

**LADYWELL LOCAL ASSEMBLY
MEETING**
Thursday 20 January 2022 7pm – 9pm
Meeting held online via Teams

Present: Councillor Bill Brown, Liz Johnston Franklin, Carl Handley

Also Present: Sakthi Suriyaprakasam, Adeyinka Joseph

Apologies: No apologies received

Record of Meeting

	Items	Actions
1	Welcome, Introduction & Format of meeting	
	Cllr Liz Johnston-Franklin welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the agenda.	
2	Mayor of Lewisham presentation	
	<p>A presentation was given by the Mayor of Lewisham, Damien Egan who expressed his thanks to all the residents who volunteered during the peak of the Covid 19 pandemic to support their neighbours and family members. In his presentation, the Mayor sets out his priorities for the coming years, highlighted some of the challenges faced by the council in its delivery of services to support the most vulnerable in the community, puts into context what is happening in local government generally and cited some examples of how the council has made a difference across all locality.</p> <p>An explanation on the state of the budgets over the past ten years and the difficult decisions that councillors has to make to balance the books was given. In real term, Lewisham budget has dropped from 2010 till date from £400m to £240m. The Mayor outlined his priorities for the future as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment – clean-up of the borough • Improving jobs prospects, digital skills and infrastructure • Protecting local shops and restaurants • Ensuring continued improvements in children’s social care • Housing and heritage (keeping building within the local character) <p>An announcement was made on the launch of Lewisham Borough of Culture event. An event to kick-start the yearlong celebration will take place on Friday 28th January.</p> <p>Further announcement was made about the restoration of the Ladywell Playtower. The Council has agreed the plans for the restoration of the building. The restoration has some set back when</p>	

Curzon Cinemas pulled out of the scheme during the Covid pandemic. Developers has managed to secure a new partner on board, one of the forerunner of Picture House.

An open conversation followed the presentation to hear people's thoughts on what they think is important to them and where they think the council needs to focus on. Some of the comments and questions raised following the presentation are listed below:

A question and answer session followed the presentation to hear people's thoughts on what they think is important to them and where they think the council needs to focus on. Some of the questions raised from the floor were as follows:

Q1. What powers does the Council have over empty properties in streets, above shops and businesses and how can they be mobilised for housing?

Response: The explanation provided that Mayor and Cabinet have announced changes to the premium paid on empty homes. An empty homes has been brought back to use in Hither Green was cited. Residents are encouraged to continue to report empty homes to the Council.

Q2. What's been done to ensure that girls and women and older people have access to digital training? There is a massive digital exclusion for older people which the pandemic has highlighted.

Response: A response that digital training remains a priority for the Mayor to improve digital infrastructure. The Council has begun some work around this priority by giving grants to organisation like Catbytes to support their digital engagement work with older residents.

Also comfortable clean spaces have been created in local libraries where people can get online and work. Facilities at Place Ladywell which offers digital access and touch down spaces for businesses.

Q3. A question was asked about the provision for changing places disabled toilet in the borough. Comment that there is only provision in the borough located in Deptford. Disappointed that the Catford Mews Cinema didn't have one put in when it was opened. Asked if the new Cinema in Ladywell could have one?

Response: The borough has engaged around 50 business across the borough who have signed up to the Community Toilet Scheme to open their toilets to the public. Need to find out how many has disabled access. An action for the Assembly to take forward.

Q4. A comment that Mayor said very little about the role of Council tax in his presentation and whether there is going to be any rises in the coming year. The question was asked on whether the Mayor has the power to effect a voluntary levy on those who can afford to pay the levy increase without putting a burden on those who can't?

	<p>Response: Mayor responding said the budget has not been decided yet. What most Councils are doing is applying an increase of 1.99% plus another 1% on the social care levy, a total increase of 3%. Anything beyond this will trigger a referendum. On the issue of voluntary increase, Mayor said he will be happy to put a call out and will have further thought on this suggestion. During the pandemic people were encouraged to make voluntary donations to local charity. The scheme attracted a total of £300,000.</p> <p>Q5. Question about climate emergency. How will the Mayor over the next 4 years ensure that carbon neutrality and other associated issues is embedded in the priorities for the borough?</p> <p>Response: Mayor in his response mentioned a Climate Action Group by the Council with a focus on Climate Action. An aspect of improvement made around carbon reduction and tying this with working with people from poorer background, vulnerable and older people to better insulate their homes was mentioned. Initiatives such as One Life and Biodiversity across rivers was cited as another way of raising awareness around climate action, teaching children and young people to learn, love and have an affinity to natural environment around them.</p> <p>Q7. Question about issues with a small developers in the neighbourhood,</p> <p>Response: Mayor cited the Lewisham Local Plan still in development stage, as an example of planning document which could look into planning enforcement powers. As the point around enforcement and planning has been raised on a number of occasions, this will be looked into to see what can be done quicker with the limited powers the council currently has</p>	
3	Update on the Redevelopment of Ladywell Playtower	
	<p>A short update on the redevelopment of the Ladywell Playtower was provided by officer from Lewisham Council with reasons provided for the delays in progressing with the restoration due to Covid and the cinema operator who had originally partnered with the developer, Gilmore pulling out of the scheme. The scheme is now back on track, a new cinema operator has been secured and the lease exchange of the building between the Council and the developer is being processed.</p> <p>Representatives from Guildmore and cinema operator presented a brief overview of the restoration design plan. The restoration of this iconic building will include new homes, four screen cinema, with a restaurant and bar. Aiming to submit a planning application for the scheme as soon as possible with decision expected in Spring or early Summer 2022. The scheme is expected for completion within 2 years.</p> <p>A session of question and answer followed this presentation.</p>	

4	<p>Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL)</p> <p>A presentation was given on the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy by Sakthi Suriyaprakasam (Community Development Service Manager) and Adeyinka Joseph (Community Development Officer) who provided detailed explanation on the context of the NCIL funding, application and assessment process and a summary of projects that have been recommended for NCIL funding and those that have not been recommended for funding. A list of recommended and non-recommended projects presented to the meeting were as follows:</p> <p>Projects recommended for Ladywell NCIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art In The Park - £2,000 • Thriving Ladywell: A Street Tree planting scheme for Embleton Road & Ellerdale Street - £5,000 • Enhancing visitors' experience in the Cemeteries - £500 • Better Streets - Hilly Fields - £10,000 • Hilly Fields Community Exercise Project - £17,514 • Ladywell Women's Safety Project (LWSP) - £5,000 • The Ladywell World Folk Music Festival - £8,000 • From Age 1 to 18 - Building Resilience and Support for our children and young people towards a Brighter Future - £4,000 • The Curve Community Garden - £3,500 • Ladywell Assembly Organising Group - £2,409 • Greenbanks Community Project - £5,000 <p>Non-Recommended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QVT Talking Therapies • Holiday club for Ladywell • Gordonbrock Residents Energy Project <p>Following the presentation the chair invited comments and view from people in attendance to establish whether they agree with the recommendations or not. The following comments and views were recorded on the NCIL bids during the questions and answers session:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A comment that although all the recommended bids looks excellent, none seems to be covering infrastructure. More youth club facility identified as a need in the ward. A Further comment was made that the music festival, though fantastic and well deserving of the fund recommended, may not be classed as infrastructure by many. The council needs to be clearer in its guidance in the next round about projects classed as revenue vs those that are infrastructure and provide clear examples of each. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers responded that infrastructure can happen in two ways i.e. bricks and mortar projects but also projects about community cohesion promoting togetherness. It was on the above basis that people have applied for funding for the two different kinds of 	
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	<p>projects strands. It was agreed that this could have been made more explicit in the guidance and have been noted for next round.</p> <p>2. A question was asked on whether there will be NCIL funding rounds for ward projects every year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers clarified that the Council collects receipt from development on an ongoing basis. It is possible that NCIL rounds will be rolled out every 2 years to give projects from this round time to deliver on their proposal. Decisions on timescales and process for the next NCIL round is yet to be made. <p>3. A comment was made about the process from a member of the Assembly coordinating group who had assumed that the Coordinating Group members would have some involvement in the assessment process but this never happened. The coordinating group member felt that he did not have enough information to comment on or agree or disagree with the recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers provided the explanation that delays caused by Covid 19 and the urgency to get the funding out before the election period begins was a factor. Given the impact of Covid on communities, there was an urgency to allocate the fund sooner rather than later and there was no time to conduct the kind of engagement process that we would have liked to have in place. <p>4. A comment was raised in the chat – about the surprising lack of projects about the Ladywell arena, given the issue about engaging people in healthy lifestyles. The resident felt that there should be a way to engage in increasing physical activities for local residents and hard to reach individuals</p> <p>5. A question was raised about what the thermoplastic crossings are and whether they do improve safety. The resident expressed worry that they might give pedestrians a false sense of security if drivers don't need to slow down at the approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers clarified that Council expert panels were consulted on bids fitting their area of expertise. The council's Highway panel were consulted on the thermoplastic bid and they were broadly in support of the project and felt it was a feasible project to carry forward. <p>6. A question was asked about the type of monitoring that will be undertaken to ensure projects has achieved the intended output and outcomes</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers responded that a discussion will be had with each delivery organisation to agree a set of outcomes and the milestone for their intended projects especially where projects have not been fully funded once the final approval has been agreed by Mayor and Cabinet. There would be a monitoring template that will be used by officers on a quarterly basis to get feedback from the grant funded organisations. <p>All 70 participants in attendance broadly supported the recommendations</p> <p>Responses provided to some of the queries on the bids presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of Projects – Officers responded that a discussion will be had with each delivery organisation to agree a set of outcomes and the milestone for their intended projects especially where projects have not been fully funded once the final approval has been agreed by Mayor and Cabinet. There would be a monitoring template that will be used by officers on a quarterly basis to get feedback from the grant funded organisations. 	
7	Community updates and any other business	
	There were no items to update the meeting	
8	Declaration of interest	
	<p>There were no interest declared at this meeting.</p> <p>The chair thanked everyone in attendance and brought the meeting to a close.</p>	