

**WEALDSTONE REGENERATION ADVISORY
PANEL****20 SEPTEMBER 2004**

Chair:	* Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan	
Councillors:	* Marilyn Ashton	* Lavingia
	* Harrison	* Vina Mithani
	* Harriss	
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
	* Mrs 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**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Byron Park Area Regeneration**

The Panel received, for information, a report of the Executive Director (Urban Living) regarding the regeneration of the Byron Park Area, which report had been submitted to the Cabinet meeting held on 9 September 2004.

The report explained that a number of developments were proposed for the area, including an Indoor Tennis Centre, and it proposed the 'master-planning' of the developments to ensure the coordinated and sustainable development of the area. It also proposed upgrading Byron Park and the environment around the Leisure Centre, which, together with the 'master-planning', would enhance the area and create a sense of place and community.

The Director of Strategy (Urban Living) who spoke to this report, advised that she hoped to bring along the project architects to a future Panel meeting to discuss their vision for the area.

Turning to discussion of the report, a Member welcomed the holistic approach being taken to the regeneration of the area. She noted that the report had recommended that the improvements would be steered by Portfolio Holders and advised that she felt strongly such a project required commitment and input from all parties. She therefore considered that a cross-party Strategy Panel, along the same lines as the Town Centre Project Panel, should be established to steer the project. The Member added that Members of the Development Control Committee should not sit on the Panel to ensure that they did not prejudice their consideration of future planning applications for the site.

The Member's comments were echoed by several other Members and advisers to the Panel and it was agreed by general consensus that a recommendation would be submitted to Cabinet requesting that a Panel be established.

Members and advisers also sought clarification on a number of issues. In response to a question regarding the Wealdstone Regeneration Budget which was mentioned in the report, the Director of Strategy advised that this was a 'one-off' sum which had been set aside specifically to progress the planning of the project proposed. She explained that officers would need to bid for money to carry out the works from the Council's budget.

In response to a further question, officers confirmed that potentially some improvements to the area might be funded by Section 106 agreements which, it was explained, were legal agreements attached to planning permissions which secured

funds from a developer to pay for community benefits. It was stressed that the Authority could not accept a scheme which would not otherwise be acceptable in planning terms, purely because of a Section 106 agreement attached to the scheme.

The Panel noted that community involvement was pivotal to the project and that the Authority would be drawing up a community involvement strategy which would set out the plans for public consultation. The Chair requested that this be submitted to a future Panel meeting, along with a timetable for the consultation process, as soon as it was available.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To Cabinet)

That a cross-party Strategy Panel along the same lines as the Town Centre Project Panel be established to steer the Byron Park Area Regeneration Project.

(See also Minute 170 below).

RECOMMENDATION 2 - Feedback on Concerns Regarding Speeding Buses which were Referred to the Bus Liaison Committee

At the previous meeting of the Panel it had been agreed that concerns which had been expressed by the Panel about speeding buses be referred to the Council's Bus Liaison Committee by one of the advisers to the Panel who was also the Chair of that Committee.

The adviser now confirmed that he had raised the matter with the bus companies. He explained that the bus companies were of the view that speeding was a perceived rather than an actual problem but they had nonetheless agreed to put notices in the bus garages at Edgware and Harrow Weald reminding drivers of the speed limits and had also agreed to carry out management checks. The adviser further explained that plain clothes inspectors also made regular journeys on buses across London and fed back any concerns arising from these. They could, for example, recommend that a driver be retrained, and overall their visits aimed to improve the quality of bus services.

Several Councillors recounted personal experiences of buses speeding and/or braking to a sudden halt and advised of the many complaints passed to them by residents. They expressed particular concern that elderly passengers were vulnerable to injury when buses braked suddenly and pulled away before passengers had had an opportunity to sit down. The adviser informed the Panel that if residents noted the time, date, place of an incident and the registration number of the vehicle involved, he could raise the matter with the bus companies and this would enable them to pin down those drivers who were causing the problem. The Chair welcomed this advice and suggested that, given that speeding buses appeared to be a Borough-wide problem, the advice could be disseminated to the general public via area newsletters. It was agreed that the Panel would refer the matter to the Publications Advisory Panel suggesting that an article be included in the next issue of the newsletters.

It was further agreed that the Chair would write to the bus companies expressing the Panel's concerns and the Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder would be requested to write an additional letter. The adviser to the Panel confirmed that he would also continue to pursue the matter of speeding buses via the Bus Liaison Committee.

Resolved to RECOMMEND:

That the Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder write to the local bus companies expressing the Panel's concerns regarding speeding buses.

(See also Minute 177 below).

PART II - MINUTES162. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

163. **Declarations of Interest:**

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

164. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

165. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

166. **Public Questions:**

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

167. **Deputations:**

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

168. **Petitions:**

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

169. **Proposal for an Indoor Tennis Centre: Reference from the Cabinet Meeting held on 29 April 2004:**

The meeting received a report of the Executive Director (Urban Living), which had been referred to the Panel by Cabinet for information. The report set out details of the proposal to establish an Indoor Tennis Centre at Harrow Leisure Centre. It was noted that Cabinet had agreed the recommendations set out in the report.

The Strategic Director (Urban Living), who spoke to the report, explained that the project would be funded in part by the Authority and in part by a grant from the Lawn Tennis Association.

It was pointed out that the Council's own Unitary Development Plan, its Cultural Strategy and the Audit Commission all acknowledged the relative inadequacy of sports and leisure provision in the Borough and this proposal would address that gap and significantly add to the range and quality of leisure facilities offered. It was also anticipated that the establishment of the Centre would assist in regenerating Wealdstone.

During the discussion which followed, several Members reiterated the comments of some Members set out in the minute of the Cabinet's discussion of the report, advising that whilst they recognised the potential benefits of the Centre they were concerned regarding its sustainability and the cost implications. Several other Members also expressed concerns regarding the affordability of access to the Borough's leisure facilities and that the Centre would cater for and appeal to only a very limited number of residents.

In response, the Strategic Director (Urban Living) emphasised that the Authority would be drawing up a usage agreement which would set out its commitment to aiming the Centre at all sections of the community. She also pointed out that similar schemes in other local authorities, such as Islington, had proved extremely successful with very

high usage by the local community. She further referred to the new Harrow Leisure Card Scheme which offered concessionary tariffs to specified groups.

Finally, the Panel noted that the Indoor Tennis Centre Project was part of a much wider audit of leisure facilities within the Borough and a drive to improve provision and standards.

RESOLVED: That the report and the above comments be noted.

170. **Byron Park Area Regeneration:**
Further to Recommendation I set out above it was

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the community involvement strategy and the timetable for the consultation process for the project be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel, as soon as they become available;

(3) it be noted that it is proposed that the architects for the project attend a future Panel meeting to discuss their vision for the area.

171. **Provision for Children and Young People in Wealdstone:**
The Panel received a report of the Executive Director (People First) which set out an overview of out-of-school provision for children and young people in Wealdstone.

The Chair welcomed the report but requested that more detailed information be provided. She proposed that an audit of the activities be carried out to ascertain, for example, the numbers attending/participating in each activity and the age groups involved, and the information then be submitted to the Panel under cover of a further report. Officers advised that there was no existing mechanism for collecting this information but agreed that groups could be approached and requested to provide the information.

Arising from the discussion on this report, several Members of and advisers to the Panel commented that, despite increased police presence on Wealdstone streets, antisocial behaviour was still a significant problem, particularly amongst young adults, and that there was not currently an adequate Police response.

It was agreed that the Panel would invite the Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Bob Carr, and a senior member of the Safer Neighbourhoods Team to the next Panel meeting to discuss their concerns. It was also suggested that the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator be invited.

RESOLVED: That (1) officers be requested to undertake an audit of out-of-school activities in Wealdstone and submit the information under cover of a further report to the Panel;

(2) the Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Bob Carr, a senior member of the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator be invited to the next Panel meeting to discuss the Panel's concerns regarding anti-social behaviour.

172. **Update on Key-Worker Accommodation:**
The Director of Strategy (Urban Living) addressed the Panel on a number of issues relating to key-worker accommodation in response to queries raised at the previous Panel meeting. In particular, a number of queries had been raised regarding the marketing of the accommodation in Wealdstone to relevant employers. Members and several advisers expressed some concern as to whether properties were being marketed effectively to employers such as the Northwick Park Hospital.

The Director of Strategy explained that officers from the relevant housing association had been appointed to market the accommodation in Wealdstone and she had requested a formal report from them as to who they had marketed to and what kind of key workers had taken the properties occupied so far. She advised that she had not yet received a response but she would circulate it to the Panel when she had. She acknowledged the Panel's concerns and reported that the Authority intended to draw up a policy which set out the standards of marketing which they would expect to be met in future.

She added that there was some anecdotal evidence that the slow take up of accommodation by key workers might reflect that the demand was for family housing

but, due to the nature of the policy framework within which the Council operated, and in particular the London Plan, much of the accommodation was in the form of flats. If this demand was borne out by statistical evidence and the policy was therefore not allowing the Borough to meet its needs she advised that the Authority would seek to revise the policy.

It was noted that it had been agreed at the previous meeting of the Panel to extend an invitation to a representative of Acton Housing to attend a Panel meeting and the Chair advised that they would be contacted to attend the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That (1) once available, information regarding the marketing of the key-worker accommodation in Wealdstone be circulated to Members of the Panel; and

(2) a representative of Acton Housing be invited to the Panel's next meeting.

173. **Report back on the Possibility of Utilising Mobile Classrooms as a Venue for the Grant Road After-School Club:**

Further to the request at the previous meeting that the possibility of utilising mobile classrooms as a venue for the Grant Road After-School club be investigated, the Panel now received a verbal update from the Assistant Youth Service Manager on this matter. He advised that Ofsted did not consider mobile classrooms to be a suitable venue for an After-School Club and officers were trying to secure another venue to relocate the Club. It was noted that the After-School Clubs were self-funding and there was therefore no budget attached to cover the cost of renting a venue.

One option under consideration was developing the provision at Belmont First and Middle Schools, and letters had recently been sent out to all parents of Belmont pupils to try and ascertain the level of interest in a club located there.

It was noted that there were currently only 2 users of the Grant Road After-School club and they were now being transported to Cedars After-School Club. The Chair suggested that this did not necessarily reflect a low level of interest from parents in the area but more that many parents had found alternative after-school provision due to the uncertain future of the Grant Road Club.

Members once again stressed their concern that a venue be found for the Club.

RESOLVED: That an update on the relocation of the Grant Road After-School Club be provided at the next meeting of the Panel.

174. **Update on Progress on Enforcement Action against the Greengrocer in High Street, Wealdstone who is Repeatedly Obstructing the Highway:**

It was noted that the Panel had been due to receive a verbal update on this item but there was no officer in attendance to provide the update. The Chair advised the Panel that she would pursue this matter.

The Chair advised that she and the Chair of the Wealdstone Traders' Association had recently made an informal approach to the greengrocer in question and he had agreed to tidy up the boxes which obstructed the highway. Several Members and advisers expressed support for this approach as, whilst they were concerned that the area around the greengrocer was currently untidy and unsightly, they noted that if the Authority resorted to taking enforcement action, they would have to taken an even-handed approach to all the retailers in the area and other retailers creating an obstruction. For example, those with advertising boards would also be approached. Local retailers were concerned that this might have a negative impact on local businesses.

RESOLVED: That the above information be noted.

175. **Arrangements for a Workshop to Discuss Traffic Issues in Wealdstone:**

Further to the decision at the previous Panel meeting to hold a workshop to discuss traffic issues relating to Wealdstone, the Chair addressed the Panel regarding the arrangements for the workshop. She advised that it had proved difficult to identify a suitable date for the meeting to take place on and queried whether Thursday 4th November was suitable for those present. It was agreed that it was.

A Member suggested that the Panel should take a holistic approach to solving traffic problems in Wealdstone and therefore proposed that the workshop should also examine the projected impact of the regeneration of Byron Park Area on local traffic. The Director of Strategy (Urban Living) explained that, as part of the proposals for the Byron Park area, traffic movement studies would be carried out to assess the impact

on ring roads and local roads and to evaluate whether the existing road system could accommodate the traffic. She agreed that she would submit this information to the Panel once it was available but advised that it was unlikely to be available by 4th November and it would therefore not be possible to have an informed discussion on the impact of the project on that date.

A Member suggested that the workshop be delayed, pending the availability of the above information, but several other Members felt that it would be possible to progress a solution to some of the traffic issues in the meantime and were reluctant to delay the workshop further. Following further debate it was therefore agreed that the workshop would go ahead to discuss traffic and to examine the proposals previously submitted to the Panel by the Wealdstone Traders' Association, and other issues relating to the regeneration of Byron Park.

RESOLVED: That a workshop with officers, the relevant Portfolio Holder, the Chair of the Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel, Ward Councillors and Members of and advisers to the Panel be scheduled to take place at 6.30pm on Thursday 4 November 2004 for the purposes of discussing traffic issues in Wealdstone and issues relating to the regeneration of Byron Park.

176. **Report back on the possibility of acquiring the Sam Maguire/Queens Arms Public House Site:**

The Chief Planning Officer addressed the Panel with regard to the suggestion put forward at the previous Panel meeting that the site of the Queen's Arms Public House be acquired by the Council.

He advised that he was currently examining the suggestion in conjunction with Legal officers, but explained that to acquire the site compulsorily, the Authority would need to demonstrate that they had an appropriate alternative use for the site in mind and, preferably, planning permission for that use also.

A Member suggested that the site could be used for car parking but the Chief Planning Officer reasoned that, as there were under-utilised car parks in Wealdstone it might be difficult to make a case for this use. He suggested that a use which would contribute to the regeneration of Wealdstone might be more appropriate.

Following further discussion it was agreed that suggestions for a use for the site would be sought at the workshop scheduled to take place on 4th November.

RESOLVED: That suggestions for a use for the site be sought at the workshop scheduled to take place on 4th November 2004.

177. **Feedback on Concerns Regarding Speeding Buses which Were referred to the Bus Liaison Committee:**

Further to Recommendation II above, it was

RESOLVED: That (1) the update be noted;

(2) the Panel refer its concerns regarding speeding buses to the Publications Advisory Panel and request that the advice given be outlined in an article to feature in the next issues of the Area Newsletters; and

(3) the Chair of the Panel write to the local bus companies expressing the Panel's concerns.

178. **Wealdstone Active Community:**

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

It was noted that a Community Safety Day would take place on Saturday 25 September and would include children's activities.

The representatives also informed the Panel that the painting of the mural on the metal fence adjacent to the railway station had now been completed. The official unveiling would take place on 4 October at 4.00 pm. In response to a query from a member of the Panel, it was explained that the names of the children who participated in painting the mural would not be added to it as it had not been possible to compile a definitive list. Only one name would appear and that would be in memory of a child who had contributed to the mural but had since died.

Finally, the WAC representatives advised that they had lost some of their sponsorship for the Wealdstone Live Newsletter. They requested suggestions for sources of funding. They advised that they would possibly be applying for a grant from the Council to fund their work for the following year.

RESOLVED: That the above update be noted.

179. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Panel be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 30 November 2004.

180. **Any Other Business:**

- Official Opening of the Wealdstone Community Centre

The Chair advised the Panel that the official opening of the new Wealdstone Centre located at Premier House would take place between 3.30 pm and 8.00 pm on Wednesday 12 January 2005.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 9.14 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MARIE-LOUISE NOLAN
Chair