

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 13TH JANUARY, 2021

MEMBERS: Councillors Anne Brown, Katherine Chibah and Lindsay Rawlings

Dennis Stacey – Bush Hill Park Conservation Area Study Group
Andrew Newman – Clay Hill Study Group
Rex Bourne – Edmonton Hundred Historical Society
Carol Cragoe – Enfield Town Conservation Area Study Group
Ann Bishop Laggett – Federation of Enfield Residents and Allied Associations
Denise Gandhi – Southgate Green Study Group
Paul Hutchinson – Grange Park Conservation Area Study Group
Robert Wilson – Hadley Wood Conservation Area Study Group
Chris Horner – Southgate District Civic Voice
John West – the Enfield Society
Juliet Barnet – Trent Park Conservation Committee
Peter Fisk – Forty Hill Conservation Area Study Group

Officers: Sarah Cary (Executive Director Place), Graham Harington (Case Officer - Development Management) Andy Higham (Head of Development Management) Robert Oles (Senior Enforcement Officer), David Taylor (Head of Traffic and Transportation) and Penelope Williams (Governance and Scrutiny)

Also Attending: Bob Blitz (Bus Network Planning Manager – Transport for London), Esther Johnson (Community Partnerships Specialist – Transport for London), Janice Lillis (Enfield Town Residents Association), Matt Mason (Crosstree), James Clarke (Crosstree) Sabri Marsaoui (Edmonton Green Centre), Kate Falconer Hall (Montagu Evans), Cicely Barnett (Montagu Evans), Nick Dines (Consilio), Julian Carter (Savills), Adam Shepherd (Savills), Iain Buzza (Savills), Abigail Heraty (Savills) Joanna Bagley (Waterman Group), Ellen Smith (Waterman Group), Katrina Wylie (HTS), C Lennon (HTS) Charlie Lusty (Steer Group), Matthew Booley (Steer Group) Martin Kiefer (Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands Architects), Brita von Schoenaich (BHSLA)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mahmut Aksanoglu.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CHANGE IN THE ORDER OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

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It was agreed to change the order in which items were considered at the meeting. Item 5 on the agenda was taken as the next item. The minutes reflect the order of the meeting.

4. BUS ECONOMICS AND THE COSTS OF RUNNING SERVICES

The forum received a presentation from Bob Blitz (Bus Network Planning Manager) and Esther Johnson (Community Partnerships Specialist) from Transport for London.

1. Presentation

The following points were highlighted in the presentation:

- Transport for London's income has fallen dramatically since the start of the pandemic. There have been drops of 95% in the number of journey's being taken on the tube and 85% on the bus network. On the 13 January 2020, there had been 5.8m journeys on the bus and 3.7m on the tube. On the 13 January 2021, there were only 1.1m bus journeys and 300,000 on the tube.
- A significant amount of Transport for London's income comes from fares: 72% of the budget. This has created a huge financial challenge. It cost £600m a year to run the network. Over £80m a week.
- Transport networks in other countries receive far more support from their governments. Since 2015, Transport for London's operating grant has been phased out making it even more dependent on fare income.
- Before the pandemic Transport for London had been successful in reducing deficits and had been on track to achieve an operating surplus by 2022.
- Government support had been critical during the pandemic. Two short term bailouts had kept the services running.
- Transport for London were working on a new sustainability plan to be published shortly.
- Transport for London planned to provide a comprehensive bus service in all areas throughout the week. It was aimed that everyone, all except those in very rural areas, should live within 5 minutes walk of a bus stop.
- The service should be simple and easy to use, keeping routes as straightforward as possible. The aim was that all services should be high frequency, reliable, turn up and go with known journey times. To protect from congestion delays, and unreliability, they could not be too long. One hour each way was an optimum service.
- Services also had to provide value for money. The average cost of a bus was £250,000 per vehicle, per year.
- Bus stands with toilets were essential. These were often difficult to site.
- Services were usually tendered for 5-7 years.
- The threshold for service change was a benefit to cost ratio of 2:1.
- It was not possible to do everything that they wanted to do.

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- Other criteria were also essential such as access to hospitals.
- Transport for London were always looking to fill gaps in the service.
- Parts of Winchmore Hill/Firs Farm area was in a network gap. The current W10 provided a limited inefficient service. A new route had been devised. The 456 which would run from Chase Farm Hospital via Winchmore Hill, Firs Farm to North Middlesex Hospital. At first it would run every 30 minutes during the week to see how the take up went. The service would be hourly on Sunday.
- Consultation on this route had concluded and it was being implemented. It would start running in March 2021.
- There would be fixed stops, not hail and ride. For disabled access it was necessary to be able to park parallel to the kerb.

2. Questions/Comments

2.1 In response to a query on the hail and ride service, the Mayor's policy was always for fixed bus stops so that they meet the wheelchair accessible standard. It is recognised that this is not always straightforward due to issues around removing parking spaces, which was often unpopular. It was also not always easy to find a site where buses could pull up at the kerb and move away easily.

2.2 A standard bus stop would be normally installed although discussions with Council officers were taking place about the designs to be used in conservation areas. Officers were also continuing to engage with affected conservation groups to try and minimise the impact where practicable.

2.3 There had been some concerns from residents about the route along Farm Road. These concerns were being considered by TfL and the Council, along with the wider benefits of the new route.

2.4 Residents were always consulted before bus routes were introduced.

2.5 Capital costs relating to the provision of bus stops were not included in TfL's cost/benefit calculations when considering new routes.. Transport for London worked on a revenue basis as infrastructure costs were quite small in comparison to the revenue expenses.

2.6 Concern about the negative impact on the conservation area of the one size fits all bus stops, the additional street furniture and road markings, particularly in the rural environment of Clay Hill. The concerns raised by the study group were being considered to help inform the final designs.

2.7 A concern about the safety of some of the stops in Clay Hill was raised. It was confirmed that a site visit had been carried out with Police to specifically look any road safety issues as part of the design process.

2.8 It was not envisaged that two buses an hour would have a significant impact on traffic congestion or cyclists. Many conservation areas in London had bus stops.

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2.9 TfL confirmed that a wide ranging consultation had been carried out on the 456 route.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Transport for London for their presentation, for members useful and detailed comments and summed up as follows:

Discussion on concerns raised about the new bus route were continuing between Transport for London and Council officers. The situation was evolving. Various issues were still being considered by the Council, including the impact on heritage and conservation areas, particularly Clay Hill, as well as parking in Farm Road.

5. DISCUSSION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND OTHER PLANNING POLICIES

Members noted the procedure for referring items for discussion at the forum, as attached to the agenda.

6. EDMONTON GREEN SHOPPING CENTRE PROPOSALS

The Forum received a presentation on the proposals for Edmonton Green Shopping Centre. Copies of the slides are attached to the agenda.

1. Presentation

The following points were highlighted during the presentation:

- Edmonton Green Shopping Centre was owned by Crosstree, a small London based investment and development company, which also owned fifty percent of the O2 centre in North Greenwich as well as other developments across London.
- The owners were hands on. They were working with well-known architects and top professional teams with the aim of creating a good development for the local people living in Edmonton.
- The last 9 months had been very tough for the business, but the best performing asset had been the Edmonton Green Shopping Centre.
- Since taking ownership of the centre two years ago, many improvements had been put in place. Four separate engagement events had been held. Initially some short-term measures had been carried out, including improving customer welfare and family facilities, removing charges and building a playground. A second stage had included creating a new branding, a way finding strategy, a deep clean, some refurbishment, redecoration, improved lighting, and new seating areas. A third event had invited people to put forward ideas for a large scale redevelopment. This had been followed up with a final consultation event on the new proposals. The new designs had been popular.

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- The market had been a key focus throughout. The centre contained a diverse range of shops but few of the high street brands. There was room for improvement; for a wider range of food and drink outlets; for places to bring people together; for measures to make people feel safer; to create new homes and for more greenery. The developers had spoken to many people including locals, retailers and organisations.
- During the first lockdown the centre had continued to perform reasonably well and had returned to 88% of footfall after the first lockdown.
- Ninety seven percent of the centre was currently occupied. Crosstree were keen to keep local independent retailers and had done everything that they could to provide proactive local support.
- The plans for the new development included a total of 750 new homes with a mix of tenancies and ownerships.
- The three tower blocks and Asda did not belong to Crosstree and could not be included in the redevelopment plans although there were plans to improve the residential entrances to the tower blocks to reduce crime and anti social behaviour and link them into the main development.
- The shopping centre was a brutalist structure originally built in the 1960's and 70's and there were now problems with the physical fabric of the building.
- It was set within the historic environment of Church Street and the busy Fore Street but was set apart, it did not engage socially and architecturally with its surroundings and was not a safe place to be outside of the 9-5 shopping hours.
- There were many good aspects such as the central location and connectedness to public transport hubs, both bus and train.
- The market was a key driver and they hoped to build on this making it a central feature of the new development.
- All the buildings will eventually be replaced (although not all at once) and a new layout introduced, making it easier to cross the site from east to west and north to south.
- The intention was to break down the scale and create new streets, squares and open places, new shops and offices with residential properties above.
- There would be a new link with the library to connect to Plevna Road and park, a new entrance near the bus station. Shopping activity would be moved westward with more residential building provided in the north.
- There were plans to create attractions at both ends to encourage movement through a central high street. In the south a new market building in a square beside Asda and in the north a new leisure box with cinema and possibly bowling alley.
- Residents would have front doors on to the street and the landscape would be greened with lots of new trees, raised gardens and play areas.

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- The Green Towers community centre would be reintegrated into the development as well as the library to improve the civic facilities of the area and there were also plans for an additional community hub with health centre.
- Thirty five percent of the new housing would be affordable with fifty one percent across the whole site. The new buildings would be a range of heights from 4 storey, several 8-9 storeys and one 30 storey tower.
- Night time uses were to be encouraged. This would also improve safety.
- The whole development would be phased in over 10-15 years.

2. Questions/Comments

2.1 Although footfall at the centre was high, spend per person was low. The centre could not support the larger retail chain stores like Marks and Spencer or Primark. This needed to change.

2.2 Concern about the prospect of a 30 storey building which would stand far above the surroundings and resulting issues of social cohesion.

2.3 It was not anticipated that satellite dishes would be a problem as a central facility would be provided.

2.4 There was a need to create a more mixed community which would support a wider range of shops. There would be new properties which would be affordable for nurses and teachers on a low salary.

2.5 Currently there were 1,000 parking spaces but only 600-650 of these were used, even at peak times. The spare capacity would be utilised more intelligently. The roof top car park at Asda was not used at present but there were plans to incorporate a ramp to the roof and to replace the multi-storey car park.

2.6 Some concern was expressed that a lot of money had recently been spent on Edmonton Green Library, but the plans for creation of a new library were for stage 3 of the proposals in 8-10 years time, so this would not be wasted.

2.7 There would be a mix of housing unit typologies, but these would predominately be apartments.

2.8 A large amount of greening would be created and 250-300 new trees planted, following planning guidance. The development would be based on sustainable urban drainage schemes with podium gardens.

2.9 Support for the improvements which Crosstree had bought in already and welcome for the potential investment. A quality development was needed. It was felt to be important to retain the small/medium sized family

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businesses and to keep things that make the centre special such as the market.

2.10 There was some concern about the long timescale and the lack of detail on the drawings shown.

2.11 There was a need for a high-quality design in all phases of the development and to make sure that the plans for phase 2 and 3 could not be changed significantly, later on.

2.12 The plan was a hybrid with a masterplan for the whole area and a detailed planning application for phase 1. The consultation will be on the whole development. There were design standards to be met at each phase. The Council's Design Review Panel would have a role.

2.13 The planning application had been submitted and planning officers were working with Crosstree on the documentation. A 30 day consultation process was due to start in the following week. This would include more information and detailed drawings.

2.14 Concern was expressed about the high rise building which would be a blot on the landscape. The Local Plan had not listed this as a suitable location for high rise buildings. More detailed elevations were needed to assess how they would fit into the surroundings.

2.15 More information was needed on how the plans would preserve and enhance local heritage assets.

2.16 In response to the concern expressed about impending changes in leasehold legislation and how this would impact on the development, members were informed that this would not have an impact on this development.

2.18 The developers did have to optimise the density of the buildings on the site but were keen to provide quality homes for people and would be following best practice guidance.

2.19 Crosstree would be doing analysis on the impact on views and would be working with officers to ensure that they had the right balance between optimising the number of units and enabling the buildings to sit well into the townscape and area. It was possible to have good quality tall buildings. They were committed to ensuring that they would be well integrated into the surroundings with good entrances that would provide integration and discourage crime.

2.20 The cost of the whole development was in the realm of £600m. There was some concern that this figure was not immediately available.

2.21 Concern that this development would not meet the need for three bedroom family homes.

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2.22 Concern that because the development was envisaged over a 15 year period that a lot could change over time and that the promised benefits would not materialise. It would be good to have some assurances that this would not happen, perhaps in the form of a financial bond. Minor amendments along the way could also have a cumulative negative impact.

2.23 Sarah Cary advised that Council's could not compel development can only grant planning permission and agree permissions. The local authority could use section 106 agreements attached to planning permissions to enable the provision of social facilities such as new schools and landscaping schemes.

2.24 There are planning and legal tools to secure benefits and make sure financial contributions were secured such as the replacement of the library and community centre.

2.25 Concern about the ability of the local authority to match the expertise and resources of such a large development.

3. Summing Up

The Chair thanked the presenters and everyone for their contributions to the discussion. She summed up as follows:

The investment in Edmonton Green was welcome but there were a mixture of views amongst the Environment Forum representatives and there were concerns as follows:

- Members wanted some guarantee that infrastructure promises would be honoured.
- That the affordable housing figures would stack up and would be adhered to.
- Concerns about high rise living and social cohesion.
- Concerns about how the scheme would meet the borough's need for 3 bed family homes.
- Concerns about how to ensure that all three phases of the development would be completed when the powers of the planners were limited and how to avoid the economic cycle's ups and downs.
- Concerns to ensure that a heritage impact assessment on the three neighbouring conservation areas was carried out.
- Concerns as to whether Enfield Council had the resources and expertise to deal with such a huge development.
- Concerns that this area had not been highlighted for high-rise development in the Local Plan.
- The need for strong mechanisms to control the development meets the promises made through control documents such as design codes, parameter documents and section 106 agreements.

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The consultation on the application had yet to start and there was still lots of time to input.

POST MEETING NOTE: The Edmonton Green planning application reference is 20/04187/OUT. It can be viewed on the Council's online planning register. Consultation is open until 24 February.

https://planningandbuildingcontrol.enfield.gov.uk/online-applications/?_ga=2.107180807.469189603.1611746464-35036751.1565280338

7. ENFORCEMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

The Environment Forum received a presentation on Enforcement in the Green Belt.

1. Presentation

Robert Oles (Pollution Control, Planning Enforcement and Appeals Manager) gave a verbal presentation. The following points were highlighted:

- There were seven officers including two trainees working on planning enforcement.
- Between them they covered a wide range of issues.
- Their work was led by the priority and severity of any breach.
- The team dealt with approximately 1,200 cases a year.
- Their work had been severely hampered by the covid pandemic. A new covid risk assessment had been introduced. They were currently unable to enter any premises to check for enforcement, but could view from public areas.
- Recently several members of staff had been allocated to support the NHS, time had been lost because staff had had to self-isolate, courts had been closed so no prosecutions had been progressed.
- Breaches on the green belt included unauthorised scaffolding companies, caravans, scrap yards and vehicle storage.
- There were currently 5 cases in court, 6 notices being investigated and 6 cases where the Council was looking to serve notice on hold.
- Conservation areas were a number one priority which would be investigated within 24 hours of a report.
- In 2019 there were 39 cases in conservation areas and in 2020 16 cases.
- Of the 25 cases outstanding in conservation areas: 15 were due to be taken to court when the courts reopen; 2 have been completed and notices are due to be served; 3 applications are awaiting decision: 6 cases have been completed and 3 cases could not be finalised due to Covid restrictions.
- The service was trying to be proactive and had a programme to look at empty and derelict buildings in town centres, and especially pubs. In April the team had planned a focus on each conservation area. They would be looking to serve notices where required.

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- There were currently no issues in conservation areas that had not been investigated.
- A question about the land on a site next to 1 Old Park Ridings had been brought to the attention of officers before the meeting. Work on this site had been closed down three times, since it had first gained planning permission 4 years ago. In December 2020 an enforcement notice was served. The owners have until February to appeal. Officers had met the builders on site last Monday and they were keen to comply.

2. Questions/Comments

2.1 There were concerns about many derelict pubs across the borough which were often key buildings in a community. Many have been boarded up and look untidy. Officers aimed to review them all and would serve an untidy notice if necessary to make owners bring them up to an acceptable standard.

2.2 Officers were thanked for their work on the site next to 1 Old Park Ridings and asked to continue their efforts. It had been made clear to the developers that they could not make a new application for the site, but would have to stick to the original plans even if this meant demolishing what was there and starting again.

2.3 Officers were asked what could be done to ensure that these cases could be monitored. Cases could go on for a long time. There needed to be a better way of communicating what was being done.

2.4 The two new trainees in the enforcement team had been on a steep learning curve. Their training programme had suffered during the pandemic. But plans were in place and officers were confident that there was enough knowledge and skills in the team and in the legal department to do the work required.

2.5 Consideration was being given to putting an enforcement register on line, similar to the information provided on planning applications. There were some data protection issues that needed to be worked through. Robert Oles offered to provide an update on any issues outstanding if information were provided.

2.6 Legal action was being taken against the owners of the Mays Inn.

2.7 A person could apply for a licence separately from a planning application. These were not linked, although officers in both teams did liaise with each other. Queries could be sent to planning.enforcement@enfield.gov.uk.

2.8 If action against a property is taken this information is included on the land registry and to the mortgage lender.

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2.9 Work can be carried out by the Council and charged to the property owner. This had happened recently in the case of the North Lodge at Whitewebbs where the Council had carried out urgent works and made a recharge.

The Chair thanked officers for the presentation and members for their questions and comments.

8. MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 were received and agreed as a correct record.

9. REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Forum noted the following changes to the work programme;

- The item for further discussion on housing need and housing typologies has been scheduled in for the March meeting.
- The Chair asked for members to suggest groups to invite to the next meeting to discuss community initiatives promoting environmental sustainability. The Friends of Firs Farm Wetlands was suggested.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Clarification was sort on the length of time that planning applications could apply. These lasted ad infinitum. Some minor amendments to the 13 year old Tottenham Hotspur application were queried. Andy Higham agreed to respond.

More detail on future landscape plans was requested.

Concern that too much time was spent on issues other than planning applications. Other members said that they liked the variety of issues discussed and would not want to change this.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The forum noted the dates agreed for future meetings:

- Tuesday 16 February 2021
- Tuesday 30 March 2021
- Wednesday 28 April 2021