

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
QUEENSTOWN WARD “LET’S TALK” MEETING
All Saints Church, Prince of Wales Drive, SW11 4BD

Tuesday, 29th January 2019 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Council Members

Councillor Govindia (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Dikerdem (Queenstown Ward Councillor)
Councillor McLeod (Queenstown Ward Councillor)
Councillor Walker (Queenstown Ward Councillor)
Councillor Hogg (Leader of the Opposition)

Council Officers

Ms Mandy Skinner - Assistant Chief Executive (Customer and Partnerships)

Chief Executive’s Group

Mr Robyn Thomas – Head of Community Safety
Ms Kathryn Stewart – Nine Elms Head of Programme
Mr Alistair Brown – Interim Residential Services Manager
Mr Matthew Maher – Head of Community and Partnerships
Ms Sophie Bimson – Community Engagement Manager
Ms Lorinda Freint – Business and Enterprise Manager
Mr Andrew Jolly – Community Safety Officer
Mr Gareth Jones – Democratic Services
Mrs Karen Martin – Democratic Services
Mr Jonathon St Clair Smith – Community Engagement

Children’s Services Department

Mrs Rachel Egan – Assistant Director (Early Help)
Mr Adam Wells - Pupil Services

Environment and Community Services Department

Mr Mark Hunter – Head of Strategic Developments
Mr Nick O’Donnell – Assistant Director (Traffic and Engineering)
Mr Michael Singham – Waste Strategy Manager
Mr David Tidley – Transport Strategy Manager
Mr John Scully – Inspection and Enforcement Manager
Ms Sharon Wright – Contract Manager (Waste and Street Cleansing)

Housing and Regeneration Department

Mr Tom Crawley – Area Housing Manager

Adult Social Services

Mr Richard Wiles – Head of Commissioning (Public Health, Wellbeing and Service Development)

Also in attendance

Mr Ian Mitchell - Managing Director Enable
Superintendent Peter Gardner – Metropolitan Police

Residents

Approximately 60 members of the public were present.

Introduction

Councillor Govindia welcomed residents and explained the format of the meeting. Councillors and officers in attendance then introduced themselves. A summary of the questions and comments from residents and responses are provided below.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Fire Safety

Sprinklers - Unnecessary retro-fitting of sprinklers including alterations required within homes at a cost to residents.

Councillor Govindia explained that it was proposed to retro-fit sprinklers in all Council residential blocks 10 storeys or higher on the advice of the London Fire Brigade. The London Fire Brigade supports the use of sprinkler systems and the installation of sprinklers in tower blocks will effectively bring these blocks up to the standard required by building regulations. However, the Council is waiting for the outcome of the Second Tier Tribunal case before a programme is developed for the retro-fitting of sprinklers. Retro-fitting of sprinklers in sheltered housing will however go ahead.

Annual inspections - Enforced annual inspections with residents having no right to refuse entry to inspectors.

With regard to sprinklers, an annual visual check of sprinkler heads within individual properties will be required.

Second Tier Tribunal – Sprinklers will be discussed further at Grenfell part 2.

Councillor Govindia reiterated that retro-fitting of sprinklers will not take place until the Tribunal has made its determination on whether fitting and charging is lawful and the Council will abide by its decision.

Councillor McLeod commented that if retro-fitting of sprinklers is the right thing to do then it is the responsibility of the Council to explain why to residents.

A resident commented that he had asked the London Fire Brigade in a Freedom of Information request six months ago how many fires have spread from flat to flat. He said that he had not received a reply but suspected that there were no such incidents.

Another resident suggested that fire safety and sprinklers are on-going issues and that residents needed to get involved if they wanted to influence what's happening.

A resident suggested that retro-fitting sprinklers is not the only issue. New build developments are non-compliant in relation to fitting sprinklers.

Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre

Consultation - Lack of consultation on Oasis and the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre.

Councillor Govindia replied that at the Let's Talk meeting two years ago residents said the Council needed to engage and it has. A number of meetings have taken place. The Maudsley had advised that the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre needed to be located where the need for it was greatest, but the Council is not now pursuing plans for use as a treatment centre and is looking wider in relation to the use of the space.

What next? – although the space is not large, it could be used for a number of different community needs, many of which were discussed during the course of this Let's Talk meeting.

Councillor Govindia replied that discussions have begun and that no decisions have been made.

Councillor Dikerdem noted that local residents needed to be involved in the decision about what to do with the Centre and invited residents to talk to their ward councillors and get involved in the process.

Let's Talk meetings

Frequency – a resident enquired about the frequency of the meetings.

Councillor Govindia explained that there are 20 wards with one Let's Talk meeting being held each month.

Councillor Govindia replied, that notes of all Let's Talk meetings are on the Council website and that residents can also comment or ask questions via the web page.

Leaflets – Residents commented that many of them had not received the publicity leaflet.

Councillor Walker commented that she was aware that residents in Arthur Court had not received the leaflet.

Councillor Govindia assured residents that leaflets are delivered but that he would double-check this with officers. He offered to respond personally to concerned residents if they left their contact details with him.

(Post meeting note: officers will review methods of delivery and monitoring distribution; the leaflets had gone out two weeks prior to the meeting and it was difficult to investigate reports of non-delivery so long after the distribution.)

Parking

Patmore/Savona Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) – A local resident requested a CPZ in the Savona/Patmore/Thessaly Road area to help control parking by contractors and construction workers, residents were not aware that they needed a certain level of support before submitting a petition.

Nick O'Donnell, Assistant Director (Traffic and Engineering), replied that support from a specific number of households is normally required to trigger a CPZ consultation but due to the special circumstances in this case an exception is being made and further communications and consultation will follow.

CPZ enforcement – too few enforcement officers (3) for the Borough.

Nick O'Donnell explained that there has been a 10% over deployment trial elsewhere in the Borough and that this has been successful. It has been agreed with NSL, the parking enforcement contractor, to make this permanent and the additional resource allocated to enforcement will start within weeks.

A representative of a Residents' Association informed those present that with the agreement of the Council, they have the authority to take photographs of cars parked in the CPZ and send them in. Tickets are then issued. They suggested residents elsewhere in the Borough could ask to try this.

Parking within new developments – planning permission conditions prevent developers from allowing shared ownership residents leasing car parking spaces although there are plenty of spare spaces.

Councillor Govindia replied that developers can make an application to change the planning conditions relating to parking.

David Tidley, Transport Strategy Team Manager, added that as there are a number of large developments in the area, it is policy not to allow residents within the new developments to apply for residents' parking permits in order to protect on street parking for existing residents. The Council provides planning permission for a certain number of car parking spaces within each development and the issue may be how the developer allocates spaces and a landlord-tenant matter rather than a planning issue.

Parking on the cycle route on Queenstown Road by Chelsea Bridge Wharf was identified by a resident as a serious hazard to cyclists as they have to swerve into the road to pass vehicles – this is a knock-on effect of the lack of parking in new developments.

Councillors Walker also a cyclist agreed. Councillor Dikerdem added that he had never seen a parking enforcement officer at this location.

Nick O'Donnell, Assistant Director (Traffic and Engineering), replied stating that a corridor study looking at safety and conditions for all road users along Queenstown Road was due to commence and expected to report later this year.

(Post meeting note: looking principally at improving safety and conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, and improving bus journey times and bus stop environments. We expect some additional kerbside restrictions. Parking compliance and enforcement will also be considered as part of the study. Likely to report proposals mid-summer.)

NSL staff on strike – parking attendants are on strike due to unsatisfactory pay and conditions, including lack of sick pay.

Nick O'Donnell explained that it was not correct that all NSL parking staff on the Wandsworth contract did not receive sick pay and in fact a significant number do. Whilst some staff do not receive sick pay, there are varying terms and conditions held by staff with some on higher pay for example. The current 4-day strike has not significantly affected the current enforcement service.

A resident commented that he had given up his car six years ago and that all policies – such as the congestion charge and low emission zone charges – are intended to limit car ownership and car use.

Councillor Govindia agreed.

Anti-Semitism definition

A resident sought assurances from Councillors Dikerdem and McLeod that they supported the full IHRA definition of anti-Semitism.

Councillor Dikerdem stated that this was a political point, that he had voted for adoption of the full definition and his position had not changed.

Councillor Govindia stated that he had been away at the time of the Council meeting and so was not familiar with how the matter was debated. However, Councillor Dikerdem has responded making it very plain and clear where he stands and this matter should now be considered ended.

Councillor McLeod explained that he had been the subject of racism and bigotry for 30 years and that he welcomed the Leader's comments that this should not be discussed again.

Yvonne Carr Centre

Changes to services – residents expressed concern regarding the future of children’s services at the Yvonne Carr Centre.

Rachel Egan, Assistant Director (Early Help), replied stating that the Council has no plans to close the Yvonne Carr Centre or any of the 12 Children’s Centres in the borough.

She assured residents that staff working in Children’s Centres have not been given notice on their contracts and that all staff will be assimilated into new roles. The proposal for Yvonne Carr is to enhance the Children’s Centre Offer with more family activities, activities for children over 5 and to think about how to make the most of the centre for example by offering inter-generational opportunities.

The aim of the consultation was to find out what is working, what is not working and where the gaps lie.

The Council is evaluating the results of that consultation and will continue to talk to local groups and organisations as part of this ongoing public engagement. The recommendations arising out of the consultation will be discussed at the Children’s Services and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th February 2019. No decisions will be made ahead of this meeting, which members of the public are welcome to attend.

The petition from concerned residents to save Yvonne Carr hadn’t been needed as it was never at risk of closing, but it was great to see so much support for the centre and to hear how much people valued the services and staff.

Consultation - Councillor Walker commented that the consultation document was very long, that the consultation had closed at the end of December and many people did not know about it.

Rachel Egan responded by saying that the consultation period was 12 weeks, that the questionnaire about the use of services and their value was emailed to all registered users of children’s centres and that over 1,000 people had contributed their views.

Residents stated that not all users of children’s centres had received the email and that the consultation events were generally held during the day and at times not convenient to working parents.

Rachel Egan responded by saying that emails had been sent to all those registered with centres but in some cases email details might have changed, hard copies were available in the children’s centres as well as online.

Translations - A resident asked why the consultation document was not available in different languages.

Rachel Egan replied that translations were available on request that videos were available with subtitles and speakers of languages other than English had supported the groups run to hear from families about their lived experience.

Budget savings – the consultation document seemed to be highlighting a need to save one third of the early years budget.

Rachel Egan responded by saying that was not correct. She stated that the Council is able to get extra money from the department for education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds to access early learning. Accessing learning is really important particularly because at early years foundation stage the gap between how children who are entitled to free school meals and their peers is getting bigger. All children need a great start and the gap gets wider as they go through school. The Council wants to make sure that more two-year olds, who are entitled to, take advantage of the 15 hours of free childcare and nursery provision on offer. They explored if it would be possible to supplement the Children's Centre Budget by changing the offer and offering more early learning for 2 year olds in children's centres. They wanted to encourage as many parents as possible, for some parents leaving your child at two isn't culturally acceptable so we consulted on the idea of being able to stay with your child and learn together.

Brexit – impact on the Yvonne Carr Centre.

Rachel Egan said that Early Years funding comes from the Early Years Block provided by the Department for Education and from the General Fund of the Council and does not receive any funding from the European Union (EU). The EU sign on the building relates to capital funding for the building.

Use of the Centre – a resident commented that the Yvonne Carr Centre was set up to be used by the whole community and enquired about the plans the Council had for it now.

Rachel Egan replied that the consultation was about building on the Children's Centre Offer and that they really wanted to work with the community to make it accessible to more people and have more happening there.

Targeted vs universal services – a resident commented that only 42% of black children are achieving the expected standard and 69% of children known to social care services are also black. Should the Council be taking a universal approach to service provision.

Rachel Egan agreed that there was an over representation of BME young people in services for example they are over represented in the Young Offending Team. She said that she felt strongly that services must be prioritised to address inequalities. Early help was all about improving outcomes.

Councillor Walker commented that services should be universal and targeted.

Budget overspend on Children's Services - Councillor Walker noted that there was an overspend on Children's Services and that this had not been helped by the Council paying £300,000 to the former Director of Children's Services when she left the Council.

Councillor Govindia noted that the Council had to abide by the terms of the contract of employment and that this situation was not unique to Wandsworth.

Councillor Govindia noted that he would not apologise for an overspend which supported the most vulnerable children in the Borough. The consultation process was to lead to an improvement in services for the most vulnerable and ensure that services were directed to where they were most needed.

Councillor McLeod commented that there was a tendency not to value cultural communities and that he had been sad when Wandsworth had changed Black History Month into Diversity Month.

A resident suggested that there should be a 'month' to celebrate other ethnicities including the Irish, Chinese and Asians. Councillor McLeod agreed.

Housing

Council houses – why not build new Council homes (not more affordable homes).

Councillor Govindia replied that the Council is building 1,000 homes for local residents on Council land including some Council properties. For example, 21 new homes are being developed and will complete next year on a council owned site on the Putney Vale Estate in Roehampton. 11 will be for affordable rent which will initially be targeted to local residents on the estate and 10 will be for supported living.

Homelessness – a resident in St George House described the problems associated with two homeless people sleeping on the fire escape and in the corridor including the smell, mice, cockroaches, blocked fire escape, broken front door – and enquired when a joined-up service approach will tackle these problems.

Tom Crawley, Area Housing Manager, said that following consultation a trial to reduce trade buton access to 8.00-9.30am only is taking place in one block. If successful, this could be rolled out to other blocks. In Park Court, the rear door has been changed to exit only and this could also be tried at St George House as it helps to further restrict access to the block and prevents tailgating.

Knife Crime

Summer months – what programmes are being put in place to prevent summer months knife crime?

Robyn Thomas, Head of Community Safety, responded that the Council, Police, Voluntary Sector and local communities are working together to meet the challenges of knife crime as well as other issues such as moped crime and drugs. Through the Wandsworth Knife Crime Forum initiatives include mental health support offered

through primary and secondary schools, community knife sweeps, Red Thread initiative in Accident and Emergency departments and targeted programmes to teach young people about the damage knives can do. Although there is a significant amount of work being done, more direct and targeted intervention is needed. The forum will develop up the interventions again for the coming months.

Superintendent Peter Gardner added that a number of summer programmes will be in place again this year including the junior citizens scheme, a #Together event and school engagement initiatives. The offender management initiative will be extended to the Youth Offender Team. A big issue in the summer relates to gang BBQs and the violence which results from these and the Police will take a robust approach to shut them down.

Community leader involvement – is it working?

Robyn Thomas, Head of Community Safety, explained that a number of community and faith groups are involved with the Wandsworth Knife Forum. The perspectives of bereaved parents and young people are also particularly valued. One of the ways forward is through the public health approach to knife crime including the involvement of health-based organisations to provide access to provide families with access to early help.

Superintendent Peter Gardner added that the Police are taking a collaborative approach and, following a homicide, had worked with community leaders to prevent retaliatory action. The South West BCU is heavily invested in offender management with a prevention focus and this has reduced offending by 45% in just five months.

A resident made some general comments. He thanked the Councillors, officers and residents present for the information and discussion and commented that both government or local government have limited resources and that they cannot do everything that residents want. They have to prioritise and can only do so much. Residents should not be too reliant on the Council and the government and should think about what they can do for themselves and how they can be innovative and entrepreneurial to find solutions to problems.

CLOSE OF MEETING

Councillor Govindia thanked residents for attending the meeting and Councillor Dikerdem reminded residents that the ward councillors work for them and urged residents to contact him by email or attend one of the local surgeries. Councillor Walker reiterated this invitation and Councillor McLeod noted that he was encouraged about the number of people who had come to the meeting and who wanted to be involved in making Queenstown a better place to live.

The meeting ended at 9.45pm.

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Questions/issues pre-submitted and not otherwise raised at the meeting

1. The front of the Savona Estate on Battersea Park Road faces the Northern Line Extension and the Battersea Power Station development. I understand that the pavement in front of the new underground station will be developed. Are there any similar plans for the frontage of the Savona Estate and will residents be consulted on the plans before they are implemented?

Response: Transport for London who are responsible for Nine Elms Lane consulted on a new design for the road in 2018. This consultation was widely publicised and received a lot of responses but obviously did not reach everyone. The Savona Street side of the road opposite the new entrance into the Power Station is due to have new, smarter pavements and improved crossing facilities. The Council is working with TfL and Battersea Power Station on how the improvements would be funded and timed. Further details can be found here... <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/nine-elms-lane/>

2. Parking around the streets adjoining the Savona Estate has been a concern for some time. When the new underground station is operational, parking will become increasingly more difficult as commuters also seek to park in this area. Are there any plans to introduce a CPZ in this area?

Response: Thank you for your question about the possible introduction of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in the streets surrounding the Savona Estate. I can advise that on 26 November 2018, the Council's Executive approved recommendations considered and supported by the Strategic Planning and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Paper No. 18-404 - Enhancements for Thessaly Road. The recommendations include undertaking a consultation with residents and businesses about the possible introduction of a CPZ in the area.

The project has been added the Current Workload Plan for the Parking Policy Team and it is anticipated that the consultation with residents and businesses in the area could commence in March/April 2019. A copy of the committee report can be viewed at

<https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/documents/s61939/18-404a%20Thessaly%20Road.pdf>

Should you require any further information regarding the consultation process please contact: ParkingPolicy@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

3. What is WBC doing to clamp down on engine idling? Note that Kensington and Chelsea have started putting up 'no idling' signs on lamp posts. This seems a good idea.

Response: The Council has taken up the enforcement powers available for vehicles idling unnecessarily. However, most of our work has been around education and publicity to discourage idling. In Wandsworth this has involved signage, but the Council has also run

targeted exercises around schools and taken part in broader initiatives, such as Clean Air Day. Anti-idling is an action contained within Wandsworth Council's Air Quality Action Plan.

4. Why isn't WBC adopting a smarter tree-planting regime? Simply giving trees away is shown to be ineffective - wrong species in the wrong places, low concentrations etc. See for example the US Vibrant Cities Lab and its Urban Forestry Toolkit <https://www.vibrantcitieslab.com/>

Response: Officers have advised that the Council do not currently give trees away as, in agreement with your comments, this is not thought to be an effective way of addressing tree planting matters. The Council currently manages its tree planting programme itself. They have further advised that, from a tree planting perspective, the planting programme is doing very well across all site types and continues to thrive. Therefore, giving trees away is not an initiative that the Council will be progressing.

5. Why are Park Run being invited into Battersea Park? They turn up and multiply like locusts and as they say on their website 'it's forever'.

Response: Enable Leisure and Culture, in partnership with Wandsworth Council, are in communication with local residents who would like Park Run to feature in Battersea Park. Local residents approached Enable Leisure and Culture and Wandsworth Council to discuss the concept, and we are reviewing the request. If Park Run does take place in Battersea Park it will be for a trial period. To date, nothing has been confirmed.
