

Planning Committee

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Our ref:
Date: 24 September 2014

Consultation response: Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation

On behalf of the London Assembly's Planning Committee please find our agreed response.

The Mayor has launched a public consultation on his proposals for the creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) to cover the areas of Old Oak Common and Park Royal. According to the Mayor, the MDC will "seek to support transformational change and development at Old Oak" stimulated in part by the opportunities brought about by the recent announcement that Old Oak will be a location for a future High Speed 2 mainline station. The MDC will also seek to protect and regenerate the industrial areas of Park Royal.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the Mayor is required to submit his final proposals to the London Assembly which then has 21 days within which to decide if it is to reject them and can do so through a two thirds majority. Subject to this, the Mayor then formally notifies the Secretary of State that he has designated a Mayoral Development Area. The Mayor hopes and expects that this process will be completed in time to allow the Corporation to commence its function on 1 April 2015.

On behalf of the London Assembly, the Planning Committee has heard from witnesses about the GLA's proposals¹. The investigation highlighted the importance of a number of issues, including: the need to protect and enhance existing industrial uses; the need for sufficient numbers and types of affordable housing; and the role of community input.

The Planning Committee has substantive comments on the following questions:

Question 1: Do you agree that the designation of a Mayoral Development Area, and creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation, is the most effective way to meet the Mayor's objectives for the Old Oak and Park Royal areas? If not, what arrangements would you propose instead?

Question 3: Does the proposed boundary offer the best opportunity to achieve the objectives set out in this document? Should any area be omitted? Should any other areas be considered for inclusion? What is your rationale for any proposed omissions or inclusions?

¹ The Transcript for the Committee meeting held on 1 July can be found here:
<http://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s38154/Minutes%20-%20Transcript%20-%20Appendix%201.pdf>

Response: There is overall support for the establishment of an MDC to meet the significant regeneration potential of the area as defined by the boundary of the proposed Mayoral Development Area (MDA). This is a complex regeneration project crossing three borough boundaries, with a large number of stakeholders, some of whom may have conflicting objectives. The ambition – to create a 21st century growth area - is substantial with the potential for significant numbers of new homes and new jobs. The industrial base of the area will also be transformed and a new piece of London created. Considerable investment will be needed to remake and upgrade the area’s infrastructure. These objectives can best be realised through a focused regeneration vehicle with the requisite planning powers.

The Assembly supported the creation of the only other MDC, that covering the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and has provided oversight of the organisation’s operation over the past two years; regularly reviewing both its budget and operations. We would anticipate similar oversight mechanisms to be established for the new MDC and that there be regular dialogue between the Assembly and the MDC.

Question 2: Does the purpose of the Corporation correctly address the Mayor’s objectives as described in this document? If not, how should they be changed?

Response: The Planning Committee supports the purpose of the MDC (as set out in paragraph 6.2 of the consultation document). However, the Committee would place specific emphasis on the need to protect and enhance the interests of existing businesses and residents as well as securing high quality sustainable development of the area.

The objectives of creating a new 21st century growth centre and of rejuvenating the industrial offer at Park Royal are to be welcomed. However, the future use of industrial land must be carefully considered. We note the importance of Park Royal, the number of businesses there and the functions they serve, in terms of supporting the growth and development of the London economy as a whole and would not want to see this compromised. Furthermore, waste management facilities should be retained, with scope to be developed further as London’s waste management demands require. Finally, the transition process will require sensitive handling and careful phasing. This MDA is unlike the Olympic Park MDA given the existence of nearly 2,000 businesses and a small, but well established, residential population. We want to highlight that the amount of disruption to existing businesses and residents should be minimised through careful planning and phasing of the investment plans of existing interests, and that the operational requirements of existing businesses (small and large) are taken into account during the long transition process.

We also welcome the 20 plus years ambition to create a number of communities with between 20,000 to 24,000 homes planned. However, where possible, these communities should include housing across all the range of products including social rents, target rents and intermediate low-cost home ownership.

The GLA has a wide range of consultation experiences to draw on and we would expect significant efforts to be expended to ensure that businesses, local residents and stakeholders are given sufficient time and opportunities, through a variety of media, to input their views into the planning process. While accepting that consultation with such a large number of existing businesses is a challenge it is clearly vital to ensure transparency of decision-making and to enable the different business voices to be heard. While welcoming the commitment

from GLA staff that there could be ways in which the consultative forum feeds into the MDC Board we suggest that the MDC Board include a community representative.

Question 4: Do you agree that the Corporation should determine planning applications in the Mayoral Development Area? Do you also agree that certain smaller scale planning applications should be delegated to the London boroughs for determination? Would you recommend any amendments to the proposed scheme of delegation set out in this report?

Response: The Committee supports the principle for MDC determination of strategic planning applications and the delegation of smaller scale applications to the boroughs. Details of the respective types of development application and thresholds should be left to negotiation between the MDC and the boroughs. We suggest that the MDC planning committee includes sufficient representation from local authorities.

Question 5: Do you agree that the Corporation should prepare comprehensive local plans including a Community Infrastructure Levy for the whole of the Mayoral Development Area? If not, what other mechanisms could be used to put in place a comprehensive plan for the area?

Response: The Committee agrees that it is logical for the MDC to prepare the comprehensive local plan for the MDC area including a Community Infrastructure Levy as the most effective way of delivering the substantial and long-term funding required to underpin the infrastructure required. We suggest that this must be done in close consultation with the boroughs, and should undergo extensive community consultation.

Question 7: Do you have a preferred option for how the Corporation's Planning Committee should be structured to ensure efficiency and local accountability? If you disagree with the proposed options set out in this report do you have an alternative suggestion?

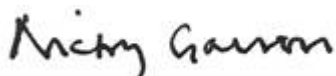
Response:

The Committee wants to ensure that local residents and the local business community (and in particular the small and medium sized businesses) have mechanisms by which their views can be canvassed and heard. There may be scope for a Communities Committee to be created and to have formal status within the governance structure of the MDC. Similar issues of local representation, transparency and accountability were discussed during the consultation stage of the Olympic Park MDC, which the Mayor is referred to.²

To support an objective assessment of the effectiveness of the London Legacy Development Corporation's planning committee in relation to representation, transparency and accountability the Mayor should consider commissioning a short piece of academic research to inform planning decisions in the Old Oak MDC.

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Chair, Planning Committee



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² http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/20110413_Letter%20to%20Mayor_MDC.pdf