

# Minutes of the Sustainable Development Select Committee

Tuesday, 10 September 2024 at 7.00 pm

In attendance: Councillors James Royston, Sian Eiles, Tauseef Anwar, Liam Curran, Pauline Dall, Jack Lavery and Luke Warner

Also present: Councillor Mark Ingleby, Councillor Louise Krupski (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Climate Action), Councillor James-J Walsh (Cabinet Member for Inclusive Regeneration and Planning) Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) and Spike van der Vliet-Firth (Acting Head of Economy, Jobs and Partnerships)

Also present virtually: Councillor Kim Powell (Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Skills), Sefkan Altuntop (Senior Air Quality Officer), Lucy Kirk (Environmental Protection Manager) and Dr Catherine Mbema (Director of Public Health)

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 18 July 2024

1.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 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. Air Quality Action Plan

4.1 Dr Catherine Mbema (Director of Public Health) and Lucy Kirk (Environmental Protection Manager) introduced the report – noting the progress that had been made in delivering the air quality action plan and highlighting significant areas of progress in the previous year. They also outlined key areas of focus in the coming year.

4.2 Dr Mbema, Luck Kirk and Sefkan Altuntop (Senior Air Quality Officer) responded to questions from the Committee (including members attending under standing orders) and the following key points were noted:

- Further information would be provided on the responsiveness and performance of anti-idling reports through the ‘parking issues’ reporting system.
- Further information would be provided on the cost of ULEZ charges for non-ULEZ compliant vehicles.
- Work to ensure that the vehicle fleet was fully ULEZ and Euro VI compliant was being prioritised (a report on the cost implications of this would be considered at Mayor and Cabinet later in the year)
- Further information would be provided on the number of homes being improved with funding from the social housing decarbonisation fund.

- Additional information would also be provided on the work taking place with housing associations and private landlords to tackle poor standards and to improve the energy efficiency of their stock.
- Air quality had improved over the past seven years across all the main pollutants.
- Officers did not routinely compare Lewisham's air quality with that of other boroughs – due to the different conditions present in each borough.
- Further work could take place to compare trends with other boroughs.
- Work was taking place with two schools to develop active travel maps to improve active travel as part of the school super zone initiative.
- 100 new air quality sensors would be rolled out across the borough to further highlight areas of poor air quality and to enable residents to choose healthy routes for walking and cycling.
- Further discussions would take place with transport colleagues to consider anti-idling signage for private businesses (such as supermarkets)
- Further information would be provided on the implementation of solar panels and other decarbonisation measures across the borough.
- There was an exceedance of nitrogen dioxide levels at the Loampit Vale monitoring site – the reasons for this were not immediately clear – but further work was taking place to determine the source.
- Further detailed analysis of the hourly monitoring data from Loampit Vale would take place to determine whether there were new businesses or changes to the road layout that could explain the change.
- It was too early to tell what the impact of the ULEZ expansion would be - but it was anticipated that the expansion would significantly improve air quality. Particulate matter in the air would remain a problem – due to the issue of road wear and particulates created by vehicles braking.
- Work was taking place to update the website with the 2023 diffusion tube data.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) targets for air quality were ambitious – and were not currently being met by any London Borough.
- The WHO targets were focused on human health, rather than achievability.
- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was in the process of being updated. It would incorporate a range of actions to deal with the different types of air pollution.

4.3 Councillor Krupski (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Climate Action) was invited to address the Committee – the following key points were noted:

- The funding from the social housing decarbonisation fund would not be enough to retrofit all of the Council's social housing stock. Further information would be made available in the forthcoming Housing Retrofit Strategy – which would also provide information on solar panels and other low carbon energy solutions.
- Work would take place to improve signage for cycling routes in line with the integrated active travel strategy. However, funding for this work was limited.
- There had been some success regarding anti-idling with private businesses.

- Discussions had been held with Transport for London to provide electric busses for the routes passing through Lewisham Town Centre in order to help deal with the spike in air pollution in the area.
- The Council had a target for the implementation of 300 new cycle hangars by the end of the 2022-26 administration (although this was dependent on funding).
- School streets had broadly been welcomed – there had been some localised issues but the reception to the programme overall was positive.
- The integrated active travel strategy would be considered by Mayor and Cabinet in October.
- Work was taking place to tackle pollution caused by wood burning and gas burning for heating.
- The causes of pollution (other than road traffic) were varied – and included agriculture (blown in by the weather) over long distances.
- Electric vehicles were an improvement on the existing fleet – but there were still issues with particulate matter created by breaks and road wear.
- Lewisham was working with Greenwich Council to spend government funding for new electric vehicle charging points and this would be focused in areas that currently had a lack of charging infrastructure.

#### 4.4 **Actions:**

- That further information be provided on the responsiveness and performance of anti-idling reports through the ‘parking issues’ reporting system.
- That further information be provided on the cost of ULEZ charges for non-ULEZ compliant vehicles.
- That additional information be provided on the work taking place with housing associations and private landlords to tackle poor standards and to improve the energy efficiency of their stock.
- That the timeline for the agreement of the integrated active travel strategy be provided to the Committee.
- That further information be shared regarding the proposals for low carbon energy and decarbonisation measures (this should be available in the forthcoming retrofit strategy).

#### 4.5 **Resolved:**

- To recommend that further discussions be held with private businesses to raise awareness of idling on or near their premises (such as supermarket car parks) and that consideration be given to providing resources for residents who want signage in specific locations.
- To recommend that the availability and accessibility of data on the website be improved. And – that this should be optimised to better enable comparisons of Lewisham’s performance with comparable boroughs.
- That the Council’s website should be updated with the most recent air quality data.
- To recommend that future reports provide an annual breakdown of air quality improvement data.
- That the Committee reiterate the urgency of decarbonising the Council’s vehicle fleet to ensure that it was fully ULEZ compliant.
- That the Committee endorse the ambition to meet the World Health Organisation targets for air quality.

- That the Committee supports the strategic roll out of electric vehicle charging points and that it encourages measures to ensure their affordability.
- That the report be noted.

## 5. Lewisham Town Centre Improvement Programme

5.1 Councillor James-J Walsh (Cabinet Member for Inclusive Regeneration and Planning) was invited to address the Committee – the following key points were noted:

- Consideration was being given to the branding of the new community and cultural hub in Lewisham (the former library) to determine an appropriate name for its new functions.
- There was an ambitious timeline for the delivery of the programme.
- Outputs from the engagement work with the local community could be shared with members of the Committee.
- It should be noted that the size of the Council's ambition did not fit with the availability of resources, which were very tight across all services.
- Consideration should be given to integration with other schemes in the town centre – particularly those for the Lewisham shopping centre site.

5.2 Spike van der Vliet-Firth (Acting Head of Economy, Jobs and Partnerships) introduced the report – noting the time pressures facing delivery and providing an update on the planning and delivery of the projects in the town centre.

5.3 Spike van der Vliet-Firth and Councillors Walsh and Krupski responded to questions from the Committee (including members attending under standing orders) – the following key points were noted:

- Work was taking place with TfL to ensure that beneficial changes to movements of transport in the town centre could be maintained once the period of temporary diversions ended.
- Careful consideration had to be given to the changes that had been implemented on Molesworth Street to ensure effective sharing of space.
- The development of the Lewisham shopping centre site could create more 'active usage' along Molesworth Street.
- There were ongoing uncertainties around the cost of delivery – but this was being actively managed. Contingency funding had also been set aside.
- There were robust controls in place to manage the risks around the delivery of the programme.
- It was acknowledged that building works increased in cost over time.
- Officers had developed a good relationship with funders to ensure that the lines of communication were open and constructive.
- As long as the government funding had been drawn down by the end of March 2026 then delivery could continue with the match funding being provided by the Council.
- It had been noted in the consultation that the route finding through the town centre was lacking – a number of improvements were planned as part of the programme.
- One of the major issues identified in the consultation was the (lack) of feelings of safety in the town centre.
- There were significant opportunities to improve the night time economy in the town centre.

- The market canopy and the cultural and business hub both provided opportunities for night time economy as civic spaces, open for events.
- Officers had been challenged to ensure that the programme enabled businesses to make the most of the opportunities from the renewed town centre.
- Consideration was being given to the ongoing maintenance and care of the market canopy building as part of the commissioning process.
- Officers involved in the delivery of the programme were also responsible for licensing and would be giving consideration to the activation of the scheme (post-construction)
- Further information could be provided about the licensing review.
- The award of funding for renovation of the sculpture park was only a few weeks old – but further information would be provided on the next steps for the scheme.
- Active measures were being taken to ensure that the market did not become victim of gentrification.
- The improvement programme was providing improved access and facilities for existing traders.
- Work was taking place with local groups (including those that were historically underrepresented) to ensure co-design and co-delivery for the future of the sculpture park.
- Lewisham had not been successful in its application to the public sector decarbonisation fund for the hub building. Work had been taking place to ensure that the future design was as energy efficient as it could be.
- The asset disposal from the library service would not lead to a diminishment in the provision of the service.
- Cycle improvements were planned for the southern part of the town centre scheme. The northern section of the scheme was currently unsafe for pedestrians – further work was taking place with TfL to strengthen the area outside Lewisham Police Station.

#### 5.4 **Actions:**

- That the consultation report be shared with the Committee.
- That further information on the licensing review be provided to the Committee.
- That information be circulated on the work taking place to renovate the sculpture park.

#### 5.5 **Resolved:**

- That officers work with TfL to consider whether current bus movements could be improved to support sustainable cycling and active walking options through the town centre.
- That the report be noted.

**Select Committee work programme**

- 6.1 The Committee considered the work programme report.
- 6.2 **Resolved:** that the Committee’s agenda for the November meeting be agreed.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_