

**Building a Better Harrow Residents Panel: Meeting 9, 9 May 2017**

**Attendance**

*Officers:* Paul Nichols, Tobias Goevert, Daniel Lester, Leanne Cooper

*Panel members:* Raj Kumar (facilitator / chair), Joanna Bowyer, Mihir Benodekar, Manjul Shah, Vishaal Shah, Louise Baxter, Yagoda Subotic, Danielle Witter, Graham Kaunders, Consolata Ndungu, Peter Jackson

*External:* Denis Collen, Sue Collen – Harrow Striders

*Apologies:* Cllr Sachin Shah, Cllr Keith Ferry, Daniel Thurlow, Neil Patel

**Presentations**

Welcome & Introductions - Raj Kumar

Harrow Striders: Nordic Walking – Denis Collen/Sue Collen

The benefits of Nordic Waking:

- Bring activity directly into the community and local areas
- Work to improve people becoming more active, meeting health targets and reducing social isolation.
- Particularly aimed at over 50's.

Background:

- Started Nordic Walking in September 2016, trained as instructors with Nordic Walking UK.
- Nordic walking is one of the fastest growing fitness activities in the UK. It involves the upper body too so an all over body workout.
- Harrow could bring communities together in its regeneration programme using Nordic Walking in urban areas through urban walking.

Latest News – Paul Nichols

- Harrow Square: the ground breaking ceremony for the old post office site has taken place.
- Gayton Road: Fairview are onsite and progressing well.
- Lyon Road: The scheme is giving a lot back to the town centre with commercial units. It is close to completion.
- Kodak: Last piece of the Kodak site has been sold to Hyde/Barratt who will be bringing forward detailed designs.

- Poets' Corner, Wealdstone Project and Byron Quarter: all are getting to the advanced stage of masterplan design. Closing out RIBA Stage 2 and will be moving to stage 3. Planning applications will be coming in over the Summer and early Autumn.
- Wealdstone Project: held a public engagement event on Saturday 6 May to show the latest designs.

#### Q&As

- Q: Kings and Queens House: will there be decent size flats or prior approval small studios? A: We would hope there would be new development not just conversions as the ambition is to have something more for that site.
- Q: What are the plans for the management of the direct Build to Rent stock? A: The council has created an arm's length company to manage its stock once it is ready. That company is already in operation and called Smart Lettings. They are being geared up to the task of managing the stock.
- Q: I like the Redrow scheme as they have office accommodation as part of their scheme. Will you introduce that requirement in new schemes coming forward? We feel the offer is reducing in the town centre. A: We want active mixed use schemes with good ground floors of retail, commercial and community facilities built in.
- Q: Is there an effort to expand the work place offering? Lots of operators have left the town as their facilities have timed out but nothing new has come forward. Are larger workspaces captured in policy? Q: There are policies to protect employment land and ensure employment uses are built into new development but where we struggle is space for large office occupiers. We have those discussions but it is difficult especially if someone is to do it on a speculative basis. Where we are having more success is space for small business and business hubs. That is the market we are targeting on our own sites.
- Q: How can we get better retail, food and beverage? A: We will have conversations with developers to lift the quality which is on offer. We have done an Economic Needs Assessment looking at all the sectors in the borough and on the back of that we want to survey more businesses. We can come back to this group with more information on that. We've also got our commercial opportunities on our sites mapped so we are looking at what to put where.

#### Platform 7 – Joanna Bowyer/ Mihir Benodekar

##### Meanwhile use proposal for Wealdstone

- Looking at the space between the discussed platform at Harrow & Wealdstone Station and the road. The station is key to the success of lots of the projects in the regeneration programme
- Footpath from the station is a key link between Wealdstone and Harrow Town Centre.

- We think there is an opportunity to create a focus and link with the opportunities happening in Wealdstone.
- The station is on a key corridor with the new council building, improvements to Wealdstone Square and up to Bombay Central in Harrow Weald. The station is a gateway into the area.
- The site is next to platform 6, a disused track bed which was a branch line between Harrow & Wealdstone and Stanmore.
- No real draw at the moment at that end of the High Street opposite the station.
- A really visible location that you can see from the train so a good sign that Harrow is changing.
- Some challenges to the site: listed station, access for maintenance, mural on the upstand of the bridge, land level differences.
- Proposals: Platform 7 should mark out that we are doing something different here as part of the regeneration programme.
- We know it is a difficult site so perhaps shipping containers could be constructed offsite and craned in perhaps on a temporary basis and allow the new Wealdstone to be established. Containers could be redeployed after use on the site.
- We could create a bit of height there marking it out as a gateway or a viewing platform.
- It could respond to existing footfall but also generate its own footfall.
- In order to make it work well we would have to curate what goes in there, making sure there is the right mix of tenants, perhaps shorter term tenancies. Could look at established businesses who want to expand and mix them up with start-ups.
- Case Studios: Inspired by Box Park in Shoreditch and Croydon, Freitag HQ in Zurich, CINEROLEUM: Clerkenwell, Folly for a flyover in Hackney Wick.
- We have exciting regeneration projects but we need to connect them up better. Need to think about how the two main town centres are going to work in the settings of the main regeneration projects.
- Meanwhile spaces offer the chance to take the risks and offer excitement and kick start regeneration in pockets where perhaps the council doesn't have the control.

#### Q&A's

- Comment: Could you have a climbing wall there to test that which could go onto the Byron Quarter site. Also thinking about an indoor market and little stalls.
- Comment: Personally I think it is critical that something like this happens. I don't think you can do genuine regeneration and transformation without something to reinvigorate an area to transform its perceptions. What I would like to say is it's a

great site but there are some constraints, so would like the officers to keep hold of the points and explore some other sites where barriers can't get in the way.

- Comment: Echo the previous point. There are more opportunities along the station where it links with the car park which might be easier.
- If a longer term use we can perhaps tap into the next round of GLA funding that is coming in the Summer for good growth.
- A possible opportunity to make a run of the regeneration sites as Virgin have launched charity runs in Hackney and this could be brought to Harrow.
- Comment: the good thing about this idea is the visibility aspect.
- Comment: It is important to prioritise this earlier than make it drag on as it needs to come up first.
- Comment: how do we connect the dots of the different schemes in Harrow and Wealdstone:-
  - Suggestions of more engagement with youth and schools and advertising.
  - Make the meanwhile uses happen.

#### Wealdstone Project Update – Tobias Goevert

- We had an event on Saturday 6 May and I have some of the designs presented.
- Aim to submit an application in Autumn and we will be looking at the meanwhile activities at the same time.
- We know issues on High Street of fear of crime and severance caused by the bypass. We want to create better links to Byron Park.
- Peter Brett Associates are looking at the transport network.
- A number of options where the Ashram temple stays where it is or where it is relocated onsite and a residential tower is built.
- There are on-going consultation events with staff on the Wealdstone Project.

#### Q&As

- Q: Has the floorspace reduced in the redesign from the competition design? A: No floorspace has been lost in the redesign of the civic building.
- Q: What about the implications on light from the scheme? A: We have taken that into consideration in our designs.
- Q: Is the roof garden idea still being considered? A: Yes.

- Q: Can the Harrow Arts Centre be reappropriated within the Civic Centre site? A: The arts centre isn't closing. We are looking to have a more dispersed cultural offer across the borough with multi uses in the council building, Byron Hall etc.

#### AOB

- Headstone Recreation Ground – a survey open until 1 June to seek views on improving the park.
- Depot – a new layout with the loop system has been introduced to improve traffic movement.
- Design Review Panel is being launched in July.
- **Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 11 July 2017**