

Planning Policy Advisory Panel

Minutes

9 January 2023

Present:

Chair: Councillor Marilyn Ashton

Councillors: Christopher Baxter Nitin Parekh
Stephen Greek David Perry
Asif Hussain Zak Wagman

**In attendance
(Councillors):** Paul Osborn

Recommended Items

23. Draft Tall Buildings (Building Heights) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Panel received a report of the Corporate Director of Place which provided a progress update to the drafting of a draft Tall Buildings ('Building Heights') Supplementary Planning Document ("SPD") (previously titled 'Tall Buildings SPD'). Members were invited to make comments on the initial draft SPD, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the agenda, prior to the document being considered by Cabinet.

In making their presentation, the officers set out the work undertaken since the presentation to the Panel on 3 October 2022, the next steps post meeting, the timetable and the approach to the drafting of the specific guidance and consultation that had been undertaken to assist in the drafting of the SPD. It was noted that the SPD did not apply within the Harrow and Wealdstone Opportunity Area as Opportunity Areas were designated through the London Plan and were subject to a greater level of change than suburban areas. A number of internal consultations and consultation with external stakeholders

had taken place to obtain information to ensure adequate coverage of issues and consistency with relevant requirements with stakeholders. Formal, wider consultation would take place subsequent to consideration and authority to consult by Cabinet.

In opening the discussion, the Chair stated that, whilst the Core strategy encouraged tall buildings in the opportunity area, it did not address suburban areas. The clarity provided by the adoption of the SPD was important as it would be a number of years until the revised local plan was implemented. Policy D9 of the London Plan helped to give it weight.

The view was expressed that the inclusion of a section on long views into the opportunity area from the suburbs was considered useful. Whilst the SPD did not refer directly to the Opportunity Area consideration was given to where it could harm the context of its surrounding areas

The Panel asked a number of questions and the officers responded as follows:

- The proposal was not to adopt the London Plan definition of a tall building but to reflect it as being the trigger for the application of London Plan Policy D9 (as well as the SPD). This was because a SPD was unable to set a definition of what a tall building would be. Would it add weight if the SPD confirmed its adoption? The officer stated that the SPD would be in conformity with the London Plan (and have weight) by not seeking to set an alternative definition of a tall building because any change in definition would have to be through the Local Plan;
- The summary table of prevailing heights and definitions was very helpful. Would it be communicated to residents? The officer confirmed that there would be liaison with the communications team as part of the formal consultation undertake for the SPD;
- With regard to whether the formula to define contextually tall height within a given area should be greater than twice the prevailing height rather than equal to or greater than, the officer said it would be considered but as it was context based it could be two storeys or more. It was not whether the proposed development was six storeys tall but the prevailing context of the area;
- Have such SPDs in other boroughs discouraged the number of applications for tall buildings? This would be difficult to ascertain. The aim of the SPD was to aid successful applications and it would set out what the Council was aiming to achieve and what it was not looking for from developments;
- How is the feedback from the Harrow Design Review Panel for more guidance/ greater emphasis on family living in terms of appropriate locations for family sized homes, additional guidance on play space dealt with in the SPD? It was difficult to be overly prescriptive as to location of family homes, but would seek an appropriate mix. The SPD did aim to give guidance to the proximity to play space which should meet the space as set out in the London Plan (2021);

- Each application for a tall building would be considered with reference to the SPD and treated on its merits.

The Panel thanked the officers for the work undertaken on the SPD.

RESOLVED to **RECOMMEND** (to Cabinet) that the draft SPD for Tall Buildings be approved for consultation.

RESOLVED: That the Panel note: the change to the title of the draft SPD; the contents of the report and the initial draft SPD; the proposed timetable headlines; and the outline consultation arrangements should Cabinet agree to consult on the draft document.