

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 April 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Mark Ingleby (Vice-Chair), Abdeslam Amrani, Andre Bourne, Suzannah Clarke, Amanda De Ryk, Sophie McGeevor, Eva Stamirowski and James-J Walsh;

APOLOGIES: Councillor Paul Upex

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Brenda Dacres, Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Katharine Nidd (Commercial and Investment Delivery Manager) (LBL), Gavin Plaskitt (Programme Manager), Emma Talbot (Head of Planning) and Alison Taylor (Project Manager, Capital Programme Delivery)

1. Confirmation of the Chair and Vice-Chair

- 1.1 Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) invited Committee members to confirm the outcome of the AGM on 27 March 2017.
- 1.2 Resolved: that the outcome of the AGM on 27 March be agreed and that Councillor Liam Curran be confirmed as the Chair of the Select Committee and that Councillor Mark Ingleby be confirmed as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2017

- 2.1 Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March be agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declarations of interest

- 3.1 Councillor Walsh declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item four as the founder of the Bakerloo line extension.com.
- 3.2 Councillor De-Ryk declared an interest in relation to item five as a dog owner and a user of Lewisham parks for dog walking.

4. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

- 4.1 Emma Talbot (Head of Planning) introduced the response from Mayor and Cabinet, the following key points were noted:
 - A number of key issues in planning were developing relatively quickly so there was more recent information for members, following the response to Mayor and Cabinet.
 - A review of Lewisham's pubs policy was taking place. This would be informed by the Mayor of London's supplementary planning guidance (SPG) for the night time economy.
 - The new housing white paper introduced further changes for planning.
 - Previously, councils had been told that they were required to have a single plan for their local area.

- At present Lewisham had a 'core strategy' which set out a vision, aims and ambitions for the type of borough Lewisham wanted to be – along with a set of documents which provided an evidence base and more detail for making planning decisions.
- The government had previously said that there would be a requirement for a single plan, which would need to be supported by a robust evidence base for each of its constituent parts.
- The recent white paper set out a more proportionate approach to the requirements of the evidence base for the plan.
- The new approach would allow for the development of a series of plans and the existing core plan would need to be reviewed, rather than redone (as at present) every five years.
- More work was required to explore the relevant issues with elected members about the type of place that Lewisham wanted to be in the future.
- There was a new manager in planning enforcement, who was helping to develop the service.
- The first Section 106 and CIL meeting with a ward assembly (Evelyn) had been held to introduce the idea of a 'project bank' of local ideas, which had been well received.
- The closing date for the most recent consultation on the Bakerloo line would be Friday 23 April. Lewisham had agreed with Transport for London (TfL) that it would submit a 'holding response', pending the provision of information requested by the Council from TfL.
- The Council was supportive of the Bakerloo line extension, including proposals for its continuation to Catford and beyond. However, further information was required about the potential requirements for density and height of any anticipated future developments along the line.

4.2 Emma Talbot (Head of Planning) responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Once additional information had been received from TfL, there would be further engagement with Members about the Council's full response to the consultation.
- A number of officers would need to be involved in the development of the draft response, because it had implications for a number of Council services.
- The London Plan set out a city-wide programme for intensification of development combined with an expectation of increased development density. The challenge was for Lewisham to create plans for new development in a way that was most suitable and beneficial for the borough and to local communities.
- Areas outside of Lewisham would also benefit from the extension of the Bakerloo line so the Council would suggest to the Mayor of London that the benefits beyond Lewisham needed to be taken into account.
- Officers were conscious about potential alternative options for the extension of the Bakerloo line and repeatedly made the case for the extension to Lewisham and beyond.

4.3 In the Committee discussions, the following points were also noted:

- The Council should use stronger language to demand the extension of the Bakerloo line to Catford.

- Officers might want to engage with Members to create a virtual tour of regeneration sites in the borough.
- As part of the negotiation about the Bakerloo line, officers should explore the options for re-zoning Lewisham stations for the benefit of residents.
- The Committee would welcome regular updates on the future of the Bakerloo line extension.

4.4 Resolved: that the response from Mayor and Cabinet be noted. The Committee also agreed to write to the Mayor of London and TfL setting out its support for the extension of the Bakerloo line to Hayes.

5. Beckenham Place Park

5.1 Alison Taylor (Project Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- The redevelopment of Beckenham Place Park was a significant project for the Borough, which would transform South East London's largest open space.
- Previously it had not been well used. Usage surveys over the past few years had shown that there were 220k visits a year on average. This was around a quarter of the usage of other large parks (such as Brockwell Park in Lambeth). The intention of the project is to triple visitor numbers to the park.
- The ambition of the regeneration project was to increase park usage and make it a thriving and well used community asset.
- The communities of Downham and Bellingham were not currently well served by the park. However, this had recently started to change. The ground staff in the park reported the busiest January they had ever seen. The demographics of park users were also diversifying.
- The programme for the redevelopment of the park was set out in five themes (as detailed in the report): community; heritage; outdoor activity; nature; relaxation and play.
- It was intended that the park would become a key asset for the local community.
- There were future plans for developing the historic buildings in the park, some work had already been carried out to bring them back into use and to safeguard their future.
- The redevelopment would enable a range of activities to take place, including a possible new range of activities using the lake. There were also options for linking the park with other nearby sites for outdoor activities.
- Beckenham Place Park was Lewisham's most important site for nature conservation and the regeneration would lead to the development of new habitats.
- There would be new playgrounds for children, a BMX track and recreation facilities for adventure, relaxation and play.
- The creation of the flood alleviation in the scheme would link with the redevelopment of Catford and would protect the local area from the impact of 1 in 100 year alluvial flooding.
- The project was fully funded. The restoration of the park would cost around £8.4m. The money was from four sources: the majority was from the Heritage Lottery Fund's parks for people scheme (£5m); the Environment Agency was contributing £1.58m; the Greater London Authority was putting in £600k; the Council was putting in £1.3m - £200k

of which was insurance money, £200k was from section 106 and £900k was from the capital programme.

- The stable block in the park would be turned into a café and an education centre; the gardeners' cottage would become a volunteer hub; Southend Lodge and gatehouse would be restored to provide a suitable entrance for the new park.
- A new building would be provided in the eastern part of the park to replace toilet and refreshment facilities that needed to be demolished to make way for the flood alleviation scheme.
- The Foxgrove, homestead cottages and the mansion sat outside the scope of the current project. They were recognised as important heritage assets and work was taking place to secure their long-term use.
- The use of the buildings needed to complement the usage of the park and provide a source of income.
- Short to medium term leases would be explored for the buildings that were not included in the scope of the current restoration project.

5.2 Alison Taylor and Gavin Plaskitt (Senior Programme Manager) responded to questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Work had been carried out to explore the long term maintenance costs of the park. The heritage lottery fund required that there be a 10 year management plan as one of the conditions of providing funding.
- It was anticipated that the cost of maintaining the park would be similar to the historic costs. Because, although there would be new features and facilities that would require maintenance, these were comparable to the relative costs of maintaining a golf course.
- The plans also took account of the likely future reduction of Council resources. Options would be explored for rental income from the buildings in the park.
- The intention was to bring forward options for the long term usage of the mansion house after the completion of the current redevelopment project. Officers wanted to develop park audiences (tripling use) and understand how people would use the park before committing a long term use for the mansion house. This followed discussion and advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund trustees, who were supportive of the restoration of the mansion house but cautioned against pursuing a decision about the use of the building too quickly and before the impact of such substantial investment in the park had been realised.
- The mansion house would not be committed to long term usage before there was confidence about the audience for potential uses.
- Limited restoration of key elements had already taken place in the mansion house. There were interim tenants in the building, who ensured that the building was secure and contributing towards the park visitor experience.
- There was no income over the period of the lease of the mansion house but there was a major saving on security costs (approximately £4000 a week).
- There had been new volunteers coming forward to support activities and regeneration activities in the park, including tree planting and sports activities.
- There had been a number of popular events held in the park. The festival of lights was so popular that there were associated issues with parking and transport. Future work would take place to ensure that issues of overcrowding were avoided. The scale of events in the park would have to be built up gradually.

- All councillors would be added to the mailing list for events in the park.
- A contingency was built into the project costs for the development.
- There were options for altering the budget for the redevelopment to reduce costs. Some aspects could be removed from the main budget and bids could be made for grants to fund this work.
- Work was taking place to encourage the usage of the park by the large number of (approximately 90) schools in the vicinity of the park.
- The £900k from the capital programme funding being provided by the Council was from the stock transfer in Grove Park.

5.3 In the Committee discussion, the following key points were also noted:

- The Committee was supportive of the redevelopment and welcomed the increased usage of the park by the community.
- Officers should publicly highlight the external funding that had been made available for the delivery of the project, in the context of savings to Council budgets.
- There should be a pricing differential for Lewisham residents and residents of other boroughs for any events or activities being held in the park.
- Consideration should be given to moving People's day and the fireworks to the park.
- The park needed to be open to all users, including cyclists, joggers and dog walkers.
- Consideration should be given to the provision of recycling and refuse facilities, especially if it was anticipated that there would be large numbers of users.

5.4 Resolved: that the Committee's views be referred to Mayor and Cabinet as follows –

- The Committee welcomes the ambitious plans for the future redevelopment the park and it also welcomes the greater opening up of the park to the local community.
- The Committee requests the financial management plans for the project, including the projections for the annual running costs for the park once the project is complete, be made available for scrutiny.
- The Committee notes the potential for large overruns on major regeneration schemes and recommends that Mayor and Cabinet seek assurance that there is tight financial management of the project.
- The Committee expresses concern over the five year wait regarding plans for the long term future of the mansion house. It would welcome the publication of the advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has informed the development of the current approach.
- The Committee recommends that a management plan for dealing with large crowd events be published and implemented.
- The Committee believes that that management plans for the park should include the requirement to recoup the cost of staging large events from promoters.
- The Committee recommends that any plans for events or activities held in the park, for which there will be charges, are priced so that there is a reduced cost for residents of Lewisham.

6. Asset Management System and asset register update

6.1 Katherine Nidd (SGM Commercial and Investment delivery) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- The majority of the work on the asset register and the classification of the 'grey estate' had been completed.
- The Council was now in a position to publish much of the information it had available.
- The completion of the AMS and the improved clarity on the asset register meant that the work already started to explore future options for the use of the Council's estates and assets was made easier.

6.2 Katharine Nidd responded to questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- The asset management system had been completed. It had been operational since November.
- There was still some work to be done to populate historic data in the system.
- Different users had responsibilities to view, edit and manage items in the register. The data could be made available to Councillors.
- Further work was taking place on the condition of Council owned garages in the borough for housing or commercial usage.

6.3 Resolved: that the report be noted.

7. Select Committee work programme

7.1 The Committee discussed the work programme and put forward the following potential additions for 2017/18:

- Development of Lewisham town centre;
- Leisure centres (currently in the terms of reference of the Healthier Communities Select Committee);
- School travel plans (to be incorporated within the item on air quality); it was agreed that the item on air quality would also include the number of cycle racks across the borough, as well as the number of businesses in Lewisham with green travel strategies;
- Liveable streets (to be incorporated into the item on the implementation of the cycling strategy);
- Asset management update;
- Street trees;
- Planning (currently included in the work programme for December) - it was agreed that it would be extended over more than one meeting separating scrutiny/updates of existing policies and the development of new plans;
- Pubs (to be incorporated into the items on planning);
- The impact of business rate changes on local businesses;
- Council's low emission vehicle strategy (to be incorporated into the item on air quality).

7.2 Members agreed to incorporate new suggestions into the plan and to regularly review the programme to ensure that sufficient capacity was available to carry out effective scrutiny.

7.3 Resolved: that the work programme be agreed.

8. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

Resolved: that the Committee's comments under item five be referred to Mayor and Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm

Chair:

Date:
