

**Residents' Association / Planning Workshop**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008**  
**Mayor's Reception Parlour, Town Hall**  
**18:30 – 20:30**

**Q & A Session**

**Questions asked by Ken West, Representative of Hartley & District Residents' Association (HADRA):**

**Q1** Can we be given an update on how the proposed new conservation areas in Croydon are developing?

**Answer Q1**

Reviews have been carried out as follows:

The South Norwood Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was formally adopted on 25 June 2007

The Webb Estate and Upper Woodcote Village Conservation Areas Appraisal and Management Plan was formally adopted on 25 June 2007

A new Conservation Area was designated by the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008 covering the East India Estate.

The Council is currently undertaking a borough wide review of all other Conservation Areas and Local Areas of Special Character which is scheduled for completion in spring 2009.

**Contact Name: Tim Naylor, Deputy Head of Urban Design & Conservation**

**Tel No. 020 8726 6000 Ext 62615**

**Q2** The fly tipping on Old Lodge Lane seems to be getting worse. Are there any proposals to monitor this?

**Answer Q2**

It has been assumed this question applies to the section of Old Lodge Lane from Wattenden Primary School to junction with Footpath 041 (just before The Heights and Wattenden Arms Public House) and not all of Old Lodge Lane.

There are currently no proposals to monitor this long stretch of narrow winding 'country lane' for fly-tipping. Temporary CCTV monitoring was recently considered and rejected because of restricted views and number of potential locations for fly-tipping. This road is prone to small fly-tips but occurrences of major fly-tipping have thankfully been rare. Should this change then monitoring options will be looked at again. Meanwhile Council and Safer Neighbourhood Team Officers travel this road regularly and fly-tips are removed as quickly as possible.

**Contact Name: Stephen Piper, Streetscene South Team Manager**  
**Tel. No. 020 8726 6200**

**Q3 Football pitches in the area have been saturated and unplayable for much of the winter. Are there any proposals to build artificial pitches?**

**Answer Q3**

In response I can advise that we are not aware of the pitches referred to in the question and would like some further detail, the only pitches we have are those in Grange Park? However I can confirm that we have no plans to build an artificial pitch in the area. I am not aware of any other plans for the area but if you have any further information I would be happy to investigate.

**Contact Name: Barry Lambton, Green Spaces Manager  
Tel No 020 8726 6000 Ext 62709**

**Questions asked by Maureen Levy, Representative for East Coulsdon Residents' Association Residents' Association:**

**Q4** There is a lack of cohesion for the wider community in a number of areas across the borough which is constrained by the arbitrary political division by ward required for election purposes. These include areas such as: Coulsdon, Thornton Heath, Purley/Kenley and South Norwood. These communities all consist of more than one ward.

In our case the community of East Coulsdon and Old Coulsdon, whilst mainly dealing separately with issues which affects those wards, are still part of the wider community which includes Coulsdon Town Centre.

Using this arbitrary political division means there is a lack of cohesion on a number of issues especially notification to East and Old Coulsdon residents of issues within and around the Town Centre which will affect us.

Residents often only finding out about those issues 'by accident'. There is not sufficient wider consultation. It is often only through the neighbourhood partnership of similar groups that we find out and by then it is usually too late and has been signed and delivered.

The first example: the physical paper notification regarding Cane Hill has only been carried out around the site and other consultation has only been carried out with those who have found out about the possible development. This could have 'skewed' the results.

Residents in East and Old Coulsdon have not been directly consulted and, being on the other side of the valley, can probably see the grounds of Cane Hill better with clearer views of the grounds than those living close by in West Coulsdon.

Cane Hill needs to be part of the community and not separate from it stuck on the top of a hill as Netherne is. We understand, by rumour, that this is the initial preferred result but not perhaps for East and Old Coulsdon residents.

The second example: is that of de ja new for which notification letters were only sent to 5 neighbours, 2 of whom were on the industrial estate and the others connected with the applicant. The auto garage actually attached to de ja new was not informed. Thus no objections or observations were sent into LBC. This is a prime gateway site into the town.

Coulsdon Town Centre is a major part of the community for the whole community of Coulsdon. East and Old Coulsdon residents are interested in developments within the town and are not separate from it. We need to be kept informed.

We would ask that LBC set up a specific planning person who is in overall control of planning and other issues for the whole of Coulsdon and keep us informed of everything major happening within the wider Coulsdon community, perhaps by newsletter, Croydon reports, directly to the 4 residents' associations of Hartley, East, West and Old Coulsdon etc.

This applies equally in other communities in the borough that are spread across more than one ward. We note that in the choice of areas for the neighbourhood partnerships that these do actually reflect local communities as opposed to ward boundaries. These should be the examples of communities that the planning department follows.

#### **Answer Q4**

Whilst some centres such as Coulsdon are covered by more than one ward for electoral and other administrative purposes, the combination of wards into Neighbourhood Partnerships has sought to recognise understood community areas and provide a forum in which planning and other issues can be addressed on a regular basis. The largest development proposals that are likely to be of most interest to residents of both East and West Coulsdon wards tend to be featured at the Neighbourhood Partnership meetings, and some have been the subject of wider publicity and exhibitions in the town centre.

There have been no recent planning applications at the Cane Hill site. English Partnerships has previously undertaken consultation with the local community on options for a mixed-use development and the site. Whilst their initial consultation was mainly to residents closest to the site, subsequent newsletters have had a much wider circulation in recognition of wider community interest.

The planning application at De Ja New was for a relatively small development close to the junction of Brighton Road with Lion Green Road. The site does occupy a prominent location and planning officers have sought to negotiate a higher quality design to the second application for a new building here in view of this prominence. The site is not adjacent to many other properties and relatively few notification letters were dispatched in this case. Whilst this case has been of wider interest it is

difficult to know which other planning applications would also be of wider interest and how far afield notification letters should be sent. There is a

cost implication for the service in greatly expanding the number of notification letters for all applications in all parts of the borough that may be of such wider interest.

The Department produces a weekly list of planning applications received and publishes this on the Council's web site. All resident' associations can view these weekly lists and follow up on applications of interest using the Council's online planning service to study the application forms and plans and then submit representations on the cases of interest. This system seems to work well for the majority of residents associations who regularly submit representations on planning applications.

The Department is currently facing a budget challenge to become more cost effective. There would be an additional cost to provide a planning contact officer to keep the 4 Coulsdon residents' associations apprised of all major happenings in the wider Coulsdon community. The cost would be greater if this exercise is replicated for other communities spreading across ward boundaries as suggested. Council officers from several Departments have assisted in the publicity for major development proposals across the borough and the Urban Design Team within the Planning Department has been active in various initiatives to publicise consultations and developments within Coulsdon town centre.

**Contact Name: Rory Macleod, Head of Planning Control  
Tel. No. 020 8726 6000 Ext 65578**

**Q5** Trees – who is responsible for cutting trees and overhanging bushes and hedges? These often encroach on to the pavement in many streets and trees overhanging bus routes. What responsibility does Croydon have to enforce cutting back of these trees, bushes and hedges? What action or power does it have or take to resolve these issues?

**Answer Q5**

Obstruction of the Public Highway is an offence. If noted by a Streetscene Officer during a street inspection or reported to the Council and on investigation vegetation from trees/bushes/hedges is found to be obstructing the Public Highway then:-

If vegetation is growing from publicly owned land the Council Department responsible for maintaining the area will be requested to carry out work to cut back.

If vegetation is growing from private land then the Council will write to the owner of land from where vegetation is growing and request it is cut back. It is usual to give owners two weeks from letter date to get work done. If the work has not been done without good reason within the required time then the matter will be passed to an Enforcement Officer who will advise owner of land they have a further two weeks and if work not completed within this deadline

the Council will have the work done and bill the owner cost of carrying out the work. If no payment made a charge is made against the property.

It should be noted however that if an offending tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order then work must not be undertaken without reference to and agreement from the Tree Preservation Officer.

**Contact Name: Stephen Piper, Streetscene South Team Manager**  
**Tel. No. 020 8726 6200**

**Q6** Enforcement of planning issues seems to be largely re-active and not pro-active. As a result many breaches of planning do not seem to be acted upon unless reported to LBC by residents and councillors. Are there any plans to make the enforcements service more pro-active, perhaps employing an enforcement officer(s) whose job is specifically to look for breaches and act upon them?

Are there any plans to ensure that planning enforcement and other departments within LBC who are responsible for enforcement action (i.e. environment health, street scene officers) work more cohesively on enforcing breaches and not take the attitude 'not part of my job' so no action is taken or only after long delays.

#### **Answer Q6**

Following a Best Value review of the Council's Planning Service a few years ago, the Department has expanded the Planning Enforcement establishment, increasing the number of Enforcement Officers to 5 and creating a new Enforcement and Trees Team Leader post to provide a raised profile for the service. This has been successful in responding to the rising number of cases brought to the attention of the team to investigate. Whilst the majority of the case work is still reactive, drawn to the Council's attention by residents etc, many of the cases have been picked up by either the Planning Enforcement Officers themselves when on site or by Planning Officers monitoring development sites. There has also been some proactive work because of Council initiatives, for example a survey of unauthorised advertisements as part of a District Centre improvement strategy.

The Department has to operate within its budget and show that its services are cost effective. However the enforcement service is currently being reviewed in the latest budget round as a priority.

The Enforcement Officers work to an adopted Enforcement Policy that sets out service standards by which the officers will visit the sites in questions and respond to complainants about alleged breaches of planning control within certain time periods. The officers are generally able to adhere to these service standards with the current establishment. The Enforcement Policy is currently under review a new policy is likely to be adopted before the end of the year to update the document. Close working relationships with other parts of the Council will continue to be an important part of this policy. The Council has an 'Enforcement Concordat' whereby different enforcement regimes in the Council can work together when appropriate to do so. Planning Enforcement

Officers cannot legitimately take action on issues the subject of other legislative regimes, but there are close working relationships with those covering these areas so that case work is passed to the appropriate section of the Council and joint action takes place when necessary. There is regular contact with officers in Street Scene, Environmental Health and Highways Enforcement.

**Contact Name: Rory Macleod, Head of Planning Control**  
**Tel. No. 020 8726 6000 Ext 65578**

**Questions asked by Ken Baker representative for People for Portland Road:**

**Q7 STREET TREES:**

**Given the answer to my second written question to the last Planning Workshop (qu.18) which admits that financial restraints result in a net loss to Croydon of 200 trees per annum, how does Councillor Wright intend to achieve his desire of 'greening' our streets – especially when Planning Officers appear not to be even 'suggesting' tree planting to Applicants, where possible (at least to indicate some social responsibility, particularly when properties are set back sufficiently from the pavement line), let alone insisting on such?**

**Answer Q7**

The Council recognises that, over the last few years, its street tree stock has diminished.

However, it is now committed to replenishing this stock and has provided the resources to allow some 650 replacement street trees to be planted over the last two winters. In addition we are actively seeking ways, including private funding, to increase this level of planting.

Further to this the Trees & Woodland Manager, Nigel Browning, reports that he is keen to liaise with residents to ensure that street tree planting is targeted at areas where there is a demand and so if there are sites in your area where you would like to see trees planted then may I suggest that you contact Mr Browning with details of these sites

**Contact Name: Nigel Browning, Trees & Woodlands Manager**  
**Tel. No. 020 8726 6000 Ext 62025**

**Q8 TREE SURVEY (1):**

**Following yet another consultation process – the Croydon Tree Survey – may we know the approximate cost of that process and how, specifically, the results will influence action?**

**Q9 TREE SURVEY (2):**

**What has the Council learned from the consultation process that it did not already know? i.e., that, of those who bother to respond and are not suffering from 'consultation fatigue', most people actually like trees (for their appearance and/or their environmental**

**benefit), some have issues with particular species, falling leaves or pruning (too little or too much) and there is, of course, always a loony minority who would like all trees removed!**

**Answer Q8 & 9**

In answer to your question, the survey cost nothing, as all the work was carried out by me as Scrutiny Support Officer, as an intrinsic part of the work involved in supporting the Scrutiny review of trees. An important element of Scrutiny work is to gain an understanding of local views regarding the issue being examined as well as of local priorities, in order to encourage local democracy.

The results of the survey will be used by Scrutiny Members to formulate their review recommendations to Cabinet - a key outcome of Scrutiny reviews. Recommendations approved by Cabinet or by officers under delegated authority are monitored for a year or two to ensure they have been implemented. Not all approved recommendations have been implemented in the past, sadly, but there have been a number of notable successes, which have hopefully brought about significant improvements to the services under scrutiny, for the benefit of people living and working in the borough.

**Contact Name: Ilona Kytomaa, Policy Officer (Scrutiny)  
Tel. No. 020 8726 6000 Ext 62683**

**Questions asked by G Mowforth, Representative of Monks Orchard Residents' Association:**

**Q10 Street trees damaged by cars, vandalism, bad weather, should be replaced promptly. Are they?**

**Answer Q10**

No, not always. Tree planting has a season. Usually from second week of November through to at latest end of March. Outside this time they are in leaf and planting is not advisable. Damaged trees are replaced resources permitting and if there is a demand. Consideration is also given to suitability of location as site may no longer be appropriate e.g. if site is close to a lamp column, dropped kerb or interferes with site lines then tree may not be replaced.

**Contact Name: Stephen Piper, Streetscene South Team Manager  
Tel. No. 020 8726 6200**

**Q11 Could green spaces be protected from fly-tipping? Could designated phone number be made available to report same.**

**Answer Q11**

It will depend upon the green space concerned and resources availability who owns the land but in most cases the answer is generally protection is not a practical proposition. The area will usually need to be accessible to the public and even areas that are fenced and gated are still prone to determined fly-tipping.

Fly-tips can be reported on 020 8726 6200 (Council Environmental Report Line)  
or by e-mail to – [Streetscene@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:Streetscene@croydon.gov.uk)

**Contact Name: Stephen Piper, Streetscene South Team Manager**  
**Tel. No. 020 8726 6200**

**Q12 Could we have name & phone number of the Street Scene Officer for Shirley?**

**Answer Q12**

Jill Govett, 020 8255 2731 (desk)/020 8726 6200 (Council Environmental Report Line), [jill.govett@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:jill.govett@croydon.gov.uk)

**Contact Name: Stephen Piper, Streetscene South Team Manager**  
**Tel. No. 020 8726 6200**

**Questions asked by Keith Whitham, Representative for Spring Park Residents' Association (SPRA)**

**Q13 On street parking issues and allocation of parking in new planning applications.**

**Answer Q13**

The adopted Croydon Plan has maximum parking standards in alignment with the Mayor's London Plan. This is to encourage parking provision in new developments to be appropriate to the need having regard to access to public transport facilities and to promote more sustainable methods of transport as an alternative to the car. On site parking provision tends to be lowest in the more accessible locations, such as near town centres, and highest in less accessible areas where provision may be to maximum standards.

The availability of on street parking in the vicinity of a new development site is a relevant consideration but not weighted as highly as proximity to public transport. New developments should provide sufficient on site parking to meet the needs of future residents. At sites where on street parking is not possible, such as on red routes, there is a greater imperative that parking need is met and contained within the site. Planning Inspectors on appeal have sometimes commented on the availability of on street parking in the vicinity of a site to take overspill when weighing the merits of a proposal.

The allocation of parking spaces not located within the curtilage of a particular dwelling is a matter for developers and their customers. Such spaces are not always allocated to a dwelling and are frequently left on a first come basis. On some developments the eligibility of new residents to apply for parking permits in the surrounding area is removed by agreement with the developer. This can help to constrain any pressure for additional on street parking.

**Contact Name: Rory Macleod, Head of Planning Control**  
**Tel. No. 020 8726 6000 Ext 65578**

**Q14 Objection to new developments exceeding two storeys in residential areas.**

**Answer Q14**

Adopted planning policies require new planning proposals to be examined in relation to the character of the surrounding area. However policies of constraint need to be weighed against those specifying the need for additional dwellings and for the full and effective use of development sites.

In locations where two storey developments is a strong feature of the area, this will be a material consideration and it may be appropriate to limit the height of new buildings to two storeys. In other circumstances it may be acceptable to provide 'accommodation within the roof' or a taller building, for example to make a feature on a corner site. It is not possible to limit all new development in all residential areas to no more than two storeys. If planning permission is to be refused for a building higher than two storeys it will be necessary to show the harm in planning terms that would arise if the development were to be built.

**Contact Name: Rory Macleod, Head of Planning Control  
Tel. No. 020 8726 6000 Ext 65578**

**Q15 Environmental degradation created by unsympathetic and detrimental new housing developments.**

**Answer Q15**

Some new residential developments have been regarded as unsympathetic to an area by some local residents, particularly if the density of the new development is higher than in the surrounding area and large gardens and trees have been lost to enable the development to take place. Whilst this may be viewed as 'environmental degradation' planning permission can only be refused if there are sound and clear cut planning reasons to do so, such as harm to the amenities of an adjoining occupier. The protection of the character of residential areas has to be weighed against the need for new housing. If the gardens retained by host properties and those provided for new dwellings meet the needs of occupiers and do not appear cramped, then it may be difficult to defend a refusal of permission on this ground at appeal. Similarly, Tree Preservation Orders can be placed on trees in good health and with good public amenity value. But it is not possible to prevent the removal of lesser trees the condition of which does not merit formal protection.

**Contact Name: Rory Macleod, Head of Planning Control  
Tel. No. 020 8726 6000 Ext 65578**