

# MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Monday, 29 October 2018 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Patrick Codd (Vice-Chair), Suzannah Clarke, Louise Krupski, Alan Smith and James-J Walsh

APOLOGIES: Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye and Mark Ingleby

ALSO PRESENT: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), David Austin (Head of Corporate Resources), Aileen Buckton (Executive Director for Community Services) (London Borough of Lewisham), Alexandra Crush (Transport Policy and Development Manager), David Edwards (Environmental Health Group Service Manager), Deborah Efemini (Capital Project Manager), Nick Harvey (Transport Planner), Cecilia Lindstrom (Studio Egret West), Kplom Lotsu (SGM Capital Programmes), Tony Piggott (Development Advisor), Nigel Tyrell (Head of Environment), Sarah Walsh (Regeneration and Urban Design Planning Manager), Mark Warren (Studio Egret West) and Ralph Wilkinson (Head of Public Services)

## 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018

1.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018 be agreed as an accurate record.

## 2. Declarations of interest

2.1 There were none.

## 3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

3.1 **Resolved:** that the responses from Mayor and Cabinet be noted.

## 4. Catford Town Centre regeneration update

4.1 Cecilia Lindstrom and Mark Warren (Studio Egret West) introduced a presentation (attached to the agenda) with an update on the Catford masterplanning development process.

4.2 The Committee commented on the update, the following key points were noted:

- It was important that the plans for the development of Catford Town Centre took into consideration the aspirations for the future of Lewisham town centre (and other town centres in the borough).
- Catford should be the civic heart of the borough.
- Consideration should be given to the infrastructure and services that would be required for the future increase in population planned for the town centre.
- The Bakerloo line would have a significant impact on the scale of development that could be delivered in Catford. The masterplan should give consideration to the implications for the town centre with and without an extension of the Bakerloo line.

- In future updates to the Committee, members would be looking for evidence that consideration had been given to the inclusion of mixed housing tenure and improvements to green spaces.
- Plans for Catford should include consideration of options to design out poor air quality.
- The Committee expected that a wide range of people would continue to be included in the consultation, including younger people.
- Improved linkages between the Catford stations and the town centre would be welcomed.
- The future of the theatre was also a key consideration for the Committee.
- The Committee would welcome progress towards the cycling and pedestrian 'A21 spine' – through the centre of the borough. It was felt that work needed to be aligned between different plans and different teams at the Council.

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

## 5. Budget cut proposals

5.1 David Austin (Head of Corporate Resources) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- The context for the report was the Council's medium term financial strategy that was published in July (2018) and considered at Public Accounts Committee and Mayor and Cabinet.
- The strategy identified that for the next two financial years (2019-20 and 2020-21) the Council needed to find £30m of cuts - £17m in 2019-20 and £13m in 2020-21 to set a balanced budget (as required by statute).
- Officers commenced a process in May-June 2018 developing proposals for cuts. The proposals had then been considered via an executive management team review process.
- Proposals totalling £21m had been submitted for scrutiny.

5.2 David Austin responded to questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Some spending on local government had been announced in the Chancellors Autumn budget – notably for adult social care - but it was anticipated that there would be more for local government in the Government's comprehensive spending review on 2019.
- Further information was awaited about the business rate relief for small businesses that had been announced by the Chancellor. The change would likely have implications for the London business rate pool.

5.3 David Edwards (Environmental Health Group Service Manager) introduced proposal COM08 (Change in the public engagement responsibilities for air quality and dedicated funding). The following key points were noted:

- There were two sides to the Council's air quality work: statutory responsibilities and campaign work. The proposed cut of £40k was currently being used for campaign work, including: school audits, green screens and the Lewisham air app.
- The statutory responsibility for air quality work was currently supported through the Council's environmental health team. The proposal was to

fund engagement activity through the Council's Public Health budget in future.

5.4 David Edwards responded a question from the Committee, the following key point was noted:

- The ability of officers to apply for funding and grants for air quality initiatives would be retained.

5.5 Aileen Buckton (Executive Director for Community Services) introduced proposal COM15 (Extend use of the Broadway Theatre) the following key points were noted:

- The plan was to implement the proposal in 2020-21 in order to give the service time to prepare.
- There had been investment in the theatre which had allowed a greater range of activities and events to be held there.
- Income at the theatre was steadily increasing, which had facilitated the employment of a marketing officer.

5.6 Aileen Buckton responded to a question from the Committee, the following key point was noted:

- Officers were confident that the proposal could be delivered in 2020-21.

5.7 Ralph Wilkinson (Head of Public Services) introduced proposal CUS14 (Parking service revenue review) the following key points were noted:

- There should be some surplus in the future parking service budget.
- The Council could not make profit from the service to meet its budget deficit.

5.8 The Committee discussed the proposal – the following key points were noted:

- Fines from people breaking the rules were welcomed – but the Council had to strike a balance between robust enforcement and being “overly draconian” in the implementation of the rules.
- Members expressed concerns about the consistency and quality of enforcement activity in the borough.
- The parking service should give consideration to the Council's wider ambitions for air quality as well as plans for increasing cycling and walking.

5.9 **Resolved:** that the following views would be submitted to the Public Accounts Select Committee:

- The Committee expressed concern about insufficient enforcement of rules for parking in the borough. It noted that it would be considering the performance of the parking service at a future meeting and that it would seek assurances that effective enforcement was being carried out.
- The Committee welcomed the intention to introduce emissions based charging and it was noted that it would consider further updates on this issue as part of its future work programme.

5.10 Viv Evans (Head of Planning) introduced proposal RES11 (Increase in pre-application fees), in response to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- There were a range of different charges for services from the Council's planning team – these proposals related to planning performance agreements for large planning applications.
- There was going to be a review of charges for pre-application advice to make the charges for smaller schemes lower (comparatively) than charges for larger schemes.
- Benchmarking had been carried out with other (comparable) London boroughs.
- All of the charges were relatively small in comparison with the scale of the schemes being proposed – however- the charges had to be set fairly and competitively.
- Every large scheme had its own requirements and in future each large scheme would have a bespoke cost for pre-application advice.
- Planning application agreements were welcomed by developers, as long as they received a quality service.
- There was no indication from Government that they would make agreements mandatory.

5.11 Gavin Plaskitt (Programme Manager) introduced proposal RES17 (Beckenham Place Park – income generation). In response to questions from the Committee the following key points were noted:

- Officers believed that the targets for income generation were realistic and fairly cautious.
- The intention was to encourage more users and groups to enjoy the park. Some consideration had been given to charging professional dog walkers in Beckenham Place Park – but it was noted that this would need to be as part of a borough wide charging policy.

5.12 **Resolved:** that the following views would be submitted to the Public Accounts Select Committee:

- The Committee was concerned about the proposal to offer 'repairing leases' for buildings in the park. The Committee recommended that careful consideration be given to the set up and management of the contracts for the lets. The Committee recommended that a stringent, tightly managed and documented approach be taken to future letting. The Committee questioned whether it would be more cost effective to repair the buildings in the park before letting them rather than offering reduced rents for repairs.

5.13 Alexandra Crush (Transport Policy Manager) introduced proposal RES18 (Electric vehicle charging points) in response to questions from the Committee the following key point was noted:

- The aspiration was to keep costs down for electric vehicle users by introducing competition between electric vehicle charging point providers.

5.14 Nigel Tyrell (Head of Environment) introduced proposal CUS2 (Increase in the garden waste subscription). The Committee discussed the proposal and the following key points were noted:

- Members welcomed plans for increasing flexibility in the system and urged that officers should improve the offer further.
- It was felt that if the price was increasing there should also be a benefit for subscribers.

- Careful consideration should be given setting the level of the charge in the second year. Members felt that an increase to £90, £95 or £99 might be more symbolically acceptable in the second phase than increasing the charge to £100.
- The Committee asked that the impact of the increase in the charge should also be carefully considered to see if there was a reduction in uptake – or increases in illegal dumping.
- Officers noted that the more complexity that was introduced into the scheme – without a simultaneous increase in automation – the more administration and associated costs would increase.
- The Committee was concerned about the potential impact on air quality that might result from more people burning garden waste.

5.15 **Resolved:** that the following views would be submitted to the Public Accounts Select Committee:

- The Committee recommended that the Council should improve the payment options available for the garden waste subscription service - to include pro-rata payment for mid-year subscription as well as the facility to pay in monthly instalments. The Committee also proposed that the Council should consider the feasibility of including the cost of subscription service as an option with council tax payments.
- The Committee recommended that further work should take place to advertise the subscription service to new residents. It suggested that the Council should include information about the service with information sent to new homes about their council tax.
- The Committee urged that the impact of the increase in the charge be carefully reviewed following the first period of implementation and that the options for further increasing the charge be considered accordingly.
- 

5.16 Nigel Tyrell introduced proposal CUS3 (Events in parks). The Committee discussed the proposal and the following key points were noted:

- There were lots of commercial events taking place in the borough's parks and green spaces that organisers were not paying for.
- In some instances there was significant wear and tear to park infrastructure as a result of commercial events.
- Events and activities should be welcomed in the boroughs parks – but options for income generation should be considered.
- Officers would consider recent legal cases involving events in parks and other local authorities.

5.17 **Resolved:** that the following views would be submitted to the Public Accounts Select Committee:

- The Committee recommended that the Council should review its policy for managing commercial activities taking place in the borough's parks. The Committee suggested that this should build on best practice in other boroughs and that it should include options for charging for the full range of commercial activities taking place in the borough's green spaces (including but not limited to: commercial dog walking, commercial exercise classes and other profit making activities).

5.18 Nigel Tyrell introduced proposal CUS4 (Increase in commercial waste charges); CUS5 (Increase in the charges for the collection of domestic lumber) and CUS7 (Reduce sweeping frequency to residential roads to

fortnightly). The Committee discussed the proposals and the following key points were noted:

- There was concern about the psychological impact of the proposed street sweeping cuts on the perception of the Council and its ability to maintain basic services.
- It was noted that, should the cut be made, street sweeping rounds would have to be altered to take account of the reduction.
- There was concern that the more litter there was the more litter it would attract.
- The street sweeping budget had been reduced by 30% since 2010 – and prior to this it had been considered as a low cost, high performing service.
- Should the cut be made the service would attempt to maintain the cleanliness of the streets but it should be recognised that the streets would appear less clean.
- The service would respond flexibly to focus on the dirtiest streets.

5.19 **Resolved:** that the following views would be submitted to the Public Accounts Select Committee:

- CUS4: Increase in commercial waste charges  
The Committee recommended that the Council should reconsider previous proposals to make the Council's trade waste service more competitive, commercially minded and profitable.
- CUS7: Reduce sweeping frequency to residential roads to fortnightly  
The Committee was concerned that cuts to the sweeping service, which leave streets noticeably dirtier, would have a significantly detrimental effect on the environment and on the public perception of the borough as well as on the reputation of the Council and on residents' confidence in local services. As such, the Committee recommended that alternative cuts be found.  
The Committee recommended that any proposed changes to street sweeping be coordinated to ensure services are responsive and demand led - in order to minimise potential negative impacts on residents.

5.20 Nigel Tyrell introduced proposal CUS6 (Bereavement services increase income targets) the following key points were noted:

- Not all of the detail of the proposal had been included in the information before the Committee. The original plan had been to increase charges for cremation and for burials, however, this had been changed to increase charges for burials and reduce charges for cremations.
- There was additional capacity in Lewisham's crematorium that, priced competitively against surrounding boroughs, could be used to increase income.

5.21 In the Committee's discussion, the following key points were noted:

- Some members of the Committee were concerned about the religious and demographic impacts of increasing the costs of burial.
- The proposal was planned over two years to determine what impact changing the costs of cremation would have on the uptake of services.
- The Committee was concerned about the comparative costs of funerals in Lewisham compared to surrounding boroughs.

5.22 Nigel Tyrell introduced proposal CUS8 (Close the four remaining public toilets).

5.23 **Resolved:** that the following views would be submitted to the Public Accounts Select Committee:

- The Committee noted the reasons for making the cut and recommended that work to remove the facilities and 'make good' the vacant space should happen swiftly in order to avoid the facilities becoming dilapidated and unsightly.

## 6. Lewisham Transport Strategy and Implementation Plan 2019-2041

6.1 Alex Crush (Transport Policy and Development Manager) and Nick Harvey (Transport Planner) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- The Local Implementation Plan (LIP) had been in development by officers (with the support of consultants) over the past 8 months.
- Councillors had been involved during the development of the plan.
- Public consultation was currently ongoing – this would lead to a finalised report for Mayor and Cabinet in February 2019 – to be followed by submission to Transport for London (later in February 2019).

6.2 Alex Crush and Nick Harvey responded to questions from the Committee (including a written submission from Cllr Ingleby), the following key points were noted:

- The new programme for the LIP included a healthy neighbourhood project – which partially corresponded to the major schemes approach taken in the previous LIP.
- The Council had a vision for rail but this did not include detailed planning and access requirements for all of the stations in the borough. Aspirations for key transport hubs were included in the LIP and in the developing Local Plan – but not in the level of the detail requested by the Committee. Further work (and funding) would need to be identified to undertake this level of assessment for all of Lewisham's stations.
- The A205 and A21 were TfL roads. The Council supported improvements for cyclists on both routes. However, due to the volume of traffic on the roads, space constraints and the costs involved, it would be difficult to create consistent provision for cycling on both routes. Although this was not to say that this issue should not be highlighted, and there were a number of opportunities to improve provision, such as the future redevelopment of Catford town centre.
- Some work was taking place with TfL regarding the development of the A21 cycling corridor. It was likely that this would be split into sections/projects to be delivered in phases as funding became available. Officers were pushing for as much feasibility work as possible to be completed as soon as possible to help tie in with the Catford work.
- Officers were developing a prioritisation process for determining work on healthy neighbourhood schemes. A large amount of information and feedback had been gathered from the Commonplace consultation, which officers were currently working through. 22/23 different factors had been identified for prioritisation process. The finalised process would be completed in time for the production of the final LIP.

- 6.3 In Committee discussions the following key points were also noted:
- The current Mayor of London's focus on cycling and walking was welcomed.
  - It was felt that the issue of air quality was not significantly nor consistently highlighted in the draft LIP.
  - The LIP should be more ambitious in terms of its plans for emissions reductions from traffic.
  - Further work should take place to support cycling on the A205 – especially through Forest Hill. Additional consideration should be given to options for an orbital route for cyclists going west through the borough.

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

## 7. Lewisham Local Plan Update

7.1 **Resolved:** that the update be noted.

## 8. Select Committee work programme

8.1 The Committee discussed the work programme for the meeting on 12 December 2018. It was agreed that:

- A further update on Catford would not be considered unless there had been significant progress on the programme.
- The annual parking report and an update on the parking policy would be considered and that prior to the meeting, Members would submit requests for information and casework queries for written answers from officers.
- The Committee would consider an update on the Bakerloo line
- The item on Beckenham Place Park would be moved to the Committee's programme in January.

8.2 **Resolved:** that the Committee's work programme for its meeting on 12 December 2018 be agreed.

## 9. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

9.1 **Resolved:** that the Committee's comments under item five be referred to Public Accounts Select Committee.

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm

Chair:

-----

Date:

-----