

Ellie Kuper Thomas

From: john parmiter [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 May 2018 12:22
To: Ellie Kuper Thomas; Richard Horwood
Subject: Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan Examination

Dear Ellie and Richard

Thank you both for your helpful participation at the public hearing yesterday.

We spent some time discussing the issue of how to deal with the Development Infrastructure Funding Study (DIFS), given that it substantially underpins the infrastructure evidence in the plan. I have now had time to look at both the documents that you handed to me at the close of the hearing: the 2017 Powerpoint slides (which was a confidential presentation at the time) and the Final Draft DIFS Report (dated November 2017) only now published by the GLA as a supporting document to the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar OAPF, which is to be the subject of public consultation shortly. I mentioned at the time of being handed these documents that I noted they were prepared by PBA and that I was partner in the firm until four years ago; I explained that I have never had any involvement in any work that firm has carried out in the plan area. I declare this for the record.

As I have reached some provisional conclusions on the matter I am writing to let you know where I have got to and to request both your views on those and the possible next steps. And in doing so I am very conscious of the impact of the available options on the resources of the parties and the wish to proceed promptly to a conclusion of the examination.

The fundamental difficulty facing this examination is that a central theme of the plan - the provision of appropriate infrastructure to support the growth that is taking place through development - is not supported, in my view and that of many of the representations, by evidence that was publicly available at the time the plan was prepared, nor formed part of the public consultation on the plan. The principle evidence cited in the plan is the DIFS.

The Forum suggested that I could pursue one (or possibly both) of two courses of action to remedy this deficiency:

1. Adopting an approach described as a Correction of Errors; or
2. Using the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and which was the subject of public consultation, albeit after the neighbourhood plan was submitted for examination - as a proxy evidence base.

I have rejected both of these approaches; correcting this deficiency goes far beyond an error and the IDP is not relied on in the plan, in any event. Instead, I canvassed at the hearing, having given you both advance warning, the possibility of suspending the examination to enable consultation on the now publicly available DIFS. And in passing, having read the OAPF document overnight, I note that at 7.1 (third paragraph) it says that: "It is also fortunate that that the timing of the production of the draft Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan for the Isle of Dogs allows for opportunities to consult jointly on the emerging documents and allow each other to inform the development of the other." (my emphasis). So, it might be possible to take advantage of that consultation exercise, if framed appropriately. And I understand that both parties could accept fresh consultation and can manage the logistics, subject to being satisfied, as I need to be, that the now published DIFS is substantially the same as the material available to the drafters of the plan.

Having now seen the DIFS presentation slides (that came into the possession of the Forum last summer, though a local Councillor) and compared them with the 78 page (double columned) full Draft report I am

not persuaded that this solution is feasible. I asked you both to come to your own view and to let me know but I wanted to express my own provisional view, which is that the slides cannot be considered sufficiently robust or proportionate evidence to underpin the relevant policies in the submitted plan. While the few tables in the slides which are reproduced in the plan are the same, nevertheless the plan necessarily extracts these out of context of the considerable body of material and arguments in the full (and at the time previous draft) report that was not available to the Forum. The two documents are simply not comparable. I cannot see how consultation on the full DIFS can rectify the fundamental deficiency. But I await your views.

I believe this deficiency represents a fundamental flaw in the plan. I would welcome your response to that provisional conclusion. If I am right, on that basis and unless I can be persuaded that the deficiency can be rectified as part of this examination, I believe there are only two options left:

1. That the Forum withdraws the plan; I appreciate this would be a most unwelcome step indeed but at least the Forum regains control of the process. I understand that the Qualifying Body (QB), the Forum, has the right to withdraw the plan at any time before the local planning authority decides on the examiner's recommendations;

and/ or

2. I continue with the examination with the material before me. This is likely to result in the plan failing, which is also a most unwelcome result, though completing the examination will enable me to provide conclusions on the policies and other material in the plan, which may well help the parties, especially if the Forum decides, for example, to move on to what is described as the "Long Plan". I would undertake to write up my report as swiftly as possible and at least by the end of May.

So, it is also open to the Forum to see what I recommend and then withdraw; that is entirely a matter for the QB.

I very much appreciate that these options are most unpalatable and are not how the Forum, especially, wishes the process to end. I am, however, keen to hear both your views on my provisional conclusions and the next steps I have set out. Can I suggest that you both let me know by the end of next week?

Kind regards

John

John Parmiter FRICS FRSA MRTPI
Examiner

Director
John Parmiter Ltd
www.johnparmiter.com

██████████
████████████████████