

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 July 2019 at 7.00 pm

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye and Pauline Morrison (who was unable to access the meeting room)

ALSO PRESENT: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Vince Buchanan (SGM Green Scene), Deborah Efemini (Capital Project Manager), Viv Evans (Head of Programmes), Tony Piggott (Development Advisor), Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services), Nigel Tyrell (Director of Environment) and Sarah Walsh (Regeneration and Urban Design Planning Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2019

- 1.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June be agreed as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 Councillor Ingleby declared non-prejudicial interests in relation to items four and five as Chair of the Friends of Grove Park Nature Reserve and as a Council appointed director for Lewisham Homes.
- 2.2 Councillor Curran declared non-prejudicial interests in relation to item three as a member of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and the Save Lewisham Pubs campaign.

3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

- 3.1 The Committee discussed the responses from Mayor and Cabinet – the following key points were noted:
 - On the response about fire safety – Members were concerned about newly identified cladding materials that were a potential risk in tall buildings. It sought further assurances that evidence was being reviewed and new materials were being taken into consideration.
 - On the response to the Committee's 'preserving Lewisham's pubs review' – Members felt that the response was insufficiently detailed and the Committee was uncertain what decisions had been made nor what action had been taken as a result of their referral.
 - The Committee would welcome a stronger planning policy for the protection of pubs – and would be working with officers to ensure that this was reflected in the new local plan.
- 3.2 Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services) assured the Committee that appropriate action was being taken to consider the risks of materials that had been newly identified for their potential fire risk. The Council was not aware that there were any current implications for Council

owned buildings – and it kept a ‘watchful eye’ on properties owned by private landlords.

3.3 **Resolved:** that the Committee would refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet, as follows:

- The Committee is concerned about the increasing list of new materials which are being identified as a potential risk for fire safety - specifically (Cllr Curran to add). The Committee asks for confirmation that due care and consideration is being given to the potential presence of these materials in Lewisham’s housing stock.
- The Committee believes that Lewisham’s pubs are at risk. It has identified an opportunity to increase protection for local pubs through the development of the new local plan. Contrary to the strength of feeling in the Committee about this issue, councillors are not reassured that their comments on preserving Lewisham’s pubs have been given full and thorough consideration. The Committee asks that Mayor and Cabinet direct officers to provide a detailed response to the Committee’s recommendations on preserving Lewisham’s pubs. This should define the actions that have been taken. Furthermore, it reiterates its view that the protection of Lewisham’s pubs should be championed through planning policy and fully incorporated into the new local plan.

4. **Parks management review: the future of the parks service update**

4.1 Vince Buchanan (SGM, Green Scene) provided a verbal update on the proposals for the future of the parks service. The following key points were noted:

- The current green space contract would end in February 2020.
- Officers were working on an options appraisal for the future delivery of the service.
- The three main options being considered were: to insource the service (in line with the Council’s corporate strategy); return to the market to put the contract out for competition; create an arms-length local authority trading company (LATCo) to deliver the service on the Council’s behalf.
- The options report would return to the Committee in September before a decision by Mayor and Cabinet.

4.2 Vince Buchanan responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- The ‘LATCo’ option was different from insourcing. Each option would require a different governance structures and management arrangements.
- Given the Council’s restrained financial position – the expenditure on the new service would be a key consideration. Officers in finance were supporting the financial modelling for each of the options.
- For the options appraisal – officers were using a model developed by the Association for Public Service Excellence – which set out these key assessment criteria: risk; advantages and opportunities; value for money; commercial opportunities for the Council; viability of each option to deliver a quality service; responsiveness of management and assuredness of service delivery; social value (in line with the Council’s newly agreed policy).
- Biodiversity was not included in the formal options appraisal model – but consideration was being given to environmental issues through the Council’s wider work in this area. Further consideration would also be

given to the issues of sustainability and environmental protection as part of the detailed work to deliver the chosen option.

- Glendale (the current parks management service provider) had committed to ensuring that they provided a quality service until the end of the contract – despite whichever future option was chosen.
- Seasonal demand meant that operatives and managers were currently focused on maintenance and planting – as opposed to delivery of new projects.
- Officers would work with colleagues in procurement to examine the options for an organisation from the voluntary and community sector provider to deliver the service. The Council had to ensure that any provider had the capacity to deliver a contract of significant size.
- Glendale was contractually obliged to provide equipment for eighteen months beyond the end of the contract in order to enable the Council to maintain the borough's parks. However, there was some potential ambiguity about the detail of this obligation. If necessary – advice would be sought from the Council's legal department.
- The Council would expect that staff covered by transfer of undertakings and protection of employment (TUPE) regulations would transfer to any new model of service provision.
- There was a small number of staff that had transferred out of Council employment 20 years ago when the service was put out to contract – these staff would be expected to return under a 'secondary transfer'..
- A playing pitch strategy had been developed by officers in the Sports Development team. Officers in the parks team would consider the strategy to assess how best the service could support its implementation.
- The amount of meadow in the borough's parks had been increased over a number of years to support biodiversity. Any decision to increase the amount of meadow area in a park took into consideration all of the space in that park - and its usage - to ensure that there was a good balance.
- Several thousand square metres of meadow had been added to Blackheath in order support biodiversity.
- The Council had a good relationship with friends groups and support for activities to maintain a park (such as litter picking) were welcomed. Engagement with local people helped increase the sense of ownership of parks. However, responsibility for maintaining parks remained with the Council.
- The existing contract with Glendale meant that the provider received all of the income from hosting events (there was an exception for the OnBlackheath festival). Beckenham Place Park was currently run directly by the Council so all money from events in the park returned to the Council.
- Consideration would be given to the options for raising income from events in parks in any future model for service delivery.
- People who were delivering commercial exercise classes in parks were required to apply for a permit (at a cost).

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

- There was a difference of opinion in the Committee about the right quantity of meadow in Lewisham's parks.
- Members welcomed the support of 'friends of parks' groups in maintaining parks – but maintenance of parks should remain the responsibility of the Council – and be provided by paid professionals.
- Members noted the increase in spaces available for different sports (including bowling, tennis and cricket) in parks.

- Any future option for the parks service should give consideration to all users of parks – including parents requiring baby changing facilities and spaces for breastfeeding.
- Members raised concerns about the risk to the Council of running events.
- The Committee highlighted the success of Lewisham’s parks in the Good Parks for London report and questioned whether the budget for the parks service could be ring-fenced to protect high quality service delivery.

4.4 **Resolved:** the Committee recommended that in the options appraisal for the future of the parks service – officers should take the following issues into consideration –

- The future management and viability of spaces for sport in parks;
- Options for the ring fencing of the parks budget;
- Safeguarding the employment of professionals with support from volunteers – rather than allowing volunteers to replace paid employees;
- Biodiversity, climate change mitigation and environmental protection;
- Management of rough sleepers;
- The availability of officer resources to deliver the urban national park project;
- The maintenance of specialist assets (such as built features as well as ceremonial and memorial gardens) in parks.

5. Catford regeneration programme update

5.1 Tony Piggott (Development Advisor), Sara Walsh (Regeneration and Urban Design Programme Manager), Viv Evans (Head of Programmes) and Kevin Sheehan responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- The realignment of the south circular would definitely be going ahead.
- Transport for London (TfL) had general resourcing issues – these were not specific to the road realignment project for Catford.
- The Council was working well with TfL – although there had been a delay in modelling work.
- The same team at TfL that was working on the realignment of the A205 would work with the team developing the feasibility work for the A21 corridor so learning could be shared.
- All options for transport were looked at holistically to manage ‘rat running’ and to encourage greening and ‘livability’ of streets.
- Officers still intended that a report would be presented to Mayor and Cabinet in October for decision on the next stage of the masterplan.
- Officers were conscious of the need to minimise disruption for local people during the delivery of the masterplan. It was hoped that TfL would implement the road realignment work as soon as possible.
- There was no proposal to close the pub on the site of the Catford Constitutional Club.
- Everything in the pub that was currently open to the public would remain as part of the pub.
- All of the parts of the pub that could be retained would be retained. The architect working on proposals for the building had expertise in preservation of old buildings.
- No decisions about the Catford Constitutional Club were being made outside of the Council’s usual governance or planning processes.

- Any issues related to the operation of the pub and potential new housing on the site of the Catford Constitutional Club would be dealt with through the planning process.
- All options would be explored to ensure that the development of Catford was as sustainable and as carbon neutral as possible.
- The masterplan provided a platform for future consideration of the operation of the theatre.
- A third director would be appointed to the Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited (CRPL) – this was currently scheduled for a decision by Mayor and Cabinet in September.
- All decisions taken by CRPL were in line with the Council’s decision making processes. Any key decisions about development in Catford would be made by Mayor and Cabinet.
- The overall masterplan for the town centre would provide a framework for development in the Catford that would have weight (as a supplementary planning document) in planning legislation.
- A key difference between the Catford masterplan and other plans – was that the Council had significant land owning interests in the town centre and it had to ensure that the plans were deliverable.

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

- Work should take place with the Lewisham cyclists to ensure their views on Catford were incorporated into the masterplan.
- The Committee re-emphasised the importance of retaining the ancillary elements of the pub in the Catford Constitutional Club to ensure that the business remained viable.
- The Committee highlighted the Council’s declaration of a climate emergency and urged that all plans for development should take account of this.
- Members expressed concerns about the future of the Broadway theatre.
- Questions from a member of the public present at the meeting would be submitted to officers for a written response.

5.3 **Resolved:** that the Committee would share its views with Mayor and Cabinet as follows:

- The Committee believes that the sustainability of the town centre redevelopment should be a key consideration. It recommends that this should take account of both - the methods used for the construction of new buildings and infrastructure - as well as the long-term sustainability and energy efficiency of the whole centre. Accordingly, it recommends that ‘sustainability’ should become one of the key place shaping principles for the town centre and it would welcome detailed information about how issues of sustainability will be considered in future reports.
- The Committee also believes that further work should take place to secure the future viability of the Broadway theatre.
- The Committee recommends that further consideration should be given to the scope and scale of the development both with and without the extension of the Bakerloo line to the town centre.

6. Select Committee work programme

6.1 The Committee discussed the work programme for its meeting in September and agreed that these items would be included on the agenda for the next meeting:

- Cuts proposals

- Future of the parks service
- Economy and partnerships
- Catford regeneration

6.2 It was agreed that these items would also be included for information:

- The implementation of the air quality action plan
- Parking policy update

7. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

7.1 **Resolved:** that the Committee's views under items three and five be referred to Mayor and Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chair:

Date:
