

Minutes of the Sustainable Development Select Committee

Tuesday, 10 January 2023 At 7.00pm

In attendance: Councillors James Royston (Chair), Edison Huynh (Vice-Chair), Liam Curran, Sian Eiles, Aisha Malik-Smith, Oana Olaru and Mark Ingleby

Apologies: Councillor Tauseef Anwar

Also Present: Councillor Brenda Dacres (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning), Councillor Louise Krupski (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate), Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Patrick Dubeck (Director of Inclusive Regeneration), David Syme (Head of Strategic Planning) and Emma Talbot (Director Of Planning)

Also Present Virtually: Charlotte Harrison (Head of Strategic Housing and Regeneration) and Martin O'Brien (Climate Resilience 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. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022

- 1.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November be approved as an accurate record.
- 1.2 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting on 30 November be agreed as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 There were none.

3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

- 3.1 There were none.

4. Local Plan update

- 4.1 Emma Talbot (Director of Planning) introduced a presentation and verbal update on the development of the Local Plan. She noted the amended timetable for the approval and adoption of the plan and recapped on the stages through which the plan would need to progress before it could be agreed. Emma also outlined the requirements for the development of a sound local plan and the subjects, policy areas and issues that fell within the remit of the new plan.
- 4.2 Emma Talbot and David Syme (Head of Strategic Planning) responded to questions from the Committee - the following key points were noted:
 - The strategic housing needs assessment for the plan was developed in 2021 (before recent census 2021 data on housing tenure was available) - consideration would be given to any significant changes arising as a result of the new data - whilst recognising that all of the evidence base

for the plan represented a 'snapshot' in time and could not be repeatedly updated.

- There were opportunities in the site allocations policies to identify locations for affordable workspaces.
- A number of planning allocations had been consolidated into use class 'E' for 'town centre uses' which allowed some flexibility for mixed uses in town centre developments.
- The plan included policies to protect existing affordable workspaces and to develop new spaces, where feasible.
- The Council's online portal for consultations (Citizen Space) would be used for the upcoming consultation - alongside the Department's existing forums and channels.
- There were significant differences between the regulation eighteen and regulation nineteen consultations on the Plan. Regulation eighteen allowed for comments on the content of the plan - and involved extensive consultation. Regulation nineteen was a formal legal technical 'test of soundness'

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

5. Climate emergency action plan

5.1 Martin O'Brien (Climate Resilience Manager) introduced the report – outlining the steps taken to develop and approve the plan (including its annual scrutiny and submission to Mayor and Cabinet). Martin also highlighted the overall positive picture presented by the action plan. It was also noted that there had been a transformation in the approach being taken by the Council in responding to the climate emergency.

5.2 Martin O'Brien responded to questions from the Committee – the following key points were noted:

- Prioritisation of actions occurred as a result of differing factors – including: where the data indicated that there was most work to do; where funding was available and, actions that had broader benefits for the community and met the Council's strategic objectives.
- Housing was a significant contributor towards the borough's carbon emissions (particularly from gas used for heating).
- The Council's climate board brought together officers from across the Council to align the actions in the plan with the Council's wider objectives.
- The main trend for carbon emissions in the past fifteen years had been in the decarbonisation of the electricity grid due to the replacement of coal fired power stations with renewable or lower carbon alternatives. The same could not be said for gas.
- Gas could not be easily swapped with electricity for heating homes and businesses due to the cost – what was required was a major programme of retrofit to reduce consumption – with the remaining heating requirement being met by alternative zero carbon heating. However – this would require retrofit at scale – which was not currently available.
- There was very little in way of support for residents to retrofit their homes (unless they were eligible for means tested benefits).
- The Council provided information for householders who wanted to improve their homes – but it was recognised that the current activity was not on a scale which would enable Lewisham to meet net zero by 2030.
- The data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) included 'scope one and two emissions' – which included

energy supplied to buildings and emissions data from surveys of vehicle numbers. It did not take account of wider consumption emissions – including travel outside of the borough and consumption of resources manufactured elsewhere.

- The Council could do more to quantify actions in the plan. Corporate carbon emissions were measured – and would be reported on the website.
- Further work could take place with partner organisations in the borough to bring together a wider set of actions and information in the lead up to 2030.
- Homes in the private rented sector were often the worst performing in terms of energy efficiency and had some of the most intractable problems.
- There were significant challenges in bringing private rented sector housing up to standard – particularly given the relatively loose regulation. It was quite straightforward to get exemption from the requirement to meet minimum energy efficiency standards – and the government had not indicated how it was willing to increase standards.
- There was some funding available to improve standards – which the Council had publicised to landlords.
- Further work needed to take place to understand the equalities issues around the climate emergency.
- It would be difficult to quantify emissions from community food growing in Lewisham (which avoided importing food) – but reducing carbon emissions was only one part of improving people’s lives and wellbeing.
- Additional information would be included about the options for improving active transport options around Deptford Church Street.
- It was recognised that the status of actions that were ‘ongoing’ was imprecise – further work would take place to determine how this could be improved.
- The Council had committed to developing a housing retrofit strategy – which would help identify projects that could be delivered if funding became available.
- It was recognised that additional sources of funding needed to be secured in order to diversify the options for delivering projects at scale.

5.3 Councillor Louise Krupski (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate) was invited to address the Committee – she noted that she had encouraged officers to produce an easy to read version of the plan. Further work would take place to improve the information about the delivery of the action plan.

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

- The Committee welcomes the update from officers and notes the good practice on which the plan has been developed. However, the Committee is unclear about the likelihood of achieving those actions which are identified in the plan as ‘ongoing’.
- The Committee recommends that the Council should seek to further risk assess, prioritise, and effectively categorise the actions in the plan. Members believe that there needs to be an enhanced focus on how and when the actions will be delivered, which may include an assessment of the work that needs to take place to achieve this.
- The Committee believes that, where priority actions have already been agreed upon, then this should be clearly communicated to members and the relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the Committee believes that consideration must be given to ensuring there is transparency around the

tasks of risk assessing, prioritising, and categorising other 'ongoing' actions.

6. Catford Town Centre programme

6.1 Charlotte Harrison (Head of Strategic Housing and Regeneration) introduced the update – highlighting recent developments in Catford Town Centre.

6.2 Charlotte Harrison and Patrick Dubeck (Director of Inclusive Regeneration) responded to questions from the Committee – the following key points were noted:

- Work was taking place to develop the public art work for Holbeach Road improvements.
- Everything in the report was part of the development framework for Catford. The programme was envisaged as a 15-20 year plan for development.
- The masterplan was the most important part of the scheme for ensuring quality design in Catford Town Centre. Work was taking place at present on a delivery strategy for the plan – which would assess how best to leverage funding from development partners.
- Those projects that the Council delivered itself as part of the phase one were of critical importance to the future of the scheme – and demonstrated the ambition for high quality design.
- The framework indicated development potential for sites in the Town Centre – but did not have control over the timing of the developments on Catford Island or on the Halford/Wickes development site.
- The financial climate had changed since the development of the framework.

6.3 **Resolved:** that the report be noted.

7. Select Committee work programme

The meeting ended at 21:00

Chair:

Date:
