

Informal Meeting Notes for Council Debate 20/9/12
Regarding the Proposed Closure of Wanstead Police Station

There was much cross party support for the petition [over 3,500 signatures collected] and the petition request: "I wish that the present building of Wanstead Police Station be retained in its current role and upgraded in order that it can continue its focal role in our community," was passed unanimously.

The debate lasted about 40 minutes and about 14 councillors spoke.

Cllr Athwal, the leader of the Labour Group put a Business Motion forward:

"In recognition of the crucial role our local Police Stations play in the community, and widespread concern that several may be earmarked to for closure under the current Metropolitan Police property review, this Council resolves:

To support residents' campaigns in Wanstead and elsewhere to keep Police Stations open;

To ask the Chief Executive to write to the Mayor London, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and the Redbridge Borough Commander, to outline our opposition to the potential closure of local police stations, and to invite them to meet with concerned residents."

The motion was seconded by Cllr Bond, the Leader of the LibDem Group and was passed unanimously at the end of the debate.

Cllr Nolan thanked her fellow councillors for the consensus support and said how successfully she and her fellow Wanstead and Snaresbrook councillors had worked with local resident associations, leading to a successful Area One Committee with guest speakers John Cryer MP, Roger Evans GLA member, Spt Hill Acting Redbridge Commander and Keith Prince, Leader of the Council. She repeated the request that a public consultation be sought.

Cllr Wilson told how the issue of the Wanstead Police Station closure had come up repeatedly, showing a map which indicated that petition signatures had come in from all over the Wanstead area.

Cllr Hoskins said that a survey had been done on crime with residents in South Woodford. 48% of people were fearful of crime although only 1 1/2 % had been burgled or attacked in the street. People should not be in fear of crime, more effective policing is needed.

Cllr Hayes pointed out that the 2 police stations which would probably be proposed as remaining, Ilford and Barkingside, were already overstretched in seeing the public, with long queues being common. Current provision is inadequate and with the rising birth rate, more, not less policing is needed. He mentioned the situation regarding the shortage of schools in Redbridge.

Cllr Huggett said that Area 2 had repeatedly asked for reassurance but no information has been forthcoming, they are waiting for the review to be completed.

Cllr Cole suggested that if needed, could there be a partnership between the Met and the Council to use other community infrastructure buildings.

Cllr Streeting said that it is concerning that not only the public are being kept in the dark but that Commander Williams was too. He felt that there ought to be more cuts in the back office in enable police to capture more criminals. He added that support was also being received from Iain Duncan Smith MP and Lee Scott MP, who was now parliame

Today, I shall e mail the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Planning and Enforcement, asking that the Council follow up on the legislation which makes it the Met's statutory duty to consult with the public before any policing plans are made - details in my talk which is attached.

Roger Evans has offered to present the petition to the Mayor's office, so I shall set about getting the signature sheets be retrieved in order that he can do so.

regards,

Helen Zammett