

MAYOR OF LONDON

Gareth Bacon AM

Chair of the London Assembly Regeneration Committee
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

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Dear Gareth

Intensification Areas in the next London Plan

Thank you for your letter of 8 February about the above.

As you know, London faces unprecedented pressure to provide new homes and jobs for its booming population. Intensification Areas (IAs), alongside Opportunity Areas (OAs), play a central role in ensuring we make the best use of brownfield land to meet London's housing needs. I have put in place a programme of work to provide the necessary research and building blocks to review the London Plan, and I am grateful to you and the committee for your recommendations. They will be considered as part of the London Plan review.

Your letter raises a series of specific points which I address below:

The Impact of Intensification Areas designation remains unclear.

Once designated in the London Plan, it is expected that the relevant borough takes forward a more detailed planning framework for the IA through the Local Plan process. At this stage, local communities will be consulted about the proposals. The London Plan is already clear that development proposals should 'provide necessary social and other infrastructure to sustain growth' (Policy 2.13Bb). In order to support this policy, my officers promote the preparation of a Development Infrastructure Funding Study to accompany Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks. The study sets out: the infrastructure that will be required to support the level of development expected in the Opportunity Area, an estimate of costs, and potential sources of funding. It makes good practice to recommend to boroughs that, where appropriate, such studies are also undertaken for Intensification Areas.

Areas selected for intensification must have adequate transport infrastructure.

This is a key requirement for identifying IAs, which is carried out with the support of the relevant borough and Transport for London (TfL). In relation to the example of Mill Hill East, I have not seen any evidence that the current level of transport accessibility is holding back development. Mill Hill East was the subject of an Area Action Plan adopted in 2009 following an independent examination and considerable community engagement. The AAP assessed the transport and other infrastructure requirements comprehensively as well as wider community impacts.

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The area is now making an important contribution in providing new homes for Londoners. TfL works collaboratively with the borough and the GLA in planning development in IAs, and transport assessments should always form part of the process of preparing a planning framework for an IA.

In the next London Plan the GLA should take greater account of the implication that development in Intensification Areas spills over into neighbouring areas.

As part of their preparation of frameworks for IAs, boroughs should consider the impact of new development on social infrastructure and plan for enhanced facilities, if required. The London Plan cannot set out precise boundaries for IAs. This will be a matter for the borough, working with my officers, as they take the IA through the Local Plan process. The London Plan is clear that development proposals should 'integrate development to the surrounding areas, especially for regeneration' (Policy 2.13Be).

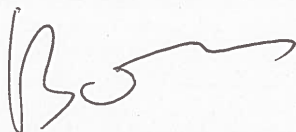
Intensification Areas also need support to protect employment land use alongside accommodating new housing.

The function of Intensification Areas, and Opportunity Areas, is not limited to providing new homes, but also ensuring space for new jobs is retained or created. As part of the review of the London Plan, Greater London Authority officers are undertaking research into the supply and demand for industrial land and office development. They will consider whether as part of the review the London Plan should clarify or provide more guidance on the need to encourage mixed-uses, and appropriate levels of employment uses.

The GLA should create a system to establish development timescales for areas with formal designation in the London Plan, and improve its communication with the development sector.

Since 2008, I have published a number of Planning Frameworks which have all been subject to consultation, including with major developers. I am not convinced that more formal arrangements through business plans are necessary, as they may prevent the more flexible approach that has enabled me to react quickly to emerging opportunities. My officers have a very good working relationship with the development sector, and would be happy to work with London First to explore how communications can be improved.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London