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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 30 OCTOBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 10.10 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Natasha Irons (in the Chair),
Councillor Daniel Holden, Councillor Ben Butler,
Councillor Anthony Fairclough, Councillor David Dean,
Councillor Aidan Mundy, Councillor Owen Pritchard and
Councillor Geraldine Stanford

John Bosley (Assistant Director Public Space Contracts and
Commissioning), Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate
Services), Mark Humphries (Assistant Director of Infrastructure &
Technology), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and
Regeneration), Paul McGarry (FutureMerton Manager) and
James McGinlay (Assistant Director for Sustainable
Communities)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies received.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. However, Cllr Mundy requested that the minutes be updated with a few clarifications.

In response to Panel Member questions about street cleaning and fly tipping (page 3), it was clarified that Pollards Hill is one of the areas in the East of the borough that the Council is paying for side waste removal outside the contract.

Officers committed to action on the matter of user journeys, web improvements and increasing the limit for uploads via mobile phones (page 4).

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

The Director of Environment and Regeneration commented on the active work being undertaken following the recommendations from the Panel in October.

One of the scrutiny recommendations agreed by Cabinet (Para 2.11) was to involve a scrutiny representative in meetings between the Council and Clarion. This matter has been discussed with the Chair outside of the meeting and she has agreed to be the scrutiny representative in those meetings.

5 CLARION HOUSING GROUP: REGENERATION (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair welcomed and thanked Paul Quinn, Director of Merton Regeneration for Clarion Housing, for facilitating today's visits to the three regeneration sites. The Councillors all found it extremely useful and informative.

Paul Quinn gave the following updates with regards to the regeneration sites;

- **Eastfields** – Clarion will be submitting the planning application for 197 homes just after Christmas. These are earmarked for the existing community, with 330 families to rehouse in total. Community centre and Energy centre. Underground refuse system at Eastfields and High Path estates.
- **Ravensbury** - Ravensbury Live web browser. Sustainable drainage system. Community centre. First new homes completed around June 2020. Phases 2-4 submitted for November Planning Committee.
- **High Path** – Extensive study of the local area, what design features work well. Phase 1 underway building over 134 homes, construction are on site with completion expected in 18-20 months. All entrances will be designed the same irrespective of social or private housing tenants.

The Chair then invited speakers to share their views on the regeneration plans;

- Cypren Edmunds, High Path Residents Association - Residents feel there has been a lack of transparency. No residents were part of the discussion of the financial model or consultation. Raynsford review reflects this kind of disenfranchisement. Fire doors installed a year ago have recently been replaced due to not being fit for purpose. There needs to be an overhaul of the financial offer or residents will be penalised.
- Eve Cohen – Lack of toilet and bathroom provision in High Path. 3 and 4 bedroom properties only have one toilet. Sanitary provision has improved through the years, why can it not continue to improve? Will private properties feature en-suite plus extra provision? Although it is too late for High Path phases 1 and 2, can more consideration be given to phases 3 and 4?
- Sara Sharp – Issue with heights Currently High Path is an island and it needs to be stitched back into the fabric of the street and community. Consultation has not been wide enough. Should have been designed as a whole - Residents don't know what phase 3 will look like. There is a push from Government for better quality – there should not be a divide and materials should be equal for social housing and luxury/private homes.

Paul Quinn responded to the speakers comments;

- We are building some of the most energy efficient properties in South London. They are insulated well, air tight, part of the district heat network and there will be underfloor heating in every home.
- Residents offer is key. Clarion made considerable effort to consult and the resident offer has been well received.
- With regards to bathrooms, we are working to National Design Standards.
- The tallest building we have is ten storeys.
- We are knitting High Path back into the surrounding area. We undertook a space syntax which indicated people walk around High Path, not through it. We have planned a much more accessible estate.
- Fire safety – We are responding to legislation and anticipating the outcome of the Hackett review/report. One of the lead contributors to that review is the Senior EM at PR Architects who are advising us with our designs.

In response to Panel Members questions, Paul Quinn replied;

- Considerable effort to ensure all homes are of the same quality and space standards. Design code and masterplan are sacrosanct to guarantee all later phases refer back to the earlier phases.
- We have undergone extension consultation including drop-ins, workshops and letters. Digital engagement is being utilised to reach further.
- Consultation has enabled us to understand residents' concerns and this is reflected in the home offer. The Ravensbury Design Consultation also led to design nuances.
- Incredibly important that we work in partnership with the Council and consider that there is always room to improve. There have been many frustrations over slow moving work and processes.
- We have an interest in regenerating neighbourhoods – the focus right now is on the Morden and Wimbledon regenerations, but we see that Mitcham has great potential for regeneration also.
- All the projects are taken to the Design Review Panel.

Paul Quinn was thanked for attending.

6 SINGLE USE PLASTICS - ACTION PLAN (Agenda Item 6)

The Assistant Director for Infrastructure and Technology presented the update. In response to Panel Members questions, the AD for Infrastructure and Technology explained that difficulties have arisen as the work sits across two directorates.

The AD for Infrastructure and Technology agreed to return in the future with an updated plan detailing the objectives and measures of success.

7 BUDGET/BUSINESS PLAN SCRUTINY (ROUND 1) (Agenda Item 7)

After inviting questions of clarification from the Panel, the Director of Corporate Services explained the following;

- Deficit created by the Dedicated Schools Grant is assumed to be around 9 million.
- Council Tax – The 2% precept is ring fenced for Adult Social Care.
- New procurement strategy enables a small release of capacity/resources.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration confirmed there will be a consultation about Wimbledon Park and the other paddling pools/interactive water features in the borough.

Discussing ENV1920-01 which is the Parking services application to change Merton's PCN charge band from band B to band A.

There was the additional request for information about where Merton Council sits in council rankings of parking services income in the country.

Action: The Director of E&R agreed to provide this outside the meeting

Councillor Daniel Holden raised a motion with regards to ENV1920-01 which is the Parking services application to change Merton's PCN charge band from band B to band A. Councillor Holden proposed this The motion was seconded by Councillor David Dean and debated by the Panel.

Panel unanimously RESOLVED to make the following reference to Cabinet:

“This Panel recommends to Cabinet that the proposed saving of ENV1920-01 be accepted on the proviso that the key locations that give rise to PCN's are checked and reviewed by the Highways inspectors to ensure that the appropriate signage, layout and road markings are clear and therefore not unfairly penalising residents. Once the review is concluded, the results should be brought to the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel for comment”.

8 BISHOPSFORD ROAD BRIDGE UPDATE (Agenda Item 8)

The Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities introduced the update and stated that the Council is still waiting for the report conclusion into the causes and what led to the bridges collapse. A report investigating whether the bridge needs to be repaired or replaced all together is also underway. Regular updates are online at www.merton.gov.uk/bishopsfordbridge

9 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION (Agenda Item 9)

The Head of Future Merton gave a presentation on the plans for Morden. In response to Panel Members questions he also clarified;

- Mitcham has seen £7m investment in transport and public realm and the next stage will be to work on a long term plan for new development investment.
- Shop front improvements are planned for Merton High Street, complimenting the High Path regeneration utilising CIL from nearby developments. South

Wimbledon is also proposed to be designated as a local town centre in the new Local Plan.

10 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Agenda Item 10)

A Panel Member asked how fly tips removed within 24 hours are monitored. The Director of Environment and Regeneration replied that fly tips are reported via CRM through to Echo and then recorded back into CRM when collected by Veolia. Due to the high volume, we cannot check every single one has been completed therefore we accept that some residents may find they have not all been collected.

The Assistant Director of Public Space added that are some peculiarities within the data that are being looked into (i.e. private land, requiring different arrangements etc.) Action: The Assistant Director of Public Space agreed to report back any significant anomalies.

A Panel Member queried the still high levels of litter and detritus. The Assistant Director of Public Space agreed they were high but are moving in the right direction. The plan implemented in the East of the borough is bringing improvement and we are grading more stringently so we maintain that pressure to deliver. We are also looking at electric mechanised sweeping apparatus pilot for waste as an option.

11 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 11)

The work programme was agreed.