

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTHCOTE WARD **LET'S TALK MEETING**

held at Bolingbroke Academy, Wakehurst Road, SW11 6BF on Wednesday, 9th November 2016 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT

Council Members

Councillor Govindia (Leader of the Council – in the Chair);
Councillors Dawson, Dodd and Martin D. Johnson (Northcote Ward Members);
Councillor Belton (Opposition Member).

Council Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Job title</u>	<u>Department</u>
Mike Bright	Head of Planning and Capital Delivery	Housing and Regeneration
Martin Byrne	Area Housing Manager	Housing and Regeneration
Henry Cheung	Head of Inspection & Enforcement	Housing and Regeneration
Graham Collins	Senior Democratic Services Officer	Chief Executive's Group
Nigel Granger	Planning East Area Team Manager	Environment and Community Services
Michael Singham	Waste Strategy Manager	Environment and Community Services
Paul Swallow	Principal Engineer	Environment and Community Services
Adam Wells	Head of Pupil Services	Children's Services
Rachel Williamson	Senior Democratic Services Officer	Chief Executive's Group

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 ward residents and updates on recent local issues.

ISSUES, RESPONSES AND ACTION

1. Highways and paving matters

Leathwaite Road: Mrs De Cruz and Mr Lapins expressed concerns that approximately 59 paving slabs were cracked or uneven in Leathwaite Road; they had reported this many times (including to their MP, Jane Ellison) and no action had been taken for upwards of eight years. Another resident said she had tripped and suffered injury to her elbow. They considered that the statutory 25mm intervention level failed to take account of persons with disabilities and children; Mr. Lapins was being encouraged by his GP to take regular exercise outside but this was being counteracted by the danger of tripping and injuring himself.

Councillor Dawson advised that such matters should be referred to the Council/Councillors rather than to MPs as the latter do not manage local government services. He re-assured residents that he and his fellow Ward councillors habitually walked around the Ward to check for issues such as paving and Councillor Govindia said that he would ensure that appropriate officers would check the position next week and report back to Mr Lapins and Mrs De Cruz.

(Action – Peter Swallow)

Alfriston Road: A resident said that the height of dropped kerbs was excessive (55cm) whereas he was aware that the Council's best practice required kerbs to be no more than 6mm above the road surface. He said that it was so excessive that he witnessed a mother attempting to get her buggy onto the pavement and the child was almost tipped out.

Another resident asked how much was being invested in repairs to paving as his perception was that insufficient was being spent on this, adding that the problem existed at more or less every side-road coming off Northcote Road.

In response, Mr Swallow advised that the Council had a planned maintenance budget to improve the highway and repairs were prioritised based on asset condition across the whole Borough. In addition, Mr. Cheung outlined the statutory duty to maintain the highway under Section 41 of the Highways Act and explained that all roads were walked on a cyclical inspection programme, either monthly, three monthly or six monthly. He also explained that it was not possible to deal with literally every defect on the highway but that officers were trained to identify defects meeting the intervention level and arranging for them to be repaired. He assured the residents that the impact for push-chairs, etc., was fully appreciated.

The officers undertook to look at the dropped crossing and carry out an inspection of Alfriston Road.

(Action – Mr. Swallow and Mr. Cheung)

A resident complained about the design of the road humps that had been replaced on the south side of Alfriston Road – he contended that the method of cutting into the road surface had resulted in water penetration and that this had led to the appearance of pot holes.

Mr Swallow advised that all road humps were constructed in accordance with the highways specifications and he therefore he would inspect to see if an error had occurred in this instance.

(Action – Mr. Swallow)

2. Swimming pool at Ernest Bevin College, Beechcroft Road (Wandsworth Common Ward)

A resident of 11 Trinity Road (not a Northcote ward resident) drew attention to the current closure of the pool at Ernest Bevin College; this is one of the numerous pools around South West London used by Leander Swimming Club and the Club is dissatisfied at the excessive time – approximately six months - this particular pool has been closed. She therefore urged the Council to act on behalf of Wandsworth residents to rectify this situation which she considered had arisen solely due to a lack of proper management of the pool. She emphasised that the Club was suffering, as were many other clubs and schools who depend on the pool to operate, and that it should be borne in mind that this was a publicly funded facility which currently was unable to generate considerable income for Ernest Bevin College. Consequently, she contended, this situation was currently a “lose, lose” for everyone concerned and that her particular concern was the Council’s lack of meaningful engagement with the Club about the issue, especially as she believed that the situation was beginning to threaten the viability of the Club.

Mr Bright said that he recognised the problem described by the resident and then provided a detailed account of his involvement with the College over this matter since the Council had been made aware of the problem a few weeks ago; he believed that the problem stemmed primarily from a persistent latent defect in the original construction works (e.g. tiles coming off) which had led the College to plan for a closure of the pool during the summer to facilitate a major repair by the original contractor to remedy the problem. Unfortunately, just prior to the start of this work, one of the pool pumps failed and the pool could not be re-opened prior to the start of the planned major repairs. Initially good progress was then made in rectifying the problems with a view to re-opening the pool by 5th September but at the conclusion of the work the system could not be re-commissioned and it became apparent that the extended closure had caused deterioration of certain other equipment. Professional divers had had to be engaged to carry out inspections under water. This inspection was carried out on 5th October but confirmed that further works to replace equipment were required. He emphasised that none of the problems appeared to have been the fault of the College, who were as frustrated as the Club in that they had been denied income from use of the pool by ‘outsiders’ and had responded promptly as soon as the need for repairs was identified. However, he was pleased to be able to report that the pool was due to open once again on Monday, 14th November.

Councillor Govindia advised that the pool was owned by the College and not the Council but that the College had taken advantage of economies of scale by joining with the Council's own contract for maintenance of Council-owned pools in the Borough, e.g. at Latchmere, Putney and Tooting Leisure Centres.

Councillor Dodd referred to the work of the Wandsworth Active Health Advisory Group and said that the Club might find it useful to come and hear what is said at the Group's meetings. She offered to provide them with details of other possible organisations – such as Sports England – who might be able to supply them with useful comparative information regarding club rents, etc.

Representatives of the Club suggested that the availability of public sector funded large swimming pools around London was poor and that the Club would like to meet with the Council to discuss the need for a 50 metre pool.

Councillor Dawson said that construction and maintenance of swimming pools was extremely expensive and any consideration of an additional [50 metre] pool would necessitate identifying a suitable site and investigating any appropriate non-Council funding streams.

3. Heathrow Airport expansion

A resident from Salcott Road asked for an update on what the Council is doing to oppose expansion of Heathrow Airport, particularly in view of the Government's recent announcement supporting this.

In response, Councillor Govindia said that the Council, working in close partnership with its 2M colleagues, has made its opposition to expansion at Heathrow clear for many years on the grounds of unacceptably high environmental impact including noise and air pollution. He outlined the next steps in the fight against a third runway – working with other Councils such as Hillingdon, Richmond and Windsor & Maidenhead Councils, and Greenpeace - including the potential, subject to ongoing legal advice, to seek a judicial review of the Government's recent decision to expand Heathrow. He opined that the Government should be looking at this issue in a far more strategic and national context.

The resident expressed concern that the Council was joining with Greenpeace to launch the Judicial Review of the Government's recent decision to expand Heathrow.

Mr Collins said that a report on this matter was expected to be submitted to a meeting of the Council's Finance and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24th November 2016 and invited the resident to provide contact details so that he could send him a copy of the report when published.

4. Crossrail 2 extension into Balham/Tooting

A resident asked for an update concerning Crossrail 2 in the Borough and the prospective disruption from construction works.

Councillor Govindia said that further more detailed public consultation on this - about the route alignment, including a significant change in that Transport for London (TfL) had proposed a station at Balham instead of Tooting Broadway – had been deferred by TfL until the New Year. This change had been proposed by TfL on the basis that investigations indicated the ground conditions in Tooting would make construction of a station at Tooting Broadway more difficult, costly and longer to construct, with far greater risk attached. Councillor Govindia said that a by-product of an alignment serving Balham was a new proposal for an intermediate ventilation/emergency access shaft in Wandsworth Common. (Details had been reported to the Council's Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 5th July 2016 (Paper No. 16-249):-

<https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=574&MId=4964&Ver=4>

Councillor Dawson expressed concern at the apparent lack of consideration being given to the disruption, such as to schools – and air pollution, resulting from prospective construction works especially as this could span a period of approximately four years.

5. Vehicle Emissions

A resident asked about actions being taken to tackle air pollution in the Borough.

Arising from Councillor Dawson's response it was noted that a contract to supply electric vehicle charging points had been agreed in August 2016 and approval had been given for the mechanism for sites across the Borough, as reported in Paper No. 16-355:-

<https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/documents/s45442/16-355%20EVCPs.pdf>

There were currently 34 proposed locations with multiple charging points.

Councillor Govindia pointed to a number of actions by the Council to tackle air pollution, including changes being made to the goods delivery regime and bus routes on Putney High Street, as well as the promotion of car clubs, particularly where there are new developments in the Borough. From 2020, areas of the Borough inside the South Circular would also benefit from the implementation of an Ultra-Low Emission Zone for motorcycles, cars and vans and for lorries, buses and coaches London-wide

The resident emphasised the need for the number of installations to keep pace with the increasing ownership of electric-powered cars. Another resident pointed to the need for locations to have due regard to the needs of disabled persons.

6. Street cleansing

Mr and Mrs Ross said that at the Northcote Ward meeting in 2014 the officers had responded to their questions by describing what monitoring and spot checking was in place for street cleansing in Arundel Close/Chivalry Road.

However, they said that, despite this, they were still dissatisfied with the extent of fly-tipping in Battersea Rise (between Chivalry Road and Bolingbroke Grove) and unreliable street cleansing in Arundel Close (from Wellington Court to the railway line); they asked why cleansing was now scheduled for the day after waste collection rather than following immediately behind and commented that the fly-tipping used to occur by a litter bin which has since been removed and that it now tends to occur beside a nearby junction box. Mrs Ross said it was frustrating to have repeatedly emailed the Waste Team with photos but then to be told that there was no rubbish. She and Mr Ross believed that the Council or the contractor was not pro-active enough and they said that they would like the Council and/or the contractor to do more leafleting of households in the vicinity of fly-tip hotspots to discourage offending.

In response Mr. Singham emphasised how the Council had been increasing its efforts to combat fly-tipping and continued to do so although it was not realistic to expect to be able eliminate it altogether. Arundel Close was scheduled for cleaning on Tuesdays and Saturdays. He explained that an officer had recently started to monitor the Saturday work due to reports of it not being completed reliably.

He advised that, as waste collection and street cleansing operations tended to progress at different speeds, depending on the quantity of litter and density of housing in different sections of street, it had proved difficult to ensure that street cleansing followed shortly behind waste collection. Moving the cleansing to the day after had ensured that cleansing did not overtake waste collection.

Councillor Dawson said that the Council's increased enforcement work and talking to restaurants, etc., would hopefully have a positive impact.

[Post-meeting note: Mr Singham spoke to the resident after the meeting and she spoke positively about her previous contacts with staff in the Waste Team.]

7. Football pitches on Wandsworth Common

A resident, who said he had lived opposite Wandsworth Common for about 35 years, expressed concerns that a different area of the Common was now being too heavily used for football matches but, whilst the matches themselves were to be welcomed, he would prefer to see the pitches used by local teams rather than by groups arriving by car from further away; this part of the Common was deteriorating and becoming muddy for local residents to walk.

Councillor Dawson said that the Common was maintained by Enable (a staff mutual) and that he had spoken to the Director of Enable (Mr P. McCue) and the Cabinet Member for Community Services (Councillor Cook) with a view investigating whether drainage of the area could be improved. He undertook to discuss this in more detail with the resident after the meeting.

8. Waste collection from Lane Court

A resident mentioned contaminated recycling, usage of the bins and dumping by others (allegedly from Thurleigh Court), the lock on the lid of the recycling banks being forced (currently unlocked, possibly requiring a new lid), collections occurring from different floors, missed collections and officers failing to show up for a meeting.

In response, Mr Byrne mentioned that missed collections might have resulted from a faulty trade button preventing access; he had the resident's name and undertook to contact the appropriate officers to arrange a meeting on site.

[Post-meeting note: Officer have identified that Lane Court has been receiving "assisted collections" (bags collected from upstairs) for sometime, despite there no longer being households there without an able-bodied person able to carry the waste to ground level. A site meeting will be held to decide upon the collection services to be provided going forward.]

9. 20 m.p.h. speed limit and

A resident referred to the Council's consultation during February to May 2016 gathering the views of the public on a potential Borough-wide 20mph limit on Council-managed roads in the Borough. He emphasised the need for clarity as to whether or not the Council wanted a 20mph limit and, if so, the public should be informed of the intended timescale and what the Council means by the term "quieter roads"; he observed that the general impression was that quieter roads were usually narrower roads and, as such, the prevalence of parked cars each side mostly prevented vehicles from travelling much more than 20mph; also, he contended that imposing such restrictions would require enforcement if they were to have any meaningful impact – he considered that the lack of enforcement at West Side suggested that enforcement on a larger scale was unlikely to happen.

In response, the officers advised that the decision to introduce 20mph on all Borough roads, except main traffic routes was made in July 2016 following consideration at the Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5th July 2016; the implementation programme for the reduced 20mph limit was for delivery of the scheme by the end of March 2017. Ward councillors said that they would be seeking views on whether a 20mph speed limit should be introduced along Northcote Road and Bolingbroke Grove as these two roads were not included in the current plans for expanding the local 20mph zones.

10. Disabled Access to platforms at Clapham Junction Station

A resident complained that, despite the recent modernisation works at the Station, the configuration of the platforms and access to them made it almost impossible for disabled persons to move from one platform to another.

In response, Councillor Govindia commented that there was little if anything that Network Rail could achieve with regard to moving between platforms via

the 'tunnel' but that disabled persons now had the huge benefit of the lifts that had been installed on all platforms, enabling them to switch platforms via the bridge.

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 9.15pm

Graham Collins (020 8871 6021)
Rachel Williamson (020 8871 7857)