

**MINUTES OF THE CROUCH END, HORNSEY AND STROUD GREEN AREA ASSEMBLY
TUESDAY, 9 MARCH 2010**



Councillors Aitken, Butcher, Gorrie, Weber (Chair), Whyte, Wilson and Winskill

Apologies Councillor Edge and Reid

Also Present: Councillor **Error! No document variable supplied.**

| MINUTE NO. | SUBJECT/DECISION | ACTION BY |
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| 26. | <p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS FROM CLLR LYN WEBER, CHAIR OF THE AREA ASSEMBLY</p> <p>Councillor Lyn Weber, Chair of the Area Assembly, welcomed those present to the meeting and provided an update on the issues set out below:</p> <p><u>Blue Badges</u></p> <p>It was noted that following issues raised at a previous meeting a review of procedures had been undertaken. Changes to the administration of medical assessments, used in the issuing of the badges, had been made.</p> <p>In addition the following actions had also been undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mobility assessment had been adapted and improved to make it more representative of the street environment • Additional information explaining the criteria against which individuals were assessed and reasons for refusing an application and the appeal process were now provided • Blue badge holders were now supplied with application packs three months prior to the expiry of their badge • Information on the Council's website had been improved and hyperlinks to Department of Transport's website had been added • NHS Haringey had been asked to remind people attending assessments to bring all of the relevant medical information with respect to their condition <p>http://harinet.haringey.gov.uk/index/environment_and_transport/parking/parking_permits_all/blue_badge_scheme.htm</p> <p><u>Making the Difference / Homes for Haringey – Information Stalls</u></p> | |

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The Chair encouraged people to visit these stalls during the break and take away the information provided.

Severe Weather Conditions

A map had been provided and residents were invited to indicate where services should be reviewed and to make a note of any suggestions on how the service provided by the Council could be improved.

Resident's Soap Box

The Chair reminded people that there was an opportunity later in the agenda for residents to raise issues.

Provisional Date for Next Meeting

It was noted that a provisional date has been set for the next meeting, once confirmed this would be publicised on the Council's website and in the local press.

27.

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES

Mildura Court Residents Association

A presentation was provided by Mr Alex Hearn, Chair of the Mildura Court Residents Association, setting out the challenges and achievements of the group since its establishment.

Mildura Court is comprised of thirty eight mixed tenure flats and includes Homes for Haringey tenants. The Residents Association (RA) had been established following a general feeling amongst residents that a focus was needed in respect of the following issues:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Environmental improvements
- Low level Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Decent Homes Programme
- Parking

Mr Hearn noted that although residents had been keen to establish an RA there had been a lack of knowledge about what the process around and what this entailed. However, Council officers and local Ward Members had provided support and information with respect to training and fund raising opportunities.

A positive relationship had been cultivated with various departments across the Council and with other agencies, which had been beneficial to local residents and key achievements included:

- Installation of new litter and refuse bins
- Neighbourhood Watch

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- Free estate parking for residents
- Environmental improvements
- Raising of £13K in eighteen months

Mr Hearn noted that although setting up a RA could be daunting the support available from the Council and other agencies made the process easier. The benefits brought about by closer relationships with the Council, Police and other agencies, was worthwhile.

The Chair thanked Mr Hearn for his presentation.

Neighbourhood Watch

Sergeant John McGrath noted the Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) had a goal to establish a Neighbourhood Watch (NW) group in every street in the Borough. Establishing a point of contact in every street allowed the Police to disseminate information more rapidly and provided an additional mechanism via which residents could report matters of concern.

It was noted that there was a NW Coordinator in place and that support would be provided to any new group in terms of organising the initial meeting. After this a volunteer to lead the group would need to be identified and this person would act as a coordinator for the group.

NW groups were free to meet as frequently as they wished and there were no prescribed rules or obligations in place around the format of meetings. Sergeant McGrath invited anyone who was interested in establishing NW group to speak to him during the break or contact him following the meeting.

The Chair thanked Sergeant McGrath for his contribution.

28.

PRIVATE LANDLORDS

A presentation was given by Mr Dave Princep, Team Leader Private Sector Housing, Haringey Council, on the responsibilities of and support available to private landlords.

It was noted that the private rental market was expanding rapidly and at present represented one third of the total housing stock in London. Approximately 40% of the properties in the private rental sector in Haringey were built prior to 1919 and without modern amenities; this resulted in a large number of poorly executed conversions that were of a poor quality, which required further modernisation.

There was a limited amount of assistance available to private sector landlords from the Local Authority; however, where a property was vacant, assistance was available if tenants nominated by the Council were taken on. There were also grants and tax incentives available to make properties more energy efficient that private sector landlords were

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able to take advantage of.

It was noted that there had been a significant increase in the legislation around the private rental market since 2004. This largely related to health and safety issues and there were twenty-nine hazards against which property were assessed.

Mr Princep noted that Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) were an area of concern to many members of the public. It was suspected that there are a large number of unlicensed HMO's in London. The Council had several measures in place to identify unlicensed HMO's and its Enforcement Team investigated reports of these received from members of the public.

The Council recognised that rigorous enforcement action alone would not provide the improvements required in the private rental sector. To raise standards generally the Council ran an accredited landlords scheme whereby landlords had to demonstrate an understanding of the legislation and make a commitment to providing good quality accommodation.

As part of this there were plans to introduce information packs to landlords and tenants providing information on their rights and responsibilities.

Mr Princep then took questions from the floor.

In response to a question Mr Princep advised that the Council was investing in a programme of incentives to encourage people to move from social housing into the private rental sector. Assisting people into longer term forms of accommodation was recognised as being an important priority.

Mr Princep advised that the Council was proactive in its approach to identifying HMO's; however, these were often difficult to identify. It was noted that the Council assisted tenants of unlicensed HMO's find new accommodation when they were evicted and that there was no penalty imposed on tenants of these properties. Concern was raised that many of the people living in this type of accommodation were vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation by disreputable landlords.

In response to a query as to whether there was any data with respect to the number of houses brought under the 'Right to Buy' scheme, which were now in the private rental market, Mr Princep advised that he did not keep this information; however, it should be possible to obtain this information under the Freedom of Information Act.

In conclusion Mr Princep noted that although enforcement action had a role to play in reducing the level of non compliant properties in the private rental sector, the accreditation scheme for landlords should be seen as the key tool for raising standards in the sector.

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The Chair thanked Mr Princep for his presentation.

29. UPDATE ON HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Haringey Council's Strategic Housing Service

A presentation was given by Nick Powell, Head of Housing Development and Strategic Partnerships, on housing developments in the Borough.

An overview of the 'Haringey picture' was provided and it was noted that there were two key issues for Haringey in terms of housing:

- The use of Temporary Accommodation (TA)
- Waiting time for Social Housing

It was noted that there had been a significant reduction in the use of TA during the last two years; however, this remained unacceptably high and remained a key area of focus for the Council. The number of people on the Housing Register, waiting for Social Housing, was currently at approximately 17,000.

Different challenges were faced in the east and the west of the Borough and the need to balance these issues was reflected in the plans and policies being worked to by the Council and partner agencies.

Homes for Haringey

The Chief Executive of Homes for Haringey, Mr Paul Bridge, gave a brief overview of the organisation's role and priorities. It was noted that Homes for Haringey (HfH) was an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) that managed the Council's housing stock.

As the ALMO, HfH was responsible for securing funding for the Decent Homes Programme; under the programme all of the Council's housing stock would be brought up to Decent Homes standards by 2012.

Mr Bridge advised that HfH was committed to working in partnership with tenants, leaseholders and private sector landlords, to create the best possible outcomes for tenants. The organisation had built strong relationships with tenants via the creation of Resident Involvement Panels and these played a key role in influencing decisions about housing issues that affected them, including anti-social behaviour and the repairs service.

London and Quadrant Housing Trust

The Neighbourhood Investment Officer, Ciaran Porter, London and Quadrant Housing Trust (L&QHT), gave an overview of the Trust's work.

It was noted that the L&QHT was the largest Housing Association in London and was responsible for three thousand properties in Haringey.

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| | <p>The range of properties managed by the Trust was diverse and included homes in mixed tenure estates. Similarly to HfH the Trust also placed a significant level of importance on engagement with tenants and developing mechanisms to encourage this.</p> <p>Concern was raised with regard to the impact upon tenants of the cost attached to work carried out as part of the Decent Homes programme. It was requested that HfH should look at introducing payment plans over several years to ease the burden that this placed on tenants. The Chief Executive of HfH agreed to look at this issue.</p> <p>There was discussion around the problems created by noise disturbance, particularly in flats and how this was addressed by Housing Associations and landlords. The meeting was advised that installing sound proofing was not a practical solution as it involved making significant alterations to the fabric of the building. The cost attached to making sound proofing a standard feature on new builds was prohibitive and could, in some instances, cause structural problems.</p> <p>It was recognised that noise pollution could be distressing and clauses were included within tenancy agreements to mitigate this. The meeting was advised that if these clauses were not complied with it could lead to tenants being evicted.</p> | |
| <p>30.</p> | <p>MAKING THE DIFFERENCE 2010-11</p> <p>The Chair requested that anyone wishing to obtain further information with respect to this item should speak to the Neighbourhood Manager, Beverley Huie, during the break.</p> | |
| <p>31.</p> | <p>SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS: REVIEW OF SERVICES</p> <p>A presentation was given by Michael McNicholas, Client and Resources Manager Environmental Services, Haringey Council, on the work undertaken by the team during the recent severe weather conditions.</p> <p>The Highway Act placed a duty on the Council to keep roads and footpaths clear of snow and ice. In order to comply with this requirement four gritting vehicles gritted roads throughout the Borough during inclement weather.</p> <p>The meeting was advised that roads in the Borough were split into three categories and prioritised in terms of gritting. Major roads and key public transport routes were the first to be gritted. In terms of gritting pavements there were fifteen locations in the Borough where grit was stored and this was distributed manually. Details of these locations were available on the Council's website.</p> <p>It was noted that the particularly severe weather experienced this year had meant that although all of the category one roads had been gritted</p> | |

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the snow that had subsequently fallen had rendered the grit largely ineffective.

Mr McNicholas noted that obtaining local knowledge and listening to the experiences of residents was helpful in the planning services and he encouraged people to leave comments next to the map provided on their experiences.

The Chair thanked Mr McNicholas for his presentation and noted that any questions people may have should be put to him during the break.

32.

**AN OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION HARINGEY COUNCIL'S
DECISION MAKERS - CABINET QUESTION TIME**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Claire Kober, Leader of Haringey Council and Councillor John Bevan, Cabinet Member for Housing, to the meeting.

Q1 What was being done to address potholes in the Muswell Hill area?

Councillor Kober advised that the Council would be investing £500K in improving the roads in the Borough during the next year. The £1M announced would be broken into two tranches with a further £500K of funding coming from capital budget, which had been re-profiled to make provision for this.

It was also noted that the Local Government Association was making representations to the Government for additional funding to support the road improvements throughout London.

Q2 Why is there no grit bins on the Campsbourne Estate and why is there no gritting undertaken on the Estate?

Councillor Bevan advised that the pavement surrounding the areas of the estate that included sheltered housing had been gritted. He agreed to discuss with officers the arrangements for gritting the estate and that there should be a review of the service provided in this area.

Q3 Were residents allowed to use the grit stored in yellow grit bins?

Mr McNicholas advised that supplies of grit were held locally and distributed by operatives. He was aware that from time to time people used the grit from these bins and noted that there were no rules in place to prevent this.

There was discussion around the how the Council had reacted to the recent severe weather conditions and how effective gritting had been. A member of the public contended that they had obtained information that showed that twenty-one priority roads had not been gritted.

Councillor Kober noted that the last winter had been the worst on record for thirty years. During December and January there had been instances

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when the snow fall had been so heavy that roads, which had been gritted early in the evening, had been covered in snow rendering the grit ineffective. In these exceptional circumstances the services provided were limited in their ability to combat these weather conditions.

Q4 Can the footpath running under Hornsey Bridge be widened?

In response to concern raised by the questioner that Transport for London (TfL) had indicated that the footpath could be widened, despite the Council stating that this was not possible, Councillor Bevan advised that he would take this issue up with TfL and provide a written response.

The Chair thanked Councillor Kober and Councillor Bevan for their attendance.

33.

RESIDENT'S SOAPBOX

The Chair invited residents to speak for up to two minutes of items of interest in their local area.

Sustainable Food

The meeting was advised that there were several local groups that were collaborating on new projects around creating sustainable food sources and community gardens.

If anyone was interested in becoming involved more information could be obtained from Jo Foster or Pamela Horling after the meeting.

Conservation Area Appraisal – Crouch End

It was noted that a meeting was being held by the Council on 16 March, at Haringey Library, that would set out proposed changes to Conservation Area Appraisals.

Conference in Planning and Development in Haringey - Haringey Federation of Residents Associations (HFRA)

A Conference on Planning and Development in the Borough was being held on HFRA on 17 April at Hornsey Vale Community Centre. Anyone interested in attending could obtain information from Bob Maltz following the meeting.

Rail Depot

Mr Richard Pout raised concern with respect to proposals for a new Rail Depot in Hornsey and noted that he intended to submit a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Transport (DT) with respect to their on plans for this.

He also raised concern with respect to overcrowding on the Gospel Oak

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| | <p>to Barking line and contended that modernisation on the line was required.</p> <p>The Chair noted that an additional issue had been raised in writing with respect to fly tipping the small areas of green space in Haringey. It was agreed that Councillor Bevan should respond to this in writing following the meeting.</p> | |
| 34. | <p>POTENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>The Chair noted that any suggestions for future agenda items should be submitted to her or the Neighbourhood Manager Beverly Huie.</p> | |
| 35. | <p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY 15TH JUNE 2010</p> <p>The Chair advised that the date and venue for the next meeting would be publicised on the Council's website prior to the meeting. Subsequently confirmed as Thursday 17th June 2010 from 7.30 (surgery 7.00 – 7.30) at Stroud Green Primary School, Woodstock Road.</p> | |