

Raynes Park Community Forum
Thursday 1 October 2015
Chair's Report

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor Michael Bull. Approximately 35 residents attended, as well as six other Merton Councillors, and officers from the council. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Update from LB Merton

Councillors Stephen Alambritis, Leader of the council told residents that devolution is being explored, which would allow local authorities more autonomy and control over matters such as business rates. The London Borough of Merton has joined with Kingston, Sutton, Richmond and Croydon to form the South London Partnership and has set up a joint committee which would allow the five boroughs to run things themselves, e.g. bus lanes and routes, skills and jobs, and housing. In spring the partnership will seek greater powers from Central Government.

The council is also sharing services in order to decrease costs to council tax payers, including legal services and Human Resources.

A new pool for Morden Park is expected by January 2018.

Two new libraries are going to be built in the borough in West Barnes and Colliers Wood, at no cost to the taxpayer as they will be provided by developers who are building new flats.

The regeneration of Morden and Mitcham is proposed.

Residents were encouraged to vote for Raynes Park in the Great British High Street Awards, where it has been shortlisted as a finalist in the London category <http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/finalist-london>.

Councillor Alambritis agreed to look into the matter of dog control in the borough and the outcome of the council's consultation on it.

Crossrail 2 – What does it mean for Raynes Park?

Stuart Bugg and Kate Neill-Sneller from Network Rail gave a presentation on how Crossrail 2 might affect Raynes Park. The presentation can be viewed at http://www.merton.gov.uk/raynes_park_community_forum_crossrail_2_presentation_1_october.pdf.

Residents voiced concern over whether houses would be demolished as part of the process, to allow for widening the railway track. Network Rail do not yet know if any houses will be demolished or which, but the priority would be to avoid residential property. They are working with the Department for Transport (DfT) to agree which land should be safeguarded, but this is a lengthy process and the decision lies with the DfT. There is a statutory process for anyone who feels they cannot sell their home or business because of safeguarding.

Crossrail 2 cannot be built before Network Rail and TfL have formal consent from the Government, the funds to pay for it and the necessary land has been acquired. The process of applying for consent will involve a public examination of the scheme and consideration of objections before any decision can be made.

Network Rail and South West Trains are working to ensure that existing infrastructure continues to function and be maintained, including maintaining Raynes Park station.

Network Rail said it would welcome the opportunity to talk with the developers of the Rainbow Estate. When the application for the estate was submitted, Network Rail did not know if they would need the land, and since it is unclear if Crossrail 2 will definitely happen, other developments cannot be stopped in the meantime.

A station at St George's Hospital is not in the plan, but residents are welcome to raise it as a suggestion during the consultation. Raynes Park is currently included in the base scheme but, as Crossrail 2 is at the early stages of development and has not been funded by the Government, this may be subject to change.

Residents can find out more at www.crossrail2.co.uk, where they can also be added to a mailing list for up-to-date information on the consultation.

Proposed Bushey Road Development

Stewart Underwood, from developers Shearer Property Group, presented on the proposals for Bushey Road. The presentation can be viewed at http://www.merton.gov.uk/rp_forum_bushey_road_presentation.pdf.

The scheme represents a £20m investment in a key gateway site, replacing unsightly buildings that have been derelict for several years and creating jobs for 500 people.

The overwhelming response to the consultation has been extremely positive: with 74% of responses in support, and only 8% saying they do not support the proposals. Traffic was mentioned in around 20% of consultation responses. Shearer Property Group has appointed transport experts as part of its submission to look at the matter.

The proposals incorporate a principal vehicle access point, in the same place as the existing site access. Customers will also be able to access the retail park via the neighbouring Next Home & Fashion store, which already has planning permission. No additional access points onto Bushey Road are being proposed.

To help mitigate against an increase in traffic, the scheme incorporates and builds upon the local junction improvements proposed as part of the Next store development. The project team is working closely with LB Merton and TfL to ensure that the access arrangements are suitable.

The site will also benefit from improved pedestrian links, including a new surface level pedestrian crossing on Bushey Road.

A travel plan will be agreed with Merton Council as part of the application; there are currently three bus stops near the site to allow for access by public transport.

Healthwatch Merton – Introduction and Update

Jade Fairfax introduced herself as the new Information and Outreach officer for Healthwatch Merton, which is an independent consumer champion for health and social care issues.

Over the past few months Healthwatch has worked on a number of projects:

- GP access – consultation was carried out to obtain people’s views on accessing GPs. A report was subsequently sent to Merton’s Clinical Commissioning Group, recommending training for frontline staff, which is now being carried out.
- Healthy High Street, Mitcham – Healthwatch spoke to residents in Mitcham about possible restrictions to fast food, alcohol and betting shops in the town centre. A report has been written on this, the outcome of which is awaited.
- CAMHS – 7-17 year-olds and parents have been spoken to as part of a review of CAMHS, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- General outreach work has been done with the homeless, primary schools and local communities, and Healthwatch is also working on an Urgent Care event to get views on what works well. This will feed into the Clinical Commissioning Group’s review of urgent care.

Current and anticipated planning applications

The council has resolved to grant planning permission to the Rainbow, which the developers have three years to implement; however the plan is now with the Mayor of London for consideration and he may call it in.

Travelodge works are ongoing but no opening date has been announced yet.

The proposed new cycle route between New Malden, Raynes Park and Wimbledon is a Kingston Council project and it is unclear if a planning application would be required for Merton. Should one be required, residents would be able to give comments to Merton Council as it would consult the public on the application. An ecology and safety workshop for residents is taking place at the end of October; it is hoped Kingston will carry out consultation with the public in January 2016. Residents are able to object about the plans to Kingston Council.

Open Forum

Residents are encouraged to vote for Raynes Park in the Great British High Street Awards <http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/finalist-london>.

Dates of future meetings all at 7.15pm, in the Library Hall:

Tuesday 1 December 2015

Thursday 3 March 2016