

Planning Committee Report

London Thames Gateway Development Corporation

Emerging Planning Policy in the Lower Lea Valley: Hackney Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document

Report of the Director of Planning

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report summarises the proposed LTGDC response to the London Borough of Hackney's Core Strategy (Proposed Submission Document) which has been published for consultation. It is available to view, along with the Submission Proposals Map, on the Hackney website: [Hackney Council - Planning - LDF - Core Strategy](#)
- 1.2 As the LTGDC does not have policy or plan making powers, it is essential that the interests of the Corporation are reflected wherever possible in emerging planning policy of constituent boroughs to assist in the delivery of the Development Corporations objectives.
- 1.3 The LTGDC Planning Committee has responsibility for considering policy documents and providing LTGDC's formal response. The public consultation has closed but Hackney has agreed that the LTGDC response can be received following the committee meeting.

2. Decision Required

- 2.1 That the Committee **Agree** that the Director of Planning respond to the consultation with comments based on the above and any additional comments made by members at the meeting.

3. Background

- 3.1 Although only a small geographic area of the London Borough of Hackney falls within the Corporation's area, the Core Strategy will be a significant policy determinant for this part of the Thames Gateway, especially given the current master planning work on the Hackney Wick Fish Island area. The LTGDC is currently progressing an Area Action Plan for Hackney Wick Fish Island jointly with London Borough of Hackney and London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This report focuses primarily on the area-specific policies for Hackney Wick. It is considered that the generic policies

of the Core Strategy are to be supported, subject to the comments in Section 5 of this report.

- 3.2 The Board received on the 2nd June 2008 and the Planning Committee formally considered, on 12th June 2008 a report on Hackney Core Strategy Preferred Options. The document currently out to consultation is the Proposed Submission Document. It is expected that the document will be submitted to Government at the end of September.
- 3.3 The representations made by the LTGDC in the last round of consultation can be summarised as:
- Need for greater recognition of the impact of the Olympics and Legacy on the Hackney Wick area;
 - Need for greater emphasis on improving connections between the Olympic Park and Hackney Wick Area;
 - A significant concern was that one of the core policies sought to protect all industrial land within the hierarchy of designated employment locations which would compromise regeneration of Hackney Wick.
- 3.4 It is considered that the first two issues have been fully addressed in the current drafting of the policies. The third issue has been largely addressed, though it is considered that further clarity would be beneficial as set out below in Section 5.

4. Summary of Core Strategy Policies for Hackney Wick

Spatial Vision and Objectives

- 4.1 The spatial vision Hackney in 2025 recognises the potential future role of Hackney Wick: *“Hackney Wick has maximised the benefits of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games legacy to become a new hub for digital media and the creative industry with the advantage of a waterside location. The area also offers competitive business space in mixed use developments and a new neighbourhood around the upgraded station”*.
- 4.2 The strategy for growth is set out in Core Strategy Policy 1, which identifies the types of locations where the Council will direct significant economic and housing growth with supporting investment. This includes Town Centres, Improved Railway Corridors, the City Fringe and New Communities (including Hackney Wick). Under this policy Hackney Wick is planned as a neighbourhood of employment led mixed development that maximises Olympic Legacy opportunities.

Area Specific Hackney Wick Policies

- 4.3 Hackney Wick is designated in the London Plan as a Strategic Employment Location. The Opportunity Area Planning Framework for the Lower Lea Valley (LLV OAPF) sets the framework and broad geography

for industrial land release and restructuring in the Lower Lea Valley. This identifies a number of areas, including Hackney Wick, with the potential to accommodate a proportion of non-industrial uses as 'Other Industrial Areas'. The Proposals for the Mayor's London Plan, published for consultation in April 2009 follow this general direction by stating the Mayor's intention to facilitate an exceptional approach to ease release of industrial land in the Lower Lea Valley to support regeneration arising from the 2012 Games. The policy direction for Hackney Wick as set out in the Hackney Core Strategy is compatible with this developing policy context.

- 4.4 Core Strategy Policy 5 sets out the specific policy context for Hackney Wick and is reproduced below for ease of reference:

Hackney Wick New Community

The Council will direct significant investment and employment led mixed development to Hackney Wick which will take account of strategic industrial and priority employment designations and Olympic Legacy opportunities. Development will be required to take account of the flood risk designations and be prepared in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25 and the North London Strategic Flood Risk Assessment requirements for the Sequential and Exception Tests. Sustainable solutions will be required to reduce flood risk to and from development in the Hackney Wick area. The Council will work in partnership with stakeholders to develop a strategic flood risk management scheme designed to alleviate flood risk within the Hackney Wick Area Action Plan Development will need to contribute to improved connectivity to the area by public.

- 4.5 The proposals map identified Hackney Wick as 'Other Industrial Area', reflecting the spatial diagram for Hackney Wick in the LLV OAPF.
- 4.6 Paragraph 4.39 of the supporting text reflects the policy direction of the OAPF, stating that "a change in emphasis for the Hackney Wick SIL could better respond to the changed circumstances of the Olympic Legacy opportunities".
- 4.7 The implementation section supporting Policy 5 makes reference to the Area Action Plan for Hackney Wick and Fish Island which is being prepared jointly with London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the LTGDC. With regards to the geographical distribution of industrial land release, the supporting text reflects the OAPF and the direction that is emerging through the AAP, stating that "*to the north of the railway there is potential to retain commercial activity as part of mixed use development; while to the south the area is more appropriate for general industry*". The key features of development proposals for Hackney Wick are summarised as 87,141 sqm of employment space, station access improvement with commercial development and approximately 500 new dwellings. Other uses would include retail, creative industry, new park and Legacy facilities.

- 4.8 Core Strategy Policy 8 identifies Hackney Wick as one of the locations where investment in social infrastructure will be concentrated.

5. The Proposed LTGDC Response

- 5.1 LTGDC officers consider that the overall vision and objectives for the Core Strategy and direction of policy for Hackney Wick is to be supported and it is considered that the current version of the Core Strategy incorporates the observations made by the LTGDC at Preferred Options Stage.
- 5.2 The proposals map allocates Hackney Wick as 'Other Industrial Area'. However, the policy on employment land (Policy 17) does not define this allocation, so it is not explicitly set out in policy which uses would be acceptable in this location (though the supporting text to Policy 5 makes reference to the range of uses within the Area Action Plan Area at Paragraph 4.40). It is considered that, as this is a specific designation on a proposals map, it should be clearly defined in policy. It is understood that there is a concern that the release of industrial land should be properly managed, coordinated and phased and that planning policy needs to set a context which prevents individual development proposals which are dominated by a single use such as residential. However, it is considered that the Core Strategy could usefully define more clearly the types of uses and could give an indication of the maximum and minimum land use proportions that would be acceptable. It is, however, acknowledged that the land use mix is being developed through the Area Action Plan.
- 5.3 Greater clarity is also required regarding the assumptions behind the figures set out in Paragraph 4.40 (500 dwellings and 87,141 sqm office floorspace); in particular the area over which this housing and employment will be distributed and the assumptions made regarding Olympic Legacy Development. It is understood from discussions with officers at Hackney that these figures are for the whole of the Area Action Plan area as defined on the proposals map, which includes the Olympic site. If this is indeed the case, the figure of 500 dwellings is considered too low and may prejudice future development of the area. Given that the authority is developing an Area Action Plan for the area and uncertainties surrounding Legacy development in advance of the review of the London Plan and Olympic Legacy SPG, it is not considered appropriate to specify a dwelling target of 500 for the whole area at this stage. LTGDC officers are working with Hackney officers to resolve this issue prior to the submission of the Core Strategy to the Government (which is currently anticipated to be in January).
- 5.4 It should be noted that the previous version of the Core Strategy Preferred Options identified Hackney Wick as a Local Centre. Preferred Policy 12 stated that growth will be guided to a hierarchy of centres which will accommodate commercial, retail, mixed use, cultural and leisure development. The LTGDC supported this in previous comments.
- 5.5 The approach has changed as the Core Strategy now identifies a range of growth locations, including Hackney Wick as a 'New Community'. Hackney

Wick is no longer identified in the town centre hierarchy as this now covers existing centres only. It is considered that Hackney Wick should continue to form part of the retail hierarchy and it is not considered that the proposals for Hackney Wick as a 'New Community' are sufficiently defined in policy.

- 5.6 It is considered that Policy 5 should make reference to the upgrading of the station. This is referenced in the supporting text and elsewhere in the strategy but should be specifically supported in Policy 5.
- 5.7 It is understood that an area identified as SIL (Reference 136b) now has permission as a travellers' site as part of relocations from the Olympic Site. It is therefore questioned whether it is appropriate to continue to identify this as SIL.
- 5.8 The only comment on the remainder of the Core Strategy is that Policy 8 Implementation and Monitoring should make reference to the LTGDC's tariff system.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to agree that the Director of Planning respond to the consultation with comments based on the above and any additional comments made by members at the meeting.
- 6.2 London Borough of Hackney officers are aware that the LTGDC's formal comments will be submitted after the formal consultation period has closed. There are ongoing discussions regarding the Core Strategy at officer level to seek to resolve any issues prior to the submission of the Core Strategy to Government.

Date: 10th September 2009