

PLANNING BRIEFING NOTE

January 2014

FURTHER ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN (FALP)

OVERVIEW

The Mayor of London has published draft further alterations to the London Plan for consultation. The proposed further alterations predominately relate to housing and London's economy, reflecting the priorities of the Mayor's '2020 Vision' and revised projected population figures (following results of the 2011 Census). The alterations extend the Plan period to 2036.

In July 2011 the Mayor of London published the London Plan, which provides the strategic framework for planning in the capital. An initial wave of minor alterations was made (to ensure conformity with the NPPF) in October 2013 prior to the latest proposed alterations. The key proposed changes are summarised below.

GROWTH

Introduction of five new Opportunity Areas – Bromley, Canada Water, Old Kent Road, Old Oak Common (currently part of the Park Royal Opportunity Area) and Harrow & Wealdstone.

Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Enterprise Zones, Tax Increment Finance initiatives or Housing Zones may be promoted, where appropriate, to assist bringing forward potential large development areas.

'Professional, real estate, scientific and technical activities' represent 49% of the projected net new job growth over the Plan period, signifying a widening of the employment base from financial services.

HOUSING

Increased target of 42,000 new homes per annum (one third above the 2011 Plan target), including 25,600 affordable homes. This target will feed through to revised targets for individual boroughs.

Boroughs required robustly to demonstrate their 5 year housing supply maximises identified housing sites.

Recognition of the contribution that the Private Rented Sector (PRS) will make to housing requirements. Viability tests of covenanted PRS should take account of the distinct economics of PRS.

Further guidance provided on setting eligibility criteria for intermediate housing and how this will be secured at reduced rates.

Greater provision and range of housing for London's ageing population. Target of 3,600-4,200 new specialist units per annum (2015-2025) and 400-500 new care home bed spaces per annum introduced.

Need for additional 20,000 student bed spaces between 2015-2025. Support for more dispersed distribution to other accessible locations, rather than concentration in central London and an emphasis on ensuring accommodation is affordable.

Residential sites over 5 ha or accommodating 500+ dwellings should encourage higher densities.

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ECONOMY

Scope for the release of surplus industrial land concentrated around public transport nodes and town centres for higher density residential redevelopment.

Promotes opportunities for mixed use, high density housing-led developments in areas of good public transport accessibility, where there is a surplus provision of retail floorspace within a town centre.

Commitment to monitor impact of loss of office space for housing across the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), as a result of the Government's liberalisation of Permitted Development rights.

Assuming retail to residential Permitted Development rights come forward, boroughs should ensure that comprehensive town centre redevelopment is not compromised in considering proposals.

Protection of small scale offices (under 500 sq m) within the CAZ where there is a particular need for local office provision. Where residential proposals result in the loss of office floorspace, subject to local office demand, a proportionate contribution to provision of new office space within or nearby the development could be required.

Supports clusters such as Tech City (City Fringe) and Med City, stretching along the Euston Road corridor from Whitechapel to White City, ensuring availability of suitable workspaces.

Promotes new and emerging sectors by ensuring availability of a range of workspaces, including start-up space, co-working space and 'grow-on' space.

SUMMARY

As anticipated, the main focus of the further alterations is the increased housing target. The target is a third higher than the original 2011 Plan target, however, continues to fall below the potential housing need of 49,000 – 62,000 new homes identified in the evidence base.

In order to address the fluctuations and unpredictability of the population projections, the proposed alterations place great weight on the need for boroughs to actively plan, manage and monitor to accommodate uncertainty.

The increased targets place pressure on local authorities to identify sites, approve and bring forward sites for residential. Crucial to achieving the targets will be maximising densities, which will require a major change in mindset for many of the London boroughs.

The Further Alterations to the London Plan is open for a 12 week consultation period ending 10 April 2014, followed by a public examination later this year and target adoption date by mid-2015.

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