

Mr Henry Peterson
Chair St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum
95 Highlever Road
London
W10 6PW

Date: 29 November 2018

Dear Mr Peterson,

RE: OPDC Governance Arrangements

Thank you for your letter of October 24 regarding Governance Arrangements at OPDC and please find below a response to the specific issues that were raised.

Planning Code of Conduct

The National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Government in June 2018, and National Planning Practice Guidance highlight the importance of pre-application discussions and require Local Planning Authorities to encourage take up of any pre-application services they offer. Prior to the 17 January 2018, legislation did not allow Mayoral Development Corporations, such as OPDC, to charge mandatory pre-application fees in the same way as other local authorities. Instead OPDC successfully negotiated voluntary Planning Performance Agreements (PPA's) with promoters of major developments to secure financial contributions towards the resourcing of pre-application discussions. This approach enabled us to ensure that costs incurred in providing such advice were not funded through the mayoral precept.

However, following amendments to relevant legislation that came in to effect on 17 January 2018, powers to introduce mandatory pre-application fees are now extended to Mayoral Development Corporations. On the 9 May 2018, the OPDC Planning Committee approved publication of a pre-application fee schedule which then came in to effect on 6th August 2018. The Planning Committee papers relating to this are available on the OPDC website. OPDC now charge for all pre-application advice, except to local residents and small businesses who require advice on small scale proposals. Information on our pre-application advice service and charges has been displayed on the OPDC website since the charges came into effect on 6th August 2018. Where pre-application discussions are expected to be protracted then OPDC will continue to use Planning Performance Agreements (PPA's) which will include appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the cost to OPDC of entering into pre-application discussions is met by the developer.

Pre-Application Advice

As OPDC charge for pre-application advice, advice is only offered following the process outlined on the OPDC website. This involves the developer submitting a request, with information for review, for a meeting with officers, following which a written note summarising the meeting and any other relevant advice is issued by officers. These notes are drafted by the case officer and are cleared by their line manager before being issued to the developer. I welcome your suggestion that it would be helpful to include the name of the officers providing the advice and I will ensure that this is included on future

pre-application advice notes. As you are aware OPDC publish these pre-application advice notes online once a planning application has been submitted and validated. This is done using the APAS system that is used to maintain OPDC's planning register. To date, pre-application advice on major schemes has not been given by telephone and now that we have introduced a chargeable service there isn't any intention for this to change. However, if pre-application advice were to be given by telephone, this would be followed up by a written note which would be published in the same way as pre-application advice given during a meeting.

OPDC Register of Interests and declarations of gifts and hospitality

The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation has an Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Procedure that applies to all OPDC staff and to all Board and Committee Members. A summary list of all gifts and hospitality declared is reported to the OPDC Audit Committee periodically. The meetings of the Committee are held in public and the papers for these meetings, which include the lists of gifts and hospitality, are available on our website.

In relation to the omission of the publication of the Register of Interests (Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) for Councillor Cowan and Mr Gokhale, this was an oversight that has now been rectified.

I appreciate your having taken the time to raise your concerns with me and if there is anything further which you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Peace', written in a cursive style.

Liz Peace

Chairman

Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation