

Agenda Item 3

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 25 JUNE 2013

7.15PM – 9:15PM

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Tindle (in the chair), Councillors Stan Anderson, , Samantha George, John Sargeant, Dennis Pearce, John Bowcott, Ian Munn

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Nick Draper, Cabinet Member for Community and Culture, Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration, Councillor Phillip Jones (substitute for Councillor Russell Makin), Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration, James McGinlay, Head of Sustainable Communities, Yvonne Tomlin, Head of Community Education, Tom Walsh (Sustainable Merton), Harold Forbes (Sustainable Merton)Rebecca Redman, Scrutiny Officer

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dennis Pearce – Member of Trustee of Morden Park Playing Fields.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Russell Makin and Councillor David Dean.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2013

RESOLVED: Panel agreed the Minutes as a true record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

The Panel agreed to receive a brief demonstration of the new microphone system being trialled at the meeting from facilities.

5 PRIORITIES FOR 2013/14 – PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBERS

Presentation provided by Councillor Nick Draper and Councillor Andrew Judge on their portfolio priorities for the 2013/14 municipal year to provide Members of the Panel with some key areas/services that they may wish to scrutinise to add value to the work being undertaken by Cabinet and the Environment and Regeneration and Community and Housing departments in the year ahead.

Members heard that the following areas were priorities in the year ahead:

Sports, Culture and Arts –

- Canons Art Facility in partnership with local schools; and
- Consider potential options for replacement of Morden Park Pools

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Councillor Nick Draper emphasised the need for partnership, spending resources more effectively and for a focus upon sustainability. Getting people working together was key in this endeavour.

Councillor Samantha George enquired about Morden Park Pools and timescales for taking this forward. Councillor Nick Draper stated that no specific timescales could be stated at this stage.

Parks and Greenspaces –

- Investment in new play facilities in a number of parks across the borough;
- Development of new sports facilities at Figges Marsh and Canons;
- Development of the capacity and opportunity to enhance green spaces, for example, with food growing using an umbrella partnership which will include friends groups and allotment holders. Independent management of these spaces will be encouraged and a number of potential spaces have been identified; and
- Supporting new Community Trusts in range of areas as part of the Fields In Trust scheme, The council is in talks with residents groups that have taken an interest in this area

Councillor Andrew Judge stated that there was a balance to be struck in terms of maintaining and improving the parks and green spaces provision in the borough in light of reduced funds.

Councillor Andrew Judge stated that the budget for maintaining grass verges had been brought back in house and that this meant there was an opportunity to work with residents to draw up a priority plan.

Councillor Ray Tindle asked if there was evidence that there was an increased demand for sports facilities. Councillor Andrew Judge stated that there had been an increase in demand, particularly in cricket, rugby and football.

Councillor Samantha George enquired about the deeds related to the Fields in Trust Scheme. Councillor Andrew Judge confirmed that the deeds would be signed by the end of the month and that this scheme would enable funding to be received along with the protected status of the fields. Chris Lee added that Fields in Trust was a 2012 initiative that dedicated 2012 playing fields and open spaces with deeds set aside for the purposes originally described. The London Road and Figges Marsh playing fields were the only ones that were ready to sign deeds for.

Councillor Ian Munn asked if the timescales were being met and that this was being pursued as a priority. Chris Lee confirmed that this was the case. Councillor Nick Draper also added that there were plans for a new multi use sports area at Canons which is being financed by Sports England and run by Greenwich Leisure with a profit sharing agreement between Greenwich

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Leisure and the council.

Tom Walsh expressed thanks to Chris Lee for the land assigned for the provision of 60 allotments which was gratefully received by residents and that all plots are expected to be filled within the next month. This has been achieved through partnership and is an excellent opportunity for residents to grow their own food.

Regeneration –

- Mitcham town centre works to begin shortly;
- Morden town centre developments are being designed and planned and consultation is on going;
- Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon developments are underway (including ensuring better transport links, cycling and pedestrian provision and Merton High Street developments);
- Housing Supply developments (with Brenley and Rowan Estates and other areas planned for expansion); and
- Working with Wimbledon Business Improvement District and the Merton Chamber of Commerce to work towards the future Wimbledon vision and generate investor interest.

Councillor Andrew Judge noted that this period is a particularly active time for the borough in terms of regeneration activity. The success of many regeneration schemes completed or underway has been linked to the existing good working relationships with partners.

Councillor Ray Tindle asked about the potential investor interest in Wimbledon. James McGinlay confirmed that a Future Wimbledon Conference would be held to test the market and see what interest there is in the area. Many investors are keen to hear what Wimbledon has to offer. The SW19 brand is a key component of what attracts businesses to Merton and the area needs to be maintained and developed to retain existing investment and attract future investment.

Councillor Stan Anderson enquired about the YMCA and plans for redevelopment. James McGinlay added that Orion Holdings are proposing to develop the YMCA site to bring forward residential accommodation jointly with the YMCA to a higher standard than the current YMCA provision plus additional housing in keeping with the area. A consultation will be undertaken in due course prior to a formal planning application being submitted.

Transport –

- Promote cycling as safe and aim to increase number of cycling journeys – enhancing cycling infrastructure and promoting behaviour change – ‘Mini Holland bid’ (as part of the Mayor of London’s fund, working with Merton’s cycling campaign). This bid is being collated at the present

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time;

- Tramlink and promoting the business case for Sutton and Wimbledon link; and
- 'Homezones' – developing a Merton approach to safer neighbourhood streets.

Parking –

- Deliver response to town centre parking research and develop response to the shopping parade parking survey;
- Highlight the availability of parking – changing perceptions as there is 30% under usage of parking in the Wimbledon area;
- Implementation of mobile phone paying facility; and
- Working with local businesses to improve customer parking for local parades.

Councillor Samantha George enquired about parking charges and the provision of 20 minutes of free parking and if there were plans to expand this. Chris Lee confirmed that the shopping parades parking survey was now closed which focused on supply, location and tariff and that results were being analysed at present. Mobile phone payments are to be introduced and the council are just about to tender for bids on implementing this.

Tom Walshe enquired if the technology for mobile phone payments could also extend to timing the actual amount of time spent parking and a fee being charged per minute could be calculated, rather than a blanket tariff. This may encourage use of the car. Chris Lee confirmed that it was within the council's gift to set tariffs.

Waste/Cleaning –

- Increase recycling further (have successfully rolled out kitchen waste collection and other recycling working with the South London Waste Partnership);
- Maximising the benefits and opportunities of the South London Waste Partnership (between Merton, Croydon, Kingston and Sutton); and
- Improving commercial waste trading position (there is a significant income target attached to this which is a challenge and the recent independent review has resulted in an action plan which is aiming to reduce back office costs as a priority).

Councillor Nick Draper welcomed comments from the Panel on whether they felt that these were the right priorities.

With regard to waste, Councillor Andrew Judge confirmed that the council

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would do as much as possible to expand recycling and to generate an income from waste. The potential for waste heat to be used was also considered.

Councillor John Sargeant asked if the feasibility of the introduction of more 20 mph zones could be explored.

RESOLVED: Panel received the presentation and considered these priorities in relation to setting their 2013/14 work programme.

6 SUSTAINABLE MERTON - PRESENTATION

Tom Walsh introduced Sustainable Merton to the Panel, as a local charity that has a role in helping residents, businesses and other groups cope with climate change, in particular the effects of peak oil and the changes that this will bring to peoples lives in the coming years.

Tom Walshe explained that sustainability should concern:

- Waste
- Transport
- Food
- Energy

The risk of people going into fuel poverty was highlighted to the Panel. Tom Walsh explained that by 2019 the average wage would not be sufficient to meet escalating fuel costs. This change would impact upon the council and the support residents would require.

Installation of solar panels has been a success story in relation to energy and this is a scheme that should be sold more to residents with the council leading by example.

Tom Walsh highlighted that there was a need to develop an energy supply and network for south west London. The knock on impact of this would be the profits that could be generated by the council. What is key is innovation.

There is also a need for behavioural changes by local residents; climate change is not just the responsibility of larger organisations. The council could play a key role in this education and in explaining policies in a clearer way.

Sustainable Merton have undertaken some work into resident's response to the governments Green Deal and found that it has not been popular, particularly due to the inability to pay back the charges for the measures associated with the Green Deal. This is making some residents reluctant to participate. Furthermore, water conservation, waste management and education are not commented upon in the Green Deal.

RESOLVED: Panel received the presentation and considered the issues raised by Sustainable Merton in relation to setting their 2013/14 work programme. Members thanked Tom Walsh and Harold Forbes of Sustainable

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Merton for their presentation.

7 WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

Mr Anthony Fairclough was invited to address the Panel with his topic suggestion and the associated petition he had gathered on residential parking charges. The Panel heard Mr Fairclough's explanation of the issues he and other residents felt were associated with residential visitor parking permits and asked the Panel to consider investigating this issue.

Councillor John Sargeant added that the Task Group review should be focused. Councillor Ian Munn asked for the implications if housing targets were not met. A report was requested on this issue.

RESOLVED: Members agreed their 2013/14 work programme.

8 PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE – VERBAL UPDATE

Councillor Dennis Pearce updated the Panel on the discussion at the Public Transport Liaison Committee (PTLC) and asked that the Minutes be circulated to the Panel for information

Councillor Ian Munn asked for a question to be responded to regarding the S1 bus route by the lead officer managing the PTLC. Rebecca Redman agreed to forward this question to Richard Lancaster.

Councillor Phillip Jones noted that the PTLC was well attended by operators but that the public attendance was relatively low.

RESOLVED: Panel noted the update and requested that the Minutes of the PTLC meeting be circulated to Members when possible.

9 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ADULT SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY – DRAFT FINAL REPORT

Councillor Ray Tindle, as Chair of the Adult Skills and Employability Task Group, introduced the report. The Panel thanked the Task Group for a piece of work well done.

RESOLVED: The Panel endorsed the report and recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.