

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12 March 2014 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Suzannah Clarke (Vice-Chair), Obajimi Adefiranye, Julia Fletcher, Mark Ingleby and Marion Nisbet

APOLOGIES: Councillors John Bowen and Eva Stamirowski

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Carl Handley (Chair Housing Select Committee), Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Lesley Brooks (Service Group Manager, Parking), Trish Costello, John Miller (Head of Planning), Martin O'Brien (Sustainable Resources Group Manager) and Ian Ransom (Transport Service Group Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2014

Resolved: to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February as an accurate record.

2. Minutes of the joint meeting of SDSC and HSC held on 2 December 2013

Resolved: to amend the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December to include the Committees' comments on the unsuitability of the 'three dragon's tool kit' and to include the chart provided to Members at the meeting as an appendix.

3. Declarations of interests

There were none

4. Response from Mayor and Cabinet on the joint referral from SDSC and HSC on housing and regeneration in New Cross and Deptford

John Miller (Head of Planning) introduced the response from Mayor and Cabinet; the following key points were noted:

- The Committee's views had been incorporated into the Council's representation to the Mayor of London about Convoys Wharf.
- The representation had highlighted the contrast between the sales values being achieved by developments at Deptford/Greenwich Thameside and the projected sales values being used by Hutchison Whampoa in their viability assessments.
- The Greater London Authority (GLA) had set a date for the Convoys Wharf hearing (31 March 2014).
- A meeting of the Council's Strategic Planning Committee had been called for 26 March to consider the GLA's report on Convoys Wharf and prepare the Council's response. There would be a small amount of time between the publication of the GLA report and the hearing, which meant the Council would have to consider its response quickly.
- The Mayor of London had visited the Convoys Wharf site and officers had been able to point out the key historic locations.

- It seemed that the GLA would recommend some changes to the scheme, but it was not likely that these would be to the extent the Council believed to be necessary.
- It was not clear as of yet what the Council's on-going involvement in the scheme would be. If the discharge of planning conditions fell to the Council, there would be very limited scope for the Council to change matters that had already been agreed by the Mayor of London.

Resolved: to note the response.

5. Sustainable Resources

Martin O'Brien (Sustainable Resources Group Manager) introduced the report; the following key points were noted:

- There was no government funding for domestic energy efficiency measures.
- The two main mechanisms for funding domestic energy efficiency improvements were the Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO).
- The Green Deal provided upfront loans for householders to pay for efficiency measures, which would be paid back through savings generated on energy bills.
- The Energy Company Obligation was designed to ensure that, in properties that were difficult to improve, energy efficiency measures would be funded by the six largest energy companies.

Green Deal

- There had been a low take up of the Green Deal; this might be because of the upfront assessment costs.
- In theory, the Green Deal should be attractive to landlords in the private rented sector. This was because they could receive improvements to their property that would be paid for through their tenant's energy bills.
- From 2018 – new rules would come into force which would prohibit homes with low energy performance certificates from being rented, which provided an additional incentive for landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their properties.

The Energy Company Obligation

- Since its launch, ECO had been subject to revisions and changes.
- The consultation into changes to the scheme was on-going; it was anticipated that the rules would change in June. The possible implications of these changes were unknown.
- Despite the announced changes to ECO, and the subsequent scaling back of the programme by some providers, Lewisham had been able to retain its existing ECO funded projects.
- The Council had appointed a contractor to provide access to ECO funding and deliver energy efficiency works

- Work had started to insulate 1000 homes across 60 Lewisham Homes' blocks to improve their energy efficiency (N.B the number of homes being insulated has subsequently been revised to 750).
- The Council would seek to extend this work more widely in the borough for properties of all tenures. This was expected to be rolled out from June 2014 onwards.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

- Householders might find it difficult to appreciate the immediate benefit of the Green Deal, relative to the upfront costs and potential disruption involved.
- The Green Deal also had a potential impact on how attractive a home was to buyers.
- There was published national data for the uptake of the Green Deal. Officers would investigate whether it was possible to find local data.
- Any work being done to support the uptake of the Green Deal would require external funding; the Council's focus was the delivery of ECO.
- It was unclear at present how the new energy performance regulations for landlords would be enforced. The rules would come into place in 2018 but there had not yet been any resources allocated for enforcement.
- The requirement for apprenticeships and use of local businesses was built into the ECO framework agreement. However, because of the speed of delivery required to secure the delivery of the first round of ECO funding there hadn't been any engagement with local businesses or uptake of apprenticeships for the current programme of work.

Resolved: to note the response; and to recommend that further information about the delivery of the Energy Company Obligation be provided at the meeting of the Committee.

6. Parking policy monitoring and update

Lesley Brooks (Service Group Manager, Parking) introduced the report; the following key points were noted:

- Officers had been making progress on the parking policy review programme. A number of the recommendations adopted by the Council had been completed and outstanding actions were in the process of being delivered.
- The Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) review programme had started; consultations were planned for the autumn- to avoid the summer holiday period.
- Officers were working to analyse parking data in order to inform the work required for the first of the CPZs being reviewed.
- The review of disabled parking bays was reliant on a review of the policy for disabled parking provision, which was currently in progress.

Health and Carer permits

- The Council was revising its approach to health and carer permits in response to the welfare reform agenda.

- Different people with long term illnesses had varied needs, as did their carers.
- Current parking policy was restrictive, and only allowed residents to apply for a carer permit if there was no other permit held in the home.
- The proposal was to change this rule, allowing residents to apply for permits based on their needs, and those of their carers.
- The policy for allocating health permits, for people receiving care visits was also restrictive.
- It was proposed to change the policy to enable people in receipt of direct payments for their care to be allocated a health permit for their address.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- CPZs had to be self-financing. Charges for implementing and running a CPZ could not be less than it cost to set up and run the zone.
- Work was currently under way to ensure that the information held by the Council about parking measures correlated with the situation on the street.
- A three year programme had been agreed for the parking policy review – however information from residents and businesses would be collated and reviewed annually.
- There was a ‘grace period’ (five minutes) in which people were able to park in some areas. There was no extended ‘grace period’ for trade people to park.
- People could park for free outside of controlled hours. Any proposal for changing the ‘grace period’ would not be revisited until the next parking policy review (2016).
- The use of peak hours enforcement for controlled parking might help to manage demand in some areas, but this was dependent on the factors that made people want to park in those areas.
- Variable enforcement hours would work to deter commuters from parking in some areas but in areas of constant demand – such as the streets in the vicinity of the hospital – it was likely that peak hours enforcement would have little effect.
- The option to vary hours of controlled parking would be consulted on through the CPZ review programme.
- There were no special parking provisions in place for Lewisham staff with caring/visiting responsibilities. Permits for Lewisham workers were administered in the usual ways, through the services they worked for.

Resolved: to note the report.

7. Implementation of the regeneration strategy

John Miller (Head of Planning) introduced the report; the following key points were noted:

- The Regeneration Strategy (2008-2020) brought together monitoring and performance information from a range of sources.
- The strategy was reaching the half-way point and officers were reviewing the delivery of the plan.
- The approach to reporting on the strategy was being refreshed because the Council was in a period of development and change.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted.

- Most of the actions in the strategy were measurable, and could be reported on in comparison with previous years.
- Some of the data was missing. Some services had reduced in scope – and the Council was continuing its programme of changing and repurposing services.

The Committee also discussed and made the following key points:

- That having a regeneration strategy was important and worthwhile.
- That some of the measures in the update appeared vague or incomplete.
- That the monitoring of measures to tackle domestic violence should be included in future updates on the strategy.

Resolved: to note the report.

8. Street lighting contract: update

Ian Ransom (Service Group Manager, Transport) introduced the report; the following key points were noted:

- In August 2011 the Council, together with LB Croydon, entered into a joint agreement with Skanska to replace and maintain the boroughs' street lighting.
- The programme in Lewisham had been due for completion within four years, however, as had previously been reported, the programme was behind schedule.
- Skanska had set out an action plan to help it make up lost time.
- Much of the delay in the programme was caused by difficulties connecting to the power network in Croydon, where the unique set up of the power system for the street lighting required the electricity to be switched off to homes in an area before the old street lights could be disconnected.
- There were many more columns to be replaced in LB Croydon than in Lewisham.
- Based on the recovery programme, it was estimated that the programme would be three months late in Lewisham and 17 months late in Croydon.
- In each year of the programme, the contractor was required to replace a number of columns in specified locations. The installation of the first year's planned allocation of lamps had not yet been achieved, but it was anticipated that it would soon be finished.
- The work planned for year two of the programme was also nearing completion.
- The Council had commissioned an independent heritage lighting report to determine where best to install replacement heritage columns. The decision about heritage lamps had been made when the contract was signed, and it would not be revisited.
- The contract with Skanska also involved a 25 year maintenance contract, following the initial 'core investment' period, when the lights were being installed.

- It was acknowledged that there had been problems with the call centre, but Skanska recognised that outsourcing this service had not been working as well as expected, and had implemented plans to bring the service back 'in-house'.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Where problems had been identified, on the whole, these were being rectified.
- The lighting layout on every street was being redesigned to meet the Council's objectives for safety and security.
- The new lights were different from the old lights; there was a contrast between the colour and the locations of the old and new lights, as well as an increase in the lighting on footpaths, and in some cases, the proximity to people's homes.
- Skanska had been contracted to provide all parts of the street lighting service and in almost all cases they should be the first point of contact for reporting problems with street lighting.
- However, in instances where the Council had to make a decision outside of the bounds of the contract officers would be required to make a decision.
- Purchasing heritage lights for the whole of the borough would have been prohibitively expensive.
- All of the streetlights being removed belonged to Skanska and would be disposed of by the contractor. At one location where residents had requested its view, English Heritage had indicated it was not necessary to preserve the old lamps.
- It was the role of the joint client monitoring team (based in Croydon) to investigate substandard work.
- The Council's aim was to ensure that work was carried out properly from the outset to avoid having to rely on enforcement.
- Skanska were responsible for the delivery and installation of the new street lights. This included responsibility for any risks associated with installing the new lights.

The Committee also discussed and noted the following key points:

- The lack of consultation with Councillors over the decisions about heritage lighting.
- The perception, from casework, that Skanska were blaming the Council for delays – and the Council was blaming Skanska, which was unhelpful and frustrating for residents and Councillors.

Resolved: to note the report; and to circulate contact details for Skanska to Members.

9. Select Committee work programme

The Committee noted the report and put forward the following suggestions for consideration as part of the 2014//5 work programme:

- Enforcement for littering and fly-tipping offences
- Pubs and community asset transfers

- Neighbourhood forums and neighbourhood planning
- Enforcement of planning regulations
- Roads, pavements and highways maintenance
- Road safety (to include the proposals for 20mph speed limits)

The Chair thanked Members and officers for their work and wished the Committee well for the future.

Resolved: to note the report; and to put forward the Committee's suggestions for consideration as part of the work programme in 2014/15.

10. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

None

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm

Chair:

Date:
