

LOCAL PLANS SUB (PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION) COMMITTEE

Friday, 17 June 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plans Sub (Planning and Transportation) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 9.00 am

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson
Henry Colthurst
Marianne Fredericks

Paul Martinelli
Graham Packham
Dhruv Patel

Officers:

Amanda Thompson	-	Town Clerk's Department
Paul Beckett	-	Department of the Built Environment
Peter Shadbolt	-	Department of the Built Environment

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2016 be approved as a correct record.

4. CITY OF LONDON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the City Planning Officer which sought comments on issues considered to be of most importance to planning the City of London over the next 20 years and which would inform the preparation of an Issues and Options consultation document.

Suggestions to the document were made as follows: -

Policy Context/Strategic Objectives

- More emphasis should be given to cross-boundary connections with neighbouring boroughs
- A number of suggestions were made for possible amendments to the current strategic objectives, but it was recognised that we will pick these up at the next stage when we develop objectives for the next Local Plan

Offices

- Suggestion that we ask what sort of floorspace SME's are looking for.
- Existing policy on large floorplates was written at a time when banks and finance companies were dominant office users. Noted that many tenants moving into the City are now in TMT sector
- Suggestion that we should consider annual monitoring/adaptation of office targets to respond more flexibly to market trends
- Agreement on the importance of flexible building designs to support new ways of working, shared use of workspace etc.

Utilities

- Suggestion that we should consider requiring new buildings to include chambers to accommodate some of the utilities infrastructure
- Scale of construction activity is a major aggravation. Suggestion that we ask which aspects of construction activity are causing the most problems/concerns.

Safety and security

- Planning and licensing need to be more consistent where possible. Suggestion that we ask whether some areas of the City should be identified either to specifically promote or restrict the night-time economy
- Need to be more bullish (like in the West End) in setting out policy requirements on night-time economy. Limited evidence that we are pushing developers to consider residential amenity issues seriously, e.g. roof terraces
- However, a recognition that the night-time economy is one of the key attractions for people to come and work in the City – balanced approach is needed
- Need to identify trends in anti-social behaviour and influence through design. Comment that terminology of existing restrictions/by-laws need to be review (e.g. don't cover scooters)
- Comment that most toilets in the City aren't currently available when really needed, i.e. at night

Key City Places

- Agreement that we should change the name from Key City Places to something like Areas of Change to better reflect their purpose

North of the City/Cultural Hub

- Suggest that we seek views on whether further residential development would be appropriate in the Cultural Hub
- Question 4.9 in Aldgate section about residential amenity should also apply to the Cultural Hub
- Suggestion that we should invite views on the correct balance of vehicles and pedestrianisation in the Cultural Hub

Cheapside and St Paul's

- This area may not require its own policy – Cheapside has developed its own momentum with the BID and no longer needs policy support. Bank junction works will be complete by the time the new Plan is adopted

Eastern Cluster

- Suggestion that we should consider expanding the Eastern Cluster to infill the area between it and the Walkie Talkie
- Suggestion that we ask a broader question about what changes are required to existing infrastructure to accommodate further intensification
- Agreement on need to emphasise importance of creating more open spaces and pedestrian routes at ground level
- Discussion about how much office development might be needed in relation to London Plan targets. Need to be careful about phrasing of questions and public expectations – if we get lots of responses saying there should be no more towers, doesn't mean we will amend the policy in such a way
- Request to find another name for the Eastern Cluster.

Aldgate

- As one of the 'weaker' areas of the City, agreed that Aldgate would still benefit from retaining a policy focus
- Discussion about whether northern part of Aldgate should be part of the Eastern Cluster, but recognition this would encroach on protected views

- Inclusion of Tower Hill supported. Area around Tower Gateway is experiencing significant change and there are opportunities for improvement and new transport infrastructure. Suggestion that this be dealt with in a planning brief rather than Local Plan given development timescales.

Thames and the Riverside

- Suggestion that we invite views on future use of the new open space at Blackfriars foreshore created by Thames Tideway Tunnel
- Suggestion that we should use the new Local Plan to be clearer about development potential and uses of sites along the riverfront. Particular concerns about pressures for residential development. Riverfront is prime office location due to transport links and we need strong policy protection
- Agreed with importance of river transport. Suggest that we should be seeking to use Walbrook Wharf for incoming deliveries as well as outgoing barges.
- Reinforcing flood defences and maintaining current openness of the river are important, but question to what extent the City Local Plan can influence this. Need to work in partnership with PLA and Environment Agency.

Design

- More emphasis should be given to seeking interesting, high-quality architecture (“too many mediocre buildings”, “not just size that matters”)
- Suggest that we should say more about wind impacts
- Need to look at pollution issues in a broader sense, e.g. light pollution. The City Corporation should do what it can to tackle glow/light spillage
- City should remain distinctive in terms of restrained advertising and avoid more clutter

Visitors, Arts and Culture

- Agreed that the draft questions are fundamental questions to ask, although Members not keen to encourage more hotels in the City.
- Need to balance cultural activity with the need for hotels. Need to investigate whether some of the demand for hotels could be met in neighbouring boroughs. Good transport links mean that visitors could easily travel into the City from adjoining areas.

- Concern that hotels are, in effect, residential by another name and that too many hotels could undermine the City's case for a continuing exemption from the office to residential pd rights.

Historic Environment

- Agree that we need to consider using heritage assets in a flexible way
- Tower of London is a key tourist attraction but most visitors then depart rather than exploring what the City has to offer. Support including a policy on the Tower World Heritage Site within the City Local Plan.

Protected Views

- This is a complex area of policy that no-one understands. Would be helpful to include more explanatory material as an appendix to the consultation document.
- Question 5.8 could be more explicit. Suggest we explore how the protected views policies affect the City and what the impacts would be if we changed those views
- Comment that we need a more sophisticated approach to views using 3D modelling if possible. Some of the London Plan LVMF views make little sense (e.g. reference to mounds in Richmond Park and islands in the Serpentine)

Tall Buildings

- More explicit questions are needed here. For instance, we could ask for suggestions on where it would be possible to locate another cluster.
- Map on page 39 should be amended because it suggests that a large area in the north of the City would be appropriate for tall buildings, whereas the listed building status of the Barbican and Golden Lane estates acts as a major constraint. Some difference of views amongst Members about this latter point and whether tall buildings could be accommodated in that part of the City.
- Suggestion that we ask for views on whether the balance between growth and preservation has worked well
- In Question 5.10 the word 'how' should be deleted so as to read 'should the current tall building cluster in the east of the City be altered?'

Sustainability and Climate Change

- Suggestion that we seek views on the pros and cons of promoting small scale local decentralised energy generation (small scale CHP and use of standby generators) compared to connection to district heating/ cooling networks, as there may be pollution impacts within the City.
- Would like to see the City taking a lead role on air quality and other forms of pollution reflecting the strategic significance for the City of mitigating measures.
- Need a joined up approach to SuDS in environmental enhancement schemes.

Public Transport, Streets and Walkways

- This section would benefit from more questions in smaller bite-size chunks
- Suggest that we ask for views on the relative priority that should be given to different categories of motor vehicles, and on how we can most effectively reduce congestion.
- Comment that any public realm improvement proposals in the Local Plan need to be joined up with the Corporation's environmental enhancement programme
- In question 6.5, replace the word 'would' with 'may' because we shouldn't rule out the possibility of locating some form of consolidation facility within the City. Include more information about pros and cons of using smaller delivery vehicles because this issue isn't straightforward. Suggest that we ask whether there should be more night-time deliveries.
- As there isn't enough space for on-street cycle parking in the City, suggest that we should consider asking developers to provide public cycle parking within their schemes.
- Suggestion that we should ask whether diesel vehicles should be banned in the City.

Waste and the Circular Economy

- Suggestion that we invite views on how we could make greater use of Walbrook Wharf

Flood Risk

- Comment that residential development isn't suitable on the ground floor of developments in the Flood Risk Zone

Open Spaces and Recreation

- Suggestion that more references should be made to green space as grass and trees create an attractive working environment, e.g. Finsbury Circus as it used to look. Some difference of views amongst Members about merits of greenery compared to open spaces that are easier to maintain and useable throughout the year.
- Comment that Local Plan should not be prescriptive about type of facilities provided but should seek bespoke, good quality, useable open space.
- Suggestion that we add a question about whether developers should be required to contribute to maintenance of open spaces

Retailing

- Suggestion that we should ask if retail uses should be specifically encouraged in the Cultural Hub

Housing

- Suggestion that question 7.6 should be amended as we have little choice about meeting the London Plan housing target
- Need to explain in more detail our approach of delivering affordable housing on the Corporation's estates outside the City boundary

Social and Community Infrastructure

- Comment that we should highlight the potential for walk-in GP surgeries in the City
- Suggestion that reference be made to the role of the City's libraries, which may be under long-term threat
- Suggestion that we should ask about funding for these services and facilities

5. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

The meeting closed at 11.00 am

Chairman

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