



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

For ease of reference topics appear as separate subjects rather than in the order discussed. Items do not appear in any order of priority, and may appear under an unlinked agenda item (e.g. AOB)

Meeting Minutes 29th January 2019

1. **Welcome**

John welcomed everyone and reminded people of meeting etiquette.

2. **Apologies**

Christine Rowles, Jim Smith, Adrian Hilsum.

3. **AGM**

The meeting was paused to conduct the AGM, minuted separately. (Agenda items 3-8.)

4. **Guest Speaker** - Sean Nethercott, Strategic Services Lead – Local Plan

Copies of Thurrock Local Plan: Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation were handed out.

The government has made it a statutory requirement that local authorities produce a plan as to how their area will develop over the next 20 years. In this area there has been more than 20 years of transformational change and an infrastructure led plan is needed along with affordable housing for existing residents and provision to meet the needs of the elderly. In 2014 the council took the decision that the new plan aid economic growth and build an average of 300 dwellings per year but landlock issues due to greenbelt areas means no sites are available to deliver housing and schools. In addition, a plan cannot be submitted until such time as the route of the Lower Thames Crossing is agreed, at which point the constraints will be known and the borough can be reimagined.

Despite the Stage 2 Consultation ending in February the council will continue to seek ongoing input and involvement from residents at every stage of the plan as residents know what local needs are. The biggest issue faced is the housing need target of 30,000/1,173 p.a. Brown field/urban sites = 6,400 dwellings, half of which will be built in Purfleet over the next 10-15 years, but government sanctions will commence in 18 months when Thurrock run out of land for housing.

The council are currently assessing sites to see if they are suitable and to identify constraints on the availability of land (e.g. subject to landfill/flooding/impact explosion issues, A127 already at capacity, damage to eco systems, x3 village expansions could damage the villages if not handled sympathetically), but the process takes 2+ years.

Problems include two-thirds of south Essex comprising strategic employment land.

Amazon would not have come here if they had realised the recruitment issues they face.

Although automation is taking place at the ports some workers are still needed.

Jobs are mostly low wage so affordable housing is needed to enable people to both live and work locally rather than commute.

Local health provision is outside the scope of the local authority, but health impact assessments are undertaken to mitigate adverse impact of developments.



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Questions from the floor:

How is the housing target figure arrived at and can it be changed?

Consultants provided the council with a demographic number of people coming to the borough, plus a figure for immigration, then affordability means more houses are cheaper and the prices create an uplift. The government's figure is arrived at using a standard methodology approach. The council can test the government's figure and argue with the government that it is unable to deliver this number but there will be sanctions for non-delivery.

Can the local authority build houses?

Yes, they could deliver 1,000 dwellings but would need to borrow money to finance this and would need to be able to access land which is already privately owned.

What can people do?

Individually respond to the consultation.

The council would be happy to receive a collective response from the Forum.

The next stage of the Local Plan will show actual options for local communities and there should be a 2-3-hour session held in Purfleet.

Are the Saturday planning sessions previously run by Kirsty to recommence?

The council will be piggybacking community events in the summer.

Happy to come back to the Forum for a dedicated meeting.

5. **Guest Speaker** - Paul Armstrong, Community Policing Team
Item cancelled as speaker unwell. Local crime figures for November were displayed on screen. Check Forum website for crime statistics.

6. **Matters Arising and AOB**

Ideas and projects:

Superfast Broadband

This was sold as a relatively easy project but has turned out to be complex. Alex is taking the project forward a section of area at a time and seeking funding per area. 1st area will be Watts Wood Park (located between North Road and the bypass) and the Uplands. It is hoped that after one area is completed experience gained should make the project easier.

Noticeboards

Looking at revamping x3 noticeboards as 75% of flyers put up are removed within 24 hours.

Location of noticeboards – close to The Fleet, the Station; the green on the Uplands.

The noticeboard on the Garrison only survived a week and is not being replaced/revamped.

Bus shelters are progressing towards council ownership. John will see if we can get a noticeboard within the shelters.

Moira said there is a noticeboard outside the Royal. John to check it out.



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Church House

After 40 years of laying waste this site comprising nearly 1.5 acres, including a Grade II listed building, is up for sale; deadline for offers is 1st February.

In 2015 two other Grade II listed buildings on this site were demolished leaving the Chapel, which had been built in 1790 for use by the Whitbread family and the local community.

It was proposed the Forum apply for Church House to be registered as a community asset, that with no accessible and affordable hall available within Purfleet the location and size of this site is ideal for a community building and, if registered as a community asset, part of Purfleet's history would be preserved.

21 signatures are required from separate households for the application to be considered, the process takes 8 weeks, and if registered it will give the community time to investigate how to fund the project and to consider what could best be achieved for the community on the site.

Purfleet Quay

The quay is located between The Royal and the RSPB and it is understood there is a pot of money available to do something with the quay. This would be a long-term project and the Forum would need people to support the project and to be actively involved.

Litter Picking

When the better weather arrives a community litter pick for 1-1 ½ hours will be arranged. Cllr Oliver Gerrish was asked to take forward a request for a couple of waste bins to be installed, one either side of the railway crossing (between the station and the ROH and the station and the school).

Pub Quiz

We held two events last year and Lynn has offered to run another one which is likely to be at the end of February (alternate venues of Fleet and Royal).

Councillor Update by Cllr Victoria Holloway

Orsett Hospital consultation has been referred to the Secretary of State on two counts – the closure of the hospital should not have been included in a much larger consultation; the plan is not in the best interests of Thurrock residents. Not yet heard whether the Secretary of State has accepted the referral.

Due to the meeting running late Cllr Holloway only gave one update but said she would be happy for anyone to speak to her at the close of the meeting.

CRO Port Roundabout Latest Plan

CRO are seeking others to fund the roundabout but have been told that they have to build the roundabout otherwise they will not be able to build the 100' high car deck (higher than the bridge with parking for 3,500+ vehicles).

CRO site is 160 acres, same size as the regeneration land but despite the size of their plot they only employ a max of 1,000 people.

Attendees were encouraged to check planning applications and to comment.



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Regeneration

Thurrock Council has a record of passing planning within 4 weeks, but this has been dragging on for 13 months and has yet to make it through.

How come CRO Ports get their plans passed when nothing is happening with the regeneration?

Every time the regeneration plan gets near to being presented to council last minute objections are received, eg Highways England, Sports England, and it feels as if these government bodies take it in turn to raise objections. Objections generates a 21-day consultation period for amendments.

Ken Dytor responded that PCRL are finding it very frustrating but that they are edging closer, significant progress has been made with agencies and they are almost there. PCRL have weekly discussions with the local authority and their aspirations include delivery of education, they are committed to provision of a primary school, an IMC (Integrated Medical Centre), they also have £10s of millions to spend on infrastructure. Ken went on to say that Duncan Inness from Swan, who have modular build expertise, is also working hard to get this project across the line. Ken wants residents to know that PCRL are still here and will remain here and, provided no further objections are received, it is anticipated the application will go before Committee in March.

Events

Wrestling tournament, Sunday 10th Feb, 14:30, Fondu Club.

Thurrock Coalition Consultation - John to email details, copies also available.

Battle's Over – John Gidman said what a fantastic night it had been and that the book produced by Trevor to celebrate the event, selling at £3, was excellent. Copies available.

A plaque has been placed on the green to celebrate the event.

7. Next meeting

Tuesday, 26th March, 19:30 at Backstage Centre, High House Production Park.

If there is a topic that you would like included at a future meeting, or a specific speaker including the council, please email chair@purfleetcf.org.uk giving as much notice as possible and we will see what we can do