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Date: Wed, Aug 30, 2017 at 3:29 PM  
Subject: Old Oak Neighbourhood Plan Area Application Designation  
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Dear Cabinet Member,

I am writing on behalf of the Hammersmith Society in relation to the item Old Oak Neighbourhood Plan Area Application Designation at the next Cabinet Meeting on 4 September.

The Hammersmith Society is in favour of the proposed Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum and eventual Neighbourhood Plan. You have received detailed comments from the Old Oak Interim Neighbourhood Forum dated 28 August , and I will not repeat those points here other than to say we support their comments. I would like to emphasise the following:

A decision to refuse the Neighbourhood Forum should await decision by the OPDC Planning Committee and OPDC Board on 6 and 12 September. The OPDC is the lead authority, and the LBHF officer's report does not explain what the OPDC are proposing and the OPDC does not explain what H&F is proposing. It is essential there should be "joined up" decision making.

In the officer's report the Hammersmith Society is not listed among respondents, despite the fact that we wrote on 13 June 2017 in support of the proposals, copying our response to planning officers and to Cllr Harcourt . We have not been able to find on the council's website Appendix B which is stated to have a full list of respondents .

There still seems to be widespread lack of awareness of the scale and impact of the OPDC development, and the impact it will have on neighbouring communities. Failure to support a sound and carefully prepared Neighbourhood Plan, such as we are confident OONF would prepare, will lead to a democratic deficit in the area, where development is already developer-led rather than plan-led. We fail to understand why the Council would reject an initiative (which is legislated for in the Localism Act 2011)

whereby residents have some real say in the future of this massive projected community.

Finally, The officer's report says at 6.3 "*...The Council acknowledges that the OPDC area will have an impact upon the surrounding areas, however, there are other channels for communities and individuals to be involved in the process, such as commenting on the Local Plan process and planning applications, and attending consultation events in the area.*" In response to this statement we point out

- This application is about a Neighbourhood Plan: the Localism Act does not say that the presence of a Local Plan mitigates the grounds for creating a Neighbourhood Plan. The report statement quoted above is irrelevant to the discussion;
- we can say, on the basis of attending numerous consultative events organised by the OPDC in connection with the Local Plan, by developers regarding their own proposals, and by the fantastically hardworking local forum the Grand Union Alliance, that it is absolutely unrealistic to claim that the Local Plan path – which is controlled by a highly structured and pre-planned process - offers a way for communities to materially influence the character of development. Nor does it offer an ongoing forum after the plan text is adopted.

In short, a Neighbourhood Forum is the only way we are aware of to avoid a democratic deficit in the massive planning challenge which is the Old Oak area and we urge Cabinet not to refuse it

Kind regards,

Melanie Whitlock

Vice Chair

The Hammersmith Society

*campaigning for over 50 years*