

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 10 September 2013 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Suzannah Clarke (Vice-Chair), Obajimi Adefiranye, John Bowen, Julia Fletcher, Ami Ibitson, Mark Ingleby, Marion Nisbet and Eva Stamirowski and

APOLOGIES: Councillors Sam Owolabi-Oluyole

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Stella Jeffrey, Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Helen Glass (Principal Lawyer), Joe Gillam, Sam Kirk (Strategic Waste & Environment Manager), Martin O'Brien (Sustainable Resources Group Manager), Ian Ransom (Transport Service Group Manager), Janet Senior (Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration), Tim Thompson (Head of Corporate Asset Services) (Lewisham Council) and Nigel Tyrell (Head of Environment)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2013

Resolved: to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Declarations of interest

3. Future of the former Ladywell leisure centre site

Joe Gillam (Project Manager) introduced the report. The key points to note were:

- The report provided an update on the future of the former Ladywell leisure centre site.
- As agreed by Mayor and Cabinet, officers intended to tender the demolition and clearance of the site.
- It was anticipated that a demolition contractor would be appointed shortly, to start on site by the end of October.
- Officers were also preparing to appoint a construction, design and management coordinator (CDMC) and party wall surveyor.
- Officers were assessing the potential parameters of any future development on the site and would return to Mayor and Cabinet with options in due course.

In response to questions from the Committee Joe Gillam (Project Manager), Janet Senior (Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration) and Tim Thompson (Head of Corporate Asset Services) advised that:

- No decision had been made about the future of the site. Nor had anything been decided about options for the feasibility of the future usage of the site.
- Officers would work with colleagues across the Council to determine what options there might be for the site – nothing was ruled out at this stage.
- There might also be options to take on other pieces of land in the vicinity of the leisure centre site in order to maximise the potential of any future development.

- It was unfeasible to retain any part of the existing building as part of the future development because: of the condition of the old building; the desirability and functionality of newer buildings; the restriction this might place on any future development.
- Further work would be done to deal with asbestos on site. Previous work had removed asbestos, where it was feasible to do so, any asbestos remaining on site would be dealt with before demolition.
- The site would be secured as part of the security programme in place across a number of vacant sites in the borough.
- Officers would assess the feasibility of creating a grassed area on the cleared site. However, there was a concern about creating a community space and then having to reclaim it at a later stage to enable the longer term development.
- Demolition of the existing building and clearance of the site would make it more attractive for development. Clearing the site would ensure that any significant risks were dealt with before the site was developed. This would make the site a more attractive prospect to potential development partners.
- Officers were looking at the development now (rather than during the construction of Glass Mill leisure centre) because: of the scope of the potential development; the option to assemble other pieces of land in the vicinity; the Council's overall asset management programme.
- Information would be made available on the Council's website and to the relevant local assemblies in order to allay fears and prevent rumours about plans for the site.
- Officers would return with a further update at the Committee's meeting in October.

Resolved:

- To recommend that officers that officers provide information about the development to the relevant local assemblies.
- To update the Councils website with information about proposed demolition and feasibility studies for the site's future use.

4. Climate local

Martin O'Brien (Sustainable Resources Group Manager) introduced the report. The key points to note were:

- Climate local was the successor initiative to the Nottingham Declaration.
- The recommendation to sign up to climate local was brought before the Committee last year before being agreed by Mayor and Cabinet.
- The agreement required that the Council set out what it intends to do to meet the Climate Local obligation.
- The decision to agree the Council's approach to Climate Local had been delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Regeneration.
- Plans should create jobs and training opportunities in the borough.
- Officers' proposals for offset funding would be decided by the Executive Director in November. Officers wanted to ensure that Members had the opportunity to input.
- The report to the Select Committee set out a summary of relevant activity related to Climate Local. In particular it updated on:
 - The 44% target carbon reduction target

- The focus on the borough's housing
- Proposals for the carbon offset fund
- Some organisations used 1990 as a baseline for measurement of their carbon reduction objectives but local authority data was only available from 2005. So the Council's updated target will use 2005 as a baseline, for which there was good data.
- The Council had purchased 50,000 energy performance certificates in order to help it determine where future work needed to be targeted.
- Housing counted for half of the borough's carbon emissions, which represented a higher proportion of carbon emissions than for other London boroughs.
- The Council continued to work in partnership with other organisations to bring forward projects and initiatives.
- Focus in Lewisham had moved from high volume low cost measures, to high cost low volume measures with measurable impact because this is where the most funding was available.
- The Council was currently undertaking a procurement process to implement its proposals for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO).
- Officers intended to work with Lewisham Homes and registered social landlords to focus on the most energy inefficient properties.
- Work had been done to ensure that the carbon offset fund was set at the correct level.

In response to questions from the Committee, Martin O'Brien advised that:

- The Carbon offset fund had been set at a level to encourage developers to ensure that their plans were as energy efficient as possible.
- The offset fund would not create a cheap 'get out' for developers who were unwilling to consider sustainable measures as part of their developments.
- The Council was keen to avoid the situation being one of 'development or no development' based on sustainability measures.
- The four phases of the ECO programme were not mutually exclusive.
- Officers would try to do as much as possible in each of the phases, with the time and funding available.
- It was in energy suppliers interests to do this work and Lewisham was creating a platform to do work that could not be done elsewhere.
- It was difficult to put an accurate figure on the number of properties that would be completed in the time available.
- The approach being developed in Lewisham was ahead of other areas.
- Information being used to promote the ECO schemes would be shared with the Committee, it should be noted that the scheme did not follow the format of previous energy efficiency offers – because the Council was working directly with Lewisham Homes and other housing providers. The marketing being provided, therefore was not large scale.
- The Council targeted its resources where it was most able to attract funding. At present, this did not include specific sources of funding for businesses.
- The Council provided information for businesses on its website and took advantage of funding opportunities where it was possible to deliver them.
- The Council was dedicated to cutting its own emissions but a balance needed to be struck between making savings and investing money. An essential factor of the effectiveness of energy efficiency measures was to make sure that the measures being put in place could remain in place for a

number of years. In the case of some of Lewisham's buildings, it was difficult to say if any scheme would be viable until the review of corporate accommodation was complete.

- The new carbon reduction target was stretching in comparison to other boroughs but it was still achievable.
- Data for the borough's overall comparison came from the Department of Energy and Climate Change, it included three elements: housing, businesses and transport.
- Information about housing and businesses came from energy suppliers and was the same data as that used for the entire country.
- The Council had purchased data for all energy performance certificates in the borough.
- Officers were using this information to target work on energy inefficient homes. It had already provided information about the sources of heating in the borough – indicating that more properties than were previously thought used electric heating.
- The transport element of the borough's carbon emissions was the least easy to measure – because it was based on a limited amount of survey data.
- Solid walled properties could be insulated either by applying insulation directly to the inside or outside walls. However, it was difficult to put in place because of the visual impact on the outside and the potential disruption caused by installation on the inside.
- Officers would continue to provide information and advice on the Council's website about energy efficiency and energy saving measures.

Resolved:

- To note the report.

5. Recycling

Sam Kirk (Strategic Waste and Environment Manager) introduced the report. The key points to note were:

- The report gave an update on key recycling issues since the last update to the Committee.
- The contract for dry recycling was nearly half the way through. Officers were looking at options for the re-tendering of the contract. This would include work with other boroughs to assess the feasibility of procuring a joint contract.
- Lots of new items had been included in the recycling contract for the first time, including clothes and textiles.
- Officers had also been working to develop a 'bring bank' for clothes recycling alongside events to promote reuse and recycling.
- Work was also taking place to tackle contamination of recycled materials. 2278 letters had been sent to residents about contamination, but only 70 bins had been taken away due to persistent contamination.
- Service standards were issued in May, setting out expectations of residents and the responsibilities of the Council.
- Officers had also been working on initiatives to encourage waste prevention: including electrical items, reducing food waste, composting and work with schools.

In response to questions from the Committee, Sam Kirk and Nigel Tyrell advised that:

- Although clothes could be recycled in the recycling bins, the bring bank was the most efficient way for the Council to deal with old textiles. Some of the clothes went to charity shops, others to textiles merchants and the vintage shops.
- Residents in the south of borough could use garden waste recycling centre in Bromley. The Council continued to offer free composting workshops and compost bins to residents.
- There were different levels of warning for contravening service standards. Letters were sent to residents who were causing problems – only the most persistent offenders had their bins taken away. There were very few cases of this happening.
- Information was available on the Council's website and via ward assemblies letting residents know where to recycle different items.
- Energy saving bulbs could be recycled at facilities in libraries. New recycling bins had been rolled out to the libraries that were being maintained by Eco-Computers.
- Shops were also required to offer take back schemes for batteries and other items.
- The borough's recycling rates differed from other boroughs because the Council had a different set of economic and environmental considerations to take in to account.
- The Council did not have its own waste transfer station. The Council had audited the transfer station it uses – and found that rates of recycling were not being accurately recorded, creating a discrepancy in the figures.
- The Council did not recycle garden waste – which would boost its recycling figures – but would come at additional cost.
- The figures were distorted because materials recycled at SELCHP (the borough's waste incinerator) were not included in the data.
- The Council's efforts were focused on recycling waste rather than just garden waste.
- Some other London authorities had better recycling facilities than Lewisham which were provided at higher cost.

Resolved:

- To note the report

6. Implementation of the street lighting contract

Ian Ransom (Transport Service Group Manager) introduced the report. The key points to note were:

- The Council was involved in a joint contract with LB Croydon to replace its street lights.
- From August 2011 the Councils had set a series of milestones that the contractor was expected to reach.
- To date the contractor had not been able to meet its targets.
- It had some struggles with UK power networks – partly because of the age and complexity Croydon system.

- However, the Councils also found that the contractor's project management was insufficient.
- The contractor was making efforts to regain the time it has lost, nevertheless, the core investment programme was likely to be three months late.
- The failure was more significant in Croydon because it was a larger borough, with more lights to be replaced.
- In conservation areas, additional design and consultation was required in order to make sure the new layout was suitable for the area.
- The new layout required a re-design of each street. Lights do not go back where they were and this has generated some complaints.
- Maintenance targets were being achieved.
- Responses to emergencies were effective.
- Despite some problems, on the most part the contractor had been answering calls from residents and dealing with problems within the allotted timescales.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ian Ransom Advised that:

- The lights had a new central management system – that enabled them to be switched off or dimmed.
- Lights could not be made brighter because they were at their maximum setting – but they could be dimmed – in line with national guidance.
- The contract was being monitored closely by both authorities, there were reasons for concern but at present these were not critical.
- UK power networks had reported a shortage of skilled staff to carry out the work required. The power system in Croydon was unique – in that it used a triple concentric power supply. There were very few people in the country who were qualified to work on it.
- The contractor had to give notice to residents that they would be working between 10-4.

The committee also discussed:

The poor performance of the complaints handling process. Members noted cases in which they had tried to resolve issues with the lighting contractor – but this had proved difficult. Councillor Adefiranye's complaint had been resolved but Councillor Clarke still had an outstanding problem – which Ian Ransom said he would look into.

At 21:30 – the Committee moved to suspend standing orders in order to complete its business.

Resolved:

- To note the report.

7. Emergency services review

Councillor Fletcher declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to this item because of her work for the Liberal Democrat members of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny manager) introduced the report. Members discussed the emergency services review and resolved to make the following recommendation:

- When putting forward proposals to close facilities or alter the delivery of services from public buildings, Lewisham's emergency services should be encouraged to consult with Councillors about the best use of their assets and any potential options for replacement facilities.

8. Select Committee work programme

Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny manager) introduced the report. Members discussed the work programme and resolved to:

Resolved:

- To move the item on highways to the agenda for the Committee's December meeting.
- To accept additional information the Convoys Wharf development in Deptford to the agenda for the Committee's October meeting.

9. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

None

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair:

Date:
