

## **WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **QUEENSTOWN WARD “LET’S TALK” MEETING**

held at All Saints Church, 100 Prince of Wales Drive, SW11

on

Wednesday 22nd October 2014 at 7.30pm

### **PRESENT**

#### **Council Members**

Councillor Ravi Govindia	-	In the Chair (Leader of the Council);
Councillor Sally-Ann Ephson	-	Queenstown Ward Member
Councillor Marie Hanson	-	Queenstown Ward Member
Councillor Nicola Nardelli	-	Queenstown Ward Member; and
Councillor Cook	-	Cabinet Member for Community Services and Deputy Leader of the Council
Councillor Rex Osborn	-	Leader of the Opposition.

#### **Council officers**

Mr. J. Adam	–	Head of Security, Events and Arts
Mr M. Howell	-	Area Housing Manager
Mr. M. Hunter	-	Nine Elms Team Manager (Policy)
Mr S. Jolley	-	Assistant On-Street Services Manager
Mr. D. Jones-Owen	-	Committee Secretary
Mr S. Lane	-	Senior Engineer
Mr. W. McCluskey	-	Committee Secretary
Mr J. Rodwell	-	Neighbourhood Officer
Mr. M. Singham	-	Waste Policy Manager

#### **Residents**

Approximately 40 members of the public.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Govindia, welcomed residents to the meeting. He indicated that there would be an opportunity after the main session for residents to talk individually to officers and Councillors.

Councillor Cook (Cabinet Member for Community Services), the three Ward Members and the Leader of the Opposition on the Council, Councillor Osborn, each gave a brief description of their roles on the Council and the officers introduced themselves.

The Ward Members mentioned the following as key issues, concerns and actions for the area:-

- (a) Combatting gang culture (e.g. by encouraging the community to provide information to the authorities about illegal activities).
- (b) Providing local employment opportunities (e.g. apprenticeships for young people), particularly in relation to new developments (e.g. at the Battersea Power Station and the New Covent Garden sites) and encouraging women, including single parents, into employment.
- (c) Providing positive activities for young people (e.g. play and sports facilities, such as the new football pitch on the Doddington Estate).
- (d) Engagement in the Nine Elms development area and with respect to other developments, with the aim of ensuring local people benefit from the developments. An example of this was the forthcoming creation of a new community centre in the Nine Elms development area.
- (e) Working to help vulnerable people in the community, e.g. people with disabilities and chronic illnesses. Ensuring that people's problems with housing and other benefits were addressed.

Councillor Govindia then invited questions and comments from residents.

## **ISSUES, RESPONSES AND ACTIONS**

*The following items were raised in the main session:*

### **1. Cycling, cycle hire scheme and Queenstown Road roundabout**

The following issues were raised under this heading:-

- (a) A number of residents expressed concern that cyclists were making use of local footpaths, contrary to the law, and suggested that their behaviour represented a serious danger to pedestrians e.g. dog walkers, parents pushing buggies, and elderly, visually handicapped and disabled people. An incident was referred to where cyclists had argued the point with a Police officer when ordered off the footpath. Another incident was referred to where a pedestrian remonstrating with a cyclist on the pavement was verbally abused. There was an impression that cyclists were "out of control" but were being given priority over pedestrians when it came to transport expenditure and improvement schemes. It was noted that pedestrians, not cyclists, were in the majority in terms of journeys undertaken. It was felt Police were not doing enough to tackle cycling on pavements and Councillors need to do more to prioritise the safety of pedestrians.

- (b) A number of residents indicated there had been no consultation on the installation of the TfL's cycle hire facilities in Prince of Wales Drive. A resident indicated that out of a block of 110 flats only 3 people received a letter about the cycle racks being installed in Prince of Wales Drive.
- (c) Concern was expressed by a number of residents about the current works to modify the roundabout at the junction of Queenstown Road and Prince of Wales Drive, the character of which was important to the area. It was stated that there had been no consultation on the modifications. One resident indicated she had only become aware of the scheme when she saw a notice. She had to request an illustration of the proposals, which it quickly became evident were all about improving things for cyclists. The works were causing serious traffic delays in the area and disruption to non-cyclists. The scheme was resented by some as another example of cyclists being given priority over other road users and pedestrians, given that the main purpose of the modifications were to provide safe routes for cyclists.
- (d) A resident indicated that there had been no on-site information giving the location of a bus stop that had been moved during the Queenstown Road roundabout works.
- (e) A resident queried to what extent agreements with developers were funding special measures designed to benefit cyclists.

Response: Regarding (a) above, Councillor Nardelli indicated that the area saw a huge volume of cyclists going North and South across Chelsea Bridge. She had been putting the case for speed controls on cyclists to be introduced or enforced and noted that the position over who had priority in Battersea Park was causing confusion and at times outrage from pedestrians. She indicated the Police were giving out Fixed Penalty Notices to cyclists on the pavement on Battersea Bridge. She indicated that the key to resolving the problem was to ensure pedestrians and cyclists were kept separate as much as possible. This was in fact the aim of the roundabout scheme referred to in (c) above: to ensure cyclists had a safe and clear route which would mean they were not tempted to use the pavements.

Councillor Ephson indicated that she agreed that inconsiderate or dangerous cycling was a problem in the area. She noted that some cyclists travelled far too fast down the hill from Battersea Dogs Home. She agreed that there was a lack of Police action to control cyclists' behaviour. She urged local residents to contact the Ward Councillors with particular concerns about cycling so that they could refer these on to Police and ensure the problem was treated as a priority. Cyclists had to be accountable for their behaviour in the same way as all other road users. She would support the Police allocating sufficient resources to control the speed and behaviour of cyclists in the area.

Mr Rodwell indicated that residents would be well advised to raise the issue of cyclists' disregard for the law on use of pavements and speed limits with the

Police at the local Ward Panel meeting, where Police officers met with local residents. This would then be noted as a local ward priority.

It was noted that cyclists felt intimidated by lorries on the road and preferred to be on the pavement as a result.

Regarding (b) above, Councillor Govindia indicated that he would be very surprised if local residents had not been consulted about the installation of the TfL cycle hire racks as that had always been standard procedure on previous installations and the installations would also have been the subject of planning applications (which would also have been consulted on).

Regarding cycling in general, Councillor Govindia indicated that while he did not cycle but he recognised that cycling was gaining in popularity and for good reasons: it was a green form of transport, it contributed to the good health of those who cycled, and it was a personal transport choice that made sense for many people. However, there was no justification for cycling on pavements. The best response was to ensure roads were made safer for cyclists and to secure Police enforcement action, as those were the best ways to get cyclists off pavements. Most cyclists were responsible in his view.

Regarding (d) above, Councillor Govindia indicated that information about bus stop relocation was a matter for Transport for London (TfL) but he agreed they should be communicating effectively with bus passengers in the area about such issues. Mr Hunter indicated he would raise that with TfL.

Regarding (e) above Councillor Govindia confirmed that planning agreements with developers had been used to fund safer cycling measures in the area. Mr Hunter confirmed that the works to the roundabout were being specifically funded through agreements with the developers at Battersea Power Station and Chelsea Bridge.

**(Action – Mr Hunter to pass on to TfL concern about notification of bus stop relocations.)**

## **2. Parking**

The following issues related to parking were raised:-

(a) A resident indicated that she considered the CPZ control period which ended at 5pm was inappropriate and resulted in residents of Prince of Wales Drive being unable to park close to their homes as, especially in summer months, users of Battersea Park would park in Prince of Wales Drive in the early evening period. She also noted that parking spaces had been lost to Red Route markings and the TfL cycle hire racks. The current situation was untenable and she considered that the end of the time period should be 8pm.

(b) A resident of Savona Estate indicated that yellow hatched lines on the estate were ignored by some drivers who parked there with impunity and this

created problems for refuse collection vehicles seeking to turn, which consequently led to problems such as uncollected refuse being littered on streets. Local parking attendants indicated to residents that they could not take any enforcement action.

Promises had been made that this problem would be addressed. The resident claimed that it was difficult to make progress on this because estate managers were constantly changing and so no one was there long enough to ensure the matter got resolved. The problem had been identified three years ago but nothing had been done.

Response: Regarding (a) above, Mr. Lane indicated that the Council had fought hard to retain residents' parking against Red Route intrusion. He went on to indicate that the 5pm cut off time was not typical for the Borough. 6.30pm was the more normal cut off time. He advised that if the resident wished to take her proposal forward, she should organise a petition as the Council would wish to see some convincing expression of support for a change in the control period before it would consult on the issue.

Councillor Govindia indicated that parking was a difficult issue to get right as the Council had to balance the interests of residents and retailers and the need to ensure safe traffic flow. However, if there was evidence of concern among local residents about this issue, that would trigger a review. It had also to be remembered that an alteration to parking controls in one locality would have an effect on neighbouring localities, which was something else the Council had to factor in.

Regarding (e) above, Councillor Nardelli indicated that she had been on the Savona Estate to discuss the problem of yellow lines being ignored. Carey Gardens had a similar problem. She was under the impression officers were alert to the problem and taking action to tackle it through putting in place double yellow lines at junctions.

Mr Howell indicated that officers were aware of the issues with yellow lines on the Savona Estate and he would check on progress after the meeting. The roads had been redesignated as highways, which meant that they were subject to a separate control regime from estate roads operated as part of housing land. On the issue of frequent changes in estate manager, he indicated that it was inevitable people would move on when they received promotion.

Councillor Govindia gave an assurance to the resident (Mr. Goonewardene) that if the issue was not resolved by the end of November, he could contact him directly and he would personally investigate and ensure action was taken. He would provide Mr. Goonewardene with his contact details after the meeting. The Ward councillors welcomed this assurance. Councillor Osborn commented that the minutes of the Let's Talk meeting would be published online and residents could quote the Leader's assurance, which would be recorded in the minutes, when raising the issue with officers.

**(Action – Mr. Howell to follow up issue with Estate Manager and other relevant officers)**

**[POST MEETING NOTE:** *With regard to the parking difficulties reported by Mr Goonewardene at the Let's Talk Meeting on Wednesday evening, Mr Lane confirmed that following occasional reports that refuse vehicles had difficulties accessing the Savona Estate and the report of similar access issues during the Savona Estate Inspection in September 2014, surveys were undertaken on Thessaly Road to identify where additional double yellow lines were required in order to maintain access. The hatched markings adjacent to the estate access roads which had been marked several years ago were in some places faded, not enforceable and therefore sometimes ignored.*

*Council approval has therefore been obtained to introduce short sections of double yellow line waiting restriction on Thessaly Road adjacent to various access roads into the Savona Estate, including the parking area to the rear of the commercial units at 178-206 Thessaly Road. A Statutory Consultation which includes the publishing of a Public Notice in the Wandsworth Guardian is now under way, with any objections required by 13<sup>th</sup> November. Providing no objections are received, the Council must publish a further notice in the Wandsworth Guardian advising that the Traffic Management Order (TMO) has been made. It is anticipated that subject to no objections, the TMO will become operational on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at which point the yellow lines can be marked - weather conditions and suitable access permitting.*

*In summary, the necessary legal process is underway and double yellow lines will be marked adjacent to the access roads to Savona Estate on or shortly after 29<sup>th</sup> November 2014.*

*With regard to the introduction of a controlled parking zone in the highway roads around the Savona Estate, there has been no indication from residents that they would support the introduction of a CPZ (possibly of the estate residents usually being able to park within the Savona Estate parking areas and, if not, to park on Thessaly Road without having to pay for a CPZ resident permit). Accordingly, there are no current plans to consult residents in this area.]*

### **3. Affordable housing and related issues**

The following issues related to affordable housing were raised:-

- (a) A resident enquired what assurances could be given that the construction of affordable housing, including shared equity and rented property, for ordinary local people was being treated as a priority.
- (b) A resident from Carey Gardens queried to what extent affordable housing could be described as "affordable" when it could in some locations that translated into £380,000 for a one bedroom apartment.
- (c) A resident of Patmore Estate commented that the Council and Government were providing lots of routes to home ownership. She felt local people should certainly attend the Council's affordable

housing fairs as there were various ways in which people could get on to the property ladder.

- (d) A resident had expressed concern at being told by sales people at St James' Gas Works site that there would be no affordable housing site and that they would pay the Council to develop affordable housing off site. Another resident queried what percentage of units in a development such as the Gas Works site near Queenstown Road would be given over to affordable housing.
- (e) A resident expressed her appreciation of Councillor Hanson's help in addressing her own housing situation.

Response – Regarding (a) above, Councillor Hanson indicated that she considered enabling ordinary people to get on the housing ladder should be treated as a priority and provision of affordable housing was key. Councillor Nardelli indicated that 2000 affordable homes were being provided through agreements with local developers. Locally the Council were also providing 46 new Council housing units. She noted that there would be an affordable housing fair at Wandsworth Civic Suite on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, which would help people identify the many routes available to people to become home owners, e.g. through shared equity schemes. Councillor Ephson indicated that she had been involved in scrutinising affordable housing proposals in local developments. She considered people needed affordable housing and she, like other people in the area, was concerned about the availability of housing for her children in the future.

Regarding (b) above, Councillor Osborn indicated that the high cost of what was claimed to be affordable housing was the central point of concern. The definition of affordable housing as "80% of market rate" did not mean the housing was affordable for people on average or lower incomes. He considered that the Council had neglected the development of social housing locally to meet people's housing needs. He considered central Government and the Council were not doing enough to help people meet their housing and depended too much on the "right to buy" route to getting on to the property ladder.

Regarding (d) above, Councillor Nardelli gave an assurance that the developers would not be allowed to ignore their responsibility to provide affordable housing.

Councillor Govindia commented that this site was not at planning application stage. The developers could say what they liked at this stage, but the Planning Applications Committee would scrutinise any application they made very carefully. There could be special factors that would affect how developers met their obligations. Developers' contributions to fund affordable housing were sometimes staged, so that they had a flow of funds arising from earlier stages, or they might initially fund other requirements e.g. the Northern Line Extension.

Mr Hunter and Councillor Govindia confirmed that the basic rule was that developers should provide 15% or more affordable housing on a development. Mr Hunter indicated it was his job to negotiate with developers about such matters. Local developments were also funding the development of a new school (St Mary's). Another important element was ensuring local people got access to job opportunities associated with developments in the area. A resident commented that one additional school seemed inadequate given the number of units being constructed locally. Mr Hunter indicated there were a range of improvements being funded from the local developments e.g. the linear park, improvements to bus and rail stations, implementation of a local cultural strategy and a community centre on the Battersea Power Station site. He had the support of consultants who scrutinised developments to ensure that maximise value for the local community was extracted.

Councillor Govindia accepted that on some of the more desirable sites that would not necessarily mean housing would be considered affordable by everyone. However, there were various routes to getting onto the property ladder including equity sharing and there were opportunities to move into lower rented properties. There would be relatively cheaper housing available in the Nine Elms area. He noted that Councillor Nardelli had already mentioned the action taken by the Council to develop some new Council housing locally.

#### **4. Formula E**

The following issues were raised in relation to the proposals to stage a Formula E event in Battersea Park:-

- (a) What benefits will Formula E bring to Battersea Park?
- (b) What disadvantages will Formula E bring to Battersea Park and local residents?
- (c) Will local residents, including those who live on or near Battersea Park Road, receive any benefit (e.g. cheaper tickets) given that they will bear the brunt of any litter, parking or crime issues?
- (d) Has a final decision on the staging of the event had taken place?
- (e) How many people would be attending the event?
- (f) Given that the arrangement with the Metropolitan Police to provide a Safer Parks Team will be discontinued in March 2015, who will provide security for the Formula E event?
- (g) Why do all the events have to take place at Battersea Park with the consequent wear and tear whilst other places like Richmond Park do not have the same level of events?

Response – The following responses were given:-

(a) and (b) Councillor Cook said that there would be a public meeting on this proposal on 6th November 2014 where local people would be able to express their views. He said that there were several potential benefits arising from this proposal with perhaps the most important being to change the public's perception of electric vehicles. It would be an opportunity to highlight the environmental advantages these vehicles could bring. He said that if the event goes ahead it would generate income with a sizeable portion being directed towards the Park's funding.

Councillor Cook said that when this proposal was originally raised the Council's initial reaction was that it was not realistic. However, the organisers amended their plans and the proposal is now being given serious consideration. If it goes ahead there will inevitably be some disruption which occurs whenever a major event of this nature takes place. He pointed out that the Council receives financial assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund in maintaining the Park and they would have to be satisfied that there would be no permanent damage to the Park. Following consultation they have identified a number of potential issues that will need to be addressed.

Councillor Osborn said that there were clear financial advantages in staging the event but it was important that it was planned properly to minimise nuisance to residents. It was also important to ensure that this did not lead to a proliferation of similar events at the Park that could lead to serious disruption for residents.

(c) Councillor Cook said that it was a fundamental principle that if the event takes place then large numbers of tickets will be made available to local community groups and schools. The aim was also that there should be an area where the public can watch the event on large screens.

(d), (e) and (f) Councillor Cook said that a final decision on staging the event had not yet been taken. The anticipated attendance of the event, should it proceed, was c. 40,000 people which he contrasted with the 55,000 who attended the Fireworks Display. With regard to security he said that the organisers would be required to provide stewards. Whilst it was true that the Metropolitan Police Safer Parks Team would not be continued, the Council's Events Security Service was to be strengthened and would take up the policing role.

(g) Councillor Cook pointed out that the Royal Parks (including Richmond) had different rules about their usage. On the general point he said that the events were very popular with the public and generated income, which was important given the current financial pressure on local authorities. He added that the Park's proximity to Central London made it a desirable location for events organisers.

## 5. Nine Elms/North Battersea Regeneration

The following issues were raised under this heading:-

- (a) Why do residents who live on the edge of these regeneration areas and who will suffer disruption from the construction works not receive more information from the Council, particularly as it is very difficult to contact the Planning Department?
- (b) A resident of Carey Gardens asked if the money the Council receives from the developers would be used for improvements for residents of local estates on items such as roads.
- (c) Developers say that they want to pull communities together but an article in the Evening Standard said that there would be private rooftop allotments at the Battersea Power Station development, whereas the local city farm was redeveloped as part of a private school.
- (d) Will there be a new Police Station in the regeneration area bearing in mind the closure of the Police Station in Battersea Bridge Road?
- (e) A resident congratulated the Council on its achievements in the regeneration schemes but asked what could be done to revitalise the local shopping parades such as Battersea Park Road. She said that the traditional shops e.g. butchers, fishmongers had gone and had been replaced by fast food outlets and betting shops. She referred to the successful rejuvenation of Northcote Road as an example of what could be achieved. A resident of the Doddington Estate said that there were several vacant shop units on that estate that had been empty for a number of years. He had been told that a person had enquired about renting a shop to provide a coffee bar but the rent was too high.
- (f) Can railway arches be used as premises for small local businesses?
- (g) Would the introduction of a 20 mph traffic zone in Battersea Park Road improve shopping conditions as it would make the road safer?

Response – The following responses were given:-

- (a) Mr Hunter said that several hundred leaflets had been sent out and 2 consultation meetings had been held. He said that there was a Nine Elms Masterplan for Utilities which was designed to minimise disruption for residents and ensure that the works met the necessary environmental standards. He said that he could be contacted at [mhunter@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:mhunter@wandsworth.gov.uk)
- (b) Mr Hunter said that there was an Infrastructure Plan for the area but developers will have to sell dwellings first before the monies for these works are available. Mr Howell said that the Area Housing Team were

compiling a list of works that residents would like to see carried out and it will be passed to the Council's Economic Development Officer.

(c) Mr Hunter said that a Community Centre would be constructed at Battersea Power Station but this would take place in the 3rd phase of the development. The meeting was also informed that St James' had held a consultation meeting on the redevelopment of the Gasworks site adjacent to Battersea Park Station where the provision of shops and affordable housing were raised. Councillor Ephson said that in addition to the proposed Community Centre there were also proposals for a new library. She had also attended the consultation meeting and she urged local residents to attend similar meetings in the future.

(d) Councillor Govindia said that there were no plans for a new Police Station but given that the US and Dutch Embassies were to be relocated to Nine Elms it was likely that security requirements would be reviewed. The closure of Battersea Police Station was part of the Metropolitan Police's review of its property portfolio and was not linked to the regeneration schemes.

(e) Councillor Govindia said that shopping patterns have changed and some small shops have suffered as a result. There was good news for local businesses in that the Council has ensured that they can tender for services in the regeneration areas. He suggested that food supply to the construction sites was an example of the type of service that could be provided locally. On the general point of changes to shops there was little the Council could do other than offer advice via the Economic Development Officer.

*[POST MEETING NOTE: The Council's Head of Property Services reports that a number of units on Battersea Park Road on the Doddington Estate have been closed for an extended period of time as some of the tenants have taken the decision to cease trading from their properties but without giving up their leases. In some of these cases, the Council has had to take legal action to regain possession so that these can then be re-let. Unfortunately this process is a slow one and all the while the shop units affected have not been trading. Additionally some of the properties on Battersea Park Road have been sold on long leases and in these cases where such properties are vacant, the Council is not in a position to repossess or re-let.*

*Currently there are three vacant shop units on the Doddington Estate that are being marketed. One of these vacant units has recently gone 'under offer' and there is a good level of interest in these remaining units which it is anticipated will also be let in the near future.*

*The rent levels are often negotiable so it is always worth prospective tenants "testing" what rent may be acceptable although it has to be said that these shop are generally at the more affordable end of the market due to their location.]*

(f) Councillor Govindia explained that negotiations with Network Rail, who are responsible for the arches, could be difficult as it was not that organisation's top priority. However, there had been successful conversions of some arches and discussions were taking place concerning other sites. In addition to their use for business some arches could be opened up to provide greater permeability in the area where access can be difficult.

(g) Councillor Ephson agreed that a 20 mph zone could help. She said that some people had tried to get funding to use empty shops for community use but without success. Councillor Osborn said that the Council cannot make people open a shop or block a change if they have the correct planning permission. However, there had been a big increase in the number of self-employed people and also people working from home. They are going to need local retail outlets and that could be the key to regenerating these shops.

On the 20 mph zones Councillor Govindia said that they had to be in a contiguous area and make sense

## **6. Close of Open Session of the Meeting**

Councillor Govindia thanked the residents for attending the meeting and invited them to stay and speak further with Councillors and officers concerning any further queries they may have.

## **7. Matters subsequently raised with Council Officers**

No new matters were raised.

The meeting ended at 9.24 p.m.

David Jones-Owen/Bill McCluskey (020 8871 7032/6010)

28<sup>th</sup> October 2014