

Leader's Question Time – Whitton and Heathfield Villages

Date: Wednesday 1 November 2017 Time: 6pm – 8.45pm Venue: Whitton Community Centre

Panel members:

- Bronwyn Ashby (Chair)
- Cllr Paul Hodgins (Leader of the Council)
- Cllr Pamela Fleming (Deputy Leader – Cabinet Member for Environment, Business and Community)
- Cllr Peter Buckwell (Cabinet member for Highways and Street scene)
- Cllr Susan Chappell (Strategic Cabinet for Children's Services and Schools)
- Cllr Martin Seymour (Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Development)

Also in attendance:

- Cllr Gareth Elliot (Whitton Ward)
- Cllr Liz Jaeger (Whitton Ward)
- Cllr Grant Healy (Whitton Ward)
- Cllr Annie Hambidge (Heathfield Ward)
- Cllr David Marlow (Joint Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Health)
- Cllr Jane Boulton (Tenants' Champion)

Pre-submitted Questions

Difficulties for cyclists in Whitton High Street	
Question 1	Greg Addington - I'm a cyclist, and unfortunately the design of Whitton High Street means that I often see more cyclists there than on the road. I don't see why my dad or my niece should have to avoid cyclists when they are just out for a walk and additionally, we have Whitton Station at the end of the high street, I would've hoped that there was greater provision for cyclists to get there safely without endangering anyone else. I know that the pavement has just been redone – what can be done to allow cyclists adequately get about without endangering pedestrians?
Response	Response and supplementary questions from 21:01 to 30:53.

Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Buckwell to investigate further the possibility of creating a by-law.
Separation of the Dean Estate from Whitton Village by A316	
Question 2	Stephen Randall – I represent 200 houses on the Dean Estate. My question is in the form of a request. I've brought this up on many occasions and meetings but I'll read it out to you. Can we please have safe service crossing over the A316, so that residents on the Dean Estate can use Whitton town services safely? We are cut off by the A316 and coupled with that, can we please have a regular bus service along the A316 to link-up with necessary services; we are nearly a mile away from the nearest bus stop. We are supposed to be able to use our Freedom Passes without having to drive to the nearest bus stop. We are part of Whitton Village; let us have the service necessary please.
Response	Response and supplementary questions from 32:36 to 43:14 (end of response unavailable due to technical error).
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This issue will continue to be raised with TfL.
Paving over of front gardens/non-enforcement of crossovers	
Question 3	Jon Rowles – Growing number of front gardens being used for paved parking, but Highways Dept. not enforcing crossover requirement so pavements are being damaged by cars parking.
Response	(response unavailable on video due to technical error) Cllr. Buckwell: The Council is trying to push back on new cross-overs and discourage paving over gardens. Paving gardens can increase the risk of flash flooding. Highways Officers do enforce, but this is mainly on a case by case basis. John Rowles requested that there be a target project for Warren Road where he estimates there are over 40 illegal crossovers, which prevents any street parking. Can the Council look at particular roads, problem roads, rather than case by case?
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will consider whether a different approach can be taken.
Turing School – Heathfield re-siting - (Question and responses unavailable on video due to technical error).	
Question 4	Bob Hope - Would a change in administration influence the planning process for Turing School?
Response	(question and responses unavailable on video due to technical error) Cllr Chappell: The planning committee is cross party, so a change in administration would not change the planning process. The selection of the school site is not Council driven. The planning laws must be abided to and transport plans/considerations put in place.
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will make sure that the planning and transport policies are looked at and are robust in order to protect the safety of children.
Question 5	(start of question unavailable on video due to technical error) Rev Nigel Griffen - Why is the Council encouraging the building of a new free school for Teddington, in the Heathfield ward? Surely a site on the Teddington side of the A316 would be preferable? Why has the Council not facilitated a site more convenient for Teddington? And we are told that this is all about planning, we are talking about a site which is Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and policy DMOS2 says 'the borough's MOL will be protected and retained in predominantly open use.

	Appropriate uses include: public and private open spaces and playing fields, open recreation and sport, biodiversity including rivers and bodies of water, and open community uses, including allotments and cemeteries. It will be recognized there will exceptional cases where appropriate developments, such as small scale structures is acceptable, but only, if it: 1) does not harm openness and character of the MOL and 2) is linked to the functional use of the MOL or supports outdoor open space uses or 3) is for essential utility infrastructure and facilities, for which it needs to demonstrated that no alternative locations are available and that they do not have any adverse impacts on the character and openness of the MOL. The MOL designation is unique to London and protects strategically important spaces and has the safe status of Green Belt. The purpose of this policy is to safeguard this open land and protect and retain it for predominantly open use.’ And I would remind the Council that in the Court of Appeal, they were ruled against in Lensbury versus the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, where they had misinterpreted the question of whether it was appropriate use of MOL.
Response	Response and supplementary questions from 45:38 to 1:14:25.
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will make public all the planning restrictions of the Fulwell site and residents will have the opportunity to pose their opinions in the planning consultation stage. The details of why the Amida site development was possible will also be made available.

Questions from the Floor:

Heathfield joined with Whitton Village by Council	
Question 6	Why are Heathfield and Whitton joined together as villages? Firstly, you talk about a Whitton and Heathfield Village Plan. Whose decision was it to clump Whitton together with Heathfield? I’m a resident of Heathfield. Heathfield has its own needs; to be clumped with Whitton I think, to me, is discarding the needs of Heathfield... You talk about the £77k available, that’s across six wards if I’m not wrong, whereas you have £800k for somewhere like Richmond. How as that decided? £77k? Finally, I walk around, and there’s absolute disparity between the look, the feel and investment at one end of Heathfield, Edgar Road, Mill Farm to remind you of the roads that come into Heathfield and people living off and below the breadline, worrying about universal credit, and relying on foodbanks. On the other side, you have the rich end. It all ties in. That time old question: Whitton and Heathfield? That’s just a bit shameful. Heathfield has been taken out and its time the council looked at Heathfield instead of sweeping it under the carpet. I want separation from Whitton or more investment.
Response	Response and supplementary questions from 1:17:31 to 1:38:20.
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Fleming to look into differentials according to house values. The Council will continue to look at improvements that can be made to the Heathfield area. Councillors will check if the Council can review the different percentages charged or if this is set nationally.
Outline of support for businesses in Whitton	
Question 7	Via Twitter: @LoveWhitton: Could @LBRUT outline its plans for continuing supporting businesses?
Response	Response and supplementary questions relating to the RFU from 1:38:45 to 1:45:32.
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council to follow up on travel plan for RFU.

taken	
Is the Turing House site in Heathfield a foregone conclusion?	
Question 8	I feel very depressed about the whole thing [Turing House School]. It's very evident the other site isn't going to be looked at. Has anyone given a thought to the parents of children at Turing School because they do not want to come across? We are a lesser part of the borough, they are Teddington parents and I am sorry they do not want the school to be towards here. If you aren't listening to us, are you listening to the Turing House parents because they do not want to be here?
Response	Response and supplementary point from 1:46:35 to 1:54:46.
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will follow up with the safer neighbourhoods' team to see if extra patrols can be arranged in the run up to bonfire night.
Heathfield Library's future	
Question 9	Do you think we'll ever see Heathfield Library again? Will we have a place where people can see that it's a library and parents with young children can take the children to find out what a library is and what it does? And people can see it on a high street? And know that it's there to be used with computer terminals and all the other things that other libraries in other parts of our borough have?
Response	Response and supplementary points from 1:56:10 to 1:58:57.
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will look at what can be done on this point.
Why is there no Ward Councillor representation at the question time top table?	
Question 10	I am slightly disappointed that this was sold to me as meet your local councillors. I.e. my understanding was that would be a meet your Whitton and Heathfield councillors. We have three Whitton and Heathfield councillors here in the audience; none of them are on the top table. These events going forward, is it always going to be members of the cabinet or will it be local councillors from the wards in which these presentations are being given?
Response	Response and supplementary points and questions from 1:59:55 to 2:04:33.
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current format is with members of the Cabinet, but the Council will look into opportunities for people to engage with the Ward Councillors.
Need for more investment in Edgar Road area/Hounslow Heath Community Centre	
Question 11	In Edgar Road RHP, who I know obviously you are in very close contact with, have a fully functioning centre that throughout the entire half term was closed. It has banks of computers, it has kitchenettes, it has rooms, and it has a sort of community hall I suppose, closed. Though many young people, adults, elderly, were stuck in their tower block flats and quite frankly sub-standard homes from what I can see. Why is the council not in discussion with RHP to get that building open and to be used as a fully functioning community centre? It will keep our young off these streets, they won't be going to the shopping area and drinking alcohol and smashing bottles as they are at present, they won't be littering. For example you cut the budget for people with drug and alcohol use problems often caused of course by mental health. You cut the budget by 60% - we now have shoplifters going in and out of those shops being able to take up to £50 worth of goods and police cannot do anything because it's under £50. I don't think this is acceptable. Also on the Edgar Estate, you are planning with RHP to

	<p>build what I call rabbit hutches; they are 26 feet, flat pack homes, which is actually under the legal square footage. One single homes for people £700 a pop to help them save for a mortgage and I'd really like to know when are you going to start building social housing so our young can actually put a foot on to the ladder, save for a deposit like most of the people here would have done so they can move on into the private sector. This is really important. You say you're building homes, you're building homes for very wealthy people, and you're putting free schools in for very wealthy people. Meanwhile our young people, born and bred here, voted here worked here, paid their taxes in the borough, they've been left behind. Who is going to come into the borough and buy these £1 or 2 million properties because I do not know a single young person, whether they're university educated, whatever level of education, they're coming out of university of average debts of around £50,000. That could've been their deposit for a home. We've got the borough of two halves, we've got elderly residents frightened stiff since the Grenfell fire, they're frightened because if there is a fire, when you are up on the 14th or 15th floor and you've got heart disease or you've got really serious disabilities, it is very frightening for people who are in their 70s or late 60s, so when are going to listen to Edgar Road?</p>
Response	Response and supplementary point from 2:08:17 to 2:14:35.
Actions to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Marlow with RHP will look at the Edgar Rd. Community Centre and the need for investment there.