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West London Built Environment Commission

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The quality and character of West London's urban environment is a major asset valued by those who live, work, visit and invest in the sub-region. In the light of a growing residential population and workforce, the Commission will examine how to more than double the number of new homes built each year in the sub-region to around 10,000, whilst achieving high quality design and maintaining sufficient office space and sheds for a thriving economy.

Context

London's population is increasing rapidly and recent projections indicate that the capital will grow to 10 million by 2031ⁱ. Building enough homes to accommodate this population growth is therefore a major challenge.

At the moment, it has been estimated that around half as many new homes are being built as are needed across North-West London. Around 4,000 completed each year against a projected need for over 10,000.ⁱⁱ

The challenge is not just about where and how to build the 10,000 new homes needed every year, but also how to improve and expand public transport, where to locate businesses, schools, hospitals and shops, while protecting open spaces and improving the environment.

The increase in housing costs are not only putting pressure on residents but also businesses. Employees contend with ever longer commutes and commercial space is being shifted to residential use, which pushes up rental costs for businesses. As a result, housing is the fastest rising concern for businesses, and today 73% of London's businesses think London's housing supply and costs are a significant risk to the capital's economic growth.ⁱⁱⁱ

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Along with population growth, there will be a significant increase of the workforce which will need to be accommodated too. In addition to new homes, West London will thus need offices and industrial sheds (small and large) to support this growth and remain an attractive location for local and international businesses.

Core issues

The commission will focus on the following key areas:

- Housing
 - o Where and how do we deliver the approx. 10,000 new homes per annum needed in West London? What are the implications for changing densities across West London? For how long is it forecast this growth in supply will need to be sustained?
 - o How do we accommodate West London's growth whilst maintaining a good quality of life, particularly noting the challenges in delivering healthcare, education and other amenities for a growing population?
 - o How do we ensure a good quality of design in the housing schemes necessary for West London to be a location of choice of the next generation?

- Workspace
 - o Where are the opportunities for growth in workspace in West London?
 - o What type of buildings need to be brought to market to meet our changing workspace needs? What UK or international good practice in innovative and efficient office space design and management can be applied in West London?
 - o How can we deliver more affordable workspace for start-ups? (office, maker, kitchen space)
 - o How do we deliver the land and investment in industrial workspaces that North-West London's economy needs to thrive, against a backdrop of ever shrinking supplies of industrial land?^{iv}

- Cross cutting theme: Land supply and planning permissions
 - o Where, and at what pace, will land be release by Crossrail, HS2, TfL, local authorities and the NHS?
 - o How can developers rapidly secure planning without losing the confidence and trust of local communities that may be impacted?

Membership

We envisage about 10 panel members with a chair (or co-chairs). Members will be a mix of WLB members supported by external subject experts.

Meetings

The commission will meet at least once every three months.

- Step 1: Gathering of evidence
- Step 2: Examination of evidence
- Step 3: Identifying options available and recommendations
- Step 4: Conclusions

Steps 1 to 3 will be supported by WLB's wider events programme, as well as group email lists for the panel members and secretariat.

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Reporting

The commission will keep the WLB board updated on the progress of their investigations at quarterly intervals. These will also be available on the internet.

The commission's final report will be presented first to the board of WLB for endorsement in Q1/Q2 2017. It will provide critical input to shaping WLB's future public policy voice. The report will then be presented to the West London Alliance (WLA), local MPs, the Mayor of London and other key decision-makers.

Resources and budget

The commissions will be supported by the WLB staff team who will provide the secretariat. Meetings will be hosted by member companies. Additional expenses from hosting meetings to travel and design/print of publications will be underpinned by sponsorship.

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the WLB and wider stakeholder community during February 2016. They will be approved and finalised by the end of March 2016 at the first meeting of the commission panel.

ⁱ London Assembly: *Up or Out: A false choice. Options for London's growth* (January 2016) - https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/up_or_out_report.pdf [Accessed 5 Feb 2016]

ⁱⁱ West London Business: *West London Data Dashboard* (November 2015) www.westlondon.com

ⁱⁱⁱ London First: *London 2036 – An agenda for jobs and growth* (January 2015) http://londonfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/London-First-Report_FINAL_e-version.pdf

^{iv} While the price of office space rent is increasing in inner London, London industrial land is being eaten up for housing meaning that companies are being forced out of London altogether. Manufacturing industries in particular are under pressure, although they still provide much needed employment and help localise supply chains. NLA Insight Study: *Work: How and where Londoners will work in the future (October – December 2016)* - <http://newlondonarchitecture.org/programme/insight-studies1/work--2016-insight-study/work-how-and-where-londoners-will-work-in-the-fut> [Accessed 8 Feb 2016]

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