

Individual 12

From: Mark Teale [REDACTED]  
Sent: 06 May 2013 18:37  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Fw: Publicity Code consultation 2013 - update  
Attachments: Stink pipe to force Worl... - Hammersmith & Fulham.pdf; Bridge bus rogues must b... - Hammersmith & Fulham.pdf; Your h&f This Week.doc.pdf; Publicity Code Consultation 2013\_Comments.doc.pdf

5<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Publicity Code Consultation  
Council Conducts and Constitutions Team  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
3/J1 Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
LONDON  
SW1E 5DU

By e-mail: [REDACTED]@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Dear [REDACTED]

### Publicity Code consultation 2013

I am attaching my comments relating to the above consultation together with relevant e-mail attachments addressing the 'news' output of Hammersmith & Fulham Council (h&f) as evidence. Before hearing about the consultation, I complained to Hammersmith & Fulham Council (h&f) regarding its (comprehensive) breach of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. H&f indicates that, in its view, it does not have to abide by the Code because it is only recommended: the reason I am now responding to the consultation as it is evident the Code needs to be mandatory if h&f (and doubtless other councils) are to abide by stipulations in the code regarding frequency of publication and objectivity/even-handedness in reporting.

I am attaching:

1. my general comments (adopting h&f as an example because I am a resident in the borough);
2. comments on 'Your h&f This Week' stories generally (h&f's propaganda newspaper that directly breaches, in both frequency and objectivity/even-handedness, the Code of Recommended Practice);
3. Two example stories (pdf's) illustrating the biased/one-sided nature of h&f's purported 'news' stories which it presents as fact to residents in an attempt to influence their opinions.

16/05/2013

Yours Sincerely

Mark Teale

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2013 6:26 PM

Subject: Publicity Code consultation - update

You may have noticed that an unfortunate printing error crept into Annex A of the consultation paper 'Protecting the independent press from unfair competition' that I e mailed you on Monday 8 April.

My apologies for that – a revised version is attached with the pages of Annex A now in the correct order.

<<Publicity Code Consultation 2013.pdf>>

Regards,

[REDACTED]  
Democracy Division

Department for Communities and Local Government

[REDACTED]

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## Stink-pipe to force World War II style evacuation

Tuesday October 16, 2012

Thames Water's 'super-sewer' stink-pipe is set to force hundreds of south Fulham residents out of their homes in the biggest evacuation since the Second World War.

Thames Water has admitted that the stink-pipe construction work, which involves the use of heavy machinery around the dock for seven years, could make life unbearable for residents - triggering a massive exodus from south Fulham.

Thames Water's Phil Stride revealed to the Evening Standard today (October 16) that thousands of people across London could face being re-housed if the construction work for the £4.1 billion sewage overflow tank is too disruptive:

Mr Stride said: "It would be something we would offer as an option to people, to move on. We would consider it in relation to where you have 24-hour working and a major construction site for a long period. It's probably the high hundreds or low thousands of people who will be affected for three years by what we are doing."

Residents living around Carnwath Road - including residents in the Piper Building and Philpot Square - face being relocated if the stink-pipe is given planning permission in 2013. There are also several schools in neighbouring Peterborough Road and a number of sheltered housing complexes in the area, which are home to many vulnerable and elderly residents.

Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) Council has warned for years that the stink-pipe is unnecessary and that seven years of construction work so close to residents' homes and businesses will devastate the area.

Cllr Nicholas Botterill, H&F Council leader, said: "Thames Water's stink-pipe now threatens to trigger the biggest evacuation of residents from our borough since the Second World War. They have deliberately misled people and covered up the full scale of the massive disruption that their unnecessary works will cause."

"Now that the full scale of the human misery is starting to emerge, the Government must block these ludicrous plans before it is too late. World experts in water management are lining up to say that there are cheaper and less disruptive ways to make the River Thames cleaner, and we need to urgently review these alternatives."

Peterborough Road resident Lance Plerson, 65, said: "One hundred per cent would not be enough to say how opposed I am to the project. Thames Water will say of course he is against it because of where he lives but I'm far more opposed to the scheme as a whole than Carnwath Road being used as a drilling site."

Mr Stride insisted: "Out of the 24 sites we have got we have only got this [disruption] at two sites. We are building a tunnel wide enough to put three London buses in from one side of London to the other."

Thames Water issued glossy leaflets last week to warn customers they face paying an extra £70 - £80 each year to pay for the controversial 20-mile-long pipe under the River Thames.

13.8 million Thames Water customers from Essex to Gloucestershire, including Londoners, will be charged a premium on top of current bills for the rest of their lives to fund the project. An 18-year-old living to the current life expectancy of 81 would pay an extra £5,040 in water rates during their lifetime.

The estimated construction cost of the sewage storage tank under the riverbed has more than doubled since the scheme was first mooted in 2002. To read more visit [www.lbhf.gov.uk/supersewer](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/supersewer).

» Send us your comments now

@Clean Thames: If you look closely at the website you've quoted (<http://phillywatersheds.org/BigGreenMap>): 2 Wetlands and 1 Green roof; I mentioned the wetland and the building. The majority of Philly (also shown at your link: [http://www.phillywatersheds.org/watershed\\_issues/stormwater\\_management](http://www.phillywatersheds.org/watershed_issues/stormwater_management)) shows that Philly uses combined sewage/rain- and melt-water

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discharge (CSO), which I also mentioned. The EPA quotes about CSOs: "They are a major water pollution concern for the approximately 772 cities in the U.S. that have combined sewer systems." ([http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program\\_id=5](http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=5)). Don't always believe what these "go green" websites feed you...  
From Mike G on 23/10/2012 at 16:07

Considering that insurance companies pick up the bill for flooding clean up, legislate that part of the premiums that are paid to these companies should be put aside, for preventative measures against flooding instead of the general public always paying more.  
From Adam on 21/10/2012 at 08:31

This is a ridiculous project that will ruin the lives of local people. If this goes ahead, it will be in the name of profiteering and not in the name of democracy!  
From mark on 20/10/2012 at 23:56

@Mike G (19/10, 16:29): When did you live in Philly?? Must have been at least a decade ago else you don't know what you're talking about.

Today, Philly likely has the most ambitious SUDS plan of any city on the planet, which includes extensive retrofitting. See <http://phillywatersheds.org> and <http://bit.ly/GreenPhilly>

In fact, this is so successful that the US Environment Protection Agency is turning this approach to sewage issues into their preferred one.

The key difference is that Philly is not hampered by the headwind of a private monopoly water industry controlled by offshore financiers.

New York is deploying Green Infrastructure too. If it works in NYC, why not in London?

More info: <http://cleanthames.org>  
From Cleant Thames Now and Always on 20/10/2012 at 23:01

Please send me a map of the area affected by the new sewer development Many thanks T. Glacom  
From Tony on 20/10/2012 at 21:28

Thames Water should be investing in a more effective, longer term solution to sewage problems in the city which don't mean putting underground tunnels the size of 3 buses and stink pipes in the middle of residential housing. There has to be a better solution to this. Or get the work done quicker - more resources to the project - to avoid the 3 years of disruption to residents. This is no doubt one of the cheaper options for Thames Water and there's inevitably another solution. ...but they're not putting their hands in their profits to fund it. Shame on Thames Water.  
From JN on 20/10/2012 at 17:52

Having worked for 20 years in structured finance, I know very well how much of the water bill increase is destined for pure profit, much of it for the Australian owners of TW and an obscene amount for a series of investment banks who will arrange the transaction (I worked in one of these banks in exactly this area). This is abuse of TW customers on a massive scale in the name of greed.  
From Rick on 20/10/2012 at 11:20

We need to influence whoever has the power to stop this. Who should we write to?  
- Councillor?  
- MP?  
- Mayor of London?  
- Port of London Authority?

Who has the most influence?  
From Pete from Fulham on 20/10/2012 at 10:09

Private company and state is not that much different except for the fact that a private company has to make profit and a state one has to invest the surplus instead of paying dividends to shareholders.  
From erlon on 19/10/2012 at 19:27

"Stink pipe"? What is wrong with you people? And what is your problem with infrastructure? Shall we just let effluent pool around our ankles?

From Shaun on 19/10/2012 at 18:07

I believe that this is being constructed to increase Thames Water profits under their regulatory structure. There must be an urgent review to find a more capital effective way to proceed.

From Benjamin Lee on 19/10/2012 at 18:05

At a time when we are told there is a shortage of housing, this is a ridiculous project on that level alone. Then there is the misery and disruption cause to residents and the extortionate cost. There has to be a better scheme than this one.

From Carol In Fulham on 19/10/2012 at 17:11

H&F Council:

"If part of the funding was reallocated to SUDS we could start installing measures tomorrow and build them up over time."

Why aren't you doing this now with permeable pavements? You mention funding, are you suggesting that part of the £80 we are going to pay should go to the council for these measures? Would this switch your view and make the added cost a good thing?

H&F Council:

"The super sewer won't be ready for a decade and SUDS would also help prevent droughts. We had the worst drought in living memory this year.."

The primary attribute of a drought is that it doesn't rain, so what rain will we be collecting again? Sure the 200l water butts will be enough for 40 toilet flushes, a fraction of the water use in a home.

H&F Council:

"...and yet Thames Water are spending £4.1 billion of water billpayers' money to deal with "excessive rainfall". Madness"

And yet we've seen time and time again excessive rainfall flooding properties up and down the country. It's madness to ignore the statistically outlying events, as statistically, they will happen and who will then be left clearing up?

From Ben Jury on 19/10/2012 at 16:42

A disgraceful piece of spin.

It says: "Thames Water's 'super-sewer' stink-pipe is set to force hundreds of south Fulham residents out of their homes in the biggest evacuation since the Second World War."

No. This is deliberately misleading, and it's irresponsible of the council to express in these terms.

The project is not "set to" do anything at all. There's a theoretical risk of disruption. But at this stage nothing more.

Read what Thames Water said. In line with EVERY major infrastructure project in Britain, they will keep the noise down and help residents reduce it. And if there's a short term problem they will fulfil their obligation to rehouse people.

As for comparing this peacetime exercise in civil engineering with a blood-soaked war that killed thousands of Londoners: absolutely disgraceful.

From James W on 19/10/2012 at 16:35

You have got to allow progress to benefit the next generation. This country is full of people who would prefer we were still riding around on "Penny Farthings" on the tow path and they have always been there. It is just so easy to vote against improvement and sound all righteous.

From seely on 19/10/2012 at 16:32

This plan is probably a huge and immoral waste of money. At the very least we urgently need some proper detailed work comparing all aspects of all the various options, made available to us all.

From Lisa on 19/10/2012 at 16:30

Re SUDS and Philadelphia: I've lived in Philadelphia for a long time. AFAIK, it uses the described SUDS in only one area: John Heinz wildlife park. Moreso, it is only one building, which was built in recent times, thus allowing for this. For the remainder of the city, it

experiences the same problems as London does, with excess rain- and melt-water mixing with sewage and overflowing into the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, and connected waterways, causing pollution and damage (erosion). From personal experience, the Thames is sparkling clean compared to the Delaware. Implementing SUDS with the existing buildings in place would be prohibitively expensive and require co-operation of a much larger part of London's population. The super-sewer may be a necessary evil, but its actual implementation does require more scrutiny because of discrepancies that only now have surfaced. THAT I cannot agree with.

From Mike G on 19/10/2012 at 16:29

Thames Water has not provided the council with any map so far but we are urgently seeking answers to a whole series of questions that their announcement raises.

From H&F Council response @ TWW Haddon on 19/10/2012 at 16:12

SUDS would work and would cost a fraction of the £4billion+ (and rising) that the super sewer will cost. If part of the funding was reallocated to SUDS we could start installing measures tomorrow and build them up over time. The super sewer won't be ready for a decade and SUDS would also help prevent droughts. We had the worst drought in living memory this year and yet Thames Water are spending £4.1billion of water billpayers' money to deal with "excessive rainfall". Madness.

From H&F Council response @ Ben Jury: on 19/10/2012 at 16:06

H&F Council

"Experts in water management are arguing ... investing in SUDS like water butts, using rainwater for toilet flushing, green roofs and permeable pavements that conserve and recycle rainwater."

Permeable pavements would be the responsibility of the council.

Green roofs while a great idea only work on new developments. I note the new large developments don't have this as part of the planning permission granted by the council.

Rain water collection and reuse will generally require a good bit of re-plumbing inside the property costing home owners, as well as having to have a collection butt. Where would that go, in our already tiny gardens?

In addition while all of these measures are commendable, they will not prevent the large scale dumping of waste water into the Thames or our properties when the drains overspill due to heavy rainfall. Something that has hit quite a few communities around the country this year. This is when the large sewer is head and shoulders above any alternative.

From Ben Jury on 19/10/2012 at 15:26

Is there a map? Thank-you.

From TWW Haddon on 19/10/2012 at 15:10

More disgraceful manoeuvring by the faceless fat cats and beauracrats, to justify their dipping their fingers in the public purse! Why can't the Government, do something to help us? Or are they part of the whole thing?

From John Lodge on 19/10/2012 at 14:15

This is simply appalling.

From Maggi Nixon on 19/10/2012 at 13:42

Biased much? This reads like something from the gutter press.

Seriously, 'stink pipe'? On the other hand a pipe that takes the stink out of Hammersmith sounds like a good idea.

We've been waiting a long time to get the river cleaned. The current drains cannot cope with the amount of building that's gone up around the river. We continue to build high density housing while the infrastructure cannot cope.

In addition this project will protect our homes from the possibility of flooding for decades to come.

Given all the advantages to us and the future generations the



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disturbance is minimal and as someone who lives in the area worth it.

From Ben Jury on 19/10/2012 at 13:26

Who wrote that absurd headline? This is about providing sewerage which is needed, its an attempt to resolve a real problem, it's a cheap and tacky to compare it with world war 2.

From river on 19/10/2012 at 13:19

Here in Greyhound Road, Hammersmith, ever since the underground sewage overflow chamber was built in Bayonne Park, frequently there is an unpleasant stink at the Fulham Palace Road Junction. Nothing is done to stop this and we residents have to put up with it. Not nice!

From Mike on 19/10/2012 at 13:15

What's the alternative?

@Alexander H&F Council response:

SUDS is the answer. Diluted sewage leaking into the River Thames when it rains is a symptom of a different problem, i.e. fresh rainwater flowing into the Victoria sewers & mixing with sewage & overloading the system which eventually overflows into the Thames.

Instead of capturing this mixed rainwater and sewage in a big & super sewer & stink-pipe and pumping it out east only to be separated out again (at huge cost!) we should be using sustainable urban drainage solutions (SUDS).

SUDS collect rainwater before it enters the sewers. Experts in water management are arguing that Thames Water is repeating the same mistakes of the past in favouring multi-billion pound concrete infrastructure projects, like the super sewer, rather than investing in SUDS like water butts, using rainwater for toilet flushing, green roofs and permeable pavements that conserve and recycle rainwater. Most other European countries and major cities like Philadelphia and Milwaukee are using SUDS instead of massive concrete tunnels.

Lord Selborne & s Thames Tunnel Commission also recommended that & green infrastructure solutions that minimise the amount of fresh rain water entering the sewerage system should be considered (instead of the super sewer), particularly in light of new EU legislation on environmental sustainability &. Read more here: [http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/Directory/News/Hosepipe\\_ban\\_confirmed\\_despite\\_greener\\_alternatives.asp#4](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/Directory/News/Hosepipe_ban_confirmed_despite_greener_alternatives.asp#4)  
From Alexander on 19/10/2012 at 13:10

So bored of all you nimbys trying to obstruct projects that would benefit all Londoners. Try thinking of others for a change instead of kicking up such a fuss to protect your own interests. Selfish.

@EJP H&F Council response:

The main beneficiary of the super sewer will be the Australian bankers who own Thames Water and stand to make a fortune out of water bill payers if the project is not ditched. There are cheaper, greener and less disruptive ways to make the River Thames cleaner. SUDS are the future. The stink-pipe is the past.

From EJP on 19/10/2012 at 12:58

The tactics used to promote and push through this scheme by Thames Water have shocked me. I genuinely thought that in a Western Democracy my contra-views and opposition to the Super Sewer scheme might hold some weight against the mighty powers of the pro-sewer lobby. Naive, exhausted and overwhelmed by it all, I no longer feel this has anything to do with a cleaner river... I think it is about shareholder profit and vested interests. It is about obscure political backroom stuff and EU regulations that determine nothing much. It is about Australian Banks, Pension Funds, unemployment number massaging, stuff that a mere mortal water rate paying riverside dwelling Londoner really can't fight. The real truth is impossible to separate from vested interests. Is the River REALLY so dirty? Is this tunnel REALLY going to fix anything much for the long-term? Is it the best solution for climate change rainfall management or just a bit of a fudge? Who really stands to gain from this expensive non-solution... we need to get to the truth, but will we? Not so sure, I remain hopeful but cynical, worried and suspicious.

From Mrs Daniela Raimes and Family on 18/10/2012 at 21:33

A massive admission of incompetence and arrogant stupidity in the face of the obvious - this site is completely wrong for what is proposed, and the stink pipe scheme is completely wrong for the Thames. Thames Water (TW) should instead have been a responsible Utility and requested people leave open spaces and soakaways in their gardens and drives to take the water that otherwise flashfloods through the sewer pipes they promised to renew 25 years ago when they were sold off, causing sewage they failed to cope with to enter the Thames. There are other companies such as Lurtec in Germany offering schemes that would cope more efficiently with the sewage, at one tenth the price, and be online in two years, but the speculators at TW have 250 people working fulltime to promote this one scheme, a cashcow for all time putting all our bills up £100 a year - forever. We who live here will be going to the European Court of Human Rights as this violates our peaceful enjoyment of our homes. We are not moving. Time to renationalise Thames Water...

From Carnwath defender on 18/10/2012 at 20:22

What shocks neutral observers from outside the area is that Thames Water would make this announcement to a newspaper before telling the affected residents themselves.

From Lance Plerson on 17/10/2012 at 19:43

The Standard have acknowledged their first report was misleading and amended the story on line. Here's our response to their first story.

"In line with Government policy on building major infrastructure, we will work to reduce noise from our sites and reduce noise affecting nearby premises by, for example, fitting secondary glazing. Where noise can't be reduced to acceptable levels, we will offer people temporary relocation, which we expect will only apply to a limited number of properties - currently estimated to be in the hundreds - at a small number of sites, where there is 24-hour working, for example Chambers Wharf and Carnwath Road Riverside."

From Thames Tideway Tunnel on 16/10/2012 at 21:21

Your comments

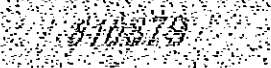
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## Bridge bus rogues must be brought to justice

Tuesday November 22, 2011



Rogue bus drivers who are tearing down a safety barrier on the approach to Hammersmith Bridge with their bare hands should be made to pay for their vandalism, according to the council that is footing the repair bill.

Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) Council estimates that it has spent more than £50,000 in the last year to fix the barrier, which is ripped off its stanchion by rogue bus drivers on an almost daily basis.

Barriers have been installed at both sides of Hammersmith Bridge as one of the control measures to prevent vehicles above 7.5 tonnes from driving over it.

Opened in 1887, the bridge was intended for horses and carriages, rather than cars, buses and lorries and if heavy vehicles continue to gain access via the broken barrier, there is a real danger that it will become unsafe, forcing the council to close it so expensive and lengthy repair work can be carried out.

The barriers have been designed by Transport for London (TfL) but because the approach to the bridge is not part of the TfL road network, the council is currently footing the bill.

When a bus approaches, the barrier is supposed to open automatically. If that fails drivers are supposed to press a key fob that they are issued with. If the barrier still refuses to open drivers are supposed to dial a phone number which automatically opens the barrier.

However CCTV coverage shows that thuggish bus drivers are driving up to the barrier and simply tearing it off before driving through.

Cllr Nick Bottenll, Cabinet Member for Environment, said: "With council budgets stretched more than ever before, our taxpayers do not expect to foot the bill because lazy bus drivers cannot be bothered to follow the barrier opening procedures or use their fobs correctly. We are demanding that TfL and the bus companies pay us back as a matter of urgency and will also report any drivers that we catch in the act to the police.

"Hammersmith Bridge was not built to withstand heavy traffic and if this continues and heavy goods vehicles are able to drive over the bridge we may eventually need to carry out strengthening works which will have a huge impact on traffic flow across the borough."

H&F Council estimates that it has had to fix the barrier over 100 times in the last six months and replace the barrier pole itself 31 times.



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31 poles is £1,612.90 each. There should be a Public enquiry. The money for repairs would have been spent anyway, as the Drivers found they were defective, and that's why they removed them. The Pole is not damaged by removing it from the lever. I have looked carefully. Don't blame council overspending on conscientious bus drivers trying to get us to and from work on time.

From Richard on 17/02/2012 at 16:03

Now that Bus Drivers are not allowed to touch the barrier or any part of it, on Wednesday morning about 7.20, half a dozen buses dumped their passenger on the South Side of the Bridge, because the "pole" was lying in their path. I don't blame the drivers at all since H&FC is so unsympathetic. Of course the tax payer shouldn't pay, it is the responsibility of TfL and H&FC to get a barrier which operates properly or replaced with Number Plate recognition cameras and any driver taking an unauthorised vehicle past gets prosecuted. They can and do prosecute drivers for entering bus lanes so why not here too?

From Richard on 17/02/2012 at 11:10

I live very close to this naughty little barrier. The problem is the design, it just doesn't work. I have been on the bus a few times when it has opened but half way, still blocking the bus. I feel for the bus drivers, they are scared to sort out the problem for fear of prosecution and also have a bus full of pissed off passengers. One time it took a sweet older man to get off the bus behind and move the barrier himself, receiving great applause from the bus was travelling on. This is not rocket science, get a different company to install a different system that works and stop wasting everyone's money and time.

Get a move on!!

From Kelleher on 07/12/2011 at 08:15

How can it be that the council pays for repairing the barrier but only TfL can say what sort of barrier should be used? One body or the other must be responsible for the road and should take it on themselves to install something that actually works properly. The other body should leave it alone and save some money.

From Guy on 30/11/2011 at 22:46

The barriers have been designed by Transport for London (TfL) but at the moment it is the council that is footing the bill. Only TfL can install a new barrier that works more efficiently and we are calling on them to do so as a matter of urgency. If they do not and these problems persist, heavy vehicles will continue to be able drive over the bridge and there is a real danger that it will become unsafe, forcing the council to close it so expensive and lengthy repair work can be carried out.

From H&F Council on 29/11/2011 at 09:51

Surely this cannot be rocket science. I have checked on the TfL Bus maps. The only routes that can be involved seem to be 33; 209; 419; 609; 72; 283; 485. The operators: London United for London Buses; Metrolink for London Buses; London General for London Buses. Not that many heads to have to be knocked together.

From Peter W on 28/11/2011 at 17:51

The vandalism is disappointing and whilst drivers shouldn't take matters into their own hands I have some sympathy for them. The system is obviously not working and effort should be put into creating an efficient fast working system that is effective. It can't be against the will of man to install a system that works. Given the cost of repairs it would be cheaper to hire someone to lift it up which would also reduce unemployment, create a job for someone as well as saving money. I also feel for the poor people on the bus trips who as a result of council inefficiency are being delayed on their journeys which are probably already lengthy due to traffic congestion. Build a proper system for the bus drivers.

From OJS on 28/11/2011 at 10:54

I agree that the bus drivers should be taken to task over the vandalism, but surely there must be a fault if the barrier does not operate correctly. Perhaps more should be spent on maintenance. This should save on the repair bills.

From Jan on 27/11/2011 at 17:35

Remove the barrier completely, place signs saying vehicles over a certain size will be fined £100. Use the enormous amount of money



06/05/2013

Bridge bus rogues must be brought to justice - Hammersmith & Fulham

collected from the fines to improve the bridge. Alternatively as soon as vehicles start getting fined the word will get out and they won't use the bridge anyway. Problem solved and bus drivers who have enough stress anyway won't have to deal with hilarious over complicated council solutions to a simple problem.

From Paul on 27/11/2011 at 01:46

Surely this is criminal damage? Sit unmarked police nearby and arrest those who break the barrier.

From cm on 26/11/2011 at 18:11

Presumably the barrier fails to lift, and that's why the frustrated bus drivers take matters into their own hands. Can't really blame them if that is the case. Cambridge uses a system of "rising bollards" which used to work fine when I lived there, letting buses through but stopping other traffic from passing. Perhaps someone should take a look at that system before we keep spending more and more money replacing the barrier?

From Matt W12 on 25/11/2011 at 23:10

This is unbelievable. That's my whole street's council tax gone. These pictures of criminal damage must be sent to the police and honestly, these bus drivers have to be prosecuted and sacked. It's absolutely disgraceful.

From Richard Long on 25/11/2011 at 22:51

Find them, give them a warning and if they do it again, get them done for criminal damage. If any another driver did this we would get a fine and points on our licence - why should they be treated differently??

From Natalie on 25/11/2011 at 21:46

If Transport for London aren't responsible for the bridge, the Council should charge TfL to use it. Bus drivers should pay a £2 toll to raise the barrier each time they take a bus south of the river. That would cover the annual maintenance bill.

From Ian on 25/11/2011 at 19:12

Is there no way that the registration numbers of the buses can be enhanced on the CCTV pictures then the bus companies made responsible for checking who was driving each bus on the relevant shift. Surely the bus companies must keep this information as part of their health and safety records. I know it is yet another job at a cost to the Council Tax payer, but if the bus companies are bugged enough they should finally get the message and deal with the offending drivers. Or am I being too optimistic???

From HilaryP on 25/11/2011 at 17:57

It seems clear that the back up system for when the barrier fails to open is not working. I'm sure the bus driver as a last resort is getting out to try and lift the barrier. I was on bus and the job didn't not work and then the driver called the phone number and no body answered. eventually someone did after 10mins. council work with TfL and sort it out.

From Iain on 25/11/2011 at 17:43

I agree. There is only one possible course of action. Such an antisocial act of vandalism would be intolerable in a common thug. How much less so in an TfL driver, who is in a sense a member of the establishment and therefore expected to set an example of disciplined, law abiding behaviour. Also, TfL itself must be called to answer for the behaviour of its employees while on duty and reassure the public that they have received proper training.

From Paolo on 25/11/2011 at 17:08

These drivers are a disgrace and should be disqualified from driving any vehicle and made to pay for the damage they have caused.

From Rosemary on 25/11/2011 at 16:28

Frankly the bus companies should be brought to account for this and pay for the damage. Their drivers should be sacked.

From Jules on 25/11/2011 at 16:27

Drivers who break the barriers should be treated like common criminals and made to pay for the damage

From A.N on 25/11/2011 at 16:16

Bus drivers must be really, really distressed to do that. Are we 100% sure the system is working properly? Drivers should be prosecuted but maybe TfL should change the bus route

From andy durden on 25/11/2011 at 15:54

This account shows that the Council's equipment has failed on no less than 30 occasions and, and nothing effective has been done to repair the Council's equipment. It is a poor response to then attack bus drivers who are attempting to provide a proper service.

From DF on 25/11/2011 at 15:29

The barrier is supposed to open automatically on approach of a bus. The fact that the bus drivers have to take these measures to get through shows the barrier is simply not working properly. Instead of having a go at them, maybe they council should put more effort into fixing it PROPERLY so it actually opens automatically for the vehicles, as it is supposed to!

From Ianf on 25/11/2011 at 15:24

Has it occurred to you that you need to take some responsibility for implementing an unviable system? Stop wasting our money, cut OUR losses and come up with something else.

From yasmin on 25/11/2011 at 15:20

£50,000! for 100 repairs, £500 each time? or for 31 new poles over £1600.00 each?? Which is it? You're having a laugh!! About time you installed something cheaper to repair and much more "simple" to use.

From mlcroo on 25/11/2011 at 15:19

Why did the council not put a stop to this immediately? A complaint to the Police with the CCTV evidence followed up by criminal and civil cases would have stopped it in its tracks.

From andykn on 25/11/2011 at 15:13

Interesting - we were talking about this on the way to lunch (we work around the corner), before this article came in.

What triggered the discussion was there were two busses going thru - the first one had gone thru, but was being blocked by traffic already on the bridge. The second one was behind it, half way thru the barrier, and WAS HIT BY THE BARRIER ARM COMING DOWN.

I think you might find it's a design flaw with the barrier arm, detecting if a bus is half way thru. All the CCTV above shows bus drivers, who may have to pull it off in order to get thru.

From Nlc on 25/11/2011 at 15:06

Why doesn't the barrier work? If the barrier has failed 100 times in 6 months that is pretty strong evidence the system is severely faulty. Bus drivers are just doing their jobs. They have a route. Can you imagine what will happen to them if they do not complete their job? H&F appear to be inconveniencing travellers and putting blame on the bus services when they should install a functioning system. If this was kids or private drivers ripping off the barrier then yes - this would be a serious issue. But this is a story about a faulty system preventing those authorised to use the bridge from using it. I'm finding, lately, H&F a bit of a political propaganda machine. Instead of focusing on the running of the borough it is instead blaming TFL for transporting residents, and blaming Thames Water for modernising the sewerage system.

From JWH on 25/11/2011 at 15:06

Totally agree with Henry, based on the fact the CCTV footage is time-stamped and London buses are actually quite reliable in terms of time tables, it shouldn't be difficult to track the driver down.

From Jason on 25/11/2011 at 15:05

What a sad indictment of our "Must Have It Now" Society! These ignorant bus drivers cannot wait 2 minutes for the barrier to open! Report them to their bus company and ensure that disciplinary action is taken against them.

From Sally on 25/11/2011 at 15:04

This is pure vandalism and of course these individuals should be held accountable, the bus companies have public liability insurance and should be pursued for damages. Council tax payers should not be forced to pay for this vandalism.

From Roger on 25/11/2011 at 15:04

Make them bloody pay!!!!!! outrageous.

From Humphrey on 25/11/2011 at 15:02



When the bridge was closed to all vehicles during the repairs some years back, there were no vehicle allowed for a while, only buses and cyclists were allowed to cross at one point. Maybe it is time for buses only, and let car drivers use the other bridges, or hop on a bus or their bicycles.

From John Ryan on 25/11/2011 at 06:36

Has this also occurred on the Barnes side of the Bridge with buses travelling in the opposite direction? Either way, why should the Council have to pay for vandalism by bus drivers who don't know how/can't be bothered to do their job properly?

It can't be difficult to find out who each driver is so they should be tracked down and face the consequences of their actions.

From Henry on 22/11/2011 at 15:57

I suggest that barriers should be replaced with bollards - the bollards should prevent barrier ripping out

I don't know but council needs stamp out this

From redworker on 22/11/2011 at 15:03

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## **H&F PROPAGANDA**

***'Propaganda is a form of communication that is aimed towards influencing the attitude of a community toward some cause or position by presenting only one side of an argument. Propaganda is usually repeated and dispersed over a wide variety of media in order to create the chosen result in audience attitudes.'***

The following summary of 'Your h&f This Week' output is in two sections. The first section addresses h&f campaigning. The second, the propaganda published to influence resident opinions on the efficiency/effectiveness of h&f Council.

H&f persistently use their tax-payer funded media resources in an attempt to influence resident opinions on political policy issues (campaigning), the effectiveness of the Council itself and squabbles between h&f and other organisations. In the last case, where the Council does embark on vendettas against other organisations, there is no right of reply beyond appending the now ubiquitous comments to electronically published articles. If h&f ever has published a retraction to one of its specious stories, I have never seen one. Only h&f's voice is heard in h&f publications.

As h&f's electronic newspaper – written in crude tabloid style (see attached) – comes out weekly (together with a range of other h&f news letters/publications), the effect is a continuous blizzard of highly politicised propaganda flooding the borough. The stories are usually heavily biased, grossly exaggerated and/or simply untrue (particularly when h&f is in campaigning mode or praising itself).

A great deal of the remaining output is simply self-congratulatory political spin later used by councillors at election time as evidence of how much they done for the borough. Very little of what is published (well under half of the output and most of that, loosely) is designed to inform residents on services (unsurprisingly as service provision from h&f, however much it is tinkered with at the edges, changes little).

Critically, from a journalistic perspective, no attempt at all is made to include the views of others in h&f stories (as a local 'news' source it is too biased to be of any value). Other bodies, private and public, are meanwhile subject to abusive criticism. Remarkably, given some of

h&f's comment is defamatory (as in the accusation in h&f's NHS story below that the consultation was a 'sham'), h&f have no liability insurance. Should h&f be sued, and given the increasingly outspoken nature of h&f's attacks on others it is only a matter of time, the Council has no cover.

As can be seen from the responses to the stories from h&f residents (shown below each of the attached pdf articles), many simply accept the propaganda that they are being fed as true/accurate (the danger of allowing local authorities to usurp the role of local newspaper). Responses from the less credulous indicate just how contentious/questionable the one-sided opinions published by h&f actually are.

The examples below come from the intro's to the full stories. Two full story examples are attached (all the stories are on the 'Your h&f This Week' website)

#### **[A] H&F CAMPAIGNING**

##### **1.0 Hammersmith Bridge Bus Barrier**

### **Bridge bus rogues**

Rogue bus drivers who are tearing down a safety barrier on the approach to Hammersmith Bridge with their bare hands should be made to pay for their vandalism. 25 November 2011

The full story is attached. In a nutshell, TFL installed a fault-prone bus barrier at Hammersmith Bridge that resulted in lengthy delays to bus passengers. Some bus drivers, instead of waiting for somebody to come and repair the barrier, removed the pole so that they could keep to their schedule. Instead of getting TFL to replace the faulty barrier with something that worked, H&F published the attached rabble-rousing diatribe against the bus drivers in their weekly electronic newsletter ('your h&f this week').

The piece is presented as a news story but demonstrates a complete lack of balance. It is wholly one-sided (neither the bus drivers – nor bus passengers – are allowed to give their side of the story). Nor is H&F's/TFL's role in installing a faulty road barrier explored.

H&F staff here are simply abusing their use of council resources to embark on a bullying vendetta, in this case, against bus companies.

Bus companies have no way of responding in kind within the same story.

The story is in obvious breach of the Code of Recommended Practice in that it is not objective, even-handed or appropriate: h&f are simply trying to deflect the blame for losing £50k a year on a fault prone barrier system. If H&F believed the staff of bus companies were somehow behaving wrongly, they should have taken up the issue with the bus companies directly. It is a classic example of why staff of Local Authorities should not be allowed to use Council media resources to fight battles with third-parties.

Just how far down the rabble-rousing route h&f staff have gone in their 'news' reporting can be seen in the following 'campaigns' against Thames Water and the NHS. The intros to the stories are shown below (the full stories are on the h&f site). The stories are blatant scaremongering. Again a total lack of balance is evident, only the (biased) opinions of h&f staff/council members are allowed. Unlike a newspaper, and like the Hammersmith Bridge piece above, no attempt is made to report impartially on the views of others, so that readers can obtain a measured/balanced view of the issues involved. Nor is it clear why h&f are writing the stories at all. Who are they trying to influence and why?

The stories themselves are meanwhile childishly abusive. H&f variously accuse other public sector bodies of dishonesty (the results of consultations that h&f disagree with are branded 'shams' and decisions made by others are 'ludicrous' if they do not fit in with h&f's partisan view of the world). Packed with invective, misleading hyperbole and silly exaggeration ('World War II style evacuation'), the stories are deliberately designed to stoke discontent (which the public responses to the stories following the articles show).

All the stories directly breach, in one way or another, the Code of Recommended Practice in relation to objectivity, balance and appropriateness (15-25). In style and content the stories also show a remarkable – for a publicly funded body – economy with the truth.

## **2.0 Tideway**

Regarding objectivity/balance, if the original full stories are read, it will be seen the h&f make no attempt whatsoever to provide the arguments for Tideway, just their own arguments against. They even

quote, as 'evidence' for their gross exaggerations, retracted news stories (a story published in error by the Evening Standard that the sewer works mean 'that thousands of people across London could face being re-housed' (the works actually affect some properties adjacent to Carnworth Road in Fulham. Despite Thames Water having told h&f that the claim is nonsense, h&f – never one to let the truth get in the way of good story – has never retracted the quote.

I think that any reasonable person writing the story would speak to Thames Water and the residents. H&f simply side with Carnworth Road residents. No mention of the wider value to the borough of the Thames Water plans are mentioned. Nothing is said of the health issues to other borough residents (or river users) of living next to an open-sewer every time there is heavy rainfall. The story is balance free, a one-side pub-style rant with an eye to the electoral advantage of being on-side in the ward covering Carnworth Road.

It is evident that the stories – which are hugely contentious politically – are deliberately designed to influence the opinions of residents regarding this major infrastructure project. In a direct challenge to the Code of Recommended Practice (16) h&f are using public funds to mount a publicity campaign whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy (h&f's policy to keep Carnworth Road residents happy).

It is quite understandable if, as part of the consultation, h&f felt it appropriate to submit a formal response regarding the problems they perceive in a measured way; but these childish intemperate stories?

## Huge sewage tunnel plans revealed

Thames Water's disruptive plans for a massive sewage transfer tunnel, or 'super sewer', beneath the Thames have gone on show – as the dates of two public drop-in sessions are announced. April 26, 2013

## Stink-pipe compensation will not buy our silence

Compensation for home owners affected by Thames Water's sewer drilling proposals will not be enough to 'buy the silence' of residents, according to the council. November 16, 2012

## Stink-pipe to force World War II style evacuation

Thames Water's 'super-sewer' stink-pipe is set to force hundreds of south Fulham residents out of their homes in the biggest evacuation since the Second World War  
October 19, 2012

## Super Sewer Summit

Call to arms...

An urgent public meeting to challenge Thames Water's 'ludicrous' decision to dump the giant super sewer drive shaft on a residential street in Fulham has been called by the council. 17 November 2011

## South Fulham's super sewer fury

Sands End residents are furious at Thames Water's proposal to dump a giant super sewer 'drive shaft' on top of their tight knit residential community. 5.11.11

### 3.0 Charing Cross Hospital

H&f's attacks on the NHS are quite serious as they accuse those involved in undertaking a consultation of dishonesty: of deliberately faking consultation results (a 'sham'). The report h&f refer to in their story, commissioned by h&f needless to say, says nothing of the sort: the author of the report simply comes to a different conclusion to that of the NHS consultants.

As with all consultant reports of this type, it would be easy to write an equally dismissive critique of the h&f commissioned report. As a resident of h&f, if the Council believes that for some reason it should be sharing its opinions on the matter at all, at the very least I would expect a measured/balanced/impartial report giving all sides of the story, not a fault-finding exercise designed to fit in with h&f spin.

## Waves of anger as NHS ignore residents' views

The voices of 66,000 west London residents have been ignored in a sham consultation designed to justify hospital closures. November 29, 2012

## Expensive 'sham' could lead to hospital closure

A multi-million pound 'sham' consultation on the future of healthcare in north west London could lead to the closure of one of the capital's most world renowned hospitals says H&F Council. November 2, 2012

## "Keep your hands off our hospitals!"

That was the stark and heartfelt message from hundreds of residents who flocked to H&F Council's Save our Hospitals meeting earlier this week September 21, 2012

## Save our Hospitals

Rideout Report slams fatally flawed NHS plans. September 14, 2012

## Waiting times to soar under 'half baked' A&E closure plan

NHS plans to close two A&E departments in H&F will pile pressure on GP surgeries and west London's few remaining hospitals. August 3, 2012

## No show for botched NHS road show

Bungling NHS bureaucrats have scheduled a major meeting on the future of local hospitals on the day west London will be gridlocked by the Olympic cycling road race. July 13, 2012

## Closing stroke centre 'will put lives at risk'

Clumping two specialist stroke units within a stones throw of each other in central London - while shutting west London's premier facility - risks putting lives at risk. July 13, 2012

## Doctors 'sceptical' on A&E closures

Medical experts brought in to review proposed A&E closures in west London say doctors and nurses are sceptical and concerned about the plans July 6, 2012

### [A] H&F COUNCIL PROPAGANDA

H&f residents receive a steady diet of the following type of 'feel-good' stories shown below. In these stories the message is how well h&f is doing. The stories have nothing to do with informing residents about services; they are simply a mixture of brazen boasts (many, as with the crime ones, that have little substance to them); unrepresentative surveys based on self-selecting samples; and claims that everybody 'welcomes' the decisions that h&f make. Complaints/criticisms about



h&f services meanwhile receive no coverage at all. Everything, in relation to judging h&f performance, is one-side: the classic definition of propaganda.

## Residents' satisfaction up as council vows to listen

Residents' satisfaction with Hammersmith & Fulham remains strong as the council leader vows to listen to taxpayers and drive further improvements in local services. March 8, 2013

## Increased right-to-buy discount welcomed

Budget measures to create jobs and growth by kick starting the housing market – Including an increased right-to-buy discount for Londoners – have been welcomed by the council which originally called for them. March 22, 2013

## H&F safer than ever – as crime falls again!

Hammersmith & Fulham is safer than ever before – with 1,600 fewer victims of crime last year, according to the latest Met Police figures. Data released by the force this week shows 2012/13 made history – with the lowest crime ever recorded in the borough. Spring 2013

## 'Wave of investment' in Hammersmith continues

Plans for hundreds of new homes and new retail space and parking have been given the green light in Hammersmith town centre as a 'wave of investment' continues to pour into the area. March 15, 2013

## Massive cash injection for school buildings

Schools across Hammersmith & Fulham will benefit from a massive £33,300,000 cash bonanza to expand popular schools and upgrade school buildings to meet rapidly rising demand for school places. January 17, 2013

## 489 fewer crimes in Hammersmith & Fulham

Hammersmith & Fulham is officially safer than it was this time last year. October 26, 2012

## H&F Council rips up the social housing rule book

Trailblazing H&F Council is to be the first local authority in the country to simultaneously introduce fixed term social housing tenancies and a maximum income cap for people wishing to access the housing register. October 5, 2012

## Sensational set of A Level results

Pupils at schools in Hammersmith & Fulham have once again achieved a sensational set of A-Level results. Provisional results show that an incredible 98.1% per cent of students in H&F passed with A\*-E grades – in line with the national average. August 17, 2012

## H&F debt falls

**Council debt below £100m for first time in a generation**

Millions of pounds have been freed up for local council services as the town hall's historic debt burden falls below £100million for the first time in 26 years. May 25, 2012

## H&F crime falls again

As the battle against the criminal minority intensifies in H&F read how covert sting cameras – with a 100% conviction rate – are snaring burglars red-handed. Read how gun crime has halved in the past year and why overall crime is falling again. Do you know the arrogant thug who thinks it's ok to urinate in a housing estate lift and was caught by the council's CCTV network? You can also have your say on the priorities for the new West London Parks Police service. 30 APRIL 2012 : EDITION 04

### Publicity Code Consultation 2013

I am responding to this consultation following lengthy (and abortive) correspondence with Hammersmith & Fulham Council (h&f) regarding its breaches of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. I was intending to complain to the Local Authority Ombudsman about the breaches but was told that their remit did not extend to Local Authority publications (something DCLG might note).

The Director of Communications at h&f argues that as the Code is only 'recommended' that h&f do not have to abide by it. In support of his position, he claims that other local authorities are ignoring the Code too.

I suspect, until I brought the Code to h&f's attention, that h&f were actually unaware the Code existed (I sent them a copy). Indeed, I still do not know whether Council members are actually aware of the Code or of h&f Code breaches (I asked whether the matter had been brought to the attention of senior staff/ Council members but never got a response).

Whether or not Council members are aware of the Code, h&f roundly ignores clause 28 of the Code which limits local authorities to publishing newsletters, newssheets or similar communications more frequently than quarterly. H&f publish a digital newspaper – 'Your h&f This Week' – weekly together with a quarterly newspaper, resident magazine and various other electronic newsletter type output: a perpetual blizzard of h&f communications.

In addition to ignoring the publication frequency stipulated in the Code, h&f also brazenly (and pretty well comprehensively) breach the clauses in the Code relating to objectivity and even-handedness. I have focused on 'Your h&f This Week' in this respect, as an example, because it is the Council's main weekly propaganda tool since they were forced to close hf News, its original hard copy newspaper.

As explained in the attached pdf (called Your h&f This Week), less than half of the stories (in a sequential sample of 78) were designed to inform residents on actual service provision (albeit very loosely; in many cases it was unclear why the purported service stories were brought to residents attention at all). The remainder were a mixture of (commonly) heavily biased/inaccurate campaigning stories mixed together with self-congratulatory pieces telling residents how well h&f are doing: pure spin-rich propaganda.

More seriously, in my view (and the reason why I believe that h&f should not be permitted to publish output of this type at all), press officers at h&f (or Council members/senior staff instructing them) appear to have no concept whatsoever of balance or even-handedness in reporting. As will be seen from the attached, h&f makes no attempt to report impartially. The stories presented as 'news' are

merely one-sided opinion pieces favouring whatever h&f perceives as its interests at the time. It is not journalism. Only the views of h&f are ever considered; there is no attempt to 'give-the-other-side' of the story at all. H&f are incapable, in this respect, of reporting accurately/impartially on contentious issues or on its own performance as a service provider and should not attempt to do so. The performance of h&f itself clearly needs to be judged impartially from outside (by the press or other third-parties), not by the staff and Council members themselves.

It is evident in this respect that h&f simply do not accept the principles underpinning the Code. It wishes to use its communication resources, without restriction, to impose its view of things, even-handed or not. And despite being forced to close its hard copy newspaper, the Council is intent upon 'business as usual' on the communication side regardless of whether or not its outputs accord with the Code. It will not abide by the Code unless forced to.

And then, on top of everything else, there is the sheer (shocking) cost of the h&f publishing empire. According to h&f its news unit is costing £680k annually: a quite staggering sum bearing in mind the bulk of the output now is electronic. To put that figure into context, an outsourced information newsletter to keep residents in touch with h&f service changes/enhancements, published electronically on a quarterly basis (as stipulated in the Code), could be produced for less than £20k a year.

But what I find really extraordinary, particularly following Leveson, is that h&f can glibly respond that they are not bound by a Code that simply stipulates publication frequency and that they need to report objectively and even-handedly. If h&f are unwilling to do even that, then clearly the Code needs to be mandatory not voluntary. Until it is, the sort of costly abuses that we are currently seeing h&f indulge in will inevitably continue.

Mark Teale, [REDACTED]