

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FAIRFIELD WARD **LET'S TALK MEETING**

Held at St Anne's Church Hall, St Ann's Crescent SW18,
on Thursday, 2nd February 2017

PRESENT

Council Members

Councillor Senior (Executive Member (Finance and Corporate Resources and Shaftesbury Ward Member – in the Chair); Councillor Belton (for Leader of the Opposition and Latchmere Ward Member); and Councillors McCausland, Sweet and Thom (Fairfield Ward Members).

Council Officers

Henry Cheung – Head of Inspection and Enforcement (Environment and Community Services)

Camillus Donnelly – Head of Network Management (Environment and Community Services)

Peter Gaskin – Head of Contracts, HR and Schools Support (Children's Services)

Andrew Jolly – Community Safety Officer (Environment and Community Services)

Steve Lane – Senior Parking Policy Officer (Environment and Community Services)

Sharon Lecky – Area Housing Manager (Housing and Regeneration)

Barry Sellers – Principal Conservation and Urban Design Officer (Environment and Community Services)

Michael Singham – Waste Strategy Manager (Environment and Community Services Department)

Mick Potter – Parking Policy Manager (Environment and Community Services Department)

Ozu Okere – Democratic Services Officer (Chief Executive's Group)

Fiona Rae – Democratic Services Officer (Chief Executive's Group)

Residents

Approximately 65 members of the public.

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed the residents present to the meeting and introduced the Council Members and officers present.

Following brief statements by the Ward Councillors the Chairman invited questions and comments from residents.

ISSUES, RESPONSES AND ACTIONS

1. Homebase Planning Application – Swandon Way

Issue – Concern expressed about the development of the Homebase site including the negative impact it would have on residents of the Tonsleys; the proposed height of 15 storeys which is contrary to the Council's tall buildings policy; its density; and the resulting overshadowing of properties at Riverside West. Residents added that the development would take away the fabric of Wandsworth and impact negatively on small businesses. Concern was also expressed that the Council is not doing enough to drive home its own policy to developers and that there was insufficient support from ward councillors on the matter and in trying to influence the decision of the Planning Applications Committee (PAC).

Response – Councillor Thom explained that there was support from ward councillors for residents over the development. He, had personally, submitted a petition with over 300 signatures on their behalf to the recent Council meeting and had met with residents of the Tonsleys about their concerns. Councillor Thom pointed out that the other two ward councillors were members of PAC so understood their concerns but are unable to say much at this meeting so as not to be accused of predetermining the application before it comes before PAC. Councillor Thom agreed with residents on the grounds for objecting to the application which he said centred on three main grounds namely; i) The density of the development which is higher than the maximum listed for an urban setting; ii) the proposed height of 15 storeys which is too high and against the Council's own policy which states that a building of 9 storeys or more is likely to be inappropriate on that site; and iii) that the development would put pressure on Wandsworth Town Station.

Councillor Sweet added that he understood residents' anger against the proposal. It was explained that councillors had met with the developers in 2015 to discuss the original proposal and, in response to the concerns raised, the developer had adapted the proposal. He pointed out that when the initial application was submitted in June 2016 it was for 17 storeys and PAC members went against the officer's recommendation to approve based on a number of reasons and not just for one reason (the scale of one tower) as a resident had suggested. Councillor Sweet then read out the reasons for objection as stated in the minutes of the PAC meeting. He reiterated that PAC members reached that decision because they did not consider the application was in line with the Council's planning policy. Councillor Sweet noted that the developers had withdrawn a further application and it was presumed that this was in response to the concerns of local residents.

He reminded the public that the Council does not own the site so it can only reach a decision when the planning application is submitted. He reassured members that the Planning Committee does listen to concerns and objections raised.

As regards the pre-consultation process, Barry Sellers said, in response, that the Local Plan was adopted in March 2016. The Site Specific Allocations Document (SSAD) contains 200 sites with planning guidelines for each of the sites including the Homebase site. There was consultation on the SSAD and the opportunity for local residents to oppose these before they were approved by the Planning Inspectorate. He further stated that within the SSAD are trigger points for tall building which for the Homebase site is 9 storeys and above. The DMS4 policy sets out 15 criteria which the developer has to satisfy to get a tall building approved and these are quite rigorous. The Planning Officers evaluate these by weighing up the harm and benefit of each proposal and PAC members will then reach their own decision having considered the officers' report. Barry Sellers added that there are different trigger points for different areas, which are set out in the SSAD, so it is not a case of the developers being allowed to ignore guidelines. In response to a further question about when the Homebase application would come before the PAC, Barry Sellers explained that the date of the meeting would be on the consultation letter or it could be obtained from the case officer.

In response to a query, Councillor Senior agreed that there were different ways for residents to object to an application, for example, it could be by online submission and/or signing a petition. Councillor Belton added that objections could also be sent direct to members of PAC whose details can be found online.

<https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/mgCommitteeMailingList.aspx?ID=304>

2. Wandsworth One Way Gyratory System

Issue – Concern was expressed about the impact the increase population of the ward would have on traffic management. Clarification was sought on parking provisions for new residents and how residents are expected to get about if they are non-drivers as the Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating for the area is incorrect.

Response – Councillor Senior confirmed that the Council met with TfL in 2016 to discuss the improvement of the one-way gyratory system. The plans are yet to be finalised but it would lead to a better flow of traffic in the ward.

Councillor Sweet added that planning permission for parking was usually not granted for new developments and there was no guarantee that residents of new developments will be given any parking provisions on the street. Councillor Sweet also noted that developments were often required to provide some funding for bicycles or to encourage bicycle use.

Councillor Belton spoke about the planned closure of nine platforms at Waterloo station in August 2017 which will result in a 25% cut in the number

of trains. The plan is that by the end of the year all 24 platforms at the station will be able to carry the longer 10 carriage trains which will in turn increase capacity at Wandsworth Town Station.

In response to the question on how committed the Council is in fighting excessive construction in the ward, Councillor Thom said that he along with his fellow ward councillors were good at understanding residents views and will ensure that their messages are put across to the PAC.

3.Theft of Mopeds/Motorcycles

Issue – The dramatic rise in theft of mopeds and motorbikes in the ward is a worry. There is concern that the police do not have a proper policy on how to deal with the problem. The question was asked what pressure, if any, the Council can put on the police.

Response – Andrew Jolly spoke about the joint working group between the Council and the police to deal with the problem. He acknowledged that Wandsworth is the hotspot of the country for theft of moped/motorcycles. He explained that there had been an increase in arrests and it was hoped that there would be a corresponding decrease in crimes. Andrew Jolly added that it is a difficult crime to stop and confirmed that there is a lot of work behind the scenes by the police to resolve the issues. For example, the police do use stingers to catch gangs and are working with motorcycle manufacturers to make vehicles harder to steal.

Councillor McCausland added that there has been discussion between the Council and the GLA about the problem and the police are also doing something about it. For example, there are currently two dedicated Metropolitan Police Officers in the ward.

In response to a resident who spoke of his disappointing encounter with the police following the theft of his moped, Andrew Jolly said he would obtain further information after the meeting so as to feed back information to the police.

4. Availability of School Places

Issue – Concern was raised about the availability of school places for primary school children in the ward and whether such places are within reasonable walking distance from the children's homes.

Response – The officer said he was unable to provide a breakdown at the meeting but he would pass the message to the relevant officer after the meeting and ensure a response is sent to the resident. The officer also provided an email address to contact him.

Councillor Senior noted that school places were monitored annually by the Council and added that a recent report dealing with pupil numbers and school places is being presented at the next meeting of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As such, he could confirm that the Council currently has the right number of school places.

Councillor Sweet added that he is aware that some schools like St. Faiths are oversubscribed but he had not received any letters from residents about insufficient places. He confirmed that the availability of school places is something the Council monitors and the report detailed by Councillor Senior is now available to the public on the Council's website.

5. Council Tax

Issue – Are there any plans by Wandsworth to increase its council tax to help pay for social care for its elderly residents.

Response – Councillor Senior said, in response, that the Council would soon announce its decision on Council tax. For information, he noted that Councils were unable to increase council tax by more than 3.99% without triggering a referendum. He reassured members of the public that the Wandsworth care budget was not as big an issue as it is in other parts of the country.

6. 20 mph Zones

Issue – Question asked whether 20mph zones will be introduced and how they would be policed.

Response – Steve Lane said the Council is working on introducing a 20mph zone on all residential streets except on 'A' and 'B' roads. It was agreed at the end of 2016 by the Council's Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Community and the Executive, and it will be introduced in phases. Any breach will be a criminal offence which only the Metropolitan Police will be able to enforce. As such, the Council is currently liaising with the Police to ensure that they have the right resources to be able to enforce any breaches. The Police have now agreed to put resources in hotspot areas. There is also the Community Speed Watch Programme where local residents join with police officers and get trained to use police speed guns and register car registration numbers. Any driver caught speeding would receive a warning notice and, if caught repeatedly, would be prosecuted.

In response to a question on whether the introduction of the 20mph zone would result in the removal of road humps, Steve Lane said there was no reason why it could not happen. It would depend on the successfulness of the scheme and any evidence of fewer incidents.

There will be no additional physical measures put in place except for signs alerting drivers to the 20mph zone.

7. Empty Properties / Overseas Buyers

Issue – Concerns expressed about the number of properties left empty by foreign buyers and it was suggested that the Council imposes a higher Council tax on them.

Response – Councillor Senior confirmed that buyers already pay twice as much Council tax if the property was unoccupied. He added that Wandsworth has fewer empty properties than other boroughs.

8. Developments on Melody Road

Issue – Clarification sought on whether development on Melody Road falls short of the requisite statutory communal space.

Response – Councillor Senior said this would be looked into and a response sent by email.

9. Flytipping/Provision of Rubbish Bins

Issue – Dumping of rubbish on Vermont Road and how the Council plans to put a stop to it.

Michael Singham said the problem probably arises because of the cost to small business to get rid of commercial waste. He added that the road was swept at least once a week and any small fly-tip should be removed as part of that service. Residents were urged to inform the Council if that work is ever not completed to an acceptable standard and of larger fly-tip items which would not be picked up as part of the cleaning service. The online reporting form is available on the Council website:
<http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/flytipping>.

Henry Cheung said that the enforcement team is able to take action where a car registration number is obtained. In the absence of a registration number, the team will go through the rubbish to try to identify the producer of the waste. The Council is currently trialling the use of mobile CCTV cameras in hotspot areas. He added that the enforcement team is working closely with waste services and will always prosecute where there is evidence.

Issue – Concern raised about rubbish being dumped on the street because of a lack of litter bins on the East Hill estate. Furthermore, it was suggested that the street cleaning service does not cover all public highway areas on the estate and that the cleansing that does occur is not always completed to an acceptable standard. A resident also said it would be better if street cleaning was done manually by someone with a brush rather than a machine being used.

Response – Michael Singham said he would need to find out which contractor was responsible for that area and would obtain further information from the resident who raised the issue at the end of the meeting. He confirmed that standards of street cleaning should be the same irrespective of whether it is done manually or with a machine and that the contractor would be reminded of these requirements. He encouraged residents to report any future service failures so that any issues could be addressed.

10. Dog Fouling

Issue – How can Council stop dog fouling on Wandsworth Common.

Response – Henry Cheung said that the Enable Team is responsible for looking after the Common and would have enforcement officers to tackle the problem which would include issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). In response to a question, Henry Cheung said that installing static CCTV camera would not act as a deterrent as it is used to pick up car registration numbers and not faces.

11. Estate Agent Boards

Issue – Problem on Old York Road with unsightly estate agents boards everywhere.

Response – Councillor Sweet explained that byelaws are required to deal with the problem. Permission would need to be sought from the Secretary of State for one and the Council is in the course of seeking the necessary permission for some areas and Old York Road is on the list.

12. Council's Long Term View for Wandsworth

Issue – Concern raised about the increasing number of new developments with tall buildings and clarification sought on the Council's long term view on the issue. It was suggested that the Council's long term view should be on ensuring that more family homes are built and that there is affordable housing for keyworkers as well as a range of buildings and services.

Response – Barry Sellers said that the current Local Plan would be in operation from March 2016 – 2019. It was noted that the Council will be consulting with residents on the next Local Plan and any input from residents was welcomed. It was added that residents could sign up to receive notifications regarding planning policy consultations by emailing their details to planningpolicy@wandsworth.gov.uk or by telephoning 020 8871 6649/6650.

CLOSE OF MEETING

Councillor Senior 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 9.00 p.m.

Ozu Okere (020 8871 6035)
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