

ROTHERHITHE COMMUNITY COUNCIL – 7th OCTOBER 2010

Feedback form workshops held at the Finnish Church in London, 33 Albion Street, London SE16

Workshop 1 - Public Realm

Public Realm is responsible for the investment in and the maintenance of Southwark's physical environment – controlling parking, footway & carriageway maintenance, tree maintenance, grounds maintenance, signage, projects, public lighting, management of abandoned vehicles.

Please discuss, write down and feedback your ideas for the following question:

What projects have you seen or heard about in other areas, which you think might encourage people to enjoy the public areas in Albion Street?

- The Public Realm workshop was all female; they began by comparing areas of Southwark that had a vibrant environment. This included Potters Field as a good example (others?). One person suggested the amount of events held in the area added liveliness to the space.
- The group then discussed some positive aspects of the street. They identified the Finnish and Norwegian churches, Rotherhithe station, BEC College.
- They suggested the council could encourage more people to visit these places, by providing better and clearer signage. The existing signage is "bitty". In particular, a graphic map placed opposite Rotherhithe station and outside the Norwegian Church, with possibly some attractive lighting on the church and an information point manned by volunteers can be a possibility.
- They maintained that the substandard quality and bad layout around the toilets blocked off the entrance to the street, and asked if the toilets could come under the Compulsory Purchase Order. The group was informed that this could prove to be difficult as CPO's had to be in the public interest to be granted, and this may not be considered essential.
- They asked that the council discussed with the Norwegian Church the idea of a market in the square and tidying up of the environment to make it more attractive. Officers were asked to meet with the Market's Development Manager to discuss the licensing process.
- The areas they identified that might be easily cleaned up are the corrugated fencing opposite Rotherhithe station, the street side of the Rotherhithe Tunnel wall, and the square in front of the Norwegian Church, including tree pruning.
- Greater access to the shops could be given if the pavements area was widened.

Updates:

Highways and lighting - Albion Street is not on the list as it is not high risk, determined from a condition survey on all lights in 2009/10. Lights were replaced in 2006 with an updated system due to crime issues. Four Lamps on Albion Street are due to be repaired as part of the ongoing maintenance.

Signage – Council policy does not allow directional signs to Churches. Signs to Rotherhithe Station can be considered, subject to not being on TfL land as this will require a location survey.

Workshop 2 - Economics

Please discuss, write down and feedback the agreed points for the following questions.

1) What can the council do to improve local economic conditions to attract inward investment?

2) What can anyone, other than the council, do to improve and attract inward investment?

3) What can I do to improve the Albion Street economy?

The workshop mainly focused on the Albion Street Library and its long term usage.

- Bring people into Albion Street after new library is completed and opened
- School of SAMBA, BEC and Morley College - ensure that they are fully involved as stakeholders and utilising the old library
- Advertise shops people would like to invest in and remove restrictions and introduce clear guidelines
- Parking restrictions should be applied on an level playing field
- No more housing developments or dwellings in Albion Street
- Shops only on one side - no viability
- Provisions for cafes on the ground floor of old library to be considered to encourage greater footfall and usage of facilities.
- Lighting needs to be upgraded from a 'community safety' point of view
- Better use of shops - ILRE (improving local retail environment) - with a community feel to them
- Library to remain and turn into theatre - Albion Theatre
- Focus on the real solutions to a small area - energy and resources
- Having a market again

Updates:

Market - a real possibility of providing license for occasional trading (pilot programme). Officers are currently speaking to the Norwegian Church and plan to speak to Finnish and Swedish Churches to discuss ideas of a Scandinavian themed market.

ILRE - designers and contractors who will be responsible for the works on Albion Street are presently finalising the specification of works and gaining final approval of the design elements from traders, and will be aiming to start work straight after Christmas.

Workshop 3 - **Density & Development**

Please discuss, write down and feedback your ideas for the following question.

If there was to be a development proposal for Albion Street, what type and density should the council support? I.e. size of buildings, retail, residential, leisure etc...

- Living versus vibrancy need to be considered
- Knit into the local area
- Bermondsey Street - limited comparison with Albion Street
- Shops in Albion Street - can they in reality compete with the likes of Tesco?
- Revive the street market
- Do not want high rise development
- Need focal point - community space e.g. cafe
- Can't find Albion Street, not easily accessible
- Access to Canada Water interrupted by development
- What worked before and could they be revived?
- Future of library - gallery or something linked with the history of the area
- Area has the feel of a village, this should be encouraged
- Need greater involvement from local residents
- Nisa (local shop) is a good example of inward investment
- Is there capacity in local health provision?
- Library is an important part of the street
- What type of shops? - Green grocers, not too many specialist shops.

Updates:

Library – The library site will be openly marketed in the next few months. Any interested parties should contact Fahad Nakendo on 020 7525 5359 (fahad.nakendo@southwark.gov.uk) or James Oates on 020 7525 5633 (james.oates@southwark.gov.uk)

Workshop 4 - Links & Accessibility

Please discuss, write down and feedback your ideas for the following question:

How can we make Albion Street more accessible so that it benefits from the investment in Canada Water and Rotherhithe Station?

- The question of accessibility initially focused on the lack of connection between Albion Street and the Canada Water development, in particular the tube station.
- There was a sense that the private developments do not take into account the local community. E.g. Will the Barrett's development have a direct link through to Albion Street? – Any improvement to the retail environment on Albion Street would depend on increased footfall.
- On the same theme, it was pointed out that the Pumphouse development entrance is blocked off at both ends, prohibiting access to Canada Water Station. The gate for the Pumphouse is exclusive and private. Is it possible to create a cut through in the wall of the passageway (where the apple tree is!) beside the station?
- Is a road linking Needleman Street to Albion Street a possibility? The main thrust of this discussion was the definite need for an alternative link between Albion Street and Canada Water station, for residents of the Canada Estate, who currently have to go a very long way, with no signage and poor lighting. The lights in the park are obscured by foliage, and it feels very unsafe at certain times of day. Indeed the park is shut at night to deter anti-social behaviour. (There is a rough patch of ground near the bus stop by the roundabout/city business centre/Norwegian Church -rear access – Renforth Street?)
- It is currently easier to use the over-ground as routes are not direct.
- People who have lived in the area all their lives have been denied access by private developments and there is an urgent need to integrate all residents. The external wall is both a physical and psychological barrier in this regard.
- Local residents feel that they are not being consulted or informed about decisions which affect them personally, and they are being cut out of the benefits of the investments at Canada Water.

Updates:

Pumphouse development entrance – There is no part of the fence that adjoins council land, so agreement of the Pumhouse Estate owners would be needed to create such an access.

What Happens next?

Albion Street Steering Group – Rotherhithe CC will be looking into setting up a steering group to focus on these and other issues around Albion Street. Anyone interested should contact Forid Ahmed on 0207 525 5540 or forid.ahmed@southwark.gov.uk