

# A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS

## Accommodating Growth Workshop

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, 9.30 – 13.00

### **Opportunity Areas, Intensification Areas and other growth area designations**

#### **Facilitator in bold**

Respondents in regular text

*These notes are a summary of the conversation*

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*Session 1, Table 6*

#### **Darren Richards, Greater London Authority (Facilitator)**

Alex Savine, London Legacy DC

Andrew Ruck, London Borough of Southwark

Donna Isaac, West Ken Gibbs Green Community Homes

Laim Kelly

Meenakshi Sharma, NOISE (Neighbourhoods of Ilford South Engage)

Nadia Dickinson, Environment Agency

Roy Thompson, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Stephanie Pollitt, British Property Federation

Zoe Savory, West Ken Gibbs Green Community Homes

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#### **Definition of opportunity areas clarified by facilitator.**

Some people felt that there was a lot of intention and there was the feeling/ an appreciation that people can't get everything everyone wants- tricky working out what gives?

Planning for uncertainty was agreed to be important.

Crossrail 1 being used for an excuse for high density development in town centres- residents cant access the station. From Shenfield developments are appearing along line- capacity wont cope, will be overcrowded and needs modelling- taking into account proposed developments.

Ilford- new build units- 9000 new units over last 10 years, people can't afford new build. Last 30 years governments housing policy has been a failure.

The suitability for high density development of certain sites has been questioned.

Intensification around station hubs- can be advantageous but some people had negative experiences of 'overloading' certain train stations e.g. Ilford. Needs to be done holistically with suitable transport and other social infrastructure.

Place making important.

Makes sense to bring community and housing into town centre- needs to be done sensitively and holistically.

Fundamental issue: infrastructure is needed/ fundamental for growth and to help manage growth.

Question: how strongly is the Mayor going to adhere to greenbelt statements? Questioned his commitment to providing correct social infrastructure too.

Question: is there a lot of TfL or GLA owned land in opportunity areas? Further question: is there a way of disposing of land by leasing it or getting receipts/ income over a long period of time? So not just private landowners/ developers benefit.

Land banking is an issue - local authorities could review land owned every 3-5 years to audit, take stock and assess.

Too much focus on intensification is short sighted.

Encourage brownfield redevelopment- knock on impacts on health, decontamination of land, improvements in river pollution levels etc. should be focusing on this.

Housing on brownfield should be a focus for opportunity areas.

Opportunity areas are an opportunity to look at what is needed where holistically, rather than on a case by case piece by piece approach. London Plan and opportunity areas gives chance to look at social infrastructure and the need across London and getting the right type of dev in the right place.

Greenbelt - the group had views on both sides.

Keep looking at the long term view- change takes time.

Displacement of land uses when development happens- needs phasing to work and change needs to be managed.

Class issues- and population densities.

Social infrastructure important.

Tension- who identifies an opportunity area and who gets to identify it? Existing communities often overlooked. Good ways of driving forward opportunity areas.

Label of 'opportunity area' seen by many as a negative with negative effects.

Take a step back and work with existing populations- new approach to opportunity areas as there are tensions. Consult with people at early stages of defining an opportunity area. Could improve buy in.

People will be against development inherently.

Broad designations which are large areas- very different and diverse. Borough participation is therefore important.

There is an opportunity to clarify the definition- as opportunity areas mean diff things to diff people- there is some confusion around them. GLA definition of an opportunity area is v bland! Doesn't say anything!

Lack of clarity in definition- more would be good. Definition could cite benefits and social infrastructure more.

Also- issues with definition of brownfield sites i.e. a council estate is brownfield a private house next door is not- discriminatory and divisive.

Need to look into equality and creating fairer London via opportunity areas. Class and inequality areas.

Level of detail in London Plan was questioned- boroughs know the areas and understand the areas.

Can the opportunity area planning framework approach be used more widely.

Change definition?

Different criteria.

Easier to understand?

Break down opportunity areas by type? i.e. by east less intense, town centres, regen - but could that over complicate?

Could a suite of solutions be more appropriate rather than the GLA 'prescribing' one? By type. Not geographical. i.e. intensification areas, regen areas, etc. TfL have done similar with street types. Then more tailored local responses may then be possible.

Opportunity areas- what is the benefit of an opportunity area?

What is in it for me and my community?

What are the benefits- why buy into it?

Need to improve concept and communication of concept.

Improve PR of concept of opportunity areas!

Importance of working with local communities- local planning/ localism.

Need to look at how the label of opportunity area affects the house prices, PRS etc. Many ramifications- need to look at all consequences- some felt they hadn't been.

London Plan does still have a role- where is the line drawn in terms of GLA role and borough role?

Need to be clear on essential infrastructure for dev and quite prescriptive.

Economic model for opportunity areas needs to be clear- it's not about housing developer making money from housing then providing schools etc. later.

Opportunity area- opportunity to look at in holistic and comprehensive way- look at wider sites rather than actual red line boundary. Opportunity area is a framework to address wider societal and equality issues.

Typologies and criteria would be beneficial.

Once size fits all doesn't work.

There are many neighbourhood forums throughout London who could/ would get more involved.

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*Session 2, Table 6*

**Darren Richards, Greater London Authority (Facilitator)**

Richard Lee: Just space

Pat Turnbull: Just Space and London Tenants Federation

Claire Loops: London Borough of Bexley

Sandra Fryer: London Borough of Waltham Forrest

Graham Saunders: Historic England

Paula Hirst: Old Oak and Park Royal DC

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**Darren introduced the topic and some of the questions to be discussed.**

Within the network of community groups within Just Space- there is concern from stakeholders within opportunity areas and concern over dis-benefits- do we need a different approach. Is it still the correct model?

Question: could opportunity areas be used to create more spatially even and consistent development over London?

Do we need different types to meet diverse needs?

Experiences of opportunity areas varies greatly.

Difference in interpretation by diff Boroughs within 1 opportunity area- Borough level inconsistencies.

Baseline not clear enough.

Lost opportunities across boundaries through inconsistency- which contradicts the concept.

Often seen as a means/ excuse to get rid of council housing and replace with speculative housing and office blocks- which do not meet the needs of Londoners. Outdated approach which needs to go.

Opportunity Areas are used by developers as a way of putting pressure on Boroughs to grant consents which aren't acceptable.

Communities and populations are moved out by big businesses and housing developers

Discussion over City Fringe- businesses are also being pushed out due to prices.

Concept of opportunity areas- yes helpful. Good to identify areas which can accommodate further development- plus can create guidance on how that should be done.

Need detailed guidance which can be set out across an opportunity area. Creates focus and guides dev industry to know where to dev.

Some do not like this as it is often seen as the wrong type of development- speculative not sustainable.

Opportunity areas need careful management. They can't just be identified and left as an identified opportunity area with no management or no one overseeing it.

Bexley was discussed- only opportunity area with no transport! Opportunity area for a long time but needs better transport to unlock the area (including river crossings).

Intensifying the employment offer was questioned and discussed- some developers are getting on board with such an approach to protect local businesses, and promote the skills agenda locally.

Concerns with some existing opportunity areas- including Olympics- were questioned how successful they were?

Responsible management of opportunity areas is essential. Need strong planning principles and a strong supporting team to ensure it works with the existing communities.

Pro-active management can be just as important as planning role in opportunity areas.

Community and local businesses need to be recognised as an important stakeholder- and are often not. Need to factor communities into governance/ management of opportunity areas.

OAPFs are subject to less scrutiny than the London Plan, and are created with very little consultation/involvement of communities in development of the OAPFs; however some cited fewer resources at public authorities for formal consultation.

For Old Kent Road OAPF there will be an examination, although may be more complex elsewhere, e.g. when several boroughs are involved.

Some OAPFs are not AAPs, but rather guidance that need to go through Local Plan process.

OAPFs can change e.g. SIL but not MOL.

OAPFs offer opportunities to fast-track development planning and delivery, but there is need to balance different interests in land use.

Need to capture qualities/capacity of opportunity areas throughout change process in a tailored way.

Look at good practice from existing OAPFs for next generation of Frameworks.

Start with holistic need for improvements and change beyond the crude housing and employment numbers.

London is a global city, but the unique London-specific characteristics need to be taken into account.

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