

Local CIL Priorities – West Hampstead

This submission is informed by a residents' survey carried out by West Hampstead Liberal Democrats during November which received 97 responses, and by concerns raised with the local team throughout the year. *NB – improvements to the train stations, especially step-free access at West Hampstead tube station, which is listed as a top priority in the West Hampstead & Fortune Green Neighbourhood Development Plan, continues to be an issue of concern for residents, but is considered out of scope for the Local CIL consultation, given the scale of the investment required.*

1. Green/ Open Spaces. The creation of new green/ open spaces and preservation of existing open spaces is a priority within the neighbourhood development plan and continues to be a priority for residents. There is a case for a wholesale review of the green spaces in this ward, to improve their quality and amenity, to consider whether there are existing open spaces that could be made greener, or private open spaces that could be opened up. Specific suggestions were made about:

- Improving West End Green to make it more attractive to sit on the benches and the grass and for children to play
- Improving the play area/ sports pitches on the Lithos Road estate
- Tidying up the green space outside West Hampstead library
- Improvements to Sumatra Road and Iverson Road Open Spaces – including consideration of whether these should be locked at night to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Improvements to Kilburn Grange Park, which is used by many West Hampstead residents, particularly public toilets and greater surveillance of the MUGA area.
- Improvements to Maygrove Road Peace Park, where much of the original peace infrastructure is now overgrown and no longer visible.

2. Tackling litter, fly-tipping and waste collection. Concern about rubbish and recycling is the top issue reported to us. There should be a review of the effectiveness of the additional education and enforcement officer capacity funded by CIL, now that one year has been completed. Over 80% of residents said that they had seen no improvement in rubbish collection on the high streets in the last year and over 1/3rd of residents who responded to our survey named a specific spot where flytipping or dumping of rubbish was a concern for them.

3. Health Services. There was widespread concern about access to health services, in the context of the ever-increasing number of residents in the area, and access to local GP services. This is another priority area within the Neighbourhood Plan. While the O2 centre development, if approved, might lead to additional health facilities, this will take many years to come on stream, and a review of provision is needed now.

4. Community Safety. This was the other top area of concern reported to us, including locations of drug-dealing, street drinking, rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour such as urinating in public and littering. A number of crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots were cited to us. These will be familiar to the Community Safety team as they are raised frequently at Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings. CIL funding offers the opportunity to take some proactive “design out crime” action. Concerns include:

- Billy Fury Way (at the corner behind Nido, and at the access to the Lithos Road estate)
- Finchley Road underpass and the area around Finchley Road, a rough sleeping hotspot

- Blackburn Road – leading to Billy Fury Way and by the pedestrian bridge over the tube (Granny Dripping Steps). This is an area cited as an area for improvement in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Iverson Road on the corner with Kilburn High Road (drug dealing, rubbish dumping)
- The telephone boxes on Maygrove Road near the junction with Kilburn High Road (drug dealing, urination and faeces)
- Under the Iverson Road bridge (lights persistently not working and rubbish dumping)
- Outside the Hemstal Road gates to Kilburn Grange Park

5. Pedestrian improvements, especially along West End Lane. Another Neighbourhood Plan priority, this continues to be a concern of residents. A range of specific concerns were reported to us, but a better solution would be a comprehensive review of the pedestrian experience along West End Lane. Specific concerns raised with us included:

- Safer crossing points, including outside the Tube Station, where many people cross directly to get to the shops in West Hampstead Square, or on the shortest route to the Overground
- A pedestrian-controlled crossing at the top of West End Lane on the corner with Finchley Road, which is used by a lot of children on their way to school
- Motorcycles parked on the pavements
- A-boards outside the shops, restricting access for those with wheelchairs or pushchairs
- Rubbish bags on the pavements at all times of day

6. Cycling infrastructure. It was noted that the NW6 area has had less improvement to cycling infrastructure than other parts of the borough, with West End Lane itself having an intermittent cycle lane painted on, and no physical protection for cyclists. Specific ideas put forward were for more cycle hangars, and use of space on council land (for example estate car parks) for cycle storage. There were also suggestions for better monitoring of the usage of the existing cycle hangars, with some having been broken into and no longer secure, and others with empty spaces because people who had booked a space had now moved out of the area.

7. Community centres, especially those providing support to vulnerable people. There are three community centres in the West Hampstead area providing food support as a result of Covid/Cost of Living crisis (Sherriff Centre, JW3, Sidings). These have benefited from CIL funding in the past and this is considered an important use of future CIL funding.

8. Consultation with residents. Finally, a number of individual residents and residents' groups have said they would like a greater say in decisions about local CIL in West Hampstead. As far as we are aware, there has been no consultation by ward councillors with the Neighbourhood Development Forum, or local residents' associations, as part of the local CIL consultation process. With nearly £1m potentially available over the next four years, this is a significant amount of public money to be decided upon by ward councillors without any consultation. A number of the proposals above (review of green open spaces, review of the pedestrian experience, review of the cycling infrastructure in NW6) are areas where the likely availability of significant amounts of funding means a strategic approach to the use of local CIL could be taken, and where engagement with active residents and interest groups would be welcome.

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