

Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Sustainable development for the fastest growing area in the UK

Health Warning – this is Tower Hamlets

London Neighbourhood Planners 11th Jan 2022



A quick digression - Spitalfields Neighbourhood Plan – referendum issues

Referendum Thursday 11th November 2021

552 residents voted in the referendum - 298 or 54% voted Yes

There was a leaflet sent by Royal Mail 1st class post to every household attacking the NP – organised by a communications company based in Romford

BUT

97 business votes submitted, 9 rejected, leaving 88 votes counted.

70 No votes, 18 Yes votes

BUT

- 49.5% of the total cast business votes came from one office building (53% of those who voted by post came from the same building)
- 22.5% of the total cast business votes cost came from one family and five other individuals

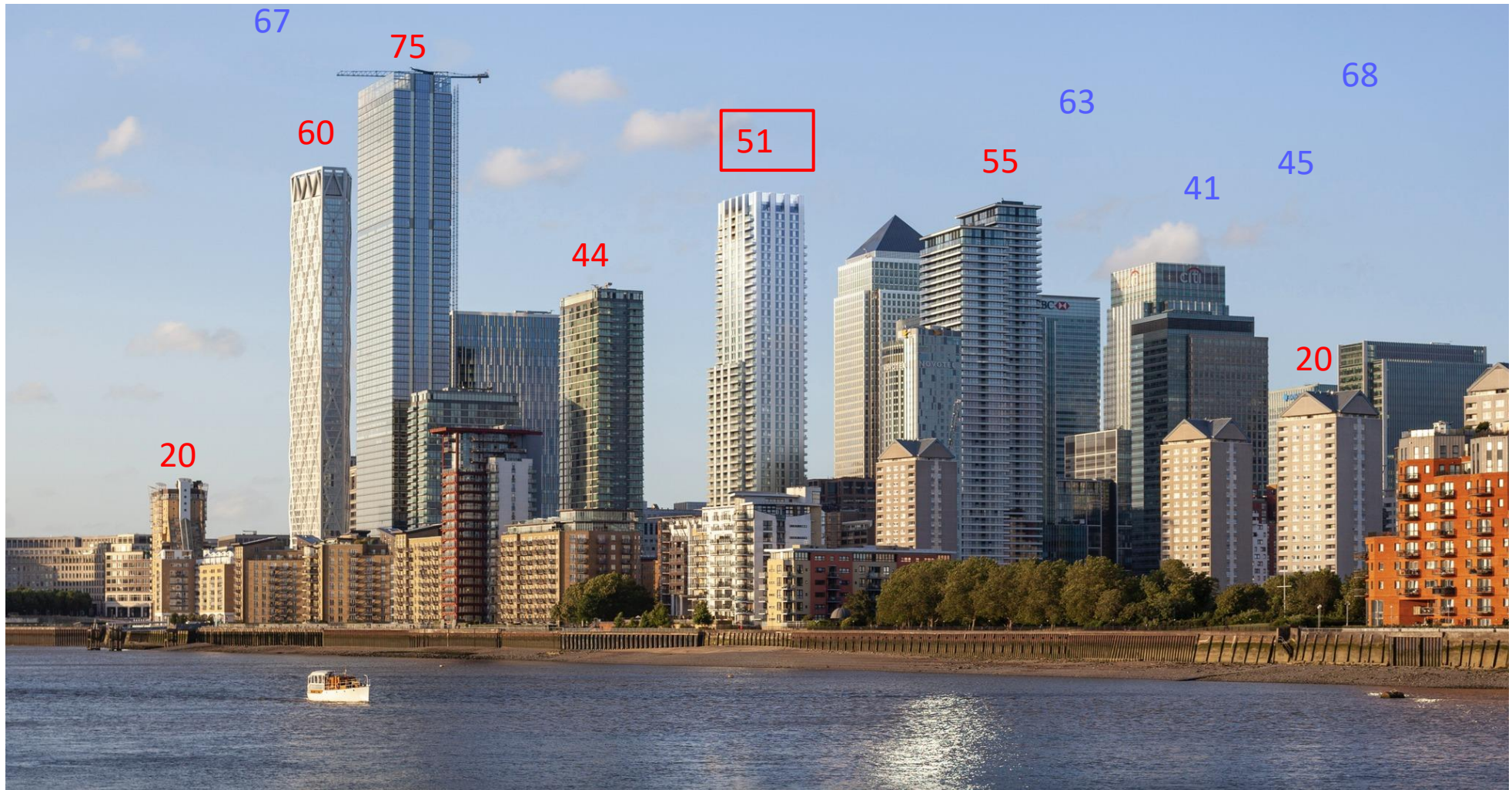
This is the first time in the country that businesses have voted No in a Neighbourhood Plan referendum.

And the first time that a local authority therefore has to choose whether to accept the resident Yes vote or the business No vote, again the first time that any local authority has had to make this decision

Isle of Dogs – picture from Tower Hamlets Council Tall Building Supplementary Planning Document 2021 – pink potential development



Isle of Dogs – 51 storey 421 homes tower going to decision this Thursday – application submitted October 2020 after Isle of Dogs referendum version published in May (examiners report April) – red height in storeys of existing buildings, blue with planning permission



Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum - quick history

First conversations summer 2014

Application for area and Forum - 1st December 2014

Major delay as Tower Hamlets Council did not know what to do with us

Recognition April 2016 – Council remove 1/3 of the area without explanation

First 'quick' Neighbourhood Plan

Rejected at examination June 2018 after GLA delay releasing crucial evidence until the evening before the public examination

Examiner did not like us stretching boundaries

Second Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 14 consultation – April to May 2019

Regulation 16 Consultation and Examination – January to April 2020

Examiners report & Referendum agreement – April to May 2020

COVID delay

Referendum 6th May 2021 – 86% yes vote

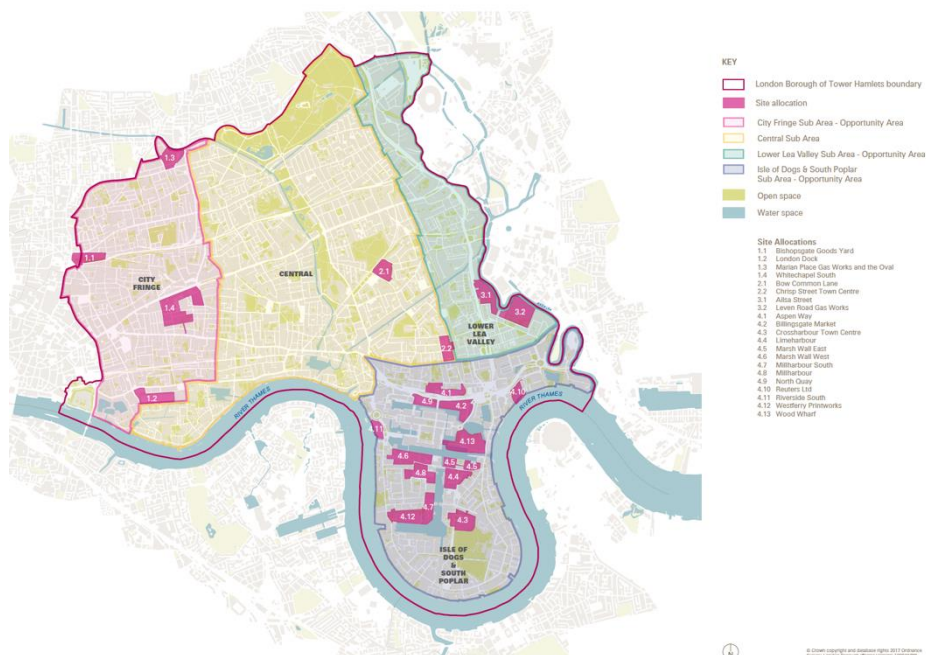
Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum - challenge – very high housing targets

	Per Year	As a share of total
New target England	337,000	
Tower Hamlets share	6,121	1.82%
Isle of Dogs & S Poplar share 57%	3,489	1.04%

Purple areas – where Council want development

SECTION 4: DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE PLACES

18: Sub-areas and site allocations



Targets by area in Tower Hamlets

Table 1: Minimum number of additional homes across sub-areas (2016 - 2031)

Sub area	Minimum number of additional homes	Percentages
Isle of Dogs and South Poplar	31,209	57%
City Fringe	10,334	19%
Lower Lea Valley	5,748	10%
Central	7,597	14%
Tower Hamlets: total	54,889	100%
Borough-wide windfall allowance (evenly distributed between sub areas)	3,122*	

*The windfall allowance has been subsumed within each sub area target.

London Plan targets – IoD 29,000 homes

Opportunity Area	Indicative homes*	Indicative jobs^
Southall	9,000	3,000
White City	7,000	2,000
Earls Court/West Kensington	6,500	5,000
Great West Corridor	7,500	14,000
Kensal Canalside	3,500	2,000
Old Oak Park Royal	25,500	65,000
Central London		
Paddington	1,000	13,000
Victoria	1,000	4,000
Tottenham Court Road	300	6,000
Euston	2,800 - 3,800	8,600 - 15,000
King's Cross	1,000	25,000
City Fringe/Tech City	15,500	50,500
Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea	18,500	18,500
Waterloo	1,500	6,000
London Bridge/Bankside	4,000	5,500
Elephant & Castle	5,000	10,000
Canada Water	5,000	20,000
Isle of Dogs	29,000	110,000
Trams Triangle/London-Gatwick-Brighton mainline		
Croydon	14,500	10,500
Sutton	5,000	3,500

Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum - Getting the plan delivered (successes and challenges)

Successes

- Two Neighbourhood Plans completed between April 2016 and May 2020
- 86% yes vote
- One of the largest Neighbourhood Plan areas in the country if measured by population

Challenges

- Examiner removed a key part of the Neighbourhood Plan (an Excel based Infrastructure Impact Assessment model) which then meant our main policy then became subjective not qualitative
- Council development planning officers (the people who process planning applications) do not want to use the Neighbourhood Plan and will change their methodology to avoid using it – it complicates the way they do work and they have the highest housing targets in the country to meet – so they will accept tick box planning applications from developers
- Developers as long as they can sell (or rent) new homes probably won't change
- Fire safety – now the biggest issue in Tower Hamlets (we lead the country on the most buildings affected) cannot be dealt with through Neighbourhood Planning
- Building quality & how these buildings work i.e. service charges – Neighbourhood Planning not the ideal tool to resolve either

Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum – Recommendations

1. Politics – what are your relationships like with the Council, with planning officers (reminder the people you deal with maybe not the people who process applications) and the governing political party? Just because neighbourhood planning should be non-party political that does not mean you should not discuss the politics of what you are doing
2. Think about other tools to solve problems – both Spitalfields and Isle of Dogs in retrospect should have tried for a local Council first (see example of Queens Park Community Council)
3. How does your development management team actually work and make decisions? Is it policy led or not? If not, then Neighbourhood Plans probably won't work unless you design them to be hard to avoid
4. **Make policies as site specific as possible or map based rather than generic policies covering a whole area – much harder for developers etc. to avoid them**
5. Plan for the post referendum period – statute, regulations and funding are all about getting you to the referendum (and are largely silent about your role post referendum) but the work does not end there – on the Isle of Dogs we lost momentum due to COVID, Chair leaving area, other issues i.e. fire safety, Westferry Printworks, Spitalfields Neighbourhood Plan all occupying scarce time – this is a marathon not a sprint

This is also all in Tower Hamlets which is a unique place so most of these lessons except 4 may not be applicable to you Happy to help provide advice etc