

## **WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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

held at the York Gardens Library, 34 Lavender Road, SW11 2UG on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at 7.30 p.m.

#### **PRESENT**

##### **Council Members**

Councillor Govindia (Leader of the Council – in the Chair); Councillors Belton and Speck (Latchmere Ward Members); Councillor Osborn (Leader of the Opposition).

Apology for absence: Councillor Hogg (Latchmere Ward Member)

##### **Council Officers**

Tom Crawley – Deputy Area Housing Manager (Housing & Community Services)  
Tim Cronin – Assistant Director: Planning & Development

(Housing & Community Services)

Elisabeth Fitzpatrick – Primary School Improvement Manager  
(Education and Social Services)

Tim Fleming – Assistant Chief Leisure and Sport Officer  
(Housing & Community Services)

Steve Jolley – Assistant On-Street Services Manager  
(Housing & Community Services)

Steve Lane – Senior Engineer (Housing & Community Services)

Roger Lyddon – Neighbourhood Officer: Community Safety (Administration)

Philip Morris – Regeneration Project Manager

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

Ian Stewart – Assistant Director: Housing Management  
(Housing & Community Services)

Gareth Jones – Committee Services (Administration Department)

Frankie Belloli - Committee Services (Administration Department)

##### **Residents**

Approximately 15 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. Regeneration Project**

A resident referred to the demolition of flats and re-provision of dwellings nearby, he was concerned about the density of the new scheme and its location which he feared would have the effect of reducing open green space and blocking views and light to existing properties. Mr Morris advised that the current ideas were simply a preferred option and more detailed plans would follow and be subject to public consultation; any proposals would also, of course, be considered as part of the normal planning consent process. The resident also mentioned issues relating to the option of having glass-fronted stairwells and the possible impact of balconies on rates and rent payable. Mr Morris confirmed that all these issues were being assessed and would be addressed in the consultation.

Councillor Belton considered that any project involving such changes would generate a range of different opinions; he personally felt that more could be done to use space such as car parking, such as the land along Grant Road. He referred to a very useful recent meeting with residents to discuss options and underlined local councillors' commitment to listen and take on board the concerns expressed.

Marlene Price reported that she had been engaging with the Council about the project and was satisfied that it was taking a more positive approach to resident involvement than in the past. However, she was aware of scepticism amongst a minority of residents, for example about the commitment on residents being re-housed locally, and underlined the need to reassure them through the quality of information and engagement as the project progressed. There were examples of councils elsewhere not meeting promises made to residents in such circumstances. The Leader of the Council agreed that it was important to be clear about the options being considered and to invite views; he underlined that the Council had been explicit with its commitments to residents, including in a number of written reports in the public domain. Councillor Belton and Speck emphasised that they would be alert to the proposals coming forward.

Mr Morris explained that efforts were being made to provide information directly to residents, through such means as leaflets and brochures, and to encourage their involvement. He agreed to consider a resident's suggestion that an individually-addressed letter be sent to every household in the area.

In response to questions about the nature of tenure in the new properties, Mr Morris confirmed that they would be for social rent, not by a housing association; those currently on a secure tenancy would retain the same security of tenure. Rents would be calculated in the same way as for social rent tenants throughout the Borough.

### **2. Traffic and Parking near Battersea Reach – York Road, Petergate and Eltringham Street**

A resident reported significant problems arising from traffic, including trucks and heavy lorries, manoeuvring at the entrance to Battersea Reach; this was causing congestion, safety risks and damage to kerbstones. The resident had written to TfL, who were responsible for York Road, to suggest a re-design of the road layout to address the problem, but they had claimed this could not be implemented. The resident also reported that some railings had also been taken out and this posed dangers for children attempting to cross the road.

Mr Jolley confirmed that he had attended a meeting and advised that since the road was the responsibility of TfL, then damage would need to be reported to them. The Council could liaise with them to see if a re-design of the road layout could be implemented, and with the Police about enforcement of traffic rules.

Councillor Speck reported that the relevant Council committee had considered the issue of parking in the area on days when football matches were being played. A resident of Petergate reported on a parking survey she had conducted recently in Petergate and Eltringham Street which had confirmed the pressures on local spaces to the detriment of residents; she considered that this was, in part, due to the restriction on the number of parking spaces to be provided for new developments. Mr Lane advised that a resident consultation had indicated a preference to retain the existing hours/days for restricted parking; the results had been analysed separately to assess the views of residents not in the new developments and those residents had no entitlement to CPZ permits. Councillors on the relevant committee had instructed staff to conduct further surveys and Mr Lane understood a letter would be sent to residents in the following week.

With respect to the impact of the matches at Chelsea Football Club, a resident suggested that consideration be given to a match day scheme similar to the one in force at Twickenham Rugby Stadium.

### **3. Petergate - Flooding**

A resident reported flooding in Petergate which had taken a couple of days to recede; she related this to continuing problems with potholes in the street. She had obtained information from the Council about proposed repair timescales and queried whether these programmes were adjusted to take account of the frequency of problems. Mr Jolley advised that the programme was prioritised to give precedence to dangerous defects; he agreed to arrange an inspection of the area following rainfall to assess whether the priority of works in Petergate could be increased.

(Action: Steve Jolley)

### **4. Grant Road**

Councillor Belton and Marlene Price were concerned about the congestion and dangers posed by the narrowness of the pavement along Grant Road combined with the installation of an electric car charging point and TfL bike

hire stands; it was a particularly difficult situation for people using pushchairs/wheelchairs and for those with sight problems. As for the traffic, buses and cars were often having to wait to pass along the road since there was insufficient width for two vehicles in many stretches. It was suggested that the bike stands could be placed at an angle to the pavement to reduce the width of the road taken up.

(Action: Steve Jolley)

## **5. Battersea Sports Centre**

Councillors Belton and Speck considered that the Council had failed to consult properly on the proposed closure of Battersea Sports Centre. Councillor Belton considered that the Council was being disingenuous in claiming that the use of the site for housing was an integral part of the regeneration project, when the option had only been raised in December 2014, at least two years after the initiation of the regeneration programme. The Leader of the Council advised that the proposed closure related to the Council's commitment to re-house people in the local area; the site was the only one available which was also large enough to accommodate the required 90 units of housing. He acknowledged concerns over the loss of the facilities at the existing sports centre on the site, but argued that this was mitigated by the improved facilities at Caius House, new sports facilities shortly to be available at the new St John Bosco School and a new all-weather floodlit pitch to be provided at Falcon Park. With respect to new leisure options for York Gardens, he confirmed that these were planned for the first phase of the regeneration programme, but given the requirements for tendering in accordance with EU legislation, it was unlikely work on this project would commence before the summer of 2016.

Some residents expressed concern about the expectation that children and young people would travel to other sites for sports and leisure activities; they felt that many would be deterred by safety concerns, eg. related to walking through poorly lit areas in the winter months, or would generally be reluctant to join clubs outside "their patch". Reference was made to disruption of existing supportive communities of activity.

Mr Lyddon advised that the latest information demonstrated that the Battersea area was not a particular crime hotspot; overall, crime levels were reducing, though some specific issues remained, such as the theft of mopeds. As was often the case, fear of crime was significantly disproportionate to the actual incidence of crime. Councillor Belton pointed out that there were, nevertheless, some alarming cases including a recent shooting in the area. A resident referred to the impact of the jailing of four local criminals two years ago and queried whether crime levels would increase when they were released. Marlene Price suggested that CCTV be considered for the areas "in between" housing estates in which residents often felt more at risk.

A resident suggested that the Council should use the Grant Road garages site for housing rather than Battersea Sport Centre; he had calculated that it would provide sufficient space for the required units. Mr Morris advised that the Battersea Sport Centre site was considered to be the most appropriate; there

was also a need to combine that site with other land to facilitate the necessary developments. He accepted that these were not straightforward choice and that residents would have different opinions, but there was an increasing need to get on with the plans.

A resident suggested that the York Gardens Library site could be used as temporary leisure facilities and then new sports and community facilities could be integrated into the new development in York Gardens. Councillor Speck pointed out that the community hall was already quite well used; she agreed that ideally, there should be replacement sports facilities provided before the closure of the Battersea Sports Centre.

## **6. Sendall Court – Operation of Mosque**

Mr Marshall referred to correspondence with Councillor Belton concerning the operation of a mosque at Sendall Court; he reported that as many as 250 people were gathering in and around a warehouse, causing problem on the local highway and posing safety risks as the warehouse had only one small door. He was concerned at the blasé attitude to this demonstrated by the Police. Mr Cronin advised that Council staff were assessing the position which was complex in that people were using outside areas and it was not yet clear what breaches of planning, highway and health and safety controls, if any, were being breached. Officers would be visiting the site on the following Friday to assess the situation. The Leader of the Council underlined that the Council took the matter seriously, but was under a duty to take action solely in accordance with its legal powers and responsibilities, and to make reasonable and proportionate judgements about the impact of the activities. Councillor Belton asked that Mr Cronin write to Mr Marshall after the visit to explain the Council's response.

(Action: Tim Cronin)

## **7. Dog Fouling**

A resident of Petergate reported persistent dog fouling of the open space nearby; she was also aware of reports of similar problems elsewhere, such as on Wandsworth Common, and was concerned about the impact of the changes to the Council's Dog Control Team. Other residents supported these concerns, pointing to the impact on children; one resident reported a man allowing his dog to foul a playground. It was suggested it was not clear how to report these incidents to the Council.

Mr Singham advised that dog owners would be committing an offence by failing to clear their dogs' mess; there was a programme of cleansing for Council-owned open spaces, but he was unsure of the frequency in respect of the Petergate site. Mr Stewart explained that the Dog Control Team was now part of the housing management function in the Council following a reorganisation. He confirmed that the Council liaised with the Police and prosecutions sometimes followed; as it was a small team of officers, they were reliant on residents to report these incidents so they could be assessed and

appropriate evidence obtained. Mr Stewart would raise the specific matter at Petergate with the Dog Control Team Manager.

(Action: Ian Stewart)

## **8. Fly-tipping and Street Cleansing Bag Collection**

A resident raised a concern about fly-tipping at Wynter Street/Maysoule Road and another resident referred to Council contractors failing to collect bags of rubbish resulting from street cleansing work which were left by lampposts.

Mr Singham advised, in respect of fly-tipping, that incidents on the highway were covered in the street cleansing contract and those in parks and open spaces under the parks contract. Residents should report any problems to the Council's Customer Services Centre. In respect of the green bags left by Council contractors, the street cleansing contract required these to be collected by the end of the same day; these deadlines were sometimes missed and if the incident was reported and logged, the contractor was obliged to collect the bags by the following day. The Leader of the Council added that there were financial penalties for failures to meet these standards.

## **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 9.10 p.m.

Gareth Jones (020 8871 7520)  
Frankie Belloli (020 8871 6005)