

**Summary of the third meeting in the third series of TEN at
New River Village, Hornsey, on 23.3.06**

Present

Marc Dorfman, Chief Planning Officer, LB Redbridge
Chris Donovan, Assistant Director (Strategy, Planning and Regeneration) Bexley Council
Brendan Walsh, Head of Regeneration, Ealing Council
Paul Evans, Strategic Director of Regeneration, Southwark Council
David Hennings, Director of Strategic Planning, Haringey Council
Mark Lucas, Head of Strategic Sites, Haringey Council
Shifa Mustafa, Assistant Director of Planning, Haringey Council
John Tunney, Interim Director, Regeneration and Development, LB Newham

Nicholas Falk, URBED
Esther Caplin, URBED

Apologies

John Best, Chief Executive, Milton Keynes Council
Peter Bishop, Director of Culture and Environment Camden Council
Tom Jeffrey, Director of Environment and Leisure, LB Sutton

The third meeting in the third TEN series took place at the award winning development, New River Village, Hornsey, in LB Haringey, an exciting 400 units, mixed use, mixed tenure scheme on an old waterworks site next to the railway line from King's Cross. The scheme has won the ODPM housing design award.

Briefing was circulated in advance including Key Facts on Haringey and the new development. To lead into discussion on 'How do you make the most of sites with relatively high accessibility?' a series of tools from *Tomorrow's Suburbs: Tools for Making London's Suburbs More Sustainable* (URBED's report for the GLA) were attached, along with 'Making new development sustainable' which provides an overview of what could be done. In addition, an introduction to a forthcoming special edition of *Built Environment* that Nicholas Falk is editing rehearsed the issues of sustainable suburbs, and a case study on Lille – 'Investing in a modern integrated public transport system' – helped show what that city has achieved (and serves as an introduction to TEN's forthcoming visit to Lille). Finally a case study of Borneo Sporenburg, Amsterdam (from CABE/Building for Life website) describes this influential scheme, which TEN visited last year. It aims to attract families back into the city and only 30 per cent of the housing is subsidized, with a mix of flats and town houses.

The walking tour began from the New River Village Marketing Suite, where we could view site models. We were escorted by members of St James Home's development team and discussed the housing allocation and the site plan including a park alongside the New River. We were able to view the interiors of both affordable and private ownership apartments, and discuss construction including cost and the use of Danish pod bathrooms. The discussion session took place in the Marketing Suite, next to the new PumpHouse Restaurant, where most of those present later ate.

TEN welcomed John Tunney, Interim Divisional Director, Regeneration and Development, LB Newham, and Brendan Walsh who has become Director of Regeneration at Ealing Council, as Marc Dorfman moves to become Head of Planning at Redbridge Council. Seema Manchanda (previously Haringey) is to become Director in April and the Group hopes that John Tunney will also continue to be part of TEN.

The Group began by comparing the development with what had been seen on the trip to Holland last year, before Shifa Mustafa, accompanied by Mark Lucas, Head of Strategic Sites in Haringey, gave an illustrated presentation on the context for sub-regional planning. A lively discussion followed on how to make the most of sites with high accessibility, how to secure a balance of tenures and employment, and what could be done to reconcile conflicting political agendas.

One of the lessons from the success of sub-regional planning in European city regions like Lille has been the focus on 'arcs of opportunity', which TEN will be exploring in our visit to Lille and Roubaix. We hope to pursue the subject in future meetings, and in the meeting with Transport for London, which Peter Bishop has agreed to set up.

The date for the next meeting was confirmed as Friday 9th June for the day trip to Lille and Roubaix.

A summary of conclusions follows.

TEN is grateful to Haringey Council for organising the meeting and their hospitality.

SECURING BALANCED HOUSING GROWTH IN HARINGEY

New River Village

Context

Haringey is a borough where east London meets west London, spanning Highgate through to Tottenham, and the new development is at the meeting point, on the River and adjacent to a public park that links with Alexandra Park (and the Palace). This former water works has provided a first class site for a high density housing scheme, with a mix of uses and tenures. The scheme won the Deputy Prime Minister's Design Award for Sustainable Communities, and is playing an important role in showing how modern design can be integrated into a traditional Victorian suburb. The original permission was for 192 houses with gardens, mainly social housing, with a Sainsburys superstore, granted on appeal. Sainsburys then pulled out, and St James came along with a different approach. St James is a joint venture with Thames Water who own the land. The final scheme is for 600 units, of which 30% are affordable. The old pump house has been turned into an art gallery for the Royal Academy and a restaurant.

The value of the Section 106 agreement was about £11 million, of which £3 million was in cash, and the balance was in public space, and the restoration of existing buildings. Half a million went into local community projects to improve the High Street. There is also money for improving links with the station. £2 million was allocated for either a school or more social housing offsite. Negotiations were difficult at first because of conflicting objectives.

Challenges

- The Great Northern railway line divides the more prosperous Western parts, with places like Crouch End and Muswell Hill, from the poorer Eastern end in Tottenham; 40 % of the population live in the 10% most disadvantaged wards in Britain
- The borough contains a few large sites, particularly around Tottenham, but East-West links are poor
- The water works offers a 5-acre site running alongside the main Great Northern railway line and canal carrying the New River
- It adjoins a small and marginal local centre on a busy road running East-West through the borough
- It has some interesting old buildings and views out to Alexandra Palace

Solutions

- The scheme contains 30% affordable housing, which is located away from the river, and facing out to existing social housing
- The new housing is contained in a series of exciting looking blocks, making great use of balconies and colour, and overlooking courtyards
- Costs have been cut by using prefabricated construction e.g. bathroom pods which cost £4,000 each, and not providing gas supplies
- The river is being turned into a 2 hectare park, which will link through to Alexandra Palace and its surrounding park

- Funds from the development are going into improving links with the station, and upgrading the look of the shops on the High Street
- The old buildings have been turned into a popular restaurant and an art gallery surrounded by high quality paving.

Lessons

- Much higher density schemes are feasible than have been traditionally proposed
- Local opposition has been overcome through careful negotiations and imaginative use of Section 106 contributions
- A study tour to a comparable scheme in Deptford for local community groups and councillors helped reconcile people to modern architecture at relatively high densities
- Concerns were expressed about social infrastructure, provision for children, and ongoing management once the development is complete.

Haringey

The borough is very multi-cultural and relatively polarised between East and West, though the central areas are being gentrified. 50% of the residents work in the sub-region. The borough contains the main regeneration areas for North London. A key issue is whether the area should just be seen as a housing growth area, as the Mayor seems to see it, or as an important source of employment. There is a huge trend for out-commuting. London may need to retain a host of employment centres, particularly as there has been no growth in employment outside public services, and the economy could be vulnerable to over-dependence on a few functions like finance.

Haringey has adopted masterplans for its two main regeneration areas in Wood Green and Tottenham. The problem is how to secure mixed uses and an adequate social infrastructure, including new open spaces. The Borough has secured funding for a new secondary school and new road, which will create the basis for a new community. Newham predict that in 10 years only 7% of jobs will not need a qualification. Haringey predict that the numbers of unskilled jobs will halve.

Significant achievements have included the revitalisation of Wood Green as a shopping centre, with a diversification of uses, including new cinemas. The Cultural Quarter in the nearby Chocolate Factory now provides space for 400 businesses, and helps to explain why the Borough has a relatively high business start-up rate. However efforts to create new jobs for those who are economically inactive have not been particularly successful, and some fundamental rethinking is taking place.

Key issues

Key issues for Haringey are:

1. increasing transport capacity and reducing car dependency
2. creating social cohesion between new and existing communities and different tenures
3. addressing the skills/new work imbalance
4. overcoming opposition to higher densities and tall buildings
5. achieving financial viability while meeting planning obligations

Currently most officer recommendations are being overturned. Newham overcomes this problem with an elected Mayor, plus doing deals with the GLA.

Points from the discussion

1 Transport capacity

In low density areas you cannot increase transport unless the pattern of movement is very pronounced. Improvements can be made by:

- charging for parking spaces (a space in the New River development costs £12,000, and buy to let investors are managing to do without parking)
- investing in utilising bikes more
- organising for interchanges and providing greater frequency of buses
- using hoppla buses
- improving the suburban stations
- assuring staffing at stations and on trains
- replacing the old tram routes with buses
- planning for an integrated transport and development system
- providing good maps
- introducing a new form of transport planning.

2 Housing

Good management is crucial, in particular as a history of this would mean that people are not so frightened of new development. Making better neighbourhoods with mixed tenure would be helped by:

- designing places with common facilities that bring communities together
- managing the blocks intensively with high degrees of social control
- setting common standards
- having on-site uniformed caretakers
- subsidising the person not the house
- funding the ongoing maintenance and management costs of higher densities
- providing gatehouses and supervision
- finding ways of funding social infrastructure and guaranteeing its delivery, for example by having fewer affordable homes
- changing the grant regimes to ensure long-term sustainability (e.g. the Housing Corporation funding is based on number of units, not on space).

3 Employment

A key question raised was how can employment be secured for school-leavers with low qualifications? Discussion raised the following approaches:

- reducing the skills mismatch through better schools
- helping the unemployed through one stop job shops in key locations
- getting closer to employers so that training leads to an entry level job, with short periods of training (Newham needs to get 3,000 a year of the economically inactive into work)

- responding to individual needs (Bexley has nine integrated programmes) on a large enough scale (Southwark is 15,000 people away from what it needs to achieve to go from 68% to 72%)
- making access to housing easier
- engaging employers in the local community
- breaking down the barriers between business and government, and building relationships with larger firms
- overcoming physical isolation
- avoiding young people becoming alienated
- tackling the benefits trap
- providing managed workspace to encourage small business growth and self employment using commercial firms
- enabling London born youngsters to compete with temporary immigrants and targeting vulnerable groups e.g. 16-22 year old males, to avoid them developing bad habits
- creating new kinds of uniformed service jobs e.g. community support officers (200 in Haringey alone)
- reinventing apprenticeships within the Council (as in Southwark with Looked After Children, who did not meet the standards)
- seeing the Council as a model for good practice
- creating 'barefoot' and intermediate jobs and getting people into the system
- ensuring that all the components are in place and joined up, and that people are tracked
- promoting local opportunities but also going for programmes that are really cost-effective in getting people into work by working with employers
- allowing for some people who receive continuous support and opportunities to refresh their skills
- using mentoring to build confidence and overcome barriers.

4 Political agendas

Relationships between officers and councillors vary from authority to authority, as does the attitude of Councils, e.g. most Haringey councillors work in the public sector and therefore have an adversarial relationship with the private sector. It was noted that in boroughs where there is not complete control by councillors, it is easier to achieve results. Actions that would promote better understanding and relationships include:

- enabling officers to provide leadership and take councillors with them
- getting councillors to understand business, for example by meeting major employers
- exploiting hung councils that need to listen to officers recommendations

In conclusion

The visit to Hornsey highlighted the proactive role that local authorities can play both in achieving higher design standards and also in securing benefits from development for the local community. It also exemplified the potential for intensification on former industrial

sites close to suburban railway stations. In summing up Nicholas Falk drew attention to the proposal URBED had developed for looking at groups of railway stations along the same suburban railway line for an unsuccessful bid to the LDA's Opportunities Fund. Network Rail are seeking proposals from developers not just for six main London stations and 50 major stations in the rest of the country but also for strings of stations.

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