

## Raynes Park Community Forum 30 September 2014 Chair's Report

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor Mary-Jane Jeanes assisted by Chris Larkman, Chair of the Raynes Park Association. More than 60 residents attended, as well as six other Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Cycle Improvements**

Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration, presented plans for improving cycling infrastructure in Merton. Councillor Judge said the ambition was to encourage cycling to help reduce congestion and pollution. Although the bid for mini-Holland funding was not successful the Mayor's cycling commissioner Andrew Gilligan has given a commitment to support aspects of the plans although no specific figure has been agreed. One likely option would be joining a route from Kingston to New Malden to Raynes Park then on to Wimbledon and Colliers Wood. A copy of the presentation is available at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums/raynesparkcommunityforum.htm>

In response to questions Councillor Judge said that any initial plans would first be shared with ward councillors and then brought to the Forum, local residents groups and the community. Councillor Judge said that most of the routes would consist of physical segregation on the road but where cycling and pedestrians would share space paths would be widened to accommodate this. All conflict points would be carefully reviewed and the needs of disabled users, including visually impaired, would be taken into account.

Councillor Judge said that without the full scheme being funded it would not be possible for a tunnel to avoid the small bridge on Lower Downes Road so an alternative would need to be found. Issues on the Coombe Lane cycle lane would also need to be reviewed. Evidence shows that well designed infrastructure will increase the take up of cycling and good facilities will be used.

### **Rainbow Industrial Estate**

Angus Boag and James Santer representing the landowner Workspace presented plans for the redevelopment of the Rainbow Industrial Estate. The presentation can be found at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums/raynesparkcommunityforum.htm>

Following the current consultation the plans will be finalised with a view to submitting a planning application before Christmas. The designs are based on buildings 3-5 stories high with simple brick design. Detailed landscape design is being developed along with plans for a 'kiss and ride' drop of point for the station.

In response to questions Angus Boag said that 150 people had attended the recent exhibition, 43 had returned a survey with 26 wishing to see the site redeveloped and

9 indicating that they would not. A previous consultation on the site plan had shown that neighbours would be pleased to see the HGV traffic removed, but that people expressed concerns about traffic, the additional strain on the station and on local health and education services. A website will be launched soon with more detail and will include the survey. In the meantime the survey will be circulated to the e-mail list for the meeting.

Concern about traffic in rush hour was raised and in response Angus said that the plans showed a reduction in traffic movements but a more detailed breakdown would be included in the planning application. Parking will be available to all the business units and not for all residential developments in line with London Planning policies. New residents would not be given on-street permits which would prevent them parking outside the estate. Community Infrastructure Levy will be paid and this can be used to mitigate some of the impacts of the development.

## **Health**

Dr Sion Gibby said that the work on the Nelson site was still on schedule for a spring 2015 opening. A video showing the planned facilities at the Nelson was shown. This is available to view on the Merton CCG website: <http://www.mertonccg.nhs.uk/Local-Services/the-nelson/Pages/default.aspx>

Asked about drop-in services Dr Gibby said that diagnostic services would still be accessed by GP referral, but there would be voluntary sector advice services using the facility that may have drop-in services. The need for a walk-in service is being considered. A new ECG facility has been opened at the Raynes Park Health Centre.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy and Planning update**

Tara Butler from the Future Merton team described how the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would work. The CIL has replaced section 106 funding as the way of charging developers for the cost of mitigating against the impact of development. Merton introduced a CIL in April 2014 and it will apply to developments from then. No money has been received as yet as payment is not made until works have started. Like other urban areas, government rules on CIL mean Merton is unlikely to benefit hugely. The Mayor of London also charges development in Merton to contribute to Crossrail. It is estimated that around £1m could be received across the borough each year from 2016 onwards.

A proportion (15%) of the funding will be spent in the area local to the development, based on clusters of local wards. Each area will be asked to put forward viable proposals for local improvements and in Raynes Park this could link to the continuing Enhancement Plan. More information on the CIL can be found at [www.merton.gov.uk/cil](http://www.merton.gov.uk/cil) and consultation will run until 24 November 2014.

Jonathan Lewis from the Development Control team provided some updates on local planning issues:

- Permission was granted for a Next Store in April 2015
- Apostles Wine Bar at 17 Approach Road - permission was refused last year for a change of use from Wine Bar to Residential use and that there are no new planning records for the property

- Cannon Hill Lane GP practice being looked at for development now that its services will move into the Nelson Local Care Centre.
- Firstway Housing scheme under construction following a successful appeal
- An application has been received for the roof of Number 1 Court at the All England Sports Ground and an application for tennis courts has also been received for the All England Club site at Raynes Park Playing Fields.
- Some revisions have been made to plans for Durham Road development which is underway
- An application for signs for the hotel above the Co-op has been opposed by residents and planning officers have been seeking amendments so as to reduce the number and impact of the signs
- Proposals to amend the design of a development under construction at 14-16 Coombe Lane have recently been approved and an application for a health care use on the ground floor and basement can now be assessed. At 18 Coombe Lane officers have recently received amended plans overcoming earlier concerns for a scheme comprising a four storey building with retail accommodation on the ground floor and flats above and to the rear
- Permission has been given for flats/hotel at the Railway Tavern, 641 Kingston Road.
- The Apostles Residents Association is checking with planning officers on plans for the old petrol station to determine how the boundary to neighbouring houses is to be made secure

## **Christmas**

Chris Larkman said that following the success of last year's Christmas Lights switch-on there will be another event on 5 December 2014 from 3pm – 7pm. This is being organised by My Raynes Park with support from local schools and businesses. If other local groups, such as choirs, wanted to organise other Christmas events they should be encouraged to do so.

## **Budget for Merton Council**

The Leader of Merton Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis set out the pressures on Merton Council finances over the next four years. Councillor Alambritis said that the Council had frozen council tax for the last four years and would continue to freeze it for the next four year. Around half the council's controllable income comes from council tax and the rest comes from government grants and other charges. Government grant includes only a proportion of the business rates collected. As an example the All England Tennis Club pays £3.5m in business rates but Merton retains only £1.5m.

As a result of the freeze in council tax and reductions in government grant Merton has made savings and cuts of £44m since 2010. A further £32m will be needed by 2018/19. The aim is to make sure the vulnerable and young people are protected as well as delivering on manifesto commitments. Efficiency savings help this including sharing services with other councils, like Legal services, shared with Richmond, Kingston and Sutton and saving £625,000 over four years.

Merton has around £40m committed to capital spending, mainly on school places and the replacement for Morden Park Pool. There were 2000 new places provided between 2010 and 2014 with a further 2000 needed in the next four years.

Merton Council is supporting a London Council's campaign for increased devolution of powers to local councils. This could include property taxes like stamp duty, capital gains tax, and retention of business rates.

In response to questions Councillor Alambritis said that the council will keep libraries open, using volunteers to help achieve this. Asked about spending on mental health services Councillor Alambritis said that some services will underspend, others overspend but a balance will be found. He also said that parking income was primarily used to cover the cost of the Freedom Pass, and that any changes to the Freedom pass would be up to the Mayor of London but he is not aware of any plans. Councillor Alambritis also agreed that preventative measures for vulnerable people were preferable where ever possible.

### **Raynes Park Station**

Chris Larkman said that the regular meeting with Network Rail would be taking place on Friday 3 October and would be chaired by Stephen Hammond MP. They would be raising the state of the new planting on the embankment that has not been maintained as well as litter and the need to paint the bridge and the station. They would also be raising the use of four carriage trains at weekends as these are overcrowded and eight car trains are needed.

### **Open Forum**

A resident asked about town centre parking and the need for additional space to support small business. In response Councillor Judge said that there was no additional land available but he wanted to look at how to use existing space. In the long term this could include removal of the gyratory system. Chris Larkman said that the RPA had consulted local businesses on proposals to change the parking arrangements in the town centre but only 18 responses were received. 13 of these said the scheme should stay the same whilst five supported change. Chris's view was that this did not demonstrate a sufficient enough evidence to take to the council.

Parking on Kingston Road at weekends was also raised as this is restricting the view of those turning out of the Apostles. Councillor Judge said this could be looked at.

The problems caused for some residents by Ride London were raised and a resident asked if the route could be changed from Coombe Lane to West Barnes Lane. There was a meeting with Ride London on 25 November and this will be raised by local councillors.

Ian Callaghan from the Safer Merton team at Merton Council asked residents and local businesses to get involved in their annual survey of crime and community safety. The survey is open until 31 October and can be found at [https://consult.merton.gov.uk/KMS/dmart.aspx?noip=1&strTab=PublicDMart&filter\\_SurveyId=2854](https://consult.merton.gov.uk/KMS/dmart.aspx?noip=1&strTab=PublicDMart&filter_SurveyId=2854)

**Dates of future meetings** all at 7.15pm, in the Library Hall:

Tuesday 9 December 2014  
Wednesday 25 March 2015

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