

Mr Henry Peterson
Chair of StQW Neighbourhood Forum

Date: 24 April 2019

SENT BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Peterson

I am writing in response to your letter dated 22nd March 2019. I've responded to your queries in the order in which they have appeared in your letter for ease of reference.

Appointment of David Lunts

David Lunts has been appointed as interim CEO. OPDC is required in law to have CEO functions in place and with Mick Mulhern's departure it was important to ensure that there was an appropriately senior level, experienced person available to take this role. I have no doubt that David will be an excellent Interim CEO for the Corporation given his vast experience across a number of public sector roles. The co-location of OPDC and the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Housing and Land directorate at Union Street and the existing close co-operation between the two teams also make this a sensible arrangement.

Conflict between delivery arm and planning authority

David is not responsible for the GLA's planning functions and does not normally involve himself with any Stage 1 or Stage 2 applications at the GLA so there is no conflict in this respect. Insofar as there could be any conflicts (e.g. housing grant awards) then David would step aside from any decision-making by the GLA's Housing and Land directorate.

I entirely agree that there is no reason for a public body's structure to be confidential and I attach a copy of our current structure chart which clearly outlines the separation between planning and delivery arms. While the CEO has responsibility for both, as indeed does our Board, this is standard in any authority with planning powers and potential conflicts are addressed as I have described below.

Now that we have confirmation of our HIF bid and following a staffing consultation, a new OPDC staff structure will be implemented as Mick Mulhern referenced in your meeting with him on the 21st January 2019. This new structure maintains separation between OPDC's planning and delivery Directorates.

As you note, we have a Planning Code of Conduct that denotes how officers and members should avoid any conflicts and I assure you that the requirements set out in this are being accorded with. OPDC also has a protocol for staff to provide further guidance on the management any actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest and this staff guidance will be formally adopted by our Board in May.

Your suggestion of a conflict between the OPDC CEO's role as delivery agent and planning authority (referenced in relation to David's letter to the planning inspector) is inaccurate as OPDC has clear lines of demarcation between the two roles and David is operating in accordance with these.

Gifts and hospitality

The OPDC has adopted the GLA framework for the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. The policy clearly states that staff are expressly prohibited from soliciting benefits or rewards in return for

providing services whether those services should be provided as part of their usual role or are provided because a gift or inducement has been offered.

David has completed an updated Register of Interests form to encompass both roles at the GLA and OPDC, which will be available on both websites shortly.

Gifts and Hospitality accepted in David's capacity as the Interim CEO of OPDC will be reported as part of the OPDC Gifts and Hospitality Register, which will be published monthly and reported at each Audit Committee Meeting.

List of perceptions

With regard to your list of perceptions we have indeed taken note of these but were not proposing to respond to them on a point by point basis. The only exception is your comment regarding the availability of information about our master planning exercise.

I'm aware that on Friday 29th March, Tom had sent you an email about this. I would reiterate that OPDC shared outputs from the masterplanning work in the Development Framework Principles documents that supported the draft Local Plan. However, work on the masterplan continues, and we're committed to sharing this later this year. It is the aim of the team to present the masterplan and associated benefits in the context of the different development phases as well as the long-term vision for the project. It is likely that there will be stakeholder drop-in events where the work will be presented and my team will be able to discuss issues and concerns with the public and interested parties. I've asked that Tom contact you once the plans for this are fixed so that you can circulate details to your networks.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Peace". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical grey rectangular bar.

Liz Peace
Chairman
Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation