

Highbury East Ward Partnership meeting

Thursday 23 November, 7.30-9.30pm

The Hall, Sotheby Mews Day Centre

Chair	Councillor Aysegul Erdogan	Highbury East ward
Councillors	Councillor Osh Gantly Councillor Caroline Russell	Highbury East ward Highbury East ward
Council officers	James Blythe	Ward Partnership Co-ordinator
	Shanti Chingen	National Management Trainee
	Jerry Gutwin	LBI Greenspace Service
	Lara Ellington-Brown	
Others	Laura Leporati Graham Carter Kerry Meehan Param Kingston	TfL / Hochtief
	Tim Sloan Sarah Earney	Levitata

MINUTES

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Erdogan welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself, Cllr Russell and Cllr Gantly.

2. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes were agreed and Cllr Erdogan signed them as an accurate record of the ward meeting on 13 September.

A resident asked whether there had been any progress on the discussion item raised at the last meeting about future funding for environmental improvements to Islington estates. Councillors said that they needed to seek further clarity from council officers on the process and agreed that the matter should be dealt with at a future meeting of the ward partnership.

3. Highbury Corner: current works

Cllr Erdogan invited Laura Leporati, Graham Carter and Kerry Meehan from Transport for London (TfL) and Param Kingston from their contractor Hochtief UK to give an update on the works at Highbury Corner.

Laura explained that TfL were not in a position to update/answer questions about Highbury Corner gyratory at this meeting, but will provide a full update about the bridge replacement works. The future of the gyratory would be a matter for discussion at a subsequent meeting, which would be attended by the relevant TfL and Islington Council officers.

Laura explained that TfL are in the process of preparing Highbury Corner for the final period of bridge replacement works planned between 18 December 2017 to 8 January 2018. Laura discussed how this work will impact on people travelling through the area, namely that:

- The A1 Holloway Road, between Digswell Street and Highbury Corner roundabout, will be closed from 01:00 on Monday 18 December 2017 to 04:00 on Monday 8 January 2018, with all bus routes diverted.
- London Overground services will not be operating through Highbury & Islington station from 23 to 30 December 2017, and on four weekends between 13 January and 11 February.

Laura advised that Highbury & Islington station, including the Victoria line and Great Northern national rail services, and local shops and businesses will be open as usual during this time. It was also mentioned that businesses within the closure area will be able to receive deliveries via a marshalled access point at Digswell Street.

Laura explained that the two-way traffic system around Highbury Corner roundabout will be maintained and changes to traffic, cyclist and pedestrian routes will be clearly publicised via posters and maps. These changes include:

- Changes to pedestrian routes: There will be no access between Highbury Place and the Marie Curie charity shop from mid-December to mid-February
- Changes to traffic: Between 22 December 2017 and 1 January 2018 traffic will not move around the roundabout, and vehicles will use the southern part of the roundabout as a two-way road.

Laura explained that there will be a Dial-a-Ride service available to assist local residents with mobility concerns, and that residents can pre-register for this service. In addition, there will be a shuttle bus service from Nag's Head to Highbury Corner.

Laura mentioned that the bridge demolition works are planned for 23 to 30 December 2017, and advised that the works will be unavoidably noisy and occasionally dusty. Laura advised that although the work would be 24 hours a day, wherever possible, the noisy preparatory work would take place during normal working hours between 18 December and 22 December. There would be very

substantial noise mitigation measures, such as sound tents; acoustic barriers, and new equipment with silencers.

TfL informed residents that information on the upcoming planned works can be viewed on the TfL website here: tfl.gov.uk/highbury-corner. TfL urged anyone with concerns to contact them using the details below:

- Contact TfL
 - anytime on 0343 222 1234*
 - online at tfl.gov.uk/contact
- *service and network charges may apply. See tfl.gov.uk/terms for details*
- Email our Public Liaison Officers
 - PLO.HighburyCorner@hochtief.co.uk

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- A resident asked whether the work was co-ordinated with other boroughs, to which TfL representatives responded that they reviewed works across London to ensure co-ordination.
- A resident asked about the Arsenal Match days and what could be done about the impact of them: TfL responded that relevant procedures were in place but that nothing could be done to change these match days or the routes used. There might actually be fewer issues than normal as the road was closed, making it easier for pedestrians to
- A resident asked about potential congestion around Highbury Barn during the planned works, especially during the Christmas period, and TfL said they were aware of the potential issue and have provided advice to local businesses regarding deliveries to attempt to mitigate any potential congestion.
- A resident conveyed concern about the perceived lack of monitoring of diverted traffic routes around Highbury Barn, especially as some roads are narrow. Cllr Russell echoed those concerns and commented that temporary cameras or traffic marshals might be a good idea to monitor the situation. TfL said they will monitor diverted routes 24 hours a day and if a build-up occurs they can change traffic signals to mitigate congestion. The key priority was to divert non-local traffic on a bigger diversion that took them completely away from the area.
- The 263 bus would also be curtailed again for the period of works, though diverted buses would be stopping at Highbury Barn. A resident suggested that the 263 stand would be a potential location for delivery lorries to wait.
- A resident asked how to provide feedback to the TfL project team, and TfL advised that there are 2 public liaison officers available on site, and they can be contacted through the dedicated email address provided, or through social media (TfL's Twitter account) if preferred.

- A resident raised a concern about access to Highbury Fields during the planned works, and TfL advised that there will be a temporary walkway to Highbury Fields.
- One resident asked whether these changes would temporarily worsen the use of Drayton Park, Baalbec Road, Fieldway Crescent and Gillespie Road as 'rat-runs'. TfL representatives commented that they were making every effort to reduce this, including by amending the recommendations made to drivers by satnavs, Google Maps etc. - but it could not be fully prevented.
- A resident suggested putting a maximum weight limit for vehicles on some of the local roads in the area. TfL representatives said this would be a matter for the council.
- A resident raised a concern around the aesthetics of TfL signage for the planned works, and TfL responded that signage is a part of TfL's Communications strategy and that any TfL signage will comply with their signage standards. TfL representatives would be happy to show councillors the proposed signage arrangements.
- A resident raised concern around noise levels during the planned works, and TfL responded by assuring residents that steps will be taken to mitigate the noise where possible. Laura mentioned that the construction team will use noise tents around cutting equipment, acoustic sound barriers, and modern equipment with silencers (where possible) to mitigate noise, and that if residents have any further issues they can use the contact information provided to speak to TfL directly.
- Cllr Russell commented that she had had many complaints from parents and carers of children at Canonbury School and that TfL needed to look at the issues there, which they undertook to do.

4. Highbury Fields: events

Jerry Gutwin, Parks Services Manager for Islington Council, attended the meeting and gave an update on a proposed large event at Highbury Fields.

The event will be run by a consortium of companies called 'The Original Events Co. Ltd' and will be held in March 2019. The ticketed event will run on 3 consecutive weekends, with an estimated attendance of 700 people per day. The events are still to be confirmed, but are expected to include events around home cooking, creative arts and photography.

Jerry advised that this will be a 'low noise' event and will be contained in a large marquee which will be constructed and located in the southern part of the northern fenced-off area of Highbury Fields. Jerry also advised that if the event is confirmed it will be the only commercial event in the 2018-19 calendar for Highbury Fields.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- A resident raised a concern about the quality of the grass after the event, and Jerry advised that, based on experience from other parks, the grass will be

alive but discoloured (yellow). Jerry advised that the parks service will re-turf some parts of the grass and that the grass will need a few weeks of recovery after the event.

- A resident raised a concern about the event potentially affecting daffodil season in Highbury Fields, to which Jerry responded that daffodils will not be affected by the event as the event will be constructed away from the daffodil area of Highbury Fields.
- A resident asked if there was a specific age group of people who will attend the event, to which Jerry responded that there was not – it was suitable for all.
- A resident asked about transport options and travel plans around the event, and Jerry agreed to look into this and possibly work this into a proposal around the event.
- A resident asked if all services will be provided in the marquee, specifically toilets and food outlets: Jerry said they would be.
- A resident asked about the income generation of the event(s), and Jerry responded that the event in March 2019 is expected to generate enough to meet the income target set by the council for Highbury Fields.
- A resident asked about what the money generated could be used for and if it was ring-fenced and could only be used on Highbury Fields. Jerry explained that the income raised from the event would be used exclusively for Islington parks.

At the end of the discussion there was a clear consensus of those present in favour of one extended event in March 2019 as the sole event on the Fields for the next financial year.

5. Highbury Fields: buildings

Lara Ellington-Brown, Parks Service Project Officer for Islington Council, attended the meeting and gave a brief update on the budget and the process for selecting architects for the Highbury Fields development project.

Lara then introduced Tim Sloan and Sarah Earney, architects from the company Levitate, who were the chosen to lead the design and consultation for the project.

Tim introduced Levitate and provided background information on who they are and shared examples of previous projects they have worked on. He said that they were really excited and optimistic about a very positive future for the Fields. Tim also mentioned the strategic brief that Levitate is working to, and that this includes a potential site area of 258 square metres. In addition, Tim mentioned that a 'Catering Brief' will be created based on the footfall data collected in the initial data gathering stage.

Tim then explained how they plan to progress through the project programme and shared a provisional timeline; details of the nationally recognised RIBA project stages discussed are below (please note that all dates attached to project stages are provisional):

- Stage 1: Levitate will focus on gathering information on the site and the surrounding areas, and will then give a public presentation to update on findings – expected at the end of January or beginning of February 2018.

Work had already begun in earnest on stage 1. They were measuring pedestrian footfall in the Fields to give a whole year's picture of the usage and to contribute to the business case for catering facilities.

In addition, they had re-measured the area of current buildings, and amended the previous estimates. The full area of buildings is in fact 279 square metres, of which the permanent structures make up 258 square metres. The permanent structures were the ones that were relevant in this case. The covered seating area has been excluded from this calculation in accordance with RICS, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, code of measuring practice.

- Stage 2: Levitate will work up detailed proposals for the project throughout March and April 2018 and will give a public presentation on progress in early May, after purdah. Cllr Russell explained to the room that Purdah refers to the pre-election period during which no government decisions or major announcements can be made.
- Stage 3: further development ahead of making a decision about submitting a planning application, including the financial case, landscaping, work by structural engineers and other professional cost estimates. Then the council will decide whether to make a planning application, and if it does so, there is an 8-week assessment process before a planning decision. If all went to plan, it would be possible for there to be a planning decision by the end of 2018.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- A resident asked if Levitate would be constrained by the 258 square metre site area outlined in the strategic brief, to which Tim responded that Levitate would be seeking to use as little land as possible, but that the legislation did in fact allow for some flexibility and took an in-the-round view of how much restriction of the openness of the land the building(s) created.
- A resident asked if the new toilet facilities would be available to all customers or just those using the café, Tim responded that they would be public toilets.
- A resident asked if the park keeper's building would be part of the project, to which Tim responded that this could be a possibility as Levitate and Islington Council are considering all parts of the site area as potential, re-useable space. Cllr Russell added that all current buildings needed to be taken into account to provide enough space to make the facilities compliant with modern legislation, for example around disabled access.
- Residents raised questions about the public consultation process. Tim and Jerry Gutwin explained the formal consultation process would take place in January or February 2018 and would be widely publicised.

- A resident asked if memorial trees will be affected by the project, Jerry Gutwin responded that they would not.
- A resident asked if members of the public can ask questions to the architects or council before the formal consultation period begins. Jerry Gutwin responded that residents/members of the public should try to only raise queries about the project through the official consultation process, thereby not holding up the process or project programme for Levitate or Islington Council.
- A resident asked if residents will be consulted on the landscaping element of the project, to which Tim responded that they would be.
- Residents asked for the presentation from Levitate to be circulated after the meeting, Tim agreed to share the presentation. *[Post-meeting note: the slides were circulated to the project mailing list following the meeting]*

6. Panel questions and answer session/any other business

As earlier items had overrun, no time was available for other business or questions to councillors.

Cllr Erdogan closed the meeting, thanking council officers, representatives from TfL and architects from Levitate for attending.

A date would be circulated as soon as possible for the next meeting.