

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

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Department: Planning

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Dear May,

**Statement of general conformity with the London Plan (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 24(4)(a) (as amended));
Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007;
Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012**

RE: Regulation 19 Consultation Pre-Publication Enfield Local Plan: 2019-2041

Thank you for consulting the Mayor of London on the London Borough of Enfield (LBE) pre-publication Enfield Local Plan (ELP). As you are aware, all Development Plan Documents in London must be in general conformity with the London Plan under section 24 (1)(b) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Mayor has afforded me delegated authority to make detailed comments which are set out below.

The Mayor provided comments on the earlier Enfield New Local Plan 2036 – Issues and Options consultation on 28 February 2019 (Ref: LDF10/LDD16/CG01) and the draft Plan on 13 September 2021 (LDF10/LDD16/LP02/HA01). This letter follows on from that earlier advice and sets out where you should make further amendments so that the draft Plan is more closely aligned with the London Plan 2021 (LP2021). These comments should be read alongside the Mayor's previous response. The LP2021 was formally published on the 2 March 2021, and now forms part of Enfield's Development Plan and contains the most up-to-date policies.

General

The draft ELP sets out clearly the borough's current context and the vision it seeks to achieve. The objectives of the draft ELP as set out in Table 2.1 align well with the Mayor's Good Growth objectives around building strong and inclusive communities and creating a healthy city.

However, the draft ELP is not aligned with the Mayor's Good Growth objective GG2, Making the best use of land, which seeks to protect and enhance London's open spaces, including the Green Belt.

The draft ELP makes it clear that the delivery of 32,800 homes over the 21-year plan period is a key priority and seeks to deliver much of the housing in four 'placemaking areas'. The high need for industrial space is also set out with a requirement for more than 300,000sqm over the Plan period. The Mayor notes that the Plan period runs from 2019 until 2041 and as such reflects the LP2021 period too.

While the Mayor is supportive of the aims of delivering more affordable homes and economic growth, the draft ELP sets out large areas of Green Belt to be released to accommodate this scale of development. While it is not precisely clear what quantum of Green Belt land is proposed for de-designation within the borough, it is clear from the mapping and site allocations that it represents a significant proportion of Enfield's total amount.

In the Mayor's previous letter in September 2021, he made it clear that the proposed approach to release such significant amounts of Green Belt was premature and that the draft ELP had not exhausted all opportunities in finding suitable capacity within urban areas by adopting a 'brownfield first approach' and intensifying the existing urban area. Unfortunately, these concerns have not been sufficiently addressed in this latest version, which still seeks to release – prematurely - significantly large amounts of the Green Belt.

Furthermore, since the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation, LBE have increased the borough's housing target by over 8,000 homes, which in turn further fuels the proposed release of the identified Green Belt areas. I would note that the Mayor has strong concerns over how the latest housing target figures were produced.

As with the housing target, the draft ELP sets an ambitious vision of economic growth, with a target of over 300,000sqm of industrial floorspace to provide jobs for residents of Enfield and beyond. The ambition to deliver economic development is welcomed by the Mayor, but as currently proposed, much of this growth is predicated on the release of Green Belt sites to provide the space required. We would reiterate the LP2021's objective to intensify the provision of industrial space on existing sites. Green Belt sites should only be considered where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated. It is noted that five sites were proposed for release in the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan and this has now been reduced to three – we are happy to continue to discuss the approach and the options / rationale.

As currently written, it is the Mayor's opinion that the draft Local Plan is not in general conformity with the LP2021 in relation to Green Belt and tall buildings. This letter sets out further detail on each matter below.

Housing

The draft ELP aims to deliver 32,800 new homes as a stepped target across the Plan period from 2019 through to 2041. LP2021 Paragraph 4.1.10 supports the use of stepped housing targets in Development Plans where appropriate. In the years from 2019 to 2029 the draft

ELP intends to meet the LP2021 target for Enfield to deliver 12,460 new homes which is noted and welcomed.

The justification for the overall target to deliver 32,800 new homes is set out in the Housing Topic Paper Local Plan evidence. This clarifies that, post-2029, the target has been established by following the guidance set out in LP2021 paragraph 4.1.11. This states that borough housing targets beyond 2029 should be based on: the figures in the 2017 London Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), rolling forward the borough's small sites target, additional capacity as a result of committed transport infrastructure and any local evidence of identified capacity. In the Mayor's previous response, he set out that LBE should look to their more recent SHLAA and HELAA evidence to calculate their post 2029 housing target. As a result, beyond 2029 and up to 2041 the draft ELP target is to deliver 1,735 net additional dwellings per annum.

While LBE have used the evidence as suggested, capacity assumptions include the proposed developments of Chase Park and Crews Hill, both of which require Green Belt release and the establishment of necessary exceptional circumstances.

Meanwhile, the small sites target for Enfield within Table 4.2 of the LP2021 is for the delivery of 3,530 new homes from 2019 to 2029. Rolling this forward from 2029 to 2041 produces a target of 4,236. However, the Housing Topic Paper sets out that only 2,715 units will be delivered in that time frame.

While it is noted that evidence has been produced to show that a history of low delivery should justify a reduction, a more positive approach in the draft ELP could help to increase delivery from this source. LBE should follow the guidance set out in Policy H2 of the LP2021 by pro-actively supporting housing from small sites by preparing site-specific briefs, masterplans and housing design codes in appropriate areas and considering the application of other approaches set out in Policy H2B. LBE should also monitor their small sites housing delivery and include this in the proposed Monitoring Framework. The Mayor has published draft guidance to help boroughs to capitalise on the potential that small sites can contribute towards housing delivery (Small Sites Design Codes and Optimising Site Capacity: A Design Led Approach) which can be found on the Mayor's web site¹). As stated in the Mayor's earlier response the LP2021, small sites targets should be treated as a minimum as more opportunities would contribute to housing supply without / ahead of any Green Belt sites.

In formulating the borough's overall housing need, LBE have relied on the Government's Standard Methodology to calculate a 'raw need' figure. Even though this figure is not directly used as a target, it is still used as the premise to justify the 32,800 housing target. However, the Government's standard method for calculating housing need is not relevant in the London context given the London Plan was published (adopted) in March 2021.

While the Mayor welcomes LBE's general approach to establish a housing target beyond 2029, based on paragraph 4.1.11 of the LP2021, this does not justify the inclusion of the proposed Green Belt sites as a source of housing supply. We also have particular concerns set out below about the sustainability of the sites and proposed approach to them. The Mayor would only be able to support LBE's proposed approach to housing delivery where it would not conflict with other policies in the LP2021, including those for the continued

¹ <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance?ac-63512=63501>

protection of the Green Belt where exceptional circumstances have not been established as set out in Policy G2 of the LP2021.

Affordable housing

As set out in his previous response, the proposed strategic target that 50% of all new homes are to be affordable reflects LP2021 Policy H4 and is welcomed by the Mayor. Part 6 of Policy H2 of the draft ELP sets out an approach which is in line with LP2021 Policy H5 and is also welcomed. However, the affordable housing thresholds as set out in the LP2021 are not minimum requirements for affordable housing; and as such should not be treated as targets but instead represent the level above which viability assessments are not required in accordance with the fast track approach. By treating the thresholds as targets it could appear that where development proposals do not meet them, this indicates of itself grounds for refusal of planning permission and this is not the intention of the Mayor's threshold approach. To make the correct approach clearer Paragraph 8.20 should be amended.

Part 3 of Policy H2 sets a 50/50 tenure split for social and intermediate affordable housing. This approach is in line with LP2021 Policy H6 which requires a minimum of 30 per cent for each tenure type with the remaining 40 per cent to be determined by the borough based on local evidence. Paragraph 4.6.2 of the LP2021 sets out a presumption that the 40 per cent will be used for Social and London Affordable Rent, given the London wide need for this tenure type. It would be helpful for LBE to be clear how they have arrived at a 50/50 split by referring to evidence that justifies it.

Gypsies and Travellers

Policy H10 of the draft ELP sets out the need to deliver 21 new pitches over the life of the Plan and this clarity is welcomed. However, Policy H10 does not identify sites that are capable of meeting that need. LBE need to make provision to meet this housing need alongside other housing needs in the plan.

Tall buildings

The draft ELP sets several different definitions of what constitutes a tall building in different parts of the borough. The vast majority of the borough is covered by the definition of '(including roof plant) 21m and above'. For clarity and consistency, the definition should be clear about where the measurement begins and should be included in the definition. For example, are measurements to be taken as AOD or from the ground level?

There are seven further, small areas where different tall building definitions apply. The height definition across these areas varies from 30m to 36m. There is no explanation provided in the draft ELP as to why each of these areas requires a separate definition and this would be useful to underpin the proposed approach and identify the harm that would arise should development within these areas exceed the stated height.

The draft ELP identifies 58 individual locations considered suitable for tall buildings, each given an appropriate height for any tall building developments. As such this meets the requirements of LP2021 Policy D9 Part B2. Many of these suitable tall building locations are

small in scale, often covering just a few existing buildings and often directly adjacent to another identified appropriate location. Where such locations are clustered and adjoining in this way, LBE should consider whether it would be more appropriate to identify broader areas, rather than specific sites (for which boundaries might change in the future). Being so tightly defined makes it difficult to understand the harm that would arise should a tall building be proposed slightly outside the defined boundaries.

The site allocations set maximum building heights, by using terminology such as ‘...tall buildings of no more than X m in height...’ This is not considered to be consistent with Policy D9 of the LP2021, which states that any such locations and appropriate building heights should be identified on maps in Development Plans. This implies some flexibility which could include a range of ‘appropriate building heights’. This is considered to be practical in terms of enabling boroughs to focus the tallest buildings in a particular part of a tall building zone and potentially lower building heights as the context and townscape indicates.

Maximum building heights could be helpful in situations where an absolute is required and necessary such as strategic views or where maximum building heights have been set by the Civil Aviation Authority. These considerations should also be applied to other instances where the draft ELP seeks to apply maximum building heights.

Policy DE6 should be clear that tall buildings should only be developed in locations identified as suitable. An exception is set out in Part 6 and Part 5 of the policy which makes clear that ‘proposals that do not meet the above location and/or height parameters must be justified with reference to the requirements of other Development Plan policies and/or material considerations’. The proposed exception simply describes the operation of the planning system when determining planning applications, where proposals are assessed against the Development Plan taken as a whole and any other material considerations. Including this statement within this policy, but not others, creates the perception of a point of difference in how this is applied where there is an ‘in principle’ objection against one element of the Development Plan. In light of this, the exceptions in Parts 5 and 6 of the policy should be removed.

Industrial land

It is noted that LBE has produced a substantial amount of evidence to underpin their strategic approach towards the management of ‘industrial land over the Plan period.

The draft ELP sets out that there is a need for 304,000sqm of industrial and logistics space over the Plan period. This clarity is welcomed as such space is vital to the success of London and the functioning of its economy. It would be beneficial if the draft ELP could separate this need out into its component parts so there is more clarity over the different types of uses required. This is especially important for Use Classes B2 and B8 given the introduction of Use Class E and its impact on the ability to protect industrial capacity.

Table 9.1 of the draft ELP sets out the locations where industrial floorspace could be intensified across a number of sites resulting in a total potential net gain 293,063sqm. However, the table does not set out if the sites are designated Strategic Industrial Locations (SILs) or Locally Significant Industrial Locations (LSISs), or the Use Classes they could accommodate. While the majority of additional capacity could come about through the

intensification of seven existing sites, the draft ELP also identifies the release of three Green Belt sites in order to accommodate identified need. The draft ELP suggests that opportunities for industrial intensification in the borough are limited due to viability challenges. Given the likelihood that viability for industrial intensification will become more attractive from the middle of the Plan period, it is suggested that Enfield employ a plan, monitor, and manage approach as set out in Part C of Policy E4 of the LP2021. Brownfield sites should be allocated accordingly and earmarked for industrial intensification typologies with more challenging sites phased from the middle of the Plan period onwards.

Policy E3 of the draft ELP seeks to protect existing SIL and this is welcomed by the Mayor. However, it should be made clear the role this will play in meeting the borough's industrial capacity needs. Part 2 of the policy states that SIL across Meridian Water will be reconfigured and this will be facilitated through 'land swaps'. Paragraph 6.7.2 of the LP2021 states that substitution should be done through a carefully coordinated plan-led approach to deliver an intensification of industrial and related uses; and that policies maps should clearly indicate the areas to be retained, substituted and/or intensified as well as the area to be released from SIL.

Policy E7 of the draft ELP, which relates to non-designated industrial sites, states that proposals involving the net loss of such floorspace should meet the requirements set out in LP2021 Policy E5 Part B. However, the correct reference is Policy E7 Part C.

Paragraph 9.77 suggests the SIL to be retained within Meridian Water can accommodate lighter industrial uses. However, light industrial uses now fall within Class E and are afforded little protection. Furthermore, SIL is home to heavier industrial uses often vital in meeting strategic demand and Class B uses should therefore be the focus within these key areas on the strategic road network.

Policy E5 Part D of the LP2021 is clear that development proposals including residential within or adjacent to SILs should not compromise the integrity or effectiveness of these locations in accommodating industrial type activities and their ability to operate on a 24-hour basis, including those in adjoining boroughs such as that in Haringey to the south of Meridian Water. Particularly in the context of the LBE's intended approach, the draft ELP should be amended accordingly and should take into account the Mayor's Agent of Change principle as set out in Policy D13 of the LP2021.

Figure 9.2 sets out clearly how LBE are proposing to reconfigure the SIL at Meridian Water and this clarity is welcomed. Table 9.3 sets out how SIL and LSIS is to be reconfigured and illustrates that parcels B and D are to be released from their SIL designation. It is noted that Kenninghall, Ravenside and Meridian 7 are proposed to be redesignated from LSIS to SIL which amounts to a gain of 7.36ha of SIL. But as the sites are already in industrial use, the gain in SIL does not represent a 'real' gain in industrial capacity. Table 9.4 sets out increases in industrial floorspace that could potentially be made at Meridian Water. This is welcomed, but LBE should make clear what the resulting needs for Use Class B8 and B2 are as a result of the proposed reconfiguration.

LBE should note that where SIL is planned to be released for residential use, Policy E7 Part D2 of the LP2021 makes it a requirement that the intensified industrial, storage and distribution uses are to be completed in advance of any residential component being occupied and this should be made explicitly clear in the policy.

Draft ELP Policy D2 suggests that masterplans can apply to a portion of a site. However, to be consistent with LP2021 paragraph 6.7.2, where SIL or LSIS is to be released, masterplans should cover the whole of the SIL or LSIS area. The Mayor's practice note on Industrial intensification and co-location through plan-led and masterplan approaches (2018)² is clear that masterplan approaches are area specific and should consider the whole of a designated SIL/LSIS and their surrounding context. As such we would request that Policy D2 is amended to address this.

Key performance indicator 12 which intends to monitor net changes in SIL and LSIS floorspace is noted and welcomed. However, the target, currently identified as 50ha, does not set out breakdowns for SIL and LSIS. The monitoring target includes the intention to meet the borough's identified need to deliver 304,000sqm of industrial floorspace. This figure too, could be broken into component parts for Class B8 and B2 capacity for the reasons set out earlier.

Transport

The aspiration of the draft local plan to support sustainable growth and enable people to get around by walking, cycling, and public transport is welcomed by the Mayor.

However, as well as the concerns highlighted above, there are significant concerns about the ability of the rural placemaking areas at Crews Hill and Chase Park to deliver genuinely sustainable neighbourhoods that would not be car dependent. A robust, masterplanned and phased implementation strategy that ensures delivery of infrastructure and public transport services upfront and a realistic funding strategy that supports such delivery and optimises use of land is necessary to achieve the objectives of Good Growth.

However, the high cost of providing the necessary transport infrastructure and services to support a new settlement which is isolated from existing centres, may not be realistic or viable. There is a real risk that these areas, if developed, could become car dependent, have poor access to essential local services and result in further pressure on the road network.

Transport for London's separate response to the draft ELP contains further details and specific points on these issues.

Green Belt

The draft ELP sets out that in order to meet its targets both for housing delivery and industrial capacity it is necessary to release areas of Green Belt.

The two largest areas proposed for Green Belt release are at Chase Park and Crews Hill; both in order to deliver new housing development. However, the justification for releasing these sites has not been set out fully within the ELP. As set out in the housing section, the overall housing target for the Plan has been established based on evidence of housing capacity identified by LBE, including the Green Belt land at Chase Park and Crews Hill. This target has then in turn been used to justify the release of Green Belt land in order that it can be met.

² https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/practice_note_-_industrial_intensification.pdf

Releasing Green Belt requires demonstration of exceptional circumstances and once all brownfield options have been exhausted. This would include optimising housing densities within urban areas using design led approaches, particularly around existing transport infrastructure and maximising delivery from small sites.

Even if exceptional circumstances could be demonstrated to justify the proposed release of Green Belt, there remain serious concerns over the suitability of the specific selected sites at Chase Park and Crews Hill. This is primarily around the ability of these sites to deliver the infrastructure needed for sustainable transport, the high levels of harm that releasing these sites would have on the function of the Green Belt and the low density of housing proposed.

The Mayor considers that the proposed changes to the Green Belt as currently set out are not in general conformity with Policy G2 of the LP2021.

Next steps

I hope these comments help to positively inform the continued preparation of Enfield's Local Plan. GLA officers are happy to work with you to address the issues identified in this letter and to ensure it aligns with the LP2021 as well as delivering the Council's objectives. If you have any specific questions regarding the comments in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Jonathan Blathwayt on 020 7983 4000 or at Jonathan.blathwayt@london.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely



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