

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 20 November 2006

Subject: **London Plan Review - Consultation Response**

Report of: Planning Strategy Director

Recommendation:

That the Committee agree the proposed consultation response as set out in Section 3 of this report.

Purpose of Report:

To agree a response to the Mayor of London's consultation on Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan.

Key Issues:

Following the Examination-in-Public on the Mayor's Early Alterations to the London Plan in summer 2006, which focused on the issues of housing provision and waste and minerals, the Mayor has published Further Alterations for consultation. Whilst much of the London Plan remains unchanged, and many of the changes that are being proposed are not considered inter-regionally significant, there are a number of issues on which it is proposed this Assembly make comment.

I. Background

- I.1 The Mayor of London consulted on Early Alterations to the London Plan, relating to housing provision, minerals and waste in October 2005. This Committee considered and agreed a response to the consultation in December 2005. An Examination in Public was held in June 2005, in which the Assembly participated, and the Panel published their report in September 2006¹.

¹ <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/eip-report06/index.jsp>

- 1.2 The Mayor has now published for consultation Further Alterations² which relate to the whole London Plan (although much of the document remains unchanged). This report summarises the Further Alterations and sets out a proposed response for members' endorsement. The consultation closes on 22 December 2006, and it is anticipated that the London Plan Further Alterations will be examined in spring 2007.

2. Summary of Changes

- 2.1 Much of the London Plan remains unchanged. Key changes relate to climate change, the 2012 Olympics, town centres and suburban development, and the sub-regional areas. The Alterations also roll the Plan forward from its current horizon of 2021 to 2026. Many of the changes that are being proposed are not considered inter-regionally significant.
- 2.2 However, there are a number of issues on which it is considered this Assembly should respond. These are set out in section 3.
- 2.3 The Further Alterations incorporate the Mayor's responses to the Panel's report on the Early Alterations. Whilst these sections remain subject to final approval, they have been tested through the EiP process and it is not considered appropriate for the Assembly to comment further on these matters.

3. Proposed Consultation Response

3.1 Inter-regional liaison

- 3.1.1 One of the stated reasons for the Further Alterations to the London Plan is to take account of the emerging South East Plan, and East of England RSS. As such a new Policy 1.2 has been included to address 'London and the wider metropolitan region', which advocates joint working and a coordinated approach to strategic issues of common concern. This commitment is welcomed, and reflects the approach set out in Policy CC7 of the draft South East Plan.

3.2 Aviation

- 3.2.1 Further policy text is proposed for the current Policy 3C.6 relating to Airport Development and Operation. This includes a statement that the Mayor 'believes that the aviation industry should meet its full environmental and external costs', which is supported, whilst accepting that there will still be a need for extra capacity to meet London's economic needs.

² <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/planning/strategy.jsp>

3.2.2 However, it is considered that the wording of the first sentence of the proposed new second paragraph, which states support for the conclusions of the Aviation White Paper, should be revised as it is felt this is misleading and appears to weaken the Mayor's stance on this, and especially to growth at Heathrow.

3.2.3 Representatives of the Mayor explained to members of this Assembly at the Inter-regional Forum meeting in October that the proposed policy wording does not intentionally reflect a softening of the Mayor's stance on aviation. However, it would be reassuring to see a re-statement of the Mayor's public position that additional runway capacity at Heathrow is opposed for environmental and climate change reasons in Policy 3C.6.

3.3 Inter-regional commuting

3.3.1 Paragraph 3.1.8 now recognises the issue of inter-regional commuting within the wider South East. It also commits the Mayor to working with the South East and East of England authorities to improve the reliability, quality and safety of not only on inter-regional rail commuting (as previously) but, where appropriate, coach and express bus services. This commitment is welcomed, however Policy 3C.8 still only refers to strategic rail services, and should be widened to reflect the reference to strategic coach and express bus services.

3.4 Climate change

3.4.1 Substantial changes are being proposed to the London Plan in relation to climate change. The Mayor is proposing that Chapter 4A be considerably strengthened through a strong focus on mitigation and adapting to climate change. The amended policies set out targets for CO₂ reduction, and promote sustainable construction and the use of sustainable energy sources. These additions are strongly supported, and complement the approach set out in the draft South East Plan.

3.5 Sub-regions

3.5.1 Chapter 5 of the Draft Further Alterations sets out the proposed approach to the sub-regions and the growth areas. References are included in several places in this chapter to the need for joint working between London, South East England and the East of England, and these are welcomed. The South East England Regional Assembly is keen to work with the Mayor and other partners in London to ensure the interlinkages between the South East and London are effectively addressed.

3.6 The Wandle Valley Corridor

3.6.1 It is considered that there is one particular aspect of the proposed sub-regional strategy which warrants representations. That is the proposals for the South

West London sub-region, and in particular, the proposed Development Corridor, which extends along the Wandle Valley into the South East region towards Gatwick Airport. Policy 5E.3 and Table 5E.1 of the Further Alterations recognise the Wandle Valley corridor as having potential for intensification, and the corridor is also identified in the supporting text to policy I.3 on Growth Areas.

- 3.6.2 Whilst the potential of the Wandle Valley in London for intensification is acknowledged, the corridor is not specifically identified in the draft South East Plan, and the exact nature of the linkages into the South East is not clear. The corridor between London and Gatwick is heavily constrained by Green Belt and opportunities for a 'development corridor' extremely limited, as reflected in the London Fringe and Gatwick sub-regional strategies. However, it is important that the London Plan reflects the priority for investment in the infrastructure of this corridor, as proposed in the South East Plan, thus ensuring that both plans capitalize on the economic potential of the corridor.
- 3.6.3 The strategy for the South West London sub-region, and especially sections relating to the Wandle Valley corridor, should make clear the need for ongoing liaison with the South East England Regional Assembly to consider the interplay with the London Fringe and Gatwick Area sub-regions within the South East region and in taking forward the policy approach and development proposals for this area.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Members are recommended to agree the proposed representations to the Further Alterations to the London Plan as set out in section 3 above.
- 4.2 Members of the Assembly will continue to meet with the Mayor's representatives and members from the East of England, through the Inter-regional Forum, to discuss the emerging spatial strategies for the three regions, and other issues of shared interest.

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