

Contact: Sunita Sharma
Tel: 020 8583 2462
E-Mail: Sunita.sharma@Hounslow.gov.uk

Executive - 15 June 2010

“Brentford’s Little Venice” – Councillor Call for Action on moorings at Waterman’s Park

Report by: Councillor Brad Fisher, member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Summary

This report seeks to address the long standing issues raised about the Watermans site following from the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) raised by Councillor Matt Harmer in April 2009.

To remind members, the CCfA is a means by which any councillor can request the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to help address a long standing unresolved matter. Once the CCfA has been accepted it is incumbent on the OSC to investigate and report back with its findings and recommendations and for the Council’s Executive to take action based on these findings.

This report puts forward the comments, observations and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a way forward for this site developed from meetings held between May and July 2009. There is a summary contained within the report and it is not therefore duplicated in this brief covering report. Since July 2009 the Committee has spent time gaining deeper understanding of the many complex legal, planning and environmental issues associated with this site in order to formulate recommendations which scrutiny members feel will guide and assist the Executive in taking this outstanding unresolved matter forward with the Partners.

The Committee has been guided by staff in the Borough Solicitor’s office and Corporate Property Unit to build a chronology of events as they developed in relation to this site. It is evident that despite all the hard work that has gone into developing a vision for this site, little has materialised on the ground and the Committee has sought to highlight why, as this has to change. The Committee has included options for a way forward and listened to the proposals put forward by the Port of London Authority (PLA) and its partners. This long standing situation cannot be allowed to deteriorate any further as is evident from the comments of the nearby community and the current state of the site. The Committee also knows that the Council cannot on its own deal with the unauthorised vessels at this site.

During the course of our evidence gathering, the Committee received information (via councillors) on the hardship faced by some boat dwellers who have faced intimidation, theft, harassment and noise on a regular basis from the use of generator sets. The environment has also suffered due to dumping and spillage into the Thames. It is expected that the Executive in taking forward the recommendations will engage with all the boat dwellers as part of seeking a formal resolution to this site.

The findings of this scrutiny response to the Councillor Call for Action might seem daunting and complex to deliver, especially in these austere times, but as this review will show, there is a lot of potential and appetite for something to finally get done for the immediate, medium and

long term, strategic vision of this site. Even at the time of completing this report, more issues of a complex nature have been emerging, including further cases of harassment, more 'squatters' moving onto the site and moorings being put up for sale illegally.

Clear leadership and action is required to move this issue forward, especially on a strategic future vision for this important site and also in engaging with the right partners to bring about a desired result – the development of this site.

Allowing for the further deterioration of this site is not an option either financially or in terms of the impact on the neighbouring community.

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Executive to:

- 1.1. Receive and discuss this CCfA report;
- 1.2. Consider the recommendations made within the report and
- 1.3. Provide a response to this report within six weeks as set out in the Council's Constitution.

2.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This CCfA deals with access to the river which has a wider implication for all Hounslow residents. The mooring of boats has a public safety implication and the continuance and/or improvement of mooring facilities at Watermans Park will encourage enterprise and support Hounslow's Marine and leisure industries. This report and the Executive's response to it will directly affect the existing boat dwellers.

Background Papers:

1. Councillor Call for Action – Moorings in Watermans Park, Brentford. Matt Harmer Brentford ward councillor April 2009.
(<http://democraticservices.hounslow.gov.uk/Published/C00000211/M00004829/AI00045763/councillorcallforaction.pdf>)
2. IBAC restricted minutes 12 May 2005
<http://democraticservices.hounslow.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=215&MId=2328&Ver=4&TPID=875813#AI17258>
3. Brentford Area Action Plan - <http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/baap.pdf>
4. Residential Moorings Demand & Preference Survey 2009 -
[http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/media/documents/Residential Moorings Survey Report 2009.pdf](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/media/documents/Residential_Moorings_Survey_Report_2009.pdf)
5. Brentford - A Waterway Town! A way forward for the Thames corridor in Brentford
http://thames-landscape-strategy.org.uk/file_download/145
6. Brentford Waterman's Ecological Assessment April 2008, Ecological Perspectives LLP

This report has been or is due to be considered by:

This report is relevant to the following wards/areas:
Brentford