

to [REDACTED], me

Dear [REDACTED]

We were very grateful to you for speaking up for us at the Planning Committee meeting last month. It was frustrating not being able to challenge what was said in response to questions by Members. We were particularly unhappy about what was said on the Basement Impact Assessment.

We have now seen the draft minutes of the meeting. They record the following:

"Responding to a question, [REDACTED] of Campbell Reith, the Council's independent basement impact assessors, advised that the basement impact assessment fully considered the issue of cumulative impact on ground and surface water flow due to the six surrounding basements and found there was none."

This statement is factually incorrect. Section 2.10 of the BIA does refer to six previous basement applications, but merely states that BIAs were carried out for these and references the borehole logs prepared at the time of those applications; it does not assess the cumulative impact of these basements.

(Para 2.10 refers to basements at 4,6,8,9,11,14 Templewood Avenue but states that the basements at 12 and 17 are not relevant as they are "further away from the site". In fact, 12 is between 8 and 14 and it is hard to understand how a competent consultant could write that it is further away, while No 17 is directly opposite No 14. Hence there are 8 sites to consider.)

The summary of the BIA states

"11.19 Construction of the proposed basement is not expected to create any unacceptable cumulative impact in relation to groundwater flows (10.2.11), ground stability (10.4.16) or surface water (10.8.12)"

However the BIA provides no evidence or analysis at all to support these conclusions: they are merely assertions.

Campbell Reith did not mention cumulative effects in their audit of the BIA and when questioned on this subject [REDACTED] simply repeated the assertions in the BIA. It is quite misleading to state that the BIA "fully considered" the issue of cumulative impact.

This is the first case in which the new policy of looking at cumulative impact has been considered by the Committee. It would therefore set an unfortunate precedent if the requirement to carry out a cumulative impact assessment could be satisfied so easily. It also raises questions about the competence of Campbell Reith in carrying out an independent assessment of BIAs.

Is there any opportunity to get Members of the Committee to raise these issues when the draft minutes are considered at the next meeting?

Kind regards

[REDACTED]