

INITIAL QUESTIONS FOR OUTER LONDON COMMISSION CONSULTATION

The response of the London Primary Care Trusts

Prepared by the NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit

Background

The Mayor has appointed a Commission to:

- find out the extent to which Outer London has potential to contribute to the economic success of London as a whole,

Response

It is not helpful to talk of economic success in isolation from other attributes of a city and its community. To speak of 'holding back' suggests that there are readily identifiable barriers to this single measure. Recent events alone have suggested that economic success as recently defined is far from a panacea. Sustainability, resilience and diversity are suggested alternative more balanced objectives objectives.

identify the factors which are holding it back from making that contribution, and

- make recommendations on policies and mechanisms which will enable it to do so. The Commission has been tasked more specifically to explore how these objectives can be achieved by:
 - identifying the scope to 'grow' the Outer London economy on a sustainable basis, through encouragement of competitive, established sectors and attracting new ones,
 - encouraging the development a few large 'super-hubs' where there is limited finances for infrastructure development just outside the Olympic area that will require a dramatically improved infrastructure eg, Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Croydon, Brent Cross and the Heathrow area, together with wider rejuvenation of Outer London's town centres and other business locations,
 - enhancing the 'quality of life' in outer London in terms of the business and residential environments and examining the relationship between demographic, housing and economic growth,

Response

The health and well being of the whole community, physical and mental should have been included in the description of quality of life.

- fostering initiatives which make the most of Outer London's distinct townscapes, including the potential of some locations to accommodate tall buildings,
- improving infrastructure, especially the balance to be struck between different types of provision for orbital and radial movement both strategically and locally,
- extending and deepening the skills base of outer London and addressing barriers to employment to meet existing and future business needs,
- identifying and enhancing the linkages with other parts of London and the wider South East which will support the broader objectives,
- suggesting how existing funding arrangements can be made more effective and pointing to new priorities for the future, and
- suggesting how relevant institutional arrangements can be refined to meet existing and future economic needs.

The Commission is taking forward its task in two ways. Firstly through statistical and other types of analyses and secondly by asking authoritative stakeholders in the outer London economy how it can best achieve its objectives. This engagement is being carried out through a series of informal and formal meetings and by providing an opportunity for written representations. Government experience of similar exercises suggests that the most effective way of undertaking such a consultation is by posing a series of written questions – this provides a structure for stakeholders to respond to while still allowing, indeed encouraging, them to raise other issues.

These questions are set out below. More detailed questions will be posted on the website to be addressed more specifically by the Commission's economic, quality of life and transport working groups. The Commission welcomes comments which are addressed generally across Outer London and/or more specifically concerned with the particular circumstances of your borough or sub region. The Commission has used the same definition of Outer London¹ as does Government for grant distribution purposes. However, it is mindful that parts of these Boroughs have 'inner London' characteristics and that parts of some Inner boroughs have Outer attributes so responses will be welcomed from stakeholders associated with relevant Inner boroughs. Further details of the Commission's approach to its work, including its terms of reference, evolving thinking and the public submissions already made to it will be available on its website: <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/planning/olc/> or by contacting outer.londoncommission@london.gov.uk .

The Commission is working to a tight deadline in order for its recommendations to inform preparation of the Mayor's replacement London Plan. It therefore would be appreciated if written representations are made as

soon as possible. All written representations should be made by 5th May 2009.

(A) Economic

(1) Why has Outer London growth in employment lagged behind that of Inner and Central London and that of the South East?

Response

The job markets of London and the wider south east have been predicated on an excess of demand in central London linked with the growth of the financial sector. It is unsurprising that local, indigenous employment growth has been restricted in the wider SE. The UK economy as a whole lacks innovation and diversity and vibrant (what do you mean by this please clarify) non service sectors.

(2) What factors have contributed to the uneven performance of economic sectors and geographic areas in Outer London? Why have some economic sectors prospered and others declined? Why have some areas done better and others worse?

Response

Local economic development has received insufficient emphasis in line with the above strategic trends. The diversity of local centres could be bolstered and new streams of employment through 'green' or environmental jobs could have been and can be inserted. The loss of employment land and local opportunity sites and buildings has been driven by the overwhelming concentration on housing numbers and a reliance on relatively distant employment markets.

(3) Overall, what are the main barriers to economic and employment growth in Outer London and what factors need to be addressed to allow the region to fulfil its economic potential? In particular, what investments are needed (particularly transport, both private/public, and education/skills and business support) to best ensure employment growth to 2031 either in existing or new sectors?

Response

Demand side factors include low skill levels, ill health and incapacity. Supply side factors include the lack of community level innovation and investment, including in community owned assets and lack of accommodation or space. The transport system that has prioritised or failed to discourage long distance commuting underpins this migration of workforce.

(4) Which of the current employment sectors in Outer London will be thriving in 2031 and will any new sectors have emerged by then? Should we be actively encouraging particular sectors or focusing more on barriers that could be holding back growth in outer London?

Response

Much more employment should be found locally out of 'green and low carbon activities and production. The importance of the health sector and medical excellence should be recognised allied with up skilling of indigenous populations.

(5) The Commission's 'First Thoughts' paper outlines some ideas on the form 'super hubs' might take and possible locations. Do you consider the development of 4 or 5 super-hubs in Outer London would enhance the Outer London's overall employment growth potential? What form do you think they might take? What role could mixed use development have there?

Response

Super hubs may well have a role to play but the above factors relating to a greater self containment of economic activity need to be addressed if the wasteful commuting patterns and a lumpy economic structure are to be undone and not simply reproduced in a different configuration.

(6) Which super-hub locations would you consider best meet the aim to improve Outer London's economic performance and why?

1 Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Sutton, Merton, Kingston, Richmond, Hounslow, Hillingdon, Ealing, Harrow, Brent, Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Waltham Forest, Newham, Redbridge, Barking, Havering

What can be done to ensure that the super hubs are sufficiently attractive to business that businesses would want to base their operations there? Improve transport links to Polyclinic sites identified in the PCT's Estates strategies.

What is required to ensure that a sufficient employment base is created for a super hub; in particular, could growth be achievable with or without infrastructure improvements (specify the infrastructure improvements needed)?

Response

The location and connections of any super hubs need to take intelligent account of labour markets and avoid in principle excessive car based commuting. The infrastructure to enable active travel and to reduce pollution is urgently needed. Employment concentrations may need additional health facilities such as walk-in centres if workplace medical services become standard. New archetypes are needed to produce more efficient and liveable integration between open space, employment space and housing.

Specifically in Waltham Forest the over ground and underground rail links need review. In order to travel from the north to the south of the borough or visa versa you would need to go into London and out again. There is also a need to improve bus links in both the Higham Hill / Blackhorse lane area with huge development plans for both housing and the public realm envisaged over the next 5 years. There is also a need to improve transport links to the Polyclinics that are being developed in both Redbridge 'The Loxford Polyclinic' and 'Oliver Road Polyclinic' that have no close overground or underground rail links and a limited or no

bus service. In Waltham Forest specifically this would also assist with access to SCORE project and LOFC in the Oliver Road area.

(7) If super-hubs are created, what role would you envisage for other town centres and other business locations/hubs (eg Park Royal) in Outer London and how can those roles be enhanced alongside the creation of super-hubs?

Response

If this is considered to be a zero-sum exercise very serious thought needs to be given to non super hubs in order to define a vital and viable role for local communities based on walkable and low carbon neighbourhoods. The success of super hubs at the expense of local centres would be no success at all. Most PCT's have identified in Outer London via their Estates strategies where the location of their Polyclinics would be. It would be useful to map where in the main these centres were and then overlay the transport links to see where the shortfalls are and what needs to be prioritised in each area in conjunction with the local councils.

(8) What do you consider would be the optimal balance of employment opportunity for outer London between local opportunities, those in Central or Inner London, or those outside London in nearby growth corridors? What are the implications for these other areas?

Response

It is absolutely crucial that super hubs do not deny or divert appropriate investment from inner London boroughs. Worklessness and deprivation continue to be unacceptable in many inner areas despite the growth in specialised jobs that have proved not to be accessible to large sections of the local populations.

(B) Quality of Life

(9) In absolute and relative terms (compared with Central and Inner London and the South East) how has the residential environment changed (good or bad) in Outer London over the last 25 years and how has this affected its attractiveness as a place to live, work and do business.

Response

There is surely convincing evidence of a deterioration of living conditions and a widespread failure to enhance living conditions in the marginal areas. Traffic volumes have resulted in greater noise air pollution and severance and despite a welcome reduction in recent years a continuing and unacceptable level of accidents that disproportionately affect disadvantaged young people.

The evidence would appear that families until very recently have normally elected to leave London to raise children. Realistic and useful indicators of ?? please elaborate are necessary to monitor these trends.

(10) What improvements would bring about the greatest improvements to the quality of life for outer London residents, workers and businesses? How would these bear on the economic objectives of the Commission?

Response

The burden of ill health and the extent and intensity of health inequalities despite significant improvements continues to be unacceptable. There is a considerable body of evidence as to the nature of these issues in for instance the recently produced Joint Strategic Needs Assessments. It would be helpful if the Commission were to draw together or cause to draw together this evidence so that the baseline is clear. The NHS is continually striving to improve the quality of care and patient experience. However, it is axiomatic that much of the burden of ill health stems from social and economic factors and is therefore not susceptible to clinical interventions. It follows that the future strategy for the development will Outer London will inevitably have a significant and unavoidable effect on the health and well being of the community. It is essential that these effects are anticipated and every effort made to ensure that they are overwhelmingly positive.

Whilst people need choice and diversity choices need to result in much more self contained patterns of activity. Movement needs to be overwhelmingly by public transport, walking and cycling. Air pollution should be drastically reduced. Green space that is safe attractive and accessible needs to be ubiquitous. Affordable highly efficient housing is needed. If significant progress could be made in these directions then the burden of ill health, physical and mental would be significantly reduced. The increased quality of life would necessarily underpin a more productive workforce.

(11) How could super hubs affect the quality of life in Outer London for residents, workers and businesses?

Response

Super hubs would allow instant access to Health care for residents, workers and businesses from 8am – 8pm, 7 days a week .

(12) How important is the provision of **local** social infrastructure to the quality of living in Outer London? (schools, health or other specific infrastructure). How does this bear on the economic objectives of the Commission?

Response

The provision of accessible high quality local infrastructure is vital to enable the community to participate fully in social and economic life. Poor services will result in, for instance, ill health, incapacity and low

educational attainment. Poor accessibility will result in excessive cross urban movements, for instance to school, that increase congestion, pollution and accidents. Such infrastructure in the right place at the right time is an essential underpinning of a vibrant local economy and would in the right circumstance actually lead private investment. The NHS in London has embarked on a very substantial programme to reconfigure services so as to provide better care closer to home in the form of GP-led health centres and the like- 'Healthcare for London'. The integration of social infrastructure into neighbourhoods and centres is essential for sustainable communities and for underpinning long term value. It is essential that the plans of the Commission are fully aligned and where possible integrated with those of the NHS in this respect.

(13) What are the factors that give your or other districts in Outer London a sense of place and community ownership? How will these bear on the economic objectives of the Commission?

A sense of place and community ownership is achieved through involving local people in the development of new centres or super hubs providing excellence in all manner of service provision. It is important to encourage employment of the local people in these buildings and also to provide community space to allow individuals to make best use of the premises. The local community needs to have a medium to air it's voice so that it feels listened to and involved in the due process.

(14) What improvements would you like to see in the quality of the public realm e.g. open space quality and provision? How will these bear on the economic objectives of the Commission?

Response

If the definition of 'public realm' is wide and encompasses all aspects of the built and natural external environment then high quality, safety durability, accessibility and vibrancy are essential attributes to enable centres and neighbourhoods to thrive. Public realm is not simply the street and a matter of design and materials.

Transport

(15) How would you make the super-hubs you have indicated more generally accessible to residents and workers from across London and outside? What is an acceptable balance between public transport and provision for cars? Will this vary in different parts of Outer London e.g. in the Thames Gateway relative to West London

Response

Unless there is a step change in the volume of car traffic the UK's carbon targets will not be met and significant health effects will continue to pose an unacceptably high burden on the health service. The proportion of short journeys by car is unacceptably high. Many more journeys should be on foot or by cycle. A radical approach to rapid comfortable public transport integrated with activity centres is needed. The notion of super hubs in outer London attracting commuters from wide catchments will only be sustainable if that movement is overwhelmingly by public transport. The integration of rail, bus and underground is still completely inadequate and needs urgently to extend to the mainline network. The East Anglian line for instance will be massively over crowded without major additional investment. The continuing failure to meet the public transport needs of the Gateway and the continued parallel reliance on jobs to the west, will be unsustainable.

(16) What approach should be taken to traffic management including car parking, congestion and pollution and the bearing these have on climate change? How could this bear specifically on super-hubs, and more generally across Outer London if employment growth rose above historic trends and travel patterns changed as Outer London became a more attractive place to work?

Response

In order to adopt the most effective strategy much more intelligent analysis and modelling is needed of the interrelationships of homes, employment and other activities. Scenarios should be built within such models and tested to judge which patterns of land use and modes produce the lowest carbon trajectories and highest quality of life. Given the massive inertia of the built environment changing existing, business-as-usual, trajectories is going to be immensely difficult but will not be achieved without a better understanding of the urban dynamics. It may be that dispersed peripheral development is in fact less sustainable than concentrated economic activity in a city like London. In any case the development of 'peripheral' super hubs must not result in further disadvantage to inner London where despite employment growth in some specialised sectors disadvantage continues to be at an unacceptable level.

(17) Where traffic demand exceeds capacity in outer London, what tools would be most effective for smoothing traffic around town centres (and managing crowding) in addition to or where there is not scope for infrastructure improvements?

(18) Extensive radial public transport networks already exist to town centres and some super-hubs, what needs to change to make them the modes of choice?

(19) The development of super-hubs is likely to require public transport improvements to make them more accessible. That in turn is likely to need

residential densities to be optimised around and within the super-hubs to justify the necessary transport investment. Is this trade-off acceptable to secure better public transport access and employment growth and is there a particular, economically viable, balance to be struck between residential intensification, transport investment and employment growth?

Response

It is simply not possible to answer this question without evidence as to the dynamic interrelationship of these aspects, as explained above. The intensification of activity around hubs will be detrimental to the extent that it produces an environment that exacerbates noise, pollution, severance and anomie and, in the wider context results in greater carbon consumption. Dense, vibrant and diverse environments, pedestrian-based with high quality services and open space would appear to be compatible with an increased quality of life. Child density is an important factor and there is an overwhelming imperative to ensure that children have access to diverse safe and attractive play opportunities.

20) Do super-hubs need to evolve into 'hub and spoke' networks serving the neighbouring areas to make the most of opportunities for local residents? How could a hub and spoke network service the more geographically extensive labour markets required to support super-hubs (and provide accessible opportunities to more workers within and outside London)? If these networks are road based systems, should options for further demand management be considered?

Response

Evidence is needed as to the relative carbon trajectories of the options being suggested before a 'road based system' could be deemed to be sustainable.

The super hubs can as has been discussed above be integrated in a well designed mixed use typology but only with utmost care and with investment in the necessary infrastructure. The access network needs to be predicated on walking and cycling and then public transport. Home working needs to be encouraged and the optimum electronic networks and energy and heat networks built-in at the outset or rapidly retro-fitted.

(21) More generally, what are the key destinations/services which people in Outer London want access to?

Oliver Road Polyclinic, Oliver Road, Leyton London E10 5LG

SCORE Project Oliver Road Leyton London E10

LOFC Oliver Road, Leyton London E10 5LG

The Loxford Polyclinic, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex

(22) How important is the provision of local transport infrastructure to the quality of living in outer London? How does this bear on the economy of outer London?

Response

The pattern of movement by age, gender class and ethnicity in outer London is known to be very complex as its dispersal, timing and purpose. Employment trips are only a proportion of the daily trips. Understanding this pattern of movement is an essential prerequisite to any attempt to modify it. Continuing reliance on dispersed destinations only accessible by car is demonstrably unsustainable. The health effects of this approach are very significant and contribute for instance to heart disease, respiratory disease diabetes, poor mental health and injury. These effects are not only an unsustainable burden on the health services but are also externalities that are reducing economic output

Have you any other comments you would like to make to the Commission?

Response

The review of the role and future direction of travel of outer London is timely and necessary. There are strong arguments for suggesting that the more balanced development of London as a whole may be beneficial and may in some real sense be an imperative in the light of climate change. However, we urge the Commission to take a holistic view of what constitutes economic development and to give the highest possible emphasis and the priority to creating the conditions for sustainable development and to make explicit the objective of reducing the unequal burden of ill health which is as prevalent relatively in outer as in inner London and improving the quality of life. Health, the environment and the economy are inextricably linked.

We believe that the health sector has a vital role to play on developing and delivering such a forward –looking strategy and look forward to further dialogue.