

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

COUNCIL MEETING – 29 JUNE 2011

Question by: Ms Alexandra Kennaugh

To the: The Leader

QUESTION

“What is Council the doing in the short- and long-term to oppose the proposed Thames Water super sewer site in south Fulham, which will lead to (1) a significant degradation in local air quality for all residents and school children in south Fulham, not only from the site and but also from increased traffic congestion related to the site—for a decade, (2) a decline in existing residential and commercial property values, as well as the opportunity cost of future residential and commercial development on the proposed site, and (3) the permanent loss of existing quality of life in south Fulham punctuated by the permanent scar of the venting column, more commonly known as the stink pipe?”

ANSWER

The Council is vehemently opposed to the use of Carnwath Road as the main construction site - but we are also questioning whether the scheme is needed at all.

The more I learn about the Thames Tunnel the more I become concerned and the more I believe there are better alternatives.

Last week we heard from the Chief Executive of Thames Water that the £3.6 billion cost was an 'indicative 2008 price tag and the cost will almost certainly increase'.

I do not think we should ask Thames Water customers to effectively write a blank cheque when there has not been proper scrutiny of possible alternatives to a 20-mile tunnel.

On a visit to Chicago I learned what other world cities are doing - increasingly there is a realisation that a tunnel alone cannot be the only answer. We also need longer term environmental solutions to stop storm water from entering the sewage system which is the main reason why we have sewage overflow. For example, Cleveland is spending \$600m on a tunnel and \$1bn on green infrastructure such as permeable pavements, some of which is retro-fitted leading to significant community improvements, but most of which is simply linked to the planning system. For example, if you are going to build a basketball court they

make sure it has a permeable surface. Cleveland will also see a significant number of new trees which play a major role in capturing rain fall.

Of course green infrastructure would not increase Thames Water's asset base which is why we need proper scrutiny and accountability before a decision is made that will not only bring 10 years of major disruption to South Fulham when it may not be needed but it will also add to Thames Water customers a life sentence of at least £80-£100 per year price hike in their bills.

In conclusion we will continue to campaign against Carnwath Road being used - if it has to go anywhere it should be on open land not near houses - and we will continue to pose very serious questions about whether this is the right scheme at all.