

Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum – consultation responses

Rep No	Rep ID	Comment
01	01	<p>This is in response to Southwark Council's formal consultation into the suitability of Russell Gray's group to be designated as the Neighbourhood Forum for Area A.</p> <p>I believe Russell Gray's group hold views that are too extreme and do not represent the majority of opinion in the area. My preference is for any other group to be selected.</p>
02	01	<p>The Old Village Neighbourhood Forum, has many members who have acted concertedly with a lot of effort and over many years. They are also an 'open –door policy group' actively publishing the times and dates of all meetings and allowing anyone to enter and contribute. As such I feel it would be an excellent choice to take forward the neighbourhood planning in the designated area.</p>
03	01	<p>I'm a resident and owner of a flat on Bermondsey Street and I'm writing to express my opinion regarding the application of the Old Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum aka BVAG to represent area A as its neighbourhood forum.</p>
	02	<p>I'm against their application and request the council reject their application. They do not represent my thinking about area A and I am very uncomfortable with their tactics and style of operation.</p>
	03	<p>As other groups may form between now and the end of the consultation period I will write later on which group I prefer to represent me but under no condition will it be the group mentioned above.</p>
04	01	<p>I write to object in the strongest terms to the designation of the above forum to take forward neighbourhood planning.</p>
	02	<p>In simply terms, those behind the forum are NIMBYs who seem to think that the boundary of the true Bermondsey begins and ends at each end of Bermondsey Street, whatever the notional catchment area for the zone may be. The clue really is in the name: "Old Bermondsey Village"</p>
	03	<p>However, elaborating that in slightly more detail, I have real concern that those behind the forum are a self-appointed brigade, which is not at all representative of all local residents but instead representative just of those living within Bermondsey Street, and it arises only from self-interest that they seek designation to "take forward neighbourhood planning". I believe that, if appointed, what we will see is wholesale objection to planning proposals directly affecting on</p>

	04	<p>the lives of those on "the Street" and a complete disregard for those living elsewhere within Bermondsey. What would be infinitely better - if indeed a forum is needed - would be a forum that encompasses the true demographic make-up of the area, both geographically and in terms of being representative of social housing tenants and the like. The instant proposal does not do that.</p> <p>I urge the Council to demonstrate some restraint in rejecting this application.</p>
05	01	Looking at the suggestion for 'Area A' .. 'Old Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum'. I feel this does not make any sense and is far too small an area.
	02	Surely a Forum for this area should include the London Bridge area down to the river for the North boundary and up to Long Lane or perhaps more suitably Great Dover Street for the Southern Boundary. The Eastern boundary would be Tower Bridge Road and the West boundary Borough High Street.
06	01	I am responding to the undated consultation letter from Juliet Seymour, Planning Policy Manager, regarding the application to designate Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum (OBVNF) to take forward neighbourhood planning in the designated area.
	02	For identification purposes, my wife [edit name] and I are residents of the area.
	03	I understand from your website https://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/3305/neighbourhood_planning_in_bermondsey that the designated area is Area A on the map at the link http://www.southwark.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11579/neighbourhood_area_a
	04	<p>Until I received the consultation letter and then looked at your website just now, I had not previously heard of OBVNF. I have some concerns about it being designated to take forward neighbourhood planning.</p> <p>My concerns arise from reading its constitution which is at the link http://www.southwark.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11681/obvnf_constitution</p>

	05	<p>Clauses 6 and 7 of the constitution have many problems, and I have copied them below for ease of reference:</p>
	06	<p>6) Meetings</p> <p><i>a) General meetings are open to all, whether they be registered members, subscribers or non-members.</i></p> <p><i>b) Any registered member may call a general meeting by written request to the Secretary stating the matter for which the meeting is to be called. The Secretary shall duly call a meeting by issuing a notice to all members and subscribers, giving not less than seven days notice except in a case of urgent business.</i></p> <p><i>c) Ten registered members eligible to vote or one third of the registered members, whichever is the less, shall form a quorum at general meetings of the Group. In the event that no quorum is present at a general meeting of the Group, or the meeting has to be abandoned, the meeting shall stand adjourned and be reconvened 14 days later, and those members with power to vote present at that meeting shall be deemed to form a quorum.</i></p> <p>7) Voting</p> <p><i>All questions arising at general meetings of the Group shall be decided by a majority of those present, all of whom shall have a vote, and unless the result of such a vote is challenged by three or more of those present.</i></p> <p><i>In the event of such a challenge there will be a new vote, eligibility for which will be confined to registered members and decisions will be made by majority vote of members present subject to a quorum of 10. No member shall exercise more than one vote but in case of an equality of votes the Chair shall have a second or casting vote. Constitutional amendments may be made by members only by a two-thirds majority vote.</i></p>
	07	<p>The problem is that people who are non-members, and who could come from anywhere, have the same voting rights as members. Indeed any general meeting could be “packed” by strangers from any part of London or elsewhere. I regard this as completely unsatisfactory.</p> <p>OBVNF should be required to revise its constitution as a condition of designation, so that only members are allowed to vote at meetings. If that were done, I would withdraw my objection.</p>
07	01	<p>Planning Policy in the National Planning Policy Framework identifies how the planning system can play an important role</p>

	02	<p>in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Encouraging communities to become more physically active through walking, cycling, informal recreation and formal sport plays an important part in this process and providing enough sports facilities of the right quality and type and in the right places is vital to achieving this aim. This means positive planning for sport, protection from unnecessary loss of sports facilities and an integrated approach to providing new housing and employment land and community facilities provision is important.</p> <p>It is important therefore that the Neighbourhood Plan reflects national policy for sport as set out in the above document with particular reference to Pars 73 and 74 to ensure proposals comply with National Planning Policy. It is also important to be aware of Sport England’s role in protecting playing fields and the presumption against the loss of playing fields (see link below), as set out in our national guide, ‘A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England – Planning Policy Statement’.</p> <p>http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications/playing-field-land/</p>
	03	<p>Sport England provides guidance on developing policy for sport and further information can be found following the link below:</p> <p>http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/forward-planning/</p>
	04	<p>Sport England works with Local Authorities to ensure Local Plan policy is underpinned by robust and up to date assessments and strategies for indoor and outdoor sports delivery. If local authorities have prepared a Playing Pitch Strategy or other indoor/outdoor sports strategy it will be important that the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the recommendations set out in that document and that any local investment opportunities, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, are utilised to support the delivery of those recommendations.</p> <p>http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/</p> <p>If new sports facilities are being proposed Sport England recommend you ensure such facilities are fit for purpose and designed in accordance with our design guidance notes.</p> <p>http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/</p>
08	01	<p>Thank-you for your letter which I received on 14 March 2015 regarding the neighbourhood planning process. I am strongly in favour of as much local involvement in planning and assisting in the development of the local area as possible and therefore of the process of neighbourhood planning. I am also an active member of the Bermondsey Street Residents Association and I live in the area, however the current email is written to you in my personal capacity.</p>

	02	<p>I support the efforts of the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum (OBVNF) to create the plans for “Area A”. I have been very impressed over the last 5 years by the efforts of the group, its predecessors and some of the individuals to stir up local interest and participation in planning issues (for example, I was present at a meeting when they encouraged very high turnout and participation at a meeting in Bermondsey Village Hall and witnessing this spurred my own interest in the potential benefits of residents’ involvement in the community). I believe they have a good approach of openness and participation. I therefore support the application by OBVNF to take forward neighbourhood planning for the area.</p>
	03	<p>I also realize that the area contains several important organizations which are very committed and doing great work on particular aspects of the development of the area, including our tenant management organization Leathermarket JMB which is doing excellent work on housing and improving the quality of life for people living on the estates they manage. I also much appreciate the vitality and creativity encouraged by Bermondsey Street Area Partnership and other organizations as well as the many local businesses and on our estate and nearby we have benefited a lot from the skills and dedication of the great staff at Team London Bridge. I hope that these organizations will lend their support to OBVNF and its democratic approach, so that it can encompass and make use of the energies, voices, skills and specializations of all these groups.</p>
09	01	<p>We have no comments to make on the applications.</p>
10	01	<p>I fully support the idea of setting up a Neighbourhood Forum to give residents/community a greater role in community issues.</p>
11	01	<p>The JMB is a resident managed organisation, with 1,500 residents. The JMB’s Management Agreement gives it the right to represent its residents on formal matters such as this.</p>
	02	<p>The JMB has no relationship with OBVNF. The JMB believes that it is not possible to work with OBVNF, whilst Russell Gray is the dominating personality.</p>
	03	<p>The JMB supported the Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum, our chair, John Paul Maytum, being the co-chair of the Steering Group. As you know well attended open meetings were arranged, high calibre people volunteered and alliances were forged. The initiative was undermined by unacceptable behaviour that alienated and excluded people who wanted to contribute.</p>

12	01	I think that the BVAG cannot achieve its purpose of "promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being" of this area without including both sides of the ENTIRE length of Tower Bridge Road in the proposed designated area. I think this is critical as one of the main thoroughfares of the region.
13	01	I am writing to you as I wish to object to the application submitted by Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum (OBVNF) to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area under the Localism Act 2011. I live in a property in Chaucer ward, an area which is covered by this application.
	02	1. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 section 8 (b) states that criteria for decision making about an application for designation of a neighbourhood forum include: • Is membership drawn from different places in the neighbourhood and from different sections of the community? • Does the purpose reflect the character of the area?
	03	A. Is membership drawn from different places in the neighbourhood and from different sections of the community? OBVNF seems to have little or no support from either the Tabard Gardens or Leathermarket JMB estates, which together encompass some 3000 properties. This is not necessarily the fault of OBVNF, as it is clear that the group would much rather represent a much smaller geographic area, centred around Bermondsey Street, and it is only after a long and convoluted process that a Neighbourhood Forum area has been delineated, which was not asked for by any of the leading representative groups involved in the process.
	04	B. Does the purpose reflect the character of the area? Bermondsey Street and Tabard Gardens have a vastly different character, and given the strong focus on Bermondsey Street, it is hard to see how OBVNF and its membership can be said to reflect the character of the Tabard Gardens Estate, let alone the wider area requested for designation.
	05	2. The council proposes to create a form of ghetto area where residents (mainly council) and small businesses have no say in planning decisions directly affecting their lives. Guys Hospital serves my local community very well and is within Chaucer Ward, yet it has been omitted. Many local families have children attending the Globe Academy, and St. Saviours & St. Olave's schools, yet they too have been omitted from the OBVNF area.
	06	3. I cannot understand why the New Kent Road, Borough High Street, or Tower Bridge Road have been omitted from the forum area when they all lie within Chaucer ward. Certainly there will be major infrastructure work done within the next 5-10 years involving my community - there may even be a tube station built at the Bricklayer's roundabout – yet this

	07	forum as designated gives local residents no chance to influence major construction works which may have a detrimental effect on their daily lives. How many residents and businesses actually support the council's designated forum area?
	08	4. The proposed Neighbourhood Forum cuts out important parts of my local ward, Chaucer. This does not make sense to me. It should include all of Chaucer ward. What would be the role of my ward councillors regarding issues within their ward but in another "designated area". Would they have to go to many more meetings? Could they represent me at other "area" meetings?
	09	5. It seems to me that Southwark council has "designated a neighbourhood area in Bermondsey" under section 61 G (5) of the Localism Act 2011 by employing a consultant whose brief was to build barriers between businesses, who could have provided vital employment and services, from the people who live here and who, in many cases, have been here for generations. I repeat that I object to the designation of this area forum and ask that the whole process begin anew, with an Chaucer ward as the basis of the designated area.
14	01	I am writing in support of designating OBVNF as the neighbourhood forum for the area A (that has been designated by the council).
	02	I strongly believe, particularly with the changing face of this area that it is essential that the resident's have a say in the that plans that the Council may have for the area. There will engender a sense if inclusiveness that has been lacking till now.
	03	I became familiar with the group's activities and started attending it's meetings after seeing a poster a while ago. OBVNF has been actively working towards these aims for a long time and is an important voice that needs to be allowed to develop and grow a community plan for the area. It would appear that the objectives of the Localism Bill are not being honoured by Southwark. it an organisation that I believe listens to the different voices in the area and tries to articulate their ambitions for the area.
	04	I do not believe that the council should continue with it's monopolistic approach to plans for the area and that designating OBVNF as the neighbourhood forum would be a positive for Bermondsey, Area A.
15	01	I must declare from the outset that I am part of the OBVNF organising team and have been involved in their work for the last five years. I don't, however, think that this precludes me from being able to give an objective opinion about the value

		of designating such a group. Nevertheless, I will keep my comments brief.
	02	I believe that local people should have a voice in which decisions are made about the area in which they live. As your own consultation letter states: Under the Localism Act a Neighbourhood Plan 'could set out detailed planning guidance on issues such as housing, heritage, design, open spaces and local businesses'. I and many people that I know and have communicated with, both in my personal life and through the work of the group, are dissatisfied with the decisions being made by the council and look forward to the opportunity to feed into a local community plan that can turn the priorities of the people into council policies.
	03	The group gathered under the OBVNF have been working for the last five years to inform local people about the developments in this area, and have continuously and conscientiously worked to move forward with the community planning process under the Localism Act.
	04	At the beginning, it formed to look into the draft SPD, and ran a community café and information point for five months, six days a week. That was only the beginning of the OBVNF's engagement with the area. The OBVNF neighbourhood group has regular meetings, a completely open door policy, varied ways of advertising its meetings (including posters, notices at the meeting venue, a website and a list of email contacts). The mailing list has over 700 people on it, the core organising team are active members of the community and so also spread information by word of mouth, the group has run an information stall at all of the last four Bermondsey Street Festivals, other locals groups are invited and encouraged to come to the meetings, and every effort is made to keep all the mailing list and members informed and included at every part of the process. Any time a decision needs to be made, this is communicated via email and all at the meeting are allowed to speak and to vote. This is the most open and inclusive group operating in the area, and therefore has the best chance of gathering opinions from all parts of the area and representing those views in a neighbourhood plan. A neighbourhood forum working to build a community plan that is sensitive to and representative of the views of the people who live and work in the area is certainly the best way forward. This OBVNF is already a focal point for people's ideas and hopes for the development of the local area, and will continue to develop this role.
	05	Southwark Council has been involved with trialling neighbourhood planning under the Localism Act since the beginning, and so it is surely time to move ahead and allow this group to attempt to build a plan, and then put it to the local people in a referendum. Surely that is the only way to test the potential of the Localism Act.
	06	Simply put, I support the application of the OBVNF to be the neighbourhood forum for Area A.
16	01	I would like to register my wish to be represented by the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum (OBVNF) on

		<p>issues related to the development of this neighbourhood, which I have resided in for almost 9 years. During that time I have seen many changes in the area and I am really alarmed at some of the development that has been allowed to take place. I am very concerned about plans for further development and the ongoing erosion of a really special, heritage area. I think it is essential that action is taken now to prevent further destruction of the village environment in Bermondsey. Once destroyed, it cannot be replaced. So I would like to register my support for OBVNF, as it continues to fight against greedy over-development and the council's agreement to the destruction of historic buildings and spaces in the area. I think it is important for people to have a voice in council planning decisions and I would like to support the application of the OBVNF to be the neighbourhood forum for Area A.</p>
17	01	<p>Strategic Flood Risk Assessments The borough Strategic Flood Risk Assessments should be the primary source of flood risk information in considering whether particular neighbourhood planning areas may be appropriate for development. As pointed out in the National Planning Policy Practice Guidance paragraph: 064 Reference ID: 7-064-20140306, where the neighbourhood planning area is in Flood Zone 2 or 3, or is in an area with critical drainage problems, advice on the scope of the flood risk assessment required should be sought from the Environment Agency. Where the area may be subject to other sources of flooding, it may be helpful to consult other bodies involved in flood risk management as appropriate.</p>
	02	<p>In all cases where new development is proposed, the sequential approach to locating development in areas of lower flood risk should still be applied within a neighbourhood planning area. The National Planning Policy Practice Guidance stipulates that Neighbourhood Development/Community Right to Build Orders that propose new development that would be;</p>
	03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •contrary to the flood risk vulnerability and flood zone compatibility table (Table 3), or;
	04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •within areas at risk of flooding where sequential testing shows there to be places at lower flood risk which are suitable and reasonably available for the development proposed, should not be considered appropriate, having regard to the national policies on development and flood risk.
	05	<p>Surface water flooding</p> <p>The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provides for a new role of the lead local flood authority. The council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has full responsibility for managing flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. Under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 LLFAs are also responsible for assessing, mapping and</p>

06	<p>planning for local flood risk, and any interaction these have with drainage systems and other sources of flooding, including from sewers. Water companies will work with LLFAs to help manage surface water flooding.</p> <p>The condition of the land could place considerable constraints on developing certain sites, including restricting the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, incurring additional costs through investigation and remediation of contamination, and if a site is particularly adversely affected, could rule it out as a residential use site altogether. Provided appropriate development and remediation measures are plausible and cost-effective for a proposed development site, development yielded by the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan could positively contribute to improvements in land and water quality.</p>
	<p>Contaminated Land</p>
07	<p>We would recommend the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan to refer to Southwark's own Contaminated Land Strategy as a reference source. This document sets Southwark's expectations of developers with regard to sustainable development of land that is potentially affected by contamination of soil, water and other relevant receptors.</p>
08	<p>An additional useful reference with regard to selection criteria for future sites is the Environment Agency document, Groundwater protection: Principles and Practice (GP3) [November 2012]. This is of particular relevance to those sites falling within areas of exposed aquifer as mentioned in soil section of this draft report</p> <p>Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100): The Wandsworth to Deptford policy unit</p> <p>In the event the neighbourhood plan area extends to include the River Thames frontage, we would wish to see the strategy aligning with the Environment Agency Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) Plan which was approved by DEFRA in November 2012. The flood risk management policy set out in the TE2100 Plan for Southwark is as follows:</p>
09	<p>☑ The Wandsworth to Deptford policy unit: Policy P5, to <i>take further action to reduce flood risk beyond that required to keep pace with climate change</i>. This means that the standard of protection against tidal flooding will be increased in the future.</p>
10	<p>The part of the Wandsworth to Deptford policy unit in Southwark extends from just east of the Royal National Theatre to just south of the South Dock marina at Rotherhithe. There are high quality public paths on much of the frontage but there are areas where public access to the riverside is not possible. These include locations where buildings, particularly old warehouses, have been constructed on the river wall. St. Saviour's Dock at Bermondsey is a 300m tidal inlet which is lined with old warehouses on the dock wall.</p>

	11	<p>The ground level in much of the floodplain is between 0 and 2m AOD except for the former Surrey Docks area, where ground levels are 4 to 5m AOD. Ground levels on the Thames frontage are typically about 4m AOD and the flood defence walls are generally small, about 1m high above local ground level. Some of the riverside paths are raised to flood defence level.</p>
	12	<p>As the flood defences are improved it will be important to ensure that there is collaboration between adjacent council areas on the planning, design and construction of improvements to the flood defences and the riverside. When defences are raised, it is likely that footpaths and other public access will also require raising in some areas. Actions involving cross-boundary working between local councils should therefore consider the following:</p>
	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consistent approach to improving the flood defences and the riverside at the boundary between the London Borough of Southwark and the London Borough of Lambeth near the Royal National Theatre, which is a very busy public thoroughfare.
	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consistent approach to improving the flood defences and the riverside at the boundary between the London Borough of Southwark and the London Borough of Lewisham in Rotherhithe, where there is a wide riverside path and the defences are on the river wall.
18	01	<p>WITHOUT PREJUDICE</p>
	02	<p>With regard to the Neighbourhood Plan designation recently applied for by the re-defined Group 'Old Bermondsey Village Forum ' (OBVF) previously known as 'Bermondsey Village Action Group' (BVAG), each group being under the leadership of Mr. Russell Gray</p>
	03	<p>I hereby state my strongest possible objection to the designation being granted to either group.</p>
	04	<p>I have been living on Kipling Estate for the past twelve years as a tenant of Leathermarket JMB.</p>
	05	<p>I am retired and in receipt of the State Pension.</p>
	06	<p>I took part in the formation of the original Neighbourhood Plan as a member of the steering group which developed subsequently into the Bermondsey Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

07	My reasons for objecting are as follows:
08	To my knowledge BVAG has only ever been a vehicle for Mr Gray's complaints against Southwark Council, mostly his objections to tall buildings proposed for St Thomas St and surrounding area.
09	Understandably he wants the Bermondsey St conservation area protected.
10	In my view BVAG is a single issue group not fit for purpose in terms of taking responsibility for a large and very important project i.e. the Neighbourhood Plan.
11	Most people in my community, for example the Kipling TRA, have never heard of BVAG or indeed OBVF and have never been invited to any meetings at BVAG's café. Clearly neither group has ever engaged directly with most community groups on any issue other than Mr Gray's agenda which to my mind has always been unclear.
12	In my experience on the steering group for the Plan I have never noticed any commitment or even mild interest from Mr Gray in moving forward with the Plan. To the contrary, Mr Gray repeatedly did his utmost at meetings to foment discord, upset and discomfort, causing at least three people to resign from the group.
13	Most people do not like conflict and I cannot imagine how anything good could ever be achieved if the designation goes to Mr Gray and his friends.
14	It's my view that conflict resolution isn't possible when one party turns up to a meeting bearing legal documents designed to intimidate the other parties. People do not respond well to having a gun pointed at their head in order to agree to something.
15	I believe strongly that there has always been and still is enthusiasm in our community for a local Plan that commits to the high standards of:
16	Democracy, openness, inclusivity, consultation
17	I trust that Southwark Council will, as our responsible public servants refuse the application by Mr Gray for designation.

19	01	<p>I write to you regarding the application, I believe local people should have a voice in which decisions are made about the area they live in. I would like to be able to feed into a local community plan that can turn the priorities of the people into council policies. I feel that a refusal of the OBVNF application will be harmful to the neighbourhood and the neighbourhood plan process.</p>
	02	<p>I Have been to any meetings, and am on the mailing list. And I have felt informed and included about the aims and work of the group. I feel that the group makes an effort to be open and inclusive and feel OBVNF as a group has ample scope to actively engage with the larger community once approved as OBVNF has the potential to be an effective representative group for the community as a whole.</p>
	03	<p>Although I understand that the boundary of the area (AREA A) has been decided by the council and is not up for discussion at the moment, I believe that there should be scope to include a wider area of Bermondsey. I think that this group should have the chance to be voted in via a referendum to be the focal point for people's ideas and hopes for the development of the local are. I Would want a community group to try to build a representative plan for the area.</p>
	04	<p>I would like the planning department to note that I strongly support the application of the OBVNF to be the neighbourhood forum for Area A.</p>
20	01	<p>I wish to object to the application submitted by Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum (OBVNF) to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area under the Localism Act 2011. I live in a property in Chaucer ward, an area covered by this application and have lived in the area for 15 years.</p>
	02	<p>1. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 section 8 (b) states that criteria for decision making about an application for designation of a neighbourhood forum include: • Is membership drawn from different places in the neighbourhood and from different sections of the community? • Does the purpose reflect the character of the area?</p>
	03	<p>A. Is membership drawn from different places in the neighbourhood and from different sections of the community? OBVNF seems to have little or no support from either the Tabard Gardens or Leathermarket JMB estates, which together encompass some 3000 properties. This is not necessarily the fault of OBVNF, as it is clear that the group would much rather represent a much smaller geographic area, centred around Bermondsey Street, and it is only after a long and convoluted process that a Neighbourhood Forum area has been delineated, but for an which was not asked for by any of the leading representative groups involved in the process.</p>

	04	B. Does the purpose reflect the character of the area? Bermondsey Street and Tabard Gardens have a vastly different character, and given the strong focus on Bermondsey Street, it is hard to see how OBVNF and its membership can be said to reflect the character of the Tabard Gardens Estate, let alone the wider area requested for designation.
	05	2. The council proposes to create a form of ghetto area where residents (mainly council) and small business have no say in planning decisions directly affecting their lives. Guys Hospital serves my local community very well and is within Chaucer Ward, yet is has been omitted. Many local families have children attending the Globe Academy, and St. Saviours & St. Olave's schools, yet they too have been omitted from the OBVNF area.
	06	3. I cannot understand why the New Kent Road, Borough High Street, Tower Bridge Road have been omitted from the forum area when they all lie within Chaucer ward. Certainly there will be major infrastructure work done within the next 5-10 years involving my community - there may even be a tube station built at the Bricklayer's roundabout – yet this forum as designated gives local residents no chance to influence major construction works which may have a detrimental effect on their daily lives. How many residents and businesses actually support the council's designated forum area?
	07	4. The proposed Neighbourhood Forum cuts out important parts of my local ward, Chaucer. This does not make sense to me. It should include all of Chaucer ward. What would be the role of my ward councillors regarding issues within their ward but in another "designated area". Would they have to go to many more meetings? Could they represent me at other "area" meetings?
	08	5. It seems to me that Southwark council has "designated a neighbourhood area in Bermondsey" under section 61 G (5) of the Localism Act 2011 by employing a consultant whose brief was to build barriers between businesses, who could have provided vital employment and services, from the people who live here and who, in many cases, have been here for generations.
	09	I repeat that I object to the designation of this area forum and ask that the whole process begin anew, with an Chaucer ward as the basis of the designated area.
21	01	As a resident within the proposed Area A I would like to express my support for the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum's application for Neighbourhood Forum status
	02	I am impressed by the hard work and commitment the BVAG and now the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum

	03	have put in to encourage the local community to engage with planning and conservation issues within the zone.
	04	I have been able to attend several meeting over the years and felt that the meetings were open and receptive to differing points of view/ perspectives as expressed by other attendees.
	04	I receive the groups regular e-mail bulletins updating me on developments both regarding the group & its activities and local planning issues. The content of such e-mails, while putting forward the groups "view", always felt as if it was a part of a dialogue and looked to encourage feedback whether in agreement or not. As a result of this openness I think they are more than suitable to act as the Neighbourhood Forum for all those within Zone A
22	01	I write to you regarding the application, I believe local people should have a voice in which decisions are made about the area they live in. I would like to be able to feed into a local community plan that can turn the priorities of the people into council policies. I feel that a refusal of the OBVNF application will be harmful to the neighbourhood and the neighbourhood plan process.
	02	I have been to any meetings, and am on the mailing list. And I have felt informed and included about the aims and work of the group. I feel that the group makes an effort to be open and inclusive and feel OBVNF as a group has ample scope to actively engage with the larger community once approved as OBVNF has the potential to be an effective representative group for the community as a whole.
	03	Although I understand that the boundary of the area (AREA A) has been decided by the council and is not up for discussion at the moment, I believe that there should be scope to include a wider area of Bermondsey. I think that this group should have the chance to be voted in via a referendum to be the focal point for people's ideas and hopes for the development of the local are. I Would want a community group to try to build a representative plan for the area.
	04	I would like the planning department to note that I strongly support the application of the OBVNF to be the neighbourhood forum for Area A.
23	01	I wish to object on behalf of Tabard Gardens North Tenant & Residents Association (T&RA) to the application submitted by Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum to designate a Neighbourhood Area under the Localism Act 2011. I am

02	<p>the Chair of T&RA, which represents over 500 properties in Chaucer ward, an area covered by this application.</p>
03	<p>1. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 section 8 (b) states that criteria for decision making about an application for designation of a neighbourhood forum include: • Is membership drawn from different places in the neighbourhood and from different sections of the community? • Does the purpose reflect the character of the area?</p>
04	<p>A. Is membership drawn from different places in the neighbourhood and from different sections of the community? OBVNF seems to have little or no support from either the Tabard Gardens or Leathermarket JMB estates, which together encompass some 3000 properties. This is not necessarily the fault of OBVNF, as it is clear that the group would much rather represent a much smaller geographic area, centred around Bermondsey Street, and it is only after a long and convoluted process that a Neighbourhood Forum area has been delineated, but for an which was not asked for by any of the leading representative groups involved in the process.</p>
05	<p>B. Does the purpose reflect the character of the area? Bermondsey Street and Tabard Gardens have a vastly different character, and given the strong focus on Bermondsey Street, it is hard to see how OBVNF and its membership can be said to reflect the character of the Tabard Gardens Estate, let alone the wider area requested for designation.</p>
06	<p>2. The council proposes to create a form of ghetto area where residents (mainly council) and small business have no say in planning decisions directly affecting their lives. Guys Hospital serves my local community very well and is within Chaucer Ward, yet is has been omitted. Many local families have children attending the Globe Academy, and St. Saviours & St. Olave's schools, yet they too have been omitted from the OBVNF area.</p>
07	<p>3. I cannot understand why the New Kent Road, Borough High Street, Tower Bridge Road have been omitted from the forum area when they all lie within Chaucer ward. Certainly there will be major infrastructure work done within the next 5-10 years involving my community - there may even be a tube station built at the Bricklayer's roundabout – yet this forum as designated gives local residents no chance to influence major construction works which may have a detrimental effect on their daily lives. How many residents and businesses actually support the council's designated forum area?</p>
08	<p>4. The proposed Neighbourhood Forum cuts out important parts of my local ward, Chaucer. This does not make sense to me. It should include all of Chaucer ward. What would be the role of my ward councillors regarding issues within their ward but in another "designated area". Would they have to go to many more meetings? Could they represent me at other "area" meetings?</p>

	10	5. It seems to me that Southwark council has "designated a neighbourhood area in Bermondsey" under section 61 G (5) of the Localism Act 2011 by employing a consultant whose brief was to build barriers between businesses, who could have provided vital employment and services, from the people who live here and who, in many cases, have been here for generations.
	11	I repeat that the objection to the designation of this area forum and ask that the whole process begin anew, with an Chaucer ward as the basis of the designated area.
24	01	I think local people should have voice in what is happening in their area and also in the decisions that are made about the area they live in.
	02	We would like to contribute into a local community plan. Refusal of the OBVNF application will be harmful to the neighbourhood and the neighbourhood plan process because OBVNF is established to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of our area.
	03	MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATION I have attended meetings and also included on the mailing list of OBVNF, where I am updated on the progress of the application.
	04	The group is open and make me welcome at meetings. OBVNG has the potential to an effective representation group for our community.
	05	'AREA A' Tabard Gardens Central residents has no objection to the establishment of a Neighbourhood Area in the community. Tabard residents are not happy about the decision made about the boundary of the area. Tabard Estate needs to be in the plan as a whole. There is no need for division. Since OBVNF is the only application is it not automatic if not the referendum will be good.
	06	POLICIES I will like the local people look into where and how future housing development takes place in the community.
	07	OBVNF I support the application of OBVNF to be the Neighbourhood forum for 'AREA A'.

25	01	<p>I have lived and worked in the area for last 12 years and I have been supporting the thoughts and concepts of BVAG for since they started their campaign.</p> <p>I am really hoping that our ideas and thought will be taken and understood on your side also.</p>
26	01	<p>I work within the area of Bermondsey next to the arches of London Bridge Station, I have been to the meetings of this group and have found them to be a great bunch of people who value the area and its heritage in the best ways possible. They fully deserve to have application granted, and I feel by denying their application you would be doing a diservice to the local community and the spirit of democracy.</p>
27	01 02 03 04 05 06	<p>I write to formally support the application of the Old Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum for Neighbourhood Forum status.</p> <p>I travel into the area on a daily basis as well as spend a considerable amount of my leisure time on Bermondsey Street and the surrounding locality.</p> <p>I have attended numerous meetings of the group over the last four years and find that this platform would be ideal to constitute the neighbourhood forum for the area. With an ever-- inviting atmosphere, I have over the years been privy to numerous educational exhibitions and events demonstrative of the rich history and diversity of the surrounding area. Every meeting invariably includes healthy debate on on going local development and the future of the local area. This has no only served to give me a deeper understanding of the area that I love but has made be more aware, active and interested in the manner in which this precious environment develops.</p> <p>It is crucial local people have a forum in which they can actively and comfortably have their say as to how their area develops, the premise of the Localism Act. This becomes especially important in an area such as this due to the increasing commercial development pressures at play.</p> <p>Having canvassed every group interested in planning policy in the area. This was the only one that seems to have a coherent and moreover competent management structure that is active in informing of local happenings via an email newsletter and facebook updates. Notably the location and environment in which group meetings are held is second to none.</p> <p>I have made numerous comments and representations individually in respect to planning applications in the area as well as attending numerous committee meetings and honestly feel that my opinions and comments fall on deaf ears. As this is</p>

		the only application for a much needed, dedicated hub for local and interested people within the area to have their say in an open and inviting environment I urge the council to look favourably upon the application from the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum.
28	01	As a local resident I think that its a good idea to set up a local neighbourhood forum. To ensure future plans in the area have guidance on issues such as housing, heritage, design, open space and local businesses.
29	01	I am a local resident and very much would like you to sanction the proposed OBVNF forum, so that we can feed preferences into the council as a group.
	02	The refusal of the submission of the OBVNF plan and re adjustments exercised by the council, when all we want is what we have been told is our legal right to be a cohesive group, really has the ability to break one's community spirit.
	03	I suggest you might re consider our efforts for area/plan A which has now been changed to exclude many of our neighbours who we feel are part of our community. That aside..... it would be generous of you all to allow us to finally have our say about our community and to listen.
	04	So I am all for the acceptance of the OBVNF being sanctioned as the accepted proposal.
30	01	I run an electric bike business on Bermondsey street and chose to be in this location as its one of my favorite parts of London.
	02	I attend most of the meetings regarding the localism and neighbourhood forum concept and I think that the local people and businesses should get a say in the local council planning policies.
	03	I really believe that that if the application by the OBVNF is refused then it will have a negative affect on the community spirit in the neighborhood detracting from its positive vibe and great reputation.
	04	My business and my employees are all on the mailing list and we help publicise and promote the community planning initiative by BVAG and the Old Bermondsey Village Forum as we believe awareness and general participation is the key to maintaining our great community here on Bermondsey street.
		I feel that with the wide range of experience among members of OBVNF they will represent the interests of the

	05	community as a whole.
	06	I think they should at least have the opportunity to show what local people with a direct interest in the neighbourhood can contribute to planning policy, as against the established process of keeping it within the control of a closed-shop of council officials from outside the area and with nothing beyond their pay packets to motivate them.
	07	Therefore I am in full support of the application by OBVNF for Area A.
31	01	Please consider my endorsement/support to the application from the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum.
	02	I am aware of the powers of the Localism Bill and have studied the application of OBV to constitute a Neighborhood Forum. I believe that this community group deserves a fair chance of having the current considered and approved. Below I lay out some arguments to support this:
	03	- As a local resident and having developed some professional expertise in the field, I believe that the current application creates an opportunity for engaging local people and giving them a chance to feed into a local community plan, which could then lead to some viable actions for the area.
	04	- I have participated in several meetings of the group in the last 2-3 years and I receive regular communication and updates about the constitution of the forum, as well as suggestions for idea generation from the public, that can ensure wider representation and visibility of the local people.
	05	- As a resident and an expert in community mobilization, I believe that the constitution of a NF in the designated Area A, needs to be approved in order for a chance for local people to lead on, but also to engage into fruitful discussion between council, residents and other stakeholders. I am willing to help with ideas generation, communication and a more grass roots approach.
32	01	I'm writing to throw support behind the Old Bermondsey Village Forum's application for Neighbourhood Forum status.
	02	They are providing an invaluable voice of reason as our area is being transformed by developers -- speaking up for everyone who wants some of the feel and heritage to be maintained as our streets and buildings are modernised by big

	03	money.
	04	They are an extremely reasonable group, despite understandably strong opinions about this (which are shared by pretty much everyone in the area), and keep all locals very well informed. They fully deserve to be made an official forum. I think refusal of the application will cause more problems than you'd expect, so please grant it!
33	01	I am writing to support the OBVNF application to be the neighbourhood forum for 'Area A'
	02	OBVNF has been incredibly active over the last five years in making the local community aware of the changes underway in my local area, going as far as running a community café on Bermondsey Street and holding evening and weekend exhibitions.
	03	They have been a visible group in this area, with a presence at the Bermondsey Street Festival for the last four years, advertising local issues with billboards on the side of buildings and the back of vehicles, and hold regular, open meetings in the local area.
	04	I look forward to having a truly local group of representatives playing a part in how the area I call home evolves.
34	01	As a local resident of the area for the past year, on and off, I have always been interested in BVAG's initiatives and fully support their policies. The current OBVNF application is a larger group encompassing several other groups and businesses motivated to realise a neighbourhood forum for the area. A neighbourhood forum will enable us to 'have a say' in relevant developments and improvements. I have been to the group's meetings and I am confident that OBVNF can work effectively as a neighbourhood forum for the designated area. It is an active, friendly local group with an 'open-door' policy to their meetings. They have taken efforts to make the locals aware of present and future developments in the area and have a strong desire for sensitive approach to such changes. The group members are very helpful, answer email queries and attend other community meetings.
	02	I teach yoga at the Tanneries studio in Bermondsey Street and therefore keen on changes that affect the vibrant, independent businesses along the stretch.
	03	I hope that the council would support the OBVNF's current application and in its endeavours.

35	01	I am writing to say we fully support the OBVNF in aiming to keep this area as characterful as it is today. We think that local people should naturally have a voice in any decisions that are made around the area they live or work in.
	02	Refusal of the OBVNF would indeed be harmful to the neighbourhood as it may mean unnecessary changes that are unsympathetic with the current surroundings.
	03	We've not yet been to any meetings or been informed of any that have taken place as we are new to the area. Should we have any issues however, we would be happy to voice them with the OBVNF, who seem to have our interests and that of the local community at heart.
	04	Having this community group building a representative plan for the area can only be a good thing going forward.
36	01	To cut to the chase, I am strongly opposed.
	02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OBVNF has repeatedly demonstrated a lack of ability to fulfill the duties expected of a designated neighborhood forum.
	03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OBVNF is a rebranded BVAG. The group believes that there is some injustice going on which only they are able to correct. That is not a view held by the wider community so by definition, the wider community can not be represented fairly by a narrowly focused, combative defender of some imaginary beachhead.
	04	To pick apart their proposal, I offer the following observations.
	05	Quoting from the Revised Application from the OBVNF:
	06	I. "The broader objective of the Group is to preserve and enhance the character of the area designated Bermondsey Village by Southwark Council in the BBLB SPD itself. "
	07	A. This objective does not rest comfortably with diverse needs of Area A.
	08	B. The statement sounds closer to the BVAG's narrow focus on St Thomas Street. A rehash of a failed application for a different location.
	09	C. Having been rejected as a designated neighbourhood group for a different area, BVAG chose

01	to move forward with an application for Area A. If they choose to apply for a different area,
02	they should have taken the time to evaluate what is needed before asking to be the representative for Area A.
03	II. "BVAG has played a major role in advancing understanding of significant development proposals, including Sellar's proposed Shard satellites, 'The Quill' and London Bridge Station. It has successfully lobbied English Heritage for Listing of the St Thomas St/Crucifix Lane Viaduct. It is working to produce proposals to conserve and restore important heritage assets in the area."
04	
05	A. Further evidence that the group is focused on its past efforts for an area that is outside of Area A.
06	B. Heritage is only one aspect of the area that needs attention.
07	C. Localism should encourage development that is fit for purpose. Focusing heritage sites outside of the area is a waste of time or best done through other processes that are not tied to Localism for Area A.
08	III. "...at least one elected ward Councillor for its designated area of interest."
09	A. Has the Councillor been named?
10	B. Is there really support to having a Russell Gray group act as the degenerated community forum from the council?
11	IV. "All important decisions are made during these meetings which are normally held in BVAG's Bermondsey St coffee point hub."
12	A. When the group was requesting designation for an area that was tightly tied to St Thomas Street, holding meetings inside the target area made sense.
	B. Since the group has chosen to put their hat in the ring for another area it would make a lot more sense to hold meetings that are more centrally located to the community impacted.
	Even better would be to take the meetings to various locations around Area A.
	C. Failing to recognize that the present location and the historical tone of the meetings held at the location has turned off the wider community shows a distinct lack of sensitivity to the

		wider community.
13	D.	The group makes a big deal of the door being open. Visiting a lions den just because the door was left open is not what is needed to build local conscious for difficult planning discussions.
14	V.	"...inform local understanding and canvass local opinion on planning issues and the built environment."
15	A.	There has been little to no efforts in Area A. The example being cited is an example of a single issue campaign relating to a narrowly focused area. An anti-big development campaign related to St Thomas Street. Anti-tall buildings.
16	B.	How well the group can understand and canvass is not in evidence. More correctly, the group has a clearly demonstrated ability to freeze out dissenting opinion.
17	C.	The group is a single issue group wrapped in anti-establishment rhetoric who has little to no interest in leading the wider community.
18	VI.	"The BVAG/STP initiative was formalised in a joint meeting of BVAG and Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum on 9 May 2012 where members unanimously voted to proceed with an independent plan ('STP') for the area we then designated."
19	A.	I am not sure the facts at the time support the recollection of the period. As for the voting records that were captured on the night. It would not be surprising if none can be found.
	B.	The BNF and BVAG have never held a joint meeting. This was a very conscious decision of the BNF.
20	C.	The BVAG wanted a joint meeting and they wanted a vote. It is their belief that if they declare that they want to hold a joint meeting, a joint meeting must have been held. Facts that get in the way are to be ignored for the greater BVAG glory.
21	D.	There was never a vote of the two organizations where the STP (definition of STP to be determined) was approved or otherwise moved forward. I am told there was a BVAG vote.
22	E.	The history of BVAG's voting process, record keeping and other democratic processes is highly suspect.
23		1. Until the group takes formal steps to improve their processes there is little faith that can be put in group decisions.

24	VII. "An area to the South was to be coordinated by another group, known as BNF but that initiative failed for want of support and in the event an application was made for a different area in the name of BNF but without any general support."
25	A. Another example of spinning the truth to advance a biased agenda. B. As the BNF never agreed to what the BVAG are calling the STP, we did not vote on any split, and there is no north and south areas.
26	C. The BNF request submitted to Southwark Council for designation overlapped or fully included the area that the BVAG designated in their application. We clearly did not agree to a split prior to any applications being submitted to the council. Check the applications.
27	D. Claims of support or lack of support are very hollow when stated by the BVAG. They say what ever they want to say to push their case in the mistaken belief that if you repeat something enough it becomes true. While there might be some good intentions, the lack of due process is scary.
28	VIII. "The St Thomas St Plan aimed to produce consensus on suitable building heights in its area, balancing the interests of growth and development with preservation of the area's historic and economic character."
29	A. Localism requires a designated group working with designated boundaries to develop a plan. There is no boundary that includes St Thomas Street and there is no designated group. The STP is nothing more than a discussion point which has not been widely accepted. Many reject the STP as not being what the local community want.
30	B. As the STP is for an area that is outside of the designated Area A, there is no need to vote or otherwise determine if there might be a conscious going forward. It is not fit for purpose.
31	C. As we are talking about designating a forum who will develop a plan, it seems rather odd to be starting with the St Thomas Street 'Plan' and then trying to form a group around it. As if the goal is decided and now we have to fit in the pieces to pretend the Localism steps were followed (in reverse order).
32	IX. "The universal perception of local people is that Southwark Council is resistant to the whole idea of a local plan in this area."

33	A. This is a false and misleading statement.
34	B. It can not be backed up as it speaks to a universal perception. The BVAG meeting held two days ago covered how the BVAG group wants to canvas the Area A community after being designated. Hence they do not know what people think.
35	C. At the last BVAG meeting, various members said that most people do not care about planning issues so they are stating publicly there is no universal perception about planning.
36	D. The experience of the BNF is just the opposite. Southwark Council was very open to discussions and supporting the process.
37	1. Council staff and elected officials held multiple meetings which demonstrated support and interested in Localism and the interests of local members of the community.
38	2. Most people are not happy with the bullyboy tactics Russell exhibits in meetings. Hence it might be staid that there is a universal perception that Russell is a bully and not someone who can represented anyone beyond himself.
39	X. "...many people having concluded that the Council will contrive to stop such an initiative by any means available to it."
40	A. While I agree that there may be many people, the many will map closely to the BVAG membership. Much of their hostility will be tied to a careful diet of false statements, rumors, made up stories and character assignations promoted by some members of the group.
41	1. I am told things about what has happened in the past by people who were not in attendance at the time of the event. Given I was in many of the meetings that are being referred to, I am left wondering how some members of BVAG have become so misinformed.
42	XI. "...at a meeting held on 12 November 2014, BVAG resolved to accept and work with the newly designated Area A."
43	A. Great. Prove that BVAG wants to meet the responsibilities expected. Tell them to do their homework and then request the right to represent the area.
44	B. If they accepted and agreed to work with the designated Area A, why the rush to apply when the work necessary for a full and robust application has not been completed?

45	C. Why does the representation for the present application tend to look like the old BVAG group?
46	D. Area A is not St Thomas Street. Submit a fresh application that demonstrates a competence for representing Area A and its residents, business owners and vested interests.
47	XII. "In the face of the Council's less-than-supportive attitude to local planning in our area it is unrealistic to expect a community group to raise the necessary resources to increase levels of awareness and participation in the very substantially extended area now determined by the Council to the levels that prevail in the original STP area."
48	A. Too bad. The BVAG team wanted to throw their hat in for Area A. Having done so they can only blame themselves for the workload they have taken on.
49	B. If they are not ready and need to regroup, withdraw the application until they have the resources and ability to represent the area.
50	What are the core issues with with the present OBVNF/BVAG group?
51	I. Russell Gray's ability to lead. Good advocate. Bad leader.
52	A. Like many organizations, the group applying reflects the leadership. In this case that means winning at any cost while appearing to be a martyr.
53	1. Meetings are run in a fashion that only people who agree with Russell are allowed to be heard.
54	a) Use of bully tactics is common.
55	b) Baiting and other methods to provoke a reaction is common once you enter the room.
56	c) Intentionally misleading statements are made and when corrections are offered to set the record straight, the alternative speaker is drown out.
57	d) Aggressive statements that continue to misrepresent are sent out on a regular basis to a wide email list.
58	(1) There are people who are reading the mailings who think he is speaking the truth. That somehow Russell has correctly represented the full facts in the

various matters.

(2) See the attached image from a mailing that went out 1 day after the last meeting with the Council representatives. Note the name calling ("Juliet Seymour, Community **Decoy** Officer") and other derogatory comments.

59



Update - Yesterday's Meeting

Yesterday's meeting with the three Council representatives, Mark Williams, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Transport, Simon Bevan, Head of Planning, and Juliet Seymour, Community Planning Decoy Officer, was as colourful as usual.

60

They had been on notice for several weeks that their 'concerns' about our application for a Neighbourhood Forum needed to be specified rather than couched in nebulous generalities - enabling them to pull an excuse for refusal out of the hat at the last minute without giving us a chance to respond. This has been their plan B. Plan A, indefinite stalling, became unlawful following central Government's realisation that it was far too easy for local authorities to defeat localism by the naturally attractive option of doing absolutely nothing. As with their previous strategies they were not going to give up the latest without a fight. Hence our esteemed guests repeatedly tried to deliver tedious empty and endlessly rehearsed speeches professing their deep sincerity - and avoiding the issues. For once in our meetings an almost Council-like firm chairmanship was required to stop them squirming out of answering the questions demanding clarity on their position. With Williams floundering on the ropes our supporters landed a knock-out punch demanding a meeting for today in which a delegation from OBVF can attend the Council offices for a meeting with Juliet Seymour for her to be categorical about what in our present application could support a refusal to recognise us - and how any such defect can be remedied. Why this could not be done at the meeting itself was not clear but it was certainly clear that they had come under duress to furnish themselves with a defence against accusations of furtive efforts to defeat our application whilst being intent on avoiding disclosure of their hand. As a result our delegation will be in Tooley St this afternoon and it will be difficult for the Council to keep any cards up their sleeve without opening themselves up to a legal challenge if they rely on them to refuse our application.

61

Williams and Bevan were obviously coming to wonder whether they could make plan B stand up because they were already starting to clutch for a plan C. Their instinct here is obviously to profess such deep deference to the results of their 'consultation' that they can claim opposition to the OBVNF application does not allow them in conscience to approve it. They have of course certain tame organisations beholden to them (e.g. paid JMB staff, Team London Bridge) beholden to them for their existence because they control their purse strings. They will be confident of being able to use their influence to coax out of such people a 'response' to help support a refusal of our application.

62

Since the statutory consultation period ends today it will be helpful if our supporters can spare the time to put in some counter-balancing views. Group Treasurer Amy burnt the midnight oil after the meeting last night and has produced this to help:

63

64

II. OBVNF/BVAG has a fundamental misunderstanding of localism and the order for developing a

	local plan.
65	A. The group confuses being combative with the Localism Act's suggestion of collaboration with a council.
66	B. The group has a mistaken belief that they can object to planning decisions that are at a superior level (national, city wide or borough) as if Localism created a right to veto at all levels.
67	C. The group further thinks that they can stop development from happening in the community if they act as a beachhead on the north side of Area A. A focus on a narrow slice of the wider Area A as if they are being martyrs for a good cause.
68	1. The beachhead is outside of the designated area so a lost cause. That seems to have gone unnoticed.
69	D. They seek to impose their wishes rather than develop a clear understanding of the wishes of the wider community. As if the usual suspects who attend the BVAG meetings are representative of the diversity of the community. A photo of the group shows otherwise.
70	III. A belief that Southwark Council is the enemy who needs to be defeated.
71	A. BVAG comes from a belief that the council is 'in bed with developers' and Russell Gray plus friends are going to save the community from the evils that are otherwise going to happen. As if there must be some nefarious agenda and only Russell can be the good guy or represent the people.
72	1. Elected officials represent the people.
73	IV. NIBMY
74	A. There is a resistance to change.
75	1. Language about protecting heritage is rolled out as if old is good and new is bad. That developers must be evil as they make a profit even though Russell is a landlord and developer.
76	2. Rather than focusing on sympathetic growth which addresses the wider community needs, there is a focus on 'we like it the way it was when we moved here so the needs of others should be ignored.'

	77	a) Pulling up the drawbridge comes to mind.
37	01	I work in Bermondsey Street and have been a firm supporter of the policies of Bermondsey Village Action Group in relation to planning issues.
	02	I would now like to affirm my support for the application by Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum to be the neighbourhood forum for Area A.
38	01	I would like to support the application for the Old Bermondsey Village forum to become a Neighbourhood Forum. I think it is a great inclusive idea. I have worked around Bermondsey Street for over 15 years and have seen many changes in the area. I would like to support the residents in their desire to become a Neighbourhood Forum.
39	01	I'm writing to lend my support to OBVNF's application for a Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act.
	02	I've worked on Bermondsey Street for the last 5 years and regularly spend time in the area during evenings and weekends. I have a strong affinity for the area and am keen to ensure we maintain the architecture, ambience and diversity for our collective future enjoyment.
	03	In my view local people should have their voices heard when decisions are being made about the area, we should have an ability to influence the council and planning department's decisions as stakeholders in the area. I feel the OBVNF's proposal would be a positive step forward in this regard and provide a vehicle through which locals could have their say.
	04	I've participated in a number of the OBVNFs meetings (under the previous guise as BVAG) through which I have been informed about some of the planning changes that have been proposed and implemented in the area. Whilst I haven't always agreed with the council's view, BVAG (now OBVNF) have gone to great lengths to communicate the plans and changes to the local community and, in doing so, have created a balanced, open and inclusive forum for the future management of the area. I feel they have set a very positive agenda and clearly have the interests of the local community at heart.
	05	In my view OBVNF should be granted the opportunity to be voted in by referendum to give locals a chance to build a representative plan for the area.

	06	Bermondsey Village is a diverse area and I feel it's in all our interests to maintain that diversity. I feel this will be best met through the appointment of this group.
	07	I hope you listen to my view and the view of other locals and I'll await further news on your decision.
	08	If you have any questions or would like to discuss please don't hesitate to get in touch.
40	01	We have both a business and a home in Area A. We have been here 15 years and we would be very happy if finally we were allowed by the council to have a say (or at least be given consideration) on how our neighbourhood grows and changes.
	02	It used to be the BSAP that generated a voice for us and sometimes somebody in Southwark listened. It hardly seems that way now that this area has grown to have the power to generate such big money. It still is my neighbourhood however and we still legally are told we have rights. 5 years ago we were inspired that this government was giving us some say in looking after our OWN Neighborhood. They said it was our legal right. After all we do live here yet its taken 5 years to get this far and the best of what we can do, which in my view is echoed via the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum, needs to be given a platform.
	03	We have gone to a few meetings because we have seen the posters on our local bulletin boards.
	04	I do not see why you have thus far refused the efforts that this dedicated group is making to better our current situation and give us our rights.
	05	I would appreciate the use of my right to have a voice that matters in my local area without having to run for local office and know they will be heard and can contribute to making a better quality of community
	06	Overall, I support the application of the OBVNF to be the neighbourhood forum for Area A?
41	01	I am writing briefly to express my support for the application of the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum to be the Neighbourhood Forum for designated Neighbourhood Area 'A' in Southwark.
	02	I have been a business owner on Bermondsey Street for a little over 11 years, during which time I've seen many changes,

	03	<p>both positive and negative, in the immediate area. There has always been a strong sense of community on Bermondsey Street. It is a genuine 'neighbourhood' and as such would, in my opinion, benefit greatly from an officially recognised representative body made up of members of that community.</p> <p>Over recent years the Bermondsey Village Action Group, now OBVNF, has been a focus for community views, both collecting and sharing. It seems to me they would be ideally placed to represent our community in a more formal manner in the future.</p>
42	01	I work in Bermondsey Village area and live nearby. This is one of the most attractive parts in SE1 with lovely feel to it.
	02	I am aware that local residents are very active in trying to preserve the unique heritage of the place and the application submitted by OBVNF for the consultation has my full Support!
43	01	I write in response to the consultation process that is under way with respect to the application made by Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum for the designated area.
	02	As someone who works and resides in the area, I have had the opportunity to attend a few of the meetings held by BVAG (before it evolved into OBVNF) and meet a array of people who either live, work or have interests in the area. I should say am quite happy with the working of the group and its informal structure. I have been quite well informed of developments in the area thanks to their mailouts and I should also underline the fact that the members are quite responsive and receptive to enquiries and comments made to them. Even though there have been mentions of other groups in the area, I have failed to see any other group as active as OBVNF and I support their application as the Neighbourhood forum and to be a part of planning policies for the designated area.
44	01	I hope you can include my statement (below) of support for OBVNF in you report and that we can move forward in setting up an all-inclusive Forum which can formulate a Neighbourhood Plan representative of all those who live and work in he neighbourhood.
		LOCALISM and NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CONCEPT
	02	(Under the Localism Act a Neighbourhood Plan 'could set out detailed planning guidance on issues such as housing, heritage, design, open spaces and local businesses' (Southwark Council consultation letter)).
	03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am passionate that local people should have a listened-to voice in which decisions are made about the area they live

04	<p>in. Through my tenants and residents association and local contacts I am able to feed my views and those of many others into a local community plan that can turn the priorities of the people into council policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A refusal of the OBVNF application would be harmful to the neighbourhood and the neighbourhood plan process because they are an established, active, diverse and welcoming group of people committed to improving the quality of life in my neighbourhood. No other applicant can hope to meet such criteria.
05	<p style="text-align: center;">MEETINGS and COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been to meetings, am on the mailing list, have become aware through posters and word of mouth, of the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum (until recently operating under the name of the BVAG – Bermondsey Village Action Group) and am very confident that we can get more people involved in a Neighbourhood Plan than Southwark council has achieved so far.
06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been kept informed and included about the aims and work of the group. The group makes a huge effort to be open and inclusive. I feel strongly that OBVNF as a group has ample scope to actively engage with the larger community once approved. OBVNF has the potential to be an effective representative group for the community. I can not understand why Southwark council has not succeeded in engaging the general public in Localism and that there were only 2 applications in my neighbourhood.
07	<p style="text-align: center;">AREA A</p> <p>The boundary of the area decided by the council is not my concern as one can not please everyone all of the time. If the council believes that this is correct and manageable time will tell. It is my belief that OBVNF can engage a large area as well, as if not better than the council has, so far.</p>
08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I ask that this group be given the chance to be voted in via a referendum to be the focal point for people’s ideas and hopes for the development of the local area.
09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not mean to be critical but if the concept of Localism means what it says, the status quo of the council’s approach and policies would receive more support (or criticism?), if they come out of a representative community group trying to build a representative plan for the area.
10	<p style="text-align: center;">POLICIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community plan policy should involve planning decisions which affect road safety, traffic controls, crime prevention, density and diversity of population, housing, building heights, light deprivation, ecology, more green spaces, education and training, dental and medical services, safe play facilities, road maintenance, clean streets, prevention of antisocial behaviour, air quality, pollution, action against poverty, diversity of shopping, local employment, youth services,

	11	<p>"wellness" and all aspects of town planning that affect the quality of life in Borough and Bermondsey. Despite this neighbourhood experiencing very strong economic growth, there are large pockets of extreme poverty, overcrowding and homelessness of which I am painfully aware through my community work.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OBVNF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I strongly support the application of the OBVNF to be the neighbourhood forum for Area A and look forward to assisting my OBVNF neighbours in making Old Bermondsey a better place to live and work.
45	01	I am writing to you as a local resident to urge you to agree to the application of the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum.
	02	As residents of Guinness Court since 2008 we have the endured, and are still enduring the disruption of nearly 7 years of constant large scale building work, together with increased heavy vehicle traffic in this small residential area in SE1, in no small part due to the closure of St Thomas St.
	03	The small London streets in this part of north SE1 are packed with buildings that evolved organically with some deference to the scale of the community, and with some sensitivity to their location. Much of the current wave of development is devoid of any such precept. And might I add that much of these new developments are still largely empty.
	04	I believe that the OBVNF would be well suited to be the official Neighbourhood Forum and focus for the area that you have designated as Area A. I have been to many meetings held by BVAG and consider them to be earnestly positive in wanting to help local people give voice to their ideas about how to progressively evolve this area in ways that do not brutalize or diminish what it is about it that drew us here in the first place.
46	01	My response is no different from the original response I submitted for the BVAG application (which was refused for trivial reasons). I have been part of BVAG for over 4 years and actively engaged in all their campaigns along with fellow volunteers. I have been living and working in the designated area A for the past 3 years. As a BVAG volunteer and member, I have been on the streets to get petitions signed and raising awareness (over current planning issues) among the general public during annual Bermondsey street festivals, needless to say attended several meetings with council authorities and all of BVAG's regular wednesday meetings held at Globe House.
	02	The Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum was formed by local businesses, residents, BVAG and other active groups in the area - as a collaborative effort to progress the neighbourhood planning process since it took the council an

	03	<p>incredible (3 years) time to deal with previous applications and finally refuse them. The OBVNF constitution allows for an open, inclusive environment for the community to engage and make representations. I am confident that OBV as a neighbourhood forum has ample potential and the calibre to work effectively - to resolve conflicts, engage and represent different sections of the community who may have different needs and aspirations.</p> <p>Southwark council authorities like to believe that BVAG/OBVNF meetings are not fairly held and as a group OBVNF may not be open or engaging enough. This notion is fictional for the above reasons. The council have been stalling the neighbourhood plan for so long that it is becoming increasingly frustrating for the people who have been working so hard and have contributed their time and energy towards realising the neighbourhood forum/plan. A bit of optimism from the council on the current OBVNF application will be a welcome change and help bridge the gap between general public and the council.</p>
47	01	As a local business owner and resident within the Bermondsey Street area for over 10 years. I support the application by Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum to be the neighbourhood forum for area 'A'.
48	01	I am writing in support of the aims, views, and application of the Old Bermondsey Village to be the Neighbourhood Forum [OBVNF] for Area A.
	02	As a local resident I am increasing worried about the tendency of nearby developments to build-out the legacy of the human scale and tone of the area, to the detriment of the local residents and the long established character of the community.
	03	As I understand it OBVNF are also of a similar disposition.
	04	Having been to a number of their meetings, I think they would be a sensible local facility and filter for future local planning, they are as deeply interested in the fabric of the existing community as I am. This area needs local representation, and I believe that a fully recognized OBVNF would be in a position to fulfill that role.
49	01	As a group of people working in the neighbourhood and hence spending much of our productive hours in this area, we

		<p>were pleasantly surprised when we became acquainted with members of BVAG, now OBVNF as a larger group. We came across the BVAG website and registered for their updates through emails. Although our work hours did not allow us to attend any meeting so far, we have been receiving regular intimations on meetings or any developments in the area and look forward to attending their meetings in future. We are happy to support the application of OBVNF and approach them in future when we need a word in, any organisation that has pushed through this long can be trusted to take the responsibilities given by the Localism Act seriously. We look forward for the outcome and are confident that OBVNF as a neighbourhood forum will help represent the concerns of local businesses.</p>
50	01	<p>As someone who works i. Bermondsey Street, i would like to state my support for BVAG and their OBVNF application. I am keen to see the area's original character preserved.</p>
51	01	<p>I'm writing in reference to the application of the Old Bermondsey Village Forum's application for Neighbourhood Forum status. I've been involved with this team (formerly BVAG) since I moved to the area 3.5 years ago.</p>
	02	<p>This is a an important group and already has huge support. Their views (although admittedly delivered often with heat!) are in essence entirely reasonable, rational, practical and informed. At their heart, they have a balanced view of progress versus heritage - a view shared by many (and hopefully the council too).</p>
	03	<p>I've been on their mailing lists from the beginning and have also attended the majority of the regular meetings and they are incredibly informative and always show a constructive approach to what's happening and planned for the area. They will be fantastic representatives for the neighbourhood - that combination of passion, hard work and knowledge is not easy to come by.</p>
	04	<p>They're always open, inviting and inclusive and I cannot imagine for a second that this will change. They're keen and able to reach even more people in the area and are poised to take on the status with tireless dedication.</p>
	05	<p>They are already the unofficial neighbourhood forum, so I strongly encourage the council to make it official. Refusing the application will provoke many questions among local residents as there doesn't seem to be any reason to do this.</p>
	06	<p>I look forward to hearing a positive outcome.</p>
52	01	<p>Thank you for inviting comments on the application by Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum (OBVNF) to take</p>

		forward neighbourhood planning for Area A.
02		This response is from the Planning Subcommittee of the Bermondsey Street Area Partnership (BSAP), which I chair.
03		BSAP is a business and residents group and has been active for over 20 years in our local area, bounded by St Thomas St/Crucifix Lane, Tower Bridge Road, Long Lane and Weston St, most of which is contained in Area A. Our members have worked on a voluntary basis to make our area better for everyone, residents, businesses, workers and visitors. BSAP started and for 7 years ran the Bermondsey St Festival which now draws many thousands of local people into the area for a relaxed and entertaining day. The BSAP Planning Subcommittee actively campaigns for development in the area to be sympathetic with the materials, massing and style in the conservation area and to grow and sustain a mixed local economy of small businesses.
04		BSAP has always supported the principle of neighbourhood planning for our area and we will seek to contribute actively, on behalf of our members, to any local planning process. We will be delighted when a suitable forum has been designated to lead the difficult work of a drawing up a neighbourhood plan which has the support of the whole community. It's a significant undertaking with all sorts of risks and uncertainties and we therefore believe that a forum needs to get off to the best possible start. It's especially challenging in our area, due to the mix of old and new communities, small businesses and residents, workers, people who pass through on the way to and from central London and thousands of visitors.
05		We have concerns about the recent application by OBVNF, which we believe carries unnecessary risk, especially in relation to governance and representation. Our worry is that if the work starts on a fragile platform, it is unlikely to reach a successful outcome.
06		Governance - 1 There exist proven template constitutions for community associations, carefully crafted to provide very necessary safeguards for the individuals involved and the community as a whole. The example I have in front of me (and which I also attach, for reference) is from Community Matters, and has been approved by both the Charity Commission and HMRC. The OBVNF Constitution, by comparison, is weak, and not fit for purpose in our view.
07		Representation We would like to see a Forum operating as a clearly independent organisation, with a range of other local organisations acting in support. This has been described in some meetings as a 'coalition of the willing.' In this context, OBVNF looks

	08	<p>not yet to have brokered broad support from other local organisations, <u>and</u> to be too close to, too dependent on the Bermondsey Village Action Group (BVAG). Given the weaknesses in the Constitution, there is a real risk that OBVNF could find itself unable to act except as directed by BVAG. This could mean that actions could be taken in the name of OBVNF and the community, which are not at all in line with the community will.</p> <p>We want neighbourhood planning for our area. A robust and inclusive forum is needed to give local people confidence that contributing their time and thoughts is going to be worthwhile.</p>
53	01	<p>I am writing on a personal basis to set out a number of very significant concerns in the operation of this group, the veracity of the claims made in its application and constitution and problems with undeclared conflicts of interest. My concerns can be grouped as follows:</p> <p>The operation of OBVNF/BVAG & compliance with the OBVNF/BVAG constitution</p> <p>02 While both the application made by the OBVNF and the organisation's constitution claim that the group operates in an open and democratic way, I have absolutely no confidence that this will be delivered in practice. BVAG is dominated by Russell Gray. When I have attended BVAG meetings I have seen Russell frequently act in a very aggressive way, haranguing, intimidating and abusing those who do not hold the same views as him. No attempt is made to capture the diversity of views present at a BVAG meeting and, in reality, it is impossible to provide variations or alternatives to the views set out by Russell Gray, let alone adopt a contrary stance.</p> <p>03 I was involved as a member of the steering committee of the Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum and, while Russell Gray was a member of that group his behaviour was even worse. He would always be angry and aggressive in stating his position during steering group meetings - at one point berating the then chair of the group so much that he reduced her to tears and forced her to step down from any involvement in the group. His temper, anger and lack of tolerance for others views is even more apparent in public meetings. I have seen his constant hectoring and argument frequently drive people away from public meetings and turn such meetings into unproductive shouting matches. I believe this has been a major factor in the lack of progress of neighbourhood planning within Bermondsey.</p> <p>04 Given this history, it also means that many of the significant community representatives within the Bermondsey area say they are unable and unwilling to work with Russell Gray. This makes it very unlikely that the OBVNF/BVAG could bring together the diversity of views to develop a fair and representative neighbourhood plan for the area.</p>

		<p>Misrepresentation by BVAG throughout the process</p> <p>05 BVAG have a history of misrepresenting situations to present them as their view of the world, rather than having basis in fact. This is illustrated by the repeating of false assertions as fact within the OBVNF/BVAG application. Having been involved in the steering committee of the Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum, I know for certain there have never been any joint meetings of the Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum with BVAG and that the BNF Steering Committee explicitly rejected proposals to have joint meetings.</p> <p>06 Given this tendency to play fast and loose with the facts, I would suggest the council takes great care to test the veracity of every statement made in the OBVNF/BVAG application to ensure they are objective fact rather than wishful thinking.</p> <p>Lack of interest and vision for 'Area A'</p> <p>07 In terms of the substance of the application to become a neighbourhood forum to develop a neighbourhood plan, The OBVNF/BVAG application singularly fails to show any vision for the council's designated 'Area A' for which they are applying. There is certainly no positive vision or aspiration within the application apart from the broad statement of a desire 'to preserve and enhance the character of the area designated Bermondsey Village'. Given that this is pretty much stating the requirements of legislation, it is hard to determine the level of genuine intent behind this assertion and what it might actually mean in practice.</p> <p>08 Instead their application makes great play of their previous BVAG application for an area which lies almost entirely outside Area A and then goes on to makes criticism of the council's processes, particularly around that history..</p> <p>09 In designating a neighbourhood forum for Area A, the Council should ensure that groups have a genuine interest in preparing a neighbourhood plan within the boundaries of Area A and not to attempt to use the process for any other purposes.</p> <p>Lack of engagement with local communities</p> <p>10 To my knowledge, OBVNF/BVAG has made no attempt to engage with the communities within Area A and certainly not the major groups representing residents and business. I am involved in the operation of Leathermarket JMB and OBVNF/BVAG has not approach the JMB, nor any of its five constituent Resident Associations. I have close links with the other groups in the area and, to my knowledge, they have not approached the Bermondsey Street Area Partnership,</p>
--	--	---

		<p>which represents residents and businesses in the Bermondsey Street corridor, nor the three Tenants & Residents associations of the Tabard Gardens area, nor the TMO and Association representing the Haddonhall estate.</p> <p>Transparency, pecuniary interest, and potential for conflict</p>
	11	<p>The leader of OBVNF/BVAG, Russell Gray, is a property developer with significant property holdings within Area A. Clearly any development that may happen in or around the area – or indeed a lack of development – will have a direct impact on the value of Mr Gray’s property portfolio. Therefore he has a very clear pecuniary interest in the content of any neighbourhood plan for the area. This has never been made explicit nor formally declared, giving rise to a clear conflict of interest.</p>
	12	<p>In conclusion, I believe that Southwark Council should test very carefully the claims that the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum has made in its application and assess whether it is confident that the group would function in an open, democratic and structured way to bring together the diversity of views across the area and produce a neighbourhood plan that the whole community would support and value.</p>