**Notes – Grand Union Alliance Meeting 3rd November 2015**

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1. **Response by Peter Farnham to e-mail sent to OPDC Chief Executive Victoria Hills and relevant discussion**

EP provided an update:

* As agreed at the meeting on 07.10.15, an e-mail had been sent to Victoria Hills regarding the failure to involve in discussions on the Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Report and asking that in an attempt to provide a positive solution that (i) a delegation of GUA members have the opportunity to present their concerns to the OPDC Board along with a community based vision for the Local Plan (ii) that OPDC planning officers attend the GUA November meeting and a request that the consultation on the OPDC Local Plan beginning in the second week in January rather than the end of December, so as not to coincide with Christmas and to facilitate good community involvement, but also ensuring that the overall existing timeframe for development of the Local Plan be retained.
* Victoria Hills responded quickly suggesting a meeting with the OPDC Communications and Engagement Team while her team was reviewing the issues highlighted.
* After the closing date of the consultation, 21.10.15, OPDC planning officer Peter Farnham responded (on 23.10.15) to the email to Victoria Hills on and following this agreed to meet with the GUA members. The offer to attend this GUA meeting is a very positive outcome.
* A copy of Peter Farnham’s response was circulated to meeting attendees (and had previously been email out to all on the GUA database.
* The consultation to the first draft of the Local Plan is now to start in January 2016.

**Comments made in following discussion**:

* Many of the GUA members included the community based vision and objectives or variations on this as part of their response to the consultation on the draft Integrated Assessment Scoping Report and also the early work they do on the Local Plan. It is good that we got that early, because they have to respond to it.
* They OPDC is required to consider alternatives. Although the OPDC initially talked of starting Community Champions Group meetings in February (which would indeed have facilitated community engagement in the development of the draft Local Plan this did not happen. The submission of the community based vision and objective document as part of the response to the IIA Scoping Report was an appropriate thing to do – it has place some of the communities preferences on the table and hopefully that might be a focus of debate with the planners – are they going to include these within the draft Local Plan.
* This is all part of a continuum process. The IIA is a tool used to scrutinise the Local Plan as it evolves and it will take 2 years to the finish stage. The IIA Scoping Report is a very important document that will be testing the Local Plan
* It has not been made clear to us if there are recognised members of the community that have been consulted (as suggested in the draft IIA Scoping Report).
* There is enough expertise, interest and local knowledge to help them in their work. It doesn’t seem that this has come together and we need to cultivate that relationship with the OPDC.
* The problem is if the relationship becomes adversarial.
* They dismissed engaging with the wider local community and Peter Farnham’s response that they had asked Amanda and Rahul to respond (about the IIA Scoping Report) on behalf of the community. What kind of support do they get either on the technicalities of such a document or in seeking views from the community? Have Amanda and Rahul received any training in respect of planning policy? What are the expectations being placed on community / business board members in terms of ‘representing’ wider community and business views?
* GUA needs to make sure that community views are somehow positively reflected.
* We need to see the draft Local Plan when is published in January before considering if we do still need a meeting with the OPDC Board.
* We only decided at the previous meeting to suggest presenting to the OPDC Board because they had cancelled the Planning Committee Meeting. The Planning Committee has excellent discussions; they would better if they engaged with us / us with them.
* Peter Farnham refers in this response to the OPDC local meeting of the 12th October. This meeting was not representative - as only 3 people attended and they have not circulated any notes; how are communities going to be informed?
* This meeting was supposed to be about the Statement of Community involvement and not the IIA Scoping Report – but wasn’t. Also, there was only 3 days’ notice for the meeting.
* The OPDC needs to properly consult with communities. They need to set the agenda from now until 2017 informing of the different stages and meetings they are going to hold with the community.
* We should ask for clarification on the various different documents and the process
* We need feedback on what is happening, how things progress and how all the documents fit together.
* Wasn’t this supposed to occur in regular newsletters from Alex Day?
* We should ask what kind of pressures they are receiving.
* Should Alex Day be present at GUA meetings?
* This has been discussed this at previous meeting and while she and planning officers should be invited to GUA meetings, it is important also that community groups to have space first talk through issues and at times come to consensus views.
* LTF co-ordinator offered to put together a briefing on processes of developing planning policy, including the different stages of consultation.
* The OPDC should tell us how they are going to spend the money allocated for community engagement.
* We haven’t been involved in the formative stages. They are going to produce a draft Local Plan and we can comment on it. We are not dealing with the fundamental basis of the plan that we are entitled to be involved with - at a formative stage.
* OPDC is no different to any other planning authority. Actually we have got in by producing our own Visions and Objectives document – but we do want to make sure they consider it.
* There is an alternative Masterplan that has been produced by the three boroughs. That could be a viable alternative, although Alex told us that it is not that different to the OAPF.
1. **Discussion with OPDC Planning Officers Tom Cardis and Peter Farnham and Senior Community Engagement Officer Alex Day**

OPDC planning officers Tom Cardis and Peter Farnham and senior community engagement officer, Alex Day, joined the meeting at this stage for a Q and A session. Some questions were answered at the meeting, but planning officers agreed to respond to these by e-mail (please refer to separate document attached with these notes).

**Timetable and consultations**

**Q:** Could you map out the different stages of the consultation and set the different dates until 2017?

**Q:** There have been a lot of documents that we are trying to respond to. I think people find it difficult to understand the process. I think if you could talk through it or give us a clear explanation of what the documents are, what they are for, what the timescale is and what are the next consultation documents that we should expect?

**Q:** Could you explain these documents; what they are, what their purpose is and how successful they now are within your armoury of documentation. Are the answers to the consultation going to be dealt with or not?

**A - TC:** The Old Oak and Park Royal OAPF (supplementary planning guidance to the London Plan) was produced by the GLA and went out for consultation last February. What the GLA tries to do in that document, which is on the OPDC website, is to summarise all the different work that has been done are. Its sets out that there was the vision for Old Oak and also Park Royal (replacing the Park Royal OAPF). There is also the HS2 Bill. There is an appendix to the OAPF which contains contextual analysis – including planning policy context – that is the various borough planning documents relevant to the OPDC area up to February 2015.

Since then the OPDC has been established and our focus is develop the Local Plan. In terms of our programme we have something called a Local Development Scheme (which is on our website) and this lists the planning document that we will produce. It is fair to say that when we look into the future, we are making some estimations. There are the elections in May for a new Mayor, so this might impact on our programme.

Recently, the programme for the first consultation has been changed, from December to January, to take on board community views that consulting over the Christmas isn’t the best idea.

**The IIA Scoping Report and Draft Local Plan**

**Q**: I am looking for specific remarks tonight on three different streams that I believe exist (i) the SCI, where are we on that? (ii) The IIA Scoping Report where are we on that? (iii) The Issues and Options Local Plan process. We have responded with our own extra community-based visions and objectives. We produced as a standardised version that GUA members could use as it was or add to. I submitted it and I know other people did too, so I would like to know if that has gone into your determination of your first version of your Local Plan.

**A-PF:** The IIA runs alongside the Local Plan process – with the same time frame and will be consulted on at the same time. Responses to the consultation on the regulation stage 18 (what used to be called the issues and options local plan) will help shape the next (final) version of the Local Plan and an updated version of the Integrated Impact Assessment.

Peter thanked GUA members for making responses to the scoping report including the community based vision and objectives, which he said was very useful. He said the planners are looking at these and working with consultants who are developing / writing the IIA Scoping Report. The responses are helping to shape not only the Impact Assessment, but also the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan**.**

The consultants look at sustainability and the planners present a variety of different options.

The Local Plan isn’t written yet. So, this community vision and objectives is there, at the beginning, shaping planners thoughts. They don’t already have version of the Local Plan ready to change.

**TC:** Unlike a local authority the OPDC planners are starting from scratch. Normally a local authority has a Core Strategy to work from; they just have the Mayor’s OAPF.

**Q**: Can you clarify are the people dealing with the IIA actually different people that those within your team, that can evaluate what they planners are coming up with? Can they criticise what has been produced?

**A-PF:** Yes, we have consultants writing the IIA. What is happening at the moment is that we will craft a suggested policy option that we will then send it out to our consultants and then they will look at this in broad sustainability terms (environment, economic and social). We then take their feedback and change the policy accordingly.

A number of different policy options will be presented in the consultation along with the OPDC preferred options. Within the Draft IIA, which will accompany the Regulation 18 consultation, there will be assessment of each of the policy options. It won’t detail every single conversation we had, but it will have a summary and the end detail. There are so many different objectives, but we want to make it easy to understand and usable. There will be a summary table.

**Structure of the Draft Local Plan**

**TC:** For some things, we will have to confirm to the National Planning Policy Framework. There is not much movability around that, but where there is, we will be setting out different options

**PF:** At the moment how we are thinking of setting this up might change. At the start you will have the policy title, then you will have Issues which we have identified and we will be asking you if there is something missing. There will be the existing policy framework, so we will be saying how this links to the planning policy. There will also be a list of current evidence-based documents, a preferred policy option and sitting beneath that a range of alternative options. There will also be a justification for we have chosen this (as a preferred option).

We don’t want it to be heavy in text; there will also be images. We want it to be readable and usable. Each of the policy option will have a summary. There will be a summary table with the different policy options.

We are trying to do is to keep the vision relatively short and suggest that there is a vision tagline, a couple of vision narratives and an overview of London wide and UK elements. The wording that you have submitted is very useful in helping us shape that.

**TC:** I can give an example. We are thinking about how we treat betting shops and takeaways. One of the options that we are looking is to ban them outright or to take a more flexible approach. We have applied for the area to be a Healthy New Town, so we are quite confident and we could justify our approach on banning betting and takeaway shops on the basis of their impact on health.

**Evidence based documents**

**TC**: At the moment we are going a lot of evidence work to support the draft Local Plan.

**Q:** Can you clarify? If you have for example a policy on betting shops, could be challenged by the EIP? How does this all relate to what Alex does with the community? If she consults 1000 people and 999 say they don’t want betting shops, does that matter? Is that evidence? What is the definition of evidence?

**A:** There is a new health document that has come this year. We will have a list of evidence-based document from the national scale, regional or local scale. In the OAPF there will be a section that lists all the studies that informed the Local Plan.

**Q:** So, is there a a description of what the local community wants as a piece of evidence. What is the hierarchy? If the National Framework says something, does it matter what the local community says?

It depends how firm the wording is at the NFP. What we have to do is to be consistent. There are certain things that it says for example on housing need, stock. It provides direction, so within that there might be flexibility. There should be general conformity with the London Plan.

**A Neighbourhood Plan for Old Oak**

**Q:** Would a Neighbourhood Plan for Old Oak be considered in all this? It is something worth doing?

**A-TC:** A neighbourhoodplan is a development plan document, but it would have to be in conformity with the Local Plan, the London Plan and the NPDF. It’s really up to you.

**Community Involvement**

**Q**: There is a genuine desire by the community to contribute pro-actively on the development of the Local Plan. This is people’s homes and area, and they care about it. How, between us, can we use the situation to be formative and to say this is important? People need to know that there is support to draw them in to get the best solutions. That is shared by GUA members, and you want that in order to have a successful programme. Working with a programme and come up with something that works better from the community involvement at this early stage is surely desirable.

**Q:** There are so many reports, deadlines and consultations. It would be good if you can to simplify the process so that I can engage with my neighbours and encourage them to join these groups. It is beyond them, and to be quite frank for someone who has worked in policy, it is getting beyond me. I would like you to simplify the process; so I can have something to say to my neighbours – this is what it is about - please get involved.

**Q:** Will you be resourcing the community to enter this dialogue of different options?

**A-AD:** We have been setting our thoughts about when the Local Plan consultation programme will start and when we need to start communicating with people so that they have got enough lead in time. The idea is to have a meeting at the end of November or early December where we do a recap of an event that we did a couple of weeks ago, to explain the different parts of the statutory consultation processes - which covers everything from planning policy to developers doing their own consultation such as the Car Giant proposals.

This is so you can understand how the consultation works and obviously take on board some of the comments that you have made about community involvement.

In that meeting in late November we will cover that process and share our thoughts for engagement for our programme that will be held in January, February and March next year.

Then you can see the types of event and the themes of those events. Obviously we want our events to be well attended and for people to feel that there is discussion on the themes that matter to them.

We are looking at how to get people involved in different aspects of the Local Plan, whether that is the vision and looking into the future how this is going to look when completed. Also, we will be looking at different themes like housing, environment, and community spaces, so that we can share this and get your feedback. There are other people who are not as switched on as GUA members.

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the community can get involved in different aspects of consultations and community involvement. There is going to be a response document and a tracked version showing the changes made. I haven’t done the tracked version yet. Changes may well include the ground rules that you suggested.

**On transport**

**Q**: We are very concerned about the potential of an opportunity being lost for Old Oak Common. We are just outside the area. We want proper transport to underpin regeneration for Old Oak Common and Park Royal and also give greater transport benefits for people across the country. We have responded to the IIA Scoping Report and pointed out 5 key points.

**Q:** We need good connectivity. We don’t want people to use public transport. It shouldn’t take long to go from A to B. Let’s not turn the clock back. We have a clean sheet of paper, let’s get it right please.

**Q:** What is the relationship between the development of the planning policy and transport and how do these blend together?

**A-TC:** We do the transport planning, but the boroughs remain the highways authorities. We will have and evidence based Transport Study, the OAPF and a set recommendations. The responsibility in terms of delivery is still with the local authorities. We have an Old Oak Study done which basically says you should be relying on walking transport.

**A-PF:** We are looking for walking and cycling in particular and how these impacts on roads and pavements, and the green spaces (trees, flooding etc.). We are looking at things holistically. We are very aware of the need to mitigate in terms of climate change.

**Impact on surrounding communities**

**Q**: I come from opposite the Old Oak and Park Royal area - at A40 Junction, Gypsy Corner. We are concerned by the environmental factors, as a lot of developments are happening already and affecting us. No one is coming to us to say anything. I have a residents’ association meeting that I am chairing and I need to feedback to them what you have been doing because they are not happy. We have the Imperial College Building and the traffic is horrendous. The doctors’ surgeries are all filled.

**A-TC:** Imperial College is building a campus in White City. The next phase will be the construction of a learning centre with theatres and spaces. There will be accommodation.

**OPDC**

**Q**: It seems to us that there is under capacity in the OPDC. You always say that you are building up your team, but I think that with the project of this size the community needs to see that there is a major team involved, because most of the decisions will be happening at the beginning. What is the timeline for your team to come to its full strength? It appears that you are struggling to deal with some of the issues that are coming forward.

**OPDC’s relationship with the boroughs**

**Q:** How are you going to communicate these plans with Ealing council? We want to know how you communicate. I want to see joint effort.

**A:** We meet with our various colleagues every fortnight to discuss a variety of issues. At the moment the concentration is at the Local Plan, which is a priority. We are engaging with development managers in Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Brent. We are engaging and also talking about the planning applications.

**Q**: Is the document that has been produced by the 3 boroughs a valid alternative?

It is a very helpful document. It was provided as a response to the OAPF. When looking at the final OAPF, this document has been used. It is fair to say that a lot of what is in the document is similar to what is in the OAPF.

**The development**

**Q:** There is a fundamental concern about the amount of houses and jobs planned for the area. Is it part of your remit to test that? This seems to be a random figure. Is this achievable? What are the criteria?

**A**: We start with target from London Plan and take it from there. We are developing a capacity study which is looking at the different densities of both residential and commercial buildings, and where the open spaces will go. We look at all those elements and how they fit together. We are still at a Masterplan Stage and not looking at individual sites as yet. The 24,000 homes and 55,000 jobs can be accommodated within Old Oak. The methodology for assessing this will be there in amongst the evidence based documents.

We have one of the biggest new stations opening in London and a new over ground station. There will be various needs for the existing neighbourhoods and communities, heritage assets and open spaces. All of those will shape the development, so where there is transport we could go a little higher (in new buildings) and where there are existing communities we could go lower.

**Green spaces**

**Q**: I am worried that you might use Wormwood Scrubs as the open space to build for density. One of the problems that happened in White City is that there were a lot of workshops about what kind of park do you want and the actually that park disappeared and was used as an open space between two blocks. I don’t want to see that happening here. If you manage to include some green spaces who will be responsible for maintaining them? Is it the boroughs?

**A-PF:** Yes the boroughs will be responsible for maintaining the green spaces. In terms of the new open spaces, we are doing an Open Space Strategy, not just for the OPDC area, but the surrounding area, so we are mapping that out and will be suggesting locations for open spaces within Old Oak. So, there are open spaces in the OAPF, but we will be looking not at this 2-dimensionally on the map, but also how the blocks respond to open spaces in terms of height, and levels of sunlight and will need to demonstrate that there is no negative impact in the open space.

At the end of the meeting people stressed the importance of the OPDC (i) having a website (ii) liaising with the West London Business Group (iii) producing of a diagram that showing how everything links together and (iv) providing support community group representatives to engage with their residents.

LTF co-ordinator asked the planning officers if they would attend a GUA meeting at the beginning of January to introduce the Draft Local Plan.

Those attending the GUA meeting thanked Tom, Peter and Alex for attending the meeting.

1. **Updates**

LTF co-ordinator informed the meeting that -

* that though an international research award that Jenny Robinson (UCL) has successfully obtained, there will be funding for ongoing support of groups in and around the OPDC area (from LTF and Just Space) in trying to influence planning policy, from 2016-18;
* following LTF’s initial discussions with the UCL’s Engineering Exchange and Tom Cohen from UCL’s transport department, an event for GUA members, friends and contacts, focusing on place making and community participation will be organised by JTP architects and master planners on Saturday 5th December. David Farnsworth who is involved with a wide community network that negotiated with Bristol City to adopt ground rules on community involvement will be one of the workshop facilitators at the event. This was well received by the meeting, although some concerns were expressed about the difficulty of maximising attendance with such short notice and the date being close to Christmas.