

Cllr Louie French comments

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Dear Mr Mayor,

I have read your proposals for the London Plan and wish to register my strong objections to some of the proposals. I am a Bexley resident and a serving local Councillor.

I made similar comments at the public consultation meeting and answers could not be provided to my points despite a large number of residents agreeing with them.

1) There is a clear lack of understanding in the plan of how outer London boroughs, such as Bexley, operate and why many families choose to move out of inner London. A number of amazing communities already exist and the density and zero parking on new developments is a major threat to them. We do not want to become a high rise, concrete and overly crowded community. I would also question whether you have the political mandate to change communities so drastically.

2) The housing target in Bexley has been increased nearly three-fold, from 446 units a year to 1,245 with NO additional infrastructure promised. Bexley does not have any underground tube stations or DLR. There is also no additional funding allocated for public amenities such as schools or hospitals. The amount of housing coming from small sites has increased from around 110 sites to 865, the highest increase as a % of total supply in London. These small sites will be predominantly in residential areas up to 800m from town centre boundaries and railway stations which in Bexley will include areas with relatively poor accessibility. Clear overdevelopment that is not in keeping with the local environment - both material planning considerations.

3) Timing issue. If these plans are approved, then the already loose planning laws become even more so from day one. This means little local control to allow for sustainable development. The plan contains lots of window dressing, but the social and transport infrastructure required to support the additional housing would take 10-20 years at least to be delivered and there are no guarantees of it coming. This will mean that it will be extremely difficult for residents and businesses to travel without private transport and would result in increased pollution from vehicle travel - a clear contradiction to your other goals.

4) Brownfield development. Bexley has cross party support for its growth strategy that would provide sustainable development, regeneration and housing. In our document, the focus is on using underused brownfield sites, mainly in the North of Bexley, to protect local residents and improve the amount of housing. The London plan would tie the hands of the local authority rather than free it to deliver. Given the amount of work that has gone into this document and the support it has from people that actually understand the borough, it should be supported by the Mayor and not ignored.

5) The removal of the ban on back land development which will see residential packed tight and with a presumption in favour of small housing developments (up to 25 units) this will end up with the loss of green space. It will also have a negative impact on local wildlife.

6) Bexley already contains a number of empty apartment blocks that have recently been developed and the local housing market has cooled considerably over the past 12 months on most data measures. We also have a number of larger sites currently under development. This increase in supply will result in housing becoming more affordable simply by economic dynamics. So are these drastic plans really needed, especially when migration numbers to the Capital are slowing? Or is this another example of a new administration desperately seeking something to do in order to justify itself?!

I hope that my objections will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Louie French

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