

# MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 18 January 2018 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Mark Ingleby (Vice-Chair), Abdeslam Amrani, Andre Bourne, Suzannah Clarke, Amanda De Ryk, Sophie McGeevor, Eva Stamirowski and James-J Walsh

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Chris Best (Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Older People), Sir Steve Bullock (Mayor), Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) Aileen Buckton (Executive Director for Community Services), James Cook (Emergency Planning, Business Continuity and Parking Service Group Manager), Liz Dart (Head of Culture and Community Development), Helen Haylett (Sales and Marketing Manager, Broadway Theatre), Jessie Lea (Senior Programme Manager), Kplom Lotsu (SGM Capital Programmes), Wendy Nicholas (Strategic Waste and Environment Manager), Carmel O'Connor (Operations Manager, Broadway Theatre), Gavin Plaskitt (Programme Manager), Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services), Nigel Tyrell (Head of Environment), Sarah Walsh (Regeneration and Urban Design Planning Manager) and Ralph Wilkinson (Head of Public Services)

## 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2017

- 1.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December be agreed as an accurate record.

## 2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 Councillor Ingleby declared a personal interest in relation to item 8 as the Chair of the Grove Park Nature Reserve.

## 3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

- 3.1 **Resolved:** to note the response on to the Committee's referral on the Broadway theatre would be provided under item four.

## 4. Broadway theatre

- 4.1 Aileen Buckton (Executive Director for Community Services) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:
- There were specific issues relating to the theatre that dictated how it could be run and managed.
  - It was a grade two listed building and a treasured icon locally.
  - The listing meant that any proposed changes to the building would require careful consideration, time and resources to carry out.
  - The building was originally built as a music hall and not as a purpose built theatre.
  - There were limitations to the scale of productions that could be staged because there was no mechanical access for deliveries to the theatre. Any staging and equipment required for productions in the Broadway had to be carried in. This posed health and safety issues.

- Local authority financial regulations meant that the theatre's budget had to balance each year. This was not the case for commercially run theatres, which could take greater risks.
- Since 2013/14, in line with the Council's overall budget reduction programme, the dedicated theatre budget had been reduced by 72%; earned income from the theatre programme was 59% of turnover in 2014; earned income was now 88% of turnover.
- In the first full year of budget reductions (which also entailed a staffing restructure) the theatre made a budget surplus of £65k but this could not be carried forward from one year to the next because of the Council's overall financial position.
- Given the reduction in resources, as well as the repairs and maintenance required to the building, a decision was taken to reduce the theatre programme (rather than to close it altogether).
- As of last year theatre income had increased. However, further changes were required in the building to enable further sources of income to be realised.

4.2 Carmel O'Connor (Operations Manager, Broadway theatre) and Helen Haylett (Sales and Marketing Manager, Broadway theatre) introduced a presentation, which is included with the committee papers. It included a summary of current activity taking place at the theatre as well as plans for future events and programming- such as: work with community groups, club nights, commercial hires and potential partnerships with other theatres.

4.3 Liz Dart (Head of Culture and Community Development) addressed the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Officers from the Community Services Directorate had been working with colleagues in the Resources and Regeneration directorate to identify funding options for improvements to the theatre building and as a result, £1.2m of capital funding had been secured.
- A cross directorate working group for the theatre had been established to oversee works.
- A conservation management plan for the building had been commissioned. The final report was due at the end of March.
- The management plan would help to further improve the plan of work that needed to take place to maintain and develop the theatre.

4.3 Aileen Buckton, Liz Dart, Carmel O'Connor, Helen Haylett and Kplom Lotsu responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Some initial funding had been identified to support the delivery of maintenance and improvement work.
- The conservation management plan was a key piece of work.
- Further consideration needed to be given to the phasing of future work to the building and the options to access heritage lottery funding.
- Further consideration would also have to be given to the alignment of plans for the theatre with the programme for the redevelopment of Catford town centre.
- The Catford regeneration programme team were mindful of the central importance of the theatre for the vitality of the town centre.
- The day to day maintenance of the building was funded from the Council's facilities management budget.
- There had been a single year in which a £65k surplus had been generated in the theatre's operational budget.

- Community Services spent £110k a year on the theatre and Resources and Regeneration spent £140k a year – resulting in a combined subsidy of £250k.
- The theatre made use of volunteers, however, volunteers required training, supervision and management time. Most organisations using the theatre brought volunteers with them to support various programmes of work.
- Consideration had been given to inviting a commercial operator to run the theatre, however, the current limitations of the building and the risks involved meant that it was not currently a viable option for a commercial operator.
- It was important for the Council to sustain its current programme of activity and community focused events.
- There was no question about the expertise of the officers managing the theatre. However, one issue with the Council running the theatre was that its decision making processes and appetite for taking risks were restrained.
- There was no censorship of acts at the theatre and it was difficult for officers to answer general questions about the content of theatre productions, given the subjective nature of some performances (particularly comedy). However, if officers were made aware of concerns about any specific production at the theatre then they would consider what action could be taken (in line with theatre hirers' agreement terms and conditions, which prohibited offensive content).
- Work was taking place to update the theatre's website.
- The use of the theatre lobby by a commercial bar operator had resulted in some unintended costs for the operation of the theatre, including: some clashes in programming between the bar and studio theatre space; the loss of the lobby as an entrance for the theatre and the requirement for additional staffing to manage the transfer of alcohol between the bar and the theatre space.

4.4 Sir Steve Bullock (Mayor of Lewisham) addressed the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Officers had provided a thorough summary of work that was taking place at the theatre. The level of work that was involved in running and improving the theatre should not be underestimated.
- If the theatre was allowed to close, it would not be likely to open again.
- The Broadway had the feeling of a community theatre but the scale of a commercial theatre, which made it a special case to manage.
- The granting of lottery funding might take more than one attempt to realise.
- Censorship was a difficult issue. Theatre staff used their judgement to ensure that the bookings at the theatre matched the diversity of Lewisham's community and the attitudes and values of the Council. However, once productions were on stage it would be difficult to manage the content of their productions.

4.5 Councillor Best (Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Older People) addressed the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Officers had worked hard to deliver a varied programme of activity at the theatre. They had brought in additional funding from filming and hires. They had also improved the reputation of the theatre.
- Efforts were being made to bring back the pantomime for 2018.

- 4.6 **Resolved:** that the report be noted. It was also agreed that officers should be commended for the work that they had carried out to develop an innovative and community focused programme of activity at the theatre.

## 5. Catford town centre regeneration: masterplan brief

- 5.1 Kplom Lotsu (Service Group Manager, Capital Programmes) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- Further work had taken place to develop a masterplan brief for the regeneration of Catford. It set out the key objectives for the redevelopment of the town centre.
- Comments from the Committee had been incorporated into the brief, where possible.
- Key dates for the development and agreement of the masterplan had been included in the report.

- 5.2 In the Committee discussion that followed, the following key points were noted:

- The Committee welcomed the clarity and plainness of the language in the brief.
- Members believed that the following should be emphasised in the report: walking, cycling and human scale of development; air quality; the role of Catford as a civic centre and; accessibility for disabled people.
- Some Members believed that consideration should also be given to potential higher education uses in the town centre.
- The Committee welcomed efforts that were being made to work with colleagues in the Council's libraries service.
- There was some concern that there were unequal levels of engagement from residents in the north and south of the town centre.
- However, the Committee commended the work that the programme team was carrying out in the local community and noted that it was an example of good practice.
- Members were concerned about the potential negative impacts of gentrification.
- The Committee wished to highlight the sensitivity about the impact of tall buildings on the town centre, Members recalled the campaign against the proposed tower in the Catford Green development.
- The Committee would welcome further customer experience mapping for bus movements in the new development.
- The Committee suggested that the key issues it highlighted be included somewhere prominently in the key objectives for the masterplan brief.
- The Committee also noted the additional documents and due diligence that officers were preparing and undertaking to support the delivery of the masterplan.
- The study area spanned an 800m radius from a defined point in the town centre but this was not tightly defined.

- 5.3 **Resolved:** that the report be noted. It was also agreed that once a masterplanner was appointed, they would be invited to present to the Committee.

## 6. Annual parking report

- 6.1 Ralph Wilkinson (Head of Public Services) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- The Council had 13 car parks and 22 controlled parking zones encompassing 21 thousand parking spaces in the borough.
- Good progress was being made with the implementation of the controlled parking zone programme.
- More penalty charge notices were being issued as a result of the new controlled parking zones in the borough. However, there had not been a resulting increase in the number of appeals and complaints.
- More people were using cashless payments for parking.
- Work carried out in the last year was designed to improve the service whilst reducing costs.
- The report also provided a breakdown of the financial performance of the service.

6.2 Ralph Wilkinson, James Cook (Emergency Planning, Business Continuity and Parking Service Group Manager) and Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services) responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Enforcement agents had rules they had to operate by. However, officers would consider concerns about any specific areas which councillors highlighted regarding the fairness or quality of enforcement.
- Complaints and comments were received from members of the public about areas of insufficient parking enforcement – as well as those about excessive enforcement activity. The challenge was to find a balance.
- Officers recognised concerns about the implementation of the controlled parking zone in Brockley. The timing of the new programme was over ambitious and officers lacked the resources to implement it successfully. There were also pressures on cost and in managing relationships with contractors. Lessons had been learned.
- Complaints were logged on the Council's iCasework system. A single complaint that was dealt with by multiple people would be logged as a single complaint unless it was escalated from an informal to a formal complaint or if the person making the complaint raised a separate case about the way their complaint was being dealt with.
- Enforcement agents were tasked with visiting controlled parking zones at critical times.
- There were 20 agents working during the week and a small number at weekends.
- Agents were moved around the borough to deal with trouble areas. Officers were currently considering the level and cost of enforcement activity.
- The times for controlled parking zones had been voted on by local residents.
- Any change to a controlled parking zone required consultation and significant resources to carry out.
- The controlled parking zone programme had been agreed following discussion and consultation. The focus had been on the implementation of new zones. The programme for the review of existing zones was scheduled behind areas that had no parking controls in place.
- There was a school deployment plan for parking enforcement around schools. Priority schools were visited by agents once a week others were visited once a fortnight. A review of the plan was currently taking place with officers in the Children and Young People directorate.
- Some Councils were considering stopping any driving or parking near schools to improve safety and air quality. However, there were obviously accessibility issues and a balance had to be reached.

- Options for different controlled parking zone times were given in the consultation for new zones.
- 6.3 In the Committee discussion, the following key points were also noted:
- Members were concerned about driving, parking and enforcement on the Catford Broadway.
  - There were also concerns about parking, driving, access and safety around schools.
- 6.4 **Resolved:** that the report be noted. It was also agreed that officers would provide additional information regarding: issues surrounding the implementation of the controlled parking zone in Brockley; progress with the lamppost electric vehicle charging project in Lewisham; parking enforcement near schools.

## 7. Waste and recycling services update

- 7.1 Wendy Nicholas (Strategic Waste and Environment Manager) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:
- The report provided an update on the new arrangements for the food and fortnightly collection service that had begun in the autumn of 2017.
  - There had been some teething problems, which were to be expected as a result of the major service change. The principal problem was that of missed collections as crews got to know their new rounds and negotiated access issues.
  - Quality checks were being carried out to ensure that the new services met the agreed standards.
  - Waste advisors had carried out a pre-implementation survey. In February a post implementation survey would be carried out – and areas with low levels of recycling would be targeted for further engagement activity.
  - Advisors had carried out roadshows and ‘door knocking’ reaching more than 15 thousand residents. Feedback from the advisors was that residents were broadly satisfied with the new services.
  - There had been a slight increase in the number of missed collections following the implementation of the new service. This had decreased substantially in the following months.
  - Complaints and casework had increased substantially (59% in October and 46% in November) but there had been a significant decrease in the number of complaints in December as early problems were identified and solved.
  - Tonnages of food recycling had increased month on month following the implementation of the new service.
  - Recycling, composting and reuse figures had increased from 16.11% in September to 24% in October.
  - The percentage of waste being sent for incineration had also reduced.
- 7.2 Wendy Nicholas, Nigel Tyrell (Head of Environmental Services) and Kevin Sheehan responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:
- The problems that had been experienced as part of the implementation of the new service were relatively small, especially in comparison to some other areas of London that had implemented new services (and experienced significant disruption).

- Officers were currently trying to negotiate an extension to the contract for the borough's waste incinerator.
- The option for kerb side sorting of waste had been explored at the time of renegotiating the new waste and recycling contract but the costs, logistics and level of labour required to carry this out were prohibitive.
- It was recognised that there was some potential confusion among residents about things that could and could not be recycled, especially regarding the different kinds of plastic.
- Work was taking place at a national level to simplify recycling symbols on plastic but there was lots of complexity in the supply chain for different products.
- The new food recycling collection was being composted in Britain for reuse here. This was not the case with all of the different kinds of recycling.
- Bins were not routinely taken away from residents for misuse. Contamination tags were used for food bins that contained items other than food.
- Bins were checked for contamination. There was a process in place to divert contaminated loads from the recycling facility, which charged the Council for disposal of contaminated recycling. Any recycling that was found to be contaminated was collected by a dedicated crew for incineration.
- Average monthly contamination of recycling loads was between 10-15%.
- Officers would give consideration to carrying out further work in any specific areas in the borough where there were issues with contamination of recycling.
- Officers were conscious of the potential issues surrounding the availability of compostable waste bags for food recycling.
- Services were available for families that produced excessive amounts of waste or waste that required clinical disposal.

7.3 In the Committee discussions the following key points were also noted:

- Members expressed support for the recent national emphasis on reducing and reusing plastics.
- It was suggested that information about waste and recycling should be included with letters to new residents about council tax.
- Members highlighted concerns about issues that affected large numbers of people on a street – rather than one or two households.
- Members noted that Bromley Council had a high profile signage and communications campaign to combat fly tipping.
- The Committee wished to place on record its thanks to Pat Hollands for her ongoing hard work and dedication in dealing with casework and queries.

7.4 **Resolved:** that the report be noted.

## 8. Information item: Beckenham Place Park update

This item was considered after item four.

- 8.1 Councillor Ingleby addressed the Committee, the following key points were noted:
- There were three parts to the regeneration of the park including: the recreation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape, improvement of nature and

ecology and the development of the park for biking and recreation. He had questions for officers about:

1. The role that the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust played in the plans for regeneration.
2. The potential further opportunities for consultation with local people about the vision for the park.

8.2 **Resolved:** that the information update be noted. It was also agreed that Councillor Ingleby's questions would be forwarded to officers working on the regeneration of Beckenham Place Park for a response.

## 9. **Select Committee work programme**

8.1 The Committee discussed the work programme for its meeting on 22 March, the following key points were noted:

- Items on the agenda were: markets, the Catford regeneration programme, work and skills strategy and home energy conservation.
- The Committee was divided about the value of discussing the regeneration programme for Beckenham Place Park at the meeting on 22 March. Some Members highlighted concerns, others noted that the plans for the park had been subject to scrutiny and that the decision to approve plans for the regeneration of the park had already been taken.

8.2 **Resolved:** that the agenda for the meeting on 22 March be agreed.

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

10.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 10.10 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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