

Vauxhall SPD Roadshow Comments Report

1. Introduction

A number of roadshows took place to raise awareness of the Vauxhall SPD consultation and to encourage local people to have their say.

2. Methodology

Roadshow locations were chosen to be in areas of high footfall and to appeal to a wide variety of audiences (both geographical and demographic).

- Saturday 13 October, South Lambeth Road Farmers' Market (10am to 3pm)
- Wednesday 17 October, Sainsbury's Nine Elms (11am to 3pm)
- Saturday 20 October, Oval Farmers' Market (10am to 3pm)
- Wednesday 7 November, Royal Vauxhall Tavern (5pm to 7pm)

Roadshows were staffed by officers working on the project who could respond to queries and encourage people to respond to the consultation via the questionnaire or general written comments. Comments made through discussion during the roadshows were also noted more generally and anecdotal feedback is included in this report.

Promotion of the roadshows was via:

- Email updates to the VNEB mailing list, linking to online detail of all activity
- Posters and flyers distributed in the local area
- Summary booklet distributed through mailboxes in Prince's, Bishop's, Oval, Stockwell and Larkhall wards
- Online news story on www.lambeth.gov.uk and tweets from @Lambeth_Council and @LambethRegen

3. Feedback and participation

The roadshows proved to be very effective at engaging with local residents. Each roadshow saw a steady stream of residents wanting to discuss the proposals – with many wanting to discuss issues at length and talking for upwards of 20 minutes at a time. The numbers indicated below are approximate and the emerging themes are anecdotal.

South Lambeth Road Farmers' Market: Saturday 13 October, 10am to 3pm

Visitor numbers: approx 60

Visitor profile: most were living in the immediate vicinity, general impression was of owner occupiers – many were young adults (20 something) and many were middle aged or retired.

Location notes: This area is reasonably far away from the tall building cluster and not likely to benefit hugely from the new Nine Elms tube station as they already have a tube station within walking distance (Stockwell or Clapham North).

Themes and issues:

- Some concern around tall buildings – although accompanied by some discussion around architectural merit and pedestrian experience
- A desire to protect open spaces
- A relatively even split between those who support the Northern line extension and those who don't.
- People wanted more detail regarding the gyratory and there was some scepticism about the practicalities of creating a viable high street and re-routing the buses.
- People liked the ideas for an enlivened riverfront.
- Generally, people were more interested in individual schemes coming forward

Sainsbury's Nine Elms: Wednesday 17 October, 11am to 3pm

Visitor numbers: approx 70

Visitor profile: lots of residents from the neighbouring housing estate, a number of Portuguese speakers (who we were able to distribute Portuguese flyers to), a number of elderly visitors, visitors with small children and some with disabilities.

Location notes: This area is close to the tall building cluster but closer to the Sainsbury's development and some of the Wandsworth developments (such as New Covent Garden Market). It was the closest roadshow location to the proposed new Nine Elms tube station.

Themes and issues:

- Some concerns and queries raised about school places
- Concerns also raised about affordable housing – social rented in particular
- Interested in potential for more jobs
- Reasonably positive about the tube and tall buildings (although some negative opinions were expressed)
- Further detail required on plans for the gyratory and people definitely liked the convenience of the bus station. One visitor was very attached to the bus station and the canopy.
- Importance of green space was mentioned in relation to the Island Site and the Albert Embankment.
- Importance of community facilities and/or money was raised.

Oval Farmers' Market: Saturday 20 October, 10am to 3pm

Visitor numbers: approx 80

Visitor profile: Reasonably affluent, home owning or private rented local residents, well educated and well informed – good mix of ethnicity and ages ranging from students or young professionals to retired. One visitor was in a wheelchair. Many visitors had read the summary booklet and came with specific issues.

Location notes: this area is further away from the opportunity area than the other locations and close to existing tube stations (Oval and Kennington).

Themes and issues:

- The Northern line extension was top of the list, with a number of visitors worried about tunnelling underneath their properties. Many were sceptical about financing and a few people mentioned linking with District line preferable to the Northern line.
- Further detail required on plans for the gyratory – people thought the bus interchange important but liked the idea of better access through the gyratory and to the river.

- Interested in potential for longer term employment opportunities and nature of businesses that might locate here.
- Height and density of development a concern, particularly re impact on local infrastructure (including sewage, drainage, transport)
- Retail provision – a few visitors wanted a shopping centre, suggesting Vauxhall Square site or Keybridge House
- Concerns about creating a living place and the dangers of a dormitory quarter.
- Footbridge was popular but some scepticism that it would be delivered.
- More information wanted about improvements for cyclists
- Accessibility of the station and tube for wheelchair users a concern. Although there is a lift at the station a lift for the tube is needed for Vauxhall to work as an interchange

Royal Vauxhall Tavern: Wednesday 7 November, 5pm to 7pm

Visitor numbers: 40

Visitor profile: Most visitors were reasonably local and familiar with the Royal Vauxhall Tavern and the gay nightlife in the area. These visitors were male and between about 25 and 45 years of age. In addition a few local residents attended and a number of priests from local churches. Although the venue was usually shut at this time, it did attract extra customers due to being open and some of these took the opportunity to look at the exhibition and ask questions.

Location notes: The venue is iconic within Vauxhall and central to the area's gay nightlife. Usually shut until 7pm, the venue opened especially for the roadshow and we publicised via the usual channels (flyers, booklet, twitter, email updates and local newsletters).

Themes and issues:

- There was an interest in high quality architecture and a desire to ensure taller buildings were of an exceptional quality and took account of the streetscape.
- There were some concerns about the height of development coming forward but also excitement about the possible transformation of the area.
- Many comments reflected the desire to preserve local character and to avoid becoming a clone high street.
- There was support for extending the cultural offer of the South Bank and opening up the river front.
- People were interested in the potential for new jobs and improved infrastructure
- There was concern about preserving the green spaces, particularly Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens and a suggestion that a bandstand was built.

Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership Open Days: Thursday 15 November, 3pm to 8pm and Friday 16 November, 10am to 6pm

Visitor numbers: 400

Visitor profile: Most visitors lived or owned property within or close to the opportunity area. Some worked locally or worked or studied within the regeneration, planning and development industries. A reasonable gender balance was perceived and a wide age range – from early 20s to 80s and possibly beyond.

Location notes: The venue is a disused office block and the location of similar Open Days in 2011. The event covered all aspects of regeneration across the opportunity area and was promoted widely in its own right, as well as via the Vauxhall SPD consultation publicity.

Themes and issues:

- The model of the opportunity area encouraged a number of conversations about the height of development coming forward and the density.
- There were concerns that tall buildings would have a negative impact on shadowing and wind, as well as psychologically.
- The density of development prompted discussions about infrastructure, particularly schools, community facilities and transport.
- Concerns about the Northern line extension were uppermost in people's minds, possibly due to the recent launch of TfL's final consultation. A number of people were sceptical that Kennington station could cope and questioned whether it would ease congestion at Vauxhall or south of Kennington on the Northern line. Some visitors living near the proposed route were concerned about noise and vibrations and the impact of additional trains.
- A number of visitors wanted further ongoing opportunities to be involved in the transformation of the area.
- People wanted clarification of proposals for the gyratory and there were concerns about how this would impact on traffic in the immediate vicinity. In general people were supportive of putting the pedestrian and cyclist experience first. They did emphasise the importance of maintaining the bus interchange.
- Visitors were supportive of opening up the South Bank and extending the cultural offer.

4. Evaluation

This method of consultation proved to be an effective way of carrying out quite detailed engagement with a wide range of people. Comments were noted to include in this report but people were principally encouraged to complete a questionnaire to ensure their views were recorded in detail.

About 700 people were engaged with overall through the roadshows and, although based on anecdotal evidence, this formed a reasonable cross section of local people. Groups clearly under represented included children and young people. Although we spoke to people from a range of ethnic groups, the impression was that white British people were over represented in this sample. A good gender balance was perceived at all roadshows, except the Royal Vauxhall Tavern. The farmers' markets seemed to attract visitors who were owner-occupiers and reasonably affluent, whereas the Sainsbury's Nine Elms roadshow seemed to attract people in rented accommodation, largely from the local council estates.

One of the difficulties of this type of engagement is how time consuming it can be. Some visitors only wanted 5 minutes of our time but others spoke with us for over 45 minutes. Whilst all feedback was useful it did mean that some visitors may have felt unable to engage with us if we were too busy with someone else.

The locations achieved a good balance of visitors in general, some knowing a little or nothing about the programme and others being very well informed. The two farmers' market locations attracted a similar audience, although different geographically. It was clear that by the second farmers market many more visitors were aware of the consultation as the cumulative promotion achieved results. Visitors to the Sainsbury's roadshow were probably least aware in general of the regeneration programme – this roadshow was most successful in engaging with harder to reach residents.