TULIP MOTION

On 2 April, City Corporation’s Planning and Transportation Committee voted 18 to 7 to approve Foster and Partners’ 305+ metre tall “Tulip” tower at 20 Bury Street EC3A 5AX. Approval was given despite the serious reservations of both Royal Parks and Gardens and Historic England over its adverse effect on the Tower of London UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The tower is nothing more than a glorified viewing platform encircled by “London Wheel” style gondoliers and internal space for 40,000 London state school children to be educated each year. In addition to the school children, the developers claim the tower will attract 1.2 million additional visitors to the City each year.

The decision of Planning and Transport Committee – the last under the chairmanship of failed Tory parliamentary candidate and planning consultant, Christopher Hayward – is subject to the Mayor of London either approving it; or refusing it; or calling it in for further consideration within 14 days. Tom Copley - a Labour Assembly Member and its Housing Spokesperson - has already indicated he will be lobbying Sadiq Kahn to refuse his approval.

The tower has no architectural value i.e. it is ugly. Like most other tall buildings, it is egotistical and inappropriate for that part of the City. If the Mayor gives his approval and it goes ahead, not only will 40,000 state school children and an additional 1.2 million visitors have a harmful effect on the environment generally - through travel, use of facilities, additional litter etc. - but the tower would have an even worse effect on the environment.

Further significant harm will be done to the environment through the demolition and removal of the existing building, production and delivery of materials for, and the construction of the tower. The site, along with its immediate adjoining area, is small and confined meaning that the noise and air pollution from demolition and construction will also be harmful to health and wellbeing. And, in addition to the tower, there are a number of similar tall buildings, with planning permission, which have yet to be built, all of which will add significant harm to the environment.

In addition to the claimed benefits of the tower itself, Annie Hampson, the Chief Planning Officer has claimed that the “scheme would provide benefits through the [developer’s Community Infrastructure Levy] for improvements to the public realm, housing and other local facilities and measures”. The amount for housing - £217,000 – won’t even pay for one flat in the 15-storey residential tower at CoLPAI!

In view of the harmful affect that the tower - if built and operated as proposed - would have on the environment we believe this Branch should support Tom Copley’s lobbying of Sadiq Khan and we move the following motion:

This Branch, in seeking to put the environment first and foremost:

1. Deplores the decision of City Corporation’s Planning and Transportation Committee to approve the planning application for the construction of the “Tulip” tower at 20 Bury Street EC3A 5AX (the application);
2. Fully supports Labour Greater London Assembly Member, Tom Copley, in his lobbying of the Mayor of London to refuse his consent for the application; and
3. Urgently calls on the Mayor of London to refuse his consent to the application.

10 April 2019

Proposed: Marge Berer and Fred Rodgers

Seconded: Jo Rodgers