### Summary

On the 19\textsuperscript{th} December 2014 the Mayor published for public consultation his draft City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework. The City Fringe area is identified in the London Plan as being an opportunity area with significant capacity to accommodate new housing, commercial and other development linked to existing or potential improvements to public transport accessibility. Although the policy area defined by the Framework is wholly outside the City it includes the immediately adjacent northern and eastern City Fringe and therefore City Corporation involvement has been welcome during preparation.

The Mayor’s commitment to the preparation of a City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework was boosted in 2013 by the realisation that this area is already growing strongly as the hub of ‘Tech City’ but this growth is under threat from increasing pressure to convert employment space to more profitable housing use. The draft Framework sets out the Mayor’s approach to development in the City Fringe area and provides Mayoral support for the protection of existing commercial floorspace and the provision of additional commercial floorspace within the commercial parts of the City Fringe. The Draft Framework is available on the GLA website at [http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/consultations/city-fringe-opportunity-area-planning-framework](http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/consultations/city-fringe-opportunity-area-planning-framework)

The draft Framework’s vision it to “enable the business cluster to continue to grow a mix of large corporations, SMEs, micro-businesses and start ups and become the innovation hub driving growth in London and the UK’s digital economy, while delivering housing and other supporting uses such as retail and leisure.”

The City Fringe Framework area is divided into a Core Growth Area, where it is
more important to ensure an ongoing supply of employment space and
affordable stock, and a largely residential ‘hinterland’. Map 3.1 shows that all
the City Fringe areas that are adjacent to the City itself, plus the Old Street
roundabout and Whitechapel areas, are defined as being part of the Core
Growth Area. Most of this area is considered to be Inner Core. The area south
of Aldgate is considered to be Outer Core though it is also recognised as being a
priority employment area by Tower Hamlets.

The City Corporation welcomes this draft Framework and notes that it is
complementary to the City’s planning policies as it recognises and seeks to
increase the economic importance of the City Fringe and its links with adjacent
areas including the City.

The key points in the suggested response are set out below:-

- The draft Framework does not directly affect planning policy within the City
  as the City Fringe area boundary has been revised during preparation to be
  wholly outside the City. This changed boundary of the City Fringe area is
  welcomed as it recognises that outwards commercial expansion of the City
  in recent years has meant that City Fringe characteristics are no longer found
  in the City itself and City characteristics are now found in core parts of the
  City Fringe.
- The draft Framework is strongly supported because it is complementary to
  the City’s planning policies as it recognises and seeks to increase the
  economic importance of the City Fringe and its links with adjacent areas
  including the City.
- The draft Framework sub-divides the City Fringe Core Area into an Inner
  Core and an Outer Core. Most of the areas adjoining the City itself are
  considered to be Inner Core but the City Fringe area south of Aldgate is
  considered less important as an employment centre and is identified as Outer
  Core. This distinction is not supported by the latest office market evidence
  and the City Corporation considers that more of the area south of Aldgate
  should be considered to be Inner Core. This would complement the
  commercial regeneration aspirations for this area that will be boosted by the
  Aldgate gyratory highway and public realm improvement project.

The suggested full response is set out as Appendix A to this report.

**Recommendations**

- That Appendix A should be approved to form the basis of the City
  Corporation’s submission to the Mayor in response to his consultation
  paper.
Main Report

Background

1. The London Plan 2011 identified ‘Opportunity Areas’ and ‘Areas for Intensification’ in London which are the capital’s major areas of brownfield land with significant capacity to accommodate new housing, commercial and other development linked to existing or potential improvements to public transport accessibility. London Plan policy 2.13 states that that ‘the Mayor will provide proactive encouragement, support and leadership for partnerships preparing and implementing opportunity area planning frameworks to realise these areas growth potential’. The City Fringe Opportunity Area wraps around the northern and eastern edge of the City.

2. The Mayor’s commitment to the preparation of a City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework was boosted in 2013 by the realisation that this area is already growing strongly as the hub of ‘Tech City’ but this growth is under threat from increasing pressure to convert employment space to more profitable housing use. Hence the Mayor established a project Group to oversee progress comprising officers from the GLA, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Islington and the City. Although the policy area defined by the Framework is wholly outside the City it includes the immediately adjacent City Fringe and therefore City Corporation involvement was welcomed.

Overview of the draft City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework

3. The Draft Framework comprises 96 pages of text, maps and photos divided into 6 chapters:-
   1. Introduction and background – sets out the Framework’s purpose, vision and objectives
   2. Ensuring space for business growth – analyses the mix of businesses, the local property market, demand forecasts and the need to protect employment space for future growth
   3. Striking the balance – considers competition from residential development and viability issues
   4. Supporting the right mix – considers the right mix of uses to foster further growth
   5. Connecting the City Fringe – addresses transport connectivity and the quality of the public realm as well as improved digital infrastructure consistent with London ‘super connected city plan’. It includes a section on the Aldgate area that recognises the importance of the gyratory removal but the text would benefit from further refinement.
6. **Implementation** – considers the Framework’s role within the planning system and the reviews potential funding sources to progress infrastructure and other beneficial changes not currently funded.

4. The draft Framework has the following Vision:

   “Enabling the business cluster to continue to grow a mix of large corporations, SMEs, micro-businesses and start ups and become the innovation hub driving growth in London and the UK’s digital economy, while delivering housing and other supporting uses such as retail and leisure.”

5. The spatial strategy for the City Fringe is shown on Framework Map 3.1 that has been included with this report. The City Fringe Framework area is divided into a Core Growth Area, where it is more important to ensure an ongoing supply of employment space and affordable stock, and a largely residential ‘hinterland’. The Core Area itself is sub-divided into Inner Core and Outer Core with stronger protection for and encouragement of employment uses in the Inner Core.

6. Map 3.1 shows that the all City Fringe areas that are adjacent to the City itself plus the Old Street roundabout and Whitechapel areas are defined as being part of the Core Growth Area. Most of this area is considered to be Inner Core (darkest purple). The area south of Aldgate is considered to be Outer Core (lighter purple) although parts of it are also recognised as being a priority employment area by Tower Hamlets (black cross hatching).

**Key Points in the City Corporation’s Suggested Response**

7. The suggested response in italics focusses on the key points:-

8. *The draft Framework does not directly affect planning policy within the City as the City Fringe area boundary has been revised during preparation to be wholly outside the City. The changed boundary of the City Fringe area is welcomed as it recognises that outwards commercial expansion of the City in recent years has meant that City Fringe characteristics are no longer found in the City itself and City characteristics are now found in core parts of the City Fringe.*

9. *The draft Framework is strongly supported because it is complementary to the City’s planning policies as it recognises and seeks to increase the economic importance of the City Fringe and its links with adjacent areas including the City.*
10. The draft Framework sub-divides the City Fringe Core Area into an Inner Core and an Outer Core. Most of the areas adjoining the City itself are considered to be Inner Core but the City Fringe area south of Aldgate is considered less important as an employment centre and is identified as Outer Core. This distinction is not supported by the latest office market evidence and the City Corporation considers that more of the area south of Aldgate should be considered to be Inner Core. This would complement the commercial regeneration aspirations for this area that will be boosted by the Aldgate gyratory highway and public realm improvement project.

11. The key points set out above are repeated in the formal response set out in Appendix A. This enables the City to complement its key points with further suggested detailed refinements.

Consultation

12. This report has been the subject of consultation with the Town Clerk, the City Surveyor, the Director of Economic Development, and the Comptroller and City Solicitor. Their comments have been incorporated.

Conclusions

13. The Mayor’s draft City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework is welcomed and strongly supported as it provides a complementary planning approach to that applied in the City. City and City Fringe are closely linked economically and it important that they have complementary planning approaches that protect existing commercial floorspace and encourage additional commercial floorspace to reinforce existing clusters of excellence and provide sustainable, accessible jobs in central London for the capital’s growing population.

Background Papers: Nil

Appendices


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Draft Framework Map 3.1: City Fringe, Inner Core, Outer Core and Hinterland