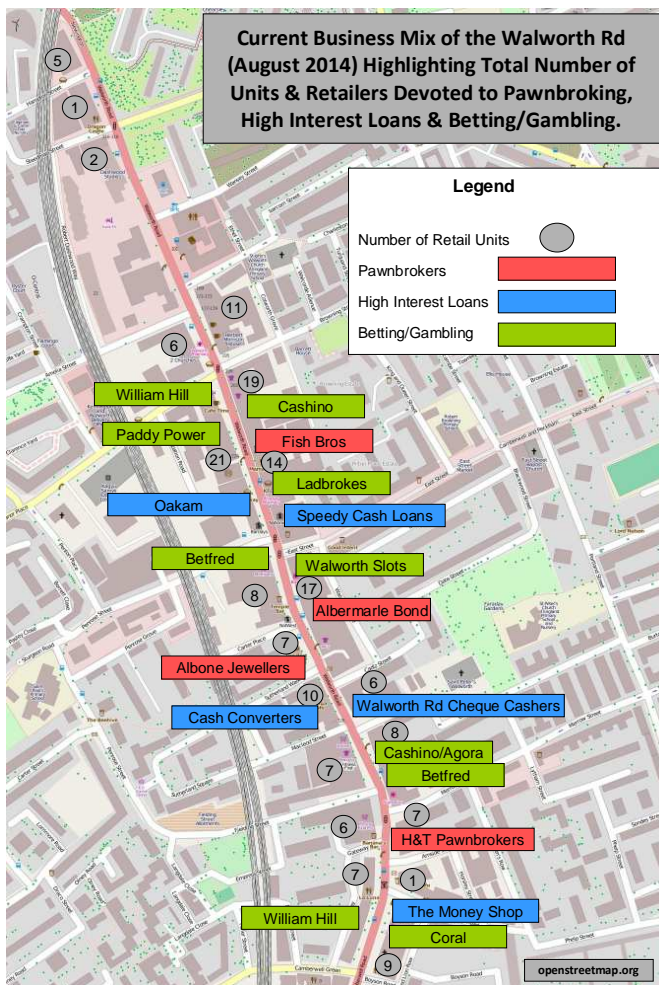


Submission from the Walworth Society

We would very much like to thank Southwark Council for this investigation into healthy communities and its proposed wide remit. We would like make submissions in relation to the financial health and the physical health of the Walworth area.

1. Financial Health

- The Walworth Society is extremely supportive of the development of a Credit Union in Walworth and are working as closely as possible as we can to support local Councillors in its creation. At the same as this very positive development, it remains important to use every power available to deter the further expansion of pay day loans and betting shops in particular owing to the sophisticated marketing and promotion which they are able to use to continue to grow.
- The Walworth Rd is saturated by units devoted to betting/gambling, high interest/pay-day loans and pawnbrokers. Out of the total of 172 retail units along the Walworth Rd (between the railway line by the Elephant & Castle and John Ruskin St), 9 are devoted to betting/gambling, 5 are high interest/pay-day loans and 4 pawnbrokers.



- Thus more than 10% of all of the current retailers on the Walworth Road is one of these three types of store.
- As well as the issue of the prevalence of these types of outlets, there is also the issue of enforcement. At a number of our Walworth Society meetings the issue of Walworth Slots (281 Walworth Rd) and their operating outside the terms and hours of the license that they were granted has been raised. Serious efforts are needed by Southwark to ensure compliance by these establishments.
- Saturation of shops such as these has a number of effects – they take money from the local economy, they offer a very poor image of the high street and they skew the mix of shops away from one that meets the needs of local people.
- We would like this investigation to ensure that Southwark is at the forefront of good practice and to make recommendations in relation to:
  - The best means to deter further growth of this sector in the Walworth area
  - Ensuring that adequate monitoring and enforcement occurs
  - Advancing the creation and promotion of a Credit Union for Walworth.

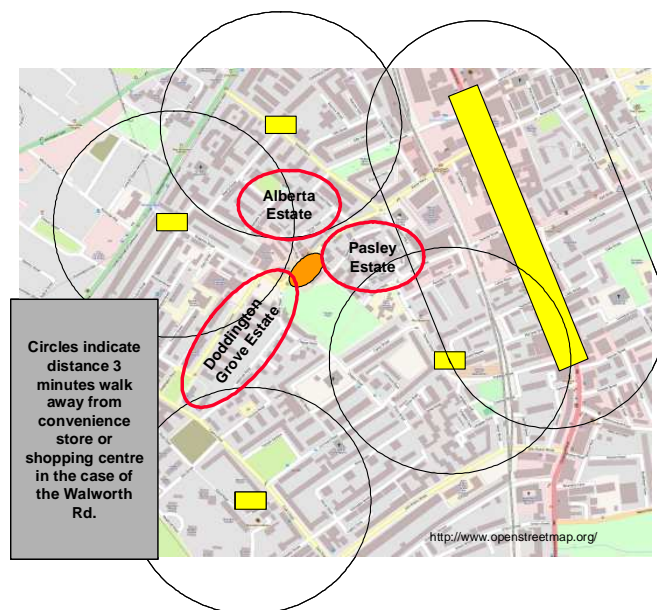
## **2. Promoting Physical Health & Wellbeing**

- We believe that the widespread regeneration which is occurring in our area and the creation of many thousands of new homes with resulting higher levels of density can act as a catalyst to promote:
  - healthier living through active travel such as walking and cycling
  - improvements in the local economy with more people wanting and able to shop locally and support local businesses.
- Below are a number of ideas to support physical health and the promotion of wellbeing in the Walworth area.
- The completion of the Walworth Road project - north from Manor Place to the Elephant and Castle (or at least to Heygate St) in order to help link Walworth as a high street with the public transport hub and encourage more people to walk to the E&C rather than make this short journey by public transport as most do currently.
- The creation of improved walking routes into the Walworth Rd from the areas to the east and west (all of these projects have the capacity to be funded by the developments which are proposed across the local area). Projects include:
  - The West Walworth Walking routes (improving Hampton St, Steedman St, Amelia St and Manor Place)
  - Pedestrianising/greening Liverpool Grove to create a green space along the Walworth Rd following the loss of Carter Place Garden
  - The Green Links/Green Routes projects across the 3 Walworth wards creating links between the unique network of pocket parks in the Walworth area through green routes.
  - The Low Line project – opening up the railway line to walking and cycling and new business uses.
- Encouraging food growing and increasing access to greenery and nature. A major theme of the recent Cleaner Greener Safer grants has been to encourage food

growing in Walworth. There are now a number of food growing projects in the Walworth area. There is the opportunity for these to be coordinated to allow more people to learn how to make food growing happen in their area and to promote the activities that are going on.

- Encouraging the development of the hinterland. In West Walworth most pressing is the need to create a local centre (see below for lack of access to shops and services). This is a paramount ambition of local people for Manor Place Terrace. The absence of local services and some retail means that the large number of residents of West Walworth are compelled to make far longer and far more frequent journeys to the Walworth Road for basic services. Manor Place Terrace offers a significant opportunity to create a place of character with a mix of local services including some retail, its links to the heritage of the local area through its characterful and original Victorian terrace, the opportunity to create independent shops (potentially distinct from the offer of the Walworth Rd) and affordable business premises (as rents in the Pullens Yard continue to rise) and the idea of creating a place that is distinct to West Walworth with close links to Pasley Park and the Walworth Garden Farm and its role as the walking and cycling cross roads of the area.

Access to Retail Services In West Walworth



- Overall there is a need to cherish and support each of the local shopping parades across the Walworth area and make sure that all are pleasant to walk and cycle to. These parades can play a vital role in encouraging local economic wellbeing, supporting walking and cycling and reducing economic and personal isolation.

We hope that these issues are of interest and some of them can be incorporated into the findings of the committee.