

Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 25th January 2012 at Sidings Community Centre.

Present: James Earl, Kay Sinclair, Virginia Berridge, Sally Hodgson, Brigid Shaughnessy, John Eastwood, Cllr John Bryant, Barbara Knowles, Jane Cunningham, Cllr Russell Eagling, Paul Mingo, Jackie Mackay, Nick Jackson, Geoff Fields, Cllr Nancy Jirira, Ian Cohen, David Richards, Stephen Nathan, Colleen Toomay, David Matthews, David Yass, Keith Moffitt, Mark Stonebanks, Candice Temple, Michael Clark, Jane Evans, Sue Measures.

Apologies: Mark Hutton, Margaret Willmer, Michael Poulard, Michelle Brady, Joan Moffat, Cllr Flick Rea.

1. Welcome & Introductions:

James thanked everyone for coming & thanked the Sidings Community Centre for hosting the first meeting of the Forum.

2. Election of interim chair:

James was elected with no objections; there were no other candidates.

3. Membership, future elections & constitution:

It was agreed to keep the Forum as inclusive as possible. Anyone living or working in the area should be able to attend meetings and contribute to the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

James said a future meeting would elect a chair, vice-chair, secretary & treasurer. There was a discussion about sharing or revolving posts and the Forum not being hierarchical, but it was agreed that permanent officers would be needed to lead the work of the Forum.

As part of the requirements set down for NDPs any group drawing up a plan needs a constitution. A group in Kentish Town has already drawn up a document for their group. James said he would draft a constitution for the next meeting & circulate to those interested beforehand.

4. Introduction to Neighbourhood Development Plans:

James outlined the basic idea behind NDPs, which are set out in the Localism Act, which comes into force in April 2012. A number of points were raised:

It was pointed that it was a resident led process, not a council-led or top down process.

Any NDP needs to fit in with the Camden Council Local Development Framework (LDF) & the Mayor of London's London Plan (LP).

An NDP can't propose less development – but can set out where future development should be located. Residents can list things they don't want – eg very high buildings.

There was concern that an NDP wouldn't carry much weight & would not affect new developments.

An NDP is a chance to be more locally focussed than the LDF.

An NDP could link in with the Camden Council 'Place Shaping Plan' for WH & the Area Action forums.

If we don't draw up a plan, someone else (eg a developer) could.

The area around the railway stations marked as an area of intensification in the LP can't be overturned.

The NDP could be an opportunity for developers to give more back to the community – there were complaints that the current Section 106 agreements are a closed process.

The NDP will not stop current developments but will be able to shape future developments.

The NDP needs to be a forward thinking document that considers infrastructure too – such as transport, schools, health services etc.

The Forum has the chance to create a positive document that has a strong and lasting effect on our area.

The Forum can usefully bring together people and RAs from different parts of the local area and give residents a stronger and unified voice.

5. Camden Council workshop – 24th January:

Those who attended said there were both positive and negative voices about NDPs – there is a need to be realistic about what a NDP can achieve. People should go into the process with their eyes open.

When NDPs come into force they will have a formal role in the planning process and can be referred to when commenting on/objecting to planning applications. The Council are keen for Forums to work with them and engage in a dialogue. Forums need to be clear about what they want to achieve and be aware of the other changes to the planning system. The Council will have to approve the proposed NDP area; there can't be overlapping plans. The Plan will need to be approved in a referendum, so will need to attract wide support.

It was pointed out that NDPs were originally designed for villages wanting more development.

There is a surprising amount of land in our area that could be developed in the future – although new developments can also take place when existing buildings are knocked down.

6. Issues to be covered by the Plan:

James set out a range of different issues that could be covered by the NDP. As well as future development, it could include – traffic/street issues; businesses; green space; community facilities; local services etc.

Residents are keen to focus on the 'village feel' of the area and in particular the shops & businesses on West End Lane & Mill Lane.

The Forum will need to identify the priorities for the area and its residents/businesses.

It was suggested that the Forum could look at recent development in the area and what does & doesn't work.

It was agreed to ask a Camden Council planning officer to a future meeting to ask questions.

7. Area to be covered by the Plan:

James said the original proposal for the area used the current ward boundaries for Fortune Green and West Hampstead. In the East, this is Finchley Road; in the North, the northern boundary of Camden Council; in West, Cricklewood Broadway/Shoot-up Hill/Killburn High Road; & in the South, part railway line, part streets in South Hampstead.

There was a discussion about excluding Cricklewood/Kilburn areas, in case they wanted to come up with their own NDP for the high streets.

In the NW, some of the streets might want to tie in with Barnet.

It was suggested consulting with CRASH on the southern boundary.

There was a suggestion to keep the Plan focussed on the area around the interchange, as this is the area affected by big developments. Others felt it would be more useful to bring the wider community together, and people living away from the interchange area were affected by it.

On a show of hands, a clear majority agreed to proceed by including the full area covered by the two wards.

8. Proposed timescale:

James said that because of the number of developments being proposed in the area, it was best to get on with the Plan as soon as possible. He said he thought it was realistic to have the Plan drawn up within the next year, with a referendum in spring 2013. Those present agreed that it would be wise to move quickly and start work on the Plan sooner rather than later.

9. Funding:

The Forum will need money to pay for meeting venues, printing, administration etc. There might also be a need to employ professional help with the plan. There is no money at present and no money from the Council.

It was suggested local RAs could each contribute £50 to get the Forum going. S106 funding could be sought from the current developments. Local businesses could be asked to contribute.

10. Other issues:

There is a Camden Council West Hampstead Place Shaping workshop on February 8th. Those attending can report back to the next Forum meeting.

There was a call to continue to oppose the current proposed developments in the area; if they are rejected, the sites could be covered by the Plan when it comes into force.

11. Future meetings:

James said he would like to have monthly meetings to help get the Forum and the process established.

The next meeting will look to agree on the area & constitution - plus initial work on the Plan.

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 28th February** at 7.30pm – venue tbc.