



OLD OAK NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

NOTES OF A JOINT MEETING WITH THE GRAND UNION ALLIANCE HELD ON OCTOBER 6TH 2020 ON ZOOM.

Attendance: Henry Peterson (adviser), Ewa Cwirco-Godycka (Sec), Theresa Magee, Robin Hayes (GIA), and a further 15 members and associate members of the Forum and GUA. Thanks given to Amanda Souter for hosting the Zoom session and noted that a recording would be made.

1. Notes of meeting on September 8th.

1.1. Minutes noted and no matters arising.

2. Update on HS2 works including the Wells House Road wall

2.1 HS2 had held a meeting for residents and stakeholders on 28th September. This showed proposals for temporary stabilising of the retaining wall in Old Oak Common Lane by the use of 'ground anchors'. John Cox explained the details. Permanent works then due to take place in 2024 subject to further feasibility studies. Impact on rear gardens in Wells House Road will be significant, with outbuildings having to be removed.

2.2. Noted that a further series of S17 applications from HS2 have yet to be submitted to OPDC for decision.

2.3 Chair of the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum reported back on a recent meeting with OPDC on the projects for improvements to the canalside and the pedestrian route from Harrow Road to Willesden Junction. Noted that these 'early activation' projects had been in the system for several years already.

3. OPDC Local Plan and 'modifications'

3.1 HP reported that the expected report to the OPDC Board on Local Plan progress, the 'Western Lands' and the long awaited modifications to the 19.2 version of the Local Plan had not been published as expected. This will be late/urgent item to the October 13th Board meeting.

3.2. The session reviewed slides of what little is known of latest OPDC thinking on the Western Lands. Emma Williamson had advised at the previous meetings that the sites under consideration were on public land, but maps show most of these as HS2 construction compounds until 2026 (now more likely 2028 for completion of station interchange). May be OPDC have negotiated early release of some sites from HS2.

3.3 On density and building heights, noted that densities of 600 units/hectare had been proposed for Old Oak North. These levels likely to be proposed for the Western Lands. LB Ealing had approved a 54 and a 55 storey tower at Portal Way, North Acton (applications delegated from OPDC). These building heights (wholly new to north west London) are now likely to be viewed as a precedent.

3.4 On the resumed Examination in Public, noted that the Inspector would need to rule on the scope of policies and parts of the OPDC area to be reconsidered. A case could be made that the changes to the 19.2 Local Plan are so substantial that many issues will need to be reconsidered.

3.5. Lack of proposals for an 'Eastern Approach' to the station interchange discussed. OPDC CEO report to Board says this major issue was the subject of 'constructive discussions' with HS2. Confirmed that OPDC Planning Committee members had not understood until a Planning Committee in May 2020 that abandonment of plans for Old Oak North meant that there would be no road connection between Scrubs Lane and the Hs2 interchange. The idea that all vehicle access will be via Old Oak Common Lane is seen as unrealistic by local residents, given existing traffic congestion.

Agreed that HP would circulate the OPDC Board report on Local Plan Modifications as soon as it is available, with a commentary.

OPDC had published the consultancy report from Prior + Partners commissioned by the OPDC Delivery Team. The version on the OPDC website at https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/opdc_the_making_of_v3.7.pdf contains no substantive information and no spatial maps or anything resembling a new masterplan for the Wester Lands. Nor does it define the boundary of this 'new area of focus'. JC has contacted OPDC Delivery team to ask if there is any further documentation. Budget for this work was £100,000.

4. OPDC Budget for 2020/21

4.1 Noted that the Mayor's Budget Guidance requires OPDC to make savings of £1m on the OPDC budget, reducing this from £7.8m to £6.8m. CEO report to Board suggested that this could be achieved through forecast underspends, with no staff reductions proposed.

4.2 The London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee will be reviewing the OPDC Budget at its meeting on 14th October. The Committee's session March, which had been due to investigate the HIF saga, had been cancelled but Assembly members are likely to have continued concerns on how OPDC has approached its responsibilities.

4.3 A set of possible questions to suggest to Assembly Members was discussed. Agreed that the most confrontational of these should be raised via routes other than OONF/GUA.

5. News from Ealing

5.1 Cllr Peter Mason has stepped down as Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning & Transformation. Cllr Julian Bell seems to have taken on this portfolio for the time being. This brings some uncertainty over impact on timetable for new LBE Local Plan preparation.

5.2 LBE proposes to set up Community Review Panels and a Design Review Panel. The Council has been one of few London Boroughs without some form of design review process. Community review groups are a model initiated by OPDC.

5.3 Noted that OPDC are recruiting five new members to its own Community Review Group. Deadline October 19th. Details at <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/organisations-we-work/old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation-opdc/opdc-planning/design-review-groups/opdc-community-review-group-old-oak-park-royal>

9.AOB

9.1 There was no other business. The Zoom session meeting closed 19.10 with members agreeing that this online format works well. Next session scheduled for 6pm on Tuesday November 3rd.