

Dear Sir,

Following various discussions with the locals that I know, I am writing to object to the Draft New London Plan.

The plan will significantly weaken the planning protection given to Hampstead, with its historic conservation areas, open spaces (including Hampstead Heath) and unique character that not only locals and residents enjoy. In the last few days I noticed many people travelling from other parts of London to enjoy the snowy beauty of the area.

There are three policies in particular that I object to, on the basis that they are inconsistent with national planning policy.

First, Policy H2. This imposes a new “presumption in favour” of small-scale development of between 1 and 25 homes including demolition and rebuild schemes, the upwards extension of flats and residential extensions. This policy should not apply to Conservation Areas. Our area has suffered from numerous planning applications in recent years where developers have tried to demolish existing properties and rebuild them with completely inappropriate new housing within our conservation area [give examples: e.g. 28 Redington Road, 29 New End, 192 Haverstock Hill, 266-270 Finchley Road, and the impact this has had or would have had].

Weakening the protection given to our conservation areas will lead to more of these applications being approved, destroying over time the special character of our area, especially as some developers start doing things before getting approval.

Second, Policy D8. This weakens existing policies on tall buildings. Tall buildings are completely inappropriate in Hampstead or the surrounding area. Planning permission has recently been granted for a 24 storey tower at 100 Avenue Road. This development is completely out of keeping with our area, will loom over our conservation areas, and result in an increase in construction traffic on our streets, which is a nightmare for people living in the area logistically, as well as impacting negatively on one’s health and environment. The London Plan should not be supporting more tall towers [give examples of the problems these cause, e.g. loss of light and overshadowing, construction traffic, wind tunnels, canyon effects, loss of streetscapes with reference to any local development, e.g. 100 Avenue Road].

Given that research has shown that mid-rise development can deliver the same housing density as high-rise development, the London Plan should not be supporting tall buildings.

Third, Policy G3. This applies to Hampstead Heath. It enables the boundaries of Metropolitan Open Land to be amended through “land swap” deals. Hampstead Heath is one of the most important areas of open space in London and is a “green lung” at the heart of our community [give personal examples of why Hampstead Heath is so important]. The London Plan should not allow Hampstead Heath’s boundaries to be amended.

Overall, the London Plan is inconsistent with national planning policy and should therefore not be approved. I do not agree that the scale of the Mayor's election victory enables him to depart from national policy. Just as important as the Mayor's mandate is the role that local communities have been given to shape their own communities (for example, through Neighbourhood Plans). This must be respected. Not only this, but the London Plan lasts until 2041, and should not be shaped by the events of one election.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Galina Portiano