

Planning Committee Report

London Thames Gateway Development Corporation

Planning for a Better London

Report of the Director of Planning

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The election of a new Mayor of London has resulted in the publication of a new consultation document entitled 'Planning for a Better London' In his foreword, the Mayor states
- 1.2 "This short report sets out the key areas I want to address in revising the London Plan, and the various other related strategies and guidance that the Mayor is responsible for. It is not a comprehensive statement of planning policy, but rather it sets out a 'direction of travel' that will characterise my term as Mayor..."
- 1.3 Comments on the document are sought by 10/11/08 and this report sets out recommended comments for the Board to make. The full document is available at <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/planning/docs/plan-better-london.pdf>

2. Decision Required

- 2.1 To AGREE the response to the consultation document subject to any amendments

3. Background

- 3.1 The document is set out in sections as follows:
 - The Mayor's approach
 - The key challenges
 - Key policy responses
 - Making it Happen
- 3.2 This report therefore follows this format, providing a summary and suggested response to the questions in each section.

4. The Mayor's General Approach

- 4.1 The main points of the mayor's general approach as set out in the report are as follows:
- More emphasis is to be given to issues affecting outer London
 - The current model of sub-regional working will be reviewed
 - Much of the underlying analysis and strategy that underlies the current London Plan is supported
 - The Mayor will focus on genuinely strategic issues and on areas where the GLA and its related organisations can really help improve the quality of planning policy and decisions
 - Stakeholders will be brought in at an earlier stage to the process of drawing up supplementary planning guidance
 - Consideration will be given to the calling of an annual London Planning Convention
 - The Mayor is likely to use his new planning powers to take over planning applications only in the most exceptional circumstances

4.2 Consultation questions and suggested responses

Is the approach to planning set out on this chapter the right one?

The Development Corporation welcomes the expressed desire to involve stakeholders more in the development of planning policies and would request that the role of the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation as key partner for the GLA and the Boroughs be fully reflected in this activity.

Does it strike the right balance between local and strategic issues?

There should be a greater consideration of the main strategic infrastructure needs of the key growth areas of both inner and outer east London and how the GLA, LTGDC and Boroughs can work together to ensure these needs are met. Within our area, proposed transport projects such as the DLR Extension to Dagenham Dock and East London Transit (ELT) need to be funded and implemented, or new communities will be created that are dependent upon the car. The Thames Gateway Bridge, with ELT linking up to Greenwich Waterfront Transit, will greatly improve accessibility and promote regeneration in the areas adjacent to the crossing. The Mayor should support this project.

Are there things you think the Mayor and the GLA could do more to improve planning in London which are not identified here?

It will be important for the Mayor to recognise the strategic role played by the Development Corporation in east London and for him to grasp the opportunity for the Development Corporation to deliver regeneration and high quality planning decisions in partnership with the Boroughs complementary to GLA and LDA initiatives.

*Do you support the idea of an annual London Planning Convention?
Would you attend if it were to be organised?*

Yes and yes.

5. London's key challenges

5.1 The document identifies London's key challenges as follows:

- Continued population growth
- London's changing economy
- Improving the environment and tackling climate change
- Providing the homes Londoners need
- Planning for all Londoners
- Planning for the whole of London

5.2 The document notes that by 2026, nearly 90% of the growth in working age population will be from the black, Asian and minority ethnic population and that London's diversity is already one of its major assets, underpinning its status as a world city. This diversity will be increasingly important to the city's economy and should be supported and sustained. Furthermore the population trends will have particular implications for the planned and timely provision of family housing, education, leisure and health facilities.

5.3 The document states that London has experienced entrenched problems of unemployment and economic inactivity among Londoners, resulting in labour coming here from overseas. A planning framework is required within which all kinds of enterprises in all parts of London can start, grow and thrive. Fundamental to this will be ensuring the availability of workspace.

5.4 Reducing London's emissions of the gases that cause global warming by using the planning system to work towards new development being zero carbon will be important. Green open spaces are vital resources for recreation and improving health, tackling obesity, promoting biodiversity and providing spaces for education and cultural activity. The planning system can help manage and promote existing spaces and provide new ones by making sure that new developments provide green amenity spaces and play areas for children.

5.5 Planning can help promote diversity of neighbourhoods and mixtures of old and new in respect of the built environment. Proper protection must be provided for buildings, parks, streetscapes and places that are loved for their historic importance. New development should be of a consistently high standard that ensures growth whilst protecting and improving the environment. Tall buildings can be supported in places where they are in context with their surroundings. The building of new homes should be encouraged along with the need to ensure the highest standards of design and construction to help foster truly liveable communities.

5.6 Too many people are being priced out or are forced to live in overcrowded and unsuitable accommodation by the high cost of housing in London. The result is a growing housing divide which is in turn exacerbating London's

problems of poverty, social exclusion and future economic competitiveness.

- 5.7 Older people and disabled Londoners should have the opportunity like all Londoners to enjoy a good quality environment. Ensuring this means planning for lifetime neighbourhoods in which local shops, social and community facilities, streets, parks and open spaces are accessible to everyone.
- 5.8 Good planning can support local employment opportunities for black, Asian and minority ethnic groups which suffer from higher unemployment and worklessness as well as the housing and social infrastructure the these communities need.
- 5.9 Too many young people are unable to take advantage of what London has to offer. Planning can help secure the facilities young people need and help tackle problems of deprivation and poor housing.
- 5.10 Planning can help secure the health facilities communities and neighbourhoods need, supporting retention of local hospitals and family general practitioner practices and help improve Londoners health by supporting facilities for sport and exercise, access to open space and promoting cycling and walking to get around.
- 5.11 East London and the Thames Gateway has London's largest concentration of brownfield land and the country's largest concentration of deprivation. It will continue to be a focus for development and regeneration and for the investment in infrastructure needed to support them. A key element of this will be making realistic plans for using the legacy of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to create and support the growth of vibrant new places in east London. A new airport to the east of London should be looked at.

5.12 Consultation questions and suggested comments

Have we correctly identified the key challenges that planning in London has to address?

Yes but see answer to next question.

Are there other challenges that need to be addressed?

The main challenge is how the priorities for addressing all the key challenges are set and, from the Development Corporation's point of view, how the GLA group of organisations will work jointly with the Development Corporation and the east London boroughs in setting these priorities.

6. Key policy responses

- 6.1 In setting out key policy responses, the document notes that there can be a temptation to become unduly focussed on central London and overlook the many more people who work in outer London. It can also mean missing the potential for people to work closer to where they live, reducing the strain on transport links into central London by encouraging

employment in parts of outer London like Barnet or Croydon. Planning has a vital part to play in realising this potential – making sure that work by agencies like TfL and the LDA in each place are coordinated and delivered in ways that make the most effective contribution to development and regeneration and environmental improvement. Physical improvements will need to be complemented by skills and other programmes to ensure people living locally can make the most of new opportunities.

6.2 The key policy responses include the following:

- To ensure a supportive policy and implementation framework for key areas of the London economy
- To support the success of all London's enterprises, whether multi-nationals or small and medium sized enterprises
- To support tall buildings in appropriate locations and work with the boroughs to identify these places
- To examine the ways of ensuring that outer London can play a full part in the city's economic success and establish an Outer London Commission
- To publish a planning framework dealing with the issues facing central London to support its continued success
- To bring forward proposals to enable planners to use section 106 agreements to require developers to make provision for affordable small shop units in major retail schemes
- To produce a new draft Housing Strategy for consultation later in 2008
- To work with boroughs to identify ways of improving the supply of housing and to ensure a supportive planning framework for delivery
- To alter the London Plan to remove prescriptive and counter productive targets such as the 50% target for affordable housing in new development
- To support delivery of 50,000 new affordable homes between 2008 and 2011 and enable a higher proportion of shared ownership and other 'intermediate' housing
- To improve standards for the quality and design of housing
- To promote good quality, liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods
- To prepare and publish revised supplementary planning guidance on housing
- To issue further guidance on designing out crime and anti-social behaviour
- To ensure supportive planning policies for facilities and uses linked with community safety and criminal justice
- To ensure that the most is made of opportunities to use the planning system to promote the most efficient use of resources such as supporting micro-generation and on-site renewable energy
- To make sure the planning system protects and enhances open spaces.
- To make sure the planning system does all it can to protect and promote trees and woodlands
- To promote a well-designed environment that respects and makes the most of London's heritage

- As a priority to look at ways of using the planning system to seek a contribution towards the cost of Crossrail from development
- To ensure that decisions on new development, transport infrastructure and funding are taken in a coordinated way
- To oppose the current plans for a third runway at Heathrow airport
- To promote a strategic planning policy framework of cycling and walking
- To support the use of the River Thames and other London waterways for transportation of people and goods
- To continue to promote the development of East London and the Thames Gateway as priority areas for development and regeneration
- To ensure new communities are not simply large housing estates and that they have the transport, social, environmental and cultural infrastructure they need
- To ensure that realistic plans are in place to make the most of the legacy from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

6.3 Consultation questions and suggested comments.

Do the policy responses suggested here adequately address the challenges facing planning in London?

As set out in our response to the Mayor's approach section of the report, in order to promote the development of east London and the Thames Gateway as priority areas for development and regeneration, commitment to key infrastructure projects needs to be demonstrated. For example, proposed transport projects such as the DLR Extension to Dagenham Dock and East London Transit (ELT) need to be funded and implemented, or new communities will be created that are dependent upon the car. The Thames Gateway Bridge, with ELT linking up to Greenwich Waterfront Transit, will greatly improve accessibility and promote regeneration in the areas adjacent to the crossing. The Mayor should support this project.

The Mayor has said that he will look at ways of using the planning system to seek a contribution towards the cost of Crossrail for development. The Development Corporation has an Adopted Planning Obligations Community Benefit Strategy, which sets out how much each development should contribute toward the provision of infrastructure that is required within our area. Until April 2009 this is £10,000 in the Lower Lea Valley and £6,000 in London Riverside per residential unit. The construction costs of Crossrail were not included in calculating the cost of infrastructure required per residential unit. LTGDC are therefore wary of using the planning system to seek a contribution for Crossrail, as it could negatively impact on the provision of other important infrastructure through planning obligations, because of its scale, cost and relatively limited impact on our area.. LTGDC would want to be fully involved in any working groups that are established to take this strand of work forward so that other infrastructure in our area is not unfairly compromised.

Are there other responses that should be considered?

The biggest challenge is that of ensuring good quality affordable family housing is incentivised in both the public and private sectors and the Corporation would welcome the opportunity to work with the Mayor and the Boroughs to ensure this happens in the Development Corporation's operational area.

How should we strike the balance between meeting the challenge of growth and improving quality of life?

Both these challenges require the provision of new infrastructure whether it be new forms of energy production and distribution, East London Transit (ELT) or new parklands. The key is how to ensure the correct identification of the necessary infrastructure and then its delivery in a co-ordinated way. The Corporation has started this work with its Delivery and Investment Strategies for the Lower Lea Valley and London Riverside in co-operation with the Boroughs and would welcome greater partnership with the GLA group to take this work forward.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The document has set out how the new Mayor wishes to take forward planning policy development for London and sets out a programme of work in which it is important that the Development Corporation plays a full part. It is also important that the Mayor is made aware of the partnership and delivery role that the Development Corporation is already playing and can develop further in the future.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That a response is sent to the Mayor incorporating the above suggested comments, as amended by Board, in response to the consultation questions. This should be supplemented by a summary of the Corporation's activities and potential for further co-operative working with the Mayor's various agencies.

Date: 18 August 2008