

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2009

EXECUTIVE – 14TH SEPTEMBER 2009

Report by the Borough Planner on the Local Development Framework.

SUMMARY

Background. This is a report on progress on the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy. Following its submission to the Secretary of State in March 2009, the Planning Inspector undertaking the Examination of the Core Strategy raised concerns in relation to the Council's affordable housing and tall buildings policies. In response to the concerns, changes to the policies were agreed (Paper No. 09-xxx) by the Executive in July 2009. This report provides an update on further work which has been undertaken in response to the Inspector's concerns.

Policy. The LDF was introduced in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and is guided by Planning Policy Statement 12 – Local Spatial Planning. The LDF, which will replace the adopted Unitary Development Plan and provide the Council's Spatial Policy, has to be in conformity with the London Plan and the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy ('Our Wandsworth 2018').

Issues/Proposals. In the light of the work undertaken since July 2009, the report details the final changes to the affordable housing and tall buildings policies, which have been forwarded to the Inspector.

Supporting Information. A copy of the Affordable Housing Economic Viability Assessment and the final version of the Stage One Urban Design Statement – Tall Buildings will be made available in the Members' Room prior to the Committee meeting and will also be available on the Council's website.

Conclusions. The Executive are recommended to endorse the further minor amendments to the proposed LDF policies in respect to affordable housing and Tall Buildings. It would then be expected that the Core Strategy could progress to its public hearing.

GLOSSARY

AHEVA	Affordable Housing Economic Viability Assessment
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
DMPDPD	Development Management Policies Development Plan Document
DPD	Development Plan Document
EH	English Heritage
GLA	Greater London Authority
GOL	Government Office for London
LDF	Local Development Framework
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PPS3	Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing
SSADPD	Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document

1. **Recommendation.** The Planning and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to support the recommendations in paragraph 3 of the report.
2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve any views, comments or recommendations on this report, these will be reported to the Executive or the appropriate regulatory and other committee for their consideration.
3. The Executive are recommended to endorse the changes to the policies as set out in paragraphs 9 – 14 and approve the use of these policies as material considerations in the assessment of planning applications.
4. **Introduction.** The Core Strategy is the most important document within the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). This sets out the Council's vision for the sort of place it wants the Borough to be and how the area should change over the next 15 years. It sets out a spatial strategy that makes provision to meet needs for housing, business, community services and infrastructure in a sustainable way, protecting both the built and natural environments while mitigating the impact of climate change. It takes account of policies in the London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2004) and reflects the spatial and land-use implications of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It sets out the Council's policies for delivering its spatial vision.
5. Following extensive consultations over the period since the summer of 2005 on the previous versions of the Core Strategy (Papers Nos. 07-692 and 08-558) a Submission Version was reported (Paper No. 09-207) to the Planning and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18th February 2009 and approved by the Executive on 2nd March 2009 for submission to the Secretary of State. The Core Strategy, including the accompanying evidence base, was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, who act on behalf of the Secretary of State, for Examination on 20th March 2009.
6. The Council subsequently received a letter from Planning Inspector undertaking the Examination on 30th April 2009 setting out a draft timetable for the public hearing stage of the examination subject to the resolution of a number of concerns. These concerns related to: the affordable housing policy (Policy IS5 c. and d.); the tall buildings policy (Policy IS3 d) and related

references to tall buildings in Policies for Places); and Implementation and Monitoring. The Council provided an initial response to the Planning Inspector on 11th May 2009 and has subsequently provided a range of further information. Following the receipt of the letter, the Council also held meetings with the Government Office for London (GOL), the Greater London Authority (GLA) and English Heritage (EH) to progress the issues raised.

7. The Planning Inspector held an Exploratory Meeting on 16th June 2009. At the meeting the Inspector detailed her concerns and the Council officers provided details of the work it had and was undertaking and the changes to policy it was recommending to make. The Inspector then set out her proposed course of action which was to require any outstanding evidence to be submitted by 4th September 2009, with provisional dates for the Pre-Hearing Meeting and start of the Public Hearing Sessions set for 8th October and 24th November 2009 respectively.
8. The recommended changes to the policies were reported (Paper No. 09-548) to Committee on 2nd July 2009. At the time of Committee, the Council was still in the process of discussing the draft Stage One Urban Design Statement with English Heritage (EH) and had yet to receive the results of the Affordable Housing Economic Viability Assessment (AHEVA). Approval was, therefore, given for the Borough Planner to make further changes to the policies in response to the results of negotiations with EH and the results of the AHEVA.
9. **Affordable housing**. Since the changes to the affordable housing policy were agreed in July 2009, the Council has received the AHEVA, which was commissioned from Christopher Marsh & Co Ltd and BNP Paribas Real Estate in response to the Inspector's concerns. The report concluded that: -

“Taking account of the difficulties in predicting the affordable housing output from Registered Social Landlords, we recommend that the Borough adopt a site based requirement for 33.3% affordable housing, which should be applied sensitively, taking full account of individual site circumstances, including financial viability.”

10. In the light of these conclusions, the final wording of Policy IS5 d. which was submitted to the Inspector is: -

“The Council will seek the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing on individual private residential and mixed-use schemes of ten or more units (gross), having regard to the above targets, the need to encourage rather than restrain residential development and the individual circumstances of the site. On individual sites, a proportion of at least 33% of homes should be affordable, but higher provision will be sought, taking into account individual site costs, the availability of public subsidy, other scheme requirements and economic viability. The Council requires economic viability assessments to be submitted with all relevant planning applications where less than 50% affordable housing is proposed or where the proportion of social rented and intermediate housing is not in accordance with Policy IS5 c. Where re-development involving the loss of housing is proposed, the Council will seek to ensure replacement housing provision at existing or higher

densities where appropriate.”

11. **Tall buildings.** The Inspector’s concerns in relation to tall buildings reflected the representations made by EH on the proposed submission version, namely that the tall buildings policy has not been informed by an urban design study in accordance with the Government endorsed EH/CABE “Guidance on Tall Buildings 2007”.
12. To address English Heritage’s and the Inspector’s concerns, the Planning Service produced a high level urban design statement, bringing together the information that was used to identify the locations which may be suitable for tall buildings. The Draft Stage One Urban Design Statement was appended to the report to Committee in July 2009. Following further meetings with EH, a final version of the study has been produced, and further minor changes were made to Policies IS3 d, PL13 e, PL11 d, PL12 h, PL13 b and PL14 iv.
13. The wording of Policy IS3 d. has been amended to read: -

“Policy IS3 d. (Tall buildings)
“Tall buildings, that is those which significantly exceed the prevailing height of surrounding buildings, may be appropriate in locations which are well served by public transport, such as the town centres and Nine Elms near Vauxhall, or at other defined focal points of activity, providing they can justify themselves in terms of the benefits they may bring for regeneration, townscape and public realm and their effect on the existing historic environment. Tall buildings are likely to be inappropriate in other areas. Detailed criteria for the assessment of tall buildings and consideration of the appropriateness of tall buildings on individual sites will be contained in the Development Management Policies Document and Site Specific Allocations Document.”
14. The wording of Policy PL13 e. (part of Clapham Junction and the adjoining area) has been amended to remove the reference to tall buildings in a specific area. This policy now reads: -

“The area around Falcon Lane should be restructured to secure an extension to the town centre in a compact and sustainable form consistent with the distinctiveness of Clapham Junction. This should take the form of a mixed-use development with good quality streets. Additional new housing can be provided in higher density mixed use redevelopment of low density retail facilities on the north side of the town centre on or close to Lavender Hill, to include enhanced retail provision where appropriate.
15. Policies PL11 d. (part of Nine Elms and the adjoining area in north-east Battersea), Policy PL12 h. (part of Central Wandsworth and the Wandle Delta), Policy PL13 b. (part of Clapham Junction and the adjoining area) and Policy PL14 vi (part of East Putney and Upper Richmond Road) have also been amended. Reference in these policies to tall buildings being “subject to the qualifications set out in Policy IS3” has been amended to read “subject to the qualifications set out in Policy IS3 and the criteria based policy on tall

buildings to be included in the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD).”

16. Following the preparation of the Stage One Urban Design Statement, work on the Stage Two Urban Design Statement is well underway. This document evaluates the suitability of individual sites and areas for tall buildings in Town Centres, Focal Points and the part of Nine Elms, SW8 (Queenstown) near Vauxhall which were identified as possibly being appropriate for Tall Buildings in the Stage one Study and Core Strategy, provides a definition of the height of what will be regarded as a tall building throughout the Borough, including the majority of the Borough where tall buildings are likely to be inappropriate.
17. **Conclusion**. The results of the AHEVA and discussions with EH on the Urban Design Statement and tall buildings policies have led to very minor changes to the policies approved in July 2009. The new evidence and related changes to policy have been submitted to the Inspector (Appendix 2) and it is expected that the Examination will now proceed as indicated in paragraph 7.

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2nd September 2009

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: -

1. Wandsworth Core Strategy: Submission Version, March 2009
2. Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning, 2008
3. Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, 2006
4. Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
5. London Plan – Consolidated with Alterations since 2004, February 2008
6. Guidance on tall buildings, English Heritage/CABE, 2007

If you wish to inspect any of these papers, please contact Martin Howell; Tel: 020 8871 6647; email mhowell@wandsworth.gov.uk.

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council’s website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk/committ) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Committee Secretary (Francis deLima – 020 8871 6488 email fdelima@wandsworth.gov.uk) can supply it if required.

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