

| Mayor and Cabinet | | |
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| Report Title | Response to the Sustainable Development Select Committee on the Local Shops and Parades | |
| Key Decision | No | Item No. |
| Ward | All | |
| Contributors | Executive Director for Regeneration | |
| Class | Part 1 | Date: 14 September 2011 |

1. Summary

- 1.1 Mayor and Cabinet received a report on 22 June setting out the comments of the Sustainable Development Select Committee arising from a discussion on Local Shops and Parades at their meeting on 10 May. This report sets out the response by the Executive Director for Regeneration.

2. Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 To consider the views of the Executive Director for Regeneration as set out in Section 6 of this report as a response to the Sustainable Development Select Committee.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 The need to protect and enhance the borough's retail and shopping areas, including local parades, is reflected in planning policy. This is detailed in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Local development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy. The saved policies under the UDP and the Core Strategy are Development Plan Documents and form part of the Council's policy framework.
- 3.2 Within the UDP policy STC 8 relates to Local Shopping Parades and Corner Shops. This outlines that the Council will grant planning permission involving the loss of a Class A1 shop from a Local Shopping Parade or as a corner shop, provided the new use would contribute towards preserving or enhancing the local character, vitality and viability of the parade.
- 3.3 The issue of local shopping parades is also addressed within the Core Strategy. *Strategic Objective 4 – Economic activity and local businesses* seeks to increase the size of the borough's economy through facilitating investment in new and existing business and retail development. One way the Council is seeking to achieve this is through protecting and enhancing local shopping facilities and services in order to continue to support basic community needs.

- 3.4 Spatial Policies relating to retail and employment seek to manage the type and quantity of development in an appropriate manner across the borough. *Spatial Policy 2 – Regeneration and growth areas*, *Spatial Policy 4 – Local Hubs* and *Spatial Policy 5 – Areas of Stability and Managed Change* provide appropriate policy direction for a variety of areas with differing character and issues.
- 3.5 Local Parades are a valuable part of the local economy, provide useful shopping facilities for local residents and mark clear places in local neighbourhoods which are three key features of the Lewisham Regeneration Strategy 2008 -2020, People, Prosperity, Place.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 The Mayor and Cabinet is asked to consider the information presented in this report by the Executive Director for Regeneration as outlined in Section 6 and agree that this is provided as a response to the Select Committee.

5. Background

- 5.1 At its meeting on 10 May 2011 the Sustainable Development Select Committee considered a Local Shops and Parades report produced by the Regeneration Directorate together with verbal evidence provided by the Head of Planning at the meeting.
- 5.2 The Committee resolved that the Mayor and Cabinet should produce an overarching strategy looking to promote and develop local shopping areas that are not in the top level of the retail hierarchy. This strategy should:
- Provide a cohesive approach for promoting the lower levels of the retail hierarchy within Lewisham, including district centres, neighbourhood local centres and parades.
 - Produce guidance and information for shop owners, those running shops and the general public outlining the planning and licensing laws surrounding local shops in order to promote awareness of what is and isn't under the Council's control and what local people can do to try and improve and influence their local shopping areas.
 - Aim to bring partner organisations together to improve communication in regards to issues affecting local shops. This should include Council departments, utilities companies, local shop owners and trading associations as well as local assemblies and the public.

6. Response from the Executive Director

- 6.1 The LDF Core Strategy sets out how the role and function of Lewisham's town centres, local neighbourhood centres and local parades will be enhanced and protected and defines the retail hierarchy. In addition to maximising the role and function of larger town centres, the Council wishes to see a range of local services provided as close to peoples' homes as possible and located

throughout the borough. This will reduce the need to travel, support local businesses and retains expenditure within the borough.

- 6.2 At the time of the Sustainable Development Select Committee in May, a detailed survey of local shopping parades had not been undertaken since 2005. During July of this year Planning Policy Officers undertook a further survey in order to update the 2005 Local Shopping Parade Survey. Whilst a detailed review of the survey data is yet to be completed, preliminary overall results indicate that local parades are generally holding up reasonably well in the economic downturn, with the number of vacancies decreasing by 1% to 12% (a decrease of 19 units) in the six years to 2011. However, the number of conversions to residential units has increased from 61 units to 105, an increase in the percentage of residential units from 5% in 2005 to 8% in 2011. This reflects work between officers and local owners in areas of higher vacancy to manage a reduction in unit numbers in local parades, with the ends of parades converted to residential use where practical.
- 6.3 The Government is proposing to introduce new neighbourhood planning powers to seek to enable local people to have greater control over the design and development of their areas. The proposed powers would allow a local neighbourhood to develop a neighbourhood plan and agree local developments without the need for planning permission (as long as their proposals did not conflict with the Local Development Plan).
- 6.4 It is agreed that further guidance on the ways in which local residents and businesses can work with the Council and other public sector partners to improve the quality of place of district centres, neighbourhood local centres and parades would be welcome. An officer working group will draw on experiences of partnership working to produce best practice guidance on the regeneration of neighbourhoods based on case studies. The guidance will form an information base and be used for further engagement with local assemblies, traders associations and the public. It is intended that this will help local groups successfully drive forward small-scale regeneration projects in their area. Examples of the type of project are the environmental improvements to Hither Green station which were overseen by the Hither Green Community Association and the project to green Brockley Common which was led by the Brockley Common Action Group.
- 6.5 Officers will also build on previous work to make planning and licensing-related matters more accessible to residents and businesses. Examples are the role of the Council in relation to large-scale developments and what it can and cannot require of applicants/developers, the work undertaken with the Arts Service to produce guidance on the use of empty shops for artistic, community or enterprise purposes and shop front design advice.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising out of this report. Any expenditure in relation to officer time attending meetings and preparing guidance documents will be contained within the existing revenue budget.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Constitution provides for Select Committees to refer reports to the Mayor and Cabinet, who are obliged to consider them and respond to the Select Committee what, if any, action they intend to take.

9. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 9.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report. However, these issue will be a major consideration in the guidance to be prepared.

9. Equalities Implications

- 9.2 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report. However, these issue will be a major consideration in the guidance to be prepared.

10. Environmental Implications

- 10.2 There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report. However, these issue will be a major consideration in the guidance to be prepared.

11. Background documents and originator

Comments of the Sustainable Development Select Committee on the Local Shops and Parades – Report to Mayor and Cabinet (22.06.2011)

Minutes of the meeting of the Mayor and Cabinet (22.06.2011)

Local Shops and Parades – Report to Sustainable Development Select Committee (10.05.2011)

Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Development Committee (10.05.2011)