



Councillor Peter Mason
Leader of the Council
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Clean Air for Southall & Hayes



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Dear CASH,

I wanted to write to you as my first act as the new leader of Ealing Council to set out the urgent steps I am taking to address the issues of air quality around the old Southall Gasworks site. As a Southall councillor, I am very aware of the genuine distress and concern that has fuelled CASH's remarkable campaigning efforts. Local residents have suffered from impacts of unpleasant odours, dust, noise and traffic. They have worried about the impacts on their health and that of their families. These real impacts on local quality of life have arisen from a development that many local people don't believe will benefit them, and for which disruptive work potentially stretches many years into the future.

As Gasworks Communities United have already identified in their demands of government, the powers that we have as a local authority to regulate and monitor brownfield developments are woefully limited. We will be campaigning, I hope alongside yourselves, to get the government to acknowledge and change this.

However, too often it has seemed to residents that the council has used this as a way to stonewall the real concerns of the Gasworks' neighbours. Too often, it has seemed – rightly or wrongly – like the council is battling for the developers and not for residents.

I want to change this. In the coming days, I will be setting out the change in direction my administration will be making on planning and regeneration, including in Southall. I am determined to ensure Southall retains and enhances its unique identity. Importantly, this means ensuring that we bring good, well paid jobs back to Southall, reflecting its strong and proud tradition as a town of industry. We cannot allow it to turn into yet another dormitory residential suburb.

I am determined to ensure that in the future, our residents lead and own the regeneration of their communities. We must do everything in our power to reduce the negative impact regeneration can have, and fully maximise the benefit it can bring to existing communities. Residents must have confidence that we are working to protect their interests and are not unduly swayed by the needs and demands of developers.





Since my election as Leader of the Council yesterday evening, I have made this issue my first priority. I have therefore already instructed officers to:

- Commission legal advice to establish what would be the necessary conditions at this stage for the council to issue a successful statutory abatement notice;
- To be prepared to place on hold the tendering process for independent air quality monitoring for the Gasworks site, so that we can restart with CASH's close involvement in specifying and awarding the contract if you so wish;
- To draw up a plan to include CASH and the wider community in developing an air quality strategy for Southall in addition to the Low Emissions Strategy for the Gasworks site;
- To begin work on establishing an independent complaint monitoring process for air quality and smell complaints to give sufficient confidence that complaints are being logged, witnessed and evidenced in order to be used in any future statutory abatement notice;
- To meet and work with Centric Lab to better understand and advocate for incorporating and accepting compound stressors in how public health professionals understand the impact of factors such as structural inequality on community health.
- To launch an urgent review Berkeley Group's sponsorship of council events and activities;
- To begin a programme of lobbying with government to obtain the powers we need.

I hope the above provides some reassurance on my commitment to doing things very differently at the Gasworks and at all major developments in the borough.

I also hope that it can form the basis for a renewed, collaborative relationship between the council, CASH and local residents. As set out, I very much want to involve you in both the commissioning of independent air quality monitoring and in the Low Emissions Strategy, both of which are urgent pieces of work that I hope we can take forward together in the very near future.

In order that we can progress these, and other important steps to improve the quality of life of local residents and to rebuild confidence, I would very much welcome the opportunity to meet, along with relevant members of my new cabinet, with yourselves in the near future. My office will be in contact with you directly to arrange a time.

In closing, I want to put on record my appreciation of CASH for your campaigning zeal and for amplifying the real concerns of many in the local community. I share your determination to protect the health and wellbeing of Southall residents and want to build a relationship based on that shared mission.





There will continue to be challenges ahead. I have made it my mission to create an open, inclusive and transparent culture at Ealing, and I hope that in future CASH and the council can be co-operators, not combatants.

I hope we can speak soon.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Peter Mason
Leader, Ealing Council

