

 Brent	Decision of Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning
	Report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE AFFORDABLE WORKSPACE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR ADOPTION	

Wards Affected:	All where the Council remains local planning authority.
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
No. of Appendices:	Three Appendix 1 – Affordable Workspace SPD Appendix 2 – Consultation Responses Appendix 3 – Equalities Analysis
Background Papers¹:	None
Open or Part Exempt	Open
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Bruna Varante Principal Regeneration Officer Bruna.Varante@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 Cabinet approved the draft Affordable Workspace Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for consultation on 17th January 2022. The report sets out the results of the consultation feedback, officer responses and where necessary recommended changes to the document. It seeks agreement to adopt the amended SPD.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning in consultation with the Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment:

- a) Consider the consultation representations received, officer response and recommended changes as set out in Appendix 2.

- b) Approve the adoption of the amended Affordable Workspace Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as set out in Appendix 1.

3.0 Detail

Background information

- 3.1 Affordable Workspace is defined in the [London Plan](#) as workspace that is provided at rents maintained below the market rate for that space for a specific social, cultural and or employment development purpose. Brent's Local Plan² specifies further that it is workspace leased to an [approved workspace operator](#) at no more than 50% of market value or rents, for the lifetime of a development.
- 3.2 Affordable Workspace provides opportunities to grow and retain local businesses and jobs, attract new sectors, incubate start-ups, and is therefore vital to Brent's economic strength and diversity. Whilst demand for Affordable Workspace has significantly increased, supply has failed to keep up; with the number of small businesses in the borough substantially increased since 2010³ but the supply of suitable premises for its use diminishing.⁴
- 3.3 In September 2020 Cabinet approved the [Affordable Workspace Strategy and Action Plan](#) (AWS) which includes new routes and initiatives to increase affordable workspace across the borough. One action was to develop an Affordable Workspace Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide clarity and detailed guidance to planning applicants and developers on the implementation of Local Plan policies to secure and deliver affordable workspace in new development.

Affordable Workspace SPD

- 3.4 Officers developed the Affordable Workspace SPD (Appendix 1) cross departmentally, and in consultation with a range of Affordable Workspace operators.
- 3.5 The Affordable Workspace SPD provides detailed guidance to optimise Affordable Workspace in new developments, and will be a material consideration in determining future planning decisions. The Affordable Workspace SPD includes the following:
1. Affordable Workspace policy and context;
 2. Affordable Workspace: Policy Context & Definition
 3. Affordable Workspace: Regeneration & Economic Development
 4. Affordability, Discount to Market Rent & Service Charges
 5. Affordable Workspace Size and Delivery Outcomes

² Adopted Local Plan supporting text 6.4.12

³ [Brent Affordable Workspace Strategy and Action Plan \(2020\)](#)

⁴ Ibid

6. Location Recommendations and
7. Specification Requirements
8. Affordable Workspace Management Plan Requirements (including priority for Brent residents and sustainability criteria) and monitoring obligations.
9. Monitoring s106 Obligations (standardised s106 obligation templates and appendices were also included to provide further clarity).

Affordable Workspace SPD Statutory Consultation

- 3.6 The Affordable Workspace SPD was subject to 6 weeks of formal consultation from 11 February 2022 to 25 March 2022.
- 3.7 In accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), during the consultation period, the Council publicised the SPD by:
 - emailing consultees on the planning policy consultation database and the Regeneration Team's database of approved workspace operators;
 - publicising via the Council's online consultation portal;
 - making hard copies available in the Brent Civic Centre at Wembley library;
 - making documents available on the Council's website.
- 3.8 The Council also consulted the three statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Natural England, and Historic England) on the SPD's Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening assessment.
- 3.9 Eleven (11) responses were received. These were from statutory consultees, residents, workspace providers and a developer. The six statutory consultees that responded had no specific comments on the SPD. Two residents and two workspace operators were in general support of the SPD. Reasons included to support business development and those working from home. One operator questioned if the resulting workspace would be affordable. Whilst the developer St George did not object to the principle of the SPD they raised various concerns around the level of detailed work the SPD requires at application stage.
- 3.10 A summary of all comments received during the consultation period and the Council response, as well as minor changes within the document are set out in Appendix 2.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Costs to produce the Affordable Workspace SPD are being met from existing Regeneration budgets.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 provide for Local Planning Authorities to adopt Supplementary Planning

Documents. These documents are to provide more detailed guidance on how a development plan policy will be interpreted in the determination of planning applications. Supplementary Planning Documents cannot introduce new policy or allocate sites for development.

- 5.2 The consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty under section 149. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council must, in exercising its functions, have "due regard" to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 6.2 The Equalities Analysis (see Appendix 3) was drafted prior to statutory consultation on the Affordable Workspace SPD and has now been signed off. Analysis is that the Affordable Workspace SPD is likely to have an overall positive impact on equality in the borough. Low cost workspace supports local businesses and communities, with the potential to benefit economically disadvantaged groups, and specific opportunities identified for younger people, disabled people, black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, pregnant women and mothers.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 Brent Council Cabinet approved the Affordable Workspace SPD for statutory public consultation in January 2022.
- 7.2 Following Council Management Team review, the Affordable Workspace SPD environmental sustainability criteria were strengthened and targets for Brent residents and businesses to access new affordable workspace increased to 75%.

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 8.1 None arising specifically from the Affordable Workspace SPD. Regeneration has developed the Affordable Workspace SPD in-house.

Related documents:

[Brent Local Plan](#)

[Affordable Workspace Strategy and Action Plan](#)

Report sign off:

Alice Lester

Operational Director Regeneration Growth and Employment