



OWGRA
Osterley & Wyke Green Residents' Association

22 April 2021

Mr Niall Bolger
Chief Executive
London Borough of Hounslow
Hounslow House
7 Bath Road
Hounslow
TW3 3EB

Dear Mr Bolger

Planning Committee meeting, 8 April 2021, Homebase & Tesco (P/2020/3099 & P/2020/3100) – further issues

Further to our letter of 15 April 2021 on the Planning Committee meeting of 8 April 2021 which approved the planning applications to redevelop the Homebase & Tesco sites, a number of other issues have come to light which we are bringing to your attention.

1. Unanswered question on format of the meeting

During the Q&A session following the presentation by the Planning Officer, 2h 52m into the recording, Councillor Khulique Malik asked the following question *“Can I ask if residents will be able to ask questions on what the developer has said? Isn’t that the best practice, rather than the developer being able to tailor response to the residents? It is how every other Council does it and how we have traditionally done it. I am concerned this could open us to Judicial Review.”* This question was not answered (the only response was a quizzical expression on the Chairman’s face as if he didn’t understand the point).

2. Lack of documentation

During the meeting (3h 29m into the recording) Councillor Mel Collins stated *“...I haven’t got the whole report, otherwise it would have taken a Pantehnicon to get it to me.”* He was referring to the Officer’s report.

3. Interruptions in listening to the meeting & monitoring absences

It is possible that Councillor Mel Collins might not have been present for the whole meeting, as 4h 11m into the recording, he stated *“I’m coming to you on a different phone, as I had a problem with the mobile.”* The Council cannot control all the equipment used by the Committee members, but their presence at the meeting should be easy to monitor. It does not appear that this was done, since the meeting should have been halted while the reason for Cllr Collins absence was ascertained.

4. Break in recording of the meeting

At 5h 2m into the recording there appears to be a break, and some of the exchange between Councillor Samia Chaudhury and the Housing Officer, Geraint Nutt, is missing.

OWGRA, 130 Wood Lane, Osterley, Isleworth, TW7 5EQ
Telephone: 07562 385269 Email: info@owgra.org.uk

5. **Motion in support of Homebase site**

Towards the end of the meeting, Councillor Mel Collins stated: *“My proposal is we vote in favour of the Homebase site taking into account all the comments that have been made tonight in the hope that the developer will make some improvements.”* Councillor Samia Chaudhury seconded the motion with the words *“We would like to see the good improvements in the Homebase site.”*

It is unclear to us from this exchange what has been agreed for the Homebase site.

6. **Concerns about predetermination**

There are very important issues which appear to have prejudiced the outcome of the Planning Committee meeting. Firstly, the Council had already agreed to buy 164 homes from the Homebase development prior to the Planning Committee meeting. Secondly, the Officer acknowledged the importance of the site to realise the Council’s housing plans, through the advance decision to purchase the aforementioned number of homes. Thirdly, the Council had published in its Great West Magazine (March 2020) a front cover picture depicting the Homebase and Tesco development sites, and showing Berkeley Homes as the developer, even though planning permission had not been discussed, let alone granted. These issues, among several other factors, appear to suggest that the Council was working all along on the clear assumption that the applications would eventually be approved. Given the scale and significance of the two sites this sort of background information appears to have had a weighty influence on the Council. It also appears to have acted as a form of subtle but well targeted pressure on the members of the Planning Committee ahead of casting their vote.

We look forward to your response on these additional issues.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Stryjak
on behalf of
OWGRA (Osterley & Wyke Green Residents' Association)