

WEALDSTONE REGENERATION ADVISORY PANEL

22 MARCH 2004

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| Chair: | * Councillor Burchell | |
| Councillors: | * Marilyn Ashton Billson * Harrison | * Vina Mithani * Marie-Louise Nolan |
| Co-opted Member: | * Councillor Miss Lyne | |
| Advisers: | † Mr S Addy | – Harrow Association of Disabled People |
| | Dr O Amele | – Wealdstone Traders' Association |
| | * Mr T Arens | – Heriot Catering |
| | * Mr M Garratt | – Kodak |
| | * Ms S Hall | – Wealdstone Traders' Association |
| | * Mrs B Harvey | – Wealdstone Active Community |
| | * Mr R Page | – North West London Chamber of Commerce |
| | * Mrs J Skidmore | – Wealdstone Active Community |
| | * Mr A Wood | – Harrow Public Transport Users' Association |

* Denotes Member/Adviser present

† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**126. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

127. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interests made by Members of the Panel arising from the business transacted at this meeting.

128. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

129. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

130. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that there are no public questions to be received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

131. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that there are no deputations to be received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

132. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that there are no petitions to be received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

133. **References from Council and Other Committees/Panels:**

RESOLVED: To note that there are no references from Council or other Committees or Panels to be received at this meeting.

134. **Wealdstone Comprehensive Community Safety Project:**

The Chief Environmental Health Officer (CEHO) attended the meeting to deliver a presentation on the new Community Safety Service and the Wealdstone Comprehensive Community Safety Project.

He began by explaining that the Council was in the process of creating a new 'Community Safety Service' which would bring together a number of existing service areas in order to facilitate a 'joined up' approach to addressing a broad range of community safety problems which were currently dealt with independently by different sections of the Council. For example, fly-tipping was currently dealt with by Parks, Highways or Environmental Health depending on whether the waste was dumped in a park, by the roadside or on a private road respectively. Under the new system it would be dealt with by one single operational system.

This new approach, it was explained, would also have the advantage of greater efficiency, and would therefore mean that resources would be freed up resulting in greater capacity, it would be easier for the public to communicate with the Council as there would be one single contact point for all community safety services, and it would also allow officers to analyse and address the root causes of problems, thereby shifting the emphasis to prevention rather than just dealing with the manifestation of problems.

The CEHO advised that the Service would be delivered through the following four major operational areas with responsibility for the sub-sections indicated, and he outlined the remit of each service area in more detail:

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| <p>(1) Commercial Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Safety • Health and Safety • Licensing Services • Trading Standards/Mortuary | <p>(2) On-Street/Envirocrime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection/Nuisance • Flytipping, abandoned vehicles etc • Highways Enforcement • Anti-Social Behaviour |
| <p>(3) Off-Street/Residential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuisance • Air Quality • Private Sector Housing • Contaminated Land • Pest Control/Animal Welfare | <p>(4) Community Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime & Disorder Unit/Anti Social Behaviour • Drug Action Team • Hate Crime/Domestic Violence • Street Wardens/Security Patrols • CCTV |

Wealdstone would be the first to benefit from the reorganisation with the launch of a Community Safety Project for Wealdstone, which would be used as the pilot study for devising operational solutions and delivery systems. The specific areas of operation for the project would be:

1. Anti-Social Behaviour, including fly-tipping
2. Abandoned vehicles
3. Crime Management/Community Policing
4. Obstruction of the footway/highway by retail activity
5. Dealing effectively with street clutter and furniture
6. Management of commercial and domestic waste
7. Empty buildings, commercial and domestic
8. Graffiti, fly-posting and fly-boarding
9. Planning and co-ordination of infrastructure improvements and street works, including those undertaken by utilities
10. Foul odours – Wealdstone Brook and individual commercial premises
11. Environmental protection/Public Health issues eg noise nuisance
12. Engagement with traders and community groups
13. Development of sustainable diversionary activities eg skateboard park

It was noted that this project would be co-ordinated with the Public Realm rollout under the New Harrow Project, which was currently being rolled out in Wealdstone, and the Safer Neighbourhoods scheme (also known as Operation Opal and Community Policing), under which each Ward would have its own dedicated Police team consisting of one sergeant, two Police Constables and three Police Community Safety Officers and foot patrolling of the community would be re-established to provide reassurance and visible police presence. The three pilot Wards for the Harrow Safer Neighbourhoods scheme would be Roxbourne, Marlborough and Wealdstone and of

these Wealdstone would be the first to receive its team, on 5 April 2004.

At the conclusion of the above presentation, Panel Members raised queries in relation to, inter alia, the following issues:

- (i) Vandalism of bus shelters: The CEHO advised that the Authority would be working in partnership with Transport for London to tackle the root cause of this problem. He indicated that if patterns of vandalism emerged the Authority would deploy the mobile CCTV van to catch the offenders.
- (ii) Obstruction of bus stops by parked cars: An adviser to the Panel explained that Brent removed any cars obstructing bus stops and queried whether Harrow would be adopting the same policy to combat this problem. In response, the CEHO advised that authorities were empowered to remove only those cars which were obstructing red bus routes and, as there were relatively few of these in the Borough, this tactic did not represent a solution to the problem. However, he assured the Panel that there would be a concerted effort to tackle this problem via regular checks by highways enforcement staff.
- (iii) Foul Odours in Wealdstone High Street arising out of sewage problems: The CEHO explained that the odours emanated from Wealdstone Brook which was culverted and ran under Wealdstone High Street, and that a survey was currently being carried which had, so far, identified approximately 250 illegal connections to the brook. Some of these were quite significant, for example the connection of large commercial buildings, and it was thought that they were a major contributor to the odours. Thames Water would try to persuade those responsible for the illegal connections to redirect their waste, but, in the event that they were unsuccessful, Environmental Health could serve notices to order rectification of the situation or, as a last resort, could carry out the works themselves and bill the offending party accordingly. It was hoped that the works would be completed before the summer and the accompanying hot weather.
- (iv) Enforcement against retailers obstructing the highway: In response to a question from a Councillor, the CEHO confirmed his intention to tackle the problem of retailers obstructing the highway and agreed that a sustained enforcement approach was required if action was to be successful, but that it must be recognised that, where a retailer owned the forecourt of the premise, control would be very limited. He emphasised that the Authority would be taking an even-handed approach to the issue and all retailers creating an obstruction would be dealt with equally.
- (v) Possible increase in Anti-Social Behaviour: An Adviser to the Panel queried whether officers would be able to cope with the influx of up to 1000 extra people to the Wealdstone area as a result of current housing projects and the possible rise in anti-social behaviour that this might cause. In response, the CEHO advised that it was impossible to predict whether anti-social behaviour would rise as a result of the new housing projects but emphasised that the key to combating such behaviour was by educating the community and providing a visible deterrent.
- (vi) Spitting: In response to a query raised by an adviser to the Panel, the CEHO advised that spitting was prohibited by a by-law in Harrow. However, the by-law was difficult to enforce and did not apply to all areas in the borough. The key to tackling the problem, he argued, was through educating the community about the potential health risks and social unacceptability of spitting.
- (vii) Litter: In answering a query relating to prosecuting for dropping litter in Wealdstone, the CEHO explained the enforcement difficulties associated with this and referred to the impact of the cleaning and maintenance scheme implemented in Wealdstone under the auspices of the Public Realm element of the New Harrow Project on the cleanliness of Wealdstone's streets. He reported that there were now more litterbins, they were emptied more frequently and Wardens had been tasked with encouraging the public not to drop litter.
- (viii) Anti-Social Behaviour linked to the use of Khat: In response to a query raised with regard to the use of Khat, the CEHO advised that he was aware of ongoing complaints regarding activities linked to the use of Khat in Herga Road. However, he pointed out that Khat was not illegal to use or possess and that there had been no allegations or incidents of criminal activity linked to the problem. Nonetheless, he acknowledged that the activities heightened

residents' fear of crime and informed the Panel that he hoped to work with both the community based Policing teams and the community to try and educate the Khat users as to the perceptions of Khat use and their behaviour.

- (ix) Dealing with Vermin: In response to a question regarding the prevalence of vermin in Wealdstone, the CEHO acknowledged that one of the major causes was the available food source through the feeding of pigeons and the inadequate disposal of commercial waste and other waste. He explained that the 'clean and green' aspect of the New Harrow Project had contributed to resolving the problem and there had also been some success in eradicating the latter through baiting regimes. With regard to pigeons, there were a number of possible solutions to the problem. The one likely to be adopted would be to proof local buildings, possibly to designate specific feeding areas and provide a pigeon loft from which eggs would be removed to control the population.

An adviser to the Panel pointed out that, when proofing buildings, the installation of slopes rather than nets was more humane and effective.

- (x) Key Worker Accommodation: A Member expressed concern that housing projects which reserved accommodation for key workers did not always remain reserved for that use. In response, the Chief Planning Officer advised that key worker accommodation was secured through legal agreement, which in practical terms gave the Authority good control over its use. The Chair expressed concern that there was a perception that key worker accommodation could revert to general use and requested that information clarifying the situation be circulated to all Members of the Panel. It was further requested that information advising whether key worker accommodation in Wealdstone was specifically marketed at Northwick Park Hospital staff was also requested.

- (xi) The Queens Arms Public House Car Park : Several Members and advisers commented on the fly-tipping problem at this site and the other problems this gave rise to, such as anti-social behaviour. The CEHO acknowledged that there was a long running problem with the site and assured the Panel that officers were seeking a long-term solution to the problems, such as working with the owners to reduce access to the site. A Ward Member for Wealdstone advised that she and her fellow Ward Councillors had recently visited the site with officers. She requested that feedback on this visit be provided via the next meeting of the Panel as the other Members might also find the information interesting.

A Member also referred to the fact that cars parking in the car park were often clamped. The CEHO advised that as it was private land this was legal and that any problems should be reported to the Trading Standards Service who would investigate the legality of the process.

At the conclusion of the question and answer session, the Panel joined the Chair in thanking the Chief Environmental Health Officer for his presentation.

RESOLVED: That the information provided be noted and the actions set out above be agreed.

135. **Community Premises Initiative - Update:**

The Panel received an oral update from the Chief Planning Officer regarding the Community Premises Initiative. It was advised that construction at the site was due to be completed by mid September and the various occupants were due to move in in November.

It was noted that the update which Members had requested regarding the relocation of the Grant Road After-School Club was included elsewhere in the agenda. With reference to this, a Member queried whether the letter seeking suitable alternative accommodation had been sent to all local schools as the School at which she was a governor had not received it. She also pointed out that Whitefriars School had been approached to be a partner but had not heard anything back from the Authority since. She further suggested that the Authority should publicise the After-School Club facility more widely. Another Member advised that the Canons Cluster had been very successful in publicising their After-School Club and suggested liaison with them for ideas. Feedback was requested on these issues.

The Chief Planning Officer (CPO) then referred to the Panel's request that the use of the multi-storey car park as an adjunct to the new youth facility at Premier House be investigated. He advised that the conversion of this site had been investigated and

officers had preliminarily identified a number of issues which would need to be addressed if the site were to be utilised. These included additional fencing, new lighting and resurfacing. He advised that there was a potential incompatibility between a surface which would meet the requirements relating to use by children and that suitable for car-parking. He indicated that the project would be quite costly. The CPO queried whether the Panel wished officers to pursue the idea and come back with a written report and a more detailed costing analysis. It was noted that , if the initiative were to then be agreed by the Panel, a report would need to be submitted to Cabinet.

During the discussion which followed, the Panel agreed that they were in favour of a more detailed report being submitted to the next meeting and the Chair agreed to circulate his briefing note on the matter in the meantime. It was requested that the report address possible sources of external funding for the project. The Panel also requested that a more detailed report which took a holistic perspective of the provision of youth activities in Wealdstone, and suggested diversionary activities, sites which could be utilised etc be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel. A further report regarding the Leisure Centre was also requested.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted/agreed.

136. **Information Update:**

RESOLVED: To note the information update provided.

137. **Wealdstone Active Community:**

The representatives of Wealdstone Active Community (WAC) updated the Panel on future activities to be organised by WAC.

The arrangements for the Community Safety Day on 27th March were reiterated and arrangements for the Blooming Wealdstone event on 3 July and the joint event with Wealdstone Football Club on May 29 to promote their new football ground which would open later this year were also outlined. It was also advised that the WAC Annual General Meeting was scheduled to take place on 19 April in Holy Trinity Church and all would be welcome to attend. It was advised that over £1000 had been raised for Children in Need through a number of previous events held in the autumn.

The representatives drew the Panel's attention to the fact that, arising from the rollout of the New Harrow Project to Wealdstone, new potted plants had been installed in the High Street and the shrubbery at Holy Trinity Church had been pruned.

It was noted that a local artist, Lawrence Mathias, had now been engaged to lead the project to paint a mural on the metal fence adjacent to the train station. It was emphasised that all input to the content of the mural would be welcomed.

Finally, the representatives distributed the new edition of Wealdstone Live.

RESOLVED: That the above update be noted.

138. **Any Other Business - Rising Bollards Scheme and Short-Term Parking Arrangements in Wealdstone Town Centre:**

An adviser to the Panel who represented Wealdstone Active Community reported that, in response to her requests at previous meetings, she had been supplied with information regarding the cost of the rising bollards scheme which had been implemented in the High Street and the possibility of seeking compensation from the manufacturer for the difficulties experienced in its operation. She read aloud excerpts of a letter from the Transportation Section. The letter advised that, as the difficulties experienced related to inconsistent installation of transponders by a bus company, the fault could not be blamed on the manufacturer and it was therefore unlikely that a compensation claim would be successful.

Arising out of discussion on the above, the adviser further pointed out that, in contravention of the traffic regulations, cars were currently using the pedestrianised centre for short-term parking. The adviser informed the Panel that local businesses felt that this arrangement worked well and she requested that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel regarding the formalising of this arrangement and addressing the issue of short term parking in Wealdstone generally. It was agreed that this would be requested.

Another adviser to the Panel referred to the advert placed in the local paper recently by a local travel agent which stated that the company were closing down due to the parking/traffic difficulties in the town centre. He argued that this was very one-sided and the closure was as likely to have been influenced by market pressures and the general

downturn in business due to international events.

RESOLVED: That the above information be noted and a report regarding short-term parking in Wealdstone Town Centre be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.

139. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Panel be held at 6.30 pm on Monday 5 July 2004.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.38 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR KEITH BURCHELL
Chair