

MINUTES OF THE MAYOR AND CABINET

Wednesday, 15 November 2017 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Sir Steve Bullock (Mayor), Councillors Alan Smith, Chris Best, Kevin Bonavia, Joe Dromey, Damien Egan, Paul Maslin and Rachel Onikosi.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Paul Bell, Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin, Councillor Bill Brown and Councillor Carl Handley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Janet Daby and Councillor Joan Millbank.

102. Declaration of Interests

None were made.

103. Ladywell Playtower: selecting a restoration partner

The Mayor received detailed presentations from the Deputy Mayor and Officers in the Resources and Regeneration Directorate on the four bids for the future use of the iconic Ladywell Playtower.

The Mayor next received a presentation from Rebecca Manson Jones of the Just Jones Theatre on behalf of What Next Lewisham, the local arm of a national non-hierarchical movement promoting arts and culture. She spoke in support of the bid by RJK/Copeland Park and Hillman which she believed could give a massive boost to the growth of arts and culture in the locality.

Callum Heckstall-Smith spoke on behalf of Ladywell Traders Association in support of the 600 seat cinema bid by Picturehouse which he saw as a desirable way to increase footfall and thereby trade in Ladywell.

Robert Smith briefed the Mayor on consideration made by the Ladywell Society. The Society felt there should have been more consultation and a second public meeting but had no firm position on a preferred bidder.

Tony Rich of the Lewisham Building Preservation Trust explained his charitable trust existed to see at risk buildings refurbished and reused. He said all four bidders had the potential to succeed but that the Picturehouse proposal should be preferred as it entailed less enabling development.

Nia Hughes spoke on behalf of BECTU and explained she had been a Picturehouse employee for a decade and was a part time union organiser. She stated Picturehouse did not pay the London Living Wage and had made repeated attempts to undermine her Union with a free to join in house staff forum. She stated Curzon was an ethical employer and hoped their bid would be successful.

Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin spoke on behalf of all three Ward Councillors. She said all four bids had been carefully scrutinised to see how the applications would complement the local Ladywell community. The Ward

Councillors had concluded that they could not support any bidder who was not committed to the London Living Wage and they asked the Mayor to only consider bids from organisations committed to paying at least the London Living Wage.

The Mayor thanked all the speakers for their contributions and reported he had received a petition on the proposal as well as many emails raising other issues. He then invited Cabinet Members to raise questions with the presenting officers on the four bids.

The Mayor summed up by thanking the four bidders and the many other organisations which had submitted expressions of interest. There had been concerns about the building for many years but the Council had not been in a position to attempt restoration. Hence bids had been invited by the Council on a non-prescriptive basis. The Mayor said he was very pleased four credible bids had been made. All four were capable of delivery and it was a pure coincidence that two of them proposed a cinema. The Mayor believed his decision would be a judgement call leaving some very good bidders disappointed. He explained many issues had to be taken into account and he highlighted three which had influenced his thinking. These were to ensure the Playtower was secured and restored, that something fresh would be offered for Ladywell and that any development was on the right scale for the locality.

After careful consideration the Mayor concluded his decision was one expressing preferences based on very fine margins and that he was launching a process which would entail much work and planning before completion. He announced that Guildmore Curzon would be appointed as a preferred provider for securing the long term sustainable future of Ladywell Playtower and that the reserve bidder would be RJK/Copeland Park and Hillman.

Having considered open and confidential officer reports and presentations by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Alan Smith, and representatives of the Just Jones Theatre, Ladywell Traders Association, the Ladywell Society, Lewisham Building Preservation Trust, BECTU, and Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin on behalf of the Ladywell Ward Councillors, the Mayor, from the options available;

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the progress made in securing a long term and sustainable future for Ladywell Playtower, and the quality and calibre of all the shortlisted proposals to reach the final stage of what has been a highly competitive process be noted;
- (2) the project team's analysis of the strengths and challenges associated with each of the final proposals be noted;
- (3) the comments made by the general public and stakeholders through the public consultation be noted;
- (4) Having considered open and closed reports, Guildmore Curzon be appointed as a preferred provider for securing the long term sustainable future

of Ladywell Playtower;

(5) a reserve bidder, RJK/Copeland Park and Hillman, be appointed who can replace the preferred provider in the case of a withdrawal from the process and/or a lack of progression towards Ladywell Playtowers restoration and revival;

(6) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Law, to agree final terms with the preferred provider and to finalise the terms of all land disposals and all other legal documentation with the preferred provider or any of their group companies; and

(7) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration to ascertain whether best consideration is being certified, to consider whether the terms of the general consent under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 apply and to make an application to the Secretary of State for a specific disposal consent should this be necessary.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.