

ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEE**26 November 2015 at 7.30 pm**

MEMBERS: Councillor Jill Whitehead (Chair), Councillor Nighat Piracha (Vice Chair) and Councillors Manuel Abellan, Adrian Davey, Richard Marston, Patrick McManus, Steve Penneck, Tony Shields, Paul Wingfield and Hanna Zuchowska.

(*Absent)

Councillor Ruth Dombey (ex-officio)*.

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATIONS OF SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Steve Penneck declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8 as he lives in close proximity to the subject matter, Russettings.

22. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes for the last meeting, 17 September 2015 are agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

23. PETITION

At the invitation of the Chair, a petition was presented by Ken Moser (Carshalton Beeches Residents Association) regarding the mobile library service, which was part of the current consultation on the provision of the library service in Sutton.

The Chair reminded the Committee that the future shape of Sutton's libraries had been discussed in detail at the Environment and Neighbourhoods Committee meeting on 17th September, with the consultation starting on 23 September and this was summarised in the minutes.

Mr Moser noted that the concerns of residents who used the Mobile Library services included those who lived in sheltered housing properties and elderly residents who relied on the mobile library.

A response was provided by Jan Underhill, Head of Wellbeing, who noted the concerns raised by the petition. She reiterated that the public consultation on the future of the library service is still ongoing, and will run until 16 December 2015, so no decisions have yet been made. She also noted that over 2200 responses to the consultation had been received to date, and went on to highlight that every service is being reviewed in order to meet the Council's £40m savings target.

Councillor Steve Penneck, Lead Member for Libraries, who had chaired the recent Libraries consultation event, pointed to the proposed expansion of the "Housebound Service" for vulnerable people as a positive measure to offset the Mobile Library loss. He explained that it would be expensive to purchase a new mobile Library as these had a limited life.

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The Senior Economic Regeneration Officer, Daniel Doris gave a presentation about the Sutton Station Gateway project which was now complete. He outlined the main changes that took place under the project, the main aim of which was to open up the side entrance to Sutton Station. Other improvements included removing street clutter such as barriers on the pavement, repositioning the bus shelters, and introducing 120 new bicycle lock-up spaces. Transport for London was expected to install Legible London signage in the week commencing 30 November to make the town centre more accessible from the Station.

Councillor Richard Clifton spoke in place of the Chair of the Project Board, Councillor Simon Wales. He highlighted the popularity of the opening of the side entrance and commended all involved in the project for delivering within time and budget.

The Chair commented that this was a good example of partnership working with a range of bodies such as TFL, Network Rail and Southern Trains. The Sutton Station Gateway project was well received, and officers were congratulated on its success. However, Councillor Tony Shields noted his dissent about the removal of the formal crossing to a new position slightly further down on Brighton Road, and the introduction of a courtesy crossing at the station entrance.

25. BEDDINGTON PARK HERITAGE LOTTERY - PARKS FOR PEOPLE FUND

Bill Wyatt, the Assistant Parks Manager presented a report to update the committee on the progress of the Beddington Park Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Stage Two bid, and he gave a presentation detailing the proposed project. The bid would be submitted in February 2016 for £2,952,700, which included Council matched funding of 10%.

Mr Wyatt noted that the project had five themes which he outlined namely 1) Access 2) Activities 3) Wildlife 4) History and 5) Lakes and Waterways. The HLF project had been a pilot for citizen led commissioning to develop these themes and it had gained much volunteer support through the Friends of Beddington Park. The bid was overseen by a Steering Group of Friends, local groups, officers and members, and was chaired by John Dodwell. Mr Wyatt outlined plans for the final HLF bid including working with volunteers on the 5 year project, and proposals for the lake, the stock pond, the Grange Garden and the London Road Boundary. The final designs would be completed once the outcome of the bid was known.

Councillor Pathumal Ali (Beddington North) addressed the Committee, expressing the importance of Beddington Park as a sub regional park used by many local people both in Sutton and in neighbouring boroughs. She also highlighted the need to manage expectations about what can be delivered within the budget, should our HLF bid be successful. John Dodwell (Chair of the Steering Group) discussed how silt will be removed from the lake and reused in the park, and how the lake and water areas will be remodelled. Councillor Sunita Gordon (Wallington North) reminded the committee that this project crossed two wards and expressed her thanks to Bill Wyatt and John Dodwell for their hard work on the HLF project bid.

Questions were raised regarding the biodiversity aspects of the HLF bid, and Bill Wyatt reminded the Committee that heritage included natural heritage. Efforts will be made to enhance biodiversity through new planting, as well as ensuring that healthy existing trees and other specimens will remain in situ. Community planting events will be organised in order to encourage the public to look after and respect the park. Bill Wyatt also confirmed that users of the park will be encouraged to travel sustainably, by leaving their cars at home where possible, and a travel plan will be developed.

Councillor Tony Shields asked if air monitoring in Beddington Park would be routinely carried out, given the proximity to the Beddington Lane waste management facility. The Strategic Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration noted that the entire borough was an air quality action zone, and information on how the air quality was monitored was previously brought to this Committee, and was available on the Council's website.

RESOLVED that the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee:

1. Notes the works to Beddington Park as detailed at 4.1 to 4.12 of the report.
2. Agrees that the final sign off for the application to the HLF and any other minor decisions arising during the development works, are delegated to Strategic Director, Environment, Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair of Environment and Neighbourhood Committee before the final submission in February 2016, and if successful to commence project implementation.

26. CYCLING STRATEGY

Alex Forrest, Principal Transport Planner, presented a report outlining the consultation results for the draft Cycling Strategy, which was a daughter strategy of the Sustainable Transport Strategy. The consultation had been held between 21 July and 7 September, and the full results of the consultation were available on the London Borough of Sutton website.

He explained that it was notable from the consultation that the infrastructure of Sutton is seen by many as the key to getting people cycling. The strategy aims to encourage a shift from journeys being taken by motor vehicles to cycling, and sets out what is currently being done and what the council proposes to do. The Action Plan will be updated frequently as a separate document to the strategy, and there would be amendments to the timeframe.

Councillor Manuel Abellan, the Council's cycling champion, highlighted the differences between cycling attitudes in London and other European countries and cities, where the latter had more families cycling. The proposed TFL Cycling Super Highway scheduled to skirt the North of the Borough and TFL's "Quietways" projects within the borough should contribute to the benefits of the Cycling Strategy in the borough. Also Sutton's new Highways and Transport Shared Service with the Royal Borough of Kingston should assist us to learn from Kingston's "Mini Holland" cycling project.

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RESOLVED that the Environment and Neighbourhood committee agrees:

1. The final Cycling Delivery Strategy in Appendix E, incorporating the proposed changes as a result of the consultation.
2. To delegate authority to the Executive Head of Safer and Stronger Communities, in consultation with the Chair, to approve any final changes to the Strategy requested by the Committee, and its subsequent publication.

27. DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION OF RUSSETTINGS

Annette Madden, the Executive Head of Business Services presented a report detailing proposed options for the future of Russettings, the council's Register Office. She circulated current layout plans and proposed future plans to the committee and outlined the costs. The expansion would allow Russettings to be used for other purposes besides marriage and citizenship ceremonies, as the venue had potential to accommodate conferences.

Councillor Tony Shields queried whether the predictions for potential income and increased business were realistic for the proposed extension to Russettings. Virginia Morris, the Registration Services Manager, confirmed that demand was high, and that potential customers were being lost to other venues due to the limited capacity of the current marriage room. The Council wished to tap the high level of demand and increase the number and types of ceremonies in line with the demand.

A vote was taken on the recommendation. Eight members voted in favour and two members voted against (Councillor Tony Shields and Councillor Patrick McManus). It was therefore:

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee approves the option to build an extension, increasing capacity to 100 seat marriage/conference room to bring in additional revenue to the Council.

28. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING & REGENERATION FEES & CHARGES FOR 2016/17

The Executive Head of Environment Commissioning, Matt Clubb, introduced this report detailing existing charges and proposed increases for some services. In a number of cases charges remained the same as last year e.g. libraries and trade waste, and some had decreased e.g. some at the Life Centre. The main aim of the proposed charges were to recover costs of services, cover increases in contract costs and inflation, and to address the base income budget position for individual services.

Matt Clubb confirmed that the service formerly delivered by The Vine Project, would be provided in-house until the implementation of the South London Waste Partnership contract in April 2017.

A vote was taken on the recommendations to increase specific charges for environmental services as outlined in the report in Appendices 1 to 7, keep some charges at the same level and decrease other charges. Eight members voted in favour and two members voted against (Councillor Tony Shields and Councillor Patrick McManus).

It was therefore RESOLVED that:

The Environment and Neighbourhood committee agrees the proposals for charges for Commercial (Trade) Waste, Bulky Waste, Parks (including Biodiversity), Cemeteries, Highways and Transport, Regulatory Services, Sports and Leisure Management, Registration Service and Libraries.

29. REVIEW OF WASTE & RECYCLING POLICIES

Josie Falco, the Head of Recycling and Waste, presented a report of an efficiency review of the Council's waste and recycling policies undertaken by the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB). LWARB recommended that the development and application of revised policies would lead to greater efficiencies in the service, potential savings and contribute to elevating material up the waste hierarchy. The report detailed the outcome of the review, the benefits of adopting revised policies and sought approval for the introduction of amended policies.

Josie Falco outlined plans to undertake an educational campaign for brown bins to be used for "non-recyclable waste" only, as recycling material was still being deposited in brown bins by some residents. At present 8% of residents (4,000 properties) presented more than one brown bin, and the aim was to reduce this to one brown bin only to encourage more recycling and greater use of green bins. The Council was currently embarking on a campaign to provide information on what items could be recycled and put in green bins.

Josie Falco also gave an update on the improvement in flats recycling following the council's receipt of money from the Department of Communities and Local Government for this purpose.

Josie Falco informed the committee that although London Borough of Sutton was fourth best in London for recycling dry mixed material per household, 23% of waste was still being disposed of as "general waste" rather than being recycled, and so improvements could still be made.

A vote was taken on the recommendation. Seven members voted in favour and one member (Councillor Tony Shields) abstained from the vote. It was therefore:

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Neighbourhood committee approves the waste and recycling policies 2016 listed at 4.4 of the report and detailed in Appendix A from April 2016.

30. ANY URGENT ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DIRECTION OF THE CHAIR

There were no urgent items brought forward.

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The meeting ended at 9.06 pm

Chair:

Date: