

## **WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **TOOTING WARD** **LET'S TALK MEETING**

held at St Augustine's Church Hall, Broadwater Road, SW17 0EF on  
Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 7.30 p.m.

#### **PRESENT**

##### **Council Members**

Councillor Govindia (Leader of the Council – in the Chair); Councillors Critchard and Daley (Tooting Ward Members); Councillor Osborn (Leader of the Opposition).

Apology for absence: Councillor B Johnson (Tooting Ward Member)

##### **Council Officers**

Martin Byrne - Area Housing Manager (Housing & Community Services)  
Nigel Granger – Area Planning Manager (Housing & Community Services)  
Adama Sulaiman – Neighbourhood Community Safety Officer (Administration)  
Steve Jolley – Assistant On-Street Services Manager (Housing & Community  
Services)

Steve Lane, Principal Engineer, Parking Policy and Operations (Housing &  
Community Services)

Liz Rayment-Pickard – Head of School Standards and Improvement (Education and  
Social Services)

Mike Singham – Waste Strategy Manager (Housing & Community Services)

Martin Newton – Committee Services (Administration Department)

Frankie Belloli - Committee Services (Administration Department)

##### **Residents**

Approximately 30 members of the public.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman, Councillor Govindia, introduced the Council Members and the officers.

The Ward Members then gave a brief overview of their role representing local people.

#### **ISSUES, RESPONSES AND ACTION**

##### **1. Street Cleaning / Fly tipping**

Concern raised about fly tipping and rubbish in Garratt Lane near to St. George's Hospital and that one contractor would not collect refuse that was not left in the street and that situation has now become the 'norm'. Fly tipping near to the telephone box at Garratt Terrace also indicated to be a problem. Resident from Gatton Road supported this comment and said rubbish often left in street and that landlords should be contacted to ensure residents are aware of the proper way to dispose of refuse. Resident of Park Hill Court, Beeches Road complained that non-residents come in to dump their rubbish.

Concern also raised at business owners in Tooting High Street and Tooting Market setting poor example for residents by leaving refuse out all day at times and that excessive chewing gum deposits are on pavements around Tooting Broadway Station. Also concerns raised regarding fly tipping and refuse problems at Tooting Grove, Marion Court, Tooting High Street and Ansell Road.

Mike Singham said that a contractor previously used by the Council had requested bagged refuse be left on the pavement but that the advice to residents was to leave refuse in front gardens where available – when refuse is left on the street itself it should not be deposited before 1830 the previous evening and only left immediately outside the residents' property. He confirmed that residents are regularly reminded of these arrangements and that refuse is collected from either a dustbin or a refuse sack. He emphasised to residents the need to report any collection problems to the Council.

Mike Singham informed the meeting that a campaign to identify and report people suspected of fly tipping had not resulted in any calls to the Council. He confirmed that the problem arose more in Tooting than in other areas. He also told the meeting that care is taken at the planning applications stage to ensure that adequate refuse arrangements and storage are catered for in developments. Nigel Granger also confirmed that a Planning Supplementary Document to the Council's Local Plan, although directed mainly at architects, contained information on this matter. Councillor Daley reiterated the need for residents to inform officers of any refuse related problems and that this enabled a statistical picture to be built up.

Concern was raised by a resident of Hillbrook Road about short-notice altered weekend collection times and Councillor Daley said that weekend reporting of issues is still possible and problems are able to be addressed. Mike Singham confirmed that the best way to report a problem was on-line and that this automatically generated a report to the contractors ensuring they were quickly aware of a complaint being made and that this was particularly useful at weekends.

## **2. Traffic / Roads**

A resident of Mandrake Road raised the question of one-way working in this road and Fircroft Road to address traffic issues. Comments were made that this approach may lead to greater speed in those roads unless further calming measures were in force. Councillor Daley drew attention to difficulties in addressing similar traffic issues in the Fishponds Road area where suggested alternative road workings had not proved popular when the Council had

formally consulted on them. It was noted that not all of Mandrake Road was currently 20mph. Councillor Govindia suggested that the submission of a residents' petition would enable further more detailed consideration of the matter. During further discussion on 20mph speed limits, Councillor Osborn said that research had shown a limit of this kind does slow vehicles down and does save lives.

Concern was raised on the speed of buses using Fountain Road and numbers of buses in the St. George's Hospital area. Councillor Osborn suggested to the resident that he would speak to him about this issue at the end of the meeting.

(Action – Councillor Osborn)

### **3. Community Cohesion**

Reference was made to the tragic events in Paris the previous week when 12 people had died in terrorist actions. The Leader of the Council underlined the longstanding, excellent community relations in the Borough. Councillor Daley considered that the Tooting area is a shining example of community cohesion and he commended the work of the Balham and Tooting Community Association which organised events bringing together many different groups in the local community.

### **4. Proposed Telecommunications Mast near All Saints Church and Hillbrook School**

A group of parents from Hillbrook School and other local residents were present at the meeting to raise their concerns over a proposal to install a telecommunications mast at All Saints Church about which a petition of 114 objections had been raised. There was considerable concern over research suggesting that the emissions from such masts could have long-term health effects; in view of this, the group considered was concerned about this location, so close to Hillbrook School which could shortly accommodate as many as 1,000 children. It was pointed out that the site also hosted a children's centre, two neighbourhood nurseries and a facility for autistic children. Reference was made to support given by Councillor Anderson for a similar campaign against a mast in the Balham area. It was reported the procedures for such proposals included asking the school affected and the relevant local authority for their comments; the All Saints Church Parish Council had indicated that it would not pursue the proposal if the Council and the School objected. The group wished to know whether the Council would object to the proposal and whether councillors would support the campaign in objection to it.

Nigel Granger explained that a mast proposal from a "code system provider" could be exempt from the requirement for a planning consent under Part 24 of the Permitted Development Order. A member of the group stated that she understood this exemption did not apply in the case of this specific proposal. Mr Granger confirmed that, in the absence of this exemption, a planning application would be required and this would be the subject of consultation and in the event of the level of objections mentioned, a decision by councillors

on the authority's Planning Applications Committee. He added the duty of the planning authority was to assess any application on its merits, taking into account relevant national, regional and local planning policies; national planning policy provided that applications could not be refused on health grounds.

Councillor Critchard stated that, as a member of the Planning Applications Committee, she had a duty to consider and assess all the material factors before participating in any decision on an application; she would not therefore be part of any campaign against the proposal. She suggested that checks should be made on whether the Parish Council had complied with requirements to consult about such a proposal.

Councillor Daley said he would consider making representations on behalf of the group so that those making a decision on a planning application understood their point of view. He underlined, however, that the grounds for any refusal of consent would have to be based on material planning considerations and the application of relevant planning policies.

A member of the group asked whether the School, as a community school, were obliged to consult parents before indicating its response about the proposal. She referred to World Health Organisation guidance and to the duty of care of the School, and of the Council as an education authority, to protect the interests of the pupils.

## **5. Condition of Highways**

A resident reported instances of "collapsing" highway surfaces in Tooting Grove and Covert Road. He also referred to the incorrect laying of the pavement outside the Tile Giant shop on Tooting High Street causing serious ponding when it rained heavily. Councillor Govindia referred to the need to involve TfL in responding to defects on roads for which they are responsible. Councillor Daley would take these matters up with the relevant agencies.

(Action: Councillor Daley)

## **6. Street Trees**

A resident asked for more street trees to be planted. Councillor Daley referred to the annual exercise by the Council to review appropriate locations for street trees; he invited residents to make suggestions which he could introduce into this exercise. Councillor Govindia advised that sometimes it was not possible to plant trees in certain locations due to services underneath the pavements and roads nearby.

(Action: Councillor Daley)

## **7. Infrastructure in response to Development/School Place Planning**

A resident was concerned about the development of appropriate infrastructure (schools, health facilities, libraries, leisure facilities, etc) to meet the growing population in the area. He suggested that local authorities consider using

space in cemeteries given that there was great pressure on development sites.

Councillor Daley confirmed that there had been a “baby boom” recently in Tooting; he underlined that school place planning was not an exact science and on occasion, the education authority had to respond quickly to unexpected pressures. He referred to the reluctance of Broadwater School to add another class at the education authority’s request and he anticipated that there would be pressure to develop open spaces in future. Councillor Govindia confirmed that the Council did all it reasonably could to predict the demand for school places and respond accordingly, such as with the new Tooting Primary School in Franciscan Road; he could not recall school closures in Tooting which had not been matched with replacement provision.

Councillor Govindia reported that the two cemeteries close to Tooting were, in fact, owned by Lambeth Council; understandably, any proposal to develop land where graves were located, would be very sensitive. Councillor Osborn referred to some space, not used for graves, at Streatham Cemetery which might provide a development site.

## **8. Hillbrook School – Development Site/Traffic Management**

A resident reported that there were problems with inadequate traffic management at this development, resulting in risks posed by large articulated vehicles making dangerous manoeuvres in tight spaces. He was also concerned by noise disturbance caused by cement mixer trucks arriving at the site as early as 5am and waiting in line making noise outside residential properties.

Nigel Granger agreed to check about the delivery management plan which should be in place for the development and would liaise with the enforcement team to ensure that its requirements were met by the developers. He suggested that residents call the Council’s Environmental Health Hotline to report any such disturbance in the early/late hours of the day.

(Action: Nigel Granger)

Another resident also referred to traffic problems created by parents parking inconsiderately very close to the School. Councillor Critchard asked whether there was a school travel plan which might relate to this problem; Nigel Granger would check this point. Councillor Govindia underlined that the School also had responsibilities to manage these situations effectively.

(Action: Nigel Granger)

## **9. Empty Retail Units**

A resident was concerned about some large new development with ground floor retail units which remained empty for long periods, resulting in “dead” stretches of certain streets. Councillor Govindia reported that the larger retail units were supposed to be adaptable to meet the commercial demand.

Councillor Daley was concerned that planning authorities were increasingly struggling with national changes to planning policies which was weakening their ability to resist certain developments. Councillor Osborn pointed to the impact of the economic recession and of the effect on prospective commercial tenants of the litter/waste management issues discussed earlier in the meeting.

There was mention of local people who wished to open a café in the area and were interested in a unit which had been empty for three years. Councillor Govindia asked that details be provided to him and he would try to facilitate contact with the owners.

(Action: Councillor Govindia)

### CLOSE OF MEETING

Councillor Govindia thanked the residents for attending the meeting and invited them to stay and speak with councillors and officers about any further queries that they might have.

The meeting ended at 9.26 p.m.

Martin Newton (020 8871 6488)  
Frankie Belloli (020 8871 6005)