

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Background

The Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea (VNEB) Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) is a non-statutory spatial planning document, prepared by the Mayor of London in consultation with a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations. It has been prepared in the context of the London Plan 2008 (Consolidated with Alterations since 2004) and the Mayor's A New Plan for London 2009. It is currently at consultation draft stage. The objectives of the OAPF include bringing together local and strategic policy across the Opportunity Area (OA), establishing and providing guidance for Borough level plan making, and assisting and implementing cross borough projects.

The purpose of this sustainability appraisal (SA) is to assist formulation of the OAPF by assessing, evaluating and predicting the effects of the OAPF and recommending measures to mitigate identified effects. Ultimately, the objective of the SA is to increase the credibility of the OAPF and its material weight in planning decisions.

The SA Process

The SA runs alongside the development of the OAPF and the results of the SA are incorporated into the OAPF. The key stages of the SA process for the purposes of this report are summarised in the following table:

A. Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying other relevant plans, policies and programmes and sustainable development objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting baseline information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying Sustainability issues within the OA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the SA framework
B. Developing and refining options and assessing effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing the OAPF objectives against the SA framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the OAPF options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predicting and evaluating the effects of the OAPF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising the effects of implementing the OAPF

The SA framework

An analysis of plans, programmes, policies and baseline data has been undertaken and used as a basis for developing sustainability objectives against which the OAPF has been tested. An assessment of social, economic and environmental issues has also been undertaken to assist in developing the sustainability objectives. This framework of objectives is called the sustainability appraisal framework and features 18 separate objectives. The objectives have been tested against each other for compatibility and potential conflicts identified, although many of them overlap and are interdependent. In addition, a set of indicators to track progress towards each objective have been selected, and are included in the SA framework.

Testing the OAPF objectives against the SA framework

The Consultation Draft OAPF objectives have been tested against the sustainability framework. There are eight OAPF objectives in total, and a matrix has been used to test the sustainability of the OAPF objectives and identify potential conflicts. Overall, the OAPF objectives are broadly compatible with the sustainability framework and there are no objectives that are either mutually incompatible or where mitigation could not resolve conflicts. The most likely conflicts arise through the need to secure growth for housing, including affordable housing, employment, and related infrastructure and the need to preserve and improve the natural environment and the character of the built environment.

Developing the OAPF options

The OAPF incorporates a Development Capacity Study that considers five separate density options. A 3D block model was developed to test special capacity for new jobs and housing in the OA, and density options were used to test public highway, highways, open space and social infrastructure requirements.

Predicting and evaluating the effects of the OAPF

The effects of the five OAPF density options have been predicted and evaluated with respect to the sustainability objectives. For further robustness, a negative or positive symbol has been used to show progress or otherwise towards each indicator aligned with an individual objective. A more detailed impact assessment is provided for Revised Scenario 5 (the preferred OAPF option), assessing the likelihood, magnitude, permanence and timescale of effects.

Mitigation measures

Based on the prediction and evaluation of effects, there are several areas where Revised Scenario 5 may result in negative effects and/or where further mitigation may enhance positive effects. Further mitigation measures are therefore recommended with respect to the following sustainability objectives:

- Equality and diversity;
- Transport and travel;
- Heritage and the built environment;
- Bio-diversity;
- Water resources;
- Waste; and
- Air quality and climate change.