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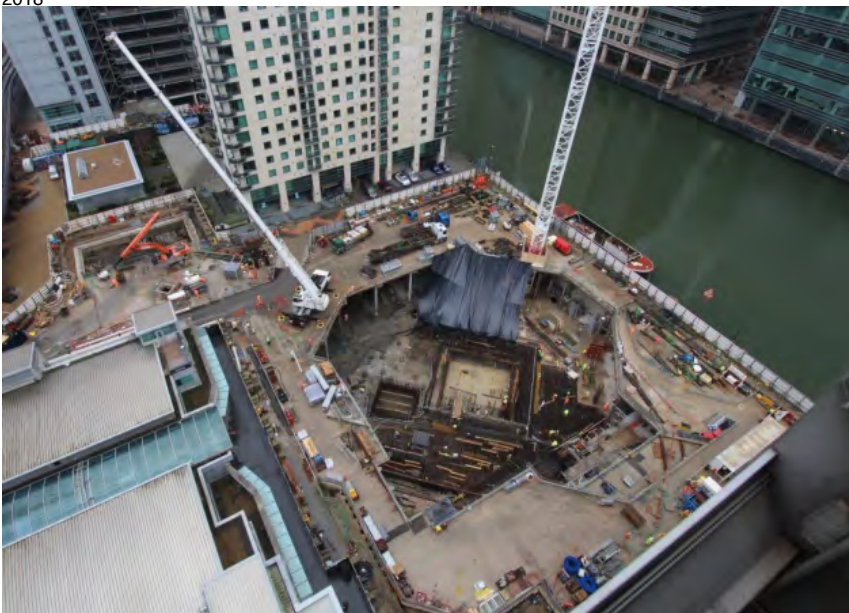
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'Stop all new building work till we sort out our mains and drains' Isle of Dogs forum demands

PUBLISHED: 07:00 13 June 2018 | UPDATED: 12:18 13 June 2018

Mike Brooke



Major construction on Isle of Dogs continues unabated.
Picture source: Isle of Dogs Planning Forum

All new development should stop around Canary Wharf and the Isle of Dogs because critical services now identified by the Greater London Authority haven't been put in place, campaigners are demanding.



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*Construction staging work being carried out at Cuba Street without planning permission, says council.
Picture: Mike Brooke*

Another 20,000 homes are now under construction or have planning permission, as well as more Canary Wharf office skyscrapers, while TfL has looked into the effects of an additional 59,000 homes by 2031 “if development is unconstrained”.

But nothing has been done to improve mains and drains, or provide the schools, medical and public transport services that are needed, the Isle of Dogs’ neighbourhood forum points out.

“What residents need is water, electricity, GP surgeries, schools, better bus services and leisure facilities,” the forum’s secretary and Tower Hamlets councillor Andrew Wood tells tomorrow’s *East London Advertiser*.

“But the Mayor of London has focussed resources on a new bridge to Rotherhithe and Tower Hamlets has concentrated on the new civic centre in Whitechapel.



Tower Hamlets Cllr Andrew Wood at the 'construction staging' site where enforcement notice has been served. Picture: Mike Brooke

“These projects divert resources and don’t deal with the impact of population growth in the fastest expanding corner of the UK.”

He is urging the mayors of London and Tower Hamlets to set up teams “to deliver the vital infrastructure we need as soon as possible”.

The forum is also calling for developers to put back any planning applications “until there is a clear strategy to catch up with the backlog”.

It estimates £41m earmarked for improvements in the past 12 months alone have not been spent, while pressure on over-stretched existing services continues with more and more major housing being added unchecked.



Isle of Dogs Forum chairman Richard Horwood with its members at Neighbourhood Plan public hearing on May 10. Picture: Mike Brooke

GLA consultants say another £40 million should be spent in South Poplar and the Isle of Dogs by March 2020 as “critical” before any further development. Their report held back for seven months and finally released last month stresses: “Without these works, development cannot proceed.”

City Hall came under fire this week for delaying the report until just 15 hours before a crucial public examination hearing on March 10 into the local forum’s long-awaited *Neighbourhood Plan* to tackle the Isle of Dogs’ population explosion crisis—even though the study “was ready in November”.

The delay led to the announcement this week that the plan was failed by the public examiner, which means it is now put back for another six months before it can be resubmitted and go to a public referendum.

The local authority which took part in the March 10 public examination learned this week of the failure to get the *Neighbourhood Plan* through.

A Tower Hamlets spokesman told the *Advertiser* today: “We’ll look closely at the examiner’s recommendation that it doesn’t go forward to a referendum at this stage. The forum could bring a revised plan later for which the council of course would provide assistance.”

The council’s own *Infrastructure Plan* identifies £1.9bn likely to be needed up to 2031 across the whole borough. It also identifies an extra £650m investment required and is using the projection “to plan ahead to meet this need”.

The forum has been calling for tougher planning laws to make it illegal to give the green light to major housing schemes without first funding the infrastructure needed.

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New bid to ease strain on services by massive Isle of Dogs developments after first attempt was 'torpedoed'

PUBLISHED: 11:10 10 April 2019 | **UPDATED:** 13:30 12 April

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Mike Brooke

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Hugh developments outstripping infrastructure on Isle of Dogs. Picture: Neighbourhood Forum

Another neighbourhood plan is being launched to try and control major developments on the Isle of Dogs to ease the strain on public services—almost a year on from a previous failed attempt.



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Richard Horwood and Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum team.

Picture: Mike Brooke

A simplified policy has now been put forward by the Isle of Dogs' planning forum, whose earlier attempt was said to have been "torpedoed" by official data not being released in time which exposed a £1 billion infrastructure funding gap.

A public hearing ruled that the data on what schools, GP surgeries, parks, public transport, mains supplies and even footbridges would be needed in the next 25 years was inadmissible because it hadn't been released officially.

Yet the information was already included in Tower Hamlets Council's *Local Plan* in 2017.

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It is now public information with the GLA's own *Planning Framework* for the area being adopted this month.

Richard Horwood presenting original Neighbourhood Plan to the Public Examiner (right) at Jack Dash House in May 2018... which failed get through. Picture: Mike Brooke

“That means it’s the right time to launch the consultation on our new ‘neighbourhood’ plan,” forum chair Richard Horwood told the *East London Advertiser*.

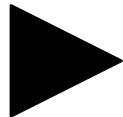
“It cannot now be undermined in the same way as our first attempt that was torpedoed by the GLA failing to publish its data in time.”

The revised plan forces the local authority to reject any new major developments without first making sure the infrastructure can cope.

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“The council doesn’t have to give consent for super-dense developments just because it’s done so before,” Richard pointed out. “It has dug itself into a hole to be ‘consistent’.

“Our proposal spells out that circumstances change. Each new major development puts further strain on the infrastructure, so that does change circumstances.”

The Isle of Dogs has the fastest growth rate anywhere in the EU, with its current 40,000 population set to reach 100,000 in the next 10 years. One street alone, Marsh Wall, where 4,000 people live, is set to house 40,000 in the next decade. Towers soar to 70 storeys, packed cheek-by-jowl into a tight, enclosed area that just four decades ago was empty land after the India and Millwall Docks had closed.

Tower Hamlets last month approved yet another huge development at Marsh Wall, reaching nearly 50 storeys, but without infrastructure guarantees.

The authority’s hands are often tied, mayor John Biggs insists.

“Planning law is adequate for most areas,” he says. “But the sheer scale of Isle of Dogs development is phenomenal, nothing like anywhere else in the country.

“We’ve been meeting developers and the utility companies to reduce the pressure, but our powers are limited—that’s the problem.”

The original ‘neighbourhood’ plan included unpublished GLA data revealing the £1bn funding gap to pay for services, first uncovered by the *Advertiser* almost a year ago.

City Hall had been working on its study of the area since 2014, but delayed releasing the findings until just 15 hours before the public examination of the original ‘neighbourhood’ plan held at Jack Dash House last May. It wasn’t enough time for the data to be legally considered, the hearing ruled.

Now that same ‘neighbourhood’ plan has been simplified and the GLA’s statistics are out of the bag in time for another public hearing later this year, to meet the needs of Europe’s fastest-growing population.



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ELECTIONS: Tower Hamlets council candidates 'hadn't a clue' about major Isle of Dogs development plans

PUBLISHED: 07:05 21 April 2018 | **UPDATED:** 07:45 23 April 2018

Mike Brooke



Isle of Dogs Forum's Richard Horwood... to advocate Neighbourhood Plan for public examination at Jack Dash House. Picture: Mike Brooke

Richard Horwood is hoping the open election meeting he is chairing on Tuesday for candidates running for Tower Hamlets mayor doesn't turn into a disaster where they can't answer questions about the vital Isle of Dogs' upcoming Neighbourhood Plan.



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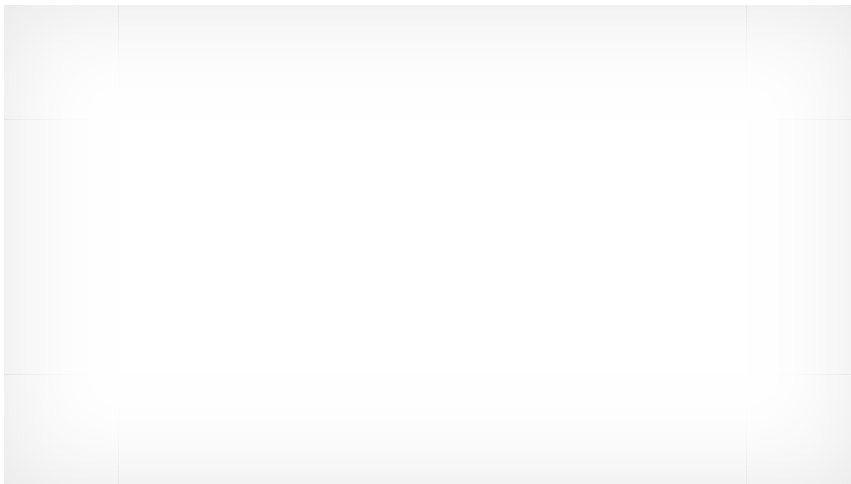
*Canary Wharf local ward hustings by Millwall's '1 Love Community' social enterprise in Pepper Street.
Picture: Mike Brooke*

After all, the area is facing a crisis of skyscraper over-development without proper infrastructure and he wants to know what each one will do if they win.

The neighbourhood planning forum's chairman got a shock at an open hustings meeting in Pepper Street last Wednesday evening where four of the five candidates present hoping to win a seat on the council just didn't have a clue about the plan—despite two years of public consultations and an open hearing coming up next month.

"We've had loads of public meetings," Richard told the stunned Canary Wharf ward candidates. "It's gone through a massive consultation process. We've had 200 pages of submissions—and you guys haven't even read it. I am stunned."

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One candidate openly apologised, then promised to take time to read it up.



Candidates at Canary Wharf ward hustings grilled on why they didn't know about Isle of Dogs Local Plan. Picture: Mike Brooke

A woman in the audience urged them: “You do need to read the Neighbourhood Plan. It’s a real disappointment that candidates haven’t engaged in it because it has more potential power than any of you.”

One voter accused the Tories of being responsible for Isle of Dogs over-development.

A second candidate responded when asked who they thought they were representing: “You ‘islanders’ need a strong voice on the council, someone who will listen to you. I think I’m that person—otherwise why would I come along and have horrible questions thrown at me.”

Richard Horwood wasn’t convinced, having organised “loads of public meetings” and taken part in a long public consultation process with the council.



Only one of these three candidates knew about Isle of Dogs Local Plan. Picture: Mike Brooke

He told the *East London Advertiser* afterwards: “Five candidates didn’t actually know about the Neighbourhood Plan, let alone read it, after it was put together by the community over the past three years. They should have known about it. We are about to have a public examination next month.”

His neighbourhood forum has 12,000 people on its mailing list—apparently not including all the candidates vying to represent them on the council. Nor had the candidates read the *Advertiser’s* front page story on April 5, it seems, highlighting Neighbourhood Plan concerns, headlined Thames Water warns ‘sewers won’t cope’ with major developments.

Richard expects a better response when candidates for mayor turn up at the forum's election hustings at 6pm on Tuesday at Millwall's Seven Mills School in Malabar Street, off Alpha Grove.

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GLA puts Isle of 'Dogs & South Poplar' plans up to 2041 out to the public with Canary Wharf launch

PUBLISHED: 09:00 19 June 2018 | Mike Brooke



Future of Isle of Dogs and Poplar for next 25 years up for public consultation. Picture source: IoD Forum

The controversial planning framework for the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar setting out the Mayor of London's vision to 2041 are up for public consultation.



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Public Examination hearing into Isle of Dogs planning forum's Neighbourhood Plan. Picture: Mike Brooke

The aim is to coordinate the development pressures and take into account the effects of the population explosion on local services and the environment.

City Hall is anxious to make sure there is enough infrastructure like mains, drains schools, roads, transport and health services to cope with the population explosion after coming in for heavy criticism over lack of planning.

"This is the last chance to influence the GLA's plans," Tower Hamlets deputy mayor Rachel Blake said. "The Isle of Dogs and South Poplar are experiencing huge development—we must get the balance right between investing in our existing communities and preparing for new ones, sharing the benefits of growth."

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City Hall has been slammed by the Isle of Dogs planning forum for keeping its *Infrastructure Study* under wraps while major developments were going ahead unabated—even though its vital data had already been pushed out by Tower Hamlets since November.



GLA plans for Isle of Dogs and Poplar up to 2041 out for public consultation. Picture: Mike Brooke

The data was left out of public scrutiny and only released by the GLA 12 hours before a public examination hearing on May 10 into the Isle of Dogs forum's own *Neighbourhood Plan* that had used the same figures.

This led to a ruling last week that there wasn't enough time for the data to have been "in the public domain" and therefore invalidated the *Neighbourhood Plan*, which has put it back six months before it can be resubmitted and a local referendum organised.

The forum is pressing to make planning permission for major developments illegal without first guaranteeing cash for utilities and public services, after discovering a funding gap of almost £1 billion for the infrastructure, revealed by the *East London Advertiser* on May 2.

The GLA's draft *Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Planning Framework* is being launched at the Museum of London Docklands in Canary Wharf on June 26. Public drop-in events are being set up over the summer, while documents are being promised to be available online and at Idea Stores.

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Why the Isle of Dogs is now 'best place to live' in whole of London

PUBLISHED: 07:00 12 April 2019 | **UPDATED:** 13:38 12 April 2019

Mike Brooke



Nothing sheepish about Isle of Dogs named by Sunday Times as best place in London to Live. Picture: Trip Advisor

The "best place to live in London" has been named as the Isle of Dogs in a national Sunday paper.



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Desirable place to live... Maybe, but what about all the development on the Isle of Dogs? Picture: Isle of Dogs Forum

It tops nine other most sort-after locations including Belgravia, according to a *Sunday Times* panel of judges.

The findings being published this weekend take in factors for living the good life like jobs, schools, broadband speed, local shopping and public transport.

But the Isle of Dogs also has unrivalled views, surrounded on three sides by the loop in the Thames, and beats Battersea into second place and surprisingly Belgravia in third.

It also has Europe's biggest city farm, the 32-acre Mudchute, contrasting the skyscrapers, which was shortlisted in 2017 as one of Britain's "most popular farm parks" by a holiday lettings website. The farm is home to 100 animals and fowl and regularly visited by large flocks of humans.



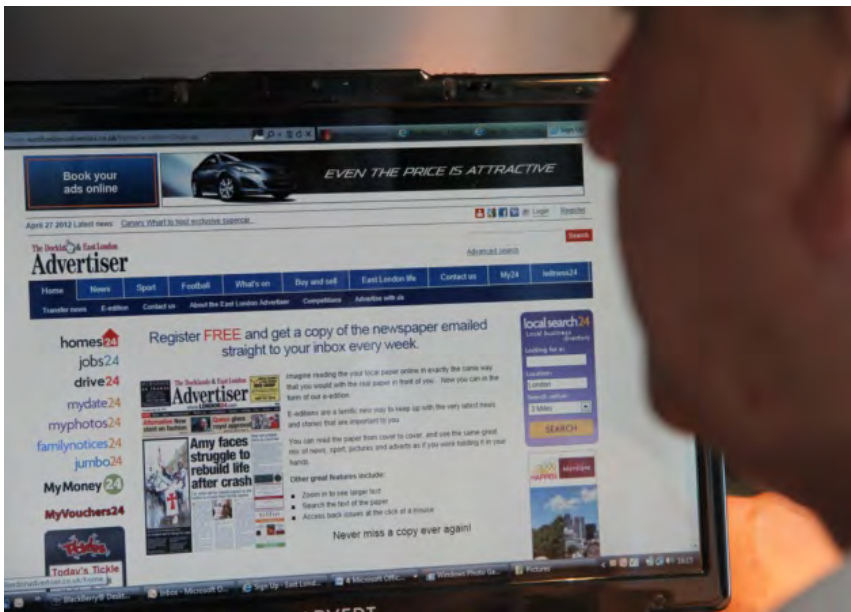
Richard Horwood... unrivalled London view from his 42nd floor balcony. Picture: Mike Brooke

Its southern tip waterfront is also where the 17th century Italian master Canaletto sat to paint his famous canvas of the Royal Greenwich Palace on the opposite bank.

But above all is the thriving East End community spirit—though more likely bourn out of the dust from all the major development going on.

One business executive attracted to the area was Richard Horwood, who moved into an apartment 42 storeys up in a Canary Wharf skyscraper with a view to die for.

"It's a fantastic place to live, apart all the construction going on," Richard tells the *East London Advertiser*.



Isle of Dogs has hyperfast broadband. Picture: Mike Brooke

“But you can’t beat the view—I can see Greenwich Royal Palace, the Cutty Sark, the Thames Barrier, the whole curve in the river, the Millennium Dome and most City skyscrapers like the Gherkin, Cheesegrater, Walkie Talkie and the BT tower. St Paul’s Cathedral, however, is hidden by another building from this angle.”

He moved in seven years ago from posh Hampstead Village as the skyscraper developments were going into overdrive, which drew him to community action.

Richard set up a residents’ association to represent 750 skyscraper households, before founding the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Forum now battling to check uncontrolled construction going ahead without planning the infrastructure.

“Planning issues affecting our lives is what strengthens community spirit here,” he adds. “So many people want to live here that we have to keep the infrastructure tight.”

The Isle of Dogs has the fastest population growth rate anywhere in the EU, with its current 40,000 population set to reach 100,000 in the next 10 years. One street alone, Marsh Wall, where 4,000 people live, is set to house 40,000 in the next decade.

It can be a headache for Tower Hamlets Council planning ahead for things like schools and doctors’ surgeries, above all trying to keep that East End community spirit alive.

John Biggs, the mayor, agrees ‘the Island’ is a “fantastic place to live” with its transport links, but warns: “The massive scale of development bringing a sense of change risks some people in the old Dockland community getting left behind. I’d like to see at least 20 per cent investment in public housing, rather than all private which most East Enders can’t afford.”

This “unheralded corner of Docklands” took first place in the *Sunday Times* panel’s list partly because of its 15 minute DLR link to the City, the Underground Jubilee line and Crossrail opening later this year, being a short walk to Canary Wharf. Other factors were clean air—fortunately the Isle of Dogs just misses the traffic pollution at the Blackwall Tunnel Approach and along the congested A13.

But for Richard Horwood, planning issues aside, it’s the panoramic view of the London skyline from his 42nd floor balcony that does it for him.



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Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan public examination opens today at Jack Dash House

PUBLISHED: 00:02 10 May 2018 | **UPDATED:** 15:15 10 May 2018 | Mike Brooke



Major new developments are leading to funding crisis to pay for gas and water mains and drainage. Picture source: Neighbourhood Planning Forum

The controversial Neighbourhood Plan for the Isle of Dogs where over-development has caused a funding gap of nearly £1 billion to sort out gas and water mains, drainage and sewers is up for public examination this-morning.



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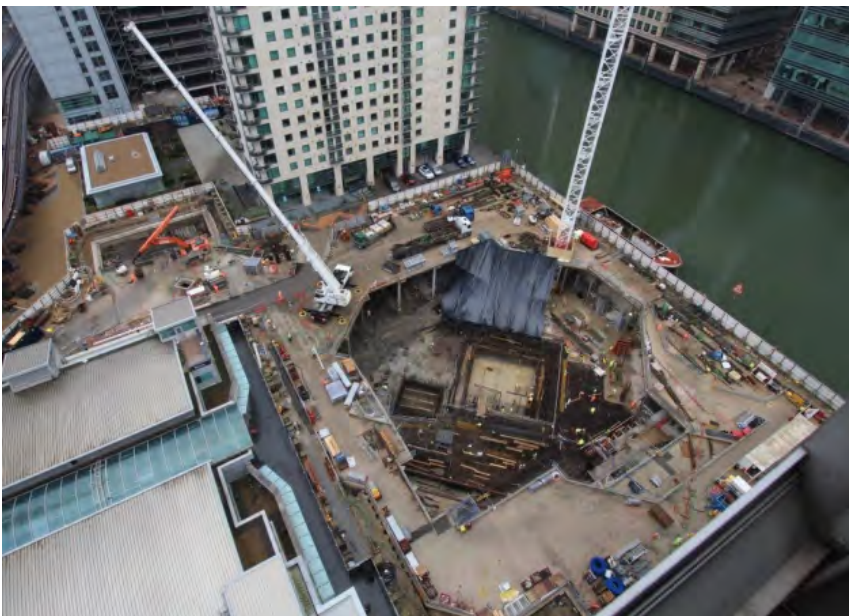
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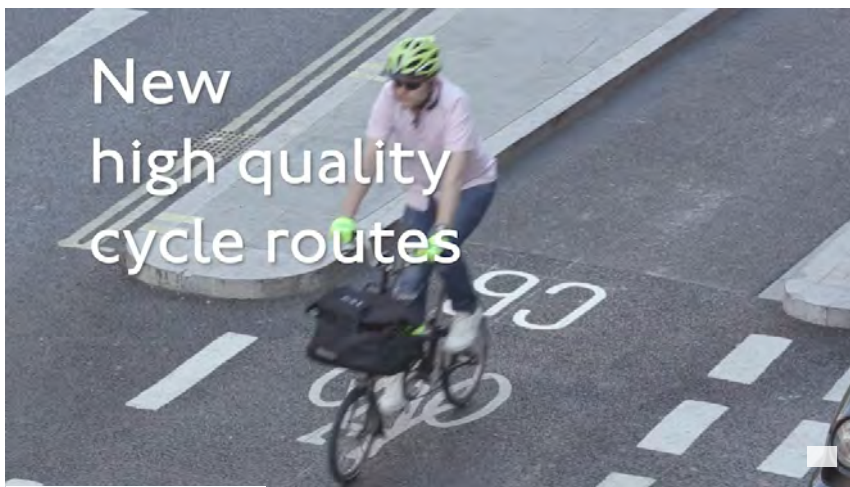
Funding crisis for mains and drains for new developments... where's the cash coming from? Picture source: Neighbourhood Planning Forum

The plan goes before an independent public examiner testing its planning legality, to prepare it for public referendum later this year.

The 10am hearing at Jack Dash House community centre at Marsh Wall, near Canary Wharf, follows three years of public meetings and consultations by the newly-recognised Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum.

It is aimed at halting yet more skyscrapers without infrastructure built first, based on a Tower Hamlets Council study showing costs at nearly £2bn to get all the infrastructure right, with only £1.1bn funding source identified so far—leaving a gap of almost £890 million to find, first revealed in the *East London Advertiser* last month.

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The Neighbourhood Plan uses a town hall study to press for changes in planning law to make it illegal for any local authority or the GLA which is responsible for London's strategic planning to give the green light to major developments without funds in place to pay for extra mains, drains and public transport.

It urges any planning levies be used only in the area affected by the impact of major developments, rather than dropped into the council's general community fund.

The issue comes to a head at the four-hour public examination showing an Isle of Dogs population rise of 44,000 in the next 14 years resulting from major housing developments already given the go-ahead or in the pipeline that critics say will bring overloaded mains and other services to a grinding halt.



Isle of Dogs Forum's Richard Horwood... to advocate Neighbourhood Plan for public examination at Jack Dash House. Picture: Mike Brooke

The 2001 census showed 20,000 people living on the Isle of Dogs, rising to 33,000 in 2011 and could reach 77,000 by 2131.

The examination tests whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets legal requirements or causes legality problems before going to a public referendum in late summer. This would force Tower Hamlets and the GLA to cool down the overheated population growth and build infrastructure before homes, if the referendum votes for it.

But activists are up against the GLA holding back for 16 months on its own study of what's needed which has been kept in 'draft' form until finally released at 5pm last night—just 17 hours before the public examination at Jack Dash House, which is not enough time for scrutiny.

Neighbourhood Forum chairman Richard Horwood, acting on legal advice by a leading QC on planning policy, is likely to call on the public examiner not to rely on the GLA's delayed report that was only released last night.

Instead, he will argue that the examiner should use Tower Hamlets council's *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* which has been ready since October which identifies what's needed and the gap in funding.

The Forum doesn't want more delays from City Hall which could hold up urgently-needed solutions to the Isle of Dogs' mains-and-drains crisis.

The delay stem from Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's push to get more housing through the planning system without waiting for the infrastructure to catch up, critics believe.

The 65,000 new homes targeted annually across the capital would add 3,500 every year to Tower Hamlets alone. Most would be built on the Isle of Dogs which is linked to the outside world by just two roads, one overcrowded Jubilee Underground line, the DLR and a foot tunnel under the Thames. The influx would add stress on already inadequate gas and water mains which have long reached full capacity, the forum points out.

The trend has already begun with developers doubling the size of one controversial housing scheme on the 15-acre Westferry Printworks site from 700 homes to 1,500 by increasing five tower blocks already given planning permission to 19 and 46 storeys, instead of the agreed eight and 30 storeys, and adding a sixth tower.

The developers say they are responding to City Hall's housing targets.

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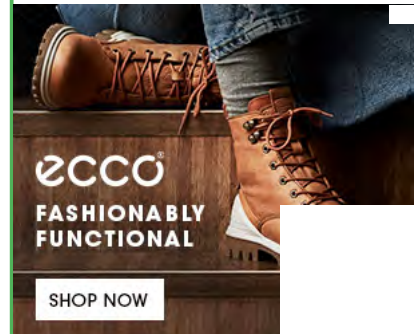
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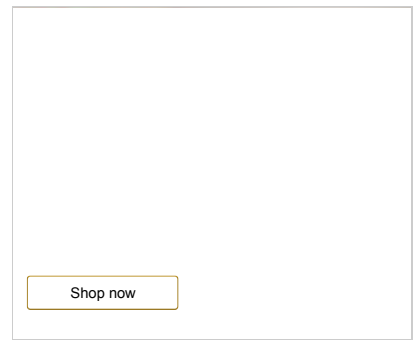
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Isle of Dogs referendum hit by delayed GLA study into future housing and service needs

PUBLISHED: 11:59 11 May 2018 | UPDATED: 17:32 15 May 2018 | Mike Brooke



Massive housing development on the Isle of Dogs with yet more construction going ahead. Picture: Mike Brooke

The proposed referendum on a neighbourhood plan for future Isle of Dogs developments could be delayed because City Hall didn't release a study on solving the 'mains and drains' crisis until just hours before a public hearing.



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Forum chairman Richard Horwood (right) with team members Andrew Wood and lawyer Dr Sue Chadwick preparing for Neighbourhood Plan public examination at Jack Dash House. Picture: Mike Brooke

The study into what infrastructure is needed to cope with the population explosion was only released 16 hours before yesterday's public examination.

Instead, the hearing at Jack Dash House community centre had to rely on a similar Tower Hamlets Council study completed in October which exposed a funding gap of nearly £1 billion to pay for gas and water mains, drainage and public transport that would be needed.

The shortfall—first revealed in the *East London Advertiser*—forms the backbone to the Neighbourhood Forum's argument for changing planning law to make it illegal to pass major housing schemes without first guaranteeing the infrastructure.

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Many schemes adding thousands of new homes have already been passed without 'mains and drains' guaranteed, with others are on the drawing board. A cautious Tower Hamlets Council was often overruled by the last Mayor of London pushing through lucrative developments along the waterfront.



Public examination into Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan, held at Jack Dash House. Picture: Mike Brooke

Yesterday's public examination to test whether the local forum's proposed Neighbourhood Plan would be legal and meet planning requirements was adjourned because it was unable to take the GLA's delayed evidence.

The public examiner has asked the forum's chairman Richard Horwood and his team to meet town hall officials confirm that the GLA's study is "not materially different to the unpublished draft" before the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted.

"The Examiner refused to let us rely on the Tower Hamlets study," Richard told the *Advertiser*. "He asked us to confirm with the council that the GLA infrastructure study is not materially different to the unpublished draft that existed last June before we submitted our Neighbourhood Plan."

The examiner is to announce if the referendum of the future of the Isle of Dogs can go ahead, but only if all the figures tally. Any fundamental differences would mean having to reopen the stalled Public Examination which would push any referendum back, perhaps for months.



Public Examiner wading through evidence for Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan. Picture: Mike Brooke

Adopting the Neighbourhood Plan would force Tower Hamlets and the GLA to cool down the overheated population growth and build infrastructure before homes.

This would rail against the Mayor of London's push for more housing with 65,000 targeted annually across the capital. That would add 3,500 new homes every year to Tower Hamlets alone—most of it, the forum believes, would come to the Isle of Dogs which has

to cope with only two roads, one overcrowded Underground line, the DLR and a foot tunnel under the Thames linking it to the outside world. Its population is predicted to hit 77,000 by 2031.

The trend has already begun with developers doubling the size of one controversial housing scheme on the 15-acre Westferry Printworks site from 700 homes to 1,500 by increasing five tower blocks already given planning permission to 19 and 46 storeys, instead of the agreed eight and 30 storeys, and adding a sixth tower. The developers say they are responding to City Hall's housing targets.

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Housing scheme bid to double tower block heights at Westferry Printworks scheme

PUBLISHED: 16:38 25 April 2018 | **UPDATED:** 09:41 02 May 2018

Mike Brooke



Entrance to Westferry printworks site on Isle of Dogs after being flattened for redevelopment. Picture source: Google

Plans to double the size of the controversial Westferry Printworks housing scheme from 700 homes to 1,500 have been revealed which will add to the Isle of Dogs' rocketing population.

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Satellite view of Westferry printworks before it was bulldozed. Picture source: Google

The developers confirmed today that they are resubmitting their planning application for the 15-acre site to Tower Hamlets Council—despite getting the green light in 2016 for the smaller scheme.

They want to increase the five tower blocks to reach 19 and 46 storeys instead of the original eight and 30 storeys and add a sixth tower—all in response to the Mayor of London’s plans for more housing.

“The increase in housing will be achieved through increasing the height of the buildings,” the company has told the *East London Advertiser*.

The scheme came under fire at last night’s Tower Hamlets election hustings for mayor staged by the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum at Millwall’s Seven Mills School, just half-a-mile from the proposed development.



Isle of Dogs hustings for Tower Hamlets mayor election held at Millwall's Seven Mills School. Picture: Mike Brooke

Candidates from across the political spectrum were angry at development going ahead without the infrastructure such as sewers and mains supplies being secured before being given the green light in 2016.

There are 10 major developments going ahead on the Isle of Dogs alone which Thames Water warns will be too much for the network to cope—first revealed in the *Advertiser* on April 5.

Thames Water's findings are being submitted to a public examination of the forum's *Neighbourhood Plan* on May 10 at Jack Dash House.

The developers, who are holding a meeting on Tuesday with neighbours living close to the site, are currently having talks with the utility mains company before submitting their redrawn proposals to the local authority in July. They also plan a public exhibition at the end of May.



Entrance to Westferry printworks site on Isle of Dogs after being flattened for redevelopment. Picture source: Google

The new scheme responds to the *London Plan* which earmarks Tower Hamlets to have 3,500 new homes every year, part of the 65,000 targeted annually across Greater London.

“We are resubmitting a bigger scheme because of the London Plan for more homes,” a spokesman for Mace Developments said. “We felt we had the capability to deliver that target.”

They will fall back on their original scheme for 700 homes if the revised application for double that number is rejected, the *Advertiser* has been told.

The proposals also include a new secondary school for 1,200 pupils, community and health centres, two new parks and a south facing dockside waterfront promenade with restaurants, bars and shops.

Population on the Isle of Dogs is set to rise by another 40,000 in the next 10 years, adding fears that the mains gas and water supplies, drainage, transport and other public services may not cope.

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South Dock bridge to Canary Wharf gets £7m go-ahead with London business rates cash

PUBLISHED: 18:00 09 October 2018 | **UPDATED:** 10:56 17

October 2018

Mike Brooke

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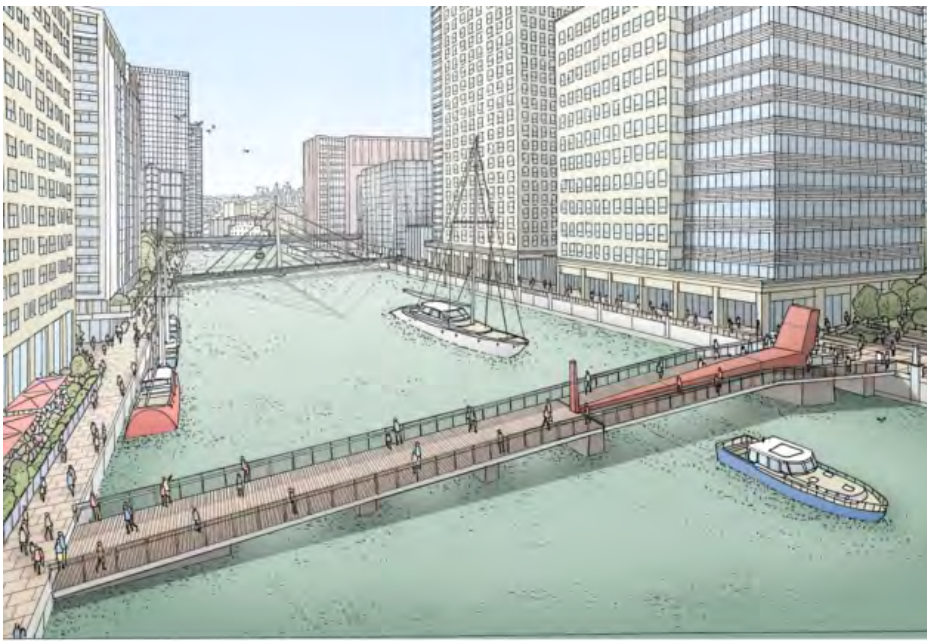
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Impression of how new South Dock footbridge will take shape. Picture source: LBTH

A badly-needed footbridge linking the Isle of Dogs to Canary Wharf has been given £7 million government funding to start construction following a three-year campaign.



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London Councils chairman Peter John... "Local authorities and the Mayor are determined to make sure business rates can be spent on strategic benefits."

Picture source: London Councils

But the grant chosen by London Councils representing local authorities is no government 'gift', as the money comes from business rates that were collected by Tower Hamlets Council in the first place.

The scheme is part of a £47m package clawed back from the chancellor for eight special projects.

"This shows we have our finger on the pulse of what London needs," London Councils' chair Peter John said. "Local authorities and the Mayor are all determined to make sure rates revenue can be spent on strategic benefits to the business community."

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An advertisement for Portakabin. The left side shows a modern building with large glass windows and a curved roof, situated on a grassy hill. The text "Made by" is written in white over the grass, and "Portakabin®" is written in white on a red rectangular background at the bottom left. The right side has a light blue background with the text "SO IS THIS..." in large, outlined letters, and "Portakabin®" in white on a red rectangular background at the bottom right.



Congested old footbridge crammed with commuters queuing to reach Canary Wharf Underground station. Picture: Sergey Kharlamov

Today's grant has been welcomed by Tower Hamlets councillor Andrew Wood, representing Canary Wharf ward, who has been campaigning for a footbridge following a strike on the DLR that caused 'bottleneck' queues of commuters trying to reach the alternative Jubilee line tube station,.

But Cllr Wood is sceptical about the funding 'gift' announced today.

"It's actually our money being returned to us," he told the *East London Advertiser*.



Canary Wharf councillor Andrew Wood... It's our own money coming back to us that should have stayed local in the first place." Picture: Mike Brooke

“Business rates are an appalling mechanism, being used as additional funding for infrastructure when it was the council that raised them in the first place.

“It’s our own money that should have stayed local in the first place.”

Tower Hamlets raises £300m in business rates a year for the government, but gets back just £119m.



Retired councillor Belle Harris... "Business rates should not be used for hand-picked projects which do not stop public service cuts." Picture: Mike Brooke

Former councillor Bell Harris, who has campaigned for all business rates to be returned to local authorities after they were reined in by the Thatcher government in 1991, slammed today’s grant as “a red herring” that starves public services of funds.

The retired Polytechnic lecturer said: “Distributing the revenue this way keeps public service cuts continuing.

Our business rates being next to the City have rocketed four-fold, which is killing small traders now facing bankruptcy. They should not be used for hand-picked projects by the government.”

Tower Hamlets mayor John Biggs also led a delegation of small traders to Downing Street last year calling for more business rates to be returned to local authorities rather than dished out for selected projects.

But London Councils insists that the South Dock footbridge is vital for the Isle of Dogs to get better access to the London Underground for commuters.

The area faces another 20,000 homes and more office towers being built or having planning permission. Yet another 59,000 homes could be built by 2031.

The Isle of Dogs' neighbourhood forum argued at a public examination hearing in March for all new development to stop until public services would be able to cope.

Resources were being spent on projects like the proposed Rotherhithe Bridge and a new civic centre at Whitechapel, which Cllr Wood feared diverted resources and didn't deal with the population growth.

Plans for South Dock footbridge were unveiled in February to relieve Canary Wharf's older 'bottleneck' footbridge. Public consultations have been held, but it is yet to receive formal planning consent from the council.

The design takes account of noise, vibration and wind to avoid the 'wobble' effect that plagued the Millennium Bridge in the City when it opened.

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Public hearing throws out desperately-needed Neighbourhood Plan for Isle of Dogs public services

PUBLISHED: 19:00 11 June 2018 | UPDATED: 11:44 14 June 2018

Mike Brooke



Rejected... Isle of Dogs plan for public services to cope with population explosion. Picture source: Isle of Dogs Forum

Proposals for a formal plan for public services to cope with the Isle of Dogs population explosion crisis have been rejected.



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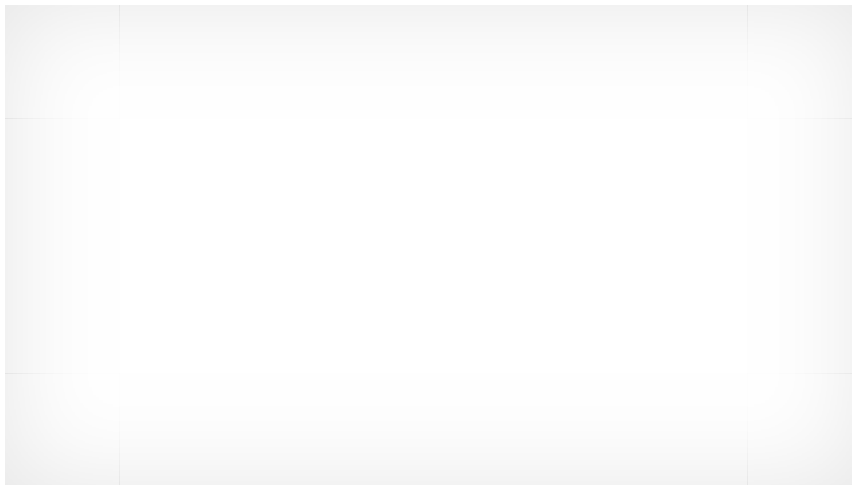
Isle of Dogs Forum chairman Richard Horwood with its members at Neighbourhood Plan public hearing on May 10. Picture: Mike Brooke

The Neighbourhood Plan for better mains, drains, schools and transport put forward by the area's planning forum has been turned down by the Public Examiner, it has emerged this week.

It means the voluntary forum's long-awaited *Neighbourhood Plan* won't go to a referendum this summer, despite months of public meetings and consultations.

The rejection was caused because it included data from the GLA's *Infrastructure Study* for the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar which was not yet in the public domain—even though it had the same information that Tower Hamlets Council issued last October.

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The GLA held onto its study for seven months and only released it 15 hours before last month's public examination hearing at Jack Dash House on the Isle of Dogs, which the independent examiner ruled was not enough time to be legally considered.



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Richard Horwood (centre) giving evidence at May 10 public examination of Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan. Picture: Mike Brooke

The Neighbourhood Plan has now been delayed another six months before it can be resubmitted—while more development schemes are passed without legislation to guarantee funding for services needed for the population rise.

The GLA had been working on the publicly-funded study since 2014 and promised to have it ready by 2016, but postponed it until February 2017, then again until last summer and finally got it ready in November.

But its findings still hadn't been released until the evening before the *Neighbourhood Plan* public examination at Jack Dash House on May 10 when they were too late to be included.

Yet Tower Hamlets had used the GLA data in October for its own *Local Plan* on what schools, GP surgeries, parks, public transport, mains supplies and even bridges are needed in the next 25 years.

The study has already identified a funding shortfall of almost £1 billion that's needed to sort out gas and water mains, drains, sewers and other services needed for major schemes already given the go-ahead, the *East London Advertiser* first revealed on April 3.

Campaigners have been calling for tougher planning law to make it illegal to give the green light to housing schemes without first funding the infrastructure needed.

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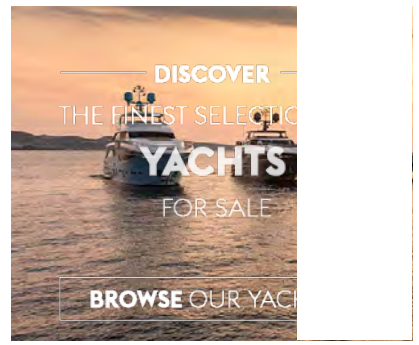
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News › UK

Resident plan to help plug £1bn infrastructure funding gap for Isle of Dogs goes to public examination

Over-development has put extreme pressures on gas and water mains on the Isle of Dogs, a City Hall funding study found

RACHAEL BURFORD | Friday 11 May 2018 15:39 |

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The Forum has spent three years drafting its planning policies (*Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Forum*)

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A resident-led plan to curb dense developments in **Tower Hamlets** and help plug an almost £1bn infrastructure funding gap has been sent for public examination.

Over-development has put extreme pressures on gas and water mains on the Isle of Dogs, a City Hall Development Infrastructure Funding Study (DIFS) found.

It will cost nearly £2bn to fix the problems, according to a council report, but only £1.1bn of funding has been identified.

The Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Forum has spent three years drafting its planning policies, which, if rubber stamped, will make it illegal for the council or the GLA to approve major developments without funds in place to pay for the infrastructure needed around them.

Yesterday its plan went to public examination to test its legality before being sent to a referendum.



Over-development has put extreme pressures on gas and water mains on the Isle of Dogs (Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Forum)

The Forum has had a copy of the draft DIFS for months and relied on its findings to write their plan. However, the GLA only officially published the document hours before yesterday's meeting.

The study now has to go to consultation to give the public time to review and comment on it, delaying the process by four weeks.

The Forum argues that developers are paying the council millions to build on the Island, but that money is being spent on infrastructure elsewhere.

Councillor Andrew Wood said: "Since April 2015 this ward has brought in £77m in Community Infrastructure Levy funds.

"I estimate only half of that will be spent in the borough. That is what the Forum is trying to change.

"We will desperately need between 10 and 14 new primary schools in this area. Other areas of the borough have a lower population and far better infrastructure. We shouldn't have to be the cash cow."

The number of towers being planned or built in the capital passed the 500 mark for the first time last year and half of these are in East London. Eighty-five are in Tower Hamlets, with the Isle of Dogs bearing the brunt of the building work.

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But Tower Hamlets Council, developers and housing associations in the area oppose parts of the Neighbourhood Plan, arguing some policies are too restrictive.

Philip Dunphy, representing developers Ballymore, said some of the plan points were "open ended and could be misinterpreted".

Ellie Kuper-Thomas, from the council's planning department, said that if some of the policies were put into place they would be "unlawful" and argued the council needed the flexibility to spend money on infrastructure where it deems necessary.

She added: "We have a housing target imposed on us by the GLA that we seek to meet. Inserting infrastructure in other areas helps us shift planning into those areas."

If the examiners report allows the Neighbourhood Plan to go forward, a referendum will be organised by Tower Hamlets Council and would likely be in September.

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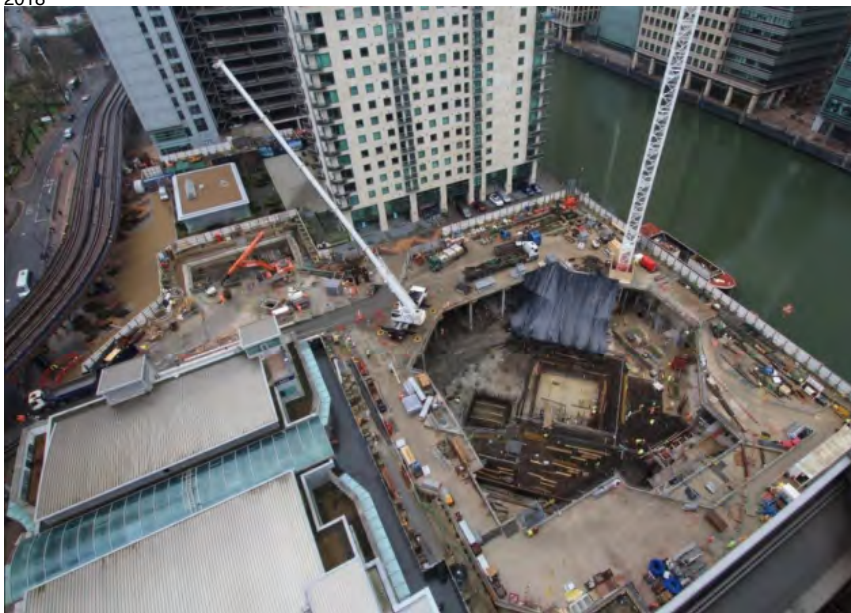
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Thames Water warns 'sewers won't cope' at 16 major developments on Isle of Dogs and nearby

PUBLISHED: 15:25 03 April 2018 | UPDATED: 08:10 04 April 2018

Mike Brooke



Candidates in the local elections have clashed over affordable housing. Picture: Isle of Dogs Forum

Sewer and drainage capacity on the Isle of Dogs may not be able to cope with the 10 massive redevelopments now under way along the Thames, it has emerged.



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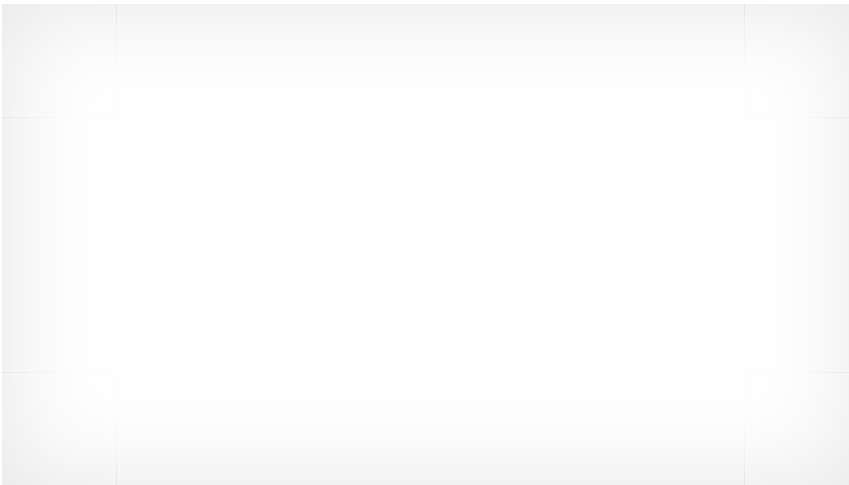
Massive Isle of Dogs developments causing strain on mains utilities. Picture source: Isle of Dogs Forum

That's the formal view of Thames Water's submission to a public hearing being held next month into the proposed Neighbourhood Plan and the right for current residents to decide the area's future.

The utility company has been concerned about lack of mains pressure at South Quay and other parts of the Isle of Dogs where there are huge tower block developments.

Its submission seen by the *East London Advertiser* says: "Upgrades to the existing infrastructure may be required to ensure sufficient capacity ahead of development.

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"The strategy should be submitted with any planning application by developers who should liaise with us to determine what is required, when and where, if there is constrained capacity."



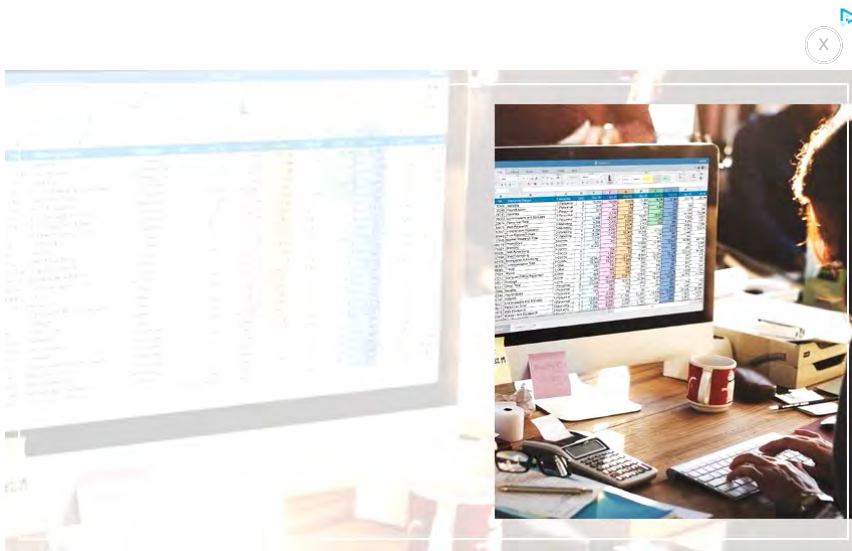
"Our right to make policies have been challenged"... Isle of Dogs Planning Forum chair Richard Horwood. Picture: Mike Brooke

Mains freshwater needs are more complex for any proposed housing, however. More details are required from Tower Hamlets Council's "aspirations for housing" at each site, it adds, such as the scale and anticipated completion date.

But before then, tenants and residents on older housing estates should be able to vote on whether their homes are torn down to make way for rejuvenation projects, the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum demands.

The forum's chair Richard Horwood said: "Our right to make some of the policies have been challenged by some developers, the council and the GLA.

"The millions paid by the developers to the council for services to support new buildings should be spent where intended—on Isle of Dogs priorities rather than elsewhere in Tower Hamlets."



Packed meeting of Isle of Dogs Forum in February, 2017, railing against over development. Picture: Mike Brooke

But his forum is up against opposition to its proposed Neighbourhood Plan going before next month's public inquiry.

But Thames Water has come out in support of a residents' policy that Richard claims the council and GLA "are trying to block".

It is calling on local authorities to insist on infrastructure solutions before giving planning permission.

Its property chief Richard Hill says in his submission: “We support the requirement for all infrastructure needs to be identified prior to development coming forward and the requirement for all planning applications to have made clear how, where and when such infrastructure will be supplied.”

Currently the council can give planning permission with a provision that services are sorted out. But Thames Water wants it the other way round, so developers get the go-ahead from them *before* applying for planning permission.

There are 16 major current developments across the East End where the public sewage and drainage network it says won't be able to cope. These include 10 on the Isle of Dogs alone—Crossharbour town centre (Asda supermarket), Limeharbour, North Quay Upper Bank Street, North Quay Aspen Way, Millharbour and Millharbour South, Marsh Wall West and Marsh Wall East, South Westferry Circus and Westferry Printworks site.

The other six major schemes likely to put pressure on the drainage network are the nearby Wood Wharf and the Reuters Blackwall Yard schemes, the massive Bishopsgate goodsyard project stretching between Spitalfields, Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, the Poplar gasworks site by the Lea River, the Bethnal Green gasworks site at The Oval by the Regent's Canal and ironically the Whitechapel south side which includes the new Tower Hamlets civic centre due to open by 2022.

Policies such as adequate infrastructure like drainage and mains supplies “must be identified and guaranteed” before more residential buildings or hotels are permitted by Tower Hamlets Council, the Isle of Dogs forum insists.

The public examination with appointed examiner John Parmiter on May 10 at Millwall's Jack Dash House, next to the two Marsh Wall schemes, is the final stage before the forum's Neighbourhood Plan goes to a public referendum in the summer.

The aim of the hearing is to consider whether its policies comply with regulations and legal requirements—not whether it is a good plan or not.

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