

Concerns with the Terms Of Reference for the Waterfront Enquiry

For the Waterfront enquiry to serve its proper purpose, it is important that it is thorough and credible to Councillors and the communities whose interests they serve. The Terms of Reference for the enquiry need to be comprehensive and robust and ask the difficult/challenging questions as they and the findings will be made available to the public, to whom we as serving councillors are accountable.

We would like to draw attention to – Articles of the Constitution Article 1 – The Constitution with particular reference 1.3 Purpose of the Constitution dated 25-03-2021.

In summary it is our view that the enquiry shall examine and report on issues such as (but is not limited to):

- The bidding and evaluation process.
- The role of the Officers and consultants in the bidding and evaluation process,
- The role of the then Council Leader, members of the Cabinet and other Councillors in the selection and evaluation process.
- The details of the DA including exit clauses, financial and other penalties.
- The opportunity for member led scrutiny of the TORs.
- The Council's involvement of neighbouring authorities and the providers of relevant infrastructure, prior to the Development Agreement being approved.
- The grounds on which involved Officers and/or involved Councillors concluded that the Project would be compatible with the riverside Staines Conservation Area.
- The relationships that existed between the former Leader and/or the Chief Executive and/or other Councillors or Officers with the successful bidder prior to the invitation to bid.

In May 2021 the former Leader and the two deputy Leaders submitted their final approved TORs to the CEX, having considered his advice on the previous set of TORs. The email contained an instruction to the CEX to submit this version to the previous investigator. It was felt by the former Leadership team that those TORs best defined the objectives and the scope of the investigation.

The Terms of Reference announced by the previous Leader reflected the fact that they had been drawn up by people with a more intimate knowledge of the provenance of the Arora scheme and contract at the time. The current Terms of Reference are very different, more generalised and with some important specifics no longer in them. The three-page preamble to the new Terms of Reference reads as defensive and is selective. We are of the view that the current document was written or heavily influenced by those who had a central role in the Arora project and call for these to be replaced with the set of new TORs attached herewith.

Signed by all 9 Staines Councillors:

Cllr Beecher- Staines

Cllr Lagden- Staines
Cllr Siva- Staines
Cllr Gibson- Riverside and Laleham
Cllr Harman- Riverside and Laleham
Cllr Saliagopolous- Riverside and Laleham
Cllr Bateson- Staines South
Cllr Mooney- Staines South
Cllr Vinson- Staines South.

22.9.2021