

# MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 30 April 2019 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran (Chair), Patrick Codd (Vice-Chair), Obajimi Adefiranye, Mark Ingleby, Louise Krupski and James-J Walsh

APOLOGIES: Councillors Abdeslam Amrani and Suzannah Clarke

ALSO PRESENT: Seamus Adams (Parking Service Manager), Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) and Erik Nilsen (Principal Planning Officer)

## 1. Confirmation of the Chair and Vice-Chair

1.1 **Resolved:** it was confirmed that Councillor Curran be Chair and Councillor Codd be Vice-Chair of the Select Committee.

## 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2019

2.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2019 be agreed as an accurate record.

## 3. Declarations of interest

Councillor Ingleby declared non-prejudicial interests in relation to item five as the Chair of the Friends of Grove Park Nature Reserve and as a Director of Lewisham Homes.

Councillor Curran declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item five as a member of the Baring Trust.

## 4. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

4.1 Seamus Adams (Parking Services Manager) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- Officers had considered the Committee's comments to Mayor and Cabinet and incorporated changes into the updated parking policy as a result. This would include programme of changes to enforcement activity.
- Officers were also carrying out a cost benefit analysis to determine whether there should be an increase in the level of enforcement activity and numbers of enforcement officers.
- Work was taking place with Transport for London to explore the options for parking enforcement activity on 'red routes'.
- It was proposed that there be increased parking charges for the most polluting cars. Funding had been made available to carry out a communications campaign to support this work.

4.2 Seamus Adams responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Consideration could be given to further changes in the controls for areas with two hour parking enforcement in order to discourage commuter parking.
- The new IT system for the parking service would allow closer management and better targeting of enforcement officers.
- Lewisham would use existing government banding for emissions from vehicles to determine increases in charges.
- Issues surrounding the emissions from Euro 6 compliant diesel cars would be considered in the consultation.
- It was proposed to make parking charges the same in the north and the south of the borough. Charges for payment by cash and mobile app would also be brought to the same level.
- Parking charges needed to be set at a fair level that supported local business and traders as well as the Council's environmental ambitions.
- The implementation of the proposals for disabled bays would take a number of years. Consultation would take place with residents about the use of bays before any were removed.
- There were not currently charges for parking on Sundays. Before any changes were made to charging at weekends, officers would have to carry out analysis of the issues.
- The policy for implementation of new controlled parking zones had been amended so that consideration would be given to the general enthusiasm for new controlled parking zones before formal consultation.

4.3 In the Committee's discussion – the following key points were also noted:

- Some Members felt that charges for parking overall were too low – especially compared to the cost of public transport. It was argued that the Council's ambition should be to reduce the incidence of short distance trips by car.
- The Committee welcomed the changes to the parking policy consultation that had been made as a result of Members' input.

4.4 **Resolved:** that the report be noted. It was also agreed that the Committee would consider the outcome of the parking consultation.

## 5. Local Plan update

5.1 Erik Nilsen (Principal Planning Officer) introduced the report, the following key points were noted:

- The local plan was still in the early production stages. Work was being carried out on gathering evidence.
- The current local plan (the core strategy) was adopted in 2011, further site allocation and development management policies had subsequently been added to the plan.
- There was a new requirement to review the local plan every five years to ensure that it was consistent with regional and national planning policy.
- The most recent national planning policy framework (NPPF) had recently been published.

- The draft London Plan was currently undergoing examination. It was not yet clear what the outcomes of the London Plan examination would be.
- Over the past few months work had been taking place to develop the technical evidence base for the new local plan. This was important work because one of the tests of 'soundness' of the new plan - when it was due for examination – would be whether it was supported by rigorous evidence.
- Lewisham had been awarded roughly half a million pounds from the Mayor of London's home building capacity fund.

5.2 Erik Nilsen provided a brief summary of the employment land study, the following key points were noted:

- It was an update to the previous study (carried out in 2015) it would guide the development of the new local plan and inform policy over the next fifteen years.
- This was a critical piece of work because there were significant changes in the emerging London Plan that were likely to have an impact on Lewisham (specifically in relation to co-location of uses in employment sites).
- Lewisham's current local plan was quite flexible on the release of employment land (specifically, land that was allocated for offices, light and heavy industrial uses) for development. This was because the Council had strategic regeneration objectives in the north of the borough, which it was trying to facilitate.
- The new study indicated that (based on evidence – and the targets in the emerging London Plan) Lewisham had reached the limit of employment land that could be released for development.
- In fact, in order to meet future needs, new employment floorspace would need to be found.

5.3 Erik Nilsen responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- The evidence in the employment land study would support the case that Lewisham should resist further permitted development of office or light industrial space for housing. However, the only way to ensure that this land was fully protected from redevelopment in this way would be to issue an article four direction (removing permitted development rights).
- The recent character study (also developed for the local plan evidence base) covered a broader range of issues than usual studies and identified potential locations where future development could be accommodated, based on local character. The 'A21 spine' in the centre of the borough had been recognised as a key route that might support future growth.
- There was a hierarchy of employment land in the borough: strategic industrial locations (defined and protected in the London Plan); local strategic employment sites and, at the lower level, local employment locations and non-designated employment locations. The final two categories would be better protected by the new local plan.
- Unless they were well designed, there could be issues with co-working/living spaces and the potential long term loss of employment land to residential development.

- The strategic housing land availability assessment set out the framework for identification of sites for future developments. The London Plan identified that over the next ten years, Lewisham should provide approximately 20,000 new homes (including strategic sites and development on smaller sites). National planning policy assessments indicated that Lewisham could accommodate approximately 3000 new homes a year (30,000 over the decade).
  - Lewisham had to demonstrate that it was using all reasonable efforts to meet its housing targets.
- 5.4 Erik Nilsen provided a brief summary of the strategic flood risk assessment, the following key points were noted:
- The assessment was a ‘living document’ that would be added to and changed over time.
  - The assessment considered all sources of flooding in the borough – including surface water flooding and flooding from rivers. Flood risk zones were mapped based on the level of risk (1,2 or 3 – with three being the most at risk).
  - The assessment was designed to help direct development away from areas at most risk of flooding. And – where development could not be directed away from areas at risk- the assessment would be used to develop mitigating strategies.
  - A further flood risk assessment would consider all of Lewisham’s strategic development sites and develop guidance to manage the risk of flooding.
- 5.5 Erik Nilsen responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:
- The last update to Environment Agency modelling was in 2016. Lewisham’s risk assessment would be subject to ongoing change based on new information.
  - Guidance for design for flood resilience would be included in the second level flood risk assessment.
  - There was a sequential test for assessing the viability of development in areas at risk of flooding. Some uses were not permitted in areas most vulnerable to flooding.
  - It was intended that policy options for ‘de-culverting’ rivers (naturalising river banks and adapting areas for sustainable alleviation of flooding) would be included in the new plan.
- 5.6 In the Committee’s discussion, the following key point was also noted:
- Members were concerned about the overly optimistic modelling carried out by the Environment Agency in light of the increasing risk of catastrophic climate change and rising sea levels.
- 5.7 Erik Nilsen provided a brief summary of the open space study, the following key points were noted:
- The study provided an audit of all of the borough’s open spaces and it included an assessment of quality as well as categorisations for each space.

- For the most part, Lewisham's open spaces were assessed as good quality. There were some areas that were assessed as poor quality – these tended to be publicly inaccessible open spaces (such as green spaces adjacent to railway lines). It should be noted that whilst the assessment used a standard methodology, there was inevitably an element of subjectivity in the assessment with several field officers doing the assessments.
- The study also considered what Lewisham's future requirements might be for open space. This was based on a standard calculation for availability of open space per thousand people in the population.
- Using that metric - Lewisham (similar to most other London boroughs) would be required to add a significant quantity of open spaces to meet demand.
- Given the pressures on the availability of land in London – the study recommended that Lewisham should improve the quality of its existing open spaces as well as improve the ease of access to open spaces.
- The study would help identify priorities for future funding and, policy decisions and development.

5.8 Erik Nilsen responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- The study only considered existing open spaces in the borough (it did not search for new options for public open space).
- Further work could take place in future to consider designating new open spaces.
- Through neighbourhood planning, neighbourhood groups could designate local green spaces, which would be given a greater level of protection from development.
- The categorisations used in the study were consistent with those used in the London Plan.
- Allotments were strongly protected in planning policy and legislation. Further work would need to take place to specify which types of 'community garden' could be categorised as allotments.
- Lewisham's parks management strategy was important for the protection of the variety of community uses in parks as well as helping to enhance usage of parks and improve quality.
- Increased access to currently inaccessible open spaces would have to be managed to ensure that biodiversity was protected.
- There could be opportunities on new developments to provide new open spaces, this wouldn't always be green open space.

5.9 In the Committee's discussion, the following key points were also noted:

- Community groups in and around Grove Park were trying to protect (and link up) green spaces in the ward.
- It was important that future policy should give consideration to the importance of cross age group integration through green spaces.
- Green spaces would be vital to climate change adaptation. The study could have included more information about tree planting and the importance of green spaces (and soil) in sequestering carbon emissions.

- Members were concerned about privatisation of public spaces. It was felt that the Council should ensure that public space remained in public ownership – even if it was maintained and managed by others.
- In particular, in relation to public spaces, members wanted to ensure that the right to protest and to assemble were maintained.

## 6. Select Committee work programme

6.1 The Committee discussed its work programme for 2019-20 and agreed that it would:

- Find an alternative date for its next meeting (due to the European elections on 23 May).
- Focus on issues of importance, where its input could have an impact.
- Scrutinise the implementation of the new corporate strategy (for areas that fell within its remit), with a particular focus on: apprenticeships; support for business and the local economy; air quality and green spaces.
- Invite external witnesses to address it on the issue of air quality.
- Review the maintenance of and signage on the boroughs cycle routes.
- Consider options for scrutinising the performance of Transport for London regarding the maintenance and management of the borough’s red routes.
- Consider an update on the implementation of the arrangements for spending neighbourhood community infrastructure levy funding.
- Carry out a review of parks management, taking into account: the proposed greening fund; finding innovative approaches to increasing pocket parks’ attractiveness and usage by local people; public/private ownership; commercialisation and the management of open spaces by Lewisham Homes.

6.2 **Resolved:** that work programme be amended, as discussed, and submitted to the Business Panel for consideration.

## 7. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

There were none.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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