

<b>Sustainable Development Select Committee</b>		
<b>Title</b>	Local Plan Update	
<b>Contributors</b>	David Syme – Strategic Planning Manager	
<b>Class</b>	<b>Part 1 (open)</b>	29 October 2018

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. This report is intended to update Members on the progress of the new Local Plan for Lewisham.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. The Select Committee is asked to note the content of this information report and direct questions to officers.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. On 12th September 2018 a report was presented to Sustainable Development Select Committee (SDSC) on Lewisham’s Local Plan. This provided an overview of the reasons why the council is preparing a new plan, the timetable for its production and the scope of the new plan (i.e. which adopted planning policy documents the new plan will replace). The SDSC report also highlighted some of the key opportunities and challenges that will need to be addressed by the new Local Plan in helping to deliver a “Lewisham for the many”. Finally, the report signposted key progress in the different areas of plan production, including early-stage engagement with Members and preparation of the evidence base studies which are needed to inform policy options.
- 3.2. This paper provides an update on the production of Lewisham’s new Local Plan and follows on from previous briefing reports. To avoid duplication of information, this report focusses on key progress made in the period since the last SDSC report. Furthermore, this report discusses in detail work on the new borough-wide Character Study, a key study which will underpin the new Local Plan including the overall development strategy.

## **4. Progress report**

- 4.1. The following section discusses progress on the preparation of the new Local Plan, focussing on updates since the 12th September 2018 report to SDSC.

## Consultation and Engagement Strategy

- 4.2. Officers are preparing a consultation and engagement strategy for the Local Plan that will outline a proposed approach to public consultation through the Local Plan process in line with planning regulations and our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The document will also include proposals on continued engagement with councillors.
- 4.3. The strategy will seek to address SDSC comments and recommendations arising from discussions held on an officer report on the development of Lewisham's new Local Plan dated 12<sup>th</sup> September.

## Member briefings

- 4.4. In order to ensure that Members are engaged early in the plan process and have an opportunity to influence its direction, the Strategic Planning Team has facilitated a series of All Member Briefing Sessions. To-date, 3 sessions have been held, with two sessions held in July shortly after the local elections and the most recent one taking place in October 2018.
- 4.5. The first session focused on the plan making process and some of the key challenges and opportunities arising through the plan review. The second session set out the 'direction of travel' on the new plan and potential broad strategic options for the spatial strategy.
- 4.6. At the most recent session on 15<sup>th</sup> October, officers presented draft 'strategic objectives' for the new Local Plan. The objectives will frame the strategy and detailed policies for the plan, and should ultimately help to ensure that the plan helps give effect to Mayor's manifesto and new corporate priorities. There are 22 draft objectives organised under 9 headline topic areas, as follows:
  - A. An Open Lewisham as part of an Open London
  - B. Housing tailored to the community with genuinely affordable homes
  - C. A thriving local economy that tackles inequalities
  - D. A greener borough
  - E. Climate change resilience
  - F. Celebrating our local identity
  - G. Healthy and safe communities
  - H. Securing and timely delivery of infrastructure
- 4.7. In addition to the draft strategic objectives officers discussed some of the key considerations for a new spatial development strategy for the borough, along with initial impressions of what a deliverable strategy might entail. The presentations led to a constructive discussion on the different aspects of the plan. A number of issues and questions were raised for further consideration, including the need for genuinely affordable housing and timely delivery of infrastructure to support planned levels of growth.

- 4.8. Furthermore, Members indicated that they would like more information in respect of the consultation programme for the plan. It was noted that officers are currently in the process of preparing a consultation strategy. This will provide details of how the Strategic Planning Team proposes to engage with Members and the wider in the Local Plan process, having regard to the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
- 4.9. Officers expect to continue engaging with Members throughout the course of the Local Plan's production, both through briefings and more formally through the Key Decision process.

#### Evidence gathering

- 4.10. In order to pass independent examination local plans are required to meet prescribed 'tests of soundness' as set out in the NPPF. This includes that they must be 'justified' by evidence. The process of plan making therefore involves a significant amount of information gathering at the front end of the process. This information is then used to set policy options and preferred approaches for the plan going forward.
- 4.11. Accordingly, much of the work on the Local Plan to-date has focussed on the preparation of the council's technical evidence base. This includes in-house research along with the commissioning of specialist studies, most of which have now been published online, completed in draft format or are in preparation. The September SDSC report provided a detailed list of key evidence base studies and their stage of production.
- 4.12. All evidence base documents will be made publicly available as appropriate (accessible on the council's planning webpages) as they are finalised. The evidence base will be published alongside the submission Local Plan and be subject to scrutiny through the independent examination process.
- 4.13. It is worth noting that the New Cross Area Framework: Engagement Strategy has now been published for public consultation, running 12th October to 7th December 2018.
- 4.14. The Lewisham Character Study will also be published for consultation, details of which are set out in the next section below.

#### Policy monitoring and review

- 4.15. Given the breadth of new and emerging changes in national planning legislation and policy, as well as regional policy, officers have committed significant resources to reviewing and understanding implications of these changes. This is particularly in respect of future strategic housing requirements / targets and implications of the Government's new Housing Delivery Test (HDT), which have key implications both for plan making and decision taking on applications.

## 5. Lewisham Characterisation Study update

### Introduction

- 5.1. Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners were commissioned by the Council in February 2018 to prepare the Lewisham Characterisation Study. The report updates the previous 2010 Characterisation Study and responds to the significant growth and change in the borough since this time.
- 5.2. Characterisation provides a description of the physical form of the borough, its origins, places, streets and buildings to inform an understanding of the particular attributes which make the borough of Lewisham what it is today. The study explores the borough's evolution and existing places to better understand what determines and contributes to existing local character and what should help inform future growth. Importantly this will help determine how this will be distinct for different parts of the borough.
- 5.3. The study will help to inform a policy approach in the emerging Local Plan and act as an evidence base document to inform a character and 'place-based' approach to growth in the borough.

### Structure of the character study

- 5.4. The study comprises of the following sections:
  - Section 1 – Introduction
  - Section 2 – Setting the scene
  - Section 3 – Borough wide analysis
  - Section 4 – Borough types
  - Section 5 to 10 – Lewisham Places
  - Section 11 – Conclusion

### Section 2 – Setting the Scene

- 5.5. This section outlines the historic evolution of the borough and provides data on Lewisham's society today including population, ethnicity, car ownership, household size, home ownership, economic inactivity and multiple indexes of deprivation.

### Section 3 – Borough wide analysis

- 5.6. Provides an analysis of the physical attributes of the borough such as topography, geology, waterways, green space, tree coverage, PTAL, transport routes, building heights, views, landmarks and historical assets.

### Section 4 – Borough types

- 5.7. This section is a review of the building forms prevalent within the borough. It is an update from the 2010 study that categorises the built fabric of Lewisham into specific building typologies.

## Section 5 – 10 – Lewisham Places

- 5.8. The study has defined five sub-areas within the borough, each with its own distinctive character, evolution and series of neighbourhoods. The characterisation and analysis of these sub areas and neighbourhoods will directly inform the emerging Local Plan. The understanding of these characteristics has allowed a context-led strategy for growth and intensification to be developed. The chapter on each sub-area has identified the features which should steer the design of future development and a series of growth priorities, tailored to each of the areas.
- 5.9. In many ways Lewisham exhibits the diversity of London's character, and this has been illustrated by a cross section of the borough and the five sub-areas which help to draw out this variety and distinctiveness.
- 5.10. There are also some themes that need to be addressed at a borough wide scale, drawing together many of the proposals and priorities which have been identified within each of the five sub-areas.

## Section 11 – Conclusion, a place based approach to growth

- 5.11. Drawn from the above the study concludes by providing an analysis of those areas that are more capable of accommodating change and describes key character based spatial themes which include:

### **Strategic growth**

- 5.12. The London Plan and the Borough's Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan identify an opportunity area that covers much of the northern area and the Lewisham and Catford central corridor.
- 5.13. The Catford, Lewisham and New Cross opportunity area sits adjacent to two other opportunity areas in the London Borough of Southwark - Canada Water and the Old Kent Road - illustrating the major cumulative change expected in this area of London. The GLA have identified that a minimum of 8,000 new homes and 6,000 new jobs will be delivered through intensification and regeneration in the area. This growth should be delivered alongside the BLE and improvements to the areas green spaces, public realm, poor legibility, severance and traffic congestion issues.

### **A tailored approach to growth.**

- 5.14. With the continued growth of the borough, many of the borough's centres will change in their role and position in the hierarchy, and new places will need to be created or enhanced to support new and existing communities. Many of the borough's centres are sustainable locations due to their higher PTAL and access to services, and each should see some level of growth. Lewisham is proposed as a Metropolitan Centre due to its retail role in serving both the borough and wider areas of south east London. Catford will continue to

expand as a major centre in the borough, with further growth that is in keeping with its existing scale and grain.

- 5.15. Some of the borough's district centres will see more significant growth and change such as at New Cross alongside a new Bakerloo Line station. Deptford, Lee Green, Forest Hill and Sydenham also all have sites and opportunities which should be brought forward to help enhance and re-examine the distinct character of each of these centres.
- 5.16. New local centres within the town centre hierarchy are proposed at Bellingham and Evelyn Street. Both of these are proposed in locations where an existing parade should be significantly improved alongside new development, to serve the existing and new community.

### **Road corridor intensification**

- 5.17. Many of the borough's busiest and most significant corridors are some of its oldest and given the age of the routes, they have seen many layers of change over history. As such they have a diversity in their character that can be further enhanced and strengthened. They are good opportunities for growth given their accessibility and existing mix of scale and uses. Many of the borough's corridors have sites that are currently underused such as single storey sheds or opportunities to add a storey to an existing parade.
- 5.18. These sites should be developed alongside highways improvements to improve the pedestrian and cycle environment, make traffic less dominant and create roads that have easy and logical crossing places rather than forming a barrier. Public realm, urban greening and shop front improvements will also help to enhance the character of these places.

### **Strengthening green and blue infrastructure**

- 5.19. Alongside new development across the borough there must be further investment in the green and blue infrastructure network. This has been a key theme in each of the five sub-areas. This will include improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes including the Green Chain, connections between existing green spaces and improved connectivity between regeneration areas. The borough also has a blue infrastructure network which form important routes through the borough including Waterlink Way and the Thames Path. Improvements should be made to the Quaggy River so that this can be enhanced as both a habitat and route
- 5.20. Improvements to the borough's existing green spaces including a new regional park in the east of the borough, further investment in many of the borough's existing parks and new strategies to help celebrate the historic woodland landscape character in the west will all help to strengthen the green and blue character of Lewisham.

## **Character based growth**

- 5.21. Following this borough wide character study and the growth priorities identified for each of the five sub-areas, an overarching character led approach to growth in the borough has been developed. This plan acknowledges the need for growth, change and enhancement to be borough wide. Borough wide growth will be delivered by reinforcing the character in even the most sensitive historic settings through high quality infill and re-use of the existing built fabric, and through the development of smaller opportunities sites in all residential areas across the borough. Any new development must respond to the distinct character of the neighbourhood in which it sits and be informed by the existing grain, historic evolution, building typologies and the growth priorities identified for the sub-area.
- 5.22. Within this framework some locations can take a greater intensity of growth. In some areas there are opportunities to re-examine the existing character, including the borough's corridors, within town centres where there are available sites and where there are opportunities for urban regeneration of areas to re-knit with the surrounding character.
- 5.23. There are also specific opportunities for re-imagining the character of a place through new development. This highest level of change will only occur in town centres with major infrastructure improvement projects or in locations with significant sites highlighted for potential redevelopment such as big box retail locations.
- 5.24. For example, in the northern area of the borough the priorities relate to promoting greater change and there are some areas where a more comprehensive reimagining would be appropriate alongside major infrastructure investment, influenced by the character of surrounding neighbourhoods. Elsewhere, large big box retail sites, for example in Catford or at Bell Green, present opportunities for more fundamental intervention to reimagine the area through redevelopment that creates better connectivity and knits into the surrounding neighbourhood.
- 5.25. For centres such as Grove Park, Forest Hill and Sydenham the emphasis should be on re-examining character. Although many of these places are attractive historic centres, there are some more fundamental interventions which could help to re-examine the existing character through the redevelopment of available sites along and behind the high streets and contribute to environmental and public realm improvements.
- 5.26. For centres such as Brockley and Crofton Park, the emphasis should be on reinforcing and protecting the existing fabric and condition, enhancing the existing character through sensitive infill and re-use of existing building fabric whilst improving, where necessary the public realm and streetscape. Similarly, there will be opportunities throughout the borough, in residential areas for sensitive infill development that helps to raise the quality of neighbourhoods and complement the existing character.

## Conclusions and next steps

- 5.27. The purpose of the Characterisation Study is to draw out the character that makes different parts of Lewisham unique and identify the features that should steer future development. The specific way in which intensification should be realised across the borough in response to local character has been explored.
- 5.28. The purpose of this process is to help shape policies and the spatial strategy in the emerging Local Plan. The Local Plan will be place-based and this process will ensure that policies for each of the sub-areas are tailored to the distinctive sense of place and character of different parts of the borough.
- 5.29. Following approvals it is intended that the character study be subject to a period in public consultation for comments. This is likely to take place November/December 2018.

## **6. Homebuilding Capacity Fund**

- 6.1. In recognition of the challenging housing targets set out within the London Plan and the need to take a different approach to delivering homes in the capital, the London Mayor has launched the Homebuilding Capacity Fund.
- 6.2. The Homebuilding Capacity Fund (a £10 million revenue fund) offers councils the opportunity to bid for revenue funding for 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- 6.3. The programme is focussed on four priorities:
  - Delivering a new generation of council homes;
  - Increasing housing supply by supporting the development of small sites
  - Proactively planning in areas with significant growth potential; and
  - Ensuring optimal density of new residential developments.
- 6.4. Councils are invited to bid for up to £750,000 of revenue funding each, to be split between up to five proposals. Each proposal must help achieve one or more of the four priorities outlined above.
- 6.5. The strategic planning team and strategic housing team are in discussions over the preparation of the bid due 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- 6.6. At a time where council budgets are being reduced this fund provides the opportunity to ensure future growth and investment within the borough is properly planned through masterplanning projects, design coding and building skills and capacity across the councils housing and planning teams.
- 6.7. Further details can be found <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/homes-londoners/homebuilding-capacity-fund>
- 6.8. We would welcome views from councillors on suggested proposals.

## **7. Financial implications**

7.1. At this stage there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **8. Legal implications**

8.1. At this is an information item there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Crime and disorder implications**

9.1. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **10. Equalities implications**

10.1. Lewisham's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES) 2012-16 describes the Council's commitment to equality for citizens, service users and employees. The CES is underpinned by a set of high level strategic objectives which incorporate the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- Tackle victimisation, harassment and discrimination
- To improve access to services
- To close the gap in outcomes for citizens
- To increase understanding and mutual respect between communities
- To increase participation and engagement

## **11. Conclusion**

11.1. The Committee is asked to note the content of this report setting out an update on work being undertaken by officers. If you have any questions about this report please contact David Syme, Strategic Planning Manager  
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