



Sustainable Development Select Committee

Lower Sydenham and Bell Green Vision Study consultation

Date: 14 January 2021

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: Bellingham, Perry Vale, Sydenham

Contributors: Officers acting on behalf of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources, Director of Law, Governance and HR and Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Outline and recommendations

The Sustainable Development Select Committee is asked to provide comments on the contents of this report and proposed non-statutory consultation

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

No formal consultation has been undertaken to date.

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report introduces the context and priorities emerging from the Lower Sydenham and Bell Green Vision Study, inviting comments on this alongside proposals for non-statutory public consultation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Sustainable Development Select Committee is asked to provide comments on the contents of this report and proposed non-statutory consultation.

3. Policy Context

3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy (2018-2022)^[1] outlines the Council's vision to deliver for residents over the next four years. Building on Lewisham's historic values of fairness, equality and putting our community at the heart of everything we do, the Council will create deliverable policies underpinned by a desire to promote vibrant communities, champion local diversity and promote social, economic and environmental sustainability. Delivering this strategy includes the following priority outcomes that relate to the provision of new affordable homes:

- Tackling the Housing Crisis – Providing a decent and secure home for everyone.
- Building an Inclusive Economy – Ensuring every resident can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.
- Building Safer Communities – Ensuring every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

3.2. Homes for Lewisham, Lewisham's Housing Strategy (2015-2020)^[2], includes the following priority outcomes that relate to the provision of new affordable homes:

- Key Objective 1 – Helping residents in times of severe and urgent housing need.
- Key Objective 2 – Building the homes our residents need.
- Key Objective 4 – Promoting health and wellbeing by improving our resident's homes.

3.3. The emerging Local Plan outlines the area around Bell Green within its Strategic Area for Regeneration, and states an ambitions for regeneration of the area to be delivered within a coordinated regeneration framework and ultimately for the area to acquire Opportunity Area status within the London Plan.

4. Background

4.1 The Lower Sydenham and Bell Green area is an emerging regeneration opportunity in the borough. This is enhanced exponentially by proposals for the extension of the Bakerloo Line along the Hayes National Rail line.

4.2 By extending the line south to serve communities like this, an opportunity for transformational regeneration and investment is created that would otherwise not be achievable.

4.3 The broad ambition for regeneration in this area is documented in the emerging Local Plan and associated site allocations (which includes Bell Green within its Strategic Area

[1]

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s61022/Draft%20Corporate%20Strategy%202018-2022.pdf>

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for Regeneration), alongside the Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE) Local Economic Impact Assessment and the Council's response to TfL's 2019 consultation on the BLE.

- 4.4 In the longer term, the Council has outlined ambitions for regeneration of the area to be delivered within a coordinated regeneration framework and ultimately for the area to acquire Opportunity Area status within the London Plan.
- 4.5 The Bakerloo Line Extension provides a once in an generation opportunity to transform the character of Bell Green and Lower Sydenham from a car-dominated out-of-town retail park into a mixed use, multi-tenure community that knits into the existing urban fabric and provides positive benefits not only for the immediate hinterland, but for the south of the Borough more broadly.
- 4.6 As a first step towards this, the Council has commissioned the Lower Sydenham and Bell Green Vision Study, with aims to:
 - Identify the scale and scope for regeneration and change in the Lower Sydenham and Bell Green area, incorporating a new London Underground station.
 - Support the case for the Bakerloo Line Extension along the Hayes line by demonstrating the transformational benefits that it would bring to the area.
 - Engage the local community in the high level ambitions for the future of the area, responding to local regeneration demands
- 4.7 The scope of this commission considers four broad areas: housing; employment; transport and movement; and maximising the benefits of the BLE.

5. Lower Sydenham and Bell Green vision study

- 5.1 The Council appointed a consultant team, led by architects and masterplanners, We Made That, in June 2020 to work with Officers on developing the Vision Study.
- 5.2 Over the last four months, the team has carried out baseline analysis (including a site visit), defined and prioritised some key regeneration issues, and developed illustrative plans for how these could be incorporated.
- 5.3 The scope of the baseline analysis has included:

Socio-economic considerations: Local economic profile and trajectory; demographics, diversity, labour market activity, deprivation and skills profile; local housing profile; and high level analysis of COVID-19 vulnerability.

Spatial considerations: Including heritage and historic development, greenspace, waterways, cultural institutions, public realm quality, land use and planning designations.

Transport: High level feasibility criteria for different tube station options; a review of bus service provision, key walking, cycling and pedestrian routes; high level review of the highway network and potential for modifications.
- 5.4 The process has also considered inputs gathered from early and targeted baseline engagement with local ward members and the Sydenham Society, considering the substantial information collection conducted as part of previous community-led regeneration proposals.
- 5.5 Building on the baseline work and working with officers from Planning, Regeneration and Economy & Partnerships, the study has focused on eight regeneration objectives, which outline high level future aspirations. These constitute:

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- **New town centre** catering to the local economy
 - **Potential for significant housing growth**, including affordable homes
 - **Potential to generate a number of new employment opportunities** accessible to local people
 - **New training, employment and enterprise centre** creating opportunities for people locally
 - **Humanising the highway network**, maximising potential for active travel
 - **New transport hub for the south of the borough**, integrated for tube/rail, buses, cycling and walking
 - **New cultural, social and civic facilities**, and integration of existing assets
 - **Maximise the potential of the Waterlink Way and Pool River corridor** and create a pleasant, green environment with improved access
- 5.6 An assessment of the number of homes and jobs that could be delivered is still under development but will form part of the final draft that is published for consultation.
- 5.7 The study also provides illustrative scenarios of how the Regeneration Objectives can be incorporated into the future spatial layout of Bell Green and Lower Sydenham, considering two station location scenarios.
- 5.8 **Scenario 1** considers a new tube station on the Bakerloo Line and transport interchange alongside the current Bell Green Retail Park, adjacent to the current bus turning circle on Alan Pegg Way.
- 5.9 This option harnesses the full opportunity that can only be achieved by extending the Bakerloo Line through Lower Sydenham and on to Hayes to act as a catalyst for regeneration in the area.
- 5.10 Key features of this option include:
- 5.11 A new town centre incorporating a relocated supermarket, and a greener, pedestrian-centred public realm. The focus of the town centre retail and amenities in this scenario would be along what is today Alan Pegg Way.
- 5.12 By bringing the Bakerloo Line into the centre of the site, it will be possible to deliver housing growth at a significant scale. This will be supported by social infrastructure, benefitting both new and existing residents.
- 5.13 This scenario would also incorporate delivery of additional employment and cultural space around the Livesey Hall, with modern light industrial workspace creating local jobs and providing space for local small businesses.
- 5.14 This scenario could enable a number of incorporating access to new green spaces and supporting the local economy and vibrancy of the town centre.
- 5.15 **Scenario 2** investigates the potential with a new station at Southend Lane replacing the existing Lower Sydenham station. Key features of this scenario include:
- 5.16 Re-positioning Lower Sydenham station as part of Bakerloo Line Extension and creating a transport interchange where the current railway line meets Southend Lane.
- 5.17 Construction of a station here could provide the opportunity to simultaneously remodel the current road bridge (which is a local bottleneck to buses). It could also support

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rationalisation of the current gyratory layout with improved pedestrian links and air quality.

- 5.18 A new town centre incorporating a relocated supermarket, and a greener, pedestrian-focussed public realm. The focus of the town centre retail and amenities in this scenario would be along what is today the northern arm of the gyratory.
- 5.19 This scenario would also incorporate delivery of additional employment and cultural space around the Livesey Hall, with modern light industrial workspace creating local jobs and providing space for local small businesses.
- 5.20 Whilst still delivering significant regeneration to the area, this scenario would not be able to deliver as many benefits to the site or wider area as would be achievable by creating an additional station. The development would still provide a substantial amount of new homes but the level of job-creation would not at the same level or as wide-ranging.
- 5.21 A **base case scenario** is also modelled which demonstrates the extent of regeneration and delivery of homes and jobs considering the retention of the current National Rail station. Without a new Bakerloo Line station, the potential for transformative change to employment, public realm and housing delivery is much weaker given the constraints on transport capacity, footfall and land values.

6. Forward programme for the Bell Green and Lower Sydenham Vision Study

- 6.1. Following the views of this committee being incorporated into the document, it is envisaged that approval from Mayor and Cabinet will be sought in the coming months prior to commencing wider public consultation.
- 6.2. Due to this visioning study carrying no material planning weight, this consultation is considered non-statutory consultation. However, officers are keen to follow due process and as such, consultation would run for 10 weeks and would seek views on the proposed regeneration objectives and illustrative layouts from local amenity societies and the wider community.
- 6.3. Depending on the result of consultation, it is hoped that the visioning study will allow for a further, more detailed masterplan to be prepared during 2021 and 2022.
- 6.4. Officers will continue to engage with SDSC and local ward councilors throughout this process.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1. This report is asking the Committee to provide comments on its contents and proposed non-statutory consultation. There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 Whilst there is no statutory obligation to carry out consultation in relation to the study, the fact that the Council has chosen to consult means that those consulted may have a legitimate expectation that such consultation is carried out properly and that any responses to the consultation process are taken into account by the Council moving forward.
- 8.2 Any legal implications arising from any of the proposals set out in the study will be addressed at the stage when any of the proposals are being considered for implementation.

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- 8.3 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 8.4 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 8.5. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed at 11.5 above.
- 8.6. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 8.7. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:
- <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>
 - <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>
- 8.8. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:
- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
 - Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
 - Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities
 - Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities
 - Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities
- 8.9. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what

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public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance>

9. Equalities implications

9.1 Lewisham's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES) 2016-20 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

10. Climate change and environmental implications

10.1. Whilst there are a number of benefits to the environmental resulting from some of the principles of the visioning study, there are no direct climate change environmental implications arising from this report.

11. Health and wellbeing implications

11.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report

12. Background papers

Appendix 1 – Draft Lower Sydenham and Bell Green Visioning Document

Appendix 2 – Baseline Analysis to support the Lower Sydenham and Bell Green Visioning Document

13. Report authors and contact

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