

Non-Executive Report of the: Council 27 th September 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Petitions to Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. This report sets out details of the valid petitions submitted for presentation and debate at this Council meeting. The text of the petitions received are set out in the attached report.
2. The Council's Constitution provides for up to four petitions to be heard at each ordinary Council meeting. These are taken in order of receipt, except that petitions for debate (those in excess of 2,000 signatures) will take precedence. Should more than four petitions be received, all remaining petitions will be listed to be formally noted by Council.
 - a. There is one petition to be heard
 - i. Asking to reconsider cuts to certain infrastructure projects
 - b. There are no petitions to be debated or noted.

PETITIONS TO BE HEARD

3. For Petitions listed as to be heard:
 - a. Petitioners may address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
 - b. Members may then question the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
 - c. Finally, the speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the petition for up to 2 minutes. The petition will then be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will provide a written response within 28 days of the date of the meeting.
4. Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.
5. Responses to all petitions will be sent to the lead petitioner and displayed on the Council's website.

5.1 Petition requesting Compulsory purchase Westferry Printworks for a school

We the undersigned petition the council to compulsorily purchase the land with planning permission for a new secondary school at Westferry Printworks. This will allow the construction of a new 1,200 pupil school providing a permanent home for Canary Wharf College. And would also deliver the community new sports facilities and four outdoor sports pitches to replace the football pitches to be lost at Crossharbour if the Selsdon Way site is redeveloped.

Dear Mayor, in 2014 you started the process to compulsory purchase the right to light at the City Pride site in order to help with the delivery of new affordable homes at Island Point.

We would ask that you start that process again but this time to compulsory purchase the Westferry Printworks school site. The landowner has since April 2016 not signed the lease agreement to allow the Council or the Department of Education to build a new school on that site. Your Management Development Document adopted in 2013 made clear that area could only be used as a school.

A compulsory purchase would deliver land for a new 1,200 pupil secondary school as well as a new school sports facility with three outdoor pitches available for the community to use out of school hours. This land was previously used as car parks and most of it has not been used for over a decade. So the financial impact on the Council would be limited and we note the government is changing the rules to make this process simpler and cheaper. This would also save the government a lot of money as LocatEd are looking to buy a new secondary school site in the E14 area for Canary Wharf College and perhaps they may be willing to pay for any compulsory purchase costs. The government has also committed to paying to build the new school.

Meanwhile, a developer is proposing to knock down a site at Selsdon Way, Crossharbour which is used as a car park. But it also has offices now used by Canary Wharf College Secondary as their school has grown while they wait for a permanent site at Westferry Printworks. There are also external football pitches on the roof (originally managed by Powerleague but now run by the school both for their pupils and for others out of school hours).

The developers want to build a new 38-storey residential tower with 40% affordable homes. But construction would mean the loss of the football pitches and part of the school. That would create a conflict with policies in the Local and Neighbourhood Plan which protect community assets.

But if Canary Wharf College is able to move to a new site with outdoor pitches that would minimise any planning conflict.

A compulsory purchase would deliver a new secondary school, new community sports facilities and open up another site for redevelopment at a minimal cost to the Council.

This Petition ran from 24/05/2023 to 31/07/2023 and has now finished.

728 people signed this Petition.

305 people signed a hardcopy of the petition

1,033 in total