

Lionel Road Liaison Group

# Notes of 11 May 2009 Meeting

May 2009

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## Attendees

- Steve Lancashire (SL), chair
- Brian Burgess (BB)
- Peter Murphy (PM)
- Matthew Rockel (MR)
- Bela Cunha (BC)
- Tim Lockett (TL)
- Dave Hughes (DH)
- Phil Marchant (PhM)
- Cllr Ruth Cadbury (RC)
- Cllr Andrew Dakers (AD)
- Cllr Joanna Dabrowska (JD)
- Peter Hughes (PH)
- Janet Burrow (JB)
- John Burrow (JBW)
- Paul Lewis (PL)
- Gisele le Moaligou (GIM)
- Ivor Morrison (IM)
- Emma Cable, notes

## Introduction

SL- Welcomed all present to the meeting and invited them to introduce themselves.

Apologies had been received from Dorothy Boland, Steve Curran, Giles Dixon, Matt Harmer, Terence Thorn, Felicity Barwood, Sam Hearn, Sonja Leadlay, Mike Simson, PC Andrew Miller, Inspector Steve Edwards, Paul Lynch, Sally Smith, Donald Kerr, Keith Garner, David Chare, Sara Ward and Peter Ladhams.

## Scheme Update

SL- Apologised that the main item was not as agreed at the March meeting but that, due to the economic situation and in the light of comments made at Lionel Road and meetings with other local groups, Barratt Homes are undertaking a major review of the scheme. He had therefore decided as chair that the best use of the main item at this meeting was for as detailed a timetable as possible be presented to this meeting and that those present have the opportunity to ensure that their views on various aspects of the scheme were recorded in order to be considered as part of this review. He indicated what those themes might be. This approach was agreed and he then passed over to Brian Burgess to introduce the item.

BB- Stated that the original target was to have the stadium opened by 2012 in time for it to be used as a training facility for the Olympics, with a planning application submitted in May 2009. This programme has been disrupted by the credit crunch. The Project team had carried on with preparations on the basis that it was viable at the beginning of 2008 and it will be

viable again when the market recovers. It would take three or four years to build the stadium from the date permission was granted and it was thought that this would be how long the recession would last. Now that it is not possible to submit an application before September, Barratt have decided to review the project completely to see if there is a way to proceed in the current market. This will also give time to review any issues raised by residents such as traffic. He referred to a statement recently prepared by Barratt Homes in consultation with the Football Club and reported the position is that

- the project offers an exciting regeneration opportunity
- the three partners (the club, Barratt Homes and Hounslow Council) are still committed to delivering the Project
- Barratt Homes and the club will review information regarding the proposals received from local residents and the Council's planning officers alongside financial projections of costs and revenue
- Once this review has been undertaken and there is some clarity in what form the scheme is viable then Barratt Homes and the club will consult with Council planning officers and other statutory consultees and resume consultations with this group.

***The notes below should be read in conjunction with the document listing in bullet point form the points made at the meeting and recorded on flip charts.***

JB- Queried how Hounslow Council can be a partner if there is no planning permission

PM- Stated that they are a partner because they own the land that is used for the leisure centre and are in charge of leisure facilities

RC- Stated that the project has all-party support within the council. This is a general aspiration and the scheme will need to go through a rigorous statutory procedure and satisfy planning requirements.

IM- Asked if the leisure centre will be built on the existing site

PM-Replied that the leisure centre will be built on Lionel Road.

JD- Commented that there have been talks of having a sports hub at Gunnersbury Park and queried how this will fit in with the plans.

BB- Stated that the plans fit very well with the aim of having a sports hub. The review of the potential to revive the sports facilities in the Park has been overtaken by the latest consultants' study on the park as a whole, although the idea of revitalising the open air facilities is still in their minds.

IM- Has the council agreed to give the leisure centre land to Barratt in exchange for Lionel Road?

RC- No formal agreement has been made but the concept is taken seriously by the council.

PM- Stated that Fountains Leisure Centre relocation has a great benefit for the project because it enhances the facilities on the site creating a 'Sport and Leisure' hub. If it is not relocated, that area of Lionel Road would be used for another purpose to help generate cross subsidy for the stadium and millions of pounds will be needed to regenerate the existing leisure centre.

PL- Asked whether the club will go bankrupt if there are delays to the programme.

BB- There are discussions currently taking place regarding the club's financing for the next few years. Also, the club has just been promoted, therefore there will be more money from TV deals and also from supporters. We are expecting the club to lose less than half a million pounds this year.

AD- Having a meeting scheduled for September would be useful but there should not be an information vacuum.

JB- Understands the wish for a “sports hub” but not why it needs to be linked to a 20,000 seat stadium in a challenging area that is near to a conservation area.

PL- Also raised concerns regarding the large stadium capacity.

BB- In the last few games, there has been high attendance. The club needs to be realistic regarding size as we will not be able to move to a bigger stadium after this move because of the costs.

PL- 20,000 seems too much because it will bring too much traffic.

AD- There is a need for council representatives to do due diligence on this plan and say to locals that they are confident in it.

TL- The proposed social enterprise hub will help charities and the voluntary sector in the area

GL- The positioning of the stadium means that although it is called Brentford stadium, it will greatly affect the people of Chiswick.

JB- The stadium is not yet included in the Brentford Area Action Plan (BAAP). To what extent will the council follow the planning inspectors’ recommendations for the site?

AD- The BAAP references the stadium as an option for the site.

TL- The employment, commercial and leisure opportunities that will result from the development will have a good impact on the community as a whole.

RC- Asked if there had been an assessment of the contaminated land on the site. Will less-polluting businesses be housed on the site or will they go elsewhere?

PM- The contamination on the site is reasonable and we are not too worried about it. The waste transfer matter has got to be looked at by the GLA.

JoB- It is very difficult to get to the site area on a quiet day, it will be much harder to get there on a match day.

PM- The stadium may be the catalyst to sort out the traffic issues that already exist in the area.

BB- There will be limited car parking at Lionel Road on match days.

GL- People will look elsewhere for a parking space and there are no restrictions on the surrounding streets.

PL- The problem will not just occur on match days. Eventually there will be 1,000 homes, a leisure centre and a hotel, which will bring more cars to the area.

PM- We need to look at the northern side of the site as well as the southern side. We could allow the bridge to become a two-way road; we have had discussions about this with TfL.

GL- There are currently not enough school places. This will be made worse when the new housing is occupied.

AD- Local councillors are continuing to watch this issue.

JB- 60% of supporters come to the match by car. Why are the major entrances to the stadium to the south of the site? Is there a way for locals to be involved in discussions with TfL? BB- Stated that he will look into this.

GL- Queried what the situation regarding emergency vehicles will be.

BB- There will be a plan for emergency vehicles on match days. The planned new bridge linking the site to Capital Interchange Way will be designed to provide access for emergency vehicles.

MR- Should we make use of the railway station and improve it as part of these plans?

PM- TfL want to use this scheme to make a public transport hub at Kew.

PL- The problem with the station is the large number of people on the trains and the low frequency of trains.

BB- There needs to be a thorough transport plan before the planning application goes in.

PM- The group should check the transport plans used by 40-60,000 seat stadiums because people disperse quickly from those stadia.

PL- Asked if Lionel Road will close on match days. This is the main access route to the M4.

TL- We have a lot of local knowledge and can present a united front, therefore TfL should come and address these concerns

JD- Stated that, from her experience, TfL will come to a council scrutiny meeting but not to a small group like this. Group members should come to a council meeting at which TfL will be present.

PL- Believes that the problems raised at the meeting will be best solved by not having the development at all.

IM – Does not think that this is the right place for the site as it is a very congested area. This meeting appears to be nothing more than a PR exercise.

PM- These meetings were set up so that we could talk through all of the relevant issues.

IM- Stated that he lives very close to the development and only found out about this group at the last meeting.

AD- If anyone should take the blame for lack of contact with certain groups it should be the local councillors. It is challenging to keep up to date with a very dynamic situation and know who is the best contact for new residents' groups.

SL- The aspiration of Hounslow Council is that there will be a stadium on this site.

MR- Can we say that the stadium will be built if it meets certain criteria, which will be decided at these meetings?

TL- There are people in the area who want everything that this project will bring to the area.

TL- The density of the site actually seems to be the main issue. People nearby may be happier with the development if it did not include housing provision.

BB- The houses are a necessary aspect of the development because the club wants the stadium and community facilities but does not have the money for this. Part of Barratt Homes' review is to see how to generate cash with less housing, although this is unlikely.

PM- Barratt cannot do anything other than this project without the club's permission. The site would have been used for distribution sheds if Barratt Homes and the club had not decided to develop it.

AD- It is important to the local economy that the club is kept in Brentford. Any problems arising from losing the club would most likely cause bigger protests than the current issues that are being aired.

PL- Asked if there was any affordable housing available as part of the scheme.

BB- Not at present and asked if the group would prefer if some affordable housing was included in the scheme.

RC- There is currently no issue regarding the people who come to the area on Saturdays for matches as there is warmth and support for the team in the area. The development would be better if it also included a controlled parking scheme.

GL- Stated that RC knew that the current stadium was close by when she moved house. However, residents have no choice about this current development.

PL- Believes that the tower blocks are too high.

PM- The towers should not be higher than the current council blocks.

PL- The proposed towers should really be lower than those towers.

MR- Towers impact upon a wider area than the land they sit on. Housing needs to be in a good-quality environment for people to move in.

JB- The Brentford Area Action Plan talks about a lack of open space in the area. The scheme will mean less feeling of open space than people currently have.

PM- Informed the group that Barratt had considered a piazza but as they only own one side of Lionel Road, it is not something that can be delivered now.

RC- Asked if TfL would improve pedestrian links to Gunnersbury Park and Lionel Road North.

PL- Stated that pedestrians coming from Gunnersbury Tube will need to be controlled on match days. Also stated that there is more demand for low-rise, more affordable homes than for 1,000 one or two bed flats.

PM- Asked if a reduction to 750 flats would improve the proposals. Also commented that people do still want one or two bedroom houses but the problem is that they cannot get mortgages.

MR- Asked if Hounslow Council should do a site brief for Lionel Road and the Fountains site and have planning officers consider the brief before a planning application is submitted.

RC- Stated that MR's point will be taken back to Hounslow Council. The council will also consider the impact that the scheme will have on the conservation area.

JB- Stated that it would be better to have more pubs to the north of the site and on the site.

BB- Asked what facilities would be good to have in the eyes of local residents.

PL- Stated that it is a bad area for shops, as it is on a poor road and there are other shops nearby.

JB- A local supermarket would be helpful.

PM- Asked if there should be more parking on the Lionel Road site, such as a multi-storey.

IM- As long as there is good access, more car parking would be a good idea.

GL- More car parking would help on match days.

MR- Another idea that could be considered is a shuttle bus from about 500 yards away.

### **Notes of Previous Meeting**

Notes agreed.

### **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **Public Consultation Activities**

SL- Informed the group that meetings have been held with Kew Gardens Heritage Officer, Strand on the Green and the West Chiswick and Gunnersbury Society's committee and a public meeting is being organised with them. Also, the Brentford Fair is to be held this coming Saturday. It is planned to continue to make contact and hold meetings with local groups who express interest as appropriate over the coming months.

### **Any Other Business**

No further items were raised.

### **Date of next meeting**

The date will be Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September between the times of 7pm and 9pm. SL invited the group to consider potential venues.

PM informed the group that Barratt are intending to finish their review by then, so there will be information to report to the group at the meeting in September.