

CHIPPING BARNET RESIDENTS' FORUM

MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2010 ACTION NOTES

held at: Coppetts Wood School, Coppetts Wood Road, N10 1JS

Chairman: *Councillor Lisa Rutter Vice-Chairman: *Councillor Barry Evangelini

*Denotes Councillor Present

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brian and Kate Salinger (on holiday) and Councillor Rawlings (clash of meetings)

	Issue Raised	Response	Update (and by whom)
1	<p>Mr Dix</p> <p>I note that the Council is planning to set up a Commercial Directorate (Delegated Powers Report 1151). From what I can understand, in addition to the £180,870-£194,960 cost of the Commercial Director, the £137,010-£147,600 cost of the Assistant Director and the £65,900-£70,730 cost of the recently appointed Strategic Planning Advisor, the Council want to appoint a further 8 people costing an additional £485,660-£523,000 a year. In total, the new directorate will cost around £900,000 a year in salaries and on costs. At a time when the Council is cutting front line services, how can the Council justify spending so much on back office management and to what extent have Councillors scrutinised this decision.</p> <p>At the meeting Mr Dix said that the response was disingenuous particularly as a consultant contract with a value of more than £500,000 was discussed at a recent Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>Andrew Travers</p> <p>With government financial support reducing by between 25% and 33% over the next four years, the Council faces significant challenge in meeting citizen expectations for improved public services. The Council's response is the One-Barnet programme which aims to provide improved public service outcomes while delivering the necessary savings. This will involve the Council working with local partners to commission services from a variety of delivery organisations. To do this effectively, it is essential that the Council has the necessary in-house expertise and capacity. It is for this reason that the Commercial Directorate has been established. The additional costs need to be seen in the context of the external consultancy which will not now be required, the wider savings proposed in the senior management of the Council, and the need to generate £35m of net savings over the next three years.</p>	

	Issue Raised	Response	Update (and by whom)
2	<p>Mr Dix</p> <p>Is the (Acting) Deputy Chief Executive a direct employee of Barnet Council; for how much longer will he be paid via Halliford Associates Ltd., the company of which he is the sole director; why did the monthly payment to his company rise from £15,000 per month in May 2010 (Ref. Doc. 5000257036) to £17,500 in June 2010 (Ref. Doc. 5000260724) and how was he paid in April 2010.</p> <p>At the meeting Mr Howard said that this person was one of the chief policy advisers with a statutory responsibility for S151 and therefore it was a surprise that he was not employed by the Council.</p> <p>Several residents raised concern that the Council might be seen as collaborating in tax avoidance and they called for transparency in terms of the arrangements particularly in respect of the tax implications</p>	<p>Jacqui McGeachie</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive is retained on a contractual basis rather than a direct employee of the Council. This specific contract was put in place after a rigorous recruitment process failed to find a suitable candidate. The use of staff on a contractual basis gives the council flexibility when planning for the future. When filling posts in this way, the council makes sure that contracts stay within the existing budget for the post. The council will not for instance, have any further obligations to a post holder for pension or national insurance contributions. The months the invoices are paid are in arrears so; payments made in May are in relation to April, and so on. There maybe variations to the payments month on month but over the year this will not exceed the budget for the post.</p>	
3	<p>Mr Gordon Massey</p> <p>These questions refer to the council's policy and practice in relation to the provision of vehicle crossovers:</p> <p>1. Why is the council persisting with the provision of a crossover at 27 Carnarvon Rd when the parking space does not meet the minimum space requirement?</p> <p>2. What are the advantages of crossovers which remove only one car from the road?</p>	<p>Paul Bragg</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated that the Smart vehicle can be parked in the frontage without overhanging the public highway and as such meets our criteria.</p> <p>Everyone has the right of free access to their property and creating a crossover improves access.</p>	<p>Paul Bragg to feed back on the site visit and the views of the Cabinet Member</p> <p>Appendix</p>

	Issue Raised	Response	Update (and by whom)
	3. Apart from conservation areas, when considering crossover applications does the council take account of any factors other than Sec 184 of the 1980 highways Act?	There are a number additional factors including but not limited to: Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, classification of road, type of building, hard standing construction materials, safety, drainage, impact on street furniture including trees etc. There was a very long exchange of views at the meeting the outcome of which is appended to these action notes.	
4	Mr Howard Referred to the work carried out by the Open Spaces Team in Victoria Park and wished to thank staff for bringing the garden back to an attractive state.		Thanks extended to the Open Spaces Team
5	Mr Dix Referred to the two responses received in respect of Future Shape and the Leader Listens Blog. He felt that responses were disappointing and he had attended an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to get some clarity on the Future Shape issues.	The Chairman and those present noted Mr Dix comments.	No further action
6	Mr Howard Again raised an issue regarding the work being carried out on the new JCoSS school and the non-compliance to the construction management plan. It was his view that the contractors were persistently and flagrantly disregarding the rules and that residents were being fobbed off and that rigorous enforcement was not being applied.	At the meeting Councillor Evangeli said that he understood that a residents' meeting had been arranged for the following Monday.	Councillor Rams Is requested to feed back to the forum on how the school is intending to address the concerns raised by residents Councillor Rams said that he was not a spokesman for the school however if residents had any issues they would like taken up, he would be happy to act as a go between. Councillor Rams suggested that the school would be happy to attend a forum if they were contacted directly.

	Issue Raised	Response	Update (and by whom)
	<p>He then referred to the impending traffic problems generated by those buses that were not stopping at the original points identified. There were problems with parking and parents dropping off their children, and the peak times in the local area was becoming longer. In terms of meetings between the school and residents, Mr Howard said that only selected residents were able to attend the meetings and no minutes/feedback had been published from the last meeting that had taken place.</p>		
7	<p>Mr Dix Referred to Issue 10 at the last meeting – 15 East Barnet Road, and confirmed that the site had been smartened up a little</p>		Noted - No action required
8	<p>Mr Dix Referred to Issue 18 at the last meeting and said that he had received an e mail from TfL who said that they were continuing to investigate the proposal to remove the traffic signals at the junction of Margaret Road. As the Council were opposed to the proposal, he said that TfL were wasting time and money.</p>	<p>Councillor Evangeli Agreed on the time being wasted by TfL and said that they needed Barnet's permission to remove the signals. He reiterated his previous statement that the Council would not sanction the removal and that the decision of the Cabinet Member on this issue remained unchanged.</p>	
9	<p>Mr Dix Referred to Issue 25 at the last meeting and said that to his disappointment, a meeting that had been arranged between officers and himself had been cancelled at the last minute.</p>		Noted – No action required

	Issue Raised	Response	Update (and by whom)
10	Several residents again referred to the fact that the Council had not delegated the powers to the Police regarding the issue of penalty notices. Discussion took place on how contraventions could be followed up particularly if a resident gave false details.		
11	Mr Massey Referred to the outcome of the CPZ consultations with regards to the Town Centre Strategy. He said that a response was yet to be forthcoming.		Neil Richardson to feed back on the outcome of the CPZ consultation
	DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING	East Barnet School Chestnut Grove, East Barnet EN4 8PU 27 October 2010 at 6.30pm.	

The meeting finished at 8.10 pm

Officers Present:

Paul Bragg

Lead Officer – Environment and Operations

Martin Cowie

Assistant Director of Planning and Development Management

Pauline Bagley

Democratic Services

Councillors Longstaff and Coakley-Webb were also present

In addition, there were approximately 10 members of the public.

ISSUE 3

- Mr Massey felt that the responses given on the Issues List were both perfunctory and dismissive. He outlined the long saga of events over the last twelve months regarding an application for a crossover in Carnarvon Road the lack of adequate and omission of replies from the Council which had continued within the response to the set of questions put before the forum.
- In response to a question from Mr Massey regarding the 2.4 metre width requirement and his view that there was not enough space, Paul Bragg confirmed that there was this minimum requirement in order for a vehicle to be able to be driven on and off the property. He added that due to a change in the requirements, there was now no minimum depth. There was a legal agreement in place with the applicant that no vehicle would protrude over the highway. Paul Bragg undertook to have another look at the measurements on site with Mr Massey in attendance.
- Mr Massey said that in this instance, a vehicle would always have to reverse out onto the highway as there was no way it could access parking on the property by reversing. He outlined his rationale for this. He said that this had health and safety implications and referred to a high number of collision incidents reported during the period 1999/2001 from vehicles exiting from crossovers.
- Mr Massey then referred to the street scene issue and said that in Carnarvon Road this was relatively well preserved. He referred to various legislation and s184 of the Highways Act 1980 regarding the construction of crossovers and how they should not compromise the street scene and the total capacity. He said that both of these criteria would be compromised with this crossover in particular the use of spaces at the end of the CPZ.
- Mr Massey said that there were many Councils which had policies in place to severely restrict crossovers in their areas and of those applications made, a majority were turned down. He also referred to the 2005 GLA Environment Committee findings about the loss of front gardens and the affect on the street scene. He said that Barnet was supposed to pride itself on its green spaces but was colluding in the concreting of thousands of front gardens. He called for the Council to abandon its ultra liberal view on the approval of these crossovers in order to maintain the street scene. Councillor Rutter reminded Mr Massey that approval or otherwise of a crossover was not just 'rubber stamped'. She said that all applications were looked at on their individual merits.
- Councillor Rutter summarised the key issues of concern raised by Mr Massey (a) the particular issue of 27 Carnarvon Road and (b) Barnet's lack of robust policies regarding crossovers.
- He confirmed that the Council did not generate an income from these applications as it only recharged for the cost of the work to be carried out by contractors. In terms of the fixed fee charged, he said that this covered administrative costs only in a section that had been reduced to just one officer and one administrative support officer to carry out the work. Parking related issues were addressed by other officers.
- In response to a question from Mr Howard as to what action the Council would take should the owner of the property change their 'Smart Car' to a larger vehicle, Paul Bragg said that the agreement was not in respect of the make of car, but a charge had been made on the property to ensure that no vehicle should overhang.
- Discussion also took place on policies in the 2006 UDP and other policies regarding crossovers, inferring protection only mattered in Conservation Areas. Martin Cowie said

that the characterisation of the Borough was currently being mapped out and a whole variety of views would be considered. He said that concerns had not gone unheard and there would be reflection when views were received via the LDF consultation.

- Mr Nightingale said that he lived in an adjoining road where there were major problems already. Paul Bragg said that any application for a crossover in this resident's road would not be subject to consultation as it was not within a CPZ.
- Councillor Longstaff referred to several residents' concerns about cars being parked at right angles and asked for clarification as to whether this affected all crossovers. Paul Bragg said that this was the case since the abolition of a minimum depth requirement in 2006/07.
- **Paul Bragg undertook to refer these issues and concerns to the Cabinet Member to seek a view.**

**FORTHCOMING PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
AND SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
(meetings usually start at 7.00pm)

AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE: - ALL TO BE HELD AT HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, NW4 4BG

Chipping Barnet

Democratic Services Contact: Pauline Bagley, Tel: 020 8359 2023

Hendon

Democratic Services Contact: Paul Frost, Tel: 020 8359 2205

Finchley and Golders Green

Democratic Services Contact: Stephanie Chaikin, Tel: 020 8359 2019

Forthcoming meetings:

Finchley & Golders Green

9 November 2010

6 December 2010

Chipping Barnet

9 November 2010

6 December 2010

Hendon

9 November 2010

Public requests to speak at Area Planning Sub-Committees on planning applications

Written requests to speak on planning applications should be notified to the relevant Area Planning Officer by 10.00am on the 3rd working day before the day of the meeting.

Public requests to ask questions at Area Planning Sub-Committees

Any request to ask a question (exact wording) on the work of the Sub-Committee must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 7th working day before the day of the meeting.

• **AREA ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMITTEES:**

Venue: Hendon Town Hall, the Burroughs, NW4 4BG

Chipping Barnet

Democratic Services Contact: Stephanie Chaikin, Tel: 020 8359 2019

Finchley & Golders Green

Democratic Services Contact: Nick Musgrove, Tel: 020 8359 2024

Hendon

Democratic Services Contact: Jonathan Regal, Tel: 020 8359 2012

Forthcoming meetings:

Finchley & Golders Green

14 October

Chipping Barnet

14 October

Hendon

14 October

Public requests to speak at Area Environment Sub-Committees

Written requests to speak on issues on the agenda must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 2nd working day before the day of the meeting.

Public requests to ask questions at Area Environment Sub-Committees

Any request to ask a question (exact wording) on environmental matters must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 7th working day before the day of the meeting.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Venue: Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs, NW4 4BG

Democratic Services Contact: Maria Lugangira (tel: 020 8359 2761)

Public requests to speak at Planning & Environment Committee

Written requests to speak on planning applications should be notified to the relevant Area Planning Officer by 10.00am on the 2nd working day before the day of the meeting for non planning issues and the 3rd working day before the meeting on planning issues.

Public requests to ask questions at Planning & Environment Committee

Any request to ask a question (exact wording) on the work of the Committee must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 7th working day before the day of the meeting.

Forthcoming meetings:

20 October, 11 November, 8 December 2010