

LOCAL PLANS SUB (PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION) COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 27 June 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plans Sub (Planning and Transportation) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 10.30 am

Present

Members:

Christopher Hayward (Chairman)
Randall Anderson
Mark Bostock

Deputy Keith Bottomley
Marianne Fredericks

Officers:

George Fraser	- Town Clerk's Department
Paul Beckett	- Department of the Built Environment
Adrian Roche	- Department of the Built Environment
Lisa Russell	- Department of the Built Environment
Peter Shadbolt	- Department of the Built Environment
John Harte	- Department of the Built Environment
Jonathan Blathwayt	- Department of the Built Environment

In Attendance:

Richard Desmond	- Northern & Shell
Tony McCurly	- Northern & Shell
Jonathan Marginson	- DP9
Lee Polisano	- PLP
Tina Qiu	- PLP

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dhruv Patel.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The Sub-Committee considered the minutes from the last meeting, held on 5 June 2018.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be approved.

MATTERS ARISING

In reference to Item 8 on the agenda, a Member queried the inclusion of the item on the agenda, particularly noting that it was marked as non-public. It was commented that this would raise an issue around perception of the intentions of Northern & Shell. The Chairman noted the point made by the Member, but advised that other participants at the Pool of London Workshop in April 2018

had been given the same opportunity to present their views on the area to the Sub-Committee and had not taken up this offer. The Director of the Built Environment advised the Sub-Committee that this was simply an opportunity for individuals or groups to present their views on the future of the Pool of London area to help Members be better informed when at later meetings they consider and make decisions on planning policy. A second Member noted that similar briefings occurred on occasion without being subject to their own agenda item and noted that any policy decision-making on the subject would always be done in a public session. The Chairman asked if Members were content to note the concerns and, given the assurances that equal opportunity had been given to all interested parties, to proceed. Members were content, except one Member who reiterated their disapproval at the item's inclusion on the agenda.

4. **CITY OF LONDON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: PROPOSED DRAFT POLICIES**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of the Built Environment that proposed draft retailing policies for the new Local Plan.

The Director of the Built Environment provided Members with an update on the local plan.

Members discussed the draft policies outlined within report appendix 1:

Core Strategic Policy CSXX: Retailing

A Member asked how Principal Shopping Centres (PSCs) were being defined and asked if language could be included that explained this. (1)

In reference to paragraph 6, a Member asked what was meant by the phrase “detract from [...] vitality of PSCs”. The Director of the Built Environment explained that it was a judgement on whether a unit would detract from the success of other centres in its proximity. The Member noted that if this was a judgement, rather than something clearly defined, then this was an issue. The Director of the Built Environment explained that there were definitions, citing the 2,500m² size threshold for a Retail Impact Assessment.

A Member asked what was meant by “retail links” and the Director of the Built Environment explained that it referred to streets linking the PSCs and linking the PSCs with transport hubs or centres in adjoining boroughs. The Member emphasised the importance of using meaningful and clear language as far as possible.

A Member noted that there was further potential for coordination with the resident population of Islington to the North. A Member suggested that there was a danger of over-engineering retail planning strategies in specific areas, and the focus should be on ensuring optimum design with consideration to aspects such as delivery access and allowing a greater degree of natural growth.

A Member raised their concerns about the potential for policy to lead to homogenous clustering of chain coffee shops and fast food outlets. The Director of the Built Environment explained that A1 units concentrated in PSCs

included a wide range of shops offering 'comparison goods' shopping opportunities. The Member noted that the City of London was not a very large geographic area and argued that there should be some degree of flexibility to consider different A1 uses to meet resident needs.

Policy DM X.X: Principal Shopping Centres

Members discussed the issue of Office developers' reluctance to offer significant space for retail. A Member noted the issue of frontage length and noted that licenced premises with significant frontage can have a huge impact on the local vicinity. The Director of the Built Environment agreed to include policy encouragement for varied retail frontages (2). A Member queried the requirement of impact assessments from developers. The Director of the Built Environment explained that over a certain size an impact assessment was required. The Member explained that the assessment was a very important aspect to inform decision making.

Policy DM X.X Retail Links

In reference to retail links, a Member queried how these were encouraged with Islington borough. The Director of the Built Environment explained that a joint site visit was taking place in the week following the meeting, and that there had been collaboration with Islington around the Culture Mile. The Chairman of the Planning & Transportation Committee explained that he had had a discussion with his counterpart in Islington Council. Liaison with other boroughs is a statutory duty on the City as a planning authority under the duty to cooperate.

Policy DM X.X Ground floor retail provision elsewhere in the City

A Member asked whether the City Corporation's policy was to allow retail development only on the ground floor of office buildings. The Director of the Built Environment explained that retail development would be permitted on other floors if developers are able to demonstrate that there would be no adverse impact on the City's business role. The Chairman noted that there was still a lot of potential in the City with regards to retail. A Member emphasised the importance of developers being kept aware of what is permitted to ensure that potential is met.

Policy DM X.X: Specialist Retail Uses and Markets

A Member requested that this policy be separated into two individual policies, one for Specialist Retail, and one for Markets. The Sub-Committee agreed.

RESOLVED – That the policies set out within the report be agreed, taking into account Members' comments.

5. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

A Member explained that they had recently visited Cory who just appointed a new commercial director and were keen to increase freight on the River Thames. The Member explained that river freight had many benefits as an alternative to road freight, such as being more economical, less polluting and reducing road traffic. They suggested that it would be beneficial to consider the possibility of using Walbrook Wharf as a consolidation centre, and in general

terms a long-term vision for the increased use of river freight. The Director of the Built Environment confirmed that increased use of the river for freight was already a policy aim. The Member explained that Cory would also be willing to sponsor a conference with key stakeholders for all boroughs using the River Thames, focused on both cargo and leisure. The Chairman explained that the ideas were very promising and thanked the Member for their update.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item No.	Paragraph(s) in Schedule 12A
9, 10	3

8. POOL OF LONDON PRESENTATION

The Sub-Committee heard a verbal presentation from local landowner Northern and Shell and their architects PLP that provided Members with a potential vision for redevelopment of the Pool of London area.

PLP presented a visualisation of their wider vision for the area and explained that this had previously been presented to Members, officers and others at the Pool of London workshop in April.

The Director of the Built Environment asked for clarification of the current status of the proposal. PLP explained that they were simply presenting a vision, and that no application had been submitted nor any action taken to proceed further than this.

A Member asked why the documents had been created, and PLP explained that they had been asked by Northern & Shell to provide a vision for the Pool of London alongside the redevelopment of Northern & Shell's site.

A Member asked if the Port of London Authority had been consulted on the vision, to which PLP confirmed that they had been, along with the Chairman and officers on previous occasions. The Member asked if any other stakeholders had been consulted, and PLP confirmed that they had not been.

PLP provided an update to Members on the historical development of the area that highlighted how trading on the riverside had reduced over time, and subsequently how the vibrancy of the area had dwindled. They explained that there was currently little activity in the riverside area. They explained that Lower Thames Street was even recommended in tourist literature as the main pedestrian route to the Tower of London rather than the Riverside Walk.

PLP argued that redevelopment of the Northern and Shell site as part of a more comprehensive redevelopment could help resolve servicing issues for several riverside sites along Lower Thames Street.

PLP suggested that more activities could be attracted to the riverfront through a greater mix of uses. They explained that a land use study carried out found that it was feasible to increase vibrancy at ground level without reducing employment space.

Northern & Shell explained that there was a unique opportunity to achieve change in the area, given that five of the buildings in the Pool of London Area were likely to have vacant possession in a similar timeframe. They noted that there was resistance to increased residential use within the City of London but suggested more flexibility on the riverside would be needed to make development economically viable without compromising the City's office provision. They suggested that the character of the Pool of London area was slightly different to that of the traditional City, and argued that this warranted the increased flexibility on development of ground level use by cafes and restaurants etc. to utilise a part of the riverside that is currently isolated. They emphasised that their ideas for the Pool of London represented nothing more than a vision and had not been submitted as a plan.

A Member explained that they were strongly in support of regeneration of the Pool of London and were interested to hear views on the appropriateness of the riverside sites for social housing. A Member interjected to raise concerns over the appropriateness of detailed discussions relating to specific sites, commenting that such detailed questions towards a developer's proposals were not appropriate for a non-public session of a sub-committee tasked with forming planning policy. The Member expressed concerns that the non-public session would prejudice members' ability to consider future planning applications. Northern & Shell explained that their intention was simply to present ideas to the Sub-Committee that they hoped would contribute to the policy debate. The Chairman recognised the danger of misconceptions in this regard, supported the Member's views on the importance of transparency and noted that all interested parties at the Pool of London workshop had been given equal opportunity to present ideas to the Sub-Committee and so no preferential treatment had been allowed to Northern & Shell. The Director of the Built Environment explained that this presentation aimed to inform the Sub-Committee's thinking as part of the local plan review process for the City as a whole and for the Pool of London in particular, emphasising that no detailed discussion over Northern and Shell's site proposals were appropriate.

A Member asked if this was the only option that would overcome the constraints on servicing. PLP explained that research they had conducted on Billingsgate found that large vehicles were forced to stop on the road, whilst only smaller vehicles could gain access to that part of the riverside. The inclusion of the cycle lane on Lower Thames Street was exacerbating the issue further. PLP considered there was a strong logic for basement servicing access for all the buildings in the area as part of a comprehensive approach.

The Director of the Built Environment noted that improving servicing was a clear policy objective.

Members agreed that the Pool of London area required addressing. The Chairman noted the comparison with the utilisation of the river on the South Bank and illustrated his dissatisfaction with the current state of the riverside in the area.

The Director of the Built Environment confirmed that officers would bring bullet-point policy options for the Local Plan Areas of Change (including the Pool of London area) to the Sub-Committee prior to recess. (3)

A Member requested that notes of the Pool of London workshop held in April be circulated, including details of attendees and parties that had been invited to speak to the Sub-Committee should they wish to. (4)

RESOLVED – That Northern & Shell and PLP be heard.

9. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

Members raised questions to the Sub-Committee whilst the public were excluded.

10. **ANY OTHER NON-PUBLIC BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was one item of urgent business considered whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting closed at 11.56 am

Chairman

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