

A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS.

Comments from Drew Stevenson.

Overall, I very much welcome A City for All Londoners (ACFAL). It is good to see such a clear commitment to consultation, not only in the document itself, but through the series of consultation meetings.

I think the document is clearly written and points the way to a challenging set of policy implications, and would be happy to comment further on the policies as they develop - or engage in further discussions if that were appropriate. My few "headline" comments are as follows.

The context. I think it is correct to identify the strategic context as requiring a response to the five key changes facing London - population change, increasing diversity, rising inequality, the uncertainty caused by the EU referendum and climate change.

The original London Plan identified six 'Drivers of Change' - population growth, economic growth, the environmental imperative, changing lifestyles and values, the impact of new technology and the need for social justice. I would suggest that this list is revisited as the strategy develops; those drivers still remain strong. In addition I would isolate the separate but parallel driver of globalisation and the huge uncertainty, as acknowledged in ACFAL, of the EU referendum result.

As to the referendum, I think the implications need to be considered in more detail, uncertain though they are. It is quite possible that inward migration may slow dramatically as a result of the movement into mainland Europe of more headquarters and financial institutions as well as service industries that look to Europe for their major clients. The issue for the London Plan will turn to the possible need for revised housing targets. I think it is important to openly address this issue at some point - and to stress that the implication is not for a lower target, but for current housing targets to remain for several years due to accommodate natural increase, internal migration and to deal with the backlog of sub-standard and over-crowded housing. Similarly the need for affordable housing will not diminish, in fact it may well increase in the medium term.

The inclusion agenda. I think it is absolutely correct to identify the need for integration and inclusion as one of the over-arching themes of the strategy. I welcome the statements throughout the document to this effect. That agenda is closely linked, as is recognised, to the need to tackle discrimination, hate crime and health inequalities as well as promoting economic fairness and focussing on the needs of communities in deprived neighbourhoods.

This is an agenda to which the role of the voluntary and community sector is central, and various of the infrastructure organisations have already come forward to offer to support the Mayor in developing that agenda and, more importantly, to help implement the necessary policies and projects to challenge inequality and promote fairness. As Convener of the London Communities Commission I look forward to continuing to work with the Mayor in this field. We particularly welcome the commitment to delivering "targeted interventions to support the most vulnerable groups and communities in our city" (page 72) as well as building strong communities in London and encouraging active citizenship.

Delivering a unified strategy. On page 15 the Mayor says that he will expand on the direction of travel set out in ACFAL in further detailed strategies that will "fully complement one another". On page 57 he talks about breaking down policy silos. I wonder if there is a need to continue to develop a single strategic, albeit brief, over-arching inclusion/integration strategy within which all the other strategies fit? This could be matched by a delivery panel chaired by the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Integration, supported by a cross-silo officer team, including external representatives from other sectors as appropriate?

My more detailed comments are as follows, in the order in which they appear in the document.

Metropolitan Open Land. On Page 19 it is good to see a reference to the protection of the Green Belt and 'other designated green spaces'. The latter, particularly Metropolitan Open Land, are often more important as amenities to Londoners than the Green Belt itself.

Housing in CAZ. There is a long history of attempts to get the balance between commercial activities and housing in CAZ correct. I am concerned that the indications in ACFAL at present undervalue the role of housing in CAZ. Of course we need space for development to sustain London's global role, but we also need to cherish the vital role that a wide range of housing in the very centre has always played as a distinguishing feature of London and its attractiveness. The wording will need careful crafting as the policy is developed.

Town Centres. I welcome the emphasis on seeing more development in town centres as hubs for retail and community activity. The task of encouraging more job-creating activities in Town Centres has always been a challenge and it would be good to see some pilot projects developed.

Infrastructure corridors. This approach is welcomed as a constructive approach to linking Good Growth in London to the essential hinterland beyond the administrative boundary.

Tall Buildings. I agree that tall buildings will have a role to play in London's future. They will need to be sensitively located in the way suggested on page 65, but I believe there should also be a reference to the benefits of clustering, rather than a scatter gun approach, and in particular the need to site them adjacent to significant public transport interchanges.

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Dec 2016