



# Grand Union Alliance

## conference

15th November 2014

## report

Grand Union Alliance is a community network for Park Royal Old Oak Common, White City and Kensal Canalside. GUA is supported by London Tenants Federation (Tel 07931 214 913) working with Just Space through grant funding provided by Trust for London.



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# Morning session



Theresa Magee, Wesley Road Residents Association (Ealing) and Jagrati Bhatia, White City Estate (Hammersmith & Fulham) welcomed attendees to the conference. They jointly chaired the morning session.

## Speakers:

**Update on Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation:** Michael Mulhern, Interim Head of Planning, Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation

The Mayor's aspirations: The Government is currently in a petitioning process around the HS2 proposals and the new station at Old Oak Common.



The Mayor's aspirations relate to the potential economic benefits (to the UK) of bringing HS2 into Old Oak Common. The new stations, HS2 and Crossrail, would handle 250,000 people - equivalent to Waterloo station. Both national and regional connectivity would be good. It is already only 15 minutes from both Clapham Junction and Richmond to Willesden Junction. A new hub, that might be something like the Kings Cross development, that is well designed and accessible could be created.

Two years ago the Government asked the GLA about the possibility of HS2 being situated at Old Oak Common and for an investigation to be carried out into what might be delivered in terms of new homes and jobs. The Vision for Old Oak Common was published in 2013 and now the GLA is looking at both a revamp of this and how they might engage local communities in developing a planning document.

The only existing Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) is the London Legacy Development Corporation which has the responsibility for delivering the legacy of the Olympic Games. The LLDC had £10 billion government funding. The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) would not have that kind of funding but with a new HS2 station, that could act as a catalyst for regeneration.

It was proposed that there was a need for a single governance structure to cover an area that is currently situated in parts of three boroughs and which has different processes for getting things signed off. A boundary was proposed for a new planning authority, which has been consulted on.

What powers would an MDC have? In parts of the MDC the majority of planning applications would be determined by the MDC and in other parts by the boroughs. Most of the development in Park Royal is about improving existing (including transport and other infrastructure) rather than large scale change. While the MDC would have the planning powers – including developing planning policy, everything else would remain within the remit of the boroughs.

Timescales: The London Assembly discussion on this and vote will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> December.

Outcomes of the consultation about the proposed MDC - (18<sup>th</sup> June – 24<sup>th</sup> September): Of the 309 responses to the consultation, 138 were generally supportive of the establishment of an MDC although some concerns were also raised in these responses. 135 were not supportive of the establishment of the MDC and noted particularly concerns around the involvement of local communities and elected representatives in the planning processes and/or about what might happen to Wormwood Scrubs. 36 made comments without saying whether they supported the establishment of an MDC or not. Some that responded commented on 20 different issues and others only one or two issues.

Key concerns raised in the consultation were:

- local governance - ensuring that local councils stay involved and involvement is transparent
- local accountability
- who would be on the board and how would local communities be engaged
- the proposed boundary (104 made comment on this; 96 of those were focused specifically on Wormwood Scrubs)

The GLA feels that it didn't make it clear why the Scrubs were included in the MDC area. The intention of including it in the boundaries was not to encourage development there, but rather to ensure its protection. There will be a lot of additional people living in the area. They will use the Scrubs and there will be a need to consider what this will mean and what the impact will be.

- That the time allocated for the consultation was too short and insufficient information was provided.
- If the GLA has CPO powers, could that involve CPO of individuals' homes?

Other issues raised that were not specifically included in the consultation:

- transport concerns;
- social and community infrastructure need;
- how tall buildings might be;
- how much affordable housing would be included;
- design issues;
- impact on the Scrubs;
- protection of local jobs and Park Royal businesses;
- impact on existing communities.

What is the GLA doing now? It is reflecting on these comments and looking for ways to address them. The Mayor will be making a decision on these in the first couple of weeks of December and the London Assembly members will scrutinise and vote on this on 17<sup>th</sup> December.

The two key boundary issues:

- (i) Industrial land on the west side of the Park Royal area - Ealing and Brent are currently doing a lot of work on the future of Alperton. (Link to Alperton regeneration Brent webpage - <http://brent.gov.uk/regeneration/alperton-regeneration/> There are links to various documents on the right hand side of the page).
- (ii) East of the Scrubs, Hammersmith and Fulham Council are doing a lot of work around the Linford Christie Stadium and the Hammersmith hospital as well as in the White City area – so this is very much part of delivery plans for that area. Also Wormwood Scrubs is a big issue.

There is further consultation on proposed boundary changes relating to the above (deadline 26.11.14) - <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/consultations/proposed-old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation-revised>

A community charter: The GLA has received a copy of the Grand Union Alliance's statement of intent and community engagement charter. The GUA's document fits well with the GLA's aims around a community charter, but it would also want to ensure full engagement of the Park Royal Business Group, the Traders Association in Harlesden, Friends of Wormwood Scrubs and some others as well. The GLA is developing its own community charter which it feels needs to be slightly broader.

The GLA is looking at some ideas and is keen to start consulting on some of them in an attempt to get a joint community charter agreed with the GUA and other groups early next year, with the aim of then consulting on this.

At present the GLA is thinking about having three public consultation events over the year (in February, mid-summer and some time in the latter part of the year). It also aims to hold six workshops or 'champion' group meetings. These will be more focused group meetings of a manageable size with a couple of representatives of some groups who will meet every two months, or more if necessary, and will look at key issues that need to be addressed.

Most of the discussion will be about planning issues – such as design, building heights and the Scrubs. The GUA and other groups (such as the Harlesden Town Team and the Park Royal Business Group) might select two or three representatives to attend these workshop group meetings. This would provide the opportunity for representatives of these groups to have their say, to feed into their groups and to feed-back on what has been discussed.

Public consultations will provide presentations on what has been discussed at the workshop meetings and possibly any other issues that come up such as HS2, but the MDC won't duplicate what is already happening at GUA / other meetings.

The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation officers feel that they are well enough resourced to facilitate this. Doing more than this would be greater than they can manage and would probably just be meeting for the sake of meeting.

Discussion from the workshops will feed into the MDC team, as will information received in emails and phone calls. It aims to engage more in social media.

The MDC team will report directly to the board. One of the representatives from the workshop group might sit on the MDC board – but officers are still trying to think this one through. They do feel that there is a need, however, for a resident and a business representative on the board.

The Mayor is to make the decision on this and he may disagree. However, many of the people who made comments to the consultation said that they did not want a faceless board, so having a community and a business representative as well as councillors on the board may relieve some fears about this.

Local councils make their decisions by cabinet and the councillors are directly elected. The MDC feels it need to acknowledge this and go out to consultation on how the community and business involvement might work.

What do groups feel about this? How might it work? How would selection of representatives occur? How would representatives be identified / nominated? Where would the workshop meetings be held and key issues communicated – would this venue (the Methodist Church) be a good location?

Social infrastructure that would be needed: The GLA has been doing a lot of work over the last six months on trying to get a handle on issues such as number of homes, potential heights of buildings, where the streets may be and what social infrastructure is needed.

So far it is assessed that there is need for:

- Two existing schools to be expanded.
- Three new primary schools to be constructed and one new school covering all school ages.
- One and a half new police stations – this would probably be one new station in the MDC area and upgrading of existing stations or additional police contact centres (smaller police stations).
- The existing fire station in Park Royal would need to be upgraded. The London Fire Brigade is already looking at a centre of excellence there – but this is very much in the early stages.
- There are about five ambulance centres within about three km of Old Oak Common – in Brent, Chiswick, Fulham, North Kensington and Wembley. One of these would need to be fully upgraded to meet the need in new development.
- Around 30 additional GPs would be required – so perhaps five or six new GP surgeries with, in

combined locations, pharmacies and dentists.

- A&E has completely changed and the way it works. There are now four or five A&E centres across London and then additional urgent care centres (for non-life threatening but none the less urgent issues / injuries). There is one at Hammersmith Hospital and one at St Charles in Kensal. The MDC will need to look at how much upgrading would be required with the NHS; a big piece of work.
- Libraries and community facilities – looking at this in the traditional way would indicate the need for two new libraries and two new community facilities (perhaps provided together). Since development may not take place for another eight years, libraries are closing and people are not using them so much, future need is uncertain.
- Leisure and youth facilities - new leisure and amenity facilities will be needed, as will improvements to the towpath, nature reserves and the Scrubs. The GLA is having some conversations with Sports England and will need to do more work on this.
- Any improvements to the Scrubs would be quite a long way ahead and for now the GLA aims to build relationships with groups concerned about the Scrubs and have constructive dialogue with them about this.
- Local employment – apprenticeships, training, affordable workspaces are all on the GLA's radar, although they haven't really started work on this.

### **Question (Q), answer (A) and comment (C) session**

- Q. The presentation implied that most development will need to be paid for through private development (except transport). What are the proposals for CIL and section 106, which are crucial in terms of provision of funding? At present CIL is borough-wide. How will this bring in the big construction funding needed?
- A. CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) is a levy put on planning applications and developments, so once the cost of social infrastructure needed (including for roads and sewerage) is assessed, a levy is determined for each type of development – office, retail and residential, etc. There will be a CIL for the MDC area.
- Q. Could groups of residents in the core area be involved in the champion/workshop groups? Those on the front line of the development should have representation.
- A. Send me an email about the first of these.
- C. Given that the recent news on NW London patients having the longest A&E waits, the needs here really does need to be properly assessed.
- Q. (i) Do you propose to replace the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham trustee on the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust?  
(ii) In an email to one of our members you said that the reason that the Scrubs was within the MDC boundaries to improve and enhance it. What do you mean by this?
- A. (i) No – the Wormwood Trust Charitable Trust was set up under an Act of Parliament and we work with this.  
(ii) We have no intention of allowing development on the Scrubs. What we are concerned about is that with a large number of new people living near the Scrubs, there will be many more using it, its existing character may change and there may need to be sensitive improvements / enhancements made.
- Q. There are a number of boroughs involved here who have not finished producing their Local Plans. Is the GLA satisfied with the state of these plans and that they are in conformity with the latest version of the London Plan? A duty to co-operate exists but this is not often exercised.
- A. Many do have Local Plans in place and these have to be in general conformity with the London Plan. I'm not sure I can answer you fully as I don't work within the area.
- Q. Could you check with Colin Wilson's team on this?
- A. I take it as given that when Local Plans are proposed the GLA responds to consultation and the plans must be in general conformity with the London Plan. Equally when this MDC's Local Plan is produced, it too will have to be in conformity with the London Plan. The MDC will work with the surrounding boroughs to ensure the plans make sense together.

- C. We often have to drag the boroughs through the mill to try to get them to write a plan that does conform to the London Plan so we are suspicious of the decision-making.
- Q. For the boroughs that are a bit further out, some are anticipating the implementation of an MDC as a matter of fact and are putting this in plans that are going to public examination. However, they have no way of validating that these aspirations are deliverable and are probably not liaising or co-operating with you. Are any boroughs now liaising with you on this?
- A. Yes, on a regular basis.
- Q. In your presentation you said that you have to ensure that social and community infrastructure is in place but previously you said that issues such as this were not within the remit of the MDC. Can you say exactly what your responsibility would be around schools, health provision, etc.? Would it just be that you allocate the land?
- A. The responsibility of the MDC is to plan for the area and talk to the NHS, police, the fire brigade and others. All these different organisations have their own plans for the future, based on London's growth. We are talking to them about how much of that planned growth is going to be in this part of London to ensure they are aware of the level of need that has to be met. The MDC's remit is to say what is required and try to influence what is provided.
- Q. Regarding the TfL consultation, are the options presented adequate up to about 2080? If not, will the MDC now take stock, review the options and consider with TfL the question of growth of the railways, HS2 particularly, and put the main station of the W London line on top of the HS2 station and ensure it is a four-platform, 12-car station as a minimum, before you start building a city on top of it? Once you start on this you have nowhere else to go for future capacity in the next century.
- Q. What lessons have been learnt from the London Legacy Development Corporation? This has been very unsatisfactory arrangement, particularly for the community there.
- A. There is a big difference between the LLDC and this MDC. The LLDC had huge public sector investment, owned pretty much all the land and has a huge team. This will be an MDC light. We will work on a plan for this area and how we will involve the community in developing it. It has a relatively small team. From what I have heard from the LLDC and groups outside, there are a lot of good things happening there. The GLA has to listen to this group (the GUA) and others about what they want, particularly in terms of community engagement.
- Q. I just wanted to hear about the lessons that have been learnt.
- Q. Our concern is about the impact of development to the neighbourhoods around and in the vicinity of the MDC. I saw nothing in your presentation about this. We have Central Middlesex Hospital here, which is a very good hospital. (i) How will existing facilities relate to and improve your plan? (ii) When you talk about social and community infrastructure does this include religious spaces, churches, mosques and temples and will there be provision of social care? (iii) Poverty is growing and things are not improving much for people at the bottom end of the social spectrum. How much will this kind of development help around issues of social deprivation and poverty?
- A. I didn't mention the Central Middlesex because it doesn't have an urgent care or A&E department. We have already started to look at the new need that will be created here. The original masterplan was a bit basic in this respect but over the next six months to a year we will be doing more assessments and will look at how it will all impact. Yes social care is of course included as part of infrastructure need.

Michael Mulhern suggested that if attendees had other questions they should feel free to put them in an email to him.



## **Overview and comment on transport proposals for Old Oak Common - Christian Wolmar, Transport Journalist**

Christian said that he had written about transport for about 20 years or more. He is a transport journalist and has also written books on transport. He used to write about local government. He lives near Kings Cross and kept abreast of the large scale development there, although he wasn't directly involved with it.

He noted that he is a lifelong Queens Park Rangers supporter and that he really hopes that they don't build a 40,000 stadium here and that the team stays at Loftus Road, "as it is an absolutely wonderful place to watch football".

Christian suggested that everyone who is going to take part in this process needed to take a deep breath as it is going to be a long haul. He said that this is just the beginning of something that will be absolutely enormous; a much larger development than Kings Cross. There will be all sorts of different plans and different stakeholders involved and it is still unclear what kind of planning authority structure will operate in the area.

He said he felt that the idea of a development corporation is right, although he is not certain that the vision is correct. He said he felt that the Grand Union Alliance would have to get involved in a lengthy campaign to get the voice of the community heard. He said he felt that people would need to put in a lot of work and where possible bring in expertise. The Kings Cross Railway Lands Group (KXRLG) had a very good planning academic involved - Michael Edwards, who did a lot of work there. Others with expertise also provided supported.

Christian said that he felt it was important for the community to set its vision, to plug variable differences and try to have something of a united front. He said this is not easy and, even from the brief outline at the conference, he had heard there are different interests.

Kings Cross had a lot of advantages. It had two major stations which needed redevelopment and is in Central London. The Old Oak Common / Park Royal area is a bit further out and in some respects is more comparable to Stratford

This area is definitely not at the same starting point (compared to either Kings Cross or Stratford). There is Crossrail and an amount of money coming in, but no huge sums of public money, while at Kings Cross and St Pancras there was the arrival of HS1 and redevelopment of St Pancras - £900 m to spend on St Pancras and £500m on Kings Cross. These are big numbers even in this day and age. Stratford had the Olympic Games. However, this is a place where a lot of changes are going to happen over the next 10 or 20 years. This is development over a long time-scale.

The Kings Cross plans were first mooted in the late 1980's, possibly for a high-speed line or possibly for something else. A lot of the railway lands got abandoned; land that used to be goods yards and sidings, just as in this area.

Christian noted that he used to go train spotting from two sheds at Old Oak Common and Willesden Junction and that he used to get chased off by British Transport Police. There are now vast areas of land that are no longer anything to do with servicing the railway.

He said that there seems to be a philosophy that you make a plan, the developers will come in and that it will all definitely happen. That is, you build the transport infrastructure core and people will come along and build. He noted that this doesn't necessarily happen. At Ebbsfleet, for example, a station built in Kent, it was really expected that HS1 would have resulted in a lot of new housing and jobs being created there. This has not occurred. He said that while the authorities suggest that 77,000 jobs will be created (across the Old Oak Common, Park Royal and adjacent opportunity areas) these figures are just plucked out of the air.





KXRLG was at the core of what happened at Kings Cross. There were other groups around too, but KXRLG celebrated 25 years of being involved there. They did all sorts of things including legal challenges and regularly attended dozens and dozens of meetings. It is important for local communities to set the agenda and organise themselves to get as wide as possible a group of people involved and to set the agenda around what people would like to see.

What happened at Kings Cross was that in the 1990's, in the immediate post-Thatcher era, there was a plan for all sorts of almost-soulless development. This included lots of office blocks, a bit of retail and a bit of council housing thrown in on the side.

Christian said he felt that through the efforts of the KXRLG they eventually got a lot of things right at Kings Cross and that it was worth people going to have a look at it. He noted that he regularly jogs and cycles through it and has meetings with people at St Pancras. There is a big arts centre - Kings Place, a huge public space, a sort of amphitheatre thing, where events are held, that overlooks the canal (which has been opened up), an arts school and a busy pedestrian thoroughfare that runs right through the middle of it. Some of the detailing is very good.

How did this happen? Originally it was London and Continental Railway that was developing the high-speed line that started the ball rolling, then they got in a developer - Argent. It took nine years for them to get planning permission. At one time there was going to be a terminal of HS1 underneath Kings Cross and now, of course, it is above ground at St Pancras. All sorts of changes occurred and an awful lot of money was involved.

Kings Place arts centre is also a huge office block headquarters of Network Rail and the Guardian. It has recently changed hands. It was built for £150m and sold for £235m a few weeks ago.

Christian said there were really important lessons to be learnt from Kings Cross.

He said he felt the transport situation was in quite a chaotic situation. He feels that probably the area is going to get HS2, although there is no guarantee that it will actually be built. He suggested that people would need to see what was going to happen after the election. He said it might well be that it will be postponed, but that his bet was that HS2 will happen, but there may well be delays. So when they say 2026, it may well actually be some years after that.

At present all the trains are due to stop at Old Oak Common. So the Crossrail interchange needs to be absolutely enormous. The whole idea of it is that there will be more people getting off at Old Oak Common than there will be getting off at Euston. Unless they do, there will be a major problem about the numbers feeding into Euston. That is a real problem.

There is also no real decision around the Overground. In an ideal world all three would be tied in together (HS2, Crossrail and the Overground station) and here again is a lesson from Kings Cross. If you push hard enough you end up with the right sort of integrated transport solution. So St Pancras has four railway lines going in and out of it. It has Eurostar, East Midlands, Kent trains and underneath it has Thameslink. This is a really sensible arrangement with fantastic interconnections used by thousands of people all the time. That is the sort of thing that this group should be pushing for – hopefully with some bus network above it. There is no point in compromising over anything else. There is no point in saying there might be 10 minutes' walk to a London Overground station or HS2 station. It just doesn't work like that. Now is the stage at which you have to push for the right kind of station.

Christian said he felt that there was a need for strong involvement from the Mayor and not a kind of MDC-light, as Michael suggests. The current Mayor is someone who really just wants the private sector to dominate, doesn't want much state involvement and sees that anything relating to the public sector is almost wrong to do. The plan has to be done publicly. You are not going to get all these boroughs agreeing with one another. You need a strong London-wide authority over this; a strong development corporation. The Mayor has considerable powers over this and ability to enable levering in more public money - more than if you have all the boroughs trying to deal with this individually. You have to have a strong body that takes a very active role that sets out a much more detailed masterplan than the existing

one. It is nowhere near complete and needs a lot of refinement. The communities here have to have a sense of urgency about this. Things suddenly start to happen. Although there is a long time scale of ten or twenty years, now is the time to get organised, widen the community base and get discussions going on this, because it will impact on everybody's lives in the area.

### **Questions, comments and answers:**

- C. On the point of options, I have some plans that have been looked at by transport planners and which involve a revised plan for Old Oak Common station that brings community benefits and does not harm the Scrubs or any other area.
- Q. I want to understand your own political agenda. You are based around Camden and obviously Camden's own agenda around HS2 conflicts quite a lot with people from around Old Oak Common and we just need to know that Camden and our area can work together.
- A. I don't represent Camden and I happen to think HS2 is a good idea, I support it, but, if they build it, you need a good station with good links. That is absolutely essential.
- Q. If the plans are for a terminus at Old Oak Common it will greatly affect those of us who live at Old Oak.
- A. My view is that they won't do that. While the last four or five miles to Euston would be the most expensive and would be largely in a tunnel, if they didn't do this it would negate a lot of the point of HS2. The people that I speak to in HS2 are adamantly opposed to this. However the plans for Euston have not been set at all and they are really problematic.
- Q. But you wouldn't represent Euston against Old Oak Common?
- A. No
- Q. Regarding the extension of the Overground line – I'd be interested to know which of the three options you think is slightly better.
- A. I'm not sufficiently au fait with the options. My view, having looked at them before coming here in a cursory way, is that they need to be fully integrated with the plan for the HS2 station. In one option the stations seem to be quite a way away – they have to be integrated. That's the way it works at St Pancras and that's the way it has to work here.
- C. The issue here is the potential impact that Option A (which would seem to be Boris's preference) has on Wormwood Scrubs. This is totally unacceptable to us. Option B would detrimentally impact on residents of Wells House Road. Option C seems to be the only acceptable option.
- Q. You referred to buses, but would you just expand briefly on that. If so, many people are going to coming out of the station and interchanging; they are not all going to be working within Park Royal - this is out in the hinterland. If you would just expand on the impact on the existing bus network and the key changes that there might have to be.
- A. I don't have the detailed local knowledge on this – however, at St Pancras the buses are very badly organised and that, I understand, was really down to the local authority. Again, I don't know here – if there were a powerful MDC whether this might result in a better bus network. However, in Kings Cross the bus, and actually also the taxi interchange, is hopeless.
- Q. I'm a local Harlesden resident, but it strikes me that Old Oak Common has lots of different communities of interest, some here today. Was that the case at Kings Cross or did it take a while to piece everything together with a common view?
- A. I went to some of the KXRLG meetings. There was another group called the Kings Cross Partnership (set up by the council) and they did sometimes fall out. This is inevitable. There are going to be people whose interest is the Scrubs, people who are interested because it is their particular patch or people who want business prioritised. The important thing is to ensure that these arguments and discussions are held away from the local authorities and that people come together with something of an agreed agenda to present to the authorities. Otherwise there will just be divide and rule. You sometimes have to bury the hatchet. In Kings Cross they had a worker, who was a planner, called Michael Parkes who did produce alternative plans to the soulless type of development being put forward by Camden and Argent. There were also times when compromises were made. At times you have to ensure that local interests don't rule – you have to be bigger than that and work together.

# Workshops



**(i) GREEN AND OPEN SPACES** *Facilitator: Robin Brown, Just Space Invited contributors: Del Brenner, Regents Network and London Waterways Commission, David Jeffries, Friends of Wormwood Scrubs and John Goodlier, Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Building Group and London Parks and Gardens Trust.*

Robin Brown asked invited contributors to introduce themselves, to start the workshop discussion.

**Del Brenner** said that his main concern was the canal. He noted that Grand Union Alliance community network had named itself after the canal. which demonstrates that the canal is of central importance to the area for many reasons, including as an open space. He noted that canals are now designated in the London Plan as 'open space', and in this sense are as important as parks and green spaces. Del said that he is also concerned about the impact of the development on Wormwood Scrubs.

**David Jeffries** noted that Friends of Wormwood Scrubs (FOWS) is an association of users of the Scrubs and said he hoped that it was also something of a pressure group. He said he felt that the response from Michael Mulhern to his question during his presentation earlier in the day was favorable.

The Scrubs is covered by the 1879 Wormwood Scrubs Act, which makes provision for it to be held in trust, at present, by Hammersmith & Fulham council for the enjoyment of the public. There are restrictions on what can and can't be done on the Scrubs and FOWS was concerned that if the Scrubs came within the remit of the MDC that the Mayor would somehow seek to alter, maybe with an intention to dilute the provisions in the Act. FOS's major fear is the potential development to the north of the Scrubs and that this end of the Scrubs might be turned into a manicured park. FOS would be very much against this because the Scrubs is valued because of its wildness and wildlife. It doesn't want to stop people using the Scrubs, but does want it kept in its current condition.

**John Goodlier** noted that the Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Building Group focuses on the historic environment of the borough and on attempting to record, preserve and enhance its historic buildings. He is also an active member of the London Parks and Gardens Trust. He organises walks for them across London and has a wide interest in urban space.

## Comments made during the discussion

- We are fortunately protected by the Wormwood Scrubs Act. The Scrubs is a nature reserve and a productive wildlife area – with migrant warblers in the spring and summer along the bank at the north of the Scrubs. This huge development of HS2 is also immediately to the north of the Scrubs. FOWS major concerns are the Overground route with three options around this currently on the table. We are voting for option C (the two-station option with one on either side of the Old Oak Common development; one on the West London line on the east and one on the North London line on the west) as opposed to option A, which would involve a viaduct over the Scrubs, which FOWS is very much against. TfL are quite keen on this option. From an operational engineering point of view it is quite attractive, but it is also very expensive which we know would be a point against it. Option B is quite simple because it involves one station on the western side of the Old Oak development, but it is also potentially harmful to Well House Road, a cul-de-sac of houses, which could be damaged.
- How do you think Wormwood Scrubs might stay as it is at present, with any kind of development at Old Oak Common, especially where that might be a mini-Manhattan or even some lesser

development?

- The Scrubs itself is open land. There is no reason why there should be any development on the Scrubs, except the proposed TfL viaduct proposal, but as far as building on the Scrubs is concerned, this not allowed in terms of the Act, unless it is some kind of small construction to facilitate the existing activities such as sport. The Lynford Christie Station is within the Scrubs boundaries. It is all part of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) – including the stadium. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) tried to take the stadium out of MOL three or four years ago, through its Core Strategy. FOWS opposed this, as we saw it as a potential risk. LBHF said that they wanted to develop the stadium and develop land around the track, all part of the stadium border, and to possibly develop homes to bring in revenue for the track and sports facilities. FOWS was very anxious about that and felt the stadium should stay within MOL. The EiP inspector (of the draft LBHF core strategy) agreed with us. It is interesting that the new MDC proposed boundary which was originally to include the stadium, now takes the stadium out of the MDC.
- Michael Mulhern said today that the MDC would respect the Act. He said there would be a lot more people using the Scrubs. How do you reconcile this with the nature reserve and keeping the Scrubs as it is now?
- There are very few green spaces in the area where I live. I'm worried that other green spaces in the area (as well as the Scrubs) are in danger of being removed. Victoria Gardens, Cerebos Gardens and the children's playground at Midland Terrace are under threat from HS2. Only 30% of the land is needed for a planned road widening associated with HS2, yet all of it is under threat. There aren't any easily accessible green spaces or playgrounds nearby if this land is taken away. Wormwood Scrubs is a fantastic facility, but it is a little far away from us.
- All around the area there are estates that are like little enclaves divided by roads and railways. The MDC and other groups will have to think about how you connect all these areas up.
- Nature is moving in. Bats are roosting in the railway viaducts, the slipstreams of the trains are carrying seeds along the length and breadth of the UK. The canals are full of wildlife. Mother Nature will always move in and we should discuss how to make it easier for her to do this.
- As well as having a nature reserve Wormwoods Scrubs has football pitches, bird watching and jogging, and is one of the few spaces in London where you can fly model aircraft. What we don't want is that the Scrubs is turned into a very nice inner city park – with swings, rose beds and a café. We need to ensure that there are spaces within the new developments that include swings, an outside gym, teenagers hang about spaces, gardens for the elderly; all these kinds of bits of park and gardens that need to be near people's homes.
- I have no sympathy for the concept of a nature reserve in the centre of a city; there's a huge country for birds and plants to do whatever they want to do in a massive countryside. Wormwoods Scrubs is the way that it is because it is bordered by pretty low-density buildings. It has a prison and a couple of railway working yards and that's why it is a nature reserve - it is hard to get to. This is a chance to sensitively develop a useful park. There are people that live all around Hyde Park and they don't have to get through barbed wire to get to it. I think the park could be sensitively developed into a useful park. The minute this development is built, it will be like Hyde Park, in terms of people living all around who will want to use it. It's a chance to sensitively develop a useful park. There are many things that people want to be able to do in parks, so the idea of saying that we're going to exclude them and put them in little pockets and somehow keep Wormwood Scrubs as a sacred place for birds and insects will be a missed opportunity. The canal could become a resource with appendages like fingers which reach out into the new development. In this way new uses could be built around these appendages and the main canal can fulfil other duties like navigation.
- As a local resident and user of the Scrubs I think you would be surprised how much use is built in to how it is at the moment. There is the nature reserve, an area for flying small model aircraft on, the Sunday football matches; it is a unique place that has green space that all parts of the community use. I don't think you can hold it up as some sort of a nature reserve that we want to preserve for ever and ever and which few people use. I think the scale of this development does cast a big shadow

over this piece of green space. But I think the way it has been sensitively used and managed and supported so far will continue, for everyone. You would think, if you are building 24,000 new homes, that they should anyway build a lot of new green spaces including roof gardens that would take pressure off the Scrubs itself.

- I agree that the Scrubs should be protected and the development itself should have at least 10 acres of public space to take pressure off the Scrubs. We should make this point more forcefully. There is a responsibility in planning terms that new green spaces must be provided, so there is no presumption that the Scrubs would be the only open space in the area. New developments in London show the exploitation of canals by developers creating unsuitable urban street effect on canals. I'm supportive of use of canals as navigation, not cycle routes. It is important that the canal doesn't become part of a housing estate.
- How will we reach consensus? Should we continue discussion as a working group? Should we try to reconcile differences or should we just go forward with diverging views?
- Suggestions have been made of new routes across the railway yards into the Scrubs for the first time, by the GLA. If I were going to build a new town here I wouldn't keep the railway depot on the south side which has been refurbished for the new trains to run on the Great Western Line. I wouldn't build a completely new Crossrail depot on the north side on top of these stations, simply because for 10, 15 or 20 years there is going to be very little development around these stations because it is all operational railway land. Although the Mayor has an aspiration to move the Crossrail depot (which is enormous) somewhere else, it's going to be hard to find somewhere else.
- How long would it take to move these depots?
- They both have leases for another 20 years, but only the Crossrail one is under the control of the Mayor. He has no control over the one on the south side. But again, there is talk of making routes across the railway yards to Wormwood Scrubs for the first time. Specifically, one of them would be a green path, a formal path perhaps with trees at the side, between East Acton tube station on the south side across the Scrubs, creating a new access point across. It's a very long way away before that happens, but it is a grand pedestrian route presumably with cycling all the way from Willesden Junction and not stopping at Willesden Junction, but going straight across it.
- On this point, I was trying to think of a comparable example. The Nine Elms, Vauxhall, Battersea area is along similar lines. An extract from a plan proposes a linear plan through the site plus a riverside walk. There is an artistic impression of such a green route through the development site but this is a proposal with high blocks on either side.
- Could we consider what was earlier being described as sensitivity in terms of Wormwood Scrubs and the new development? I think it is inevitable that the nature of the Scrubs will change and the biodiversity will be impacted by the foot fall. From a practical perspective it would be useful for people who are so keen to protect Wormwood Scrubs to start to think about their priorities. What is important to protect? This is a great forum to talk about sensitive change.
- There are two defensive mechanisms to the erosion; one is the existence of the Trust. There should be onus on developers to provide certain kinds of recreational space within the development - formal gardens and sports facilities that differ from the ones currently available. Sports facilities now are much more under cover and intensive in use.
- What about the people of Harlesden and other surrounding areas who don't necessarily have good access to Wormwood Scrubs or any other open space? Should the development be making use of the deficiency of access?
- I've played football on the Scrubs for years? It always seemed to be a windswept forgotten space, particularly because of the large industrial developments by the railways on one side of it, but considering its position in west London it does seem that a lot more people could get a lot more enjoyment out of it. There isn't adequate provision for cycling access and walking. If the development can generate revenue to pay for the improvements then that's a good thing.

**(ii) WASTE AND CLIMATE CHANGE.** *Facilitator: Nathalie Monnot, Co-ordinator, Kensal Green Streets.*  
*Invited contributors: local Friends of the Earth representatives*

Discussion on gaps in provision and potential impact of new development in terms of waste:

- Powerday – which owns and operates the largest materials recycling facility in S England is in Park Royal. Much of its focus is on construction and demolition waste. They were invited to attend the conference but were unable to.
- There is a waste transfer station in Park Royal, which is operated by West London Waste (in Twyford Abbey Road), but that's scheduled to move. It's a small and ramshackle affair. At one time there were plans for this area to be a park. This is perhaps still on the agenda.
- There should be an opportunity for all residents (new and existing) to take their recycling waste locally. However, given the proposed number of new homes, quite where and how accessible the required waste disposal areas might be situated is a real issue. In terms of what Mick said earlier, the boroughs will still have responsibility for waste.
- A digester system is planned at Willesden Junction (where a freight line used to be). It seems that the plans have been put on ice because of the plans for the MDC and because this is contentious. It would be too near people's homes which are in a conservation area.
- There are two waste authorities operating across the area: (i) the West London Waste Authority (covering Brent and Ealing along with Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond) and (ii) the Western Riverside Waste Authority, covering Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea. This could create some problems.
- New households will need a local waste / recycling centres accessible to them and we don't know whether the local ones would be near enough or will be adequate to do the job. There was no mention in the presentation from Michael Mulhern about these kinds of issues. The only thing they seem interested in is the number of homes they aim to build.
- Will waste be processed locally? It is better to process locally rather than to take it by truck or train miles away from the area. At present, much of it is put on a train to Buckinghamshire. Are we going to do more of this or are new facilities going to be built? Anaerobic digesters really aren't any problem as they are completely enclosed.
- The only problem with anaerobic digesters is that they are not simply a local solution; they take waste from near and far. By their very nature they need to take large quantities of waste.
- At one stage Ealing proposed eight sites (one on Victoria Road) for the anaerobic digester. The residents on the Wesley Road Estate don't want it near them, mostly because of the problem of additional trucks running past their homes. So in that respect, the problem environmentally is the increased levels of CO2 emissions in transportation and additional air pollution. Is this the right place for a system to be located?
- It would seem that the key priority here for the GLA is building new homes, but with no careful consideration of the need for supporting infrastructure (including waste). So the assumption seems to be - build the homes and everything else will be delivered. But none of these things should come as an afterthought, they should all be carefully considered together.
- They seem to be doing some analysis on this.
- Yes, but what Michael Mulhern said, for example, on health care, was that the NHS will have to sort this out. He provided some broad brush figures, which apparently will then be passed on to other providers.
- This is though at a very embryonic stage at the moment.
- Michael Mulhern gave information on the number of doctors, the number of A&Es and police they would need, but didn't mention waste facilities?
- The reason for this could be that there was a consultation two years ago on the West London Waste Plan. That is being revised and further consultation is taking place (running until 19<sup>th</sup> December). This is to do with the Mayor and each borough has got to participate in it.
- There is information on this, with links to the consultation and also to consultation on a sustainability appraisal, in the conference pack (in the short briefing on waste).

- Does this modification take note of the plans for Old Oak Common? If not, there is a danger of the Plan being adopted without any consideration of the additional waste that will be created in the development.
- It seems that all over the place profitable housing development is occurring without a planned approach to addressing infrastructure costs of the required infrastructure.
- Around the stadium in Wembley there are already blocks of flats and student accommodation that seem to have some sort of system where everything that can be recycled is thrown down a chute. There is so much development going on, there must be a lot that we can draw on.
- In some boroughs households are able to put all recycling materials in one bag. This is likely easier for people in blocks of flats, where they don't have outside space to store different types of recycling materials.
- People are not recycling as they should do. In Ealing we were supposed to have recycling bags (a clear sack delivered to our homes) but we haven't had one since last Christmas. A big issue is also buy to let with here today and gone tomorrow households. In instances like this, having one sack which is then sorted by the borough / contractors would be a better bet.
- Evidence suggests that where you have separate recycling from houses, you have a far higher rate.
- I understand that it is the opposite. In blocks of flats where there is collective recycling, there has been an overall increase in recycling.
- There are, however, problems on housing estates where there are large bins – some for recycling waste and some for non-recycling waste. People muddle the two (particularly if the ordinary waste bins are full). Residents need to be well informed around what they can and can't recycle and about the problem of contamination.
- Having different coloured bags can be useful.
- There are machines that separate different types of recyclable materials, so theoretically they can all go together. The issue is contamination from non-recyclable materials.
- People often don't know what can and can't be recycled in their own borough. So we come back also to education.
- There is also an issue of toxic materials going into landfill, such as batteries and light bulbs. Some of the supermarkets will take these.
- Whatever is decided in the MDC area, it is clear that there needs to be some standardisation, with neighbouring boroughs having the same procedures.
- The key message must be that there must be an overall waste plan for this area before they start giving planning permission for buildings which will be full of people producing waste. There must be a proper plan, not just a few vague ideas.
- This also has to include water and sewerage.
- What is required in terms of water? How much will this cost Thames Water and ultimately us? What will the plans mean in terms of drainage? This is all going to be enormous.
- In one development in Ealing where they built loads of new houses, sewage came up in adjacent homes because planning permission was given without any prior enhancement of the sewerage system.
- The MDC's Local Plan will only be covering new need rather than existing. However, if the proposals are considered to be 'regeneration', there is a need for us both to consider and to highlight existing need too.
- Will the developers, through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), be paying for the new and enhanced drainage and sewerage infrastructure?
- There is one sewer from Highgate that goes out into the Thames in Hackney and when it's at full bore, it backs up. We are already building on what is flood plain.
- The GLA has commissioned a Development Infrastructure Funding (DIF) study. There was to be a midway report by 1<sup>st</sup> September, but there is nothing on the GLA's website about this and Michael Mulhern said that there is not really anything to report at this stage. They have commissioned someone to carry out this work.
- Thames Water are building a new 20m gallon sewage tank in Maida Vale to take up the excess



amount of sewage from developments such as those in Victoria where new pipes have gone in. They have been working on this for nearly a year and a half and it is still just a large hole in the ground.

- Also in London you have streams, so if you have flash floods you have all this water running down from higher areas such as Highgate. This has to go somewhere. So the question is, can the current infrastructure really deal with all this or are we going to be adding in these 20m gallon tanks like at Maida Vale.
- They are already doing this in some sites, where they install large tanks that surface water goes into. Again, they hold thousands of gallons. This has been happening for years.
- There are so many things that need to be taken into consideration – the height of the Thames, the amount of flash floods that are causing the drains to choke up. All these issues need to be considered before the buildings go in.
- If the detail is all being considered it should be circulated to us in a digestible form. We need to see the information on all these individual utilities, what is going to be supplied and who will be responsible for delivery, the costs and who is going to pay.
- A lot of this stuff is quite technical and we don't want to spend our lives learning about waste disposal, but we do need to be assured that the conversations are being had with the planners and that information is accessible to us all.
- One of the points we have to consider in all this is the phenomenal amount of material which literally is being dumped on the street. Builders no longer have yards where they might store things like a half sheet of MDF. That MDF is now just being thrown away and a truck goes around and picks it all up and then it's all thrown away. In parts of Germany you have depots where all this kind of material can be stored.

#### Other climate change / sustainability issues:

- Within this 'light' MDC, are we going to get a light touch on sustainable building and low energy too? What are the standards that they are going to build to? If this is about developers profits, we are more likely to get low quality shoddy development.
- There are national and regional standards and policies that have to be followed.
- There are, but they don't have to go to the lowest standard and, in fact, couldn't this development be an opportunity to produce innovative proposals?
- The South Acton development quality of design and architecture was a major issue. Lowest standards are being delivered in many developments.
- Embodied CO2 emissions will be high in the huge levels of construction planned here. Embodied carbon includes the CO2 emissions from taking materials from the ground, producing the building components and in transporting them from far away. This can be a significant proportion of the CO2 emissions of the whole lifetime of a building. The London Plan and the boroughs set targets for reducing operational carbon emissions (that is once the building has been constructed) but not for embodied carbon.
- Targets for this should be set in the new MDC Local Plan and we should include this in our demands for the most environmentally friendly design possible.
- CO2 emissions from transport are also high. The more people use cars the worse this is. We should be looking to reduce car usage and encourage public transport.
- We need to reduce car parking spaces.
- To what sort of levels?
- Wembley might be a good example. They limited the number of parking spaces, I think, to half a space per household.
- Is there enough public transport provision in the area? The scheme could well be a leader on this. Train wise, the public transport accessibility will be exceptional, but what bus routes will there be?
- Why should there be a need for half a parking space per residential unit? You can't take parking spaces away from someone who already has one, but for new people moving in, they shouldn't expect to have a car parking space. Shouldn't this just be a car-free development?
- Many new buildings are going up everywhere and the authorities are not guaranteeing parking space

on the street. If you move into a flat here you should just have to make a conscious decision that you will not have a car, except perhaps for car clubs, disabled people and where a vehicle is essential to someone's trade.

- If it is car free the area is a lot nicer to walk around in.
- How do you address the issue of shopping for a family of five or more without a car?
- Presumably you get a minicab or order online.
- In many new developments, for example at Wembley, Tesco Metros (or similar) are popping up in these housing developments.
- There is a move to encourage local shops and to moving away from the use of large supermarkets.
- The land grabbing or buying up of land for supermarkets has often taken place with promises of delivering other things – like improvements to roads, car parking etc. But if you look at examples such as Edinburgh, at one end of its tram line system (by the docks) you have a huge Morrison's and a whole range of other large stores. At the other end there is similar – but there is nothing in the middle - because they haven't got the space. It means that everyone who wants to do a large shop is ordering via the internet and various companies are using transit vans to deliver.
- Small branches are coming back though and this is encouraging people to walk more.
- The working assumption for Old Oak Common is that the types of retail is going to be of a local kind, except, presumably, if they are delivering large transport stations when there will be an expectation of retail in the railway concourses. You won't be able to get through a ticket barrier without buying something first.
- Retail is of specific interest to Harlesden as it is the nearest shopping centre with 400 local shops. The kinds of shops that new residents want are likely to expand into this area. For larger retail stores it will be White City.
- If I were a business I think I would feel it would be much better if I were on a bus route. These days you can also have storage facilities built at entrances to blocks of flats for deliveries from Tesco's or Morrison's, with the supermarkets having access keys.
- It is inevitable though that this type of development will attract an amount of retail and, with that, a likelihood of basement car parking areas. The other thing that could be considered is having carpools – like they have in India.
- We must have good public transport so that there are alternatives.
- It's incredible that sometimes the cabs and mini-cabs include themselves as public transport – but actually if you have a cab with just a driver and one person, the issues are much the same as those of individually owned cars.
- Air pollution problems are high in parts of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea. How much would the development hinder meeting air pollution targets, during the development and after?
- We should have bicycle hire, cycle paths / lanes and facilities.
- The canal is not being used properly. It could be used more for transportation.

#### Other non-waste and climate change issues:

- Is the MDC talking about having any houses in the plans or are they all going to be blocks of flats?
- Unlikely to be houses. The plan is for 24,000 in the 155 hectares of Old Oak Common. The Mayor suggests this will be a mini-Manhattan.
- Hospitals are an interesting transport issue – Northwick Park is the major A&E department, but there is quite poor public transport access. The existing routes have not been adjusted to meet need here.
- The high levels of development will severely restrict car access.
- While the GLA says they want people that would be impacted to be consulted, many of us never received the consultation papers
- We need unity of demand. Whatever is developed, the impact falls on those in and around it.

#### Additional support and research required:

- What happened with waste at Kings Cross? Could we have a general overview on this - as it is so

often cited as an example of good practice?

- We should indeed look at some test cases. Kings Cross is one large development area (and indeed comparable in many ways with Old Oak Common), but there could be other examples that we might look at. This could be one of our requests in terms of additional research / support needs.
- Analysis on most effective methods of recycling / encouraging and educating on recycling.
- Support in making accessible the information on the delivery of all types of infrastructure.
- Research on innovative schemes relating to waste and climate change issues.

#### Who else should be involved?

- Young people. While planning is not the most exciting issue, we should look at widening out to young people; perhaps speak to colleges and sixth form colleges.
- By the time we get round to all this being built it is the young people now in primary school who will be dealing with a lot of the development.
- More young and old people.

**(iii) SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE.** *Facilitator: Richard Lee, Just Space. Invited contributors Ian Sensan, Acting Head of Strategic Development, Diocese of London and Theresa Magee, Wesley Estate Residents' Association*

The two invited contributors were asked to commence the discussion.

**Ian Setton:** We need to look at residents (current and future). Planning now is for the successful; we need to plan for the disenfranchised. To do this, we should start with research and work with community groups.

**Theresa McGee:** 40 years ago, there were many more social amenities. Now the area is industrial with no amenities or facilities. There is no help from the authorities. We were told there were not enough children and the school on School Road was closed; along with sports field, etc. The hospital was demolished for social housing; there have been three fatalities on local roads. Pedestrian lights are needed.

There are many headings for social infrastructure:

#### Education

- Schools.
- Recreation.
- Appropriate development (not multi-site schools; integrated).
- Safe access to school facilities during building/ construction period.
- Only religious schools are available.
- North Acton Station: lots of student accommodation, but no other student facilities.
- Technical college with specific training for work on HS2.
- We need students on a broad scale working on the issues: need more looking at mixed needs to work on alternative plans. Richard Lee noted that from January 2015 UCL will provide some dedicated student work on this area.
- Could a technical college be driven by the needs of the community, rather than dictated by a standardised curriculum that doesn't fit our needs?

#### Health

- Middlesex A&E, Northwick Park too far away.
- Land will be too expensive for NHS to re-purchase.
- Northwick Park A&E will not open until late 2014
- Waiting times at A&E are rising.
- An independent commission is to look at closures of emergency services at Hammersmith and Central Middlesex hospitals for local councils (Brent, Ealing Hammersmith & Fulham and Hounslow).
- 60% of Charing Cross hospital site is to be sold off for luxury flats.
- We were told there will be a review of GPs in NW London.

- It is half an hour journey to the nearest A&E.
- 1m plus are without access to A&E.
- The capacity is not there; we need more joined-up thinking on A&E.
- Wesley Estate Residents' Association submitted a proposal for a community centre including nursery and parking facilities but it was not accepted by the council.
- Walk-in clinics were missed out in Michael Mulhern's presentation.
- Must go to Brent and wait three weeks for a GP appointment. No district nurse is available, and they won't come in from Brent.
- Boris Johnson: devolution of healthcare. We need to lobby for GLA control of NHS.
- Personal experience with NHS: not sterile, poor conditions for recovery.

### Worship

- The great majority of people have a faith. The lack of understanding around community needs means we lack services for community growth: food banks, welcoming new members, choirs, nurseries. We don't need money but better thinking on space.
- It's not about needs not met, but rather lack of thinking ahead. Not just on spaces for worship but for the whole community to use. Space is at a premium and cannot be all tied up or unaffordable.
- What mixture will future development be? New housing has been marketed in Abu Dhabi.
- Religious space must be mixed-use.
- Renting space is expensive. Facilities should be available for multiple groups. Groups currently have to wait because the priest won't accommodate them: Portuguese, Romanian, children, etc.
- Is Michael linked into the multi-faith forum?
- Michael Mulhern spoke about the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Mayor set provisions but as further into development processes, social housing gets reduced.
- The Salvation Army and nine churches are involved. They should try to share diaries: lots of churches are offering the same services (e.g. nursery) and are under-subscribed. They need to join up. Should share resources when finance is tight.
- How can we make sure faith isn't lost (in these other activities in church space)? Research shows Sunday church attendance rises if community members see the church providing other benefits to the community.

### Social Infrastructure

- There should be pressure on the Mayor to revisit the criteria for affordable housing: lack diversity.
- Chiswick Social Park: share with developer. Residents have access to facilities in the evenings. This should be extended to commercial facilities.
- Public subsidiaries: at King's Cross, every individual developer had to provide at least a minimum of extras. The MDC should enforce on individual developers; in White City, the buck was passed.
- Youth centres – currently there is nothing.
- Older people's centres: there are thousands of older people but no amenities. Two clubhouses have been turned into housing.
- Libraries have been taken away.
- There is also need for restaurants, bars, pubs etc. for a bit of life in the community.
- There has been some research in Harlesden and Kensal Green on an older people's hub, developed by the community. There has also been discussion on youth facilities. The problem is the resources to facilitate.
- We need a mixed-use club with different uses on different days. We currently have £63,000; but need more funding.

### Leisure

- Mobile libraries have been taken away.
- When I arrived in London, I didn't speak English. I relied on Willesden Library to learn, which is now closed for redevelopment.
- Libraries are all being centralised – we lost six in one go.

- In the past we had youth workers, now this resource has shrunk. There is a £7 million youth centre, but if you can't travel, you can't access it. Communities are local, therefore should base community services in the communities.
- 4-year plan.
- In North Acton: Heavy investment in libraries, decent investment in sport.
- Nothing in MDC for leisure centres or arts and culture.
- Prestigious arts school adds to the personality of an area.

#### Public toilets

- Increased pedestrian travellers in the new station will mean more public toilets are needed. The Mayor's provision requires this but they're often left off.

#### Recreation

- Wormwood Scrubs: couldn't be landscaped because owned by Ministry of Defence. It's loved for its desertion but this character will not survive the proposed plans. Could also become an unsafe area if not properly lit, etc.
- Should be used for cultural activities. Theresa: why is the Ealing jazz fest not brought across Western Avenue to the park?
- Why build new recreation centres when what's already there could be redeveloped?
- Acton: here as observer to bring back notes to other community groups. Will be back to further engage with you all. Acton is very disparate.

#### Final comments

- Tom: HS2. Publicity on community fund for those affected by HS2. Potential role to play. This sort of fund has been used in the past for community centres, etc.
- Peter: sustainable communities. Funding: Mayoral Development Corporation's CIL. We need to know within the contract what is it spent on. We need to influence this.
- 50% income allocated in accordance with wishes of local community. The Mayor could subsidise the new station out of this levy fund. This could be lost unless we influence contributions.
- Election: we need to talk to MPs

**(iv) LOCAL EMPLOYMENT** *Facilitator: Jenny Robinson UCL Geography. Invited contributors: Francis Moss, Park Royal Atlas production team, Jessica Fern, Just Space Economy group and Atara Fridler, Lift People*

Much of the discussion in the workshop focused around a map from the Park Royal Atlas, which has been produced by the GLA.

Francis Moss explained that the area at the heart of the redevelopment proposals for Old Oak Common is mostly railway sidings but also includes the industrial area around Hythe Road (shown as HF1 on the Atlas). Car Giant owns most of this area, apart from two recycling plants. There are a substantial number of other businesses there - some complement Car Giant (in the auto industry), but there are a range of other diverse businesses occupying traditional industrial sheds, and older Victorian buildings occupied by artists' studios. All are renting space from Car Giant.

Michael Mulhern reported that many of these businesses have recently been given notice (2-3 days previously).

Jenny Robinson explained that Car Giant is planning its own development and is busy acquiring more land. Queens Park Rangers also has speculative plans, but owns no land. There is a concern about smaller businesses around the edges.

Michael Mulhern was concerned about the impact of HS2, which is proposed to affect parts of Park Royal as it will run over-ground until it reaches Old Oak Common. There are concerns about displacement of businesses and issues around accessibility during construction (as a result of planned road closures and additional construction traffic) when accessibility in Park Royal has already been identified as a major issue affecting businesses. Construction impacts will also be significant as Old Oak Common station does not currently exist and will need to be built from scratch.

The issue of what kind of jobs are to be created was raised. They are likely to be mostly low value, in retail and hospitality. These jobs not only have low salaries, but the demands of the jobs make it difficult for people to manage their lives with families. Concern was expressed that development will put pressure on house prices in the area. Michael Mulhern agreed with this. Once the redevelopment is complete it will price people out of the area. Since many people who work here live locally there significant concerns.

#### **Contributions to the debate:**

- There would be overlap of residents and business interests, as residents are equally concerned about the impacts of construction, as well as the possible impacts of regeneration on existing businesses and the possibility of losing local employment.
- There could be huge opportunities for creating new employment during the development here, but the issue is how we make it happen. There is likely to be a need for jobs in construction associated with the development. If we plan for this early through local skills training, we can help to ensure local people benefit from these jobs.
- It is of concern that the skills-set of current residents and employees will not match the new employment offer in the offices provided.
- Securing community benefit will be difficult as there will be viability issues for the developer given the new transport infrastructure that is going in. The potential to secure affordable workspace through the redevelopment was discussed.
- The group should be cautious about this and not assume that provision of affordable workspace would necessarily protect existing jobs and businesses. In the context of the previous discussion, where it was acknowledged that there would be much pressure on developers to deliver other community benefits, affordable workspace might fall low on the list of priorities once affordable housing and transport infrastructure considerations were taken into account.
- Rather than requiring developers to provide affordable workspace (in the form of offices or studios compatible with housing) through planning gain, they should be required either to protect or re-provide industrial premises alongside housing redevelopment. It was agreed this would need to be explored further.
- Land ownership is a big issue here. The community should insist that affordable housing is provided on site (unlike what happened at Dickens Yard in Ealing). It would be interesting to understand rental values and lease periods in Park Royal, so that one could better understand to what degree we could preserve rent levels for the medium to long term. Also the fact that some land is in some kind of public ownership (railway land) might be relevant.
- A big question is what does redevelopment at Old Oak mean for Park Royal? The GLA has spoken about densification/intensification within Park Royal in order to accommodate displaced businesses from Old Oak (and potentially some housing?), but it is currently unclear whether there is capacity and what impact this would have on existing businesses.
- The GLA is currently working on an Employment Land Review for Park Royal, which will look at the estate's capacity. The review is also considering land ownership, although this information is difficult and expensive to obtain. The Opportunity Area Planning Framework is also underway.
- The area's road capacity also needs to be considered when discussing intensification.
- One of the impacts of improved transport infrastructure, such as Crossrail and HS2, is that the employment catchment area grows substantially, allowing people to commute in from further afield even if they are priced out of the London market.
- Concern was expressed about this. What will be the impact of employees not being able to live in the borough? Long commutes are not necessarily compatible with family life and can be expensive. It was acknowledged that even if affordable housing were to be provided on-site, the current definition of 80% of market rate would be unaffordable for most. The group agreed that it would be important to look at mechanisms for ensuring local workers can also live locally.
- UCL might be able to mobilise some student help to supplement the GLA's work in Park Royal. There is a real need to make contact and help organise communication between the small vulnerable businesses within and on the periphery of the main redevelopment area, as well as the residents'

groups. How can we organise this? Could this be a role for the Grand Union Alliance?

- A Neighbourhood Forum is being developed in Harlesden. The Neighbourhood Plan area has not been designated yet.
- The Forum could become a significant consultee for the MDC.

This led to a further discussion around how the CIL secured by the MDC from the development could be used to support social infrastructure in the area.

- It would be helpful to do a skills audit in the area.
- A useful next step could be to organise a door-to-door survey of the area to record what businesses are there now, which would also provide an opportunity to make contact with diverse businesses and raise awareness. Francis Moss could advise on how to record and map what is there now.

## Afternoon session



Leroy Simpson, Harlesden Town Team (Brent) and Henry Patterson, St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum (Kensington & Chelsea) jointly chaired the afternoon session.

## Speakers

### Introduction to the four local opportunity areas:

The London Plan defines Opportunity Areas as the capital's major reservoir of brownfield land with significant capacity to accommodate new housing, commercial and other development linked to existing or potential improvements to public transport accessibility. Alterations to the London Plan include five new Opportunity Areas (now totalling 38) including Old Oak Common. It says that planning for Old Oak Common should be integrated with the wider Park Royal Opportunity Area and suggests that linkages with Kensal Rise Canalside and White City Opportunity Areas should be considered.

### White City - Jagrati Bhatia, White City Estate.

The White City Opportunity Area is situated south of the Old Oak Common OA. It is divided into three sub areas (i) White City East (ii) Shepherds Bush Town Centre including the market and (iii) White City West (which includes White City, Wood Lane and Batman Close council housing estates and Loftus Road Stadium). Plans are for 6,000 homes and 10,000 jobs, with most development occurring in White City East. Many of the development sites already have planning approval.

White City and Wormholt along with College Park and Old Oak Common wards are the most deprived in Hammersmith and Fulham. Some of the concerns are: to what extent will existing communities' needs be met, will polarisation of communities increase, is this regeneration or gentrification and for how long will the land and the 2,027 homes on the White City Estate be safe from development?

The White City Development Infrastructure Funding Study suggested that it would only be viable for 15% of the new homes in the White City Opportunity Area to be affordable, when the London-wide target is for 40%. Only 15% of the homes in the Westfield extension will be 'affordable'. Developer Stanhope's plans for the BBC centre include a 47 bedroom Soho House private members club with a rooftop pool.



The percentage of affordable homes will be only 17% (subject to viability).

There is concern that large retail outlets will result in a loss of local traders. The local Goldhawk Road businesses and traders had a long battle against Compulsory Purchase Orders and their replacement with luxury flats. While at a public inquiry the planning inspectorate recommended that the order should not be confirmed, the Government has rejected this recommendation and compulsory purchase will go ahead.

Many of the new jobs seem focused on low paid retail or high-end creative, research or technology. It's hard to get figures on how many local people have gained long-term employment from section 106-funded schemes. White City is deficient in open space. There are proposals for a White City Green and smaller green spaces, but not enough to meet required standards of provision. The need for affordable play and sports facilities is not addressed in the plans.

### **Kensal Canalside - Henry Peterson St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum.**

This is the smallest of these four Opportunity Areas. It's the area along the canal to the east, with the Sainsbury's and the redundant gas holders on it. Kensington and Chelsea published an issues and options paper back in 2012. The land ownership is complicated. You have Ballymore, an international property investment and development company, National Grid, which own the empty gas holders (decommissioning these is a big and expensive job) and Sainsbury's, who plan to demolish their existing supermarket and build something new.

The three options that the council published in its issue and options consultation would involve upwards of 3,500 homes (so small in comparison to Old Oak Common and White City) and 2,000 jobs. This is nothing like the scale we have been talking about during the morning session. The council is still lobbying to have a Crossrail station in the development, although most think it will probably never happen and that Crossrail will never be persuaded. The Labour group on the council is talking about a tram link between Kensal Rise and Old Oak Common as a means of moving people from east to west. It's moving very slowly. It will take years to get agreement between the land owners on how they are going to parcel up the sites.

### **Park Royal - Francis Moss, Urban designer and architect**

Francis worked in the GLA's regeneration team earlier this year on an atlas of all the businesses in Park Royal. Link to the Atlas - [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Park%20Royal%20Atlas%20Screen%20Version%201.1\\_0.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Park%20Royal%20Atlas%20Screen%20Version%201.1_0.pdf)

Park Royal is mostly an employment area. This work on the business atlas was put together for the boroughs and the GLA who are interested in the diversity of businesses in Park Royal.

Francis showed a map of all the industrial land in London to demonstrate how big and important the Park Royal area is. The regeneration team has been focusing a lot on high streets but is also interested in areas where people work other than high streets.

Park Royal is where the Routemaster buses were made (at the centre of it) and Guinness Brewery had a long history here. The survey of businesses was carried out door to door. 2,950 businesses were surveyed and 245 were interviewed and input information about what the businesses do and about the kind of spaces they use. Using standardised categories Francis showed the results of this.

The atlas colour-codes the types of businesses – for example manufacturing in yellow and construction in green. They looked at the floor spaces as well as use. They found, in mapping this area, that there is a variety of larger and smaller businesses lots of different sectors together, particularly in the central area.

Interestingly, often the businesses themselves don't know what else is going on around them or even what their neighbours do. It is estimated that there are about 31,000 people working there and could be more. Most of these are tiny businesses with 1-9 employees (this makes up 75% of all the businesses there). They vary in the types of spaces – from massive warehouses to lots of smaller units. Some are on multiple floors, more like offices, and others are factory warehouses.

They also carried out some case studies. They asked businesses how long they had been there to get some sort of a timeline for the study. Interestingly, most of the businesses said that they estimated that they would be growing in future years.

### **Old Oak Common - Amanda Souter, Wells House Road Residents' Association.**

A large impact is anticipated on residents in the Old Oak Common area, with some being on the front line of the development. There are 625 households between Shaftsbury Gardens and Midland Terrace, Island Triangle and Wells House Road. They face:

- development of 24,000 homes and office space for 55,000 jobs;
- development of the HS2 station and tunnel, which will be the biggest impact for Wells House Road and Island Triangle - with 24/7 work being carried out over a 10-year period;
- TfL Overground line and station. Residents here feel that the TfL consultation proposed Option C would have less affect on residents and the Scrubs;
- West London Wastes plans to build more;
- the potential of a new Queens Park Rangers stadium with 4000 visitors per match;
- Crossrail, for which there has been a lack of consultation so far;
- plans for developments such as Carphone Warehouse, already in the early stages of planning.

Residents in the Old Oak Common area will have 10-20 years of living on a construction site, with trucks, an overhead conveyor belt, poor air quality , noise, vibrations and traffic.

HS2 already provides a flavour of the impact. There will be a tunnel under the north side, an open station on the east side, a haul road against the south and a crossover box on the west side. Old Oak Common Lane will be closed for a year, cutting off schools, hospitals, churches, doctors, groceries, pharmacies, transport and the Scrubs. There will be CPO of 25 gardens for one year, loss of gardens and play spaces on Victoria Road and a threat to Wormwood Scrubs. Three years into HS2 consultations (which residents have been heavily involved in) no compensation has been proposed.

Old Oak Common residents' associations have been responding to consultations in an attempt to effect change, lessen the negative impacts and negotiate a better deal. They have collaborated with other local community groups and lobbied for support through building relationships with officers, local politicians and experts. They have attempted to get their views heard through the media, including social media.



### **The Grand Union Canal, its importance to the area in the past, present and future - Gerry Heward, Wood, Hall and Heward and London Waterways Commissioner**

Gerry is a commercial director of Wood, Hall and Heward, a company, works with boats, tugs and barges on the canal in and around London, on parts of the Thames and also in some other parts of the country. They are based in Harefield in West London. He is also a London Waterways Commissioner.

He said that listening to the presentations on the development proposals here, it is very clear that there is going to be huge pressure on the transport in this area. However, in the middle is a largely underutilised piece of the transport network – the canal, so it makes good sense to begin to look at the possibilities of utilising this now and to start to build a case for it.

Gerry's background and involvement in canal freight: He was at university in Brunel in Uxbridge 1971-75. Two of his fellow students were Tam and Di Murrell. The Murrells owned and operated narrow boats on the canal and he joined them in 1978. They had a contract with what was British Waterways and is now the Canals and Rivers Trust, to transport lime juice from the Brentford depot to Roses bottling plant at Boxmoor, just outside Hemel Hempstead. The lime juice came in 45 gallon drums as dead cargo on ships from Mexico and the West Indies and was eventually taken on narrow boats from Brentford to Rose's

bottling plant at Boxmoor. The plant closed in about 1980-81 and the Rose's site is now a B&Q superstore.

The Murrells wanted to stay in the water-freight business. There wasn't much taking place on the canal at that time so they moved out onto the river; negotiating a contract with Allied Mills to take grain from Tilbury grain terminus to Coxes Lock Mill (a specialist mill that made 22 grades of flour) on the River Wey, just outside Weybridge in the village of Addlestone. Coxes Lock Mill is now a block of flats.

The Murells continued to work in the water-freight business. They bought a 25-ton Dutch motor barge used for transporting aggregate traffic (he showed a slide of the barge transporting aggregate to Deptford Creek from Silvertown). They then bought three small coasters of about 350- and 500-tons taking aggregate, mostly from the East coast and servicing the upper Thames berths of Vauxhall, Wandsworth and Battersea. They also serviced Whitstable in Kent.

Gerry left the Murrells in 1988 and did an MBA at Henley Business School and spent about 10 years working in software. In 1995 he teamed up with one of the senior partners with T & D Murrell, Tim Wood, and then Mr Hall and created the company they have now. When they came back onto the canal there was nothing going on in the freight world, so the bulk of their work is infrastructure maintenance. He said that there is a bit of a grey line between freight and infrastructure maintenance because the same boats are used for moving things from A to B. However, an infrastructure project can be anything from a week to a year, while freight work is an ongoing contract taking a commodity to somebody's factory.

The Paddington Arm of the canal and development of industry around it: Gerry showed a map of London's water network of 190 km. There are two easy east-west routes - the Thames to the south and the Paddington Arm and the Regents Canal operating east-west route and going slightly to the north. There are two north-south routes, the River Lee, which runs up to Bishop Stortford, and the Grand Union Canal coming down into Paddington. This extensive network is largely underutilised, both the Thames and the canal.

Paddington Basin was the basis for building the Paddington Arm of the canal.

In terms of the canals history, much of the early development was on the east side of London. The River Lee was probably London's industrial heart. The very first canal was probably the Limehouse Cut, which goes from Bow back to Limehouse, followed by the Grand Junction Canal, which we now call the Grand Union Canal. The Paddington Arm was completed before the Grand Junction. The Regents Canal followed, because the Paddington Arm was very successful and it made good sense to take the Regents Canal down to Limehouse basin, originally called the Regents Canal dock, which linked it back to the river. Then came the Hertford Union and finally the Slough Arm in 1882. Nearly 200,000 tons of cargo were being moved on the Slough Arm in 1905, a significant tonnage in that period.

The Waterworks River was turned into a canal with the implementation of Three Mills Lock to support the development of the Olympic Park and to move construction traffic in and out of the Olympics.

Gerry provided a short explanation for the rather strange pattern of canals in London. The route from the industrial heartlands of the Midlands, Coventry, Leicester, Derby to London, was down the canal to Oxford and then down the river to here. It became clear that if your market was in London rather than Oxford it was better to build a canal to London rather than just to Oxford. So that was the motive behind building the Grand Junction Canal. Whilst they were building the Grand Union Canal to Brentford, it was decided to build a canal to Paddington, because the New Road (what we now know as Marylebone Road, Euston and Pentonville Roads) had just been built, going to Islington and to the City. Effectively Paddington was an inland port. One of the key features of the Paddington Arm is that it has no locks on it, which makes it interesting and useful from a freight transport perspective. A lot of stuff coming into the port was building and construction materials and coal for energy. If you look at the history, it seemed that development took place at both ends, at Southall and Paddington, and in the middle at Kensal Green cemetery, the gas works (mentioned earlier), the Portobello dock built by the borough of Kensington & Chelsea to take rubbish out of the borough, and Park Royal. Park Royal was originally a showground but with the advent of the First World War and munition factories it started to grow as an industrial area (NB

the Heinz factory (now sadly gone) was there from 1925-2000. Running back the other way, further west, J Lyons started life in Brentford, expanded very quickly and moved to the village of Greenford. There was also Southall gas works, Willowtree Wharf and the jam factories and then Bulls Bridge at the junction there.

Activity on the canal now: The London Plan is proposing higher levels of growth, with huge increases in volumes and densities of people, and this puts huge pressure on transport. Government policy is on transport pricing, trying to make it more difficult and more expensive to use roads. We have congestion charging in London and we will have low emission areas, we are going to have lorry-only movements at night and so on. It will become more and more difficult to get in and out by road. With more people there will be more waste and servicing. This causes huge problems for logistics and distribution. Also the cycling super highway is eating into road space as well.

Gerry showed a map detailing the extent of that congestion and the high central-London pollution levels. Surrounding this we have the largely underutilised waterways.

What kind of work is taking place now / over the last 10 years? There has been freight traffic between Denham and West Drayton, where there was a facility at Hanson's Yard. This provided seven or eight years of work, moving about 30,000 tons a year with two small water barges. Powerday's Wharf has also created a new destination. Powerday's site was seen as a good because it is a multi-modal site with road, rail and canal access. Gerry's company has moved aggregates down the River Lee. A lot of the materials that went into building Kings Wharf at Kings Cross was transported by barge over an 18-month period. They have also delivered materials and taken out waste at an awkward site just off the Harrow Road.

Where are the future opportunities? Gerry has put together a table setting out the possibilities. The best opportunities are having both a waterside source and a waterside destination. Unfortunately these don't come up very often, although the Denham-West Drayton and Powerday's Wharf are good examples. There are a lot more possibilities that start off at a waterside destination, but don't end up at a waterside destination, for example contaminated waste that can't go to Powerdays but has to go to specialised sites. Then there is the possibility of items that don't start at a waterside site but end at one. Cladding and construction materials such as steel beams rarely originate from a waterside site but do sometimes go to a waterside destination. The one that is the most interesting is the not-waterside to not-waterside sites, which are largely retail and consumer sector goods.

London's economy is essentially one of retail and distribution. You need multi-modal type equipment in order to do this. To make this viable for water transport, you need a system that is something like the seagoing container, on a smaller scale. As an example, Gerry's company did work for Hackney Council to move waste from their site at Millfields Road to their disposal / incinerator site in Edmonton. The waste was collected in standard refuse-collection vehicles. They didn't want to put it into containers because of the problem of container handling. So instead they built a barge that had raising and lowering decks which allowed them to use rollers, a standard piece of equipment used in the construction industry and in waste collection, where the lorry that collects the waste can also load and unload to the barge.

The also did a trial in Scotland with WEEE – waste electrical and electronics equipment. A local authority was looking to have a waterside facility and wanted to know if it would be possible to deliver materials to that site by barge. This particular barge was designed so that a skip lorry could load the skip into the barge and unload it; again avoiding the need for handling equipment.

Over recent years there has been increased online shopping and the door-step delivery. This is expensive and difficult for retail companies (including accessibility to deliver), so there is something emerging called click and collect. When you order online, it is possible to designate a place where you can collect. They are looking at transport stations and other places that people go to every day. Paddington station is a potential a good place for a click and collect facility / store. The problem is how would you get click and collect goods to Paddington Station during the day when it is busy with traffic? Fortunately there is a canal right at the back of the station, so there is proposal for transportation by vehicle to ends at a junction of the M4 that touches the canal, perhaps at Greenford, and then to use the canal to Paddington.

Returned goods would go back the same way. This would provide a predictable vehicle time and keep the delivery vans out of central London.

There is a lot of residential waterside and it is now being suggested that secure stores could be included where there are one or two hundred flats. The attraction for that is that this could be serviced by barge along the Paddington arm of the canal. In addition, the construction side is so easy by canal transport that it would be an injustice not to ensure that some of this traffic is taken off the roads.

Q. What about maintenance of towpaths and cycling and pedestrian access?

A. There is some conflict around whether the towpath is a cycle or pedestrian way. It is a bit tight to be both. If it were leisure cycling this is probably less of a problem, but otherwise the rush is an issue. This seems to be mostly about the space available, particularly though some of the narrow arches.

C. They could cut the vegetation back.

A. Yes, but remember that there is high voltage cable running through and optic fibre cable at the back of the towpaths, so it is already used as a utility route – which makes it difficult to work with.

C. One of the problems is that we haven't really decided whether we want towpaths as a transport facility or as nature reserves. In Holland they have created huge paths beside their canals which accommodates all kinds of traffic. We could do that. At the moment we seem to be trying to shoehorn everything in to that canal space, without taking a political decision on what is wanted or required.

Q. Do you think the waste transport from developments like this could be scaled to make a significant difference; in a way that might be seriously considered by the planners?

A. Everything has a scale limit to it, but the barges used by Powerday and those on the River Lee are 60/70 tons of barge load– so that is three 20-ton tipper lorry loads. The good thing about the Paddington Arm is that you can use multiple barges. We did a trial for a company called Hadley's at Reading, who have a waste recycling site with about a million tons of waste a year, and they were looking to pick up business from the London market but didn't want to send their lorries into London because of unpredictable journey times. They asked us if we could run it down to Southall and tranship it. But with that particular run we were running two barges at a time, so we were doing about 120 tons per unit. There is a reasonable amount of scale there I think.

Q. Have you looked at any specific cases at Park Royal?

A. Yes. The difficulty we have found is that it is quite compartmentalised (during the days of the Park Royal Partnership). We felt it would have been good if the Partnership had created some sort of consolidation centre, creating the opportunity to take goods in and then distribute within the locality. It was felt, though, that the opportunities for the waterside businesses were quite difficult, not that they were not sympathetic. All were keen to explore, but it was difficult to get the scale right.

Q. You didn't mention the railways – because you could just load stuff on a train from here to Paddington. The rail network is so congested that it is very difficult.

A. There is rarely an hour in the day when London's rail network is not moving trains somewhere. Every freight train coming in to London has to cross a bridge somewhere. There is a huge amount of demand on the rail network. For that type of activity the rail does not work as well as the water. It's not as flexible.

# Workshops



**(i) TRANSPORT** *Facilitator: Henry Peterson, St Quintin and Woodland Neighbourhood Forum. Invited Contributors: Tom Hinds, HS2, John Cox, Harlesden resident, David Evans, Brent Cyclists*

Henry Peterson opened the workshop by explaining the range of likely topics - including HS2, the Overground, Crossrail, cycling, traffic, roads and buses. He noted that there would be invited contributors.

**Tom Hinds, Area Petition Manager HS2** Tom distributed an illustrated handout. Old Oak Common interchange station, serving the Great Western Main Line, Crossrail and HS2 would be one of the best connected stations in the country. It will be 45 minutes to Birmingham, 1-plus hours to Manchester, 5 minutes to Euston and 3.5 hours to Edinburgh. HS2 is a massive project with extensive construction sites in and around Old Oak Common, Victoria Road, Willesden Container Depot and Atlas Road. Wells House triangle of homes would remain, but virtually surrounded by the construction sites. A conveyor belt would move tunnelling spoil north to Willesden Container Depot site for rail shipment. The project is currently at the Parliamentary Bill phase with petitioning being heard by a Select Committee. Royal Assent is expected in 2016. From 2015 to 2017 there will be detailed-design land acquisition. The construction period will start in 2017 with varying peaks and troughs of activity until opening in 2026. Certain regimes will be in place to monitor and control construction impacts, including a helpline.

The following is a summary of the key points made in the discussion. **John Cox, Harlesden resident and transport planning critic** contributed with several substantive points.

- **Station Design**: parliamentary powers are sought for 'concept' design (where, extent...) subject to local authority or Mayoral Development Corporation approving the final design after further consultations. HS2 passes to and from Old Oak Common in tunnels; Crossrail will be on the surface along the Great Western Main Line. The Overground is or will be at a higher level.
- **Timing**: is dependent on Parliamentary clearance. Currently panel of MPs is hearing petitioners (objectors). It is anticipated that HS2 and the Crossrail stations will open together, but TfL would prefer to open Crossrail and Overground stations earlier to serve HS2 workforce.
- **Services**: It is expected that all HS2 trains will stop at Old Oak Common to collect and disperse passengers so as to relieve Euston, otherwise the Underground services at Euston will be critically overloaded. Connecting services by Crossrail and Overground are, therefore, essential. It is not anticipated that commuters will board to travel to Euston.
- **Adverse Impacts on Local Roads**: Concern that Old Oak Common will serve as the drop-off and pick-up station generating car and cab trips so as to avoid Euston and its Congestion Charging and Low Emission location, but local roads, including bus services, will prove inadequate. Proposed road access is planned to be constrained in order to avoid air quality and congestion issues at critical junctions on surrounding main highway network. Congestion is believed to be inevitable. Construction impacts from highway/bridge improvements will be highly disruptive. TfL is presently

CIL charges. This will mean that the Mayor will take money off the developers to pay for infrastructure requirements. The developers will then play the 'viability card', saying 'we are having to pay CIL, so can't afford to also contribute section 106 funding for affordable housing'. This will have to be watched. The MDC's Local Plan will determine what kind of housing the Mayor will required within its boundaries.

Mark noted that recent consultation had been focused on whether the setting up of an MDC would be the right vehicle to take control of the development. The proposals will then go to the London Assembly to approve and then finally to the Secretary of State. The MDC will then work for the next couple of years on the policy that will be used to determine planning applications for developments.

Comments from the discussion on design, density and high-rise development:

- The borough with the highest density in London is Kensington and Chelsea, predicated by mansion blocks not tower blocks. Blocks like Erno Goldfinger's tower are not the norm there. There is a difference between high-rise and high density.
- There is something called low-rise high-density.
- Economically (putting aside the land under the building) the cheapest building you can produce is a cube because you get the maximum volume for the surface area. It's the surface area which costs money so this would indicate that mansion blocks are more economical than skyscrapers.
- Earls Court is mostly 8–11 storeys high built in Georgian and Victorian London and has the highest density in the whole of Western Europe. Architects that work for developers want to design something that is an iconic building for their portfolio and the developer wants to maximise their profits.
- (Peter Eversden) The London Plan says we should build 32,100 homes a year while actually we are only building about 20,000. The 2011 census identified that 32,100 wasn't enough and that we need 42,000 new homes a year. This target was set in Further Alterations to the London Plan earlier this year. At the Examination in Public (EiP) of these alterations the Mayor's officer said that the boroughs had to identify all the possible land they have where homes may be built using the mid-range of the London Plan's density matrix (included in the conference pack). They said that the boroughs needed to raise their aspirations and use the top end of the density matrix range to deliver the number of homes London needs. The Mayor is promoting higher levels of density particularly in opportunity areas. He has just approved a football stadium for Brentford. Because they can't afford a new stadium he has allowed them to build at three times the density level of all the existing housing that fronts it. These will be the slums of tomorrow. You can almost shake hands between blocks and access to light in habitable rooms is below guidelines.
- In South Acton they are replacing high-rise buildings with low-rise and lots of space between them, so there are also good examples.
- There are, but there is also high levels of displacement of people in council estate regeneration schemes. At the Elephant and Castle the majority of council tenants and leaseholders have been kicked out by a thing called 'regeneration'. The majority of new homes will be private homes for sale – with very few replacement social rented homes.
- Many people feel that you should make better use of existing land to get more housing on it, which probably means building at higher densities than existing.
- There was a recent TV programme on housing in which it was said that the smallest sized rooms being developed in Europe are here in England. The Evening Standard picked up on the same story and provided photographs to illustrate this, showing rooms that are well below Parker Morris standards.
- We have to ensure that room sizes are habitable. We need to stop thinking about housing units and instead about 'homes'.
- These kinds of homes are being built for short term financial gain. 20–30 years from now they will be torn down. The most unsustainable thing in the world is to quickly build some cheap undersized pieces of junk that will then be torn down again. The best buildings are those that have been there for 150 years and have the potential to be there forever.
- We need to talk about the best materials to use. We don't have to have buildings that are all steel and glass. Materials should be considered in terms of sustainability.



undertaking detailed technical studies, but there is concern that these would be retrospective justifications, as per Transport Study for the White City Opportunity Area.

- **Inadequate Consultation:** There has been no prior consultation on Crossrail's Old Oak Common Station. TfL technical studies are not for public consultation. Attendees and their contacts are urged to respond to TfL's current consultation on the Overground.
- **Faulty Connectivity:** Silo mentality of railway planning agencies, Network Rail, HS2, TfL, Crossrail, etc. TfL is ignoring through services to south London and Gatwick via OOC. HS2 station is not necessarily appropriately designed to ease interchange with the Overground and does not provide for an alternative routing of HS2 to HS1 link – not disruptively through Camden, but along West London line to Clapham Junction. The Overground cannot pass over HS2 station box. Consequently, the Overground station location options are sub-optimal. There will be a cumulative multiplying effect on passenger interchange numbers when several lines come together, as at Stratford, which is now proving to be inadequately sized.
- **Inadequate Linking with Immediate Hinterland:** No station is proposed on the West London line to serve the White City/Imperial College development. A Crossrail station to serve Kensal Rise Opportunity Area is unlikely.
- **Key Rail Support Infrastructure at Risk:** Rail depots line on both sides of Great Western Mainline at OOC and the one on south side is being refurbished. The need to rebuild or relocate will constrain and/or delay development.
- **Deficient Integration of Overground:** Current TfL consultations are on the three options offered for new Overground stations on the routes to Richmond and to Clapham Junction so as to serve Old Oak Common and the interchange station. But these options each have operational deficiencies. There is a need to lobby for radical rerouting across the HS2 station to achieve close proximity and the desired integration.
- **Significant Highway Network Improvements Needed:** East access road from Scrubs Lane into the OOC development site proposed, but not part of HS2 project. John Cox distributed a hand-out showing his personal proposal for a new highway from the North Circular through Park Royal to Old Oak Common avoiding Harlesden town centre. Access to Old Oak Common from the north through Harlesden town centre is/would be particularly problematic.

**David Evans, Brent Cyclist for London Cycling Campaign** said that cycling is increasingly important, but is confronted by a historic street pattern that is poorly maintained and organised. The proposed major east-west cycle route along Western Avenue by 2016 would be ill-connected with OOC. Limited north-south links, hazardous for cycling, are compounded by adverse construction traffic/impacts. There is a consequent need to incorporate cycling capacity in a rebuilt or improved local road network and for sufficient cycle parking at Old Oak Common station (unlike the inadequate facilities for HS1 at St Pancras station). Whilst TfL has an encouraging approach, HS2 is effectively controlling the likely provision. There is support for a new direct north-south route for cyclists and pedestrians across the Old Oak Common area from Willesden Junction to Wormwood Scrubs.

**(ii) DESIGN, DENSITY AND HIGH-RISE DEVELOPMENT** *Facilitator: Mark Walker, Island Triangle Residents' Association. Invited Contributor: Peter Eversden, London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies.*

This workshop started with provision of some information on the boundaries of the proposed MDC area and the possible siting of the HS2 interchange and Crossrail.

**Peter Eversden** advised that not all the Planning Frameworks for London's Opportunity Areas have been developed. Once in place they influence the planning decisions made by the boroughs. The Mayor of London will be truly in control here with the MDC covering Park Royal and Old Oak Common. He wants to protect the Park Royal area industry even though he is planning to build a town centre, housing and a transport hub in the middle of it. Park Royal, the industrial bit, is actually the bigger area.

The big influence will be what's happening in the White City Opportunity Area. As Jagrati highlighted earlier, only 17% of the housing is to be affordable there. If people want to see far more than that, they were going to have to fight for it. He noted that as soon as the MDC is in place it will begin to look at the

- The London Mayor actually introduced space standards that are better than Parker Morris in the London Plan. The Government is trying to get him to reduce these. He may be forced to reconsider his space standards in a replacement London Plan. But clearly there is a difference between density and space standards. You can have high density, but still have good space standards.
- I don't advocate having very small homes but there are some, such as starter homes that are quite small and also well thought out in terms of design; such as those designed by Pocket Living. You wouldn't want to bring up a family in them though.
- The canal and railway are primary space running through the area. If we can express this via the end-less railway tracks, the canal could potentially have ducts or fingers running from it. There is a recent development like this in which they have taken water from the Thames to create ducts with quite dense housing of 10 or 12 storeys around them, so it looks like a mini Venice. This is a fantastic opportunity to expand the canal as an amenity. Also, if you had green fingers coming from the Scrubs into the housing, suddenly you could accept higher density because you would have good access to green space. You don't want to isolate the canal as a waterway with barges running up and having housing all a long along; it should all be integrated. They saw this as an opportunity at Kings Cross.
- (Peter Eversden) The Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks set targets for numbers of homes and jobs but don't say how or where. However, you could get some of this detail into the MDC's Local Plan – saying specifically that we don't want all the housing facing onto the canal as it will create a barrier to accessibility. You could also force the MDC to have area action plans in which more of the layout could be determined, otherwise the developers will just put in the planning applications based on what they want and on greatest profitability. Views directly onto the canal will give the highest sale prices. This would isolate the canal and make it an exclusive part of the area.
- This brings us to how many designers and architects might be chosen to determine the more detailed design. There might, for example, be a competition for the master-plan with different ideas coming forward rather than just one idea.
- Not just Terry Farrell!
- There could be a process in which there is wide input into the overall and more detailed design. There could be some early suggestions of options. A masterplan has a big effect on what happens afterwards. It is also possible not to have just one developer (as occurred at Kings Cross). So if the masterplan were to determine a certain amount of infrastructure and roads, they would sell-off or accept bids for different chunks of land as they do in Germany and France. This would be a different process from having the whole thing determined by one developer.
- We need to discuss the issue of ensuring homes that really are 'affordable' – that is social-rented housing. Most of what is said to be affordable just isn't. Even intermediate, which is nominally cheaper than market housing, is not affordable. A one-bedroom flat was recently sold under hammer, in a poorish part of Westminster at £505,000. We must look at the needs of people who cannot afford anything other than social housing. The percentages, just 17% in White City and sometimes as low as 13%, is something we need to take on board and perhaps discuss in more depth.
- (Peter Eversden) We have to understand the reasons for this. The Government expects a return of 65% of market rents on homes developed from the housing pot, while central London boroughs are saying rents should be at 30% market rents in order to deliver really affordable homes. The Government and the London Mayor say well, you can deliver some at that level, but you have to deliver others at 80% market rent. This is part of the failure to devolve to London the right of the boroughs to borrow and build and for the Mayor to have the right to spend his housing pot as he wishes. The affordable rent model (a national model) fails in the capital as it sets rents that are intolerable to most people in the capital. We have to demand devolution to London. The local authorities used to build all the social housing and could again.
- Social housing can be indistinguishable from other tenures. Space standards in London are higher than Parker Morris. There is housing behind Paddington Station where 30% is low cost housing and about half of that is low-cost rented. However, when you drive in, it's the same car-park and the housing, regardless of tenure, it looks the same. It's not about design it's about selecting certain flats that are subsidised for people who can't afford them.

- I know of housing in Brent where they have made the same claims, but actually there is a poor door and the facilities are noticeably less for some sections. In examples in Kensington & Chelsea and in Camden, it is the same story. The poor door is now notorious. In one Brent scheme the children can't even get the key to the communal playground.
- How is the MDC going to set up the financial structure? There is a lot of good practice around the world, but when you have a corporation that's developing a master plan for a large area and wants to respond to its remit to deliver affordable housing it needs to have a financial structure that mirrors what is needed. They need to have the same dialogue with the developers who say that delivering affordable homes is not viable and tell them - this is what you can do with the private stuff, this is how much affordable housing we need and this is the financial structure you should use. They have to plan their finances to make it work.
- We have discussed this London-wide, but it seems that Westminster is the only council that has the skills to argue back with the developers that it is the poor design that makes them non-viable.
- Delivering social or affordable housing can be profitable. You have to talk about the time frame for the payback, say a 25 year payback versus a 10 year payback.
- Returning to the issue of design, relating to this great asset of the canal and the problem of the historic railway infrastructure, the Great Western railway is a real barrier that sits at the top of Wormwood Scrubs with a kind of nether land beyond. Wormwood Scrubs is not the most beautiful part of London and we have great opportunities to expand the Scrubs northwards into the canal space. All this could become one area that is not so dominated by the railways even though we are likely to need a certain number of bridges relating to HS2 and Crossrail. I think we could look at other examples such as what they have done at Stratford, which has its own character and is easy to move around.
- You could actually put all the stations including the Underground together at one point.
- We are not that far from some of the most expensive land in the world. We are not that far from anything here. So getting those connections will be staggeringly profitable. However, if you don't make the profits and you leave the noisy railways there, it won't make any money.
- It could be possible to meet a lot of London's housing need in the MDC without skyscrapers. At present, the MDC is saying this is the kind of vehicle that will deliver. What we are discussing here is very useful because it provides us with some ideas of the types of thing we need to be saying to the MDC. This is important, as they don't yet have a masterplan.
- The thing that is coming early here is this connection issue; the crux of these matters and the only reason that anything else might happen. For this to work it needs to be connected to businesses.
- (Peter Eversden) We all have to understand what we are supposed to get from the current London Plan policies. This means we have to look at chapter 7, which looks at context and character and the impact of tall and large buildings on surrounding areas and what kinds of policy of control should be in place at the borough level. It is notable that Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's guidance on tall buildings (of 2007) has just been revised by the Design Centre and English Heritage – with a six weeks consultation period - <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/tall-buildings-have-your-say-revised-guidance>. We should be able to say to the Mayor and his MDC that they should look at their policies in chapters 3 and 7 of the London Plan to ensure they are following their own rules. In addition, this revised guidance on tall buildings should also be followed since it is of material consideration that should be taken into account in every planning application. So we all have to get really knowledgeable about the policy and guidance on this issue. When we are looking at planning applications we really have to consider which policies in the London Plan the application does not conform to, rather than simply 'we don't like this'. So try to get away from expressing an opinion and focus on what the policy is, then you are in a better position.
- As a local resident it is important for me to know how we can scrutinise the MDC and the masterplan it comes up with. I agree it is important that we learn how to frame our questions and concerns in the kind of (planning) language that will make an impact.

**(iii) HERITAGE AND ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE** *Facilitator: Leao Neto, Harlesden Methodist Church. Invited contributors: Richard Lee, Just Space and John Goodlier, Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Building Group.*

Invited contributor **John Goodlier** noted that he was also a member of the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society. He is interested in 20<sup>th</sup> Century design and industrial archaeology. He put together information setting out a very brief history of the area which is included in the conference pack.

He said that the area planned for development is basically an industrial area although there are pockets of housing such as at Wells House Road. That area including Victoria Road had been intended for housing and a school was built on School Road. Many of the children who went to the school would have come from housing to the north of the area.

There are three strands of the development of industry in the area (aside from that relating to the railway):

- Industry that developed north of the canal around Hythe Road, which tended to be mechanical engineering and some food production.
- The Royal Agricultural Society of England set up a permanent showground at Park Royal in 1903 but only stayed there for three years and then the land was sold off to large industries such as Guinness, Heinz, McVities and Park Royal Motors.
- Victoria Road, where the Hayes Munitions Factory bought land during the First World War. After the war, two brothers with the surname Allnatt bought some of the buildings, possibly mostly for scrap. A manufacturer offered to buy one of the sheds. Within a few weeks they were all sold. The Victoria Road area was predominant in electrical engineering.

There are some notable industrial buildings in Park Royal, for example Rolls Royce. Acton Road has a number of interesting pubs and wine bars.

Beyond existing buildings the industrial history can be remembered in various road names and other memorialisations, such as Lyons and LEO (in this case Joe Lyons who built the first commercially-used computers, called LEO (Lyons Electronic Office). Also Sunbeam (Road) after Sunbeam cars.

A textbook case of this kind of memory is RAF Stanmore, where council houses built on the site are all named after pilots and aircraft that flew out of RAF Hendon. The people who lived there in the past also have memories to draw on, which can be quite intense, for example, of factory conditions and their lives.

There are places that still need to be preserved. The local council archive services is a resource. Ealing Local History Centre has large-scale ordnance survey maps detailing industry. In Victoria Road, for example, there was the electronics industry producing radio valves and vacuum cleaners. The physical form is often gone, but the memories are there. Perhaps some people are still there who remember. Oral histories could recover some of that.

Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group, the Twentieth Century Society and the Greater London Industrial Archaeological Society do a lot of walking around factory estates.

Is it possible to protect buildings? Yes, for example, there was an initiative that got the canal turned into a conservation area, and other listings.

It would be helpful to produce a map of this area with conservation areas and listed buildings, as community assets or for protection.

Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Building Group has produced a publication called 'Local List' which is a directory of historical and descriptive information on over 2,000 buildings throughout the borough, listed alphabetically by street name. It includes 450 nationally listed buildings and the 1,500 plus on the council's Local Register of buildings of merit, sometimes referred to as Grade 3 listed buildings. It also includes other buildings which the group feels are worthy of retention. The council's list is not done very well, certainly not of Industrial Heritage, and they have also not managed to list some spectacular buildings.

**Richard Lee** outlined the opportunities framed by the Localism Act to list assets of community value. He talked about the procedure for registering assets and the right for groups that have got assets listed to bid for them if they are to be sold. The request has to come from the community. There might be some opposition. Generally councils like green space to be registered as an asset. Registration is a relatively short process. The Localism Act requires that it be done in six weeks, and generally applications are turned around quite quickly. The main purpose of getting assets that the community values listed is so that when building is at risk, because it is not profitable or there is development pressure, a prospective developer can't simply and immediately acquire it. If the asset is to be sold, the group that got the building listed is given a period of time to say if it would like to make a bid and, in total, a six-month period in which to put forward a business plan. There is support available from Locality to do this. There is a briefing on the Community Right to Bid / listing assets of community value in the conference pack.

- There will be a neighbourhood forum meeting in Harlesden area at 6.30pm on 26th November at the Lift People office, St Thomas' Road, organised by Atara Fridler. This is the first contact for the group. A steering group is proposed, which needs 21 people. The opportunity is to prepare a neighbourhood plan and to work for assets to be reclaimed by the community. (Leao)

Richard explained that an important resource is a survey conducted by most local authorities, who often have a good understanding of community assets and may have plans to dispose of some of them. Each borough is required by law to have an asset management plan. It has to list every building owned by the council and the future uses planned for it. Has this been done in the boroughs of Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham?

Richard mentioned the example of the Ivy House pub in Nunhead, Southwark, which is the first co-operatively owned community pub and was the first pub to be listed as an asset of community value. Shortly after completing purchase of the building (with support of government funding through Locality) they opened a community share offer to raise money to pay for the repairs and refurbishment needed. They have 371 shareholders in this new community enterprise.

Generally, development of neighbourhood forums and listing of assets of community value are going forward separately. However, you don't need a neighbourhood forum to list assets of community value, but it is, of course, good if neighbourhood forums can do this.

Comments:

- Assets can include parks, which also need protecting from building pressure.
- The first Methodist church was built here in 1869; it is now the next door pub.
- Some historic factories could be listed as assets of community value, as well as pubs - such as the Torpedo Factory on Chandos / St Leonard's Road. This was originally a soap factory built in 1908.
- The possibility of preserving the character and history of a place, where appropriate, can be helped by listing community assets and sites of heritage interest. Buildings of architectural merit, or of heritage value can be listed on the local council list of buildings of merit (local council conservation register), based on architectural or historical significance. In contrast, assets of community value are based on use. We should be pursuing both lines of protection.
- The GLA will start to produce a planning document for Park Royal and Old Oak Common area, and the GUA needs to be ready at an early stage with its lists: buildings of merit and assets of community value. There could be a chapter in the plan on this, and perhaps the MDC could commission people to prepare this information.
- Often communities are only reactive, and wait and complain that the planners haven't understood! We could do the work earlier.
- This contributes to mapping the social and community infrastructure, putting forward a diversity of needs - for example, libraries, cultural facilities, religious activities, etc.
- Why not put together our own plan for community infrastructure?

Members of the workshop agreed to do a walkabout to identify interesting buildings and sites.

### List of ideas for heritage sites and industrial history to explore:

- Acton Road pubs.
- Old pubs in housing estates.
- Church buildings.
- INCO building.
- Old School Hall, where a wall remains standing.
- Leo/Lyons.
- Rolls Royce.
- Sunbeam Cars.
- Torpedo, Chanders Road, soap factory, 1908

### Actions:

- Locate the borough listings of assets, buildings and planned use.
- Locate council registers of buildings of architectural/historical merit.
- Undertake walk to identify initial ideas re: historical and community use buildings/parks.
- Explore GUA plan for community infrastructure in new developments.

**(iv) HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS** *Facilitator: Sharon Hayward, London Tenants Federation. Invited Contributors: Sean Risdale, People of the Road and Karl Stein, Lift People*

Sharon provided a short introduction to the workshop, including the context to the high numbers of homes that the Mayor's office proposes for Old Oak Common. She drew attendees' attention to the briefing paper in the conference pack on assessing housing need and meeting that need in London.

- Both the London Mayor and the boroughs are responsible for assessing housing need in their geographical boundaries. These are called Strategic Housing Market Assessments. The Mayor and the boroughs also make assessments of where land is available to develop the new and additional homes needed, called Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments.
- London's Opportunity Areas provide the greatest opportunities for providing new homes.
- The London Plan sets the Mayor's target for the new and additional homes needed in London each year to meet need; 32,100 a year at present, but will be 42,000 homes a year (for 20 years). This is based on the assessed increases in population in London as well as 'backlog of need', such as homeless or overcrowded households or those in homes that just don't meet their requirements.
- The Mayor proposes that 24,000 homes can be delivered in Old Oak Common. It will be very difficult to squeeze that number of homes in to the available land (155 hectares) along with schools, doctors, green and play spaces, shops and amenity space.
- The briefing provides information on the housing targets and what has actually been delivered in Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea over the last seven years. Delivery of affordable housing is poor in comparison to need; particularly so for social-rented homes.
- More than 50% of households in London can really only afford social-rented homes. The median income level (the mid-point) is around £30,000 a year. To meet the cost of an average affordable rent here, at 80% of market rents, requires a household income of £44,500.
- The private rented sector has grown significantly in London.
- Needs assessments are also supposed to consider communities that have particular housing needs such as those who are disabled and or elderly.

**Sean Risdale** works with travellers, particularly in Ealing providing information on the needs of gypsies and travellers. He said that Ealing has a long history of traveller settlements, particularly Irish travellers. There are about 2,000 travellers in the borough. The site at Bashley Road, which is on the edge of Park Royal, has been in existence for about 15 years as a result of negotiation between the Gypsy Council and the LB of Ealing. Ealing Council is responsible for running the site. It is called a 'tolerated site' – it is in a ghastly situation environmentally and nobody cares very much about itinerants.

The site has about 24 pitches, about four or five families and a large number of small children. Most of

the men are economically active. The women have particular pressures, notably that it is virtually impossible to keep the trailers and chalets clean as there is so much gunk in the air. There is a kind of no man's land between the railway line and the site, which is infested with rats. The Pilkington glass factory is adjacent to the site and the chalets closest to it are virtually going up and down as the ground gets pounded. As the site is close to factory units, people often park across the site access road, which means residents can't get their vehicles in or out. The Royal Mail doesn't deliver post to individual addresses.

The council has given the contract for managing the site to a firm based in Oxford that runs gypsy and traveller sites across the Thames Valley. While the two men from this firm seem to be doing their best, they are only on the site for about half a day a fortnight, whereas until a couple of years ago they had a full time warden there. With the difficulties of dealing with the day-to-day management issues it is difficult to get to issues about the broader developments at Old Oak discussed. However, collectively the community is very family-centred and they have links across London.

Many are aware that gypsy and travellers were evicted from Clays Lane, Newham, to build the Athletes Village for the Olympics. The travellers that were living there did, though, get quite a good deal out of this and were rehoused, largely because Hackney took charge of this rather than Newham. Hackney Homes, which manages Hackney council homes, did a pretty good job of getting travellers resettled on sites that are multipurpose - with bungalows, chalets or trailers. The site is based much on the model they have in the Republic of Ireland and the travellers are largely pretty happy with how they have been resettled. So while to an extent there is some ambivalence, they are anxious about all the construction that is going to go on around them. Having said that, there are so many elephants in the room stomping around that this is perhaps just seen as another, but bigger, elephant. At the moment, the site residents want to be properly informed about the plans and the implications for them.

- (comment) This is true for all the communities within the MDC; we have exactly the same issues.

I think what the Reverend from the Church of England said this morning about the dispossessed not being consulted applies. I don't say this particularly as championing the cause of travellers but rather to highlight this as an example of how certain sections of the community can be left out of the loop over the consultation processes. While probably there are some very decent people involved in this from the MDC, they know what they want to do and they are aiming to get there. I think information-sharing is very important to help us negotiate around what is going on and assess what little bit of power the travellers may have within this situation in order to get the best that they can out of it.

- This is a good contribution to the current gaps in provision. It could be argued that within the new developments new gypsy and traveller sites / pitches could be included. Is this something that People of the Road would want to lobby for?

Sean said that a key brief of their organisation is to make travellers a part of the broader diverse community in any way possible. One of the reasons that they often don't relate to the wider community is because they are scared of abuse. However, there is some movement on this, particularly amongst the younger members of the community. They have a football team with a range of communities represented, such as Polish, Afro-Caribbean and Asian.

One other point, in terms of gaps in existing provision, is that there hasn't been a new site provided for gypsy and travellers in London since the mid-1990s. Many gypsy and travellers, even those who have been placed in bricks and mortar housing for a couple of generations, would say that they would move back to a site like a shot tomorrow if they had the opportunity. That's not an argument against integration or interaction but simply that they would rather be living on a site than in a house.

Following discussion:

- We (from church at the top of Scrubs Lane) are quite concerned about the kind of infrastructure that might be included in the development and the 24,000 homes. What about the community centres and schools? What kind of community will we be generating? It also seems to us that this may be about dispersing people. Communities work in certain ways and I'm not sure that any research has



been done around how our existing communities operate now. It would seem that most new developments are just for yuppies and wealthy people. They have their own style of community – not what we are used to.

- Exactly. They only relate to each other.
- This is a very important part of the discussion. The London Plan has a policy on developing ‘Lifetime Neighbourhoods’ – this is relatively new in planning policy terms. Some groups (such as Age Concern and London Tenants Federation) have set out their own definitions of what they would want to see in a Lifetime Neighbourhood. Broadly it is a neighbourhood that is designed in a way that meets the needs of people of all ages - old and young and for those with disabilities. It is a neighbourhood that is inclusive. What other things are important to create a ‘Lifetime Neighbourhood’?
- Community cohesion. It is in the interest of any new incoming group to reach out to the existing community to get people involved.
- A sense of fairness. Everyone should feel they have a stake in the community and not having some getting privileged access to resources. We should all have good access to doctors, nurses and teachers. These are the people that make the city run and they should not be priced out.
- You need to be able to have school gate conversations.
- After tax, how much are teachers left with compared with the prices of homes? If you have two children the cost of a home in Brent is more than they could be to afford. How is that people like this can’t afford to buy a homes here?
- We need homes for key workers.
- If you look at the developments in Stratford you can see that there are no key worker homes there that a teacher might be able afford to buy. A teacher in Brent who takes home £2,000 a month can’t afford them. Even with a second income of the same wage, a household would struggle to meet the cost. If we don’t have the homes that people can afford we won’t get the kind of society that we want.
- The same if true for nurses, the police and other essential workers.
- We have to stop our politicians promoting the sale of homes abroad. I’m very happy to have people coming here from abroad if they are actually living and working here, but not buying up homes for investment and leaving them empty.
- We need to have homes in a community where people will want to raise their children, have a stake in their neighbourhood and might grow old in.
- Yes, but we need more than this. We need a society that can live and function within a certain space.
- We don’t need homes which people who help to make a supportive community can’t afford. Some of these homes for the very wealthy are used like personal hotels.
- Or they are renting them out on short-term agreements – so this creates transient communities.
- The Evening Standard reported that private-rented homes in Hackney and Tower Hamlets (at one time relatively cheap places to live) now cost £2,500 a month.
- East London is now getting more expensive.
- They have been criticising the scriptwriters of East Enders for not including the aspirations of new communities now living in parts of East London.
- This is a ludicrous situation. People who have been living as part of the community in the Elephant and Castle, which was never exactly Mayfair, are now being forced out and are being told to move to Manchester or Birmingham or anywhere out of London. We are losing essential workers. This is happening in Tower Hamlets as well.
- We are also losing the soul of those places – as could happen in Harlesden.
- Some of the housing associations have sold off properties to raise funds and have then been able to build more homes. In one instance in Kensington & Chelsea this raised £4.5m; if they hadn’t done that, they would not have had the money to build other affordable homes.
- The problem is that the government is no longer giving housing associations the money to build homes. It is correct that some are selling off land to the rich to provide them with money to develop future schemes. We have to be aware of that.
- As a member of a large housing association board, talking about affordable housing is very difficult.

How do we make it fair for everyone? This is where the percentages come in. Our problem is that we can't determine the top figure. If you live in Manchester you may pay 25% less than the going rate for rents. If you live in London and you pay 25% less than the going rate that is going to be a much higher rent. This is hard, but housing associations have to protect their revenues. If they apply 25% of the market rate in all parts of the UK and Ireland, they can manage that. If you begin to vary it, it could be seen that some areas are favoured over others. We have to understand that housing associations have to survive. It is the local authorities who deal with the allocations – which is my biggest issue.

- As a member of the London Federation of Co-operative Housing, we work with other housing co-ops across the country. For those developing new housing, it is a lot easier outside London. The key issue here is the price of land. It's not the case that this is about taking money from the rich to give to the poor. It is actually a case of taking money from one place to buy up land elsewhere, often from a council or other public owner. This is about moving big chunks of money around without us actually getting what we need. Sharon talked about the housing needs assessments and land availability assessment for homes in London. We want that land to be available for social housing. It is the fact that a lot of councils would rather make a quick buck out of it. This needs to be addressed. If you are not paying vast amounts for the land then you can build affordable housing on it without having to sell off any other existing homes. The idea that 25% of market rent across the country is an easy figure for housing associations across the country is nonsense, because this wouldn't pay for the cost of maintenance. The rents you charge have to meet the cost of maintenance. However, this should be separated from the cost of purchasing the land to build homes in the first place.
- We are looking at ways that make it easier for housing associations to develop because sometimes, as you say, it's about the land that is available. Some don't have the time to get back their money, because they have to develop services as well as developing new homes. So, some have set up separate development companies. There are different options out there, but the one thing we do have to look at is how the housing will be allocated. It is clear that Brent will not get many of the homes if most of the homes are to be developed in Hammersmith & Fulham. If land from the other boroughs is being used for facilities and resources or delivering the land for the railway, we have to ensure that Hammersmith & Fulham does not keep all the affordable housing for those within its own boundaries.
- One of the key issues here is that much of the land for development is public rather than private land. If it is public land, does it have to be sold off? Couldn't at least a percentage of this land be set aside for genuinely affordable homes?
- We are getting increased levels of private-rented homes and transience.

At this stage, **Karl Stein**, working with single people who are at risk of being homeless or who are actually homeless, was invited to contribute to the debate. He noted that those he is working with are a growing transient section of the community. The demography is predominantly over 35 or 40 years of age. Some are women and some younger people of both sexes, but principally they are men. Many of their problems relate to having been divorced or separated from partners, single living, sometime with drug or alcohol abuse. Sometimes they find their ways to Lift People from the street and if they are eligible they are provided with help in getting accommodation.

People come to Lift People because there is no social-housing available for them and they are offered the chance to get into the private-rented sector. Lift People provides help in making contact with the local authority and the DWP and thereafter training to access online searches for properties. Lift People will find out what the local housing allowances are and provide information to help people to help themselves and can provide support for three to six months. It aims to ensure that people are aware of their responsibilities to their landlords as tenants and of how to make a good impression on landlords. It provides a kind of vetting procedure – since landlords may have access to tenants' banking details. Potential tenants may have to provide references – this can be difficult because most of these people have problems anyway. Invariably people want to remain in this area, which is not always possible.

There is the issue of affordability. Many landlords are now creating flats in a single house – turning them

into studios and if a person is over 35 the maximum housing allowance will apply. The maximum Local Housing Allowance is £258 a week just for a studio flat that might have a kitchenette / diner, a bed and cupboard and a shower unit.

- It sounds like student accommodation and this is perhaps what a lot of this student accommodation will end up being.

Karl said that he felt the current gaps in provision are:

- Under 35s can't get local housing allowance for individual properties (i.e. they can only get benefits if they are living in shared accommodation). Young people tend not to turn up to training days and searches – they get disillusioned very quickly. The same, of course, applies to those over 35 and the problem is that there is just not very much of this kind of accommodation available.
- In terms of getting accommodation – zero hours contracts don't help.
- There is a need for more housing advice and support.
- In Brent the issue of void properties also needs to be addressed.

We hope that the MDC will:

- Look at issues of affordable housing for single people and housing for local people.
- Extend its voice outwards on these issues.
- Help to support community cohesion, since those we represent are often isolated, they don't feel part of the community and don't have a way of engaging and getting their voices heard. We try to empower people – because once they have left our project they have to speak for themselves and people need to find their own voice.

Additional support and research needed:

- The boroughs of H&F, Brent and Ealing should collaborate more on the housing needs of single people. They seem to have different targets and allocations, no shared approach. We feel that if they worked together more on these issues they could come up with shared policy as well.

Further comments from attendees:

- Brent, along with Newham, has the highest levels of private-rented accommodation (around 40% of homes in the borough are private-rented) and, like Newham, also has the problems of beds in sheds and in garages. Is Brent looking at licensing properties? Is it properly managing the private-rented sector here? Are they making sure that private-sector landlords are good landlords?
- Lift People sits between what's happening on the ground and the council.
- There is a housing association called Dominion and they deal with some people who have supportive housing needs – but it is very difficult to find such accommodation. They also try to place single and vulnerable people in private-rented homes.
- Did anyone see a series on the secret history of our streets? It was brilliant. They looked at six different parts of the city. One was in Deptford where there had been some low-rise houses which the council had decided to knock down and replace with high-rise blocks. They interviewed people, showing the effect and how much more isolated people felt than living on a street.
- They also looked at Notting Hill, where ordinary working-class people were being pushed out by yuppies.
- There was one section that looked at an example on the Holloway Road, where an older man had built flats underground illegally, but he didn't care. The series is interesting background and one of the best things I've seen on TV.
- Aren't Ealing and Brent beginning to knock down beds in sheds?
- They have knocked down some in Southall.

Key additional points:

- The biggest current gap in provision is for genuinely affordable housing.
- As the development is to be on public land some should stay in public hands to develop council homes, co-operative and/or other community housing.

- The worrying thing is that all the plans are for private-sector development.
- There should be a change in the law on right-to-buy to keep homes affordable.
- There should be provision of support for single and vulnerable households – particularly those in the private-rented sector.
- We need community cohesion with people of all types actively engaged and not sterile isolated housing units.
- We need integrated communities with lifetime neighbourhoods – with the kind of security of homes and tenure that will facilitate this.
- Consultations need to be set out in a language that is understood by everyone.
- We need to rediscover the time when housing was really a politicised discourse.
- People need a stake in where they want to live, where they are going to live and what affects them in those homes.
- There needs to be a change in the attitude that assumes people are poor because they are not working hard enough.
- The greatest concerns is that the development will just be expensive housing and that there will be a lack of social cohesion.
- We need some good case studies on community cohesion and lifetime neighbourhoods and on retaining public land for publicly-owned development.
- We need information on how new affordable housing will be allocated amongst the boroughs.

Who else should have been here today?

- The London Mayor, MP's councillors, London Assembly members – to respond to us.
- Would the debate have been as good if they had been here? Would some have felt uncomfortable?
- Some, yes, and some of us may have been a bit more aggressive.
- Some may have been sympathetic to us, but others not. Some politicians are good community leaders.
- Some have good relationships with their communities but on the issue of the MDC they are being told by the cabinet to 'mind your own business'.
- Representatives of different faiths and churches need to be here.

The Grand Union Alliance conference 2014 was held at Tavistock Halls, Harlesden Methodist Church, 25 High Street, Harlesden.

## CONFERENCE ATTENDEES (INCLUDING SPEAKERS)

Donald Alwright  
David Ardatti, Brent Cyclists  
Mark Belham, West London Line  
Geoffrey Berg  
Jagrati Bhutia, White City TRA and Advice4Renters  
Del Brenner, Regents Network  
Catherine Browne, Ealing Friends of the Earth  
Robin Brown, Hayes Community Development Forum  
Civillini Matteo  
John Cox, Chelsea Close Residents' Association and Harlesden Town Team  
Ewa Cwirko-Godycka;  
Stewart Dalby, Friends of Wormwood Scrubs  
Bill Davison, Acton Alliance  
Peter Davidson  
Peter Denton, LTF and Westminster Residents Panel  
Dariusz Dzywigaj  
Charlotte Evans, Anglican Church  
David Evans, Stonebridge TRA and Brent Cyclists  
Peter Eversden, London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies  
Virginia Fassnidge, Ealing Friends of the Earth  
Jessica Fern, Just Space Economy Sub-Group  
Nic Ferraday, Ealing Friends of the Earth  
Gerry Fitzgerald  
Atara Friedler, Lift People  
Jullian Gallant  
Colin George, Kensal Green Streets  
Lucy Goldman  
John Goodlier, Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Building Society  
James Guest, Ealing Fields Residents' Association  
Anne Griffiths, Island Triangle Residents' Association  
Desmond Hall, Pentacostal City Mission Church  
Nina Hall  
Sharon Hayward, London Tenants Federation  
Gerry Heward, Wood, Hall & Heward  
Tom Hinds, HS2  
Caroline Hughes

Ben Hughes  
David Jeffreys, Friends of Wormwood Scrubs  
Michael Kiwumuh  
Christine Kontogionni  
Ami Kotecha, Hunger Hill Residents Association  
Raj Kotecha  
Jim Lawman  
Richard Lee, Just Space  
Rachel Ling  
Brenda Long, Island Triangle Residents' Association  
Theresa McGee, Wesley Estate TRA  
Nathalie Monnot; Kensal Green Streets  
Alfred Mukenbeck  
Murli Mulchandani  
Michael Mulhern, OPDC  
Leao Neto, Brent Methodist Church  
Graham Noyce, St Martins, Kensel Rise  
Francis Moss, Marko&Placemakers;  
Peter Osman  
Henry Peterson, St Quintins Neighbourhood Forum  
Sean Risdale, People of the Road  
Greg Robbins, London Federation of Co-operative Housing  
Jennifer Robinson, UCL  
Rob Rudy  
Ian Senson, London Diocese  
Leroy Simpson, Harlesden Town Team  
Marie Somerville, Island Triangle Residents' Association  
Amanda Souter, Wells House Road Residents' Association;  
Karl Stein, Life People Private Tenants Group  
Dzidra Stipnieks, Ealing Fields Residents' Association  
Marco Torquati  
Mark Walker, Island Triangle Residents' Association  
Amanda West, Sunstrans  
Christian Wolmar  
Sarah Ullman, RARA  
Emma, Wells House Road Residents' Association.

# Grand Union Alliance conference November 2014

