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MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 8 March 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), James-J Walsh (Vice-Chair), Suzannah Clarke, Amanda De Ryk, Carl Handley, Mark Ingleby, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, Eva Stamirowski and Paul Upex

APOLOGIES: Councillors Bill Brown

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Allery (Interim Commercial and Investment Delivery Manager), Timothy Andrew (Interim Overview and Scrutiny Manager), Edward Melconian (Managing Director) (THCO), Bernard Ofori-Atta (Service Manager, Change and Technology), Nick Pond (Ecological Regeneration manager) and Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2016

RESOLVED: That

The minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Development Select Committee held on the 14 January be agreed and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Mark Ingleby declared a personal interest in item 3, Biodiversity Action Plan as he was Chair of the friends of Grove Park Nature Reserve.

3. Biodiversity Action Plan

3.1 Nick Pond, Ecological Regeneration Manager, presented the report to the Committee and highlighted the following key points:

- The report provided an overview of the new proposed Biodiversity Action Plan “A Natural Renaissance for Lewisham 2015-2020” which would go to Mayor and Cabinet for approval on 23 March 2016.
- Biodiversity action planning policies derive from the 1992 Rio Convention. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 states that every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard to conserving biodiversity. Also, the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning systems should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing biodiversity gains where possible.
- The Biodiversity Action Plan was the result of a substantial amount of on-going partnership working between Lewisham Council and a large range of local groups and Individuals as well as National

groups and agencies. This forms the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership.

- The Plan sets out the Partnership's aspirations to contribute and influence the Council's objectives across a range of service areas including: education; urban regeneration; housing; parks; health; and culture.
- Work carried out to date by the Partnership included: ecological restoration work at Deptford Green; promotion of green roofs; three rivers clean up; river corridor improvements.
- Other work of the partnership included: policies through the Local Development Framework to enhance biodiversity; published biodiversity guidance for planning application; and generating and submitting regional data on species.
- The Partnership had engaged with over 70,000 people and carried out 861 guided walks, 1427 school education events, installed 333 bat boxes and created 2081 meters of hedgerows since its establishment.

3.2 In response to questions from members of the Committee, the following key points were raised:

- The main challenges for the partnership were financial resources and continuing to engage the public and local groups.
- Grounds maintenance of Lewisham Homes properties could be an area to look at further. If local residents were interested they could contact the Ecological Regeneration Manager for support and possibly part funding for schemes to improve the biodiversity on green spaces on Council estates.
- One third of the greenspace in Lewisham was back gardens and this therefore represented a challenge in maintaining and enhancing this land to promote biodiversity. Education on encouraging a wildlife ethos was important in achieving this.
- Park user groups had been consulted with and contributed to the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- If parks management was given over to community groups, it would be beneficial if they were required to promote the aims and objectives in the biodiversity action plan.
- Greenspace Information for Greater London (GIGL), hold data on species details and numbers across London. This includes details of the number of Dutch Elm trees.
- IT and data management was a challenge for the team and currently the data was largely held with GIGL.
- Photovoltaics on green roofs were being promoted. The planning department requested cross-sections of proposed green roofs at application stage.
- The Committee noted that they felt that paragraph 3.3 point a. of the report to Mayor and Cabinet, quoting the Local Development Framework, should include the word "enhancing" to read: "protecting and enhancing all open space including Metropolitan Open Land.

The Local Development Framework had already been agreed and adopted but the Committee's comments were noted.

- It was a challenge to find suitable sites for street trees. Additional work on this could be undertaken, possibly with Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy money. There could however be obstacles to increasing numbers of street trees such as concerns around on-going maintenance costs and problems with liaison with partners such as TfL.
- Large developments were encouraged to have lighting strategies thorough the planning process to help protect species from the effects of light pollution.
- Sites of Nature Conservation (SINC) were under threat from development in parts of the borough. A technical report had been commissioned to survey the borough's SINC sites and record species data. It was hoped that the results would be able to be used in planning policy to help protect these sites.
- LB Lewisham had a legacy from Kenneth White to benefit Lewisham nature reserves and there was a commitment to carry out enhancements dedicated to him.

RESOLVED:

1. That a referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet highlighting the following key points: That
 - The Committee considered the Biodiversity Action Plan to be excellent and recommended to Mayor and Cabinet that it be approved:
 - Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy money be allocated for a borough-wide survey of potential sites for additional street trees and ecological enhancements.
 - As part of the Digital Transformation Programme, consideration be given to how best to support the biodiversity action plan with improved use of IT.
2. That the Committee be provided with details of the recommendations from the report being carried out on Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SINC) in Lewisham.
3. That it be noted that the Committee felt that paragraph 3.3 point a. of the report to Mayor and Cabinet, quoting the Local Development Framework, should say add the word "enhancing" to read: "protecting and enhancing all open space including Metropolitan Open Land".

4. Asset Register - Sharepoint demonstration

- 4.1 Edward Melconian, Managing Director, THCO Ltd, gave a demonstration of the functionality of the new asset register being developed. Bernard Ofori-Atta, Service Manager, Systems and Technology and Peter Allery, Commercial and Interim Investment Delivery Manager were also in

attendance. During the presentation and in response to questions from members of the Committee, the following key points were highlighted:

- THCO Ltd had been contracted since February 2016 to work on setting up the asset register for LB Lewisham.
- The system was split into four modules: property management; programmes and project management; facilities maintenance management; and highways asset register management. Work had so far been carried out on three of these modules with work on the programmes and projects management module still to be commenced.
- The application was based on office 365 and would be hosted by Microsoft Sharepoint on the cloud.
- To date, 1793 highways had been loaded onto the system. Data could be searched by Unique Street Reference Number (USRN) or name. This could be plotted with GIS. The information could be extracted into other applications such as excel.
- The system would be able to log details of reactive and planned maintenance as well as records such as lease details for properties or hazards present such as asbestos. Matters for action could be flagged up as well such as renewal deadlines and rents receivable.
- Access could be Council-wide and there was potential for Councillors to have access to view the data. A full access policy would be established with details of the different levels of access. The idea was that a service desk manager would monitor engineers and input the data on the system.
- Operational assets and estates, commercial properties, industrial units and Council owned land, would all be included on the register.

4.2 RESOLVED: That

An update report on the Asset Register be presented to the Sustainable Development Select Committee at its meeting in June.

5. Sustainability Consultancy

5.1 Martin O'Brien, Asset Management Planning Manager, presented the report to the Committee and highlighted the following key points:

- The proposal for setting up a sustainability consultancy had not been possible due to complications regarding the profitability of the service after recharging for formerly in-house services such as HR and IT and the VAT liability that a new company would be subject to.
- In addition to this, there had been cuts to many of the energy efficiency, fuel poverty and carbon reduction programmes that were part of the initial business model for the consultancy.
- The service would continue to run in-house with the aim of covering costs through charging for services and continuing to successfully apply for government grants.

- An example was the £1.65 million grant from the Department of Energy and Climate Change which offered residents a grant of up to half the costs to pay for energy efficiency measures in their homes. Money from the grant allocation was used to analysis of the South-East London market.
- The team was continuing to work on a scheme with fuel poor residents – “Warm Homes, Healthy People”.

5.2 In response to questions from the members of the Committee, the following key points were raised:

- It was important to raise the profile of the “Warm Homes Healthy People” work. This could be flagged up to the Healthier Communities Select Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The scheme was not currently advertised and the team took referrals from other sectors such as front line healthcare providers and GPs.
- It would be useful for Councillors to have details of how to refer residents to the scheme.

5.3 RESOLVED: That

The information on the Warm Homes, Healthy People project be provided to all Councillors and details be passed on to the Health and Well-being Board and Healthier Communities Select Committee.

The Committee noted its support for the work of the Sustainable Resources Group and their approach to innovative working and income generation.

6. Select Committee work programme

6.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the report to the Committee and asked members for any suggestions to be included in the work programme report for the 2016/17 municipal year.

6.2 RESOLVED: That

An update report on the Asset Register be included on the Sustainable Development Select 2016/17 Committee Work programme for its meeting in June.

That quarterly updates on Catford Town Centre Regeneration be scheduled on the 2016/17 Committee Work Programme.

That an update on the Planning Department key policies and procedures be included on the Committee’s 2016/17 work programme for the Autumn.

7. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

RESOLVED: That

The referral as listed under the minutes of item 3, Biodiversity Action Plan be made to Mayor and Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Chair:

Date:
