

From: **Chair KOVF** <kovf.chair@gmail.com>

Date: 21 September 2015 at 10:02

Subject: Next Vauxhall Consultation and the Community Proposals

To: Lib Cllr <LPeck@lambeth.gov.uk>

Cc: "Hopkins,Jack Cllr" <JHopkins@lambeth.gov.uk>, Michael Keane <mj.keane@btinternet.com>

Dear Councillor Peck

I am approaching you as Leader of Lambeth Council because KOVF would like your support for the community vision for a major new public space in South London linking Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens and Vauxhall Park. I have copied in Councillor Hopkins as lead cabinet member on this and as Oval Ward councillor for the area.

As I am sure you know, KOVF is the local forum for the area around Vauxhall. I wouldn't normally write to you directly, but I think we are now at a critical point in working out a solution for Vauxhall.

We all recognise the importance of getting Vauxhall right. TfL undertook an initial consultation on a partial two-way working solution last year, which was not well received by the community - see feedback to TfL from KOV published on our website. Throughout 2015, Michael Keane, a local resident and KOV Board member, has been reviewing evidence and drawing on ideas from a number of sources. He has been working with local architects, transport engineers and others in developing alternative ideas for Vauxhall. Key ideas have been tested at informal consultations and in public meetings. 'Our Vauxhall' proposals are not idle aspirations. We know they would get wide acceptance from the public. The economic, safety and environmental benefits are too strong to ignore and can only add to whatever benefits may be realised from the Vauxhall island/bus station site.

Whatever advice you may have been given to the contrary, Our Vauxhall proposals will result in satisfactory performance of the road network and will perform better than TfL's proposed solution for Vauxhall, as far as it has been disclosed, on a range of measures. In a straight comparison with TfL's approach we are confident that Our Vauxhall would win both in terms of overall performance and public support.

KOVF appreciates the need for Lambeth to work with TfL in a constructive manner but we must not allow this opportunity to pass. Whatever barriers are preventing TfL/Lambeth from supporting this scheme must be identified and overcome. I attach as appendixes two reports of incidents which have led the community to believe that they are not being listened to and that their proposal is not being taken seriously.

We are therefore asking for your intervention now to ensure

- 1) The two main options for Vauxhall are on the table;
 - (i) TfL's partial 2 way approach
 - (ii) Our Vauxhall full 2 way approach with a major new public space for South London

2) Our Vauxhall and TfL's proposals are accurately compared against the same range of measures including safety, environment, average journey times, economic, jobs, business opportunities, accessibility, cost of delivery etc.

3) A review is undertaken of surveys/workshops and reports commissioned by Lambeth and presentations made by senior officers with a view to identifying and addressing bias

4) Any consultation, analysis and findings are conducted in a fair and transparent way so that the public can make informed comments and chose an appropriate scheme for the future.

I look forward to hearing from you further with the necessary assurances.

Helen Monger

Chair

Kennington, Oval and Vauxhall Forum

www.kovforum.org.uk



Appendix 1: Background information for consideration of Our Vauxhall being considered fairly

It was clear from the recent Vauxhall reference group meeting that in spite of all the evidence in favour of our Vauxhall scheme, TfL seem intent on pursuing their own substantially unchanged ideas in the forthcoming consultation being unable to work up our scheme due to resource and time constraints. Lambeth/TfL have had since March to address this and we are unsure why no progress has been made.

This is a once in generation opportunity which should not be rushed into and TfL should be encouraged to do the right thing. There are a number of flaws in their proposal which we would expect your advisors to have informed you about . Rather than point out the flaws our focus remains on what we believe is a far better solution for Vauxhall.

Michael informs me that he has waited very patiently (see appendix 2 time line below) for some actual evidence of any fatal flaws in Our Vauxhall proposals. He has had to resort to Fol requests and continued prompting to get basic information that should have been made available to him as designated KOVF lead on Vauxhall. We advised back in March that TfL had not analysed our scheme and any conclusions they came to analysing a completely different scheme were flawed. Supplementary points made by Lambeth consultants, WYG, were considered but the original assumptions were too far from the mark.

A further cause for concern is bias and misrepresentation of the facts. For example

1) I have been given a survey script that was commissioned by Lambeth Council. Interviewers were present at the bus station at the end of August asking people what they would like to do given the bus station will be demolished. This understandably raised significant concerns that Lambeth had already decided to support demolishing the existing bus station structure prior to any public consultation and contrary to Lambeth Council statements that we have been given that the community will be listened to.

KOVF are obliged to represent views of the entire community. We carried out a survey and the results indicated that opinions (without taking into account costs) seemed equally divided between retaining the existing bus station canopy and replacing it with something else. By pre-empting the consultation and allowing TfL to progress their own ideas, Lambeth is ignoring the wishes of a significant proportion of the local population. Perhaps minds will be a little more focussed once the costs of replacing the bus canopy with something else becomes clear.

2) Claims have been made by Lambeth officials that there was never any intention of having distributed bus stops but the existence of actual plans and information from TfL suggests otherwise.

KOVF Board are content that all parties are now agreed that a central bus station is retained but consider it unhelpful if statements are made which do not accurately reflect the facts.. Our Vauxhall supports a range of bus station configurations

3) Claims have been made that the alternative plan [Our Vauxhall] has insufficient junction capacity and this results in link saturation on certain roads at peak time. This is the one and only criticism that has been made of our scheme

Michael informs me that it was made clear back in March that TfL had modelled the wrong scheme and asked for our scheme to be modelled. The scheme they analysed was one that retained the bus station operating broadly as it is with some weaknesses imposed by TfL's own plans - reduced link and junction capacity. Our Vauxhall is very different from what they modelled. It maintains existing capacity at main junctions and smooths overall traffic flows. The difference between the two approaches may be characterised as (i) TfL approach seeks to maximise traffic flows through during peak hours. In contrast, (ii) Our Vauxhall seeks to minimise overall journey times for the 80% of journeys that do not occur during those peaks. The different approach results in fewer overall left/right turns, shorter overall distance travelled, more favourable traffic lights and reduced congestion on Kennington Lane viaduct. For this reason Our Vauxhall outperforms TfL's approach on a range of network performance measures. TfL have confirmed that no scheme for Vauxhall has yet been subject to full traffic modelling. That will only occur later in the process.

4) Recent communication from TfL on another infrastructure project (CS5) proving to be misleading or blatantly wrong which has led to a breakdown in trust with the community. Two examples on Harleyford Road: a. Omitting to mention during any consultation the narrowing of the pavement outside Harleyford Road Community Gardens giving problems for those with any mobility impairment; or b. TfL's commitment to residents last week that the noisiest works would be completed between the hours of 9pm and midnight only to carry out very noisy work involving rollers between 3am and 4am causing unreasonable disturbance.

Appendix 2: Timeline (Michael Keane's dealings with Lambeth/TfL in regards Vauxhall)

- 14 December 2014 Fol request sent to TfL

Having been provided with information about collision stats by the Oval Project team I asked the Vauxhall TfL project team to provide the same. As this was not forthcoming I felt obliged to raise an Fol request

- 12 February 2015

TfL respond to Fol above and provided collision stats for the Vauxhall area and the November 2013 traffic movements study on which their traffic modelling is based

- 23 February 2015

John Rider invites us to "a small technical workshop with TfL and Lambeth's transport teams to look at both alternative proposals with you and the other respondent [Martin Worthington]"

- 19 March KOV Forum public meeting including discussion of Vauxhall
- 26 March 2015 Martin Worthington, Helen Irwin and myself meet with TfL engineers and Lambeth

(I thought this was a positive meeting and Lambeth officers gave the impression that they were open to our ideas at that time. The TfL engineers expressed their view but it was fairly obvious even then that they had made the wrong assumptions about our scheme. I asked for the detailed assumptions and output from their models so I could give them further consideration. Having considered the traffic movements data, I had already satisfied myself that our scheme would probably work but was willing to listen to their view once I had a chance to review their analysis)

- 30 March 2015 Email to John Rider

I wrote thanking him for the meeting and giving appreciation "that TfL took the time to analyse one particular approach and trust that they will do the same with the other emerging ideas" I also asked, as requested at the meeting, for the "values/variables/assumptions that they [TfL]fed into their traffic model together with the output report from the model."

- 30 March 2015 TfL publish their Vauxhall consultation findings

A number of respondents were critical of the questions asked and I thought the summary evidence was surprisingly biased for a public sector consultation. Only 4 businesses repounded. Hardly representative. I was a little bemused to see that I got a personal mention.

- 7 April 2015 Email to John Rider

I asked him if he had heard back from TfL and if not I would write in with an Fol. I also asked whether Lambeth employed any qualified highway engineers. He responded on the 8th offering to chase and confirming Lambeth no longer employed highway engineers so there were no internal professionals to talk to)

- 18 April Vauxhall Hustings at Oval Farmers' Market

Candidates from all parties appeared to be critical of Lambeth in respect of its dealings with TfL over Vauxhall

- 23 April 2015 E-mail to John Rider

There were additional e-mail exchanges but this was a final warning for TfL via John aimed at extracting the information requested at the meeting and I was starting to be more directive about what should happen

- 23 April 2015 E-mail to Jack Hopkins

This was an e-mail accepting his personal invite onto the Vauxhall Community reference group

- 24 April 2015 Fol request sent to TfL
- 26 April 2015 Response from TfL forwarded by John Rider

Given the timing, I suspect my Fol triggered the response. Whatever the motivation, the TfL assessment provided was rather shallow and just restated what had been said at the March meeting. It lacked the information requested and failed to point out the advantages of our approach to traffic flow compared with their own solution.

- 29 May 2015 Email from John Rider

John provides pedestrian counts and interchange stats that had provided to him by TfL (Part of what I wanted in my Fol). He also passed on the apologies from the TfL project team as they had only received my Fol on 22 May

- 11 June 2015 Vauxhall Community Reference group

This came across as a very naive meeting - more PR than substance

- 14 July 2015 response to Fol received

I didn't get exactly what I was asking for but at least I got a response albeit rather late. Rather oddly for an Fol it stated "Lambeth's independent transport consultant (White Young Green - WYG) have been tasked to meet with you and explain the inputs/outputs in detail to ensure a thorough understanding".

- 13 August 2015 Meeting with WYG to go through traffic modelling

Neil Wisher and 2 other WYG staff were present as was John Rider and Geoff Burrage (Alan Baxter Associates) who is working with us. this was the first time I had actually seen the plan they had evaluated and the LinSyg output. It was immediately obvious that they had chosen to analyse the wrong scheme.[I subsequently requested yet again the detailed model outputs but have yet to receive them]

- 9 September 2015 2nd Vauxhall reference group meeting

It was clear from the plan presented by TfL that they were proceeding with their own ideas. The claim over the bus station having to be demolished to allow 2 way working was again

repeated even though the presented plan appeared not to impact on the existing bus station structure

- 15 September Email from John Rider

John provided some information requested in August but felt unable to provide the LinSyg files as these were deemed to be TfL intellectual property.

- 17 September

Email to Sandra Roebuck, following recent reference group meeting where Cllr Hopkins appears to lack information about Our Vauxhall Scheme, seeking confirmation of whether or not Lambeth has undertaken an actual comparison between the TfL and alternative solution for Vauxhall.