

## Planning Committee Report

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### London Thames Gateway Development Corporation

#### Emerging Planning Policy in the Lower Lea Valley: Hackney Core Strategy (Pre-Examination Changes)

##### Report of the Director of Planning

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#### 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report summarises the Corporation's proposed response to the London Borough of Hackney's Core Strategy (Pre-Examination Changes to the Proposed Submission Version) which has been published for consultation.
- 1.2 The Council is currently consulting on changes (Pre-Examination Changes) to the Proposed Submission Version, made in response to the last round of public consultation, for a limited period between 6<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January before the Core Strategy is submitted to Government.
- 1.3 The Pre-Examination Changes document is available to view, along with the Submission Proposals Map, on the Hackney website: [Hackney Core Strategy Pre-Examination Changes](#)

#### 2. Decision Required

- 2.1 That the Committee **Agree** that the Director of Planning respond to the consultation with comments set out below 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 opportunities present by the Olympic Legacy and current master planning work on the Hackney Wick and Fish Island areas.
- 3.2 One of the Corporation's principal concerns with the Core Strategy policy for Hackney Wick is that it should give a clear policy direction on the managed release of employment land in Hackney Wick for mixed use development. The current London Plan (London Plan Consolidated with

Alterations since 2004; February 2008) designates Hackney Wick as a Strategic Industrial Location. The Opportunity Area Planning Framework for the Lower Lea Valley (LLV OAPF) identifies a number of areas, including Hackney Wick, with the potential to accommodate a proportion of non-industrial uses (designated 'Other Industrial Areas'). However, this is on the basis that there should be no net loss of industrial capacity. The OAPF defines 'Industrial capacity' as "*the overall industrial space comprising internal floor areas and all functional external areas*". The policy has therefore been interpreted by some planning decision makers as meaning that there should be no net loss of floorspace on redevelopment, including yard space. This requirement clearly restricts potential for viable mixed use development and has important implications for the future regeneration of the Hackney Wick area.

- 3.3 The Draft Replacement London Plan, published for consultation in October 2009 states 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. This is also the direction of policy emerging through work to prepare the Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 3.4 The Core Strategy adopts the same 'Other Industrial Area' designation as the OAPF. The Pre-Examination Changes introduced a definition of 'Other Industrial Areas' as "*areas where existing industrial capacity is protected but where the introduction of additional uses and activities should be considered*". If the OAPF definition of industrial capacity is applied, LTGDC officers consider that the policy is too restrictive.
- 3.5 It is considered that clear guidance is needed to ensure that the policy sets the right balance between the need to encourage a mix of uses including residential to support regeneration and the need to ensure that an appropriate level of employment floorspace is retained and that development is genuinely mixed use rather than being dominated by residential. The proposed response from the Corporation in relation to this issue is set out in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3.
- 3.6 The London Borough of Hackney has produced a Draft Area Action Plan for Hackney Wick which is currently out to public consultation. The issue of managed employment land release will also need to be addressed through this document. A separate report on the Area Action Plan will be prepared for February Planning Committee.
- 3.7 The Corporation has responded to two previous rounds of public consultation on the Core Strategy: the Preferred Options in June 2008 and the Proposed Submission Document in September 2009. A summary of these documents and the proposed response was reported to Planning Committee in June 2008 (attached as Appendix 1) and September 2009 (attached as Appendix 2).
- 3.8 The Corporation's main objective in relation to Core Strategy Policy 5 is that it should provide a positive vision for the area based on the creation of

a new local centre focused on an improved and remodelled station to serve an expanded wider residential community and employment area, support regeneration and maximise the opportunities presented by Olympic Legacy. The principal issues raised in representations made by the LTGDC in the last round of consultation can be summarised as:

- Need for greater clarity regarding the mix of uses that would be appropriate, in particular how the 'Other Industrial Area' designation will be applied to proposals in the area;
- Hackney Wick should be identified as a local centre in the retail hierarchy;
- Need for greater clarity regarding the assumptions behind the proposed housing and employment capacity (500 new homes and 87,141 sqm employment floorspace); 500 new homes is considered low and should be expressed as a minimum; and
- Proposed improvements to the station are a central part of the proposals for Hackney Wick and as such should form part of the main policy rather than being referenced in the supporting text only.

3.9 LTGDC officers subsequently met with Hackney officers to discuss the Core Strategy policy and wrote on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009 setting out the Corporation's views on the policy and suggested alternative wording.

#### **4. Summary of Proposed Amendments to the Hackney Wick Policy**

4.1 This section summarises the main changes currently proposed in response to representations by the Corporation and others. The proposed new wording of Core Strategy Policy 5 is as follows:

##### ***Hackney Wick New Community***

*"The Olympic Legacy will bring significant regenerative change to this area, and the Council will prepare an AAP to maximise these opportunities*

*The AAP will aim to build a new integrated community in Hackney Wick. This will involve significant investment in employment led mixed development and connection to Stratford and Hackney Central, taking account of strategic industrial and priority employment designations the Olympic Legacy opportunities, including provision of new open space and a linear park adjacent to the River Lea. Key features of development proposals are 87,141 sq m of employment space, upgraded station and access improvements, with commercial development and approximately 500 new dwellings. Other uses would include retail, creative industry, new park and Legacy facilities.*

*Development will need to contribute to improved connectivity to the area by public transport, walking and cycling.*

*As part of the area is subject to identified flood risk development is 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 management scheme designed to alleviate flood risk within the Hackney Wick Area Action Plan.*

- 4.2 The following paragraph has been added as the first paragraph in the supporting text:

*“The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Games, and Legacy dramatically change the policy context for Hackney Wick, presenting an opportunity to grow a new community of residents, and enterprises that is integrated into the urban form, supported by improved infrastructure and better connected to both Hackney Central and Stratford”.*

- 4.3 The supporting text has been reordered so that the Olympic Legacy and the potential benefits of a change in emphasis in relation to the London Plan Strategic Industrial Location are stated up-front.

## **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. LTGDC officers support a number of the Pre-Examination Changes to the Hackney Wick policy, including in particular the reference to up-grading the station and the range of acceptable uses within the main policy. However, it is recommended that further representations are made to seek greater clarity in the policy as set out below.
- 5.2 LTGDC officers are still concerned that the allocation of Hackney Wick as an ‘Other Industrial Area’ is not sufficiently clear. The Glossary of Terms has been amended in the Pre-Examination Changes to include a definition of Other Industrial Area as: *“areas where existing industrial capacity is protected but where the introduction of additional uses and activities should be considered. Additional uses are subject to industrial needs and demands being met and should be achieved by maximising land uses and by introducing higher density development that increases employment and may enable the release of land for other uses”* However, LTGDC officers consider that if the OAPF definition of industrial capacity is applied as outlined in paragraph 3.2 of this report, the policy is restrictive and may constrain regeneration.
- 5.3 Some guidance is also given in the Draft Area Action Plan as to how the Other Industrial Area will be applied to development proposals. This states

that “*in areas designated as Other Industrial Areas (OIA) the Council will support development proposals which seek to intensify the use of sites through the introduction of other uses as long as existing industrial floorspace is re-provided within the development*”. Whilst LTGDC officers recognise the need to ensure that development is genuinely mixed, it is considered that the requirement to re-provide all industrial space is too restrictive. LTGDC officers would like to explore alternative approaches such as a requirement to provide the necessary floorspace to generate an employment density which is equivalent to the existing uses. Also there will be some sites where residential led or even solely residential development will be acceptable within an overall mixed use development. This will be explored in further detail through discussions on the AAP and will be reported to Planning Committee in February.

- 5.4 It is still considered that the figure of 500 dwellings is too low and may prejudice future development of the area. LTGDC officers consider that the housing target should be expressed as a minimum. If, as stated elsewhere in the document, Hackney Wick is to be significantly regenerated with enhanced public transport connectivity and a concentrated investment in social infrastructure then a sufficient level of new residential units will be required.
- 5.5 Discussions with Hackney planning officers since the Pre-Examination Changes were published for consultation indicate that the target will be increased to 620 dwellings. This issue will require further discussion and clarification at officer level, though the view of LTGDC officers is likely to remain that the target should be expressed as a minimum.
- 5.6 It should be noted that the Core Strategy Preferred Options document identified Hackney Wick as a Local Centre and that the Corporation supported this at the time. 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 as a proposed local centre and it is not considered that the proposals for Hackney Wick as a ‘New Community’ are sufficiently defined in policy.

## **6. Next Steps**

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to agree that the Director of Planning respond to the consultation (before the deadline of 22<sup>nd</sup> January) with comments based on the above and any additional comments made by members at or after the meeting.
- 6.2 There are ongoing discussions regarding the Core Strategy at officer level to seek to resolve any issues as the Core Strategy progresses to Examination.

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010**