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London Borough  
of Barnet

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date: 2 March 2018  
our reference: RC/kl/ 180302 mayordlp

Dear Mayor Khan

Officers have submitted Barnet Council's formal response to the Draft London Plan. However, I wanted to write privately to highlight a number of points.

Despite our political differences, we are agreed on the need to deliver high quality new homes for Londoners. Barnet works closely with neighbours, particularly in the West London Alliance, and we share many of the concerns they have raised about the Draft Plan.

Barnet has been pushing the housing growth agenda for well over a decade, delivering more than most London Boroughs and the most in outer London. We have looked at what it would take to further increase the rate of housing delivery to the levels envisaged in the Draft London Plan. I do not believe that these targets can come close to being achieved through the approach to small sites outlined in your plan – partly for practical reasons, and partly because we are losing Londoners' acceptance of new homes where we are not able to deliver the infrastructure needed to support them. A more radical approach is required. For example:

- Extending Crossrail 2 to New Southgate and at least decking the A406 to create a new Opportunity Area should be accelerated, along with the West London Orbital line highlighted in the Mayoral Transport Strategy;
- We should invest in developing approaches to over-track and over-sidings development (beyond simply ticket offices), which would release substantial development areas in outer London where the tube is largely overground and there is an extensive rail network;
- Local authorities need sweeping new control over public sector land, with the ability to requisition surplus and under-used public sector sites for housing.

Edgware General Hospital and the neighbouring MOD site are good examples of missed opportunities;

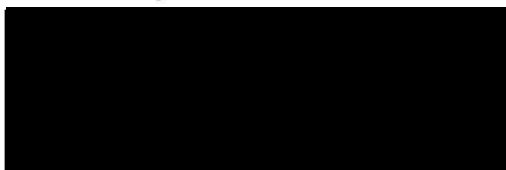
- Moving key transport infrastructure underground could release significant land;
- In North Finchley we are taking an innovative plan-led approach to major transformation of the town centre in partnership with a private developer. This aims to concentrate traditional town centre uses into a smaller curated area, releasing significant land at the edge of the town centre for housing. Similarly, transformational approaches to town centres are needed if we are to move towards your targets.

The Draft London Plan also rightly highlights the need to cut down on unnecessary car use. However, it needs to recognise that in outer London a car is necessary for many. I know that this view is shared by colleagues in neighbouring boroughs. The London Plan in its final form must provide some flexibility to recognise that adequate car parking is essential for many outer Londoners – both to ensure that new homes are suitable for residents, and to maintain the support of existing residents for new development. Giving councils the flexibility to set parking levels appropriate to local circumstances is a must.

Finally, it is good news that links have been made with the National Health Service to improve health for Londoners. This work must urgently address the lack of GP provision to support new developments. In Barnet, we have delivered a number of health centre buildings with the agreement of the NHS, only to have them turned down by successor NHS organisations. For many Barnet residents, the reality of housing growth boils down to their experience of unacceptably long waiting times for GP appointments, and as a result we are beginning to see stronger and more vociferous opposition to new development.

Of course, we will not agree on all aspects of the Plan. However, if we are to succeed in meeting London's housing needs I believe these issues need to be taken seriously. I hope that a diary slot can be found in late May for the Leader of Barnet Council to discuss these issues quietly with you.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Richard Cornelius  
Leader of the Council