

At a meeting of the Heston and Cranford Area Forum held on Thursday, 31 May 2012 at 7:30 pm at the Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow.

Present:

Councillor Gopal Dhillon (Chair)

Councillor Shantanu Rajawat (Chair)

Councillors John Chatt, Mohinder Gill, Elizabeth Hughes, Gurmail Lal, Amritpal Mann and Sohan Sangha

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Rajinder Bath, Poonam Dhillon, Kamaljit Kaur and Peta Vaught.

1. Appointment of the Chair for the Municipal Year 2012/13

Councillor Rajawat proposed that Councillor Gopal Dhillon be appointed as Chair. Councillor Sangha seconded the proposal and a vote on the proposal was unanimous.

Resolved -

That Councillor G Dhillon be appointed as Chair for the Municipal year 2012/2013.

2. Appointment of the Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2012/2013

Councillor Mann nominated Councillor Elizabeth Hughes to be appointed as Vice-Chair. Councillor Lal seconded the proposal. However an alternative proposal was made. Councillor Gill proposed that Councillor Rajawat be appointed as Vice-Chair and the proposal was seconded by Councillor Sangha. On hearing the second nomination, Councillors' Mann and Lal withdrew the original nomination for Councillor Hughes. As the first nomination was withdrawn, a vote was taken on the remaining proposal for Councillor Rajawat to be appointed as Vice-Chair. The vote was unanimous.

Resolved -

That Councillor Shantanu Rajawat be appointed as Vice-Chair for the Municipal year 2012/2013.

3. Area Committee Appointments for the New Municipal Year 2012/13

Resolved:

That the following appointments be made to the Heston & Cranford Area Committee for the

municipal year 2012/2013.

- Councillor John Chatt as the Committee's representative on the Community Investment Advisory Panel.
- Councillor Shantanu Rajawat be appointed to the Sustainable Development (Enforcement) Sub-committee
- Councillor Sohan Sangha as the Committee's representative on the Hounslow Borough Police Consultative Group.
- Members agreed to defer the appointments to a S.106 sub-group to the next meeting when there would be more Councillors present to discuss the membership.
- That the appointment to the Housing Strategy Forum be deferred to the next meeting.
- That the appointment to the Central Area Housing Forum be deferred to the next meeting.

4. **Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest or any other Communications from Members**

All members had received correspondence from Ms Bull regarding the Hermitage.

5. **Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2012 were agreed subject to the following amendments:

Item 60: Page 4 – Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest or any other communications from Members.

Councillor Chatt advised that he had given his apologies due to other Council Business but they had not been listed on the minutes.

Item 60: Page 4 – Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest or any other communications from Members.

Councillor Hughes stated that the order of the words in her declaration of interest were incorrect. She asked that the following sentence:

'Cllr Hughes also declared that she knew a director of the company concerned along with his son, a former Hounslow councillor'

be replaced with:

'Cllr Hughes also declared that she knew a director of the company, a former Hounslow Councillor, and his son.'

Item 60: Page 4 – Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest or any other communications from Members.

The Chair stated that his declaration of interest had not been recorded in the minutes. His declaration of interest was in relation to Item 65 of the agenda – Land adjoining Heston Services, North Hyde Lane. He advised that he had declared that he knew a director of the company and his son but that he did not have a prejudicial interest.

Item 68: Page 9, 2nd Paragraph – Update on Policing Matters
Replace 'Sgt Hughes' with 'Sgt Hipkiss'.

6. Matters Arising

Item 67: Page 4, Paragraph 5 – Open Forum

At the last meeting Councillor Hughes had asked for a letter to be drafted to the Highways Officer requesting that the Borough negotiates with TFL regarding the issue of double yellow lines on the Brabazon Estate to enable buses to negotiate the bends more easily. Councillor Hughes advised that she had not seen a letter yet and asked that Heidi/Lourdes chase this issue up and speak with Councillor Hughes outside of the meeting.

Item 68: Page 10, Paragraph 2 – Update on Policing Matters in Heston & Cranford

Councillor Hughes asked for an update on the issue of illegal street gambling outside Hounslow West tube station. Sgt Dave Gregg advised that he had attended meetings with the transport police and they were working together with TFL to carry out stringent checks of individuals and their tickets as they were leaving the tube station. It was understood that a lot of the illegal gamblers were coming into to Hounslow on the tube from East London using student tickets. He advised that the police, TFL and the SNTs were working hard to catch the culprits.

7. Borough-wide Character and Context Study

The Chair invited Adrian Lee, Principal Planning Policy Officer, to present the Borough-wide Character and context study.

He advised that the Core Strategy (Preferred Strategy) consulted on in July 2011 proposed a "Borough-wide Context and Character Study" – the purpose of which was to identify key character areas and develop an understanding of the quality of the landscape and built environment.

The physical survey work for the study was in hand and explored urban design quality, heritage assets and local distinctiveness across the borough. When analysed and collated it would form an evidence base for the Council's approach to protecting and enhancing quality of place in the Borough and inform the preparation of Council's Local Plan.

The presentation provided an overview of the study and outlined how it would be used to guide future development and management approaches. Stakeholder consultation events were being planned for mid-June.

Representatives from the Borough's local amenity groups would be invited to attend the consultation events, during which the purpose and methodology of the Study would be explained and stakeholders would be encouraged to engage in the process by identifying what they valued about their local area, and why.

Councillor Hughes advised that the new approach was positive and more focussed. She questioned what a heritage walk in Heston would look at. She felt it was very important to develop a Heritage Walk for Heston and Cranford and emphasised that there were a lot of historical areas of interest. She gave examples of the war memorial, the Hermitage, the large interwar detached houses and also the site where the first air passenger terminal was located. She expressed concern that beautiful buildings such as the Hermitage had been bought by private owners and then been left to deteriorate and crumble away. Councillor Hughes stated that the London Borough of Hounslow was considered to be one of the greenest Boroughs

within West London and it was important that the beauty of the Borough was not lost.

In response to a question from Councillor Rajawat, Mr Lee advised that the UDP was the existing planning framework and the local plan would replace the UDP.

Mr Marbrow, a local resident, raised the issue of basic overcrowding within the area. He referred to the increase of backyard bungalows that were ruining the outlook and appearance of Heston & Cranford. He questioned whether the study would include data in relation to the number of illegal backyard bungalows within the Borough. Mr Lee advised that the study would not include specific data in relation to the number of backyard bungalows, but there would be references made to the illegal dwellings within the report.

Resolved -

That Members noted the presentation.

8. Bus Stop Improvement Proposals

See the report of the Director of Environment (Agenda Item 9)

Nigel Kent, Senior Transport Planner, presented the report. He advised that the report presented proposals for five bus stop improvements for Routes H28 and 111 on Cranford Lane and Springwell Road in Heston. The Council aimed to make bus stops in the Borough compliant with the Equalities Act. He advised that the Council had already made improvements to some bus stops and the proposals within the report contributed to the delivery of the ongoing improvements programme.

Mr Kent referred to maps to indicate the location of the bus stops. He advised that the aim was to lengthen the bus stop clearways which would enable the buses to pull in easily.

Councillor Rajawat noted that some of the bus stops on Springwell Road were located near to speed humps. He expressed concern that some drivers were driving dangerously fast in between each of the speed bumps on Springwell Road. Councillor Hughes agreed and asked Mr Kent whether there were any proposals to introduce a 20mph speed limit on Springwell Road. Mr Kent advised that he was not aware of any proposals but that he would forward the request onto the traffic safety section.

In response to a question from Councillor Mann, Mr Kent advised that the bus stops were spaced approximately 400 metres apart.

Resolved –

That the Committee

- 1.1 Noted the proposed details for bus stop improvements on Cranford Lane and Springwell Road.
- 1.2 Approved the five bus stop improvement and clearway proposals at an estimated cost of £10,000, as set out in the report and on Attachments A-C.

9. Western International Market, Hayes Road, Southall

See the report of the Director of Environment (Agenda Item 10)

Myfanwy McNally, Planning Officer, presented the report. She advised that the proposal was

for the construction of a trade city development to comprise of 9 self contained units B1/B2/B8 use and associated works.

Resolved -

Members made the following comments:

- Members expressed concern that the consultation had not been carried out to a wide enough area.
- Members expressed concern about the increase of traffic to an already congested area.
- Members felt there would be an increase in congestion and traffic which would adversely affect local residents.
- Members expressed concerns about the congestion that would be caused by large Lorries delivering goods to the site.
- Members did not feel that the amount of parking proposed was adequate for the site.
- Members felt that any employment opportunities generated at the site should be ring fenced for local people; otherwise there would be no benefit of the scheme for local residents.
- Members felt very disappointed by the piecemeal approach submitted by the developer for the site.
- Members requested that a response from the traffic section be provided in response to concerns regarding traffic and congestion in the area.

10. Open Forum for questions from the public (maximum of 30 minutes)

The Chair invited Ms Bull to address the committee. She stated that she had not received a reply to an enquiry she made to the Council on 2 February 2012. Her enquiry related to the massive increase in vermin in the vicinity of empty houses. This was a particular issue of concern in the vicinity of The Hermitage, Upper Sutton Lane, Heston. Ms Bull questioned whether Council vermin control services were free to old age pensioners.

Ms Lorraine Srivastav, Contracts Officer, advised that she had spoken to Tony Bull from the Animal Warden Team and he had advised that all information regarding the Council's pest control services, including fees and charges were available on the Internet. Ms Srivastav had downloaded a copy of the information and she handed it to Ms Bull.

In relation to the Hermitage, Ms Srivastav advised the Committee that they had received information yesterday about rough sleepers squatting within the Hermitage site. She advised that she would liaise with LBH legal team to explore the options of serving the squatters with a legal notice to vacate the site.

Maggie Urquhart, Conservation Officer, advised that the Council had plans to review security and access to the Hermitage site. She acknowledged that access concerns had been raised by the committee several times and she would work closely with Ms Srivastav to secure the premises.

In terms of the fabric of the building, Ms Urquhart advised that there was some funding available to carry out a condition survey of the premises. However, the Council only had half of the funds required to carry out the survey. Therefore, it would be necessary to source the remaining amount of funds to pay for the survey. Ms Urquhart clarified that the survey would only assess the existing condition of the building. She stated that it could be argued that it was the owner's responsibility to fund and apply for the building survey as he owned the property.

Ms Urquhart emphasised that she did not have enough funds within her budget to cover the

full cost of the survey. She advised that the Committee could choose to allocate funds if they wished to do so.

In response to a question from Members, Ms Urquhart advised that she was not absolutely sure what the full cost of the survey would be. She stated that English Heritage had said that they did not wish to be involved in the project. Therefore, it would be necessary to employ consultants to assess the amount of work required and then provide a quote for the work.

Councillor Mann felt frustrated that there appeared to be no progress made. He felt that the current issue about funding for the survey meant that the Council was just going round and round in circles. He stated that when he was Chair of the Area Committee, he and Mr Blackett had met with the owner of the Hermitage and the owner had been very amenable to suggestions about how to make progress. The overriding opinion from the owner and local residents had been that it would be optimal to try and save the existing building rather than let it collapse. Councillor Mann suggested that the Chair and Heidi Shearn, Area Coordinator, and Mr Blackett once again meet with the owner to discuss the best way forward to protect and possibly restore the building.

Councillor Chatt stated that he had suggested some time ago that Officers could contact restoration television programmes or even colleges with trainees to work on the restoration of the site. He emphasised that it was essential to make the effort to move forward with this issue. Councillor Chatt expressed concern that if Officers and residents continued to waste time discussing the issue they would run the risk of the building collapsing and crumbling away before a resolution was finally agreed. Councillor Chatt stated that the owner would not provide the necessary funds required, thus Officers would need to look into options that would provide the owner with enough financial help to solve the problems.

Councillor Hughes felt that the main problem was that the Council did not own The Hermitage. She felt that it was essential for the Council to apply for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the property. She felt that the Hermitage could only be saved once the Council owned it. She asked Officers to consider whether the Council could allocate funds and carry out a Compulsory Purchase Order. Councillor Hughes commented that they had never actually received a report with options for the site. She requested that Ms Urquhart bring a report to the committee outlining all of the options for the site.

Gurpreet Thethy, Community Safety Coordinator, reported that there were approximately 4 or 5 rough sleepers living within the Hermitage building. She advised that they had moved into the Hermitage grounds after being moved on from under the M4 Bridge. She advised that they had received several complaints from local residents about the squatters and reports that they had even installed two televisions on the site. She stated that they were taking serious risks with their lives by living in such a dangerous property. In response to a question, Ms Thethy stated that it was not clear where the electricity supply was coming from and she clarified that as they were not living on a public road but actually within a privately-owned property they were considered to be squatters.

Mr Blackett questioned whether the squatters were living within the main building or the ancillary buildings at the back of the property. He expressed concerns that a number of buildings at the back of the site were in a very dangerous condition and could collapse at any time. Ms Thethy advised that she would look into the matter.

Councillor Mann emphasised that the Heston & Cranford Area Committee would need to decide whether it should assist the owner with funding to restore the property to its original state. Councillor Mann advised that in conversation with the owner, the owner had stated that he would be happy to restore the property with assistance from the Council. Councillor Mann

suggested that Maggie Urquhart make contact with the owner of the Hermitage and discuss the various options to enable a restoration of the property to take place.

The Chair invited Mr Nick Marbrow to address the committee. Mr Nick Marbrow, a local resident, referred to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). He advised that Paragraph 7.24 of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement stated "*an application which has objections can not be approved under delegated powers; it must be determined by an Area Committee or the Sustainable Development Committee*". He stated that since the Area Planning Committees were abolished in May 2011, 272 planning applications to which there had been objections were approved under delegated authority. He felt that the Council had acted unlawfully in failing to comply with the SCI. He questioned what action the Heston & Cranford Area Committee would take to ensure that the democratic rights of residents in Heston & Cranford as enshrined within the SCI were restored, and that illegally approved planning applications be referred to the Sustainable Development Committee for determination.

Mr Marbrow also stated that Members should note that the amendments to the Council's constitution to allow the Sustainable Development Committee to delegate authority to determine planning applications when there were objections was unlawful because it ignored the requirements of the SCI.

Mr Marbrow felt that the Head of Legal Services should have advised Councillors that they could not adopt the new planning procedures as they would have been allowing illegal delegated decisions to be made. Mr Marbrow expressed disappointment that the Council did not follow procedures that it had introduced.

Councillor Chatt stated that he wholeheartedly agreed with the comments made by Mr Marbrow. He noted that the decision and procedures adopted had clearly caused conflict and upset for local residents.

Councillor Mann felt that financial constraints within the Authority had taken priority. To reduce costs it was agreed to cut the number of meetings and therefore determine more applications under delegated authority. However, Councillor Mann felt that the public should be involved in Council decision-making processes.

Councillor Hughes suggested that Officers could consider the delegated decisions in a public environment so that members of the public could listen to the officer's deliberations before a decision was made.

The Chair invited Mr Blackett to address the committee. Mr Blackett felt that it was important for the Council to pay more attention to conservation matters within the Heston Conservation Area. He referred to shop fronts and businesses that were not in keeping with the identity and appearance of the Heston Conservation Area. He emphasised the importance of protecting the conservation area and urged the Council to remain vigilant.

11. Update on Policing Matters in Heston & Cranford

See the Heston & Cranford Sector Police Report - Agenda Item 12.

Chief Inspector Wilson presented an update on the Local Policing Model. Under the Local

Policing Model, neighbourhoods were at the forefront of the policy. A Sergeant would be allocated to each ward and the Neighbourhood Policing Teams would be responsible for looking after a number of wards. Under the new model, Heston Ward would be joined up with Hounslow West. Chief Inspector Wilson advised that there would be a team of five neighbourhood cluster teams and recruitment was currently taking place for PCSOs to be allocated to each cluster team.

Councillor Hughes thanked Chief Inspector Wilson for his update and also wished to commend the Sfaer Neighbourhood Teams for all the wonderful and hard work they do. She referred to an incident of a missing child on the Brabazon Estate last night. She stated that the PCSO on duty was absolutely brilliant, calm and professional. She was happy to say that the 3 year old child was found a couple of roads away unharmed. However the incident highlighted the speed at which the PCSO reacted and also that he remained professional at all times. On behalf of the committee, Councillor Hughes thanked PCSO Richard Bacon for all of his hard work.

Sergeant Dave Gregg referred to the police report within the agenda pack and invited questions. Members were pleased to note that there had been a reduction in the number of burglaries across all four wards.

Gurpreet Thethy, Community Safety Coordinator, provided an update on the people living under the M4 Bridge. She advised that a fire took place at the site on 1st May and luckily no-one at the site was injured. There had been no information about how the fire was started; it was assumed that a mattress or bedding was set alight due to an internal dispute amongst the squatters. Ms Thethy advised that a report was sent to the Highways Agency to alert them to the fire risk.

Ms Thethy advised that the latest update found that there were still approximately 12 people living under the bridge. She advised that she had spoken with the Highways Agency in an attempt to permanently secure the site. However, she had received a response stating that it would not be possible to permanently attach anything to the M4 bridge, however they suggested that chemical bonding was a feasible option. She explained that the Highways Agency would be able to install the chemical bonding within one month of the chemical bonding approach being approved. She advised that the site would need to be cleared of bedding and rubbish before the contractors could complete the chemical bonding.

Councillor Rajawat questioned whether there had been any further progress made with the Indian High Commission in terms of helping the individuals to go back to their countries. He expressed concern that the individuals would be moved away from under the M4 Bridge and they would locate themselves somewhere else, such as The Hermitage. Ms Thethy advised that she had several conversations with the Indian High Commission and the majority of the individuals were sent back to their country of origin. Unfortunately there was no short-term or quick-fix solution for the remaining 12/13 individuals.

Ms Thethy provided an update on the parking issues being faced in Thorncliffe Road. Ms Thethy advised that Satnam Sahota met with several residents of Thorncliffe Road and the option of installing bollards appeared to be a favourable option. Mr Sahota advised that the installation of bollards would not completely solve the problem. He advised that he had spoken with Asha Sharma at Hounslow Homes to put forward a proposal to install gates to secure the garages. He stated that the residents were very happy with the option to install gates as it would allow access for residents only and it would stop parents parking there.

The Chair thanked Sgt Dave Greg and Gurpreet Thethy for all their hard work. The Chair also thanked Sgt Hipkiss for all his hard work stopping the illegal gambling in Hounslow West.

12. CIL Briefing Report May 12

See the report by the Director Of Environment – Agenda Item 13

Myfanwy McNally, Planning Officer, described the main features of the new Community Infrastructure Levy and the proposals for implementing the arrangements in Hounslow. Some Boroughs had already set a standard charge. Hounslow was still considering the issue. A pan-London charge by the Mayor for London of £35 per square metre would be introduced on 1 April 2012. The Community Infrastructure Levy was compulsory and there was no room for negotiation. It was confirmed that some elements of section 106 agreements would remain.

In response to questions from Members, Ms McNally advised that the CIL was not ring-fenced and that it could be used towards any infrastructure needs at the time.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

13. Osterley Lane (CCTV cameras)

Lorraine Srivastav gave a verbal update in relation to reports of fly tipping in Osterley Lane. Ms Srivastav advised that the issue was raised approximately a year ago and Members received an update at the time. She stated that currently Officers did not feel that there was a serious problem with fly tipping in Osterley Lane. She reminded that last year there were eleven separate cases of fly tipping and the Council allocated funds to clean the area up. Ms Srivastav emphasised that currently the problem of fly tipping was a lot worse in other areas of the Borough.

In relation to a request for CCTV, Ms Srivastav advised that the problem was a lack of funding to implement cameras. She stated that in Osterley Lane there were no street lighting columns that could be used to provide power to CCTV Cameras. Previously the team owned four cameras however the team no longer had access to those anymore. She stated that unfortunately there were no available funds to purchase the cameras or to provide a power supply to any CCTV cameras on Osterley Lane.

Councillor Lal expressed concern that the Committee had never been informed of the issues in relation to the power supply before. He felt disappointed that the Committee was unable to make any progress with this issue. He stated that it was a matter of opinion whether it would be considered a serious problem. He noted that in relation to fly tipping across the Borough, Officers may not consider Osterley Lane to be a serious case. However, to a resident living close by to the area where the fly tipping was taking place, it would be considered a serious issue.

Councillor Mann agreed with the comments made by Councillor Lal and stated that local residents would be very disappointed with Ms Srivastav's response. He recalled previous discussions with a former Council officer, Jay Gopal, who had looked into the option of bringing a power supply to the site from the bridge. In his opinion he felt there was definitely a serious problem of fly tipping in the area that could not be ignored.

Mr Blackett advised that on a positive note, signs had been installed on the sharp bend on Osterley Lane. He emphasised that residents were very happy with installation of the new

signs.

The Chair stated that he was not happy with a verbal update from Officers. He stated that the Committee always requested written reports with facts and figures. He requested that this item be brought back to the next meeting and that Officers provide a written report.

14. Burns Way

Satnam Sahota, Traffic Engineer, advised that the implementation of a width restriction had been programmed for the summer holidays to minimise disruptions. He anticipated that the restriction works would be complete by late August/early September.

Councillor Chatt expressed disappointment that once again the Committee was being presented with a verbal update. He referred to the minutes and pointed out that Members had requested a written report on this issue rather than a verbal update.

15. Thorncliffe Road (parking problems)

Satnam Sahota, Traffic Engineer, provided an update about parking problems in Thorncliffe Road. He advised that a request had been received to install bollards in a section of Thorncliffe Road to prevent obstructions by vehicles in the road. He advised that an order for the bollards had been placed and that the bollards would be installed within the next two weeks.

A second area of concern was obstructive parking and parking on yellow lines. Due to the short term nature of these and reports that the problems were occurring throughout the Borough at school drop off and pick up times, enforcement would be very difficult. The long term solution would be to work with the school to 'educate' parents about the dangers of obstructive parking. The Road Safety Team had been alerted and would discuss ways to 'educate' parents with the school.

16. Petitions

Heidi Shearn , Area Co-ordinator, advised that a petition was submitted and signed by 60 residents, against the introduction of Controlled Parking on the Northfield Road Estate in Heston.

A response to the petition had been received from Hounslow Homes. Ms Shearn advised that the response to the petition had been included within the agenda pack.

Resolved –

Members noted the petition and the response to the petition by Hounslow Homes.

17. Date of next scheduled meeting

Members noted that the next meeting will be held on Thursday 12 July 2012.

18. Urgent Business

Heidi Shearn

Heidi Shearn, Area Co-ordinator, advised that this would be her last meeting as the Area Co-ordinator. She introduced Lourdes Debarry, the new Area Participation Officer. Ms Debarry

introduced herself and advised that she would be working with Members to improve the committee profile so that there would be an increase in the level of public participation.

Heidi Shearn said goodbye to the Committee and members of the public and advised that it had been a joy to work with both the Committee and members of the public.

On behalf of the Heston & Cranford Area Committee, Councillor Gopal Dhillon thanked Ms Shearn for all her hard work as the Area Coordinator. He emphasised that Ms Shearn had contributed a great deal to the committee over the last five years and that the Committee and local residents would be very sad to see her go. The Chair stated that Heidi had always been very friendly, professional and helpful throughout her time as Area Coordinator.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair also welcomed Lourdes Debarry as the new Area Participation Officer.

Councillor Mann welcomed Lourdes Debarry and emphasised that Members were very sad to see Ms Shearn leave. He emphasised that Heidi Shearn had developed a wealth of information about local issues such as the Hermitage. He expressed concerns that once Ms Shearn left the progress made through discussions with the owner of the Hermitage would be lost. He requested that Ms Shearn provide a thorough handover to Ms Debarry about local issues, especially the Hermitage, so that Ms Debarry could continue with the positive work started by Ms Shearn. Ms Shearn advised that she would provide Ms Debarry with a thorough handover and all of the information she had in relation to local issues within Heston & Cranford.

Time of meeting

Councillor Rajawat noted that this meeting had a very heavy agenda, hence the later finish time of the meeting. He suggested that in the interest of fuller resident participation it would be more beneficial to start the Area Committee meetings half an hour earlier. He proposed that the Heston & Cranford Area Committee meetings commence at the earlier start time of 7pm rather than 7.30pm. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Chatt and unanimously agreed by Members.

The meeting finished at 9:45 pm.

The minute taker at this meeting was