**West Norwood Engagement Workshop 1**

**18:00 – 20:00 Thursday 20th October 2022**

**The Old Library, Knight’s Hill**

NB Notes below are summarising/paraphrasing rather than direct quotations

**Attendees**

Representing Lambeth Council

* Matt Dibben, Assistant Director: Neighbourhood Regeneration and Partnerships
* Rob Bristow, Director: Planning, Transport and Sustainability
* Catherine Carpenter, Head of Policy & Placeshaping
* Rheanne Holm, Head of Neighbourhood Regeneration
* Cllr Danny Adilypour, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Growth and New Homes
* Siddo Dwyer, Senior External Affairs and Cabinet Support Officer
* Andrew Anderson, Assistant Director: Development Programme
* Sara Waller, Co-Strategic Director, Sustainable Growth and Opportunity
* Sally Dickens, Neighbourhood Regeneration Manager
* Vanessa Rodgers, Planning Policy Manager
* Amy Tanner, Principal Planning Policy Officer
* Jon Milward, Managing Director, Milward Associates

Representing West Norwood Community

* Cllr Saleha Jaffer – St Martin’s Ward
* Cllr Jackie Meldrum – Knight’s Hill Ward
* Cllr Ibtisam Adem – Knight’s Hill Ward
* Cllr Judith Cavanagh – West Dulwich Ward
* Cllr Christine Banton – Gipsy Hill Ward
* Ben Avery (Business owner at Knollys Yard (Avery Scaffolding))
* Sue Osborn (local resident)
* Andrea Merciar (local resident)
* Noshir Patel - Norwood Forum
* Kim Hart (Chair, Norwood Forum)
* Charlotte Ashworth (Station to Station BID)
* Clare Hamilton-Hidson (Knollys Yard Community Group)
* Stefan Baskerville (Knollys Yard Community Group)
* Anton Baskerville - (Knollys Yard Community Group)
* Tim Bellenger– Friends of West Norwood Station

**Intro by Matt Dibben**

**Cllr Danny Adilypour (DA)**: I am in here in listening mode, discussion will be led by the community

**Rob Bristow (RB) and Catherine Carpenter (CC) spoke to slides 7-10 (attached)**

**Kim Hart (KH):** we are being talked at

**Stefan Baskerville (SB):** what’s the timescale for publishing?

**CC:** Next stage – report to be taken to cabinet and council – that version of plan is the Proposed Submission Version and this will happen next year.

**SB:** Problem is with trust – not the information being made available. Council has no real interest in hearing from community, community given only 4 weeks to respond. Council has not responded to comments yet, just repeating what we’ve heard before

**Cllr DA:** lets try to agree the agenda now. We can’t say today that we will take site 18 and 19 out – but I’m fully open, eyes open, and want to engage from this point on – appreciate the upset and hurt. Can’t make commitment for change this evening. Confirmed he is the one that ultimately signs off the document.

**Sue Osborn (SO):** Our primary request: Remove the two sites from consultation to enable proper community engagement. The Community feels like they are nothing – ‘parameters’ makes us feel like ants, you are planning the community around us. Council has responsibility to involve the community as valued members, community feels they are being talked at, rather than being able to express how we want our community to be. It is not ok to treat us this way. In 2017, we were treated with respect – used toolkit. We are fully in favour for development and homes. How many will be affordable? Living in a bubble of planning language – our homes, our community, our lives. Take the threat off the table. How dare you consider turning our community in one where we have no say. This meeting has confirmed you’re not listening. We will fight. We demand a true consultative process.

**Cllr DA**: I am here to listen, want this to be listening exercise, which we will continue over the next few months. Reviewing all options, can’t say today that the sites will come out. Recognize the anger, can’t change what has happened in the past, here to hear views and have a constructive discussion. All I commit to is listening and considering opinions.

**SB:** Is it important to you that the community is engaged?

**RB:** yes, important to seek the views of key stakeholders, but it’s difficult to get full consensus.

**SB:** Nobody wants this. The vison for industrial intensification – how does that tie into local economic strategy, what is demand for? There are empty light industrial units in the vicinity – land and yard space is important, not necessarily units. You are de-industrialising the site rather than intensifying. There are 200 jobs at stake. Local economy needs heavy industry. There isn’t an abundance of space within London. Scaffolders can be affordable because they are located nearby, not sustainable to move everything out of London.

**RB:** there is a need for a range of commercial space and land, we are confident that we can protect the West Norwood KIBA, working with government and GLA to strengthen protection of industrial land. Lambeth historically has seen a net loss of commercial space mainly due to Government permitted development relaxations, but through strengthening our policies we are turning this around.

**SB:** The site is uniquely constrained – level changes, land locked, contaminated – council is crowbarring scheme in, including bridge – why is so much effort being gone to this? The height is appalling and only works if you pile up flats. Where in KIBA are scaffolders meant to go?

**CC:** Using funding from GLA and with close working between Regeneration, Planning and the BID – study has been produced in conjunction with BID looking at detailed evidence of demand for workspace in West Norwood and Tulse Hill. Significant evidence also sits behind the Local Plan.

**SB**: But it’s being commissioned post-hoc?

**RB:** The designation of the KIBA at Knollys Yard – is backed up by evidence in the Local Plan. The current access is inadequate. Network Rail are reporting safety issues as landowners because of low underpass– concerning to NR. How can investment be enabled to improve access? Responsibility of landowner to ensure safety.

**SB:** But they’re (National Rail) going to profit from the development

**RB:** we are alive to their interests, but they are also a transport provider. Economic challenge – need for more flexible affordable workspace

**Charlotte Ashworth (CA):** need to maximise ‘dirty, messy, smelly’ space – but light industry is important. Important that businesses can stay in the area, need a space for everyone. Also want to talk about Site 18 – more scope for light industrial than Site 19 – feels like shoehorning into site.

**Cllr Jackie Meldrum (JM):** need more discussion about Site 19, not going to get to Cabinet early next year. Need to go back to the beginning – complex sites, but consultation not good enough. Need more than one workshop. The SCI is for normal planning applications, it is not designed for complex large schemes like this. The online consultation not good enough, should be workshops, exhibitions etc. There are more than 2 sites in Norwood that need development. Need to engage wider community. Don’t see how we can have discussions within time scales. Key infrastructure, we are getting nothing from Network Rail. E.g., Useless bridges – need investment from NR. That’s what should be part of this debate, not just the two sites.

**Tim Bellenger (TB):** NR have obligation to government to bring forward sites for housing. One of the reasons why they want to do it, encouraged by Treasury to reduce cost of railway. Rail network does need investment in bridges, and accessibility. Tulse Hill station very busy but has poor step-free access, short platforms.

**Andrea Merciar (AM):** If we are stakeholders, how are you letting people know? I’ve lived on Knollys Road for 20 years and didn’t find out until had some scaffolding put up and they told me.

**Ben Avery (BA):** EcoWorld are disregarding scaffolders/businesses in their consultation – why is there no engagement with people who could lose business?

**Cllr Saleha Jaffer (SJ)**: surprised how top-heavy this meeting is with council officers/presentation. Agreed that the starting point would be reviewing the agenda, yet we started with technical presentations – the community has that information already, we want to talk to you and get feedback.

**Cllr DA:** didn’t think it was practical at beginning to review at start, but we are now having discussions

**SB:** People didn’t know! Actions look like the Council wanted to whizz it through (due to timing of EcoWorld planning application and GLA grant). Real questions about process and trust. Height – reduces the justification that developers have to provide to allow tall building. All looks like it is happening to allow totally inappropriate development. Trying to subvert what is allowed. How does that site work without a bridge? Bridge is 13m high – taller than houses, construction will cause disruption and distress, loss of trees and green for a concrete bridge. Evidence document - all streetscape photos taken from angles which minimise the impact of the height of tower. Eg view from top of Leigham Vale looking down at tower. Looks like LBL are trying to rush it through.

**SO:** What’s the rationale for a tall building? Knollys’s is unique site, locked in by railways, greater separation than other sites. There is no justification why tall building is ok at site 19.

**RB:** it’s in the evidence base, recognising that Knollys is unique. Appreciate that these are matters for debate.

**SB:** It is so transformative, which means it needs to be justified and scrutinised. There is no justification for why it is appropriate. That’s why it needs to be taken out of SADPD – more development required. No way proper consultation can take place in timescales.

**Cllr DA:** can we move on to Site 18? Need to leave for another meeting shortly

**Cllr IA:** Are you committed to community engagement? Plans done in 2017 were community-led. Is there a possibility of pulling the two sites out and doing more engagement?

**Cllr DA:** yes, it is a possibility, it is on the table. Needs to leave shortly, can we discuss Site 18?

**KH**: Issues are the same for Site 18

**CA:** if it all (Site 18) gets developed at same time, it will be devastating. It is the heart of the community. We would like to see more housing, light industry workspace underneath. Aspiration for 15 min neighbourhood. Needs to be piecemeal development with community/business consultation. Site has complex ownership – some businesses purely exist because they own their sites eg WearAbouts. Need those kind of businesses – not generic and boring. Needs to happen slowly, carefully, considered. We have a well-connected community, work together on a regular basis. Together we can do something really great, but it needs the two sites to be removed. This high street is resilient, we have data to show that WN and TH has done better than most hight streets through the pandemic. We are the number 1 BID in London, open throughout pandemic. WN and TH are special - don’t mess with special.

**KH:** Need to have a vision for whole area. People need to feel like they have a stake given the circumstances

**Rheanne Holm (RH)**: Site 18, I led the Manual for Delivery project in 2017. Lots changed economically since then = finances more constrained but we haven’t come that far since 2017 in shared vision: both want affordable housing, better connectivity, public realm – now more commercial-led which is what we’re seeing the demand for (rather than retail-led) – and community facilities, no increase in parking.

Although allocation is for Site 18, its more about development going forward. LBL has bought sites within Site 18. Andrew’s team will be workshopping what is the best delivery mechanism, phasing, etc, could be a really good site to develop

**Cllr JM:** What about the Iceland site – new housing that you want to knock down? What about Knowles? Are we going to have a wider consultation – this isn’t even a workshop. This isn’t how to do community engagement. Need to get young people involved, and homeless households in temporary accommodation. Need to talk about social housing, that’s what we need.

**KH:** the agendas for the next two meetings are pointless. There is no way we are hearing the views of community for site 18. Earlier point about agenda has been ignored

**RB**: In respect of Site 18, we want to explore/explain how it should come forward. If developers bring forward sites based on individual land ownerships, the wider public benefits aren’t realised e.g. legibility through site. The red line is consistent with the Site Allocation within the current Local Plan. Doesn’t mean there is a sword hanging over people’s homes, the policy does not stipulate that the redevelopment of the site has to be comprehensive across the full site. However, the policy seeks to encourage greater collaboration between land owners in order to realise greater public benefits. Currently little being offered through current piecemeal applications in terms of affordable housing. More benefits can be achieved if site comes forward in a more comprehensive way.

***Cllr Danny Adilypour left the room at around this time.***

**Cllr SJ**: second half of workshop is better – rather than coming in with technical jargon presentation. Workshop is not ‘them and us’. We have experiences, know what we want – listen to us. I don’t understand a lot of planning jargon and I’m on PAC (as a sub), and Equalities Panel. Are you going to take equalities very seriously?

**RB:** your comments on next workshop – noted. We will do away with slides.

**Noshir Patel (NP):** There is dissatisfaction with Consultation process – use community to do the consultation process rather than bringing in outsiders as we have significant local knowledge and connections

**KH:** Borough Plan has had a much better consultation. Still running sessions at different times, locations with paid facilitator compared to this – we got 4 weeks only to respond

**RB:** your comments on next workshop – noted. We will do away with slides. This is a continuation of a dialogue that has been happening for years e.g. Manual for Delivery, the 2015 Local Plan Site Allocation, we started the latest Local Plan in c. 2017 with Knollys as a proposed KIBA with potential for co-location for housing. The 6 week consultation in January and February 2022 on the draft SADPD is in line with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement, and was agreed as an approach at Cabinet back in December 2021. But we recognise that there are tensions around height, and concerns about density.

Site allocations are grappling with deliverability – that’s why nothing has happened following Manual for Delivery – economic conditions and viability are challenging. If not deliverable, the plan will not be found sound. As we know, there is a huge housing crisis but needs to be contextual response.

**SB:** Existing policy on tall building but this is not step change – going from 7/8 storey to 24 which is an extraordinary change in approach. Context not addressed for people who live there. What about optimisation for the community? Community response? Not just about what building, it’s about the whole community. Can’t accept that this is continuation of previous engagement – this is transformation in the wrong way. Process used in 2017 worked before – you need to actually listen. Needs to be a joint development – we want to be partners. We’ve never said we’re against development, just against it without you talking to us as equal partnership.

It should be on council to engage – should have written to every household, but we received nothing. Why are we doing the council’s job?

**Cllr IA:** We need an answer on whether you are going to change the consultation process. All you will hear at the next workshop otherwise is ‘we don’t like this consultation process’.

**Sara Waller (SW):** what’s the intention for the next workshop? Workshop 2, what the development looks like, phasing, rationale make sure we are all on same page. Workshop 3, Site 18 – delivery, different ways of bringing forward development. In terms of decision-making around consultation and taking site out of SADPD – Danny will have to take that away, officers can’t make that decision tonight. SADPD is a process led by council – if done right allows the conversation before developers come forward. For some sites the process may work well – but this is an area for us to reflect. You want these sites to come out – we need to think about that. Longer process – but risks associated with that.

**SB:** What are the risks?

**SW:** If you only have the local plan this can be a risk – there are other layers of planning, and there is the planning inspectorate. With site allocations there is greater potential for us to manage process, rather than inspectors at appeal – in principle. If there are other documents that give specificity, this may be looked at. Our politicians will need to consider potential implication of taking these sites out.

Consultation – how do we have consultation where you feel listened to and respected? Saddened that officers are perceived as not diligent. Need to go away and think about this point. We have a desire to create positive change, we don’t want to create change that is not wanted by local community.

Questions about evidence – feels like an important conversation to have. Number of duties we are under e.g., achieving housing targets, ensuring development is deliverable – construction costs going up 20%. John Millward is an expert in property and viability – how it works, what the challenges are and will speak at the third workshop. But whatever we do, deliverability is important.

**SO:** - All the people in this room understand context – but you need to involve us. There is no trust and that is a major negative. We want this to be a co-partnered development. This community will not stand for how it is being treated.

**Cllr Judith Cavanagh:** All parts of the community need to be represented – how are you working to reach out to other parts of the community? People don’t want to feel like they are being co-opted in to defend.

**SW:** Aware that the group of people in the room to do not represent whole community. Things that did emerge from this conversation:

* You’ve challenged us to look at the evidence again – we can revisit it.
* What do businesses need – we are doing work with the BID, in parallel.
* There is less of a sense that this has built on previous dialogue, this is completely different.
* Site 18: Some appetite for something to happen in some way. But more complex as multiple landowners and nothing to support us doing something coherent. Something for us to consider.

**CA:** talk to businesses.

**Cllr JM**: Laundry site is disgusting but need a process of consultation to develop. SINC/railways are also important. Would an SPD work? We’ve been promised one for years for Norwood High St but you always focus on the north of the borough where the money is.

**SW**: We need to consider resourcing

**Cllr JM:** What about Net Zero? Need to talk about the future. Need to talk about railways, we’re never going to get the tube here. All the talk is about infrastructure in the north.

**SO:** there is a new world economy, different context post covid. Next two workshops feel like you will be talking at us.

**SW:** we are trying to listen. Some of the solutions might be different for the two sites – one workshop on Site 18 and one on Site 19 to take you through what we’ve done so far. Is that what you want?

**KH:** No, we want to talk about what we want. We want to plan more consultation.

**SW**: We can talk about pros and cons of different approaches, risks etc will be different for different sites

(Further discussion not captured as chairs were being put away)