

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of depositions from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the Council, nominated by the Mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the Mayor and voted on without discussion that the spokesperson for the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

**(1) Deputation concerning the Gasworks site in East Brighton
Spokesperson Marie Sansford**

Supported by:
Keeley Bignal
Stephen White
Pip Tyler
Michael Pegley

Ward affected: East Brighton

Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council will reply.

**(1) Deputation concerning the Gasworks site in East Brighton
Spokesperson – Marie Sansford**



Action on Gasworks Housing Affordability, Safety and Transparency

AGHAST presentation to Full Council 22 October 2020
Brighton Gasworks Development recently in the pre-application process.

AGHAST is a group of concerned residents of East Brighton and we are here to urge you to robustly invoke health and safety protections in dealing with this application. Berkeley Homes/St William propose to build 600-700 flats on the gasworks in blocks of up to 15 storeys, placed around gas pipes and other installations still in use. These will require deep foundations in the areas currently occupied by huge, redundant gas tanks and ducts. Soil tests for the site are unavailable and testing will be done once permission is obtained.

Brownfield sites are seen as the way forward to provide more housing. However there is a material difference between developing railway sidings, goods yards etc, and developing gasworks, because of the toxicity of the latter. When Hove gasworks was developed in the 1980s-90's, and a survey by Hove Borough Council detected untreatable toxins in the fabric of the site, it was deemed unsuitable for residential use. It now houses a Tesco and a large car park, which required shallower foundations than tower blocks.

In 2010 Ealing Council refused Berkeley's application for planning permission on the Southall Gasworks on environmental and health grounds. When, as Mayor of London, Boris Johnson overturned that decision, residents soon experienced strong toxic smells of petroleum, and were exposed to naphthalene, a known carcinogen, at levels considered too high by PHE. There has been a higher than normal incidence of ill-health involving peoples' airways, from breathing difficulties to terminal cancers. A legal case being built by local residents seeks a stop to the works on the grounds of 'Nuisance'. In Brighton similar work on the gasworks site could spread pollution over a vast residential area in which are located ten schools and colleges, parks and playing fields, golf courses and our main hospital.

Berkeley now own more than 20 gasworks sites around the country. Worried residents have created a national pressure group, Gasworks Communities United, to demand the highest standards of safety and monitoring of these developments. The Campaign for Clean Air in Southall and Hayes (CASH) is supported by the local and national Green Party, which made a film viewable on the CASH website. We understand that Green Party colleagues from Ealing have approached the leadership of B&H Council with their concerns.

We urge the Council to take seriously its responsibility for the protection of Environment and Health under DM40/41 of City Plan 2, and propose that it should follow the example of Hove Borough Council and allow only limited development of this site. If nothing else, we call upon the Council to ensure that a thorough independent assessment of the site is carried out before planning permission is even considered., We request that the findings are shared with the community before any planning permission is granted.

Brighton Gasworks development – pollution concerns

Summary of concerns

Development of the Brighton Gasworks site risks releasing potent toxins including carcinogens into the atmosphere. These pose a direct threat to human health as well as the surrounding natural environment including the South Downs National Park – home to rare and protected species.

Pollutants found on a typical gasworks

Former gasworks sites typically contain a range of pollutants in the soil. These include polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), petroleum hydrocarbons, asbestos, metals, cyanides, sulphur, and ammonium compounds and nitrates.

What happens when these pollutants are disturbed through construction?

Pollutants will be released from the soil and into the atmosphere in both particulate and gaseous form. Small particles pose the greatest danger as they can reach deep into the lungs. These light particles will remain in the atmosphere for long periods increasing the risk of exposure through inhalation.

The toxins will enter homes where they can be concentrated to harmful levels.

As well as being present in the atmosphere the toxins will settle and contaminate the soil in surrounding gardens and parks including the South Downs National Park.

Harmful effects of exposure to these toxins

These toxins include carcinogens (cancer causing), mutagens (cause genetic deformations) and teratogens (harm foetus in the womb). They have a range of other impacts including causing breathing difficulties, asthma, kidney and liver damage.

There are no safe levels for many of these toxins.

These impacts are real and happening now at sites developed by St William

Residents near to former gasworks developments including Southall, Hornsey and Bow in London have reported long term breathing difficulties, increases in incidences of asthma, nausea, mental confusion, eye problems, headaches.

Impacts on the surrounding natural environment

The chalk grassland of the South Downs National Park hosts rare and protected species of birds, butterflies and plants. Pollutants risk ecological impacts such as altering species composition, direct toxic damage and making plants more vulnerable to frost, drought and pathogens.

Conclusion: The safest place for these harmful toxins is to keep them locked away in the soil and undisturbed on the site.

Dr Keeley Signal – expertise in air pollution including PhD in motor vehicle pollution and post-doc research on combustion emissions such as PAHs.

Brighton Gasworks – pollution concerns. References.

<https://www.thecentriclab.com/air-pollution-health-in-southall-london>

Banks, M.K., Schultz, K.E. Comparison of Plants for Germination Toxicity Tests in Petroleum-Contaminated Soils. (2005). *Water Air Soil Pollution* **167**, 211–219

Kuppusamy S, Maddela NR, Megharaj M, Venkateswarlu K (2019) Impact of Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons on Human Health. *Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons*

Kim K, Ara Jahan S, Kabir E, Brown RJC (2013) A review of airborne polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and their human health effects. *Environment International*

Kisku GC, Tripathi S, Raj A (2018). Polycyclic-aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in environment and human health: a review. *International Journal of Advanced Research*

Jan Alexander, Diane Benford, Andrew Cockburn, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Eugenia Dogliotti, Alessandro Di Domenico, María Luisa Fernández-Cruz, Johanna Fink-Gremmels, Peter Fürst, Corrado Galli, Philippe Grandjean, Jadwiga Gzyl, Gerhard Heinemeyer, Niklas Johansson, Antonio Mutti, Josef Schlatter, Rolaf van Leeuwen, Carlos Van Peteghem, Philippe Verger. (2008) Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Food. Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain. *The European Food Safety Authority Journal*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/aug/27/londoners-claim-toxic-air-from-gasworks-damaging-their-health>

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wildlife-habitats/habitats/chalk-grassland/>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/skylark/>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/invertebrates/butterflies>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/22/residents-demand-new-clean-air-rules-for-former-gasworks-sites-in-england>