

**GLA working group on strategic spatial planning co-ordination  
Meeting to be held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 at 2pm at City  
Hall, Queen's Walk, London.**

**Agenda**

- 1 Apologies**
- 2 Notes of last meeting**
- 3 Discussion on duty to co-operate**
- 4 London Plan – FALP update (John Lett)**
- 5 Proposed working group (Lee Searles – see paper)**
- 6 Priority strategic spatial planning policies issues (see paper - John Lett)**
- 7 Next steps and potential for one further meeting of this group**

## Working Group members

Richard Linton	GLA (Chair)
John Lett	GLA
Lee Searles	Consultant to GLA (Secretary)
Sue Janota	Surrey County Council
Jack Straw	Mole Valley DC/Surrey Planning Officers Association
Robin Miller-Scott	South London Partnership
Zhanine Oates	Essex County Council
Martyn Thomas	LB Havering
Stephen King	North London Strategic Alliance
Paul Donovan	Hertfordshire County Council
Paul Stimpson	Head of Planning Policy and Projects
Stephen Kelly	Harrow Council/West London Alliance
Steve Walker	Environment Agency
Nick Woolfenden	South East England Councils
James Doe	Dacorum BC/Hertfordshire Planning Officers Network
Alison Bailey	Bucks Planning Officers Group
Tania Smith	Dartford Borough Council/Kent Planning Officers Group

**Notes of the GLA Working Group on strategic spatial planning co-ordination, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at City Hall**

**Present**

Alison Bailey	Bucks Planning Officers Group
Mide Beaumont	DCLG
Paul Donovan	Hertfordshire County Council
Peter Hall	LB Havering
Sue Janota	Surrey County Council
Matthew Jericho	Essex County Council
Stephen King	North London Strategic Alliance
Richard Linton	GLA (Chair)
Lee Searles	Consultant to GLA (Secretary)
Tania Smith	Dartford BC/Kent Planning Officers Group
Jack Straw	Mole Valley DC/Surrey Planning Officers Association
Steve Walker	Environment Agency

**Apologies** – John Lett (GLA), Ian Smith (South London Partnership) and Nick Woolfenden (SEEC).

**Notes of last meeting** – The notes of the last meeting were agreed.

**London Plan – FALP Update** – RL reported that it is expected that a FALP consultation will launch on 15<sup>th</sup> January. A launch event is being arranged for 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014. More consultation meetings will be organised with particular groups and topic interests in the two months following. Members of the working group were briefed informally on the issues proposed for inclusion in FALP, to be agreed by the Mayor shortly. The first formal meeting of the new proposed working group would fall within the consultation period (towards its end) and so would be able to take stock of responses and issues arising, as well as contribute its own views.

The key issue being addressed in FALP relates to the demographic issues which affect household projections and housing requirements, and the spatial planning responses to them. The group were referred to the agenda paper outline strategic planning co-operation issues arising from FALP which broke down these issues into a number of elements.

The group discussed how co-operation might work in relation to these issues. Firstly, there would need to be a shared understanding and hopefully agreement on the demographic challenge. Secondly, there would be a need to understand whether the proposed FALP responses are supported and, thirdly, if they are, the implications for London and other local planning authorities.

The group discussed whether there is capacity among local planning authorities outside London to work with the GLA's demographers on the interpretation of DCLG and GLA demographic/household projections. Both DCLG and GLA said that there may be ways to support this. It was noted that a meeting is to take place shortly between GLA and DCLG on the interpretation of demographic and household projections.

The status of London Plan corridors was raised by PD who said that, following the abolition of regional spatial strategy, corridors have no formal status outside London and so FALP should take the opportunity to review this situation. RL said that, at present, there is no intention to do that.

**Outline strategic planning co-operation issues arising from FALP** – In the light of the discussion above, these were largely endorsed as important issues for consideration. The group highlighted the need for further development of the table to include further transport and environmental issues. The group were reminded that the table only picked issues out of those being reviewed in FALP. Nevertheless, the table would be reviewed to ensure that these issues are not missed.

**London Infrastructure Plan** – RL outlined the purpose and scope of the new London Infrastructure Plan. As outlined at the last meeting, the plan will be a broad document looking 50 years ahead and asking some fundamental questions about how London's growth is going to be directed in the context of infrastructure requirements in the widest sense. Currently, a number of ideas and issues are being generated and some consultative meetings are being held. By the time the proposed formal working group holds its first meeting there should be a more developed idea of the shape of the plan. This could form the basis of a presentation and discussion on its emerging themes.

**Discussion on the Duty to Co-operate** – The working group felt it would be useful to discuss the application of the Duty to Co-operate in the London and wider metropolitan area context. Mide Beaumont explained that the Duty applies to prescribed bodies (of which the Mayor is one) where their activities inform or pave the way for the preparation of development plan documents. Clearly, the Mayor's London Plan will do this and so co-operation with local planning authorities in the preparation of their plans is implied.

Richard Linton said that the Duty does not apply to the preparation of the London Plan itself since it is not a local plan, but a form of regional plan of the type the duty was intended to compensate for the loss of. Regardless of the technicalities, the Mayor wishes to co-operate with local planning authorities on the preparation of London Plan policies and has made efforts to find ways to engage with local planning authorities from the wider metropolitan area in order to discuss how.

**Proposed new formal working group** – LS presented a proposal for the establishment of a new working group to be drawn from London and other local planning authorities in the wider metropolitan area and from corridor partnerships, statutory consultees and other relevant bodies. It would meet four times per year and would be chaired by the GLA. The aim would be to promote greater co-operation and co-ordination on spatial planning issues with the aim of building co-operative working sustainably in line with policy priorities and resource constraints. The proposal was agreed by the group. LS will assist with preparations for the establishment of the new group, which will have its first meeting in March 2014.

**Next meeting** – It was agreed that a further meeting of this group is not needed and that the next meeting should be the first of the new formal working group. Participants are thanked for their involvement in the working group and it is hoped that they are able to take part in the new group in the New Year.

### Strategic Planning co-operation issues arising from FALP

The Mayor's Planning team have indicated that the Mayor would like to work positively with local authorities and others to develop mechanisms for strategic spatial planning policy co-operation. A seminar organised by GLA officials on 24<sup>th</sup> October discussed the policies which will be reviewed in the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) which is being carried out now with an anticipated completion by the end of 2015 or early 2016.

This gives a practical edge to discussions about how to build co-operation where it can benefit strategic spatial planning policy development and local authority local plans. As a more limited review of the London Plan, it provides an opportunity to test co-operation measures. Some emerging FALP issues with strategic spatial planning implications are drawn out below and discussed.

<b>FALP emerging policy proposals or inputs</b>	<b>Specific issues</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Housing requirements</b>	Population growth – projections (models) and migration assumptions, implications for household size.	<p>Important and unexpected demographic challenges have arisen from the 2011 Census results. These are complicated by the effects of the economic downturn, in particular in relation to whether recent trends are transitory or structural. Current models also may need to evolve to more accurately interpret the data. Together, there is uncertainty over how to reflect the results in FALP and then a subsequent full review of the London Plan.</p> <p>Clearly, there is a need for London and surrounding local planning authorities to develop a shared understanding of what the data reveals, over the methodology and scenarios that should be used for projections, and the implications for housing requirements.</p> <p>This is important for the Mayor in setting out London's housing requirement in the London Plan and also local planning authorities in developing their local plans.</p> <p>Initial discussion of this issue at the first working group meeting and at the GLA workshop in October hinted at technical capacity issues which may exist outside London. How can this be dealt with?</p>

	<p>Density assumptions – intensification around high PTAL locations, High quality urban environment, scaled to surrounding areas.</p>	<p>Emerging policy proposals for FALP are examining the potential to intensify development in areas of high public transport accessibility including in town centres, opportunity areas and on surplus employment land, but consistent with the objective of sustaining local neighbourhood character.</p> <p>Developing a shared understanding around how the approach to density has been formulated and the contribution it makes to meeting London’s housing requirements could be useful to all local planning authorities in responding to London Plan issues but also in developing consistent approaches across local plans.</p>
	<p>Space standards – Effects of maintaining Mayor’s standards instead of Government proposed standards.</p>	<p>The Mayor’s adoption of London housing space standards has been a successful policy in terms of improving the quality of housing provided in the Capital. FALP will examine the implications of sticking with these standards, as opposed to adopting emerging national standards. The implications for housing provision could be usefully discussed in order to understand the scale of impacts.</p>
	<p>SHMA</p>	<p>The implications for the SHMA should be discussed.</p>
	<p>Delivery assumptions – backlog and forward delivery</p>	<p>The recession of the last five years has led to a housing delivery backlog in London. Demand and need has not gone away and so, looking forward, there is a need for a shared understanding of what a sustainable delivery trajectory looks like. This will help to foster a shared understanding of what is reasonable in terms of projecting London’s housing delivery over the London Plan period.</p>
	<p>‘Exports’</p>	<p>What does all of the above mean with regard to London’s ability to meet its housing requirements within its boundaries and the extent to which some housing needs will need to be met in surrounding areas?</p>
	<p>Longer term thinking</p>	<p>The scale of population growth predicted needs to be understood. The approach taken by the London Plan to meeting the resulting housing requirement, based on making the most effective use of land in relation to public transport accessibility, access to employment and sustaining local character, also needs to be understood. It may be that there is a longer term requirement for a more radical strategic spatial approach in future full London Plan reviews.</p>

		It would be useful to discuss the premise for this and to consider what approaches could be examined.
<b>Transport</b>	Parking policy in outer London	Parking policies are an important factor in the economic performance of town centres. The difference in parking standards applied to town centres in adjacent local authority areas inside and outside London is affecting their attractiveness. It would be useful to develop shared thinking about how parking policies can play a positive role in shaping successful town centres.
<b>Employment</b>	Employment projections, Town Centres and Retail	There is a need to begin thinking in policy terms about how to take account of the impact of changes in consumer demand and behaviour on town centres and retail patterns, for example through multi-channel. The usefulness of retail needs assessments which currently underpin planning policies needs some careful review. There would be a significant advantage for all in developing a shared understanding and approach to future planning policies for town centres and retail, across borders and avoiding potentially damaging short term approaches.
<b>Waste arising and apportionments</b>	Municipal, Commercial and Hazardous	Projections for Municipal and Commercial & Industrial waste arisings have been reworked using the latest available data, and consequently borough-level apportionments have been revised (this has been done in-house but evaluated by an external consultant). Across the piece, projected arisings and apportioned waste are down by around 25-30% on the 2011 London Plan figures, and consequently the amount of waste projected to be exported from London (already due to reduce over time as London's waste self-sufficiency kicks in) is less than before.

## **Proposal for an officer level working group on strategic spatial planning issues**

### **Introduction**

The idea to establish an officer level working group to discuss and share information on strategic spatial planning issues was first aired in the Mayor's November 2012 discussion paper on strategic spatial planning co-operation. It was discussed at the March 22<sup>nd</sup> workshop for planning officers held by the Mayor's officials. In responses to the Mayor's paper and in discussion at the workshop, the idea was given strong support as a practical mechanism to strengthen dialogue on technical planning issues of a strategic nature.

Since then, the Mayor has commenced a limited set of further alterations to the London Plan (FALP) which is timed for completion in early 2016. Officials have disseminated early information on emerging proposals in FALP. It makes sense to seek to establish a working group now in order to discuss which issues are most relevant in a 'strategic spatial' sense to local authorities in and outside London, related to FALP. This could also help to establish good working relationships ahead of a future full review of the London Plan. It would also enable local authorities to raise their concerns and issues that would benefit from strategic co-operation.

A short task and finish working group has been established which can oversee and influence the shape of these working arrangements. At its first meeting, it endorsed this general approach in principle. At this second meeting, it is asked to comment on and hopefully agree a template for the working group and its operation.

### **Context**

From work carried out in support of this project it is clear that different working groups have different capacities and systems in place which give them a varying level of ability to act, respond, make decisions etc. Because of this and in view of the severe resources constraints everyone is under and which are arguably increasing, the working group should be established fairly simply to start with.

The idea is to try to reflect as much of the geography of London and the wider area in the membership. This is more geared towards reflecting the issues raised by different geographies than representative decision making. Based on feedback from local authority officers, it seems extremely unlikely that an agreement by the working group members can bind the areas which they represent. This is because most networks don't 'agree' policy positions, but exist to share information and experiences. Also, there is the issue of not being able to agree to issues which are properly within the remit of elected members to decide.

It is therefore unlikely that the group will be able to make important decisions affecting the whole area. This is all about making a start in building dialogue, shared understanding of technical planning issues, investigating shared issues and informal agreement on approaches and standards. That said,



the fact that FALP is being prepared means that there is a practical edge to this proposal. A limited number of important policy issues could be discussed through the working group.

### **Working Group Geography and Membership**

The group would include participants from the areas of London, Surrey, Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. This is on the basis that the need for strategic spatial planning co-operation is greatest between these areas and with London. Representation could be achieved in a range of ways:

- Through strategic partnerships and alliances which cross boundaries
- Through county-based planning officer networks
- From individual local authorities
- From other local authority representative organisations
- From key statutory consultees

Because the group will not be making binding decisions, there is no need to be very strict about who takes part, save to say that it is important for different areas to be involved. A fairly arbitrary proposal is to limit membership of the group to 20. This could be reviewed if unnecessarily restrictive.

### **Draft terms of reference**

It is proposed that the terms of reference be adopted for an initial period of one year after which they should be reviewed or reconfirmed. The initial proposed terms of reference are set out below.

The working group exists to:

- Promote shared understanding and use (where appropriate) of strategic spatial planning policy assumptions, issues and responses.
- Improve shared understanding and use of common data, standards and monitoring.
- Foster dialogue about policy options for strategic spatial planning policies in London and the wider metropolitan area.
- Discuss how shared approaches can strengthen the case for strategic transport, economic development and environmental infrastructure delivery.

### **Powers**

The Working group would have no powers as such. It could potentially undertake the following activities with the agreement of its members:

- Provide a forum for discussion of topical strategic spatial planning policy issues.
- Act as a technical sounding board for the development of London Plan policies.

- Disseminate information, with the aim of improving awareness of particular technical issues.
- Be a conduit for consult between local authorities and others on particular technical issues.
- Highlight common approaches as good practice.
- Feedback to Government on key technical aspects of planning system operation in London and the wider metropolitan area.
- Undertake research, either through the efforts of its members, through resources in host organisations, or by commissioned work funded from sources to be identified.

## **Meetings**

Some proposals are set out below:

- Meetings of the working group could be held four times per annum.
- Meetings would be held in London, normally at the offices of the GLA and normally (possible) on a Friday at 2pm.
- Meetings would normally last no more than 2.5 hours.
- The group would be chaired by an officer from the GLA with a vice-chair from a local authority outside London.
- A secretary would be identified to support and resource the group.

## **Agendas**

A suggested approach to agenda planning and shape is set out below:

- One month prior to each meeting, a call for agenda items would be made.
- A meeting or teleconference would be held between Chair, Vice-Chair and secretary to agree agendas
- Each agenda would be despatched no later than one week prior to the meeting.
- At each meeting, the following standing items would be included
  - New items for consideration (enabling new issues to be raised at the meeting)
  - Key actions report (based on the group's agreed actions)
  - Plans update (new issues and cases relevant to the group)
  - Confirm notes of last meeting
- One or two key discussion topics at each meeting, relating to the issues on the radar of the group. This could be informed by papers and/or presentations to the group, with actions proposed where appropriate.
- With the agreement of the group and others, a note summarising its work would be written and disseminated via the GLA website and local authority networks.

## Resources

The Working Group will be supported by a secretary from within GLA resources, which will be identified shortly. The role of the secretary will be to:

- Undertake and manage the call for agenda items
- Convene a discussion with the chair and vice-chair to agree the agenda
- Commission papers and directly prepare papers for meetings
- Ensure venues are booked and are appropriately set up.
- Liaise with other participants who may be attending meetings
- Support the chair and vice chair at the meetings
- Takes notes of the meetings and log agreed actions
- Progress chase actions to delivery in-between meetings
- Collect intelligence for meetings in terms of relevant plan/issue updates
- Support the identification of emerging issues for the working group through liaison with participants and wider stakeholders.

## Possible timetable

Step	By when?	Actions	By who?
Agreement to proposed working group	6 <sup>th</sup> December working group meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes revisions in light of comments and send out to group</li> </ul>	Group/LS
Invitations/nominations process for new working group	By end of January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conjunction with existing working group members, prepare a short invitation letter and send to appropriate contacts. Chase responses.</li> </ul>	LS
<u>One further meeting of existing working group?</u>	Late January?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss capacity to respond to issues raised.</li> <li>• Discuss coverage of new working group</li> <li>• Discuss agenda for first meeting of working group</li> </ul>	LS
First meeting of new working group	Early March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange venue(s)</li> <li>• Prepare agenda and despatch</li> <li>• Confirm Chair and Vice chair</li> <li>• Agree terms of reference</li> <li>• Identify gaps in representation and remedy.</li> <li>• Agree forward programme</li> <li>• Discuss capacity issues</li> </ul>	
Second meeting 2014	Early June	Tbc	
Third meeting 2014	Early September	Tbc	
Fourth meeting 2014	Early December	Tbc	

**DRAFT Notes of first meeting of the GLA Working Group on strategic spatial planning co-ordination**

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at City Hall**

**Present**

John Lett, GLA

Celeste [Giusti](#), GLA

Ben Corr, GLA (part of meeting)

Lee Searles, Consultant to GLA

Stephen King, London Stansted Cambridge Corridor

Ian Smith, South London Partnership

Robin Miller-Scott, South London Partnership

Paul Stimpson, Slough Borough Council/Berkshire Heads of Planning

Jack Straw, Mole Valley District Council/Surrey Planning Officers Association

Alison Bailey, South Buckinghamshire District Council/Buckinghamshire Planning Officers Group

Des Welton, Hertfordshire Planning Co-ordinator

Sue Janota, Surrey County Council

Zhanine Oates, Essex County Council

Paul Donovan, Hertfordshire County Council

Steve Walker, Environment Agency

**Apologies**

Richard Linton, GLA

Neil Woolfenden, South East Councils

Martyn Thomas, London Borough of Havering

James Doe, Dacorum District Council

Tania Smith, Dartford Borough Council

**Discussion notes and actions**

**Context for the Group** - Lee Searles explained the purpose of the working group which is to examine in closer detail the issues and ideas presented at the GLA's March 22<sup>nd</sup> workshop on strategic spatial planning co-operation. The group picks up where that left off. If the working group comes to some clear conclusions about the workability of co-operation mechanisms to address co-operation issues at a variety of scales, then GLA will consider extending its work in this area with partners in 2014.

John Lett explained that the timing of the establishment of the group means that it could be an important mechanism for information sharing on issues now emerging in the preparation of Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP). He outlined a number of demographic and housing trends which will be important considerations in the development of FALP, with potential cross-boundaries [implications foreffects on](#) adjoining authorities. Information relating to this will be presented to a workshop of London and wider local planning authorities on 25<sup>th</sup> October at City Hall.

New information presented to the meeting in outline related to household projections and migration projections using new information from the 2011 Census, [ONS and CLG](#). On a range of scenarios using the GLA's own model, this points to a higher than currently expected level of households [growth](#) in London ~~and the wider metropolitan area~~. Based on what has already been

identified in the London Plan, this impacts on housing requirements supply beyond 2030. The Mayor is currently considering a range of responses in FALP to address the issue, but will most likely focus on an 'interim' policy response which will be reviewed once the demographic future for London and the wider region had become clearer – at present it appeared that constraints on the housing market associated with the recent recession had significantly reduced the traditional out migration flows from London to surrounding areas. pending the development of updated projections from ONS and further trend information.

The key areas which are being examined in FALP were also presented in outline. These will be presented to the workshop on 25<sup>th</sup> October. Taken together with the population and household information, these present a range of pressing issues which could usefully be shared and explored with authorities in the wider region, on which some form of co-operation is needed, starting with the development of a means of sharing information and discussing it.

Lee Searles explained that the work of the group would focus on officer working relationships and mechanisms. It has been recognised at a political level that there were weaknesses in previous strategic spatial planning working arrangements, stemming from the lack of basic infrastructure for officer working across London's boundaries with authorities in the areas beyond. This made it difficult to progress strategic actions. It is acknowledged that truly strategic decisions and debate will need member input and oversight. Separate initiatives will consider these, including a new regular but informal meeting between the mayor's representatives and those from South East Councils.

**Officer level working group based on planning officer networks** – In the context of the information presented to the meeting, there was ready agreement to the idea of organising a regular officer-level meeting with representatives from GLA, county officer networks, county councils, London sub-regional partnerships, London Boroughs, policy topic groups, statutory consultees and officer representatives from the main member bodies, such as South East Councils and London Councils.

The main priority of the group would be to organise a working model for this for agreement by the next meeting on 6 December. Lee Searles will make contact with each member of the working group to discuss the issues in more detail.

**Periodic Workshops** – The group agreed that these are a good thing – the GLA has organised two workshops this year, providing a forum to discuss co-operation in March and planning for housing forthcoming on 25<sup>th</sup> October. A new working group would be able to provide an input to the topics for these meetings.

**Online Forum** – At the present time, the group felt that an online forum is a step too far and that it would not be well used. This is something that should be revisited if greater co-operation is achieved and interactions grow.

**Plan Monitoring** – It was felt by the group that, at the current time, authorities would not use information collected via a shared plan monitoring service.

**Co-operation Strategy** – The Group felt that the Co-operation Strategy approach is the right way to go in the long term. However, two things stand in the way. The first is a lack of resources to undertake the process and the second is the possibility that it might be overtaken by events on FALP.

The Group will make progress on developing a working group as agreed above and return to this issue at the next meeting on 6 December.