

Subject:	Items referred from 22 October Council meeting – Deputations.		
Date of Meeting:	3 December 2020		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
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Wards Affected:	Various		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To receive the following deputation referred from the Council meeting held on the 22 October 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee responds to the deputation either by noting it or where it is considered more appropriate, calls for an officer report on the matter which may give consideration to a range of options and writes to the deputation spokesperson setting out the committee's decision(s).

3. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 To receive the following deputation along with the extract from the council meeting and supporting information which is detailed in appendix 1:

(1) Deputation concerning the Gasworks Site in East Brighton

Spokesperson Marie Sansford

Supported by: Keeley Bignal, Stephen White, Pip Tyler and Michael Pegley

Ward affected: East Brighton



Action on Gasworks Housing Affordability, Safety and Transparency

AGHAST presentation to Full Council 22 October 2020

Brighton Gasworks Development recently in the pre-application process.

AGHAST is a group of concerned residents of East Brighton and we are here to urge you to robustly invoke health and safety protections in dealing with this application. Berkeley Homes/St William propose to build 600-700 flats on the gasworks in blocks of up to 15 storeys, placed around gas pipes and other installations still in use. These will require deep foundations in the areas currently occupied by huge, redundant gas tanks

and ducts. Soil tests for the site are unavailable and testing will be done once permission is obtained.

Brownfield sites are seen as the way forward to provide more housing. However there is a material difference between developing railway sidings, goods yards etc, and developing gasworks, because of the toxicity of the latter. When Hove gasworks was developed in the 1980s-90's, and a survey by Hove Borough Council detected untreatable toxins in the fabric of the site, it was deemed unsuitable for residential use. It now houses a Tesco and a large car park, which required shallower foundations than tower blocks.

In 2010 Ealing Council refused Berkeley's application for planning permission on the Southall Gasworks on environmental and health grounds. When, as Mayor of London, Boris Johnson overturned that decision, residents soon experienced strong toxic smells of petroleum, and were exposed to naphthalene, a known carcinogen, at levels considered too high by PHE. There has been a higher than normal incidence of ill-health involving peoples' airways, from breathing difficulties to terminal cancers. A legal case being built by local residents seeks a stop to the works on the grounds of 'Nuisance'. In Brighton similar work on the gasworks site could spread pollution over a vast residential area in which are located ten schools and colleges, parks and playing fields, golf courses and our main hospital.

Berkeley now own more than 20 gasworks sites around the country. Worried residents have created a national pressure group, Gasworks Communities United, to demand the highest standards of safety and monitoring of these developments. The Campaign for Clean Air in Southall and Hayes (CASH) is supported by the local and national Green Party, which made a film viewable on the CASH website. We understand that Green Party colleagues from Ealing have approached the leadership of B&H Council with their concerns.

We urge the Council to take seriously its responsibility for the protection of Environment and Health under DM40/41 of City Plan 2 and propose that it should follow the example of Hove Borough Council and allow only limited development of this site. If nothing else, we call upon the Council to ensure that a thorough independent assessment of the site is carried out before planning permission is even considered., We request that the findings are shared with the community before any planning permission is granted.

3.2 An extract from the minutes of the Council meeting is detailed below:

COUNCIL

4.30pm 22 OCTOBER 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING - TEAMS

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Robins (Chair), Mears (Deputy Chair), Allcock, Appich, Atkinson, Bagaen, Barnett, Bell, Brennan, Brown, Childs, Clare, Davis, Deane, Druitt, Ebel, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Gibson, Grimshaw, Hamilton, Heley, Henry, Hill, Hills, Hugh-Jones, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Lloyd, Mac Cafferty, McNair, Miller, Moonan, Nemeth, Nield, O'Quinn, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Phillips, Pissaridou, Platts, Powell, Rainey, Shanks, Simson, C Theobald, Wares, West, Wilkinson and Williams.

PART ONE

42 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(1) GASWORKS SITE EAST BRIGHTON

Spokesperson Marie Sansford

- 42.1 The Mayor reported that one deputation had been received from members of the public and that he would invite the spokesperson to introduce their deputation and for the relevant Chair to respond. He noted that 15minutes were set aside for the consideration of deputations.
- 42.2 The Mayor welcomed Marie Sandford to the meeting and invited her to address the Council.
- 42.3 Ms. Sansford thanked the Mayor and referred to the deputation and outlined the group's concerns over the possibility of the gas works site being redeveloped. She hoped that the council would give consideration to the request to having an independent assessment of the site and to ensure only limited redevelopment was permitted that would not result in any contamination being released or environmental and health risks for local residents and the local area.
- 42.4 Councillor Mac Cafferty thanked Ms Sanford for the deputation and stated that all planning applications must be determined in line with both local and national planning policy and guidance and relevant planning legislation. This included Environmental Impact Assessments and the impact of a development on human health. He was certain that the city council would scrutinise the information as part of the planning application process and any approval would be subject to stringent planning conditions to address land contamination. He noted that remediation was highly technical, regulated and was licensed and overseen by the Health and Safety Executive. He was sure that if these standards could not be met, then works on the site could not proceed.
- 42.5 The Mayor thanked Ms. Sansford for joining the meeting and noted that the deputation would be referred to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.

Supporting Information

Brighton Gasworks development – pollution concerns

Summary of concerns

Development of the Brighton Gasworks site risks releasing potent toxins including carcinogens into the atmosphere. These pose a direct threat to human health as well as the surrounding natural environment including the South Downs National Park – home to rare and protected species.

Pollutants found on a typical gasworks

Former gasworks sites typically contain a range of pollutants in the soil. These include polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), petroleum hydrocarbons, asbestos, metals, cyanides, sulphur, and ammonium compounds and nitrates.

What happens when these pollutants are disturbed through construction?

Pollutants will be released from the soil and into the atmosphere in both particulate and gaseous form. Small particles pose the greatest danger as they can reach deep into the lungs. These light particles will remain in the atmosphere for long periods increasing the risk of exposure through inhalation.

The toxins will enter homes where they can be concentrated to harmful levels.

As well as being present in the atmosphere the toxins will settle and contaminate the soil in surrounding gardens and parks including the South Downs National Park.

Harmful effects of exposure to these toxins

These toxins include carcinogens (cancer causing), mutagens (cause genetic deformations) and teratogens (harm foetus in the womb). They have a range of other impacts including causing breathing difficulties, asthma, kidney and liver damage.

There are no safe levels for many of these toxins.

These impacts are real and happening now at sites developed by St William

Residents near to former gasworks developments including Southall, Hornsey and Bow in London have reported long term breathing difficulties, increases in incidences of asthma, nausea, mental confusion, eye problems, headaches.

Impacts on the surrounding natural environment

The chalk grassland of the South Downs National Park hosts rare and protected species of birds, butterflies and plants. Pollutants risk ecological impacts such as altering species composition, direct toxic damage and making plants more vulnerable to frost, drought and pathogens.

Conclusion: The safest place for these harmful toxins is to keep them locked away in the soil and undisturbed on the site.

Dr Keeley Bignal – expertise in air pollution including PhD in motor vehicle pollution and post-doc research on combustion emissions such as PAHs.

Brighton Gasworks – pollution concerns. References.

<https://www.thecentriclab.com/air-pollution-health-in-southall-london>

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Kim K, Ara Jahan S, Kabir E, Brown RJC (2013) A review of airborne polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and their human health effects. *Environment International*

Kisku GC, Tripathi S, Raj A (2018). Polycyclic-aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in environment and human health: a review. *International Journal of Advanced Research*

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<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/aug/27/londoners-claim-toxic-air-from-gasworks-damaging-their-health>

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wildlife-habitats/habitats/chalk-grassland/>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/skylark/>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/invertebrates/butterflies>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/22/residents-demand-new-clean-air-rules-for-former-gasworks-sites-in-england>

