



## Planning Committee

12<sup>th</sup> July 2006

### Report from the Director of Planning

For Action

Wards Affected:  
ALL

## London Plan –Draft Further Alterations

### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents a summary of the Mayor of London's draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (LP). It has been drafted primarily for consultation with the London Assembly and GLA functional bodies (Transport for London, London Development Agency, Metropolitan Police Authority and the London Fire & Emergency Authority). However, Boroughs are being given an opportunity to influence the draft before it is made available for public consultation in the autumn this year (Sept-Dec)

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Planning Committee notes the content and implications of these draft alterations for Brent's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) policy and agrees that appropriate representations be made to the Mayor of London based upon this report.

### 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 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 are now the subject of an Examination in Public (EIP). The further draft alterations, which are now being informally consulted upon, address the review of other planning issues in the London Plan.

#### 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**

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:

- **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**
- ensure designs make the most of natural systems both within and around the building
- reduce **air** pollution,
- **manage flood risk**
- **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**
- **avoid creation of adverse local climate conditions**
- promote sustainable waste behaviour in new and existing developments, including support for local integrated recycling schemes, CHP schemes and other treatment options.
- **encourage major developments to incorporate living roofs and walls where feasible**
- **reduce adverse noise impacts**

**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.

**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.**

**Developers should use best practice and appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the environmental impact of demolition and construction.**

- 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.

3.9 Economy: -There are many forms of employment, some that are generally associated with high 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 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 an 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 the 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.

- There is strong support 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 supported

### 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 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. With non-food goods between 0.9-1.5 million square metres of floorspace will also be needed 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 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 Mayors objectives also now specifically includes the provision for social infrastructure and related services, including provision for health, play space and childcare facilities
- Health inequalities and provision for young people (play space and services) have been made more explicit in the Mayors objectives, in making London a better place to live. Policies which require the assessment of needs for primary health care, and the provision of these both to deal with increased population as well as existing deficiencies.

- 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
- New Policy on Regional Casinos – Greenwich and Wembley identified as appropriate locations in view of their strategic regeneration and leisure roles

### 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, have been moved to the housing section
- Some changes to mixed use policy, now encouraging 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

### 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. At present it merely serves to promote development at Brent Cross/Cricklewood in North London.

### Next Steps

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

- **30 May - 21 July 2006**  
Consultation with the London Assembly and Functional Bodies
- **25 September - 15 December 2006**  
Formal public consultation on the Further Alterations
- **Spring 2007**  
Further Alterations Examination in Public (City Hall Chamber)
- **Early 2008**  
Adoption and publication of the Further Alterations to the London Plan

## **4.0 Environmental Implications**

4.1 As explained above, the most significant Further Alterations proposed relate to new policies to address Climate Change, due to the seriousness of the threat, and the urgent need to achieve substantial reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. These should enable Brent at local level, to more confidently pursue these goals within the Borough's LDF, and in assessing ongoing development in the Borough.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 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.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 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

## **7.0 Diversity Implications**

- 7.1 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. Bearing in mind Brent's high level of diversity, Officers will have an opportunity to scrutinize the likely implications during the public consultation in the autumn, when the Mayor will produce a Sustainability Appraisal (including of social impact) to accompany the Further Alterations.

### ***Background Papers***

- Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan – May 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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