

ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 February 2016 at 7.30 pm

MEMBERS: Councillor Jill Whitehead (Chair), Councillor Manuel Abellan, Councillor Adrian Davey, Councillor Richard Marston, Councillor Steve Penneck, Councillor Tony Shields and Councillor Hanna Zuchowska

(Absent) Councillor Nighat Piracha (Vice-Chair), Councillor Patrick McManus and Councillor Paul Wingfield

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATIONS OF SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillors Paul Wingfield, Nighat Piracha and Patrick McManus. Councillors Jean Crossby, Joyce Melican and Tim Crowley attended as substitutes respectively.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

33 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

34 HEART OF HACKBRIDGE

Sally Blomfield, Area Renewal Manager, presented a report on the results of a formal road crossing consultation in Hackbridge that followed the Heart of Hackbridge scheme implementation, and the subsequent installation of a zebra crossing outside Hackbridge School, following a road safety and disability audit. The report explored the options for an additional controlled crossing in the area and outlined the consultation results, including 399 responses from residents, parents of children at local primary schools, and representatives from Sutton Vision and the Metropolitan Police. The report recommended the implementation of a zebra crossing north of the roundabout on London Road, which would result in a formal crossing on each arm of the roads which serve this local centre (the third crossing being at Hackbridge Station/the Felnex site).

Michael Parsons was invited to speak on behalf of Sutton Vision. He advised the committee that the estimated figure of 4500 Sutton residents with visual impairments was actually likely to be much higher and was predicted to increase. He reported that not many of Sutton Vision's 42 members in Hackbridge were able to respond to the consultation because the leaflets that were circulated were printed on glossy paper which is more difficult to read for those that are partially sighted, and that he had found the online consultation difficult to navigate. Mr Parsons indicated that

options 1, 3 and 4 for the zebra crossing were not suitable as they either prevented disability access or caused unnecessary inconvenience. He advised the committee that Sutton Vision consultees believed that option 2, outside 156 Hackbridge Road, was the most suitable option.

Councillors discussed the need for the council to involve disability groups in consultations, and particularly to take note of what can be done to be more inclusive. Councillor Adrian Davey confirmed that he would take this forward as Chair of the Equality and Diversity Forum. Mr Parsons offered his assistance in leading a session on the accessibility of services, which the Chair accepted and thanked him for his offer.

Councillor Tim Crowley asked about the timescale for the second crossing and Warren Shadbolt, Executive Head of Safer and Stronger Communities, responded that a timetable was currently being developed.

Councillors also raised concerns about the installation of courtesy crossings without clear guidance from the government. Sally Blomfield advised that she had attended a debate about courtesy crossings at the House of Lords, where it was reported that new national guidance was currently being produced. Warren Shadbolt advised that there is existing guidance that is unclear on the matter of courtesy crossings but that Highways officers awaited the new guidance due shortly from the Department for Transport. A vote was taken and all Councillors agreed with the recommendation.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee agree the implementation of a zebra crossing north of the roundabout on London Road to replace the courtesy crossing adjacent to No 156 London Road.

35

LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - ALLOCATION

Warren Shadbolt, Executive Head of Safer and Stronger Communities, presented a report to outline Transport for London's allocation to the Council of Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding for 2016/17. He advised that Local Committees had been asked for new LIP proposals, which had been assessed in the usual way, and that the report was based on the results of this process.

Councillors discussed the future of LIP funding under a new Mayor of London, and supported the need for fairer local funding for Sutton. LIP funding had been provided for a three year period, but the future arrangements for the period after 2016/17 was unclear, as TFL's budget was being reduced in line with other public bodies. The Chair noted that money for road maintenance had been reduced by government over a number of years, but councils needed funds to be retained to maintain the quality of local road assets.

The Chair noted that Sutton had won funds from TFL for Beddington Lane to be the next major road scheme in the borough. This was the first bid in London to be won for an industrial area, rather than a High Street area. The value of the bid was initially over £300,000 for a feasibility study, to be followed in subsequent years by funding in the region of £3 million.

A vote was taken and all members agreed the recommendations.

RESOLVED that the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee agree:

1. That the schemes and measures detailed in the report, having received LIP funding, become part of the Highways, and Transport Service delivery programme for 2016/17.
2. To release financial provision of £1,734k for the capital schemes identified in the settlement for 2016/17 (£207,000 for various revenue initiatives has been approved for 2016/17 and will be included in the revenue estimates).
3. To allocate the £100k Local Transport Funding element of the settlement to Local Committees on a per capita basis.

36

THE FUTURE OF SUTTON'S LIBRARY SERVICE

Jan Underhill, Executive Head of Wellbeing, presented a two-part report to outline the results of the Sutton's Future consultation with service users and consider, in detail, the options for savings in the years 2016 to 2019, for a future model of the library network which takes into account developments elsewhere in the UK. She presented the key messages and the methodology of the consultation which sought to carry out the aims from the Library Strategy, to protect the most vulnerable people, and to maintain as much of the service as possible whilst still delivering the required savings. The most popular option was to move towards a voluntary and community based model.

In the second part of the report, Jan Underhill referred the Committee to the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, which highlighted libraries as a statutory service but with flexibility for local authorities to determine needs and service design. The recommendations had been drawn from data that showed the usage of the Mobile Library Service and Beddington Library had been declining for several years. However the need to ensure that vulnerable, housebound people could still access a library service was acknowledged and a new Housebound Library Service had been developed to respond to those needs and which commenced in September 2015. The Libraries service intended to use toolkits and guidance available nationally to pilot a more volunteer and community based approach.

Councillors commended the extensive research that had been taken into account. A discussion ensued regarding the sustainability and popularity of the housebound service, and Jan Underhill confirmed that feedback so far had been positive and that a review would be undertaken after one year. The Chair advised that she had received interest from residents who were keen to apply for the service.

Councillors asked questions about the volunteer-base for libraries and the possibility of sharing library premises with other bodies. Jan Underhill advised that the volunteer hours already included people from a variety of age groups and backgrounds, and that training would be important for volunteers in a community based model. The sharing of premises was being considered across the Council. Tolis Vouyioukas, Strategic Director for People Services, informed the Committee that the financial cost of the buildings was not the most significant cost of the Library service.

Further questions were asked about the mitigation for Beddington library users, besides the introduction of the Housebound Service for older users, and the internal central charge for the Mobile Library service. In regard to younger users, Madeline Barratt, Head of Service for Libraries, Heritage and Arts, detailed plans to work more closely with schools and nurseries so they could order boxes of books to borrow, or a member of staff for story-time, as well as other initiatives such as the Bookstart Scheme. Jan Underhill undertook to confirm any central charges that might have been applied to the Mobile savings quoted in the report and inform the Committee at a later date.

This was followed by a discussion about the benefits of joining the London Libraries Consortium that consisted of 17 London Libraries, which coordinated a number of back office functions such as centralised book buying, and the proposals for a change in opening hours, including the reopening of all floors at Sutton Library on a Monday.

A vote was taken on each of the recommendations.

RESOLVED that the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee agreed:

1. That the use of the findings of the Library Consultation which ran from 23 September to 16 December 2015 to inform the options under consideration be approved.
2. To close Beddington Library from 1 April 2016.
3. To withdraw the Mobile Library service from 1 April 2016 with the continuing development of the Housebound service to minimise adverse impact on current vulnerable users of the Mobile Library.
4. To change library opening hours from 1 May 2016, to be achieved by internal efficiencies.
5. To change Sunday service at Westcroft and the Life Centre from staffed to fully self-service libraries.
6. That the model of Council-led services with community support was the one best suited for adoption in LB Sutton.

Councillors Tony Shields and Tim Crowley recorded their dissent to recommendations 2.2 and 2.3.

37

ANY URGENT ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DIRECTION OF THE CHAIR

There were no urgent items brought forward.

The meeting ended at 8.41 pm

Chair

Date

