

The format of future meetings of the Local Plans Sub-Committee

Workshop

1. At the meeting on 22nd September, Members expressed a desire to hold one or more of the future meetings of the Sub-Committee in a workshop format, potentially inviting key stakeholders when issues of interest to them are being discussed.
2. Officers have given further consideration to how such a workshop could operate and how it could best fit into the Local Plan preparation process. Rather than inviting stakeholders to attend for part of a normal Sub-Committee meeting, officers consider that the format and purpose of the workshop is likely to be more easily understood by participants if a whole meeting is devoted to hearing the views of key stakeholders.
3. It is therefore suggested that a workshop be arranged in a “Select Committee” style, similar to that used by the GLA or in Parliament, with participants invited to present their ideas or evidence for a set period of time (up to 10 minutes would seem appropriate) and to answer questions from Members where further clarification is required. In order to ensure the workshop is as informal as possible, it could be held in one of the larger committee rooms with the layout arranged to enable participants to present ideas electronically or through plans and drawings where appropriate.
4. It is considered that this type of workshop is likely to be better attended if personal invitations were to be sent out to a range of stakeholders, perhaps from the Chairman. In view of the need to give invitees sufficient notice and a chance to prepare their evidence, invitations would ideally be sent out at least a month before the date of the workshop.
5. While it would be possible to hold a series of workshops tailored to specific topics or areas of the City, this would be logistically difficult because of the already congested nature of the Committee calendar and could significantly delay the preparation of the Draft Local Plan. In addition, it might restrict potential participants from raising issues that are important to them, but are not on the set agenda.
6. It is therefore suggested that one workshop be arranged in the first instance, with invitees able to raise any matter of relevance to the Local Plan Review. This would need to be a full half day session in order to allow sufficient time to accommodate a range of speakers. If the format is successful then the Sub-Committee could decide to arrange a second follow-on session.
7. In terms of timings, there are two options available:

Option A: arrange the workshop as part of the Sub-Committee’s consideration of the Draft Local Plan. Due to the need to give invitees adequate notice, this is likely to mean that the earliest it could take place would be mid-late January and this is subject to finding an appropriate slot in

the committee calendar. There would also need to be a follow-up meeting of the Sub-Committee to consider if any changes should be made to the Draft Plan in light of the evidence heard, prior to consideration of the full Plan by the Grand Committee. This option would be likely to result in a modest slippage to the current Local Plan timetable, which envisages consideration of the Draft Plan by the Grand Committee in February 2018. However, it would increase the transparency of the plan preparation process to external parties.

Option B: arrange the workshop as part of the public consultation on the Draft Plan in spring 2018. This option would have no impact on the Local Plan timetable and could be dovetailed with the other consultation activities described in Appendix 1 of this report. It is important to note that the Draft Local Plan is not the final Plan and that there will be a further round of public consultation towards the end of 2018 before the final Plan is submitted for examination. This option has the benefit of enabling the Sub-Committee to hear evidence directly from individuals and organisations affected by the draft Local Plan and to better understand the implications of draft policy. It would enable stakeholders to have a direct input into the consultation and convey a clear message that the Corporation is keen to work with stakeholders as the draft Plan progresses.

8. Members are asked to indicate which of these options is preferred, or alternatively to suggest a different approach if neither of these options is considered suitable. Members are also asked to indicate the range of stakeholders that they would like to be invited to any such workshop.

Site visit

1. At previous meetings, reference was made to conducting a Member site visit to the Silver Vaults in Chancery Lane in connection with representations made to the Issues and Options consultation seeking a Special Policy Area to be designated for the Silver Vaults.
2. In order for the necessary arrangements to be made the Sub-Committee is asked to indicate whether or not it wishes to undertake a site visit to the Silver Vaults, and if there are any other sites or areas of relevance to the Local Plan Review that Members would wish to visit. Depending on the number and location of sites visited, this is likely to require at least a half day to be allocated and would probably need to take place early in the New Year.