

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA PARTNERSHIP

Golborne Road Study Update

16th November 2005

This paper:

Updates the Steering Group on the progress of the Golborne Road Improvement Study that is being undertaken on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea by consultants, Building Design Partnership and Urban Space Management, and provides an indicative timetable for its completion, and;

Invites the Steering Group to consider whether it would like to receive a presentation of findings by the consultants.

FOR DECISION

1. Background

- 1.1 Golborne Road has an intrinsic character that derives from its local population, land uses and townscape. It is a vibrant and interesting retail and market street that sits within a residential environment and serves the needs of local residents and others that make of its specialist food outlets. It intersects with the northern section of Portobello Road, connecting with its famous market.
- 1.2 Despite these advantages, it is felt that Golborne Road is not fulfilling its potential as a commercial street in the north of the borough. Retail properties are vacant or underused. The street market is dominated by casual traders, and less than half of the designated market pitches regularly used. The area suffers from problems relating to a low quality of public realm, crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.3 The Royal Borough considers that Golborne Road may benefit from applying the streetscape design principles that have succeeded in boosting confidence in other commercial streets in Kensington and Chelsea. The approach has resulted in a positive spiral of change in High Street Kensington. Golborne Road may also benefit from a review of Council service provision, as it may be a matter of targeted adjustments to services, such as cleansing or parking, delivered in the area. The Council has therefore appointed specialist consultants to carry out a review of the Golborne Road and prepare option(s) for its improvement.
- 1.4 Importantly, the Mayor of London has selected Golborne Road for his 100 Public Spaces Programme. Launched in July 2002, the initiative aims to enhance the value of London's existing network of public spaces and to show how revitalised streets and squares can make a positive difference to people's quality of life and

to community vitality. Unfortunately, Golborne Road is not regarded as a priority and funding for any improvement programme remains unconfirmed.

2. The Consultants

- 2.1 In May 2005 the Royal Borough appointed consultants Building Design Partnership (BDP) and Urban Space Management (USM) as consultants to undertake the Golborne Road Improvement Study. The appointment was made following a tender selection process, based on a range of criteria including experience and value for money. BDP is a major firm of planners, urban designers and architects who specialise in developing urban design and regeneration strategies for streets and town centres. It is complimented by USM, a firm of retail and market specialists. USM is responsible for setting up the popular Camden Lock and Spitalfields markets, and has experience of managing Gabriel's Wharf, Merton Abbey Mills and Greenwich markets. The consultants began their work in early June.

3. Project Brief and Aims

- 3.1 BDP and USM were tasked with developing a strategy for the future of Golborne Road that would cover not only the physical aspects of the street, but business related issues as well. The work ranged from the choice of street lighting unit through to the daily operations of the street market itself. This wide project brief is reflected in the 5 general objectives that the consultants were charged to respond to, namely:

- Promote a positive image for the Golborne Road
- Provide a useful and attractive local shopping centre that also attracts a wider audience
- Establish the future for the street market
- Provide a safe environment, and
- Provide a high quality streetscape design.

- 3.2 Whilst the nature and extent of change courted was largely unresolved, the brief required that any improvements or interventions should relate to the Golborne Road's unique scale and townscape and promote its positive characteristics. Additionally, an important feature was that the current two-way traffic needs of the Golborne Road were to be kept.

4. Local Consultations

- 4.1 In carrying out the study the consultants were asked to seek the views of a variety of interests in the Golborne Road. In summary, BDP and USM consulted 4 groups of users:

- Key stakeholders – Meetings and interviews were held with key organisations, amenity groups, the Police, local councillors, etc.

- Businesses – Interviews were held with nearly 80% of local shopkeepers and 50% of stallholders, despite requests going out to all.
- Customers – Over 300 people visiting the road were surveyed during a 4-day period, with questions on where they travelled from, how and why they were visiting, and the best and worst features of the road.
- Residents – Over 50 people attended a public consultation event held on 28th June at the near-by Venture Centre. The event was widely publicised through the local newspaper, signs in shop windows and leafleting.

5. Programme and Feedback

- 5.1 The timetable for presenting the report of findings and draft improvement proposals to the Council was originally set for early October 2005. This deadline was set back at the request of Council officers to allow up-to-date traffic and pedestrian counts to be commissioned. This analysis was itself delayed until after the school holidays to ensure reliable counts. BDP has now incorporated the additional data into its findings and has submitted its draft report.
- 5.2 Council officers are currently reviewing the consultants' report and draft proposals, before presenting a paper to a meeting of the Golborne Road Working Party that will consider the findings, as well as cost implications and funding opportunities. The report to the Working Party is expected early in the New Year. Any further proposals would be subject to public consultations.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council recognises that the Golborne Road Improvement Study and the surveys conducted by the consultants during the summer have generated much local interest. In response to local enquiries and as a reflection of the Council's candid approach, the consultants have been asked to provide a presentation of their findings.
- 6.2 The Kensington and Chelsea Partnership is therefore asked to consider if it would like to see this presentation.

FOR DECISION

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