

DRAFT NEW LONDON PLAN

Introduction.

The Mayor needs to recognise the differences between inner and outer London Boroughs. A one size fits all plan that ignores these differences will not work.

The area covered by the London Borough of Hillingdon was once known as Middlesex. LBH is made up of ancient villages, most of which are mentioned in the Domesday Book and fine Metropolitan Towns. This means our communities have more than a thousand years of history and culture.

This should be respected by ensuring the characteristics that make our communities what they are are retained and not diminished by any new plans.

The approach outlined in this draft document will destroy the character of both ancient villages and Metropolitan Towns, this is unacceptable.

Chapter 1. Good Growth Policies.

The growth of any town or village should respect the heritage and culture of that community. A policy of cramming in unsuitable buildings, even if it seems to fit into designated Conservation Areas, cannot be regarded as good growth.

The proposal of the development of small sites should be removed from the draft plan, this type of indiscriminate building cannot be controlled.

Chapter 2. Spatial Development Patterns

The Mayor does not explain his thinking when using the phrase 'appropriate intensification'. This could mean anything. A plan of this magnitude should be clear and concise, not left open to interpretation and conjecture. Any new development should blend in with the surrounding area and not be over dominant, the policy of small developments could and will change an area beyond all recognition thus becoming over dominant and destroying the community, culture and heritage of the village or town.

High rise or tall buildings in the centre of towns will be out of context with any Metropolitan Town.

Chapter 3. Design

Elsewhere in this draft plan there is great emphasis placed upon green roofs [this after existing gardens have been built on]. For a building to have a green roof/garden it has to be flat. Therefore, the Mayor is proposing one style of building across the board, which will be cuboid in shape but with varying heights. This is not good design and will not enhance any ancient village or Metropolitan Town.

The lack of provision for quality amenity/ play space is disturbing. Green roofs/gardens are not suitable for children's use. Children need a safe play space that can be seen from the parental home. The loss of the facility for people to have private, good quality outside space leads to many cases of poor mental health. This plan does not take this problem into consideration, in fact it will exacerbate the problem.

Little thought has been given to the building of basements. The geological conditions of any area must play a large part in determining whether or not it is suitable to excavate such a large area. Again one size fits all is not good planning. This whole subject needs a much closer investigation. Preferably it should be left to each local council to decide what is possible within their boundaries.

Chapter 4. Housing

The Mayor advocates the increasing use of smaJJ sites for development.

Policy H2. Small sites.

01. InfiJJ development on vacant or under used sites.

D2 (d) Infill within the curtilage of a house.

The NPPF does not allow the building of dwellings in gardens.

Although this plan does not specifically use the word 'Gardens' the policy H2, 01 & D2(d) means exactly that, building in gardens. 'Garden Grab'

I doubt the Mayor has greater powers than the Secretary of State and is able to change Government policy. Therefore, this policy must be removed from the Plan as it does not conform with the NPPF.

The loss of biodiversity by building on land that was once a garden cannot be replaced by the provision of green roofs/walls and extra street trees. Green roofs are expensive to install and costly to maintain. Green walls are even more difficult to maintain and will use a considerable amount of water, which will be a waste of a precious commodity.

Some areas of LB Hillingdon, especially the more rural ones, do not have a very good public transport system. Owning and using a car in many areas of the borough is the only way to travel to work or visit other areas. The restrictions on parking spaces per dwelling in this plan do not take into consideration the varying needs of the different London Boroughs. This should be reconsidered and left to each borough to set its own standards according to need.

The Mayor, although against expansion at Heathrow has not taken into account the extra stress this would place on housing. Therefore, the draft plan should include a strong reason for refusal of the Heathrow expansion citing that the increase of population cannot be accommodated.

Chapter 7. Heritage & Culture.

Protecting the heritage and culture of any community is of vital importance.

Earlier policies of allowing infill building in Conservation Areas & Areas of Special Local Character must be deleted from the draft plan if these areas are going to keep their special character. The same applies to the Statutory Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings, not all of these are in Conservation Areas, therefore there should be stronger protection to stop all of these being swallowed up by inappropriate developments.

Thus making sure this draft plan is in line with the NPPF.

Chapter 8 Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment.

The protection of all Green Belt land is essential. Elements of the proposals in this draft plan weaken the policies of the previous plan. Excessive increase in the housing total for LB Hillingdon will weaken the policy and will encourage developers to encroach onto Green Belt land. This policy as set out in the previous London Plan should not be changed.

It is not clear what is meant by the terms 'enhancement' and 'appropriate multifunctional uses' grey, muddled terminology like this leads to many problems later on.

The suggested proposal to 'enhance' open spaces e.g. Metropolitan Land is again very weak. There must be strong policies to protect the conservation areas of Metropolitan Land and other parks from inappropriate developments in the buffer zone around these areas.

The draft plan does not appear to recognise or give any support to protecting green chains. These are vital corridor links between open spaces to allow the migration of wildlife. This omission should be addressed.

Many areas of the built environment are already lacking in nearby open space. The proposals within this draft are set to take away a lot of open space used by the majority of the inhabitants, namely gardens. As the London Boroughs are going to be expected to treble their annual rate of dwelling production, where are they supposed to find extra land to produce green open space? This is not at all clear.