

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

COUNCIL MEETING – 23 JULY 2014

Question by: Lance Pierson

To: The Leader of the Council

QUESTION

“Can the Leader of the Council summarise what he has done since becoming Leader to continue the Council’s opposition to the Thames Tideway Tunnel?”

ANSWER

I commissioned a report from Council Officials about the Carnwath Road site being used as a potential permanent site for the Fulham Boys School (FBS) instead of the Thames Tideway Tunnel. Hammersmith and Fulham Council has freehold interest in the Carnwath Road site.

On 9 July I met with the Rt Hon Greg Hands MP for Chelsea and Fulham, and officials from the Council and the Department of Education (DfE). I suggested to Mr Hands that we join forces to encourage the government and the London Mayor to seriously consider the Carnwath Road site as a permanent site for FBS. I suggested we make representations to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the DfE together. Greg Hands declined.

Later, on 9 July I met with Lord Nash the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools at the DfE, Greg Hands, DfE and Council Officials to discuss the future of FBS. I offered the Carnwath Road Site and suggested this should at least should be in the government’s considerations and open a dialogue with the DCLG and London Mayor. This was declined.

It is the Council’s view that a school at Carnwath Road would be a far more appropriate use than a tunnel excavation which would heap misery on thousands of local residents for years to come. The Government should instead use open land over the river at Barn Elms for the tunnel, which would be far less disruptive to people’s lives.

Prior to this the Council participated in a six month examination into the Thames Tideway Tunnel application which closed on 12 March 2014. The examination ran for 6 months and included hearings and allowed interested parties to make formal submissions to the Planning Inspectorate. During the six month examination, the Council gave oral evidence at 20 of the 48 formal examination hearings and made 10 formal submissions including a Local Impact Report. Each submission made to the Planning Inspectorate identified areas of concern and potential detrimental impacts on the borough, concentrating on the inappropriate selection of Carnwath Road Riverside as a main drive site and the significant impacts that would be felt by the residents and community in the South Fulham Area in terms of noise, traffic, odour and disruption for a prolonged period of time.

Following 6 months of examination, it is firmly the Council's view that Carnwath Road Riverside is not the best available site for a main tunnel drive site.

Today I met with Council officers and senior executives at Thames Water to lobby against the use of the Carnwath Road site.

I fully endorse the Council's position at the recent examination in public, robustly opposing the use of Carnwath Road. But had I been in office, greater efforts would have been made much earlier in defending Carnwath Road from the imposition of massive unjustified disruption and environmental damage despite the presence of the readily available alternative site originally put forward by Thames Water themselves at Barn Elms.

The previous Administration and the local MP were too busy attacking Thames Water and feeding a massive publicity campaign against the project as a whole to spot that they were being outflanked by politicians south of the river.