

**RENEWAL AND RECREATION
POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

BECKENHAM TOWN CENTRE WORKING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 11 December 2014

Present:

Councillor Michael Tickner (Chairman)
Councillor Ian Dunn
Nick Goy, (West Beckenham Residents Association)
Jackie Groundsell, (Beckenham Business Association)
Maggie Hopgood, (Beckenham Resident)
Gail Law, (The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association)
Julian Lewis, (East)
Ian Muir, (Eden Park Residents Association)
Pam Notcutt, (Beckenham Society)
Marie Pender, (West Beckenham Residents Association)
Janice Pilgrim, (Kent Association for the Blind)
Chloe-Jane Ross, (Copers Cope Area Residents Association)
Terry Stanley, (Beckenham Resident)
David Wood, (Beckenham Civic Society)

Stephen Wood (LBB Democratic Services)

Also present:

Robert Buckley, (LBB Regeneration & Transformation Service)
Chris Cole, (LBB Environment & Community Services)
Cheryl Curr, (LBB Environment & Community Services)
Ayesha Malik, (LBB Regeneration & Transformation Service)
Kevin Munnely, (LBB Regeneration & Transformation Service)

10	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
	Apologies were received from Councillors Vanessa Allen, Russell Mellor and Sarah Philips. Apologies were also received from Mr Cliff Watkins. Cheryl Curr notified in advance that she would be arriving late owing to other commitments. It was also noted that this would be the last meeting that Ayesha Malik (LBB Regeneration and Transformation Service) would be attending as she was shortly to take up alternative employment. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Ayesha for her valued contribution to the Working Group.
11	MINUTES OF MEETING ON 6TH NOVEMBER 2014 AND MATTERS ARISING
	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed with minor

	corrections.
12	PROPOSED BECKENHAM TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA
	<p>Mr Robert Buckley (LBB-Regeneration and Transformation) appeared before the Working Group to provide an update on the proposed Beckenham Town Centre Conservation Area Summary, and to answer any questions.</p> <p>The Group heard that a consultation had been undertaken, regarding proposals for a conservation area in Beckenham. The response to this was generally positive; 77% of respondents stated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the concept.</p> <p>It was noted that no formal response had been received from the Beckenham Society, and that the Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas welcomed the proposals. English Heritage was also supportive of the Conservation Area proposals. Both English Heritage and The Advisory Panel were of the opinion that Manor Road should be excluded from the Town Centre Conservation Area scheme.</p> <p>The Chairman queried what would happen next, and asked the Group for feedback on their views concerning Beckenham Junction Station being included in the Conservation Area proposals. The Working Group agreed that Beckenham Junction Station should be incorporated in the conservation area proposals.</p> <p>The proposals would be brought to the Development Control Committee in 2015, where they would be updated with the details of the consultation. If the DC Committee approved the proposals, then the details would be passed to local residents, and LBB would have to deal with any subsequent objections.</p> <p>The Group concluded discussion on this matter by agreeing to move forward with existing plans, thus avoiding any further delay.</p> <p>A report will go for decision to the Council's Development Control Committee by the end of February 2015.</p>
13	UPDATE ON HIGH STREET/RECTORY ROAD JUNCTION REALIGNMENT
	<p>The update was provided by Chris Cole (LBB-Environment and Community Services). Previous delays had been caused by BT, but the good news was that BT had now confirmed a date of January 2015 to commence the work concerning the essential relocation of cables. It was anticipated that this work would take eight weeks, and that there would be no loss of broadband services to local residents.</p>

	<p>After this, LBB's Civil works could commence.</p> <p>It transpired that LBB had made progress on this issue after the matter was raised with TfL. It was not possible for any sanctions to be made against BT for delay, as the cables were their asset. LBB had programmed in engineering works, based on the estimated completion time provided by BT. It was therefore anticipated that the project would be completed around April/May 2015.</p>
14	TOWN TEAM UPDATE
	<p>The Town Team Update was presented by the Team's Chairman, Chloe Jane Ross.</p> <p>The London Mayor's High Street Fund had recently been created to release £9m towards the regeneration of town centres. Small businesses and community groups on London's High Streets had been encouraged to apply for funding to help revitalise and potentially change the way High Streets appear, and were used.</p> <p>The Regeneration Team were looking to use the new funding to support ideas that went beyond 'business as usual' activities. They were keen for small businesses to take a leading role in bidding for grants to boost their local town centres. Grants could be used to smarten up shop fronts, improve public spaces or to hold mini festivals but the aim would be for firms and community groups to be at the heart of that funding.</p> <p>The Town Centre Team had applied for funding in respect of a project called "do up our alley" for various minor works/improvements to the town centre. The application was currently being assessed, and the Group would be updated in due course.</p>
15	EAST KEY STAGE REPORT PRESENTATION
	<p>The East Key Stage Report Presentation was given by Mr Julian Lewis from East Architecture.</p> <p>A brief overview of the presentation was provided to set the direction for the meeting; this consisted of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recap of the Scheme Objectives 2. Latest Plan Overview 3. Project Elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key spaces treatments

- Footway/Pavement treatments
- Parking Spaces and Loading Bays
- Lighting
- Materials
- Furniture
- Alleyways

4. Next stage of the Design Process

Recap on Scheme Objectives:

The recap on the scheme objectives was sub divided into seven areas:

- Removing or reducing the level of HGV usage in the High Street. The Group had agreed that the Albemarle Junction should be redesigned.
- Improving the pedestrian experience of the High Street, with enhanced crossings and wider pavements. The Group commented that it should be borne in mind that room was still required for traffic. The plans would endeavour to create more space, improve the local economy, and the social aspect of the area.
- The improvement of parking and loading provision for visitors and businesses
- Improving the opportunities for regular street markets. The Group noted that Beckenham Green was commonly used for markets, and thought that more consideration should be given to see what could be provided in the High Street
- Improving the quality of the public realm, incorporating coordinated and harmonious design, reduction of street clutter, and the increased use of soft landscaping.
- Improving traffic flow at major interchanges, especially during rush hour
- The Working Group were in agreement that enhancing the public realm and pedestrian accessibility at the War Memorial was important, and that this was a good objective.

Latest Plan Overview:

The Working Group were informed that the Beckenham High Street Overview plans were supported by Urban Design London, and that the plans were currently at stage "C". The next stage would be for

the plans to be submitted to LBB Planning Department. East Architects were confident that a well-defined plan would be submitted.

Project Elements:

Key Space at Beckenham Junction Station and Albemarle Rd – High Street Traffic Lights

One of the project elements being considered was a key space at Beckenham Junction Station which could incorporate a flower kiosk. Public Realm improvements at Beckenham Green would support events and social activity. Regarding the space between High Street and at Beckenham Green, the intention was to keep the trees, and to try and make the shops feel close to the Green; kerb alignments would change.

Canopy at Beckenham Green

The Working Group discussed the option for a canopy at Beckenham Green. It was suggested that a stage canopy be constructed using permanent columns, and demountable canopy material; the guys would be roped like a circus tent. It was suggested that when only the columns were visible, they would blend in with the trees. Some of the Group members expressed concern about possible traffic congestion in the vicinity of the Green, and debated if one or two road carriageways should be used. Chris Cole (LBB) stated that modelling would be undertaken to find the best plan, and that then the results of the modelling could be fed back to the Group.

It was noted that the canopy was still at a design stage, and that then precise technical details had yet to be confirmed. Some members of the Group expressed concerns with storage, and with mounting and demounting the canopy, and thought that it may be better to go for a permanent option.

Key Space at Thornton's Corner.

The Group discussed proposals concerning the Key Space at Thornton's Corner. Members expressed concern that there were parts of the High Street in this area that were difficult to cross, and that there was a disjointed feel to the buildings and alignment of the roads. Members felt that wider footways may be required, along with proper kerbing to help protect properties when occasional flooding occurs from the River Beck. The Chairman suggested the possible use of a mini roundabout.

Members of the Group were shown a photograph depicting what was termed an "example of how improving relationships between

carriageway and footway can enhance quality and atmosphere of space". A lively debate ensued concerning the issue of using kerbs, as opposed to utilising roads/pavements at the same level, but made of different materials. There seemed to be a lack of agreement concerning this matter.

East and some of the Working Group were comfortable with using same level pavements and road surfaces. They adopted the view that same level surfaces were being used widely anyway, and that it created a better town centre atmosphere.

Others in the Group expressed the opinion that standard kerbs and "crossover" ramps were required as these would be better for safety reasons. Some members of the Group expressed road safety concerns in that drivers may be tempted to cut corners in a way that they would not be able to do if proper kerbs were used. The representatives from Guide Dogs for the Blind, and from the Kent Association for the Blind expressed concern that blind people would not be able to differentiate between the road and the pavement where there was no kerb.

Key Space at Kelsey Square

Members of the Working Group proceeded to discuss the possibility of a new key space at Bromley Road. Suggestions made were to widen footways, improve current crossings, make a new crossing, and to remove guardrails. East Architects proposed a new southern pedestrian crossing. The Working Group were updated concerning proposals for Kelsey Square with additional seating, and materials reflecting the old red brick buildings—there would also be special lighting. The main concern revisited by members of the Working Group was possible confusion over the pavement and roadway where there was a flat surface with no raised kerb. A diagram and a photograph were displayed to demonstrate how the footways and roadways around Kelsey Square could become better connected with a uniform surface, and the use of high quality materials.

Key Space at St George's Church – High St/Bromley Road

Suggestions made were to widen footways, improve current crossings, make a new crossing, and to remove guardrails. East Architects proposed a new southern pedestrian crossing.

Proposed options for improving the War Memorial Roundabout and associated area

There were three options proposed by East Architects for traffic model testing:

- **Option 1**--wider footway at cinema side, wider crossing

	<p>points, enhanced crossing east to west through roundabout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 2--wider footways at all sides, especially at post office, wider crossing points, smaller roundabout • Option 3—much wider footways at all sides for shoppers and visitors. Traffic light junction. <p>The Working Group were largely opposed to option 3, as it was felt that this would create traffic jams. Chris Cole informed the Group that TfL still wanted this model to be tested. TfL could give consideration to pass models as long as traffic along the strategic route network was not made worse.</p> <p>The Chairman requested a show of hands concerning the War Memorial proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 members preferred option 1 • 8 members preferred option 2 • 0 votes for option 3 • 4 votes to leave things as they were <p>Photographs were shown to illustrate that existing footways in Beckenham High Street were too narrow; some felt that this created a feeling of clutter in the High Street. Other photographs were shown to the Working Group to provide examples of how new wider footways, with parking and loading incorporated into the footway could help improve access, capacity and the quality of the public environment.</p> <p>Some members of the Working Group responded to these photographs by stating that they still had reservations concerning public safety; there were issues around a seemingly confused layout, issues with who had right of way in different scenarios, and the problems caused by Utilities digging up surfaces and relaying them in a different manner. Chris Cole stated that such schemes were being used all over London, and were subject to Safety Audits.</p> <p>East appraised the Group regarding new footways and layby surfaces and informed that more parking spaces and loading bays were planned. A member of the Group asked if local traders would be consulted.</p> <p>East referenced the different types of lighting that could be utilised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lighting on columns • lighting fixed to buildings • park lighting (Victorian Style). • special lighting at passageways and yards
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	<p>East referenced the different types of seating that could be utilised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informal seating • park benches • special perch seating • special seating <p>East then updated members of the Working Group with details concerning proposed new cycle parking and signage.</p>
16	AOB--PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED.
	No further business was discussed.
17	DATE OF NEXT MEETING TO BE AGREED
	<p>The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed.</p> <p>The Meeting ended at 9.30pm and was followed by the Chairman's Christmas Reception.</p>