

RYE LANE & STATION ACTION GROUP (RLSAG)
10th Meeting 22nd October 2008
at Bussey building, 133 Rye Lane, SE15

Minutes of Meeting

Summary

This was the 10th RLSAG meeting on the Group's 4th anniversary. It was very well attended by residents with nearly 50 present, and also other stakeholders - Network Rail and Southern Rail, and the Council. The rail companies reported on current improvements to the railway infrastructure in and around the station and tracks, and the Council presented a report on how to achieve the transformation of the station area including the new piazza. Peckham Vision and The Peckham Society presented ideas on how those very welcome developments would fit into the vision of a transformed central Rye Lane, including the emerging Copeland Cultural Quarter on the site designated for the tram depot. The Council explained that the forthcoming consultations on the Peckham Area Action Plan (PAAP) provided the context for considering all these ideas. The positive ideas were welcomed by the meeting as realistic ways of transforming the town centre. The obstacles were acknowledged, but also that there was willingness of the Council and community to work together to overcome them.

Present

Residents, elected representatives, council officers, Network Rail, Southern Rail, Met Police. See list at end of minutes.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Eileen Conn (EC) local resident & convenor of RLSAG welcomed everyone to the 10th RLSAG meeting on its 4th anniversary. It had been set up as a joint initiative between the Bellenden Residents Group and the Council's Peckham Programme. There had been some successes in the last 4 years, particularly the cleaner state of the station forecourt and Rye Lane, but there was still much to do.

2. Station & Track Operations

Barry Jones (BJ), the new Area Manager from Southern Rail, said he was glad to be able to come to the meeting and meet everyone, and he had good news to report:

- 'Meet the manager' sessions would start January 2009, at Peckham Rye station.
- Repair works now started in relation to stairs, booking hall, platforms, canopies.
- There will be full deep clean and painting once works complete.
- Oyster cards: validators would be ready for use at Peckham Rye by September 2009, but not purchases.
- Aim to fit ticket gates by September 2009; this is still early days but looking very promising.
- 24 Hour staffing of Peckham Rye station by September 2009.
- Work about to start with Network Rail to remove graffiti from outer buildings.
- Painting of station front is about to happen.
- Refurbished waiting rooms

Nick Gray (NG), Head of Community Communications South East, Network Rail, introduced his colleague John Eccles, and reported that:

- the main issue at Peckham Rye Station is the graffiti which would be removed soon. However the support of the local community is required to prevent more graffiti taking its place.
- the rubbish is in better order at the back of the shops in the station forecourt, and fruit & veg. shop looks to be better managed.
- in 1982, Network Rail sold the lease to the front of the station properties to a company for 125 years.
- over the next three months there would be substantial amount of money spent for a face lift of the station and Network Rail hopes the community would respect it afterwards.
- Network Rail's first priority is safety, followed by train performance. A quarterly 'meet the managers' session will be introduced.

BJ and NG left the meeting after answering some questions on their reports (the Qs/As are included in the report on the discussion at the end of the minutes)

3. Peckham Rye Station area - future developments

Russell Profitt (RP), Southwark Council, presented the key points from the report from consultants Roseveare on 'Peckham Rye Station: the case for change'. The report outlined a business case to achieve a transformation of the station and its environment. The report proposes four phases

1. Phase 1 (2008-10): Station refurbishment programme to maximise the use of internal space and arch refurbishments
2. Phase 2 (2009-12): Development of rear courtyard as a cultural quarter/market.
3. Phase 3 (2011-13): Front Courtyard – Demolition of the arcade buildings, erection of 2x contemporary buildings alongside the arches, and laying a new town square to the front of the station.
4. Phase 4 (2016+) Eastern Courtyard – Spread of cultural quarter arch development to the east and development of a second square as part of the complementary measures to accommodate the Cross River Tram.

(the report will be available, later in November, on the Council website

<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCommunity/NunheadPeckhamRye>)

The reasons for change were numerous:

- The listing this year of the 19th century station building.
- The desire, clearly expressed locally, for a focal point for the area in the form of a piazza or square.
- The success of Network Rail property company Spacia's South London redevelopment programme.
- The emergence of cultural uses in the railway arches in the station area, and the potential extension and promotion of this as a catalyst for regeneration and higher value rental returns from Network Rail assets.
- The need to bring all these together into the development of the PAAP (Peckham Area Action Plan).
- A long list of issues relating to the station area:
 - Poor station and interchange environment for passengers at a heavily used station (TFL Category C Station)
 - Low quality public spaces
 - A very linear shopping street without lateral interest or fine grain
 - Poor visibility of the station from Rye Lane
 - The cramped, low grade, high maintenance environment created by the existing arcade building
 - Perception of crime in the area
 - Persistence of low value shopping offer: pound stores etc
 - Shopping offer not improving in line with other town centres locally
 - Difficulties in managing the growth in footfall

4. Central Rye Lane - vision & developments

Eileen Conn (EC) for Peckham Vision, presented some maps of the central Rye Lane area to illustrate how the emerging Copeland Cultural Quarter (CCQ) to the south and east of the station complemented the vision presented in the case for change around the station (see www.peckhamvision.org/wiki/Copeland_Cultural_Quarter):

- This site, where the Bussey building is located, is immediately adjacent to the railway lines and already busy with creative industry and small businesses; it is half of the 6 acres of land designated for demolition for the tram depot.
- It is becoming known as the Copeland Cultural Quarter (CCQ) because of creative businesses which have developed from the commercial operations in the Copeland Industrial Park, the business that operates most of the industrial premises there.
- There is significant potential for new modern buildings, integrating the historic buildings on the site, including the Bussey building, and for creating new public spaces to link with the town centre to the west and the residential area to the east, and including pedestrian walkways under the railway lines.
- Such developments immediately to the east of Rye Lane would transform the town centre from a long narrow linear shopping street into a wider integrated multi-pathways area of the town centre. None of this would be possible if the tram depot was located there.

Benedict O'Looney (BO'L), local resident, architect and Peckham Society Committee member, gave an illustrated account of the history of that central part of Rye Lane:

- The many changes and developments to Peckham Rye station, the main building of which had this year been listed by English Heritage.
- The other buildings of historic note nearby in Blenheim Grove, the striking facades in Rye Lane and the remaining parts of the famous Holdron's store, including one of the arcades.
- The Bussey building across the road on the CCQ site which was a fine example of historic industrial architecture and one of the last remnants of an important part of Peckham's major industrial history.

- The strong case for the Town Centre Conservation Area to help preserve and integrate this important heritage. This would be discussed in detail in the forthcoming meeting on Wednesday 19th November as part of the PAAP (Peckham Area Action Plan) discussions.

5. Peckham Area Action Plan (PAAP)

Michael Carnuccio (MC), Southwark Council Planning, explained the key aspects about the Peckham Area Action Plan (PAAP):

- Two planning documents are being prepared that will help shape the future of Peckham.
 - The **Core Strategy**, a broad document for all of Southwark, looking at how much housing, shopping, business space and community facilities should go in Peckham compared to other areas.
 - The **PAAP** is more detailed and specific to Peckham, and asks what sort of Peckham do we want to see in 2020 and how can we make it happen.
- The **PAAP** is a new type of plan that has to demonstrate how and when things will happen for it to be approved. It will:
 - set out what should be built on specific sites in Peckham town centre. This will include the land around Peckham Rye Station, between the railway lines, and the site designated for the tram depot. The question of whether there will be a tram depot on the site needs to be resolved, and if not what other uses could go on the site - other possibilities include new creative, cultural and businesses uses.
 - In deciding what a site should be used for we need to consider what is needed in an area, what the impacts on surrounding land uses could be, the aspirations of the community and land owners and also that someone would be interested in actually building it (we need to make sure our plans happen).
- The **Core Strategy** and **PAAP** are at an early stage - Issues and Options, ideas rather than actual proposals. This is a chance for people to tell the Council if they agree with the ideas and issues identified, and what ideas and issues they have.
 - A summary of what the **Core Strategy** means for Peckham is on www.southwark.gov.uk/futurepeckham There is a questionnaire response form to help people comment. The Planners are also holding a number of public events and can come and talk to local group meetings. Deadline for comment on the **Core Strategy** is December 15. For more information www.southwark.gov.uk/corestrategy
 - The draft **PAAP** issues and options paper is on www.southwark.gov.uk/futurepeckham The final version will be out towards end of the winter, followed by formal consultation. This will cover the detailed issues about the sites at the station and the site affected by the tram depot designation.
 - Contact Michael.Carnuccio@southwark.gov.uk

6. Questions & Discussion

Topics raised and comments made after the presentations are gathered together here to avoid duplication.

Current operations

- A resident said that the law requires lift accessibility for disabled people and currently there is no lift access to Peckham Rye Station. Complaints about this seemed to get nowhere. NG said that Network Rail aim to resolve complaints within 20 days of the complaints being received. EC said the Southwark Rail Users Group meeting on Monday 17th November would be the place to raise this issue again.
- A new booking hall has been earmarked for next year in the plans for Queens Road Peckham Station.
- South Eastern Rail responsible for Nunhead station were not present to report on plans for that station.

Future Developments

- Someone asked if there had to be a joint planning decision for the East London Line Extension and the Cross River Tram. The answer was that they were not related. The funding for both schemes was as yet uncertain.
- A local resident artist who lives on Holly Grove said that he was hoping to start an art business in one of the buildings in the station near Iceland, and was concerned whether his building would soon be demolished if the regeneration project for Peckham Rye station commenced. The answer was that no buildings would be demolished soon.
- RP said the proposed developments around the station clearly needed extensive discussions with Network Rail and others to establish the business case, and, if agreed, work would be phased over a long period to 2016 and beyond.
- NG said that Network Rail were unlikely to be able to buy out the long leases.
- To overcome the problems, local residents suggested that the Council could consider Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) for the buildings in front of the station. Cllr Gordon Nardell said that he supported the exploration of CPO powers for this.

- Another suggestion to move things forward was that a planning application could be submitted to create the piazza in front of the station.
- There was criticism of the design of the piazza shown in the pictures used to illustrate the piazza space. It was agreed that the design needed careful attention, and it was pointed out that the current image was just illustrative.
- The discussion concluded with strong endorsement. It was recognised that the ideas presented for the station area, and the nearby area including the Bussey building and adjacent site, presented significant opportunities for transforming the town centre. It was acknowledged that there were obstacles, but also that there was a readiness to work together to see how they could be overcome.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm, and was followed by animated informal discussion with the aid of Peckham Vision exhibition, and PAAP displays, on the ways in which the key sites in central Rye Lane could be encouraged in integrated organic development, so extending and transforming the shape and nature of the town centre.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Residents

About 45-50 residents attended but not all names were registered. Addresses recorded came from West Peckham, East Peckham, Rye Lane West, Rye Lane East, Nunhead, Peckham Rye, East Dulwich, one each from Dulwich, Tulse Hill, Camberwell. About 20 residents sent apologies.

Rail Companies

Barry Jones	Area Station Manager, Southern Rail
Nicholas Gray	Network Rail
John Eccles	“” “”

Police

Paul Waterman	The Lane Safer Neighbourhood Team, Met Police
Jim Thorogood	“ “ “

Elected Representatives

Gordon Nardell	Ward Councillor The Lane
Jenny Jones	Ward Councillor South Camberwell, & London Assembly Member

Council Officers

Russell Profitt	Head of Area Management & Community Engagement, & Peckham Programme
Nadine James	Community Council Involvement Coordinator
Rebecca Durojaiye	Community Engagement Support Officer
Michael Carnuccio	Planning Policy
Sally Crew	Transport Policy