

## **Matter 10 – Site Allocations**

### **Issue 1: Whether the overall approach to site allocations is justified, effective and consistent with national policy and in general conformity with the London Plan.**

10.1 Is the ‘must, should, may’ approach sound? Is it clear as to the circumstances where planning permission would be granted, and will it be effective in securing the delivery of the site allocations?

10.2 Is the use of an indicative capacity sound? Is it sufficiently clear what the minimum dwelling contribution from each site would be? How have the indicative capacities been calculated and what is the evidence, including the Sites Methodology Paper [EIP82]?

10.3 For each of the site allocations, can the Council provide an up-to-date position on what relevant planning permissions have been granted as of 31 March 2020 and whether, as of 1 April 2020 which of those permissions are under construction? What effect would any extant or implemented planning permission have on the allocation in terms of the amount of development approved and its coverage of the allocation area? Is each site allocation policy sufficiently clear as to when the sites are expected to come forward for development? If a site allocation is under construction, is it right for these to remain ‘allocations’ in the NSP? Would the allocation be viable and is it deliverable? To what extent would land ownership or the need for any land assembly affect the deliverability of the site? Are the respective criteria to guide the proposed development justified?

10.4 Are the site allocation policies sufficiently clear as to whether tall and taller buildings will be acceptable?

10.5 Can the Council identify where in the evidence base the planned net increase in B class employment space has been quantified for all of the site allocations?

10.6 Is the plan is relying on the delivery of any sites that “should’ provide C3 Dwellings (rather than must)? If so, is this approach sound and what is the expected contribution?

10.7 For each of the allocations that seeks to provide employment, is the requirement to increase the proportion of B class uses on allocations justified? Does this provide sufficient flexibility if there is insufficient demand or viability?

10.8 For each of the site allocations, what effects, if any, do the changes to the Use Classes Order (September 2020) have on those respective allocations where use classes are referenced?

10.9 Are main modifications necessary to any of the site allocations for soundness?

**Issue 11: Whether the London Bridge sites are justified, effective, consistent with national policy and in general conformity with the London Plan.**

10.69 (NSP51) Should there be a single, more comprehensive allocation covering NSP50-51 and what would be the effect of doing so?

10.71 Does the policy provide suitable guidance in respect of the impact on any heritage assets or their setting?

Relevant policies / evidence:

- Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance 2008
- Historic England Advice Note 3, The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans: in particular 1.1 (evidence base), 1.2 (characterisation work), 2.1 (criteria), 2.2 and table 5 (methodology).
- Historic England Guidance Note 7: Local Heritage Listing, Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage 2021
- NPPF 16, 91, 92, 121, 124, 126, 127, 129, 151, 152, 154, 157
- Publication London Plan 2020,
  - GG1 Building strong and inclusive communities: A, G
  - GG2 Making the best use of land: D, E, F, H
  - Policy GG5 Growing a Good Economy: F(Heritage) H (Circular Economy)
  - Policy GG6 Increasing efficiency and resilience: A (Circular Economy) D (Local Infrastructure)
  - Policy SD1 Opportunity Areas: B (1, 2,3,4,5,6,8,,9); 2.1.1, 2.1.4,
  - Policy SD4 The Central Activities Zone (CAZ):A,C,K,L,M, N(2); 2.4.19
  - Policy SD10 Strategic and local regeneration: B, C, D; 2.10.3, 2.10.4-6
  - Policy D1 London's form, character and capacity for growth: A, B ; 3.1.1 - 3.1.8
  - Policy D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach; 3.3.1-3.3.4; 3.3.20-3.3.23
  - Policy D4 Delivering good design: A,E; 3.4.1
  - Policy D5 Inclusive design: A (collaboration); 3.5.5 (involvement)
  - Policy D8 Public Realm: B, D, F, I, L, M,
  - Policy D9 Tall Buildings: A (Definition), B (Locations), C (Impacts)
  - Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth
  - Policy HC3 Strategic and Local Views
  - Policy G1 Green infrastructure
  - Policy G4 Open space
  - Policy SI 7 Reducing waste and supporting the circular economy: A,C; 9.7.7
- Bermondsey Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2003
- Draft Bankside, Borough and London Bridge SPD 2010
- Bankside, Borough and London Bridge Characterisation Study July 2013
- Social & economic benchmark of the residential areas most affected by the St Thomas St developments September 2019 (LBS, TLB, Social Life)

- Hammersmith and Fulham Local Plan 2018
- LB Newham Local Plan 2018 Site Allocations and Evidence
- Westminster Council Building Height Study 2019
- Croydon Opportunity Area Framework and Masterplans
- Kentish Town Planning Framework July 2020
- Draft Future Shoreditch AAP
- OBNF Comparative Character Study 2018
- OBNF Draft Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2021

The must, should, may approach does not provide a clarity for whether planning permission will be granted and is representative of a lack of robust evidence in the plan which is not justified or positively prepared. The decision as to how the three options have been made in relation to the criteria is not clear from the Methodology or IIA or their appendices. The targets driving the figures in relation to employment and open space need to be refined (subcategories of different kinds of employment and different kinds of open space), differentiated strategically and according to context and need to be adjusted to reflect the pandemic situation and the climate emergency which are affecting working patterns, the need for types sizes locations and mixes of employment space (not just office) and the need for new quantum types and qualities of open space, residential amenity space, community space and social infrastructure to properly attend to issues of access and inequality - in order for the plan to be justified, positively prepared effective and legal.

As per Matter 1 and previous representations indicative capacity methods are not justified in the Methodology and IIA evidence. In the case of NSP50&51 the Forum has variously requested but not received actual worked examples of the studies undertaken to assess capacity (in the terms outlined in the methodology throughout its evolution 2017-present), which will be the subject of the statement of common ground alongside issues of site selection, policy development and consultation on building heights and heritage impact, which we hope will provide good preparation and focus for the hearing.

One example of a key inconsistency in the Methodology is that where as FAR ratios were provided for both site allocations in the previous iterations of the plan (either in the Site Allocations themselves or in the Methodology) a FAR ratio has been omitted from NSP50 in this case. The 'current'/relevant four proposals for the sites (details below) equate to 220-240% of the FAR ratios. Another example of inconsistency is that one allocation in Peckham is given a height limit. Newham's Site Allocations policies, based on a much more robust evidence base including actual on-site audits and documented iterative processes manage to propose an intelligent range of heights (responding to a reading of context in their determination of capacity), also providing a more detailed description of where different ranges could occur in plan (where as Southwark are typically limited to a single cardinal direction). In the case of the AV.11 allocations this is in part due to a lack of planning framework combined with high pressure from the CAZ and (unmonitored) Opportunity Area designation - compounded by the pressure from informal agreements the council we believe have made with developers in recent years. In these site allocations and more widely however there seems no reason why the

council should now not make the allocations more sound by matching the level of description given by the Newham Local Plan in terms of height ranges (subject to consultation) - they could go further and give indicative locations in plan of the locations of where various buildings heights would be acceptable. This strengthening of the policy would be aided if the connected tall buildings policy was made sound by showing clearly on one map where all tall buildings are proposed to be acceptable and undertaking a study like that of Westminster's to seek to define types of tall building in terms of ratios relative to context.

The four applications relevant to the allocations are as follows:

NSP50: 18/AP/0900 - GLA Stage 2 - overdue legal agreement was due Nov 2019

NSP50: 20/AP/0944 - Current

NSP51: 18/AP/4171 - Refused on 29 June 2019 and called in by the Mayor

NSP51: 19/AP/0404 - Deferred on 29 June 2019

The Forum would argue that these applications in their various iterations (some since 2010) have driven the development of the policies rather than the policies framing appropriate development and that the poor methodology has been compounded in this case by a lack of a planning framework in the context of the CAZ pressure for floor space.

As per previous representations the bare minimum if only minor modifications were deemed to be necessary would be for threefold: For appropriate height limits to be agreed with the local community and appropriate independent heritage experts (e.g. Historic England and the Victorian Society) taking into account the Conservation Area (proposed to be extended in the Forum's draft plan to include St Thomas Street and the Grade 2 listed Arches) which is characterised by its small scale; for the local heritage fabric (not just the setting) that contributes to the conservation area and which is registered on the Forum's local list (including Becket House on NSP50 and the Vinegar Yard Warehouse on NSP51) to be protected from demolition for genuine restoration and re-use and for the open space quantum on both sites to be significantly enlarged - Melior Street Gardens should be retained and extended to the West and the NSP51 provision should be at least 1000sqm (as it was in previous iterations before being reduced to 600sqm). The Forum argue however that main modifications to these allocations are necessary in the form of a complete, transparent and indeed community led re-assessment of the sites' capacities and the opportunities they present for sustainable heritage led regeneration.

A single more comprehensive allocation covering NSP50-51 would give the opportunity for long overdue genuine consideration of the capacity and potential of the area and the Forum propose that the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies could be developed consulted upon and refined to provide a locally embedded and strategic planning framework for the area - as they were originally intended to do. This could be done as part of a framework for the whole opportunity area to allow AV.11 to have a more refined and locally responsive vision focussed in this area on local heritage, the local economy, social housing, and a landscape design led public realm.

A second option if the Area Vision is deemed sound would be for a community led masterplan to be undertaken. The Forum met in recent months with Cllr Situ Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Planning and Transport to discuss how a community led masterplan, including height and massing might form the basis of a revision of the St Thomas Street Framework which it was agreed, given the current state of the refused and deferred applications (and the new situations arising from covid-19 and the climate emergency) needs to at least be fundamentally revised. Details can be provided of the proposals and of correspondence with Cllr Situ upon request.

Through the statement of common ground process we will now continue to seek agreement with the council on these issues in advance of the hearing.