



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE Wednesday 6 March 2013 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Ketan Sheth (Chair), Daly (Vice-Chair), Aden, Baker, Cummins, Hashmi, Ogunro (In place of John), CJ Patel, RS Patel and Singh

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John and Krupa Sheth

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None declared.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 February 2013 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Wembley Area Action Plan - Publication and Submission**

This report provided a summary of the consultation responses, explained the main changes being proposed to the draft Wembley Area Action Plan and recommended that the Plan be published on 25 March and made available for comment for 6 weeks.

Ken Hullock, Head of Planning and Transport Strategy in setting out the background stated that the reasons for producing the Area Action Plan (AAP) derived from the need to update and provide clarity to, the UDP policy, particularly the Wembley Regeneration Area chapter taking account of changing circumstances. It was a logical step in drawing up the folder of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that would make up the borough's development plan and ultimately supersede the UDP. The AAP also consolidated detailed policy and guidance currently contained in a number of documents, including the Wembley Masterplan 2009, the Wembley link SPD 2011 and the Wembley West End SPD 2008.

The Head of Planning and Transport Strategy continued that the Council had undertaken a series of public consultation on the AAP including the draft Plan, Preferred Options. These followed wide publicity including online, advertisement in the local press, Brent Magazine, road shows in Wembley Central Square, libraries, One Stop Shops. In addition, drop-in sessions were held at the Town Hall and in a shop unit at Wembley Triangle.

He drew members' attention to the summary of responses to the consultation which generated 240 comments in total and for which reasons it was proposed that the Plan be amended. He also drew members' attention to the timetable for progressing the Area Action Plan and Development Management DPD as set out in the report from the Assistant Director of Planning and Development.

In reference to the vision and objectives for Wembley, Councillor Hashmi stated that the reduction of car parking spaces was likely to have adverse impact on retail function of the area. He also pointed out that affordable housing provision was inadequate to meet the growing demand in the Borough.

The Head of Planning and Transport Strategy responded that the target was to achieve approximately 50% of housing development as affordable housing however, delivery of affordable housing was also based on viability of each scheme. In respect of parking provisions, he submitted that whilst parking provision in the stadium area had been reduced it had been counter-balanced by improvements to public transport network in the area in particular, Wembley Stadium, Wembley Park and Wembley Central stations. This view was also echoed by Councillor Singh.

The Head of Planning and Transport Strategy in response to the Chair's enquiry stated that the Council was in constant dialogue with Transport for London (TfL) about existing bus routes and that junction improvements were also being sought as and when a development came forward.

Members enquired as to whether any negotiations were taking place with Chiltern Railways, the rail operator. Councillor Daly observed that the areas along River Brent was densely populated and requested officers to consideration to the provision of amenities including play spaces, gyms and leisure facilities. She also enquired as to whether officers had given any thoughts on Ealing Road as an international retail destination. This view also echoed by the Chair.

The Head of Planning and Transport Strategy responded that in discussions with Transportation officers, Chiltern Railways had confirmed that the services they inherited were limited by capacity which they were currently expanding. They added that the programme of expansion could lead to additional services to the Wembley area. On Ealing Road as an international retail destination, the Assistant Director of Planning and Development submitted that although officers had given consideration to it, lack of land space for additional development was hampering efforts. The Head of Planning and Transport Strategy added that work was in progress to improve the amenities along River Brent including semi-naturalisation of Wealdstone Brook.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Executive be recommended to agree the revised draft Wembley Area Action Plan for publication and public consultation on 25 March 2013 for 6 weeks, and to recommend to Full Council agree that the draft Plan be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination;

- (ii) that the Executive be recommended to agree the proposed responses to individual representations, as set out in the schedules attached as appendix 1;
- (iii) that the Assistant Director, Planning & Development be authorised to make further editorial changes to the document prior to finally issuing it for public consultation;
- (iv) that the timetable for completion of the Area Action Plan up to adoption and for bringing forward the Development Management Policies DPD as set out in paragraphs 3.42 and 3.43 of the report be agreed.

4. Permitted development rights for change of use from commercial to residential

Members considered a report which provided a summary of the main implications for Brent and areas of concern, including the potential permanent loss of employment land of strategic economic importance. This followed an announcement by the Government that from Spring 2013, permitted development rights would be introduced to enable change of use from office (B1a use class) to residential (C3 use class) without the need for planning permission.

Chris Walker, Assistant Director of Planning and Development outlined some of the concerns as follows:

- (i) The employment opportunities created through construction of housing development would be temporary and also result in a permanent loss of employment land with potential adverse impact on long term growth and jobs.
- (ii) Conversion of office buildings to residential within Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL), Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS) and Opportunity Areas could compromise the distinct industrial character of those locations with consequent prejudice on their future development for employment uses.
- (iii) Conversion of office to residential within Wembley would lead to a loss of, as well as undermining the ability to introduce, active frontage in the town centre, thus prejudicing its viability and the potential to expand Wembley town centre eastwards into the Stadium area as set out in the Wembley Area Action Plan.
- (iv) Due to the volume of traffic, current council policy was to manage air quality sensitive development within restricted areas in close proximity to the North Circular Road (NCR), such as housing, hospitals and schools. Under the permitted development rights, offices in proximity to the NCR could be converted to residential uses without having to demonstrate there would be no adverse health impact on residents through poor air quality.
- (v) There was no provision for the council to seek Section 106 contributions from developers for open space, education and health care, thus resulting in pressure on existing schools, open space and infrastructure, especially in

areas of the borough where an increase in residential accommodation was not envisaged.

- (vi) Clarity was required on how the provision of affordable housing would be dealt with through the permitted development rights. If no affordable housing was required as a result of change of use then this would have a dramatic effect on the supply of affordable housing in the borough.
- (vii) It was unclear as to the extent that the new homes provided through office to residential conversions would be expected to comply with design guidance such as the Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Brent Council's Design Guide for New Development SPG.
- (viii) Permitted development rights would be subject to a prior approval process covering significant transport and highway impacts, development in safety hazard zones, areas of high flood risk and land contamination. It was currently unclear as to who would manage the prior approval process and how this would be resourced given current pressures on council resources and budgets.

The Assistant Director of Planning and Development submitted that given the concerns set out above the council had applied to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for an exemption to the permitted development rights for the borough's SIL (East Lane, Staples Corner, Wembley/Neasden and Park Royal), LSIS (Alperton, Brentfield Road, Church End, Colindale, Cricklewood, Honeypot Lane, Kingsbury and Neasden Lane) and Opportunity Areas (Park Royal/Willesden Junction, Wembley encompassing Wembley town centre and Colindale/Burnt Oak). He added that the introduction of the proposed permitted development rights in those specific locations would have significant adverse economic impacts, which would not be outweighed by the benefits the new rights would bring. In addition the council highlighted the concerns set out above to the DCLG and requested that air quality be assessed as part of a prior approval process.

In welcoming the report, Members endorsed the reasons for which the Council had sought exemption to the new permitted development rights from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for the borough's Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL), Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS) and Opportunity Areas.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the forthcoming changes to the permitted development rights for change of use from office (B1a use class) to residential (C3 use class) purposes, which were due to come into force in Spring 2013 be noted;
- (ii) that the request for exemption from the permitted development rights for the borough's SIL, LSIS and Opportunity Areas, which was submitted to Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on 22 February 2013 be endorsed.

5. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting ended at 8:05pm

COUNCILLOR KETAN SHETH
Chair