

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12 September 2018 at 7.00 pm

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Juliet Campbell, Councillor Sophie McGeevor (Cabinet Member for Parks, Neighbourhoods and Transport (job share)), Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Liz Dart (Head of Culture and Community Development), Kplom Lotsu (SGM Capital Programmes), Tony Piggott (Development Advisor), David Syme (Strategic Planning Manager), Sarah Walsh (Regeneration and Urban Design Planning Manager) and David West (Studio Egret West)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2018

- 1.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2018 be agreed as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 Councillor Ingleby declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item five as a board member of Lewisham Homes.
- 2.2 Councillor Walsh declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item four as a resident of Catford – and – a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item five as a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

- 3.1 There were none.

4. Catford regeneration update: masterplanners

- 4.1 David West (Studio Egret West) gave a presentation (which is attached to the minutes) on the development of the masterplan for Catford. The following key points were noted:
- There was lots for the masterplanners to do (to prepare the masterplan) and lots for them to learn about Catford.
 - The delivery of the plan was being managed in stages. The initial work would focus on listening and understanding.
 - The masterplanners were using the 'Catford Cornucopia' shop on the Broadway to meet with local people.
 - The masterplanners had adopted the title of 'C-Team', which built on the work of Team Catford, and included: Studio Egret West (architects, landscape architects and urban designers); Carl Turner architects (which specialised in temporary installations); Greengage (sustainable environmental consultants); and Civic Engineers (public realm specialists in street design).
 - It was intended that the masterplan would change and evolve over time. But the intent was to regenerate Catford from the outset.

- It was intended that the redesign of the south circular would provide a new street (with features and spaces for interaction) for Catford rather than just a larger road.
- The masterplanners intended to creatively co-author the masterplan with the local community.
- The plan would be authentically ambitious, taking account of the 2500 homes that were likely to be required in the town centre as a result of the new London Plan.
- The targets in the new London Plan would require every new mixed use development in London to host many more new homes and new infrastructure.
- There were currently 244 homes on the Milford Towers site. Initial estimates indicated that 800 new homes might be required on the site, which would probably necessitate some buildings to be built between 10 -20 stories high to meet the London Plan targets.
- It would be challenging to ensure that Catford would be able to host the number of new homes required. Future development would also need to enable the creation and maintenance of quality public realm and a new civic centre.
- Public realm in Catford was not currently green, active and clean enough. The masterplan would aim to create sustainable, welcoming public spaces, as well as homes and employment opportunities.
- The masterplan would be delivery focused. There had been lots of discussion about development in Catford – it was time to ensure that things started happening.
- Catford's character was complex. People had things they loved and hated about the town centre.
- Laurence House was an exemplar building of its kind. It was originally designed to be a temporary office building. The masterplanners questioned whether its location should determine the realignment of the south circular.
- It was expected that Milford Towers would be removed as part of the future redevelopment. However, activity could take place immediately to change the feeling of car park underneath the Towers and its surroundings. One example of local innovation was the Peckham Levels.
- There were a number of strong examples of innovative short/medium term uses for development sites.
- There were also examples of buildings being redesigned, retrofitted and repurposed. The masterplanners were open minded about these options for buildings in Catford. The benefit of this approach was that it could be more cost effective, quicker and more sustainable.
- There might be an option to move the Council offices into a renovated car park in order to release the land occupied by Laurence House and achieve the optimal realignment for the south circular.
- The masterplanners had met with the original architect of Milford Towers, who had no strong feelings about retaining it.
- Catford was car dominated and there were lots of car parks. The movement of the south circular had to be considered as part of the overall development of the town centre – rather than just as a means of pushing the flow of traffic southwards.

- The south circular passed through a number of communities. There were some sections that felt more inviting to pedestrians and cyclists. It was important that future plans for the realignment of the road prioritised pedestrians and cyclists rather than just cars and lorries.
- Catford had excellent green spaces surrounding it. The masterplan would consider how to green the town centre.
- Options would be considered for integrating St Dunstan's – and its sporting facilities better with the town centre.
- There was lots of space in Catford. Which meant it should be able to accommodate a range of new homes, including genuinely affordable homes.
- Some of the discussion about the development of Catford was controversial. It was necessary to be open about the challenges and the language being used to talk about the redevelopment.
- Catford could be better connected. Consideration would be given in the masterplan to the linkages between the two stations and the realigned south circular.
- Plans were being considered for the creative redevelopment of the pedestrian lanes in Catford – in collaboration with local people.
- There were options to trial ideas on a temporary basis in order to change the way that people felt about the town centre.

4.2 David West, Kplom Lotsu (Service Group Manager, Capital Programmes), Sarah Walsh (Regeneration and Urban Design Programme Manager) and Tony Piggott (Development Advisor, Capital Programmes) responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Travel by car had to be considered in terms of whole journey times rather than the speeds that could be achieved on separate sections of road. The intention in Catford would be to create a smooth overall journey through the town centre rather than to for there to be constant stopping and starting of traffic through patches of congestion.
- The speed and volume of traffic around all parts of the south circular was generally the same. However, the feeling of different sections of the road was markedly different. In those sections with shops, restaurants and open spaces felt more pedestrian and cycle friendly. The intention was to avoid Catford being dominated by a widened, busy, traffic heavy section of the south circular.
- The alignment of the south circular was a priority for the masterplanners – because decisions on its future were already being made.
- There were a number of challenges facing the redevelopment. It would be important to balance the requirement for new homes in the London Plan with the expectations of existing residents.
- It was important to sustain the pace and momentum of change. Lots of work had to take place before the delivery of the masterplan in March 2019.
- Catford was recognised for the quality of its connections to central London. However, part of its future offer could be to provide affordable local employment spaces and homes that supported the viability of the town centre.
- The masterplanners were using the information gathered through the Catford Common Place to inform the engagement with the local community.

- Perceptions of places in London changed over time. People were moving to Catford because of affordability. The key in the redevelopment would be to ensure there was a balance between existing and new residents.
- Incremental changes and small scale initiatives could improve the way that people felt about a place.
- There were positive examples of multi-use/multi-function spaces that Lewisham could learn from in order to ensure that its new offices made a positive contribution to the town centre.
- The exact alignment of the south circular was still being defined. The masterplan and the realignment programme for the road had been coordinated to develop together.
- The integration of the Broadway theatre into the cultural offer in the town centre would be key to unlocking its potential.

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

- Members wanted to ensure that there was thorough engagement with local people.
- All options should be considered for improving the layout and design of the south circular.
- The plan for Catford should build on the Council's experience of delivering the redevelopment of Lewisham town centre.
- Members were supportive of increasing the level of greenery and high quality public spaces in the town centre.

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

5. Lewisham Local Plan update

5.1 David Syme (Strategic Planning Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- The Local Plan was a lengthy technical document – but work was taking place to make it more accessible.
- The new plan was important because it would guide development in the borough for the next 15 years.
- The Local Plan had to be reviewed every five years. Significant changes to national (through the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2018) and regional (the draft London Plan) policy needed to be incorporated into Lewisham's new Local Plan. This meant that it was a good time to develop the new Local plan.
- The timetable for the development of the new plan had been agreed by Mayor and Cabinet in January. A draft version of the plan (for regulation 18 consultation) would be prepared for consultation in winter 2018/early 2019.
- The government was questioning some of the policies in the draft London Plan, which added some risk and potential complications to the timetable for the development and consultation on the new Lewisham Local Plan.
- Lewisham's Local Plan had to be in broad conformity with the London Plan and the NPPF. Lewisham would not want to develop policies in response to the draft London Plan that might be significantly changed at a later date.

- One of the key challenges was the number of homes that were being proposed in the draft London Plan for Lewisham. It was anticipated that 2110 (2117) homes¹ would be required each year in the borough. However, the government's assessment based on locally assessed housing need estimated that 3100 (3181) homes would be required each year (this figure may be subject to review).
- The current housing target was 1350 (1380) homes per year and in recent years Lewisham had delivered approximately 1500 homes each year.
- The new National Planning Policy Framework introduced a housing delivery test, which would assess each local authority's performance in the delivery of new homes.
- If Lewisham did not meet its targets it would be required to develop an action plan. If delivery fell below a specified threshold then there would be a presumption in favour of development, which would reduce the ability of the Council to oversee new development proposals.
- Work was progressing with delivery of the new plan, despite the ongoing uncertainties.
- All new planning applications would need to be in line with the new plan.
- A number of studies underpinned the new plan, including: the strategic housing market assessment, a retail capacity study, employment land study, open space study, strategic flood risk assessment, and a new Lewisham character study (which would help to identify key issues within Lewisham's different neighbourhoods).
- Work had been taking place with community groups and neighbourhood forums to develop the character study.
- Officers were also reviewing site capacity and site allocations studies. Feedback would be sought from the Committee – and from all councillors regarding the content of these.
- Development management policies were also being reviewed and updated. Reviews were being carried out on the effectiveness of existing policies and proposals were being made for potential improvements in the new Local Plan.
- The Council was learning from examples of best practice at other councils – including Lambeth, Croydon and Tower Hamlets.
- The structure of local plans was relatively standard. Most included a section which provided an outline of the current situation, the following section included a vision for the future (drawn from the corporate strategy) - the third section included detailed policies (on issues such as housing, employment, the environment and town centres), which would guide future development management decisions. The final section of the plan included a programme for delivery.
- A number of new local plans had character studies, which defined local places. This enabled the targeting of policy toward local areas. It enabled a better understanding of the connections between different areas in the borough and enabled assessment of the infrastructure required to support development.

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

¹ Precise figures are included in brackets.

- There was evidence from engagement across the country that residents were not actively engaged in the development of their local plans. It was a challenge to ensure that people realised how important local plans were for their area and that the decisions in the plan would shape their area over many years.
- Local plans were not written in accessible language – this was due in part to the fact that there was a requirement to ensure that plans were legally robust and enforceable, in accordance with planning law.
- Consideration was being given to the possibility of using an accessible version of the character study to engage with communities about their aspirations for their areas.
- Resources in the Planning Department were limited, however, work was ongoing to consider how to work with local communities to develop the proposals for the new Local Plan. Officers in Planning had also been discussing future plans for engagement with the Council's communications team.
- Lewisham's retail study had recently been updated – but the retail environment was changing rapidly – officers were considering how best to include policies in the plan that could be adapted to change.
- Consideration was being given to how the Lewisham town centre local plan would be integrated with the new borough wide plan.
- Planning policy followed a lengthy legal process of development, consultation and approval. As soon as the current plan was finished, work would start on the next version of the plan.
- There was some delay between changes in real world circumstances and in the development and implementation of new policy.
- Lewisham was currently working with utility, transport and healthcare providers to review existing requirements for infrastructure and to develop projections for future growth. This work provided the substance for Lewisham's infrastructure delivery plan – which would also include consideration of the funding required to deliver that infrastructure.
- Options could be included in the Local Plan for the varying levels of potentially development that would be achievable with and without new infrastructure (such as the Bakerloo line extension).
- Officers were considering how best to encourage developers to provide a range of facilities in mixed use developments alongside housing and retail.
- The new Mayor was receiving regular updates on the development of the new Local Plan.
- Planning officers were working with officers in Community and Cultural Development to determine the requirement for community space in the borough and build in the requirements of the community space strategy.
- The open space study was being updated as part of the evidence base for the new plan. Work was also taking place with officers in the Environment Division to develop an open space strategy.
- The new strategy would prioritise the open spaces in the borough that required funding and maintenance.
- Management and maintenance agreements for open spaces could be included as an obligation for new developments in the new Local Plan.
- The details of each management and maintenance agreement had to be determined on a case by case basis.

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

- When homes had been approved - but not delivered by the developer - under-delivery of housing targets would still be the responsibility of the Council. Moreover, the government had not proposed to grant councils new powers to compel developers to deliver homes that had been approved but not built.
- Ward councillors would be in a good position to provide local knowledge about sites for development.
- There was concern about the availability of infrastructure (including water and energy supplies) for new homes.
- Officers should ensure that the new plan was developed in coordination with the priorities of the new Council administration.
- The Council should engage with the Royal Town Planning Institute to support local assemblies and other community groups about the planning process.
- Consideration should be given in the new plan to broadening the scope of maintenance and management agreements (to include, for example street sweeping and maintenance).
- The new plan should support the Council's ambitions for improving public health, reducing obesity and supporting good mental health.
- New developments should include capacity for renewable energy generation.
- There were third sector organisations that could support communities to improve and maintain green spaces. The design of new developments should encourage maintenance by the community.

5.4 The Committee **resolved** to advise Mayor and Cabinet of the following:

- The Committee recommends that Mayor and Cabinet ensures that all options be explored for the consultation on the new Local Plan. The Committee acknowledges that the plan has to be technically sound and legally robust. However, it asks that options be considered for the production of a simplified version of the plan for consultation with as broad a group of residents and stakeholders as possible. The Committee recognises that the Planning Department may need support from other Council teams to achieve this aim.
- The Committee recommends that options be considered for the engagement of all councillors in the production of the new plan, the Committee believes that specific focus should be placed on the role of ward councillors in engaging local groups and in identifying local opportunities and challenges.
- The Committee recommends that the new plan be used to promote the inclusion of renewable energy production in new developments.
- The Committee believes that further consideration should be given to how best areas of public realm (that are delivered as part of new developments) can be maintained in the long term.
- The Committee recommends that options should be considered for the retention and expansion of community spaces. It believes that this might best be achieved through the protection and development of the spaces

categorised in the D1 planning class. The Committee would welcome the development of a new community space strategy.

6. Select Committee work programme

6.1 The Committee discussed the work programme.

6.2 **Resolved:** that further updates on the Local Plan and the Catford town centre regeneration be considered at the meeting on 29 October as well as reports on the local implementation plan & transport strategy as well as the savings programme. It was agreed that the update on pubs would move to the Committee's meeting on 12 December.

7. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

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

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair:

Date:
