

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22 May 2013 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Suzannah Clarke (Vice-Chair), Ami Ibitson, Mark Ingleby and Sam Owolabi-Oluyole and Alan Hall

APOLOGIES: Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye, Julia Fletcher and Marion Nisbet

ALSO PRESENT: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) and Brian Regan (Planning Policy Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 01 May 2013

In relation to the minute for item 7 (business development review) Councillor Ingleby noted that he had raised the importance of partnership work with Goldsmiths as well as the Council's interaction with the tertiary sector in developing training and employment opportunities in the creative industries.

Members agreed that the change should be noted and-

Resolved: to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 01 May 2013 as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to the minor amendment noted by Councillor Ingleby.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Ingleby declared an interest under item 3 as the Chair of Grove Park nature reserve.

Councillor Ibitson declared an interest under item 4 as an employee of the Greater London Authority.

3. Development management local plan

Brian Regan, Planning Policy Manager introduced the report. The key points to note were:

- The development management local plans fitted within the wider planning policy framework. At the top of the framework was the London Plan, then the Council's Core Strategy (which was adopted in 2011). The development management plans fitted around the objectives of the core strategy and provided policy direction on issues local of importance.
- Following from the Committee's work on local pubs, the development management policy relating to pubs may be of particular interest to Members.
- There had been a significant decline in the number of pubs in the past ten years. The new policy was designed to protect the borough's remaining viable pubs.
- There had been consultation with the community as part of the development of the new policies.

- Issues raised through the consultation had been incorporated into the development of the new plans.
- Three Member briefing sessions had been held for Councillors to input into the development of the plans.
- The economic viability test for pubs set a new standard for protection of pubs – ensuring that owners had to market a pub for 36 months before it could be considered for conversion.
- The pubs policy also set a new standard for the robustness of the evidence required to convert a pub for residential use.
- By making the pubs policy part of its development management policies, Lewisham had created a stronger protection for pubs than authorities that had included their pub protection policies as supplementary planning guidance.
- The recommendations from the Committee's 'preserving local pubs' review relating to the use of community spaces in pubs had been taken forward. Pubs in the borough were being invited to add their community spaces to the Council's register of venues for hire.
- The Baring Hall hotel, a pub, was the first building in the borough to be added to the register of assets of community value.
- As requested, planning conservation officers had re-visited the register of locally listed buildings. Of the 93 pubs in the borough, officers had assessed 20 pubs and recommended that they be added to the local list. The remaining pubs would be evaluated in phases.

In response to questions from the Committee, Brian Regan advised that:

- If the Mayor and Cabinet approved the development management policies they would be submitted to the full Council for approval before further public consultation and assessment by an independent examiner.
- A small number of objections had been received about the policies but none of them related to the fundamental 'soundness' of the plans being put forward.
- There was a formal process for dealing with serious objections as part of the examination by the planning inspector.
- It was anticipated that the final agreement on the new policies would happen in December 2013/January 2014. Nonetheless, if Council approved the policies they would have an immediate formal weight in planning decisions.
- Liz Dart's team (Community and Cultural Development) were responsible for administering the process for registering assets of community value.
- The policies included measures to limit gambling and betting shops. However, recent government changes to permitted development rights (changes which do not require planning permission) had weakened the control the Council had to limit the proliferation of these businesses.
- Any shop could now be converted into a betting shop without planning permission.

The Committee thanked Brian Regan and-
Resolved: to note the report.

4. Emergency services review

Members discussed the emergency services review. The key points to note were:

- Further work could be carried out to assess the value of the public sector assets that had been proposed for closure.
- The Committee might need to challenge the assumptions that had been made about the development value of these assets.
- The Committee agreed to ask the following questions of officers in planning and regeneration & asset management:
 - Can the buildings be demolished?
 - Are there any designations on the buildings that would stop them from being developed (i.e listing or other conservation status)?
 - What is their potential development value?
- It was also agreed that a further request would be made to the police and fire services for further information about their assumptions on the potential usage of these buildings.
- The Committee decided that it would also investigate the potential impact of changes to emergency services on travel and transport times. The Committee agreed to ask the following questions of officers:
 - How long will it take for residents to reach Queen Elizabeth hospital in Woolwich from different parts of the borough?
 - Are there direct transport routes to the hospital?
 - What are the potential time and cost implications of the changes on residents using transport routes through the borough?
 - What consideration has been given to changing or enhancing existing transport routes?
 - Following the police station closures, how long will police officers take travelling from their bases to places of work?

The Committee agreed to request further information from officers and-
Resolved: to receive the information contained in the agenda for the review.

5. Select Committee work programme

Members discussed the work programme and-
Resolved:

- to postpone the item on street lighting and categorise it as a low priority
- to take further evidence for the emergency services review at the next meeting
- to include an item on 'building the Lenox' at a future meeting

6. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

The meeting ended at 6.30 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____