

Junction and St George's Ward Partnership Meeting
Tuesday 28 January 2020, 7pm – 10pm

Yerbury Primary School,
Foxham Road, N19 4RR

Ocado distribution hub planning application

Attendees

Cllr Sheila Chapman, Junction councillor

Cllr Janet Burgess, Junction councillor

Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Junction councillor

Cllr Satnam Gill, St George's councillor

Cllr Tricia Clarke, St George's councillor

Cllr Gulcin Ozdemir, St George's councillor

Cllr Richard Watts, Leader of the Council

Karen Sullivan, LBI Service Director, Planning & Development

Neill Abrams, Ocado Executive Director & Group General Counsel

Ian Starling, Ocado Group Head of Real Estate

David Shriver, Ocado Director of Communications

Trish Keating, Junction Ward Partnership Co-ordinator

Imognen Resnick, St George's Ward Partnership Co-ordinator

85 members of the community signed into the meeting



Transcript of an [article](#) by Lucas Cumiskey from the Islington Gazette published on 29 January 2020:

Nocado: Ocado chief tells parents controversial depot near Yerbury Primary School will help meet demand of 13,000 weekly Islington customers

Demand from 13,000 weekly customers in Islington justifies plans to build a controversial delivery and refuelling depot next door to an Archway primary school, an embattled online supermarket has claimed.

Scores of parents and neighbours crammed into the hall at Yerbury Primary School, in Foxham Road, to roast Ocado bigwigs over their pursuit of planning permission to build a depot with diesel pumps at Bush Way Industrial Estate in Station Road. The depot would serve up to 100 delivery vans a day at peak times.

It will also offer run a "zoom" service, offering deliveries within 60 minutes, which some fear will "kill local businesses".

Following a huge backlash, Ocado last week offered to upgrade power capacity at the depot so it can rollout a fleet of less-polluting electric models - but chiefs last night admitted they can't guarantee when this will happen, or the time frame for all vans to be electrified.

It's in talks with UK Power Network about the former and hopes to have some answers by mid-February.

Ocado says the site could be served by vans powered by compressed (so called) natural gas (CNG), which emits less carbon dioxide when burned but produces more methane, or even hydrotreated vegetable fat oil (a form of renewable diesel), instead of the real thing. One woman said: "We are serious because the children are going to suffer because of your business. You're serious because it means more money but we are serious because it's the health of our children, it's the environmental crisis we are facing."


Addressing similar concerns, Ocado's executive director Neill Abrams said: "The way in which we operate grocery distribution is not zero carbon footprint, it's not possible to feed people at the moment without generating carbon."

He later added: "Having no one next door isn't a real world aspiration, I can assure you Ocado is going to be a caring neighbour, always available to engage with the community."

Multiple attendees accused Ocado of trying to sneak the depot and diesel pumps through the planning process without properly consulting stakeholders, saying: "We don't trust you". Mr Abrams apologised for the perceived "lack of transparency", saying they'd operated within the law through Islington Council's planning process.

Council leader Richard Watts later said this was "bollocks" and that Ocado had a statutory duty to the council but moral obligations to the Archway community.

Ocado has a 15 year contract for the site and will employ 300 people there.



Not long after an attendee accused Ocado of "green washing", Mr Abrams also made an unexpected announcement that a "green wall", using plants or vegetation to absorb CO₂, could be erected along the depot's boundary to the school playground. Yerbury headteacher Cassie Moss found out about this idea via the power point presentation. She said: "I think from the school's perspective there has been a real lack of communication on Ocado's side." Cassie said the school wasn't mentioned in the planning application and she had to contact Ocado directly to voice concern because it "didn't try to reach out as a potential future neighbour". She claims Ocado told her an electric fleet at the site wasn't possible, before later telling Cllr Watts the opposite.

Ms Moss has previously said the proposed depot would "make a mockery" of the council's school streets scheme, for which Yerbury was a pilot.

The "Nocado" campaign to stop this development has garnered more than 4,000 signatures in an online petition, and has been backed by Islington's Labour and Green councillors. Many attendees at the meeting, including Cllr Watts, admitted they'd previously shopped with Ocado but say they're now boycotting it.

Vehicles release harmful air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulate matter like PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀, which can enter the blood stream, damage organs and stunt children's growth.

In 2015, 39 of Islington's 58 primary and secondary schools were also found to breach these limits, and seven were in the top 100 most polluted learning environments in London.

Cllr Watts says soon-to-be-released data shows these figures have improved, but air pollution around Yerbury remains concerning.

People are also objecting to the excess traffic and noise pollution from the site.

