

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BROWNSWOOD WARD FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 17TH JULY, 2013

**Councillors Present:** Cllr Brian Bell, Cllr Oli De Botton and Cllr Feryal Demirci

### 1 Minutes, Actions and Updates

Oli suggested the provision of primary school places as a topic for future meetings.

Issues relating to highways or cleansing, including after gigs in the park, could be raised directly with Feryal as they fell within her cabinet remit.

### 2 Discussion on homelessness and hostels in the ward

The Finsbury Park Homeless Families Project and St Mungo's explained their roles both within the ward and in the wider area. In particular St Mungos emphasised that they were tenants at 350-352 Seven Sisters Road, and that the landlord "Top Class Investments" were responsible for any planning applications.

Amongst points made were –

- Some persons begging do have perfectly good accommodation
- Changes to the benefits system were alarming many local residents
- Hackney had less of a rough sleeping issue than more central boroughs
- There had been a noticeable rise in East European men needing assistance
- St Mungo's had clear behaviour expectations of those who stayed in their units
- Some residents believed the hostel uses were closely linked to crime
- Others warned it was important not to generalise in this way and pointed out that the prostitution and begging issues in the area could not be traced back to hostel use

Luton (St Mungo's) offered to try to make contact with Planning and other agencies to establish roughly the number of units in the area in such uses. He would feed this back to Isabel de la Cour.

It was suggested that the commissioning section within Hackneys Adult Social Services be contacted to explain any rationale behind where they procure accommodation. And if appropriate, invited to a future meeting.

Action:

- Luton to liaise with agencies to try and establish the rough number of hostels in the area. To feedback to Isabel

### **3 Finsbury Park draft Supplementary Planning Document.**

Mark Powney (LBH) explained that the SPD was a joint initiative by the 3 boroughs to guide future development in and around the town centre. 14,000 leaflets had been distributed around the area, and over 200 people had so far attended the consultation events. The three planning authorities were also looking at the possibility of an Article 4 directive which would restrict some development rights, although nationally the current government seemed to be going in the opposite direction and were removing certain matters from planning control.

Network Rail would be a crucial partner in this with installations and lighting to the viaducts planned. They would also be responsible for any works to the surface station while TfL operated the tube lines. Planning would also be carrying out a “retail health check” across Hackney within a year, which would give clearer and comparative data on the shop and other uses in Finsbury Park.

Among views expressed were –

- Some residents wanted greater controls over uses such as money lending, bookmaking and fast food takeaways
- Improvements to cycling and walking facilities need to be included as well as for public transport and vehicles
- Need to plan for the impact of the City North development
- The southern part of Blackstock Road was improving but not the north

Brian reminded the meeting that the SPD had flowed from the Finsbury Park Accord signed up by all three boroughs the previous year. A regeneration board had been established to over see its implementation and Feryal currently represented Hackney on that.

### **4 Update on the idea of holding a Blackstock Road festival**

Brian explained that unfortunately it now looked unlikely it would be possible to organise a Blackstock Road Festival that year, but that when the new town centre management arrangements were imbedded, the idea would be raised again.