

Hello everyone. We hope that you are continuing to keep sane and healthy. There has been no slowdown in the number of newsworthy items coming to our attention since our June newsletter. We start with the borough-wide news.

## **SHAKE UP AT THE TOP OF THE COUNCIL**

Ealing's seemingly impregnable Labour administration was shaken recently when Council Leader Julian Bell narrowly survived a vote of no confidence in a secret ballot of Labour councillors – 28 to 27, with one abstention. The vote was called after it emerged Cllr Bell had wrongly stated that the London Ambulance Service was consulted before Ealing's highly controversial [Low Traffic Neighbourhoods \(LTNs\)](#) were introduced. This caused local councillors much embarrassment when shared with some irate electors.

The narrowness of Cllr Bell's majority raises questions over his ability to continue in a post he has held for the past 10 years. His task will be made no easier after the resignation of Peter Mason, a close colleague, from the Council's Cabinet. Now Cllr Gregory Stafford, the Leader of the Opposition, has written to Cllr Gulaid, the Mayor of Ealing, formally requesting that an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council be called to vote on the recently created LTNs and on a no confidence motion in the Leader of the Council.

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW**

In our last newsletter we reported on work getting under way to update Ealing's Local Development Plan which sets out the borough's development policies. This exercise is long overdue. Our existing Plan came out in 2012. Since then its policies have been increasingly set aside, and excessive developments are being approved across the borough regardless of policies that ought to prevent them. So it was good news that the Council announced a programme of work for the update to take place.

Wanting to support this work, Ealing Matters organised [a public webinar](#) for its members which drew 92 participants. As Chair of the Local Development Plan Advisory Committee (LDPAC), Cllr Mason responded to wide ranging questions about Council planning policy and the review process more generally. Ealing Matters has also launched its own [Guide to the New Local Development Plan](#) to provide information that ought to be available on the Council's Planning Policy page but isn't.

Unfortunately, the review programme has been thrown into disarray by Cllr Mason's resignation from the Cabinet. As leader of the borough's efforts on the Local Plan, Cllr Mason had allowed many concerns that groups across the borough have long raised about the way the borough is changing to be discussed. These concerns include tall buildings, the role of town centres, the design of new development and the character of Ealing's different communities. Presenters representing a range of Ealing's stakeholders spoke at LDPAC meetings on each of these topics - see [our Guide for links](#) to these.

What impact Cllr Mason's departure from the cabinet will have on this work remains to be seen. Ealing Matters hopes that the programme to update the Local Plan and the themes it has raised will not be too badly affected by Cllr Mason's departure, but watch this space.

## CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE WORKSHOP

The Council promises that our new Local Plan will see a stronger emphasis on design and heritage. A borough-wide professional Design Review Panel will be set up to comment on planning applications, together with Community Review Panels for different parts of the borough. It has also published two draft reports on these topics, and these will form part of the new Local Development Plan evidence base.

[Ealing Character Study and Housing Design Guidance](#). Written by consultants Allies and Morrison this identifies the different 'character areas' ... 'to understand what this means for shaping character-led intensification and growth across the borough'.

[Strategic Review of Ealing's Conservation Areas](#) (CAs). Written by Renato Messere, the Council's heritage consultant, this reviews Ealing's Conservation Areas and proposes boundary and policy changes to them. It also includes separate reviews of each of the 29 CAs and proposals to update them.

The authors of these two documents joined a **webinar on 30 September organised by the Civic Society**.

## THE COUNCIL'S CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Along with its ongoing Local Development Plan review the Council recently consulted on its new strategies to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030. [Ealing Matters' response](#) to this ambitious plan shares the Council's views about the Climate Change threat, but found the strategy disappointing in its lack of detail and in its absence from the new Local Development Plan. Most worrying was the Council's failure to engage with the community when drafting the document. The draft strategy is likely to affect everyone in Ealing, but there was very little public awareness of the consultation and what it said. Climate change is much bigger than party politics. Everyone needs to be involved and ways found to engage with the whole community.

## LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS (LTNS)

Ongoing rows about LTNs provides further evidence of the need to engage with Ealing people better before Council decisions are taken. The TfL LTN programme, designed to reduce rat running in residential neighbourhoods, could have drawn considerable support. The quality of life in many residential streets across Ealing is compromised by through traffic avoiding main roads. TfL's funds could have been used to stop this in numerous places - and indeed some of it has been.

Unfortunately, several schemes were introduced with no prior discussion with residents in the affected streets and no consideration as to where or how they would be most useful. Instead, over the past two months, some schemes have been introduced that severely disrupt long established travel patterns in areas where no traffic problems were previously perceived to exist. The most contentious of these is the notorious LTN 21 between Northfields Avenue and Boston Manor Road where 11 road blocks are disrupting the lives of local residents and hampering emergency vehicles.

Residents responded furiously. The new bollards and tree planters have been vandalised, [a petition](#) (currently with over 9,000 signatures) was launched, and thousands of residents marched in protest to the Town Hall on 12 September. [Four separate applications for Judicial Review](#) have now been launched.

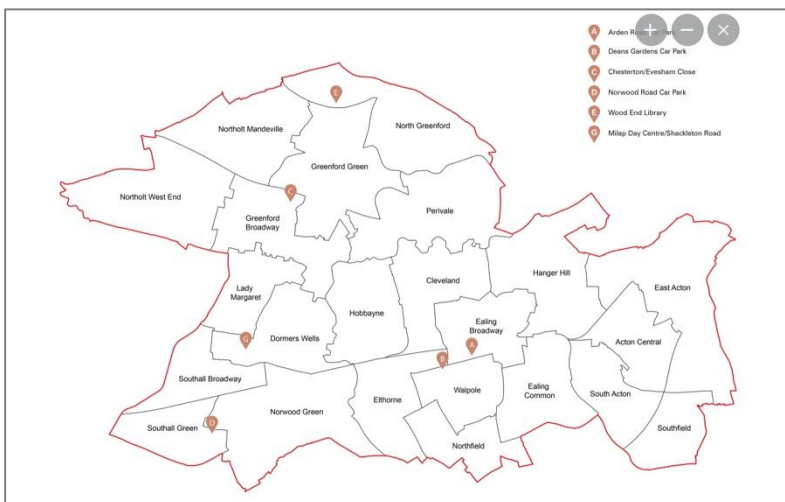


Attitudes on either side of the argument are hardening. This can only set back the vital need to reduce car dependency and promote more sustainable travel. The lesson from this sorry episode is that initiatives like [LTNs have to be undertaken in conjunction with local communities](#), not imposed on them.

## REDEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL CAR PARKS

The re-development of six Council-owned car parks as a single package of works to deliver 134 new housing units has been announced. The two largest are in West Ealing at Dean Gardens (A: **203719FUL**) and the corner of Arden and Uxbridge Roads (B: **203717FUL**), which are slated to deliver 53 and 29 units respectively out of the total. The other four are in Southall and Greenford.

The new housing will be a mix of houses and flats. 73 will be London Affordable Rent (which is more expensive than social rent), 25 Shared Ownership and 36 Private. Not for the first time, conflict of interest rears its head, as the Council is landowner, developer and planning authority.



## GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER ‘PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE’

Further uncertainties about planning in Ealing arise from the Government’s planning White Paper ‘[Planning for the Future](#)’ published in August. Announced as the biggest shake up in planning since the war, the White Paper is out for public consultation until 29 October 2020. After canvassing our member groups, Ealing Matters has now submitted [its response](#).

We welcome the White Paper’s commitment to greater public engagement in planning than we’ve been used to in Ealing over the past 10 years, and its strong emphasis on design. But whether either of these will materialise is another matter. The White Paper is full of untested and sometimes contradictory ideas in a mind bogglingly complex area. The Government and its closest stakeholders - particularly the development industry - will now start a long, behind the scenes discussion before we’ll know exactly how the new system will work and just what it will mean for Ealing.

Below is a round-up of what has been going on in individual areas across the borough:

### ACTON

#### *London Transport Museum’s Acton Depot*

The London Transport Museum’s collection store next to the District line train depot in Acton and opposite Acton Town station houses 90% of the museum’s collection, some 320,000 items. As part of its development along Bollo Lane, TfL has earmarked the depot site for development. Pre-application discussions with Ealing Council have determined that around 800 new homes plus a replacement storage facility for the museum would be viable. TfL has now published a Prior Information Notice, which it says will help gauge market demand and identify a joint venture property developer. According to the notice the 2.6-hectare site could be worth more than £320 million. [The Museum Depot](#) will be open to visitors this month.

### CENTRAL EALING

#### *Perceval House (203275FULR3)*

The planning application is now out to consultation until 20<sup>th</sup> October. For an overview of the scheme, a 1-minute tour of how it will look, reasons to object and a link to help you do so, go to [stopthetowersealing.org/central-ealing](http://stopthetowersealing.org/central-ealing).

We have highlighted before the negative impact the development, particularly the 26-storey tower, would have on nearby Conservation Areas and the Grade II listed Town Hall. In [its formal response to the](#)

**application** Historic England (HE) agreed, in particular with regard to the Ealing Green Conservation Area, Walpole Park and its Grade II listed bridge, which it describes as ‘one of the key designed views within the park’, adding that ‘the proposed tall building... is at odds with the predominantly semi-rural character of this part of the conservation area’. HE recommends that ‘this harm could be mitigated through a reduction in height of the proposed tall building.’ The Council remains full square behind the developers despite HE and despite its own Climate Change aspirations, which seem to be at odds with the demolition of Council offices that are not even 40 years old.

### ***Victoria Hall***

The dispute over the future of the Victoria Hall drags on. Many readers will know that Ealing Council agreed to transfer the hall to a hotel company called Mastcraft even though it belongs to a charity set up by Victorian philanthropists to provide facilities for the people of Ealing. In March the Charity Commission refused to allow Ealing to proceed without much stronger safeguards for the charity’s beneficiaries. The Council’s General Purposes Committee which also acts as the charity trustees met twice over the summer to agree their response. While broadly sticking to their original plans, they plan to appoint a non-voting trustee who is not a councillor to represent trust beneficiaries. Applications for the role have now closed. The Chair of **[the Friends of Victoria Hall](#)**, which opposes the disposal of the hall, has applied for the post.

## **GREENFORD**

### ***Greenford Quay***

With 379 Build-to-Rent units, Tillermans, Greenford Quay Block 5, is the first block to be delivered within the Greenford Quay masterplan for a total of 1,965 flats, and is now being advertised for rent.

### ***Victory against mobile phone mast***

A recent case highlights the need to hassle Ealing’s planning department to prevent mobile companies taking advantage of statutory development rights for masts up to 20 metres high.

Two applications were submitted to replace a mast at the junction of Whitton Drive and Whitton Avenue East with a 5,4,3,2G 20-metre mast. Ealing rejected the full application, which the company appealed. In the meantime, the mobile company put in an identical prior approval application. Ealing has a long history of failing to respond to this kind of prior approval process within the statutory time period (56 days), thus ceding its right to reject. In this case a formal complaint to the Chief Executive of the Council did result in a timely response from Ealing, which rejected the prior approval application. The protesters were further vindicated by the Planning Inspectorate, which subsequently turned down the appeal.

## **HANWELL**

### ***Threats to Conservation Areas (CAs)***

It seems that nowhere is safe from the development boom engulfing Ealing. An historic and very rare **[1912 Arts & Crafts House](#)** in the Hanwell Village Green CA is threatened with demolition and replacement by a high-density block of flats (**201141FUL**) despite a recent Strategic Review of Conservations Areas presented to the Local Development Plan Advisory Committee (LDPAC) in July, which describes it as a ‘key unlisted building’ which ‘contributes positively to the character of the area.’

A different threat to CAs is their gradual erosion by the cumulative effect of minor alterations such as the loss of original window design and porches, loss of front gardens and boundary treatments and the installation of micro-generating equipment fronting the public highway. One such example in Hanwell is the Cuckoo Estate CA, a surviving interwar London County Council planned estate centred around the Hanwell Community Centre, with its original layout still relatively intact. Such is the deterioration that the proposal is to reduce the CA by 85%, with an Article 4 Direction to prevent permitted development in what remains.

## SOUTHALL

### *Southall Waterside*

Clean Air for Southall and Hayes (CASH) continues its campaign for action on air pollution caused by soil remediation at the former Southall Gasworks site. [In its fourth report since 2018](#) Public Health England (PHE) recently reviewed air quality monitoring data from the developer, Berkeley Group. Airborne chemicals from the site were said to be 'unlikely to pose a direct toxicological risk to the health of the nearby population.' Despite this, health issues among residents are real, and Ealing Council has received 250 formal complaints.

PHE acknowledges that, even if not directly toxic, 'odours can cause nuisance amongst the population, possibly leading to stress and anxiety. Some people may experience symptoms such as nausea, headaches or dizziness as a reaction to odours even when the substances that cause those smells are themselves not harmful to health.' [A report by Centric Lab](#), a neuroscience research laboratory, states that: 'People who already experience chronic stress are more susceptible to the effects of air pollution,' suggesting that direct toxicity is not the only risk factor, especially in a deprived area like Southall.

[The Guardian](#) has been following the campaign for the last year and recently produced a film on the plight of residents. As a result, other similarly affected communities have come together with CASH to found [Gasworks Communities United \(GCU\)](#), which is demanding an overhaul of regulations on the treatment of contaminated land, in particular independent assessment of all contaminated land to ensure that toxic substances are not released into the air during excavation, among other environmental measures.

### *Tudor Rose saved*

We reported in April this year that this Art Deco Afro-Caribbean community centre was under threat of demolition. Although still unofficial, we are told that, after much local pressure, the Council has intervened, and the demolition of Tudor Rose will no longer be part of the Peabody residential development plan.

## WEST EALING

### *Planning application for Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) at Gurnell (201695FUL)*

Since we reported that this planning application was out to consultation in our last newsletter, an impressive campaign by local activists has garnered more than 1,650 formal objections and 4,100 petition signatures.

According to [Save Gurnell](#), the Mayor's office sent their Stage 1 response to Ealing Council on 15 September. The report says that the plans do not conform with the London Plan but that 'possible remedies could address these deficiencies.' Apart from the central deficiency of building on MOL, another is the ballooning cost of replacing the leisure centre via this scheme, up from around £30 million in 2016 to more than £50 million according to the Council's independent cost assessment. A further significant issue is the Environment Agency's objection to the application in the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment and supporting flood model – particularly given recent flooding of the site over the 3-4 October weekend.

### *Planning application for 51-56 Manor Road and 53-55 Drayton Green Road (corner site next to West Ealing Station (202231FUL)*

Another stunning effort by campaigners has generated almost 2,400 formal objections to this part 12, part 19-storey development. 55 West is a development by Metropolitan Thames Valley (MTVH), one of the UK's largest housing associations, in partnership with Southern Grove, and claims to be a 100% affordable scheme. However, none of the 144 flats will be affordable for those who most need it. According to MTVH's Affordable Statement, the tenure for 35% of the units will be London Living Rent, with the gross monthly rents costing more than half of market rent. Of more concern is the 65% of units in London Shared Ownership. [A podcast by Stop the Towers](#), which includes interviews with two Ealing residents living in Shared Ownership flats, highlights many of the pitfalls surrounding this form of tenure.

*With thanks to Eric Leach for his contribution to this latest issue. Contributions that you think would be of interest to Ealing Matters member groups are welcome.*