

Canning & Clyde Road Residents Association

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Ms Brenda Taplin
Programme Officer
Croydon Gateway Public Inquiry
Persona Associates
West Point
Springfield Road
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18 August 2007

Dear Ms Taplin

**The London Borough of Croydon
(Land West of East Croydon Station, The Gateway Site)
Compulsory Purchase Order 2007
Compulsory Purchase of Land and New Rights in Croydon Town Centre**

In addition to our letter of 4 February 2007 to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government objecting to the above Order - now that we have had sight of the London Borough of Croydon's Statement of Case - we would like to add the following to be considered by the Inspector.

We have made a separate objection to the Planning Application and in this new submission attempts to minimise any repetition.

1. The Council's 46 page statement fails to prove that there is a **compelling case in the public interest** for the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). In fact, if anything, the contrary.
2. It claims that the scheme is viable but no proof has been given. It claims that the scheme will support sustainability objectives but no evidence of this is given.
3. The Council's preferred developer, Arrowcroft, is quoted in the Council's document as overseeing commercial schemes that for example include the refurbishment of the listed Albert Dock in Liverpool. In fact this scheme lost Arrowcroft £1.17 million last year and saw Arrowcroft Holdings' debts rise from £24 million to £26 million over the year.
4. We understand that the Local Government Act 2000 obliges the Council to prepare a community strategy for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to sustainable development in the UK. The community strategy's vision for Croydon is to **create a place which is safer, healthier, more prosperous and sustainable, a place where people choose to live, work, visit and socialise and which is addressing the needs of the future**. We think that having a large,

event-driven development in the centre of the Croydon commercial sector next to the 15th busiest railway station in the country will achieve none of these goals because of the transitory nature of arena patronage. People like a sense of permanence as that is what makes them feel safe; they do not want to be intimidated by large visiting crowds.

5. Section 8.1 states that ***Croydon suffers from limited leisure and entertainment uses and lacks a diverse evening economy.*** It was the Council's own planning and licensing policies that created this in the first place. The arena scheme complete with its night club will only add to this limitation - being more of the same - and will lead to the loss of the Warehouse Theatre and contribute to the uncertainty at the Fairfield complex.
6. The Council claims that a large number of people will make maximum use of the site's high accessibility by public transport, in particular trains and trams. Both Network Rail and Tramlink have distanced themselves from this statement.
7. The Council says it is satisfied that there is sufficient demand for the proposed arena since leisure has grown strongly in the UK in recent years and that live music in particular is a growing activity with increased demand from the public for concerts. We challenge that statement. Most certainly people are interested in live music but not necessarily in listening to it as part of an audience of 10,000 or more. What is needed most certainly in Croydon are smaller venues for live music.
8. The Council states that it is satisfied that the scheme is viable and deliverable taking into account The Dome and Wembley. Given Croydon's good access to airports and the economy of air fares, some European arenas should be considered as competitors too.
9. We believe that for people living close to the proposed development the CPO would violate Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998, the right to protect private and family life.
10. An arena would create a potential crowd that is transitory and has no concern to the consequences of passing through the area: intimidating large crowds through the streets, overcrowding on public transport, litter, parking in residential streets and noise nuisance of people returning to cars in residential areas late at night. This is damaging to existing communities. In this wish to 'rebrand', the Council appears willing to sacrifice historic communities.
11. The Council's response to the previous objection that the scheme was not the subject of proper consultation says that it will demonstrate relevant documents have been subject to widespread consultation. We think not. PPS1 under *Community Involvement*, paragraph 2, says, '*One of the principles of sustainable development is to involve the community in developing the vision for its area. Communities should be asked to offer ideas about what that vision should be, and how it can be achieved.*' Instead the Council have displayed tunnel vision and merely promoted the Arrowcroft scheme. No alternatives have been offered for consultation. The public have just been told you are going to get an arena. With regard to public exhibitions relating to the scheme, a recent Expo at the Whitgift Centre was accompanied by a market research exercise that excluded any member of the public who belonged to a known association or group that objects to the arena development. There have been instances at Croydon Council presentations for the site where, when asked the alternatives, the Council has replied none – it is an arena. We think this is a disgrace. We hope that this Inquiry will reveal the nature of the relationship between the Council and the commercial developer. Further, our association has had to resort on two occasions to the use of the Freedom of Information Act to gain sight of the contract (edited) between the Council and the developer and to see documentation on transport.

12. PPS1, *Community Involvement*, paragraph 3, states, *Planning authorities should build a clear understanding of the make-up, interests and needs of the communities in their areas.*
The Council has ignored the local communities. Instead it has pursued its joint 'vision' with Arrowcroft and is willing to sacrifice the local communities for a scheme with highly dubious outcomes.
13. The UDP Inspector found an arena not to be necessary for the site and expressed doubts about its viability. The UDP was adopted in May 2006.
14. The Council's wish to 'rebrand' Croydon could far better and safely be achieved by (for example) the proper regeneration of the historic Old Town area.

Yours sincerely

Steve Collins
Chairman, Canning & Clyde Road Residents Association