

**MINUTES of the meeting of the STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
held in Room 2, Civic Suite, CATFORD SE6 on Tuesday 5th March
2019 at 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors: Paschoud (Chair), Brown and Walsh

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Smith, Bell, Clarke, Ogunbadewa, Reid and Amrani

OFFICERS: Viv Evans - Head of Planning, Chris Dale – Development Management Group Manager and Alison Bradshaw - Planning Committee Co-ordinator.

Other Members in Attendance and welcome to speak under standing orders:

Cllrs Sorba, Krupski, Handley, Anwar, Kelleher, Ingleby, Mallory, Muldoon, Johnston-Franklin and Jacq Paschoud.

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Ingleby declared that he is appointed by the Council as a Director of Lewisham Homes

Cllr Kelleher declared that she was a Lewisham Homes tenant.

2. MINUTES – Maximising the Yield of Affordable Housing from Private Sector Development

The following recommendations were agreed unanimously:

- 1 To recommend the Mayor and Cabinet to;
 - 1.1 Approve the preparation of a document which should if possible, take the form of a full supplementary planning document (SPD) setting out this Council's interim position on the provision of genuinely affordable housing ahead of the new Local Plan. This process is currently estimated to take 9 - 12 months from a Mayor and Cabinet decision and thereafter should start as soon as possible
 - 1.2 Make available the necessary resources to undertake this work. The planning service should be properly resourced to complete the preparation of the SPD and interim policy statement as soon as possible
 - 1.3 Note any financial and legal implications of producing an Interim Policy on the Provision of Genuinely Affordable Housing.
 - 1.4 Ahead of the above SPD officers should be asked to prepare a statement of intent on the future direction of affordable housing provision and requirements in the London Borough of Lewisham for consideration by Full Council. This should be prepared as soon as possible. This will need to be grounded in the new corporate strategy, and based on a sound evidence base and legal advice. Production is expected to take two months

- 2 Further recommendations for consideration by the Mayor and Cabinet
 - 2.1 To resolve that genuinely affordable housing in the Lewisham context is regarded by the Council as social rented housing between local target rents and London Affordable Rent as set out in paragraph 6.13 of the report to Strategic Planning committee
 - 2.2 Note the practical considerations which the Strategic Planning Committee and other committees will have to take into account when considering specific planning applications as set out in paragraphs 7.4 and 7.5 of the report to Strategic Planning committee.
 - 2.3 To review the inclusion of shared ownership as part of the affordable housing definition in Annex 2 of the report to Strategic Planning committee
 - 2.4 Mayor and Cabinet to consider and clearly define a preferred mix of tenures within the London Borough of Lewisham, e.g. more genuinely affordable units and fewer units below market rents
 - 2.5 The cost of student accommodation in Lewisham's Halls of Residence to be an affordable percentage of the student loan. The Head of Planning to circulate proposed wording of recommendation and discuss with the Chair of SPC
 - 2.6 Securing, where possible, advance valuations of properties coming to market in the Borough in order to seek to establish existing use values of land and buildings early in the development process and notifying these to vendors and asking them to pass the information on to potential purchasers,
 - 2.7 Requiring that planning applications accompanied by Financial Viability Assessments must be submitted with a Statutory Declaration from the author confirming that the inputs, assessment and overall conclusion are a true and fair representation and are not altered in any way to influence the viability position.
 - 2.8 Where agreed by the Chair of any of the planning committees and the Head of Planning, major applications would undergo a pre-committee informal briefing including attendance by the viability assessor when appropriate.

The Chair of the Committee asked if Members agreed that the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 23rd May 2018 were a true and accurate record. Members agreed and the minutes were signed by the Chair.

The Chair of the Committee opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of the meeting as set in Section 1 of the paper attached to the Agenda.

Officers provided some background to members through four PowerPoint slides. One slide demonstrated the downward trend of the amount of total affordable housing that had actually been delivered, rather than granted in the borough. He explained that the Council's Core Strategy pre-dated the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and earlier versions of the NPPF. The Council's new corporate strategy contains the political aspirations of the council in respect of the amount of affordable housing desired in Lewisham, but that the corporate strategy can be afforded little, if any, weight in the determination of a planning application.

The preparation of the new Local Plan is currently anticipated to conclude with it being adopted in late 2021 or early 2022. The Local Plan is the most effective means of affording weight in the making of planning decisions. An adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), based on robust evidence, would provide a robust interim position pending the adoption of the new London Plan, and until then planning officers and planning committee members will need to make decisions based on assessment of the individual planning merits of any particular scheme.

This was followed by a discussion between members of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and other members that spoke under standing orders.

Members agreed that there was a need for more transparency around the viability of a scheme presented to planning committees so that they could confidently challenge developers. Members agreed that recommendation 2.8 above should be implemented.

Members requested that viability training, provided last year to all members, was repeated for the benefit of new planning committee members. Officers confirmed that it is now Council policy and practice to publish all viability reports.

Members requested that the Chairs of all planning committees should review the committee agenda in advance and ensure that the planning officer connected to the scheme attended the meeting. They could also request attendance by specialist viability consultants when required. Chairs of planning committees can take advantage of viability training courses provided by Urban Design London.

The Chair suggested that Cllr Walsh could elicit information on what previous work had been undertaken to review delivery of obligations in the S.106 Agreements and any resulting claw backs via a Member question to Full Council.

Officers explained that a condition could be placed on decision notices that any review mechanism of delivery of the scheme should be referred back to the planning committee.

Members agreed that SPC could be given the task to review planning performance. This recommendation should be referred to the next Constitutional Working Party meeting on 20 March 2019.

Any comments arising from legal on the above resolution would be followed up and circulated to all members of SPC.

All members expressed gratitude to Chair of SPC for arranging the discussion.

Meeting closed at 21.25.