

Outer London Commission

Response from the North London Strategic Alliance

This paper from NLSA has been developed with its partners. Given the depth of information already given to the Commission from North London and the Commission's stated wish to focus on the long term strategic economic drivers for Outer London we intend to focus on the two key strategic corridors within the subregion – what could be termed “super-corridors”.

This is not to down play the importance and potential of other sites within north London to deliver meaningful economic growth in the coming decades, specifically our diverse range of town centres, such as Walthamstow, Wood Green, Enfield Town and Finchley. We touch on the key town centre issues at the end, restating our earlier comments.

Interim report and Commission meeting

The NLSA was requested by the Commission to submit an interim submission to inform the March meeting of the Outer London Commission, which focused on the North London Subregion.

This first report goes into detail of the character and diverse issues facing outer London and north London specifically.

The NLSA fielded a team from the private and voluntary sector, as well as Borough Chief Executives to give evidence to the OLC meeting in March. After presenting oral evidence the team took over two hours detailed questions for the commission.

In addition individual boroughs within North London will be making submissions.

London – Luton Coordination Corridor

We welcome the recognition of Brent Cross as a potential growth hub and economic driver within the Outer London Commission's initial papers. We would also ask that the wider context is considered, the concept of the London to Luton Co-ordination Corridor and links between Brent Cross/ Wembley/Kings Cross and out to Watford and beyond. This corridor has been adopted in the London Plan (adopted February 2008), following the recommendations of the Inspectors.

There are a number of major sites along the corridor which are projected to deliver major employment and housing growth in the coming decade. The Brent Cross-Cricklewood planning application is moving towards determination in 2009, while even in the recession work is still actively being progressed at Wembley, Kings Cross and Colindale.

London – Luton Coordination Corridor: Major sites

	Projected New Homes	Projected new jobs
King's Cross	2,250	25,000
Euston	1,000	5,000
Brent Cross / Cricklewood	7,500	20,000

Colindale	10,000	500
Wembley City	10,000	10,000
Harrow	4,000	13,000

Based on London Plan figures, from 2006-2026

In addition locations in Hertfordshire and beyond are projected to deliver major growth in the coming decades. For example currently the area around Luton is projected to deliver 26,300 new homes by 2018, while Watford is looking at 5,000 new homes (East of England Plan, May 2008).

Associated with housing growth there are a variety of interventions which will promote economic growth at key locations such as Brent Cross and Wembley City. Key building blocks, such as the strong Higher Education presence (in the form of Middlesex University in Hendon), and the strength of business formation in the corridor means that the area has the potential to be a major economic driver. In the London fringe the major health campus in Watford (onsite), will also be an important provider of employment and is seeking a strong link with the Metropolitan Line.

A major factor required is significant investment in the transport links along the corridor.

Road Network: The long term capacity requirements on key routes such as the M1, A1, A5 and A406 will need to be modelled and planned for now.

Rail: The Thameslink Programme will see major capacity enhancements on the severely overcrowded routes into London. However access from key growth sites needs to be improved with enhancements required at stations including Mill Hill and Cricklewood.

Tube: The Northern Line already has major capacity issues and, despite the enhancements being delivered by the current PPP, a long term solution needs to be found.

West Hampstead: The interchange at West Hampstead will be increasingly important as a link between Thameslink, Jubilee Line and Overground services (including to Stratford). This means the current arrangements will have to be significantly improved to make sure that passengers can move between services efficiently and safely.

Orbital Routes: The orbital routes to and between the key growth points, such as Wembley and Brent Cross, remain weak and new solutions are required to unlock the full potential of these sites.

Upper Lee Valley

The Upper Lee Valley represents London's largest Opportunity Area, at over 3,000ha. It is strategically located for growth as part of the

London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth corridor and forms the northern boundary to the Olympic Park. At its heart are the greenspaces and waterways of the Lee Valley Regional Park, the regeneration of this area is a clear legacy of the 2012 Olympics.

The NLSA co-ordinated a new vision for the Upper Lee Valley as North London's Waterside. This sets out an ambitious regeneration framework for the corridor. It is a shared vision "owned" and taken forward by the three boroughs (Enfield, Haringey, Waltham Forest) and with the direct support of the Mayor and the GLA Group. The GLA's **Upper Lee Opportunity Framework**, due in 2009, will be an important element to progress this vision. In addition the Upper Lee Valley Partnership is

progressing key projects such as the Upper Lee Strategic Landscape Study and the Upper Lee Economic Strategy, to be launched this year, giving a clear “direction of travel” for the Upper Lee Vision. There needs to be greater recognition of the Upper Lee’s ambitious growth agenda, driven by its strengths; access to the regional park, its industrial and logistical assets.

The policy around the Upper Lee is evolving rapidly, with the development of a number of key masterplans and Area Action Plans. Sites such as Meridian Water in Central Leaside and Ponders End in North East Enfield are proposing major uplifts in their potential compared to current London Plan figures. LB Enfield’s submission outlines in more detail the raising ambition for their key sites in the Upper Lee. At the same time a proposal for a major redevelopment of the Tottenham Hotspur stadium (which lies almost adjacent to the Haringey / Enfield boundary) is progressing and should deliver significant employment and housing growth. Tottenham Hale, with its excellent rail and Victoria Line links is already delivering significant numbers of new homes and linked with Waltham Forest’s adjacent Blackhorse Lane site will deliver nearly 4,500 new dwellings.

The London Plan review must reinforce the vision for the Upper Lee and be flexible enough to accommodate the growing ambition for the area.

The availability of so much vacant and under-used land at this location provides a unique opportunity in London to create an exemplar new mixed-use community, built on eco-town principles and utilising new technologies that could take into account combined heat and decentralised power generation with the creation of sustainable employment. In addition, because the Upper Lee is close to existing centres such as Tottenham, Edmonton and Walthamstow, with careful planning and investment in local social and transport infrastructure delivery of the new vision will drive regeneration of London’s most deprived neighbourhoods.

London Development Agency / Homes and Communities Agency

Due to the concentrations of deprivation, large levels of underused land and comparative weakness of the market a long-term investment strategy from the LDA and the HCA will be required to deliver the Upper Lee’s potential. The Upper Lee Valley Partnership seeks specific support for its ambitions to deliver:

- A sustainable economy based on recycling and advanced technology resource management; together with specific **green industries** linked to and driven by strong knowledge-based economy;
- A **visitor and leisure economy**, using the natural attributes of the valley and its proximity to the Olympic Park and ready access to central London;
- Stronger **logistics and distribution function** based on selective investment in key transport priorities and modern industrial estates which use the natural advantages of the Upper Lee’s connection to road, rail and water.
- Improving educational achievement and raising skill levels is key to transforming perception of the area. LDA needs to proactively support partners in improving the **HE/FE** presence in the area with a specialism linking to emerging sectors of green technology and environmental industries.

Transport investment remains a major barrier to growth in the corridor.

West Anglia Line: A metro-style stopping service along the Lee Valley, along with enhanced links to Stratford / Olympic Park, would improve the accessibility of deprived communities to jobs and opportunities, while also opening up a number of sites for development.

Tottenham Hale: The station is already a gateway to London but needs improvements to make it more accessible. In addition, reconfiguring the gyratory outside is key to unlocking the potential of Tottenham Hale for housing and retail developments.

Stansted Airport: With BAA remaining committed to a second runway, and passenger throughput on the existing runway increasing from 25 million to 35 million per annum, the role of Stansted as an economic driver for this part of London needs to be more seriously considered within regional (and inter-regional) planning.

Roads: Improvements are needed to orbital and radial routes, most notably the A406 and A10, if current levels of congestion are to be reduced and environmental impacts mitigated. In addition, enhanced access to the M25 will be vital to if it is to remain a key industrial / logistical area in London.

Town Centres

In addition to the concept of what may be called “*Super-Corridors*”, the NLSA would like to reinforce its earlier comments on town centres made in its interim response (March 2009). Town centres will be major drivers of sustainable employment growth in Outer London and should be seen by the GLA group and others as the focus for investment.

Office Market

In north London over 50% of office space is pre-1970 (rising to 80% in Waltham Forest). There is a vicious circle of poor quality units, leading to low rents, leading to a lack of investment and a lack of renewal of the office stock. However GLA’s “*London Office Policy Review 2007*” and NLSA’s work has demonstrated that there is a strong “hidden” office market in outer London town centres – with an employment breakdown of 49% Office based, 35% retail, 16% other (*Over the Edge, NLSA 2008*). The GLA’s review showed the considerable office demand forecasted and virtually non-existent supply, in Enfield, Haringey and Barnet.

LDA/GLA Economics needs to develop a model on the role of public sector intervention to support sustainable office and high-skilled workspace in outer London. Pro-active (but sustainable) investment from the public sector may be needed to kick-start the renewal of office development in key sites in outer London. However, very careful consideration will be needed on the form, location and models of investment.

Transport

The weak orbital links to outer London town centres needs to be addressed. A suite of measures specific to the individual town centres will need to be developed, with TfL working with the specific boroughs. The **bus network**, provides the most cost-effective method to tackle poor orbital links; problems include inadequate links to key opportunities and services, variable frequencies, bus-on-bus congestion and poor safety and security. In addition issues such as **bus-based transit** schemes and orbital **Express bus networks** need to be tested and piloted, as well as **Intelligent Transport Systems** improving information for public transport users. It should be noted that these are not new ideas and are well understood by boroughs and TfL. What is needed is the investment and drive to implement these concepts.

Interchanges, especially on overground stations, often need investment to improve overall quality, accessibility and address concerns over safety and security.

Public realm

The public realm in a number of North London **town centres** requires enhancing. Interventions range from de-cluttering streets to highway improvements. Examples of proposed major schemes include those at Archway, Wood Green and Wood Street.

Increased funding is needed for the North London boroughs, through their **Local Implementation Plans**, to deliver smaller schemes, including those in and around stations, which complement major projects and support local place shaping.