

## **Camden Together**

### **Highgate Ward Community Strategy Consultation Meeting**

#### **Notes of a meeting held on 30 October 2006 at 7.00pm in Highgate Newtown Community Centre**

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

Cllr Maya de Souza  
Cllr. Adrian Oliver  
Cllr. Paul Barton  
Alex Williams, Assistant Director, Culture and Environment  
Jon Brenner, Project Officer, Camden Strategy Unit  
Cathy Norris, Programme Manager, Building Stronger Communities Team  
Martin Ford, Building Stronger Communities Team

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

Brigitte Eisner  
Nick Bradfield, Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee  
Nick Roxan, Highgate Newtown Community Centre  
Emma Diaz  
Michael Nicholas  
Jeff Williams, Highgate Safer Neighbourhoods Team  
John Collins, Camden's Green Party  
Carolyn Naish, Lauderdale House  
Maggie Cosin, Highgate Newtown Community Centre  
Roisin Gadelrab, Camden New Journal  
Alison Clare  
Michael Woy  
Blake Ludwig  
Margaret Downing, Holly Lodge TLA  
Nasira Saeed  
John Slater, Swains Lane Residents Association  
Linda Treherne, 3 Point Park Steering Group  
Lesley Simpson, 3 Point Park Steering Group  
Michael Zagol, Swains Lane RA  
Anita Broome, Highgate Newtown Partnership  
John Thane  
Jean Pateman, Friends of Highgate Cemetery  
Ben McPartland, Ham & High  
Nora Howard, Chetwynd and Twisden Roads RA  
Rae Fether, Chetwynd and Twisden Roads RA  
K Ives, Lauderdale House  
Tim Gladestone, Boscastle Road RA  
Avie Cummings, Project Manager, Fresh Youth Academy

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## **Introduction: Camden Together**

Alex Williams, Assistant Director, Culture and Environment, LBC, welcomed people to the meeting. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to seek and listen to people's views on the proposed new community strategy for Camden for 2007-2012 entitled 'Camden Together'. Alex then introduced the Ward Councillors to the meeting with Cllr. Maya de Souza taking over as the Chair.

Cllr. de Souza explained that the community strategy was:

- a forward looking plan
- sets out a shared vision to make Camden a better place for everyone
- that since 2000 all local authorities are required by law to have a community strategy

Cllr. de Souza explained that the first community strategy 'Our Camden, Our Future' 2001-2006 was well regarded and that far reaching consultations were now being carried out for the second community strategy 'Camden Together' 2007-2012. She outlined that there were 4 main areas to discuss and seek people's views on and, after discussion, it was agreed that the meeting as a whole would go through these one by one rather than splitting into smaller groups.

It was highlighted that people were encouraged to give their views on the strategy over and above this meeting by using the FREEPOST address, by website ([www.camdentogether.org.uk](http://www.camdentogether.org.uk)) and by email ([community.strategy@camden.gov.uk](mailto:community.strategy@camden.gov.uk)).

Cllr. de Souza then summarised the aims of the strategy by stating that a) it is ambitious and widely-owned community strategy built on a firm evidence base and extensive consultation, b) that it engaged local people and partners in conversations about the future, especially dilemmas, c) that it sought clarity about the kind of place and community we want to see in 2012 – and what we need to do to get there, and d) that the strategy captures what is unique and special about Camden.

### **1. Creating a borough of opportunity**

Cllr. de Souza explained that Camden's vision for 2012 stated that 'we have a strong local economy that adapts well to the future change and where more people, especially young people, can acquire skills and access education, training and jobs'. She invited the meeting to comment and posed the question 'How can we build a stronger economy at the same time as supporting local business and getting more local people into work'?

Comments from the floor included:

- Training by local providers such as the community centre should be supported and safeguarded
- Need for more resources to support local apprenticeships for young people
- Would like to see more young people employed by Camden and create schemes where young people can gain skills as plumbers, electricians, etc. Camden has to be more open and stop doing things on the cheap
- Create more partnerships for young people to gain employment and/or mentoring schemes
- Due to cuts last year there are now fewer opportunities for training in the area, investment is required
- Businesses in the South of the Borough (Banks, etc,) should be encouraged to employ local young people and invest in local schools
- More support is required for young people who slip through the net to ensure they are not excluded from job/work opportunities
- More focus is required on the 10\11 year's old age group particularly those who have been excluded from school
- Other Boroughs in London seem to offer a better service to local young people, seems to be a gap in service in Camden
- Young mentally ill people also slipping through the net and more resources required for specific groups
- When dealing with people in crisis and/or with mental health issues you can never get hold of anyone at Camden to help, needs proper funding/resourcing to ensure that there is someone available to help
- Lots of people who are brought into Holborn Station suffer from mental illness and no one is usually available from Camden to help. Requires a telephone help line especially out of hours that can offer help/guidance from a social workers
- More focused consultations required to glean specialised knowledge on young carers, people with mental health problems, people with special needs, over 25's with special needs, etc
- Invest in schools to support children going into vocational training – schools should also develop their own specialities
- Camden has one of the highest percentage of people on incapacity benefit, LBC needs to work with local organisations to break the

unemployment cycle and help people back into work - services required to work with families as a whole

- Need to recognise that we have to re-build peoples confidence to get them back into work
- Need to give incentives to organisations and businesses to take on local people who currently lack confidence – need to offer incentives to small businesses to take on volunteers and apprentices
- The Community Strategy is a requirement from the Government and it is not addressing the big challenges in Camden such as population growth (how will services cope with more people?), inequality (resources should be directed to where inequalities are biting) and resources (Camden is making cuts yet building up a wish list, how can these be met?). If the document is to have any meaning then the Council will have to grapple with these three main points.

Cllr de Souza thanked the meeting for the above comments and stated that they were being recorded and will be fed back into the consultation.

## **2. Balancing growth with our environment**

Cllr. de Souza explained that Camden's vision for 2012 stated that 'we work together to accommodate a growing population while protecting our environment and quality of life' and that 'we are meeting the needs of people in Camden now and safeguarding our inheritance for future generations. She again invited comments on this whilst posing the question 'How do we balance the competing pressures of a growing population and economy with protecting the environment and improving quality of life?'

Comments for the floor included:

- Camden should Green-up and Clean-up. Camden not very helpful, could do with support and expertise particularly around the issues of graffiti and litter
- The Police are already working with the street cleaning operator to ensure that any new graffiti is brought to the attention of Camden
- Facilitation required to support clean-up initiatives - people feel safer in better\cleaner environments
- Financial support from the Borough needed to support greening initiatives. Good evidence to support that where neighbourhoods have been greened then this improves the quality of life for residents
- Lots of damage was done in the 60's from poor developments, when Camden\developers come to re-develop an area priority should be given to low density housing

- Money has been misspent on the tower blocks on Hampstead Road, time to stop wasting money and pull them down and then re-build
- Hawley Road open space needs improving, improvements have been made but still poor. Stop fencing people in and soften the environment
- Let local communities have more of a say, money ought to be allocated to local communities (decentralise). Camden needs to loosen the reins
- Residents should have more of a say in the design of gardens and open spaces – people need money allocated at neighbourhood level
- 3 Point Park is a good example of local people working in partnership with Building Stronger Communities Team and Parks & Open Spaces and perhaps this is the way forward
- Camden will start charging people for not recycling waste but more collections should be carried out on the estates. More should be done to encourage recycling
- Residents should be rewarded for recycling. There are various schemes around the world that work and incentives should be looked at
- Solid panels on bus shelters should be replaced with transparent ones as this will help reduce the fear of crime, especially around Camden Town
- Speed humps should be taken out as they are causing damage to buildings and walls e.g. wall in Swans lane
- School buses should be encouraged as a way to cut down on car usage by parents
- More public transport should be provided at peak times with children encouraged to use the buses
- Are there enough buses on the routes?
- Better management of children on buses is required between 3.00pm and 4.00pm
- Alternative energy solutions to be encouraged starting with community building such as Highgate Newtown Community Centre

Cllr. de Souza thanked people for their comments and stated that these would also be fed back into the consultation.

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

Camden's vision for 2012 states that 'people at home in Camden, take an active part in democracy and can influence the decisions that affect them' and that 'quality of life is improving for all, particularly children, young people and older residents. Cllr. de Souza asked people to consider these statements and posed the question 'What would help you to feel more at home in Camden and what would encourage you to be more active and live more healthily?'

Comments from the floor included:

- Access to free plants to help green neighbourhoods
- People need organisations to help them participate – assisting residents to help to participate in local democracy
- Organisations need the support from Camden so that they can support volunteers and helpers
- Focus to be given to develop young people and their role in the democratic process
- Would like to see a Youth Mayor in Camden to help promote young peoples views
- Would like to see more community cafes on estates to help develop communities and neighbourhoods
- Would like to see Libraries opened on a Sunday
- Would like to see more money go into Libraries
- Libraries could be run by volunteers on a Sunday, should be tried
- There is a proposal to set-up Area Committees in Camden and whilst this is a good idea in principle, will they engage the disengaged?
- Need more devolution of power down to local communities
- Camden needs to improve its communication.
- Camden website is too structured, needs something more - should look at using the Internet more such as 'have your say' type feedback
- More outreach\detached work e.g. councillors going to where people are at, more council officers out in neighbourhoods

- Consultation has to be relevant to the people e.g. through tenants and residents associations
- Camden should have a young person's blog on their website to encourage young people to have their say
- Need to do more work with the disengaged, more funding should go into organisations that work with this group
- Camden should make more use of bus shelter advertising to get messages across
- BME\Faith communities should be targeted so that they can also have a say in the consultation
- Disappointed that the local schools did not send anyone along to the meeting
- Local schools should be encouraged to participate and send representatives along to meetings such as this

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

The vision for Camden 2012 states that 'we share a thriving and safe part of London -and gateway to the rest of Europe – where all local people benefit from the excellent cultural and leisure opportunities on our doorstep including the Olympics. Cllr. de Souza asked people to consider this and posed the following two questions ' What would help reduce fear of crime and increase peace of mind?' and 'How can we make it easier for people to enjoy the cultural activities Camden has?'

Comments from the floor included:

- Young people feel marginalised, need to re-engage them but also punish young people who do wrong
- Parents have to take responsibility also. Lots of parents don't care; young people are not just the problem
- Bad parenting and difficult children are linked, parenting skills\support required
- Youth Service and YOT will be integrated and this is not a good idea, YOT is compulsory and the Youth Service is not. The integration sends out the wrong message that all young people are offenders
- Concerned about dispersal of young people from the area, won't this just move the problem into the next area?

- Last survey in the ward showed that crime is down, although there are still problems with car crime and burglary in parts of the Ward
- Ideas such as Juice Bars and Youth Centres should be encouraged to help reduce/address crime
- Community Centres are good for mixing and should be supported
- Special Police Constables are a good idea and should be encouraged – Council workers should be encouraged to train as PCSO's
- Need to address the issue of young people on scooters who are not properly licensed
- Council should bring in by-laws banning scooters and Housing Department should use their powers of eviction
- Strong initiatives required to address the problems of scooters
- Project required to deal with users of scooters, similar to that held in Ingestre Road Community Centre
- Camden Town is a crime hot-spot and has a knock-on-effect on crime throughout the Borough
- Better cross mix of activities required particularly intergenerational
- Camden should look at Art Centres such as Lauderdale House as creative industries
- Lauderdale House should initiate an outreach programme
- Lauderdale House activities are quite expensive, Camden should subsidise them more
- Camden should help enable blue badge holders park in central London
- Camden has to look at new ways in which to engage people to get them involved in cultural activities
- Cultural activities need to be affordable
- Need more recognition to support cultural activities and events
- Camden has two main cultural venues - Camden Market and the Forum - should be recognised for its different cultural centres
- British Library should be more accessible to local people - could incorporate street theatre, etc, in their space

**Cllr. de Souza then thanked everyone for their positive contributions and for attending the meeting, she encouraged people to use the feedback methods for the consultation if anyone wanted to add any further comments**

**Meeting closed at 9.00pm**