

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 29 October 2019 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Bill Brown (Chair), Sakina Sheikh (Vice-Chair), Abdeslam Amrani, Tauseef Anwar, Patrick Codd, Liam Curran, Sophie Davis, Sue Hordijkenko, Coral Howard, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Silvana Kelleher, Louise Krupski, Jim Mallory, Joan Millbank, Hilary Moore, John Muldoon, Lionel Openshaw, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Stephen Penfold, Kim Powell, James Rathbone, Luke Sorba, James-J Walsh and Susan Wise

APOLOGIES: Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye, Peter Bernards, Juliet Campbell, Suzannah Clarke, Tom Copley, Colin Elliott, Aisling Gallagher, Leo Gibbons, Alan Hall, Carl Handley, Mark Ingleby, Paul Maslin and Eva Stamirowski

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Andre Bourne (Cabinet member for Culture, Jobs and Skills (job share)), Councillor Brenda Dacres (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport (job share)), Charlotte Dale (Interim Overview and Scrutiny Manager), Councillor Joe Dromey (Cabinet Member for Culture, Jobs and Skills (job share)), Councillor Sophie McGeevor (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport (job share)), Barrie Neal (Director of Corporate Policy and Governance) and Councillor Jonathan Slater (Cabinet Member for Community Sector)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019

1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 **RESOLVED:** That the following declaration of interest be noted in relation to item 4 on the agenda:

Councillor Joan Millbank – Chair of Lewisham Local

3. Response to the Committee's referral

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the response be noted.

4. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

1.1 The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Members to the meeting.

1.2 **Cllr McGeevor** gave a brief summary of her current work activities and her priorities for the rest of the municipal year/administration. The following key points were noted:

- Following the declaration of a climate emergency, consultants were working on plans to enable the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- The Greening Funding allowed local community groups to apply for Section 106 money to improve green spaces on public land. £360k of funding had been allocated to projects so far this year.
- Improving air quality was a key priority and the Cabinet Member was working closely with the Air Quality Champion on a number of schemes including an anti-idling campaign. Fixed penalty notices (£80 fine) were being given out by traffic wardens to people refusing to turn off their engine whilst their car was stationary.

1.3 **Cllr Dacres** gave a brief summary of her current work activities and her priorities for the rest of the municipal year/administration. It was noted that:

- The Bakerloo Line Extension campaign was a key priority for the Council.
- Four “Healthy Neighbourhoods” would receive £250k of funding to encourage sustainable modes of transport.
- The Council was committed to ensuring that all Lewisham residents, businesses and visitors are within 500m of an electric vehicle charging point by 2021 which equates to 70 chargers across the borough.

1.4 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

- Lessons had been learnt following the launch of the swimming lake in Beckenham Place Park. A permanent, but attractive, fence would be erected around the lake to control numbers and the contract for managing the lake would be going out to tender in the new year.
- Although TfL funding had allowed the first wave of cycle racks to be made available for £24 a year rent, subsequent racks cost £60 a year in rent. However, officers were looking into ways of making the racks more affordable.
- Electric vehicle charging points were installed on the road wherever possible but in a few instances needed to be on the pavement for health and safety reasons. There would be charging points in Evelyn ward.
- The Cabinet was pushing for as much communications support as possible in relation to the Bakerloo Line Extension campaign and the Council’s local assemblies and *Lewisham Life* were being used.
- Members working on Healthy Neighbourhood schemes would be put in touch with Air Quality Champions in schools.
- Inclusive play was important and there were some excellent examples of well tested inclusive play equipment on the market, but

consultation with disabled play equipment users would be considered.

- There had been some confusion over eligibility for the Greening Fund but it covered all land owned by the Council. In the case of land managed by Lewisham Homes, applications had to be made via Lewisham Homes.
- Fly tipping was a key issue for the Council and HMO licensing was one way of addressing it. Enforcement was key (officers assessed the rubbish dumped for clues as to who may have dumped it) and penalties were in place. There was also a role for the Council in ensuring that residents knew the rules. A new waste facility in the south of the borough was not being progressed but mechanisms were being put in place to make it easier for residents to dispose of rubbish.
- Ice-cream and other food vendors operating in and around parks had been advised that they could not leave their engines running whilst selling. Vendors requiring a running engine to make their product could either update their van, as newer vans did not require this; or use a plug-in system where available. It was agreed that an update on officers' investigations into plug in systems would be provided.
- It was clear that Sainsburys wanted to develop their New Cross site, which might have an impact on plans for the Bakerloo Line Extension, but any planning application that came forward would be treated the same as any other planning application would be. Other sites for launching drilling equipment were available.
- Healthy Neighbourhood boundaries were not aligned to ward boundaries but officers were now aware of which councillors they needed to contact in each case.
- Improvements to Sydenham Park bridge were planned for next year.

1.5 **Cllr Bourne** gave a brief summary of his current work activities and his priorities for the rest of the municipal year/administration. It was noted that:

- The Council had bid to become the borough of culture in 2021.
- There had been longstanding issues with the Fusion Contract but there had been big improvements recently with new staff and equipment and better communications. There was a particular focus on Forest Hill Pools.
- It was hoped that full disabled access could be achieved at the Broadway Theatre.
- The London Youth Games results were disappointing but plans were in place to improve sports development in the borough.
- Improving the night time economy was a key priority and the Council now had a Women's Night Safety Champion.

1.6 **Cllr Dromey** gave a brief summary of his current work activities and his priorities for the rest of the municipal year/administration. It was noted that the following were all key priorities for the Council

- Supporting local growth that benefits local residents

- Creating and supporting the creative enterprise zone in the north of the borough
- Extending the network of enterprise hubs and supporting small businesses
- Community wealth building and the creation of a “Lewisham Deal”
- Increasing access to high quality apprenticeships
- Developing a Lewisham Inclusive Growth Strategy.

1.7 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

- Apprenticeships were not just for young people and the upskilling and retraining of older workers was crucial. Officers were working with Job Centre Plus on both their jobs fair offer and schemes for people with physical and mental health issues. Older workers would also be considered as part of the Inclusive Growth Strategy.
- Signatories to the London Living Wage declaration should ensure that their contractors pay the London Living Wage, a fair wage should not be for directly employed staff only.
- The Council was looking to recruit a dedicated Sports Development Officer.
- The needs of older residents would be considered when developing the night-time economy and the Festival of Creative Ageing (Age Against the Machine) had been very successful.
- Information on the Physical Activity and Healthy Lifestyle Strategy would be circulated.
- The timing of the potential closure of the theatre to allow works to commence would be carefully considered.
- High speed internet access and WiFi across the borough would be looked at as part of the Inclusive Growth Strategy.
- Any concerns around the goods being sold at markets should be reported - market inspectors carried out regular checks. Low starter rates were on offer so there were low barriers to entry, making markets a great place to start a business.
- Council contracts with the security firm CIS specified that they must pay the London Living Wage.
- Pubs were crucial to the life of the borough, it was important to preserve as many as possible and a policy had been agreed with Mayor and Cabinet.
- Digital skills were important. There was a “Go ON Lewisham” programme to upskill residents and also work with Job Centre plus to help people access Universal Credit online. Plans were in place for adult digital skills learning to be free from 2021.
- Training people for jobs in the sustainable economy would be an important focus of the Inclusive Growth Strategy. Two of the six Lewisham Deal partners had agreed to the Council’s net-zero carbon target.

1.8 There were a large number of questions relating to the Fusion contract. It was noted that:

- Fusion recognised that recent performance had not been acceptable
- The Council's focus was on ensuring Fusion improved standards
- Swimming lesson cancellations were declining
- Investment in staff, equipment and facilities had been agreed
- Approximately £1m of investment across all the centres was planned
- Issues pertaining to the Ladywell Arena would be looked into
- There had been nation-wide lifeguard recruitment issues last summer
- Briefing documents would be updated and circulated so councillors had up-to-date information when responding to constituent queries
- Information on penalty charges and their use to date would be provided.

1.9 **Cllr Slater** gave a brief summary of his current work activities and his priorities for the rest of the municipal year/administration. The following key points were noted:

- A Disabled People's Commission for Lewisham had been created and Jamie Hale had been appointed as Chair. Commissioners would be recruited shortly.
- Black History Month had been successful, in particular events around the legacy of the Windrush generation.
- People's Day would take place next year.
- There had been a crowdfunding campaign for the Blackheath Fireworks and Greenwich Council had donated £15k. More corporate sponsorship would be sought next year.
- The main grants programme was funding 40 organisations.
- Rushey Green Timebank (Lewisham Local) would be providing infrastructure support to the local voluntary sector.
- V22 had taken over from Eco Communities in running Sydenham Library.

1.10 In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

- There had been modification to the opening hours of Sydenham Library whilst V22 got to grips with running an additional library.
- Funding for digital inclusion would be looked at.
- Information on the Disabled People's Commission terms of reference, the new Chair and the recruitment of commissioners would be circulated.
- An update on Pepys Library would be provided.

RESOLVED: That the responses provided by the Cabinet Members be noted.

5. Referrals to Mayor & Cabinet

None

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

Chair:

Date:
