London Assembly Plenary Meeting: Thursday 6 February 2020

Transcript of Item 4 (Part A) - Mayor’s Opening Statement

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Good morning. We are pleased to be with you here today to discuss the new London Plan. We are now coming to the end, as you have said, of what has been a long but productive process. After a huge amount of research and work with local councils and other partners we published the draft London Plan in December 2017. This was very much a new London Plan, with a new approach to sustainable development and a strong emphasis on good growth where growth is inclusive and brings benefits to communities.

The Plan was a direct response to the major challenges facing London; the housing crisis, which is making it hard for many Londoners to find a decent and affordable place to live; rapid population growth, which is putting significant pressure on land; high levels of income and health inequalities; the climate emergency and toxic air pollution; and competition from other global cities for talent, business and investment. The Plan sets out clear policies to address these challenges and to make London a healthier more inclusive city that continues to be globally successful. This is about making the best use of London by optimising rather than maximising density; delivering genuinely affordable housing and increasing overall delivery, protecting London’s vital industrial capacity which keeps our city functioning, requiring major developments in London to be zero carbon, increasing green cover to more than 50%, getting more people walking, cycling and using public transport, supporting town centres and high streets to adapt so they can continue to be vibrant places that provide a range of jobs, goods and services, safeguarding the cultural assets that Londoners value, growing the night-time economy, and protecting the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL).

We have had, Chair, a huge response to the consultation, receiving around 4,000 written submissions. In response we made a number of minor suggested changes in August 2018. The Plan was then subject to the Examination in Public (EiP) early last year. This involved 51 sessions over 12 weeks reviewing 94 different matters with more than 300 different organisations and individuals participating. Following this examination we made further suggested changes to the Plan in July last year [2019]. We then received the report of the examination from the Panel of Inspectors in October [2019]. As you will have seen, the report is overall supportive of the Plan, concluding that the detail is justified and all the matters it covers are of strategic importance. The Inspectors made 55 non-binding recommendations, we have accepted 40 in full or in part. There are 15 that we have not accepted, the most significant of which relate to deleting the aviation policy which reflects my opposition to a third runway at Heathrow, lifting our ban on fracking, committing to a review of the Green Belt and weakening the Green Belt and MOL policies. These are things which we believe are absolutely not in the interests of Londoners.

Chair, our response to the Inspectors’ recommendations was sent to the Secretary of State along with the Intend to Publish version of the Plan in December [2019] and this is what we have laid before the Assembly to consider today.

As you can see, we have been on quite a journey, making more than 1,500 changes to the Plan in response to feedback from partners, stakeholders and the Inspectors themselves. The Plan has been informed and influenced as a result of the generous and thoughtful engagement of everyone involved,
including members of the public and, importantly, Members of the Planning Committee and wider Assembly. I thank you all for that.

Publishing the London Plan is critical to delivering good growth and to building a city that works for all Londoners so everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential, lead fulfilling lives and strengthen the bonds we share with Londoners from all walks of life and backgrounds.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the Greater London Authority (GLA) officials who have worked on the Plan and pay special thanks to Jennifer Peters, Head of London Plan and Growth Strategies, who is leaving the GLA tomorrow after steering the Plan to this stage.

I look forward to your comments and taking your questions this morning.