

Minutes of the SGTO New Homes Network

Held on Wednesday 3rd November 2021

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Summary of actions agreed

Action: Jack to draft a Consultation Charter in collaboration with Cris and Harps, using these minutes. It will then be fed back to the New Homes Network for amendments. After amendment, it will be presented to the Council.

Action: Jack to circulate the email addresses of Michael Scorer and Stuart Davis to the Network.

Action: Jack to contact Damian to gain a clearer idea of what role of the Housing Scrutiny Commission could play in helping us achieve our objectives.

Action: Jack to approach Damian and ask for information on the call-in process, which can be shared with Network members.

Action: Damian to research what would happen to a planning application if an independent structural engineer reported that it would be unsafe to pursue, and report back to the Network.

Action: Damian to email Juliet Seymour with questions regarding the training of surveyors of rooftop home extensions.

Welcome and apologies

Jack noted apologies from Sam Jones, Nick Flower, Ulrike Steven, Tom Lloyd, and Lara Daniel. Jack noted the attendance of Councillor Damian O’Brien, and SGTO Chair Cris Claridge.

Key strategies to consider: Poor consultation, and safety

Jack stressed the need to discuss new homes consultations on estates, and how in some cases this had been unsatisfactory.

Lucy Hancock (Co-Chair, Clifton TRA) mentioned that her TRA had put in a freedom of information (FOI) request to the Council, asking for more information on their

phone consultation of the Estate's residents. They had not heard back yet. Lucy mentioned there were no minutes from conversations council officials had had with residents. The TRA has found through their counter-consultation that the Council are false in their assessment that residents are responding positively to new homes proposals on the Estate. In the Resident Project Group, the TRA are bringing up the issue of poor engagement and communication on the Estate. The TRA have engaged Councillor Peter Babudu in the issue of poor consultation at Clifton. He agrees that consultation on the Estate is not satisfactory, and has said so in writing.

Sheila Taylor (Chair, Cherry Garden TRA) said that in North Bermondsey the community were meant to be consulted on two separate issues but this did not happen. The Council stated they sent 1,000 letters to residents about a section of the Thames Path – a lot of people did not receive these. A playground is being developed on George Row, with Section 106 money. The Council said they sent letters to those in the surrounding area, but these people said they did not receive them. There were consultation meetings on the playground, but it is difficult to keep people informed.

Simon Bevan (Lsborough and Scovell TRA) mentioned that consultation questions on infill on the Lancaster Estate were quite leading. For example: "do you agree that there should be more housing in Southwark?" Simon was concerned that people answering yes to this question might be misconstrued by the Council as people supporting infill and rooftop homes. Looking at a previous Council document from June 2020 that announced the Council's intention to go ahead with the scheme on the Lancaster Estate, the Council used residents' agreement on generic points (i.e. the need for more housing) to imply that 65% of people supported infill and rooftop developments on the Estate. When Simon gained more specific data from the Council via an FOI request, only 5% of residents could feasibly be said to support the project, and 25% of residents had mixed responses. The TRA did their own petition and could not find anyone who was supportive of the scheme. There is gap between the consultation itself and the information being provided to the Council. The Council commissioned the Arup report on the safety and economic cost of building rooftop homes, and then a few sentences were selected from this document to be shown to councillors. This gave the impression of the report supporting rooftop homes but in actual fact, it said the opposite. There is a lack of control of what information Council officers are putting in their reports. Simon Bevan raised this issue with Leo Pollak and later Stephanie Cryan. Simon mentioned that if he, in his own work, presented false information to the Board, he would be fired. Simon hoped that Councillor O'Brien could inform members about how the consultation process works in Southwark.

Cris Claridge asked that when the Council consults with Council tenants, how much liaison do they have with the TRAs? Cris mentioned that basic elements of a consultation, including the wording of questions, should be decided in consultation with the TRA on a particular estate.

Lucy mentioned that in Clifton Estate, the Council called residents, but they did not go to the TRA.

Cris was concerned that such phone calls would make it easier for the Council to frame questions in a particular way. The Council should work with the TRA to develop questions that are fair.

Jack stressed the need for TRAs to be involved in this process, as the elected voice of residents on an estate.

Amanda Johansson (Chair, Lindley TRA) mentioned that at Bells Gardens, the consultation literature contained leading language, misleading data, and cherry-picked information from the resident project group. The Council sent around a 'you said, we did' factsheet, but they cherry-picked information that reflected well on them, rather than addressing resident concerns. The application went back to Planning Committee three times because the Council were not consulting people properly. There was also a lack of transparency – the Council door-knocked and called residents, but they did not respond to resident requests about the questions they were using. The Council have also not outlined the percentage of people they need to engage. 14 residents turned up to a joint project group meeting for Bells Gardens and Lindley Estates – these two estates cover between 800 and 900 households. The majority of these 14 people were already taking part in the resident project group. The TRA challenged the Council on the fact that their engagement was not working. The Council responded that they had done enough in fulfilling the legal requirement of handing out notices. It is a £50 million development – residents must be engaged. The Housing Department tends to approach TRAs first, often with misleading information about the site. Residents are then invited onto the resident project group.

Sheila said that in seven years of running a TRA, she has never been asked for the TRA's view in any kind of consultation. It could be said that relevant developments in housing have not occurred in her TRA's area, but a few years ago there were rumours of rooftop homes in Cherry Garden. But rumours were not addressed by the Council. People active in TRAs are more involved and informed, but they are only engaged on paper, and not in reality.

Sam Vacciana (Chair, Gaywood TRA) said that we have all had different experiences of rooftop homes. In the Gaywood Estate, consultations were mailed out during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Notices were tied to lampposts too, but resident engagement was low. Councillor Pollak spoke to the TRA at a long meeting, but only 10 or 12 residents were there, not necessarily representing the whole estate. But it is difficult to get a wide range of people to TRA meetings. There are people on the estate in desperate housing need who welcome new housing development on the estate. The TRA speak to the Council constantly – a structural survey started on the estate with only two days' notice.

Amanda mentioned that Leo Pollak also visited Lindley. His contribution was leading and he was unclear about what takes precedence for the Council. Amanda criticised how Leo Pollak stepped into a resident meeting after missing at least six meetings beforehand and then not returning again. Residents need access to impact surveys. On Lindley, the TRA supports the development, but the Bells TRA opposes the proposed development on their estate. What's built must match housing need. On Lindley, 3 and 4 bedroom houses are needed, but these are not necessarily going to be built. The Council don't necessarily need to build more 1 and 2 bedroom properties on Lindley.

Cris outlined the need for the Council to work with TRAs to draft the original consultation questions put to residents. Questions must represent resident needs and consultation must be conducted fairly. When the answers come back, the TRA must sit down with the Council to interpret the answers.

Pascale (Dunlop Place) mentioned that there had been a lot of telephone consultation on her estate, but a lot of people on the estate may not speak English as a first language and would not have an interpreter to help them. Similarly, people with learning difficulties may struggle to interpret some of the questions being asked. Pascale used the example of her own daughter, who has speech and language difficulties. While she is articulate on the surface, she may have difficulties understanding questions put to her. TRAs have to be involved as they are the bridge between the Council and vulnerable groups of people. Not all new homes developments are safe and secure, and in a majority of new homes developments in Southwark, 3 and 4 bedroom homes are not being proposed, yet these are most needed.

Jack said that Cris' point around the sequencing of when consultation takes place was similar to a point Sam Jones raised with Michael Scorer and Stuart Davis previously.

Sam Vacciana agreed with Cris, stating that the TRAs know best when it comes to consulting their own residents, and the Council needs to talk to them.

Liba Hoskin (Alvey TRA) said that on the Kingston Estate, leaflets were delivered that encouraged residents to share their opinions online, but a lot of people on the estate are not familiar with communicating online. There was a lack of engagement, and meetings organised by the Council were ignored. At one meeting residents were present, but the Council posed leading questions, such as 'do you support social housing?' Agreeing with this does not mean you want to see housing built on your greenspace.

Amanda mentioned that this issue of inconsistent and misleading consultation was raised with Leo Pollak earlier this year. The Project Manager on Lindley said the residents had an overall positive experience of the consultation, but then on Bells the resident project group felt gaslighted, and people boycotted the meetings.

Notice boards are being placed across the borough, but the Council seem to cherry-pick which estates they put these notices in.

Jack noted a lot of common issues between estates around poor consultations. He said that the TRAs not talking about this are perhaps TRAs who have had more positive experiences, or ones which are unable to access meetings such as these. Jack noted that perhaps there are differences across Southwark's estates when it comes to consultation over new homes.

Cris asked the group what can be done on this issue. Cris mentioned that this Network could devise a consultation charter, stating what resident expect from consultations, which they could take to Michael Scorer and Stuart Davis.

Liba said that residents must have the opportunity to object if the Council's plans are not reasonable. Councillor Kieron Williams committed before that the Council will not infill on estates where there was resident opposition, but it does not appear like he is following his own words.

Jack stressed that the SGTO could record resident concerns independently and take them to the Council.

Harps (Planning Solicitor, Southwark Law Centre - SLC) mentioned that the SLC do a lot of work around consultations, looking at whether or not they meet legal requirements, such as those stated in the Equality Act. Harps has put a document on this into the Google Drive, and would like to be involved in this. The Council have a statement of community involvement, but by law it is meant to be updated every five years (it has not been updated in nearly ten years). This Statement covers how the Council should consult the public on all types of planning applications. The Council is not leading by example if it does not specify how it will consult on council housing development, and they have not updated the statement of community involvement. These issues connect with the idea of a consultation charter mentioned here.

Jack stressed that himself, Cris and Harps should meet to discuss this, and he invited further stories and experiences from members that could feed into the charter. He asked if there are any objections to going forward with devising this charter and presenting it to the Council. No objections were recorded.

Action: Jack to draft a Consultation Charter in collaboration with Cris and Harps, using these minutes. It will then be fed back to the New Homes Network for amendments. After amendment, it will be presented to the Council.

Deputation to Council Assembly Wednesday 24th November: what key messages and demands will we take and how can we best convey these?

Jack explained the format of Council Assembly, mentioning that we need six people on the deputation from the New Homes Network. The Consultation Charter could feed into our deputation speech, in addition to points we are making around safety concerns and disruption caused by rooftop homes (Jack cited Chilton Grove as an

example). Jack opened the floor to feedback from members on the points they would like to see us raise at Council Assembly. Jack also invited people to volunteer to be part of our deputation. He mentioned that it is unlikely audiences will be allowed on the day, so the only people present from the SGTO will be the deputation.

Harps mentioned that we could present material from the previous discussion as evidence at Council Assembly. Harps said that it is important for us to have 'clear asks' of councillors present at Assembly, putting them on the spot. We could ask councillors to adopt the consultation charter we will be writing up.

Jack emphasised that Cabinet Members, including the Cabinet Member for Council Housing (Councillor Stephanie Cryan), will be present at Council Assembly.

Harps asked for Councillor O'Brien to explain how the opposition group might be able to help us at Council Assembly.

Pascale agreed with Harps that many of the issues raised at this meeting were common across many estates. Pascale said that looking at infill, building on greenspace and densification would be a good idea, as well as looking at rooftop homes. In the context of COP26, we need to think about sustainable development. Each estate is highly specific in its needs. There is a huge push to get developments through planning committee. Slippers Place is going through planning committee this month. Little Dodson is going through in December, and Sceaux Gardens has already gone through, along with Bells Gardens. These estates are being pushed through planning committee in advance of local elections in May 2022. The proposals for the Vauban Estate have been retracted.

Damian mentioned that a statement of community involvement went out to consultation last year. Damian and Councillor Adele Morris worked together on completing this, but they were told that because of Coronavirus the consultation on the statement had been delayed. Damian said that after we make the deputation, we will receive a reply from Councillor Stephanie Cryan. The minutes from Council Assembly will be publicly available, and Stephanie Cryan can be held to account on any commitment she makes at Council Assembly. The role of the opposition is to scrutinise the Council and ask piercing questions, putting Cabinet on the spot. Damian mentioned that there is a broad spectrum of abilities when it comes to TRAs – some have a more social focus, but others are more engaged in political processes. This means it can be a mixed bag when engaging them in consultation. Damian mentioned the Council's Housing Scrutiny Commission, which he may be the Vice Chair of in the near future. The chair of the Commission is Councillor Gavin Edwards. Damian believes it is important to consult TRAs on rooftop and infill developments on their estates, and that we should approach Gavin Edwards to see if the Commission can be involved in this process.

Amanda said that Councillor Ali had been helpful in past Council Assemblies. Amanda mentioned that the TRA had told Councillor Ali what points they would raise so that the opposition could frame their question in tandem with the TRA.

Tanya said that at Council Assembly, Yes 2 Fair Redevelopment is having a protest, beginning at Spa Gardens and then walking to Tooley Street. The protest will continue once the deputations have gone into the building. Tanya said those present who are not on the New Homes Network deputation would be very welcome in the protest. Tanya raised the fact that the Lib Dems had put in a motion that included protection for greenspace on estates, but Labour proposed a wrecking amendment that got rid of this aspect of the motion. The amended motion was later adopted by the Council. Tanya wondered whether the Lib Dems might want to return to Council Assembly with other motions on topics such as rooftop developments, infill, or building on council estates in general.

Cris made it clear that she would not be speaking at the Yes 2 Fair Redevelopment protest.

Amanda mentioned that the Pandemic has shown us the importance of being able to trust those in power. Trust in the Council has been eroded through poor consultation, so it is worth us talking about the impact this erosion has. Amanda mentioned that the Council had gaslighted TRAs for over three years, with their views being ignored. There is an issue of engagement on estates – people have been complaining about leaks and repairs for years, yet nothing has been done. As a consequence, residents do not have confidence that they will be listened to, making engagement impossible. This is impacting on resident wellbeing. This has to be considered in the deputation.

Jennifer Quinton-Chelley (Clifton Estate) asked whether Council Assembly will be available for viewing on YouTube, and if so, whether the sound quality would be adequate.

Simon Bevan said that the delivery of consultation questions to residents is poor. Data gathered from the consultation is misinterpreted, and this misinterpreted data is used as the basis for Council decisions. Simon said that Council officers are not acting in good faith, and that councillors are regularly being lied to. There must be more rigorous control of how data is used and interpreted before the Council bases decisions off this data.

Sam Vacciana mentioned that the repairs team are only doing emergency repairs – council tenants feel abandoned. Some housing officers are better than others. There is a question as to whether or not Council officials know what is happening on the ground. Sam said that she wants Michael Scorer and Stuart Davis to attend one of the Gaywood Estate TRA meetings, reminding those present that they had offered to attend individual TRA meetings. Sam suggested that COVID-19 and the increase in homeworking had been used as an excuse by some council officials to not address repairs and other issues with sufficient speed.

Jack agreed to share their contact email addresses, and also mentioned that in spite of follow-ups, he had not heard again from Michael and Stuart, in spite of them agreeing to answer our remaining questions in writing.

Cris stressed the need for six people to go onto our deputation. She said that we should confirm these six people by the end of this meeting. It would not come across well if we cannot get six people. Cris suggested that some people may find it difficult to get to Tooley Street, yet she did say even if people attend and do not speak, their attendance in the deputation is important. These six people have to be representatives of TRAs.

Jack agreed with Cris that a strong deputation is essential. He said that those volunteering don't necessarily have to give a long speech. Jack encouraged people to come forward and that people interested can email him if they have questions. Jack also encouraged people to promote the deputation to other people on their TRAs.

Cris said ideally we need people on the deputation to volunteer tonight/as soon as possible. The day before Council Assembly there is a Housing Scrutiny Meeting, also at Tooley Street.

Amanda said that a representative from Lindley or Bells Gardens TRAs will attend, but may not speak and act as a support in terms of numbers.

Liba asked who is on the deputation.

Jack responded that Ulrike Steven (Unwin TRA), Nick Flower (Southampton Way TRA) and now a representative from Bells Gardens or Lindley TRAs. He said we still have three places left.

Action: Jack to circulate the email addresses of Michael Scorer and Stuart Davis to the Network.

Action: Jack to contact Damian to gain a clearer idea of what role of the Housing Scrutiny Commission could play in helping us achieve our objectives.

Councillor Damian O'Brian: how can we work with councillors to achieve our goals? How can we bend the ear of the Council on rooftop homes?

Liba asked whether all those on the Council's planning committee have to read all the comments and objections on a planning application before coming to a decision?

Damian said it was a mixed bag. He said there is a briefing meeting beforehand, where councillors get together with officers to discuss the planning application. Councillors can ask a wide range of questions here, not necessarily related to planning policy (which councillors have to strictly stick to at the actual committee meeting). Some of the officers submit massive reports – up to 400 or 500 pages. Damian tends to go straight to key points, including objections.

Damian mentioned that the National Planning Policy Framework, the London Plan, and the Southwark Plan are the three tiers of planning policy which a planning application must be compliant with. Planning applications have to be assessed according to harm vs. benefit. This is a judgement call to be made by the planning committee – the officers are more concerned with policy compliance. A planning committee is like a jury at a trial – common sense people asking common sense questions.

Amanda asked what we might expect from councillors. She asked if councillors have a common expectation when it comes to the quality of consultations. Amanda mentioned that at planning committee, councillors did not raise the objections they had received from Bells Gardens residents. They acknowledged activism but did not set out objections. The TRA was disappointed that they did not acknowledge the objections of those who had elected them.

Damian said that these objections were summarised in the report. Damian said an application can be refused on policy grounds, but it cannot be blocked because councillors or residents don't like it. If councillors refuse something not based on policy, the applicant can take it to a Government Inspectorate, who can overturn the refusal and award costs to the Council. A Council official will talk to councillors and ensure they are on very 'solid ground' if they do object. Damian said the process is not democratic "in any way, shape or form." Damian said that with Bells Gardens, the application did not breach planning policy, so councillors could not object.

Amanda asked how ward councillors can be seen to be listening to the concerns of their residents. How can they acknowledge that residents are objecting to the planning applications that are being passed?

Tanya reiterated her question on whether the Lib Dems planned any motions against rooftop or infill homes for Council Assembly.

Damian said that they already put in a motion on infilling and greenspace – they have to wait until at least 6 months to submit an objection on the same theme. In terms of rooftop developments – Damian says the Lib Dem group needs to meet to discuss how they can oppose these. Damian said rooftop homes can cause a lot of problems for existing residents and also for the borough as a whole in terms of costs, delivery and value for money. There are some estates where existing derelict land could be built on without impacting existing residents, but this is not the case with all estates. The party does not support infill and certainly does not support rooftop homes. Damian had a one-to-one meeting with Michael Scorer, who had some concerns over rooftop homes. Damian said the Lib Dem group need to sit down and agree what their policy is going to be.

Cris queried why Damian couldn't call a meeting of the Lib Dem group to agree a policy before Council Assembly on 24th November. Cris didn't see a case for rooftop homes when so many residents oppose them. Cris said his answer was a cop-out. Cris was concerned that if the issue is not raised at this Council Assembly, we will

have to wait another quarter. Cris noted that it is unlikely that a Lib Dem motion would pass anyway, but it is important to get the motion across.

Damian mentioned that the 4th November is the deadline for submitting motions to Council Assembly. Damian said he would bring it up with his group but that he is not their chair, so cannot dictate their direction.

Simon Bevan echoed Cris – most of the rooftop homes will be going to planning committee between December and March - the Lib Dem group don't have much time to formulate a policy.

Damian said because rooftop homes are considered to be minor applications, most will be decided by delegated authority – meaning officers, rather than councillors will make the decision. Damian advised those present to get their ward councillor to call in an application. This takes at least two councillors, one of which has to be your ward councillor (ideally both of them should be your ward councillors). Whether or not it is a minor application determines which planning sub-committee it is taken to. Councillor Martin Seaton, the Chair of Planning, has recently changed the rules. If two councillors call an application in, it goes to a sub-committee, who decide whether or not there is a policy reason for it being called in.

Simon Bevan asked that Damian share this process with Jack, who can share it with the Network.

Damian stressed that he would do whatever he can to represent resident concerns, and he is surprised that other councillors don't seem to do this. Damian gave the example of Michael Scorer – he said the best way to get in contact with him is via highlighting an issue with a ward councillor, who can talk to Michael Scorer (who is obliged to listen to councillors). If Michael oversees a staff member who looks after the relevant area, it will be sent to them.

Simon Bevan mentioned that his local councillors are also opposition councillors, so this may perhaps make it more likely they will raise an issue.

Cris said that if residents are struggling to get their councillors to help them, then get the SGTO to help them get in contact. Cris said that Michael Scorer got back to the SGTO quickly.

Damian said that every councillor receives a weekly list of planning applications that have been approved in their area. Damian goes through this and flags things that may be contentious. Each councillor should keep an eye on this.

Liba said that the councillors would not even answer a single letter sent by the estate on infill development and Councillor Martin Seaton refused to accept a petition from residents. Liba asked why residents would go to Michael Scorer.

Damian said that if Liba gets completely stuck to email him. Damian stated that as Michael Scorer is Director of Housing, he has a wide remit with regards to new homes.

Liba asked whether Michael could call off an application before it goes to Planning Committee.

Damian confirmed that this is not possible. Planning Officers have to compare the application to planning policy, and an application cannot be stopped on a subjective basis. Damian mentioned that after seven years, the New Southwark Plan is coming out now it has passed its examination in public. For Rooftop and Infill new homes developments, the applicant is generally Southwark Council itself, so it would probably not take itself to appeal if the application is turned down, but the application must still be policy compliant.

Jack mentioned that on 1st December Planning aid for London will be hosting a training session on planning policy. Jack stated that while the planning process does seem opaque, the SGTO want to try and make it accessible if it can.

Simon Bevan mentioned how the Arup report explains which buildings are and are not suitable for rooftop homes. If the block is built before 1970 and the Ronan Point Collapse, it would not have been designed with disproportionate collapse in mind. Simon mentioned a recent collapse of a building in Miami as an example. Simon stated that most of the council housing stock in Southwark was built in the 1960s out of reinforced concrete and brick, and it is not appropriate for rooftop homes. Simon encouraged Damian to meet with the author of the Arup report so he could confirm this lack of suitability and the dangerous nature of building rooftop homes on pre-1970 blocks.

Damian said the block he lives in is an ex-Council block originally built in 1956, and made of brick. It also has a flat roof, making Damian worry the Council might want to build on it at a future point.

Simon said the block he lives in is a yellow-brick four storey block from a similar period. The floorplates are reinforced concrete and not always connected to the walls, posing a possible safety issue if rooftop homes are constructed there.

Sam Vacciana asked whether Damian believes rooftop homes are unsafe.

Damian said he couldn't say, but as part of the planning process, they would need a structural inspection. Planning applications are made on the basis of all of those blocks meeting regulatory requirements. The Council has to assume they are safe if the surveyor has not identified issues. Damian clarified he himself is not qualified to come to a conclusion on the safety of building rooftop homes on these blocks.

Sam Vacciana asked whether Damian had faith in the structural surveyors' ability to determine safety.

Damian said you have to have faith in qualified people. He didn't see a reason for the Council wanting to put people's lives in danger.

Liba asked whether, in light of the Council's need to address the climate emergency, a planning application could be rejected on the basis of it reducing greenspace.

Damian confirmed that CO2 emissions and greenspace are both policy issues. 10 square metres per property should be devoted to private amenity space. Playspace must be available. Sometimes, if an application cannot provide these, the Council may take a payment in lieu. CO2 emissions come under Part L of the London Plan, setting a minimum 35% reduction in CO2 emissions from buildings. All recent successful applications in Southwark have demonstrated a 50% reduction or above. This will increase over time. The Council now has an £8 million grant to install more sustainable pipes.

Liba asked about the residents – a payment in lieu from the Council will not solve the adverse health affects of losing greenspace. Is this OK?

Damian clarified that he was simply outlining how the process works.

Jack posed a question on behalf of Jennifer. What would happen if an independent structural engineer reported the rooftop home extensions were unsafe? What impact would this have on planning?

Damian clarified that planning permission would not be given. Building control would be brought in, who are the arbiters of fire safety and structural integrity. Damian emphasised that we shouldn't hold him to this for certain, as he had not been through this process before, but he can find out more about this process if that would be helpful.

Amanda stated that the London Plan commitment on 10 square metres of amenity space does not apply to infill development. You only need to prove that new residents in the infill homes would have this 10 square metres, but you do not have to do the same for existing residents in the Estate. This disadvantages existing residents. Amanda said that good policy is about looking ahead and thinking about what needs to be achieved, not merely whether something is compliant. This is particularly true in relation to the Climate Emergency. In relation to the safety of rooftop homes, would surveyors be trained to spot safety issues within new methods of construction that might be new for Southwark Council?

Damian mentioned that Juliet Seymour is the Head of Building Control at Southwark Council. Damian has posed the question of how infill developments can be compliant with the need to provide 10 square metres per person of amenity space to residents. The response Damian received did not satisfy him. Damian agreed with the importance of greenspace for both physical and mental health.

Amanda asked whether the opposition will continue to challenge the Council's record on the Climate Emergency.

Damian said that all councillors voted to adopt a motion on the climate emergency in March 2019.

Action: Jack to approach Damian and ask for information on the call-in process, which can be shared with Network members.

Action: Damian to research what would happen to a planning application if an independent structural engineer reported that it would be unsafe to pursue, and report back to the Network.

Action: Damian to email Juliet Seymour with questions regarding the training of surveyors of rooftop home extensions.

Any Other Business

Jack mentioned that the next few weeks would be busy, with Council Assembly on 24th November and Planning Policy training on 1st December. Jack said that a separate meeting of those who want to volunteer for the Council Assembly deputation will have to be arranged, but Jack said it might be a good idea to have another New Homes Network meeting in two weeks-time (Wednesday 17th November). No objections to this were recorded so Jack confirmed that we will have a meeting on this date. Although no volunteers for chairing this came forward at the meeting.

Jack thanked everybody for attending and reiterated the need to get more people together for our Council Assembly deputation.