

**Scrutiny Review on the potential for regeneration in  
Camberwell**

Report of Scrutiny Sub-Committee B

January 2009

## Introduction

The purpose of this review was to identify short, medium and long term measures to recommend to the council and other bodies with a local impact to improve the quality of life in Camberwell. The report does not attempt to analyse all the issues pertinent to the area, but to focus on those where there are some tangible opportunities or policy choices open to the council.

The overall picture the committee found was that there are a number of key issues facing Camberwell: poor public transport infrastructure, a massive volume of traffic through the town centre with the resulting pollution and grime, an incomplete regeneration scheme on the Elmington Estate, which has left sites standing derelict for years. At the same time there are some real opportunities - the bid to Transport for London for a new town centre scheme, the development of the creative industries in the area, the local hospitals' commitment to improvements. The area does not require large scale regeneration, but would benefit from a coherent policy and planning framework to realise and maximise the benefit of these opportunities as well as focussing the council's own programmes for Camberwell in a better, targeted, way.

The committee's starting point was to investigate the work streams that had already been undertaken by Camberwell Community Council.

Following several years during which local councillors constantly raised the need for a serious amount of financial investment, recent government policy which focuses on bringing help to communities and areas of deprivation, led to a successful bid for £3 million pounds from Transport for London to improve Camberwell Town Centre. Officers confirmed the success of this bid at the first meeting of the scrutiny sub-committee in September.

Using information already obtained from previous surveys, officers will bring an example of a 'model town centre' to a future community council meeting, from which a priority list of items the community wants will be compiled.

Members of the Camberwell Community Council identified the need to improve the shop fronts around the Town Centre; following more pro-active work by Members a funding stream was identified, namely English Heritage. English Heritage agreed to give a sum of £50,000 over two years after Camberwell Community Council Members agreed to match fund, mainly from the cleaner, greener, safer funding which could have been used for local groups.

Following an allocation of money by Camberwell Community Council a consultant (Mouchel) was employed to work on identifying excess street clutter, which is now in the process of being removed.

Beyond that, the committee heard from local groups and service providers, and carried out a walkabout to see the area and understand the issues for themselves. The committee wishes to thank Councillors Dora Dixon-Fyle, Ian Wingfield and Alison McGovern for their contributions to the review, and particularly wishes to commend the work of Living Streets, who have worked with local people to audit the area and develop the core ideas which have informed the town centre bid - rebalancing the streets between the needs of pedestrians and vehicles, working proactively towards a safer feeling environment, slowing down motor traffic, improving access for cyclists, and reducing the number of traffic bottlenecks.

The committee was also assisted in its deliberations by representatives of a number of local organisations and received presentations from council officers and Executive members.

Over the course of its 3 meetings, the sub-committee broke the issues down into a series of themes, and wishes to make recommendations around each of those.

### **The sub-committee request a progress report from the Executive in six months' time**

## **1. The Town Centre**

A theme that emerged repeatedly was that the town centre (the area around Camberwell Green and Church Street) has no focus and its quality of environment is badly affected by the volume and speed of traffic passing through.

Beyond the traffic problems, the area is suffering from piecemeal development. On the members' walkabout and in a number of submissions, it was noted that there are sites in central Camberwell in need of redevelopment (for example, the bus garages and the Valmar Road industrial estate). At the same time, a representative of Kings College Hospital told the committee that the hospital is landlocked, and is looking for potential sites for expansion.

The committee felt that the area requires a cohesive plan, including the appointment of a town centre manager, to pull these issues together into a framework that will provide an overarching strategy for Camberwell. If this is not done, the risk is that the council may continue in reactive mode, responding to ad hoc development proposals, and step change will not be achieved.

### **Recommendation**

**An area action plan would be the best vehicle for developing the planning framework and the committee suggested that this might be funded by use of the council's Local Authority Business Growth Incentive programme.**

## **2. Camberwell Leisure Centre**

The committee heard from local councillors about their continuing support for a case for capital investment in the leisure centre, and from the executive member, Councillor Lewis Robinson, who briefed the committee on his department's work with the Freshfield Foundation. The committee noted that Overview and Scrutiny Committee is receiving regular updates from Councillor Robinson and did not therefore duplicate the discussions taking place in that committee, but linked the debate about the future of the leisure centre to submissions they had received about youth provision in Camberwell, and particularly the low proportion of young people who are satisfied that there is enough to do in Camberwell.

As there is not a large central site where activities are provided, provision tends to be dispersed and tucked away, giving the impression there is less on offer than there actually is. Whilst there are arguments that one large 'magnet centre' may encourage gang problems and territory disputes, as well as problems with the long term sustainability of a youth centre when the 'newness' has worn off, the committee believes that one large central youth centre which could provide a range of activities and services would be successful and well used. This might be achieved as part of a refurbished leisure centre.

There were some informative and helpful statistics presented to the sub-committee by Karl Murray, which are appended to this report.

The sub-committee also accepted the view that the location of the library is less than ideal and that, when an opportunity arises, serious consideration should be given to its relocation.

#### **Recommendations:**

- i. The provision of youth facilities should be audited and rationalised, with the possibility of creating a single, larger centre.**
- ii. The library is a key facility and should be linked with the town centre. It should be a factor for inclusion in any future developments in the area.**

### **3. Street drinkers**

There is a long term issue about the concentration of substance abuse clinics and projects in Camberwell. It is understood that these facilities grew up locally because of the excellent support services developed and commissioned by Kings College Hospital and the Maudsley. However, they have been excessively concentrated in Camberwell and as a consequence there has been concern from residents for many years about the number of street drinkers in the area. Some progress has been made through concerted efforts on the part of the police, the council, the NHS and voluntary sector agencies concerned with addiction services, but the problem remains, and residents continue to raise their concerns with local councillors. The committee felt that this situation would not be substantially changed until the number of projects is reduced.

#### **Recommendation**

**That the health and social care partnership board should look at areas of need and at where there is over provision in the borough. That Overview and Scrutiny is provided with a list of all services in the area and what street drinking policies are in place. That where there appears to be a high concentration of provision in one area, the PCT and other service providers should seek to move services to more appropriate locations.**

### **4. Transport planning**

The road layout in the area is not satisfactory. There are major challenges presented to pedestrians in particular. An example is at the northern end of Denmark Hill, where moving from one side of the road to the other involves crossing several lanes, which can mean that it takes an unreasonable amount of time to make the crossing. As described above, the committee heard that the Executive has already approved a Town Centre Scheme bid to Transport for London (TfL) for Camberwell's redevelopment. This consists of a three step process that will take over a year to complete, starting with a minimum feasibility plan that, if successful, will get a small amount of funding from TfL for modeling, followed by implementation if the model has been given the go-ahead.

This proposal had been developed through collaboration between the Local Travel Plan Group, Camberwell Transport Summit and Camberwell Renewal. Officers warned the committee that potential complications may arise as the East to West route across Camberwell Green is a TfL route, whereas the North to South route of Camberwell Road and Denmark Hill is a Borough route. With all going to plan, the town centre scheme bid will be accepted by TfL and Cleaner, Greener, Safer (CGS) will continue to pick up the smaller transport issues, such as signage and street furniture.

Camberwell suffers from the lack of underground rail links and poor overground rail provision, resulting in heavy reliance on buses, which leads to overcrowded streets, poor interchange facilities and safety hazards. The sub-committee was advised that restoration of a Camberwell overground station would result in the closure of Loughborough Junction station, although there was no statistical or other evidence provided to substantiate this contention.

Denmark Hill station is receiving an overhaul as part of a TfL Area Based Scheme to improve the accessibility of the station. This will provide lifts from street level to the platforms; however, work will not start until 2010 and work on the station will occur at different times so as not to prevent accessibility at any time. The hospitals are involved in the local travel plan group and provided valuable information about how people travel to the area. The desire is to improve the travel experience in and around Camberwell, creating a more pleasant local environment, especially for people coming to the area for the Maudsley, Kings College Hospital and the Institute of Psychiatry. The lack of signage from Peckham to Kings College Hospital is on both CGS and the Camberwell Society agendas, as part of the transport summit's plans to reorganise and reduce signage clutter.

## **Recommendation**

**There is still hope that there may be a tube station in Camberwell, as part of an extension of the Bakerloo line and that the Council should press ahead with making this a priority. In addition, it should not be accepted that an overground station replacement is not possible, unless and until such time as the service provider is able to demonstrate that this is not the case.**

**The lack of adequate signage to public transport is very apparent. It should be a relatively straight forward exercise for the Council to ensure there are good information signs to major transport routes.**

**The Council should press TfL to look at and improve the way the bus interchange arrangements are set up. It is currently difficult to find appropriate bus stops. The current configuration of the bus stops means that several are some distance apart from each other. This ties in to the town centre bid for a better transport interchange.**

**The Council should also press TfL to look at the clustering of buses at the Camberwell Green end of Denmark Hill. Buses regularly park two or three deep, blocking the road and making it hard for people to get on and off buses.**

## **5. Planning, regeneration and housing**

The incomplete state of the Elmington Estate regeneration scheme was a major issue raised with the committee. The committee was told that the council agreed to demolish and redevelop the Elmington 4 Towers and surrounding low rise blocks in December 1999, following the discovery of major structural weakness. 338 council rented homes were demolished on the Elmington estate between 2002 and 2005/6, and 136 new council homes built in Phase 1. This leaves the two vacant hoarded sites still to develop.

Executive amended the agreed scheme in November 2005 because of the rising projected scheme costs and the adverse impact on other priorities in the housing investment programme. This decision meant that the remaining phases should be developed as two sites with the number of council units built reduced from 89 to 27, and the remainder of the site disposed of to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) or developer.

There are planning policies and funding issues to resolve before the final approach is agreed. These are currently being pursued with the Greater London Authority. The existing scope of the scheme will also be considered, and particularly whether any adjacent properties with high investment needs should be considered for redevelopment.

One consequence of the change of direction is that external works to newly built properties that were intended to be incorporated into Phase 2 have not been undertaken. Whilst all of the Phase 1 properties are occupied, the rear gardens of 23 of these units were not completed due to the presence of buildings, which have since been demolished. It has been agreed that these works will be undertaken outside the development arrangements and should commence shortly.

The committee agreed that the council should now step up the pace of this redevelopment. In the meantime the council could look at more short term measures such as improved lighting to enhance safety along Southampton Way.

Aside from the Elmington Estate, the committee noted various empty sites and premises. For example, a disused building on the corner of Southampton Way and Bonsor Road, which is a prominent eyesore, and the vacant site on the corner of Vestry and Peckham Roads.

### **Recommendation**

**That the Council makes it clear that it recognises and will address the frustration felt by those residents living close to improved properties, when their own have not been scheduled for work.**

**That pressure should continue to be brought to bear on the GLA and any other relevant body, so that the cleared areas formerly part of the Elmington estate are developed without further delay.**

**The Council should encourage owners to use empty premises and if this does not result in effective responses, it should acquire and utilise them appropriately, rather than ignoring them for long periods of time. This should inform future planning enforcement, housing and regeneration policies.**

## 6. A hub for creative industries

Camberwell has a large number of artists living and working locally, and a number of arts organisations such as Camberwell College, the South London Gallery, Theatre Peckham and Cowling and Wilcox - the largest art shop in South London. Stan Dubeck explained to the committee that the presence of these individuals and institutions creates opportunities for improving the area that are currently under-developed. There was evidence of some increasing connectivity between local artists, and a desire to become more involved with the broader community. Urban Space Management are keen to launch an Arts and Crafts market in spring 2009 but are still in discussion as to sources of initial funding. They hope that it could be supported by Section 106 receipts, or the community council's Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme. The committee agreed that this concept was a strong potential "unique selling point" for Camberwell and that the council should consider supporting this by earmarking a building for use as a creative hub. For example 29 Peckham Road is a distinctive local building that will be vacated when staff move to the council's new offices in Tooley Street.

### Recommendation

**That the Council earmarks a building within the town centre to encourage artistic ventures, and small business start ups, including small technology ventures. That it should also engage more closely with the local cultural and business community to maximise opportunities for new enterprises.**

## 7. The local environment and street scene

Everyone who addressed the committee emphasised the grime that pervades Camberwell. The pavements are dirty throughout the town centre and made more unsightly by vast numbers of iron railings, and generally outdated and neglected street furniture. This has a detrimental and demoralising effect on people's general perceptions of the area. Businesses have been allowed to encroach onto pavements and this has caused significant access problems, especially where the pavement is already very narrow.

As well as the traffic and transport problems impacting on the town centre, members felt that the one-way system in Southampton Way should be reviewed, as it was not considered to be working satisfactorily or in the best interests of the environment.

### Recommendation

**That the Council urgently addresses the level and standard of street cleaning, with a view to initiating a general 'Clean-up Camberwell' process. That enforcement is used to stop businesses using the pavement areas where there is limited access.**

**That the Cottage Green and Southampton Way traffic problems be reviewed and re-examined. Special focus should be given to the review of the one way system in Southampton Way.**

*The full minutes of the meetings held on this subject, together with a number of presentations that were made to the committee are available on the council website [www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk) or directly from the Scrutiny Team, Southwark Town Hall, Peckham Road, SE5 8UB, [scrutiny@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@southwark.gov.uk).*

## Appendix 1

Population	37,000 (mid 2004 estimate) By 2006 this population was expected to increase by 5.4% to 38,053. This is slightly lower than the expected overall population increase for Southwark (6%).
Age	Camberwell Community Council has a younger male population compared with Southwark as a whole (a higher proportion of those aged 0 to 14). In contrast, there is a lower population of males in their 20's compared with Southwark and a higher proportion of females in their 30's. Slightly over one fifth of the population is aged between 0 and 15, nearly 70% working age (16 to 64) and one tenth 65 and over. There is a higher proportion of females aged 25 to 39 and over 45 compared with males.
Ethnicity, Country of Birth	Slightly over half of residents in Camberwell are White British (55%). This is the second lowest of all Community Councils and lower than Southwark overall. Approximately a third of residents are Black – the second highest of all community council areas and higher than Southwark overall. Slightly under two thirds of residents were born in England – third lowest of community council areas and lower than for Southwark.
Rates of Unemployment	Camberwell Community Council has a higher proportion of people who are unemployed (7%) compared with other areas. This is also slightly higher than for Southwark. Of those unemployed, Camberwell has the third highest proportion of people who have never worked compared with other areas.
Job Seeker Claimants	Camberwell has an average claimant rate that is slightly higher than that of Southwark.
Lone Parent Households	Nearly half of male lone parents are employed full time (45%) compared with 9% employed part time. Of those employed part time, Camberwell has the second highest proportion of all areas.
Income Support	12% of residents receive Total Income Support. This is slightly higher than for Southwark as a whole. 6% receive Lone Parent Income Support and 5% Disability Income Support.



<p>Low Birth Weight and Teenage Conceptions</p>	<p>Camberwell has an average rate of low birth weight babies that compares with the Southwark average. Its rate of teenage conceptions is average for Southwark (83/100) but is significantly higher than the rate for Dulwich Community Council.</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>The All Causes Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for all people and females is significantly higher than the Southwark rate. For males, the SMR is significantly higher than that for Dulwich Community Council area. The All Cancers Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for males, females and all people is close to the Southwark average. The All Coronary Heart Disease Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) is also close to the Southwark average but significantly higher than the rate for Dulwich.</p>
<p>Housing</p>	<p>Nearly half of people live in households rented from the Council and over one tenth from Registered Social Landlords. These are higher rates than for Southwark as a whole.</p>

<p>Education</p>	<p>Just under one quarter of pupils in Camberwell are white British, compared with just over a quarter in the Borough as a whole. Camberwell has a slightly higher proportion of Black Caribbean pupils compared with Southwark.</p> <p>In regard to Key Stage 1 attainment (2002-4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 or above, as well as Level 3 or above, is consistently higher than the whole of the Borough over time for Reading, Writing and Maths.</li> </ul> <p>In regard to Key Stage 2 attainment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above, as well as Level 5 or above, is higher than for the Borough for English over time (except for Level 5 and above in 2003)</li> <li>• For Maths, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above is consistently higher than for Southwark over time, with the exception of 2005. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above is similar to the Southwark rate.</li> <li>• The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above, as well as Level 5 or above for Science, is consistently higher than for Southwark over time, with the exception of 2003 and 2005 for Level 5.</li> </ul> <p>In regard to Key Stage 3 attainment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher proportions of pupils are achieving Level 5 or above, as well as Level 6 and above, for English, Maths and Science over time compared with Southwark as a whole.</li> </ul>
<p>Satisfaction with the Local Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A higher proportion of residents in Camberwell were satisfied with their area than dissatisfied. However, this was lower than the proportion of Southwark residents satisfied overall.</li> <li>• A slightly higher proportion of residents in Camberwell think their area is getting better rather than worse although, again this was lower than for Southwark overall.</li> <li>• The main crime concerns are people hanging around the streets (28%), drug abuse/dealing (26%) and disturbances by youths (24%)</li> <li>• The two main improvements residents would like are better maintenance and less vandalism/graffiti (both 29%). This is followed by 24% wanting improved existing housing.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

Note to Scrutiny Committee B from Karl Murray

### **Response to Camberwell Scrutiny concerns on youth provision**

There is a mixture of maintained and voluntary sector provided provisions in the Camberwell area that caters for young people aged 5 – 19yrs+. These provisions can be loosely split accordingly:

- After school provisions (5 – 11yrs)
- Play provision (8 – 12yrs)
- Youth provisions (13 – 19yrs+).

Within this community council area these provision are supported by other borough wide resources that serve to augment what is taking place in each of the above age range environments. Examples of these are:

- Arts and culture opportunities and sites;
- Sports and other recreational sites such as parks and open spaces.
- Libraries
- Schools with access for evening class an other extramural activities as part of extended services approach

Regards the specific youth focus provision (13 – 19yrs), based on information obtained from our EYS management information system, we have been able to determine participation and attendance levels of those organisations using this tool. Thus, we can see in the first half of this year:

- 41% of the young people aged 13 – 19yrs who live in the area access provisions (national target is 25% contact)
- a range of programmes, including residential and camping programmes take place during term time and holiday periods;
- range of building based and detached provision offered across the local area
- specialist provision for those with special needs.

Table 1 below provides a notional overview of the relationship between the capacity of some of the provisions (where this can be best established) and the take up of those provisions. In looking at the figures, however, care must be taken as to some of major variables that impact greatly on what is offered against what can be offered. Some of those are:

- shape and configuration of the buildings (is it on more than one level and how open are the spaces?)

- funding available to organisations to secure an adequate programme (i.e. is there enough staff to deliver the programme and ensure the provision is safe and secure?)
- staffing complement available on any given session (e.g. most of the provision will be part-time and hence the staffing will be either volunteers or part-time sessional workers and quality of those staff?)
- transport route and accessibility to the provision
- opening hours and availability of space, where this is a shared space (e.g. is the case with church halls and T&RA provision)
- time of the year – darker nights and winter months usually mean lowering of the participation level across sites.

**Some further thoughts to consider:**

There is a thought that part of the supply – demand agenda could miss out on the post 16 feature of youth engagement. Young people who are between 16 – 19yrs are looking for something fundamentally different from those aged 11 – 16yrs. For some, especially those who are not in education, employment or training, the concern is one of inertia. For them, the incentive to do nothing is greater than the incentive to get up and do something! There is almost little to no hope for this generation and they reflect back to the younger ones what life could/may be like and so they may not aspire. As the saying goes, only a fool push themselves when there is nothing to gain! Youth provision can play an enabling role and do, but they require other supportive and allied provisions, such as good employment and skills sector engagement/facilities to support the work of good quality youth work. We currently have two work based learning providers in the borough (Southwark College and Bosco Centre) offering Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Education to Employment (E2E) training opportunities. Perhaps there is an opportunity here in Camberwell to give some thought to how we can shift the supply side!

**Karl Murray**

Head of Services for Young People

October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008

**Table 1 Camberwell Youth Provision - attendance analysis: April - September 2008 (provisional)**

Club	Average capacity of provision (Note 3)	Average per session	average % take up
Denmark Hill (3 Hills)	35	19	54%
Area 3 Camberwell Detached	n/a	82	
Lettsome Estate T & R	30	18	60%
St Faith's Youth Forum - church/community centre (V)	12	8	67%
Caribb Youth & Community (v)	45	38	84%
Clubland (v)	n/a	12	
Hollington (v)	30	29	97%
Note 1 Dog Kennel Hill	20	156	
Note 2 Cambridge House & Talbot (V)	30	36	120%
Total	22	44	197%

**Notes**

- Note 1 Includes summer camps, adventure playgrounds and main site for summer playschemes
- Note 2 includes easter & summer special needs programme for 16 - 25yrs
- Note 3 Based on assumption of all things being equal (see full report)

**Source:** EYS management information system.

