

Sadiq Khan
New London Plan
GLA City Hall
London Plan Team
London
SE1 2AA

1st March 2018
Reference JF/HY/0127

Dear Mr. Khan,

DRAFT LONDON PLAN REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF PROVEWELL LIMITED

I write on behalf of my client ProveWell Limited to make representations to the Draft London Plan that is currently out for consultation.

Introduction

ProveWell Ltd is a property company that seeks to provide warehouse living properties to tackle the current housing and workspace affordability issues in London, particularly for the creative sector.

Representations

Policy H18 Large-scale purpose-built shared living

This policy provides guidance on large-scale purpose-built shared living Sui Generis use developments and such developments are required to meet the following criteria:

1. *it meets an identified need*
2. *it is located in an area well-connected to local services and employment by walking, cycling and public transport, and its design does not contribute to car dependency*
3. *it is under single management*
4. *its units are all for rent with minimum tenancy lengths of no less than three months*
5. *communal facilities and services are provided that are sufficient to meet the requirements of the intended number of residents and include at least:*
 - a. *convenient access to a communal kitchen*
 - b. *outside communal amenity space (roof terrace and/or garden)*
 - c. *internal communal amenity space (dining rooms, lounges)*
 - d. *laundry and drying facilities*
 - e. *a concierge*
 - f. *community management*
 - g. *bedding and linen changing and/or room cleaning services.*

6. *the private units provide adequate functional living space and layout, and are demonstrably not C3 Use Class accommodation*
7. *a management plan is provided with the application*
8. *it delivers a cash in lieu contribution towards conventional C3 affordable housing. Boroughs should seek this contribution for the provision of new C3 off-site affordable housing as either an:*
 - a. *upfront cash in lieu payment to the local authority, or*
 - b. *in perpetuity annual payment to the local authority*

ProveWell Ltd requests for clarification on this policy. It is considered that this policy should clearly specify what type of uses fall under '*large-scale purpose built shared living*' i.e. student accommodation or co-living facilities which would include a concierge and room cleaning services.

Currently, the criteria outlined in this policy are considered restrictive to warehouse living use and not fundamental to their distinctive character. This includes the requirements to provide a concierge, bedding and linen change and/or room cleaning services, as well as to make financial contribution to affordable housing. These requirements in addition to being contradictory to the warehouse living character, would be likely to make warehouse living schemes unviable and would therefore prevent these type of developments from coming forward.

Furthermore, it should be reiterated that the required financial contribution to affordable housing does not apply to warehouse living as these units already provide affordable accommodation to occupants by offering both workspace and residential accommodation in one single space.

For the above reasons 'warehouse living' is not considered applicable to policy H18. ProveWell Ltd therefore requests that either the policy clearly states that warehouse living is excluded or provides further details on what a 'purpose-built shared living scheme' entails/defined under.

Policy E3 Affordable workspace

This policy requires developments to provide affordable workspace in defined circumstances, at rents maintained below the market rate for that space for a specific social, cultural or economic development purpose. As detailed in Part A of the policy, such circumstances include workspace that is:

1. *dedicated for specific sectors that have social value such as charities or social enterprises*
2. *dedicated for specific sectors that have cultural value such as artists' studios and designer-maker spaces*
3. *dedicated for disadvantaged groups starting up in any sector*
4. *providing educational outcomes through connections to schools, colleges or higher education*

5. *supporting start-up businesses or regeneration.*

ProveWell Ltd considers that warehouse living developments should be exempt from the requirements of this policy. The principle of warehouse living already meets the key objective of this policy – to provide affordable workspace for specific sectors that have social, cultural or economic value, as detailed in Part A of the policy. The mix of residential accommodation and workspace within warehouse living units offers affordable workspace as it allows occupants to use the single space for multiple purposes.

In addition, warehouse living units are particularly attractive to charities or social enterprises, the creative sector and start-up businesses which are often faced with affordability issues in renting workspace in addition to residential accommodation. Therefore, warehouse living units provide affordable workspace for sectors that have social and cultural value (Part A point 1 and 2), disadvantaged groups starting up in any sector (Part A point 3) whilst supporting start-up businesses (Part A point 5).

As the fundamental characteristic of warehouse living units already provide affordable workspace, ProveWell Ltd requests that warehouse living is excluded from this policy and that this exemption is clearly stated in the policy.

Policy E7 Intensification, co-location and substitution of land for industry, logistics and services to support London’s economic function

This policy seeks to encourage the co-location of industrial and residential/other uses, whilst promoting the intensification of existing industrial uses.

The relevant parts of the policy for this representation are illustrated below, this includes Part D and the criteria outlined in Part E whereby the processes in Part D (B and C) must comply with:

Reference	Description/criteria	Comments by ProveWell Ltd
Part D	<p><i>Mixed-use or residential development proposals on Non-Designated Industrial Sites will be supported where:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for the industrial and related purposes set out in part A of Policy E4 Land for industry, logistics and services to support London’s economic function; or</i> <i>2. it has been allocated in a Development Plan for residential or mixed-use development on the basis of part D.1; or</i> <i>3. industrial, storage or distribution floorspace</i> 	This is supported by ProveWell Ltd.

	<p><i>is provided as part of mixed-use intensification where this is feasible; or</i></p> <p><i>4. suitable alternative accommodation (in terms of type, specification, use and size) is available in reasonable proximity to the development proposal and subject to relocation support arrangements for existing businesses before the commencement of new development. Mixed-use development proposals on Non-Designated Industrial Sites which co-locate industrial, storage or distribution floorspace with residential and/or other uses should also meet the criteria set out in parts E.2 to E.4 below</i></p>	
Part E.1	<p><i>The industrial uses within the SIL or LSIS are intensified to deliver an increase (or at least no overall net loss) of capacity in terms of industrial, storage and warehousing floorspace with appropriate provision of yard space for servicing</i></p>	No comment.
Part E.2	<p><i>The industrial and related activities on-site and in surrounding parts of the SIL, LSIS or Non-Designated Industrial Site are not compromised in terms of their continued efficient function, access, service arrangements and days/hours of operation noting that many businesses have 7-day/24-hour access and operational requirements</i></p>	<p>This could contravene the feasibility of co-location. Specifically, it may not be viable to introduce residential/mixed-uses without compromising the days/hours of operation, particularly for those businesses which operate on a 7-day/24-hour basis. This is due to the sensitivity of residential/mixed-uses to amenity impacts.</p>
Part E.3	<p><i>The intensified industrial, storage and distribution uses are completed and operational in advance of any residential component being occupied</i></p>	<p>This may raise financial viability issues for developers and would therefore prevent such schemes from coming forward.</p>

Part E.4	<p><i>Appropriate design mitigation is provided in any residential element to ensure compliance with 1 and 2 above with particular consideration given to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. safety and security (see Policy D10 Safety, security and resilience to emergency and Policy D11 Fire safety)</i> <i>b. the layout, orientation, access, servicing and delivery arrangements of the uses in order to minimise conflict (see Policy T4 Assessing and mitigating transport impacts)</i> <i>c. design quality, public realm, visual impact and amenity for residents (see Policy D1 London's form and characteristics, Policy D2 Delivering good design, Policy D3 Inclusive design, Policy D4 Housing quality and standards, Policy D5 Accessible housing, Policy D6 Optimising housing density, Policy D7 Public realm and Policy D8 Tall buildings)</i> <i>d. vibration and noise (see Policy D13 Noise)</i> <i>e. air quality, including dust, odour and emissions (see Policy S11 Improving air quality and Policy S12 Minimising greenhouse gas emissions).</i> 	No comment.
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ProveWell supports the principle of co-location, however my client requests that the requirements detailed in Part E of the policy are amended to allow greater flexibility for co-location developments. It is considered that these requirements are restrictive to co-location developments as it is likely to raise feasibility issues for developers and excessive complications for councils to determine such applications. This may prevent co-location schemes from coming forward and thus, the restrictive nature of this policy may contravene one of its key purpose. It should be noted that there is a strong demand for co-location, as outlined in the evidence base document *London Industrial Land Demand Study*. Therefore, ProveWell requests that the criteria listed in Part E of the policy are simplified to provide greater flexibility for co-location schemes to come forward successfully.

Policy H13 Build to Rent

Under this policy, Build to Rent developments schemes are encouraged and it is recognised that these schemes can positively contribute to the delivery of new homes.

ProveWell Ltd strongly supports the recognition of the positive impacts of Build to Rent schemes.

However, part B of the policy outlines a list of criteria that must be met in order to qualify as a Build to Rent scheme. Some of these criteria are restrictive to the overarching objective - to accelerate the delivery of new homes. Therefore, Provewell Ltd suggest the following:

Reference (Part B of policy)	Criteria	Comments by Provewell Ltd
1)	<i>the development, or block or phase within the development has at least 50 units</i>	It is understood that at the footnote of this policy, it states that boroughs may set their own thresholds to reflect local housing market circumstances and affordable housing needs. However, Provewell requests amendment to the wording of this part of the policy to indicate a greater flexibility on the 50-unit threshold and/or to clearly state that the threshold is subject to local market circumstances. It should also be noted that the 50-unit threshold is restrictive in terms of site capacity, which may limit the number of sites coming forward and thus, limiting the number of new homes to be delivered.
4)	<i>All the units are self-contained and let separately</i>	Provewell requests for clarification on this point as it does not appear to consider different types of uses including the emerging warehouse living uses, which can also be considered to fall under a Build to Rent development model. Specifically, clarification is requested as warehouse living units generally consists of multiple bedrooms with communal living areas, rather than multiple self-contained units.

Policy D6 Optimising housing density

Within the current London Plan, developments are limited to the density range outlined in the density matrix. The new draft London Plan proposes to remove this density matrix and seeks to use a design-led approach.

Provewell Ltd strongly supports the removal of the density matrix to allow greater flexibility for high density developments.

Policy D8 Tall buildings

As opposed to the current London Plan policy on tall buildings, the new policy no longer limits tall buildings only to sites in Central Activity Zones, opportunity areas, areas of intensification or town centres with good public transport connectivity.

Provewell supports the positive approach in allowing more flexibility in the locations for tall buildings.

Policy E8 Sector growth opportunities and clusters

This policy seeks to promote employment opportunities across a diverse range of sectors. It therefore seeks to ensure the availability of suitable workspaces to accommodate different employment types.

ProveWell strongly supports the thrust of this policy. The specific business growth opportunities for culture and creative industries as well as the tech and digital sector identified in the supporting text of this policy (paragraph 6.8.3) are particularly supported.

Conclusion

Policy D6 (Optimising housing density), D8 (Tall buildings) and E8 (Sector growth opportunities and clusters) of the Draft London Plan are strongly supported by ProveWell Ltd as these policies appropriately reflect and address the current and future housing and economic issues in London.

However, in consideration of the emerging warehouse living uses in London, ProveWell Ltd requests amendments to policies H18 (Large-scale purpose-built shared living), E3 (Affordable workspace), E7 (Intensification, co-location and substitution of land for industry, logistics and services to support London's economic function) and H13 (Build to rent). Amendments to these policies would aid the integration of different types of uses, particularly emerging uses such as warehouse living. This would subsequently help push forward schemes that meet the demands of London. Due to the nature of warehouse living uses, allowing such schemes to come forward can therefore deliver affordable housing and workspace to meet the capital's needs.

Yours sincerely,

John Ferguson BSc (Hons), PG Dip TP, MRTPI

Director