

MINUTES OF THE LEWISHAM CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 17 October 2023 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Edison Huynh and Aliya Sheikh

ALSO PRESENT: Ade Joseph, Cllr James Walsh, Cllr Brenda Dacres

Record of Meeting

	Items	Action s
1	Welcome, Introduction & Format of meeting	
	Cllr Edison Huynh welcomed attendees and went through the format of the meeting.	
2	Gateway Development Phase 2 Update	
	<p>Jon Chew, Deputy Project Director from Balfour Beatty introduced himself and updated the meeting on the details of the development and retail plans for the Gateway phase 2 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phase 2 of the Gateway Development aimed to deliver a major mixed-use scheme to help revitalise Lewisham Town Centre and create a metropolitan hub - The development is a mixed-use scheme comprising of 3 main building, including co-living apartments, several retail units, cinema restaurants and a gym space - Unfortunately, one of its main Partner, Lindner pulled out of the project due to commercial reasons with a number of supply chains left in the lurch. Balfour are now picking up the pieces offering support to all the companies caught up in the withdrawal. - Works to external of the building are complete. Balfour Beatty is working with Get Living and Muse to complete all internal fit-out, and agree the rental of the apartment and commercial units - An estimated dates for the handover was given as follows: D2 building, the tallest building on the corner of the roundabout is due for handover to client by the first quarter of 2024. The building which has the cinema in it and co-working space will follow in quarter 2 (around April / May 2024) and the last block next to the train station is estimated for handover by the end of quarter 2 / beginning of quatre 3 between May and August 2024. - Once the hand over is complete, all the communal spaces around the building will be opened up. - Regarding the hoarding on the pavements near the bus stops, there is ongoing discussion with MUSE and Council planners on section 278 agreement (work on Highway). It is proposed that once an agreement has been reached, the hoarding and fencing 	

	<p>on the pavement near the bus stops will be moved back to give more space to pedestrians on the pavement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In terms of the retail aspect, Get Living are moving swiftly with the commercial units' rental. The meeting was shown a coloured coded plan detailing available units, those currently under offer, where there is ongoing discussion and where contract has been exchanged. <p>Following Jon's presentation, several questions were raised as follows:</p> <p>Q – What do you mean by come over? A – This means the hand over of building to MUSE and Get Living so they can commence with the fit out.</p> <p>Q – what is the current situation with the cinema offer? A – initial offer with Empire Cinema was withdrawn when the company went into administration. There is ongoing discussion with the company about takeover of the company. There is a number of interests from other cinema providers at this stage because of its location and new fittings.</p> <p>Q – What's the plan for the removal of the hoarding which has taken up pavement space opposite the police station and the bus stops outside the entrance to the DLR Station, compromising pedestrian safety? People are being forced to walk on the road as a result. A – there are plans to push back the hoarding by the beginning of 2024. Ongoing talks are taking place with local government bodies around working through the evenings and weekends to finish the services works in this area quicker and get the hoarding removed earlier. There is a good chance that this could be done before the end of this year.</p>	
3	Sustainable Streets Programme	
	<p>Ozid Miah from the Project Centre introduced himself and gave an overview of the Sustainable Streets consultation in a presentation as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Centre are helping Lewisham Council to develop some of the design behind the consultation on Sustainable Streets Programme. Consultation has begun and taken place in areas across the borough including Lewisham Central ward. - Project Centre is helping with analysing the result of the consultation and providing feedback to inform some of the proposal which will form part of the programme. - The programme was said to be about encouraging more sustainable mode of transportation including walking, cycling and more use of public transport. - People are being consulted in different areas at different stages. - The consultation is now in its second phase and the people in areas including part of Lewisham Central ward, Blackheath, Evelyn and Rushey Green were sent consultation questionnaire last month. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential permits have been in Lewisham Central for 35 years. As the areas changes and grows, the council wants to review how parking restrictions are working and explore whether travel habits have changed since Covid. - One of the measures proposed for Lewisham Central is to retain existing parking controls, check if additional times and days should be considered and whether people would like parking permit installed in areas which currently has no restrictions. - The scheme will also want to ensure that streets with existing parking permits enjoys the benefits of additional Sustainable Streets measures, like pavement improvements paving way for the installation of EV charging points, more street trees, cycle hangars and improving safety at junctions and crossing points. - The team have consulted with local businesses to ensure that any programme introduced would not affect their trade. Some of the discussion had centred around exploring parking requirements, provision of loading bays and increasing footfall to the area through active travel. - The meeting was shown a coloured coded map of the ward to clarify areas where the recent consultation was conducted. There are plans to extend the consultation to include other areas later in the programme. - Around 8500 postcards were sent to households in the consultation area within the ward including the use of the QR code through the website. - Around 150 key stakeholders were invited to two virtual sessions to get their feedback on the proposals. - Outcome from the consultation (which was mainly around parking) – received 217 responses and 68 pins dropped on the online interactive map. Responses received would be analysed on a road by road basis. <p>A resident from Slaithwaite Road raised the issues about a mix up with their parking permit following a recent change to resident parking permit on the estate. The area has now been classified as part of the Clarendon Rise / Gilmore Road parking control. Residents can no longer park on their Estate as a result.</p> <p>It was also highlighted that residents on Slaithwaite Road did not receive the sustainable streets consultation card. Cllr Huynh asked if the consultation can be re-open to allow more people to have their say in the light of feedback received at the meeting. Ozid promised to pass the request to council officer for consideration. Cllr Huynh also promised to email the cabinet member responsible for the sustainable streets programme asking them to consider re-opening the consultation in Lewisham Central to give more people the opportunity to have their say on the scheme.</p> <p>On the specific issue about the Slaithwaite Road parking permit, the affected residents were asked to send their request by email to both ward councillors who will investigate the matter as part of their casework.</p>	
4	Lewisham Town Centre Improvements – Levelling Up Fund	

The updates on the Lewisham Town Centre Levelling-Up improvements were delivered by Spike VanderVliet-Firth and Sidra Hill-Reid from Lewisham Council. Both officers introduced themselves and delivered the updates as follows:

- Officers outlined where the money for the improvements came from and the specific projects it would be spent on.
- £19m was secured from the Government Levelling-Up fund with an additional £5m contribution by Lewisham Council to bring total fund to £24m.
- This fund would enable the delivery of 3 projects, the first being the refurbishment of Lewisham Library, second is the rejuvenating of Lewisham Market and the last will be see a significant capital investment in improving Lewisham High Street. Full details of each project were provided for the benefit of those attending the meeting for the first time.
- As part of the process, Lewisham Library temporary closure took place on 15 September. On completion the library will re-open in 2026 as a hub library for the future.
- In the interim, a replacement click and collect service has been set up at the Glassmill Leisure Centre. People can order books and return them to the site.
- There is no change to the library home service. This service will continue as usual, delivering books to those vulnerable and housebound in the community.
- The Archive and local history service has been moved to the first floor of Catford Library, from where people can access these services.
- A programme of events with community partners is planned with schools, family hubs etc, in the Shopping Centre and Migration Museum, to ensure that the library presence remains in the area.
- Residents can visit [lewisham.gov.uk/libraries](https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/libraries) for more information about other libraries across the borough and update on the refurbishment.
- Works on the 3 projects will be done at different phases. The quickest one will begin in January 2024 to upgrade road crossing for better pedestrian flow, instal better signage and way finding, and upgrading of street lighting etc. These works would be the first visible tangible part of the levelling up programme and would be completed by spring 2025.
- Improving connectivity across the town centre through pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is another aspect of the scheme, including:

- enhancing cycling provision through the upgrade of existing entry routes to the Town Centre with three new strategically sited mobility hubs to encourage cycling and electric vehicle use
- improving the public realm by creating spill out zones for local businesses, opening up trading and eating out onto the pavements
- providing more green infrastructure, with tree planting, planters and pocket green spaces.

Timeline of project

- Design and planning permission is ongoing
- Revamp of the High Street will begin in January 2024 and later for the market and library
- Public engagement sessions for the library are expected to start later this month and run until December. The Council has engaged a full time Communication and Engagement officer dedicated to this project
- Public engagement for the market and high street will remain ongoing throughout the project
- Buses will still be able to use the High Street throughout this improvement.

Consultation plans

- Officers are currently working on a full engagement plan which will include information sharing and engagement with all key stakeholders on all aspects of the project
- Plans will be available to view via the following website
 - o Website **lewisham.gov.uk/LewishamTC**
- Residents can also sign up to receive newsletter via email – by emailing **lewisham.gov.uk/signup** or by getting in touch with the project team at **lewishamtc@lewisham.gov.uk**
- People can also access information via a dedicated social media handle **@LewishamCouncil**
- Efforts would be made to ensure that information and engagement reaches a wider cross section of local people including advocacy groups. This would be done through a range of online and face to face sessions.

A question and answer session followed this presentation.

Q – on the library concept, is the building going to be knocked down and rebuild? Also, can the existing building absorb all the plans proposed for the refurbishment?

A – There are no plans to knock down the library building as the council does not have the fund to do this. The project will focus mainly on refurbishing the building ensuring the design and lay out includes

	<p>all the aspirations concepts.</p> <p>Q – A comment was made about how some of the plan to encourage night economy could result in antisocial behaviour and whether consideration has been given to facilities for public urination</p> <p>A – There are currently no facilities for public urination in the plans for the public realm’s designs. Officer will take this back as a consideration.</p> <p>Q – A question on the longevity / sustainability of the refurbishment / pedestrianisation and how to ensure the area do not end up a dumping ground for unwanted illegal vehicles again.</p> <p>A – On illegal parking and pedestrianisation, officers are seeking advice from colleagues in the council’s policy directorate about ensuring the delivery of a decent scheme to stop illegal parking and encourages more walking and cycling, opening up spaces, creating more visibility which in turn will disincentivise antisocial behaviour in the area.</p> <p>Q - Will the refurbishment of the market attract an increase in pitch prices which could impact on pricing of fruits and veg.</p> <p>A – One of the benefits of securing the funding from elsewhere meant there is no costing implication for the existing market pitch owners. No cost will be passed on to market traders.</p> <p>Q – A comment made about bringing back the model market</p> <p>A – Landsec are keen to bring the model market back to Lewisham and has vendors line up to deliver this, but this has not yet come to fruition.</p>	
5	Consultation - Lewisham 2030 Conversation	
	<p>The Deputy Mayor of Lewisham, Cllr Brenda Dacres introduced herself and outlined the Council’s Strategic Partnership Group consultation programme, stating that the Council is conducting a big conversation process to get people’s views on their hopes for Lewisham in 2030. Residents are being asked to give their feedback on what they would like Lewisham to be in 2030. The aim is to find out about people’s priorities, hopes, ambitions and aspirations for the future and how they can work with the council and its partners towards a better future for everyone in Lewisham, in 2030. To do this, she asked the people present at the meeting to respond to the three key questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What do people like about Lewisham now? 2) What are their hopes for 2030? What a good future will look like 3) What they think needs to change to make these hopes happen? <p>Cllr Dacres invited people to get involve in the conversation by</p>	

	<p>providing their answers on the post it notes provided, pasting their responses on the flip chart paper displayed around the room.</p> <p>She also encouraged residents to share their views via the online survey at: Lewisham.gov.uk/Lewisham2030 the survey closes on 31st of October 2023.</p> <p>A question and answer session followed this presentation.</p>	
6	Community updates and any other business	
	<p>Recruiting to the Assembly meeting Planning Group A member of the Assembly planning committee made a call out for more people to join the group. The group meets up to 4 times a year, in between each assembly meeting. She informed that the people in the coordinating group are residents volunteers and those who have link to the area through the work that they do.</p> <p>Ade reiterating explained some of the role of the group which mainly to plan the Assembly meeting's agenda and advise on the work that the Assembly does outside of meetings. People do not need any previous experience to become a member. All that is required is a desire to help improve the local area. The next meeting of the group is on January 10th, 2024, from 7pm till 8.30pm at the Salvation Army Centre. The next Assembly meeting is fixed to take place on 22nd February. Anyone interested in joining the Coordinating Group is asked to give their contact details to Ade at the end of the meeting.</p> <p>Hate Crime Awareness week Cllr Aliya Sheikh informed the meeting about the Hate Crime Awareness Week which is being held from 16th to 22nd October. Some badges and T-shirts have been provided for people to take home.</p> <p>Ward Cllr's surgery The Cllr's surgery which was previously held on the first Saturday of every month, 10am to 12 midday at Lewisham Library has been moved to Unit 69 in the Lewisham Shopping Centre, due to Library temporary closure.</p>	
7	Declaration of interest	
	<p>There was no interest declared at this meeting.</p> <p>The chair thanked everyone in attendance and brought the meeting to a close.</p>	