



# **NEW APPROACHES TO / ISSUES FOR REGIONAL CO-ORDINATION**

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**OUTER LONDON COMMISSION ROUND 4 | 2015-16  
TOWARDS A REVIEW OF THE LONDON PLAN**

# NEW APPROACHES TO / ISSUES FOR REGIONAL CO-ORDINATION

## 1 LEGAL/NATIONAL CONTEXT

- 1.1 There are 156 local authorities within the wider South East region including London, the East and the former South East of England. Under the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended), the Mayor of London must consult and inform local authorities in the vicinity of London about the preparation of his plans. National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) states that 'cooperation between the Mayor, boroughs and local planning authorities bordering London will be vital to ensure that important strategic issues, such as housing delivery and economic growth, are planned effectively'.
- 1.2 In terms of the preparation of the plans of authorities outside London, these authorities and the Mayor are bound by the 'duty to co-operate' (DTC) as introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Since July 2014 the Mayor has received around 90 consultation and engagement requests from planning authorities outside London. Most of these are from authorities within the former East and South East of England and on London's boundaries. The Mayor of London has developed a mechanism to log these requests, screen and consider them for strategic London-relevant issues and, where appropriate, respond.

## 2 CURRENT CO-ORDINATION/CO-OPERATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 In early 2014 a senior officer group (Strategic Spatial Planning Officer Liaison Group – SSPOLG) with around 20 voluntary representatives from across the wider South East, was formally established to discuss the potential of sharing data and approaches to strategic spatial planning. It has so far largely focused on demography, housing and infrastructure issues. Further details about SSPOLG are available on the following website: <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/cross-boundary-strategic-planning-co-operation>
- 2.2 At a political level, London's Deputy Mayor for Planning has been meeting the leaders of South East England Councils (SEEC), and more recently the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) – umbrella organisations for most of the former East and South East England regions respectively – to discuss informally common strategic policy and investment issues.
- 2.3 Following the first DTC responses by the Mayor and in the run-up to the Examination in Public of the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP), some authorities within the wider South East indicated that they had not been engaged sufficiently in

the London Plan's preparation. They asked to be more closely involved in the Full Review of the London Plan.

### **3 TOWARDS MORE EFFECTIVE CO-ORDINATION/CO-OPERATION ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 Since then, the Mayor, EELGA and SEEC have jointly been investigating options for more effective co-ordination of strategic policy and infrastructure investment across the wider south east. This led to a regional summit in March 2015 at which leading councillors discussed potential objectives and arrangements for a new structure. All authorities within the wider South East were invited to the summit and over 100 attended. It concluded with broad support for the creation of a mechanism to take forward discussions between London, East and South East England on planning, housing, infrastructure and the economy based on a roundtable format.
- 3.2 Full notes and papers of the March 2105 regional summit are available on the following website: <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Item%205%20-%20Wider%20South%20East%20Summit%20-%20Notes.pdf> .
- 3.3 Five roundtable meetings have now been scheduled for July and September 2015. The task of these events is to develop and agree recommendations for more effective co-ordination. These will go forward to a second wider south east summit planned for 11 December 2015.
- 3.4 Potential functional factors, and the elements of a new coordination structure which follow, are set out in sections 2 and 3 of a draft discussion paper that was presented to the most recent SSPOLG meeting on 5 May 2015. The discussion paper is available via the following website:  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Item%205%20-%20Roundtable%20discussion%20note.pdf>

### **4 THE LONDON PERSPECTIVE – YOUR VIEWS**

- 4.1 The Mayor has asked the Outer London Commission to investigate potential future co-ordination arrangements from a London perspective. This process will operate collaboratively and in tandem with the work with partners outside London described above. Collaboration will take place through exchange of papers and meeting notes, and it is expected that the recommendations of both processes will inform the second regional summit on 11 December 2015.
- 4.2 You may wish to consider the questions set out overleaf on form and function of the new structure as the starting point for this discussion. These are largely based on the more detailed points set out in sections 2 and 3 of the roundtable discussion note referred to in paragraph 3.4 above.

## QUESTIONS ON THE FUNCTION OF NEW CO-ORDINATING ARRANGEMENTS

- R1 Should London and the wider south east be viewed as one area for managing growth? What are the planning implications of this for housing and jobs growth and strategic infrastructure provision?
- R2 Which strategic policy issues affecting this part of London would benefit from being considered through some co-ordination of planning with authorities across the wider south east as a whole, or with representative of adjoining sub -regions?
- R3 Should new co-ordinating arrangements only consider pan-regional or also cross-boundary issues? At what level does an issue go from being cross boundary to pan-regional?
- R4 How could useful co-operative relationships be built (over time) across the border, going beyond the statutory requirements under which the Mayor and LPAs work? How can any value be added to this process?
- R5 How could new co-ordination arrangements usefully promote and enable the development of a common evidence base, and a shared understanding of how local and sub-regional economies, housing markets and labour markets interact and to what extent could it do this effectively?
- R6 How could new co-ordination arrangements facilitate the identification of different views among its members? And how might these different views be accommodated?

## QUESTIONS ON THE FORM OF NEW CO-ORDINATING ARRANGEMENTS

- R7 Which geographical area should new co-ordination arrangements cover? Should it vary depending on the issue?
- R8 Who could constitute the membership? How many local authority representatives, how many LEP representatives and others should be directly involved?

- R9** What should be the format of new co-ordination arrangements, and how many layers should it have? For example, should it include a regional plenary for all members and/or sub-committees for specific issues/ areas? Plus a political leadership group and officer servicing group?
- R10** How should new co-ordination arrangements be managed and by whom, and how should the required resources be shared? and how should it engage with its constituents/ the public?
- R11** How should new co-ordination arrangements relate to and work with structures and bodies within London?
- R12** Should an evolutionary or incremental approach be taken to the development of new co-ordination arrangement, capable of adapting to changing circumstances – or should it be firmly fixed from the outset?