

SOMERSTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING PROJECT

PLANNING MEETING

Monday 5th March 2012

5pm – 6:30pm

Somerstown Community Centre

Present:

Susan Adams	British Library
Afe Komolafe	Local resident
Ben Frimstone	Origin Housing
Sarah Elie	Somers Town Community Association (Chair)
Helia Evans	Ossulston Tenants and Residents Association
Tim Foster	Somers Town Coffee House
Dave Hoefling	Chair of Origin Tenants Association
Hilary Vick	Nappy Ever After
Jennifer Hugh	38-60a Levita House Tenants Association
Cathy Lettan	Oakshott Court Tenants and Residents Association
Abraham Lettan	Oakshott Court
Mohammed Miah	Superior Negotiators
Jaqui Jeans	Superior Negotiators
Shelagh O'Connor	New Horizon Youth Centre
Vijay Patel	NISA supermarket/local resident
Finnula Campbell	Somers Town Community Organiser
Cllr Roger Robinson	Somers Town & St Pancras Ward Councillor
John Wood	Walker House
Ashley Adkins	OpenPathways
Jim Widdowson	Oakshott Court Tenants and Residents Association
Peter Ward	Camden Community and Police Consultative Group (CCPCG)

Also in attendance:

Michael Parkes	Voluntary Action Camden/Planning Aid London
Donna Turnbull	Voluntary Action Camden (minutes)

Written by

Donna Turnbull, Voluntary Action Camden

09.03.2012

Apologies received from:

Cllr Samata Khatoon, Cllr Peter Brayshaw, Shahnewaz Ahmed (*Somers Town Bengali Cultural Association*), Katie Matthews (*Francis Crick Institute*), Dave Cooper (*Safer Neighbourhoods Team*).

1. Welcome and Introduction

Attendees were welcomed by the Chair and asked to introduce themselves to the group.

2. Minutes of previous meeting 13th February 2012

Minutes agreed with corrections:

P.3. Helia Evans spoke with residents *and sent emails to those on her database*.

P.6. Under **Community Engagement** Vijay Patel's point about 72 different languages spoken in Somers Town was added.

3. Updates from working groups

3.1. Planning, Development, Housing and Environment

Michael Parkes described the meeting on 28th February with planning officers (Mathew Furness and Jennifer Walsh) as a useful first step and clear evidence of a wish to work in partnership. He emphasised 3 areas of focus for the group:

i. Awareness of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Site Allocations study. The Police Vehicle Depot is a key development site identified in the study. Neighbourhood planning needs to ground itself in getting involved in development and growth related to sites like this.

ii. Place Shaping. Two Place Shaping Plans overlap the Somers Town neighbourhood (Euston and Kings Cross Place Plans). The meeting had highlighted the desire of those community members present to see Somers Town as a place in its own right. The route between the stations along Phoenix Road was also flagged up as an area to focus attention.

iii. Other partnership mechanisms for addressing the neighbourhood planning process. Michael reiterated that the community was no longer outside the process as a consultee, but was in it. A follow up email had been sent to council officers to tease out some of the points raised at the meeting that go beyond building development. Planning officers had responded with a useful set of website links and information relating to plans and strategies e.g. crime, health, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) etc. These are all useful partnership vehicles for the neighbourhood planning process and developing a plan that 'fits' with needs, profile and broader aspirations for the area.

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Discussion

Dave Hoefling suggested meeting specifically with residents of the flats opposite the police site to discuss impacts of development and managing the health impacts.

Jim Widdowson pointed out that pollution added to already bad health problems and referred to the extreme mortality rate differences between Somers Town and Hampstead.

Sarah Elie summarised that planners were on board and action points from the meeting included updating after the neighbourhood planning regulations are published in April. Planning officers will be invited to a full forum meeting to explain the regulations and implications.

3.2. Governance

Donna Turnbull updated on a meeting with Sarah Elie on 1st March. The assumption at the moment (pre regulations) is that a neighbourhood forum will be an unincorporated association. Charity Commission models and constitutions from other projects have been looked at and a suggested starting point is to use the model for a small unregistered charity and concentrate on getting the objectives and membership of the forum right before regulations provide further guidance. There are a number of Charity Commission 'acceptably worded' objectives relating to sustainable development and regeneration which may be useful, and the Camden Central Community Umbrella board Terms of Reference also had some very relevant objectives. Local priorities identified to date will guide the work on this. Donna suggested that these elements are now developed at a working group meeting and put together as a draft for the forum to look at.

Helia Evans had not been able to attend the meeting and complained about the short notice.

Discussion

Cllr Roger Robinson stressed the importance of including young people on the committee.

Dave Hoefling reminded the meeting that there are areas without tenants and residents associations that often get left out. **Jim Widdowson** asked about finding out who isn't involved, and suggested also consulting Camden Federation of Tenants lists of associations.

Cllr Roger Robinson flagged up some of the housing without or with defunct associations e.g. Monica Shaw Court, Churchway, Cranleigh Street. There are some known contacts / connections in these areas who have been or can be contacted. **Sarah Elie** and **Jennifer Hugh** had met after the last meeting with the aim of bringing all the tenants and residents associations together. A letter of introduction has been drafted and this will be sent out to named representatives from each group with the intention of bringing them together for a meeting, and ultimately engaging with the forum. Dave also has some contacts among residents who may be able to help with streets and blocks without representation. **Helia Evans** questioned the validity of new associations, their principles and constitutions. **Dave** reiterated that all tenants and residents and associations were welcome. **Jim** asked about the inclusion of faith groups. **Sarah** explained that they were in communication and

members had attended the previous forum meeting and the planning and development working group.

3.3. Engagement and IT

Sarah explained that OpenPathways had offered to sponsor and set up the project website. They had had an initial meeting and discussed some of the content e.g. youth project filming the neighbourhood boundary.

Ashley Adkins explained that OpenPathways is a not for profit social enterprise based in Kings Cross, which feels connected to Somers Town. They will get the website up and running and contribute staff time. They hope to have a draft site ready in a couple of weeks so that there is something tangible to discuss and develop.

Discussion

Cathy Lettan asked about advertising. **Ashley** explained that the costs were covered and that revenue generating was not its purpose. The purpose is to communicate the project and get people involved.

Helia Evans asked about the council support for websites mentioned by Jim Murray at the last meeting. **Sarah** said that they had been contacted but hadn't replied.

Shelagh O Connor suggested the group give an idea of what's needed.

Jim Widdowson asked if it would show other facilities. **Ashley** said that it was specifically for this project. There was extended discussion on this topic with some people suggesting links to different projects and others feeling that there was a danger of overloading the site. It was agreed to get something started, but start small and then discuss development from there. People will be asked to submit information when it gets to the relevant stage. A preview draft will be circulated by 2nd April.

4. Walkabouts

Sarah explained the value of raising the profile and understanding neighbourhood from this 'on the ground' perspective.

Donna explained that she and Alex had gone on an informal walk about with some residents and Cllr Samata Khatoon. The idea had been to take pictures of the areas / issues mentioned in the last forum meeting. The walk and discussion gathered a lot of information which fills out the picture of the area. For example the last meeting heard a lot of points raised about anti-social behaviour, the walkabout discussions then helped to connect those issues with some of the roots of the problems and possible solutions. It is also a good way of identifying some 'quick wins', for example getting access to playgrounds through local key holding schemes. The walkabout notes will be put up on the CEN website and a link will be circulated. More of these (on different themes) will be planned over the coming weeks. The

information gathered will also help to put together a locally relevant planning for real type exercise.

Discussion

Jim asked about young people's involvement. **Helia** pointed out that Somers Town youth Group were at the last meeting and that they would be running a film project as part of the planning process. The discussion continued about places for young people to hang out – they don't always want organised activity but are often excluded from other spaces. It was suggested that there are those who do attend activities and those who get thrown out and become a nuisance. The under the radar groups need to have something to do / somewhere to go.

Walkabout themes and actions were suggested:

Tim Foster suggested action as part of meetings e.g. half an hour painting graffiti out in a park (and being persistent about it).

Jim suggested identifying space for young people to use informally, and capitalising on HS2 to bring in jobs and employment

Michael Parkes suggested walks to look at Plot 10 and the police site.

Helia objected to looking at small issues and stated that we should look at big issues like the courtyards not being locked and attracting drug users. **Sarah** assured her that the big picture was being looked at but the details were also important.

It was agreed that some dates would be circulated for walks. **Sarah** also updated that she was meeting with the head of strategy from University College to discuss involvement of volunteer researchers.

5. Boundary

Donna explained this was on the agenda to make sure everyone is clear at this stage about the plan area, but that this would eventually have to be negotiated and approved with the council anyway so was not written in stone. **Michael** described the boundaries and how they had been arrived at the first event and meeting following that. He also stressed the importance of manageable scale.

Cathy asked about the inclusion of Kings Cross. There was a discussion about this but it was generally felt this was not part of what is usually understood as the Somers Town 'neighbourhood'. Kings Cross also had its own complexities e.g. crossing borough boundary. There were concerns about not benefitting from the developments like the new university of the arts. **Michael** pointed out that the neighbourhood plan would still have to consider what was on or just over it's boundaries. Ward boundaries were also mentioned but the Bermondsey 'front runner' example was used to illustrate how unmanageable that could become. The meeting agreed on danger of becoming too big and spread too thinly, but agreed to include St Pancras Church and Oakley Square. **Sarah** explained that she had been

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approached by the Kings Cross Development Forum for a meeting so the boundary will need to be discussed with them. She asked for volunteers to attend the meeting.

To attend: Sarah, Shelagh, Ashley, Michael, Donna

6. Working groups: members and meeting dates

Business, employment and training 26th March 5pm

Tim Foster, Shelagh O Connor, Susan Adams, Katie Mathews, Mohammed Miah, Jennifer Hugh, Ashley Adkins, Sarah Elie.

Community Safety date TBA (Sarah, Dave)

Dave Cooper, Cathy Lettan, Jennifer Hugh, Cllr Roger Robinson, John Wood, Jim Widdows, Peter Ward.

Planning, Development, Housing and Environment 14th March 4pm

This meeting is a 'walkabout' to discuss the police vehicle depot site, Plot 10, Phoenix Road as time permits.

Cllr Roger Robinson, Michael Parkes, Mohammed Miah, Jennifer Hugh, Vijay Patel, Donna Turnbull, John Wood, Dave Hoefling, Sarah Elie, Shanewaz Ahmed.

Governance date TBA (Donna)

Helia Evans, Mohammed Miah, Ashley Adkins, Sarah Elie, Donna Turnbull.

Engagement, IT and outreach date TBA (Sarah)

Sarah Elie, Ashley Adkins, Helia Evans, Cathy Lettan.

7. AOB

Susan Adams informed the meeting about the British Library Learning Team's 'Writing Camden' project for 16-24 year olds.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 16th April 2012

5pm – 6:30pm at Somers Town Community Centre.