

LONDON PLAN – EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

Play and Informal Recreation

M54. Would PolicyS4 address strategic matters of London wide importance relating to play and informal recreation? In particular:

a) Would PolicyS4 provide an effective and justified strategic framework for the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans in relation to play and informal space?

b) In light of the need for increased densities and differing local contexts, would requirements as set out at Policy S4B2 be justified, particularly a space standard per child for accessible on site play provision?

Overall would it provide sufficient flexibility to reflect local circumstances?

Zacchaeus 2000 Trust's over-riding hope for the new London Plan is that it will deliver the genuinely affordable homes the Capital's homeless and overcrowded families, and others languishing for years on waiting lists need. However, we are also conscious that these homes should also be in developments and neighbourhoods which are good places to live, especially for children. And in that respect, we see a persistent tension between numbers and open space, including child play-space within individual developments. Usually, open space loses out.

In our view, Policy S4 (Informal Play and Recreation) essentially restates the current position and doesn't help improve the quantum of child play-space required within new developments. In our response to the original consultation, Zacchaeus 2000 highlighted our concerns that the child yield expected of each new privately-owned one- and two-bedroom property is far too low. Essentially, it is based upon an assumption that there will be no children at all in one-bedroom flats, which is not likely to be true. Our original evidence included an example to illustrate this outcome.

Zacchaeus 2000 is therefore disappointed to note the implication in the questions asked by the Panel that the standard of 10 square metres per child does not provide enough flexibility to address the perceived need for *"increased densities and differing local contexts"*. We feel strongly that the proposed space standard is the absolute minimum necessary to allow meaningful opportunities for informal play and recreation for children. We hope the Panel will take the opportunity provided by the Examination hearing to look again at this issue through the eyes of London's children.

While we accept that the formula for child yield should probably not be set in the Plan itself, we believe the Plan needs to be amended to highlight the practical inadequacy of child play-space in many schemes coming forward for planning permission and identify the current formula as the reason for this deficiency. We feel strongly that such a standard needs to be set at a London-wide level, rather than left in the hands of individual Boroughs, some of whom do not always insist on adherence to the existing requirements.