

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 28 November 2017 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Liam Curran, Carl Handley, John Muldoon, Maja Hilton, Jim Mallory, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Pauline Morrison and Luke Sorba

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Siddorn

39. Minutes

Beckenham Place Park Regeneration Update

Following a request from Business Panel, Panel Members were informed that a review of the Council's Lettings and Contract Procedures Policy was being done to ensure that the policy is fit for purpose and reflects best practice. The findings would be presented to the Business Panel meeting on 23 January 2018. The Chair thanked officers for the update.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the open meeting held on 7 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

40. Declarations of Interests

The Chair declared a personal non pecuniary interest in item 8 as a Board Member on the Phoenix Board.

Councillor Mallory declared a personal non pecuniary interest in item 8 as he is a member in one of the groups listed in the appendix of the report.

Councillor Handley declared a personal non pecuniary interest in item 8 as he is a member of the Lewisham Community Transport Scheme.

41. Outstanding Scrutiny Matters

Report noted.

42. Notification of Late and Urgent Items

Report noted.

43. Decisions Made by the Joint Committee of the London Borough of Lewisham and Brent

This item was not identified for further discussion.

44. Decisions Made by Mayor and Cabinet on 15 November 2017 4.30pm

Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Update

The Head of Planning introduced the report.

The Chair asked what funding had been identified for the preferred site as there was a sitting tenant on the site and other issues involved which included ecology and flooding. Panel Members were informed nothing specific had been done as there will be costings involved for the deliverability of either site.

Panel Members noted that there was ongoing discussion with Network Rail, the current owner of the Pool Court Linear Park site. The Chair commented that according to the report the Pool Court Linear Park site was of importance for Nature Conservation, and it also mentioned the dominance of Japanese Knotweed on the site. Panel members were told the Japanese Knotweed was on the Lewisham's owned piece of land, and irrespective of the choice of site, the Japanese Knotweed would be addressed.

Panel Members raised the validity of the information in the media about Network Rail wanting to sell A package of land to just 1 bidder, and were told that the Council was trying to negotiate buying the Pool Court Linear Park site from the package before it was sold. They also raised concern about officers not knowing how much the site might cost, and were told a budget had been set aside although the likely cost was not known. It was noted that the actual cost would depend on what needs to be done.

Councillor Curran said that as the cost was still uncertain it would be prudent for officers to do a cost comparison for both sites to include all the issues that might occur for both sites the additional costs. The Chair said this request should include comparison with bricks and mortar sites and this was agreed. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the decision of the Mayor be noted.
- ii. the Mayor is requested to instruct officers to do cost comparison of both sites, in addition to the bricks and mortar alternatives before a decision is made.

Fire Safety Update

The Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager introduced the Fire Safety Update report, and the Service Group Manager for Property, Asset Strategy & Estates introduced the response to the Sustainable Development Select Committee on Fire Safety in Tall Buildings.

The Chair asked if officers were sure all the tall buildings in Lewisham were now safe, and was told that as far as officers were aware there has been confirmation that they have all complied with all fire regulations. Panel Members highlighted 6.14 of the report about 1 landlord who might not be compliant, and Members suggested, naming and shaming them into submission. Panel Members said steps needed to be taken to prevent another disaster which could result in loss of lives.

Panel Members requested a publicly available list to maintain public's confidence. Concerns were raised about not maintaining this process once the issue is out of the media's focus. The Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager said officers could instigate reviews going forward. The Chair said Scrutiny had requested information and were pleased work was done and would be ongoing. He said it would be useful for all Members to receive the report, plus a short briefing about progress on Grenfell Tower. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

Action >>>>> ED Customer Services, ED Resources and Regeneration

45. Decision made by Mayor and Cabinet on 15 November 2017 6.00pm

This item was not identified for further discussion.

46. Decision made by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 15 November 2017

Main Grants Programme 2018-19

The Head of Culture and Community Development/Service Manager introduced the report.

The Chair said as it was coming to the end of the current administration's term of office Panel Members would like to know the programme's budget projection for the future. The Panel was informed that as far as officers were aware there had not been any proposals to reduce the current budget.

Responding to the Chair's question on how officers achieve a balance when funding smaller and larger organisations, taking into account the diminishing funding allocation and geographical areas. Business Panel was told that it could be very challenging but focus would be on topics and issues important to the borough, and particular attention would be given to South of the Borough. Panel Members noted that the assistance of the Select Committees in resetting the funding would be useful.

Councillor Mallory referred to paragraph 8.7 of the report, and asked why officers seemed to be leaning towards commissioning. He was told that certain elements of the grants programme included direction and a prescriptive agenda; justified because of the need highlighted by the welfare benefits.

Councillor Sorba suggested changing the title of the Small and Faith Fund, to make it inclusive to all organisations. The Head of Culture and Community Development/Service Manager said the name had derived from the merge of two funds, and the intention was to highlight faith organisations undertaking community work, rather than the work being linked to a particular faith.

The Chair said Members value the Small and Faith Fund but felt some consideration ought to be given to the name and criteria of the fund to reflect what it does, which was agreed. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the Mayor's decision be noted.

- ii. the Mayor be requested to instruct officers to investigate the possibility of changing the name of Small and Faith Fund to reflect what it does.

47. Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees Work Programmes 2017-18 verbal update

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that some Select Committees were now concluding their indepth reviews. She updated the Panel on current work of the Select Committees.

Members were informed that the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) had issued its final report on South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLaM) "Places of Safety". JHOSC would likely meet again in March to review the implementation of their agreed recommendations relating to the proposals from SLaM ON the mental health of older adults.

Panel Members were told that Parliament's Communities and Local Government Select Committee had finished taking evidence in relation to its review of overview and scrutiny and was currently considering the findings with a view to publishing its final report and recommendations soon.

Councillor Morrison said the Healthier Communities Select Committee's LGBT review had been very interesting, and she had an early morning telephone conference with Leicester City Council, they presented their work very well. The Chair said Scrutiny had been doing very good work and the Council should be promoting this. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

It was agreed that a recommendation should be agreed asking that officers to promote the work of Scrutiny Select Committees on an equal basis with Mayor and Cabinet.

Action >>>>> Head of Communications

RESOLVED that:

- i. the report be noted.
- ii. the Mayor be advised to instruct communication officers to promote the work done by Scrutiny going forward.

48. Exclusion of the Press and Public

No confidential item was identified for further discussion.

49. Decision made by Mayor Mayor and Cabinet on 15 November 2017 5.45pm

This item was not identified for further discussion.

50. Decision made by an Executive Director Under Delegated Authority - Award of software contract extension for Payroll and Human Resources from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2020

This item was not identified for further discussion.

Meeting ended: 8:10pm

Chair