

## INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION-MAKING

### RECORD OF DECISION

#### PART A

<b>DETAILS OF REPORT</b> <i>(Officers to complete this section prior to issuing to cabinet member)</i>	
Title of report	Neighbourhood Planning – Decision on an application for a revised Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of neighbourhood planning in Bermondsey
Decision-maker	Councillor Mark Williams, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and New Homes
Earliest date when decision can be taken	26 February 2018
Key decision – Yes/No?	No
Date published on forward plan	N/A
Date sent to cabinet member	19 February 2018
Recommendation	That the Cabinet Member 1. Refuses to extend the designated area as shown coloured blue on the map in Appendix 2, proposed by the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum as a revised Neighbourhood Area, for the reasons set out in the officer's report.

<b>ORIGINATING AUTHOR'S DETAILS</b> <i>(Officers to complete this section prior to issuing to cabinet member)</i>	
Lead officer (Name and job title)	Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive
Report author (Name and job title)	Juliet Seymour, Planning Policy Manager
Contact Number	020 7525 0508

#### PART B

*(Cabinet member to complete this section)*

#### DECISION(S)

**DECISION(S)**

As set out below.

**REASONS FOR DECISION**

As set out below and in report.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS  
CONSIDERED**

Refuse to extend the designated area as shown coloured blue on the map in Appendix 2, proposed by the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum as a revised Neighbourhood Area, for the reasons set out in the officer's report.

In addition, in order to address concerns raised an editorial amendment to the New Southwark Plan proposed submission version will be made before submission to the Secretary of State to the Design and Accessibility Guidance to NSP53:

The site is within the setting of the Grade II listed Railway Arches. The site is partially within the Bermondsey Street conservation area and includes an important unlisted building, The Leather Warehouse, which makes a positive contribution to the area. The site is also within the setting of the important unlisted Horseshoe Pub. Redevelopment should enhance the setting of these buildings. Development proposals should ~~seek to~~ retain and enhance ~~where possible~~ the townscape setting provided by key heritage assets including the unlisted leather warehouse on Snowfields Street, the Horseshoe Inn located on Vinegar Yard and the Grade II listed Railway Arches. Development proposals should complement local character and distinctiveness. The urban grain and street layout of the surrounding area should be retained.

**REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

17 representations were received, attached at Appendix 1, in support of approving the revised neighbourhood area. The representations mainly relate to the area around St Thomas Street north of Snowfields. The following issues were raised:

- Representors assert that Snowfields is not a natural boundary to the neighbourhood area as they believe the character is similar on either side of road. They highlight the presence of commercial, including small businesses, residential and public sector uses north of Snowfields.
- Representors are concerned about development of tall buildings and protecting the historic environment, including the Vinegar Yard warehouse.
- Representors claim that the revised neighbourhood area is supported by local people.

**ADDITIONAL ADVICE RECEIVED**

## **ADDITIONAL ADVICE RECEIVED**

### **Planning Policy**

As set out in the officer's report the proposed extension north of Snowsfields entails a mix of uses. Whilst the presence of some flats is noted it is considered that the dominant character between Snowsfields and St Thomas Street is commercial and strategic in nature. The area includes the premises of Team London Bridge business improvement district, a Home Office 7 storey office building and large footprint sites with capacity for major development. It is maintained that the scale of built form is significantly greater around London Bridge in comparison to Old Bermondsey Village and that this broadly transitions at Snowsfields. The street is a natural boundary to provide a coherent neighbourhood appropriate for neighbourhood planning.

A number of representations refer to the Horse Shoe Pub and the Vinegar Yard Warehouse. The concerns expressed could be addressed by minor editorial amendments to site allocation 'NSP53: Land between St Thomas Street, Fenning Street, Melior Place and Snowsfields' in the New Southwark Plan prior to submission, as set out in the alternative options considered..

### **ANY INTERESTS DECLARED**

*Note: If the decision-maker has a disclosable pecuniary interest in the matter the report must be referred to the full cabinet for decision.*

*Where a cabinet member may discharge a function alone and becomes aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being dealt with or to be dealt with by her/him, the cabinet member must notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter.*

*If a member is unsure as to whether an interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest they should contact the governance team for advice.*

## DECLARATION

~~I approve/reject the recommendations set out in the report.\*~~

or

I approved an alternative course of action set out in Part B.\*

or

~~I have referred this matter to the Full Cabinet for decision.\*~~

(\* - Please delete as appropriate)

Signed 

Dated

26/2/2018

Cabinet Member

Please return completed hard copy of the form to Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, PO BOX 64529, London, SE1P 5LX – tel: 020 7525 7225 fax: 020 7525 7284.

### Seeking advice

You should seek advice from the relevant officer on a number of occasions:

- (a) If you wish to consider alternative options
- (b) If you are considering rejecting the proposals

Otherwise it is at your discretion when you should seek further advice and you should do so when you consider it appropriate.

## APPENDIX 1 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

I would like to request the revised neighbourhood area is approved, please (I live at post code SE1 6AY) and would welcome this area being included in the neighbourhood area of Bermondsey

My email regards today's decision on the application for a revised neighbourhood area in Bermondsey. I live on Long Lane and work on Bermondsey Street.

I object to the reasoning cited for the decision, specifically for the area north of Snowfields. As someone who spends most of my time in the area, I assure you Snowfields is not a "natural boundary" between the Bermondsey Street area and another separate area. It's one cohesive series of shops, restaurants and bars with 2-3 storeys of residential above. Any redevelopment on or around those sites should be decided in the context of the wider neighbourhood area as proposed by OBVNF.

I am especially resistant to proposals to put additional high-rise buildings on or around these sites, especially the areas east and west of Fenning Street. I'm not opposed to redevelopment and have, in fact, seen much benefit on Long Lane from recent development projects. However, these need to be constrained by local character and the needs and desires of local citizens, and I don't feel that local citizens' voices are being heard in this case.

I am writing to lodge my clear objection to the inclusion of St Thomas Street in the new neighbourhood development plans. This street should continue to be included in the historic Bermonsey Village Neighbourhood as it previously was.

The council appears to be hell-bent on converting this historic village area into nothing but a collection of high rise buildings, in stark contrast to the architectural and cultural heart of the area, which in turn will attract chain stores and drive out the innovative, independent shops and small businesses that give so much interest to the area. Anyway who has walked around More London, or down St Thomas Street since the Shard and London Bridge Station development has been built will feel that these new high rise buildings create incredible wind tunnels which make the streets inhospitable to pedestrians.

Why are you so insistent on completely destroying the area? At the recent consultation for the proposed Greystar development, it was clearly stated that there is an intention to link the London Bride station development all the way down to Bermondsey Street. Once Bermonsey Street has been reduced to nothing more that a street full of chain shops with big glass buildings at the end, which you can encounter anywhere else in London (or indeed in cities around the world) , there will be no charm or attraction to Bermondsey Street! You will kill the 'golden goose'.

London is a beautiful city valued by tourists around the world for its historical appeal. High rise buildings can be - and are - found everywhere. Don't destroy what makes London, and this area, special.

I am making a comment in a personal capacity in support of this application. My reasons are focused on a desire to give protection to the warehouse at Vinegar Yard. I am extremely supportive of the comments that are set out in the consultation report in support of the retention of the warehouse and that this building should be preserved as a

truly remarkable example of the built heritage of the London Bridge area. I acknowledge that there will be taller buildings in the vicinity but its preservation as part of this designation would be an extremely strong statement about the value that Southwark places on the outstanding buildings that exist in the borough.

I write in support of the Old Bermondsey neighbourhood area to be extended to include the St Thomas St car park, Vinegar Store and all the land around St. Thomas St which is earmarked for high rise student accommodation.

I am shocked and saddened that the Officer has chosen not to listen to the overwhelming support of local people in refusing this application. Clearly the case for approving the application to extend the Neighbourhood Area is compelling, if not to the Planning Department it is certainly compelling to local businesses and residents. There is overwhelming local support for the extension, the best available evidence on character and appearance and community ties support it. Councillors, please can you ensure that the voice of workers and residents is heard and that the view of the Planning Officer is rejected.

I give you formal notification of my support to extend the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum Area as advised in the Extension Application.

As a long time (30 years) resident of Bermondsey (in Wilds Rents) I urge you to listen to local people and work with neighbourhood bodies to enact planning decisions that benefit the local population. The reason that Bermondsey has become so popular over the past decade is precisely because of its current mix of buildings, small independent businesses, council tenants and private owners of small properties. Your actions that encourage offshore developers to build anonymous tower blocks will be instrumental in ruining this vibrant community.

Please desist and also please be more open  
Being evasive and non-inclusive only shows us that you have something to hide

The community of Bermondsey is worth valuing and respecting

Following my supporting email for the OBF extension I am disappointed to read the council's decision to reject it on the grounds that St Thomas street is not part of the conservation area and that Snowfields is the natural boundary. St Thomas street has important buildings such as vinegar yard warehouse and the viaduct, which, are both essential elements to the character of Bermondsey street are the area around. Adding tall buildings to st thomas street will only disconnect its residents from their surroundings.

This is to lodge my disagreement with the above, on the grounds that it fails to take into account the evident weight of local opinion.

There are a number of areas of concern about the decision.

Chief of these is that it would appear that Southwark is making its decision on the very questionable basis that the area now being denied is primarily a 'business' area, when in reality its make up is both business and residential - and thus of similar composition to

the area already granted by Southwark.

Sadly there is no surprise in your decision to reject the "Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum revised area boundary".

I shall still contest the north of Snowfields is business based. At present north of Snowfields are Capitol House (Nursing training) and the Home Office Immigration reporting Centre in Beckett house, which I would not refer to as businesses.... On the site of Capitol house is proposed by Greystar a 45 storey student accommodation tower, which, but for the Greystar (high rents for foreign accommodation for foreign students as their website explains), does not represent any kind of business albeit the proposed Immigration Museum which may employ a handful of local people? One knows that some of the land on the north of Snowfields leading to Bermondsey Street has been sold to CIT which erects tall residential buildings which are automatically not for local people or people of normal means.

Snowfields, itself leading unto Newcomen Street, is a street of low residential development (Guinness Trust building) and residential units above shops as seen in Bermondsey Street but for the Cancer Research Building.....

Due to time running out: ie deadline I can no longer carry on writing....

The council interest into the local community, safeguarding a unique area too is at its minimal and totally destructive.

As a local resident I feel very disappointed that St Thomas Street is not to be recognized as part of the proposed OBF neighbour plan extension...

I feel that area is very much part of the fabric of both the area and the community and whatever happens within that stretch of land has huge huge implications for everyone living and working around it...

It is very disappointing to feel that the wishes of the local community are being ignored in favour of private developers who I feel do not have the best interests of the area and people who live in it at their core. A great example is the recent 'consultation' of the building to replace 'the quill'. Even though the impact of this for me, as a Bermondsey street resident, would be immense I was given no notice it was happening and was only made aware by coming across a chance tweet on the SE1 Twitter account. I cannot see any positives from that particular building going ahead for anyone in the area.

I do feel that the OBF have far more integrity in fighting for an area that represents those who live and work here - and vote in the elections - and I would like to express my immense disappointment that there feels like no recognition of this by the council in this poor decision.

I disagree with the council's decision to reject the OBF extension on grounds that St Thomas street is not part of Bermondsey street conservation area and that Snowfields is the natural boundary due to the protected viaduct and the vinegar yard warehouse, of which should be conserved as important heritage of this area.

Firstly, I wholly disagree with Para 36 of the Individual Decision Maker's report, and specifically the idea that Snowfields serves as a natural boundary and the area north of it does not fit in with the rest of the neighbourhood. I agree that Guys and St Thomas' is a

self-contained and separate site and should continue as such. But I can in no way find any rationality to the assertion that Snowfields itself, Melior St and St Thomas Street do not fit in with the neighbourhood scheme. As a resident of this area for nearly 10 years, my Church is located on Melior St, somewhere that I walk to each weekend and somewhere that serves as a focal point of local community life. This may have been utterly disrupted in the last few years due to the construction of **additional residences and small businesses**, but Melior St and Snowfields have reverted back to being peaceful parts of the neighbourhood with smaller, independent businesses and residence spaces that are completely in keeping with the rest of the neighbourhood. I cannot follow your logic that neither church and community nor restaurants and residences - of which there are an abundant number of similar types on Bermondsey Street itself - are not in keeping with the wider Neighbourhood Area which is from your own report (Para 34, and drawn from the 2013 Characterisation Study) is "predominantly residential, interspersed with commercial and industrial uses". How would you therefore characterise the Horseshoe Pub, Vinegar Warehouse, Snowfield's 'Pocket Plaza' and indeed any of the small businesses on Weston St, interspersed with low rise flats?

As a second point, I find it ludicrous that you expect residents and interested parties to this matter to have only three days in which to review the information and decisions and respond. I am not sure whether you intend people to be able to spend time reading all the material during their working time, or whether you expect us to take time off work in order to properly review information that has a direct bearing on the area in which we live. Perhaps next time, you could have the decency to offer seven days including a weekend, so that people who work Monday to Friday or on rotating shift patterns have time to make a genuine and thought out response, instead of using our office hours inappropriately.

Overall, I feel your report has failed to take into account any of the points raised during the consultation, or acknowledge the feels of local people who live and work inside the area of proposed changes. It feels like you have simply recycled previous lines taken, and have no genuine wish to engage with local people on ways in which our local area can be sensitively developed. The impression given by the Council is that you are trying to turn London Bridge into Canary Wharf, an investment of money where nobody lives and with a lack of life and character.

In short, I disagree with the recommendation and urge the Council to continue to work with local residents and the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Forum to work to a solution that benefits local residents and the local area.

I find this recommendation extremely disappointing in that it totally ignores local interests. In particular the continued insistence the Snowfields local authority block, Horseshoe pub and Vinegar yard warehouse share more likeness with the area towards the station than the area to the south covered by OBVF is staggering.

We all want Southwark to progress and grow as an area, but to do it by drawing ridiculous boundaries and ignoring the local community is not the right way to do it.

I am writing to state my opinion that I disagree with the decision not to extend the Old Bermondsey Village Neighbourhood Area.  
I am highly disappointed that on Tuesday last the application was recommended for refusal by the Council.

The proposed areas of extension clearly make a for coherent neighbourhood because



*they fit better in character, urban grain and scale with the northern part of the area designated by the Council; they mainly consist of small independent businesses and residences with a high concentration of buildings of some historic or architectural interest.* [Excerpt from the application to extend the Neighbourhood Area]

Furthermore, as stated by **Paul Stinchcombe QC** in his report on 12th February 2018:

"Conclusions 22. For all of the above reasons, the case for approving the application to extend the Neighbourhood Area is compelling. There is overwhelming local support for it; the best available evidence on character and appearance and community ties support it; there is good reason in these regards (and new evidence) for the Council to come to a different conclusion than in August 2014, which is inconsistent with the Bankside, Borough and London Bridge Characterisation Study; and the concerns raised by the principal objectors – who are not the voice of the local community – are unfounded. and

23. In the premises, should the Council decide to refuse the OBVNF application for the extension of the Neighbourhood Area, at the very least to Crucifix Lane, they will plainly be at risk of being successfully challenged by an application for judicial review through failing properly to interpret and apply relevant policy and through failing, accordingly, to take into account all but only material considerations in accordance with the policy of the Localism Act."

I hope that decision will now be reconsidered in the light of the above serious failing of material consideration in accordance with the policy of the Localism Act.

I am extremely disappointed by the decision of the council to recommend refusal of the application for area extension of OBVNF.

The application was supported by very many people who live and/or work in the area, including myself. This area of Bermondsey has a vibrant and unique character which should be supported by Southwark Council, and the proposed extension area has a similar mix of residences and small independent businesses to the existing neighbourhood area. Furthermore, many of the buildings in the proposed extension area are of historic and/or architectural interest so should be conserved.

I would ask that the Council reconsider their decision.

