

Subject: Planning Committee Work Programme

Report to: Planning Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 18 March 2015

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out Committee work undertaken in 2014/15, previously agreed priorities, and a list of topics that may form the basis of developing a work programme for the coming Assembly Year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes this report that sets out work completed in the Assembly Year 2014/15 (paragraph 3.2).**
- 2.2 **That the Committee notes the topics being considered in the ongoing work towards drafting a full workprogramme for 2015/16 (paragraphs 4.4 – 4.10).**
- 2.3 **That the Committee delegates authority to the Chair in consultation with the Deputy Chair to agree a work programme for approval at the next Committee meeting on 16 June 2015.**
- 2.4 **That the Committee delegates authority to the Chair in consultation with the Deputy Chair to agree the main item for the next Committee meeting on 16 June 2015.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Committee receives a report monitoring the progress of its work programme at each meeting.
- 3.2 Much of the work in 2014/15 focussed on the various implications arising from London's unprecedented recent growth. A number of meetings reviewed subjects that ultimately contributed to the revision of the London Plan (including the Examination in Public) and the development of the Mayor's Infrastructure Plan.
- 3.3 The Planning Committee undertook the following work in 2014/15:
- **Protection of London's Green and Open Spaces:** The Committee meeting on 28 January gave Members the opportunity to assess whether the protections to green and open space need to be altered or strengthened in the London Plan.
 - **Consultation on Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP):** The Committee met on 25 February to discuss a number of key policy proposals contained in the Draft FALP.

The resulting information was used in the Committee's response to the consultation (published on 10 April 2014).

- **London's Mixed and Balanced Communities:** On 25 February, the Members discussed the policy objective of promoting communities balanced by tenure and household income as set out in the London Plan and agreed to commence further work to assess the extent to which this is being achieved. Members delegated authority to the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chair, to agree the next steps of the project that will be carried forward into the Committee's work programme.
- **Density of New Housing Development in London:** The Committee met with experts from the fields of architecture, planning, urban design, academia and the GLA on 11 March 2014 to discuss the definition of density, the state London's housing density, challenges to delivering supporting infrastructure, the impact of the density matrix on land values, alternative configurations to accommodating higher density and whether the London Plan should be revised to include policies that influence density.
- **Long Term Infrastructure Investment Plan for London:** In June 2014, the Planning Committee wrote to the Mayor containing a number of recommendations on what his draft infrastructure plan should contain. The letter also included a memorandum that provided additional context and detail, based on a number of meetings undertaken by the Committee since November 2013. The Committee met experts to discuss the Mayor's consultation on the London Infrastructure Plan 2050 on 14 October 2014, and responded formally to the proposals in November 2014.
- **Examination in Public of Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP):** The Committee undertook to examine the Draft FALP in public in meetings on 1 July and 14 October 2014, wrote a set of submissions to the Examination in Public during the August recess, and participated in a number of sessions of the EiP in September.
- **Tall buildings and London's skyline:** On 10 June 2014, the Committee met to discuss with experts the reasons behind a growing number of proposals for tall buildings and ways in which the planning system can manage this apparent trend.
- **Old Oak Common and Park Royal Mayoral Development Corporation:** The Committee responded to the Mayor's public consultation on the Old Oak Common and Park Royal MDC based on a discussion with experts on 1 July 2014. On 17 December 2014, the Assembly met to consider the Mayor's proposals to designate a Mayoral development area at Old Oak and Park Royal, and did not vote to reject these proposals.
- **Permitted Development Rights:** The Committee responded to Government's Consultation on Technical Consultation on Planning on 14 October 2014.
- **The Mayor's Strategic Planning Decisions:** The Committee heard from, and put questions to, a number of invited experts on the exercise of the Mayor's strategic planning decisions powers on 18 November 2014.
- **Localism in London - What's the Story?** Produced on 20 November 2014, the Planning Committee's report 'Localism in London – What's the Story' reviewed the evidence, three years on from the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. It found that there has been slow progress in the uptake of devolving powers to local communities as the legislation was designed primarily for smaller, more homogenous areas than can be found in London. A report following up the responses to the report can be found elsewhere on this agenda.

- **Long term options for accommodating London's growth:** On 22 January 2015 the Committee reviewed the implications for growth on brownfield sites, suburban intensification and greenfield, as well as the issues surrounding the co-ordination of planned growth outside London.

4. Issues for Consideration

Work plan priorities

- 4.1 In the last Assembly year the Committee used three central aspects of strategic planning policy for managing and prioritising its work programme. The three main areas of policy were:
- Undertaking the work for the revision of the London Plan, the Mayor's 2020 Vision and the Infrastructure Plan.
 - Policy documents/guidance supplementary to the London Plan - these documents (SPGs) are aligned to key issues, including open space, accessible London, affordable London, localism, and liveable world city.
 - Opportunity area frameworks –The Mayor's London Plan identifies 33 Opportunity Areas and ten Intensification Areas, 12 of these have published frameworks and the Committee resolved to review further frameworks as they are published for consultation.

Potential work for 2015/16

London Plan related work

- 4.2 With the publication of the Further Alterations to the London Plan it is unlikely that there will be a requirement to review the Plan in 2015. The focus in 2015/16 will most likely be reviewing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Opportunity Area Planning Framework Guidance. The following consultations are expected:

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Central Activities Zone Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) – July 2015
- Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) – May 2015

Opportunity Area Planning Framework consultations

- Public Consultation on the London Riverside Opportunity Area Planning Framework – 9 February 2015 (closes 24 March 2015)

Long list of potential topics for 2015/16

- 4.3 As part of maintaining a rolling 12 month workprogramme, a number of potential topics have been identified by Members for future review. These are listed below.
- 4.4 **GLA land and property assets:** The GLA owns a portfolio of 181 land and property assets across London, covering more than 650 hectares. Most of these assets are either currently being disposed of, or are marked as for future sale. However, in February TfL will launch a process to bring forward up to 50 sites with around 10 million square foot of development potential. Members may wish to review how these, and other, sites are meeting the Mayor's policy objectives set out in the London Plan – for example to increase the supply of affordable housing in London, provide sites for new

employment and secure the delivery of community infrastructure etc. The work would build on and complement work planned by the Budget and Performance Committee by looking at wider implications of the disposal strategy for the London Plan.

- 4.5 **Viability of development and the impact on housing targets:** The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that the viability of schemes can be important where planning obligations or other costs are being introduced. In these cases planning decisions must be underpinned by an understanding of viability, ensuring realistic decisions are made to support development and promote economic growth. Where the viability of a development is in question, the guidance is that local planning authorities should look to be flexible in applying policy requirements wherever possible. Members may wish to undertake a short review on how the viability of schemes are being calculated, the variables taken into consideration and the impact on the delivery of housing against the Mayor's London Plan targets.
- 4.6 **London's mixed and balanced communities:** Mayoral planning policy supports communities mixed and balanced by tenure and household income that should be promoted across London which foster social diversity, redress social exclusion and strengthen communities' sense of responsibility for, and identity with, their neighbourhoods. The Committee has previously looked at changes in the makeup of London's communities between 2001 and 2011 using census data. Members may wish to undertake a piece of work that maps the extent to which this policy is being delivered in the period since 2011.
- 4.7 **Tall buildings and London's skyline:** London's skyline has changed rapidly over the past decade significantly influencing the character of the city, dividing many over the character, geography and necessity of these buildings. The Committee met in June 2014 to discuss the 236 buildings of more than 20 storeys under construction in London according to New London Architecture (NLA)¹. Members may wish to undertake a piece of work that builds on last June's work, bringing together disparate opinions on proposed tall buildings and clarifying the Committee's position on planning for future developments.
- 4.8 **Estate Regeneration:** On 12 February the Housing Committee published a report on regenerating housing estates that gives recommendations to the Mayor and Government on best practice for both new-build and renovation schemes for estates. Members could investigate the planning policy implications of these proposals and may wish to hear from key stakeholders on how they will consider the recommendations in light of planned regeneration and new developments in London.
- 4.9 **Social infrastructure provision:** While 'hard' infrastructure such as pipes, sewers and substations is pivotal for supporting the growing population of London, so too is social infrastructure. Social infrastructure is the network of schools, hospitals, parks, religious buildings, community centres, sports clubs, leisure centres and other spaces vital for people's health and welfare in London. The Mayor published a 'Draft Social Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance' in May 2014 which was open to comments until 5 October 2014. Members may wish to hear more about the Guidance in its draft form or wait until the final publication of the Guidance. Members may alternatively wish to engage with a specific element of the Guidance, which covers general planning, health and social care, education, sports and faith requirements.

¹ London's Growing Up!, NLA Insight Study, 2014, page 63 http://www.newlondonarchitecture.org/dls/TB_B1.pdf

- 4.10 **London's relationship with the rest of the south east:** London's predicted growth will add a further 2 million people to the city within the next 20 years. It is becoming increasingly apparent that options to spread this growth beyond London's boundaries may be necessary for sustainable growth and to relieve pressure on supporting infrastructure. This has been recognised by the Mayor and will form part of the next review of the London Plan. The Mayor has proposed holding a summit with Home Counties council leaders in March, to discuss cooperation on managing the capital's housing growth. The Assembly's Conservative Group recently published a report that suggested creating new garden suburbs outside London in partnership with county councils to accommodate this growth.² Members may wish to review the various options for managing and co-ordinating London's growth outside the city's boundaries.

Draft Committee timetable of meetings

- 4.11 The draft timetable of meetings for 2015/16 has been published. This gives the Committee dates for six formal meetings:

16 June 2015	16 July 2015	17 September 2015
17 November 2015	26 January 2016	10 March 2016

- 4.12 A previous BMAC decision established that, if during the year a committee modified its approved work programme and/or number of meetings in response to topical events, and an ad hoc extra meeting was called for, that would be permitted if the Members of the committee concerned agreed; if two or more Members of that committee did not agree to a proposal for an extra meeting, the matter would be referred to the GLA Oversight Committee for determination.³
- 4.13 Members are recommended to note the ongoing work towards drafting a full workprogramme for 2015/16 using those topics set out in paragraphs 4.4 – 4.10 above as a basis for discussion.
- 4.14 Members are recommended to delegate authority to the Chair in consultation with the Deputy Chair to agree a work programme for approval at the next Committee meeting on 16 June 2015.
- 4.15 Members are recommended to delegate authority to the Chair in consultation with the Deputy Chair to agree the main item for the next Committee meeting on 16 June 2015.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

² Southern Powerhouse, January 2015 <http://glaconservatives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/southern-powerhouse.pdf>

³ <http://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s36184/Committee%20Timetable%202014-15.pdf>

List of appendices to this report: none

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers:

None

Contact Officer: Paul Watling, Scrutiny Manager

Telephone: 020 7983 4393

Email: scrutiny@london.gov.uk