

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 24 January 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Suzannah Clarke (Vice-Chair), Bill Brown, Amanda De Ryk, James-J Walsh, Mark Ingleby, Eva Stamirowski, Pat Raven and Paul Upex and Alan Hall

APOLOGIES: Councillor Pauline Morrison

ALSO PRESENT: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Fenella Beckman (Strategic Partnership Manager), Deborah Efemini (Capital Project Manager), Kay Foley (Animal Welfare Officer), Sam Kirk (Strategic Waste & Environment Manager), Jessie Lea (Senior Programme Manager), Gavin Plaskitt (Programme Manager), Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services) and Nigel Tyrell (Head of Environment)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November be agreed as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of interest

There were none.

3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

Resolved: that the response from Mayor and Cabinet be noted.

4. Animal welfare charter

The order of the agenda was changed. This item was considered first.

4.1 Sam Kirk (Strategic Waste and Recycling Manager) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- The Council's animal welfare charter had been updated (using RSPCA guidance) to incorporate changes in legislation and best practice.
- The proposed charter included updates on: the Council's statutory responsibilities; enforceable legislation; responsible animal ownership; procurement; wildlife and habitat conservation; performing animals and; emergency planning.
- Officers had used an online survey to consult with residents. The consultation had been sent to more than 270 organisations, including all primary and secondary schools, nurseries and relevant businesses in the borough.
- 119 residents responded.
- 11 responses came from businesses.
- The demographic makeup of respondents to the consultation was not representative of the local population, which was not unusual for consultations held in Lewisham.
- There were very few responses from people under the age of 25 so officers held a special session with the young advisors.

- The results of the consultation were included in the report.
- Broadly, people were supportive of the new charter.

4.2 Sam Kirk (Strategic Waste and Recycling Manger) and Kay Foley (Animal Welfare officer) responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Three organisations (including one religious organisation) that had responded to the consultation (43% of responses from businesses) disagreed with the proposed ban on the use of sky lanterns and balloons on Council premises.
- The religious organisation which disagreed with the ban on sky lanterns and balloons was not one that used lanterns or balloons as part of its religious celebrations.
- The ban on lantern and mass balloon releases was designed to protect wildlife from debris and plastic, which might present a choking hazard to animals, particularly in the marine environment.
- The ban was on mass balloon releases and not a general ban on the use of balloons on Council property.
- RSPCA guidance was that vertebrate animals should not be kept in the classroom environment. This was because it was difficult to maintain the right conditions for animals in classrooms. It was also difficult to ensure the future welfare of animals that were produced from egg hatching projects in schools.
- Officers could support the keeping of animals, such as chickens or bees on school premises, that were not in the classroom environment.
- Permission for events including performing animals was based on the requirements of the animal welfare act and requests were dealt with on a case by case basis.
- Information about reporting stray dogs was available on the Council's website.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

5. Waste and recycling services update

5.1 Sam Kirk (Strategic Waste and Recycling Manager) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- There were 8200 subscribers to the new garden waste service.
- The lumber service was transferred to Lewisham Homes in April (2016).
- There was some change from the previous proposal to Mayor and Cabinet following a benchmarking exercise against other authorities. 11 operatives and a collection vehicle had been added to the new service.
- The service had proposed to make a saving of £400k, which it now would not make.
- Disposal costs with the new food and garden waste service would initially be greater than the existing service. However, over time, the new service would allow the Council to avoid disposal costs.
- The service would be reviewed after it had been rolled out.
- A comprehensive communications plan was in place to advise residents about the new services.
- The implementation timetable had slipped. Publicity would start in mid-April. Operational service roll out would start in June.

5.2 Sam Kirk (Strategic Waste and Recycling Manager) and Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services) responded to questions from the Committee; the following key points were noted:

- The garden waste collection service would run all year. Food waste and garden waste would be collected together, so there would be no additional cost to collecting garden waste all year round.
- Waste and environment services had a savings target of £1m. It had already saved £600k the other £400k would be reached over time.
- Officers were confident that the communications plan would inform people about the new services in sufficient time for implementation.
- There would be a range of communications methods used to provide information about the changes. Each collection crew would have a dedicated field officer, who would liaise directly with residents to solve problems at an early stage.
- Officers would run 'roadshows' to provide information around the borough.
- The Council was working with neighbouring boroughs to explore the potential for sharing disposal services. Most of the neighbouring boroughs' waste services were run by Viola.

Resolved: that the report be noted. The Committee also thanked Sam Kirk for her service to Lewisham, congratulated her on her new appointment and wished her well for the future.

6. Work and skills strategy implementation

6.1 Fenella Beckman (Economic Development and Partnerships Team Manager) introduced the report; the following key points were noted:

- The main focus of the Council's work over the last year had been in developing its partnerships.
- Priorities for next year would be: preparing for the work and health programme in 2018 to make sure it provided opportunities for residents; working with the Department for Work and Pensions to deliver European Social Fund programmes for the most disadvantaged residents and working with partners to develop up-skilling opportunities for jobseekers to stop people frequently moving in and out of work.
- The move to all age apprenticeships was also important because it allowed people who were over the age of 24 to retrain and gain new work experiences.

6.2 Fenella Beckman responded to questions from the Committee; the following key points were noted:

- Lewisham worked closely with job centre plus and other local partners to deliver employment programmes. There had been some conversations about job centre plus finding a new location to operate in Lewisham.
- The employment rate in Lewisham was relatively high in comparison with recent years, as was reflected across London. However, work still needed to take place to reach people who were furthest from the job market.

- The majority of newly unemployed people were out of work for less than twelve weeks.
- Officers were involved in the London-wide discussions about the further education area reviews, however, recommendations had not yet been made.
- One of the central aims of the strategy was to align training opportunities with the jobs that were available in the market.

6.3 In Committee discussions, these other key points were also noted:

- It was concerned about the ‘hourglass’ employment trend – which described the concentration of jobs at the top and the bottom of the market. Members noted the proportion of Lewisham workers in health, education and the arts, which outstripped the proportion of jobs projected to be available in these areas in the next 25 years.
- It highlighted the importance of both outputs and impact of activities in achieving the aims of the strategy. It was felt that greater political input into the delivering the strategy would enable the borough to lobby on the broader issues surrounding access to employment (such as access to affordable transport).
- In the next update of the strategy, the Committee would welcome more data about the impacts of the strategy.

Resolved: that the Committee would share its views with Mayor and Cabinet as follows:

- The Committee congratulates officers on the work being done to implement the work and skills strategy with particular reference to the Pathways to employment programme.
- The Committee notes that the focus of the implementation at present is partnership working at an officer level. The Committee recommends further political leadership and increased involvement at a councillor level to lobby government on the broader issues surrounding access to work and skills.

7. Catford Town Centre update

7.1 Gavin Plaskitt (Senior Programme Manager) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- The report outlined the next steps of the Catford regeneration.
- The Mayor had agreed the programme for the next phase of work to regenerate the town centre and to carry out stakeholder engagement.
- The early interventions to improve the station in Catford and on flood alleviation had been made possible through housing zone funding.
- Next steps for activity in the town centre had been approved, including the approach to the Broadway theatre.
- Plans for a stakeholder engagement strategy had also been approved by the Mayor. Work was taking place to develop the strategy.
- Work with Transport for London was progressing on the modelling to realign the A205.
- Some additional feasibility studies had been commissioned and completed for the Plassy Island site.

- A firm of property consultants had been commissioned to assist with the consideration of development viability.
- Once a decision about the road had been reached, officers would proceed to commission a master planning architect.
- Opportunities for 'meanwhile use' of assets in the town centre were being marketed.
- Officers would return to brief the Committee about an evaluation of options for the realignment of the A205 at the meeting in March.

7.2 Gavin Plaskitt, Jessie Lea and Deborah Efemini responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- There were commercial interests that needed to be considered in a private session before all options for the road could be fully evaluated. There was a third option for the road, which might now be viable, subject to further analysis.
- Each criteria for assessing the viability of the TfL options for the road was made up of a range of other criteria.
- The consultation with residents would not include options for the realignment of the road, due to commercial sensitivity.
- There were difficulties with the sequencing of the programme because of the potential impact on landowners in the town centre.
- Officers would provide an analysis of each of the options proposed by TfL against the criteria set out in appendix 3 for consideration by the Committee before a decision was taken by the Mayor. TfL had its own assessment criteria for each option.
- Officers were planning to start using the 'Common Place' online consultation platform to engage with residents. One of the benefits of this platform was that residents could contribute to the discussion about where the boundaries of the Town Centre should be. A suggested boundary had been proposed by officers, to include anyone who used Catford as their primary town centre.
- The stakeholders for the Catford scheme were anyone who lived, worked or had an interest in the town centre.
- St Dunstan's had submitted a planning application for Canadian Avenue to re-site the access road to their playing field, which might have created some confusion for local residents.
- The housing zone proposal set out an indicative capacity for about 2500 homes in Catford on the five key remaining development sites in the town centre. 1300 of these were proposed to be on land owned by the Council, 1200 were proposed to be on land in private ownership.
- The density of development in existing proposals for Catford had been based on London Plan guidelines.
- Segregated cycling routes could be provided for east west movement through the town centre. North/south segregated cycling provision would be more difficult to provide but further options would be considered at the detailed design phase.

7.3 In Committee discussions, the following key points were also noted:

- The design of the street scape and environment in any new development would need to be carefully thought through.
- Pedestrian and cycle safety were of primary importance to the Committee.

- Street trees should be built into any new scheme to help improve air quality.
- Members of the Committee believed that the design options for the town centre should aim to make Catford 'lovable, liveable, joyful and iconic'.
- Officers were commended on the work that had been done to develop meanwhile use in the Catford centre.
- The Committee would consider its options for lobbying Mike Brown (the Chief Executive of TfL) to push forward the options for the realignment of the South Circular.
- Members were concerned about the management of refuse in Catford and the general appearance of the Catford Broadway.
- Consultation with stakeholders should lead the decision making about the plans for the town centre. Any key decisions should first take into account meaningful engagement with stakeholders.
- Concern was expressed about the potential scale, density and quality of design of any proposed development for the town centre.

Resolved: that the Committee would share its views with Mayor and Cabinet as follows:

1. The Committee recommends that the Council produces a communications plan, which details the timetable for consultation with local people and other key stakeholders. The plan should also include regular opportunities for engagement with councillors.
2. The Committee recommends that officers produce a 3-5 year plan outlining anticipated dates for key decisions relating to Catford. The Committee asks that this be made freely available and updated regularly.
3. The Committee recommends that, prior to each key decision, the Sustainable Development Select Committee has the opportunity to comment on and review plans as they progress.
4. The Committee believes that before each key decision is taken options should be considered for: safe cycling and pedestrian provision; the proposed scale of any intended development and; the future viability of the Broadway Theatre.
5. The Committee has concerns about the height density and massing of potential buildings in Catford and is keen to review any proposals before key decisions are made.
6. The Committee will closely follow the development of options for the realignment of the A205. The Committee intends to use its influence to encourage TfL to prioritise funding for the scheme.
7. The Committee believes that the safety of pedestrians and cyclists as well as the provision of segregated cycling lanes should be central to the consideration of all options for the realignment of the A205.
8. The Committee recommends that, in assessing options for the future of the A205, due regard should be given to the impact of air quality on public health.

8. Select Committee work programme

- 8.1 Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report. The Committee agreed the proposed agenda for its meeting on 8 March.

9. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

Resolved: that the Committee's views under items four and six be referred to Mayor and Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair:

Date:
