

Wimbledon Community Forum 8 June 2016 Chair's Report

The meeting was held at the Mansel Road Community Centre, and chaired by Councillor James Holmes. Approximately 40 residents attended, as well as Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Policing update

Sargeant Gettings informed residents that crime levels are going down in all Wimbledon wards, although there have been some problems with high-value burglaries, so the police are focussing on these.

The priorities for the Met Police will change with the new Mayor but it is not yet known what they will be. A new Borough Commander for Merton is also due to start imminently.

Extra officers from other boroughs will be drafted in during the Wimbledon Tennis tournament, and during the Euro 2016 Football tournament, there will be at least one Sargeant and six PCs on late shifts.

Crossrail 2 update

Jenn Bryden and Isabelle Adams from TfL presented an update on the Crossrail 2 plans, which can be viewed at

http://www.merton.gov.uk/crossrail_2_wimbledon_community_forum_presentation_8_june_2016.pdf

Jenn summarised that consultation is ongoing and will continue as the programme is designed. A lot of valuable feedback was received from Wimbledon during the previous consultation and this feedback will be reflected in the new proposals that will be consulted on towards the end of 2016. In the interim, a consultation report and a response to the consultation report called "Response to Issues Raised" will both be published ahead of the next consultation. It was acknowledged that a 5,000-signature petition had been received and that this was being taken into account.

The Future Wimbledon Master planning work is underway simultaneously to the development of Crossrail 2 proposals, so the Crossrail 2 team is working closely with LB Merton. TfL and Network Rail are also working closely with the Growth Commission to support housing and jobs needs in London. Paul McGarry, who is leading on the Wimbledon Masterplan for Merton Council, reassured residents that Crossrail 2 is not stifling other development in the area; there is a Local Plan to guide development in Merton regardless of the Crossrail 2 project. The number of planning applications being received has actually increased and the Crossrail 2 plans have attracted more investment from other developers. If residents or businesses have any property concerns, they can contact TfL either by email (crossrail2@tfl.gov.uk) or on the helpline (0343 222 0055) to speak to a member of the consultation team or land and property team. The NIC submission report, available on the Crossrail 2 website, provides more information on funding Crossrail 2 and growth benefits. Councillor Martin Whelton added that the council favours Crossrail 2, but not at any cost. It is therefore working closely with TfL and Network Rail to address concerns and make sure the proposals work for Merton.

Paul McGarry reminded residents that the council's cross-party support to Crossrail is available online at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/crossrail2.htm>.

In response to a question about what is being done to increase transport capacity until Crossrail 2 is ready, Isabelle Adams replied that an investment programme within TfL is being implemented at the moment to upgrade the District Line, but Crossrail 2 will still be needed. Councillor Martin Whelton added that 10-carriage trains are currently being extended.

Wimbledon Masterplan update

Paul McGarry, head of Future Merton, explained that the Masterplan is a long-term plan for development in the whole of Wimbledon Town Centre, not just the area around the train station. It covers issues such as urban design, traffic and transport, land use, and development coordination. Further information can be found at http://www.merton.gov.uk/wimbledon_masterplan.pdf

Consultation on the plan will begin in autumn 2016, in line with the next Crossrail 2 consultation, and will be an 18-month continuous process looking at all issues, from transport to building height to design quality.

Responding to a question about Crossrail development: development of any land that is purchased for the Crossrail 2 scheme (and other sites in the town centre area) would have to be guided by the council's masterplan. The council will work with all landowners to ensure space is provided for businesses and shops and is making it clear that the vibrancy of the town centre should be maintained throughout any developments.

Responding to a question about change of use, Paul explained that the council has applied Article 4 powers to stop offices in the town centre being converted to flats. In a separate question about retail units becoming banks or eateries, the Council's powers are very limited as the government has changed use class orders to allow these changes without the need for planning permission. The Council can only consider shop front design, or issue certificates of lawfulness for these permitted developments.

Residents made it clear that they do not feel sufficiently informed about planning applications for Wimbledon; they felt that the council should be pro-actively notifying them when new applications are received. Paul McGarry agreed to look into this.

Action: Paul McGarry – completed. The Council's Twitter feed will now publicise the weekly list of planning applications received by the council. This will be easier for residents to read instead of searching Planning Explorer.

Street cleansing and litter

Councillor Ross Garrod, together with officers from the council's Waste team, fielded questions about street cleansing and litter.

A resident complimented the dustmen, saying that they do a good job. He also commented that bin bags are frequently split open by foxes but the mess is not cleared away. It was

also noted by residents that street sweepers are not coming every week, which leads to rubbish piling up. The footpath between Sherwood Road and DunDonald Road was cited as a particular problem.

Road sweepers are employed to follow the dustbin vehicles and sweep up rubbish left behind, but Councillor Garrod said that he would report the issues back to the Waste department. Tony Gant from the Waste Department explained that a trial period in which road sweepers followed dustcarts to sweep up after them was found to be unsuccessful. As such, the service has been changed; sweepers across the borough now work from maps that have roads pre-scheduled for cleaning between Mondays and Fridays.

Action: Councillor Ross Garrod

A resident commented that working conditions for road sweepers are poor, which seems to be leading to a shortage in the workforce.

Councillor Garrod said that a change in shifts for street cleaners may be implemented, whereby they would no longer have to work eight-hour shifts. The matter is being considered by the council's Scrutiny Panel as part of the wider issue of selecting a preferred bidder for dealing with waste in the borough.

The former recycling site at Palmerstone Road is still attracting fly-tipping. Residents suggested that clearer signage is needed to indicate the site is no longer active and where recycling can now be taken. It was also suggested that bins should be removed from the site to deter residents from leaving recycling there.

In response to a comment that residents' recycling boxes are being broken by waste collection workers throwing them back once emptied, Councillor Garrod said that the Head of Waste Services is aware of this problem and training is being given to operational staff.

Fly-tipping was raised as a continuing problem, including the issue of it being bagged by waste services but subsequently not removed.

As part of the dog waste bins removal plan, bigger bins are going to be placed in parks which will compact the rubbish. The bins are programmed to inform waste services when they are full. An external enforcement team will also be going into parks to issue fines for dog waste and littering.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 21 September 2016 at The Mansel Road Centre, Trinity United Reformed Church, Mansel Road, London SW19 4AA.

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