

## **Camden Together**

### **Frogna and Fitzjohn Community Strategy Consultation Meeting**

#### **Notes of a meeting held 7 November 2006 at 7.00pm at University College School**

#### **Camden Council councillors and officers present:**

Cllr Dawn Somper (Chair)  
Cllr Martin Davies (Presentation)  
Cllr Andrew Mennear  
Philip Colligan,  
Stuart Gibb, Members' Support, Organisational Development

#### **Members of the public present:**

Tony Hillier, Heath and Hampstead Society  
Val Russell  
B Kinsley  
Joan Wilson  
S L Ram  
Charmian England  
Douglas Maxwell, Frogna Way Residents Association  
Fr G Sheehan (St Thomas Moore Catholic Church)  
Peter Brown, warden of student residence  
Karen Blanchard, Chesterford Gdns & Frogna Residents Association  
Alan Austin  
Sunita Rapai, CNJ  
Farokh Khoroshi, Fitzjohn's Avenue Residents Ass.  
Vicky Fobel  
Sgt. Phil Hewetson, Safer Neighbourhoods Team  
James Parkinson, Safer Neighbourhoods Team)  
Jessica Leamond Criqui, Learmond Criqui Sokel LLP  
Lilian Brafman, (RedFrog)  
Dudley Leigh (RedFrog)  
Richard Stone  
Ruth Stone  
Vera Coleman, RedFrog  
Sunil Sabharwal  
Helen Cordell

1. Cllr Somper introduced the meeting, welcomed all those attending and outlined the aim of the evening as the opportunity for residents/groups from this area to feed their comments and ideas in to the Community Strategy. Cllr Davies gave a presentation on the key themes in the consultation document. There were some general questions and then the discussion focused on each of the themes set out in the consultation document.

2. Following a query about the population increase in Camden, Cllr Davies confirmed that according to the latest ONS projections the population of Camden was expected to grow by 80,000 by the year 2029.

3. Cllr Davies confirmed that the community strategy would be wider than Unitary Development Plan and that the Council was leading the development of the community strategy, working with other partners on the Local Strategic Partnership, including the Police, health and fire services, with voluntary and community groups and businesses.

### **Creating a borough of opportunity**

4. People wanted to see more done to protect the unique character of places like Hampstead High Street, particularly in terms of supporting independent retailers and avoiding large chain stores moving into the area. It was recognised that there were limits on what the Council could do although people wanted to see the Council show leadership on the issue. There was discussion about whether the Council could incentivise small businesses and retailers, for example through business rates or rents.

5. Others felt that the Council did not have a role in subsidising small businesses and that, while independent retailers were good for the area, there was also a need for shops that met the everyday needs of residents. The Hampstead and Heath Society had introduced a card system whereby discounts were available to users and people felt that this approach could be promoted more and used to encourage local people to support their independent retailers.

6. Some people felt that the Council had little influence over getting people into work. Cllr Davies explained that there were things that the Council could do for example increasing access to training. People at the meeting wanted to see more adult training utilising the adult training colleges and institutions in the borough. There was support for the idea of developing positive role models in the community.

### **Balancing Growth with our Environment**

7. There was a discussion around the Council's role in promoting the use of electric cars and several people supported the idea that the Council should provide charging points for electric cars, in particular for those living in apartments who currently had no means of charging electric vehicles. It was felt that schools had a critical role in promoting environmental concerns, for example the importance of recycling.

8. It was recognised that there would need to be greater housing density to accommodate the growing population, but several people felt that should be targeted around Kings Cross and the West End where there was already the transport infrastructure to accommodate growth. There were concerns about the impact on the environment with the scale of growth in population that was expected.

9. There was support for looking at quality of life across London, to ensure there was a balanced approach to preserving green space. Several people felt that Camden should protect open public spaces and protect them from development. Hampstead Heath was very important to people, but there was a feeling from some that Frognal & Fitzjohns didn't have it own green open space. Several people talked about the importance of good public transport to ensure that public spaces were accessible. There were some specific concerns about the public transport serving Hampstead Heath.

10. Several people supported the idea of empty office space being used as the basis for more housing, for example in the area around Kingsway. There was a feeling that empty buildings were a wasted resource and more should be done to bring them back into use.

11. It was felt that there needed to be increased communication between those involved in developing transport across London and in particular people wanted the Council to work more closely with Transport for London. Several people felt that there should be a green transport policy for schools and there were concerns about the impact of the school run in particular. Several specific points were raised about making buses more useful, for example extending the route for the 603 to run all the way to Paddington not just to Maida Vale. It was also suggested that there should be a school run bus service. The issue was raised about the proposed position of the new secondary school in Swiss Cottage and the fact that there would be very great traffic consequences with 2 schools on opposite sides of the road. People felt that the development of east to west transport in Camden would play a key role in improving access to key areas and facilities in the borough.

12. There was a discussion about the role that cycle lanes and other measures could play in encouraging people to cycle rather than use their cars. Many people felt that the current cycle lanes were inadequate and there was a call for looking at alternatives including allowing cycling on pavements. Others at the meeting felt that this would disadvantage pedestrians. Finchley Road however given as an example where it was dangerous for cyclists to use the main road. Some people supported the introduction of licence plates for bicycles so that complaints, for example about cycling on pavements, could be pursued. Responding to a discussion about the possibility of a model like that in places like Copenhagen (where more of the road is dedicated to cyclists) Cllr Mennear explained that these were issues for central not local government.

### **Building strong, healthy and connected communities**

13. While it was recognised that this meeting had people from a wide range of backgrounds, people felt that more needed to be done to involve hard to reach communities in decisions. There were concerns that large parts of the community never attended events like this one or got to input in other ways.

14. There was support for greater use of webcasting, although Cllr Mennear suggested that currently not many people watched the meetings that were webcast. It was suggested that the Council should have its own cable TV station, which could be used to communicate with residents. There was also support for a central notice board to advertise meetings and events for the community.

15. People wanted to see more residents voting and it was suggested that the Council should aim for at least 50% voting in local elections.

16. There was support for the council helping to bring communities together – young and old, rich and poor, different ethnic backgrounds. People saw the idea of area forums as a means of bringing residents and groups to get together. It was noted that more should be done to bring groups to these meetings, including more and better advertising. It was suggested that the Council should advertise in bus shelters and other places, possibly using electronic screens, to ensure that people are aware of events.

17. There was some concern about the division between private and public education and the need for work to happen to bring children from different backgrounds together. Cllr Somper explained that some work was being done on this, including between UCS and other schools in area on drama.

18. The issue was raised about the proposed position of the new secondary school in Swiss Cottage and the fact that there would be very great traffic consequences with 2 schools on opposite sides of the road. Cllr Davies suggested that with an expected increase in population of 90,000 by 2029 this was necessary.

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

19. There was concern that the fear of crime had been fed by the media and that the rise in fear did not reflect an actual rise in crime. People wanted more positive news about what had been done to tackle crime and wanted local councillors to play a bigger role in disseminating information to residents. Sgt Phil Hewetson from the Met Police Safer Neighbourhood scheme said that when meeting with residents, more said they feared crime than had actually been a victim of crime.

20. People welcomed the police approach to the safer neighbourhoods initiative, which involved listening to residents. It was noted that two years ago the police wouldn't have attended a meeting like this. There was some concern that groups like Neighbourhood Watch groups had been excluded from the safer neighbourhoods approach, although they were crucial to the community.

21. In relation to the 2012 Olympics, people felt that the Council should have a strategy for children in the run to the games, which would help Camden have a gold medallist. There was support for involving business, for example through sponsorship for individuals. People felt that there was a

strong link between sporting activity and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

22. There was some concern about the impact of the games in terms of transport. People felt that Camden had excellent sporting facilities, but there was also concern that some of the sporting facilities in the borough could not easily be accessed from Frognal and Fitzjohn because of the lack of adequate public transport. Others felt that there wasn't enough provision of sporting facilities in the borough, in particular there was concern that places like Swiss Cottage already had long waiting lists for 5 year olds to join the gym. There was also concern about the cost of hiring facilities.

23. People wanted to see Camden make the most of the cultural aspect to the games. People wanted more done to encourage visitors to the borough and were concerned about the impact of parking controls on visitors.

**Cllr Davies, Somper and Mennear thanked guests for their attendance and valuable contribution to the consultation. The meeting concluded at 9.10pm**