

Battersea Residents' News

Clapham Junction Proposals

Special Edition - January 2009 Edited by Jane Ellison

Conservative Parliamentary Spokesman, Jane Ellison says **BRITAIN'S BUSIEST STATION DESERVES BETTER**

With the most trains and more passengers passing through than Kings Cross, Euston and Paddington, Clapham Junction is indisputably one of Britain's most important stations. It is also one of those in most dire need of major improvement.

In considering the current planning application I have asked myself two key questions: firstly, will the changes to the station result in a substantially better experience for all of us who use it and, secondly, if this was the 'once in a generation' chance to make improvements, is this plan for the station ambitious enough? I believe the answer to both these questions is **NO**.

Given the record levels of public debt we now bear as a country, there is a third key question. If further improvements to the station can only come at a price (which seems to be Network Rail's position – see overleaf) is the price for these changes one worth paying?

I believe the answer, in the case of this application is, again, **NO**. I hope the current proposals are rejected by Councillors but there will undoubtedly be others. With the interest generated by these proposals we should now start a local discussion about the future of our station.



Yet another busy morning at Clapham Junction

Boring but necessary: Briefing on the role and responsibilities of the Council and your local Councillors on planning



Local councillors are always interested to hear your views about all planning applications – big and small. Many people have already been in touch with them

about the major proposals for the area around Clapham Junction station. This application was submitted by Delancy (the developers) and once the application was received the Council had no choice but to consider the application and follow proper legal procedures.

Council members are also required to follow proper procedures. A councillor who is a member of the Planning Committee has to be careful not to "pre-determine" the decision by declaring whether he/she is in favour of the application or opposed to it prior to considering the papers put before the committee before coming to a decision. As the decision of the Planning Committee about a major scheme may come to a Council meeting other councillors also need to be careful what they say.

They are required to study the case both for and against an application together with the Borough Planner's report. Failure to do so can be challenged in courts through the Judicial Review procedure.

Another potential problem is that an applicant may appeal to the Government's Planning Inspectorate and one of the matters they will consider is whether due process has been followed. If there is evidence that a councillor involved in the decision had made up his/her mind before properly considering the application this could undermine the Council's case for refusing the application and involve not just legal costs but the decision itself being overturned.

However this does not stop councillors asking questions, requesting information about issues that residents have raised with them or forwarding on the local concerns. That is why local councillors are seeking residents' views and comments on these proposals so that the Council's Planning Department is well aware of the local opinion.

See over for
contact details.



Conservative

WHAT DO NETWORK RAIL HAVE TO SAY?

In November 2008 Jane Ellison wrote to Network Rail asking them to clarify their stance on the current proposals and to comment on their future plans for Clapham Junction. She put to them many of the questions that are being asked locally including 'can we have the station improvements without the tower blocks?' and 'what public funds are allocated to Clapham Junction'. This is the unedited response from Network Rail's spokesman.

"The proposed development of the Clapham Junction area which you are referring to is a scheme led by Metro Shopping Fund, a joint venture between Delancey and Land Securities. Metro Shopping Fund has submitted a planning application to improve the commercial property in and immediately surrounding Clapham Junction Station. Network Rail has been jointly involved with Metro in the planning of the redevelopment of the station area and we are supportive of their proposal.

You ask if this scheme is a way of avoiding spending money so that it can be diverted elsewhere. On the contrary, the new entrances, ticket hall and related improvements are works that are required to meet long term passenger growth projections and Network Rail would not have the capabilities of providing these improvements alone. The rail industry would not be in a position to offer these benefits to passengers if working in isolation.

With regards to the Access for All improvements, this scheme will deliver step-free access from station entrance to platform. This will see nine lifts installed, taking passengers directly from the footbridge to the platforms. There will also be a newly designed interim entrance at Brighton Yard. Construction work began in April 2008 and is expected to be completed by September 2009. As you may be aware, in order to minimise disruption to commuters, the concrete lift shafts are being lifted into position over the Christmas period at the same time as the track renewals (Windsor ladder upgrade).

There is additional investment planned for Clapham Junction. Currently we have numerous improvements in the planning stages but these are yet to receive the third party funding required to secure the go-ahead. Such improvements include platform lengthening to allow longer trains (10/12 cars) – primarily on the Sussex route but also on the Wessex route; the reopening of platform 1 to make way for the London Overground; improvements to toilet facilities and the subway.

You also enquired about the possibility of matched funding for this scheme. When Network Rail was established, it inherited many stations, such as Clapham Junction, in need of redevelopment. We own and operate over 2,500 stations across the country. Although our priority must be to improve the standards of safety, reliability and efficiency of the rail infrastructure, we aspire to see improvements to all our stations. Our strategy, developed within the framework set out by the Government and the Office of Rail Regulation has therefore been to work with development partners to deliver refurbished stations. This way we can refurbish a higher number of stations, help bring wider benefits such as homes, retail and jobs to local areas and ensure that taxpayers' money is invested wisely.

With regards to public meetings on this matter, we in partnership with Metro Shopping Fund attended a number of consultations and workshops with the local community in early 2008. We are in the process of arranging a meeting with the LB Wandsworth to further discuss our proposals for Clapham Junction. I hope this addresses your concerns though of course please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions."

Network Rail Spokesman

Here to help

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