

NINE ELMS VAUXHALL STRATEGY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held virtually on Thursday, 22nd October 2020 at 2.30p.m.

PRESENT

Members of the Board:

Councillor Ravi Govindia (Co-Chairman, in the Chair), Wandsworth Council
Councillor Jack Hopkins (Co-Chairman, Lambeth Council)
Councillor David Amos (Lambeth Council)
Danny Calver, Transport for London (TfL)
Gordon Adams, Battersea Power Station Development Company (BPSDC)
Jo Breare, Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA)
Stephen O'Driscoll, R&F Holdings
Aseem Sheikh, Vauxhall One
Stevan Tennant – Ballymore Group
Paul Hampson – Tideway
Katherine Wood – GLA

Officers and observers:

Wandsworth Council – Paul Martin, Steve Diamond, Kathryn Stewart, Katherine Yexley, Sam Emmett, Esther Swales, Michelle Walker, Mark Hunter, Declan Costello, Alex Rinsler, Danielle Rose, Chris Kelly
Lambeth Council – Andrew Travers, Eleanor Purser, Thomas Branton, Laura Cheyne
TfL – Jonathan Berry, Robert Niven
CGMA – David Frankish
R&F Holdings – James Cook
UKPN – Mark Adolphus, Liam O'Sullivan

Apologies:

Jules Pipe – Greater London Authority
Sean Burke – Berkeley Group
Jon Evans – Wandsworth Council
Philip Robins, St Modwen

1. Introductions and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Paper No. SB20-01)

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategy Board on 27th September 2019 were agreed as correct record.

3. Reporting Framework (Paper No. SB20-02)

Ms Kathryn Stewart (Nine Elms Development Team, Wandsworth Council) presented the report, which focused on the achievements and progress made by the Nine Elms Vauxhall (NEV) Partnership over the past six months, which she considered to be good as a result of effective management and a strong partnership approach despite the impact of Covid.

It was noted that the Northern Line extension was anticipated to complete soon and that various other projects were reaching significant milestones. It was also highlighted that there had been a noticeable increase in residents now living in and around the area, which was considered to be encouraging.

The key points for the Board were highlighted and included summaries related to:

- Connectivity / active travel
- The delivery of the first phase of Nine Elms Lane Highway Scheme
- The design Competition launched with London festival of Architecture for the entrance way to Arch 42 connection way.
- That Vauxhall park refurbishment project was nearing completion.

An update on the key milestones was provided. It was reported that in regard to housing delivery, nearly 7,000 had been completed out of the 18,000 homes that had been consented across the whole of the opportunity area. It was considered positive that construction was continuing.

Ms Stewart reported that the health programme was progressing well and the funding agreement between Wandsworth Council and NHS Property Services had now been signed. It was reported that the business case for the surgeries in Lambeth was very close to being finalised ahead of submission to the SE London CCG.

A further milestone noted as completed in March 2020 was the RMA design submission for the proposed school on the Royal Mail Group site, which was in line with the planning conditions for the site.

Mr Tom Branton reported on the refurbishment of Vauxhall park and advised that the construction of Wyvil school was progressing well, with completion targeted for early Spring 2021.

RESOLVED – That:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) completed projects be removed from the Reporting Framework.

4. UKPN Update (Paper No. SB20-03)

Mr Mark Adolphus (UKPN) provided an update presentation to the Board, noting the progress that had been made and providing a summary of the current position in relation to the project.

In terms of work completed to date, he reported that the new main substation at Stewarts Road had been completed. Mr Adolphus reported that the site had been connected to the existing deep tunnel network owned and operated by UK Power Networks to enable the installation of two extra high voltage cable circuits but eliminating the need for an open cut excavation route from Wimbledon. The Board was advised that phase 1 of the works to construct a new high voltage cable route to energise Battersea Power Station had now been completed.

Mr Adolphus provided a summary of the future works to be completed, noting they were in the final stages of commissioning the new main substation at the site in Stewarts Road to deliver essential network reinforcement. This strategic site provided a connection to Battersea Power Station and would increase the network capacity in Nine Elms Vauxhall development area and surrounding communities. He further reported that the construction of new cable routes would entail significant excavation works across the road network and noted the key area for these works, which included amongst others Battersea Park Road, Thessaly Road and Corunna Estate Road.

Mr Sam Emmett noted that the co-ordination process had been much improved and was pleased to see that Thessaly Road had been added to the list of roads on the critical paths for the project. However, he noted his concern in relation to the risk associated with the consents process and considered it would be good to get an idea of the level of risk the project was carrying in this regard. It was reported that the consent process was ongoing and that a more detailed update could be provided separately to Mr Emmett.

A query was asked relating to the presentation slides regarding Thessaly Road and it was noted that the supply from Thessaly Road had been extended and completed. The area was now ready for cable installation.

RESOLVED – That the update report be noted.

5. NLE Update and Milestones to Opening (Paper No. SB19-10)

Mr Rob Niven, Head of Investment Delivery Planning, London Underground Major Projects, provided the Board with a presentation on the Northern Line extension. He explained the impact of coronavirus on the project, noting that work had been paused from 24th March until 26th May, but had now been resumed and the target for opening remained Autumn 2021.

The Board was provided with details of progress to date, which included updates on Arch 42, Nine Elms station and the Battersea Power Station exterior. Mr Niven noted that the project was now into a systems development phase following the construction phase.

The next steps were summarised to the Board, which notably included that it was hoped that the exterior cladding of Nine Elms Station would be finished by Christmas and that discussions were in progress regarding a potential funding package for the

second entrance of Battersea Station. Upon questioning from the Board, it was reported that there still remained a full commitment to opening the second, western entrance which formed part of one of the buildings in phase 4 of the development. Mr Niven noted that the timescales were not certain, although it was hoped there would be an announcement soon on the likely progress. Notwithstanding that announcement, the Board was advised that the western entrance would not be open at the opening of the station.

The key milestones to opening were discussed and it was noted that summer 2021 would see trial operations begin and that the extension would be opened at its earliest opportunity once testing had been completed.

Mr Niven advised of the need to ensure operational plans were aligned. He noted that there had been good progress and the outlook for opening as planned looked a lot more likely and positive than it had done two to three years ago.

RESOLVED – That the update report be noted.

6. Delivering a Post-Covid Neighbourhood (Paper No. SB20-05)

Ms Kathryn Stewart provided an introduction to the discussion and noted the report had been produced with the comments captured from the various partnership forums over the past few months.

The impact of Covid-19 was discussed and it was noted it had created uncertainty about the future of work, office, the role of cities, and the distinction between home and work. The vision for the Opportunity Area was reiterated, with it noted as being for a sustainable, high quality, genuinely mixed-use development, offering a blend of residential tenures, commercial space at a variety of scales, retail and leisure opportunities and new community infrastructure that creates a neighbourhood with culture at its heart.

Ms Stewart reported that good progress was being made with the delivery of infrastructure projects, notably the extension to the Northern Line. She noted that there were two big infrastructure projects that would help the long-term success of the overall project, those being the Vauxhall Gyrotory and the Linear Park. It was reported that these projects were at an early stage, had not been fully programmed yet, and had an element of uncertainty associated with their delivery. It was therefore considered that the partnership would need to ensure the projects remained a strategic focus of the Board.

Mr Tom Branton discussed the shared objectives and vision with the Board. He commented on the significance of the Vauxhall gyrotory to the overall project. It was considered that the project was important in terms of improving air quality and would also help to create a new town centre for London and help with the post-Covid recovery. Councillor Hopkins and other Board members stressed the importance of the project to the future delivery of the Nine Elms project.

A question was raised in relation to the progress of the bridge project and it was considered that a future decision would be required relating to the support for the project. Ms Stewart noted the project was aligned with the active travel and climate change agenda. It also had strong benefits in terms of a connection point to the area. She reported that over the past few months work had been undertaken in terms of scoping and costing the project, and to develop the competition design.

It was commented that the Nine Elms area was becoming an incredibly attractive location for commercial premises to locate, which was already well connected and would only improve with the completion future projects. The various smaller projects, for example the Arch 42 design competition were noted and it was commented that the concept of the 15-minute city was very much what was being created in the Nine Elms area.

RESOLVED – That:

- (c) the progress made against the original vision of the Opportunity Planning Framework and the potential for a successful post-Covid neighbourhood be noted;
- (d) the summary of the issues relating to the delivery of the Vauxhall Town Centre be noted;
- (e) the commitment to the achievement of this long-term shared objective and pursuing this aim through a collaborative approach to lobbying relevant authorities be restated; and
- (f) the delivery programme for key urban realm projects, in particular the Linear Park, the next phase of which will be delivered in 2022, with the majority delivered by 2024 and the final section completing in 2027/28, dependent on construction phasing be noted.

7. Economic Growth and Local Employment and Skills Support (Paper No. SB20-06)

Mr Steve Diamond introduced the item and provided the background and long-established ambition that had been identified and expressed ten years ago for the economic growth in the area. It was noted that the remit in terms of economic development had included:

1. To identify the current and planned job opportunities in the Opportunity Area and work with employers to access a skilled and motivated workforce.
2. To maximise sustainable employment opportunities for local communities (creating pathways for those facing barriers) as well as the wider London economy.
3. To articulate and promote the OA (and neighbouring areas) as a great place for all types of business, providing a variety of employment space and thriving business communities.
4. To promote the OA as a destination for business, enterprise, creativity and innovation in key sectors such as creative, digital, food and horticulture.

He commented that the area was now recognised as a major economic site, following the significant levels of redevelopment. The partnership had also strongly supported achieving tangible benefits from the redevelopment for the local community, noting the jobs created in the area, notably within the construction industry. The Board discussed the strengths of the area and the types of businesses that had located there.

The Board was provided with details of the activity that was planned or already underway to support economic development. The Board was advised that employment in the construction sector had suffered from the impact of Covid for a period earlier in the year, but levels had picked up again in summer. Further updates were provided in regard to the hospitality sector for which Covid had also adversely impacted, and in digital innovation.

Councillor Hopkins noted that there would be a requirement to consider how the economy in the area would be shaped post-Covid and it was commented by Board Members that there would likely be a change in how often workers would work from home instead of going into the office compared to what they did previously.

RESOLVED – That the elements of the VNEB growth strategy, the impact of Covid-19 and the local authorities' response be noted.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business for consideration.

The meeting ended at 4.05 p.m.