

NINE ELMS VAUXHALL STRATEGY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held virtually on Tuesday 19th October 2021 at 10am.

PRESENT

Members of the Board:

Councillor Ravi Govindia (Co-Chairman, in the Chair) Wandsworth Council
Councillor Claire Holland (Co-Chairman), Lambeth Council
Councillor Rhodri Morgan (Wandsworth Council)
Danny Calver, Transport for London (TfL)
Gordon Adams, Battersea Power Station Development Company
Katherine Wood, Greater London Authority
Stephen O'Driscoll, R&F Holdings
Aseem Sheikh, Vauxhall One

Officers and observers:

Wandsworth Council – Steve Diamond, John Stone, Mark Hunter, Kathryn Stewart,
Esther Swales, Declan Costello, Sam Emmett, Katharine Yexley, Holly Weaver
Lambeth Council – Eleanor Purser, Thomas Branton, Matthew Dibben, Rheanne
Holm
TfL – Robert Niven
Tideway – Allen Summerskill
R&F Property – James Cook
Covent Garden Market Authority – Peter Nolan
Network Rail – John Gill and Thomas Freeman.

Apologies:

Councillor David Amos – Lambeth Council
Sean Burke – Berkeley Group
Andrew Travers – Lambeth Council
Jules Pipe – Greater London Authority
Stevan Tenant – Ballymore Group
Jo Breare – Covent Garden Market Authority
Michelle Burton – Ballymore Group
Laura Cheyne – Lambeth Council

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. SB21-08)

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategy Board on 20th April 2021 were agreed as correct record.

3. Reporting Framework (Paper No. SB21-09)

Ms Kathryn Stewart opened the item by explaining some of the highlights from the report, including that the Arch 42 gateways project was still progressing forwards and the first phase of the Nine Elms Lane scheme had been completed. The Nine Elms School reserved matters application had been approved at Planning Committee over the summer and a number of residential developments were near completion. There was a bid put in for the Levelling-Up Fund which was awaiting a decision, and a number of successful projects had continued over the summer, such as the Happy Streets festival in July and the launch of Mudskipper. The next six months were expected to be especially busy, with the Line of Light Celebration planned for the 29th and 30th October to create a display along the line of the new tunnels. Ms Stewart gave her added thanks to colleagues and developers as the event was set to be spectacular.

Mr Tom Branton also explained the Lambeth-based highlights of the report, including the opening of the Northern Line Extension and the link created through Arch 42. The Vauxhall Gyratory was still progressing slowly but steadily in terms of developer and TfL colleagues, and there was a crunch point coming up with the importance of the infrastructure. Over the summer the Vauxhall outdoor summer programme had been completed and Lambeth had been working in partnership with Vauxhall One to design and bring forward public realm interventions on Goding Street to support local businesses. Wider-school works had been completed across the opportunity area and this meant schools were ready to open and welcome students.

Mr Stephen O'Driscoll congratulated all colleagues that had been involved in the Northern Line Extension and the Arch 42 project.

Councillor Ravi Govindia asked whether the Thessaly Road works were looking to be completed on time as planned, and in response Ms Stewart explained that the trenching should begin to reduce over the coming weeks with the final piece of major disruption due soon, the works should be finished in December with the re-surfacing carried out. Mr Sam Emmett also added that the utility works were due to be completed by the end of October.

Councillor Claire Holland thanked all colleagues for the hard work they had undertaken for the Northern Line Extension and added that it was a compliment that it has now been incorporated into the London transport system as though it was always there. She commented that the Vauxhall Gyratory now appeared to be turning a corner and that support from all parties was required to push the project through. Once this had been finished, it would help tie together all areas across the boroughs seamlessly.

Mr Aseem Sheikh informed the Board that over 2.5k people were projected to come to the events, and in response Councillor Govindia added that opening the NLE when the economy was opening back up was very good timing.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

4. Northern Line Extension Update (Paper No. SB21-10)

Mr Rob Niven opened the item by informing the Board that he would cover the next steps needed to close out the project now the Northern Line Extension had opened. It was important to use the NLE as an example of investment in London for land using planning and transport together to show what could be achieved. He gave a presentation, detailing the timeline it took to get to the final result and the target completion date, which was met despite some delays due to Covid-19. He also showed slides detailing the lessons learnt from the project, which could be used by the Board for future developments, or for other authorities in similar positions. He then showed the external and internal factors that had an impact upon the project, a demonstration of the early use so far, and then detailed next steps for the close of the project. The aforementioned slides can be found in full detail within the agenda pack.

Mr Adams considered the NLE to be a remarkable achievement and whilst it had been spoken about in theory for 9 years, it had finally come together and was a fine example of collaboration between different groups across the two boroughs and beyond.

Councillor Morgan asked whether there had been any more interest in the concessions around the tube stations, and in response Mr Niven explained that the process of attracting tenants to those concessions was the next steps. The quantity of footfall to the two tube stations could pose issues for tenants, but even if a temporary concession was in place it would be helpful.

Councillor Holland commented that she remembered in 2014 she had chaired Community Liaison Groups where residents weren't happy with the idea, but the positive outcome and response now showed the turnaround that took place. She added that it was important to situate it within the wider area, as there would not be a national economic revival without a London revival, and that there needed to be energies put in to gathering data to show the successes. Mr Niven in response explained that for Transport for London they could use this achievement to bolster their case to receive future funding from Government, although this would come after a spending review.

Ms Stewart gave anecdotal evidence of a positive resident reaction, where one had said they thought it was amazing they could travel to High Barnet in 40 minutes without a change, and there were other stories that would concur with this view.

Mr O'Driscoll added his congratulations to the team for the success of the NLE and commented that infrastructure was needed in order to see if Battersea was maturing, but the footfall already to the new underground stations was a strong indicator of the positive investment in the area.

Councillor Govindia asked whether there were any plans to do origin and destination surveys, as it would be worth finding out where people were taking their journeys from and to. In response Mr Niven explained that surveys could be undertaken, and the team needed to double check whether there would be anything specific to the Northern Line Extension that could help out the partners.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**5. Extending the Low Line to VNEB – A Vision for Activation and Delivery
(Paper No. SB21-11)**

Mr Tom Branton gave a detailed presentation (see agenda) to explain how the extension of the Low Line to Vauxhall, Nine Elms and Battersea would benefit the opportunity area. Some key points he highlighted were how the Low Line would stitch together large-scale development with small scale development in the area, and by looking at the successes and learning takeaways of the Southwark Low Line, the one in the opportunity area could become very successful. There could be increased employment opportunities, workspace and retail in the area, and there were 250 arches equating to approximately 776,000 square ft of floor space to work with along the Low Line.

Councillor Govindia commented that the paper was an important document, as this scheme would be another strand to linking this area with the rest of London. He added that the Arch 42 project had demonstrated there needed to be openings along the line to be able to pass from North to South easily.

Mr Gordon Adams added that the Arches Lane example was strong enough for this project to be endorsed, and that whilst it's helpful to create a rough framework for occupants of the opportunity area to follow, it is also important to invite people to deliver without having too many constraints.

Mr Aseem Sheikh explained that projects completed a decade ago would have learning opportunities arising from them, and so the Southwark Low Line could be utilised in order to help this project succeed too. He pointed out a key difference between the Southwark arches and the VNEB arches, which was that the VNEB arches were dual opening, and so connections could be forged through them from parks to the river to create connection and flow.

Councillor Holland thanked Mr Branton for his presentation and asserted the importance of having mixed uses in order to show the mixed communities and needs of the population of the area. She also added that it would be a good opportunity for both boroughs to meet the mark with the climate crisis.

Councillor Govindia concluded by saying it would be helpful for the study to establish the future plans of the current businesses, as while there were some businesses that may move out of the area, it was important to understand the businesses within the area to understand the strategy of how best to retain and support them with this project.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. Thames Tideway Forward Look (Paper No. SB21-12)

Mr Summerskill opened the item by explaining that a new “super sewer” was being built under the River Thames to help reduce the amount of raw sewage flowing into the river. On average there was 10s of millions of tonnes of raw sewage flowing untreated into the river during periods of heavy rainfall, and so the Thames Tideway tunnel would have 3 different upgrades which would work to reduce that quantity almost entirely.

Mr Summerskill gave a detailed presentation showing the locations of different parts of the tunnel, where they sat along the water course and where they could be accessed if needed. The presentation slides included photographs and CGI graphics to demonstrate the process and hopeful final outcome of the project, which was already underway. The project would cost approximately £4.1billion and would be 25km in length along the river. He added that Tideway was actually using the river to transport equipment and materials in order to reduce its carbon footprint, and each barge used took 75 lorries off of the road. The tunnel itself would be over a metre thick and the lining would be complete in 2023. The aforementioned slides can be found in full detail within the agenda pack.

Councillor Govindia asked whether the location of one of the tunnel’s structures had been met with any opposition from MI6, as it was location adjacent to their building, and in response Mr Summerskill explained that all issues they had raised had been mitigated for.

Ms Stewart asked whether the open spaces provided by the project would be open to the public when finished before the whole tunnel was commissioned, and in response Mr Summerskill explained that they would be trying to hand back areas early. The public perception would be that there was no work taking place, but it would actually be taking place underground and out of sight.

Councillor Morgan asked why only 95% of the raw sewage was accounted for by this tunnel, and not 100%, and Mr Summerskill explained that the sewage would only end up in the river following extreme weather events, and even then, it would be treated to some extent first, so it was not raw and polluting the river in this manner. He added that there were not sites big enough in London to build the tunnel needed for 100% of the sewage to be accounted for, as the tunnel itself was already a 35-metre diameter tunnel.

Mr O’Driscoll asked whether there was any timeline for the Pimlico Bridge site, and in response Ms Stewart explained that the Kirtling Street location had now been selected as the preferred option for the Bridge, but was dependent on the completion of the Tideway and bringing it forward would be a project to be revisited in the future. Councillor Govindia asked what would happen to Kirtling Street and Mr Summerskill explained that there were no planning applications in yet for the site, but if there were in the future then the aim was for there to be a path that ran parallel to the river.

Mr Emmett explained that there had been sewage on the streets of Nine Elms and Battersea Park Road after extreme weather events and queried whether the Tideway Tunnel system would help prevent such events from occurring. He also asked whether Heathwall Pumping Station was able to function as it should during the major infrastructure work at that location. Mr Summerskill explained that whilst

flooding would most likely still take place on those roads, Thames Water were in conversation with Wandsworth Council and TfL to find a solution. There had been some works done without consent in the area which had caused the problems, but they were working to resolve the problems. The Tideway project was purely designed to stop raw sewage flowing into the river, and Heathwall Pumping Station could still discharge into the river during periods of heavy rainfall. The problem would be getting it into the pumping station fast enough, however Thames Water were looking into it.

Mr Emmett asked whether the finishing of the Heathwall Pumping Station – specifically lighting and painting - fell within Thames Water's remit, and in response was told by Mr Summerskill that it was never part of Tideway's brief to do that. They weren't sure what the completed pumping station would look like, but it was no more advanced than what was there 4/5 years ago.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. Battersea Park Station Update (Paper No. SB21-13)

Mr Freeman opened the item by explaining that historically, over 15 years of attempted projects at Battersea, not having any lifts at Battersea Park Station was a serious issue. Lifts onto the platforms were desperately needed but any AFA scheme couldn't go ahead due to the cost, as it would be in excess of £20million additional funding on top of what was already sourced to deliver. The forward funding meant there was a technically feasible solution approved by partners in order to help the wider area, but outcomes still need to be tested against the scope to look at the optimal solution for value and the area. The timescales were planned to start with the commencement of construction in 2023, with the finish being 2025/26. There had been considerable anecdotal issues raised by members of the public that meant the issue could no longer be ignored, and the option selected would require a new entrance being built to get the lifts in. There would be two new lifts, two new staircases and a double ended entrance. It would actually then face the park it was named after, and the wider connectivity and benefits to residents and businesses could not be ignored. There were currently fast lines moving through Platform 5's track so it would not be a problem to work on the site, as there was no equivalent platform on the other side of the track.

Mr Freeman then added that there was £3million of funding secured from Access for All to help deliver the scheme, and that half of the money had already come from Wandsworth Council and St Williams.

Mr Gill explained that it was a politically sensitive area and a difficult time for the project. They were working with senior officers in the Department for Transport and all possible pots of money would be looked at. They needed to demonstrate the best value for money and also deliver the best quality project, but they were very confident it would be delivered.

Councillor Govindia asked whether Network Rail were confident they would receive the other half of the funding they needed to complete the project, and in response Mr Gill explained that he was very confident there would be more, but the exact amount

was still unknown. Councillor Govindia followed up by asking Mr Gill what the Strategy Board could do to help push this project along, and in response Mr Gill explained that Network Rail were very committed to completing this project, but with the Department for Transport's upcoming spending review, they'd need to make sure this project was viewed as a priority when assessed with other proposals.

Mr Adams pointed out that Apple would be moving into the area with up to 5000 workers, and so pushing the project through was paramount, particularly as South Western Railway had reduced the number of services to Queenstown Road. He pointed out to the Board that on transport maps the overground logo has now been included at Battersea Park Station and asked whether that was a part of this project. Mr Freeman explained that the logo was on there because it was a parliamentary service. As Clapham was further developed it was open to interpretation, but there were sensitivities in the design.

Mr Stone added that the project needed to be kept moving, and the scheme now was much improved and it was aimed to keep the existing entrance open too so accessibility to the station would be better. It was hoped that the station would be up and operational as soon as possible.

Councillor Govindia thanked the colleagues from Network Rail for attending.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. Wandsworth Development Infrastructure Requirements Refresh 2020 – Draft Findings (Paper No. SB21-14)

Ms Stewart opened the item by explaining that this report was conceptually a moment of stock take. It would be useful to see what the next phase of change would be in the area and the updated infrastructure requirements. The Development Infrastructure Funding Study (DIFS) that supported the plans for the VNEB opportunity area had been replicated by other opportunity areas since its development and other authorities were coming forward for advice and guidance, which demonstrates the success of the area. This Refresh was commissioned within the Wandsworth boundary to be an update to see how the borough was getting on, what was needed going into the future, and what the pace of change needed was.

Overall, the Board had done well in the area and she signposted Board Members to the draft report found attached in the agenda. The NLE was not included as its funding mechanism was established and its delivery was underway at the point the study was commissioned. She added that contrary to how it feels at the time, infrastructure delivery required constant validation which led to revised requirements as projects progressed. For example, whilst Health centres were envisaged as being required in the DIFS, the health care programme that had encompassed 7-10 GPs had increased to 14 GPs. She concluded by saying that there was a solid 3-5 year capital programme in place that was finely balanced, and in the longer term the delivery of more overtly 'place' orientated infrastructure delivery such as schools and doctors, would be needed in response to the development happening.

Mr Adams explained that he was curious to go through this piece of work in details but had always thought it was a strong piece of work to undertake. He added that given the substation was delivered through another means so hopefully the funding could be given to the 5G project.

Ms Purser explained that she hoped there would be a public facing version of this document at some point in the future. In Lambeth there had been some draft findings now moved into CIL and a discussion could be had offline of how the whole opportunity area could be covered, not just Wandsworth.

Councillor Govindia asked whether there were any dental services included, and in response Ms Stewart explained that these services were excluded from the report as they were provided by the private sector rather than the NHS.

Councillor Govindia then asked whether it would be possible to look at the capacity of the area to see what commercial space could usefully be taken by a dental practice. Ms Stewart responded that this could be looked at. Responding to Ms Purser's point, she said that once the report was published it would show the finances up to a snapshot point of the study, and Officers would continue to report annually to Committee about the Nine Elms development area as a whole.

Councillor Govindia concluded by saying it was also useful for the Board to see what the area's 5G capacity was, as they were hoping for the VNEB opportunity area to be the 21st Century enclave to London so they would need to make sure 5G coverage was not patchy.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted for information.

9. Any Other Business

Mr Adams suggested the Strategy Board wanted to look at resolving issues with South Western Railway Services to Queenstown Road. The corridor through from Vauxhall to Earlsfield was crucial and the reduction in the service would create problems for commuters and residents. There was no other business for consideration.

The Chairman thanked Battersea Power Station for hosting the hybrid meeting.

The meeting ended at 12.27pm.