

Committee	STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE	
Report Title	MINUTES	
Ward		
Contributors		
Class	PART 1	Date: 10 August 2017

MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held on the 4th July 2017.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

MINUTES of the STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE meeting held in ROOMS 1 & 2 CIVIC SUITE, CATFORD SE6 on TUESDAY 04 July 2017 7:30pm.

Present

Councillors De Ryk (Chair), Paschoud (Vice Chair), Coughlin, Bonavia, Reid, Curran, Clarke & Hall

Apologies: Councillors Onikosi & Amrani

Officers: Emma Talbot – Head of Planning, Helen Milner – Senior Planning Officer, Paula Young - Legal Services, and Alfie Williams - Planning Committee Co-ordinator.

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings held on the 21 March 2017 were approved.

3. Lewisham Gateway Site, SE13

The meeting began at 19:30 with a closed session with Councillors and Council Officers. A discussion took place between officers and the Committee regarding the confidential sections of the Viability Report. Councillors also received instruction as to which parts of the report could be discussed in public.

The applicant and the public were invited into the meeting at 19:50.

Chair De Ryk began by introducing the application and explained that a proposal at the site was discussed at the previous Strategic Planning Committee and was deferred. The Chair then stated that the Committee would be focusing on the reasons for the deferral and went on to clarify that all previous information could still be considered.

Emma Talbot then presented the amended proposal focusing on the deferral reasons. It was noted that Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations have recently been updated but EIA regulations from 2011 still apply to this application. It was also noted, following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, that fire safety is controlled by Building Regulations. However, the point was made that the application is not proposing amendments to any materials and that sprinkler systems would be installed in the buildings.

The Committee received a verbal representation (accompanied by a PowerPoint and models of the proposal) by Imola Berczi regarding the design of the proposal. Imola Berczi gave an overview of the proposal and highlighted some of the amendments to the scheme; including the allocation of Use Class B1 office space in block E.

Mike Auger from Muse (applicant's team) introduced the viability and infrastructure section of the presentation. Reference was made to the cost of reclaiming and rerouting two A Roads and two rivers as part of the development. Mr Auger also explained that the project had experienced significant delays caused by external factors, such as utility company works. However, he confirmed that the primary reason why it is not viable to include affordable housing within the scheme is due to the cost of the infrastructure works rather than just the delays. Mr Auger also stated that the scheme could be reviewed on its completion and a contribution made to affordable housing off-site as part of the Section 106. It was also confirmed that pre-letting agreements were close to completion for the proposed cinema and hotel.

Imola Berczi then addressed the concerns regarding the quality of the public space and introduced updated sunlight and wind assessment studies.

Councillor Bonavia was concerned that the scheme has not moved towards addressing the lack of affordable housing and asked whether the Mayor of London had been approached for funding. Mike Auger stated that discussions have taken place with the Greater London Authority, but that no further funding would be forthcoming.

Chair De Ryk questioned the need for a hotel on the site and asked whether increases in property values had been factored into the viability assessment. Mike Auger addressed the question by referencing a graph demonstrating increases in building costs raising faster than property prices in Lewisham. Councillor Paschoud cast doubt on the validity of the graph as it was comparing unitary values with percentage increases. Mr Auger then explained that the proposed hotel makes a significant contribution to job creation on the site and that the market for a hotel is strong.

Councillor Coughlin queried whether the off-site contribution to affordable housing is contractual. Emma Talbot clarified that this would be addressed following completion, but that a contribution cannot be guaranteed.

Councillor Reid requested clarification as to what profit margin makes the scheme viable and stated that not meeting BRE Sunlight standards is unacceptable. Barney Stringer, an economist consultant for the applicant explained that the profit margin required by the applicant would be in line with GLA guidelines.

Chair De Ryk asked the applicant for information regarding Homes and Community Department Grant. Mike Auger explained that the grant is paid back after costs are deducted and that planning obligations could be counted as a cost.

The committee then heard from those objecting to the application. Geoffrey Thurley representing the Ladywell Society raised concerns regarding the lack of affordable housing. He then questioned the level of scrutiny contained within the Council's

Viability Assessment and made the point that the developer had undervalued the properties.

Nick Patton then spoke on behalf of the Blackheath Society and also raised concerns regarding a lack of affordable housing. Mr Patton went on to suggest that the applicant had not done enough to address the reasons for deferral and that the proposal lacked substance. A particular concern was the increased strain that would be put on the local community and infrastructure.

John Keidan of the Lewisham Green Party then spoke in opposition to the proposal and also raised concerns regarding the lack of affordable housing. Mr Keidan stated that the local community would suffer due to the proposal and that the opportunity presented at the site was being squandered.

Emma Talbot then addressed some of the points raised by Councillors and the objectors. It was noted that some parts of the viability assessment are confidential and that the Council were satisfied that the scheme had undergone sufficient scrutiny. It was also noted that the Council are in talks with Network Rail regarding improvements and capacity at Lewisham Station. Emphasis was placed on the complexity of the site and the huge challenge rerouting highways and rivers presented. Risk sharing with the Council and community benefits from the scheme was also addressed. Emma Talbot made the point that the community have already seen improvements to connectivity between the town centre and the station. The community will also benefit from the improvements to the night-time economy.

At 22:00 Chair De Ryk announced that standing orders had been suspended.

Councillor Hall stated that he agreed with the points raised by the Blackheath and Ladywell Societies. He then noted that the scheme approved in 2009 was done so on balance and stated that the developer has presented an almost identical scheme as the one deferred at the previous committee.

Councillor Hall then moved to refuse the application. The motion was seconded by Councillor Reid. Members voted unanimously to refuse the application with one abstention.

The chair then requested clarification from members as to why they had refused the application. There was general concern as to whether the amendments were minor, also the proposed range of uses compared with the original scheme and the benefits of the amendments along with the mitigation of the impacts. Councillor Hall had concerns regarding the justification for the viability of the scheme. Councillor Reid objected to the increase to the height and massing of the development. Councillor Clarke was concerned with the environmental quality of the public realm following the proposed amendments. Councillor Bonavia stated that further work was required on options to address the lack of affordable housing. Councillor Paschoud added that the section 106 obligation was not satisfactory as the contribution could not be guaranteed, with regards to affordable housing.

Chair De Ryk asked for legal guidance in confirming the reason(s) for refusal. Following a discussion, Paula Young confirmed that the reason(s) could be drafted by officers and brought back to the committee to be decided.

FOR REFUSAL: Paschoud (Vice Chair), Coughlin, Curran, Clarke, Bonavia, Reid & Hall

AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: De Ryk (Chair)

Application Refused

The meeting ended at 22:14