

Decision Maker: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Date: 9th June 2015

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: MINOR ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN CONSULTATION DRAFT HOUSING STANDARDS & PARKING STANDARDS

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Chief Officer: Jim Kehoe, Chief Planner

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

The Mayor of London is consulting on two sets of Minor Alterations to the London Plan (MALP) on Housing Standards and Parking Standards. These Minor Alterations have been prepared to bring the London Plan in line with new national housing standards and car parking policy.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

i) Members consider and note the Minor Alterations to the London Plan 2015 Housing Standards and Parking Standards (MALP).

ii) Members endorse the proposed response as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Planning
 4. Total current budget for this head: £2.144m
 5. Source of funding: Existing controllable revenue budget for 2014/15
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All residents in the Borough as well as those making planning applications for development in the Borough.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not applicable

3. COMMENTARY

Background

- 3.1 The London Plan was updated to incorporate the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) and published in March 2015. It stated that the Mayor would bring forward additional alterations in early 2015 to reflect Government housing standards and give “active consideration” to addressing changes to national policy on car parking should Government bring these forward. At the end of March a Ministerial Statement introduced new national technical housing standards (on the back of the Deregulation Act), zero carbon homes changes (from the Infrastructure Bill) and amended national planning policy to further support the provision of car parking spaces. The Mayor of London has subsequently drafted amendments to the London Plan in order to address the national changes and is consulting on these as Minor Alterations to the London Plan (MALP) until 22 June 2015. The proposed changes will be considered by an independent planning inspector at a joint public examination later this year.

Proposed changes to housing standards

- 3.2 The new national technical standards include optional Building Regulations for access and water, and a new national space standard. A number of standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes and Lifetime Homes have been revoked and replaced with reference to the Mayor's Housing Design Guide 2010, the Mayor's Housing SPG and the relevant sections from the Building Regulations. The MALP set out how the London Plan could be updated and amended to reflect the Government's policy changes, either by restating existing policy with additional evidence or by adjusting the policy wording or approach.
- 3.3 Table 3.3 in the London Plan “Minimum Housing Standards” which sets out minimum unit and room sizes has been replaced with a new table which is in line with the new national housing standards (See Appendix 2). There are some changes including the extension of the standards to include larger dwellings, built in storage requirements and slight amendment to the smallest unit size.
- 3.4 Changes to policy on wheelchair housing are proposed to bring the London Plan in line with optional Building Regulations which distinguish between wheelchair user dwellings (Category 3) and homes which can be adapted to meet the needs of a household including a wheelchair user (Category 2). Category 2, is broadly equivalent to the Lifetime Homes standard which the Government have revoked and Category 3 replaces current guidance on housing specifically for wheelchair users. The Minor Alterations propose that 90% of housing to be built as Category 2, and 10% should meet Category 3 level which is the level currently required in new developments.
- 3.5 In terms of water usage, the existing London Plan policy is to be retained. This target, of 105 litres per day, is in line with the new optional National Standards, the Minor Alterations justifying its retention by reference to the fact that London is an area classified as seriously water stressed by the Environment Agency.
- 3.6 The Mayor proposes to retain the current policy position on carbon reduction in new major developments, considering it to be in line with the Government's intentions. Bromley currently defers to the London Plan in this policy area and it is recommended that this continue, although viability will be tested additionally through the Borough's own Local Plan viability assessment. The GLA's viability assessment of the MALP tests the existing carbon reduction policy against a sample of developments across London and concludes that it is still acceptable. It should be noted that amendments have been made to text and figures of the policy to take into account changes in Building Regulations from 2010 to 2103, but the target is effectively the same.

- 3.7 The MALP also reiterate existing London Plan policy and expand upon the Government's approach to allow developments to make a payment for any carbon reduction that cannot be met on site. Payments in this context are referred to as "Allowable Solutions" and Boroughs are encouraged to set up local projects and funds for this purpose.
- 3.8 Alongside the consultation documents the Mayor has also published a Housing Standards Policy Transition Statement which sets out how existing London housing standards should be applied from October 2015 (when the new national standards come into effect) until such time that the Minor Alterations are adopted.
- 3.9 From 1st October 2015, relevant London Plan policy and associated guidance in the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) should be interpreted by reference to the nearest equivalent new national technical standard. The Mayor intends to adopt the new national technical standards through a minor alteration to the London Plan.

Proposed changes on parking standards

- 3.10 Representations were made at the Examination in Public of the Further Alterations to the London Plan in September 2014 and the Outer London Commission (OLC) in March 2015, arguing for the need to allow greater flexibility for boroughs in Outer London to set their own parking standards. Bromley maintains that local characteristics are vitally important and that Boroughs should not be forced to comply with either inappropriate London-wide standards or outer London specific standards.
- 3.11 The MALP proposes allowing outer London boroughs to permit greater parking at new residential developments in low PTAL areas predominantly 0-1 but in some cases PTAL 2, above that which is permitted under the London Plan Standards. It recommends that additional parking be allowed in developments in areas of PTAL 2 if they are located *where the orientation or levels of public transport mean that a development is particularly dependent on car travel*, as Bromley have consistently argued to the GLA and OLC.
- 3.12 The MALP proposes permitting Boroughs to consider revised standards (which could include minima) and permitting higher levels of provision in new residential developments in the areas outlined above. By allowing for Minima, the MALP has moved significantly away from the maximum standards of both the London Plan and the FALP. The increased levels of parking allowed under the MALP would therefore ensure that the emerging Local Plan, which sets minimum standards for residential parking, is in conformity with the London Plan.
- 3.13 Paragraph 6.42k states that in deciding whether or not more generous standards are to be applied, account should be taken of the extent to which public transport might be provided in the future. Consideration should also be given to the impact of on-street parking measures such as CPZs which may also help reduce the potential for overspill parking and congestion, and improve safety and amenity. This is of particular concern given that if public transport investment does not materialise or is some years away, developments will be built with inappropriately low levels of parking. Additional CPZs to protect roads around new developments are also likely to just move parking pressures to the first roads available outside the CPZ increasing pressure on parking in the Borough.
- 3.14 There appears to be some lessening of the importance ascribed to PTALs with the removal of their description as detailed and accurate, although it is still a concern that PTALs are being used to define which areas are more car dependant than others without taking into account more nuanced local characteristics.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The London Plan forms part of the Development Plan for the Borough with the Council's Local Plan required to be in 'general conformity'.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal, Personnel and Financial
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) National Planning Practice Guidance, Housing – Optional Technical Standard updated 27 th March 2015 Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (March 2015) The London Plan (March 2015) Housing Standards Policy Transition Statement (May 2015)