



Executive
11th December 2006

**Report from the Director of
Environment and Culture**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

London Plan – Draft Further Alterations

Forward Plan Ref: E&C-06/07-027

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report presents a summary of the Mayor of London's draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (LP) and recommends comments that should be put to the Mayor on behalf of the L B of Brent.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That Executive notes the content and implications of these draft alterations for Brent's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) policy and agrees that representations be made to the Mayor of London as set out in paragraphs 3.16 – 3.26.

3.0 Detail

Background

3.1 The London Plan (LP) was adopted in February 2004 after going through a statutory consultation process, culminating in an Examination in Public (EIP). The Plan provided London with its first planning and development strategy in 25 years. The plan's integrated and strategic policies cover a range of areas including sustainable development, housing, transport, and supporting economic growth.

3.2 Under the new Planning Act 2004, the LP is a part of Brent's 'Development Plan', along with the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and eventually, with the emerging LDF (when it is adopted in 2008). This means that major/strategic planning applications, referable to the Mayor, also need to comply with the LP policies. Brent's Planning Policies in the new LDF are

also required by legislation to be in “general conformity” with the LP. The Mayor of London can ask the Secretary of State to intervene (i.e. to direct a change to the plan) if there are aspects of the plan that he considers do not conform.

- 3.3 The Mayor initially published limited Early Alterations to the Housing, Waste and Minerals sections of the London Plan in October 2005, including revised borough-level targets for housing provision based on a new Housing Capacity Study and, following consultations, these have been the subject of an Examination in Public (EIP) and subsequent Panel report. The further draft alterations, which are being formally consulted upon until December 22nd, address the review of other planning issues in the London Plan. As well as submitting its own comments on the Alterations, the Council can also influence a joint response being made on behalf of West London Boroughs by the West London Alliance.

Reasons for the Alterations

- 3.4 The Mayor has a legal duty to keep the London Plan under review and up to date as well as to ensure that his various strategies are consistent with each other. The Mayor has a duty to ensure that these strategies work with national Government policy, which has included a radical overhaul of the Plan making system itself.
- 3.5 Government’s focus on key growth areas, especially the Thames Gateway, has intensified and the national emphasis on the need to deliver ‘sustainable communities’ requires the Mayor to re-emphasise some of his policies. There are also specific subjects where Government has issued new policy since the *London Plan* was adopted that the Mayor must consider.
- 3.6 The Mayor has also signalled his intent to take the year **2025/26** as its formal end date (instead of 2016) because the Mayor believes a long-term view of London’s future is needed.

The ten key themes of the review of the London Plan are:

- Climate Change
- London as a World City
- The London Economy
- Housing
- Tackling Social Exclusion
- Transport
- London’s Geography: the Sub-Regions and Inter-Regions
- London’s Suburbs
- Liveability (including safety, security and open spaces)
- The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Key Further Alterations & Officer Comments:

- 3.6 The Further Alterations increase the number of policies from 184 to 200 –an 11% increase, but most of these address Climate Change adaptation.

- 3.7 **Sustainability:** –this is the area of the Plan with most alterations. Two new Policies set out a requirement for developers to include climate adaptation measures in their schemes, and these policies are supported by a single overarching sustainable design and construction policy (shown in full below –additions highlighted) with a wide range of criteria. Targets for these are set out in new policies addressing each of the sustainability criteria.
- They also encourage a more widespread use of hydrogen as an alternative to fossil fuels. These elements are in the current plan, but do not have a specific policy.

Overarching Sustainability Policy	
. Policy 4A.2i Sustainable design and construction	
<i>The Mayor will, and boroughs should, ensure future developments meet the highest standards of sustainable design and construction and reflect this principle in DPD policies. These will include measures to:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make most effective use of land and existing buildings • reduce carbon and other emissions that contribute to climate change • design new buildings for flexible uses throughout their lifetime • manage overheating • make most effective and sustainable use of water, aggregates and other resources • minimise energy use, use renewable energy, supply energy efficiently and incorporate decentralised energy systems where feasible (policy 4A.7) • procure materials sustainably • <i>ensure designs make the most of natural systems both within and around the building</i> • <i>reduce air pollution,</i> • manage flood risk • <i>ensure developments are comfortable and secure for users conserve and enhance the natural environment, particularly in relation to biodiversity and enable easy access to open spaces</i> • avoid creation of adverse local climate conditions • <i>promote sustainable waste behaviour in new and existing developments, including support for local integrated recycling schemes, CHP schemes and other treatment options.</i> • encourage major developments to incorporate living roofs and walls where feasible • reduce adverse noise impacts 	
<i>The Mayor will and the boroughs should require all applications for major developments to include a statement on the potential implications of the development on these sustainability principles. This statement should address demolition, construction and long-term management. Boroughs should ensure that, where appropriate, the same sustainability principles are used to assess all planning applications.</i>	
<i>The Mayor will and boroughs should ensure that developments minimise the use of new aggregates and do not use insulating and other materials containing substances which contribute to climate change through ozone depletion.</i>	
<i>Developers should use best practice and appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the environmental impact of demolition and construction.</i>	

- The sustainable drainage policy now requires developers to aim to achieve zero net run off from their site. This is a significant step towards reducing surface water run off and flood risk in general. The policy justification states that the retention of soft landscaping in front gardens and other means of reducing or not increasing the amount of hard standing with existing homes will make an important contribution towards reducing surface water run off. This is an important addition to the text, although a mention of this factor in policy would assist in strengthening our draft water and flooding policies which both mention this issue as a significant problem in Brent
- A Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document was also produced, by the Mayor in May 2006 to provide more detailed guidance for Local Authorities and developers about the Mayor's expectations on these issues.

3.8 Housing: –Housing provision target for Brent is being set by the Early Alterations to the London Plan

- The Mayor proposes a new minimum annual target of an additional 30,650 homes for the period 2007/8- 2016/17, based on the London Housing Capacity Study 2004. Brent's new target figure is likely to be 11,200 new homes to be provided
- An enhanced overall emphasis on sustainable residential development has resulted in a new policy to require higher standards of residential design and construction; to consider the needs of prospective residents, including children's play, and to ensure a safe residential environment. This is a welcome move to ensure more sustainable housing development by better linking the current wider Chapter 4B sustainable development policies specifically to housing development. The Plan now embodies an expectation that "large residential developments will offer economies of scale to achieve particularly high environmental standards and very low carbon emissions. Unless there are exceptional circumstances CHP (combined heating and power) should always be incorporated".
- The most significant alteration to the Plan's current affordable housing strategy is the proposed replacement of the 'no threshold' approach with a new policy requirement for affordable housing "on a site which has a capacity to provide 10 or more homes". Boroughs are encouraged to seek a lower threshold in LDFs. Brent's current threshold is 15 units and this will have to be reduced to conform with this amendment if carried through to the adopted London Plan. Members have agreed a proposed reduction in the threshold to 10 units in the new LDF for Brent as part of the ongoing public consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options.
- There is an increase in the threshold figure for new residential sites above which the boroughs are required to prepare development frameworks. This has been lowered from 500 units (or 10 hectares) to 200 units (or 5 hectares). This will give rise to a need for additional staff resources at borough level.

3.9 Economy: -There are many forms of employment, some that are generally associated with high value land uses. The objective of protecting land for industrial employment is to resist the encroachment of higher land value uses. Despite structural change, industrial areas remain of significant importance to a functional and growing London and Brent economy. It is sensible to distinguish particular areas to be used for industrial employment.

- Strategic Employment Areas now to be renamed '*Strategic Industrial Locations*' reflecting a distinction between general employment and industrial employment.
- The word *workspace* is now used instead of premises. This is welcome in so far as it recognises that planning for future provision for employment change includes the consideration of premises *and* land whether it be open land, studio space, factory space etc.
- New office provision benchmark -There is recognition that previous projections for the need for new office development were optimistic outside of the central activities zone, and that future development should be carefully considered in terms of its location. In Brent, we recognise that office development should be directed towards town centres in accordance with the sequential test; but will also be supporting office development at the National Stadium and at Park Central in Park Royal
- Reference is made to the re-use of surplus or redundant office space. This is a particular issue in Brent's town centres and the emerging Local Development Framework will encourage the re-use of surplus office space for a number of uses that are best suited to town centre locations by virtue of visitor numbers and generally matching development to local transport provision
- The Office supply policy refers to the need to enhance the environment offer for office development. With regard to Brent, all business development will be required to respect principles of sustainable development set out in policy. In addition, office development is encouraged at the National Stadium and at Park Central in Park Royal to areas where there will be significant improvements to the environment as a result of regeneration. The Borough is working with partners (including the GLA) for the preparation of a Park Royal Opportunity Area Planning Framework that has objectives for improving the environmental offer.
- No change is proposed in the Alterations to the areas identified as Strategic Industrial Locations within Brent, nor to their sub category in the London Plan as either Primary Industrial Locations (PIL) or Industrial Business Parks (IBP). In Brent, East Lane is currently identified as an IBP along with part of Park Royal. However, the prospect of East Lane being developed as a business park has now receded (it was suggested in the past that there could be a synergy with the Westminster University campus at Northwick Park). Consequently, your officers recommend that the GLA be asked to re-designate East Lane as a PIL which would better reflect the activities located there and the likely future demand for the estate. At the same time Brent, in its UDP, seeks to promote a Business Park east of the stadium in what is currently described in the LP as the Wembley PIL. It is also recommended that the GLA be informed that this area should be designated as an IBP.

3.10 Transport – There are no major changes to the transport section other than to aviation policy as there are no new public transport schemes in the pipeline. The emphasis is on better use of the existing network.

- The absence of any new public transport proposals, and in particular the lack of any proposed significant improvements to public transport provision in the Brent area give rise to concerns that the growth proposed locally through the new housing targets will be unsustainable. The Mayor is urged to consider the need for greater investment in public transport if growth is to be sustained, and particularly in orbital provision which is currently very poor. If the Mayor's new policy of promoting sustainable suburbs by focusing investment in town centres (policy 2A.6) is to work then major investment in new transport provision to support this is necessary.
- There is strong support in the Alterations for the Aviation White Paper's conclusions that, "based on current evidence, any proposal for additional runway capacity at Heathrow should not be progressed unless the adverse impacts on climate change, air quality and noise can be sufficiently mitigated and public transport access be improved. On current evidence adequate mitigation is not possible, and additional runway capacity at Heathrow is therefore opposed." The proposed expansion of Stansted, and ultimately, Gatwick, is also supported in the Alterations.

3.11 Town Centres: -

- Uxbridge is to be moved up the retail hierarchy to Metropolitan centre status and Canary Wharf upgraded from District to Major centre;
- Policy now recognises a need to encourage increasing of town centre capacity (more food capacity in smaller district centres and more non-food in larger town centres) to enable them meet their roles in the overall network of centres. This may be of benefit to Wembley which is not yet performing at the level of a Major centre, due to past decline.
- Need for 0.1-0.3 million square metres of new floorspace for food shopping from growth in population's spending over next decade. For non-food goods there is a need for an additional 0.9-1.5 million square metres of floorspace across London.
- Supporting text emphasises the role town centres can play in creating more housing through allowing them in mixed-use schemes which can also contribute to their renewal, though careful management to avoid conflicts will be needed.
- Policy now states that existing edge-of-centre or out-of centre retail/leisure facilities should be managed to improve their public transport access, and reduce car dependency, helping to integrate them better with town centres. Large proposals in Wembley, Brent Cross, White City, Stratford, Kings Cross and Battersea should provide modern examples of how to achieve this.
- A policy amendment to resist the loss of street markets and farmers markets to meet dietary needs and improve choice.



3.12 Community, Culture & Sport: -

- In order to promote social inclusion and tackle deprivation and discrimination, the Mayor's objectives also now specifically include provision for social infrastructure and related services, including provision for health, playspace and childcare facilities
- Health inequalities and provision for young people (play space and services) have been made more explicit in the Mayor's objectives, in making London a better place to live. New policies require the assessment of needs for primary health care, and the provision of these both to deal with increased population as well as meeting existing deficiencies.
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- There is also a new requirement for major development proposals to submit Health Impact Assessments for applications (there is no explanation of what these are, it is unclear what this entails)
- Policies have been updated to identify how the Olympics and Paralympic Games will promote tourism and London's status as a leading world city. Also to look beyond 2012 and the long term needs for sporting facilities to be made accessible for all Londoners
- There is a new Hotel Bedroom target of 50,000 gross by 2026, a rise from 36,000 by 2016. Boroughs are also asked to support an increase in the quality and quantity of fully wheelchair accessible accommodation in light of integrated and strategic local assessments. There is greater emphasis on spreading the benefits of tourism throughout the capital, to reduce pressures on Central London.
- New Policy on Regional Casinos – Greenwich and Wembley identified as appropriate locations in view of their strategic regeneration and leisure roles. Wembley should no longer be considered as an appropriate location in light of the Council's decision to withdraw its bid for a regional casino.

3.13 Urban Design & Heritage: -

- The design policies have been linked more closely with sustainability objectives
- Other aspects now emphasised include inclusive/accessible environments for everyone, construction, security issues and links to green and Blue Ribbon networks
- The need for design to facilitate emergency and contingency planning is also emphasised
- The policy on appropriate density levels to make best use of scarce land, has been moved to the housing section
- There are some changes to mixed use policy which now encourages different appropriate mixes for different places



3.14 Open Space & Waterways (Blue Ribbon Network): -

- Greater emphasis on developing a green network – through treating existing open spaces as an integrated system performing many functions
- There is a new policy for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation Strategies. Boroughs will be required to produce strategies on play and informal recreation. Audits of these areas should also be undertaken. Boroughs should also ensure new housing developments make provision for play and informal recreation, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs.

3.15 The Sub-Regions

- It is proposed by the Mayor that the West sub-region, of which Brent is a part, also includes Kensington and Chelsea as there will no longer be a Central sub-region. Further changes are proposed across London including the creation of sub-regions for the North East, the South East and the South West in addition to the North and West sub-regions.
- The only other significant change for West sub-region is the inclusion of Willesden Junction in the wider Park Royal Opportunity Area rather than as a separate Area for Intensification. This is a logical approach which was recommended by the West London Alliance group of boroughs when commenting upon the draft Sub-Regional Development Framework
- Within the North sub-region a new corridor between North London and Luton airport (on the M1 corridor), requiring strategic co-ordination is identified to capture the development potential of Brent Cross, Cricklewood, Mill Hill and Colindale. Further thought needs to be given to this concept to enable it to take account of development potential in Brent and Harrow as well, and to ensure that growth along the corridor is not merely car-based but takes the opportunity to build upon and enhance public transport routes.

Summary of Proposed Comments

- 3.16 In general most of the new and revised policy contained in the Alterations is welcomed, especially the increased emphasis on sustainability and the new policy content on climate change adaptation measures which Brent has also introduced in its Core Strategy Preferred Options of the LDF. The new policies setting out a requirement for developers to include climate adaptation measures in their schemes are supported.

- 3.17 The sustainable drainage policy requiring developers to aim to achieve zero net run off from their site is supported. Although the justification to the policy states that the retention of soft landscaping in front gardens, and other means of reducing or not increasing the amount of hard standing with existing homes, will make an important contribution towards reducing surface water run off, if this was stated in the policy it would assist in strengthening Brent's draft water and flooding policies which mention this issue as a significant problem locally.
- 3.18 There are concerns that the requirement for boroughs to produce development frameworks for housing sites capable of accommodating at least 200 units (or over 5 hectares) will place an additional burden on already stretched staff resources. It is Brent's view that the threshold should remain as it is.
- 3.19 The use of the word '*workspace*' instead of 'premises' is welcomed in so far as it recognises that planning for future provision for employment change includes the consideration of premises *and* land whether it be open land, studio space, factory space, etc.
- 3.20 The GLA are asked to re-designate East Lane as a Preferred Industrial Location, which would better reflect the activities located there and the likely future demand for the estate. In addition, the area east of Wembley Stadium should be designated as an Industrial Business Park to reflect the designation in Brent's UDP and the Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Wembley Regeneration Area agreed jointly with the Mayor of London.
- 3.21 The Mayor is urged to consider the need for greater investment in public transport in key locations, e.g. linking growth areas, if growth is to be sustained. In particular, investment in orbital public transport provision, which is currently very poor, would make a major contribution towards the objective of promoting sustainable suburbs.
- 3.22 The emphasis on the need to expand existing town centres, thus increasing their capacity, is welcomed.
- 3.23 The inclusion in the Mayor's objectives of provision for social infrastructure and related services, including provision for health, playspace and childcare facilities, is supported.
- 3.24 Wembley should no longer be considered as an appropriate location for a regional casino in light of the Council's decision to withdraw its bid for one.
- 3.25 The inclusion of Willesden Junction in the wider Park Royal Opportunity Area, rather than as a separate Area for Intensification, is supported.
- 3.26 Further consideration needs to be given to the concept of the M1 corridor to enable it to take full account of development potential in Brent and Harrow as well as Barnet, and to ensure that growth along the corridor is not merely car-based but takes the opportunity to build upon and enhance public transport routes and, in particular, to link the individual growth areas.

Next Steps

- 3.26 The timetable leading up to the adoption of the Further Alterations to the London Plan, is as follows:

- **2 October - 22 December 2006**
Formal public consultation on the Further Alterations
- **June 2007**
Further Alterations Examination in Public (City Hall Chamber)
- **Early 2008**
Adoption and publication of the Further Alterations to the London Plan

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The resources to engage with the London Plan review are within the Planning Service budget including from Planning Delivery Grant. It is not yet clear what other financial implications the measures proposed within the further alterations may generate. Most, if any arising from new requirements, will likely fall on developers and the industry generally, although concern is expressed at the requirement to undertake development frameworks for residential sites at a lower threshold level of 200 units or 5 hectares.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The new development plan system introduced by the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act conferred 'Development Plan' status on the London Plan. This means that policies in Brent's new Local Development Framework must conform with those in the London Plan. The Further Alterations are therefore a constraint for policy options in Brent. There are, however, also some opportunities.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 The Mayor has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in London and thus to have due regard in the Plan, to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 and other relevant government policy advice. The Sustainability Appraisal of the London Plan concludes that it is "highly impressive" that, in giving detailed consideration to the needs of different population groups, it addresses issues relating to the provision of and access to services and to quality of life. It also concludes that disabled access is strongly represented in the alterations.

Background Papers

- Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan – September 2006
- Early London Plan Alterations to Housing Provision Targets, Waste; and Minerals – October 2005.
- Reviewing the London Plan, Statement of Intent from the Mayor – December 2005
- The London Plan (Spatial Development Strategy for London) – February 2004

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