

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 January 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), James-J Walsh (Vice-Chair), Bill Brown, Suzannah Clarke, Carl Handley, Mark Ingleby, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, Eva Stamirowski and Paul Upex and Alan Hall

APOLOGIES: Councillors Amanda De Ryk

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Jacq Paschoud, Councillor Ami Ibitson, Katherine Kazantzis (Principal Lawyer), Kplom Lotsu (Group Manager, Capital Programme Delivery), Gavin Plaskitt (Programme Manager), Janet Senior (Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration), Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services), Alison Taylor (Project Manager, Capital Programme Delivery), Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager), Ian Chalk (Architect) (Ian Chalk Architects) and Tim Thomas (Growth Area Manager) (Transport for London)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2015

RESOLVED: That

the minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Development Select Committee held on the 26 November be agreed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Hall declared a personal interest in item 3 as he was a Board Member of Phoenix Community Housing.

Councillor Walsh declared a personal interest in item 4 as he was a Rushey Green Ward Councillor and also lived in the Ward.

3. Beckenham Place Park

3.1 Councillor Curran introduced the item explaining it was in response to a petition to the Council of more than 5000 signatures. Councillor Curran reported that he has received some suggested questions from one of the Petitioners and he tabled these at the meeting, a copy of which will be interleaved with the agenda.

3.2 Alison Taylor, Project Manager, Capital Programme Delivery, introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- The park represented 98 hectares of open space and was the largest part in the London borough of Lewisham.

- The park had substantial heritage and character and included: ancient woodland; an eighteen century mansion and stable park; a café; gardens; and a golf course.
- Usage surveys indicated that the park was underused compared with comparable parks.
- Consultants carrying out usage analysis concluded that there were a number of barriers to higher usage namely: lack of key attractions; lack of investment meaning there was a “run-down” feel; large areas of the park feeling un-accessible due to the usage by the golf course.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant had been awarded on the basis of a master-plan which was shaped by substantial consultation.
- Should the golf course be maintained this would represent a significant change to the proposal and a new bid would need to be made to HLF which was felt to be very unlikely to be granted.
- Maintaining an 18 or 9 hole golf course had been ranked bottom of the prioritisation list during the consultation process.

3.3 Carole Hope, Andrew Tonge and Jenny Kay addressed the Committee regarding the petition and highlighted the following key points:

- Beckenham Place Park had the only public golf course in inner London and provided a fantastic resource for the public.
- The course had a diverse range of users and usage did not impact on attracting other park users to the park.
- The proposed closure discriminated against the diverse group of users.
- There was not a viable business case for the closure of the course and with good management it had the potential to be a profitable asset to the Council.
- The contract with Glendale was seen to be a factor in the levels of subsidy that LB Lewisham were currently providing.
- The course was 100 years old and therefore had its own heritage legacy which should be celebrated.
- There were many positive aspects of the regeneration proposal and the Heritage Lottery bid, but to realise these, there was no necessity to close the golf course.
- With good management the golf course could generate a substantial income for the Council.

3.4 In the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

- Comparison between Ladywell Fields and Beckenham Place Park could be problematic as they had different levels of accessibility and proximity of local transport links and housing.
- The current Council subsidy to golfers was approximately £10 per round of golf.
- The demographics of the park users from sample surveys taken at different times of the day showed an under-representation of women, children and non-white park users.

- The future of the mansion house was being reviewed and it was possible that this would be the subject of a further bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- There had been a decline in golf nationally and there were many other courses within 30 minutes of Beckenham Place Park. Many other local authorities had closed similar facilities in the last year.
- Based on sample studies 75% of people who signed the petition did not live in the London Borough of Lewisham.
- Priorities of the Heritage Lottery Fund were to attract large amounts of public to a free facility and protecting heritage.
- Clarity on the nature of the Glendale contract for managing the golf facility would be helpful to ensure that the true profit/loss potential had been assessed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the questions tabled by Councillor Curran and interleaved with this agenda, be referred to Mayor and Cabinet and officers be requested to ensure that their report to Mayor and Cabinet addresses these questions.
- 2) That additional details on the current contract with Glendale be provided so that an analysis of the true profit potential of the golf course was possible.

4. Catford Regeneration Programme Review - Evidence Session 2

4.1 Tim Thomas, Growth Area Manager, Transport for London (TfL), gave a presentation to the Committee, highlighting the following key points:

- TfL and London Borough of Lewisham had been looking at a range of options to improve the Catford road layout. These were: option 1 - a hybrid scheme, which diverted the South Circular behind Laurence House; and option 2 - a gyratory scheme which retained the current road layout and included localised improvements.
- Neither scheme currently had funding secured.
- The preferred scheme would form part of the Council Town Centre Regeneration Plan and a decision was needed to help progress this plan and secure funding.
- Catford had significant transport challenges including: bus and traffic congestion; poor confluences; poor pedestrian provision; insufficient cycling provision; and public realm being dominated by highway requirements.
- Key objectives of the schemes included: maintaining and improving journey times and reducing congestion; improving bus journey times and reliability; providing better cycle facilities; improving the pedestrian environment; and opening up investment possibilities.
- Transport studies and cost implications had been drawn up to provide a comparison between the schemes. The hybrid scheme involving moving the A205 behind Laurence House was likely to cost £15 to £20 million for the purchase of land, relocating and property and building costs. The Gyratory Scheme was likely to cost in the region of £10 to £15 million.

- Benefits of the hybrid scheme included: reduction in journey time for some bus routes; general improvements to traffic times; realignment of A205 out of the Town Centre; some improvements for pedestrians and the provision of 1039 homes. Benefits of the Gyratory scheme included: reduction in bus journey time on four routes; a slight improvement in traffic times; some improvements for pedestrians; and the provision of 1295 homes.
- Currently neither scheme included substantial improvements for pedestrians. More could be done to improve these facilities once either scheme was chosen.
- Replacement of the Network Rail Bridge over Catford Road would also provide improvement to the pedestrian and cycling offer in the area. Network Rail currently stated that this would not be done until 2019.

4.2 In the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

- Indecision was a major obstacle to improvement and selecting an option would mean that work on Town Centre Improvements could proceed.
- Both schemes aimed to improve signal timings and pedestrian provision but once a scheme was selected, more work could be done to ensure objectives for pedestrians and cyclists were delivered.
- It was a difficult decision to choose a scheme and unfortunate that the same number of homes was not achievable with the hybrid scheme as with the gyratory scheme.

4.3 Ian Chalk, Ian Chalk Architects, gave a presentation to the Committee and highlighted the following key points:

- He had been working with staff at the Broadway Theatre over the last year to develop proposals to improve the building. There were significant challenges and any proposals would involve statutory consultees. Solutions proposed would be robust.
- The current corner location meant that there was tight restricted access from the main road.
- The theatre included a studio theatre which was currently well used and function rooms which could be used to a greater extent.
- The seating in the Upper Circle was the only fixed seating in the theatre which was originally designed principally as a dancing and wrestling venue.
- The theatre had a good stage design and a charming organ chamber – one of only two in London. Historic England had been particularly interested in this feature.
- The studio theatre currently had restricted views due to four large columns. Moving these columns would increase capacity by around 30%.
- The auditorium did not have adequate back stage provision or “get in” facilities i.e. access for deliveries/ stage equipment etc. This needed to be resolved in any design to ensure the theatre was a commercial success.

- The design by Ian Chalk Architects was to change the access so the main entrance would be from Catford Broadway; the seating would be re-ranked making it more usable and improving the sight-lines; “get-in” would be via the main stage which could become backstage when needed.
- Historic England and Theatres Trust were broadly in support of the proposals.
- There were a number of other amendments to the proposals that could work. There could be the possibility of funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund or other organisations.

4.4 In the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

- The designs would create a stage approximately the same size as the current stage but include a back stage and wings area meaning more suitable as a modern venue.
- The organ and acoustics would be protected to ensure the quality of sound.
- Work could be done to improve the facilities and access to the café-bar so it could be a successful and profitable part of the theatre.
- In addition to shows, the theatre could be used as a venue to generate additional income. The space created would be flexible and adaptable.
- LB Lewisham had undertaken a basic condition survey of the theatre and the key aspects identified included that it needed urgent investment in the roof structure. Other elements were not seen to be in too bad a state of repair.
- There was potential for the theatre regeneration to receive Heritage Lottery Fund funding and a viable plan that represented value for money would benefit local people and could be part of the vision for the centre of Catford Regeneration.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Ian Chalk be thanked for the work he had undertaken regarding Broadway Theatre.
- 2) That the following referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet:
 - a) That the Committee advised the Mayor and Cabinet: That
 - The Committee felt it was unfortunate that the options presented meant that it appeared that the Council was being offered a choice between additional housing verses smoother traffic flow and possibly better pedestrian provision.
 - The Committee stressed the importance of making a decision on an option for the Catford Town Centre and noted that historic indecision was the major barrier to development of the area.
 - b) That the Committee recommended: That

- Any Option selected should be fully integrated including ensuring a thorough and well thought-out offer to enhance the street-scene for pedestrians.
- The Mayor lobby Network Rail to prioritise improving the rail-over-road bridge on Catford Road to allow for better pedestrian and cycling provision.
- That the presentation by Ian Chalk from Ian Chalk Architects be referred for information and consideration by Mayor and Cabinet and to the Broadway Theatre Working Party Group for consideration.

5. Select Committee Work Programme

RESOLVED:

- 1) That a report on streetlight dimming be added to the March work programme and that it be noted that a report only was sufficient and there was no need for a presentation on this item.
- 2) That following on from the referral the Committee made to Mayor and Cabinet on section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy, an additional report on a Lewisham Community Trust be presented to the Select Committee.
- 3) That as part of the response back to the Committee on the High Streets Review, information should be included on recommendation 5 regarding the creating of a Lewisham “meanwhile” (meanwhile.org.uk) system.

6. Items to be Referred to Mayor and Cabinet

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

Chair:

Date:
