



Haringey Council

Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel

THURSDAY, 20TH MARCH, 2014 at 18:30 HRS - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

MEMBERS: Councillors Alexander, Bloch, Bull, Gibson, McNamara (Chair), Stanton and Weber

AGENDA

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN PLANNING SERVICES (20.30) (PAGES 1 - 40)

To:

- 1) Discuss key evidence from the evidence gathering sessions
- 2) Outline conclusions and recommendations from the review

10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (PAGES 41 - 56)

- 28th January 2014-03-12
- 24th February 2014

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Wednesday, 19 March 2014

**Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel
Community Engagement with Planning - Evidence Session 1 – Local Policy
and Practice
19th November 2013**

Present: Cllr Gibson, Cllr McNamara (Chair) and Cllr Weber

In attendance: Alison Bolm-Cooer (LBH), Clodah McGuirk, Sule Nisancioglu, Zoe Robertson (LBH) and Ransford Stewart (LBH) and Emma Williamson (LBH).

1. Community engagement with planning

Scope

- 1.1 The panel agreed that community engagement with planning would be a project in the work programme for 2013-14. The panel discussed and agreed the proposed project scoping report. The overarching aim of this work was to:

‘To assess whether residents and communities have appropriate opportunities to engage meaningfully in local planning processes through community engagement and involvement strategies within the planning service (with particular reference to the Statement of Community Involvement).’

Evidence from Planning Officers

- 1.2 The panel noted that the Planning Service was committed to involving and consulting with local people in all planning processes and decisions and that the views of local people were important in shaping the future of the borough. Effective community involvement and consultation is fundamental to this process to ensure that decisions are reasoned, transparent and accountable to the community.
- 1.3 The panel heard that the planning service undertakes consultations for two types of planning processes:
- planning applications; and
 - planning policy documents.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.4 It was noted that consultations on both planning applications and planning policy documents are subject to statutory requirements. In addition, the principles and methods of local planning consultations are statutorily required to be set out in a local Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The panel noted that the SCI is generally a framework document as too much detail may stifle creativity and could be subject a Planning Service to legal challenge if not complied with.
- 1.5 The panel noted that Haringey’s SCI was first adopted in May 2007 and was reviewed in February 2011 in response to changes in planning law. The planning service aims to exceed any minimum requirements detailed in the SCI, though this will depend on the type of consultation, the targeted consultees and resources available.
- 1.6 The panel noted that the SCI needs to be updated to reflect the introduction of Localism Act, National Planning Policy Framework and Neighbourhood Planning.

The review will also incorporate a review of new engagement tools available to the Council. The panel noted that its work, which would involve consulting local groups on the SCI, would also contribute to the review process.

Planning Consultations

- 1.7 The Planning Service consults in the formulation of local planning policies; these would include major planning documents at the Core Strategy, as well as more specific policies for particular planning issues. Minimum requirements for consultations are set out by government, and the SCI provides additional methods and approaches to help ensure community involvement is effective and reaches local stakeholders.
- 1.8 Different methods and requirements for consultation are required depending on the status of the planning document, for example, whether it is a Development Plan Document (DPD) or a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD):
 - A DPD brings forward statutory local policy which requires at least two stages of community consultation and an independent examination.
 - An SPD provides further guidance for policies in DPDs and as such requires only one stage of community consultation and is not subject to an examination.
- 1.9 The panel noted that a variety of local stakeholders were involved at various stages of the plan making process and include:
 - Statutory consultees (e.g. Mayor of London, neighbouring boroughs, fire, police, utilities, health, transport);
 - Representative bodies
 - Community groups
 - Business groups, planning agents and consultants
 - Local residents and individuals.
- 1.10 The planning service maintains a database of local stakeholders and currently this has almost 1,500 entries. The database is updated every three years and this last occurred in 2012. In some cases the Planning Policy team will access other consultation databases to target groups or individuals for particular issues, for example the London Landlord Association database was used for consultation on the for the introduction of the Article 4 Direction.
- 1.11 Consultations need to be flexible, accessible and proactive and above all, tailored to meet the needs of consultees and the scope of the planning document. In this context a wide range of consultative methods can be deployed to inform and engage local residents. These could include:

• On line surveys	• workshops
• Dedicated focus groups	• Area Forums
• Drop in sessions	• Street leafleting
• Attendance at residents and community group meetings	• Public roadshows, exhibitions, stalls

- 1.12 Informal methods of consulting such as drop-in sessions, public exhibitions and on street leafleting proved to be successful in engaging with individuals who have not been involved with Planning before and who would otherwise not have the time, interest or inclination to submit a formal response to a consultation. Their views and issues are captured and in some cases the participants will ask to be included in the consultation database to receive information on future consultations.
- 1.13 Notifications setting out when and how the Council will consult on a particular document is published through a variety of mediums including: local press; the Council's website; emails and letters to statutory consultees, all organisations, voluntary and community groups, and individuals on the Planning Policy consultation database; the Council's consultation calendar; Haringey People (when appropriate); and information leaflets and posters (when appropriate). Printed documents are made available in public libraries and in the planning service office.
- 1.14 The panel noted that wherever possible, the Planning Service seeks to work with established structures such as the Developers Forum, Conservation Area Advisory Committees, Tenants Forums and residents' associations which allow engagement with a wider audience.

Statutory Consultees

- 1.15 In the presentation given to the panel it was noted that there were a number of agencies which need to be systematically consulted within certain planning processes these included Thames Water, Fire Service, Police Service, Environment Agency and English Heritage. Contact is predominantly via email and is made in accordance with guidance from individual bodies.
- 1.16 In discussion on statutory planning consultees it was noted that:
- statutory consultees do not have to respond to consultations
 - In respect of development consultations, there is a threshold for statutory consultation.
 - The provision of responses from statutory consultees varies, and that a planning view or judgement has to be taken where there has been no response.
 - In respect of Development Management, statutory consultees would be re-evaluated.

Internal consultees

- 1.17 The panel discussed those services from within the Council that are routinely consulted within planning applications. The panel indicated that it would be useful to understand further what services were included, what was asked and how frequently these responded to consultations.

Website

- 1.18 The panel discussed the use of the website as a tool through which to provide planning information. A wide range of planning information is contained on the site, including local planning policies, planning proposals and planning advice. Whilst it

was acknowledged that there was a lot of information on the website and that improvements have been made, it was acknowledged that further work to improve the content and accessibility would be undertaken (it would be assessed as part of the Development Management improvement programme). The panel also noted that:

- It would be useful, if (panel) members could receive a demonstration of the planning service website, how and information is stored and can be accessed;
- Planning consultation responses would be labelled in the future.

Pre-application discussions

1.19 The panel noted that constructive pre-application discussions between potential applicants and planning officers can help to ensure all relevant considerations are addressed when an application is submitted. The opportunity for local stakeholders to engage and discuss proposals offers a number of potential benefits to the planning process:

- It can help to identify improvements needed to a scheme before it is formally considered;
- Improve the quality of the submitted application (for example, ensure that it is supported within development plan, conforms with local planning policies);
- Facilitate the speedier delivery of decisions, time and cost savings and higher quality development;
- Bring greater certainty into the process;
- Less pressurised timescales also allow for greater community engagement and involvement.

1.20 Due to issues of probity, the panel noted that there was no formal member involvement in the pre-application process. Planning Authorities were naturally wary that members could be accused of predetermination when applications subsequently came in for consideration that may result in legal challenge. The panel noted however that the Localism Act (2011) has recognised the benefits of involving members in pre-application consultation and seeking of advice at a pre-application stage so long as members:

- Avoid expressing an overall view and indication of how they intend to vote
- Limit their questions to an understanding of the proposal
- Asking questions which could not be viewed as having a closed mind.

1.21 In written evidence submitted at the meeting the panel noted that a number of other London Authorities had established pre-application consultation processes in which members were involved:

- **Camden** – operates Development Management Forum for large scale development proposals at a pre-application stage to help understand the aims and any constraints as early as possible and see how proposals can be adapted to better reflect community aspirations. The forum enables local residents, business and organisations to comment on proposals at an early stage and supplements any developer consultation. Members and officers attend but do not express any opinions on the merits of the proposal.

- **Croydon** – operate a Strategic Planning Committee that both determines major planning applications and receives presentations on them at the pre-application stage. At key points in the pre-application process the developer has the opportunity to present their schemes to the committee and for members ask questions and give their opinion on aspects of the scheme (though must avoid giving their opinion on the scheme as a whole).
- **Lambeth** – operate a strategic panel where members and senior officers are briefed on major development proposals at pre-application stage. The protocol sets out that the panel will have no decision-making powers, nor will views expressed be binding or influence the way in which applications may be reported to and determined by the Planning Applications Committee.
- **Wycombe**– have a facility for developer presentations to members and stakeholders immediately before Planning Committee. Invitees include all members of the Council, relevant officers, representative of the Highway Authority, Chairman of the Parish/Town Council and a deputy, members of local associations and residents groups.

1.22 It was noted however, that member involvement at the pre-application stage should not be undertaken without an agreed protocol as this may unnecessarily open any member on the planning committee to avoidable risks of challenge on apparent pre-determination. The panel noted that a review of the current member protocol for involvement in planning is scheduled for 2014 which will draw on experience and best practice in other authorities.

Member involvement (general)

- 1.23 The role of members in local planning processes was discussed by the panel. The panel noted that there were three issues:
- that greater use could be made of the existing knowledge and skills of local councillors in planning consultations and processes;
 - the need to further publicise to members the planning resources available to them (e.g. website, publications, public advice services) to support their role in community planning processes (e.g. liaison with local residents and groups);
 - the need for further ongoing tiered training on the role of members in local planning processes should be made available to support members role (as above).

Benchmarking consultation costs with other Local Authorities

- 1.24 The panel noted from the officer presentation that the average cost for consulting on applications for residential development in Haringey was £708, this was significantly higher than the comparator average of £266. In fact, the nearest borough average was £300. It was suggested that this figure would indicate that there is a wide level of consultation and engagement in Haringey. It was suggested this additional cost of consultation could in part be attributed to larger / or wider consultation areas for each development in Haringey.

1.25 From written evidence submitted to the panel it was noted that a summary of consultation is produced for each planning application and this accompanies application document on the website. A sample from these provides an illustration of the levels of consultation:

- Hornsey Depot application for Sainsbury's and 438 residential units, 3,931 residents were consulted;
- Mowlem Trading Estate – the replacement of warehouses, 102 residents were consulted;
- Somerset Gardens Health Centre an application for change of use of part of Doctors surgery to include a pharmacy, 92 letters were sent
- for recent householder application - 64 Elmer Road 5 letters were sent.

Defined community consultation post

1.25 It was noted that whilst community consultation figured within a number of individual roles, there was no defined designated community consultation post in the planning service. It was suggested that it may be of some value for the planning service to conduct an option appraisal of the community engagement function which sought to assess value and contribution of different methods (e.g. cost of scaling back quantitative consultation and being retackled by more specialist community development input).

New technology

1.26 The panel noted that the planned review of the SCI would include an assessment of new methods of engagement, particularly the use of more interactive online tools, such as SNAP surveys and online discussion forums. The panel noted that the service is trialling SNAP survey tool which not only allows for on-line consultation, but can also record and note responses and non-responses.

1.27 It is anticipated that on-line methods of consultation will develop further in this sector as people use more mobile and remote communications. The panel noted that the planning service would continue to work with corporate consultation to ensure that the best use of new technologies were utilised within consultation processes.

Capacity Building – local community

1.28 In written documentation presented, the panel noted that notifications of a planning policy consultations sets out the scope and role of the draft document, the stage of preparation, how to access the relevant documents, and how to respond to and participate in the consultation. The planning policy team also offer advice on the document and how to engage via dedicated web pages, email and telephone. In addition, information and advice is provided through meetings attended by officers during the consultation period.

1.29 The panel noted that the policy team held a number of training events in the past for community groups and are currently considering an open-day event in June/ July 2014. This will coincide with the preparation of our next three key planning policy

documents. In addition, the panel also noted that an open day session for community groups early was being planned for early 2014 as part of the development management improvement plan.

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**Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel
Community Engagement with Planning
Evidence Gathering Session 2 – Comparative Policy and Practice
(31st January 2014)**

Present: Cllr Bloch, Cllr McNamara (Chair) and Cllr Weber

Apologies: Cllr Alexander, Cllr Bull, Cllr Ejiofor and Cllr Mallett

In attendance: Nancy Astley (Planning Aid for London), Alison Blom-Cooper (Haringey Council), Pat Castledine (Planning Aid for London), Simon Ford (AMEC, for Planning Advisory Service), Jonathan Gibb (Islington Council), Kevin Henson (Islington Council), Clodagh McGuirk (Haringey Council), Sule Nisanlocgu (Haringey Council) and Emma Williamson (Haringey Council).

1. Introduction

1.1 The aim and objectives of this investigation by the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel (EHSP) was outlined to those present. In summary the overarching aim of the investigation was to assess how the planning service engages and supports meaningful community involvement in planning developments and decision making with particular reference to:

- Statement of Community Involvement
- Role of members
- Capacity building of community
- Role of IT and new social media
- Implications of recent legislation.

1.2 The current and future work programme of the EHSP in undertaking this investigation was as noted below:

Evidence session 1- Local Policy and Practice (November 2013)

- AD Planning,
- Planning Policy Officers,
- Development Management Officers

Evidence Session 2 -Comparative Policy and Practice (January 2014)

- Planning Aid For London
- Planning Advisory Service
- Islington
- Camden (to schedule visit)

Evidence session 3 - Community stakeholders (February 2014)

- Survey of consulted groups
- Community groups
- Developers (representatives/ agents)

2. The following provides a summary of the areas of panel discussion together with key evidence heard from specialist contributors.

Planning Advisory Service

- 2.1 The Planning Advisory Service is funded through the Department of Communities and Local Government (as part of the Local Government Association) principally to provide planning advice, support and guidance for local authorities (portfolio holders, planning committee members, non executive members and planning officers).

“PAS exists to provide support to local planning authorities to provide efficient and effective planning services, to drive improvement in those services and to respond to and deliver changes in the planning system”

Planning Aid for London

- 2.2 Planning Aid for London offers advice and training on planning processes for communities and individuals across London. This service is provided by qualified volunteers including planners, architects and lawyers. The service has been in operation for approximately 40 years and provides support to those who are affected by planning proposals or decisions and who do not have the resources to pay for planning advice.
- 2.3 PAL operates at many levels and can facilitate community involvement in planning and regeneration at a specific site, within a local neighbourhood or Borough or even London wide. Some recent examples of PAL work include:
- Assisting Finsbury Park Action Group to develop the Isledon Road Community Plan
 - Workshops and other consultation events with King’s Cross Development Forum on King’s Cross Central proposals.
 - Providing “An Introduction to Planning” training to community groups such as the Wards Corner Community Coalition.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 2.4 The panel noted that the statement of community involvement (SCI) was of critical importance to local engagement as this document should set out the context, nature and approach of consultations undertaken by Local Planning Authorities. It was of critical importance that the SCI is developed in consultation and in agreement with the community to demonstrate that the prospective approach to involvement is endorsed by the community.
- 2.5 The Planning Advisory Service and members underscored the importance of local demography and in assessing local needs in shaping consultation methods detailed in the SCI. Planning Advisory Service also noted that it was important that the notion of community engagement was seen to be ongoing, fluid and evolving to reflect the fact that the local environment and community is ever-changing. An ongoing programme of community engagement is more likely to pick up and respond to changes as they occur.
- 2.6 Planning Officers noted that the current SCI was originally drafted in 2007 and was updated in 2011. The panel noted that it was expected that the conclusions and recommendations from the project would guide and inform a further update of the SCI planned for summer 2014.

Development Management consultation

2.7 In respect of new development members of the panel reported that there were two main criticisms of local consultations:

1) that the consultation area for prospective development was too small, which meant that local residents that may be affected were omitted from the consultation process.

2) that the consultation for prospective development could take place earlier to allow people more time to engage and be involved.

Islington Council noted that there were large variations in the number of responses it received for development management consultations across individual wards.

New technologies

2.8 It was noted that both Islington and Camden have incorporated Geographical Information System (GIS) within notification systems for development management. It was noted that Wiltshire County Council uses GIS to map local planning information (e.g. conservation areas, flood zones, listed buildings, tree preservation orders) as well as details of local planning applications.

2.9 Panel members noted that whilst digitalisation clearly offers numerous potential benefits to assist community engagement and involvement in local planning processes, there was an underlying concern about the accessibility of digital systems to a significant proportion of local residents, particularly the elderly, socially and economically disadvantaged and non-English speaking groups.

2.10 The panel noted that information technology advances has made it easier to consult and involve local people and to keep local residents up to date in planning issues. The panel noted that the current system of notification of planning applications via posters of lampposts was antiquated and liable to miss those to whom this is targeted. It can also be difficult to extrapolate details from these posters to find out further information about applications. It was noted that if you don't know the postcode or application number, then it can be difficult for local residents to locate and identify an application that they may wish to comment upon.

2.11 It was suggested that new technology could assist in local consultations in that this could provide a GIS linked map of applications where people can physically see what planning applications in a particular area (down to street level).

2.12 It was also suggested that GIS technology could also assist in relation to earlier notification of when planning applications received by the planning service. It was noted that a small number of authorities operate systems in which local residents can register with the council to receive email updates details of planning applications within a defined area when applications are initially logged into the system rather than just those applications going to committee.

Using existing community resources and capacity building

2.13 In evidence presented to the panel both PAS and PAL concurred that it was important that the local community is a significant resource to local planning services, and where possible it should seek to harness the such skills and expertise and local knowledge to the benefit of local planning processes. In addition, it was

also suggested that planning services should utilise existing community infrastructure rather than trying to create or invent new structures (e.g. existing community groups and residents associations).

- 2.14 Similarly, PAL indicated that it is important to work with existing institutions in the area to support development that could improve planning outcomes for local people. It cited its work with the British Library, UCL and Kings Cross Station which have helped to bring further training and job opportunities for local people.
- 2.15 There was some concurrent amongst those attending that it was also important to build the capacity within existing community groups. Both PAL and Islington Council both indicated that they had worked with local voluntary sector umbrella groups to (Voluntary Action Camden and Voluntary Action Islington) to help build local capacity to engage and be involved in local planning processes. Capacity building was also an important step in supporting cultural change to encourage local leadership and responsibility for planning.
- 2.16 Some understanding of planning processes is needed to support meaningful engagement in consultations for new planning development or planning policies. In this context, the panel recognised the need to invest in planning training for local groups or individuals to help build local capacity to engage and meaningfully contribute to local planning processes. If effective, such training can then be cascaded throughout the community. Advice from PAL would suggest that such training should be focused on existing groups and community networks.
- 2.17 As part of a capacity building programme for the local community, the panel noted that it may be helpful to provide examples of what good engagement and consultation responses. Such examples (so long as they avoided a template response) could assist local residents or groups in the responses that they provide to planning consultation.
- 2.18 The panel noted that the issue of capacity building also extends to the role of local planning officers, in that it may be necessary to build and extend the community engagement skills of local planning officers. Attendees noted that it was rare to have dedicated community engagement or consultation expertise within planning services and this is carried out generically within existing planning officer roles. PAS also suggested that planning officers should, where possible, draw on the consultation and engagement experience across the council, in particular those in transport and parking.
- 2.19 The panel noted that it was important to demonstrate what impact consultation with local residents and community groups had upon individual planning proposals. That is, how had plans changed as a result of the feedback provided within individual planning consultations? The panel noted that it was important to provide a mechanism for such feedback to:
- Provide reassurance to participants that their contributions were useful, valid and contributed to the planning process;
 - To provide a guide to *potential* participants in planning consultations
 - Facilitate further community engagement in the future.

- 2.20 In the context of the above, panel members noted that it was important to managing respondents expectations and to clearly spell out how involvement can possibly shape the outcomes.
- 2.21 The panel noted that it was important to maintain an organisational record of community engagement which contain an analysis of those methods which have successful or those which require further adaptation. Without this analysis, the organisation is liable to repetition of ineffective consultation processes. This record will also help to establish the journey that the planning service has embarked in relation to community engagement and involvement and guide and inform future processes.
- 2.22 The panel noted that Haringey Planning Service intended to organise a community conference during 2014. The purpose of this conference was to engage with local communities and to help identify what the service should do to improve in engaging local groups and involving them in planning processes.
- 2.23 In its evidence to the panel, PAS recommended that community engagement and capacity building should be focused and objective and properly evaluated to ensure that what work is undertaken is done well and builds up positive experiences with the public. Too much engagement, which is unfocused could end up being very expensive, lead to inconclusive outcomes and leave participants demoralised.
- 2.24 The Panel were unsure as to whether some small part of income derived from Community Infrastructure Levy could be used to fund community training and development in the locality, or if there were other examples from other local authorities?

Availability of independent advice

- 2.25 The panel sought to clarify the range of independent advice available to individuals and local communities to support their engagement with local planning processes. It was noted that there were a number of sources which included:
- Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) a charitable body supporting spatial, sustainable and inclusive planning;
 - Planning Portal;
 - Planning Advisory Service;
 - Planning Aid for London.
- 2.26 The panel recommended that an advice sheet is developed for local residents and community groups in Haringey which provides details of those organisations from which independent planning advice can be obtained.

Approach of planning officers

- 2.27 The panel noted that different planning officers adopt different approaches in supporting local development plans. It was suggested that those officers that adopted a more holistic approach by facilitating sites visits, involving related council and other services and where the views of local stakeholders actively sought were evidently more successful.

Early involvement in planning applications

- 2.28 It was noted by the panel, that developers recognised the importance of local capacity building and early engagement. It was noted that a registered housing provider (Family Mosaic) had trained up members of local tenant forums to help consider planning issues. It was suggested that such early investment in local communities had a number of benefits:
- Allows more time for a greater representation local stakeholders to be involved including community groups, local councillors as well as local residents
 - More time for meaningful engagement and for opinions to be canvassed fully and objections dealt with at an early stage;
 - It minimises the risk of later (and more costly) legal challenge later in the planning process – it was estimated that a 1% investment in community engagement can help to bring a 4% saving on the scheme overall.
- 2.29 Traditionally, local planning services have been wary of involving councillors at any reapplication stage to avoid any notion of predetermination. It is recognised however, that members can play an important role in pre-application discussions as their involvement can assist the planning process through:
- Local knowledge (groups, representatives, area);
 - Understanding of community views;
 - The early identification of problem issues.
- 2.30 As a result of provisions within the Localism Act (2011) the panel noted that there was new probity guidance for Councillors and officers particularly in relation to the consideration of planning proposals at the pre-application stage. Provisions within the Act allows Councillors more freedom to engage, express their views and question the applications so long as this is done with an ‘open-mind’ and without pre-determination.
- 2.31 The panel noted that a Pre-application Planning Group is in operation in Islington at which Planning members can attend alongside executive members and local planning officers.
- 2.32 It was noted that PAS was intending to provide further support to local authorities develop and improve local pre-application processes. It was envisaged that this support would be programme of workshops which could be operated locally, to help services evaluate and improve existing pre-application processes.
- 2.33 In verbal evidence received by the scrutiny service from another authority, it was noted that the pre-application consultation was particularly important as this helped to identify problems and solutions early in the planning process. It was acknowledged however, that it was often difficult for people to meaningfully engage when plans may be still in their infancy and fully worked up (i.e. exactly what it planned, what this will it look like and what impact that it may have in the community).
- 2.34 It may also be useful and important to establish rules of engagement for developers, members and the local community at the pre-application stage. In this context, the panel’s attention was drawn to the recent joint publication by the Local Government

Association and British Property Federation: 10 Commitments for effective pre-application engagement.¹ These commitments cover the following areas:

- Parameters of consultation (timing, proportionality);
- Open exchange of information;
- Collaborative working to find deliverable outcomes;
- The need to involve members in.
- Need to keep a record of meetings held.

Member Development

2.35 It was noted that local councillors play an important role in local planning processes as they embrace a number of key roles:

- Strategic leadership: setting the vision and direction
- Plan making: to reflect local values and priorities in policies
- Ward level representation: representing local views
- Neighbourhood planning: – link between community and the council and council services.

2.36 Local Councillors have a particularly important role in Development Management to help ensure that:

- Involvement with the community and developers is at an early stage
- Areas of local concern are raised
- There is an informed debate on the issues presented
- A wide range of issues and material considerations are considered in helping to make the right decision.

2.37 In relation to member development it was noted that there was a Councillor area on the Planning Advisory Service website which provided briefings, updates and training to support their role in local planning processes.

2.38 The need to support members in their advocacy / champion role in planning consultation – need a dedicated web page for members on how to support individual and local community groups through the planning consultation process.... one stop page for all independent advice.

Planning Enforcement

2.39 The panel noted the work that had been undertaken in a neighbouring authority (Camden) in relation to planning enforcement. In response to the huge amount of time and resources devoted to enforcement, every developer and every agent working in the borough were consulted to identify those planning issues of most concern for which pre-application information guidance (Top Ten Issues) could be developed. Through involving local developers, it was hoped that this would prevent or minimise later enforcement action as this guide would set out 'up front' what is needed and expected from developers. This process can also help to speed up the planning process.

¹ 10 Commitments for effective pre-application engagement, Local Government Association (2014)

**Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel
Community Engagement with Planning
Evidence Gathering Session 3 – Community Group Representatives
(18th February 2014)**

Present: Cllr McNamara (Chair), Cllr Bull and Cllr Weber

Apologies: Cllr Alexander, Cllr Ejiofor and Cllr Mallett

In attendance:

Alison Blom-Cooper (Haringey Council), Stephen Kelly (Haringey Council), Clodagh McGuirk (Haringey Council), Sule Nisanlocgu (Haringey Council), Mercy Oriwari (Haringey Council) and Emma Williamson (Haringey Council).

David Roach, DP9, Planning Consultancy

Caroline Simpson (Bowes Park Community Association), Ronald Lock (Bounds Green residents Association), Ken Ranson (Bounds Green Residents Association), Mick Gerrie (Bounds Green Residents Association), Candy Amsden (Wards Corner Community Coalition/ CARA), Dave Morris (Haringey Federation of Residents Associations/ Our Tottenham Network), Gail Waldman (Highgate Society), Eddie Capstick (Alexandra Ward Mobility Group), Pippa Robinson (BGDRA), Delphine Grauf, Chris Faulkener (Freeholder Community Association), Marcus Ballard (Parkside Malvern RA), Joan Tracey Benoit, Hesketh Benoit, Michael Kyriacou, Chritos Koizi, Evelyn Ryan, Jeff Lever, Stephen Brice (Pinkham Way Alliance), Paul Bumpstead, Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society), Joyce Rosser, Tottenham CAAC).

1. Introduction

1.1 The Chair introduced the meeting, the third evidence gathering session of the Environment & Housing Scrutiny Committee assessing Community Engagement with Planning Services. The aim of this work is to assess how the planning service engages and supports meaningful community involvement in planning developments and decision making. The key areas the panel looking at include:

- Statement of Community Involvement
- Role of members
- Capacity building of community
- Role of IT and new social media
- Implications of recent legislation

1.2. The panel noted work that has been completed to date, including two previous evidence gathering sessions:

- Local Policy and Practice (November 2013)
 - AD Planning,
 - Planning Policy Officers,
 - Development Management Officers
- Comparative Policy and Practice (January 2014)
 - Planning Aid For London

- Planning Advisory Service
- Islington Council

2. Developer perspectives

- 2.1 A representative from Dp9 (planning consultancy) attended to provide the panel with a developers perspective of local planning processes. It was noted that Dp9 works within a number of London authorities, so was in a good position to provide some comparative insight in to local planning processes. Thus the reflections provided were not an assessment of Haringey Council but a generalised view of other local authorities.
- 2.2 It was noted that a key trait that developers were looking for in working with local authorities on local schemes was 'certainty'. This certainty, whether it was favourable or not to the developer position, was exemplified in a number of ways:
- A clear and transparent timetable which detailed key planning milestones (consultations) and when decisions are taken;
 - Greater clarity on the political and strategic priorities of the council for local development;
 - Unitary Development Plan and other local planning policies are compliant.
- 2.3 It was important that key objections and issues with any proposed scheme are raised as early as possible to allow for planned and timely solutions to be put in place. It was noted that delays can occur when:
- Local planning policies are not compliant (out of date, in need of updating);
 - There is poor member engagement; which can lead to
 - Issues or objections raised for the first time at Committee.
- 2.4 The panel heard that developers receive feedback on planned developments from numerous council services (waste, transport, planning), though this is not always coordinated, consistent or timely (e.g. responses were provided at different times, different recommendations etc). The panel noted that it was of critical importance that there is coordinated multidisciplinary feedback on proposed development which is both timely and coherent.

Planning Performance Agreement

- 2.5 The panel noted that it can be difficult to determine planning applications within the statutory timeframe, particulate when large developments may raise many complex issues (e.g. high density development, mixed use, historic environment, local community concerns). In such cases, a Planning Performance Agreement between the Local Planning Authority and prospective developer can be reached to allow decisions to be taken outside the statutory timeframe.
- 2.6 The panel noted that Planning Performance Agreements are essentially a project management process and tool to improve the quality of major planning applications and to provide greater certainty and transparency in the development of major schemes, in the assessment of the planning applications and in the decision making process. This process can help to provide:
- Key timescales for the applicant for submissions and decisions

- Information to support engagement and consultation (e.g. details of who is consulted and when).

2.7 It was noted that a fee can be payable for such Planning Performance Agreements (£26,000) and can give both the developer and Local Planning Service a clearer route map of the planning agreement process.

Member engagement

2.8 Given their local knowledge and understanding of community issues, early member engagement was identified to be important in the smooth progression of development schemes. The panel noted that where there was early member engagement (with both planning members and ward councillors) this allowed earlier discussions on the proposed scheme and the early identification of possible faults or objections (which could be more easily rectified at this stage).

Community engagement

2.10 The panel noted that the benefits of planned community engagement and consultation has become more widely recognised and is being adopted more widely in development plans. It was noted that a key factor in successful schemes is the degree of community consultation that has been undertaken as this helps bring a wide ranging benefits, particularly if this early within the scheme development.

3. Community Group Representations

3.1 The panel received a number of submissions from representatives of local community groups attending the meeting. Group representatives were asked to describe their experience within local planning consultations and to identify those consultation and involvement processes which were successful and those that needed to be improved. The purpose of this exercise was to develop key priorities to support improved community engagement in local planning processes.

Haringey Federation of Residents Association/ Our Tottenham

3.2 Four documents were submitted by Haringey Federation of Residents Association/ Our Tottenham:

1. Presentation to the London Assembly Planning Committee, 10th October 2013
2. Our Tottenham Community Charter (May 2013)
3. Our Tottenham Community Planning conference (Feb 2014) summary
4. Analysis by affected traders, and by Our Tottenham, of the controversial High Road West consultation

3.3 The panel noted that there were a number of inherent problem which inhibited community engagement and involvement in planning processes at all levels (local, pan London and nationally).

- That developers generally had more resources, knowledge and expertise at their disposal than local communities which created an unequal playing field in local development consultations;
- Key planning strategies do not embody the principle of community consultation and involvement (e.g. London Plan, Lipton Report 'It Took Another Riot');
- Definition of affordable housing being used to drive development undermines the credibility of the planning system and local people's willingness to engage with it.

- The complexity of planning policies and processes is such that few individuals or groups can meaningfully contribute to development management or planning policy consultations;
- 3.4 The community are also confused by the role of the Council in local planning processes which outwardly appear to straddle the interests of both developers and the community. It was suggested that this, together with the complexity of local planning processes, has created a growing cynicism within the community about where decisions are actually taken for new development and the validity of community involvement. Two examples were provided which it was suggested, have undermined community confidence of engagement local planning processes:
- The refusal of the Council to engage with the Wards Corner Community Coalition or assess its submitted Community Plan;
 - The perceived bias in the consultation over Love Line and High Road West.
- 3.5 It was suggested that the cumulative impact of the above left the community feeling that 'its all too complicated' and 'why bother as the Council never listen anyway.... they usually consult when they've already made up their mind.... .' There was also a suggestion that there was consultation fatigue within the community, with residents being asked for information with few tangible outcomes.
- 3.6 HFRA pointed out to the panel, that the variety of local community groups in Haringey represented a significant resource for the council. Such groups contained much knowledge, skills and expertise across a wide range of issues which the council was not utilising. It was suggested that greater engagement and involvement with these groups, together with greater trust could bring significant benefits to local communities.
- 3.7 HFRA and Our Tottenham made 6 key recommendations to the panel:
1. There is a need to redefine 'affordable housing' so that it is genuinely affordable to those who most need it, and ensure the maximum levels in all development.
 2. No developers to be allowed to be exempt from appropriate s106 / CIL and other community obligations.
 3. Make sure that any public funding for development or regeneration comes with an obligation to demonstrate genuine community support, empowerment and partnerships.
 4. Ensure that every development application has a community partner – no partner, no development.
 5. That the Council sign up to the Out Tottenham Charter.
 6. That the council support the development of Community Plans (Lorship Rec was cited as a positive example).

Highgate Society

- 3.8 The panel noted that the Highgate Society spans four local authorities, is actively engaged in planning issues with these authorities and as a result, its members have considerable experience and knowledge of planning processes. This being said, it is a task for an experienced an organisation as it is, to keep up to date with changes to national, regional and local planning policy framework.

- 3.9 It was emphasised to the panel, that groups such as the Highgate Society could and should be a resource for local planning services given their detailed knowledge of local areas and issues and experience of planning processes. There was a perception however, that community groups were not recognised as such and that a fundamental cultural change needed to be instituted which supported a more active and positive approach to engagement with local community groups.
- 3.10 The group acknowledged the financial pressures that local authorities and local planning services were under which had precipitated the need for local services restructures. However, it was perceived that these had resulted in a number of deficiencies which impacted on local engagement and involvement:
- More active programme for engaging and involving local groups to harness their knowledge and understanding;
 - Inability of planning officers to adopt a holistic approach to planning needs assessments;
 - Lack of cross-boundary planning consultations.
- 3.11 Particular concerns around heritage conservation in the planning process were raised with the panel where it was noted that conservation planning posts had been deleted, there was too much reliance on internal consultation and that there was no 'Heritage Champion' to provide local leadership on these issues (this post was present in other boroughs).
- 3.12 The importance of pre-application consultation was underlined to the panel. It was suggested that early liaison between developers and local communities had numerous benefits for both parties. Communities welcomed early sight of development proposals and the opportunity to feedback and influence plans, though there was inconsistent support and take up among developers (developers did not turn up at an arranged DMF). It was suggested however, that pre-application consultation should be encouraged and supported further.
- 3.13 An important part of the community engagement and consultation cycle is the provision of feedback, where participants are informed of how their contributions have impacted on proposals. It was suggested that this is a significant weakness in the locality in that whilst many people take the time to develop reasoned and meaningful responses to planning proposals, there is generally little record as to how such contributions have shaped and informed final plans. This is problematic for the community in that:
- There is no validation of responses (what information has been useful, what has been disregarded);
 - It does not stimulate or encourage participation in future consultations.
- 3.14 It was suggested that an additional record is created for development or other planning consultations that indicates how feedback data had impacted on the original proposals.
- 3.15 The panel noted community concerns with the planning enforcement function of the council. Local residents and community groups indicated that there were numerous incidents of unauthorised development which was going unchecked or that the council was powerless to stop. Nonetheless, this was also a suggested priority for

the council, for if there was no effective regulation and enforcement of the planning system, this would encourage others to not comply.

- 3.16 The panel noted that where joint training had been provided to officers, members and community representatives, this had been very informative, engaging and positive. The further development of this approach to would be welcomed.

Bounds Green Residents Association

- 3.17 A number of contributors from the residents association gave evidence to the panel. A summary of the main issues presented by contributors is given below.

- 3.18 There was a general perception that the timescales for consultations for new development was insufficient to allow members of the public, residents and local community groups to read, absorb and to construct meaningful responses. It was suggested that there were a number of factors which were not given enough prominence in developing local consultation frameworks. These included:

- The ability of local communities to access information digitally or via the internet;
- The proportion of non- English speaking communities resident in Haringey;
- Unreliability of existing notification schemes (letters to households, posters in lampposts);
- Lack of baseline planning knowledge and understanding within the community (which may necessitate potential respondents to undertake research or seek other sources of advice or support).

- 3.19 It was communicated to the panel that there needed to be greater transparency in consultations for planning development. It was suggested that there was often a welter of supporting information within planning consultations which local residents found difficult to navigate and draw out key facts. In addition, many residents remained confused as to the role of the Council, local planning service and other council departments within such consultations and that greater clarity, particularly around the aims of consultations, would be welcomed.

- 3.20 Whilst much of the discussion had been focused on the efficacy of large scale developments, it was suggested that smaller developments are equally to consider in this debate, as they are more numerous and equally, have a significant impact on those residents affected. The panel noted however, that individual residents in neighbouring properties affected by proposed development often do not know where to start in participating in a consultation or indeed in developing a response. Whilst it was noted that there was information available, individual residents may not have the not knowledge or confidence to draft a response. It was suggested that there should be:

- More information on the council website (particularly in the form of how to guides);
- More guidance from planning officers as to what information is expected, or what issues are valid and considered within applications;
- Signposting to planning advisory services.

- 3.21 As with other contributors to the meeting, there were concerns about the effectiveness of the planning enforcement function in Haringey. It was suggested the use of retrospective planning applications or certificates of lawfulness were being

used to bypass local consultation, which left local residents feeling frustrated and disengaged.

- 3.22 As a general view, it was noted that there was a general absence of younger people involved in local planning consultations and that further work should be undertaken to engage and involve this group locally.

Parkside Malvern Residents Association

- 3.23 A representative from the organisation made a number of points to the panel in relation to community engagement and involvement which are summarised below.

- 3.24 A significant problem for local residents and community groups for involvement in local consultations was the accessibility of planning documentation. The panel noted that even informed local residents struggled with the volume and complexity of planning information. In addition, potential contributors to planning consultations found it difficult to keep pace with planning reforms and how they impacted on planned local development and planning policies.

- 3.24 It was suggested that at present, the planning service and function was too far removed from the communities in which development was taking place. Much of the local frustration in local development was the failure to take on board knowledge and understanding of local issues in developing local plans. In this context, there was a need to involve local residents more, assesses community opinion and ensure that this was factored in to final planning applications or planning policies.

- 3.25 It was suggested that a new strategic approach was needed to planning engagement and involvement in which there was:

- Clearer strategic vision for what the Council is trying to achieve;
- More detailed assessment of community resources and how these can contribute to these objectives;
- More cooperation between interested parties (council, local communities, developers).

- 3.26 It was suggested to the panel that it was the Councils role to ensure that interested parties and stakeholders worked together for best effect in local planning processes. At present, the perception was that there was too much 'head-to-head' in planning processes which has lead to a significant level wasted resources and under achievement. It was suggested that the Council, in its overarching role, should provide greater leadership and vision in taking this forward (the use of local Champions was suggested).

West Green Residents Association

- 3.27 It was suggested to the panel that the reliance on digital media within planning consultations was the wrong approach to encourage greater involvement of the community. The 'digital by default' approach would omit those 20% of residents who were not connected to the internet or other digital media. Furthermore, the use of letters to publicise planning consultations was felt to be ineffective as many of these do not reach the intended recipient, or not clearly explained.

3.28 Given the complexity of planning issues, it was suggested that greater use should be made of softer consultation engagement methods, such as face to face meeting with planning officers and community consultation events. This approach would also help local planning officers to build knowledge and understanding of local issues. This view was echoed by a number of other groups in attendance.

Freeholders Association

3.29 The panel noted that there was considerable reliance on the planning service website to communicate planning information to local residents and community groups, yet there were evident concerns around the accessibility and navigability of the website. It was noted that there were particular concerns around:

- The labelling of individual responses submitted to planning consultations;
- The effectiveness of the planning search tool.

Myddleton Road Strategy Group

3.30 Planning enforcement was also of concern among members of this group. The panel noted that there were too many retrospective planning applications which bypassed local community involvement and input and was a source of much local anger and feeling of resignation. It was suggested that this was an indicator of the need for greater investment in the mobility of planning officers and to ensure that they have greater connectivity with local issues and development.

Pinkham Way Alliance

3.31 The panel were briefed on the context of this planning application in respect of the proposed development of the Pinkham Way site as part of the North London Waste Plan. This was a complex planning process involving the North London Waste Authority (of which there are 7 borough members, including Haringey) and the implementation of the North London Waste Plan which earmarked the Pinkham Way site in Haringey for multiple waste processing use.

3.32 Within this planning process, representatives highlighted a number of suggested improvements to the way that such large developments are implemented across the borough. This included:

- The need to provide clear, open and transparent information about the development proposal as early in the planning processes as possible, too often there was insufficient information to provide meaningful contributions;
- The role of interested parties should be made clearer in planning processes;
- Where responses have been provided, reasons should be given as to why these were not accepted or taken in to account within development proposals, so that contributors can develop and refine the validity of future submissions.

3.33 The panel noted that the groups reflections of the Statement of Community Involvement was that whilst in principle this was very good, it remained very much a local aspiration rather than a implementable approach.

Wards Corner Coalition

3.34 The panel noted that the Wards Corner Coalition had submitted a Community Plan¹ to the local planning service in October 2013. To date, there has been no communication as to when this would be considered by the local planning committee. This had created much scepticism and mistrust within the group, and considerable frustration given the time and resources local people had contributed to its development. It was suggested that further work may be needed to engage and support local communities in this area, as this was one of the first community plans to be submitted in the locality.

3.35 Concerns about the Strategic Areas for Development plan were also voiced to the panel. It was suggested to the panel that such an important spatial development document (which highlighted areas for development across the borough) would require a different consultative approach to that outlined so far, to really engage and involve local people.

BGDRA (Bounds Green District Residents Association)

3.36 It was suggested that a number of guiding principles should inform all planning processes, these should be:

- What is good for the local community should be of paramount importance and inform local development and planning policies;
- Local officers should have a real knowledge and understanding of the local area and local community groups;
- As there are no second chances for new development, it was suggested that there should be some form of due diligence for planning offices to ensure full procedural compliance;
- That there should be systematic follow up for planning enforcement.

3.37 Given the complexity of the local planning processes and the resources available to developers, it was suggested that there should be improved access to independent planning advice and support for local residents and community groups.

Haringey Planning Service

3.38 Officers from the planning service were in attendance at the meeting to hear community groups representations in person. It was noted that the contributions provided by groups at the meeting had raised deep issues for the service which would need further reflection. It was noted that the service was in the middle of implementing a development improvement programme which it was hoped would help improve communication with local residents and communities as well as helping to restore trust, integrity and confidence in the service.

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3.39 It was noted by the panel that the planning service faces many difficult choices as it seeks to deliver community aspirations for the area alongside other regional and national obligations.

3.40 It was noted that a community planning conference was being planned for 5th April 2014 to further canvass opinion of local planning services and to identify priorities for improvement.

¹ Community Led Plans set out the aspirations of the community to be delivered over the next 5 to 10 years. Actions that might be included range from street cleaning and establishing local festivals to developing new services and installing local energy projects.

EHSP

3.41 Cllr Weber suggested that two initial recommendations for this work:

- The need to involve and support the role of members in planning consultations. Members are an important conduit between local communities and the council and to whom many may first approach for planning advice. It was suggested that further work is undertaken to develop and improve the capacity of members to support local residents.
- Improved access to planning officers would be of benefit to local residents. It was suggested that the establishment of planning officer surgeries could help to improve accesses and involvement in local planning processes.

Environment & Housing Scrutiny Panel

Community Engagement and Planning Services

Survey Analysis

March 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 As part of the work programme for 20-13/14, the Environment & Housing Scrutiny Panel (EHSP) agreed to look at how the Haringey Planning Service engages and involves local residents and community groups in planning processes.

1.2 The overarching aim of this work was agreed as follows:

‘To assess whether local residents and community groups have appropriate opportunities to engage meaningfully in planning processes through the community engagement and involvement strategies of the Local Planning Authority.’

1.3 Within this, the EHSP agreed to address a number of specific objectives including:

- To assess the nature and scope of community consultation and involvement in planning processes (including local standards, how these are measured, monitored and published);
- To assess the Haringey Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and make recommendations for development / improvement;
- To assess whether there is appropriate education and training for local community groups to support engagement and involvement in local planning processes;
- Identify opportunities for the further development of digital, new technology and social media within community engagement and involvement strategies;
- To evaluate community perceptions of local engagement and involvement within the planning process;
- To assess the impact of recent legislative and policy changes for community engagement and involvement in the planning sector and how these are reflected in local arrangements.

1.4 To support this work, the EHSP held a number of dedicated evidence gathering sessions as set out below:

1. Local Policy and Practice (November 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AD Planning, ▪ Planning Policy Officers, ▪ Development Management Officers
2. Comparative Policy and Practice (January 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning Aid For London ▪ Planning Advisory Service ▪ Islington / Hackney
3. Community stakeholders (February 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation with community groups

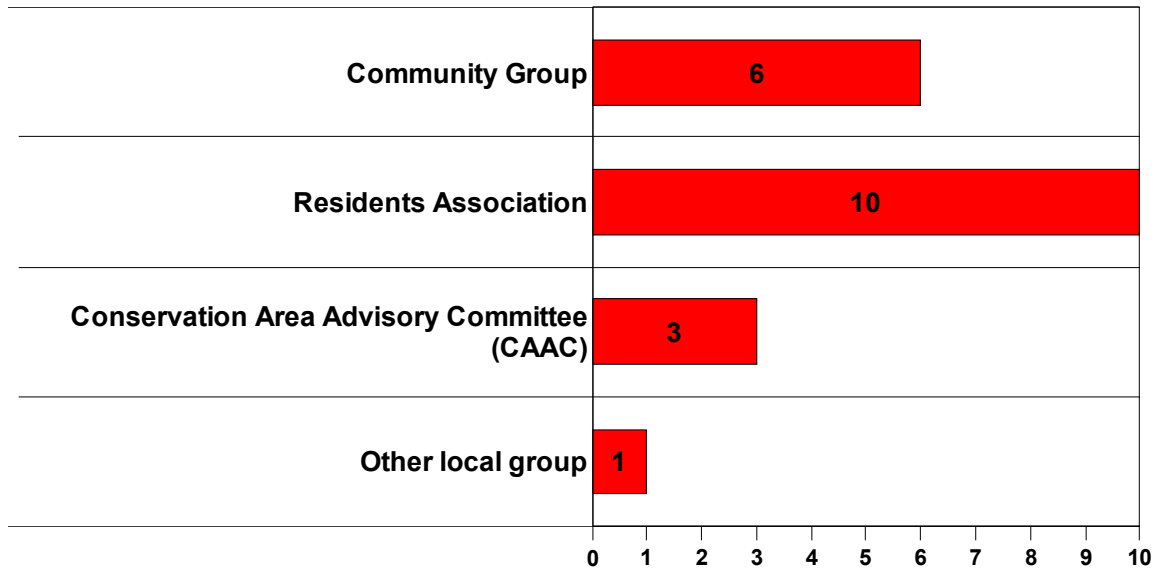
1.5 A dedicated evidence gathering session was held with local community groups on 18th February 2014 at which representatives from 24 community groups and residents associations attended. The purpose of this meeting was to enable local groups to feedback on their experiences of involvement within local planning consultations and to identify priorities for improvement.

1.6 To support its involvement of local community groups in this work, a short on-line survey was created and distributed to those groups on the Planning Service Consultation database and all local residents associations. This report provides a summary of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the 21 responses received.

2.0 Survey analysis

2.1 The on-line survey was distributed to 42 community groups contained on the planning consultation database. In total, 20 responses were received by the deadline date to be included within this analysis. Responses were received from a variety of local groups including residents associations, community groups and Conservation Area Advisory Committees (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Source of survey response (n=20)



Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

2.2 The SCI sets out a framework of minimum standards for community engagement and involvement that the Local Planning Authority will comply with in local planning processes. The survey sought to assess community groups awareness of this document, whether they had read or used it and if so, how useful it was.

2.3 In total, 11 of the 20 (55%) community groups that responded indicated that they were aware of the SCI (Figure 2). Analysis of qualitative data would suggest that this document is not publicised widely enough and is difficult to locate on the Council website:

‘Not publicised widely enough. Many residents are not aware of the statement or its implications.’

‘Not publicised.’

‘..... we were unable to find the Statement of Community Involvement on the website.’

2.4 Of those nine respondents who were aware of SCI, seven (78%) had read or used the document (Figure 3). Analysis of qualitative comments would suggest that some community groups found the SCI difficult to access, and that it would be of benefit if summarised version was available:

‘The content is also fairly dense and needs to be simplified with summary to help guide readers through the processes.’

Figure 2 - Respondents aware of Statement of Community Involvement (n=20)?

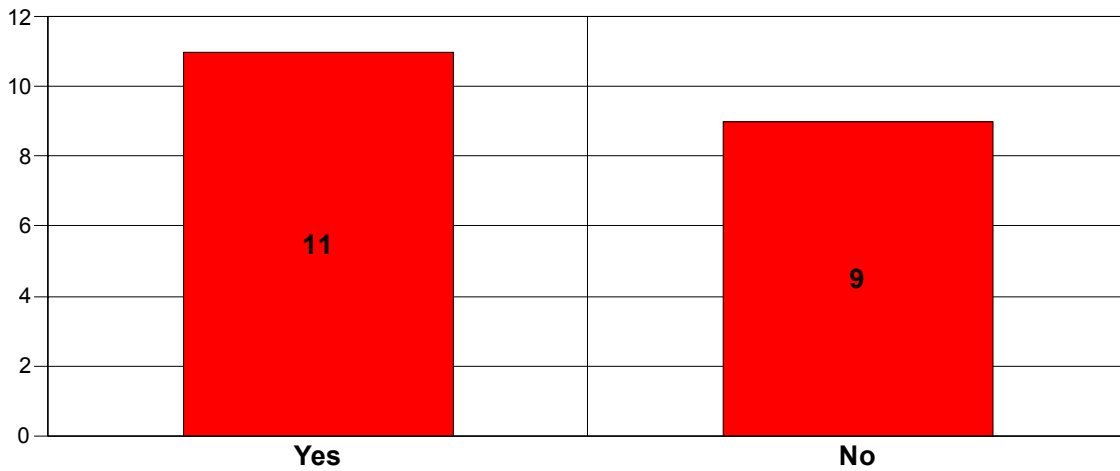
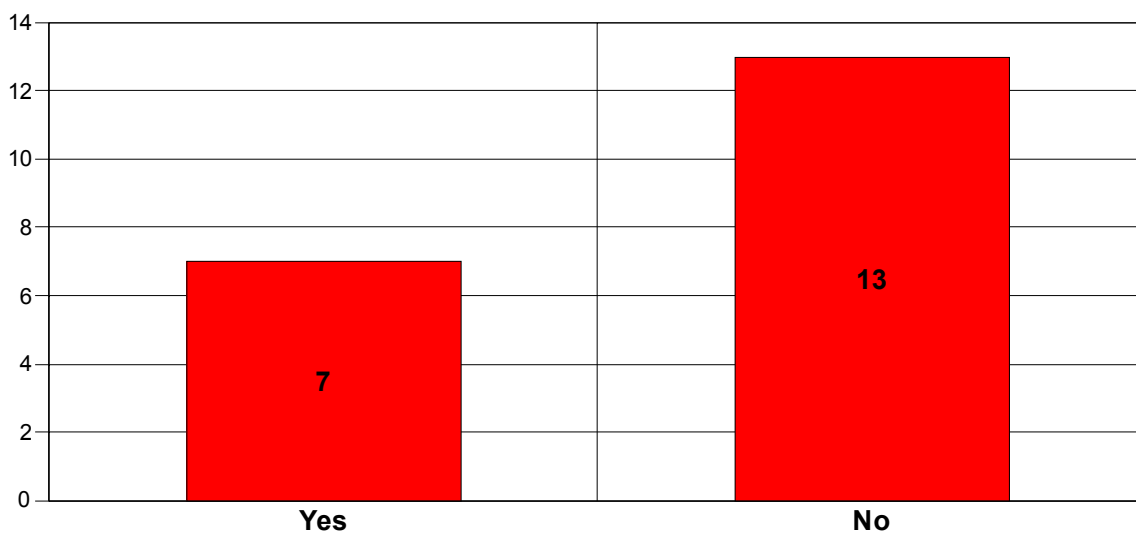


Figure 3 - Respondents indicating that they had read or used Haringey Statement of Community Involvement (N=20)



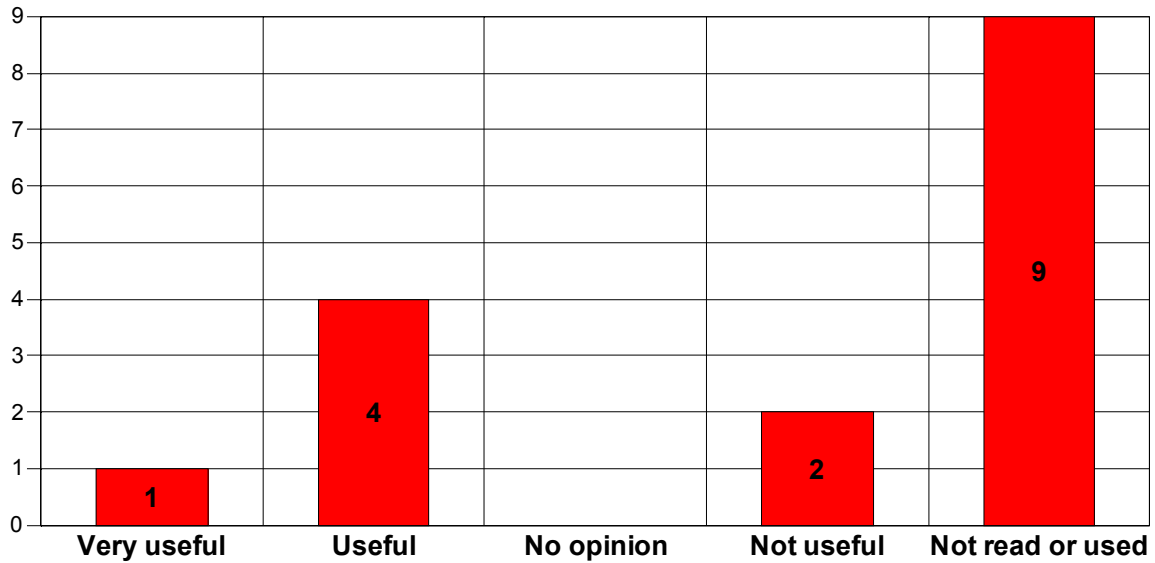
2.5 Of those seven respondents who had read the SCI, five (71%) found it either 'very useful' or 'useful' (Figure 4). Analysis of qualitative responses would suggest that there is some scepticism as whether the community engagement or involvement processes described in the document are followed through in practice:

'Have just looked at it.. and good in theory but in practice?'

'... more a statement of intentions than a recipe for action.'

'Haringey planners need to read it and it should do what it says on the tin.'

Figure 4 - How useful was the Statement of Community Involvement (n=16)?

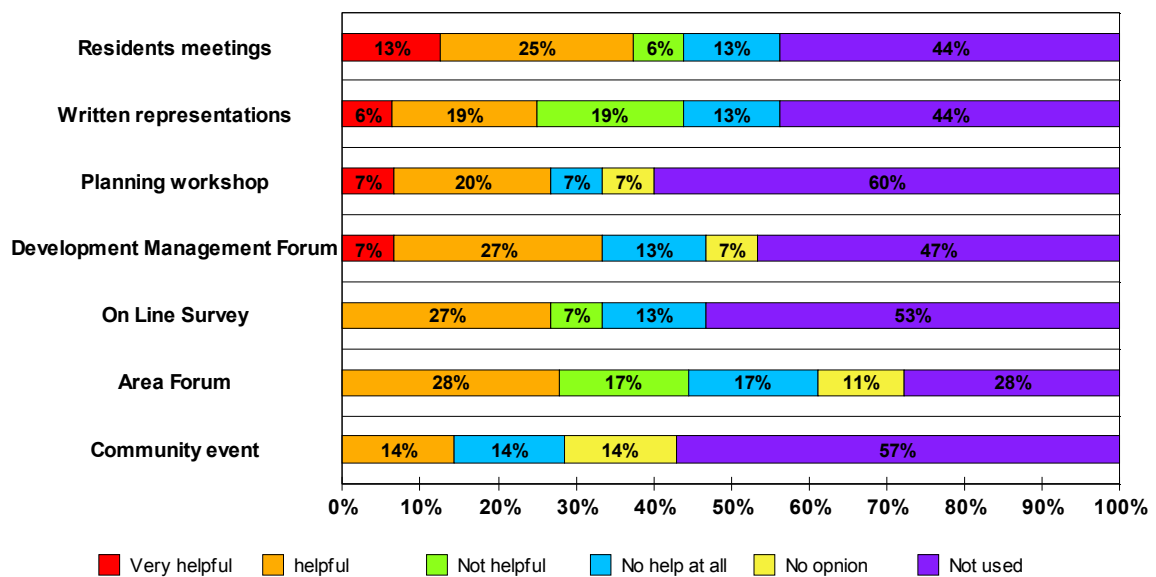


Consultation methods

2.6 The survey sought to assess the consultation methods in which local community groups had been involved and perceptions of how helpful these were to planning processes. Almost ¾ (73%) of respondents had participated in a planning consultation at a local Area Forum though on the whole the survey would appear to suggest low levels of engagement with a range of consultation methods (Figure 5).

2.7 The consultation methods that respondents indicated were most helpful included residents meetings (38% agreed these were very helpful or helpful) Development Management Forums (34%) and Planning Workshops (27%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5 - Use and perception of local consultation methods (n=20).



- 2.8 Further analysis of qualitative responses give a more detailed assessment of some of the consultation methods used within the planning service. Quantitatively, 17% respondents indicated that it was unhelpful to use **Area Forums** as a medium through which to conduct planning consultations and this was substantiated in qualitative comments provided within the survey:

'The Area Forum is not an appropriate forum to gather consultation opinions due to the shortage of time and need to follow a set agenda which means residents are unable to speak freely. It should be used to publicise proposed developments instead and events.'

'The Area Forums are a good idea in principle... must be a total waste of public money and time. There are always more officers and Councillors than members of the public. Those few who attend are the same as make their voices heard anyway. The local publicity for these is also very poor – i.e. emailed posters not sent till almost last minute.'

- 2.9 Contrastingly, respondents were more satisfied with dedicated planning forums such as **Development Management Forums** which are operated to support large scale developments.

'Development forums are very helpful.'

'The Local Development Forums can be extremely useful and we hope that these will continue.'

- 2.10 There was a perception however among some respondents, that Development Management Forums could be held more frequently:

'... DMFs held which are also not frequent enough.'

- 2.11 Further analysis of responses, would suggest that there is too greater reliance on **digital and on-line** response for planning consultations which may exclude those who are not digitally connected and disconnects people from the areas and proposals on which they are commenting:

'Web-based material is useful, but not readily accessible to many residents.'

'The effect of on line surveys is very hard to gauge.'

'Consultations tend to rely far too much on internet access. As noted at the meeting, not everyone has access nor do they wish to participate in this form.'

- 2.12 On the whole, respondents would appear to demonstrate a preference for more **participative methods of consultation** in which local communities could physically meet and discuss planning proposals with planning officers:

'More, localised, Public Meetings would be an advantage... .'

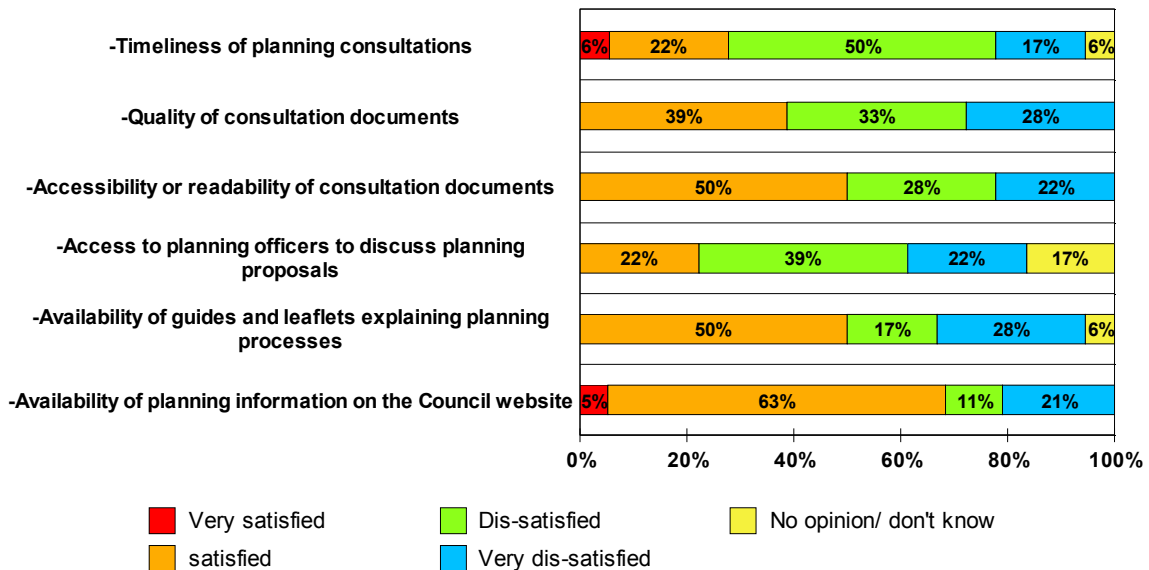
'Residents have strong views about planning issues and welcome opportunities to discuss planning matters, rather than simply responding in writing.'

'Meetings and personal contact with genuine discussions.... .'

Overall satisfaction with planning consultations

2.12 Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with aspects of the planning consultation process such as the timeliness of consultations, quality of consultation documentation and access to planning officers. These responses are summarised in Figure 6.

Figure 6 - Overall satisfaction with aspects of plannign consultations (n=16)



2.13 Over 2/3 (68%) of respondents indicated that they found planning information on the **council website** useful (Figure 6). Whilst some respondents indicated that there were some technical difficulties in accessing certain planning documents on the website, overall there appeared to be a general satisfaction with information available on the website:

'... some documents are not easy to use on line, there can be problems for Mac users.'

'I think information on council website is very good, Very pleased that CAAC minutes and annual reports are on council website. Thanks.'

2.14 One suggested improvement that could improve the accessibility of planning documentation on the website was better **labelling of consultation submissions** or comments received for individual applications:

'With regard to the planning applications on the website, there could be better labelling of the pdfs. Sometimes there is no labelling at all... and it can take a long time to find the relevant one. It would also be useful if the pdfs containing comments from the statutory consultees or the design officer could be marked accordingly.'

2.15 Analysis of quantitative responses also indicated that two-thirds of respondents were dissatisfied (67%) with the **timeliness of planning consultations** (Figure 6). This was verified in qualitative responses where respondents indicated that there was insufficient time to respond to development notifications:

'If [we] do get a letter then the deadline for responding is almost up. We are notified too late.'

'21 days is not long enough for comment to be made.'

'If you are on holiday or away, you may be too late to provide input.'

2.16 There was also a perception that there was insufficient time given to respond to major development proposals:

'An example of a current method is the Site Allocations DPD which I was told about on 20 Jan for consultation until 7 March. This is a very short time for such a central policy proposal.'

2.17 Survey analysis indicated that just 39% of respondents were satisfied with the **quality of documentation** for planning consultations (Figure 6). Analysis of qualitative comments would suggest that the main concerns that potential contributors to planning consultations found was that documentation did not give enough detail or that information submitted was incomplete:

'Documentation supplied by applicants often contain insufficient detail with poorly drawn or no plans.'

'There are often examples where the description of the proposed development is incomplete and quite important aspects of the development are just left out entirely. The planning officers should check the description against the submitted drawings and not just the information provided in the application form.'

2.18 Whilst 50% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the accessibility or readability of planning consultation documentation (Figure 6). Qualitative analysis would suggest however there was too great an **emphasis placed on digital distribution** of planning documentation and that physical access to hard copies of planning documentation improved:

'Applications are not sufficiently well publicised. Too much reliance is placed on online dissemination and merely having the documentation at libraries is insufficient.'

'More active information so that we don't have to search out.'

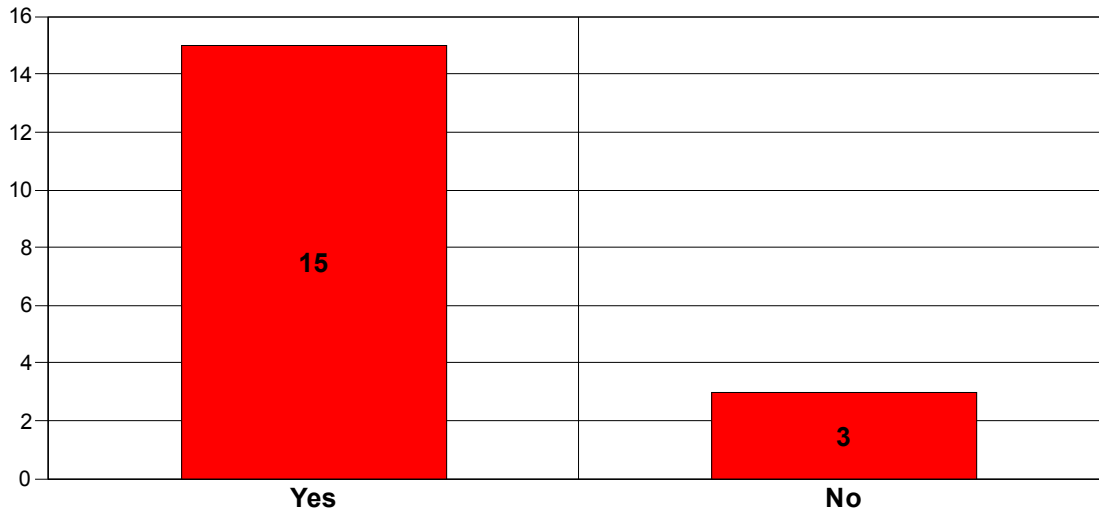
'..... it is essential that any supporting documentation should be made available in 'hard copy'.'

More involvement in Planning Consultations

2.19 Quantitative analysis indicated that 15 out of 18 respondents (83%) would like to be more involved in local planning consultations (Figure 7). Analysis of qualitative data would indicate that local community groups and residents associations contain many informed individuals who are familiar with planning systems and wanting to play a more active role. Of particular note, analysis suggested that the community should be seen as a resource and that local residents could help to provide key local information to support planning officers and planning processes:

'We can easily supply specific information re an application because of our local knowledge; context of proposals not easy for officers to understand on occasion.'

Figure 7 - Would your community group like to be more involved in planning consultations (n=18)?



2.20 Respondents also indicated that it would be useful if **planning officers** could attend local meetings to discuss consultations for local planning applications or planning policies, particularly as group members may not have the confidence to attend official planning meetings:

‘Discussion with officers at our meetings.’

‘Planning Officers to be available to attend group meetings.’

‘... planning officers coming to our meetings. Many people are too nervous to go to official meetings.’

Factors to help improve community engagement and involvement

2.21 Respondents were asked to indicate what practical steps could be taken to improve community engagement within planning consultations. Quantitative analysis indicated that the most favoured way to improve community engagement for planning consultations was earlier notification of planning application proposals where 84% of respondents indicated that this would be helpful (Figure 8).

2.22 Analysis of qualitative comments would suggest that **earlier engagement** with the local community, particularly in relation to new development would be most beneficial as this would allow more timely input into proposed development which may avoid later problems in the planning application process:

‘Early notification of proposed plans or changes is essential if people are to have time to respond.’

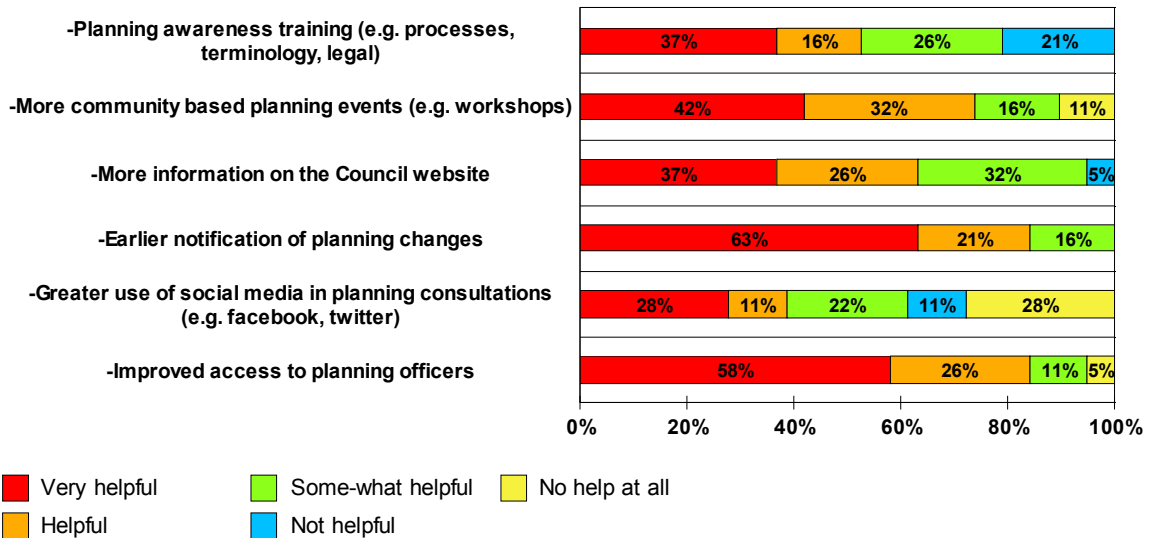
‘Engage with applicant at pre-application stage.’

‘Representatives of local community groups could be invited to attend pre-application advice meetings. We might then avoid having unsuitable designs inflicted on us, and address contentious issues at an early stage.’

2.23 Qualitative analysis was also suggested that earlier consultation in the development of local planning policy would be helpful:

‘To be consulted about new policies at an early stage and not just to find out about things when they are published as happened recently with the policy on basement extensions.’

Figure 8 - Factors that would assist further community engagement in planning consultations (n=16).



2.24 Earlier sections of this report have highlighted that residents would like planning officers to attend local group meetings and events as a further way to encourage participation. This was also verified in quantitative responses here, where most respondents (84%) indicated that improved access to planning officers would also support further engagement and involvement in local planning consultations (Figure 8).

2.25 In general, qualitative analysis would suggest that improvement to planning notification systems would also help to develop community engagement and involvement. Firstly, there was a concern that the **weekly notification list** of new planning applications was about to be discontinued. Respondents evidently found this weekly notification very helpful and suggested that it be retained:

‘We regret that it is proposed to discontinue the weekly list of planning application which is a valuable method of community involvement.’

‘You should not stop sending the planning app lists to people currently on the distribution list. I learn that this is the intention.’

‘It’s a shame the weekly/monthly email of current applications to interested parties by ward is ending. This is very useful.’

‘The present system of the weekly distribution of Planning Applications by email must be continued.’

2.26 A number of respondents indicated that the community group of which they were a member was not routinely included in local notifications or consultation processes. As a consequence, this required members to be **proactive in researching proposed new development** or policies that may impact on the local area in order for them to respond or be involved:

'In order to respond, our group needs to be proactive, by scanning the application lists and website to see what is coming up. We receive neither written nor electronic notification of proposed developments.'

'The only way to find out what is happening is to continually check the planning website.'

2.27 Qualitative analysis would also suggest that respondents had concerns around the efficacy of notifications systems to inform residents of proposed development within the local area.

'Very few residents get notification of development plans in the immediate vicinity.'

'Community groups, residents associations and residents should be sent letters of notification of proposals.'

2.28 In the context of the above, respondents underlined the importance of other traditional methods of distributing planning notifications such as advertising in **Haringey People** and the placement of **posters** displayed in local areas affected:

'Local newspapers are not delivered so the Council must advertise in Haringey People also.'

'I know it sounds odd in the present age, but the practice of sticking a notice on or near the application premises is still a very useful way of alerting residents to an application.'

2.29 What is apparent from qualitative analysis is that where possible the Planning Service should support a **multi-faceted approach**, where the diversity of methods deployed can further ensure that planning notifications (for new development or new policies) reach the target residents and communities:

'I would like people whose lives will be profoundly affected by plans and decisions to be informed by all possible methods.'

2.30 Qualitative responses provided elsewhere in this survey indicated that local communities found it difficult to access planning consultations due to the complex nature of planning processes. Further evidence of this concern is provided here where just over 1/2 (53%) of respondents suggested that further **training on local planning issues** would be helpful to support community engagement (Figure 8):

'More training for Community groups.'

'There is little information for the public as to how the planning system works, its implications and how residents should be participating.'

'It would also be useful to have something similar on generic subjects rather than individual applications. For example on shop-fronts, basement extensions or front garden parking. The idea being for the officers to describe policy and what powers the Council has and for residents to get a better understanding of the issue and raise any questions or concerns.'

2.31 Further analysis of qualitative data revealed one important further issue which would help to support further engagement and involvement by the community in local planning consultations. Many respondents indicated that at present, little **feedback** is

provided to contributors to planning consultations which makes it difficult to determine the usefulness of submissions and how this has impacted on final plans:

'Often the designated planning officer does not mention comments in her/his report.... .'

'Lots of good intentions at consultation meetings and such.... but then? Often disappear without trace or the agreed actions don't happen etc.'

'Consultation should directly involve residents and the results need to be made transparent.... .'

'Community Engagement would be improved if the Council were to publish and explain the reasons for their decisions when they are contrary to the views expressed through this process.'

2.32 With little feedback as to how contributions have informed consultations and impacted on final plans, there was a perception that planning consultations were not a **two way process**, which left participants feeling frustrated:

'... if you call it a consultation it must be one. It is a 2 way process or don't bother.'

'Prove that you have listened to what we say.'

'Planning Officers must be open to listening to the public's view.'

'The consultation process is a charade. While it is easy to comment online on planning applications, local residents' opinions seem to be totally ignored. One question whether the planning officers read them.'

2.33 Respondents suggested that if it was apparent that consultation contributions had been assessed and recorded where these had influenced planning decisions, this would encourage further participation:

'[Our community group would be more involved] if they felt that their comments were taken more seriously. It is often the case that the comments submitted by this CAAC for example are not mentioned at all in a planning officer's report.....'

9.0 Other issues identified within the survey

9.1 To conclude, respondents were invited to provide any further information on any related issues to those covered within the survey. Analysis of these responses highlighted a number of areas for possible follow up.

Role of local Councillors

9.2 It was suggested that in recognition of the important role that local councillors play in supporting community engagement with planning processes, further training may help to promote greater understanding within the community

'The Planning Process is complex and difficult to understand. Not only should residents be given clear, readable information but local ward councillors must be trained in the Planning system.'

Planning Enforcement

9.3 Although not the focus of this survey, but clearly linked to how the community engages with the planning, planning enforcement was raised as a concern. It was suggested

that arrangement for reporting planning infringements are not operating as effectively as it could:

'The survey should also include community engagement with Planning Enforcement, an area which desperately needs to be addressed and which Noel Park has been badly let down on.'

'Enforcement is a real problem. We notify Haringey of infringements and then very little happens; this is discouraging to say the least.'

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Minutes of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel 28th January 2014

Present: Cllr Alexander, Cllr McNamara (Chair) and Cllr Weber

In attendance: Cllr Ejiofor, Daliah Barrett (Haringey Council), Michael Kelleher (Haringey Council) and Michael Kelly (Haringey Council), Clif Osborne (Trust for Conservation Volunteers) and Chris Speirs (Trust for Conservation Volunteers).

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Bull, Cllr Bloch and Cllr Gibson.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 None received.

3. Deputations

3.1 None received.

4. Trust for Conservation Volunteers

4.1 Officers from the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) gave a presentation to the panel on the work of the organisation in Haringey. The panel noted the vision and the purpose of TCV was:

- VISION- An abundance of safe and accessible outdoor places for everyone to use and enjoy
- PURPOSE-Work together with people and communities to transform their health, prospects and outdoor places for the long term.

4.2 The panel noted that TCV work in a number of different settings and with a range of local groups to support socioeconomic and environmental regeneration across the borough. TCV works closely with Green Flag parks and support the creation of a Conservation Action Plan (a project management plan for environmental improvement) in each. This is a new model for the management of the parks to help facilitate local involvement, develop local partnerships and improve accountability.

4.3 The panel noted that TCV was currently working across 20 sites in Haringey of varying size and with different community emphasis. These included:

- Board walk construction at Coldfall Woods;
- Removing a fallen holly at Queens Woods;
- Wildflower bed creation and pond clearance;
- Creating homes for Wildlife.

4.4 A key aim of the approach of TCV is to recruit local volunteers and to support them in local environmental projects. The panel noted that TCV recruit Haringey volunteers that in total worked over 1,241 workdays had been completed by volunteers to date. It was estimated that this was of a net value of £80,990.

4.5 The panel noted that TCV also undertakes education projects with both young people and adults. Here it was noted that at the Railway Fields site in Harringay:

- 20 different school groups had received educational input;
- 1,327 children studied environmental education topics;
- An adult education programme is supported.

4.6 TCV works with local groups to support environmental projects particularly local Friends of Parks groups, which offer an important link to local residents associations and other local residents. TCV offers free training and support to local FoP groups which aims to develop skills, knowledge and confidence to undertake local environmental work.

4.7 The panel noted that in the restructuring of environmental support In Haringey, TCV funding was reduced from £130k to £50k, which has consequently reduced its capacity to support local environmental projects. The panel noted that for every £1 of funding received by TCV. More than £2 is received back in terms of hours supplied by volunteer. TCV also brings in additional funding through other bids and partnerships.

Green Gym

4.8 TCV also support the Green Gym initiative which is a programme to help improve the physical activity and mental health of those referred. The panel noted that participants can be referred by health services or via self-referral to 3 hour sessions based in local green spaces. There are 14 Green Gyms across London, 3 of which are in Haringey including Broadwater Farm. The panel noted that TCV were also offering a Blue Gym programme for environmental work focused on waterways. In Haringey, the Green Gym had also helped to support:

- Intergenerational projects
- Learning Disability/ Mental Health Service users
- Those with Drug and Alcohol problems (DASH).

4.9 The panel noted that TCV are trialling the Green Gym model with youth offending services in Lewisham and Greenwich and if successful would like to extend this work further to other Local Authorities. This would take time to develop links and further funding opportunities.

Agreed: that details of local YOS would be given to TCV to explore possible opportunities for the Green GYM in Haringey.

4.10 The panel noted that evaluations of the Green Gym had demonstrated the following outcomes:

- Improved Wellbeing ;
- Improved Physical Health;
- Pro-Environmental Behaviour;
- Individual and Community Resilience ;
- Improved quality Green Spaces.

4.11 The panel suggested that given the health benefits derived from this work, it would be practical to approach Public Health to identify opportunities for possible partnerships and or joint working opportunities.

Agreed: That scrutiny would contact Public Health to identify a contact link between these two services.

4.12 The panel noted that whilst TCV had a strong track record of involving local community groups in small neglected areas of green space and pocket parks and was interested in working with local communities, there was no capacity to support additional work at present in Haringey. The panel noted that historically, the TCV was funded for local community development but this ceased in the most recent restructure.

4.13 The panel noted that other boroughs (Harrow) had created a 'Green Grid' that underpinned planning development which acted as a tool through which to engage developers in support of local environmental projects. Contributions were used to support the development of green infrastructure across this borough.

Agreed: that Planning Service would meet with representatives from Leisure Client Services to ascertain possible opportunities to develop and support environmental projects through planning development (CIL).

4.14 The panel also suggested that further work could be undertaken with housing providers within the borough (both Homes for Haringey and other registered housing providers), who may also have small pockets green space which could be developed through TCV.

4.15 The panel noted that significant potential of the model used by TCV and suggested that a Community Environmental Conference is organised to help link the following, new volunteers, the identification of undeveloped or neglected green spaces; new funding opportunities. It was suggested that each ward could nominate 10 areas of neglected green space which could be taken forward for development. This would need to link to Green Conference.

Agreed: that the possibility of supporting a Community Environmental Conference is explored Client Services Team with the aim of bringing interested local stakeholders together to assist in the identification of neglected green-spaces, volunteers and funding opportunities.

5. Cabinet Q and A

5.1 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement attended to respond to questions from the panel on services within his portfolio which has four main strands:

- Planning applications;
- Planning and licensing policy;
- Planning and licensing Enforcement;
- Housing with Multiple Occupancy.

Planning Enforcement

5.2 The panel noted a number of local case studies in which unauthorised development was perceived to have gone unchecked by the planning authority. The perceived lack of action taken by the planning authority was felt to undermine confidence in local

planning enforcement processes and future compliance with planning regulations. The panel noted that there were a number of contributory factors:

- An information gap within the community about what is permitted development and what needs planning authority authorisation;
- The exploitation of planning processes (e.g. retrospective applications, appeals, certificates of lawfulness).

5.3 It was noted by the panel that Planning Officers had been specifically tasked to look at planning enforcement to ensure that the appropriate authorisations are communicated to applicants at each stage of the planning process and that there was a much clearer understanding within the community about what is permitted development.

5.4 The panel noted that there would be a more robust planning enforcement response in the future to help restore greater confidence in the system. This would include the following:

- A tasking group to undertake a visible manifestation of physical enforcement;
- Prioritisation of planning enforcement cases, which will be supported by;
- Direct action (where necessary) by the Council to uphold enforcement decisions.

5.5 It was hoped that the above would send a clear message to those developers seeking to exploit planning processes that the Council would not be a 'soft touch' and that enforcement will be a priority.

5.6 It was important to note that planning enforcement relied on intelligence and reports from within the community and that where planning breaches were identified or suspected, these should be reported promptly to the planning service.

5.7 The panel noted that there had been an increase in unauthorised living in employment areas. Further investment in planning, housing and legal support to address this issue had been approved in budget proposals for 2014/15.

Planning Performance (Development Management Improvement Programme (DMIP))

5.8 The panel noted the improved performance for strands within the Development Management Improvement Programme (DMIP). The panel noted that regular updates on the implementation of recommendations within this report were regularly provided to Regulatory Committee.

Site Allocation Plan Document and Tottenham Area Action Plan

5.9 The panel noted that these documents provide a framework for the future regeneration and development of the borough. Both documents identify potential strategic sites and suggest what form development may take. The consultation opened on 17th January and local residents, business and other local stakeholders would be invited to respond. Both documents are subject to consultation and the plans for each will go to every Area Forum.

5.10 The panel noted that there was a target of developing 1,500 homes per annum which would be challenging given the pressures for possible redevelopment sites and inability to build upward. Both plans, once agreed, will provide a clearer framework for potential developers to engage with the authority.

5.11 the panel noted that potential sites were identified through a number of processes including:

- A 'call for sites' advert to local landowners wishing to develop;
- Greater London Assembly;
- Neighbourhood Plans.

5.12 The panel also noted that there is a strategic development monthly meeting at which the Cabinet member is kept up to date with all major planning applications. Within the meeting a member takes the role of design champion, and the meeting is also looking to develop a role of 'heritage champion' to further promote sympathetic development.

5.13 The panel underlined the importance of community engagement and involvement in the local planning processes. It was suggested that many small developments could be implemented to encourage and support community engagement and build confidence for involvement. It was suggested that a summary of the impact of public engagement should be included within planning reports, as this would provide evidence as to how consultation processes had influenced decisions within the final planning policy or development. This would provide reassurance to members of the public that time taken to be involved within the consultation had been worthwhile and encourage further involvement in the future.

Agreed: that a mechanism should be developed in which the impact of public consultations is recorded on final planning documents (for Community Engagement with Planning Project).

Licensing Applications

5.14 The panel were made aware that all licensing applications received required the following publication:

- All applications would be sent to statutory consultees (fire, police, enforcement, building control, CYP service etc);
- Are displayed on the website
- Applicant is required to notify local newspaper and put an appropriate sign outside the premises.

Event Planning

5.15 The panel noted that two licenses have been granted for events at Finsbury Park which take place in May and July respectively and an events plan is being developed for each. As a result of the scrutiny call-in process, a Finsbury Park Stakeholders group has been established to assist with plans, communications and liaison. The group has identified community representatives and held its first meeting.

6. Draft Partnership Agreement – Housing Enablement Service.

6.1 Officers from the Housing Enablement Team presented the draft Partnership Agreement. The purpose of the agreement is to establish a framework to ensure consistency in how providers deliver new housing, make allocations and manage their stock to ensure that they meet local needs. The Council does not have any regulatory authority over registered providers, and the agreement is voluntary.

- 6.2 The panel noted that as a result of earlier scrutiny, the role of elected members had been developed within the partnership agreement with local registered housing providers. Similar additions have included:
- New requirement for 12 month programme of estate inspections;
 - A commitment to develop a stock rationalisation policy;
 - The provision of performance data to the Council;
 - A new role for scrutiny in addressing poor performance.
- 6.3 It was noted that the Homes and Community Agency is the sole regulator of registered housing providers. The HCA replaced the Tenants Service Authority as regulator and now provides 'back stop' regulation, the expectation being that local stakeholders will play a more active role in regulation (of tenants issues) with the HCA only becoming involved in serious concerns relating to governance and financial viability.
- 6.4 The final consultation document and Partnership Agreement will be sent to all Chairs and Boards of registered providers which own or manage housing stock in Haringey. Based on previous agreements, it is expected that 90% of providers will sign up to the new agreement.

7. Update on strategic enforcement

- 7.1 The panel noted that an evidence gathering session was held with officers from representing corporate services (Communications, Audit and IT). A further two evidence sessions were planned for:
- Other Local Authorities
 - Local partners – Fire Service & Police

8. Update on Community Engagement with Planning

- 8.1 It was noted that an evidence gathering session had been held with officers from both the Development Management and Planning Policy teams to ascertain local policy and practice for community engagement and involvement. A further two evidence sessions were planned:
- Comparative policy and practice – Planning Advisory Service, Planning Aid for London and Islington and Camden Councils.
 - Community involvement – a consultative session with local community groups to feedback on their experience within local planning consultations.

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**Minutes of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel
24th February 2014**

Present: Cllr McNamara (Chair), Cllr Alexander, Cllr Bull and Cllr Weber

In attendance: Cllr Bevan, Graham, Beattie (LBH), Gary Weston (LBH).

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Bloch and Cllr Gibson.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 None received.

3. Deputations

3.1 None received.

4. Cabinet Members Q and Q

4.1 The Cabinet Member for the Environment attended to answer questions from the panel relating to this portfolio. To begin, the Cabinet member outlined some key service areas which have been visited since being in post (September 2013). It was noted that the Cabinet member had:

- Met with street sweeping staff to assess how operations could be improved. The Cabinet member was impressed with the front line officers and the work that they were undertaking across the borough.
- Met with refuse collections teams and been out on refuse collection rounds to better understand some of the challenges that front line staff face;
- Met with all parks staff across the borough, visited Green Flag accredited parks and those that intended to apply for Green Flag status in the near future.

Waste Contract Performance

4.1 The panel noted that the performance for key waste and recycling indicators was improving. In respect of the recycling rate, it was noted that the council reached last year's target and was on course to reach this year's target (35.4%). It was also noted that street cleanliness assessments had also improved through 2013/14.

4.2 There were two issues however, which were proving more difficult to resolve, these were fly tipping and fly posting. The service was working with Veolia to help improve performance in these areas and had reinforced this as a priority with street cleansing staff.

Waste Contract Monitoring

4.3 The panel sought further clarification as to how the contract with Veolia was monitored now that the Waste Contract Monitoring Group was no longer in operation. It was noted that monitoring of the waste contract took place at numerous levels:

- Weekly on an operational basis with officers;
- Every three months for high level strategic assessments with lead member.

4.4 It was noted that with the demise of the Waste Contract Monitoring Group, there were no opportunities for local ward councillors to raise waste issues directly with the contractor and officers. As a result, the process of getting resolutions to local waste collection problems had become slower and more time consuming.

4.5 To support its scrutiny of waste and recycling services, it was suggested that it would be beneficial if the EHSP could receive regular quarterly reports of key issues within local waste contract monitoring (e.g. recycling performance, food waste from flats, enforcement, fly tipping).

Agreed: That a quarterly report of Waste Monitoring Data is provided to the EHSP, with the Chair to agree with Cabinet member the nature of such data to be provided. This is to be requested at the first OSC Cabinet meeting of the new administration.

Hard of hearing access to Veolia call centre

4.6 The panel noted that an elderly resident had tried to call the Veolia call centre but there was no provision for hard of hearing. The Cabinet member indicated that this would be followed up at a future monitoring meeting with Veolia.

Action: Single Front Line to follow up provision for hard of hearing at Veolia call centre.

Purple Bags

4.7 Members of the panel raised ongoing problems with kerbside collections of purple bags. Initial investigations would suggest that there are insufficient wire back collection vehicles to provide cover if any of the fleet break down. As a result, when break downs did occur, rubbish remained uncollected (which then raised further issues concerning foxes and other vermin).

Action: Single Front Line would raise this issue with Veolia at the next monitoring meeting.

Waste vehicles

4.8 The panel noted that waste collection vehicles had occasionally been noted to be travelling in the wrong direction up one way streets. Whilst it was noted that the size vehicle and narrow roads may limit manoeuvrability, it was suggested that this issue should be raised with Veolia as it did not set a good example.

Action: Single Front Line would raise vehicle transgressions with Veolia at the next monitoring meeting.

Rationalisation of bins

4.9 The panel noted that the number of bins on streets remained problematic in some areas and sought further clarification on what was being done to support rationalisation of bins. In its previous investigation of waste and recycling services, the panel made a recommendation that further support (e.g. a how to guide) should be developed and distributed to local residents to support those wishing to reduce the number of bins outside properties. It was noted that with the high rate at which households moved in and out of the borough, such information may need to be re-distributed to maintain local awareness.

Action: Single Front line to clarify the availability of the bin rationalisation leaflet and its availability and future distribution.

Bins without lids

- 4.10 The panel noted that there were ongoing issues with waste bins without lids. It was noted that whilst resident can be report this to Veolia, waste collection teams should be reporting this to Veolia as and when lidless bins are identified. The panel noted that this would be raised with Veolia.

Action: Reporting procedure for waste bins without lids to be confirmed with Veolia.

Fly tipping

- 4.11 The panel noted that fly-tipping was an ongoing problem in some areas of the borough. It was suggested that more should be done to publicise successful prosecutions of those caught fly tipping to act as deterrent to other potential offenders.

- 4.12 It was confirmed to the panel that the Neighbourhood Action Team could follow up enquiries relating to suspected illegal disposal of trade waste. The NAT team can investigate vehicles suspected of illegal dumping as it can be verified if the operator has a trade waste license.

- 4.13 It was confirmed that the service had recently met to identify improvements to how the service responded to fly tipping incidents, particularly in relation to how information is collected, analysed and acted upon. It was noted that further work was being undertaken to help improve local intelligence gathered from street sweepers to help identify illegal dumping and promote its speedier removal..

Agreed: An update is to provided to the panel on fly tipping, trade waste licenses and enforcement (possibly included in quarterly report).

- 4.14 The panel noted that with the new waste and recycling collection system, large household items could be collected for free via Veolia. It was suggested that this information may need to be re-communicated to local residents as part of an ongoing education and awareness programme.

Street Sweeping

- 4.15 The panel noted that header roads on the ladder did not appear to be being swept regularly, which was leaving the public realm looking very untidy. It was noted that NAT would enquire as to the frequency of sweeping in this area.

Action: NAT to assess frequency of street sweeping on header roads on the Harringay Ladder.

Disposable nappies

- 4.16 The panel sought clarification as to what support was available for families with young children wishing to dispose of nappies. It was confirmed to the panel that non reusable nappies are retained within residual waste and sent to landfill/ incineration. The panel noted that dedicated advice was available on the Haringey website about nappy disposal, including schemes to encourage use of real or reusable nappies.

Dog excrement

4.17 The panel noted that there were ongoing issues with dog excrement, in that this was not being removed within regular road sweeping rounds. It was reported to the panel that road sweepers should have appropriate tools to enable them to dispose of this safely.

Action: Follow up with Veolia to ensure that road sweepers systematically dispose of dog excrement where this is located.

Street Banners

4.18 The panel sought clarification on the use of street banners on road railings. It was noted that there had been no change to the local policy of not allowing any banners on road banners on the grounds of public safety as these may restrict the vision of motorists, pedestrians and other road users.

Finsbury Park Steering Group

4.19 The panel noted that in response to the recent call-in of the Councils Event Policy, a Finsbury Park Steering Group had been established and a first meeting held. It was noted that whilst there was member representation in this group, not all local members had been invited to keep the group to a manageable size. The group were already discussing plans for the first major event being held in May 2014.

Road resurfacing

4.20 It was noted that there were a number of roads that were in state of disrepair and which needed substantive resurfacing work (e.g. Wolves Lane, White Hart Lane). As a response the panel noted that:

- Increased spending was detailed within the new programme of road surfacing which had recently been agreed;
- It was confirmed to the panel that part of White Hart lane would be resurfaced in the next programme of road resurfacing works (2014/15) and that local councillors would be engaged ahead of this process.

Encroachment on local parks

4.21 It was noted that the Cabinet member had met local parks representatives and discussed local issues. An issue emerging from some local parks was encroachment (and poor maintenance) of properties adjacent to the park. It was suggested that the legal position of the Council should be ascertained in being able to reclaim any land taken or to require remedial work on adjacent properties.

Action: Scrutiny to ascertain the legal position of the Council in respect of park encroachment.

4.22 The panel thanked the Cabinet Member for attending and responding to questions within the environment portfolio.

5. Waste and recycling report - follow up

5.1 The panel noted that substantial progress had been made in developing the food waste collection system from 25,000 local flatted properties. A pilot scheme involving 1,500 flats (Homes for Haringey, RSLs and private developments) was operated over September to October 2013. The pilot scheme had been successful with particular note to:

- The tonnage of collected food waste was higher than expected (26 tonnes);
- Improved performance in collection of dry recyclables recorded at test sites;
- Low contamination of food waste bins.

5.2 The panel noted that the learning from this pilot would inform the roll-out to all flats in June 2014. In other follow up points from this report, the panel noted that:

- An outreach team from Veolia had been very active in the pilot scheme areas and had received positive feedback from residents;
- £200k had been secured by the Council to purchase reusable bags for tenants in flats to support dry recycling;
- Leaves collected from the roadside can no longer be included within green recycling due to possible contaminants;
- Our Haringey enforcement reporting App was now in full operation and use was growing.

5.3 The panel noted that due to resource pressures, the conversion of twin waste chute flats (one to recycling and one retained for residual waste) had not been progressed. This would be looked at once the food waste programme had commenced.

5.4 The panel noted that a fuller response to the recommendation to further develop education work to improve recycling in schools had been expected. It was suggested that this should be included within the quarterly report to EHSP as agreed earlier.

Agreed: Recycling education for recycling given in schools to be included within quarterly update to EHSP.

5.5 The panel noted that a near 6% increase in recycling rate was attained for 2012/13 to 32% and that the 2013/14 target of 35.4% was likely to be achieved. Future recycling targets would be challenging however, and that the Council was working with Veolia to develop strategies to further improve local recycling performance.

Environmental Champions

5.6 The panel noted that the Council had now recruited 20 local Environmental Champions across Haringey. The group had met a number of times and were being provided with training from Veolia and other sources.

5.7 It is hoped that this group would help to improve notification of local environmental problems (waste dumping), help develop local capacity of local groups to respond to environmental issues and provide a contact group for the Council in the development of local environmental initiatives.

5.8 The panel noted that it would be useful to be made aware of local Environmental Champions so that these could be supported further in the community.

Action: That local Councillors are informed of Environmental Champions in their ward.

5.9 The panel thanked officers for the preparation of this report and for responding to their questions about it.

6. Strategic parking in Tottenham - follow up

6.1 The panel noted that substantive progress had been made against the recommendations agreed in its scrutiny report from 2012/13. There had been a minor delay in the implementation of the Phillip lane scheme to allow works to coincide with road resurfacing. The issue of pop-up parking had been investigated and a number of possible options were being discussed and strategies for action would be developed in 2014/15. It was noted that:

- Match Day Parking Scheme Approved
- Stoneleigh Car Park C was now open to the public;
- New corporate signage was being rolled out - including new signage for car parks;
- Streetscape had been softened in car parks.

6.2 In relation to Phillip Lane development, the panel noted that most of the planned improvements had been made and that a site visit had been undertaken to inspect completed work. There were a few outstanding issues:

- Loading bays were still present on Jansen Road as TFL were not in agreement for removal. This was still being pursued.
- A review of CPZ spaces is being undertaken;
- As all works are undertaken under an Experimental Traffic Order, this allowed for further review and amendments within the scheme.

6.3 Security in Council operated car parks was discussed by the panel. It was noted that mobile CCTV would be used to help identify fly tipping and ASB to make car parks look and feel more welcoming to users. It was noted that improved signage to car parks would help to increase turnover which may help users feel safer whilst using it. It was suggested that Homes for Haringey, RSLs and local businesses could be approached to resource efforts to soften / reclaim landscape of car parks, and that local environmental (Groundwork / TCV) groups could be contacted to maintain these with the local community.

6.4 The panel noted that this holistic approach to resolving local traffic pinch points (as exemplified through the Phillip Lane Scheme) had been very successful and provided good value for money and that the Highways Service was looking to identify other areas where the model could be re-applied. It was suggested that the service may provide a short update once the Phillip Lane scheme was fully completed. The panel suggested that it would be useful to include a pictorial update to enable members to full assess the impact that changes have made.

Agreed: A further update is provided to the panel once the scheme has been completed (to include pictorial evidence where possible).

6.5 The panel noted that the North Tottenham Parking Scheme would move in to Phase 2 later in the 2014 and a second tranche of funding would be released. This phase would also include a review of the existing CPZs. The panel noted that it would be beneficial if the Council were replace the current processes where CPZs were implemented 'piecemeal' across the borough with a more holistic approach as this may help to:

- Remove anomalies;
- Provide further clarity and consistency;

- Limit displacement that occurs in new schemes;
- Improve scheme costs.

Agreed: the panel indicated that it may be helpful to revisit CPZ policy in the new municipal year.

7. Minutes of the previous meetings.

These were deferred to the next meeting.

8. Date of next meeting.

20th March 2014

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