



**Wednesday 8 March 2017
7.30-9.30pm**

Television Room, Sotheby Mews Day Centre, Sotheby Road, N5 2UT

MINUTES

Chair	Councillor Aysegul Erdogan	Highbury East ward
Councillors	Councillor Osh Gantly	Highbury East ward
	Councillor Caroline Russell	Highbury East ward
Council officers	Martijn Cooijmans	Team Leader – Planning & Projects, Planning and Development
	James Blythe	Ward Partnership Co-ordinator
	Bhupesh Thapa	Assistant Parks Manager (Central)
	Jerry Gutwin	Parks Services Manager
	Lara Ellington-Brown	Projects Officer
	John Muir	VCS Team Manager
	Pamela Aristokle	VCS Development Officer
	Michael Gray	Joint Commissioning Manager – Prevention
	Steve Nash	New Homes & Development Programme Manager
Other	Andrew Berthier & Tony Miller	Highbury Roundhouse
	Graham Carter Carolyn Chambers Jessica Taylor Param Kingston	TfL / Hochtief
	Sarah Williams	RIBA Client Advisor (Highbury Fields project)

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Erdogan welcomed residents to the meeting and introduced her fellow ward councillors.

2. Minutes and matters arising

Under matters arising, Cllr Russell updated residents on the bike hangar trial that had recently taken place. While no confirmation had been received yet, Cllr Claudia Webbe, as Executive Member responsible, had agreed the trial had been a success.

There being no concerns with the minutes of the previous meeting, Cllr Erdogan signed them as an accurate record.

3. Highbury Corner Bridge works: update

In a change to the published agenda, this item was taken first. Cllr Erdogan introduced Graham Carter, Carolyn Chambers and Jessica Taylor from TfL and Param Kingston from Hochtief.

The representatives of TfL gave residents a brief update on the progress of works at Highbury Corner, noting in particular that:

- There would be closures of the North London Line over Easter, and changes to entry / exit routes to Highbury & Islington station to facilitate the demolition of the second part of the bridge.
- Further closures for the final substantive works would be needed at Christmas, and that would include road closures. The details of these closures were still being worked out and agreed with Islington Council.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- In response to a question from Cllr Russell, the TfL representatives committed to a site visit with the ward councillors to view the arrangements for pedestrian and cycle access to the station before the closure at Easter.
- In response to a further question from Cllr Russell, TfL explained that it would not be possible to reinstate the direct pedestrian crossing from Highbury Place to the station because it would need to cut through the works site.

- A resident asked about the impact of the works on trees in the area and whether there would be any compensation, and in response TfL agreed to investigate any such issues.
- In response to a resident's question, TfL confirmed that the works were still on course to be complete on time.
- The consultation report about the future possible works at Highbury Corner to reimagine the space had not yet been published, although the comments from residents were available online. This report was still being finalised, and Cllr Russell commented that it would largely be dependent on the new Mayor's Transport Strategy, which was due to be published shortly.

[Post-meeting note: further information, including a time-lapse video of the works, can be found at tfl.gov.uk/highbury-corner. For further information, residents should contact Param Kingston, Hochtief Liaison Officer - PLO.HighburyCorner@hochtief.co.uk]

4. Sotheby Mews / Highbury Roundhouse

Cllr Erdogan began the item by thanking staff and service users of Sotheby Mews for having us in their centre for the meeting, and thanking Cllr Diarmaid Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development, council officers, and representatives of Highbury Roundhouse, for attending.

Martijn Cooijmans, as the responsible officer in the Planning & Development division, began by giving some of the background to the proposed changes. He set out how, with support from the council, Highbury Roundhouse would be able to build a new community centre that would be twice the size of the two existing centres at Ronalds Road and Sotheby Mews.

Martijn then invited Andrew Berthier to speak as director of the Highbury Roundhouse, along with Tony Miller, one of the organisation's trustees. Tony then took residents through the facilities that would be available in the new centre and explained that the Roundhouse had raised sufficient funds to get the centre built, that it would be completed by Spring 2018, and that in fact contractors had begun to arrive on site for preliminary work.

Andrew Berthier then explained that services from Sotheby Mews would move to the new Highbury Roundhouse once it had been built, and that he

wanted now to open a dialogue with service users at Sotheby Mews about the transition and the opportunities as well as differences that the new Centre would bring about. This will include establishing a working group to ensure that resident views were heard and factored into decisions relating to the new arrangements at Highbury Roundhouse's new centre.

Cllr Erdogan then invited Stephen Nash from the council's New Build team to explain the processes around the eventual building of social housing on the site of the Sotheby Mews centre. Stephen explained that his team had not even begun to plan for that, but when they did they were committed to a very proactive and substantial engagement process with local residents. No work would begin at Sotheby Mews until the transition of services had been completed.

Finally, Cllr Erdogan introduced Cllr Diarmaid Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development, who concluded the initial presentations by setting out that the council was committed to involving service users in the process for these changes, and to ensuring continuity of service for Sotheby Mews users as the services transitioned to the new venue.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- A Sotheby Mews service user commented that the Centre had made a huge difference to her life, that construction of new homes could be very disruptive, and that in her view the new Highbury Roundhouse did not have sufficient facilities to cope with the wide range of activities that took place at Sotheby Mews.
- A resident asked whether there was in fact sufficient space at the new Highbury Roundhouse for the services from Sotheby Mews. Andrew Berthier responded that he was committed to starting that conversation and to resolving it to the satisfaction of all parties.
- A resident commented that there had been a number of similar proposed closures of day centres in the area and that often resistance from residents and service users prevented them closing.
- Cllr Ward commented that members and officers were here to listen to people's concerns, that all services would continue at the new centre, and that there would be a minibus service from Sotheby Mews to the new centre.
- A resident asked why the Sotheby Mews centre had to be closed, and whether alternative funding sources had been considered. In response, Cllr Ward commented that to create a new centre twice the size of the two existing spaces combined and build substantial

amounts of new social housing represented a major success for the council on key priorities and this was why the decision had been taken.

- A resident asked about the types and quantity of space at the new centre, and in response Tony Miller said that although the space would be different, it would in many ways be a better offer than Sotheby Mews.
- A resident commented that it was not just service users, but also their carers, who were affected by these changes. It could, for example, mean that she, as a carer, could not continue to do part-time work if her mother did not feel able to engage in services at the new centre.
- Tony Miller explained that staff from the Sotheby Mews centre would transfer to the new Highbury Roundhouse, to give continuity, and that he was confident there was sufficient capacity at the new centre.
- A resident asked about the hairdressing service, which represented more a social support service than a hairdresser, and in response, the Chair of the Highbury Roundhouse spoke to say that some difficulties were presented by the fact that the new centre had been designed and designs approved before it had been agreed that services from Sotheby Mews would move there, but that Highbury Roundhouse were committed to doing their best to accommodate all provision from Sotheby Mews in the new centre.
- A resident commented that they felt the engagement with service users and residents was coming quite late in the process. In response, Cllr Gantly reminded the meeting that, although members would very much hear the concerns raised by residents, the council was doing its best to manage the impact of austerity and that did involve compromise and require tough choices.
- A service user commented that this centre was being sold to raise funds and that in their view the elderly were being sold down the river. In response, Cllr Ward commented that the council was safeguarding the services from Sotheby Mews and at the same time building new social housing, a key priority need for the borough.
- Cllr Russell commented that we had learned a great deal during the meeting and heard testimony from service users. In her view it would be heartbreaking to lose Sotheby Mews, there had been a misunderstanding between the council and Highbury Roundhouse and the new centre was really designed only for the services that had been previously been delivered at the Bottleworks site. In her view it seemed possible to build homes at Sotheby Mews as well as a new community centre on the site.

- Cllr Erdogan responded that no final decision had been taken about Sotheby Mews, and that was why there were so many council officers and members present tonight to hear views. Cllr Ward also commented that in his view everything was on the table and he was happy to have a conversation.
- A resident commented that the council had previously committed to keeping Sotheby Mews open and asked whether funding would transfer to the new centre with the services. Cllr Ward responded that the council was doing its best in very difficult circumstances.
- A resident commented that perhaps different use could be considered for the London Met building and it was important to promote better join-up of public spaces.
- A resident asked if the council could guarantee how long the minibuss service would be provided for – Cllr Ward could not offer any guarantees but was happy to discuss the matter.
- A resident asked about the mix of social and private housing and about the number of units planned for Sotheby Mews. In response, Cllr Ward and Stephen Nash said that no decision had been taken, but that units for private sale were used to fund construction of social housing and the council tried to keep the proportion of social units as high as possible.

In closing the discussion, Cllr Ward said that he was happy to discuss these proposals with anyone and could be reached at Diarmaid.ward@islington.gov.uk. Cllr Erdogan thanked him, representatives of Highbury Roundhouse and council officers for attending.

5. Highbury Fields building project: update

Cllr Erdogan then introduced Lara Ellington-Brown, the Project Officer responsible for delivering the new building(s) on Highbury Fields. Lara introduced the discussion by providing an update on progress to date. She said that the initial design brief had been published before Christmas and it was still a working document. She also introduced Sarah Williams, the RIBA Client Advisor the council had engaged to support the selection process for an architect.

Lara also explained that the steering group had not planned any more meetings at this time, as the consultation process will be available to all members of the community to participate. This was because of the level of interest in the project and so that no one was excluded from engaging.

Sarah Williams then introduced herself and her work, and Cllr Erdogan asked Bhupesh Thapa from the Greenspace team to give a short explanation of the background to this item, for the benefit of any residents who were not aware of the proposals.

Lara then explained that the question of whether there should be one or two buildings would be a key question for the consultation with residents in the first phase of this project, and Cllr Erdogan reiterated the council's commitment to really extensive consultation on this matter.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- It was not at this stage possible to be certain about when a decision would be made about the design – this could be a lengthy process.
- A resident commented that communication had been an issue, and Cllr Russell explained that this was why the decision had been taken to expand beyond the Steering Group and have a fuller engagement process in which all could participate.
- A resident asked about the possibility of keeping the floodlights on for an additional hour and members agreed to go away and investigate that.
- A member of staff from the Bandstand asked whether a community room was necessary given the investment in Highbury Roundhouse. Lara responded that this was exactly the sort of point the consultation might be expected to capture.
- A resident commented that in the past the money for new buildings had tended to run out after the consultation phase. Jerry Gutwin from the Parks Services Team commented that this was now a high priority project and the council had committed the funds to get to a final design already.
- A resident spoke to welcome the commitment to consultation, and a number of people present commented that there was a new constructive atmosphere around these proposals.
- A resident commented that it was important to include all users of the Fields in discussions, including young families, and Lara responded that this was very important to the team and they intended to promote the consultations in various ways and offer a range of means to comment. A resident then offered to help promote the consultation to users of the Fields.
- A resident thanked officers for attending and asked for clarification about the process. Sarah Williams explained that the brief was being developed iteratively with residents and (once they were appointed) the

architects and would be developed continually until the planning submission.

6. Any other business

Cllr Gantly informed residents that the point had now come to complete their gender transition and that at the next ward partnership meeting they would be looking somewhat different. This received a round of applause from all present.

Cllr Erdogan then closed the meeting, thanking officers for attending and providing support to the Ward Partnership meetings.

[Post-meeting note: the next meeting will be on Monday 12 June at 7.30pm]

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

