

**WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**ROEHAMPTON AND PUTNEY HEATH WARD “LET’S TALK” MEETING**

**Holy Trinity Church**

**Wednesday, 15th May 2019 at 7.00pm**

**PRESENT**

**Council Members**

Cllr Govindia, Leader of Council  
Cllr Jeremy Ambache, Labour  
Cllr Claire Gilbert, Labour  
Cllr Sue McKinney, Labour  
Cllr Fleur Anderson, Labour

**Council Officers**

Hannah Gill, Senior Public Health Lead, *Adult Social Services*  
Lorinda Freint, Business and Enterprise Manager, *Chief Executive Directorate*  
Henry Cheung, Head of Engineering Group 3, *Environment and Community Services*  
Adam Wells, Head of Pupil Services, *Children’s Services*  
David Tidley, Transport Strategy Team Manager, *Environment and Community Services*  
Sharon Wright, Head of Inspection and Enforcement, *Environment and Community Services*  
Michael Singham, Waste Strategy Manager, *Environment and Community Services*  
Don Ogunyemi, Deputy Head of Network Management, *Environment and Community Services*  
Andrew Jolly, Community Safety Officer , *Chief Executive Directorate*  
Danny Edwards, Area Housing Manager, *Housing and Regeneration*  
Andy Algar, Assistant Director (regeneration), *Housing and Regeneration*  
Hollis Blake, Interim Head of Youth Service, *Children’s Services*  
Mark Hickey, Deputy Estates Services Manager, *Housing and Regeneration*  
Joanna Chambers, Senior Planner, *Environment and Community Services*  
Anne Brown, Deputy Area Housing Manager, *Housing and Regeneration*

**Other officers attending:**

Sophie Bimson, Community Engagement Manager  
Gareth Jones, Democratic Services Officer  
Davena Palmer, Democratic Services Officer  
Elizabeth Kingdom, Partnership Officer  
Steve Edwards, Head of Communications

Meeting started at: **19:32pm**

## Residents

Approximately **75** members of the public were present.

## Introduction

The Chairman 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 detailed below.

### 1. Parking, Cycling and Roads

Concerns were raised by residents regarding the cycling contraflow on Treville Street and an irregularity with the signage, as well as concerns regarding the narrowness of Medfield Street, and it was suggested it be made one-way.

Councillor McKinney commented that on Treville Street there were two shops with continuous deliveries and therefore restrictions on deliveries could help alleviate the problem.

The Transport Strategy Team Manager explained that a one-way street can be investigated but they often displace traffic creating issues elsewhere. He confirmed that the signage issue would be looked into. The Head of Engineering added that the cycling contraflow scheme had been implemented but there are still two give way signs to be installed. Regarding the possibility of a one-way system on Medfield Street, residents would need to submit a formal petition with at least 51% agreement from all households in the street in order for the Council to formally consider the matter.

(Post meeting: - Additional signage on the cycling contra-flow has now been installed.)

In response to a question regarding speed cameras on Roehampton Lane/Medfield Street, it was explained that speed cameras are the responsibility of Transport for London (TfL). In response to concerns about parking displacement extending onto Putney Heath, officers said that the effects of the recent CPZ implementation is being monitored. The Head of Engineering said both TfL and the parking team are aware of buses struggling to pull away from the bus stop on Medfield Street and double yellow lines are being considered to combat the issue.

Councillor Gilbert commented that she had attended a meeting with TfL regarding Roehampton Lane and potentially having a crossing there. Councillor Gilbert asked how residents found it crossing Roehampton Lane and some residents said that cars were often speeding, and it was dangerous for cyclists.

Concerns were raised by residents regarding Wanborough Drive with access and visibility issues due to parked cars and making it difficult for emergency vehicles to access the road. Officers confirmed that they would be happy to discuss the concerns directly with the residents who have raised them.

(Post meeting: - The Area Housing Manager has passed on the resident's contact detail to the Parking team to investigate the parking issue in Wanborough Drive.)

## **2. Fire Safety and Leaseholder Responsibilities**

Residents raised concerns about fire safety on balconies highlighting that hanging clothes and discarded cigarette butts were causing hazards. The Area Housing Manager responded that fire safety was of key importance for the Council and that washing lines on balconies are monitored by site staff. The Area Housing Manager said that if residents knew of any specific addresses that were a problem they could inform him after the meeting.

A local resident commented that leaseholders were concerned about fixing their doors, which should last for life, and asked whether they will receive the funds to fix the doors. The Area Housing Manager accepted that it can be challenging for leaseholders to find the money for fixing the doors, but that the Council was happy where possible to work with leaseholders over modifications to their existing doors. It was explained further that standard leases provide that leaseholders are responsible for their own front doors and the Council is committed to ensuring that the necessary measures are taken in 10+ storey blocks to ensure that doors are compliant with fire regulations i.e. half hour fire check doors. The Council can arrange repayment plans for leaseholders.

(Post meeting: - The Area Housing Manager met with the Hindhead Point resident after the meeting regarding concerns about the cost of replacing the non-compliant front entrance door to his home. He later confirmed having received the letter from the Estate Manager explaining how the door may be modified to achieve compliance and would be proceeding accordingly. He also raised concerns about the fire hazard posed by drying of washing on private balconies at Eashing Point. The Area Housing Manager advised that this is not in itself a breach of the tenancy conditions but that a practical view had to be taken and we may contact residents as applicable. He also mentioned that in repairing the chute, the wrong paint had been used. The Estate Manager would be following this up with the resident.

Further update: - the resident decided to replace the door and agreed to reimburse the Council should they do the work on his behalf. A contractor was instructed on 31 May 2019. The washing on balconies has been investigated but found to be contained tidily and not overhanging the balcony. The resident was advised accordingly. The Estate Manager is following up the balcony painting issue with the project controller.)

A resident explained that they had received a letter stating their doors were not fire compliant and must be replaced, however, the door frames are owned by the Council so would the Council reimburse the cost of the frames? The Area Housing Manager said that officers would need to look into this.

(Post-meeting: - In some instances, the door and frame are integral and the respective maintenance obligations may be unclear depending upon the individual lease. Advice is being taken to establish the appropriate way to proceed in these cases.)

Councillor Gilbert commented that there had been a lack of consistency in messages regarding fire safety and that the letters relating to legal action were distressing for residents and needed to be treated with care.

It was reported that there were several balconies used to store bicycles and students, who rent some of the flats, smoke and dispose of cigarettes on the balconies. It was questioned whether the Council provided leaflets to inform students of the dangers. Councillor McKinney thanked the resident for raising the concerns regarding students and confirmed that she would be taking the issue back to the university.

(Post meeting;- Councillor McKinney has spoken to both the Students' Union and the off campus services at the Uni about this and they have since sent out messages to all students.)

A local resident queried whether fire safety assessments had been carried out on Sarah, Louisa and Esme House and raised concerns about the fire hazard of a dry creeper tree covering Esme house. The Area Housing Manager explained that fire risk assessments had been carried out for all council blocks and copies can be provided on request. He added further that officers had been monitoring the creeper but had no concerns about fire safety following a survey from horticulturalists.

Councillor Gilbert commented that fire risk assessments should be made more accessible and that she would be interested to hear more from residents regarding the expense and anxiety being caused by the Council's litigation and highlighted that not all legal documentation was reaching residents.

A local resident acknowledged that Grenfell was an awful tragedy, but that the Council had made a knee-jerk decision to install sprinklers in all 10-storey plus flats, without consultation. It was highlighted that last December the Council's Executive had agreed to allow recommendations from the Grenfell enquiry determine how the fire safety programme would be progressed. The resident questioned why the Council was proceeding with a legal case against leaseholders and argued that the Council should halt proceedings until the findings of the Grenfell enquiry were known.

A local resident commented that the blocks on Wanborough Drive were solid, had double ventilated staircases and water hoses. The comments regarding students are classed as anti-social behaviour and the resident advised people to call the police if the Council don't respond to reports. The resident explained that the risk of water damage is greater than for fire itself, when sprinklers go off accidentally, and that it needed to be considered. The resident argued that fire safety measures should be included in council tax, and that the council should find the funds elsewhere and not burden leaseholders, as leaseholders and tenants are finding the situation distressing. The blocks are very solid and if everyone adheres to safety regulations there wouldn't be a need for sprinklers.

A local resident complained that the Council in enforcing sprinklers, was asking leaseholders to pay the costs, and then if leaseholders can't pay, instructing them to borrow money from the Council with 3.5% interest on the loan.

The Leader, Councillor Govindia addressed the points raised by residents explaining the following:

- Fire Safety Assessments – All Council buildings should have fire safety assessment, which are available to the public to view, but that their accessibility would be reviewed. The Area Housing Manager added that some assessments may be out of date, but it takes time to revisit all buildings and carry out the reassessments.
- Since Grenfell the spotlight has been on fire safety, which has highlighted that fire doors are not necessarily fire safe.
- Sprinklers – The Council's decision is based on the view that Grenfell would have been avoided or its impact significantly reduced if there were sprinklers, and along with several other local authorities, it was decided to make provision in the Council budget to install sprinklers in blocks of 10-storeys or higher. The risk to blocks isn't reduced if only some flats have sprinklers fitted.
- The Council has made an application to the First Tier Property Tribunal to ensure that it has the authority to undertake and charge for the works in leasehold properties. If the fitting of sprinklers or insulation is judged an improvement (for the better management and maintenance of the block), then it can be recovered from leaseholders. This is obviously an unforeseen burden for which people aren't prepared, and the government needs to be made aware as such and the Council continues to place pressure on Ministers to make provisions for the cost to leaseholders.
- The issue is not just an issue for Wandsworth.
- The first issue is whether the Council has the right to fit the sprinklers and insulation, which will be addressed by the tribunal. Secondly it needs to be determined whether the Council has the right to charge, and finally how to install the sprinklers as access could be an issue.

A resident highlighted that the government said that sprinklers were not essential, so they wouldn't pay for it, but the Council is arguing that they are essential. The Leader added that the Council is seeking the tribunal's ruling on what the Council's obligations are and whether the Council has a liability to pay for the sprinklers.

A local resident raised concerns that fire risk assessments were not being disclosed as they may be used as evidence in the tribunal and that she had asked for documents from Council lawyers and not received anything back. The resident said that a 2016 fire safety assessment recommended no sprinklers, so she couldn't understand why the Council was insisting on the installation of sprinklers. The

Leader asked the resident to provide further details of the specific address to Council officers.

### **3. Community Space and Local Business**

A local resident explained that the Muslim community in Roehampton and Putney was desperately in need of a place of worship. Their current rented space is used by a boxing club which has poor sanitation and is unfit for the 90+ children who attend Islamic education classes on Saturdays. It was explained that the resident had been in contact with the Council for some time regarding 6 unoccupied spaces owned by Wandsworth as they need a secure place to rent for worship.

The Leader explained that there would be no argument against any faith group that needs a place of worship, and that solutions needed to be found regarding the shortage of spaces in the ward. The Leader said that he would be happy to speak further with the resident and wider Islamic community, to assess their current space and review suitable alternatives.

A local resident and small business owner explained that she operated a care agency in the ward and after contacting the Council had received no response to her queries, asking the Council to support small business like hers. She said further that the Council are not awarding contracts in a way which supports small businesses, and if it did it would support employees, many who live in the poorest parts of Roehampton. The resident commented that she was paying business rates to Wandsworth, but not doing any business with them. The Leader explained that he does not make direct decisions regarding contract awards but would be happy to facilitate a discussion between the resident and relevant officers to explain the procedure.

Councillor Ambache commented that issues with under-occupancy of the Children's Centre was raised 2 1/2 years ago and explained that the three Ward Councillors have been arguing for more community space within the regeneration project for several groups. It is hoped that space could be created within the planned library.

A resident commented that the Alton Activity Centre appeared to be underused and asked what was happening at the centre. Councillor Ambache explained that there had been some progress over the past two years. There was a meeting with the Cabinet Member and parents, where it was discussed that the centre be used for youngsters who were having issues with schoolwork and bullying. The plan was not for the Council to reinstate the money for the provision of activities, but it is now being contracted to a parent who does activities afterschool for children. There has been some progress but not as much as hoped for. As part of the regeneration ward councillors are pressing that the centre be upgraded and opened properly.

### **4. Estate Maintenance**

Several residents in attendance raised concerns regarding the Alton estate and the following:

- Overflowing bins

- Lawn maintenance and
- Contractors and workmanship
- Cleanliness of the lifts and communal areas
- Difficulties contacting the Council and Housing Managers.
- Visibility of staff walking the estate.

The Leader, Councillor Govindia, confirmed that he would be taking forward the issues raised about the estate, adding that he had a meeting scheduled the next day with the Director of Housing and Regeneration and would be raising the concerns of residents with him directly. The Leader said further that the Council's cleaning contract was up for re-procurement which will have new terms and requirements. The issues raised concerning the workmanship of contractors will be taken up directly with the Director of Housing and Regeneration and the Leader confirmed he would come back to visit the area if necessary.

(Post meeting note: The morning after the meeting, officers visited the Alton estate and produced a set of photographs which dispelled the notion of the estate as a picture of uncollected paladin bins with refuse and litter spilling out everywhere. On the contrary, the general condition of the common parts was very good. There were some areas with overflowing bins, but this is not just a simple issue of capacity but also the management of the refuse facility by the cleaning operatives, the location of the paladins and missed collections arising from contamination of the recycling banks.

Current arrangements are being reviewed for maximising recycling and reducing contamination. Where recycling and general waste bins are together, the recycling bins tend to get contaminated more often. However, when moved some distance apart, normally to a centralised recycling point, an increase in recycling waste is found deposited into the general waste bins often creating the need for increasing capacity for general waste.

Housing officers are working with the Waste and Street Cleaning team and cleaning contractors to improve communication on issues such as missed collections and damaged bins which should reduce the risk of overflowing bins. New signage will be added to the front of the general waste and recycling bins stating that it is an offence to leave refuse on the floor next to the bins which can lead to fines of up to £400.

We have also identified that in some cases the cleaners have moved bins to more accessible locations that make collections easier for the waste collection contractor. This has been raised with the cleaning contractor and they have assured us that this practice will cease to happen with immediate effect.

We are trialling a recycling initiative involving residents at Chillingford and Hayesend House (two identical blocks in Tooting) where residents in one of the blocks are provided with the use of transparent orange sacks for recycling to be deposited for collection in an improved recycling area. The residents in the other block will continue unchanged i.e. presenting recycling and general waste in the existing communal bins. Recycling parameters will be measured over a 6-month period to assist in identifying whether the provision of transparent orange sacks, a better sign posted recycling facility and some dedicated communications and provision of

educational material has the desired effect in increasing recycling levels throughout the period comparing the performance of residents in these blocks. The use of orange recycling bins is also to be trialled during this project to make the recycling bins easier to identify.

**fly tipping more generally:** - The Leader is eager to create a partnership between the Council and its residents to tackle flytipping. To this end, a flyer has since been distributed to all households on the estate (copy attached), with further copies for residents' associations to display on their notice boards. Officers are routinely monitoring the standards and bulk removal and the newly revised and enhanced cleaning contract due to commence April 2020 should further help to improve the situation.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Inspection and Enforcement team are responsible for the enforcement action for fly tipping that occurs on the highway. A recent discussion with this team confirmed that these powers could be delegated to Housing teams to enable enforcement on housing land. Training and guidance would need to be given to the teams to ensure the correct procedures are followed and we are in the process of putting this in place.

To reduce the length of time fly tipping and bulk refuse is left visible on the estates, we are working on a project to identify locations across the estates where waste can be stored until collected by the bulk refuse collection vehicle. In addition, bulk refuse has been highlighted as an issue of significant importance during the tender process for the new cleaning contract.

Non-specific complaints about a major works external decoration contract currently on site: the current major works at Tangley Neighbourhood were subject to an early delay when bats (a protected species) were discovered and a bat survey had to be undertaken. From the Council's perspective, the contract has gone well.

A complaint about grounds maintenance and a "Youtube" video of a contractor mowing an area of apparently dead grass during drought conditions: -. the Council suspended grass cutting last Summer but it was nevertheless necessary to continue limited mowing to maintain the sites. While grass browns off and goes dormant, deep rooted weeds are far more resilient and often continue to grow on.)

## **5. Transport and Regeneration**

A local resident asked when will they finally receive better transport provision? Councillor McKinney explained that herself and Councillor Leonie Cooper were pushing the issues of transport within the Ward with TfL and were lobbying TfL for a meeting. Residents asked how they could help to secure that meeting, and Councillor McKinney said that she would get back to residents.

A local resident commented that there was an urgent need for social housing in the borough and not the private accommodation the Council was providing

Councillor Gilbert said she would like to hear from the Leader regarding what was being done about the provision of affordable housing. Councillor Gilbert added that



the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report in July that indicated that 30% of the Alton estate properties were overcrowded, bringing into question whether the installation of sprinklers was the best use of money. Councillor Gilbert said that she would like to know if specific blocks need sprinklers.

Councillor Ambache commented that £108 million was being spent on the regeneration, which would yield 800 private homes and only 30 extra council homes. The Leader explained that regeneration was taking place on the Alton and at the Winstanley and York Road Estates near Clapham Junction, and providing more affordable housing at those sites. He explained that the projects still had to come within budget and to achieve that it means both sites need to include private market homes, adding that all existing council homes would be replaced and overall there will be a net increase in affordable homes.

A local resident explained that they had been on the housing waiting list for temporary accommodation and that the list was 7 years long. They asked how 30 affordable homes would make a difference. The Leader highlighted that the Council was committed to building 1000 homes, 600 of which will be affordable.

A local resident reported that there had been 3 houses built next door to Heathmere school and asked why neighbouring residents were being asked to comment on a development that has already been built. The Leader asked the resident to provide their details, so he could look further into the issue.

Councillors in attendance were given the opportunity to summarise any points prior to the end of the meeting.

Councillor Ambache thanked residents for attending and said he was pleased to hear that the Leader would be engaging with the Director of Housing and Regeneration about contractors on the estate. Councillor Ambache encouraged residents to contact their ward councillors highlighting that litter was a serious problem, and he would pass any resident queries onto the Area Housing and Waste Strategy Managers. Councillor Ambache said further that residents could contact their Ward Councillors or officers in Environmental Health regarding issues with anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Gilbert said in closing that the Council had a unique position on sprinklers as no other borough was taking residents to court. Councillor Gilbert explained that the planning application for the Alton estate regeneration had been pushed back, and a 30-day consultation should commence in June, which will be last opportunity for residents to give comments.

Councillor McKinney confirmed that she would be following up on an access gate from Roehampton into Richmond Park, better transport links, and issues regarding Roehampton university students.

Councillor Anderson thanked residents and officers for attending and said that she hoped to see Councillor Govindia in the ward over the next few weeks, following up on issues. Councillor Anderson commented that Roehampton felt very isolated and

progress on transport links was slow. She highlighted that Wandsworth was 6<sup>th</sup> worse for recycling in the country and couldn't wait to sort issues with the new contract.

The Leader summarised that sprinklers and transport were big issues that had been discussed at the meeting. Regarding regeneration of the estate, the Leader encouraged residents to engage with the consultation, he thanked everyone for their attendance, and confirmed that he would try to follow up on all points he had noted down.

## **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The Chairman thanked residents for attending the meeting and invited them to stay and speak further with Councillors and officers about matters they had raised or to ask any questions that they had not been able to during the open part of the meeting.

The meeting ended at **22:01pm**.