

Wimbledon Community Forum 14 March 2016 Chair's Report

The meeting was held at the Mansel Road Community Centre, and chaired by Councillor James Holmes. Approximately 50 residents attended, as well as Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Wimbledon Masterplan update

Paul McGarry, Head of future Merton at Merton Council, and Sally Warren from Love Wimbledon Business Improvement District gave a presentation, introducing the Future Wimbledon masterplan and timescales for community participation in the project. The presentation is available to view at http://www.merton.gov.uk/wimbledon_masterplan.pdf.

Residents expressed concern about the long-term disruption that Crossrail 2 would bring, as well as the impact on property owners of potential CPO by TfL. Councillor Andrew Judge responded that, whilst it seemed that the Crossrail 2 scheme would go ahead, TfL had recognised that their most recent proposals were not fitting for Wimbledon. TfL are now exploring alternative options for Wimbledon Station, taking into account feedback from residents and the council, and they will consult on any new proposals in due course. Councillor Judge added that the Labour and Conservative groups in Merton are working together to make the Council's views on Crossrail 2 known and to represent the local community over the proposals, for example, it has been suggested that TfL look at tunnelling the south west trains fast-lines as an alternative to the loss of homes, retail and office in Wimbledon. Paul McGarry added that Crossrail 2 have a property team for anyone concerned about CPO to speak to: <http://crossrail2.co.uk/faq/> and https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/crossrail2/october2015/user_uploads/g9.pdf

In response to residents' concerns that they have not been involved so far in the Masterplan consultation, Paul McGarry explained that the project hasn't started yet as there are no plans to consult on. The council is still drafting the brief. Tonight's presentation to the forum is to introduce the project. There will be plenty of opportunity for community involvement from mid-2016 through to 2017.

Other than a few workshops with key community groups, 2014's Future Wimbledon ideas competition winners to shape the brief and meetings with a few landowners, so far most of the community engagement has been through the community forums. A team will be in place to run the masterplan process by May-June, led by the Council's futureMerton team and will be looking to engage with as many residents, community groups and landowners as possible over the next year. The masterplan will be working along themes such as heritage, public realm, traffic, buildings and branding. The consultation will have a greater online presence and the council will refresh www.futurewimbledon.com to be the main hub for information.

A resident commented that Wimbledon needs big stores and that the closure of Waterstones, WH Smiths and Next was not welcomed by locals. Sally Warren responded that these stores are actively looking for new sites within the town centre. Paul McGarry added the Waterstones / WHSmith situation was a private landlord issue. Residents also asked what the Council could do to attract more independent businesses. Paul McGarry said

that through the masterplan, the Council would like to explore the creation of new affordable workspace policies for new developments in order to attract independent traders to the town centre.

In response to a question about what kind of utilities infrastructure would be put in place to deal with new planning projects, Paul McGarry explained that infrastructure would be looked at as part of the masterplan. Though at the macro scale, the borough's 15 year infrastructure needs are regularly reviewed as part of the plan-making process, last undertaken in the Core Strategy 2011.

The issue of traffic flow will be examined through the masterplan, for example, whether street calming measures can be taken and if additional infrastructure, such as bridges could be a viable solution to ease traffic in the town centre.

The future Merton team is responsible for regeneration, highways, economic development, strategic planning, sustainability, and place-making. To deliver the masterplan, outside expertise will be needed as the team is not big enough to deliver all of the work itself. The expertise will be drawn from consultancies, including those on procurement framework panels that the Mayor of London has put together.

Resolutions to Council

The Council's Constitution provides in Part 4A, paragraph 2.3(h) that a motion relating to the report (notably the referral of any recommendations) can be submitted in accordance with the timescales provided for in the Constitution.

Based on the recommendations of the Wimbledon Community Forum, it was agreed that Councillor James Holmes would put forward resolutions to Council in accordance with the Council's constitution as follows:

- Office lights - The Wimbledon Community Forum is concerned about the environmental impact of office lights being on all night. The Forum notes the number of lights left on in the Broadway and town centre offices all night and questions whether this is required. The Forum notes energy and climate change legislation and Merton Council's "Brighter Business" initiative which offers local businesses expert energy efficiency advice and support. The Forum is aware that the purpose of the initiative is to reduce running costs and environmental impact.

The Forum has resolved to request Merton Council to ask the Cabinet and Cabinet member responsible, Councillor Andrew Judge to consider any additional measures that he believes appropriate and can be taken to encourage businesses to switch off lights at night. The Forum would welcome additional interventions, contact, publicity and other methods which the Cabinet member deems appropriate and feasible. The Forum notes that the Cabinet is best placed to determine what additional measures may be appropriate.

The Forum would be grateful to receive an update from the Cabinet member personally or in writing in due course.

- Increasing cycling opportunities - The Wimbledon Community Forum would like there to be increased cycling opportunities available in the Borough. The Forum notes the

environmental, congestion and health benefits of cycling. The Forum welcomes the support of the Council for these principles.

The Forum notes and welcomes the Cycling Quietways initiative funded by Transport for London and implemented by Merton Council. The Forum also notes that the possible advent of Crossrail 2 makes additional measures challenging at this time.

The Forum has resolved to request Merton Council to ask the Cabinet and Cabinet member responsible, Councillor Andrew Judge to keep the Forum updated on the Quietways initiative and where both appropriate and possible to consult with the Forum on any Council involvement with its development and roll out in Wimbledon. The Forum further requests that the Cabinet member continue to explore and develop appropriate and affordable cycling opportunities in Wimbledon and to update the Forum in writing or in person in due course on this work.

Smart Metering Risks

Local resident and Electromagnetic Pollution Consultant, Ingrid Dickenson, gave a presentation in response to Thames Water's presentation on Smart Meters at the previous Wimbledon Community Forum meeting. Ms Dickenson's presentation is available to view at http://www.merton.gov.uk/response_to_thames_water_smart_meters.pdf.

Ingrid Dickenson BRCP EMR, Energy Medicine Practitioner and Electromagnetic Pollution Consultant, is a local resident who presents peer reviewed scientific evidence on the health risks of smart meters. She also urges people to consider other associated risks such as their impact on privacy, hiked energy bills and house fires as experienced in the US, where smart meters have been in use for some time. She also provides important weblinks for public information.

Further information related to the presentation can be found at the following websites:
<http://smartgridawareness.org/2015/02/13/how-smart-water-meters-invade-privacy/>
www.stopsmartmeters.org.uk
<https://takebackyourpower.net/>
www.bemri.org
<https://www.emfanalysis.com/tedx-wireless-wake-up-call/>

Soapbox

Responding to a question about whether there would be parking included with the new hotel on the Jimmy Beans site, Councillor Judge said that the plan was for only a small number of disabled parking spaces. He added that local councillors would work to prevent extra vehicles parking on Griffiths Road as a result of the limited on-site parking.

A resident commented that consultation with residents on planning applications should be more extensive. She also asked for feedback from the Leader of the council on a presentation that residents gave about establishing the branding and identity of Wimbledon.
Action: Leader of council

A resident asked if a public notice had been put up to inform residents that the Pinnacle House building on Hartfield Road was going to be constructed, as residents had been unaware of the construction.

Action: Planning department

Councillor Judge explained to residents that if there are works or improvements that they would like to see carried out in the borough, they should inform the council of them. Whilst budget restrictions mean not everything can be done and matters have to be prioritised, the Community Infrastructure Levy allows the council to pay for some things.

A resident complained that the waste collection team has been damaging residents' bins, such as the food waste bins, and that rubbish is being dumped on Palmerston Road and on the Broadway, but not being picked up by street cleaning. It was also mentioned that litterbins on Dundonald Road and Sheridan Road are overflowing. Residents also commented that waste vehicles' engines are left running even when the vehicles are idle, instead of being switched off. These matters have all subsequently been fed back to the Waste team at the council.

Paul McGarry agreed to feedback residents' concerns about air pollution to TfL. He explained that the council does try to keep air pollution down, where it reasonably can; for example, taxi and bus drivers are requested to turn their engines off when their vehicles are idle. The Council is also undertaking projects to improve air quality in Weir Rd and Willow Lane industrial estates. The council has some air quality monitoring stations.

Action: Further information on air quality monitoring stations to be provided

A resident asked if the council's Overview and Scrutiny committee could look at how much is spent on various traffic calming schemes and whether they are good value for money or serve much purpose. There were also concerns over the severity of street tree-pruning within the borough. These suggestions have been fed back to the Scrutiny team for consideration.

Paul McGarry undertook to speak to Highways about a reported water leak on Plough Lane and report to Thames Water.

Action: Paul McGarry

A resident asked if the restoration of an electricity substation at the end of Sunnyside could be sped up. Paul McGarry responded that a conservation officer in the futureMerton team is looking into the matter; however the substation is not a council structure, therefore is not something the council can put money into. Since the meeting, feedback has been received from the futureMerton team stating that it's a decommissioned sub-station of heritage value and is in the Council's ownership. Funding would need to be sought for its restoration.

The hygienic safety of the 'Any bin will do' policy for dog litter was questioned.

Action: Waste team to provide a response

Paul McGarry noted residents' request for a say in any changes made to St Mark's Place and how the place should be used. Councillor David Simpson commented that he has taken up the issue of antisocial behaviour in St Mark's Place with The Alexandra pub.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 8 June 2016 at The Mansel Road Centre, Trinity United Reformed Church,
Mansel Road, London SW19 4AA.

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