

## **Decisions of the Public Realm Forum**

25 January 2019

Members Present:-

Councillor Rohit Grover

Councillor Tim Roberts

Also in attendance:-

Assistant Director Transportation and Highways Commissioning (Chairman)

Commissioning Lead Environment

Head of Business, Employment and Skills

Highways Lead for Network & Infrastructure

Environment Commissioning Officer

Design and Heritage Manager

Philip Davies, (Conservation Expert and constituent)

Gordon Massey, Barnet Residents' Association

Bob Burstow, Chipping Barnet Town Team

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

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

### **2. UPDATE ON SUPPORT TO BARNET TOWN CENTRES**

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

The Head of Business, Employment and Skills provided an update on the support that the Business, Employment and Skills team provides to town centres, residents and other stakeholder groups. The priorities for the team include:

- Engagement and capacity building
- Funding coordination
- Strategic alignment with other Council aims and objectives
- Workspace protection and design

The forum queried whether best practice was being applied when considering the exterior design of new town centre units' planning applications. The Head of Business, Employment and Skills said that the Council works with specialist urban designers and architects, and commented that the Council needs to bring this expertise in-house, but could work more closely with them to address concerns about heritage and design.

Councillor Grover inquired about the status of the Golders Green Town Centre Strategy. The Head of Business, Employment and Skills reported that it is still in draft form, and it is intended to go out to consultation and to be presented to Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee in March.

The forum noted dissatisfaction with the design of shop fronts in Chipping Barnet Town Centre, and suggested that planning and town centre officers work more closely. The Head of Business, Employment and Skills noted that these two teams are working

together more closely to inform the development of the new Local Plan. The forum further suggested that shopfront design guidance could be included in future strategic work.

The forum asked about the status of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation in North Finchley. The Head of Business, Employment and Skills said this has moved forward with a local developer to deliver a major scheme. A partnership board will be established to include local voices in the steering of the development.

### **3. WELCOME TO THE BOROUGH / TOWN CENTRE SIGNAGE**

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

The Chairman noted that Environment Committee approved the procurement of a new signage sponsorship contract. It was noted that if it works with the procurement timeframe, the Forum should discuss draft designs at the next meeting.

The Chairman noted and thanked Philip Davies for his work surveying existing signage and suggestions for improvement. The need for design agreement was emphasised and forum members were requested to provide feedback on the future design.

Councillor Grover and Councillor Roberts expressed concern about sponsors with no link to the borough, and noted that it would be best to have sponsors who invest in the borough and play a key role in the local economy.

The Head of Business, Employment and Skills suggested notifying Middlesex University of the procurement.

#### **ACTION:**

The Public Realm Forum agreed to:

- LBB to create signage designs and circulate these to forum members or if it works with the procurement timeframe discuss the designs at the next Forum.

### **4. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING**

The Chairman introduced the item and discussed demand from residents and Members for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. With funding from the Go Ultra Low Cities Scheme (GULCS), 40 electric vehicle chargers will be installed in lamp columns across the borough for households without off-street parking in the Spring. Another 40 will be installed later this year.

The Chairman highlighted the criteria to consider when locating the chargers, such as site suitability and resident demand. The Chairman noted that Officers would like the forum to comment on any suggestions for locations. The Chairman noted that West London has installed them in conservation areas and has respected their context as much as possible.

Councillor Grover noted there needs to be signage directing people to charging points, and Councillor Roberts expressed a wish for signage to reflect the borough's logo to indicate the charger as Council property and a service for residents.

The forum suggested the following considerations for future electric vehicle charging infrastructure:

- Electric car-dedicated parking bays for set times
- The use of ground-based chargers and general charging in car parks or in petrol stations for larger and faster car charging

**ACTION:**

The Public Realm Forum agreed to:

Share information, best practice and location suggestions from residents for the next phase of 40 lamp column chargers.

**5. UPDATE ON THE DE-CLUTTERING SUGGESTIONS VIA THE MEMBERS FOOTWAY IMPROVEMENT SERVICE**

The Environment Commissioning Lead updated the forum on the item and detailed the requests made to Councillors and the resulting decisions, for the period from September 2018 to January 2019.

Some members of the forum felt that the Council could do more to reduce sign cluttering and suggested that Councillors make more requests for removing duplicated and redundant signage.

**ACTION:**

The Public Realm Forum agreed to:

- Head of Business, Employment and Skills to confirm the town centre funding and whether these can be used for decluttering

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

None.