

ROEHAMPTON PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Roehampton Partnership held on Tuesday,
24th November, 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

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| Councillor Kim Caddy (Chairman) | Cabinet Member for Housing |
| Councillor Jeremy Ambache (Deputy Chairman) | Wandsworth Borough Council |
| Ms Natasha Beckwood | Roehampton Business (Focal Point Opticians) |
| Deacon Kathy Johnson | Roehampton Methodist Church |
| Councillor Claire Gilbert | Wandsworth Borough Council |
| Councillor Sue McKinney | Wandsworth Borough Council |
| Mr Steven Fannon | Western Area Housing Panel |
| Mr Marc Newey | Roehampton Business (Roehampton Club) |
| Mr Matthew Tiller | Western Area Housing Panel |
| Ms Pamela Harris | Roehampton Trust |
| Mr Reggie Blennerhassett | University of Roehampton |
| Ms Farrah Black | University of Roehampton Students' Union |
| Fr Alberto Pelucchi | St Joseph's Church |
| Mr Xico Perez | Roehampton Forum |

In attendance:

Andy Algar, Assistant Director (Regeneration)
Mrs Anna Singleton, Head of Regeneration (Alton)
Ian Millichap, Democratic Services Officer

Observers:

Mr John Horrocks

The meeting proceeded to consider the business set out on the agenda for their meeting (a copy of which is interleaved, together with a copy of each of the supporting papers).

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sutters.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

3. Minutes - 10th September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th September 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. It was noted that Mr Reggie Blennerhassett representing the University of Roehampton, was present at the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

4. Alton Estate Regeneration - Update

Councillor Caddy introduced the report entitled “Alton Estate Regeneration – Next Steps”, which was due to be considered by the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26th November 2020 and the Executive on 7th December 2020.

Councillor Caddy welcomed the Planning Application Committee’s resolution to grant planning permission (subject to finalising detailed terms for a Section 106 Agreement, the completion of a unilateral undertaking to bind any future development partner to the Section 106 Agreement and agreement of conditions).

She noted that the application was referable to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Council was committed to working with the GLA to ensure a positive decision at the earliest opportunity. The scrutiny committee report sets out the next steps on a proposed procurement route to select a new development partner and the consideration of the Community Engagement Strategy, noting that this would supersede the Roehampton Partnership’s role in community engagement.

Councillor Caddy highlighted the work done by the Regeneration Team reviewing engagement practice in Wandsworth and across London. One aspect of the findings was that formal meetings were not generally popular with residents. She reiterated the contribution of the Partnership and Partnership Members was highly valued by the Council. All members of the Partnership would be spoken to about their knowledge and experience, and how they might wish to contribute to future engagement initiatives. Councillor Caddy emphasised that as the regeneration scheme moved to a “delivery phase” now was the right time to review and develop the community engagement process.

Councillor Caddy acknowledged that the Roehampton Partnership could continue to meet without Council involvement if this was the wish of the membership. Responding to a question from Councillor Ambache, Councillor Caddy explained that if the partnership wished to continue to operate without the Council’s input it could do so. The Council’s involvement included the appointment of Councillors and the Chairman, officer input and the clerking role. Councillor Caddy stated that the view of the Council and her view was that the Roehampton Partnership should be superseded by the arrangements set out in the officer paper. This would lead to an improved engagement process with the Council’s resources better spent on a well-planned engagement process involving more residents and stakeholders.

Mr Marc Newey thanked the Chairman for accepting his motion for discussion at this evening's meeting. The motion read as follows:

"Proposed dissolution of the Roehampton Partnership

"The Roehampton Partnership does not agree to its dissolution at this time when it is felt that the Partnership is needed most. We aim to continue to play a constructive role to support and enable the long-term regeneration of Roehampton. The Partnership needs to be working as an integral part of the newly proposed Community Engagement Strategy and not to be superseded by it."

Mr Marc Newey expressed his concern that the Roehampton Partnership would be effectively side-lined. The Partnership meetings needed to be listened to by both councillors and officers and he expressed disappointment that councillors would not be involved in the future. Whilst Mr Newey welcomed that engagement would continue, he did not believe it would be as effective as it is now. He invited the Council to reconsider its position.

During the discussion on the Community Engagement Strategy, Partnership Members debated the motion with the following contributing: Mr Steve Fannon, Councillor Sue McKinney, Ms Pam Harris, Deacon Kathy Johnson, Mr Reggie Blennerhassett, Ms Natasha Beckwood, Mr Matthew Tiller, Fr Alberto Pelucchi, Mr Xico Perez, Councillor Clare Gilbert and Councillor Jeremy Ambache). The following observations were made during the debate:

1. The Partnership's formality provided an opportunity for residents and community representatives to talk to officers and bring views to the attention of the Council. Disappointed that the new arrangements do not provide a suitable structure to hear existing voices.
2. The Partnership has a wider remit than the re-development looking at the broader needs of the population in a high needs area. Engagement is broad extending to schools, health provision and inequality. There is a wider role in creating a stronger community.
3. More difficult for individuals to be involved in the types of discussions taking place in Partnership Meetings.
4. The report contains no action plan or governance arrangements.
5. The Partnership brings together people from a range of other groups within the locality, like Roehampton Response. This meeting enables engagement between community representatives and the Council. There is no other body that replicates this role.
6. Several Partnership Members expressed the view that the Community Engagement Strategy and its action plan would be better developed over a

period of a year to 18 months and coexist with the Roehampton Partnership. During this period the role of the Partnership could be re-negotiated.

7. Regret was expressed by some Partnership Members that the proposal had not been first discussed at a Partnership Meeting before it was made public.
8. There was no conflict between grassroots engagement and a more formal structure which could complement one another.
9. Following the withdrawal of the development partner, this is a time of crisis for the regeneration scheme so the timing of a proposal to dissolve the partnership is short-sighted.

Responding to questions from Partnership Members, officers made the following observations:

- a) The proposed Community Engagement Strategy reflected a significant change to a more grassroots focused and bottom-up approach to engagement. The strategy sets out a clear vision of how the Council sees engagement and the further development of an action plan will be the next step in the process of taking consultation into the community. The action plan would see the establishment of groups and events in response to the wants and needs of the community. The plan will endeavour to work with all sections of the community, bringing together groups and organisations outside of the Council so that priorities continue to be addressed. The strategy will have a broader focus and benefit a greater number of people. Officers would report not less than annually to the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress of engagement activities.
- b) The Regeneration Team which is based in the local housing office within the Roehampton area would continue to operate an open-door policy for residents to raise issues (COVID restrictions permitting).
- c) The Regeneration Team was resourced to implement the engagement strategy including building the necessary capacity and expertise. The Assistant Director (Regeneration) stated that steps were already underway to ensure this was in place and residents should watch this space for further announcements.
- d) It was noted that the role of the Roehampton Partnership was not to hold the Council to account. There were other formal bodies such as the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Opposition who held the Council's ruling group of Councillors to account.

Upon the conclusion of the discussion, the Chairman sought the view of the meeting on Mr Newey's motion. Partnership Members expressed their unanimous support for the motion.

Agreed:

That the Roehampton Partnership does not agree to its dissolution at this time when it is felt that the Partnership is needed most. We aim to continue to play a constructive role to support and enable the long-term regeneration of Roehampton. The Partnership needs to be working as an integral part of the newly proposed Community Engagement Strategy and not to be superseded by it.

There were no questions on other aspects of the report. The report was otherwise noted.

5. Presentation - Business in the Roehampton Area

The Chairman invited Ms Natasha Beckwood to introduce this item.

Ms Beckwood presented a set of slides entitled "Saving the High Street" covering the key issues. Ms Beckwood stated that in her view the high street lacked a range of different sized units to attract businesses with different needs. She explained it was important to bring the business community together to assist one another, to build links between businesses and links to other organisations like charities. Some of this activity could not be undertaken by the businesses alone and would need external support.

The Chairman welcomed the excellent presentation on growing and supporting the high street.

The Assistant Director (Regeneration) concurred with the key issues raised in the presentation. He stated that he would ask someone to speak with Ms Beckwood outside of the meeting about setting up a meeting with the Council's Town Centre Manager to ascertain what the Council could do.

Councillor Ambache raised the prospect of encouraging banks to set up in the area and/or install an automatic cash point machine so there was more than one ATM in the locality. In reply to a question about the use of the Alton Activity Centre, the Assistant Director stated that discussion regarding the future use of the centre was subject to obtaining planning permission.

6. Any Other Business

There was none.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.