

## FEDERATION OF RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS IN BARNET MEETING 17 FEBRUARY 2021 7.30pm BY ZOOM

### Attendees:

Barnet RA 1. Gordon Massey (chairman), Barnet Society 2. Robin Bishop robin.bishop@gmx.co.uk, East Barnet RA 3. Rob White East Barnet RA, 4. James Bradshaw. Finchley Society 5. Peter Pickering Finchley Society 6. Sheila Shannon, Friern Barnet & Whetstone RA 7. David Thompson, Hampstead Garden Suburb RA 8. Tony Brand, Lodge Lane Residents Association 9. Daniela Boyce Lodge Lane Residents Association 10. Tim Stevenson, Lodge Lane Residents Association 11. Brian Solomans, Mill Hill RA 12. Frank Orman; New Barnet Community Association 13. John Dix, Railway Terrace RA Cricklewood 14. Jessica Howey Totteridge RA 15. Paul Flashman [m](#), West Finchley RA 16. Salim Sabri; Woodside Park Garden Suburb RA 17. Robert Shutler, Barnet RA 18. Barry Henderson, (Zoom) Sponsor 19. Stephen Yeo

1. Introduction: The chairman thanked Stephen Yeo for making his personal Zoom account available for the meeting. Secretary Kieran Kettleton has resigned as a result of moving home away from London. Kieran has been very assiduous in the role. We are now looking for a replacement. Robert Newton has resigned from FORAB for personal reasons. The Chairman expressed appreciation for Robert's long and valuable contribution to FORAB.

2. Apologies: Kate Salinger, Karen Miller, Yvonne Ruge

3. Minutes of meeting on 16 September 2020: - approved. Matters arising: The chairman reported that he had responded on behalf of FORAB to the consultation on 'Proposed changes to the current planning system' and had circulated a draft BRA response to the consultation on the Planning White Paper. It was expected that any changes following the first of these consultations might happen soon using Regulations, but for the second any changes would require primary legislation and could take up to three years. In December the Communities Dept produced a 74 page Parliamentary briefing on all legislative changes and consultations on planning in 2020.

4. Finance: The Treasurer reported that as we had suspended room hire, subscriptions for 2021 would be waived.

5. Meeting with Head of Planning (Fabien Gaudin): This was with the chairman and BRA officers as result of BRA complaints on the handling of two planning applications. Fabien commented that Barnet had the second largest number of applications in London after Westminster, and more than Manchester and Liverpool combined. Issues discussed were:

a) Availability of notes of pre-app meetings: Fabien said these were not public documents and was not disposed to making them routinely available. He pointed out that some developers include the notes of any meetings in their planning applications.

b) Conversion/demolition of houses to flats: BRA commented that there was a lack of consistency by officers, planning committees and the planning inspectorate in deciding these applications. BRA pointed out that DM01 says demolition would not normally be allowed on roads characterised by houses, but officers had supported a recent planning application for demolition and replacement with flats in a road where just 13% of properties were arranged as flats. Fabien said the problem was that apart from DM01 there was no other guidance so 'characterised' was open to interpretation. DM01 will be replaced in the forthcoming Local Plan and the test for demolition/replacement is expected to be different.

c) Consultation with community associations. Fabien confirmed that officers routinely encourage developers to consult with local community organisations with an interest in planning.

d) The new planning committee structure: The three area planning committees were replaced in October by three committees A, B and C. Applications from across the Borough will be allocated to committees by rote. With just seven members each this means these committees will often be determining applications with no local councillors on board. Fabien said he has noticed that ward councillors, free of any restraints as they were not

committee members, were appearing more frequently as speakers. He suggested associations might find it useful to make a point of asking councillors for assistance more often than might have been the case in the past. A concern expressed was that with applications ranging across the Borough site visits by committee members might become less frequent. The Strategic Planning Committee continues as before. The Chairman asked for feedback on how well the system was operating.

6. Major Housing Schemes. The chairman reported that schemes for the Gas Works site in New Barnet and the Homebase site in North Finchley has been rejected in Committee. Similarly schemes have been rejected for Arnos Grove station car park in Enfield and Canons Park station in Harrow. For all of these officers had recommended approval. In addition the developer for housing at Colindale station has pulled out leaving TfL to decide whether to just proceed with the station rebuild. Large schemes have been approved in Ealing and Brent. Next up is the B&Q site in Cricklewood and later this year applications are expected for stations at Finchley Central, High Barnet, Cockfosters, Stanmore and Rayners Lane. But clearly the grand plan to pepper the suburbs with dense high rise flatted developments is meeting stiff resistance, so there is everything to fight for.

7. London Plan. Publication is imminent and what is assumed to be the agreed version can be read on-line. The document is some 600 pages. The Chairman said he is considering producing a short digest of key planning issues but will first wait to see what the London Forum decides to send to their member associations.

8. Local Plan. Consulted on early last year and next version was expected this 'winter'. But now expected to go to the Policy and Resources Committee in June. Nick Lynch has offered to do a presentation to FORAB and this is likely to be the main feature of our next meeting.

#### 9. Permitted Development Regulations.

The Chairman reported he was advised by the planners that they dislike the recent PD changes as much as we do.

a) Extra storeys on houses To date the council has received 27 applications. 17 have been refused, one allowed, and nine are under consideration. The test will come when a refusal goes to appeal and we learn how the Planning Inspectorate interpret this new regulation.

b) Offices/Industrial buildings to flats. The regulations were tightened in July and now require the provision of adequate natural light to all flats. Though there is no definition of 'adequate' the horror of flats with no windows has now been stopped. From 1 April there will also be a requirement that all flats meet national minimum space standards.

c) Conversion of shops to residential use This is a proposal currently under consideration. The response from many organisations has been uniformly negative. Contraction of town centre retail should be managed. The random conversion of shops could do more damage than good.

10. Class E Planning Classifications. Combining the uses of most town centre premises into a single classification is designed to allow change of use without the need for planning consent. It should have a positive impact. The Chairman asked for any feedback on whether this is happening.

#### 11. Barnet Council

a) Consultation on charging for car parks in parks In progress. Expected to raise £150,000 a year. Concern has been expressed that this may reduce usage and in some areas visitors will just park in adjacent residential roads.

b) Consultation on solar panels and batteries in parks and green spaces There has been a lot of negative comment. The council leader has apparently said this will not happen in parks but he comments are not entirely clear so there is a need to closely watch how this develops.

c) Advertising banners on lampposts The policy was approved by the Environment Committee in 2018 and a contract has been let for an agency to implement this. A large number of planning applications have been lodged for fixing pvc advertising banners to runs of lampposts across the Borough. Many residents are objecting and associations should look at applications for their area.

#### Any Other Business

33 Lyonsdown Rd Robin Bishop said that an application to redevelop this building had been refused but officers and the developer had said that the building could be demolished under Permitted Development. Barnet Society had written pointing out this was not the case.

Parking Survey Methodology David Thompson drew attention to the methodology used for parking surveys required to support some planning applications. These had used the 'Lambeth methodology' which only looked at evening/night parking when in some areas daytime parking was very difficult but the impact was being ignored. An example was the Finchley Police Station site.

A1000 cycle and bus lane experiment The council consultation on making this permanent is unstructured with consultees self-selecting. This may result in a disproportionate response from sectional interests e.g cycling organisations.

Engage Barnet website This has just 738 registered users which seems unduly low. This may impact on the validity of responses.

Next Meeting Chairman to liaise with Nick Lynch re publication of next version of the Local Plan with a view to inviting Nick to make a presentation to FORAB.

GM February 2021