

Decisions of the Public Realm Forum

7 September 2018

Members Present:-

Cooke (Chairman)
Councillor R Grover
Councillor T Roberts

Also in attendance

Councillor J Marshal
Commissioning Lead Environment
High Streets & Town Centres Investments Manager
Design and Heritage Manager
Gordon Massey, Barnet Residents Association
Gail Laser, Chipping Barnet Town Team

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Stephen Sowerby

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed those present to the third meeting of the Public Realm Forum.

2. GOLDERS GREEN TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY - UPDATE

The Chairman introduced the item and the intentions of the discussion.

The High Streets & Town Centres Investments Manager provided an update on the work to date for the Golders Green Town Centre Strategy. It was noted that the consultants have completed Phase 1 consultation and engagement to date. A six week public consultation regarding the final draft strategy will take place in the near future.

Councillor Grover noted that he had read the current draft strategy and was pleased with the content and looks forward to the strategy going ahead but noted that we should be looking at public realm interventions which we can implement independently of the strategy. For example, the trees planted a few years ago are very popular and have improved the area.

The forum also discussed the conflict of parking within town centres, the impact of developments and the issue of pollution.

ACTION:

The Public Realm Forum agreed that:

- The High Streets & Town Centres Investments Manager will inform the forum when the dates for the public consultation are known.

- The forum asked for the web link to the existing town centre strategies which can be found below:
 1. Burnt Oak Town Centre strategy
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s43516/Appendix%201%20-%20Burnt%20Oak%20own%20Centre%20Approach%20February%202017.pdf>
 2. Finchley Central Town Centre strategy
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s43517/Appendix%202%20%20Fi%20nchley%20Central%20Town%20Centre%20Strategy.pdf>

3. WELCOME TO THE BOROUGH / TOWN CENTRE SIGNAGE DESIGN

The Chairman introduced the item, gave an overview on the council's intentions for signage and the intentions of the discussion.

The forum discussed a number of points and views which will be considered by officers as part of the project;

- It was noted that we should celebrate the different areas and specific parts within Barnet. For example, some attendees noted that the historic town centre of High Barnet should have historic signage noting the battle and ideally would have historic street name plates. It was noted that Chipping Barnet would have a more modern feel.
 On the other hand, it was also noted that the benefit of uniformity was preferred and also it was important that we keep a Barnet as a borough brand. It was noted that signage in Stratford upon Avon was very uniform and clear. Perhaps the sign casing and font should be part of corporate branding and that the wording is the only part which varies between signs.
- It was noted that one sign including the sponsorship section would be beneficial and ensure a clean, less cluttered look. However, it was also noted that having separate signs (but attached the same sign posts) would be advantageous depending on the length of the contract and would be easier if the sponsored aspect requires updating / change.
- It was noted that we need to ensure that the signage does not contribute to the clutter in the public realm and that we are also looking at reducing signage.
- It was noted that we need a real identity, to create a brand.

The forum also discussed having advertising banners on lamp posts. Some attendees noted that this was very positive particularly for community groups and local businesses.

ACTION:

The Public Realm Forum agreed that:

- Forum attendees to provide any exemplars for signage
- The points above will be considered by officers. Example designs and concepts will be sent to forum members or reviewed at the next meeting depending on time constraints for the work.

4. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

The Chairman introduced the item by discussing the progress that the National Trust have had with introducing electric vehicle charging points across their estate.

The Chairman gave an overview on the council's intentions and increasing residents requests for the introduction of electric vehicle charging points.

The forum noted that as a borough we need to be thinking ahead about how to support residents to use sustainable transport modes.

A few points which were discussed were;

- Having electric vehicle charging points located in car parks is a really good start and there are a fewer issues than having lamppost chargers.
- It was noted that with lamp post chargers if there are dedicated on street bays for electric vehicle charging that these could be empty / not used as much which would cause parking issues for some streets.
- The forum discussed that there is more choice now with hybrid cars and other vehicle types. It was also noted that the technology is changing and units installed now could easily be very out of date in 10 / 15 years' time which adds to complexities.
- It was noted that petrol station style electric charging with rapid chargers could be a potential solution.

ACTION

- All attendees to consider potential electric vehicle charging options and provide any examples of best practice for electric charging points.

5. ACTIONS TAKEN FORWARD

The Chairman introduced the item and noted that the council would like to progress the de-cluttering suggestions raised in a previous meeting by Phillip Davies and would like to manage requests through the Members Footway Improvement Service.

The forum noted that utilising the service to request for redundant signage poles to be removed was positive.

Councillor Grover requested that an email is sent out informing councillors of the request from the Public Realm Forum and details of the service. Utilising the existing service will also allow for requests and their implementation to be monitored and an update can be provided to Environment Committee on the scheme. Councillor Grover noted that we should ensure that we continue to focus on this at the next meeting.

An attendee of the forum noted HGVs have been driving on pavements in High Barnet causing them to crack and that bollards should be installed to prevent this. The forum discussed that bollards can also be seen as clutter but that there were potentially other ways to defend the pavement such as using trees, cycle stands or benches. It was noted that if Town Centres had a BID that this could be something that the Town Team could action.

The Chairman agreed that the protection of paving should be a future agenda item for the forum.

ACTION

- Officers to email all councillors of the request from the Public Realm Forum and details of the service.
- Ways to protect the footway should be a future agenda item for the forum.
- A copy of the presentation from Phillip Davies is to be circulated to attendees of the forum.

6. FORWARD PLANNING

Potential items to be considered for the forum work programme were;

- A uniform approach to an attractive borough (not just conservation areas).
- Exemplars for sponsorship for town centre and welcome to the borough signs to be discussed.
- Review of the Members Footway Improvement Service requests and implementations at the next meeting in order to keep a focus on this.
- Discuss the work of the town teams and projects that they would like to implement.

Dates for future meetings, agendas and minutes are publicised online - <https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=957>

The date for the next meeting will be scheduled shortly.

7. ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.