

Council, Tuesday 14 July

Amendment to Opposition policy item 4.2

Moved by Councillor Melvin Cohen

Review of 'London Plan'

Delete after 'etc' and replace with:

Council notes the new London Plan and that all councillors have an opportunity to comment upon it, as do residents and residents' groups. This opportunity was taken up by the administration who submitted a response on 30 June 2009.

Council further congratulates the Mayor of London on his planning initiatives to date.

Council notes that it has hitherto avoided instructing scrutiny committees of their work programme.

Council notes that councillors had an opportunity to put forward the issue of the London Plan for consideration of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee but failed to do so.

Council, Tuesday 14 July

Amendment in the name of Cllr Ross Houston to Opposition Policy Item in the name of Cllr Jim Tierney

Review of 'The London Plan'

Delete all and replace with:

The Mayor of London is reviewing the London Plan this year, starting with his initial proposals document "A new plan for London". The review will impact on important local issues such as housing, transport, environment, economic development, etc.

The London Plan is being reviewed in parallel with the Mayor's draft Housing Strategy, Transport Strategy, Economic Development Strategy and the interim Outer London Commission report, with a full draft of the new London Plan due for public consultation in the autumn.

Council wishes to raise the following issues:

Affordable Housing:

It is of concern that the continued approach by the new Mayor of attempting to increase the supply of affordable housing by negotiating numeric targets with individual boroughs seems to be failing, with some Boroughs, including Barnet, still to agree the Mayor's indicative targets.

The Council's last Housing Need Survey in 2007 showed that the need for affordable housing in Barnet was at crisis levels two years ago, with a projected shortfall of over 5,000 affordable homes each year from 2007 to 2012.

The local population is set to grow by about 31,000 by 2016, but the big regeneration projects in Barnet won't meet the affordable housing needs of the local population by that time, with a net loss of affordable housing over the West Hendon estate, Grahame Park, and Stonegrove estate agreed so far.

Unless the boroughs, including Barnet, co-operate in agreeing the Mayor's targets the pledge to build 50,000 new affordable homes in London will not be achieved, and with the statement that the 50,000 figure will be revised in light of available resources - despite the Mayor having £5bn from the government for building new homes in the capital - the election pledge to build 50,000 new affordable homes looks all but shelved.

The current recession and credit crunch has made it virtually impossible for first time buyers to get on to the property ladder in Barnet, even with discounted housing products in the intermediate housing sector, so the new London Plan proposal to change the social/intermediate split from 75/35 to 60/40 seems completely premature.

With about 15,000 families on the housing waiting list in Barnet, not maximising the delivery of affordable housing, and affordable housing for rent in particular, will mean some local families waiting decades for a home they can afford.

Sheltered Housing:

"A new plan for London" aims to provide greater support for the housing needs of the elderly and disabled, and the Mayor's draft Housing Strategy talks about the need to build more sheltered housing. This is in stark contrast to Barnet's recent decision to withdraw residential wardens from many sheltered housing blocks, and replace it with floating support, without the evidence of a comprehensive needs analysis.

Infrastructure for population growth:

There is no mention of the need for more play spaces for children and young people in an increasing population.

Orbital transport:

Despite the Outer-London Commission meeting all this year to discuss how to work with Transport for London on building capacity in outer-London transport infrastructure, no real proposals have emerged apart from the orbital express bus route.

Cycling, walking and roads:

Congestion is a serious problem in Barnet. "A new plan for London" talks about encouraging walking and cycling, but suggests no targets for reducing car journeys, and is favourable to further road development. There are no concrete proposals for achieving a shift from the car to more sustainable modes of travel like cycling other than to develop a cycle parking standard. (The Velib project will not be rolled out in Barnet).

No agreement for using Oyster pre-pay on overground rail has been negotiated.

Accessibility on the transport system:

The Transport Strategy only commits the Mayor to providing step-free access at 29% of stations by 2017, - letting down older people, parents with young children and disabled passengers.

Economic Development:

Growth / Super- hubs appear to have been dropped completely. Cricklewood was one of the proposed hubs.

Waste:

"A new plan for London" remains silent on waste minimisation, but it is an issue that Barnet must make progress on if it is to tackle budget pressures.

Council believes all Councillors should have an opportunity to properly consider these and other issues in the Mayor's various strategy documents, and to contribute to the council's response to the draft London Plan when published later on this year.

Council therefore asks the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee to:

- establish a scrutiny task and finish group to assist Cabinet in preparing its response to the formal consultation on the draft London Plan in the autumn and
- consider Council's views on the initial proposals document as part of that process.