

ITEM 7c

Camden Local Strategic Partnership

Meeting	9 September 2008
Report Title	Draft note of LSP seminar “Shaping Camden Town” held on 9 September 2008
Report by	Mike Webb Senior Policy Officer, London Borough of Camden tel. 020 7974 4328 e-mail michael.webb@camden.gov.uk
Purpose	This report is a note of the LSP’s seminar on 9 September entitled “Shaping Camden Town”.
Recommendations	The LSP is asked to note the report, particularly the actions to take forward.

Present

- Cllr Keith Moffitt (Chair of LSP), London Borough of Camden, Leader
- Rob Larkman (Vice Chair of LSP), Camden Primary Care Trust, Chief Executive
- Cllr Andrew Marshall, London Borough of Camden, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Equalities and Community Development
- Rachel Stopard, London Borough of Camden, Director, Culture and Environment (in place of Moira Gibb)
- Chris Shaw, Camden Town Unlimited, Chair
- Stephen Jordan, London & Continental Stations and Property, Managing Director
- Chief Supt Dominic Clout, Metropolitan Police, Borough Commander
- Professor Anthony Kessel, Camden Primary Care Trust, Director of Public Health (left at 19:30)
- Charlie Legg, Camden Community Empowerment Network and Camden Central Community Umbrella

Apologies

- Moira Gibb, London Borough of Camden, Chief Executive
- Ann Baxter, London Borough of Camden, Director of Children’s Services
- Michael Quy, London Fire & Emergency Planning Authority, Borough Commander
- Kevin Munslow, The Holborn Partnership, Vice Chair
- Karen Wilson, Camden Housing Association and Co-op Forum, Chair
- David Latchman, Bloomsbury Colleges (Master, Birkbeck College)
- Mick Hickey, Job Centre Plus, External Relations Manager – Central London District

Also in attendance

- Simon Pitkeathley, Camden Town Unlimited, Chief Executive
- Paul Inglefield, London Borough of Camden, Head of Communications
- Alex Williams, Transport for London, Director of Borough Partnerships
- Robert Scourfield
- John Futcher, London Borough of Camden, Traffic Team Manager

- Louise Matlock, Government Office for London, Locality Manager – North
- Mary Burguieres, London Borough of Camden, Head of Policy
- Mike Webb, London Borough of Camden, Senior Policy Officer
- Janice Lim, London Borough of Camden, Senior Policy Officer

1 Camden Town

- 1.1 The seminar was preceded by a walking tour of Camden Town led by Camden Town Unlimited and taking in the key locations.
- 1.2 Chris Shaw and Simon Pitkeathley began the seminar with a presentation on Camden Town Unlimited, its achievements, building on these achievements and a vision of a Camden Creative Quarter.
- 1.3 Paul Inglefield then updated LSP members on the post-fire marketing campaign for Camden Town funded by a £90,000 grant from the London Development Agency.
- 1.4 Slides from these presentations are available to LSP members on request from Michael Webb. The following points were raised in the subsequent discussion.
- 1.5 There are a number of current and forthcoming developments which will broaden the appeal of Camden Town to an older age group such as the Roundhouse, a new contemporary art gallery and a new Gordon Ramsay restaurant.
- 1.6 There were concerns as to whether development in Camden Town is benefiting poorer local residents. Much of it is mixed use with some affordable housing bringing residents back into the town centre. There are also training and job opportunities as a result, although some local residents may find it hard to access these.
- 1.7 Although the new Mayor would be interested in the streetscape proposals, the LSP needs to be aware that the agenda is changing on a pan-London level. Concerns about an incremental decrease in traffic capacity are likely to temper schemes to enhance the public realm. In Camden Town, Cobden Junction is the main area of concern in terms of capacity. There will also be a lot less funding overall available for these types of schemes. Therefore elements such as the red route proposals are unlikely to be approved. There will need to be political lobbying by the council which also takes into account these technical and financial factors.

- 1.8 The council was aware of the risks and pressures when developing the proposals and there are ways in which they can be amended to make them more acceptable. There will always be a trade-off between traffic capacity and public realm but the public realm could be enhanced at Britannia and Cobden junctions without significant reduction in capacity.
- 1.9 The proposals could be an easy win for the GLA, leveraging council and CTU money to make highly visible improvements to Camden Town.
- 1.10 A rebalancing towards public realm in Camden Town would also have public health benefits.

2 Place shaping

- 2.1 Rachel Stopard gave a presentation which set initiatives in Camden Town within the developing place shaping agenda across the borough, identifying other parts of the borough which are a priority for development. She saw it as the beginning of a dialogue in which partners can use the LSP to discuss their plans for these priority places alongside the more formal LDF process.
- 2.2 Rachel said she would share the Area Profiles which are being developed to provide an evidence base for place shaping working. The presentation slides are available from Michael Webb as before. The main points of the discussion were as follows.
- 2.3 Place shaping is an exciting agenda, one of the council's two main challenges alongside the everyday business of improving its customer service. However it must work with the grain of partners, "nudging" rather than a top down approach. There are limited resources so place shaping is as much about co-ordination and knowledge sharing, even within the council.
- 2.4 Better public space improves the quality of life for local people e.g. increasing the flows of people through estates makes them more "permeable". Traffic capacity and public realm are not a zero sum game; they can be balanced through traffic management.
- 2.5 The point about better co-ordination was echoed; the local NHS, particularly the PCT has a large estate but has not really engaged with the council except in a narrow sense, through the planning department. St Pancras Hospital is in dire need of regeneration and occupies a strategic site between St Pancras and Camden Town. The plans need to make sense for Camden as a whole and local people.
- 2.6 West Hampstead is a good example of the issues associated with place shaping. As it is an intensification site, there will be a need for more public services (GPs, schools etc). While residents might like the council to take charge, this does not reflect the realities of private sector development.

- 2.7 The problem in Camden Town is that there is no prime mover, no one big property owner who can set the agenda, so streetscape is needed as a focus for the work. The existing traffic capacity at Cobden is illusory; congestion is caused by traffic speeding down the High Street before having to slow at the junction. The current roadworks at the northern end of Eversholt Street show that restrictions on traffic in the area do not necessarily reduce capacity. The Farrell plans for Euston Road are based on a slow and steady flow of traffic rather than continuous stop-start and this might work for Camden Town as well.
- 2.8 There was a recognition that place shaping needs Compulsory Purchase Orders in its toolbox. The LSP will receive a note on the latest on the CPOs for the derelict buildings at Cobden Junction. It was suggested that the public realm needs to be improved before investors would be interested in the junction area.
- 2.9 Crime was the impetus for setting up the Business Improvement District and remains a priority, particularly the perception of crime. Public realm can do a lot to improve this. Other councils have encouraged retailers to remove roller shutters from shop windows or have installed street lighting aimed at pedestrians to make streets more welcoming at night, both of which would improve Camden Town. Parts of Camden Town are surprisingly quiet after dark despite the thriving night-time economy.
- 2.10 Redevelopment can take a long time; the building which houses Gilgamesh was destroyed by a fire 20 years ago and only recently brought back into use. The timescale for Hawley Wharf has to be shorter. The LDF should support what is needed for the fire site e.g. hotels, cinemas.
- 2.11 The LSP will return to the place shaping agenda in future.

The meeting closed at 8:05pm.

Summary of actions arising

- The council's will share its Area Profiles
- The council will circulate an update on CPOs