

Wednesday 13 September

7.30-9.30pm

**TV Room
Sotheby Mews Day Centre, Sotheby Road**

Chair	Councillor Caroline Russell	Highbury East ward
Councillors	Councillor Aysegul Erdogan Councillor Osh Gantly	Highbury East ward Highbury East ward
Council officers	James Blythe	Ward Partnership Co-ordinator
	Barry Emmerson	Acting Head of Parks
	Bhupesh Thapa	Assistant Parks Manager (Central)
	Min Yee Cheung	Senior Engineer, Traffic and Parking Services
Others	Jessica Taylor Gareth Edwards Heather Preen	TfL/HUK
	Cecilia Larkin Tina Enright Neil Hancock	Thames Water

MINUTES

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Russell welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself and Cllrs Erdogan and Gantly. She commented that there were a number of organisations attending tonight as well as council officers and thanked them for being present.

2. Minutes and matters arising

A resident commented that the error in estimating the maximum permitted footprint of buildings on Highbury Fields had been omitted from the minutes. The minutes were corrected to include the sentence:

'Officers informed the meeting that the maximum permitted footprint of buildings was in fact 306 square metres rather than 266 square metres.'

Subject to that correction, the minutes were agreed and Cllr Russell signed them as an accurate record of the meeting on 4 July.

3. Highbury Corner / Upper Street works: update

Cllr Russell invited Jessica Taylor and Heather Preen from Transport for London (TfL) and Gareth Edwards from their contractor Hochtief to give an update on the works at Highbury Corner.

Jessica explained that Skanska were currently completing the relocation of utility pipes and cables. This phase of work had more impact on pedestrian and vehicle flows around the area because of the location of those pipes and cables. As a result, TfL had extended their working hours so that the work would be completed as quickly as possible.

She reminded residents that there would be a period of closure of the A1 and Highbury & Islington station over Christmas, the quietest period on the roads. They were developing plans for pedestrian, cycle and bus routes in that period and would share them as soon as possible.

Jessica apologised to residents for the disruption and urged anyone with concerns to raise them via Gareth (PLO.HighburyCorner@hochtief.co.uk) or to contact TfL directly - anytime on 0343 222 1234* or online at tfl.gov.uk/contact - (*service and network charges may apply. See tfl.gov.uk/terms for details).

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Cllr Russell commented that match-day arrangements at the weekend had been inadequate. Heather Preen said in response that TfL were not expecting the same level of problems for the match on 14 September as the away fans would almost all be arriving by coach, and the current issues would in any case impact only three more games, after which the access routes to the station would improve again. In general TfL were grateful to Cllr Russell for raising the issue and they had taken steps to improve the situation. Stewards would be on duty from well before the game and there will be extensive signage as well as social media information from both TfL and the council.

- A resident asked about contractors parking their personal cars in the works area, and Jessica agreed to take that away and investigate.
- A resident asked about whether phasing of the traffic lights before the works could be replanned to give more time for pedestrians, and TfL agreed to investigate and give a response.

Heather Preen then gave residents an update on the future plans for the roundabout when the bridge works were completed. The next stage of the process was to publish a response to issues raised, where TfL respond to residents' responses to the consultation. This is anticipated by the end of September and TfL are working closely with Islington Council. The goal was to begin the roundabout works seamlessly after the end of the bridge works, and council officers and the TfL project team would attend the next ward partnership meeting to present the plans in more detail.

There was then a period of discussion in which the following points were made:

- Cllr Russell commented that as there had been major issues with the designs on which TfL had consulted, she hoped they would allow plenty of time for further engagement with residents.
- A resident commented that while TfL had engaged closely with council officers, they did not always fully understand issues with proposals in the level of detail that residents do.
- A resident asked whether the contractors' compound on Highbury Fields would remain for the roundabout works. TfL representatives did not know at this stage.
- A resident asked about the future of the 263 bus. TfL reps undertook to enquire and report back, and Cllr Gantly reminded the room that the council had proposed to TfL that they extend that route as far as Finsbury Park.
- A resident asked whether Highbury Place would remain closed for the new works, but TfL representatives confirmed that it is planned to reopen in February 2018.

Cecilia Larkin, Tina Enright and Neil Hancock then presented on the current emergency works at Angel, which were to replace a water main that runs down Upper Street.

The work was substantially complete and the goal was to be completely finished by the end of October. The disruption which had resulted from the works was inevitable as the water main ran in the middle of the road, but Thames Water had been proactive in trying to mitigate the impact (for example by running a free shuttle bus from Nag's Head to Angel).

4. Highbury Fields building project and general discussion

Cllr Russell then invited Barry Emerson and Bhupesh Thapa from the Parks Service to give an update on the building project on Highbury Fields.

Barry explained that the council was now at the stage of choosing an architect to take the project forward. This involved extensive public consultation, including two days of public exhibitions of concept work by bidders, and would be completed by the end of September.

In light of the extensive public interest in this project, the council had engaged an advisor from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to ensure that the process maximised public engagement. This could only properly begin in earnest, though, when an architect had been appointed.

Barry emphasised that the appointment of the architect was separate from the question of what the building or buildings would be like, and indeed whether there was one or two buildings. He urged residents to focus in their comments on the style and approach the architects took, as it would be for the council and the community to decide on what would be built.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- A number of residents raised questions or concerns about the procurement process. Barry explained that the council was appointing an architect to take the project through to planning permission. It was not in a position to decide on the approach beyond that point as funding had not been secured. He also commented that the council had included a public vote element in the procurement decision-making, something that was not standard practice, to recognise the level of community engagement. In addition he explained that the procurement question about whether there should be one or two buildings was

just an exercise to understand their thinking, and it would not be for the architect to decide on whether there was one or two buildings.

- Cllr Russell reminded those present that the council was trying to put a real emphasis on open engagement, regular consultation and transparency in this process to ensure the community supported the new building or buildings. She emphasised how exciting it was to be creating new high quality provision on the Fields. In response, two residents commented that all involved should keep an open mind as to what the outcome would be, including whether we should do anything more than the minimum necessary remedial works to the existing buildings.
- A resident raised the issue again of the maximum permitted size of buildings on the Fields. Barry clarified that this was definitely 306 square metres, with a further 110 square metres of open space with external seating. A resident commented that this total space was equivalent to two tennis courts.
- It was also noted that the design brief indicated a substantial increase in size for the one o'clock club. Officers agreed to bring back a more detailed explanation of that change to the next meeting.

5. Cycle parking

Min Yee Cheung from the Environment and Regeneration directorate attended the meeting and gave a brief update on the rollout of the first 18 bike hangars in the borough, which she was aiming to have completed by Christmas. Two of these were located in the ward. The council recognised that there was a significant waiting list for these hangars and intended to seek further funding from TfL to continue to expand the offer.

In the meantime, if residents wanted to join the waiting list they should email publicrealm@islington.gov.uk.

A resident suggested that councillors ask TfL to fund some bike hangars in compensation for residents' patience with the years of works at Highbury Corner.

Cllr Russell encouraged officers to have a real focus on removing people's rights to a hangar space when they left the borough, as this had been a major issue with similar schemes in the past.

[Post-meeting note: as requested photos of the bike hangars accompany the minutes]



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6. Panel question and answer session

A resident asked for an update on the Blackstock Road Sainsbury's planning appeal, but councillors didn't yet have much to share as a decision had not been made on the appeal yet. Once more information was available it would be circulated to residents.

A resident explained that she had identified a number of potential breaches of planning regulations in the building of the new Highbury Pool. The ward councillors shared her concerns and willingly agreed to work with her to secure a meeting with the relevant senior officers and members in the council to discuss the matter.

A resident raised the issue of a reduction in funding for environmental improvements for council tenants and residents associations from the Housing Department. Councillors agreed that this would be a substantive item at a future meeting, especially as ward partnerships has been identified as taking on some of that role in future.

A resident asked why councillors had not responded to the letter from Sotheby Mews campaigners. Councillors explained that they were keen to meet the group and discuss the matter, but there had been

scheduling issues which had delayed the meeting. Another resident commented that the councillors' response had been extremely disappointing, and urged them to support the petition that had been set up. Another resident reminded those present that older people deserved respect and the council should not keep cancelling meetings. In addition a resident explained that the major issue was a lack of consultation and the speed with which decisions had been taken.

7. Any other business

There being no other business, Cllr Russell closed the meeting, thanking officers and representatives from TfL and Thames Water for attending.

For further information please email james.blythe@islington.gov.uk or call 0207 527 6833.

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