

Minutes of the Sustainable Development Select Committee

Monday, 24 April 2023 at 7.00 pm

In attendance: Councillors James Royston, Edison Huynh, Tauseef Anwar, Liam Curran, Sian Eiles and John Paschoud

Apologies: Councillor Eva Stamirowski

Also present: Councillor Mark Ingleby, Councillor Louise Krupski (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate), Seamus Adams (Head of Commercial Operations and Development), Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) and Paul Boulton (Interim Director of Public Realm)

Also present virtually: Councillor Luke Warner, Vince Buchanan (Head of Parks, Sport and Leisure), Neville Graham (Sport and Leisure Service Manager) and Michelle Hope (Traffic and Safety Manager)

NB: Those councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken or to satisfy the requirements of s85 local government act 1972

1. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair

1.1 Members were invited to agree the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

1.2 **Resolved:** that Councillor James Royston should be Chair and that Council Edison Huynh should be Vice-Chair of the Select Committee.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023

2.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 be agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declarations of interest

3.1 Councillor Mark Ingleby declared an interest as the Chair of the Friends of Grove Park Nature Reserve.

3.2 Councillor James Royston declared an interest in relation to item six as a member of Kent Athletics Club, which had an interest in Ladywell Arena.

4. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

4.1 Members considered the response from Mayor and Cabinet – noting the future development of a housing retrofit strategy and emphasising the need for quantification of the carbon savings likely to be achieved by the actions in the action plan.

4.2 **Resolved:** that the response from Mayor and Cabinet be noted.

5. Implementation of the transport strategy: walking, cycling and healthy neighbourhoods

5.1 Paul Boulton (Interim Director of Public Realm) and Seamus Adams (Head of Commercial Operations and Development) introduced a short presentation (attached to the minutes) which outlined the key objectives of the transport strategy as well as the constraints of the current financial situation and priorities for implementation.

5.2 A representative of Lewisham Cyclist was invited to address the Committee – it was noted that:

- Lewisham Cyclists were the local borough group for the Lewisham Cycling campaign.
- It was important to note that the Council had committed itself to a number of actions to improve active travel. The benefits of cycling and active travel were broadly acknowledged and supported.
- Lewisham Cyclists welcomed the Council's approach to consultation, but they believed that the delivery of the Council's plans was lacking. There had been little progress on building new cycle infrastructure over the past seven years.
- Cyclists welcomed the plans from TfL – but there was little funding (especially in comparison to other boroughs) for cycle lane development in the local implementation plan.
- Lewisham had the lowest percentage of protected cycle ways of any inner London borough, and it scored the lowest on the healthy streets score card.
- Lewisham Cyclists welcomed the sustainable transport and parking consultation and looked forward to delivery of the Council's ambitions.
- Officers should include a Deptford to Lewisham link in future plans (along Brookmill Road). The Council should be ambitious for all of the sections of the Deptford to Downham route it was responsible for.
- The school streets were a good initiative – but they represented islands of safe streets that were not connected.
- The Council should make best use of all available revenue streams to implement improved cycling infrastructure.

5.3 Paul Boulton and Seamus Adams responded to questions from the Committee – the following key points were noted:

- It was unlikely that funding from Transport for London (TfL) would ever return to pre-pandemic levels.
- Officers were seeking to be innovative in identifying funding for active travel.
- A key way to access more funding was to ensure that the projects that were delivered were delivered well.
- Work was taking place to make the best use of data to focus resources and to demonstrate the benefits of improvements to residents.
- A report updating the Council's electric vehicle strategy was currently being considered – and a timetable for implementation was forthcoming.
- Work was taking place with e-bike companies to deliver hire schemes and the first would be implemented before the summer. This would be accompanied by a programme of communication.
- Officers had learnt a lot from recent consultations – and would continue to learn lessons for future schemes.

- Consideration was being given to resourcing for cycling and active travel – including the potential appointment of a dedicated cycling officer and a refresh of content on the Council’s website.
- Work was taking place with Lewisham Homes to ensure that new cycle storage (and EV charging points) would be available on estates (work was also due to take place with other social housing providers).
- Officers were planning schemes that would be delivered in phases – as and when funding became available.
- It was recognised that improvements were needed in terms of communicating with people on the waiting list for cycle storage. This could be considered as part of future updates of the website.
- The spending of the funding from the climate bond would be agreed when more was known about the level of funding.
- The report of the outcome on the first phase of the sustainable parking and transport consultation was due at Mayor and Cabinet in July – this would inform the next stages of the programme and the future priorities for engaging with residents.
- The school streets programme had been very ambitious – work was now taking place on developing safer routes to schools to build on the successes of the programme.
- It was challenging to meet the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) targets for cycling (and to encourage people to cycle as a first choice for journeys) but there were many better active travel options than driving – especially for short journeys.
- There was lots of latent demand for walking and cycling – consideration was being given to making active travel safer.
- The Department for Transport was giving consideration to the use of electric scooters – the lessons from this would be considered in Lewisham.

5.4 Councillor Louise Krupski was invited to address the Committee – the following key points were noted:

- The relocation of the A205 would have a major impact on new cycling infrastructure and improvements on the A21.
- Work was taking place with the Greater London Authority to access support and funding from TfL.
- The stability of funding from TfL was contingent on its finances – which were highly dependent on customer numbers – numbers were still low following the pandemic.
- It was agreed that school streets were effectively islands of safety – but the programme had been a real success, which the Council could build on.
- The north of the borough had benefitted from new infrastructure – this was because there was more section 106 funding from planning obligations due to developments in the north of the borough.
- The early data from e-scooter trials indicated that they were quite safe. London Councils were producing a regulatory package for scooter and bike rental in London.

5.5 In the Committee’s discussion, the following key points were also noted:

- It was important that (anonymised) data collected by the Council was used effectively to make quality decisions in as transparent a way as possible.

- The update on active travel was welcomed but there was concern that the Council's initiatives relating to active travel were not coordinated and not enough information was made available to residents.

5.6 Resolved:

- That consideration would be given in future work programme discussions about how best to scrutinise the Council's work on active travel.
- Further information would be provided regarding the targets for reducing car journeys as well as the baseline figures used to develop the LIP targets for cycling.
- Consideration should be given to improving the information about active travel on the Council's website (including the level of data available regarding active travel).
- There should be better communication with those on the cycle waiting list for cycle hangars.
- That additional information should be provided regarding the funding available and the prioritisation of funding from the issue of the climate bond.
- Members reemphasised the importance of including Brookmill Road and Southend Lane in the Deptford to Downham cycle route linking the north and south of the borough.

6. Parks and Open Spaces update

6.1 Vince Buchanan (Head of Sports, Parks and Leisure) and Neville Graham (Sports and Leisure Service Manager) introduced the report. Vince highlighted the work carried out by the parks service to develop the Parks and Open Spaces strategy (in consultation with the Committee). He also highlighted the progress on delivering the strategy – and the key points from the annual monitoring report. Neville outlined the process for developing the playing pitch strategy in 2019 and provided an update on current work taking place in the sports and leisure service.

6.2 Vince Buchanan and Neville Graham (Sport and Leisure Services Manager) responded to questions from the Committee – the following key points were noted:

- The football foundation's interest in Whitefoot playing fields was welcome. Consideration would also be given to options for improving the changing rooms and other facilities on site.
- Feasibility work had been taking place regarding the development of the Grove Park urban national park – further consideration could be given to incorporating this work into the annual monitoring report.
- Consideration would be given to including information in the monitoring report about the amount of external funding and grants that had been successfully secured each year.
- Further information would be provided regarding the provision of charging points for concessions in parks.
- There was no strategy for changing rooms – but further consideration would be given to improving provision.

- There were benefits to artificial playing surfaces – but it was important that there was a balance between the provision of pitches of artificial grass (that could be played all year round) and the retention of natural grass pitches.
- It should be noted that grass pitches also had an environmental impact in terms of the maintenance, levelling and weed control they required.
- Careful consideration was given to the provision of events in parks – apart from the Council’s own ‘People’s Day’ no park was ever completely closed to the general public.
- The current contractor (Glendale) received the income from events in parks – so it was in their interest to attract quality events. This also had the benefit of subsidising the cost of the contract. Glendale had responsibility for making good any damage to parks in the unlikely case that there were problems.
- Work was taking place to bring the playing pitches at the Bridge Leisure centre back into use.
- Provision of facilities for cricket was one of the Council’s key priorities.
- The Council had adopted an integrated weed management plan. Further information about the use of glyphosate weed killer would be provided to the Committee.
- The opening hours of some facilities had been changed post-pandemic. These were constantly under review – as was the provision of access of facilities to the public.

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

- Members welcomed the level of additional funding and grants the parks service had been able to bring into the borough.
- Consideration should be given to increasing the numbers of playing pitches and changing spaces in the borough.

6.4 **Resolved:**

- That further information should be provided about the Council’s use of glyphosate weed killer.
- That the Glendale event form would be shared with members.
- That an update should be provided on the provision of charging points for concessions (i.e. ice-cream vans) in parks.

7. **Select Committee work programme**

7.1 The Committee discussed the work programme – and agreed:

- Further consideration should be given to scrutiny of levelling up funding for Lewisham Town centre.

The meeting ended at: 21:40

Chair:

Date:
