



Planning Casework Unit
Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

By email to: PCU@communities.gov.uk

6th November 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CALL IN:

15 Chandler Street, Wapping – Application number PA/24/01545/NC

Change of use to a substance Misuse Recovery Centre with associated internal alteration

We write to you in respect of the corruption of process endemic in the above planning application in which the LBTH propose to convert an existing community Centre, with a Nursery on the ground floor, into a drugs rehab Centre.

The Council has failed to adhere to both the statutory, and non-statutory consultation process for this proposal. It has not consulted properly with residents, business, stakeholders, and local voluntary/community organizations. The council has not considered existing businesses, services and facilities within the immediate location. There has been no study or risk assessment of the impact of the proposed facility within the immediate or reaching environment. The Council has, without prior consultation, submitted a planning application, (PA/24/01545/NC) for a change of use to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors of 15 Chandler Street.

The only form of consultation prior to the planning application being submitted was some 150 letters sent to local residents within an immediate council estate. Copy attached.

When pressed on the absence of consultation (statutory and non-statutory), the Council swiftly, (within 3 days) pushed the proposal through to a formal planning application. A position, in my view, solely aimed at negating their obligation to hold a full and transparent consultation.

When further pressed on the lack of a consultation the council cited an email "consultation," which subsequently they admitted was inadequate as follows:

*"The correspondence you highlight was a short email sent out to 5 residents in August of this year following the pre-planning consultation exercise. This email has previously been brought to my attention by Cllr Lee and following review we have acknowledged the wording in this email to be unhelpful."
Carrie Kilpatrick ; Deputy Director Mental Health and Joint Commissioning*

We have corresponded with council officers on multiple occasions. Their responses, if provided have been delayed, weak, evasive and obstructive. Despite significant but reasonable requests for documentation the council has failed to provide any evidence of meaningful assessments whether it be to reflect considerations of the building framework, risk assessments both internally and to the existing business/users of the building, (nursery to 1-4 year old children) as well as documentation and/or assessments in relation to the proposed location, its impact on surrounding residential units, existing business's, services and facilities. Difficulty of access to the building, given the significantly restricted pavements and narrow cobbled roads seems to have been ignored, until we drew their attention to inadequate pavement width for the safety of wheelchair users.

Please see letter, attached, sent to LBTH's Planning and Building Control in relation to 'Inclusive mobility, A guide to best practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure').

The council's position has been to defer/encompass any consultation process within the planning application process. Under best Practice Guidelines they have failed to properly consult prior to submitting the planning application.

The LBTH Planning and building control have received to date some 1170 objections to the planning application from local residents and stakeholders. I attach a letter of objection from the local surgery, Chair, Mr V Morgan to the PPG.

Upon securing a face-to-face meeting with council officers on the 18th October 2024 we made further requests for supporting evidence and documentation to support the proposal. This was followed up by email. Again, nothing has been provided short of unsubstantiated assertions with no documents, assessments to support. Within these conversations *Carrie Kilpatrick stated ; 'If we had run a consultation we would have likely had in excess of 2000 objections'*.

Stephen Halsey, LBTH CEO failed to reply to 2 emails requesting a meeting and has not replied to any emails we have sent to him.

The council has breached its statutory obligations to consult in an apparent effort to avoid scrutiny and accountability and rushed the application through to planning. The authority has no innate right to pick and choose which parts of statutory process it complies with. It has breached Best Practice Guidelines. We consider the planning application to be both illegal and void by virtue of the lack of consultation and it should be stopped immediately

I would ask that the government call in the application to ensure the corruption of process is not allowed to continue.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew Melbye
Chair
St Katharine's and Wapping Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel

www.skw-wardpanel.org