

London Assembly Planning Committee – Thursday 23 January 2020

Transcript of Agenda Item 6 – London Plan Q&A

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Thank you. We have cantered through the dull stuff and now we go on to the interesting stuff. We will be today talking about the London Plan and, just before we start the session, I would like to confirm a correction of a little typo in the report. In paragraph 3.3 relating to the dates listed for the Examination-in-Public (EiP). This should read, “15 January to 22 May 2019”. I need that to be put onto the record.

I now welcome our guests: Jules Pipe [CBE], Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills; Jennifer Peters, Strategic Planning Manager for Planning in the Greater London Authority (GLA); and Rob McNicol, Policy Team Leader for Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA.

That is a hellishly long title. What do you do?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): I am Policy Team Leader within the London Plan team with a focus on the policies relating to the economy, culture and social infrastructure.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): That is a lot of words. Thank you very much. If we can now go to our main business, which is to ask questions of our guests, for our first batch of questions I would like to hand over to Assembly Member Devenish, if I may.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. Starting with the Deputy Mayor, when does the Mayor expect a response from the Secretary of State for Housing, [Communities] and Local Government [The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP], please, to the intended-to-be-published version of the London Plan submitted on 9 December last year [2019]?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): 19 February [2020].

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you. A nice straight answer. Does the Mayor expect the Plan to be ready in time for the papers to be prepared for the [London] Assembly Plenary on 6 February [2020], then? Presumably not.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Not the Secretary of State’s response, no.

Tony Devenish AM: OK. Has the Mayor received any indication from the Ministry of Housing, [Communities] and Local Government (MHCLG) to any potential responses they intend to make to the Plan when they do respond on 17 February [2020]?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): No, only the most informal contact, officers to officers.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you. When do you anticipate being able to publish the final version of the Plan?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): We hope to have it published before the pre-election period and so by 20 March [2020].

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you. Great straight answers today. I am very impressed.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Chair, could I just come in? If you get the response from the Secretary of State on 17 February [2020], do you then have to respond to that response?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. If a response comes in on 17 February [2020] requiring some changes, we would then have to go back to the Secretary of State confirming that we had made those changes to the Plan.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I am just trying to think in terms of this [London Assembly] Plenary business. That would be another week, would it, for you to respond or two weeks?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It would depend on how complicated they are.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Sure. That makes sense. All right.

Navin Shah AM: Would that not have an effect on the publication date then?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Indeed, if they were complicated and there were irreconcilable differences, then yes.

Navin Shah AM: Then that would be at risk?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes.

Navin Shah AM: OK. Thank you.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Do you have to make changes throughout the Plan? You do not know, do you, because you cannot have a plan ready for publication --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): The Secretary of State is at liberty to go further than the issues of disagreement between us and the Inspectors.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It is tricky, is it not?

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Assembly Member Devenish, carry on.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you. What are the key lessons that the Mayor has learned from the process of developing the Plan so far?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): London is facing an awful lot of challenges and competition for land and the variety of uses that we need to put land to in order to make London a successful city is a very contested space, literally.

Tony Devenish AM: You knew that already, though?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): We got yet more evidence, though, that that is the case. The process really did highlight the polar opposite views that there are about the value of the Green Belt and the value of industrial land. In the EiP hearings, a very wide variety of views was heard. From what was distilled out of 4,000 different submissions to the Plan, we heard views as wide-ranging as, “The Mayor should go further”, to, “London is full up and, therefore, we should be refusing development”. Yes, this is a very contested space.

Tony Devenish AM: If we were in a lift together and you were going to give me a private anecdote that is a little bit public now, you have been around a long time in local government and so what is the thing that really stuck out for you, rather than the generalities that, with respect, you are giving us so far? Nobody disagrees with what you have said, but what is one thing that you think, “I did not realise that”, “We need to do more on this”, or, “We are doing well on that”? Perhaps not the latter one.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I am always terrible on those kinds of questions because I will just keep thinking around and around them. On all of these subjects, they are all contested, whether it is the value of wharves and the whole issue about agents of change and people moving into new accommodation next to wharves and thinking the wharves should close down, but then how are we going to bring the aggregates in to build homes for anyone else to live in? The list is endless if one is going to say, “What was the surprise?” We could go through almost page-by-page of the Plan and there could be an anecdote that would illustrate the contest that is at play on a particular issue. Therefore, I am loath to try to highlight one particular thing.

I am happy to talk around it and tease some out. I am not trying to keep anything to myself. I suppose it is an extensive list. Anywhere in the Plan one can find something.

Tony Devenish AM: Maybe I will ask you at future built environment events, anyway. How will the Mayor support boroughs to implement the policies contained within the Plan? We all know it is easy to say it. It is difficult to actually do it. What more can you do on resources for the boroughs?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There is a significant amount of work that we have been doing with the boroughs throughout the creation of the Plan to support them in both the way in which they can ready themselves to implement the Plan and also practical things to do with housing delivery. I am not sure which of those or whether perhaps both of those are things that you wanted to discuss.

Tony Devenish AM: Yes, please.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Firstly, by having a robust Plan in place that seeks to encourage boroughs themselves to produce their own local plans and things that we think need to be put in place to provide for quality decision-making and decision-making that is focused on achieving the targets that have been set is obviously a positive thing. We have been working in partnership with them a great deal around funding opportunities as well through Housing and Land. There is any number of projects that we have been working on, such as the Small Sites, Small Builders programme, whether it is

bringing more capacity in through the 80 or so built environment professionals who have been brought into local government in London and the South East through public practice. Jennifer will fill in the gaps while I am finding my extensive list.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes. One of the important things that we will be doing over the next few months - and in fact we have started with it - is developing a range of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and other guidance documents to help boroughs deliver the Plan.

Important on that and something we have already started on is design guidance on understanding optimising capacities. That will be a fairly processed piece of guidance that will help boroughs assess sites and understand the best and most suitable range of development to put on those sites. We have done some work on that over the last couple of years with boroughs as well and so they have fed into it. We have learned from examples where they are already doing that well and so we can roll that out.

Also, once we have the Plan in place, the team will then move into implementation mode, if you like, and that will include also going out to boroughs, doing training workshops, listening to boroughs and understanding where they may be uncertain about how to apply policy and then we can develop guidance as and when it is needed.

One of the things we are planning to do or hoping to do is to have a bit more guidance that we can more speedily update so that, as and when questions come up, we can put that online and people can search. If they are interested in a particular topic or area, they can search that and all of the areas of guidance will come up and they can find that. This means that we can put up guidance notes, as I say. If a particular question comes up, rather than waiting a year to write a document on a topic, we can come up with the answer to that question very quickly. That, again, will help to implement the Plan and, as Jules has already said, the Plan has been written in way that can be implemented quickly. We are following that up with quicker guidance, if you like.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Jennifer has covered the housing design guidance and bringing that forward. The Affordable Homes programme itself is all about delivery. The Building Council Homes for Londoners as well is directly involving the GLA with the boroughs to help them deliver that.

The Homebuilding Capacity Fund has £10 million of revenue funding directly, to help planning departments within boroughs, to skill up, to be able deliver some of this or even to employ someone from public practice if they do not have the revenue funding themselves to do that. I mentioned Small Sites, Small Builders. That is a £15 million-plus programme. There is the Community-Led Housing Hub that the Mayor launched in 2017 and the Community Housing Fund that followed in 2019, which is £38 million of capital grant and loans.

There is our work to bring forward public sector sites through Transport for London (TfL) and working with the National Health Service and the work that is being done in Housing and Land to diversity housing products like the encouragement of Build to Rent. The Prism tool is encouraging the modular building and optimising capacity on sites that are using modular building. I have mentioned public practice and of course there are things like the Mayor's Construction Academy to try to increase the workforce available to deliver some of these projects.

There is a variety of things that are designed to increase delivery.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you very much. I will leave it there.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Can I just come in on this one on the boroughs? It was really interesting, actually, listening to that whole list of all the different mechanisms, initiatives and funding that you have for delivery.

It is also important how boroughs are going to be able to respond to developers. Let us assume it is published in March, April or May [2020]. Developers are going to be ready, are they not, and the Design Guide will be coming out. They will not have done their open space, their tall buildings, their density frameworks. How could they? Half the boroughs - it is good, this - have characterisation assessments and some of them have area action plans, but a lot of them are not really ready for the developers. How are you going to respond to that? This came up a lot at the EiP. The boroughs do not have the planners, the urban designers, the architects or the resources.

By the way, when you are answering that, could you just say how many of the 80 - that number is great - public practice associates are actually in London boroughs?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): On the public practice associates, it is probably about - I am guessing - 65 to 70 out of the 80 or so.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): That could be more than one per borough?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. There are one or two with TfL, but the overwhelming majority - as I say, around 70 of the 85 or 86 that there are - are with London boroughs.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): In London?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes, or very close to. St Albans, for example.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, but we are talking about London boroughs. That is good to hear. And they go on for more than a year?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I am sure that less than a dozen are in places like Epping and St Albans around the periphery. All bar about one have stayed in the public sector and, again, all bar a handful are continuing either in the same role or in an associated role with the same borough. Overwhelmingly, it has established that resource semi-permanently, as long as these people want to continue.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): In terms of boroughs gearing up, obviously the Plan in draft form has been out since December 2017 and so they know the essence of what is in it and will be thinking about how they gear up for that and update their local plans. They would have been carrying out work on that and we know that because we have had some drafts in, and they are already starting to do what we require in this Plan.

Also, within the Plan itself, a lot of the policies and criteria, although sometimes they are designed mainly for using in a plan-led approach, also can be used on a case-by-case criteria and so tall buildings and a design

approach. You can use the same approaches but just in a more reactionary way as and when you need to while they are gearing up for their own local plans. We have been working with boroughs, as I say, particularly on the design elements and so they all know what is coming and what they need to do to gear up to that.

Navin Shah AM: I want to rewind to the SPGs we were talking about earlier on. You have committed to publishing many more SPGs. When can we expect to see that and how will you prioritise the topics for those SPGs?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Jennifer has an extensive timetable that we could let you have, which prioritises them. They play out over about the next 12 or 18 months.

Navin Shah AM: You have a list of topics and a timeframe for each of those? That is brilliant. One question. Will the publication of the new London Plan make the existing SPGs obsolete? What is the legal status?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): We have to publish a list of existing ones that no longer apply. We publish that at the same time we publish the new Plan.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes, we will do. The guidance that exists at the moment is hooked off the current Plan and so, in theory, it falls away. However, what we will do is we will make sure that where that guidance is still relevant and in the interim while we are updating or providing new guidance, we will be clear about what is still relevant and what counts. There is a lot of stuff out there that we have done in the past that is still very useful and we would not want to lose that in the transition period. We will put that online, as Jules says, when we publish the Plan.

Navin Shah AM: Your list of SPGs will also state, in a sense, when the new Plan is published, what will become obsolete or will need lots of rewriting or redrafting of what will effectively be the adopted, so to say, and which are the ones that will be brand new. Talking about brand new, would you have any on tall buildings or densities, two separate ones?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): The design work that we are already undertaking, which will be one of the first ones to go out to consultation, deals with the issue of densities and how to understand the right density for a site. That should come out, hopefully, in the spring or the early summertime [of 2020].

In terms of tall buildings, yes, we are, slightly further down the road, looking at the different issues in the tall buildings policies, particularly things about daylight/sunlight and impacts on wind. We have a whole list of things that we are looking to cover in that. That will be, as I say, a bit further on. We have not started working on that yet, but that will be one that we will be bringing forward.

As I mentioned before, the way we are looking to do SPGs and guidance in general is that we will pick up issues. It might not be that we have a tall buildings guidance document that comes out, but we will ensure that we pick up all of the issues around tall buildings throughout the guidance that we will be doing.

Navin Shah AM: I have some questions on policies on both density and tall buildings. Given that boroughs are now left, as part of the new policies, to define what a tall building is and, for example, the density matrix also is left to them to determine, will this be something picked up strongly within the SPGs so that have strategic and clear guidance?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes. The design SPG that I have mentioned will help in this regard and so will the characterisation SPG. That is another one that we are looking to do quite quickly and then also the tall building guidance. The first two will help boroughs understand where is appropriate for tall buildings and what is 'tall' within their context, yes.

Navin Shah AM: And in a London context?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): And in their local context. What would be tall in Tower Hamlets is different from in Richmond.

Navin Shah AM: Sure, yes. All right. Thank you for that.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Also, you know perhaps that we, the Assembly, argued that it is about time we had a distinction made between commercial tall buildings and residential tall buildings. Originally, the policies were written for commercial and in some cases mixed use, but they were not written for residential. We have gone on not changing that and now we are at a point where there is a huge pipeline of tall buildings. It was 80%. I do not know whether it still is. About 80% are going to be residential. It is very difficult designing residential tall buildings from designing for commercial. Even the location really matters, too.

I want to press you on this. Will you be looking at that?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes. Where there is a difference of things that have to be taken into account between the two different uses and whether a tall building for commercial or a tall building for residential is appropriate in a location, then, yes, that will be picked up by either the characterisation guidance or the design guidance.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): We will be looking at the design of these buildings? There are huge issues around families and cores and corridors and access.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes. We are looking at that. One of the things that we are doing at the moment is some research. An example is the Good Growth by Design inquiry into child-friendly cities. We are hoping that some of that research gives us some information about how we design better for children and families in mind. That will feed into some of our guidance.

There is other work going on. The Social Integration Lab is doing some work specifically with Tower Hamlets at the moment looking at social cohesion in tall buildings. We are thinking that some of the learning from that is the sort of thing that we might be able to fit into guidance. At the moment, we are still thinking about exactly what the guidance would look like, but we are looking to pick up those issues.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): That is encouraging.

This is a few questions on the Green Belt. The Mayor has rejected the Government Inspector's recommendation that he should do a review of the Green Belt. What you have said, if I have this right, is that he will do an appraisal of all the spatial development options that lead to a sustainable outcome as part of the next London Plan. Do I have that right?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Do I have it really right?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. You have made a better fist of describing it than I would have off the top of my head. Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): OK. In that case, then, will this strategic appraisal also include the Green Belt?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): When going forward with producing the next Plan, whenever that is, part of the debate will have to be about taking a step back and looking at how we can address need in the context that London sits, basically the wider South East, but that is problematic without a regional approach to planning and we do not have that anymore in this country. The Mayor's remit goes only as far as the border of the GLA, as you know.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. Any appraisal will have to include - I think we all totally agree - looking at the wider South East. We have actually dealt with that in this Committee, too.

At the EiP, there was a lot of discussion about what I can only really call the inadequacy of the arrangements for tackling growth locations and the big, strategic issues, which need a lot of policies. They also need a lot of attention from relevant stakeholders and other interested parties.

It was suggested by the Assembly and by others that what is needed is a shared resource for resource and providing evidence for the growth locations and the associated strategic infrastructure that goes with growth locations and, in fact, as a step towards certainly making the case and then some form of not just contingent but strategic planning and co-ordination. We suggested a technical secretariat to undertake that. Obviously, that has to include the Mayor taking leadership, but the Government would have to be very supportive of that and possibly be part of it.

Are you lobbying for that? Are you thinking about that?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It is not something that I am sighted on. If your point is about across the wider South East --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It is.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): -- yes, then we are very much engaged with the representative bodies like the East of England grouping of councils and South East England [Councils] (SEEC). We are engaging with the newly created transport bodies for these areas like England's Economic Heartland and the south-eastern one and the eastern one. There is a lot of overlap but some of these representative bodies are not necessarily coterminous. We are working with individual local authorities. The representative bodies on London Councils and the GLA have put a call out to boroughs to meet on a bilateral basis with London to discuss these issues.

This is not necessarily the strategic approach that you are suggesting, but there is a lot of activity in this space about --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): We are very aware. That was absolutely rehearsed at the EiP, the activity, but a lot of it is with willing partners.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Exactly. That is exactly what it is. That is the point. Without a regional framework, we do not really have any leverage or even anything to lead within. There is not a construct or a framework within which we could lead and so, instead, it has to be on a 'willing partners' basis.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, and they are not necessarily --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There are not that many --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): In terms of strategy or strategic locations, they are not necessarily the relevant partners always. They are not necessarily the willing partners on one-to-one arrangements around waste or something. In fact --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Assembly Member Gavron, could I just ask Assembly Member Devenish to come in? He wanted to come in on that point.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, of course.

Tony Devenish AM: Mine is a simpler point. I agree 100% with Nicky. Is it not really the case that you have to appoint somebody fulltime from your side, Jules, and get Homes England to appoint somebody and you have to go out as a team? Otherwise, you will spend half a day a month on it because you are doing all the other parts of your job. Nicky is absolutely right. We have to have the South East involved in this. Otherwise, you will just have a couple of discussions with Billericay or with Reading or whoever and nothing is going to happen.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): No, there are some dedicated resources within the GLA team that address this very issue but, as I said, I believe that Nicky's point would really require a governance framework in place that would smack too much of regional planning for this Government to be interested.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It would not. That is not what we were talking about. We were talking about a technical secretariat to --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Elements of that effectively exist.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Just to come in on that, as you heard at the EiP last year [2019], with the wider South East on trying to do joint research and do a joint evidence base. For example, our Demography team has done population projections for the whole of England. That process, even getting some of the organisations that Jules mentioned - SEEC and the East of England Association - signed up to even doing research together is very slow and hard because there are all of the trust issues about what London is trying to do to the wider South East. Are we trying to get rid of homes or whatever it is? We have had to work very carefully with them to do even that work.

However, we have had some successes. In some of the letters we have written to the Government about barriers to housing delivery, we have pulled together pipeline information from the whole of the wider South East, but --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): That is a list of agreed infrastructure projects around which we could all coalesce.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): -- it has been very slow in doing that. As Jules said, without the Government's backing, the only way we can do it is through very much a partnership approach, which is slow and is likely to have people who are not in agreement. The idea about having a dedicated technical resource is a good idea, but we would still need to be getting those different parties on board. That conversation is yet to be had and it would not necessarily be an easy one, even though, to a lot of us, it seems like a simple solution would be very useful.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): That was a very helpful answer, but it is something that really needs to be worked on because I do not understand how you can possibly do a strategic appraisal of all the options including the wider South East without that. It would be very difficult.

Chair, the Committee ought to think about this and see if it cannot lend some support to the whole cause, in a way, maybe by writing to the Government. Yes?

Anyway, just to go on to another question, in the plan, you are very robust about protecting the Green Belt. That is continuing, yes?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Does that mean that you do not accept that if there is a decision made, say to de-designate, which meets the criteria of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), you would not -- I am just trying to find out where you are vis-à-vis the NPPF.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): We believe our policy is consistent with the NPPF and, therefore, should be found acceptable. The Inspectors felt that it was unnecessary. The Mayor does write to object when there are moves to de-designate, but the NPPF does trump the London Plan and, therefore, the Inspectors are at liberty to agree with the de-designation proposed by a borough. The Mayor has set out his stall about how he feels about de-designation.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): OK. That is very clear.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): In terms of the Green Belt test, if a borough has done a review and has found some land that no longer meets any of those tests, then that is a different proposition because then it is no longer Green Belt in the way that we expect it to function. We have not actually had any of those come through. It is always 'exceptional circumstances' arguments, which are different because we are still losing Green Belt that meets the functions.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I vaguely remember someone applying to convert it to Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) because it no longer met the Green Belt tests. They had no intention of releasing it as green space but MOL designation was more appropriate than Green Belt. There was once one of those.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): OK. The NPPF has a lot about protection in it but it also has a certain amount about enhancement. You stress in the London Plan - and we really supported you on that - the multifunctional nature of the Green Belt. It seems now that with the climate emergency, with the decline in biodiversity, the decline in wildlife habitats and so on, the need for more woodland, not to mention air quality, recreation and so on, there is a real role for the Mayor to emphasise enhancing the Green Belt. I wonder what initiatives are being put in place.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): You are absolutely right to highlight the Plan's explicit support for the enhancement of the Green Belt and its multiple uses and benefits for Londoners. Of course, the planning system, whilst it can say what it says, does not have a role in actively encouraging positive uses because many of the changes that would be welcome and that we would all want to see in the Green Belt actually do not require planning permission. The spatial rules we would have in the Plan are not necessarily relevant to encouraging those beyond the strong protection and the headline encouragement of policy G2 that supports the enhancement of the Green Belt. Really, it does more fall to environmental stewardship schemes that provide payments to landowners. Having those kinds of rules and the delivery of that is outside the scope of the GLA, but we in principle support those kinds of works.

The GLA is working with partners and stakeholders to try to influence those schemes. Previously it would have been through the European Union (EU) because the EU rules dictate how some of these land payments work because it amounts to subsidising landowners for particular beneficial uses. The typical one that would be discussed would be payments for farmers to set land aside that could be used for public use, for example. The GLA has previously engaged on that and would continue to engage with the Government about any new rules that are brought forward for that kind of environmental stewardship. Inevitably, there will have to be something that supersedes the EU rules around this during the Brexit transition period.

The GLA also works with people like the Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission and we are actively supporting work in major woodland creation opportunities. The Mayor has met the ambition of achieving [National] Park City status, but we want to continue increasing the green cover, not just green space but wooded space as well.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): The GLA has quite a role here because, for a lot of the land, there is an issue about the landowners and bringing them together to do many of the things that you might want to suggest.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It is interesting that perhaps only 60% of the Green Belt is agricultural land. This whole EU subsidies point and whatever replaces it has quite a bearing on Green Belt usage.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): The new stewardship changes? Yes, they do. Also, in terms of land ownership, between the City of London and a lot of the London boroughs, there is quite a chunk of the Green Belt that is in public hands. That is where the partnerships have to be struck to do the enhancements and the kinds of things you have just been talking about.

I have just one last question. What about access – this is within the Mayor’s hands – in terms of making sure that the Green Belt can be really enjoyed by Londoners in terms of recreation, cycle routes, roaming rights, pathways and all that? What initiatives are going on there?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Sorry?

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Maybe I should ask Heidi Alexander [Deputy Mayor for Transport], but just in terms of increasing access to the Green Belt for Londoners. It is very important for recreation, wellbeing and health. All of these local authorities have public health duties.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): We are highlighting, as Jules says, in the Plan the importance of being able to use the green space and those multifunctional purposes. We have work going on with things like the All London Green Grid, which we have as a document at the moment. That is all about enhancing green space and making sure that there is that access to it. However, as Jules said at the start, a lot of this is beyond planning. Only if a planning application comes in can we do much about that.

On your point about land ownership, a lot of the Green Belt, as you say, is in public ownership, but it is often freehold and is leased out for agricultural uses or is parks or woodland. In those areas, you can do a lot to bring in more access, but when it is agricultural land, even if it is in public ownership, there is less you can do because they have tenancies on them.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): To date, a lot of those payments on the agricultural land are about preventing adverse outcomes rather than about promoting positive outcomes and uses. This is something that the GLA is lobbying on and others can lobby the Government about how any new scheme could be far broader about achieving positive outcomes, benefits for Londoners and access, rather than just simply setting aside to prevent more fertiliser being used on a particular area or whatever. It should be less about setting aside and more about active uses for Londoners.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It is a huge asset that we have allowed to decline and we need to think more about it. Thank you for that answer. That was helpful.

Navin Shah AM: This is in the context of tall buildings and density. The new policies very clearly put a new and very considerable burden on planning authorities. The question is something we have touched upon, but I want a bit more comprehensive response.

What more intervention can City Hall provide to support boroughs with decisions related to a design-led approach to density and also the much significant work that will be required on tall buildings?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Jennifer is best placed to answer that because it is a question about professional capacity and officer capacity within boroughs.

Navin Shah AM: That puts on an enormous burden in terms of financial resources and their ability to have that. At the same time, there is already support given from the GLA at different levels to the borough. How can that be enhanced so that local authorities do not have to entirely rely upon their own inhouse support or whatever they want to organise? This is very critical.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): The first thing I suppose I would say is that the design-led approach and the approach to tall buildings is not something totally out of the blue. A lot

of boroughs do that kind of work. If a borough is doing a site allocations document, for example, they will look at the site and understand its capacities to try to put out in the allocation or in the area action plan or masterplan what they would like to see on that site. A lot of this work is already going on. There are a few boroughs that have not done it yet and so they will need support in gearing up.

The important point that we are trying to push in this Plan is to do that work through the local plan to make sure that it is properly plan-led. That does frontload work a bit, but it means that when you have applications coming in, you are not reacting to those applications. You have already done the work. You have done the evidence and, therefore, you can encourage them to be the right schemes but, if they are the wrong schemes, you have the evidence and the information to explain why they are the wrong schemes. In lots of ways, it is work that would already happen, but we are just saying to do it at the front rather than at the back end.

Then, as I have already mentioned, the SPG guidance provides a step-by-step process - that is the idea - and a tool as well that can be used. Boroughs that have not necessarily done it before or have not done it as much as others can follow that guidance and deliver that and understand those capacities.

We are also doing the work on characterisation studies and so, again, boroughs can go through a process to make sure they understand the character and context, which leads them to understand where those taller buildings are, and make sure they can understand capacity in terms of transport and accessibility.

We think we have a package of measures within the Plan itself and then through the SPG guidance. Then there will be the training sessions that I have mentioned that we will do on the SPGs and also things like the public practice. Where there is a skills gap or a lack of capacity at a particular local authority level, they can draw in that expertise. The public practice people are designers. This is urban design. This is exactly the sort of thing that their skills can do.

We feel that, as I say, one, it is frontloading a lot of work that would already happen anyway and giving a clear process that boroughs can follow and have responded well to. A lot of the boroughs we have spoken to have said that they do already do this or that they are glad there is this pressure to do more of it, not just do it on one area or on an area action plan but do it on a whole-borough basis.

Navin Shah AM: I can see where you are coming from, but still the question remains that - call it frontloading or whatever - that preparation or forward plan, which will be critical to how those policies are implemented, would that require much bigger and stronger teams, which probably traditionally or currently the boroughs do not have, given that kind of scenario and also interpreting those policies when you have planning applications, which itself may require more than your normal capacity of urban designers, architects or whatever. This is why I have concerns about how it will actually work on the ground.

Do you see within the GLA or City Hall increasing that capacity so that the boroughs can benefit where you find there are gaps in specific requirements? Is this something we are gearing up to do?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Firstly, I would say that the boroughs will not require more capacity than they should have, whatever the system. They are stretched.

Navin Shah AM: Very stretched.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Many are stretched. It is different borough to borough and each borough is different, but many are stretched. The approach that we

have brought in with this Plan is -- it would be wrong to say, "Do not change to what we believe is a better system and a better approach", because at the moment boroughs have depleted resources. There is an issue, whatever the approach to density and tall buildings and the difference between a design-led approach versus a more numbers-driven approach. There is a capacity issue.

Regardless of the Plan, regardless of the change in approach, City Hall would want to do what it could to help boroughs in their capacity. I mentioned the public practice capacity building fund. There is the homes building capacity fund as well. One of its prime intentions is to help development teams within boroughs and development management teams within planning departments to bring forward housing.

The two things are slightly separate in my mind, the capacity and this particular change in approach.

Navin Shah AM: I have one last question. Given that the trend - and it will continue, I am sure - is to go high for residential buildings, as Nicky has already mentioned when talking about tall buildings, what proportion, do you reckon, of family-sized dwellings will those tall buildings contribute? It has lots of implications, including the whole family-friendly places, amenities and so on and, therefore, how appropriate they will be in those tall buildings.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. I am sure I had some numbers that I noted down about unit size in tall buildings.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): One of the facts that is quite interesting, which we trotted out at the EiP, was around the --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): The surveys on satisfaction about them?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): That is another one.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): That is another one. I will come to that, then. I will do that one.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): You do that one. Tower Hamlets is delivering a lot of homes. It is one of the biggest deliverers and it delivers dense development but is also delivering a lot of family homes.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): That is the one. That is the one I am thinking of.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): It shows that it is not impossible to do family housing and dense development. It is not necessarily saying tall buildings, but there are tall buildings over there.

It is difficult to know exactly the proportion that will come through tall buildings because, when we do the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), that is based on assumptions around density and is not necessarily assuming the form of that density and whether that is tall buildings or not.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): One of the points I was going to make was about the satisfaction thing. The survey showed that there was a great deal of positivity from people living in taller buildings, including families, which was counter to the assumption that people live in them as a last resort.

What it comes down to, whether someone thinks it is a positive experience or not, regardless of a family or not, is the quality of design, both inside and also outside, at ground-floor level, and also the issue about play space. The new Plan requires ten square metres of play space per child who is expected to live in a development. Going forward, the degree of importance placed on better design, including public realm and the provision of play space -- if it is being suggested that they are not suitable places for families to live, the evidence is not there to support that.

Navin Shah AM: I am just trying to get the scale rather than the design issues, but I am at risk of pinching questions from the family-size dwellings section and so I will stop there.

Tony Devenish AM: If the Deputy Mayor is saying what he just said in terms of people being satisfied living in tall buildings, can he write to us with the data? We are very cynical on that one, to put it mildly.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. It was published in the EiP, but we are happy to draw it out.

Tony Devenish AM: That would be great.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I was going to say that it would be very useful to know. The Assembly put forward that for families, particularly families living in affordable housing, a large flat should be no higher than the fifth storey. We are talking now, by the way, about 50% of the towers, which are going to be between 30 and 70 storeys. That is from New London Architecture. I think I have that right. It is not the most up-to-date figure, but it was there a couple of years ago. There was a lot of discussion at the EiP about the design and about how a lot of the children's playgrounds are the corridors and the way you design the corridors, for instance. Also, the satisfaction rates generally are from people who are quite affluent and can take their children all over the place and can accompany them to things.

Tony Devenish AM: Do you mean architects?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Lawyers.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It is a bit different. It would be really helpful - we might be looking at this in a later investigation - to look at the post-occupancy surveys, which are rarely done but have just been done in Tower Hamlets, which does have a lot of family housing in high-rise, and to find out really what people's experience is. We need to know because it would then inform us about how to go forward.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I of course have met many people who have said that it is great living in a block of flats with their families and, when I have questioned them, they always happen to be people who have a family home in the country that they bolt to on the weekend, but that is another issue and I am sure we could talk for a long time about tall buildings.

If we are done, I am going to talk now about small sites, if I may. It was quite clear from the EiP that the original small sites policy that you proposed lacked a proper evidence base, including the arbitrary targets and the upper limit of 25 for the presumption in favour.

How was it allowed into the draft London Plan in the first place and why was it allowed to get so far?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): The basic number is already happening. It was the windfall sites that were created on small sites. What the Inspectors questioned was the degree to which that trend could be encouraged to grow. The scenarios we outlined were 0.3% increments in growth and we thought - it was a case of judgement - that in our judgment a 1% growth increase in the trend rate was reasonable. The Inspectors disagreed and thought that we should remain simply only banking on trend.

Our response has been to say that we will not include the numbers in case we are indeed wrong - fine - but we still think the policy is right to encourage sites to be brought forward and time will show whether we are right or not.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I think we are all at one about bringing small sites forward. It is about how you do that where there may be some dispute. Which boroughs have so far identified enough small sites to meet either the requirements of the London Plan or the reduced target?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Everyone will be currently achieving the reduced target, will they not, because it is all trend?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): No, it is slightly above trend with the 0.3%. The Inspectors have said in the report, which is quite useful, that that small sites number can be windfall and they so have to identify it because you would not identify a small plot for a couple of units. That kind of incremental intensification would not be identified through a site allocation, for example. However, we know that we have boroughs coming through at the moment with plans - Croydon is an example - and they are looking at options but within those options they can meet those numbers. In terms of the 0.3% number, as Jules said, boroughs would not have much trouble in bringing forward those sites, but they would not have to necessarily identify them because they can be windfall.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): None have actually come forward and said, "Yes, we can do it"?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): They are going through their process at the moment of doing local plans. I imagine that most boroughs, especially outer London boroughs who had much higher targets in the draft Plan, are quite pleased with the targets now on small sites in the intended-to-be-published version because they will feel that they are much more deliverable. In fact, the 0.3% rate that the Inspectors went for was discussed and brought up by some boroughs in the room at the EiP and the West London Alliance work also suggested that that was about the right amount. I guess the Inspectors went with that because they felt there was the evidence to get to that level.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Or at least the support in the room.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes, or support in the room for that level.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): What can be done, do you think, to mitigate the lower demand for smaller sites in outer London?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): I guess going back to your first question about the small sites approach, one of the difficulties I felt at the EiP about the back-and-forth on the argument is that, if you are only ever relying on trends or what has happened before, you can never do anything differently. Our point was that what we are trying to do is something quite different to bring forward more small sites.

One of the things that we are doing through still encouraging it in the policy and putting those targets as minimums and through the SPG work is trying to understand what those barriers are for sites coming forward. Some of it might be viability, but some of it is policies that indirectly impact the likelihood of small sites coming forward.

Other things are around - which was an argument we made at the time - having a positive attitude to small sites. Applicants will not be coming forward in a lot of boroughs at the moment because they know they just will not get permission, whereas if you change that and say, "If you come forward with a well-designed scheme, this is the sort of thing we would like to see", then we believe - and I still believe - that you will get more people coming forward with those sites. Development opportunities in outer London are being more and more viable and more attractive because you can deliver a bigger range of units, if you like, bigger units with gardens, even when you are intensifying.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): You have now accepted the recommendations of the Inspectors. Are you speaking there after you have accepted those recommendations? Has your reply been that or has your reply been about what was previously in the Plan in terms of bringing more sites forward?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): It is for both. Bringing more sites forward is why we put those targets as minimums, but to get up to the targets in the Plan, which is still at 52, we will need more small sites coming forward than we have in the past. Also, to see if there are more opportunities to meet more need, we are looking at how we can overcome those barriers to deliver good developments in those sorts of areas.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): What can the Mayor do to protect non-designated green spaces such as gardens, play areas and community amenity spaces from development under the small sites policy?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, Greater London Authority): **Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA):** All of the Plan policies apply, even to small sites, so any protections that exist apply whether it is a small site or not. Then we have a line in the supporting text around making sure that you replace green cover for minor applications. If it is ten units or more, then the Urban Greening Factor and all the greening policies apply. In terms of social infrastructure space, that is protected by the policies elsewhere in the Plan.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Would it be a better focus in the small sites policy to focus on genuinely redundant small sites - disused land, empty garages and that kind of thing - rather than on family homes and back gardens?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): That is all in there. This is all in addition, except that I would not characterise it as 'homes on back gardens'. That does give rise to the idea that there will be a regular street pattern and then someone will just dump a whole house on somebody's back garden and so you would come out into your back garden and would be next to some house that has sprung up. That is a view that would tend to put people off such a policy, understandably so.

In my mind, the most welcome kind of small site would be the one at the end of the street that was a couple of garages or ten garages and, instead of someone wanting to build two semidetached houses on it with parking for four cars outside, we would see a three-storey mansion block with 16 flats. At a stroke, we would be quadrupling what that site is delivering in housing for Londoners.

In terms of building on a back garden, the kind of building on a back garden I would welcome would be where someone is, say, subdividing a property into flats - as is common in inner London but not so much in outer London - and, to make enough room for bathrooms and kitchens at the back addition, they needed to extend out a little bit. In return, they are required to return the front garden from hard standing for cars back to soft planting. There would be no net loss of green space, biodiversity or sustainable urban drainage, but we would have an additional housing unit created out of the subdivision. That is a long way from the imposition of a great bulk of building, breaking up a rear building line, which is not what that policy is all about.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Yes, and one less family-sized home.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It depends on the size of the house. There are a lot of interwar semis in outer London the size of which could easily accommodate a family-sized home with three bedrooms in one unit and two bedrooms in another.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Yes. That is not to say that it would not allow the development of a house in a back garden. You are just saying that that would not be the usual --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It would depend on all the other policies in the Plan, which would make the scenario of it just being plonked down on part of a back garden rather unusual and very hard to achieve because of the other policies within the Plan.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Yes. You may have persuaded your team, but you have not persuaded us on that. With regard to industrial land, we will be talking about industrial land policies later, but does the small sites policy also protect non-designated industrial land from residential development or conversion?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Non-designated?

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Yes, small bits of industrial land that are very important to jobs.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It does not protect them in the sense that it preserves them in aspic, but it does require them to maintain an industrial use, say, underneath a housing development.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): That was a change, was it not, in the Plan? Are non-designated industrial premises - which could be, of course, quite a lot of the various small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are behind the high streets - now better protected?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): This is the first time that the London Plan has had explicit protection for non-designated industrial sites and so it is stronger than the previous Plan.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): They are the changes we argued for.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): In terms of the small sites policy even as it was or as it is now, it does not override other policies in the Plan. I will bring in Rob in terms of that non-designated policy.

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): Yes. As Jennifer says, the small sites policy, particularly as it is currently worded, does not then override the policy on non-designated industrial sites. Whilst we ought to encourage those small sites to come forward and some may be currently in industrial use, the non-designated industrial policy requires developers either to demonstrate that the industrial use is redundant and there is no demand for it or to re-provide that industrial capacity on that industrial site as part of a mixed-use development.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Some things, of course, cannot coexist with housing. Certain industrial processes cannot coexist with housing.

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): That is why we would not mix them with Strategic Industrial Land (SIL) where those heavier uses are located, but if someone has a small maker space that is more typical in light industrial units, it is no worse many instances where people are living side-by-side with all sorts of uses within London.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I am tempted to use an anecdote. How much time do we have? I will. In Hackney, where I used to live, we had nice little areas opposite us, non-designated small industrial areas. Remarkably in Hackney, we had a blacksmith - of all things - in there and various other things, drycleaners, makers, food processing, all sorts of things. Then, of course, the Notting Hill Housing Trust came along and decided to buy the land and build on top of it. They persuaded the local planning committee that they would re-provide industrial space, but of course you cannot re-provide that. All you had then was retail outlets, not real makers. That is what we worry about - and I know we share that across the Committee - about those little areas of economic activity that are being pushed out of our urban areas because of the pressure of housing, which we absolutely understand.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. I would agree that historically that kind of encouragement to re-provide, along with the correct insistence that ground floors should be activated and should not be residential, but then an inappropriate thing was put on the ground floor. Nine times out of ten it was simply that the ceiling heights were too low for it to be anything other than an estate agency or whatever. I agree.

That is why there are policies to encourage the right kinds of spaces on ground floors. We have had any number of applications in the last six months or so where what is being proposed on the ground floor is a long way from a two-metre-high estate agent's office on a ground floor. People are often keen to bring forward B1(a) instead and say, "Look at our industrial space", but, no, we want B1(c). That fight is often had. The Plan has policies to encourage the bringing forward of true B1(c) underneath and as part of developments and, as I said, not just underneath but side-by-side as well in larger areas.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Yes. All those little industrial areas around the high street were recently discussed by the Economy Committee. Half the jobs in outer London are provided near the high streets. They are vital but are often neglected and too often got rid of. That was the view of the Committee.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): The only reason we are pushing this - as well - is because the Government's permitted development rights (PDR), which we have so far been totally unsuccessful in getting rid of, are now moving on to light industry; also, not just conversion but redevelopment as well.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I entirely agree with you about not liking the Government's PDR policy. The ability to redevelop well and maintaining high-ceilinged maker space and creative space on the ground floor is something that potentially leads developers away from using PDR. I would say to any developer who is insistent on going ahead with a conversation that they would probably get a much better result by putting in planning permission for doing a more comprehensive redevelopment that preserves B1(c) space on the ground and maybe the first floor and building the third and fourth floor as residential.

When you go down the Old Kent Road and go just behind the frontages there, there are loads of two-storey 1950s and 1960s, really low-density B1(c) space. You could see, if that was replicated in a modern building with residential above - this is the Old Kent Road, zone 2, almost walking distance to the centre of London - it would seem a sensible use of very valuable land. However, the danger is that it could just get flipped to very shabby residential or someone making the case for sweeping it all away and building purely residential there. We would not want to see either of those scenarios.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): We know that many of the larger developers are particularly disinterested in small sites. They are a bit of a headache for them. What can the Mayor do to address the slowdown in the growth of SMEs in the construction industry, which has carried on for some years now?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): That is something that probably my predecessor in Housing and Land [former Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, James Murray] was taking a lead on to encourage small --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): It is your job now.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Temporarily, Chair, very temporarily. However, of course, I have been very much involved from a skills point of view with the Mayor's Construction Academy and the hubs that have been created there. From the early signs, it appears that there is a really good story to tell on both numbers and the increasing diversity in women, black and minority ethnic people and young people coming into the construction sector. That can only be a good thing in terms of re-energising the sector.

I have to say that the economics of small builders is not something that I am particularly focused on in my role.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Going back to the small sites policy, part of that was - and still is - trying to encourage those players back into the market or new ones into the market. Setting out clarity, both at the London level but also at the local level, about what kind of development would be acceptable takes away some of that risk. Bringing forward some of those sites that boroughs are saying that, yes, where they can allocate small sites or do design codes about what they would be happy to see, as I said, then reduces some of that risk.

There is also the Small Sites, Small Builders programme, which is about TfL land and trying to apportion smaller sites and putting those out to smaller builders to try to bring them forward as well.

In combination, we are trying to build up that sector because, as you say, they have disappeared and we need them to gear up and build out more homes.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There are about 11 borough projects that have come through that as well. These are ones where they are de-risked and put on the website and marketed to small builders.

Tony Devenish AM: Could you write to us on that, though? We are all a bit cynical because you are right in the last comment you just made. The boroughs are leading that. They are packaging them up and they are leading that because the free market is not interested because they are not easy products to make successful. On what James [Murray, former Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development] was doing, it would be good to have an update on where he has got to and also where TfL has got to. Perhaps they can compare notes because it is a bit disjointed.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. Over the last year, it was only TfL sites but now we have, as I said, about 11 borough projects in there. It is all about de-risking because previously the boroughs, if it is too small to be part of an estate and if it is not a regeneration project, will just sell it. It is far better if it is de-risked and then planned.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): If you could undertake to write to us with those, we would appreciate that. Thank you. How does the Mayor reconcile the fact that his stated aims with regards to the small sites are lower than the small sites target figures?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Sorry, Chair?

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): The Mayor wants to build more homes than the targets you have set for small sites and so there is a gap now as a result of you reducing your ambition.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. We are saying that the small sites ten-year target is a minimum. That is what we have said. We welcome and would encourage overachievement of that, yes.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): You have had to reduce your target and reduce your aspiration?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes, because we set the 1% growth on small sites, whereas the Inspectors have reduced us to 0.3% growth in what was happening already, the windfall.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): That would have an overall effect on the Mayor's housing target?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): OK. The Committee recently investigated neighbourhood planning and found that in many cases it has been a good way to identify small sites at a very granular level. The close

involvement of the community in that process often means that they are more willing to accept higher densities.

Do you think the Plan goes far enough to acknowledge and support the role of neighbourhood planning?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): We explicitly acknowledge the role that neighbourhood planning can have, but we do not go into detail in the Plan. There is a tier of planning between us and neighbourhood planning with the boroughs, but we do acknowledge its role and encourage neighbourhood planning. It is something for the boroughs to take forward rather than the GLA.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Chair, it would be fair to say the report of the [Planning Committee on] Neighbourhood Planning is not yet published but it will make a number of recommendations not just to the boroughs but to the Mayor and to the Government about neighbourhood planning because there is a bit more of a role than is currently being played.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): What we are looking for is a firmer acknowledgement in the London Plan that neighbourhood planning actually matters. When neighbourhood planning first started as a result of our investigation, there was a general assumption that neighbourhood planning was only for the well-resourced middle-class areas of London. Actually, our investigation showed that that is not the case and that neighbourhood planning is quite widespread in London.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): And in areas of change.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): And predominantly in areas of change. An acknowledgement in the London Plan of the role of neighbourhood planning would be encouraging and may also guide people in the future as to the importance of those neighbourhood plan recommendations.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I will be interested to see when you bring the report forward about the specific suggestions. On your headline request, we think it is there. I would bring up the acknowledgement and the wording in the Plan. We feel that we have --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): You feel that you are there, then?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): We are there with that acknowledgement.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It is there. To be fair, it's there as a headline point. We are looking at more recognition, more support and more leadership from the Mayor in areas of strategic regeneration where you are really looking at, with some of those, the most deprived areas where they would benefit from more resourcing and more acknowledgement about what is actually written in the Plan that the experience and knowledge of communities is a huge asset.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): The Neighbourhood Planning Forums can be great partners in producing the kind of development that actually all of London is looking for.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): In terms of the broader community aspect, that was one of the changes we made as part of the first suggested changes to the good growth objective now to be very clear, about the role of communities because that was something that had come up.

They did not feel that that came through properly in the Plan. It was part of the supporting text but putting it in that objective makes that a lot clearer. Also, we have been clear in the introduction about how this Plan is for Neighbourhood Forums as well and it should feed into neighbourhood plans and that the resources we put out in terms of SPGs will be relevant for those forums as well.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. Just to add to that, it was well argued by community groups as well and you have also amended SD10. In a way, that is going to be very helpful in terms of the Mayor's role in neighbourhood planning where there are areas of change as well as where there is not neighbourhood planning and where there are areas of change in areas of strategic regeneration.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): It absolutely highlights the importance of working with the community a lot more than it did before. As you say, that came up a lot in the discussion.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Do you think the small sites policy will make it easier for decision-makers going forward?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): When we have published the Housing Design Guide with a section on small sites, which is basically an online toolkit for people to work with, yes, it will be easier.

Tom Copley AM: Moving on to family-sized housing, I will start with the size mix scenarios. Do you think it is confusing, providing three different scenarios in the Plan?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): We did the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in 2017, which fed into the London Plan. One scenario that was used was, if you like, the main scenario and then another scenario. Then, through the discussions and the debates at the EiP, we brought in the third scenario as well. What we have done is we have referred to the SHMA addendum in the policy itself and put those three scenarios in the addendum to the SHMA.

What we are trying to set out there is that it is about the assumptions that you make and those assumptions will be more appropriate or less appropriate depending on the other evidence that you have at a local level. We feel that they are all useful to understand those nuances and that is why we have, through the process of the EiP, got to those three scenarios that, as I say, can all be drawn upon.

Another change that we made during the EiP was to be very clear that if local information exists - which is where you get a much better feel for actual size mix needs - that is the information that should be used. A London-wide figure is just not nuanced enough for those local decisions. In the --

Tom Copley AM: I guess the question then is why put it in at all if it is not relevant locally and then you have three different scenarios that may be confusing.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): It provides that overall understanding of a strategic wide need and that size mix and it is useful to have an understanding of the size mix. It would be useful to understand how those different assumptions change that mix and to know what it is we are looking at.

They are useful for boroughs to draw upon, having three of them, and we try to make it clear, as I say, in the supporting text that there are those three scenarios.

Tom Copley AM: How are you going to make sure, though, that you do not end up with developers cherry-picking the one that is best for them, as it were?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): We have tried to make sure in the wording of the policy that what we are saying is that they are for boroughs to draw upon in their assessment, not necessarily for developers. We are trying to encourage, through the work that we have already talked about in terms of understanding the capacity of sites, boroughs to set size mix as part of their site allocations. Again, it is that upfront work and then they can be very clear, taking account of all the different things in part A of that policy, to make sure that they have the optimum mix for that particular site.

Tom Copley AM: In terms of things like downsizing, how is the Mayor communicating his downsizing schemes? Do you want to come in on this one, Jules?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): To be honest, I am not aware of downsizing schemes.

Tom Copley AM: There are things like Seaside and Country Homes and --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Those are longstanding. The Mayor has not introduced any specific ones. We are not assuming that there is going to be any active promotion to people of downsizing. The basis of the assumption was that over a period of time, within 25 years, on average people will have moved at least once. There was this opportunity that there would be, over time, a greater match of household size to dwelling size. It did not seem an unreasonable assumption to make in the scenario. That did not gain great favour.

Tom Copley AM: Yes. It assumed that no private renter, for example, would have a spare room and we know that people do have spare rooms in the private rented sector and probably will continue to.

I do, sorry, have one more question specifically on the size mix for Jennifer. We talked earlier about SPGs. Are you planning to do anything on size mix and bring forward an SPG or include it in an SPG?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): It is not something on our list, to be honest, about size mix because we think that that policy sets out what needs to be taken into account. However, if there is guidance, with this new way of doing guidance we can put that up if we find that it is necessary.

One of the things that we could do in terms of the SHMA assessment document itself is update the executive summary. I know there was some concern that people were going to the SHMA and, if they were just reading the executive summary, would not know of the existence of the three scenarios. We can update that to make that clearer, which, again, will help local authorities.

Generally, local authorities are well used to understanding the size mix at a local level. They have their housing registers. They have their own information to do that. It is not something that we have had a lot of call from local authorities to do guidance on. However, as I say, we will keep listening and will hear what boroughs want from us.

Tom Copley AM: I know that in the past - and I think this is from 2004/05 - the GLA issued SPG that related to size mix and so it might be something to consider.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Can I come in, if you do not mind, specifically on downsizing? You were saying there is no specific downsizing scheme and yet one of the --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): No pressure. The Mayor is not promoting the main scenario over the other two. It was based on the assumption that, increasingly, renters will not want more space than they need. Certainly, in the situation with Housing Benefit, that is a strong discouragement to people to be able to have more bedroom space, for example, than they absolutely require, and so over time there would be this downward pressure on under-occupation.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Without a scheme or encouragement, how does that address the severe problem that we have in London of overcrowding? I often hear the argument proposed that if you build one- and two-bedroom flats they are attractive to people who may want to downsize. People do not do that automatically. They typically do it when there is a scheme in place to allow them to do it. You are saying that there is no specific scheme by the Mayor to encourage such downsizing?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): That is right.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes. There are two issues there. From research that we have done, particularly for older people who may look to downsize there is not the right type of development out there at the moment, but as you build more one and twos of the right size, which our standards should ensure are delivered, then they will be more likely to want to downsize and make sure that they are in the right place. Our research shows that you are going to want to stay in the community that you are in, so the more you can build around where people live at the moment, the better.

In terms of the overcrowding point, that draws more onto an affordability point. A lot of families are overcrowded, as we found in the SHMA, because they cannot afford a property that is the right size. That is about delivering the right --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Or any property.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes, or any property, but that is about delivering the right-sized property and the right-priced property. They are not overcrowded because a bigger property does not exist, it is because they cannot afford that property. It is often about delivering the right affordable homes.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There are a number of people as well who would probably be perfectly happy in ones and twos, but they are sharing, say three couples sharing a three-bed house.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes, and that can free up those family homes.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): The evidence I have seen does not support that.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): The social rented, the low-cost housing, two of the scenarios are suggesting that 69% or 70% should be one-bed. Having gone around quite a lot of schemes where older people have downsized or are wanting to downsize - I am now talking about really older people - it just does not work for them because they would need a carer, their grandchildren or somebody, or stuff. One person said to me, "For my stuff". It is just this idea that people are a couple who may then have a kid, but before they have a kid they are in a one-bed flat - this is what we are allocating in the affordable housing sector - or a couple with two kids cannot have more than two bedrooms between them. Somehow it is bound to breed overcrowding, and we have been operating on this kind of system.

What we have is an English Housing Survey which came out last January [2019], a year ago, saying that we have now unprecedented overcrowding - they have beaten the records - in one- and two-bed homes in both sectors, private and public. We just have to start thinking about family housing. I think what you are alluding to, because I was around then, is the 2005 guidance. It was not guidance on policy. It gave a target for family housing in social rented properties. I am just thinking now that maybe, if you are going to update -- we have a housing SPG at the moment, do we not? Let me just get this right. You have produced a new one which is about the --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Affordability and viability.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, that one, the affordability and viability one. But you still have -- am I right about this? The current Housing Strategy is still live?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): There is the Housing Strategy but there is also a housing SPG from 2016 which --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I mean the housing SPG, don't I?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): That still exists, yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Sorry. I am saying 'Housing Strategy'. I mean 'housing SPG', the guidance.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Are you planning either to do a new one or to update it?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): With that, it will depend on what elements of it are needed as guidance. We will pick up the specific parts of it. We will not update that document as such, but we will pick up any specific guidance in it that is needed. There is a lot in that that is very repetitive of policy rather than actually providing anything new.

In terms of your point about low-cost rent, obviously we have been very clear in the policy ever since the start, even with the changes, that what we want is for local authorities to understand their need for low-cost rent and plan for that need. If that is a lot of family homes, then that is what they need to be doing.

One of the issues you raised, about what people are allocated, is not a policy that sits with the Mayor. Allocation policies are local authority policies but they are obviously dictated very heavily by the fact of the bedroom tax, which means that people will not be put in properties that they can grow into; they will be put

into properties that are suitable for their need at that time. That is a much broader issue than the Plan or the Mayor can deal with.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Just on that, I am sorry we have driven a coach and horses through your set of questions, Assembly Member Copley --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Sorry, Tom.

Tom Copley AM: It is fine, it is fine.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): -- but we know how much the Assembly cares about this issue.

Tony Devenish AM: I think the issue fundamentally is - forget the rest of the London Plan and many good things that you are doing, Jules - I do not think you have answered the two questions that, cross-party, we all want you to point to, on how you are going to make it better rather than basically try to hand it over to somebody else, be it the boroughs or be it the markets. On the one hand, older living and various other brands are meant to be coming up where it may work for certain, very high net worth individuals but I have not seen much evidence. Mainly, older people with money are staying in their house, as my own mother is doing until this weekend, completely underutilising an asset on the one hand, whilst the rest of the population are living in more likely overcrowded conditions with more one-bedroom flats being built in London. Could you point to one policy line where you are going to do something to improve one of those two fundamental issues?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): The Plan does encourage local authorities to set larger bedroom mixes and larger-bedroom properties in the affordable sector. What it did not do previously was encourage it in the market sector because the three-bed ones would be simply too expensive to buy. It does not actually solve the need that we need to address.

Tony Devenish AM: You are not encouraging people to go into smaller properties when they are effectively in their latter years at all. There is no real drive to do anything in this Plan on this issue.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): No, the --

Tony Devenish AM: You are basically saying, "What will be will be", and we will be sitting here in four years' time and things will be worse.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): No, no. There are trends that are not created by the Mayor, such as the bedroom tax, for example. We felt that that would push behaviour in a certain direction, and the Plan responds to that. In terms of older people, no, the Mayor has no policy of encouraging people *per se*, but the Plan does expect suitable housing for older people to be brought forward and there are policies in the Plan that encourage that.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): It is probably worth saying, in terms of the standards policies, that there are all the accessible housing standards policies. What we are trying to do is make sure that all homes that come forward are suitable for a range of people.

Just picking up on the point about under-occupation, in all three of the scenarios under-occupation in the owner-occupied sector is assumed as trend. We are not assuming that everyone who owns a property is

suddenly going to move out and get a smaller one, but what we are saying is that if you build the right type of properties that may happen naturally.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I am going to hand it back to Assembly Member Copley, if I can? That does not mean I am not going to come in --

Tom Copley AM: No, no, that is all right. I will just go through the remaining questions. In terms of downsizing, you have actually probably answered this question, Jen, because the Plan talks about identifying suitable locations for smaller homes that are attractive for Londoners to downsize to. You said basically the kind of thing is in their local area, essentially. Is that the key to getting people to downsize?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Definitely, and being near amenities, the town centre. Close to town centres and things like that.

Tom Copley AM: Infill development on a council estate that could encourage older people under-occupying to move out but stay in the same location?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Yes.

Tom Copley AM: OK. What has been the uptake of the Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund? Does anyone have the answer to that?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): I do not, I am afraid. We would have to find out.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): We can write to you on that.

Tom Copley AM: That would be fine, thank you. Will the Mayor set targets for accessible housing, particularly for older and/or disabled Londoners and those with children?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): In terms of accessible homes, all of the new-build homes built in London should meet - and this is where I get my things confused - M4 (2), which is generally accessible, and 10% of homes should meet M4 (3), which is wheelchair accessible. Essentially what we are saying is that all new-build homes that are built are accessible for those groups.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you. Just in broad terms, what is the Mayor going to be doing to encourage the development of more three-plus-bedroom homes?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Again, in terms of the low-cost rented sector I think the Plan does that through being clear about the strategic need for larger low-cost rented housing but also being clear that what we want is for boroughs to set very clear requirements for that and then - through this site allocation approach - understand where that would be. In terms of the site allocations, again that can help understand where the market larger units could go but the focus is more on the affordable or low-cost rented family homes and making sure we deliver those.

Tom Copley AM: OK. Thank you.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Can I just say, that means then that the third scenario, which is the one that is not based on hypothetical assumptions about how people might behave but is based on trend and on an evidence base, is the one that gives a lower proportion of one-bed, dropping it from 69% or 70%-plus to 44%. That is one-bed and studio flats in the social rented sector. What you are saying is you will be encouraging that scenario, then, because that is the one that has -- I am not sure what the breakdown is between two-bed and three-bed but certainly it has far fewer one-beds, 44%. It is nearly half.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): What we are saying in the policy is that what we are encouraging boroughs to do is understand their housing waiting list or their Housing Register, sorry, and therefore their need in their local area, and plan for that need.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): We know that families on the waiting lists have to wait a whole lot longer, do they not, because there just are not enough family homes in the affordable sector?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): This would make sure that they --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): The Plan encourages them to dictate that the affordable units in a development should be three-bed.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): OK. I will leave it at that.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): You said something along the lines of, "It is not the Mayor's responsibility on allocations". I absolutely accept that. However, should the Mayor be paying regard to the stock, the housing stock in London and what that looks like?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I do not understand why what I just said, encouraging boroughs to decide what they need locally and impose that on developers --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): There is a big argument there that development follows the money, and the Mayor has not allocated any money to family housing. That is an argument for your other hat, which will soon be passed on. He has not allocated any money to encouraging family housing and he expects the boroughs just to unilaterally say, "Yes, we want more family housing". Always follow the money, and that is not the case.

What I am interested in is that we are embarking with the London Plan on a process of building the most inflexible forms of home, which are one-bedroom flats or even two-bedroom flats. With a large family home, over a period of years it might be a family home, it might be a house in multiple occupancy (HMO), it might be subdivided in many ways and then go back to being a family home over a period of many decades. That is the most flexible form of housing that you can have. By encouraging the development of one- and two-bedroom flats based upon a SHMA that is going to look totally different in a few years' time, we are building inflexibility into the system as a whole. Does the Mayor not recognise that the demands of the moment are not necessarily the demands of the future? How do you build that into the Plan when thinking about the overall stock in London? That is a long question and I apologise.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): You are talking about the market side. You are suggesting subsidising the market side so that they can --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): The Mayor does not even subsidise the affordable side in terms of family housing, or insufficiently.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There is no premium for size but obviously the Mayor has a significant affordable homes programme, the largest, I think, that has ever been run from City Hall. As I say, I come back to that if the need locally is for affordable homes in a development then the borough, in negotiating the affordable homes for a particular development -- we work in the percentages of habitable rooms. How those habitable rooms are dispersed across how many units is a negotiation for the borough and the developer.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Also, I would point to policy 4.10.4 of the Plan, where we explicitly set out how, yes, one-bedroom units can play a role in meeting housing need, but make your point that they are the least flexible type of unit and therefore all schemes should provide a range of unit types and unit sizes. That is in the policy as well.

Just in terms of the affordable housing point, one of the things around the threshold approach to affordable housing is that 35% threshold is based on habitable rooms to ensure that there is no incentive to do a lot of affordable one-beds just to get through the threshold. We have thought about that to make sure there is no disincentive to do larger units.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): OK. I just see the Mayor abandoning family size targets and pushing the responsibility for addressing overcrowding down to the boroughs, and then adopting the evidence of the SHMA to develop the most inflexible form of housing, which is in direct contradiction to what the boroughs have been telling him about what their requirements are. It just seems as though the Plan is ignoring one of the biggest social problems we actually have in London --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I am sorry, Chair --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): -- which is overcrowding. 360,000 children are being brought up in overcrowded conditions, with all the implications that that has for their futures, and yet it does not seem to be an imperative within this Plan.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I do not think that is true, Chair. I am sorry, I have repeated a number of times that I do not think that saying the boroughs can decide is shuffling off the responsibility to the boroughs. It is quite the opposite. It is saying, "Boroughs, what do you need? This Plan says you can impose that". If the requirement in affordable housing is for three-bed homes, then in a negotiation with a developer over a site the requirement can be for predominantly three-bed homes in the social requirement on that site.

What the Plan does not do is encourage boroughs to say, "You can only build three-bedroom market homes", which will cost a fortune and will not sell, other than to very wealthy individuals or to landlords who will rent them out to become HMOs.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): They can be HMOs. Over 100 years, who knows what happens to a house?

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. We as an Assembly do not have problems with people who cannot afford to rent alone, flat sharing.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): An element of that already does happen. It is a case of a balance, is it not? In any development there are also three-bed units, three-bed market units, but what we are saying is that there is not really the evidence to say that we should actively incentivise, particularly with public money, the building of large market homes. We think the little money that we are given from Government should be prioritised on genuinely affordable homes and the building of social products, social and low-cost rented products.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): We will argue this in another forum whether or not the record amount of allocation could be described as 'little'.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): In the context of what is needed, Chair, it is little. We need about seven times the rate of affordable housing grant if we are going to address the need in London.

Tony Devenish AM: I will not dwell on this point for much longer, but I have to say that when you have a cross-party consensus -- the Mayor of London does not have that many responsibilities. It is housing, police and transport. To almost abdicate responsibility and say that if a borough goes and does lots of family housing that is great but that is up to them, and if the others do not, that is almost their tough luck -- you are not putting it quite that rudely but it does feel that if we are sitting here in four years' time and a handful of boroughs have addressed family housing while the vast majority have just said, "We will build one-bed flats and capital will go to the private rented sector, etc, and it is for somebody else to sort out" --

The whole idea of being the Mayor is to grasp the big challenges of London. This is one of the big challenges of London. When you get Andrew Boff [AM], Nicky Gavron [AM] and me agreeing, and the gentleman over there almost -- although Tom [Copley AM] better be quiet, I guess, because he is a loyalist to Sadiq [Khan]. There is a real consensus here.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I am sorry, Chair, all I can do is read you the London Plan:

"Boroughs should provide guidance on the size of units required (by number of bedrooms) to ensure affordable housing meets identified needs. This guidance should take account of evidence of local housing needs, including the local Housing Register and the numbers and types of overcrowded and under-occupying homes."

It goes on with other criteria that boroughs should take into account. It says, "This guidance should take account of". It says, "Boroughs should provide guidance on". This is the Mayor requiring boroughs to do things. This cannot and should not be characterised as, "The Mayor is just leaving boroughs to do whatever they want and in a few years' time we will see how it turns out". I think that is really quite specific.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Yet the SHMA indicates that there should be certain numbers of properties that should be built, a certain size mix that should be built.

Anyway, I often wish that I could be a fly on the wall on those planning committees in the 1960s that made dreadful mistakes to find out what it is that they did wrong.

Navin Shah AM: This is on industrial land. I have a number of questions. A couple are the demand-related issues. Due to future demand, you have accepted the recommendation that industry land should be provided

and not just maintained. Given the situation, how will you achieve this and does this impact on your plans for industrial land in the coming ten years?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): You are looking to Rob [McNicol]. I am happy to kick it off but, Rob, you just get straight in there.

Navin Shah AM: I am looking across. Jules, you can take it.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Well, I know this Plan goes far further than any other Plan in its protection and promotion of the importance of industrial land. When you look at the rate of loss it is three times the rate of expected loss from the previous Plan. In central London, it is around seven times the expected loss in the previous Plan.

The industry and planners are only now really beginning to understand that you can almost get to a formula. We are not far off being asked to know what the formula is, but for every home you build you actually have to create a certain amount of industrial floor space, even if it is only for the just-in-time deliveries from supermarkets and Amazon, the way we purchase online now. It has gone way beyond, “You need some employment space near homes”, to a much broader need and requirement for B8 usage as well as other usage.

There is a lot in there for maintaining capacity in SIL, expanding capacity in a number of boroughs and only accepting a reduction in capacity in two or three boroughs, mainly in east London. That is balanced by a similar number of boroughs that are provide boroughs, which are expected to increase their amount of SIL. There are a number of policies in the Plan to address that and then in the industrial land primer that we have produced is a kind of toolkit to be able to show how these policies can be implemented.

What we are always keen to say, I am keen to say, is that this is not about preserving current industrial usage in aspic. I am keen to counter the idea that there is all this underutilised industrial land that is going to waste and we should just start building homes on it. There is plenty of industrial land that is underused that has long since been given away or designated for housing. Some of it may not have been necessarily built out yet, but that is different from industrial land that we ought to keep because of the need. On that point I will hand over to Rob.

Navin Shah AM: Also, it is not only under-utilisation but we need to have intensification of the existing industrial land.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There are plenty of policies in here and encouragement to --

Navin Shah AM: If you can comment on that.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Where no mixed use is suitable - SIL - we are encouraging double- and treble-decking, for example, of industrial land. Where it does not have those heavy uses on and it is not SIL we are open to mixed use, but in all those scenarios we are keen that the industrial capacity is re-provided because all this is about capacity and not preserving footprints and, as I say, business as usual.

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): Just to add to that a couple of things, one is that we are now seeing industrial developers - the likes of

SEGRO, the likes of Prologis - coming forward with schemes for multi-storey, really quite high density industrial use, both the big logistics sheds in places like Park Royal where that is an appropriate use but also the smaller, lighter industrial stuff with goods lifts going up four or five storeys. We are seeing this stuff happen and we are working with the market to deliver this.

In terms of the point around trying to provide additional industrial space, there is a spatial aspect to that. As Jules rightly said, in east London there is some spare capacity for industrial land so those areas are appropriate, through a Plan-led approach, to release some industrial land for housing. We are obviously working closely with the relevant boroughs there. In other parts of London, though, we are asking boroughs to find ways to provide additional capacity. That might be through encouraging and setting higher requirements for their industrial areas to provide industrial land, it might be through designating some non-designated industrial land to say, "This is an important bit of industrial land that we need to retain", and it might be through working with other local authorities in the surrounding area to take a more joint and property market area approach, to see what can be provided right across the board.

Navin Shah AM: Given the high demand, are you undertaking new demand studies or are the boroughs undertaking new demand studies, particularly to incorporate in your policy considerations new and emerging types of industries? That has changed substantially from traditional industry uses. Where are we on that?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): We obviously undertook industrial land demand and supply studies to inform this iteration of the London Plan. We will have to update that evidence at some point in time as a holistic piece to review all of that. We have not set a specific date for that, but we will also be monitoring the industrial land supply that comes through the London Development Database (LDD) to see what we get in terms of increased capacity in the relevant places and so forth. It is a case of monitoring that and also reviewing our evidence at an appropriate time.

Navin Shah AM: How will you be protecting smaller premises or non-designated land around town centres and high streets, for example, so that SMEs can continue to thrive across the city, and even enhance those uses? It is about regeneration of your high streets, something those strategies can actually help with.

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): Shall I? We have obviously introduced, as Jules [Pipe CBE] I think said earlier, a policy protection for non-designated industrial sites, policy E7C of the Plan. That is the first time the London Plan has had a specific policy on non-designated industrial sites, and that sets certain tests around redundancy of those premises or encouraging them to come forward for mixed use with residential and industrial use as well. There may also be some other non-designated industrial sites where local authorities think, "Actually, this is playing an important role, so let us have a policy or let us designate it as a Locally Significant Industrial Site so that we can make sure that that is maintained as an industrial function".

I think it is worth saying that we require boroughs to look at developing town centre strategies as well. As part of that work, it would make a lot of sense for boroughs to think about not just your traditional retail/office/cultural uses as part of your town centre but actually think about town centres as places of work and look at this important relationship between those town centres and the high streets and the light industrial stuff that often supports them. That is an aspect that we will probably follow up with some SPGs to look at how that operates and work with some boroughs to figure out how that can be done.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Assembly Member Gavron could just come in there, perhaps.

Navin Shah AM: Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I will let you finish and then I will add a few. Have you finished, Navin?

Navin Shah AM: No, I have a few more questions, but if you want to come in now, please do.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Should I come in now? It is on the back of a couple of things you have said. This is born out of an enormous amount of sitting on planning committees, for years and years, trying to protect employment space and light industrial space. I have talked to Business Improvement District (BID) people about this too. I think the test is that you market it, and I cannot remember how long. How many years are we saying?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): I will just take you through what the tests are, if that is useful. To demonstrate no demand, an applicant needs to provide a strategic and local assessment of demand, evidence of vacancy, evidence of marketing with appropriate lease terms for at least 12 months --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Twelve months.

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): -- and if it is obsolete and derelict then it needs to be marketed with potential for redevelopment for industrial occupiers, and then to look at the scope for mixed use intensification of that site.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It is the marketing bit, because in fact a year is nothing really, and if you know that your asset is going to change class or you are going to get more money from what you are about to do, you do not have any incentive to really market. It is a big issue.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): It is like the pubs.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. It is a massive issue. We really wanted to get that taken out, that bit. What we did succeed in getting taken out was the fact that if you can identify another premise then that would be fine too. That is gone. The other tests are good, but it is flawed, that. That was one point I wanted to make, and I do not know what can be done about that now but it really needs to be monitored.

The other one was that I remember, Jules, you coming to us on this Committee a couple of years ago when we were looking into industrial land and telling us about your horror at the amount that had been released. I think we have been extremely slack in the past about monitoring the release of industrial land. There has not really been any proper control and I want to know how we are going to monitor and control now the release of land. What are you putting in place that is going to make it any different from the past?

My third question is that you said something very interesting about non-designated. If you have to provide more capacity, you can actually say that something – an area or I do not know how many premises – can be designated. Now, for instance, there was a row of shops in Brent, in Alperton. Not shops. Behind the high street there was a row – there was a whole street, really – which was about producers and makers. They make props and a whole range of things. A little cluster. Could you designate that, then?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): Yes. If the borough thought that that was --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Can you designate a bit of a street, a cluster?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): Yes, yes. Some of the Locally Significant Industrial Sites, which are one of the two layers of designation we have, are actually, across London, really quite small sites themselves. There is no reason a borough could not either designate it with that particular designation or come up with their own policy approach to those smaller industrial units that goes further than the requirements we have in the London Plan for that 12 months of marketing. They could be very specific about their site allocations and saying, "We need to see this come forward for mixed use industrial space and it needs to provide this amount of space".

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): OK. On the latter, on this third point, it is news to me. It certainly does not come out of your last study on industrial land demand because all that study talks about is the extraordinary loss of industrial premises. That is something that really needs to be worked up, I think. There is a town centre policy. There is no high street policy. We really ought to be thinking about that if you are producing some kind of guidance. I think boroughs need to know that if they have to provide more capacity, that is one way to provide more capacity and help their high streets and town centres.

Now, to go back to the control and monitoring, how are we going to do it?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Through our local plan conformity process we can make sure that we are keeping a watching brief on what boroughs are doing in terms of their local plans, and that would be picking up where they are allocating more space, providing that industrial space where necessary. If we are talking specifically about non-designated industrial space then we have the LDD, which you will know we are updating and improving. That will help us understand what is being lost. Obviously where applications come to us, we can make sure we apply the policy very strongly.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Are you insisting of an audit of non-designated?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): I do not think we insist on an --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): An audit of premises, really.

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): Yes. What we ask boroughs to do is to audit their premises when they are looking at their approach in their local plans to providing industrial capacity. Particularly that will focus, understandably, I think, on the SIL and the Locally Significant Industrial Sites, but for those boroughs that are provide capacity boroughs I think we would certainly encourage, if not expect those boroughs to think about their non-designated sites as part of that mix and what they are providing and contributing to their local economies as well.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I think it sounds quite weak at the moment. One last point. We have said this before, I think. We definitely said it at the EiP. We need to have a new study done, a new demand study looking at some of the emerging industries and some of the new industries. That is something that would be very helpful in terms of assessing down the line whether we should be releasing any more of the land

that has been earmarked for the next 20 years, because you will be reviewing that, will you not, and monitoring it?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): Absolutely, and when we come to do a new industrial land demand study, a new industrial land supply study, we are going to look very closely at some of these more emerging sectors because we know that this is overall a shifting scene. The industrial economy is moving and has changed a fair amount over the past five to ten years.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Sure. Right, OK.

Navin Shah AM: I have still a couple of questions. This one is on PDR. What has been the impact of PDR in terms of protection of industrial land, particularly in outer London areas? Are there any further steps that we can take to stop the impact of PDR?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): I do not have the figures to hand in terms of the impact of PDR on industrial premises as such. We know obviously that it has had a very significant impact on offices. My understanding is that the impact on industrial premises has not been anything like as significant, but there have been some examples of where PDR to convert offices to residential has happened within designated industrial areas. That obviously then stagnates the function of those industrial areas if suddenly you have residential units, a block of flats or whatever it is, that have been built right in the middle of an industrial estate.

The Mayor gives support for boroughs to develop article 4 directions [under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995], both for conversion of offices to residential in appropriate locations and for industrial uses to residential as well. A number of boroughs have done that. Southwark did it very quickly, for example, and brought that in, and we can provide information of which boroughs have brought in those article 4 directions as well.

Navin Shah AM: I think that would be useful, if we can have that. Also, like you said, boroughs have a lot of information as part of their efforts to deliver an audit on PDR and loss of offices from PDR. Do you know if boroughs are doing a similar exercise on loss of industrial land from PDR?

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): We will have that information in the LDD. We can pull that information off and provide how much industrial space has been lost to residential through PDR.

Navin Shah AM: Yes. What can the Mayor do in terms of stopping conversion of industrial land to other uses?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Support the boroughs in terms of advice and professional planning support. But there is no route to intervene, is there, in the actual --

Rob McNicol (Policy Team Leader (London Plan Team) – Economy, Culture & Social Infrastructure, GLA): No, that is right. Because of the way the legislation is written, the Mayor has no powers to stop conversions as and when they are applied for to local authorities.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It is one of the devolution asks, that it comes to the Mayor, that they devolve that from the MHCLG to City Hall and other mayoral regions so that the Mayor could either choose to change the policy or to have them made referable. It could be amended in a number of ways if it was devolved.

Navin Shah AM: One final question. It is industrial uses versus affordable challenges, affordable units. Can the Mayor deliver on his commitments to affordable housing for Londoners and at the same time deliver on his 'no net loss' approach to industrial land?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. The Plan is obviously a balance between all these competing requirements and the whole concept of good growth is that a balance should be taken so that whatever is built out, whichever communities are built out, are sustainable communities. Housing is crucial, particularly provision of affordable housing is crucial, but it is not sustainable if we just build huge dormitories and sweep away everything in between, whether it is open space, green space, employment space or service space in terms of logistics. A balance has to be found and that is why we have to be creative in terms of maintaining capacity even if it means in some areas mixing residential in with light industrial.

This is not about putting residential along heavy metal bashing and heavy industries. When you wander through light industrial areas today they are artisanal cheesemakers, gin distilleries and propmakers. In promoting the importance of light industrial, the GLA Regeneration Team put a promotional video together which looked at all the different makerspaces across London that were used to support the Barbican Theatre. It was a myriad of different kinds of places, including those little Victorian workshops behind rows of Victorian houses that you access through this one arch in the middle of a terrace. I think that was a gin distillery, behind that, and the propmakers and whatever. There were a couple of dozen businesses or whatever across London that all support just this one operation in central London.

Proximity was important as well. If they were all working out of corrugated sheds up in Luton, then it is not the same thing and would not necessarily be getting that work in central London. This proximity issue is huge because saying that, "Well, it is industrial land. It can all just go outside of London and all this land could be swapped over to housing", obviously there are the usual, traditional objections to that about employment, which are right, but there is also sustainability in terms of congestion and pollution in travelling, bringing everything down the A1 and M1. People are still making those arguments, though. Often some of the boroughs surrounding London will make the argument, "Surely you could give us some of your industry and move some of that light industrial out of London". That frees up space, but it will cause other problems.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Of course, the EiP Inspectors recommended a Green Belt review on the basis of the 'no net loss' policy that you have adopted.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Encouraging industrial to go on Green Belt --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Encouraging --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Encouraging industrial to go on Green Belt is what they -- part of the review was suggesting that some Green Belt should be used for relocation of industrial, yes.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Do you think that the policy might encourage that drift?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Which policy? What, the policies that we have in Plan would encourage that drift?

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Yes.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): No. No, I do not think so, no.

Navin Shah AM: Is it not the review we are talking about?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There are protections on the Green Belt. The policies designed to maintain and/or provide capacity of industrial would not encourage the creation of that space on Green Belt.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): OK.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): As we always say, the Plan has to be read as a whole. There are too many other checks and balances. That does not mean to say that the importance of creating industrial trumps the preservation of Green Belt.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Boroughs such as Enfield are saying that they are having to look at Green Belt in order to keep with your policy of no net loss.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): No, I think that particular --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Is that not the case?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I mean that borough has indeed promoted the idea of moving industrial onto Green Belt, but it is not one that we support or think is necessary.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Right, but where I live is? In Barking and Dagenham, you can get rid of industrial land?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Barking and Dagenham is one of the release boroughs where --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): It is just that I live in the middle of it, so those releases ...

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes, because of the huge tracts that were released.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Just very quickly, if you are saying 'no net loss' and then you are also saying we are going to not just maintain but we are going to increase industrial capacity, I do not quite --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Well, some boroughs --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Unless that is where --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There are a handful of provide boroughs and there are less than a handful of release boroughs in the east. We are saying no net loss across London. The Inspector has encouraged us to actually tighten slightly so that --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): You are talking about industrial land, are you not?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. Yes, sorry.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): No net loss of industrial land.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. We are not talking about Green Belt.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): No, no, no. I have moved away from the Green Belt.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): But you do not think there is a pressure on Green Belt as a result of no net loss?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Of industrial land.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Of industrial land.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): You are not talking about premises. That is what I am trying --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Well --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Is there not a knock-on from that?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It is hard, I suppose. I come back to probably the very first point that I made as we sat down, that all these uses are competing for land. In making any statement about, say, the importance of creating housing, that is putting pressure on industrial land, Green Belt and every other usage. They are all competing. I suppose it is like a balloon: you push on one bit; the other bits push out. Everything puts pressure on everything else as one allocates the land.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): It depends what hierarchy you have and what hierarchy ultimately the Mayor has in his mind.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): As I say, it is more of a balance because if it is a simple hierarchy and we say housing is the most important then everything would go to housing, and obviously no one around this table is saying you would just allocate everything to housing. A balance has to be struck.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I cannot really talk about that can I? But there are examples of where the Mayor has allowed or overridden local boroughs' height of buildings policies in order to put more affordable housing

on top of an already tall building. Those are the kinds of decisions that the Mayor has taken. Richmond Homebase, for example, which I do not expect you to talk about. Carry on, sorry.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Well, as I say, a balance has to be taken, and a balance is struck on an example of additional affordable housing that the public benefit is seen to outweigh the departure from the local policy.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Thank you.

Tom Copley AM: Moving on to Gypsy and Traveller sites, how long do you or does the Mayor envisage the Londonwide review of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers will take?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Shall I come in on this one? We are scoping it at the moment, in the very early stages of that. We have an internal steering group looking at it. The last time we did it, it took a number of years, so we are trying to work through how long it will take, but we know, because it will take some time to build up those contacts to work up the methodology, that we are starting it now, basically.

Tom Copley AM: By the way, it is something I really welcome because it is an element I badgered the previous Mayor about and the answer was just no, so I very much welcome this. Are you going to be using -- the Government have changed the definition of Gypsies, who is a Gypsy or a Traveller, and a lot of people are very unhappy with that change.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): We will be sticking to the Mayor's adopted definition.

Tom Copley AM: Good. Excellent. Very pleased to hear that. Then in terms of provision, there has been very little new provision recently, only 24 new pitches provided since 2007/08. How are you going to make sure that boroughs actually are delivering, once this assessment has been done?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): Even in the policy at the moment - obviously we have not done the updated study but we have the old Fordham study as a kind of backstop - we are encouraging boroughs to update their studies, but also that they need to put in their plans a target for delivery.

Tom Copley AM: Great.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager - Planning, GLA): That means that they need to understand the need and then plan to meet some of it or all of it through their local plans, which is more than we have had in the past. Then what we also need to think about is how we bring in looking at sites more into the SHLAA process than we have had in the past. In the past it has been something that we have asked boroughs to contemplate when they are looking at sites but not really put too much pressure on that, and I think we can do more. Especially once we have done the study and we know what the need is, we can then understand better and put more pressure on boroughs to allocate those sites.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): As you know, the Mayor's affordable homes programme has money for pitches.

Tom Copley AM: Has money for, yes, Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The last question, which I think I can answer myself, actually, is: why has it taken over a decade for a new comprehensive accommodation assessment for Gypsies and Travellers? I presume that is because the Government removed the requirement and the previous Mayor did not want to do one.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There will be that. I think it was felt that the boroughs were best placed to lead on it, but we have moved on.

Tom Copley AM: Yes. As I say, I very much welcome that. Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Thank you very much. I think those are all the questions we have for you. Thank you ever so much, all three of you, for sticking with us.