

Fw: RBKC decision on the Ballymore/Sainsburys scheme Tuesday 6.30pm

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St Helens Residents Association



St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

As explained in last month's newsletter, the Council's Planning Committee meets at **6.30pm on Tuesday 11th November** to decide the planning application from the Ballymore/Sainsburys proposals at the Kensal Canalside Opportunity Area (the former gasworks site at the northern end of Ladbrooke Grove).

The application dates from October 2023. The scheme has long been badged as [Project Flourish](#) with a website that encourages the public to send in messages of 'support'. The proposals are for 2,519 new housing units in a series of towers and tall blocks, along with a replacement Sainsburys superstore. The details of the plans, and the CGI images, have been covered in several previous newsletters and are not repeated here.

In the last couple of weeks, a coalition of residents groups and associations in North Kensington and Kensal Rise have joined forces to prepare a 'Residents Briefing Pack'. This joint effort was prompted by the 'Factual Briefing' which the Council held for the five councillors on the Planning Committee last month (see our October newsletter). This event cast little light on what is planned.

At this session at the Town Hall, organisations who have opposed the scheme from the start (including StQW/SHRA) were allowed to observe -- but not to speak. So there was no opportunity to question or challenge the presentation from the Ballymore team.

The pack of material since prepared by local groups, working together, is detailed and authoritative. It runs to 61 pages, covering transport, site capacity, heritage, contamination, and the history of why an Opportunity Area considered in 2012 to be appropriate for 2,000 new homes is now seen as a location for double that number.

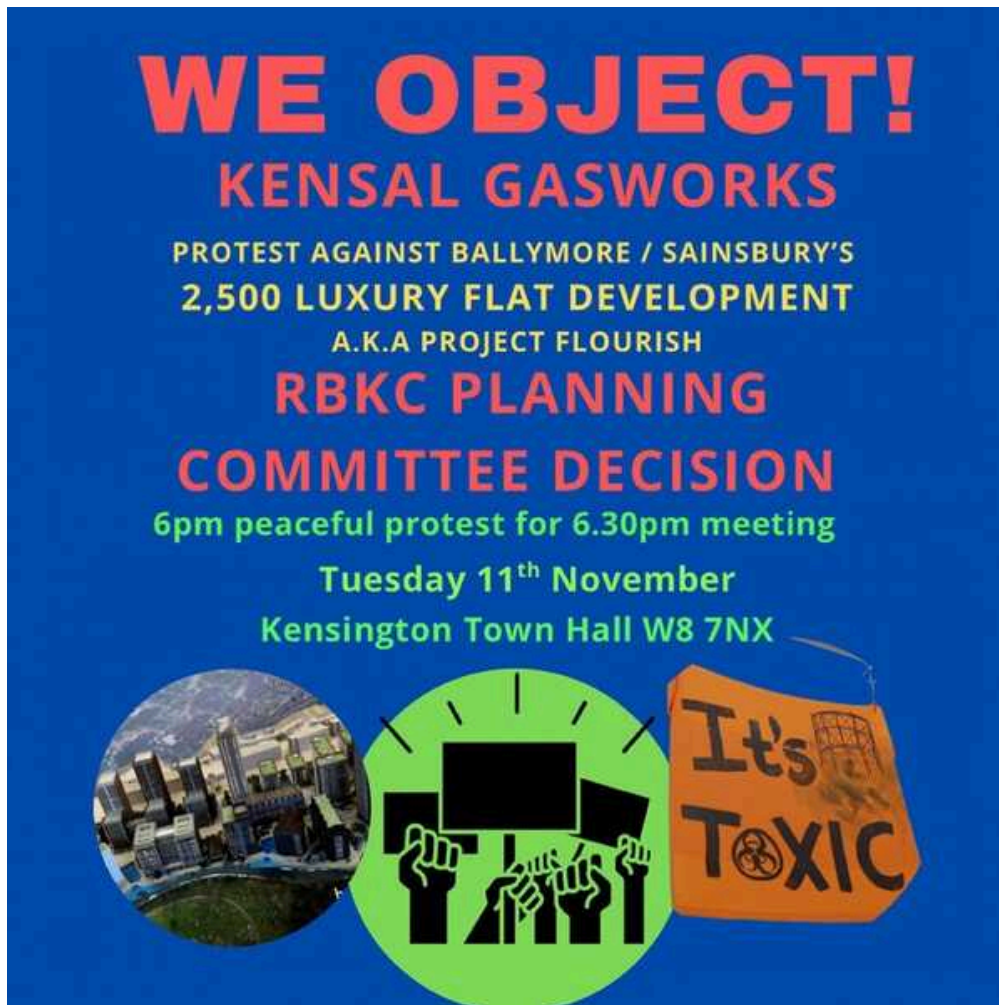
The full briefing pack is too big a file for our StQW website. Our input can be read/downloaded at [RBKC decision imminent on Ballymore/Sainsburys application at Kensal Canalside | St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum](#)

This group of local organisations met this evening on Zoom to co-ordinate who will be speaking as objectors at the Planning Committee, and on what topic. StQW/SHRA will have one minute (out of a 15 minute total for 18 people who have registered to speak).

Our main point will be a reminder of the realities of the development capacity of the site. This is now a scenario in which the once promised new Crossrail station will **not** feature. Nor will a new bridge southwards across the rail tracks to Barlby Road. The prospect of a longish walk to the Elizabeth Line at the half constructed Old Oak Common station has slipped back to 10-15 years away. The site is not 'well

connected' as claimed by RBKC. It is very poorly connected to any public transport other than buses.

There will be a 'peaceful demonstration' at the Town Hall (outside the central civic building which includes the Council Chamber). This will be underway by 6pm. The Planning Committee agenda and officer report (436 pages) can be found via the RBKC website and the meeting will as usual be livestreamed on YouTube.



The officer report recommends a grant of planning consent. The outcome on Tuesday night will be one of the biggest planning decisions made by the Council in decades. But it will not be the end of the story. The Mayor of London and potentially the Secretary of State have yet to become involved. These events come at time when the Government and the Mayor have proposed a package of measures to 'jump start' the building of homes in London by relaxing the affordable housing threshold for a 'fast track' scheme and reducing other construction requirements (and CIL charges) for a 2 year period.

These 'emergency measures' are in response to a major slowdown in housing construction in the capital. In the first six months of the year only 3,946 new private housing units changed hands across the whole of London. Increasing service charges combined with falls in the value of 'newbuild' flats, as well as reduced numbers of overseas buyers, are causal factors.

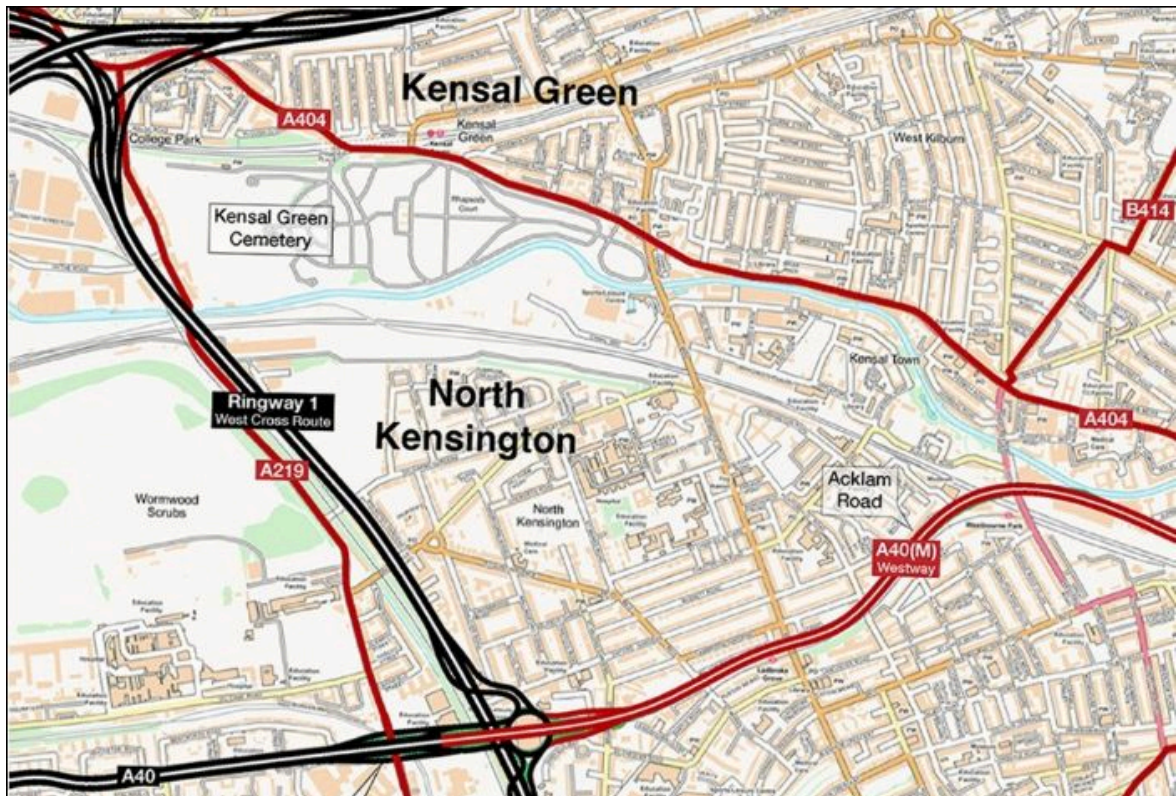
The Keep Kensal Green campaign is [crowdfunding for a potential legal challenge](#). This will probably be on environmental grounds, questioning how decontamination of the site is due to be handled. Judicial Reviews on planning grounds alone have a slim chance of success, as the planning authority can always retake a decision if found at fault.

Sometimes over-ambitious plans do not happen - the detailed plans for London's Ringways

The blog <https://www.londoncentric.media/> this week carries an article on 'what might have been' if both main political parties and the then GLC had gone ahead in the 1960s with plans for the full set of London Ringways.

Chris Marshall, founder of the website roads.org.uk has spent years piecing together, from archived plans, exactly where these motorways would have run.

We are all very familiar with the only two parts of these grandiose plans that were built. These were the Westway and the brief section of the West Cross route to Shepherds Bush).



The detailed map now published shows Latimer Road as being obliterated by the proposed route.

This is a reminder that detailed plans, prepared at much cost, can sometimes remain on the drawing board. May be in 20 years time, when the [two proposed New Towns](#) at Thame and in Enfield have emerged as a better solution to London's housing needs, we North Kensington residents will look back at the CGIs for 'Project Flourish' as a another near miss.

Could this prove a scheme which reached decision stage at the wrong moment to catch the tailwinds of London's second phase of high density residential towers (the first having ended abruptly with the collapse of Ronan Point in 1968, after which this building typology for homes (rather than offices) became a rarity in London for a couple of subsequent decades.

The Council's Planning Committee needs to recognise that history may not look kindly on its decision on Tuesday night. Whatever does get built at Kensal Canalside will be there for a long time to come. The incoming residents will be the ones to experience the wrong type of development in the wrong place.

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