

LOCAL PLANS SUB (PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION) COMMITTEE
Friday, 22 July 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plans Sub (Planning and Transportation)
Committee held at on Friday, 22 July 2022 at 10.30 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Shravan Joshi (Chairman)
Deputy Alastair Moss (Deputy Chair)
Deputy Randall Anderson
John Edwards
Deputy Marianne Fredericks
Martha Grekos
Jaspreet Hodgson
Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Alderman Ian David Luder
Deputy Graham Packham
Deputy Susan Pearson
Deputy Christopher Hayward (Ex-Officio Member)
Elizabeth Anne King (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Gwyn Richards	- Chief Planning Officer and Development Director
Peter Shadbolt	- Environment Department
Rob McNicol	- Environment Department
Joseph Anstee	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from William Upton QC.

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

There were no declarations.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED – That the Sub Committee receive its terms of reference, as agreed by the Planning & Transportation Committee at its meeting on 26 April 2022.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

At this point, the Sub Committee queried whether those Members of the Sub Committee designated as ex-officio Members were eligible to vote in the elections of a Chairman and Deputy Chairman. After considering advice from the Town Clerk and discussion, the Sub Committee agreed that in the absence of any clear agreement to the contrary, the ex-officio Members of the Sub

Committee should not be permitted to vote in the election of the Chairman or Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Orders 29(7) and 30(9), also noting that the designation of Members appointed by other Committees to the Sub Committees of the Planning & Transportation Committee as ex-officio may not be appropriate.

Members expressed their clear dissatisfaction with the lack of clarity on this point, and asked that both the matter of eligibility to vote, and the ex-officio designation on the Sub Committees of the Planning & Transportation Committee, be clarified following the meeting, and reviewed if deemed necessary by the Grand Committee.

The Sub Committee then proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 29. Expressions of interest were sought from Members, and there being multiple expressions of interest, a ballot of eligible Members present was undertaken and Deputy Shравan Joshi, upon receiving a majority of votes cast, was duly elected as Chairman of the Sub Committee for the ensuing year.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The Sub Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 30. Expressions of interest were sought from Members, and there being multiple expressions of interest, a ballot of eligible Members present was undertaken and Deputy Alastair Moss, upon receiving a majority of votes cast, was duly elected as Deputy Chair of the Sub Committee for the ensuing year.

6. CITY PLAN 2040: PROPOSED POLICY DIRECTIONS AND TIMETABLE

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director providing an update on the City Plan and proposing broad policy directions for a revised version, considering consultation responses and other issues, also including an updated timetable for progressing the Plan to a further public consultation and onward to public examination and adoption. The Chief Planning Officer and Development Director introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the key points, principally the overall strategy, and the key policy shifts set out within the report. The Chair then suggested that the Sub Committee first frame the parameters for policy direction before going into detailed discussion on each distinct policy area.

In response to an initial question from a Member, the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director confirmed that there had been four responses to the public consultation on a Housing Call for Sites proposing sites, adding that this could be brought as a topic to the next meeting to discuss taking this matter forward.

The Chair then invited Members to suggest areas for focus not covered across the list of key policy shifts. Members suggested that housing, retail provision, the reuse or conversion of Grade B & C office space, a river strategy, increasing accessibility, protection of heritage assets were areas for focus

during the process. A Member added that meaningful engagement with residents was a key part of the process and should be given appropriate weight. Several more specific comments were made in respect of housing, which the Sub Committee agreed would need to be a key area for review, both in itself and on its impact on other areas such as retail and the local economy.

The Sub Committee noted that the City Plan had to work within the framework set by the wider City of London Corporation, including the Corporate Plan, as well as regional and national policies. The Chairman commented that despite this, the opportunity remained to take a bold, leading approach and go further than superficial change, noting the bold steps already taken on sustainability, which would become embedded in the local plan. The Sub Committee then proceeded to discuss the key policy shifts.

Members commented that Destination City would benefit from a clearer definition and more detail on its implications in this context. It was also felt that the process needed to be organic, as it was easy to fall into a trap of developers providing facilities that then went unused, as they were not needed. Members further commented that existing cultural spaces and their use should be protected. The Chief Planning Officer and Development Director commented that the implementation plan would be key, as well as the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and guidance. The Sub Committee noted that the City was currently at its peak for activity 3 days a week, and that the City Plan should focus on returning this to 5 days, then drive towards 7 days. A Member suggested that planning conditions could be used to incentivise increased opening hours for retail, which could contribute towards the 7 day target.

A Member argued that the City's cultural offering was a positive way to work towards this target, adding that Members needed to be realistic with regards to retail. The Member added that amenities such as toilets and water fountains were not always easily identifiable in the City and suggested that clearer signage would be beneficial.

Next considering Workspaces and SMEs, the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director advised that the London Plan set out some requirements in this area. A Member commented that the more requirements there were for new buildings, the more difficult things became in respect of Grade B and C office space. The Chief Planning Officer and Development Director responded that officers would look into this. Another Member commented that priorities were the key consideration, which needed to be resolved, adding that a robust and prescriptive policy may be more effective than making assumptions.

A Member commented that start-ups and SMEs were very price-sensitive, and therefore more affordable office accommodation was attractive to them. In response to a question from a Member on affordability, the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director advised that whilst there were several contributing dynamics with regards to affordability, the Grade B and C office accommodation that could be retained should be retained for this purpose. Another Member added this was a key need for older office stock, as start-ups which flourished in the City tended to stay, and that the City should focus on promoting the affordability of these spaces.

In response to a comment from a Member on requirements for training, education and skills, the Sub Committee noted that the Chairman of Policy & Resources Skills for a Sustainable Skyline should be useful. The Chief Planning Officer and Development Director advised that this was also covered in the SPD, as well as requirements relating to construction. In response to a question from a Member, the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director advised that live/work spaces were difficult for planners, but that officers could look at this.

A Member commented that it would be important for Members to consider a more comprehensive and detailed report on office space that could be properly discussed in full. The Member added that it needed to be clear that all groups were consulted and heard, as there were amenities that may not have been fully considered previously, such as play spaces.

The Chief Planning Officer and Development Director advised that consultation on the Local Plan followed the traditional route, with responses primarily from businesses. The Chief Planning Officer and Development Director added that groups of young people had been part of the previous consultation which had thrown up a few interesting points. The Chief Planning Officer and Development Director then advised that more user-friendly consultation software would be used this time round, and that officers hoped to go further with the consultation than previously, with a target to get more feedback from workers, particularly on matters other than public realm and transport.

The Chairman commented that Members had all received the slide deck and report and encouraged Members to send feedback to officers outside of the meeting with a view to informing the discussion and decisions later in the process. In response to a question from a Member, the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director advised that officers were waiting on items such as GLA projections before providing further data on offices, but assured Members that whilst there was no set timeline for this, it would be prioritised.

The Sub Committee then considered the programme for progressing the City Plan. The Chief Planning Officer and Development Director drew the Sub Committee's attention to the key milestones, with targets of February 2023 for agreement onward approval, formal consultation to take place in late Spring 2023, and adoption in October 2024. The Chairman asked that meeting dates for the Sub Committee be identified and agreed as soon as possible.

At this point, the Chairman sought approval from the Sub Committee to continue the meeting beyond two hours from the appointed time for the start of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 40, and this was agreed.

In response to a question from a Member regarding informal engagement, the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director encouraged Members to let officers know of groups that they felt needed to be part of the consultation. A Member commented that more engagement would make the process smoother, and suggested that informal engagement be open to everyone. Members suggested that Members be given a list of stakeholders and groups

consulted so far at the first meeting following the Summer recess, and that officers present a plan for meaningful engagement, to which the Sub Committee could add. A Member added that this could then be sent to the wider Court for comment.

The Sub Committee discussed the point on engagement, noting that whilst it was important not to micro-manage the process, an effective plan for consultation would be beneficial later on and lessen the risk of issues arising later. The Chairman asked that the consultation process be included on the September agenda, and that the Sub Committee be provided with a list of those contacted as part of informal engagement and those to be contacted as part of the consultation. Members further commented that evening meetings and workshops should be considered as part of the programme, for the benefit of residents and other stakeholders.

RESOLVED – That the Local Plans Sub Committee advise as above on the proposed policy directions and agree the timetable for progressing the City Plan.

7. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

A Member advised that they had several minor amendments to the minutes which they would provide for the Town Clerk following the meeting. The Sub Committee resolved to agree the minutes, pending the Chairman's approval of these amendments.

RESOLVED – That, subject to agreement of these amendments, the public minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

The meeting ended at 12.53 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Joseph Anstee
joseph.anstee@cityoflondon.gov.uk