

Draft

MINUTES OF WALTHAMSTOW WEST COMMUNITY COUNCIL (WWCC)
TUESDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 2005
CHAPEL END JUNIOR SCHOOL, ROBERTS ROAD, LONDON E17

PRESENT:

Community Chair:
Philip Herlihy

Councillor Vice Chair:
Councillor N Matharoo

Councillors:

Councillor S Meiszner
Councillor L Ali
Councillor J Macklin
Councillor D Blunt

Councillor B Wheatley
Councillor J Wilson
Councillor B Carey
Councillor P Woollcott

Officers in Attendance:

Claire Witney
Garry Seal
Steve Brickell
Clive Morton
Katherine Pedley
Sarah See
Michael Toyer
Keith Weir
Robert Yeo
Margery Peddie
Jamie Macfarlane
Dervin Patterson
Shirley Haynes
Emma Chaplin
Anthony Lane

Lead Officer (Community Councils Manager)
Community Protection
Regeneration Manager
Head of Cultural Services
Head of Libraries & Information Services
WF Primary Care Trust (PCT)
Service Planning & Research Manager
Head of Street Services
Ascham Homes
Communications Team
Street Wardens Team
Street Wardens Team
Community Council Officer
Community Council Officer
Committee Manager

Others in Attendance:

D Christy and A Ford
S Cosgrove

Scouts Association
Guardian Newspaper

Residents Present:

There were approximately 27 residents present at the meeting.

PART ONE COMMUNITY FORUM

Item

1.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced speakers and relevant officers for the proceedings.

He introduced the street wardens in attendance and requested a brief outline of their activities.

J Macfarlane reported that they had been operational in the area since July 2005, patrolling High Street and Markhouse wards. They act as a visual

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	<p>deterrent to criminals in the area and are the “eyes and ears” of the community at large. They are the resident's point of contact to raise concerns about safety and environmental issues and patrol the streets from 8am to 10pm daily. Street Wardens work with local communities such as schools, faith groups and street watchers to build relationships of trust and can help sort out environmental problems such as abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and graffiti in partnership with Waltham Forest Direct (WFD on 020 8496 3000).</p>	
2.0	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / MEETING CONDUCT - GUIDELINES	
	<p>The Community Chair reminded residents of the guidelines that had been agreed at previous meetings. Cllrs Belam (Councillor Chair), Robbins (Cabinet Champion), Dunphy and Wright sent apologies for absence. Councillor Meiszner had advised that he would be slightly late.</p>	
	<p>D Spiro requested confirmation that Cllr C Robbins was still Cabinet Champion, as he was unsure whether a new Champion had been elected. If so, he was concerned that the Champion had tendered apologies for the last few meetings and it was a formal condition and an expectation of residents that the Champion be in attendance.</p>	
	<p>P Herlihy noted that Cllr Robbins was still Cabinet Champion, however, he would have that confirmed at the next meeting. He added that Cllr Robbins had tendered apologies due to an urgent personal matter.</p>	Members Support Officer
3.0	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
4.0	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	
	<p>The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair with no amendments.</p>	
5.0	RESPONSE SHEETS	
	<p>Claire Witney presented the blue feedback report included in the Agenda to the meeting.</p>	
	<p>There being no further discussion the item was closed at this point.</p>	
6.0	MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES / COMMUNITY DISCUSSION	
	<p>The following issues were raised by the meeting:</p>	
	<p>K Lord had issues surrounding members of the Community Council speaking at Cabinet. He was concerned that public speaking rights at Cabinet for members of the public had been curtailed and believed that any member of the public should have the same rights as an elected representative of the Community Council. He asked how Cabinet planned to consult with the people on public speaking rights and believed that the current proposals put forward in the consultation on changes to the CC constitution were flawed. On a further issue, he noted that, the Community Forum had elected the Police Community Consultative Group (PCCG) representative, however, the Councillors did not ratify this choice in the Formal Committee. He was also concerned that the representative sent into this formal structure on behalf of the Community Council was a member of the public and not a Councillor. The PCCG meets some 5-7 times per year, with the CC only 4-5, therefore, he asked, how will</p>	

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this representative be able to co-ordinate reports with the counter-cyclical nature of the meetings. A further consideration, in his view, was that one of the major themes at CC meetings was that of crime and the fear of crime. To this end, he believed that the police should attend the CC meetings for say 15-20 minutes at each meeting as a standing item to discuss issues of concern to residents, rather than the CC representative having to attend their meetings. He believed that this structure of referral was fundamentally wrong and this, he added, applied to all the CC's that had nominated representatives. He also questioned the impartiality of the representation, as the meeting was not advised as to any allegiance to political parties. He was aware that Mr Gladstone was a member of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), but not whether he was a member of a political party. He believed that this could raise issues of conflict of interest. He requested a proper reply to these issues.

P Herlihy noted that Mr Lord had raised some interesting issues, particularly with regard to the Formal Committee ratifying the PCCG representative. He was unsure whether it was necessary and he was not qualified to rule on the issue, however, requested that this be taken forward for discussion and approval in the Formal Committee. He also asked for further legal opinion on the legal questions raised for the next meeting. On the two other issues, he believed that the opportunity to ask whether the PCCG representative was a member of a political party was lost now, as these issues could not be continually revisited. He did add that this should be taken into account in the next election of the representative and perhaps a brief question and answer session would be the way forward on this issue. He noted that he Community Forum had discussed and decided to send a representative to the PCCG. With regard to speaking rights, he noted that the Cabinet was the decision making body and that the CC had been given the right to express an opinion. This issue could be discussed at a later date if the meeting saw fit for it to return. He asked Councillor Matharoo whether he would be willing to take up the issue of ratifying the PCCG representative.

Cllr Matharoo agreed to handle the situation in the Formal Committee.

P Herlihy requested a vote on whether to continue with this discussion by a show of hands.

Voted to Continue: 1; Voted to Move On: 6

The remainder abstained from voting.

P Herlihy noted that there was no great interest in pursuing this item further.

E Poulsen noted as a point of information that it was the democratic right of any resident to belong to any political party and they could not be excluded from representing the CC if they were elected to do so. She therefore felt that it was a waste of time to discuss the matter at all.

P Herlihy noted that from a point of view of full disclosure that it was useful to know and he requested a Q&A session be organised in the future.

M Grimshaw was concerned that his recycling Black Box had not been emptied for some weeks from his residence in Blackhorse Lane.

K Weir advised that from 5/9/05 Black Box collections had changed over to weekly collections. He commented that records suggested that the new service was found to be very effective, however, he apologised that the resident may have experienced a problem in the transition to the new collections and promised to get the situation rectified as soon as possible. He added that residents were able to get extra boxes if they requested them.

D
Fenwick

K Weir

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P Spiro noted that there had been some confusion in the changeover and expected that there would be teething problems, however, this was not aided by the changing of the day for a Councillor photo opportunity on his road.

K Weir advised that the Black Box collections had been changed to the same day as the refuse collections to avoid any future confusion surrounding collection days.

P Herlihy asked who should be contacted if there was missed collection.

K Weir advised that Waltham Forest Direct (020 8496 3000) was well-equipped to take calls, however, as there were usually not many, residents could contact either Doug Teesdale or himself on 020 8496 2510.

D Spiro noted that there were real problems with the WFD service, which was slow and punctuated by irrelevant messages requesting candidates to adopt or foster a child. He added that the Clarence service used to be good and efficient, however, now it is to be handled by WFD, which means that you are on the line for at least 10 minutes.

K Weir noted that the Clarence Free Phone line 0800 232323 was still available, though a WFD representative will now pick it up.

D Spiro noted that the Clarence number is not well publicised.

K Weir advised that the decision not to publish was taken because it is a WFD service. He wished to note that calls from mobile phones would automatically be charged at premium rates, so suggested calling the Free Phone Clarence line from landlines only.

P Herlihy asked whether there was any intention to do away with the number.

K Weir said that there was no intention.

J Thompson had called the Free Phone number recently and it went through to WFD, where she waited for 26 minutes on the line. Her brown box garden refuse bin had not been emptied for over two weeks (Roberts Road).

P Herlihy noted that he had also waited for over 10 minutes recently and asked whether there were any figures relating to average waiting times for WFD.

Cllr Blunt in response noted that a number of Councillors were currently on the case of WFD. He recognised the difficulties at the moment getting through to the service. He noted that the intended purpose of the WFD service was to have a single point of contact for the majority of services, to reduce the need to look up various numbers for the service you want. When you get through, a trained officer should be able to deal with the majority of enquiries at that point or be able to re-direct you to where it can be handled. He noted that he was taking a number of cases forward at present with regard to the system. On the issue of recycling collections, the green waste is scheduled for fortnightly collections and the Black Box weekly, as there is a much higher yield of waste taken out of the waste stream.

A **resident** noted that they had called over twelve times in the last three weeks trying to get through over several hours and had received no response.

Cllr Blunt noted that average waiting times were available.

Cllr Wheatley had written several letters regarding the WFD service, as he had also had poor experiences recently with the service, rotating through the menus and the lack of response. He was surprised to learn that the Clarence Free Phone number was still active and noted that he seemed to find out more information from the local Guardian about the service than he does from within the Council.

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P Herlihy asked Councillor Blunt if he would be so kind as to provide the figures on the average waiting times at WFD, for publication in the next Agenda and to add to his satellite web pages, which can be viewed at www.walthamsoft.com/wwcc.

Cllr Blunt noted that there were obvious operational problems with the WFD service and added that the Cabinet Member responsible for the WFD service was Cllr K Rayner.

Cllr K
Rayner /
WFD

K Lord had issues with commercial waste collection, in particular at the former Greenleaf Road adult education centre, which he was surprised to learn in the September edition of WFM magazine was highlighted as a major learning centre despite the fact that it had been closed down prior to this. He noted that the Council had stripped out the centre disposing of the materials both in the bins and around them with the excess. The dust cart operatives ignored this on their pick up and when confronted, Mr Lord was told that he should phone the Council and they would give him a quote to pick it up, despite the fact it was waste left by the Council. He was amazed that waste generated by the Council, was seemingly left to be cleaned up by local residents.

K Weir advised that it was policy that all trade waste must be paid for. Excess was not collected to avoid the situation where users tried to get extra tonnage collected at no extra charge, thereby costing taxpayers money for extra collections.

P Herlihy commented that this had been generated by the Council or one of their contractors and asked who should be contacted in this instance.

K Weir advised that residents could contact him directly.

E Poulsen noted that she is 87 years old and disabled. She found it difficult to return her bin to its original location after collection and added that prior to the change of collection day the operatives had been very good at replacing the bin. She had called WFD repeatedly and had as yet received no satisfactory response or solution to the situation.

K Weir noted Mrs Poulsen's address (Westbury Road) and added that all vans are equipped with an "Elderly and Infirm" list and whenever they pick up the bins at these locations, they are returned to the original location. There is a procedure for advising and instructing if they miss these locations, though he suspected that the new system of collections had perhaps meant a new team were on that particular route. Otherwise, it may be that they have lost or misplaced the list. He would investigate and rectify the situation.

A Gladstone apologised for lateness and asked to be briefed on what had been discussed surrounding the PCCG representative.

P Herlihy summarised the issue to date and asked whether Mr Gladstone would be happy to disclose affiliations to any political party.

Mr Gladstone was unsure of the relevance of such disclosure, however, he advised that he was a member of the Labour Party for the record.

F Meyer took up the issue of dog waste bins in the park at the back of the Town Hall, including by the Canteen, the allotment and at the entrance near to Spruce Hills Road, not being emptied for long periods of time. Dog owners could not use these full bins and, at the last fireworks night, one was blown up and had not been replaced.

K Weir replied that an internal contractor, Building Cleaning Services (BCS), was responsible for the emptying of these bins. He would speak to them regarding this situation. He added that Street Services had recently taken

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delivery of a large consignment of these bins and they would be distributed as a matter of course to those sites requiring them. He would ensure that this location was noted.

F Meyer added that in wet weather the contractor would not cross the park to empty the bin at the entrance near Spruce Hill Rd.

K Weir noted these points and he would ensure that BCS do their job correctly.

K Weir

A Stannard noted that he had campaigned for some time to prevent the toilets outside the William Morris Gallery from being closed. He was very concerned that the proposals to replace these facilities with an Automatic Public Convenience (APC) would not have the capacity to serve properly the numbers of people that use the park at peak times. He also asked why there was such a delay in moving the Palmerston Road facility to the foundation platform that had been in place for some time and was an eyesore.

K Weir advised that the Council had taken the decision to close the facility and replace it with an APC. He added that the electricians were on-site today examining the electrical connections and within the next month the Bedford Road facility would be closed and replaced by an APC.

Cllr Wheatley noted the importance of public facilities, particularly for the elderly and had campaigned for the retention of many of these conveniences. However, in the case of Bedford Road there were other issues surrounding anti-social behaviour, which were also a factor in the closure. He believed that there should be a facility there, however, it needed to be monitored, patrolled and regularly cleaned.

K Weir commented that the APC's were hygienic and self-cleaning and personally felt they offered a far better alternative to the traditional public toilet. They are vandal-proof and not subject to anti-social behaviour with a Council decision taken to keep the facility free for users.

At this point the item was closed.

7.0 WALTHAMSTOW MASTER PLAN

Steve Brickell, Regeneration Programmes Manager, outlined opportunities and issues, particularly in the light of the immense developments proposed for the Stratford City Centre and with the 2012 Olympics, in developing a planning framework for Walthamstow town centre. He noted the progress on current Town Centre developments, the challenges of housing and tall buildings in the town centre and briefly outlined specific schemes such as Tower Mews, Selborne Walk, Buxton Road, the Central Station Car Park, South Grove, the EMD Cinema and the Arcade development.

The main points of discussion on this issue are summarised below:

Cllr Wheatley asked how many car-parking places were planned for the Tower Mews development.

S Brickell advised that this was a car free development with provision only for the disabled.

Cllr Meiszner asked whether the Buxton Road site was locally listed.

S Brickell advised that parts of the area west of St James Road was a conservation area, which did open up some buildings in that area to the potential for English Heritage grants under the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS). The Council would need permission if it planned to demolish the building, however, there was a case for the retention

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of the façade of the Buxton Road site.

Cllr Meiszner noted on the proposal to reinstate the Hall Farm Curve, that the value added was not the only issue, but also the potential devaluation of the area if it did not go ahead. The impact of the Stratford New City on areas such as Selborne Walk needs to be factored in.

S Brickell agreed that we turn our back on the Stratford City development at our peril, as the area needs to benefit from the overall regeneration of that area, or else risk potential decline. He noted also that the local area needed to broaden its current base to address such issues as the “evening economy” in order to best take advantage of the events elsewhere. He added that he was hopeful of a positive result from the Hall Farm Curve negotiations.

Cllr S Meiszner noted that when the Henry Boot project went out to consultation initially, there was a long period of consultation with groups such as the Cleveland Park Road Residents Association. He hoped that a similar exercise would occur, particularly if plans were proposed for an even higher density development with the possibility of 8-10 storeys.

S Brickell noted that in the last round of consultation, the Arcade Stakeholders Group was set up, which included groups such as the Residents Associations of Cleveland Park Road and Cairo Rd, as well as the Chair of this forum. Any plans that are brought forward will be consulted upon when they come in. The contractor for the site will be bound to comply with the planning application process and no concessions will be made.

P Herlihy at this point asked whether residents would prefer to continue with this discussion or move on with the planned Agenda.

The vote showed 13 in favour of continuing, 1 against and the remainder abstained from voting. It was therefore agreed to continue with the item.

Cllr S Meiszner asked whether the new proposal would be of a higher density.

S Brickell commented that at this stage, before any plans were submitted, they were unsure of the form that the design would take or the population density of the proposals. There were concerns that would be monitored, such as the requirement not to overshadow or overlook. Guy Osborne, the Conservation Officer, was also keen to see a good relationship between this development and the Grade 2 listed EMD cinema. The decision has been taken that the arcade site will be sold off to developers and their proposals will be submitted according to the planning application guidelines. There was potential to have a taller structure on parts of the site and developers would of course be keen to maximize it, however, he noted again that the developer would be obliged to observe planning guidelines. He did warn, however, that opposition from the Council, without reasonable grounds, could lead to the Council losing an appeal.

D Spiro was concerned that developers had a history of holding councils to “ransom” in various ways with such developments and he was keen to know whether the price originally agreed was firm and fixed in a final agreement. He agreed with the Council decision to change tack on the project, stating that he thought it was the correct path and the Council had every right to make the decision, however, his anxiety surrounded the possibility that Henry Boot may now squeeze the Council, seeing them as being caught in a difficult situation requiring the need to take action quickly.

A Stannard was concerned that the overall development policy of the area

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lacked cohesion and was flawed. He thought that the Council lacked control of the situation. He saw the current situation as being a mish-mash of developments being planned in whatever areas were identified as potential development sites, with the successful candidate developer being the highest bidder. He cited a large development in Erskine Road, not even mentioned as part of this scheme. Even if they lose an application, he stated, there was always the possibility that the ODPM could overrule on the appeal. The Town Centre should be planned in an orderly fashion with the right design in the right place, in his view.

Cllr Woollcott noted the forward progress on the bus station and Selborne Walk as both being very positive for the area, but was concerned with the roundabout at the corner of Selborne Road and Hoe Street, which he thought was an embarrassment to the area. He noted that often in other council areas, companies paid to maintain the roundabouts. He was also concerned that the shrubs around the bus stations were not properly planted allowing people to walk through and across them. They would be better housed in raised beds to prevent this activity.

K Lord agreed with Mr Spiro on the Henry Boot issue, adding that he felt that the original tendering process had been flawed, in that the successful contractor was chosen over the opposing Osborne Group bid, which was favoured by the majority of the public. The original scheme was cancelled without recourse to further tender or new proposals and he believed the Council would therefore make concessions to the developer in the sale of the arcade site. On the issue of kiosks in the Town Square, he noted that the decision was taken to test the kiosks in the square without proper consultation and as such it undermined the civil rights of residents for commercial ends. Despite the fact that it is on a small scale, it was still a key space in the Town Centre and he believed that the decision was made "behind the backs" of the public. He noted issues of safety on Blackhorse Road / St James Street at the bottom of the market. He went on to highlight a 500 strong petition raised and submitted at a Council meeting in May 2005 requesting action with regard to safety issues at the area where a woman was killed in February. He stated that this site is dangerous and required attention and the Council should not hide from the issue behind statements that they meet Government standards. These traffic improvements should be part of the Town Centre plan, as was the section on Palmerston Road further up the market, where a new crossing with speed table and lights had been installed. He requested a reply to these issues.

S Brickell replied that the price was not fixed for the arcade site and the value would be ascertained from what was consented to in the planning process. On the issue of control, he agreed that clearly the Council would have a different degree of control if they were to develop the site themselves, as opposed to taking it through the planning application system. If this is unsatisfactory to any parties, there is a system of appeal in place. The Council has a good record of winning appeals if the situation should arise.

Cllr S Meiszner noted that third parties are unable to appeal.

S Brickell agreed, but added that they can make a representation to a Councillor, which can be duly fed into the process. He agreed that the roundabout in question was not the ideal situation, adding that consultation is underway to ascertain the best way forward for the site. Strettons currently

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does give some funding presently for the upkeep of the shrubs on the site. He noted that preliminary engineering surveys suggested that the bridge could benefit from strengthening and it was to be decided whether it was worth spending on this or a complete redesign of the area, perhaps even looking at getting rid of it entirely and making an open space with chairs and tables for community use. The shrubs in the Town Square were originally designed to be in raised flowerbeds, however, financial constraints had meant that they could not be planted in this way. He agreed that the area required a higher standard of maintenance. On the question of concessions, he noted that there was always some degree of conflict inasmuch as the Council would always be looking to get the best for the area, while developers will look to maximize the return on their investment. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that they are not taken advantage of in such negotiations, but at the same time this must be balanced with an opportunity that is attractive enough to encourage developers to undertake a project. On the issue of not tendering the site, he noted that the Council had taken counsel on the issue and had acted based on that advice. The original plan for the area did include kiosks in the Town Square and along Selborne Road, however, again funding limitations had meant that these did not go ahead as planned. He added that these kiosks were not a money making exercise, but an attempt to encourage people to make better use of the area as a place to sit and take refreshment. The presence of the kiosks does not mean that other groups, such as those in the voluntary and community sector, cannot use the square, however, he reminded residents that permission must be sought before planning any organised activities. He warned, however, that if any problems were to arise with issues of noise or anti-social behaviour, for instance, then the Council did have the right to bar organizations from the area.

P Herlihy asked if Mr Brickell would write a summary of responses for the next meeting.

S Brickell agreed to this request.

S Brickell

8.0 COMMUNITY COUNCIL BUDGET 2005/06 - WORKSHOPS

By virtue of a vote taken on the night, this item was deferred to the next meeting in order to continue discussion on the previous item.

The item and Community Forum was called to a close following Item 7.0.

PART TWO

FORMAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

Councillor Narinder Matharoo (Vice Chair) in the Chair.

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Prior to the first scheduled item in this section Cllr Matharoo took formal decisions on matters arising from the Community Forum.

This discussion is detailed below in Item 4.0 - Formal Council Business.

1.0 REFURBISHMENT OF THE WALTHAMSTOW LIBRARY

Clive Morton, Head of Cultural Services, provided an update on the progress of the redevelopment of Walthamstow Library. Giving a detailed examination of the floor plans for the site, he outlined the expected outcomes of the refurbishment, which eventually would result in a modern, fit-for-purpose, fully

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refurbishment, which eventually would result in a modern, fit-for-purpose, fully accessible public library in a beautiful, historic, local Victorian building, providing a full range of library, reference and information services. He expected work to commence in February 2006 with expected completion by late 2007.

The main points of the following discussion are summarised below:

Cllr S Meiszner was impressed with the plan and the presentation, with the exception of the continued inclusion of the Post Office in the development. He noted that the Post Office was to be housed at the site on a temporary basis and he wanted to see a separate, functioning post office, unlike the current situation, where hours of operation have been reduced (e.g. rarely open on a Saturday). On a question of detail, he asked whether the historic stained-glass window in the building would be able to be seen from the outside once the building was completed.

K Pedley advised that it would be visible. On the post office issue, she advised that Royal Mail held a five-year lease and they could not wait for that to expire before building commenced. In the future when they may move out this would free up still more space in the building. They had no control over the hours of operation of the Post Office.

Cllr Macklin noted library developments in other Boroughs, such as Tower Hamlets, Redbridge and Newham, which seemed much better spaces, with such things as cafes, breakout areas, reference libraries and the like. This development disappointed him, as it did not seem like the flagship development he was expecting for a major Town Centre. In agreement with the views on the earlier issue of the arcade site, he noted that there seemed to be a lack of cohesion in the development, with Councillors excluded from the negotiations. He commented that the Council was not working democratically and the information given has been inconsistent, citing valuations ranging from £12 million (January) to £6 million (July) for the arcade site. He was very anxious about the actual amount available for the development and wished to ensure that the Council maximised the receipts from the disposals for future developments. He was hoping that once the development was completed that the community would not be disappointed with the results.

Cllr Blunt did not want residents to leave the meeting thinking that the Council did not inform Councillors on local development issues. Decisions are brought through Cabinet, all parties are represented and the Council has a Scrutiny Department to examine such issues. Systems are in place to inform all Councillors of activities. He had taken advantage of an invitation to view the development and was very pleased with the plans and the intention to preserve the historic nature of the building within a contemporary context. He was looking forward to the final results, saying that it was an excellent development.

K Lord noted that his understanding of the situation was that the upgrade of the libraries in Walthamstow and Leytonstone was contingent upon the sale of the arcade site. The architects were appointed waiving the Authority's usual Contract Procedure Rules to bring the planning from initial feasibility study to outline stage. He noted from previous Cabinet Minutes (19/4/05) that a consideration of up to £150,000 was agreed, set against the sale of the site. He felt that this arrangement was just what the developer wanted and would impact on how much money they offered to procure the site. He was also

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concerned that there had been no mention of the book stock and the upgrade or addition intended for it in the future. He felt that over the last few years he had seen a decimation of the service and stated that a quality library required a quality book stock. There was no benefit in having a wonderful building stocked with low quality contents.

C Morton noted that he and Ms Pedley had been asked to speak on the refurbishment of the library building and offered to return at a later date if requested to talk on the improvements planned for the service. He added that the refurbishment of the buildings was an important part of the ability of the Authority to deliver the high quality service it intended in the future.

Cllr Woollcott was disappointed with the first draft plans, noting that the contemporary extension was out of character with the rest of the historic building. He hoped that it would match the existing structure.

K Pedley responded that the architects' intention was to create a structure that preserved the historic, while at the same time highlighting the contemporary. The service agreed with the architects that to try and match the building would not be the best course, as it would never quite work. She noted that if you looked at the current plans closely you would see that it is already made up of three separate developments. The idea was to make each of these eras distinct and clearly linked with its own past. Some of the 70's development will also remain in the new structure.

D Spiro asked whether the development was in fact contingent on the sale of the arcade site.

C Morton noted that, while he was not directly involved in the structuring of the capital programme, he was on the project group to build the libraries and he stated that it was their strong intention to build them and it was not contingent on the sale of the arcade site.

A Stannard, as a member of the civic society, noted that there was a lot of synergy with the library and the post office in the same building. He asked whether it would be possible to redesign the old Hoe Street entrance, which currently looks closed, blank and uninviting, to ensure that people could perhaps see into the building and note whether it was open.

C Morton responded that this was a good idea and he would talk to the architects about seeing what could be done.

The item was closed at this point.

2.0 DOCTORS' SURGERIES IN THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL AREA

Sarah See, Acting Assistant Director from the Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust (PCT - www.walthamforest-pct.nhs.uk), presented information about the provision of doctors' surgeries in the four Community Council wards.

The main points of the following discussion are summarised below:

Cllr Wheatley was pleased to see the refurbishment of the St James Street centre and the health centre on Leucha Road. He asked whether residents would be able to get blood tests and so forth at the new facilities.

S See advised that the PCT was looking to locate more diagnostic services closer to the community, though the new centre was a third party development still at the planning stage, so she could not confirm the full range services at this point. She would take the suggestion back to the designers.

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Cllr Wheatley was concerned at the seeming centralisation of services at the expense of smaller local surgeries, such as those in Higham Hill. This will directly impact on people in the area.

S See noted that not all surgeries were closing in the Higham Hill area and the PCT was not looking at a "one size fits all" provision of services in the Borough. There would still be mainstream services provided at smaller locations, however, issues of access did impact upon surgeries located in places such as terraced houses.

Cllr Blunt was also concerned that the PCT strategy of centralising at larger health centres was inherently wrong, evidenced by the need for controlled parking around these centres. Most people prefer having their surgeries within walking distance and these larger centres would lead to greater need for the use of transport to access services. He was further concerned at the range indicated on the quality and outcomes framework point scores (455-1033) and asked whether the 455 score indicated a sub-standard practice and one of which residents should be made aware. He asked what was being done to improve this particular service.

S See replied that information on these scores was available for reference on the website (www.walthamforest-pct.nhs.uk/publications/QOF.htm). The standard set by the Strategic Health Authority and the Department of Health allowed the PCT to isolate problem areas and develop a plan of action to address poorer performance, thereby raising overall standards in the Borough. Within Waltham Forest, each point was worth £75, which this year is increasing to £120 per point, which is a big incentive to improve services.

K Lord was also concerned about the closure of smaller, local surgeries and the proposed reorganisation of the GP surgery structure. He asked whether this reorganisation would impact upon the choice that people would have in selecting a surgery and whether the residents concerned would be forced to use these centralised centres, perhaps as result of their postcode and location or whether they still had the opportunity to choose where they registered.

Cllr Macklin also asked if the residents could register where they wished.

S See noted that it was still the choice of the patient where they wished to register. She knew of only two closed lists in Waltham Forest, where surgeries were not registering patients, which left 21 others at which to register. She added that the point of the public data on surgeries was that patients could review the information and make a more informed choice of surgery for their needs.

No further discussion was taken on this item.

3.0 THE LICENSING ACT

The Licensing Act 2003 will take over from current licensing laws in November 2005. The new Act completely overhauls the previously separate regimes covering "liquor", public entertainment, theatres, cinemas, late night refreshment houses and night cafes into a single unified regime. The intention is to provide greater freedom and flexibility for the hospitality and leisure industry, with an emphasis on greater consumer choice. The reform also gives tougher powers for the police and other responsible authorities to call for the review of a licence if problems arise at particular premises. Garry Seal, Public Protection Group Manager was in attendance to explain the changes and local

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implications.

Discussion following the presentation is summarised below:

Cllr Wheatley noted that articles in the local press had raised issues around the new process and was concerned that it would have a major effect on the area in the coming months.

G Seal advised that all applications were assessed based on their merits. To date he was only aware of one application to open for 24 hours and it was difficult to gauge whether an applicant would actually use it to the full extent.

Cllr Wheatley asked whether local supermarkets wishing to trade after 11pm at night would need to apply and if so had any applied to trade after 11pm.

G Seal advised that they would have to apply under the rules, however, none had done so to date to his knowledge. He added that it would remain to be seen how many premises actually took up the opportunity to trade later in the evening. Liquor licenses are granted for three years and entertainment licenses for one year. If any problems were encountered, residents and agencies, like the police, did have the right to object and call for a review under the new rules.

A **resident** asked whether it was possible for a resident to request a review if the licensee stayed within the parameters of the license, but created problems with noise or customer anti-social behaviour.

G Seal advised that it was possible and highlighted the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm.

A **resident** asked whether the possibility had been considered, when granting and reviewing licenses, of large corporations taking the Council to court in appeal and potentially costing the taxpayer down the line a great deal of money in court action and legal bills.

G Seal advised that the sub-committee, when granting and reviewing licenses does take the advice of legal services. It was the right of applicants or licensees to appeal if aggrieved by a decision of the Licensing Sub Committee.

K Lord was concerned about the possibility of children as young as 13 being able to sell alcohol if in sealed containers and asked what the Council intended to do under the objective of the protection of children from harm. He asked if there were any changes intended to the by-laws regarding this and whether proper enforcement of the regulations was planned to ensure that such events did not occur.

G Seal noted that Mr Lord had raised this question during the consultation period and feedback from agencies had been requested. He advised that there was a general requirement for an authority in the issuing of licenses to protect children. If issues were highlighted, the Licensing sub-committee was reliant on the Authority drawing attention to the problems. If concerns were raised then a review of the license could be initiated.

No further discussion was taken on this item.

4.0 FORMAL COUNCIL BUSINESS

Prior to the first scheduled item in the Formal Committee section of the Agenda, Cllr Matharoo asked those Councillors present to ratify the nomination of Adam Gladstone as the duly appointed Walthamstow West Community Council representative to the Police Community Consultative Group (PCCG).

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Cllr Blunt moved to ratify the nomination of Adam Gladstone.

Cllr Wheatley seconded the motion.

The vote in favour was unanimous and Mr Adam Gladstone was duly appointed to the position of PCCG Representative.

There being no further formal decisions required on matters arising from the Community Forum or any further discussion, the item was drawn to a close.

5.0 DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The venue and date for the next meeting of the Walthamstow West Community Council was confirmed as **The McEntee School, Billet Road, E17 on Monday, 7th November 2005 starting at 7.30pm.**

Refreshments, Councillor and Police surgeries will be available from 7.15pm.

The meeting finished at 10.05pm

Chair's Signature_____

Date_____