

# MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 12 May 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Suzannah Clarke (Vice-Chair), Bill Brown, Amanda De Ryk, James-J Walsh, Mark Ingleby, Eva Stamirowski, Pat Raven and Paul Upex and Alan Hall

APOLOGIES: Councillor Pauline Morrison

ALSO PRESENT: Simone van Elk (Scrutiny Manager), Kplom Lotsu (SGM Capital Programmes), Martin O'Brien (Asset Management Planning Manager), Gavin Plaskitt (Programme Manager), Emma Talbot (Head of Planning) and James Lee (Service Manager, Inclusion and Prevention and Head of Cultural and Community Development)

## 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2016

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2016 be agreed as an accurate record subject to the following amendment:

That "Apart from where the TfL Quietways scheme was being introduced, many roads in the borough did not seem to have been adjusted to accommodate cyclists apart from white lines being added" be added to paragraph 4.2.

## 2. Declarations of interest

The following non-prejudicial interest was declared:

Councillor Walsh lives within Catford Town Centre, and is the founder of [bakerlooextension.com](http://bakerlooextension.com)

## 3. Street lighting: variable lighting policy

3.1 Martin O'Brien (Asset Management Planning Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- In 2015 a report had been presented to the Committee which presented a proposal for variable street lighting.
- In November 2015 a pilot had been conducted where in every electoral ward the street lights of three streets had been dimmed. No feedback had been received from residents following this pilot. A similar pilot had been conducted in Croydon, where no feedback had been received either.

3.2 Martin O'Brien answered questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Every street light in the borough could be operated independently, so the dimming of street lights could be implemented flexibly. The strength of an individual street light could be adjusted by 1% at a time. Street lights on junctions were one of the locations where an exemption to overall policy of dimming lights would likely be applied to ensure road safety.
- There was no hard evidence available that the dimming of street lights had led to impacts on crime or road safety. However its impact on feelings of safety may be different.
- The figure of 20% mentioned in the report as the maximum number of street lights that could be exempt from the overall policy would not be fixed target but an estimation of the number of exemptions and therefore of the costs savings that the policy would achieve.
- Councillors had not all been notified about the trial taking place, partly to avoid influencing the results but an email had been sent to the relevant Cabinet Members and the Chair of this Committee to notify them.

3.3 The Committee made a number of comments. The following key points were noted:

- Some residents may have noticed and found it difficult that streets had become darker but not enough to contact the Council. The fact that no feedback had been received did not necessarily indicate that people felt neutral or positive about the change.
- The trial seemed to have taken place in individual streets instead of intersecting ones. If lights were dimmed in intersecting streets then this may lead to a cumulative impact on visibility. This should be tested before implementation across the borough.
- The Committee welcomed the opportunity for the Council to make a budget saving in this area as well reducing light pollution.
- The Committee felt that a variable street lighting policy should be applied sensitively, with recognition of the circumstances of the specific streets and lights, and not be implemented to achieve a cost saving at all costs.

3.4 RESOLVED: That the report be noted, and that the following views of the Committee be referred to Mayor and Cabinet:

The Committee commented that although a trial of dimmed lights had taken place, the streets in this trial did not seem to intersect. This meant that any cumulative impact of light dimming in a large number of intersecting streets at the same time could not be adequately assessed, although this would probably lead to darker streets. The Committee therefore recommended that an additional trial take place of the dimming of street lights in one area of roughly the size of a polling district and that the results of this trial should be reported to Mayor and Cabinet when considering whether the Council should adopt a variable lighting policy.

The Committee felt that although a saving should be welcomed, the implementation of the policy to dim street lights in the borough should be driven by the particular circumstances of each street, and these should not be overshadowed by financial considerations.

The Committee felt that Members' extensive knowledge of their wards could be a useful asset to officers when implementing a variable lighting policy. Therefore, if a variable lighting policy was adopted, Members should be offered the opportunity to highlight any streets where dimming of lights may create particular concerns.

#### **4. Use of section 106 and CIL**

4.1 Emma Talbot (Head of Planning) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- Section 106 and CIL funds are held by the Council's planning department. Other Council services would make formal applications to receive a portion of these based on projects being managed in those services.
- Each section 106 agreement had specific conditions for how this funding could be spent. The CIL Infrastructure List, also known as the 123 List, sets out the types of infrastructure that CIL funds can be used for. A council had more flexibility in what was included in this list.
- Section 106 funds were no longer being accrued for infrastructure because the Council had been applying CIL since 1 April 2015.
- A process was needed to ensure further public and Member engagement in the allocation of section 106 and CIL funds. This process would need to fit national planning guidance and legal advice would be needed in its development. The aim was to achieve transparency and accountability while fitting within a complex legal framework. Once proposals had been developed, consultation would take place.

4.2 Emma Talbot and James Lee (Head of Culture and Community Development) answered questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- The CIL 123 list had been consulted on as part of the formal plan preparation process. The CIL charging schedule including this list had been approved by Full Council on 25 February 2015. CIL was only payable on commencement of a development, so although it had been applied since April 2015, few CIL payments had been received so far.
- The level of involvement for members of the public in the allocation of CIL funds would likely differ for different types of infrastructure on the CIL 123 List. The plan would be to use existing networks and groups to consult with when allocating the neighbourhood element of CIL funds. Officers were investigating how to engage with local assemblies in this context. The locations for the previous trials were decided on the basis that section 106 funding would be available in those areas for allocation.
- The section 106/CIL Overview Group was chaired by the Head of Planning, and a legal officer and the relevant section 106 officer were also members. Applications for funding had to/have to meet very detailed standards to ensure they meet the terms set out in the relevant section 106 agreement. The priorities for spend set out in section 106 agreements were determined by the needs arising from the development, which had been consulted on as part of the plan making process and for the application itself. The head of terms of a section 106 agreement were agreed as part of a planning application for a development and ward councillors were involved in that process.

- The planning department produced monitoring reports to outline how the funds had been spent. The legislation around CIL required an annual monitoring report from the Council's planning department.
- Officers had attended a meeting of the Evelyn ward assembly to discuss the allocation of section 106 and CIL funds. Comments from the public at this meeting indicated that they did not feel they had been included in the process for allocation funding or determining priorities for spend. One thing to consider was that ward assemblies were not always representative of the population in a ward.
- Section 106 and CIL funds were often used to fund for example street lighting and road works around major developments which could use up significant amounts of funding. It was not always clear to residents that these bit of infrastructure had funded via these planning obligations and that therefore less section 106 and CIL funds were available for other projects.
- In areas where there was a neighbourhood plan, this plan was required to contain priorities for the area and it had to correspond with the Local Plan. A neighbourhood forum did not need to follow the Council's organisational boundaries such as its electoral wards. Officers were working to develop relationships between existing neighbourhood forums and local assemblies. Where a neighbourhood forum was in place, 25% of CIL funds from development in that area would be available for local spend.
- Individual planning applications had to correspond with the Development Plan. The plans that form that, including local plans and supplementary planning documents, had been through public consultation, presented to scrutiny, agreed by Mayor and Cabinet and agreed by Full Council. These set out the scope of borough wide priorities and also more detailed guidance on the type of S106 funding that would be sought on individual applications.
- The Council had begun investigating whether a community trust could be set up to be used for relevant section 106 and a proportion of CIL payments. However with the current low interest rates for saving, a very substantial sum of money would be needed to ensure the trust could fund community work in perpetuity. Part of this work was identifying whether fund could be sought via other means such as crowdfunding, spacehive or endowments.
- The regulations for the spending of section 106 and CIL funds were worded such that allocations needed to be based on geographical areas, and the priorities for spending were therefore based on the needs of the local community. It would require some more thinking to see how these allocations could take account of the special needs of certain groups across the borough, such as young people for example.

4.3 The Committee made a number of comments. The following key points were noted:

- The Committee asked for the CIL Infrastructure or CIL 123 list.
- If Councillors were informed about the section 106 agreements relevant to their wards, they could help explain the conditions for spending section 106 funding to their residents.
- Participatory budget techniques might be useful in consulting local communities on their priorities for allocation of section 106 and CIL funding.

4.4 RESOLVEDL That the Committee noted the report, and that the following views of the Committee be referred to Mayor and Cabinet:

The Committee felt it was important that the processes for allocating section 106 and CIL funding were made transparent so accountability could take place.

The Committee was aware that officers are considering the process and options for further public and Member engagement in the allocation of section 106 and CIL funds. The Committee felt a timeline should be established for when this consideration would be completed, so Councillors and members of the public could be made aware of the results.

The Committee felt that local assemblies should be made aware of any proposals for the allocation of Section 106 funding where communities would be involved in the allocation process. This should include those areas where a neighbourhood forum exists.

The Committee felt that participatory budgeting techniques should be considered as a method to involve communities in the allocation of relevant Section 106 or CIL funding.

## **5. Catford Regeneration Programme Update**

5.1 Gavin Plaskitt (Senior Programme Manager) introduced the report to the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Housing Zones were an initiative from the Greater London Authority (GLA) to accelerate the development of schemes scheduled to deliver more than 1.000 homes. Catford Town Centre had now been designated as a Housing Zone, and would therefore receive funding from the GLA to support the building of affordable housing and infrastructure. The houses would need to be delivered by 2026.
- A report had been submitted to Mayor and Cabinet to agree to bid for Housing Zone funding. The bid had been submitted in February and the results had been announced in March.
- A detailed report was due to be presented to Mayor and Cabinet before the summer to agree the details of the Housing Zone agreement.
- There had been a discussion with Transport for London in January at this Committee to discuss the road network in Catford. A decision on whether Transport for London would relocate the South Circular (A205) was expected after the results of the Mayoral election for London. There was also an ongoing conversation between officers and TfL around the plans for the extension of the Bakerloo line.

5.2 Gavin Plaskitt, Kplom Lotsu (Project Manager), and Emma Talbot answered questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- The boundaries of what is considered Catford Town Centre are defined in the Council's Core Strategy. The area considered for the Council's Catford Regeneration Programme was smaller than the town centre though. The

planning application for Former Catford Greyhound Stadium, Adenmore Road SE6 4RH was considered as part of the town centre, but was not a part of the Council's regeneration programme.

- Officers were in conversation with the GLA about the specific conditions for the awarded funding for providing affordable housing.
- One of the aims for the regeneration programme was to mitigate against the current segmentation of the town centre by railways, roads and buildings.
- The density of housing for buildings and approved planning applications for Catford falls within the limits of the London Plan for town centres. Catford is identified as an opportunity site in the London Plan. Plans for the town centre have also been incorporated in the Council's Local Plan which had been extensively consulted on.
- A high density of housing would not automatically mean lots of towers. The housing present in Victorian terraced housing with multiple flats in a single house could be quite dense.
- A report was due to be presented to Mayor and Cabinet with an update on the terms of the Housing Zone funding, to present a updated vision for Catford Town Centre and a programme for the next steps in the regeneration programme including consultation.

5.3 The Committee made a number of comments. The following key points were noted:

- A Catford Town Centre Local Plan had been developed and consulted on, but this had been withdrawn before being agreed.
- There was a need for a clear vision for Catford Town Centre which should involve creative thinking and should focus on the lifestyle that Catford would offers its residents and visitors.
- There was a need to ensure that local residents were involved in creating this vision as a first step to developing the town centre.
- The placement of the South Circular was crucial to the regeneration of Catford, and the preference was for one central area.

5.4 RESOLVED: That the report be noted, that a report containing an update on the Catford regeneration programme being prepared for Mayor and Cabinet should be added to the Committee's work programme, and that the following views of the Committee be referred to Mayor and Cabinet:

The Committee were pleased with the funding being made available by the GLA in its designation of Catford town centre as a Housing Zone.

The Committee felt a clear vision for the future of Catford Town Centre should be developed instead of a fragmented approach, and that the feel and attraction of the centre of Catford to its residents, workers, pedestrians, cyclists and its visitors depended on establishing places where everybody feels accepted, relaxed and excited to be. The town centre should be designed to feel loveable, liveable, joyful and iconic.

The Committee felt strongly that the local community should be involved in and consulted on their vision for Catford and that such consultation should happen

before the appointment of developers. The Committee urged that the consultation be used an opportunity for the Council to engage closely with the local community in future plans for the town centre and innovative consultation methods should be considered. The aim should be to identify the reasons people chose to live or spend time in Catford and to develop a shared vision for the lifestyle that Catford should offer its residents and visitors.

The Committee also noted the strength of feeling from local residents that had been expressed previously on planning applications for developments in Catford. It was recognised that the level of interest in the future of Catford was a significant asset for any future consultations on plans for the area.

The Committee was concerned that piecemeal development had already begun when a planning application for Former Catford Greyhound Stadium, Adenmore Road SE6 4RH was considered at a recent meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee.

The Committee felt that any decision on realignment of the South Circular through Catford would have major impacts, both for the traffic flow for buses and cars as well as for the quality of public space in the town centre. The Committee noted that Transport for London had previously presented their designs for the South Circular to the Committee, and hopes that Transport for London will weigh their concerns around the quality of the environment for pedestrians accordingly.

While appreciating that progress depends on a decision by Transport for London on whether to realign the South Circular (A205), the Committee requested that a clear timeline be established for the regeneration programme outlining the order of any key decisions, and that this should be shared with the Committee.

The committee strongly felt that the South Circular should be relocated as originally planned in order to achieve the town centre vision built around the theatre and a central piazza.

## **6. Select Committee work programme**

6.1 Simone van Elk (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report. The Committee discussed the report and decided that:

That a report containing an update on the Catford regeneration programme being prepared for Mayor and Cabinet should be added to the Committee's work programme for 29 June meeting and that the Cabinet Member for Growth and Regeneration be invited to attend for this item.

6.2 RESOLVED: That the report be noted, and that the work programme be agreed subject to the discussed amendments.

## **7. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet**

7.1 RESOLVED: That the Committee's views under items 3, 4 and 5 be referred to Mayor and Cabinet.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chair:

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Date:

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