

<b>Mayor and Cabinet</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Catford Regeneration Programme – Draft Catford Town Centre Framework
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Ward:</b>	Rushey Green
<b>Contributors:</b>	SGM Capital Programmes
<b>Class:</b>	Part 1
	Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020

## 1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1. This paper seeks to update Mayor and Cabinet on progress in the development of the draft Catford Town Centre Framework. It seeks approval to commence an 8-week public consultation on the draft Framework document and asks Mayor and Cabinet to endorse the draft attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2. This paper suggests key principles through which the draft Town Centre Framework can support the positive evolution of Catford, fundamentally shaped by community priorities.
- 1.3. Critically, the draft Framework sets out a template of how the Town Centre can evolve in the next 10/15 years – how we can improve and invest in Catford; how we can protect all that residents love about the town and how we can work together to address the things that must improve.
- 1.4. The draft Framework for Catford sets out a vision of how the Town can evolve against a post-Covid setting – offering a safe, green, accessible and quality environment in which to live, work and dwell.

## 2. Recommendations

Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1. Note the content of the report and endorse the Draft Catford Town Centre Framework for consultation;
- 2.2. Approve the release of the Draft Catford Town Centre Framework for broadly-based public consultation and report back to Mayor and Cabinet in Spring 2021;
- 2.3. Authorise the Executive Director of Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, to undertake all steps to progress the public consultation and to progress the related workstreams set out in this report;

- 2.4. Note the Phase 1 delivery projects as early and positive investment projects and consider specific recommendations to advance these as set out in a separate report on tonight's Mayor and Cabinet agenda;
- 2.5. Authorise the Executive Director of Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm, in consultation with the Executive Director for Corporate Services and with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, to undertake all steps to progress work needed to report back to Mayor and Cabinet on potential delivery mechanisms – including potential partnership approaches and approaches to funding and phasing;
- 2.6. Authorise the Executive Director of Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm, in consultation with the Executive Director for Corporate Services and with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, to undertake all steps to progress work needed to report back to Mayor and Cabinet on a strategy for Civic Accommodation/the Catford Campus;
- 2.7. Authorise the Executive Director of Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm, in consultation with the Executive Director for Corporate Services and with relevant Cabinet Members to continue to bid for external funding opportunities where they arise to support essential investment in Catford and enable the aims of the draft Framework (within the current delegation framework); and
- 2.8. Authorise the continued development of the scheme to re-align the A205 in order to enable the Draft Catford Framework, including working with TfL to reach agreement on matters of technical detail and with TfL and DfT in relation to funding.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. Full background information, detailing the previous key decisions made by the Mayor & Cabinet to take a Masterplan Framework approach in Catford, and to re-align the South Circular road through the town centre can be found in the November 7th 2016 Mayor & Cabinet report, the July 19th 2017 Mayor & Cabinet report and the 28th February 2018 Mayor & Cabinet report.
- 3.2. The report to Mayor & Cabinet on 19th of July 2017 recommended re-aligning the A205 to the south of Laurence House. The road decision was an essential step in defining and scoping the spatial plan for Catford's future. In December 2017, TfL's Healthy Streets Portfolio Board endorsed the outcome of the 'Pre-feasibility Design' work undertaken for the Catford town centre highways project. The Board approved the progression of the project to the next stage of design development 'Feasibility', managed by TfL's Transformational Schemes Sponsorship team. Feasibility design is jointly funded by TfL and LB Lewisham.
- 3.3. After the road re-alignment approval by Mayor & Cabinet in July 2017, a masterplan brief was prepared for Catford Town Centre. This set the fundamental purpose, objectives, requirements and scope of the study, which was endorsed by Mayor & Cabinet in February 2018.

- 3.4. In July 2018 Architects Studio Egret West (SEW), supported by Carl Turner Architects (renamed Turner Works), Greengage Environmental Consultants and Civic Engineers, were appointed to develop the Catford Town Centre Framework study.

#### **4. Policy Context**

- 4.1. The Catford Town Centre Framework contributes to the implementation of the Council's Corporate Priorities as detailed in the "Corporate Strategy 2018-2022" document which are:
- Open Lewisham: Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.
  - Tackling the housing crisis: Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.
  - Giving children and young people the best start in life: Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.
  - Building an inclusive local economy: Everyone can access high quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.
  - Delivering and defending health, social care and support: Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.
  - Making Lewisham greener: Everyone enjoys our green spaces and benefits from a healthy environment as we work to protect and improve our local environment.
  - Building safer communities: Every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from fear of crime.
- 4.2. Lewisham's new Local Plan will build on the existing growth strategy contained within the Core Strategy 2011, which identifies a growth corridor extending from New Cross and Deptford to Catford. Lewisham's new Local Plan proposes a strengthened focus on Lewisham's places, to ensure that development is positively managed with communities over the long-term for the benefit of all.
- 4.3. Lewisham Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, committing to reach a target of carbon zero by 2030. Change and growth must be positively managed, to build green infrastructure and harness opportunities for walking and cycling alongside more sustainable forms of development in the borough.
- 4.4. The Catford Town Centre Framework will provide evidence for the new Lewisham Local Plan's place-making approach. The process of plan making involves a significant information gathering and specialist studies at the front end of the process. This information is then used to set policy options and preferred approaches for the plan going forward. Local plans are required to meet prescribed 'tests of soundness' as set out in the NPPF. This includes that they must be 'justified' by evidence. The evidence base will be published

alongside the submission Local Plan and be subject to scrutiny through the independent examination process. The Catford Town Centre Framework will form part of this evidence base along with other Area Frameworks and will be given effect through the new Local Plan.

## 5. The opportunity to re-imagine Catford's future – key drivers

- 5.1. Catford is unique – a Town rich in history, culture and diversity. Catford is a diverse community with deep family roots both to the Victorian streets of our once grand neighbourhoods and cultural echoes from Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Poland, Nigeria, Ghana, Brazil. Catford has welcomed people for decades and this draft Framework seeks to support Catford's continued transition through the generations.
- 5.2. A Framework plan for Catford is inevitably long-term in outlook. It sets a blueprint for positive change to guide the development of the town centre in the decades to come. It will succeed if we can capture a consensus from the community on a vision for the town centre. To do so, we must hear from the younger generation - those who want to put down roots in Catford, to start a family, build a business and invite friends and family to spend time in the place they call home. We must welcome and encourage views from those in our community that need this change, reflect on what younger generations need in 10-15 years and be open minded in our vision. The Framework and priorities must also be relevant to those with deep-roots in the town – those who have lived its history and want the best for the town's future.
- 5.3. The journey to develop this Draft Town Centre Framework has already taken several years. During that time extensive engagement has already taken place, with around 2,500 separate views and inputs shaping the direction and priorities. Everything in the draft Catford Town Centre Framework seeks to reflect the needs of the community and what we have heard from local people on the journey to date. We started consultation four years ago taking the time for everyone's voice to be heard - sometimes formally and sometimes casually, as we talked to the seldom heard, breaking down the barriers that too often prevent people engaging in a place-shaping discussion. All this input has centred the emerging draft Framework on three critical themes that matter most to Catford people:
  - **A green town centre** - The ambition for Catford to be one of the greenest town centres in London is hugely supported. Nature will be prioritised to create a cleaner, healthier and a more sustainable town centre for the benefit of people, urban wildlife and ecology. Public space is vital as we have all learnt through the pandemic. A variety of space will be created in and around the places we gather - the train stations, Catford Broadway, the riverside and a new heart for the town centre. Planting on streets and in public spaces will enhance biodiversity providing new habitats for birds, insects and other species creating 'green stepping-stones' from natural spaces around the town centre including the River Pool linear park and Ladywell Fields. Green space helps to cool the urban environment,

improve air quality, noise pollution and also support sustainable drainage reducing the risk of flooding and providing resilience against climate change.

- **A vibrant town centre** - A reorganised Old Town Hall and Civic Suite for Lewisham Council's offices will provide an opportunity to celebrate the Grade II listed Broadway Theatre and create public space around this important heritage building. Catford will remain the civic heart of the borough and there is an opportunity to introduce educational institutes, leisure uses, new public space and entertainment and performance venues. Affordable workspace and more flexible retail space will encourage and nurture local employment opportunities, start-ups and growing businesses as well as provide new space for existing businesses.
- **An accessible town centre** - New residential neighbourhoods will be created in and around the town centre with affordable homes, thoughtfully designed to be safe, welcoming and encourage local living. Safe and attractive cycling routes will weave and stitch into surrounding neighbourhoods. More safe crossing points on the South Circular Road will help Catford become more pedestrian-orientated and a new network of lanes will improve the connectivity across the town centre. Improvements to the stations area will create a sense of arrival in Catford with a generous pavement to walk to and from the town centre.

## 6. The Draft Catford Town Centre Framework document

6.1. The key aims of the framework as set out in the appointment Brief were to:

- establish a framework for new development in the town centre in terms of its location, massing and potential function;
- be both aspirational and deliverable, commercially based, and informed by a thorough understanding of the retail, residential and leisure market in Catford;
- retain the intrinsic character of Catford as it grows in the future;
- form part of the evidence base for the emerging LB Lewisham Local Plan;
- inform funding bids by LB Lewisham and its partners for a range of transport and regeneration initiatives.

6.2. The core masterplan objectives set out in the Brief included:

- Setting up the spatial layout and land use mix for the centre.
- Securing a cohesive, permeable and well-connected proposition for the whole of the town centre.

- Improving the quality of the public realm and mitigating the impacts of traffic
  - Improving the retail and leisure offer in Catford including the morning, daytime and evening experience of the town centre environment.
  - Providing a clear delivery plan and greater clarity for landowners, developers, investors, operators, the council and other public sector agencies as to the appropriate scale, location, mix and form of development which could be accommodated within the framework study area.
- 6.3. The draft Catford Town Centre Framework document consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 sets out the need for change. Chapter 2 establishes the strategic opportunities and spatial framework. Chapter 3 illustrates more detailed guidance for key sites across the town centre. Chapter 4 summarises the viability factors which have influenced the spatial strategy and sets out an indicative outline implementation programme for change over the short, medium and long term in Catford.
- 6.4. The draft Town Centre Framework responds to a number of key issues that public consultation to date has highlighted. The vision and guiding principles have been organised thematically and have been fundamentally shaped by the consultation process. Whilst the Framework will not constitute statutory planning policy it does underpin the Local Plan and will help the Council in guiding priorities and change in the Town Centre, utilising these main ‘pillars’:
- A Green Town Centre
  - A Vibrant Town Centre
  - An Accessible Town Centre

## **7. The consultation process for the draft Town Centre Framework**

- 7.1. There have been a number of workshops with Members, 3rd party landowners and key stakeholders and these conversations will continue. The emerging framework has been shared with the local community and this has informed the refinement of the framework as it has progressed.
- 7.2. In light of the Covid pandemic, the approach that is recommended for holding an 8-week non-statutory public consultation on the draft Town Centre Framework document is set out below. Subject to endorsement of the draft Framework, a broadly-based engagement and consultation plan will be implemented. This will comprise a range of themes, events and media appropriate to the Pandemic and maximising public and staff safety, but still engaging communities fully in physical and virtual space.
- 7.3. Following analysis of the consultation responses received, any necessary changes will be made to the draft Town Centre Framework document before it is brought back to Sustainable Development Select Committee and Mayor &

Cabinet as a final draft. The completed document will be subject to Mayor and Cabinet sign-off prior to adoption.

7.4. The programme of key dates for the approval process are in the table below.

15 Sep 20	SDSC Update: Draft Catford Town Centre Framework Presentation
16 Sep 20	M & C Approval sought to commence the draft Town Centre Framework public consultation
Oct-Nov 20	8 weeks Non-Statutory public consultation on the Draft Town Centre Framework (subject to M&C approval)
19 Jan 21	SDSC Update: Final Catford Town Centre Framework
10 Mar 21	M&C formal endorsement sought of the Catford Town Centre Framework

## 8. A205 highways project update

- 8.1. TfL is working with the Council to bring forward a scheme for the re-alignment of the A205 through Catford Town Centre to deliver a key element of the transformation of the town centre and address the severance caused by the existing route. In addition the scheme would seek to rebalance the movement and place functions to reduce air pollution, to encourage the use of sustainable and active ways to travel by improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and to improve the use of public transport and to seek to reduce the impact of private cars.
- 8.2. The introduction of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) is due to be introduced by TfL in October 2021 and this would affect pollutant vehicles heading north of the A205. Proposals for the A205 will need to take account of corresponding changes in behaviour by drivers.
- 8.3. TfL have secured 'in principle' agreement to the funding of the scheme from the Department of Transport. In December 2019, Lewisham successfully achieved £10M of Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) from the GLA linked to the A205 works being delivered.
- 8.4. In March 2020, many TfL staff were furloughed which unfortunately caused delays to the scheme development programme. With the current focus necessarily being on the London Streetspace Programme and emergency social distancing measures, some prior projects will experience delays. Catford remains a priority project in the TfL Healthy Streets Portfolio and TfL are committed to continuing to work with Lewisham Council on the aspirations for the town centre.
- 8.5. Technical assessments and considerations to date have shown that there is scope to deliver a scheme that realigns the A205 to achieve the outcomes outlined in paragraph 7.1. It is necessary to undertake further detailed work to get a full understanding of all the potential impacts of the scheme and ensure that the scheme is delivering the maximum possible benefits. This will

be a key focus of the future work. Whilst timescales in which this work will be undertaken are currently uncertain, discussion with TfL managers are seeking to build a composite work programme into 2021 which address all key workstreams on which the delivery of the Town Centre Framework depends.

## **9. Delivery issues and approaches**

- 9.1. Delivery of any framework such as this is a medium/long term proposition and will require sustained input, focus and capacity over time. The attached Framework paints a pen-sketch of a programme which can deliver significant and positive change over a 10/15-year cycle. Subject to engagement and final endorsement of the Framework, the Council will need to advance a broadly-based delivery programme which provides a practical way forward on several of the following key issues:
- 9.2. **Early Phase 1 Delivery** – A further report on tonight’s agenda outlines projects that start to make early and tangible improvement to Catford. These projects seek to focus investment on areas of significant community support – such as the Good Growth Fund bid for Catford Constitutional Club. The report also sets out a programme of improvements to the Station Approach/Links – which will improve the sense of arrival/approach to Catford and start to emphasise the commitment to being both a Green and Accessible Town Centre. Importantly, these early projects are seeking to draw down on a range of funding streams that can achieve tangible, early, priority improvements. Approval of the framework will, in turn, enable Catford to bid confidently against other funding streams that are likely to arise in the years ahead. In turn, these projects should also help to leverage other key partners – such as Network Rail - to advance investment plans.
- 9.3. **Catford Campus/Civic Accommodation** – Further work will be needed to advance a Council-wide plan for Civic and Office floorplate requirements. Whilst an initial scope was agreed as part of the early Masterplan Framework, this will have changed substantially as part of a post-Covid transition. Further work will need to be undertaken to assess the future floorplate and Civic requirement. There will also be a consideration of the potential to achieve a broader consolidation of public and community partners as part of broader post-Covid public service Campus. This will take some time to fully-explore, scope and detail. Critically, the Civic requirements are not funded at this stage – so work will need to be done to generate a business case for the future requirements.
- 9.4. **Funding and Phasing** – Beyond public consultation and as part of building a strong implementation programme, Mayor and Cabinet will need to take a view on its preferred future delivery model. The scale of investment proposed is such that it is likely to be beyond the Council’s own resources, so strategic options will need to be presented to enable the delivery of the Framework’s benefits/key outcomes. As outlined elsewhere, the Council has – through its land ownership – gained a high degree of control over the pace and scale of any change within the core Town Centre area. The Mayor and Cabinet is asked to agree a full option appraisal to consider how the

framework can be carefully and sensitively delivered over time, whilst retaining control of quality, pace and outcomes.

## **10. Initial Viability Assessment**

- 10.1. It is usual with development frameworks to undertake some outline viability testing as a measure of deliverability. At such an early stage this cannot be a full commercial Development Appraisal. That detail will follow at later stages, when detailed development schemes are advanced to a planning application phase. Nonetheless, initial work has been undertaken to assess basic viability of the key elements of the 'core' Catford Town Centre Framework – specifically those elements that relate to the Council's own land ownings. This work was undertaken by the Council's appointed Viability consultant – AspinallVerdi (AV). AV's summary report is included in the commercially confidential Appendix in Part 2 of tonight's agenda.
- 10.2. In AV's work with the Catford Framework team, the challenge was to explore and test viability of a baseline scheme that could realise the inherent value of Council's long term landholding in the Town Centre whilst also achieving the other objectives of the Framework, including a high level of affordable housing, green space, commercial space and associated quality place-shaping. The fundamental conclusion of this work is that the Framework provides a platform that is viable against reasonable planning assumptions and should be able to achieve at least 35% affordable housing. Key conclusions from AV are set out in the Part 2 report. In addition to the positive headline position, AV have undertaken more detailed work on potential early sites/phases. Specifically, in relation to Phases 1-3, they highlight positive viability, giving confidence that these are capable of progressing in the short-medium term. AV also highlight the need for flexibility in order to adapt to market needs/conditions and to ensure that quality is not compromised.
- 10.3. Officers believe that the AV's conclusion above and in the confidential paper in Part 2 provide sufficient assurance to underpin further work towards delivery. Their input and summary also points to areas in which viability can be enhanced further as we progress into greater detail and depending on both market conditions and delivery approaches.
- 10.4. The initial viability report should remain confidential at this point in order to protect the Council's commercial position in any subsequent discussions.

## **11. Financial Implications**

- 11.1. At this stage there are no direct financial implications arising from this report as the decision relate to the release/consultation on a draft Catford Town Centre Framework.
- 11.2. Looking forward, the key financial issues for the Council are the protection and enhancement of the considerable value that the Council has embedded through extensive town centre landholdings. Such extensive and consolidated

town centre landholdings are quite rare in London and this presents a significant opportunity for the Council to achieve its broader aims – particularly significant new affordable housing. The key issue for the Council going forward will be the scale of further investment that will be required to realise the full scale of development set out in the Framework.

- 11.3. The Council has – through its wholly owned property company (CRPL) – acquired and aligned significant town centre landholding which are a major opportunity and enabler to implementation. Initial outline Viability appraisals suggest that a scheme of this type would achieve an inherent and positive viability on the basis described, whilst also preserving a significant Capital investment/land value. There would be several ways in which that investment/value can be protected and enhanced. It is recommended that a full option appraisal is brought forward to Mayor and Cabinet once the Framework has been consulted/agreed. The initial viability report should remain confidential at this point in order to protect the Council’s commercial position in any subsequent discussions.
- 11.4. Recommendation 2.7 flags the continued importance and potential for Catford to benefit from a range of external funds that are likely to emerge. Catford has already been successful in being highlighted for GLA Good Growth funding and it is reasonable to conclude that further funds will emerge in response to the Covid Pandemic and associated economic and employment challenges. Officers are clear that recommendation 2.7 must continue to reside within the Council’s current framework for external bidding.

## **12. Legal Implications:**

- 12.1. The Catford Town Centre Framework may be a material planning consideration, but its weight will be limited when coming to consider planning applications.

## **13. Crime and disorder implications**

- 13.1. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **14. Equalities Implications:**

- 14.1. The Council’s Comprehensive Equality Scheme for 2016-20 provides an overarching framework and focus for the Council’s work on equalities and helps ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 14.2. The Catford Town Centre Framework does not have any direct equalities implications.

**15. Environmental Implications:**

- 15.1. There are no specific environmental implications arising directly from the recommendations set out in this report.
- 15.2. In the preparation of detailed planning applications for sites in the town centre energy strategies, air quality, wind and daylight studies or any other relevant impacts will be assessed.

**16. Human Rights Implications:**

- 16.1. There are no specific human rights implications arising out of this report

**Appendices:**

*Appendix 1:* Draft Catford Town Centre Framework (available on the Council's website): <https://lewisham.gov.uk/catfordtowncentreframework>

For further information please contact Sarah Walsh, Regeneration and Urban Design Programme Manager ([sarah.walsh@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.walsh@lewisham.gov.uk))