



REGENERATION AND LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Regeneration and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Monday 5 March 2012 at 7.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor David Noakes (Chair)
Councillor Renata Hamvas (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Claire Hickson
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Lisa Rajan

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Poddy Clark

OFFICER SUPPORT: Fergus Grant, District Operations Manager, Jobcentre Plus
Graham Sutton, Economic Development Manager
Simon Bevan, Acting Director of Planning
Alison Squires, Planning Policy Team Leader
Sally Masson, Scrutiny Project Manager

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were none.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

2.1 There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 In regard to item 6, Councillors Hamvas and Hickson declared that they were home owners within the Nunhead and Peckham areas.

4. MINUTES

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th February 2012 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

5. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTHWARK

- 5.1 Fergus Grant, the District Operation Manager for JobCentre Plus, presented an overview of the labour market situation in Southwark.
- 5.2 The total population of Southwark is 287,000 and the working age population is 211,400, which is 73.7% of the population. The overall employment rate is 68.9%.
- 5.3 In January 2012 the Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) count was 11,085 in Southwark.. This was a decrease of 15 (-0.1%) from December 2011 but an increase of 940 (9.3%) on the previous year. The Jobseeker claimant count is 5.2% of the working age population.
- 5.4 Fergus Grant said that it was not necessarily the case that claimants need to sign on in their own borough. That some Southwark residents sign on at offices in Lambeth. Other boroughs sometimes follow suit because of the convenience to its claimants. Although there has been a rise in claims over the last year nationally, this has not been the case in Southwark. Numbers have been steady since September 2011.
- 5.5 New claims (on-flow) in January 2012 was 785 a fall from the previous January in 2011 of 14.6%. Numbers coming off benefits (off-flow) this year was at 1,785 (0.8%) higher than a year ago, from January to January. However it was noted by Members that those coming off benefits weren't necessarily in employment.
- 5.6 The JSA Claimant Count for 18 – 24 year olds is 2,420 for January 2012 which was a decrease on December 2011 of -2.6% (65).
- 5.7 The 18 – 24 on-flow in January 2012 was 555 which was a fall from a year ago by 13.3%. The off-flow for January 2012 is 1.8% higher than a year ago.
- 5.8 There are two elements to the amount paid as JSA. The first is contributions-based, i.e. calculated on the amount of National Insurance contributions a claimant has made; the other is income based, i.e. means tested and, unlike the contribution based claims, continues as long as an individual is seeking work.
- 5.9 Jobseekers Allowance Claims by age and duration:
- 21.8% of claimants are 18 – 24 (2,415)
 - 60.9% of claimants are 25 – 49 (6,755)
 - 17.4% of claimants are aged 50 or more (1,930)
 - 50.3% of claimants have been registered less than six months (5,580)
 - 23.1% of claimants have been registered between six and twelve months

(2,565)

- 26.7% of claimants have been registered for one year or more (2,955)

5.10 From April this year, the government will introduce the Youth Contract, which is a specific scheme for those Not in Employment Education or Training (NEETS). Jobcentre Plus will introduce advisors for that group. Further sector-based work academies will be set up, where young people on placements will be guaranteed an interview when a job becomes available.

5.11 The barriers to young people getting employment tended to be a lack of experience along with various skills gaps. A significant number of young people remain unemployed for a duration of time and they usually need specialist help to get them started on the right course of action.

5.12 As of May 2011, 13,440 people were claiming Employment Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit. 4,870 were claiming Income Support.

5.13 In January 2012, 1,417 vacancies were notified. This compares with 1,500 in December 2011 (down 5.5%) and 1,128 in January 2011 (up 25.6%).

5.14 Jobcentre Plus is under an obligation to match vacancies locally using online facilities. This year, 2012, there will be a new website launched to enable those claiming benefits to access more opportunities without having to travel to the Jobcentre.

5.15 The top ten notified vacancies by occupation in January 2012 include:

Occupation	Number of vacancies
• Sales and related occupations	142
• Sales representatives	126
• Van drivers	118
• Care assistants and home carers	96
• Nurses	94
• Typists	50
• Sales and retail assistants	47
• Security guards and related occupations	47
• Waiters, waitresses	47
• Collector salespersons and credit agents	46

5.16 Top ten sought occupations by JSA on flow in January 2012:

• Sales and retail assistants	390
• General office assistants/clerks	120
• Customer care occupations	55
• Cleaners, domestics	55
• Van drivers	50
• Other goods handling and storage occupations	50
• Retail cashiers and check out operators	45
• Kitchen and catering assistants	40

- Security guards and related occupations 35
- Labourers in building and wood working trades 30

5.17 JSA Claimant Count, Local Authority Comparison:

Local Authority	January 2011	January 2012	% Change
Barking and Dagenham	6,570	7,475	13.8%
Barnet	6,435	7,020	9.1%
Bexley	4,335	4,810	11.0%
Brent	8,955	9,730	8.7%
Bromley	5,280	6,145	16.4%
Camden	5,390	5,565	3.2%
City of London	135	120	-11.1%
Croydon	9,540	10,920	14.5%
Ealing	8,305	9,125	9.9%
Enfield	9,315	10,535	13.1%
Greenwich	7,300	8,210	12.5%
Hackney	10,090	10,940	8.4%
Hammersmith and Fulham	5,025	5,105	1.6%
Haringey	9,895	10,410	5.2%
Harrow	3,905	4,245	8.7%
Havering	4,980	5,620	12.9%
Hillingdon	4,930	5,345	8.4%
Hounslow	4,910	5,220	6.3%
Islington	7,045	7,265	3.1%
Kensington and Chelsea	3,485	3,240	-7.0%
Kingston upon Thames	1,955	2,055	5.1%
Lambeth	11,110	12,160	9.5%
Lewisham	9,470	10,765	13.7%
Merton	3,435	4,040	17.6%
Newham	10,355	11,595	12.0%
Redbridge	6,505	7,200	10.7%
Richmond upon Thames	2,005	2,020	0.7%
Southwark	10,145	11,085	9.3%
Sutton	3,270	3,660	11.9%
Tower Hamlets	10,090	11,120	10.2%
Waltham Forest	8,475	9,910	16.9%
Wandsworth	6,175	6,595	6.8%
Westminster	5,065	5,280	4.2%
Column Total	213,870	234,535	9.7%

5.18 Employment Support Allowance is the new benefit to be phased in to replace Incapacity Benefit. This transformation is due to be completed by 2014. Those who are assessed and registered as sick are to be assessed and encouraged to take part in support groups to help them back to work opportunities. Those who are registered as terminally ill are to continue to receive benefits. Others claimants are to continue to get allowances but the expectation would be that they

would be trying to find work and would be assessed on the progress of their recovery. The situation would be the same for those suffering mental health problems, who would be expected to look for work based on what they can reasonably do.

5.19 Lone parents, tended to be on income support and they would carry on receiving income support until the youngest child became 5 years of age. After that, the parent would be expected to go on to Jobseekers Allowance. Consideration would be taken when assessing parental needs for more flexibility, so that they would be able to look after their children adequately during the searching for work process. Consideration as to the types of work that would be suitable for each family's needs would also be taken into account when processing claims for this particular group.

5.20 There was a lot more emphasis nowadays on those in receipt of benefits being required to look for work.

5.21 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Single Work Programme.

The work programme was to be geared towards those furthest from the labour market. The expectation of Jobcentre Plus was that 90% of those claiming should be in work before they were required to attend the work programme for their receipt of benefits.

5.22 Those under 25 years of age, who have been unemployed for more than 9 months, would be allowed to volunteer to go on the scheme.

5.23 Claimants who have been out of work for 22 weeks and over would be required to attend the scheme. The most disadvantaged claimants such as ex-offenders would be required to attend the scheme after 3 months of unemployment. The DWP would not interfere with the providers of work placements, once a claimant is with them. However, the provider would hold the responsibility for keeping the claimant in work with whatever support they may need.

5.24 Members said that he was aware that there had been controversy around the work programme. There were certain work placements where claimants were being given no choice in whether or not to go onto the programme. Members felt that there was a danger that claimants could be placed in areas of work that would not necessarily suit them. There was also a possibility that organisations taking part in the work placement scheme might take advantage of claimants who would not have the right to refuse placements because of the risk that they may lose their benefits if they couldn't or wouldn't attend for any legitimate reason.

5.25 Fergus Grant said that 30% of those doing work experience actually managed to go into employment long term. He said that Southwark had been comfortable using work experience opportunities in the past and that the work programme had also been attempting to develop apprenticeship working.

5.26 The Jobcentre Plus employment service management remit was to get people off benefit and to take a long term view of people getting into and staying in work. Universal credit would allow people to take part time work. This would mean that

people wouldn't have to keep starting and stopping benefit claims but would receive a consistent level of payments taking into consideration their irregular work.

- 5.27 Claimants would have a permitted period of time where they would be allowed to look for the employment they most want and Jobcentre Plus consultants would help them investigate the realistic chances of them getting the type of work they were seeking. Claimants would also be encouraged to travel to look for and to take up work, although it was acknowledged that this could be a potential challenge for some.
- 5.28 Fergus Grant made it clear that there was now a 'conditionality regime' to those on benefits and the change in culture meant that if claimants were not deemed to be actively seeking work they would lose their benefits.
- 5.29 Both JSA and Income Support were both means tested methods, so there was not a significant difference in payments in real terms.
- 5.30 Fergus Grant stressed that unemployment figures measure those registered at the jobcentre but that not all workless people would be registered as unemployed, especially if they were not eligible for benefits. An additional way to consider the true picture of unemployment figures might be to consult Census data, which would now be 11 years old. Data from the 2011 census would be expected some time next year.

6. NUNHEAD AND PECKHAM AREA ACTION PLAN

- 6.1 The Nunhead and Peckham Area Action Plan was now at the 5th stage of consultation and had been developed with the next 15 years in mind. It covered public realm improvements and set out ideas for getting more interest from developers, faith groups, local traders and other community groups to help inform Council policies, such as the regeneration project for the cross river tram.
- 6.2 Alison Squires, Planning Policy Team Leader, set out the various themes covered by the plan:
- 6.3 Shopping and employment in Peckham town centre.

The policy supported new retail development in Peckham town centre to help maintain and enhance its status as a major town centre in the borough's retail hierarchy. It intended to work with landowners to improve and expand shopping floor space through the promotion of additional retail space. Most of this would be on the following sites:

- Aylesham Shopping Centre
- Copeland Road Industrial Park
- Peckham Rye Station
- Land between the railway arches

6.4 Arts culture, leisure and entertainment

6.5 There were aspirations to maintain a cinema and to work with businesses to facilitate the provision of more cafes and restaurants to improve the town's night life. As far as Rye Lane was concerned, the plan set out to protect business, retail and leisure use, along with other cultural projects.

6.6 Local shops and services

The plan was to maintain the status of the larger shopping parades as 'protected shopping frontages' and maintain a vibrant mix of retail uses within the area, using policies in the core strategy.

6.7 Hot food takeaways

There were no plans to establish any more fast food takeaways. There were over 10% shops given over to this type of retail exceeding the limit of 5%. Concerns over childhood obesity meant that there was support and encouragement from the local community and the NHS to restrict these outlets.

6.8 However, Members mentioned that whilst some takeaways were poor in nutritional content some were of good quality and those businesses were also good for the cultural vibrancy of the area. For instance, Portuguese and Turkish takeaway restaurants, offered more healthy and diverse food options. Not all takeaways were as bad as the many chicken and chips shops that were already in excess of what was desirable. It was noted that there would be no more takeaways allowed within 40 meters of any school.

6.9 Markets

There would be an established site for markets in a new location in Peckham town centre, possibly on land to the rear of Peckham Rye station. The plan would also support occasional markets on Peckham Square and Nunhead Green.

6.10 Business space

The generation of new jobs and businesses would be promoted and there would be new small scale business floor space in Nunhead local centre.

6.11 Community facilities

The aims of the strategy was to locate local facilities and bring them together so that all of the services required by the community, including services for young people, health centres and community spaces, were to be provided in accessible locations. It was hoped that the facilities and services coming together in this way would enable them to complement and support each other.

6.12 Schools

Following the policy in the core strategy Southwark would like to deliver

improvements to schools by working with partners to:

- Provide additional places at primary schools
- Build new and improve existing schools to improve educational opportunities.
- Protect schools where there is a long term local need.

6.13 Health facilities

There had been work with NHS Southwark to improve the health of current and new residents in Peckham and Nunhead by considering opportunities to improve local health services. The new developments in Peckham and Nunhead opens up the possibilities for supporting and encouraging GPs to promote and provide services for the community.

6.14 Sports facilities

There were plans to support improvements to sports facilities in the area to meet the needs of an increasing population.

6.15 Active travel

Working with Transport for London, developers and other stakeholders, Southwark would be able to provide a high quality network to support active travel.

6.16 Public transport

Working with Transport for London, Network Rail and other stakeholders to improve the frequency, quality and reliability of public transport.

The key priorities in the action plan were:

'The extension to the Bakerloo line through to Peckham and Camberwell'

'The Cross River Tram, or an alternative high quality public transport service to link Peckham to north London.'

6.17 Officers told the committee that the Mayors plan has no funding with which to extend the Bakerloo line at the moment.

6.18 Parking for shoppers and visitors

The proposals for parking as set out in the area action plan were:

- Retain Choumert Grove car park (as the consultation revealed, local residents and traders don't want this car park built on)
- Support the redevelopment of car parks which are currently under-used for alternative uses
- Allowing the existing multi-storey car park and the Copeland Road car park to be developed for alternative uses
- Support the redevelopment of the Aylesham Centre, Asda site and the Bellenden Road retail park.

6.19 Residential parking

In the Peckham core action area the plan had set out that Southwark would encourage residential developments to be car free, aside from the requirement of provision for parking for disabled persons and car club spaces. It also set out that Southwark were to allow developments in line with the Peckham core action area to include a maximum of 0.3 spaces per unit.

6.20 New homes

Development in the action area will provide a minimum of 2,000 net new homes between 2011 and 2026. We expect at least 1,500 of these homes to be within Peckham core action area.

6.21 Affordable and private homes

Development in the action area was to provide a minimum of 700 affordable homes and 700 private homes. The development within Livesey, Peckham, Nunhead and The Lane wards must provide a minimum of 35% private homes.

6.22 There are two types of housing:

- Private (or market) housing were to be available to either buy or rent privately on the open market.
- Affordable housing, as set out in the London Plan policy 3.10 should meet the needs of households whose incomes were not enough to allow them to buy or rent decent and appropriate housing in the borough.

6.23 Mix and design of new homes:

New developments were to comply to a range of sizes and were to be built to Lifetime Homes standards. 10% of developments must be suitable for wheelchair users.

6.24 Open space and sites of importance for nature conservation

There would be protection and improvements to open space and sites of importance for nature conservation. The plan had stated that Southwark would provide an accessible, high quality, green infrastructure network for residents and visitors to enjoy and which strengthened local character, promote nature conservation, exercise and food growing opportunities.

6.25 Energy

There was a need to reduce the energy use of new developments and support the provision of an efficient energy network for Peckham and Nunhead.

6.26 Waste, water, flooding and pollution

Developments would be required to meet the highest possible environmental standards, in line with Core Strategy strategic policy 13.

6.27 Trees

Southwark would protect trees wherever possible as part of a new development and would seek to maintain and improve the provision of street trees in Peckham and Nunhead.

6.28 Public Realm

Working with Transport for London, English Heritage, developers and the community Southwark would provide a high quality design of public squares, streets and spaces.

6.29 Built form, high quality design of buildings

The high quality of design of buildings would protect and enhance the character area.

6.30 Building heights

The current character of places were to be retained, with most new developments being similar to existing building heights.

6.31 Heritage

To strengthen the character of Peckham and Nunhead by conserving and enhancing the significance of Peckham and Nunhead's heritage assets and protect buildings with local value by identifying those buildings on a 'Local List.'

6.32 Members commented that the biggest issues were around the shops on Rye Lane. It was felt that there was a case for inviting the larger shopping retailer chains to the area, given that the consultation processes had found that younger people wanted to see an 'Oxford Street' south of the borough. However, keeping a balance between the big high street names and the more traditional ethnic shops was important.

6.33 Car parking was seen as an issue for the area especially for people coming in from other boroughs. The unique shops made Peckham quite popular to residents just outside Southwark. Market traders were very vocal in leading the movement for more public parking as this was seen as crucial to the survival of their businesses and had a direct impact on the accessibility to their ability to thrive.

6.34 Members were aware that there was a demand for the types of shops that Peckham had to offer to those in neighbouring boroughs and likewise, residents from Southwark also tended to shop in neighbouring areas. It was felt, therefore that there should be more capacity for shops, possibly behind Rye Lane to continue to develop the unique character of the area.

6.35 Officers told the committee that there were aspirations to open up the railway arches so that people can walk from north to south. They also informed the committee that it was possible that more shops could be developed along that

route.

- 6.36 Officers also said that there were aspirations to preserve the amenities that have been successfully established in the area already but also to maintain a cinema and increase capacity within the Aylesham Centre.
- 6.37 Members and Officers were concerned that the law didn't allow any restriction of payday loan shops at the current time. That if the premises were already grade 2 use then there was little the Council could do to stop payday loan shops opening in premises that were once banks or estate agents.
- 6.38 Members and Officers felt that being able to move about the area freely and safely, increasing the amount of links between the various commercial areas of the borough was something of a priority. Members noted that there wasn't a great deal of information regarding the creation of cycle highways and increasing the 'safe routes' for cyclists. Officers said that there were some basic plans in place but they were planning on building on what they had in forthcoming years.
- 6.39 Members said that there didn't seem to be a great deal of improvements planned around the pedestrian and cycle areas around Nunhead station. Officers reported that no one had mentioned Nunhead station in the consultation.
- 6.40 Officers reported that the Nunhead and Peckham area action plan would have its final consultation process between September and November 2012 and would then invite comments on the soundness of the document based on the evidence and various tests.