

Camden Together

Canteloves Community Strategy Consultation Meeting

Notes of a meeting held 2 November 2006 at 7.00pm at The Irish Centre

Camden Council councillors and officers present:

Cllr Paul Braithwaite
Cllr Frederic Carver
Cllr Ben Rawlings
Robert Scourfield, Assistant Director of Public Protection
Ruth Playle, Research and Policy Officer

Members of the public present:

Attendees In total there were 20 attendees, excluding a CNJ Reporter, councillors and council officers.

Attendees who signed the attendance list were:

Anthony Walleluda
Bridget Walleluda
Chris Talbott,
D. James
M. Jackson
Barry Hultuary
John Twoney
Sarah Hayward
Jenny Blagbrough
David Blagbrough
June Swan
Cheryl Donker
Andrew Deans.

Cllr Braithwaite introduced the meeting and Cllr Rawlings gave a presentation on the Camden Together Community Strategy document.

After a general discussion, which also resulted in some comments relevant under the four main themes of the strategy, the group split into four and discussed a theme each. One person from each group then fed back the main comments of the discussion.

General comments on the Community Strategy

There were concerns about what was **left out** of the Consultation document. Comments were:

- The strategy doesn't address the main issues faced by residents (the reality of daily life) such as safety, drug dealing, crime, trafficking – sex shops, quality of life is not improving.

- Individuals want to be able to identify issues relevant to them in the plan.
- The older generation isn't going to benefit from this strategy because it looks too far ahead.
- What's been written is very good, it is a visionary document. However it needs to demonstrate the responsiveness and responsibility of the Council, a separately if necessary.
- Need to make sure that contractors are held responsible for the work they do on behalf of the council
- Members of the community need to feel they are being served/responded to.
- Where is the sustainability for the future in the strategy?

Other concerns were around how the vision would be achieved:

- We agree with the document as a vision but it is the journey to that vision that we want to talk about.
- Needs to be a vision of Camden in 2007 not 2012, because some of us won't be around in 2012!

Creating a borough of opportunity

- Education is the most important thing, it is right that it should be central to the strategy. Teachers are very important.

Balancing growth with our environment

- If cuts are occurring how do you intend to cope with the growing population?
- We still need two refuse collections a week not one, otherwise the improvements made by introducing two collections will be no more.

Building strong, healthy and connected communities

- If you cut back on community centres how will you encourage a community spirit?
- General feelings were that hope had been taken from the community and the group didn't think that there would actually be a community in 2012.
- The council needs to be aware of cuts that affect ordinary people.

- The Council needs to regain the confidence of its residents and organisations.
- Very deep concerns that communities will be destroyed as there isn't as much of a community spirit now as there was twenty or even ten years ago.

A safe and vibrant place at the heart of a world city

- Opening of the Channel Tunnel – have the implications been thought through?

End of group discussion feedback for each theme:

Creating a borough of opportunity

- Scrap the “especially for young people” bit. The strategy needs to be for everyone. The opportunities need to extend to older people too and services for them.
- There needs to be more working with and funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- More emphasis on the integration of communities. An example given was helping all types of groups from people coming from other countries to those trying to get back into work after being in prison.
- Give value to people and places.

Balancing growth with our environment

- This group saw this theme as having three distinct areas: housing, planning and the environmental issues themselves.
- Make better use of student accommodation during the summer.
- Developers should be made to have to always have at least 15% of their developments as social/affordable housing.
- There were concerns about more people coming to Camden through Kings Cross to work and for “outings” as a consequence of the Kings Cross Project. The concern was that these new commuters looking to move to London would decide to live in Camden rather than any other borough. It was suggested that the Council needs to work with neighbouring boroughs to coax new arrivals out of Camden and into (e.g.) Islington otherwise the population could grow even more than estimated.
- There needs to be more lobbying at the Government for the money that we lost out on for not voting for the ALMO.

- Planning need to challenge the 10% sustainability of new houses and make it 30%.
- Make it easier for people to get grants to use more sustainable energy sources.
- Support for the Town Hall Extension Wind Turbines.
- Does the Council recycle everything? They should.

Building strong, healthy and connected communities

- To create a feeling of community the Council needs to engage the population, and show residents that they will make a difference during this process. Without knowing that they can make a difference they will not engage and the community spirit will disappear.
- The Council needs to be understanding, accessible, and sympathetic.
- There needs to be a larger sense of inclusion, there is not enough of this, which is needed if we are to feel like a community, for example street festivals and local fairs.
- Need to get back the village street feel: more local shops and the Council should give small amounts of money to businesses to help them and create shop signage.
- People respond to the area that they are in: if it looks run down, council standards of housing, the maintenance etc. and has drug dealers on the street corners then people won't care and there won't be a sense of community. The strategy needs to address these issues.

A safe and vibrant place at the heart of a world city

- Need to ensure that Kings Cross can cope with the "hoards of people" coming into Camden and the residents travelling out. It doesn't appear to have been thought about.
- Anti-social behaviour. The Westminster side of Covent Garden doesn't have as much crime as the Camden side. There needs to be greater cross borough communication and sharing of ideas.
- Where is the sustainability for the future in the strategy?
- What's being done about major employers' needs? It will benefit them if their employees live locally. Can we facilitate this?

Consultation feedback

Picked the wrong things for the summary document/postcard – it gives the wrong impression. For example it is very youth focused and adds to in ability to identify with the full strategy proposal which is more inclusive.

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and contributions.