



Overview & Scrutiny Committee
9th February 2010

**Report from the Director of
Policy & Regeneration**

Ward Affected:
Kensal Green

**Willesden Junction Station Councillor Call for Action
Request**

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received a councillor call for action request from Councillor James Powney (appendix a) relating to the poor environmental condition in the area surrounding Willesden Junction Station. Councillor Powney has highlighted a series of problems including:

- The poor and dangerous state of Station Approach (the road up to Willesden Junction Station)
- Underuse of Hythe Road public footpath
- Poor management of land around the station leading to environmental health issues and lack of visual amenity.
- Poor maintenance of Harrow Road footpath
- Poor signage around the station

1.2 Councillor Powney would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider these issues and recommend a solution to the problems at Willesden Junction Station.

1.3 The councillor call for action was introduced in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. It enables any member of the council to refer to an overview and scrutiny committee any local government matter which affects their ward. A local government matter is defined as one which:

- Relates to the discharge of any function of the authority

- Affects all or part of the ward for which the referring member is elected or any person who lives or works in the ward
- Is not an excluded matter

- 1.4 A protocol on how councillor call for action will operate in Brent has been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, scrutiny chairs and all group leaders. The protocol recommends that a councillor should try to resolve the issue / problem using the mechanisms and resources available to them including Neighbourhood Working and the council's complaints system, prior to asking an overview and scrutiny committee to take the matter further.
- 1.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will need to decide whether or not to take the Willesden Junction Station issue forward and could use the criteria set out in the protocol to help to make the decision.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to decide whether it wants to consider the councillor call for action relating to environmental issues around Willesden Junction Station, Kensal Green ward. If the committee chooses to do this, it will be included on the agenda of a future meeting.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received a councillor call for action request from Councillor James Powney (appendix a) relating to the environmental problems in the area surrounding Willesden Junction Station. Councillor Powney has highlighted a number of problems he would like to see addressed to improve the local area. They include:
- The poor and dangerous state of Station Approach (the road up to Willesden Junction Station)
 - Underuse of Hythe Road public footpath
 - Poor management of land around the station leading to environmental health issues and lack of visual amenity.
 - Poor maintenance of Harrow Road footpath
 - Poor signage around the station
- 3.2 Councillor Powney has contacted London Overground, Transport for London and Network Rail over several of these issues over the course of three years. He does not believe it is a matter that falls within the remit of the Neighbourhood Working Service, and they have confirmed that they are not directly involved in any project to improve the local environment around the station.
- 3.3 However, this issue is complicated by the fact that Willesden Junction Station is on Brent's boundary with Hammersmith and Fulham and Ealing. Councillor Powney believes that as the borough boundary goes through the station, it is necessary for Brent and Hammersmith and Fulham to examine the problems. Station Approach and the Hythe Road footpath are in Hammersmith and

Fulham. The Harrow Road footpath and much of the land around the station is in Brent, whilst signage issues apply to both Boroughs.

- 3.4 Councillor Powney is asking the committee approach Hammersmith and Fulham Council to set up a joint overview and scrutiny task group to investigate the issues around Willesden Junction Station. If the committee is minded to do this it should be noted that it will not be possible to support a task group until the outstanding task groups are completed. Hammersmith and Fulham would also need to agree to this proposal.
- 3.5 The councillor call for action introduced in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables any member of the council to refer to and overview and scrutiny committee any local government matter which affects their ward. A local government matter is defined as one which:
- Relates to the discharge of any function of the authority
 - Affects all or part of the ward for which the referring member is elected or any person who lives or works in the ward
 - Is not an excluded matter
- 3.6 A protocol on how the councillor call for action will operate in Brent was discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, scrutiny chairs and agreed by all group leaders. The protocol recommends that a councillor should try to resolve the issue / problem using the mechanisms and resources available to them including:
- Raise the issue through the Neighbourhood Working process. The Neighbourhood Working Co-ordinators advice / assistance should be sought in finding way to resolve the matter.
 - Ensure that the service area or partner agency has been informed of the issue and been given enough time to resolve it.
 - Ensure that this is not an issue that is currently being or should be pursued via the council's complaints process.
 - Ascertain whether or not any other form of local scrutiny is investigating the issue. The Local Involvement Network for instance.
 - Assist local communities with petitions and deputations
 - Ask questions at committee or Full Council
 - Submit motions to Full Council
 - Hold public meetings
- 3.7 Once on the agenda it is for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether or not to take the matter further. To aid their decision the committee could use the criteria set out in the protocol. The criteria are:
- Is the committee satisfied that appropriate attempts at resolving the issue/problem have been made by the ward councillor?
 - Has the committee considered a similar issue recently – if yes have the circumstances or evidence changed?

- Has the relevant service or partner agency been informed and been given enough time to resolve the issue? What response has the councillor received?
- Is this a case that is being or should be pursued via the council's corporate or the statutory complaints system?
- Is this an issue currently being looked at by another form of local scrutiny e.g. Local Involvement Networks?

3.8 Assuming that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee does want to look at this subject in the future Hammersmith and Fulham Council will be contacted to see if their Overview and Scrutiny Committee is interested in working on a task group. Once a response has been received from them, officers will come back to the committee with proposals on taking this issue forward.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 None

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 None

Background Papers

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