

GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY

**Workshop on cross-boundary co-operation on strategic planning
for London and the wider metropolitan area**

**2pm Friday 22 March 2013
committee rooms 4&5
lower ground floor
City Hall London**

A G E N D A

- 14.00 welcome and purpose of workshop**
Stewart Murray GLA Assistant Director Planning (workshop chair)
- 14.10 the response to the Mayor's Discussion Paper**
Lee Searles Consultant
- 14.25 discussion 1 – What are the key issues for co-operation?**
- 15.10 break for refreshments**
- 15.25 discussion 2 – Identify the best mechanisms to promote co-operation**
- 16.05 questions, answers and points of view**
- 16.35 next steps and close by 16.45**

CROSS-BOUNDARY COOPERATION ON STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR LONDON AND THE WIDER METROPOLITAN AREA

A DISCUSSION PAPER

INTRODUCTION

- 1 This paper has been prepared on behalf of the Mayor of London as a basis for discussion with planning authorities in London and adjoining counties about the future approach to cooperation across the Greater London boundary on strategic planning.
- 2 Policy 2.2 of the London Plan deals with planning for the sustainable development and management of growth in the wider metropolitan area beyond the boundaries of Greater London, and in the greater south-east of England. It states the Mayor's commitment to work with planning authorities in the South East and the East of England regions through the Inter-Regional Forum and any successor body, and through suitable arrangements to be established with local authorities and other appropriate partners, to:

“...broadly align approaches (and, where appropriate, planning policy frameworks) and to lobby for timely and sufficient investment to realise the potential of, and address the challenges facing, the city region as a whole and areas within it (particularly the growth areas and corridors referred to in Policy 2.3), especially those dealing with population and economic growth, infrastructure and climate change”
- 3 The Policy sets out a number of objectives set by the Mayor for this activity; to seek to ensure that:
 - a appropriate resources, particularly for transport (including ports and logistics) and other infrastructure (including open space, health, education and other services) are made available to secure the optimum development of the growth areas and corridors as a whole and those parts which lie within London
 - b common policies and procedures are followed to ensure that there is, so far as possible, a 'level playing field' particularly adjacent to London's boundaries. This will help to promote spatially balanced and sustainable economic growth, and to meet housing, energy and sustainability targets, and standards such as those for parking
 - c integrated policies are developed for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, logistics provision and the adaptation of shared infrastructure
 - d jointly owned policies are developed to help rationalise commuting patterns, both at different times of the day and to encourage reverse commuting where appropriate, including the promotion of public transport improvements to enhance access to key destinations
 - e integration is achieved with other strategies to ensure that appropriate skills training is available and other barriers to work are overcome
 - f common monitoring data are collected, reviewed and assessed on a regular basis with neighbouring local authorities, as appropriate
 - g reviews of the London Plan have regard to relevant plans and strategies of neighbouring local authorities
- 4 Until 2010, the Advisory Forum on Regional Planning for London, the South East and East of England (widely known as the Inter-Regional Forum), which brought together the Mayor and the regional planning bodies for the East and South-East of England, enabled engagement

with planning authorities in neighbouring regions. In June 2010 representatives of the Mayor and of South East England Councils (SEEC) and the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) met to discuss the future of inter-regional work following the dissolution of the former regional planning bodies. It was agreed then that subject to decisions to follow in SEEC and EELGA, inter-regional cooperation should continue supported by officers from the Greater London Authority and local authorities outside London. The Mayor has yet to hear from SEEC and EELGA; given this he has decided to investigate how inter-regional cooperation can best be taken forward.

The duty to cooperate

- 5 This work has been given added urgency by the coming into force of the new statutory duty to co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development¹ introduced through the Localism Act 2011. In short, this requires planning authorities to “engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis” in carrying out certain defined strategic planning activities (including preparation of development plan documents and local development documents) relating to “sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas.

- 6 While preparation of the London Plan is not covered by the duty, the Mayor (and Transport for London) are required to cooperate with planning authorities inside and outside London in the preparation of their local plans (and they are required to cooperate with the Mayor). Where appropriate, London boroughs and local planning authorities outside London are required to cooperate.

Mapping strategic planning outside London

- 7 Against this background, the Mayor has decided to explore options for future cross-boundary work on strategic planning. As a first step, following publication of the London Plan in 2011 he commissioned Lee Searles (who has carried out an earlier review of the Inter-Regional Forum) to conduct a mapping exercise to look at the strategic planning activity and players beyond London. This identified spatial and land use planning activities being undertaken at cross-district, county and sub-regional scales in Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire and Bedfordshire, and was based on a survey of local authority planning policy managers. At the same time respondents were asked for their informal views about engagement with the Mayor and emerging thinking about how the duty to cooperate might apply to relationships with the London boroughs and the Mayor. The results of this exercise have informed the proposals in this paper.

¹ See section 33A of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 (as amended)

OPTIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNTIES AND DISTRICTS

8 In most of the area under consideration, county councils continue to exist and provide a degree of strategic coordination across their area (there are no county councils in Bedfordshire or Berkshire). The mapping exercise showed that in common with London colleagues, county councils have limited resources, and that this coordination is carried out by facilitation of networks of district and unitary council planning officers. These networks are commonly developing shared approaches to implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy; some are also working on county-wide housing strategies to provide an evidence base and coordination mechanism for local plan-making.

9 The mapping exercise suggested that many district councils would prefer to engage with London bodies through these county-based (and organised) forums and networks, which exist in well-organised forms in Kent, Surrey, Hertfordshire and Essex, on a less organised basis in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire – but not at all in Bedfordshire. In general, these arrangements are well-supported by districts. They are already established, and using them as a means of engagement would avoid the need to invent wholly new structures. They would be likely to provide an effective means of reaching as wide a number of relevant officers as possible.

10 Engagement with networks may not be sufficient on its own – the new

duty applies to individual authorities, who may need to engage with the Mayor or individual boroughs separately. There may be a need for higher-level engagement focussing on cooperation between key organisations beyond the counties whose work has a bearing on issues underlying strategic planning. These might include officer groups working on relevant issues such as:

- East of England Directors of Environment and Transport Strategic Planning Group
- Enfield, Essex and Hertfordshire Border Liaison group
- South East and East of England Waste Planning Advisory Groups
- South East and East of England Aggregates Working Parties

There may be a need to develop links with the respective Local Economic Partnerships as well.

11 This cooperation may have to be taken further to involve more senior figures (including elected representatives) to discuss and take forward issues of Greater South-East England or sub-regional issues where there will be shared interests – a current example might be future options for funding strategic infrastructure of the kind being considered by the Mayor's London Finance Commission.

12 The nature of cooperation required is unlikely to be fixed. Given the new duty, and the current level of change in the planning system, it may take time for authorities to decide what level of engagement on what issues is most appropriate to their needs. This is compounded by nervousness about the possible implications of joint work on issues

like housing and employment distribution for local plans.

A proposed approach

- 13 These considerations suggest that the best way forward would be one that enables the organic development of engagement, allowing all those concerned to meet their respective needs, responding to circumstances, and developing engagement structures and processes over time to maximise their effectiveness.
- 14 Experience suggests this is an approach more likely to be effective than setting up extensive formal arrangements along the lines of the former Inter-Regional Forum (IRF). The IRF failed to create a shared understanding of key employment, housing, transport and waste trends and assumptions, or to agree suitable responses to them in regional strategies. In practice none of the bodies involved dedicated resources to its work on a continuous basis, and activity tended to peak at times of preparing for meetings. If formalised machinery of this kind did not function well at the apogee of regional planning, it may be that an approach that allows cross-border working to find its own appropriate level would be better. Such an approach may also be more realistic given the resource constraints faced by all concerned.
- 15 Such an organic approach could be based around use of information technology to provide, through a "Linked In"-type **online forum**, a means for regular interchange of information, for consultation and engagement, to share new projections and research and informal discussion of issues of general interest and concern.
- 16 This could be supplemented by **periodic seminars** either around particular subjects of general concern, particular policy areas, or propose plans (the Mayor could organise a seminar on London Plan alterations, for example). These are envisaged as being interactive, allowing stakeholders to inform and influence our approaches to particular issues.
- 17 Any approach of this kind could be underpinned by **regular meetings between GLA officers on behalf of the Mayor, and their counterparts in county-based networks** (and perhaps other organisations dealing with issues relevant to strategic planning). The Mayor would also propose to invite London Councils to attend meetings of this kind on behalf of the London boroughs and, perhaps, a representative or representatives of the London sub-regional partnerships. Representation by Local Economic Partnerships may be considered.
- 18 The Mayor would be prepared to host meetings of this kind on, perhaps, a six monthly basis. These meetings could provide an opportunity to swap information on matters of common concern and discuss how, practically, a shared approach can be developed where necessary. This mechanism could also be used to identify issues on which it would be useful to involve elected members.
- 19 Given the existence of the statutory duty, and the fact that inspectors examining local plans will be considering the extent to which it has been complied with by authorities, there will be a need to evidence any new arrangements. The London/county network meetings could be used to develop

a **cooperation strategy**, perhaps identifying the policy areas where cooperation is required, and a description of the kind of engagement and the level of resourcing that will be used to address each. Use of an IT-based forum would also provide an easy means of recording the engagement that takes place, which would help those concerned evidence the cooperation that takes place at examinations in public and elsewhere.

powers to address local infrastructure deficits, for example) are not lost.

20 Arrangements of this kind could be used initially to discuss the kind of issues identified in Policy 2.2 of the London Plan. They could also be used to deal with specific infrastructure projects (like Crossrail 2), and over time could be extended to deal with issues that are of both spatial planning and economic development concern such as employment and training initiatives.

21 Another role that arrangements of this kind could explore is the scope for joint approaches to **monitoring** trends in housing and employment, and in areas like waste and minerals.

23 These ideas are mutually-reinforcing, in that adoption of one could help the effectiveness of another. They would provide the basis for exchange of information and building of trust that could over time lead to stronger and more formal arrangements, and perhaps greater engagement at political level.

Conclusion

22 This paper outlines a number of elements that could be used to enable the organic development of arrangements for cooperation across the Greater London boundary. These are intended both to enable planning authorities on either side of the boundary to show that they have met the statutory duty to cooperate, and to help those of us concerned with planning for an area of the country crucial to the sustainable growth and future prosperity of the United Kingdom ensure that opportunities for effective joint action (to secure new

HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

24 The Mayor is putting these proposals forward for comment by London boroughs, planning authorities in the counties adjoining London, other relevant organisations of which we are aware, London Councils and the London sub-regional partnerships. Others are welcome to comment if they wish. Comments should be sent by email to Andrew Barry-Purssell and Richard Linton at the GLA to reach us by the end of December 2012 – please email:

andrew.barry-purssell@london.gov.uk

richard.linton@london.gov.uk

25 Should the response be positive, the Mayor would propose holding a meeting in January/February 2013 – perhaps involving the county-based planning networks referred to earlier – to agree on ways forward. A meeting of this kind could discuss engagement machinery, and start to scope out the kinds of issues that it would be mutually useful to deal with using it.

Key Themes Raised by Responses to the Mayor's Discussion Paper

General Themes

- There is a widespread desire among respondents to work with the Mayor to develop sensible arrangements for co-operation on strategic planning issues.
- London Plan Policy 2.2 is an important context for co-operation between the Mayor and local authorities in the wider metropolitan area.
- Co-operation arrangements must include statutory consultees.
- Co-operation is a two-way process meaning that it should enable the Mayor to influence local plan development and equally enable local planning authorities and other statutory stakeholders to influence London Plan development.

Approaches to Co-operation

- There is a good level of support for an organic and informal approach to co-operation as a necessity in the current climate.
- However, there are some who advocate research to establish key priorities and reasons for co-operation before mechanisms for co-operation are considered.
- Many think that a co-operation strategy needs to be put in place early in any process to create mechanisms for co-operation, in order to give a sense of structure and direction to the organic and informal approach.
- Through their work with authorities beyond London, London's Sub-Regional Partnerships feel they could play a valuable role in implementing London Plan policy 2.2 through cross-boundary working.

Specific ideas

- An online forum is supported, but allied with other mechanisms and subject to further understanding of costs and practicalities.
- Periodic Seminars are supported, but should avoid duplication with other events. Issues arising from online discussion themes might provide suitable topics and so enable further consideration of issues raised online.
- Regular meetings with networks – These are strongly supported as a primary mechanism for co-operation under an organic approach. However, they must include more than county-based networks, for example sub-regional partnerships within and outside London, topic-based groups and major statutory consultees.

- The development and agreement of a co-operation strategy at an early stage is viewed as very important in order to give structure and direction to co-operation activities adopted.
- There is wariness over commitments to joint monitoring, which will probably be best developed as working relationships develop.

Other views

- Strategic co-operation activities should be carried out within a framework set by elected members.
- Research is required to provide an understanding of the needs of London and the authorities beyond in spatial planning terms. Following this, formal proposals for the establishment of a new body for inter-regional co-operation should be brought forward.
- A Co-operation Strategy jointly agreed between London Boroughs and the Mayor could enable strategic level co-operation agreed by the Mayor to be implemented by the Boroughs in a duty-compliant way.

Discussion 1 – What are the key issues requiring co-operation between the Mayor of London and Local Planning Authorities in the Greater South East?

In response to the Mayor's discussion paper, Policy 2.2 of the London Plan was supported as a key context for co-operation. This provides a starting point for identifying the key issues on which co-operation is needed. Responses to the paper highlighted other issues on which co-operation is required, including the implications of increased airport capacity to serve the South East, and an understanding of the key opportunities for growth in transport investment, housing and employment.

To state in simple terms, the issues on which it is already known co-operation is needed are big and enduring. The strategic co-operation mechanisms for dealing with them are of limited capacity or are not in place. Previous efforts founded on more solid arrangements and resources for strategic co-operation (the Inter-Regional Forum) did not achieve significant results, undermining belief in the ability of voluntary co-operation arrangements to deliver.

However, there is a significant change factor in the duty to co-operate. Every local planning authority is required to demonstrate compliance with it as a test of soundness. This means it is an on-going commitment delivered throughout a plan process.

There is also an argument that more than immediate neighbours to the London Boroughs are implicated in co-operation with London by the duty to co-operate, with the sphere of co-operation extended by the strategic scale of housing, employment, waste and other issues, and by transport corridors connecting towns and cities with London, within a wider metropolitan area.

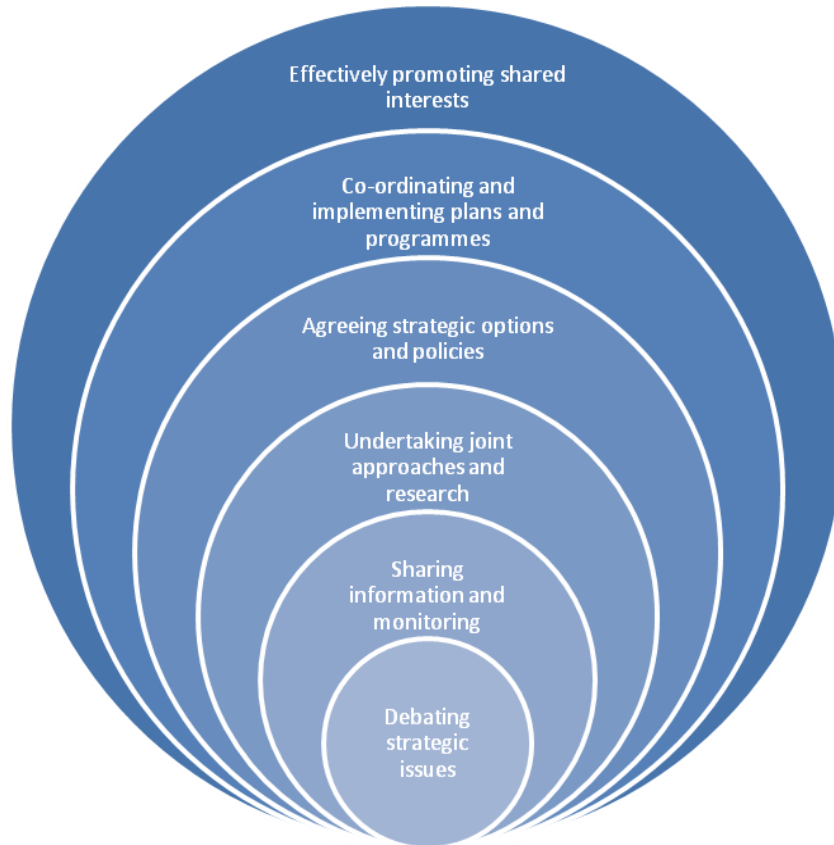
The new duty to co-operate requires local planning authorities to co-operate at an individual level, which is another important change factor. It makes it difficult to see how co-operation activities can be left solely to strategic bodies set up to promote co-operation.

The political and financial environment must be taken into account in thinking about how strategic co-operation can be realised. Both politics and public finances militate against new formal arrangements on a wider scale.

The institutional framework is also changed. Regional Planning Bodies are abolished and the Mayor of London remains as the sole strategic planning authority in the greater south east. This must be taken into account in making proposals for future strategic co-operation.

The diagram below was taken from an earlier report on the Inter-Regional Forum, for the South East Partnership Board. It is reproduced here to remind of the roles and functions that co-operative working can play and to emphasise the importance of building functions on top of each other. There is a requirement for all of them in addressing the issues on

which co-operation is required, but it must be recognised that it is not always possible to undertake higher order roles and functions without solid foundations. This may need to be recognised in identifying key tasks which co-operation activities should seek to address initially.



In your discussion group and with reference to the elements of London Plan policy 2.2, you are asked to identify and order the main tasks required to promote effective co-operation between the Mayor of London and local planning authorities in London and the wider metropolitan area. Issues raised in responses are also included.

DISCUSSION GROUP NO. _____

Co-operation issue	First Task	Second Task	Third Task	Existing mechanism to be used or built upon	New mechanism required
Optimum development of growth areas and corridors					
Common policies and procedures, between different plan areas					
Integrating policies for climate change and adaption of shared infrastructure					

Jointly owned policies to help rationalise commuting patterns					
Securing integration with other strategies to overcome barriers to work					
Ensuring London Plan reviews have regard to plans and strategies of neighbouring local authorities					

Decisions on and the implications of, increased airport capacity in the Greater South East					
Understanding strategic growth options and opportunities					
Other issue#1					

Other issue#2					
Other issue#3					

Discussion 2 – Identify the best mechanisms to promote co-operation

The Mayor's discussion paper, published for consultation in the autumn of 2012, purposely focused on the processes by which London and local planning authorities in the wider metropolitan area might foster awareness of each other's issues and concerns, build sustainable co-operative activities and, through on-going and serial dialogue and joint work, comply with the requirements of the duty to co-operate which local planning authorities operate under. The idea of thinking about the process of establishing sustainable arrangements was generally welcomed by those responding to the paper.

The abolition of regional planning bodies and regional plans has left a vacuum in strategic planning liaison arrangements. The Mayor of London's strategic spatial planning functions remain. The duty to co-operate does not require the Mayor to co-operate on the preparation of the London Plan. However, analogous to and pre-dating the duty, a clear requirement for the Mayor to consult with neighbouring authorities on the preparation of the London Plan is set out in the GLA Act.

The Mayor wants his engagement on a range of strategic planning issues to be able to reach as many authorities as is appropriate to aid development of the London Plan, whilst allowing the individual issues on which co-operation is requested by local planning authorities to be considered.

The central proposition in the Mayor's paper was that, in the light of this, large formal structures are not likely to succeed in political, financial or practical terms. Further, the duty to co-operate requires co-operation between authorities on specific issues they identify together and this cannot be left to broad, unspecific liaison arrangements. The duty also applies over considerable time periods and so reaffirmation and review are essential components. Referring to these factors, some local planning authority responses to the paper highlighted the need for direct engagement in new arrangements and not proxy ones.

Taken together, the issues arising from and the requirements for future co-operative working indicate the benefits of a more organic and informal approach based on maximising the opportunities to identify the specific issues which require co-operation between the Mayor and local planning authorities. With some exceptions, responses to the Mayor's discussion paper saw the overall benefit of taking an organic approach to co-operation as realistic and practical, whilst allowing individual authorities to raise co-operation issues with the Mayor and vice versa.

A suite of activities, operating together, is foreseen as part of an organic approach suited to the current climate, which can be developed on if taken up. Some mechanisms which could potentially play a role in building co-operation were set out in the Mayor's discussion paper. The paper also suggested that the Mayor could formulate and adopt a co-operation strategy

to provide a framework for co-operation activities. There was strong endorsement of a co-operation strategy as an essential document to provide structure and direction.

The ideas set out in the discussion paper included:

- An online forum/discussion group
- Periodic workshops or seminars to explore issues in more detail
- Regular meetings of networks covering geographical and topic issues, with the GLA.
- Joint monitoring and data gathering
- An agreed co-operation strategy

How might these ideas fit together? A co-operation strategy would set the framework for the other activities. An online forum would provide a mechanism for raising issues in an informal way. Periodic Seminars or workshops would allow for a focused review and airing of the more important of these. A regular meeting of representatives from networks and topic groups would inform the on-going review of the co-operation strategy, explore issues raised by the online forum and seminars and, importantly, provide the main mechanism for encouraging discussion and agreement on strategic co-operation issues and work. Work which might arise from the network meetings would include commitments on monitoring and data sharing, joint research and policy development.

How such an arrangement will perform will depend on the commitment of those taking part. The strength of it will lie in that, rather than the structure itself. A fuller explanation of what each mechanism would do is set out below.

Co-operation Strategy – It is important that people know who the Mayor thinks he needs to co-operate with to prepare the London Plan. Equally, they should know what local planning authorities beyond London think they need to co-operate on with the Mayor, as they prepare their Local Plans. If there is an opportunity to comment on plans for co-operation, then people can shape it and influence it at an early stage. Equally, having had the chance to influence such issues and having seen their concerns taken into account and kept under review, there can be little to successfully object to later.

An adopted strategy would have further benefits in setting out the Mayor's priorities for cross-boundary working with local planning authorities in the wider metropolitan area. Equally, local planning authorities would be able to use the process to highlight the issues which they feel require co-operation with the Mayor, to which the Mayor would have to respond.

A co-operation strategy would therefore log the issues on which co-operation is required and then indicate how they are going to be dealt with. This would give structure and

direction to the suite of activities in place to support co-operation. It would indicate the issues where a strategic approach might be successfully applied across a number of local planning authorities and the London Plan, and would direct support to achieving that through the mechanisms employed. These would hopefully develop over time. It would also tell external interests what the key issues for co-operation are and allow them the opportunity to comment.

Network meetings – This would be primary mechanism for creating regular dialogue, for ensuring a co-operation strategy is adhered to, for considering issues arising from online dialogue and seminars, for fostering shared approaches, data sharing and monitoring. The aim would be to hold meetings twice each year, timed to take stock of or influence development/reviews of co-operation strategy, seminars and other information. The meetings would be hosted at City Hall and organised by a secretary who would either be a GLA officer or employed to carry out the task.

Resource would be allocated to ensure decisions taken by the meetings are implemented in the time in-between. This would also involve liaison with the individual networks to ensure dialogue is maintained. Action on the co-operation strategy would be the main driver for activity.

The Mayor's discussion paper indicated that meetings could be held with county networks. Responses to consultation thought this was a good idea, but felt that other networks, topic groups, statutory consultees and sub-regional partnerships should be included. The meetings with networks could be run on this wider basis.

Online Forum – This should be regarded as an opportunity for all local planning authorities and the Mayor to raise issues in an informal setting, as they arise. At one level, it can solve everyday issues relating to plan development. At another level, it can be a route for testing new ideas or seeking support for issues being felt locally. It is a conduit for raising ideas. The Planning Advisory Service currently runs a series of Communities of Practice forums which perform a similar function for authorities and other sectors with shared interests. This model would appear to fit the requirements for London and the Greater South East given the limited number of participants.

Importantly, issues raised through this mechanism would be picked up in Network meetings and periodic seminars, and through them potentially in the Co-operation Strategy. This model envisages central moderation to ensure that the forum operates fairly and effectively, and is not misused, but beyond that, all registered users can use the mechanism to register views, raise issues and consult colleagues.

Periodic seminars – Online discussions are a mechanism for raising issues which may need attention - the number of contributions and/or the weight of the evidence in support of them may indicate this. A first response could be to provide a physical forum for that

discussion, at which all sides of the issue can be considered and dealt with. A structured workshop designed to explore them could provide one complementary element in a co-operation response. The GLA would organise the workshop, set the agenda, issue invitations, provide supporting papers, carefully record discussion results and agreed actions. As part of a menu of co-operation tools, the role of the seminars is therefore more than good practice liaison.

Seminars would also allow the Mayor to brief local planning authorities on emerging London Plan issues and get feedback from them. This would enable the Mayor to take account of views given in the development of the London Plan and for local planning authorities outside London to take account of how the London Plan will affect them. The frequency of such events would be of the order of every six months.

Other ideas were put forward in responses, including:

- A greater co-operation effort with sub-regional or corridor partnerships
- Investment in existing well-established topic liaison groups e.g. for aggregates and waste

In your discussion group, you are asked to consider what contribution you think the various mechanisms proposed in the Mayor's discussion paper and those put forward in responses, could make towards achieving greater co-operation on strategic planning between London and authorities beyond the London boundary.

- **What contribution could each mechanism make as part of a suite of activities?**
- **What form should they take and what function could they perform?**
- **How should practical proposals be developed with partners?**
- **What would success look like in three years time assuming the ideas are in place?**

DISCUSSION GROUP _____

Co-operation mechanism	What contribution to co-operation can this make?	Views on form and function	What are the essential steps to establish this, in terms of co-operation with partners?	What would success look like in three years' time?
Co-operation Strategy				
Network meetings				
Online forum				

Periodic Seminars				
Sub-Regional partnerships				
Topic Groups				
Member-led liaison group				

Other idea #1				
Other idea #2				
Other idea #3				

Planning Beyond London workshop
City Hall London 22 March 2013
ATTENDANCE LIST

County councils

Samuel Dix, Buckinghamshire County Council
Zhanine Oates, Essex County Council
Sue Janota, Surrey County Council
Paul Donovan, Hertfordshire County Council

Districts and unitaries outside London

Max Baker, Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Michael Holford, Brighton & Hove City Council
Bill Newman, Brentwood Borough Council
Colin Haigh, Broxbourne Borough Council
Amanda Raffaelli, Castle Point Borough Council
Jeremy Potter, Chelmsford City Council
Laura Chase, Colchester Borough Council
Paul Buckley, Dartford Borough Council
Adrian Fox, Dover District Council
John Preston, Epping Forest District Council District Council
Karol Jakubczyk, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Paul MacBride, Harlow Council
Simon Warner, Hertsmere Borough Council
Andrew Marsh, Mid-Sussex District Council
Jack Straw, Mole Valley District Council
Cath Rose, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Geoff Dawes, Spelthorne Borough Council
Paul Newdick, Tandridge District Council
Claire Williams, Three Rivers District Council
Morgan Slade, Thurrock Council
Ian Bailey, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Adrian Tofts, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Andrew Taylor, Uttlesford District Council
Philip Bylo, Watford Borough Council
Ernest Amoako, Woking Borough Council

Other Greater South East

Des Welton, Hertfordshire Planning Co-ordinator
Deborah Sacks, SEWTAB & EoEWTAB
Nick Woolfenden, South East England Councils

Inner London boroughs

Peter Shadbolt, City of London Corporation
David Gawthorpe, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
Sakiba Gurda, Islington Council
Jonathan Wade, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
Alex Rosser, Royal Borough of Kingston
Matthew Randall, London Borough of Lambeth
Claire Gray, London Borough of Lewisham
Michael Glasgow, Southwark Council
Tom Clarke, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Lisa O'Donnell, City of Westminster

Outer London boroughs

Rita Brar, London Borough of Barnet
Mark Egerton, London Borough of Bexley
Clare Loops, London Borough of Bexley
Lee Longhurst, London Borough of Croydon
Natalie Broughton, Enfield Council
Ken Bean, Enfield Council
Martyn Thomas, London Borough of Havering
Brian Whiteley, London Borough of Hillingdon
Ian Rae, London Borough of Redbridge

Other London organisations

Ian Smith, South London Partnership
Archie Onslow, North London Waste Plan
Stephen King, North London Strategic Alliance
Dominic Curran, London Councils
David Payne, London Aggregates Working Party

Government/Agency

Stephen Walker, Environment Agency
Mide Beaumont, Department of Communities and Local Government

Greater London Authority Group

Andrew Barry-Purssell, Greater London Authority
Jane Carlsen, Greater London Authority
Andrew Hiley, Transport for London
John Lett, Greater London Authority
Richard Linton, Greater London Authority
Christine McGoldrick, Greater London Authority
Stewart Murray, Greater London Authority

Facilitation

Lee Searles, consultant to GLA
Nathan Conway, intern to Lee Searles
Jonathan Finch, Greater London Authority
Sara Leader, Greater London Authority

Apologies

Tim Martin, Kent County Council
Jane Everton, Department of Communities and Local Government (Mide Beaumont substituted)
Catherine McRory, Royal Borough of Greenwich
Roy Lewis, Essex County Council (Zhanine Oates substituted)
Carolyn Barnes, Bedford Borough Council
Chris Waite, London Aggregates Working Party (David Payne substituted)

Workshop on cross-boundary working

Notes of officer workshop held on 22nd March 2013 at City Hall, London.

Introduction

1. On 22nd March 2013, around 65 local planning authority and other stakeholders met at City Hall to share ideas and views about how to develop effective cross boundary working in the development of the London Plan and local authority Local Plans. The discussion was split into two main sessions, during which participants discussed in smaller groups the key issues on which more cross boundary co-operation is needed, and the mechanisms which could help to achieve it and also satisfy the requirements of the duty on each LPA to co-operate in plan-making. This note seeks to capture the key issues raised by the discussions and outline a next step to explore co-operative working on strategic spatial planning.

Issues on which co-operation is needed

2. Prior to the workshop, views on co-operation issues had been raised by respondents to the Mayor of London's discussion paper on cross boundary working. They largely reflected and endorsed London Plan Policy 2.2 themes as a starting point for a consideration of cross-boundary issues. Therefore, at the workshop, these were adopted as prompts for discussion, and then space was allowed for further issues to be raised by participants. For each policy theme, participants were asked to identify the first, second and third priority tasks required to address an issue, and consider how existing mechanisms might be developed, or what new ones are needed.
3. **Optimum development of growth areas and corridors** – Across the discussion groups, it was clear that the first task is to address key evidence base requirements relating to housing and employment, with an emphasis on the identification of shared methodological approaches (for example of SHMA and SHLAA), geographical definitions (for example of London Plan corridors) and assumptions about infrastructure requirements (social, economic and environmental). The second and third tasks related to the finer detail behind these, for example, space standards, parking standards, approaches to the delivery of affordable housing, and having regard to green belt, flood risk and natural assets. In terms of building on existing liaison mechanisms, a wide range were highlighted, including the LEPs, regeneration partnerships (like the Thames Gateway/South Essex Partnership and its north Kent equivalent), representative bodies like London Councils and South East Strategic Leaders, and professional bodies like ALBPO, the RTABs, POS Enterprises etc. New mechanisms required included joint studies across borders, a commitment to a co-ordination role by GLA and other mechanisms for creating two-way dialogue.
4. **Common policies and procedures between different plan areas** – The first priority is to identify and map common issues, then develop common or complementary methodological processes where possible and publish these. Some issues raised which would benefit from this included the role of the Metropolitan Green Belt and approaches to economic growth strategies, but would presumably also included the shared issues raised above (parking and

space standards for example). Existing mechanisms which could be used to progress these ideas would include waste technical advisory bodies, aggregates working parties and joint commissioning through planning officer associations. In response to the issues raised about approaches to economic growth, the idea was posed that polycentric approaches to growth could be rejuvenated. In terms of new debates, the role of London in the context of national growth policy was raised as an important one for understanding how growth could be accommodated and infrastructure investment delivered.

5. **Integrating policies for climate change and adaption of shared infrastructure** – The first priority task identified is to ensure issues are dealt with at the right scale in plan/policy terms. Examples were raised, such as the Gatwick Diamond which it was felt cannot tackle climate change issues at the scale it operates. On the positive side, the scale of the South West London Strategic Partnership has been an advantage in addressing drainage and flooding issues across a large geographical area. Waste, waste water and water issues were other issues raised. The second and third tasks related to addressing key barriers, including economic viability implications (for example of the Code for Sustainable Homes level 5) and member attitudes and knowledge of these issues. In terms of connections into existing mechanisms for these issues, the Local Nature Partnerships and Environment Agency River Basin Management Plans were mentioned. In terms of new approaches, there is seen to be potential for alliances based on responses to environmental opportunities and threats.
6. **Jointly owned policies to help rationalise commuting patterns** – First, there is a need to understand the complex patterns of commuting to London and other centres in the wider metropolitan area, and then consider the implications and potential factors which would influence them. It is important to establish an up to date evidence base for the wider area. Exploring common objectives and investment should be an aim. The role of homeworking needs to be examined in the context of SHMA. In terms of building on existing work, it was suggested that Crossrail impact assessment work could be extended to general rail and to a wider area. Network Rail needs to be engaged.
7. **Securing integration with other strategies to overcome barriers to work** – The first and second tasks are to understand and map the issues and work with local authorities to establish what is being accomplished through Local Plans in London and the wider area.
8. **Ensuring London Plan reviews have regard to plans and strategies of neighbouring local authorities** – Here it was felt that London needed to take on a greater co-ordination role, to understand what the impact of the London Plan will have on its neighbours. Knowing the state of plans and policies is important in order to understand what co-operation issues need to be worked through and with whom.
9. **Decisions on and implications of increased air capacity in the greater south east** – The most urgent need is for clarity, because decisions will affect employment and movement significantly across the area. There is a need to seek to influence the decisions in a way which supports London Plan and local plan objectives. Where possible, common positions should be explored.
10. **Understanding strategic growth options and opportunities** – Officer and member engagement is needed to create a shared understanding in London and the wider metropolitan area of the political and technical requirements for infrastructure investment and delivery. Maintaining an overview of infrastructure plans and provision is important.

There is a need to work with LEPs to identify local and strategic growth options. Strategic agreements in Zones of Co-operation across London and the wider metropolitan area need to be developed. A concerted effort is required to develop links with appropriate LEPs. There is a need to create a positive vision of what the growth imperative means for all communities in London and the wider area. Overall, there is a vacuum where the 'big ideas' for the region as a whole need to be developed.

11. **Other issues raised** – First, a clearer understanding of the impacts of London Plan scale growth on surrounding areas is needed. Second, information exchange and the development of shared methodologies to understand population trends and projections would be beneficial. Third, greater sharing of infrastructure and implementation plans prior to publication would encourage closer co-operation.

Views on co-operation mechanisms

12. In the second part of the workshop, participants were asked to discuss their views on the contribution that particular co-operation mechanisms could make and to consider their form and function. They were also asked to think about the steps in the process of establishing them.
13. **Co-operation strategy** – As originally written in the Mayor's discussion paper, the co-operation strategy for the London Plan would be a document which the Mayor would publish, setting out London's approach to co-operation based on dialogue and engagement with relevant stakeholders and an assessment of co-operation issues. It would be for local planning authorities to adopt their own co-operation strategies if they so wished, to address their own co-operation issues, which may include shared issues with London.
14. In the discussion groups, the idea of the co-operation strategy was welcomed, but the expectations about what it covered in principle varied around the Mayor's initial idea. Some participants viewed the co-operation strategy as potentially a shared mechanism for the whole region to adopt as an agreed framework, which others viewed as unwieldy and resource-intensive. Some suggested it should be light touch and headline focused, but others felt that this could be less meaningful in duty to co-operate terms.
15. There was agreement that the spatial limits of co-operation will vary by topic. There was a suggestion that a protocol could be adopted as a guide to how local planning authorities will approach co-operation (thus stopping short of an actual strategy). Statutory consultees would be included.
16. Some key steps were identified in establishing a strategy, including the identification of thematic and spatial issues which need to be addressed and their appropriate scale. A shared evidence base is important. Member involvement and a member decision making mechanism are needed. A clear understanding of the bodies to which regard is needed in developing local plans and the London Plan, could be produced in the form of a list and key checklist issues for each.
17. Most also thought it important to understand local planning authority plan development and progress, and to log co-operation issues.

18. Other components included a consultation contacts database, a forward work plan on co-operation issues, a shared website for sharing information, protocols and memorandums of understanding which could also cover some aspects of co-operation which the Mayor could carry out on behalf of the London Boroughs. A step-by-step process should be mapped out to aid understanding of how this would work.
19. One group raised the idea of a GLA Statement of Community Involvement and a Local Development Scheme with Annual Monitoring Report. (As originally conceived, this is what the annually reviewed co-operation strategy would be in practice).
20. **Network meetings** – Many comments about this idea were expressed in the form of questions, which will need to be explored and answered. First, there is a question of the focus of such meetings on information sharing or decision making, or both. There was a debate about whether they are focused geographically or by topic, or both. There is a question over the mandate for such meetings to make decisions, given (potentially) the lack of authority granted by members. There are, as always, questions about resources available for people to take part in practice.
21. There were also some clear views about how network meetings could work. There should be a clear focus on priority issues (perhaps identified through co-operation strategies). As much as possible, there should be a relationship with identifiable geographical areas like London's wedges. Sub-regions and corridors. They will be a mechanism for two-way communication. There could be a shared management process. There could be involvement of key statutory stakeholders. The aim could be to produce shared actions which will support the case for co-operation issues having been addressed at examinations.
22. **Online Forum** – There was not much support for a major effort on this idea. However, there was some support for the opportunity it could create for dialogue and information sharing. As such, most stakeholders felt that, if progressed, the aim should be to have such a forum sit within an already established online environment such as that managed by the Planning Advisory Service.
23. **Periodic Workshops** – The workshops were not much commented on in the discussion groups. At best, the workshops were seen as complementary mechanisms to the main thrust of co-operation activities taking place through co-operation strategy and network meetings.
24. **Sub-regional partnerships** – Overall, there was strong support for using sub-regional partnerships as a co-operation mechanism, in particular where they already cross boundaries, have officer and member buy-in and are willing to engage. A different suggestion was that existing professional bodies could develop a new role to promote co-operation, including the Planning Officers Society and the RTPI. Relating to the use of sub-regional partnerships, some issues will need to be explored – does it matter if there is incomplete coverage of sub-regions, in relation to the duty to co-operate? Are sub-regions appropriate for all issues and how can using formal mechanisms like this avoid getting bogged down when technical issues are addressed? Again, there is need to consider the role of LEPs in sub-regional arrangements.
25. **Topic Groups** – The discussion groups supported the role of topic groups as a key co-operation mechanism. Resources and funding are issues which would need to be addressed. The groups identified a range of topics which could usefully be examined, including housing, transport, employment, airports, ports, green belt, infrastructure and health. The work of

existing group could be further developed, including on waste, aggregates and flooding. The work of such groups could include research. Common approaches and where appropriate, apportionment. Support from DCLG should be sought for their work.

26. **Member liaison group** – The discussion groups felt an elected member liaison group is important to secure political support and buy-in to technical work being carried out on co-operation issues. There was a question raised, which would need to be explored, as to whether such a group would own the process in terms of setting its parameters, or would be more of a liaison mechanism without a formal agenda-defining role. A further question to be explored is the scale at which such a member liaison mechanism might work best. For example, would it cover the whole of the wider region, or might it best be aligned more tightly in geographical terms to the wider metropolitan area around London, or by quadrant, aligned to sub-regions etc? One group raised the idea to establish local members forums based sub-regionally, which would be attended by leaders and chief executives.

Next Steps

27. There was strong endorsement of the initiative being taken by the Mayor to continue to explore new working arrangements designed to promote co-operation on strategic spatial planning issues. GLA suggested that a small working group should be formed to explore the ideas presented and issues raised both there and in responses to consultation. The aim would be to examine in greater detail the practicalities and potentialities of co-operation mechanisms, with a view to establishing them where there is agreement. Participants at the workshop strongly supported this idea and so GLA said it would seek to carry this out over the next few months.