

## **Cultivating the Capital**

Food growing and the planning system in London

January 2010





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**Greater London Authority**

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The review's terms of reference were:

- To assess how effectively the planning system supports and encourages agriculture in London, with a focus on land use for commercial food growing; and
- To establish what changes could be made to the planning system to foster agriculture and encourage more food to be commercially grown in the capital.

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# Contents

Chair’s foreword	9
Executive summary	11
1. Introduction and background	13
2. The importance of agriculture	16
3. Agriculture and the planning system	21
4. Other measures to promote economic viability	32
5. New growing sites	36
6. Integrating food growing with the Mayor’s duty to promote sustainable development	45
Appendix 1 Recommendations	54
Appendix 2 Definitions of urban agriculture and commercial food growing	56
Appendix 3 National planning policies	58
Appendix 4 London Plan policies	65
Appendix 5 Possible content of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	75
Appendix 6 International policy examples	76
Appendix 7 Site visits	79
Appendix 8 Capital Growth	82
Appendix 9 London Food Strategy	83
Appendix 10 Written views	85
Appendix 11 Orders and translations	87
Appendix 12 Principles of scrutiny page	88
Endnotes	89





## Chair's foreword



This report shows that supporting commercial and social enterprise food growing in and around London can bring many social, environmental, economic and food security benefits to the capital.

We heard from farmers and growers about new opportunities and the growing demand for local and seasonal produce. We also heard about the considerable planning challenges they face. Besides difficulties in finding suitable land, problems with diversifying their activities, advice and funding, they often experience low farm gate prices, competition from cheap imports, crime and logistical difficulties in selling their produce in the capital.

Building on the work of the London Food Strategy to increase the amount of seasonal, locally sourced food in London, this report looks at how planning policies can support more farming activity. It also considers how to give food producers from the capital and its fringes more opportunities to sell their produce directly to Londoners, whether at farmers' and street markets, to schools and hospitals and other parts of the public sector, or to restaurant and hospitality sectors. This can be through London's wholesale markets or by new innovative supply chains.

The report makes specific recommendations to the Mayor for his London Plan. It suggests ways for Local Authorities to help existing and new farmers in and around London in the short term and ways to improve distribution routes and markets for local produce. The Mayor's London Food Strategy can help with targeted projects.

In the longer term the issue of food security will have to be addressed. The world's only Professor of Food Policy told the Committee "we are sleepwalking into a major problem when it comes to food". London is very dependent on food imports and has only three or four days' stocks of food should there be any disruption to supply. The Government has recognised this by publishing a strategy examining the future of food and farming given the challenges of food security and climate change.

Growing more food in this country is going to become more and more critical over the next ten years. To avoid food shortages, an increase in the production, processing and distribution of locally grown food will become necessary. This will have to come from a much broader base than currently exists and there is a role for small, medium and large sized food producers working on existing farmland and new and unconventional urban spaces.

Jobs can be created in either growing food or in other stages of the food chain in the capital. And with the coming of "peak oil", oil derived fertilizers and long distance transportation of food is likely to become cost prohibitive and innovative ways of using the city's waste water for irrigation and food waste for compost will have to be found.

Action is needed now. Increasing the amount of food we produce locally is the first step to avoid sleepwalking into a major potential problem for London's future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jenny Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

**Jenny Jones AM**

Chair, Planning and Housing Committee

# Executive summary

Despite being a sprawling urban metropolis, Greater London is home to almost 500 farms and the capital currently produces more than 8,000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables. But London could produce so much more; our report finds that much of the “agricultural” land around London – around 15 per cent of the capital’s total area, mostly in the Green Belt – is not actively farmed.

One of the original purposes of the Green Belt was to provide space for growing food, but farms there face increasing pressure from housing and ‘land banking’, as well as commercial challenges.

In 2008, Mayor Boris Johnson committed himself to increasing protection for green space and growing space in the London Plan. Our report assesses how effectively the planning system supports and encourages agriculture and commercial food growing in London and what more could be done to improve the situation. It highlights the need for amendments to the London Plan and local authority planning policies to encourage food growing in London.

There is a good case to be made that commercial agriculture is one of the best and most productive land uses in the Green Belt. The benefits include: opportunities for local job creation, skills development, regeneration, preservation and management of green space, potential for waste management, providing healthy locally produced food and so reducing food packaging and food miles and the potential for improving food security.

The Mayor, in his current draft London Plan, has made a good start in proposing to provide specific support for land for food growing. Our report seeks specific amendments to the London Plan to highlight food growing as a particularly desirable use in the Green Belt and so give it the same weight as is currently given to the other uses, such as outdoor recreation. Our report explains how the viability of commercial food growing is affected by the planning system; a system that has not evolved to reflect the modern needs of commercial agriculture and which fails to support the necessary diversification of agricultural activity.

Getting the food to market is also an issue for some growers. With the largest four supermarkets controlling around 75 per cent of the grocery market, mostly sourced directly from suppliers, use of London wholesale markets – formerly the main hub between farmers and

retailers - has declined. Economic viability would be assisted further by planning policies that improve access to markets, small scale distribution systems, delivery services and street markets. The London Plan should therefore specifically encourage new farmers markets, particularly in public squares and large public spaces.

The report found that more could be done to open up land within London for food growing and planning policies could support this. Sites should be identified that are suitable for temporary and unconventional food growing operations. The Mayor should promote and develop food-growing activities as part of his duty to promote sustainable development and tackle climate change.

To achieve this he should also integrate urban agriculture into waste, water and energy policies and empower boroughs to encourage growing spaces on housing developments, rooftops and vacant land – even if the space is only temporary.

The report commends the Mayor's Capital Growth programme, which promotes the creation of local community growing spaces, and calls for an assessment of sites owned by the Greater London Authority to see if any are suitable for food growing. Boroughs should do the same for their existing and brownfield sites.

The report's objectives are necessarily ambitious – to re-define the efficient use of land within the Greater London area, to boost the amount of food grown in London and to support a revival of commercial farming activity. We call on the Mayor and the London to rise to that challenge.

# 1. Introduction and background

When you think of London you think of an urban metropolis. London is the biggest city in the European Union, home to over 7 million people and covers nearly 158,000 hectares. Yet few people are aware that there are 472 registered farm holdings in Greater London, most of them occupying Green Belt land on the city's fringes<sup>1</sup>. Up to 15 per cent of London's land area (equivalent to around 24,000 hectares) is agricultural farmland.

Each year Londoners eat 2.4 million tonnes of food, most of which is purchased from supermarkets and often imported from across the world, however there is now a growing awareness of the benefits of local food and increasing demand for it amongst Londoners. This is reflected in the growing number of farmers markets in London and availability of local produce in supermarkets.

London produces a surprisingly wide variety of produce from grapes to aubergines, potatoes, cauliflowers and cabbages and roughly 8,400 tonnes of vegetables are produced commercially, as well as an approximate 27 tonnes of honey and meat, milk and eggs<sup>2</sup>. But we could use our land more effectively to produce more. An expanding, dynamic commercial food growing sector in London would boost our food security, cut food miles, provide more employment and support community cohesion.

Sadly much of the "agricultural" land around London is not actively farmed. We have found that in recent years, pressures at the urban fringe, particularly from new development, have caused farming activity to become detached physically, economically and culturally from the urban population. Since 1949 landscapes on the edge of London defined as "urban" have increased while agricultural land uses have decreased.

"The urban fringe has increasingly become London's dumping ground, home to activities such as sand and gravel pits, refuse disposal sites, kennels, equestrian centres, golf courses and driving ranges, and facilities for noisy sports as well as car-breaking, horse-keeping, car boot sales, car storage, motorcycle scrambling and caravan sites"<sup>3</sup>.

Pressures on farming, including prospects for more lucrative land uses and the impact of falling prices for produce, have grown so much that now perhaps less than 10 per cent of land in Greater London appears to be actively farmed, almost all of which is within the Green Belt in

There are 472 registered farm holdings in Greater London, most of them occupying Green Belt land on the city's fringes

outer London boroughs<sup>4</sup>, and only 500 hectares are known to be under fruit and vegetable cultivation<sup>5</sup>.

This report is the results of a six-month inquiry in to how effectively the planning system supports and encourages agriculture and commercial food growing in the Greater London area. We looked at both large-scale operations, mainly in the outer fringe of London, and small-scale schemes often found in inner London boroughs. Our report makes a number of recommendations to the Mayor and boroughs for incorporation into the revision of the London Plan, borough local plans and planning guidance in order to encourage more food to be commercially grown in the capital. The report also makes recommendations to the Mayor's 'London Food' Board<sup>6</sup> to ensure that appropriate support is available to make best use of food growing spaces and opportunities.

The review's terms of reference were:

- To assess how effectively the planning system supports and encourages agriculture in London, with a focus on land use for commercial food growing; and
- To establish what changes could be made to the planning system to foster agriculture and encourage more food to be commercially grown in the capital.

Questions that quickly emerged from the scope of the inquiry included:

- How effective is the planning system in fostering productive agricultural activity in the green belt?
- Does other space used by existing commercial, social enterprise and other growers who supply food to the community have sufficient protection in the planning system?
- What scope is there to provide further growing space, where demand exists? This will include areas on the fringes of London, in the Lee Valley as well as areas within suburban and urban London.
- What planning mechanisms could enable the provision of new space?

## Some definitions - commercially grown food and urban agriculture

What constitutes “commercial food growing” and “urban agriculture” for the purpose of this review was set out at the scoping stage<sup>7</sup>. As well as economic viability and financial turnover it can include, in a broader sense, social enterprise and other models to supply locally grown food to the community such as “box schemes”<sup>8</sup>, local markets and partnerships with restaurants (Appendix 2).

Commercial agriculture can take various forms<sup>9</sup> and a minimum £50,000 turnover may be required for the commercial viability of a fringe farm, although it was noted that other models exist, such as a social enterprise market gardens in London that are supplied by smaller scale fringe farmers<sup>10</sup>. It is also often the case that a farm or growing business is cross subsidised by other income, i.e. from second jobs or from family members.

The size of a viable farm can also vary. Knight Frank, one of the world’s largest property and consultancy agencies believe that a typical commercial farm that supplies a wide area or commercial customers needs to be 1000 acres (405 hectares). But farms that supply local and farmers markets can be much smaller. Figures suggest that in London 12,000 hectares is farmed by 472 businesses, an average of 25 hectares, which is very small<sup>11</sup>.

To limit the scope of the review we agreed that planning issues relating to individual growing, including private gardens and allotments, or community growing where the produce is not sold or traded would not be included in the Committee’s recommendations. They are obviously a significant type of growing space for London and as such they are still referred to in the report.

The Assembly’s Environment Committee reviewed London’s allotments in 2006<sup>12</sup>. Its report examined the benefits that London’s allotments bring to individuals, their role in food growing and how vulnerable sites can best be protected. The recommendations made at the time are still relevant and complement this report.

Figures suggest that in London 12,000 hectares is farmed by 472 businesses, an average of 25 hectares, which is very small

## 2. The importance of agriculture

Agriculture is a major land use in and around London and one of the few productive activities permitted in the Green Belt but the amount of land devoted to growing by commercial farming declined by nearly a third between 1965 and 1997<sup>13</sup> and is likely to have fallen further since then. [Illustrative maps will be provided in the final printed version of this report]

According to government data up to 15 per cent of Greater London's land area (equivalent to around 38,000 football pitches) is farmland<sup>14</sup>. However, less than 10 per cent of land in Greater London appears to be actively farmed, almost all of which is within the Green Belt in outer London boroughs<sup>15</sup>.

The majority of commercial farm businesses are currently located in the Green Belt. Green Belt land accounts for 22 per cent of London's land area (around 348 square kilometres or 34,800 hectares)<sup>16</sup>. Inclusive of the Green Belt within London's boundary, the entire Metropolitan Green Belt surrounding London stretches over 5,000 square kilometres (or 1,950 square miles) - an area about three times the size of Greater London<sup>17</sup>.

Continued reliance on food grown further afield makes London dependent on long supply chains and vulnerable to transport disruptions

Each year, Londoners eat 2.4 million tonnes of food, most of which is purchased from supermarkets and often imported from all over the world, but a certain amount, for example milk, vegetables and some meats, are sourced from within the UK. Continued reliance on food grown further afield makes London dependent on long supply chains and vulnerable to transport disruptions and fuel price increases. Other emerging issues such as climate change impacts on world food yields and the increasing demand of a growing world population on finite resources used for producing food may threaten future food supplies.

Despite the apparent decline in agricultural production around London the importance of, and interest in, locally grown food has increased. This can be seen in the growth of farmers markets, the promotion of regional produce, and box schemes, many of which have a local food focus.

### **A small but increasingly diverse sector**

Although London makes a very small contribution to the United Kingdom's overall agricultural production, the range and nature of such a land use is broad. Food growing takes place throughout the capital, predominantly in the Green Belt but also in back gardens,



greenhouses, market gardens, allotments, parks, vacant and temporary sites, and even rooftops.

Food producers comprise commercial enterprises as well as individual and community food-growing, and the range of foods produced includes fruit and vegetables, meat, eggs, milk, honey, wine and more.

The amount of land devoted to food growing by commercial farming has been declining since the 1950s. Farmers in and around London are operating under intense economic pressures – from competition from housing, the high cost of labour and transport, low farm gate prices<sup>18</sup>, a shortage of skills and grants to improve their land. There is also growing pressure from 'land banking'<sup>19</sup> in the hope that change of use will be granted for future housing development.

Farmers have traditionally been the 'custodians of the land' in rural and urban fringe areas. It is therefore not surprising that, when agriculture is in decline, the management of land will become increasingly neglected. The Countryside Agency (now: Natural England) notes for example regarding the Thames Basin Lowlands character area to the southwest of London:

'The interface between countryside and urban edge is typically characterised by an often unkempt appearance associated with horse keeping. Irregular fences and gappy hedges, run-down sheds and fields full of docks, nettles and ragwort give these landscapes a neglected feel'<sup>20</sup>.

### **Benefits and challenges**

Our inquiry heard of the potential benefits from local food growing that include economic, environmental, health and social sustainability. It provides opportunities for exercise and enjoyment of the outdoors, local job creation, education, regeneration, preservation of green space, reducing food packaging and food miles. Local food growing also has potential to use the capital's waste products such as compost made from its food waste, or harvested rainwater and recycled grey water for irrigation<sup>21</sup>.

The close proximity of urban fringe areas to customers can guarantee fresher produce and keep 'food miles' to a minimum. Urban areas offer a good potential market, with increased options of direct selling to shops, restaurants and the public. Farmers markets provide

The interface between countryside and urban edge is typically characterised by an often unkempt appearance

benefits through face-to-face contact with producers. A farm location near a large centre of population not only increases potential consumers, but also access to a large workforce. Additionally there is the potential for 'pick your own' farms.

Despite all these potential benefits, commercial food growers in London face a number of challenges.

### **Funding and other financial issues**

There are no subsidies for small-scale (unlike large-scale) horticultural businesses and not many applicable funding schemes. In practice, urban agriculture managers must expend huge amounts of time and energy in identifying grant sources and submitting proposals. It is not surprising therefore that project self-sufficiency is a common objective for smaller commercial urban agriculture projects.

### **Accessing land and water**

In most cities there is a high demand for land for residential, commercial and industrial development, which can restrict land availability for urban farmers. Access to information about suitable land plots may also be limited without specialist knowledge and the relevant contacts. Physical access and use of sites can also be limited by a lack of transport infrastructure and connectivity to water sources for irrigation.

### **Making profit**

The supermarkets have brought cheap food to the people but the consequences have been to squeeze the profits of the farmers. The relatively low prices paid for farm produce, particularly in the wholesale and supermarkets business, also limit the possibilities for farmers to invest in increased production.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) confirmed that there can also be huge price differences when comparing farm produce sold directly on site or at a local market with produce sold at shops and supermarkets. A kilogram of onions can vary in price from the farm gate to the shops from 17 pence to 73 pence. Likewise, a farmer only receives 32 pence for a dozen eggs, which then sell on average for £1.51 in supermarkets. NFU president Ben Gill said the low prices paid to farmers by supermarkets and food processing companies were "killing British farming"<sup>22</sup>.

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A 2008 Government study concluded that the price of meat, milk and other British farm products will have to rise to reflect the environmental cost of producing them<sup>23</sup>.

### **Site contamination**

The toxicity of an urban site can be a major obstacle to those forms of urban agriculture where food is grown in the ground as opposed to in raised beds. Food produced on vacant inner-city land may not be safe to eat if the soil is contaminated by prior uses. Techniques for effective site remediation can be costly, time consuming and legally complicated. But issues surrounding air pollution need not prevent urban food production. Airborne pollutants will not affect the quality of fruit and vegetables and they are safe to eat as long as they are washed<sup>24</sup>.

### **Lack of long-term site tenure or ownership**

A common problem, particularly for small-scale businesses and community gardens, is the difficulty in securing tenure over property that is not owned outright. The land used for food production is frequently in the hands of private landowners or public agencies that may view such land usage as temporary or less profitable than others.

### **Local or national Government barriers**

A US study found that at all levels of government there was a general disinterest in urban agriculture. This may be the result of a narrow understanding of urban agriculture and its benefits, a view of agriculture as a rural, not urban, activity, or simply a focus on other local priorities. Urban agriculture projects can also be hindered by conflicts among the different objectives of various municipal agencies, for example the objectives for, or value of, a site in terms of open space provision, biodiversity, potential for development or potential for food production<sup>25</sup>.

### **Lack of business expertise and skilled staff**

Agricultural management is a skilled business. One critical need of urban food producers is to find and retain the qualified staff needed to manage the range of responsibilities requiring specialised knowledge and experience. Urban growers, however, are typically low-paid and often young people. Farmers may often lack business skills, e.g. for marketing their produce successfully and managing finances. Defra's "Fresh Start" initiative<sup>26</sup> does provide training and a

mentoring programme, however it is predominantly aimed at rural locations.

# 3. Agriculture and the planning system

As a major land use, agriculture and commercial food growing in particular are important to London. Perhaps not in terms of the proportion of value it adds to the London economy, but certainly as one of the few productive and commercial activities that is permitted in the Green Belt. However, its viability is affected by a planning system that has not evolved to reflect the modern needs of commercial agriculture.

This chapter sets out the planning policy background and government objectives for the Green Belt and puts them in context with the practical requirements of modern agriculture highlighting the potential conflicts that exist. In addition, existing planning policy at national regional and local level that is relevant to farming in London is discussed and suggestions are made on how the Mayor could amend London Plan policies to make them more relevant to current needs of London farmers.

## Planning Policy, Green Belt objectives and farmers' practical needs

As Chapter 2 highlights, overall, the area under commercial cultivation around London is in decline. Housing and other development pressures threaten farming particularly in the Green Belt. For example, agricultural land may be left derelict in the hope that planning permission will eventually be granted for more lucrative types of development such as housing.

However, policies do exist – at both national and regional level – which support a more environmentally productive approach to the area surrounding London. National Planning Policy Guidance PPG2 (Green Belts) outlines the history and extent of Green Belts and explains their purposes (Appendix 3). It lists the uses and objectives of Green Belt land as:

- To provide opportunities for access to the urban countryside for the urban population;
- To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- To retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes near to where people live;

As a major land use, agriculture and commercial food growing in particular are important to London

- To improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- To secure nature conservation interests; and
- To retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses<sup>27</sup>.

Many assume that these objectives reflect some kind of priority of land uses but they do not. Sustainable food production could provide for, or contribute to, all the above objectives and not just the agricultural function listed.

Farmers in and around London are operating under intense economic pressures

Farmers in and around London are operating under intense economic pressures – from cheap imported produce, competition from housing, the high cost of labour and transport, low farm gate prices, a shortage of skills and grants to improve their land. They need to diversify and update practices and infrastructure to maintain viability – but we have heard that this is where they can come up against barriers in the planning system, especially when the need for a new or replacement farm building arises.

Agriculture is one of the few land uses permitted in the Green Belt, but it is often given a lower priority (in relation to the other uses above) by Local Planning Authorities when formulating borough policies and making planning decisions. Some borough development plans protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development through planning policies but do not set out in detail what the acceptable and supported uses are. Frequently reference is made to National Policy Guidance PPG2 but it is not indicated what the specific priorities are in the borough and if there is potential for agricultural uses<sup>28</sup>. Other borough plans in London specifically provide policy support for recreational uses or access to open space in the Green Belt or seek to maintain the natural environment but do not make any mention of the other Green Belt uses supported by national policies, e.g. agriculture<sup>29</sup>.

Many commercial growers in and around London have found that the requirements for modernisation or diversification that are needed to maintain a viable agricultural business often conflict with Green Belt and other planning policies.

Submissions received by the Committee frequently refer to the need for modernisation in order to comply with national requirements and standards, such as British Retail Consortium protocol<sup>30</sup> and Health and Safety standards, which continue to evolve. Many feel that the planning system does not take this development into account sufficiently<sup>31</sup>. This applies particularly to businesses trying to expand and include packing and distribution facilities that must comply with specific standards in size, interior fitting out and hygiene. Traditional farm buildings can often not accommodate these or be converted.

Another issue often raised by Green Belt farmers is the lack of support by planning authorities for on-site farm shops. These shops provide the opportunity to sell food directly to local residents and businesses and include a small range of other suitable products to support the farm income. However, moves to diversify activities through these developments often fail to gain planning permission. Reasons for this may include local planning policies that prevent retail development outside town centres and concerns that a farm shop could lead to increased traffic in the local area.

In order to extend their product range and to be able to prolong the growing season, which helps a farm business to compete with overseas produce and stay profitable, farmers often need to erect "polytunnels"<sup>32</sup> on part of their fields. There has been a prolonged debate amongst planning professionals – specifically as to whether they are permanent structures or not and hence whether they need planning permission. Factors that need to be considered include the size of the tunnels, their permanence and attachment to the ground. The size and (visual) impact of the tunnels is often the subject of opposition from local residents who complain about the loss of visual amenity.

Additionally there is a range of supplementary facilities that agricultural businesses could utilise to increase their income. Composting food waste from the farm and the local area could provide additional income as well as environmental benefits. Other alternatives are anaerobic digesters that can produce both heat and energy from renewables as well as fertilisers. But in the main these facilities require planning permission and, in planning terms, these positive aspects have to be balanced against the potential visual impact on Green Belt land. More progressive planning policy could

Another issue often raised by Green Belt farmers is the lack of support by planning authorities for on-site farm shops

Planning professionals often have a low level of awareness of issues relating to urban agriculture

help create a more sustainable local economy with locally grown food cross-subsidised by an income stream from an anaerobic digester.

Despite these problems Planning Policy Guidance PPS7 (Sustainable development in rural areas) recognises that diversification into non-agricultural activities is vital to the continuing viability of many farm enterprises and advises that local planning authorities should be supportive of this where possible<sup>33</sup> (see details of policy at Appendix 3).

However, international and national surveys show that urban planning professionals often have a low level of awareness of issues relating to urban agriculture and food growing and lack information on how to deal with agricultural and related proposals, e.g. applications for expansion or modernisation. This often leads to a refusal of planning permission<sup>34</sup>.

Agricultural development can sometimes also be restricted by Environment Agency regulations too, that may conflict with planning regulations such as the definitions of waste and topsoil (see information box below).

### **Examples of planning system restricting development of commercial farming**

#### **Watts Farm (LB Bromley)**

Watts Farms is a 300 acre farm situated within the Green Belt on the outskirts of Orpington, specialising in the growing of herbs, spinach, baby leaf products, soft fruit and vegetables in the UK growing season and importing a similar range from continental Europe out of season.

The farm has recently won a planning appeal to build a new packhouse. However, this followed a six-year battle with the local authority. During this time Watts Farm has not been able to develop and become more efficient to keep up with the demands of the modern-day customer, according to their farm manager. The farmers were faced by what they felt was a complete lack of understanding by the local planning committee who repeatedly went against the advice to grant permission given by its agricultural consultants, the Mayor of London's office and its own planning officers.



At the final planning inquiry the inspector heard that Watts Farms' proposal for a pack-house on the edge of the Green Belt was not an expansion of the business but a rationalisation to bring all its activities under one roof. The proposed new facilities will allow Watts Farms to become more efficient and to improve working conditions for employees.

The planning inspector noted that 'the farm is sensitively managed, contributing positively to the visual qualities of this part of the Green Belt. The inspector also agreed with the applicants that the proposed new building, although taller than existing ones, would improve the look of the site as it would result in the removal of unattractive structures<sup>35</sup>.

#### **Corbetts Tey Pit (LB Havering)**

At the time of writing this report the planning application was "live". The application proposes to raise the existing ground level of the site (located within the Metropolitan Green Belt) with imported soil to be re-used for agricultural purposes. The site will be restored to the same level as the surrounding fields using inert materials, such as top-soil, sub-soil, clay sand or any other inert material.

This application was referred to the Mayor as it is considered waste development, which does not accord with one or more provisions of the local development plan.

The Council's committee approved the proposal (10 December 2009), however, a range of strict conditions are attached to the decision, including the requirement for a site investigation report that looks into potential land contamination and for a site waste management plan which sets out compliance with the Environment Agency waste regulations.

The Committee are aware of other cases, for example another farm located in Bromley is currently applying for a change of use of two of the agricultural buildings to class B1/B8 commercial use. This would help maintain an existing business (repairing agricultural machinery and vehicles), provide storage units and a workshop. The farming activities will continue unchanged and the additional rental income will support the main core farming business. A number of objections have

been received by the local authority relating to the possible impact of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt and on transport.

### **National and regional planning guidance for agricultural development**

This section seeks to set out existing planning policy at national, regional and local level that is relevant to farming in London. This includes national Planning Policy Guidance, the adopted London Plan and the Replacement London Plan Consultation Draft, as well as some examples of London boroughs planning policies.

At national level there is a significant amount of policy guidance relevant to urban and rural agriculture. As described earlier, PPG 2 (Green Belts) provides that agriculture is one of the preferred uses in the Green Belt. Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) promotes more sustainable patterns of development including a range of uses to maximise the potential benefits of the countryside fringing urban areas. The Government recognises the important and varied roles of agriculture, including in the maintenance and management of the countryside and most of our valued landscapes.

PPS7 promotes sustainable, diverse and adaptable agriculture sectors and specifically advises that policies in Regional Spatial Strategies<sup>36</sup> and Local Development Documents<sup>37</sup> should recognise this and support development proposals that will enable farming and farmers to:

- Become more competitive, sustainable and environmentally friendly;
- Adapt to new and changing markets;
- Comply with changing legislation and associated guidance;
- Diversify into new agricultural opportunities (e.g. renewable energy crops); or
- Broaden their operations to 'add value' to their primary produce.

The guidance further highlights the need to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land and recognises that diversification into non-agricultural activities is vital to the continuing viability of many farm enterprises. It is clear from this guidance that local planning authorities should be supportive of well-conceived farm diversification schemes that contribute to sustainable development objectives and help to sustain the agricultural enterprise.

Further planning guidance, draft PPS 4 (Planning for Prosperous Economies), is currently under consultation. The draft policies in this consultation document seek to update and support existing guidance. They reiterate that local planning authorities should support appropriate farm diversification proposals (Draft Policy EC9.2). Draft Policy EC13.1 further notes that farm shops help meet a demand for local produce in a sustainable way and contribute to the rural economy and should therefore be considered by planning authorities, subject to their potential impact on existing shopping centres.

Appendix 3 sets out details of relevant national planning guidance.

### **The London Plan**

The current London Plan (the London Plan Consolidated with Alterations since 2004) was published in February 2008. Policy 3D.18 (Agriculture in London) of this version of the London Plan directs encouragement and support for “a thriving agriculture sector in London” and advocates the protection of the “best and most versatile agriculture land” in local plans, whilst allowing for diversification<sup>38</sup>. Diversification involves farms earning income from sources other than agriculture ranging from food processing and farm shops to providing accommodation or leisure activities and grazing horses. No specific mention is made of other food growing opportunities and the use of the Green Belt to produce food for London.

### **Draft Replacement London Plan**

The current draft replacement London plan<sup>39</sup> that is under consultation already includes more detailed references to farming and more support for food growing. Draft Policy 7.22 (Land for food) encourages and supports thriving farming and land-based sectors in London, particularly in the Green Belt, however it goes further than the existing Plan and encourages the use of land for growing food nearer to urban communities.

It is clear from this guidance that local planning authorities should be supportive of well-conceived farm diversification schemes

There are further opportunities to emphasise the importance of agriculture in Draft Policy 7.16 (Green Belt) as, currently, it only refers to the objectives of PPG2 and does not specifically point out the importance or benefits of agricultural uses in the Green Belt (details of this policy are in Appendix 4).

### **London boroughs**

Consultation responses received from a number of London boroughs show that many of them have current or emerging planning policies that relate to agriculture or food growing. These are tailored to the specific local circumstances in each borough. For example:

- Tower Hamlets Policy Core Strategy (Submission Document) promotes and supports local food-growing and urban agriculture (Policy SP03).
- Redbridge Local Development Framework Borough Wide Primary Policy CR2 provides explicit policy protection to allotments.
- Hillingdon UDP planning policy OL12 relates to the protection of agricultural land (Grade 1, 2 and 3A) and land suitable for food growing.
- Hounslow's main farms, and the vast majority of smaller areas of farmland, are protected by either Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) designation and associated policies (UDP Policy ENV-N.1.2 and ENV-N.1.5).
- Lewisham and Camden have food strategies that aim to increase the health and welfare of local people through improved access to nutritious and safe food from a more sustainable food chain.
- The City of London and Tower Hamlets have a sustainable food sourcing local procurement policies and a Food Link Programme.

As set out on page 22 above, many commercial growers in and around London have found that the requirements for modernisation or diversification that are needed to maintain a viable agricultural business often conflict with Green Belt and other planning policies (traffic generation, loss of residential amenity etc.) and often result in failed planning applications, the issue of restrictive planning conditions and overall a lengthy and arduous process, all of which can

be expensive and even make a proposal financially unviable (see information box on page 24).

## Conclusions

Our review has found that the planning system appears effective in protecting open land through Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land designations. However, we believe that the planning system needs to better encourage diversification that makes agriculture more viable, by allowing farm shops and other uses that could support the farm businesses and help them remain successful<sup>40</sup>. Agriculture as a land use in the Green Belt should not be given less weight than some of the other objectives set out in national policy.

Evidence shows that existing planning regulations, as well as regional and local planning policies, often either restrict or ignore urban agriculture as a land use. The challenge for the statutory planning framework is to recognise and integrate food production into sustainable development strategies.

The policy framework could better support and facilitate urban agriculture and local food growing, seeking to maximise its benefits to the community, economy, biodiversity and other areas whilst preventing or mitigating any potential negative impacts.

The 2006 London Food Strategy aims for more of London's food to be local and diverse and recommends increasing food production within London and the surrounding regions to meet this objective. Further information on the London Food Strategy and the London Food Board is provided in Chapter 6.

If the Mayor is to follow through his commitments in the London Plan to encourage and support farming and food growing in London, particularly in the Green Belt and nearer to urban communities, he needs to highlight food growing as a particularly desirable use in the Green Belt and give it the same weight as is currently given to the other uses such as outdoor recreation.

The Mayor needs to emphasise to Local Planning Authorities that they should take better account of existing farms before allowing new residential development nearby to avoid future conflict and complaints about noise, smell or loss of visual amenity.

The planning system needs to better encourage diversification that makes agriculture more viable

In order to educate and support planners and policy makers as well as the general public, the Mayor needs to ensure that the London Plan provides a more sophisticated definition of urban agriculture (not just including allotments) that recognises viable urban agriculture as a legitimate land use.

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Mayor should include in the London Plan reference to Green Belt Policy (PPG2). To better support the objectives of the London Food Strategy, Draft policy 7.16 (Green Belt) should specifically state that food growing is one of the most beneficial land uses in the Green Belt. Draft policy 7.16 should also include a requirement for boroughs to give added weight to food growing as one of the most productive activities in the Green Belt when preparing policies for their Local Development Frameworks.

#### **Recommendation 2**

Through draft policy 7.22 Boroughs should incorporate urban agriculture in Local Development Frameworks as a desirable urban activity that can help improve the quality of urban life, food security, neighbourhood safety and environmental stewardship and utilises vacant land.

In order to educate and support planners and policy makers the Mayor should also consider producing specific supplementary planning guidance to assist urban farming and food production. Possible contents of such a guidance document are outlined in Appendix 5.

In formulating planning guidance and planning policies, the Mayor could draw on two important international examples that highlight the role of public participation in embedding urban agriculture in the policy making process and which demonstrate how urban agriculture can become a driver for regeneration. These examples include:

- The Southeast False Creek Urban Agriculture Strategy and related guidance which focussed on the masterplanning and delivery of the Olympic Village for the 2010 Winter games in Vancouver, Canada; and

- The ‘Agromere’ study and the ‘Almere 2.0’ strategy for Almere in the Netherlands which propose a new district with urban agriculture as main element of the green infrastructure to the east of Almere, with the objective to combine urban development with sustainable food production

Full details of these strategies are provided at Appendix 6.

### **Non-planning related issues – crime, security and vandalism**

The National Farmers’ Union is aware that many farmers suffer commercial losses due to theft, vandalism or even attacks on livestock. Green Belt farmers frequently complain about crime such as trespassing, large-scale fly tipping, or theft of machinery, which increases their costs substantially, e.g. for additional security measures and insurance premiums<sup>44</sup>. London fringe farmers estimate their costs to be 10-15 per cent higher than an equivalent business in a more rural area<sup>45</sup>. Some farmers are worried that the police are not responding to crimes on agricultural land sufficiently.

Many farmers suffer commercial losses due to theft, vandalism or even attacks on livestock

In inner city growing sites, vandalism and criminal activity can also hinder farming efforts and affect viability. This can include pilfering vegetables, damaging plants, stealing signs or tools and disposing of garbage on the site.

The Chair of the Committee has requested further information from the Mayor who has since confirmed that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) can identify and research crime data relating to farms in London at a local borough level and that the issues can be addressed at Ward Panels through the Safer Neighbourhood Teams<sup>46</sup>.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Metropolitan Police Service should compile annual data on farm related crimes by ward and borough in London with a focus on the Green Belt. If evidence emerges of there being a significant problem, the MPS should also look at appointing a farm crime liaison officer for London to raise the profile of farm crime and support a strategic as well as a local response.

## 4. Other measures to promote economic viability

The review has highlighted a number of other steps that need to be taken to promote the viability of commercial food growing in the capital. This section sets out the impact of farmers markets and other distribution systems which can help support the viability of locally grown food and help businesses promote and sell their produce successfully.

### Distribution systems, markets and training

Many growers are trying to tap into the expanding demand for local food

Many growers are trying to tap into the expanding demand for local food by growing a variety of produce in, or close to, London. However, economic circumstances and complex food supply chains often favour larger farms over smaller local suppliers.

Smaller producers have found they can succeed by identifying niche markets or producing for farmers markets or restaurants directly. Some concentrate on specialty crops that can be grown intensively on a restricted amount of land at high value such as salads, herbs or flowers and benefit from short delivery times.

However with the largest four supermarkets controlling around 75 per cent of the grocery market mostly sourcing directly from suppliers, this has led to some reduction in the use of London wholesale markets, formerly the main hub between farmers and retailers. Recently some have experienced new growth, including New Covent Garden market. There are over 12,000 restaurants, 6,000 cafes and 5,000 pubs/bars, 300 hotels with restaurant facilities in London and wholesale markets often play an important role in supplying these<sup>47</sup>.

There are currently five wholesale food markets in London (Billingsgate, New Covent Garden, Smithfield, Spitalfields and Western International) and together they represent 20 per cent of the total supply of fresh meat, fish, fruit and vegetable supplies to London and the South East<sup>48</sup>.

One of the most significant priority actions in the 2007 London Food Strategy Implementation Plan was the 'Local Food Infrastructure Project'. With a budget of £1,500,000 over three years it aims to work with London's wholesale markets along with producers and customers at different stages of the supply chain in order to build the capacity for local, regional and sustainable food to be supplied into London. A number of complementary measures have been proposed including the establishment of a sustainable Local London Food brand,



increasing sustainable procurement by food access projects in London and making food transport more sustainable<sup>49</sup>.

The other priority action was the 'Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative' which worked with local authorities and primary care trusts to increase the capacity of local suppliers to meet demand and 'good food training for London' which provided training for over 1,000 public sector catering staff and procurement managers in schools and hospitals. Both initiatives could potentially stimulate demand for local, regional produce<sup>50</sup>.

Many people involved in supporting the development of local food systems believe that an investment strategy is needed to develop shorter and more dedicated value chains<sup>51</sup>. There are examples where support for infrastructure projects, such as distribution hubs, and assistance to innovative enterprises and collaborative groups has been provided with the help of initial public sector funding.

The "Making Local Food Work" programme is co-ordinated by the Plunkett Foundation and funded by the Big Lottery Fund and seeks to 'reconnect people and land through local food increasing access to fresh, healthy, local food with clear, traceable origins'. Making Local Food Work is a partnership of seven organisations<sup>52</sup>, each with its own area of expertise. In particular they aim to:

- Help community-supported agriculture<sup>53</sup> (CSA) projects to become established and offer a range of training opportunities and mentoring support;
- Provide a practical guide to help community-owned and village shops identify, stock and sell more local food and drink. As well as guidance, this includes point of sale materials to use in-store and tools to help shops market their ranges and communicate their message to customers;
- Bring their experience and specialist knowledge to farmers' markets throughout England;
- Explore ways of increasing links between consumers and their local producers. They are doing this through developing a hub of activities around food and brokerage of local produce;

- Develop a range of resources, such as a toolkit, and marketing materials, to help food co-ops start up or build on their successes and organise networking events.

Delivery services for local produce, set up to cater for a local neighbourhood or a larger area, are another option of selling local food in a sustainable way. Local residents can order a box of seasonal fruit vegetables and salads and pick them up from an accessible central location. Some businesses even offer local delivery by bicycle or electric vehicle.

In the Green Belt, farm shops are an additional option to sell farm produce directly to customers that live nearby or pass by on route.

The growing number of local street and farmers markets, both in London and elsewhere in the UK, reflects the expanding demand for locally grown and organic produce. This growing demand offers opportunities to develop new markets and increase the frequency of existing markets, but it requires time and effort to plan and organise and new traders benefit from support offered by organisations such as FARMA, the National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association, or Sustain.

As the Growing Communities example (Appendix 7) shows, training is an important aspect for the success of a food growing and distribution business. Where skills are provided a business can expand and pass on the knowledge obtained. This example also shows that initial financial support is likely to be required for small business to help with start up costs, however it also shows that with the relevant technical skills and suitable marketing techniques such projects can become independent from public subsidy and become commercially viable.

The case for investing public money in local food systems lies in the range of associated benefits, from growing and selling local food in a sustainable way to providing training, skills and job opportunities.

### Conclusions

Farmers need to access new markets if they are to maintain their commercial viability. In order to do this, they need assistance with distribution and encouraging local markets. Alternative options such as small-scale distribution and delivery services, street markets and other schemes should be facilitated both through planning and other

The growing number of local street and farmers markets in London reflects the expanding demand for locally grown and organic produce

measures. These can provide a market for locally grown food and provide an alternative to wholesale markets for local businesses and residents.

In order to achieve this, sites need to be found for organisations that will distribute locally grown food, and new or extended farmers markets need to be accommodated by the planning system and through local authority food policies.

Further advice is required to show how this could be achieved and the proposed London Plan SPG on Town Centres should include this information.

Sites need to be found for organisations that will distribute locally grown food

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Assembly welcomes draft London Plan policy 4.8, which supports the range of street and farmers' markets and their contribution to the vitality of town centres. The London Plan should specifically support the potential for farmers markets in the public realm and in particular public squares and large open public spaces. The proposed Town Centre SPG should specifically include detailed guidance regarding farmers markets and distribution networks for locally grown food.

## 5. New growing sites

Urban agriculture in London does not just include larger commercial farms located mainly in the Green Belt, but also other types of urban growing, for example smaller enterprises in inner areas that produce food and even growing on temporary sites. Allotments and community gardening, while not the primary focus of this report, clearly also contribute to feeding London's population.

This chapter looks at the potential for new growing sites in Greater London, possible solutions and opportunities for different types of sites including working examples, and the role that the Mayor and boroughs can play in helping to encourage and support these schemes.

### Green Belt

Despite the recent decline in commercial food production agriculture is still a major land use in London's Green Belt area (see Chapter 2). There is potential in the Green Belt to extend some existing farm sites or utilise land for food growing that is currently lying idle, however high land prices and difficulty obtaining planning permission for farm related structures can be a challenge.

Evidence submitted to the Committee indicates that there is support for identifying larger areas for food growing such as in the Lower Lea Valley, Thames Gateway or Green Grid.

The Lower Lea Valley has been noted for its market gardens since the eighteenth century

The Lower Lea Valley, extending outwards from north-east London, has been noted for its market gardens since the eighteenth century. The industry boomed after the Second World War, reaching its peak in about 1950 when around 1300 acres were farmed in glasshouses. Today, at around 300 acres (1.2 square kilometres), the area under glass is smaller than ever before but productivity has more than trebled. The 200 or so horticultural enterprises in the area range in size from less than an acre to 20 acres.

Stretching over 10,000 acres (41 square kilometres) the Lea Valley Regional Park winds its way 26 miles (42 kilometres) along the banks of the River Lea from Ware in Hertfordshire, down through Essex, North London and past Olympic Park to East India Dock Basin on the River Thames. The Olympic Park covers 2.5 square kilometres of the Lea Valley area.

In East London, the aim of the Green Grid is to create a network of interlinked, multi-functional and high quality new or improved open spaces<sup>54</sup>, including agricultural land, that connect with town centres, public transport nodes, the countryside in the urban fringe, the Thames and major employment and residential areas. This vision is designed to respond to two key drivers – climate change and future development<sup>55</sup>.

The Green Grid is part of the wider Thames Gateway across South Essex and North Kent (some 43 miles long and up to 20 miles wide) and subject to national greenspace strategy<sup>56</sup>.

### **Parks and Open Space**

Examples exist throughout the built up area of London and in other major cities where food growing has been integrated into public parks in different ways:

- Growing Communities, a market garden business in North London, officially lease a part of Springfield Park from Hackney Council. The site remains open to the public to enjoy the green space and to learn about growing food (Appendix 7).
- The Royal Parks run an allotment project in St James's Park in London. The objective of the organic allotment is to promote sustainability and recycling and to provide a working example of how to grow fruit and vegetables. After three years of success the park's allotment will move to Kensington Gardens and Regent's Park in 2010.
- Grant Park in Chicago (USA) incorporates a 20,000 square feet (0.2 hectare) urban farm. The project provides training to young people in both growing and marketing produce and seeks to quantify the commercial viability of urban agriculture both in economics and production. Again, the site remains open to the public and therefore does not reduce the amount of public parkland.

The integration of fruit and nut bearing trees or bushes into the design of parks represents another opportunity to produce food on public open space.

### Public and private land

Land owned across the GLA family (Transport for London, the London Development Agency and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority) could be used for food growing, especially where there are vacant or under used areas or sites that are unsuitable for other uses like housing or offices due to their location, size or other reasons<sup>57</sup> (page 42 further discusses this issue).

The same is the case with borough owned land, in particular housing estates. These often contain large grassed or paved areas that are neglected and underused which may benefit from alternative uses such as food growing projects. Successful schemes are already underway in London, e.g. Abundance, an urban agriculture demonstration plot in Brixton.

This project aims to show how productive urban agriculture can be - although the organisers value the recreational and quality of life aspects of the project, the focus is on productivity. Another key objective is to explore the policy and planning arrangements that lie behind land cultivation.

A number of innovative companies are already using surplus company land for a range of food growing projects

A number of innovative companies are already using surplus company land for a range of food growing projects for both their employees, local residents and as part of their businesses. Alara Wholefoods, an organic muesli producer, successfully developed a permaculture forest garden<sup>58</sup> on their company site Camley Street near Kings Cross and an orchard for the use of employees, a community garden for local Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, and have recently introduced an urban vineyard.

Alara's Managing Director Alex Smith has been made 'London Leader of Sustainability' for 2009 by the Mayor of London and has launched a Vision for Camley Street. The aim is to transform a number of derelict plots into food growing areas and set up a social enterprise to cultivate the sites and sell the produce locally. Alara is currently also involved in developing the first inner city community scale Anaerobic Digester<sup>59</sup> in Europe in order to produce renewable energy and fertiliser.

### Creative solutions

Land along highways, railway lines and waterways not suitable for housing or other built development could provide opportunities for

food growing. The cooperation of landowners is required and lease agreements have to be negotiated. If the land is needed in the future, temporary solutions are still possible alternatives.

Almost any site, irrespective of size, location or soil conditions can be used for food growing operations by making use of raised beds, skips and builders' bags filled with good quality soil. These solutions are relevant to both community and commercial growing and provide the opportunity to extend production if local demand exists and allows for mobility should the project have to be moved, e.g. if the site is needed for another use or if larger site becomes available.

Almost any site, irrespective of size, location or soil conditions can be used for food growing

This has become a current issue where a developer or landowner has obtained planning permission for a larger building, but due to financial reasons construction is delayed, sometimes by a number of years. The City of London has identified many building sites in the 'Square Mile' that the recession has left vacant, that could be turned to other uses such as food growing. The Corporation's Open Spaces team has considered the use of builder's bags as allotment space for local residents as a possible option<sup>60</sup>.

Green roofs can also provide "urban farmland", if structurally suitable, and accommodate both growing beds and greenhouses<sup>61</sup>. Most green roofs today are created to manage stormwater flows, to reduce the urban heat island effect, to save energy, or to create attractive green spaces.

### **New development**

In order to provide more land for growing food in London, new developments could include suitable plots. They could be integrated in the overall soft landscaping strategy of the site or be allocated as flexible space depending on local demand. In housing developments, allotments and community gardens appear most suitable, however in a mixed use or commercial scheme a commercial growing operation could be accommodated with the opportunity for both providing produce for local businesses and restaurants and for selling produce to local residents.

Local Planning Authorities regularly require a range of planning contributions from applicants as part of permitting new developments. These typically include provision of green areas, play space or cycle paths, or financial contributions towards school places, bus services or

health facilities. It should be considered if space for food growing could formally be required in large new developments, for example where there is an identified demand for allotments, a shortage of green space or the site is located in an area considered to be a “food desert”<sup>62</sup>. The Council and the developer would then set out the details in a Section 106 agreement.

The Committee’s review on Section 106 agreements and planning priorities in 2008<sup>63</sup> touched on the issue of identifying local priorities for this form of funding. About 40 per cent of planning applications are now subject to Section 106 agreements.

The report identified the following London borough priorities for Section 106 contributions:

- Transport and access improvements (29 per cent of S106 expenditure)
- Public realm, including streetscape and open space (24 per cent)
- Education and health (21 per cent)
- Affordable housing (14 per cent)
- Economic and community regeneration (12 per cent)

No borough specifically had allotments or other food related facilities featuring in any of the top three priorities although there may have been individual agreements involving allotments in some of these cases.

The Committee highlighted that it is for the boroughs to set their own local priorities and the best mechanism for setting these out is by the formal statements of community involvement. These explicitly allow residents or local businesses to participate in any negotiation of borough Section 106 policy and state their local priorities.

The Assembly’s Environment Committee looked into the matter of allotments in London in 2006 and recommended that boroughs that have identified unmet demand for allotments should consider using Section 106 agreements to compel the developers of high density housing to allocate a portion of land for use as allotments<sup>64</sup>. In



principle this could also apply to other forms of food growing, e.g. for a small community supported business.

## Conclusions

There is considerable scope for growing food inside London on existing plots or more unconventional sites. Experience has shown that good quality soil is not necessarily required to use a plot for food growing as there are number of solutions including raised beds, builders bags and skips that use soil separate from the potentially contaminated, barren or simply sealed ground. Entirely soil-less options include hydroponics or even beehives.

The 'Capital Growth' initiative launched by the Mayor in 2008 (Appendix 8) is showing how the temporary or long term conversion of underused plots or sites, that are not suitable for development, to growing spaces can contribute to food provision for the local community. Sites include unused green space on housing estates and other public land as well as riverbanks and railway land.

In some cases, and with the help of initial funding, a social enterprise or small business start up can be established which can enable or boost production, market sales and delivery of produce. Successful ventures will be able to offer local job and training opportunities.

Sustain (the organisation) has engaged in negotiations on an individual basis with developers and land owners to gain access to land that for a period of two to five year temporary usage for Capital Growth projects. Transport for London joined the Capital Growth scheme in December 2009, having provided a brownfield site above Southwark Tube station, which will be leased to local people to grow a range of fruit and vegetables.

A brownfield site above Southwark Tube station, will be leased to local people to grow a range of fruit and vegetables

### Recommendation 5

The Mayor should through the London Plan encourage the temporary use of vacant public and private land for urban agriculture and encourage Boroughs to include relevant policies in their Local Development Frameworks.

The Mayor should also promote the inclusion and preservation of productive land for growing food within housing developments as

well as green roofs and other “unconventional” growing spaces.

### **Recommendation 6**

The Mayor should amend draft London Plan Policy 5.21 (Contaminated land) to include food growing in raised beds or skips on potentially contaminated sites as a feasible temporary alternative to the often expensive remediation of contaminated soil.

### **Surveys and assessment of potential sites**

Evidence suggests that growers who are looking for additional sites to expand their business or to start a farm or food growing project are experiencing difficulties in finding suitable sites or accessing the relevant information and contacts<sup>65</sup>.

One option to assist in the allocation and distribution of land for agricultural uses is for public authorities to conduct surveys or audits of potential sites that could be used for food growing. Borough or city wide strategic land assessments of vacant or underused land often concentrate on housing or business uses only.

### **City of Portland, USA**

In 2004, Portland’s City Council passed a resolution directing various City bureaus to conduct an inventory of their properties, with the goal of determining which might be suitable for either expanding the Community Gardens Program or for future development into other kinds of agricultural uses. The subsequent “Diggable City” study by Portland State University identified a diverse array of potential agricultural uses on city-owned lands. Portland’s Bureau of Planning and Sustainability works with the Portland Food Policy Council to advise elected officials on issues regarding food access, land use planning issues, local food purchasing plans and many other policy initiatives in the regional food system<sup>66</sup>.

### **The Edible Urban Landscape, University of East London**

A 2006 University of East London dissertation report looks at urban agriculture practices in the UK and its relationship to planning and land use with specific reference to Geographical Information Systems (GIS). The study considers that combining aerial photography with

GIS, community mapping, and participatory planning could help identify possible opportunities for urban agriculture. A small test area in London (Elephant and Castle) was assessed using these methods and it was found that of the amount of open space identified, 24 per cent could be converted to urban agriculture, while still allowing for current recreation and leisure activities<sup>67</sup>.

### Existing data and surveys in London

The National Land Use Database<sup>68</sup> provides comprehensive, recent and consistent records of brownfield land and buildings in England that may be available for development, whether vacant, derelict or still in productive use.

In response to a 2005 London Assembly report 'Dereliction of Duty?'<sup>69</sup> the London Development Agency (LDA) carried out London Brownfield Sites Review (Stage 1) which outlined information regarding the quantity and type of Brownfield land in London. Stage 2 was developed as a website comprising good practice guidance, a database containing site-specific information along with interactive mapping of brownfield land (above 0.1 hectares) in London, and other useful information<sup>70</sup>.

In November 2009 the Mayor announced proposals to free up under-used land owned by the GLA. He has commissioned an audit of land owned across the GLA, including Transport for London, the London Development Agency and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, to identify potential sites. We welcome that initiative.

### Conclusions

International examples show that a borough or citywide assessment of potential sites can pave the way for effective development strategies for vacant or temporary spaces including food growing as a land use.

Studies suggest that combining a number of surveys including map and photographic records as well as site visits and community engagement could provide the most comprehensive results and reflect local conditions and requirements. However, these can be time consuming, therefore an initial high-level desk based assessment for London could create an initial maps which could be supplemented over time with more detailed information at borough level.

In November 2009 the Mayor announced proposals to free up under-used land owned by the GLA

The recently proposed audit of land owned across the GLA regarding the potential for housing development could be extended to also assess the potential for commercial or community growing. Sites that are unsuitable for housing due to their location or size may still be acceptable for food growing, i.e. under power lines or near railway tracks. By using raised beds or similar solutions for growing, contaminated sites that cannot immediately accommodate housing development, can be utilised for food growing even if only for a temporary basis.

#### **Recommendation 7**

The Mayor should commission an assessment of sites owned by the GLA group regarding their potential for short or long-term urban agriculture including both commercial and community growing opportunities in the next two years. Boroughs should do the same for Council owned land as well as existing brownfield sites through the LDF process.

## 6. Integrating food growing with the Mayor's duty to promote sustainable development

The review has found that there are a number of ways in which Mayoral initiatives and policies could support commercial food growing and promote sustainable development. This chapter sets out how London Plan policy could draw attention to the role of food growing in the greenbelt and how the Mayor could develop of his role on the Inter-Regional Forum<sup>71</sup>. It also highlights the importance of integrating urban agriculture into waste, energy and water strategies, and the role it could play in the work of the Food Board and the Olympic Legacy Company.

### Support for agriculture through London Plan policy

The Mayor has agreed that the London Plan should provide specific support for land for food growing. In response to a motion agreed by the Assembly on 19 November 2008 the Mayor wrote:

"I agree that we should look at whether the planning system should provide specific provision for allotments and other land used for growing food – to protect what exists now and encourage further provision in the future."<sup>72</sup>

Since the launch of the Committee's review in July 2009 a number of draft London Plan policies have been published that take a more positive approach towards food growing as a land use, particularly through draft policy 7.22 (see Chapter 3). Mention of local food growing and distribution is also made in draft policies 2.18 (Green infrastructure: the network of open and natural spaces), 5.11 (Green roofs and development site environs) and in the supporting text to draft policy 5.8 (Innovative energy technologies)<sup>73</sup> (Appendix 4). While the support given to the issue by the Mayor is welcome there is an opportunity for even more policies to contain reference to food growing.

### Conclusions

The current draft policy 7.22 specifies opportunities for Inner London only. However, taking into account the existing farmland and potential for food growing in the Greenbelt, mention of outer London should be made at this point. This would complement draft policy

The Mayor has agreed that the London Plan should provide specific support for land for food growing

7.16 Green Belt uses and highlight this aspects rather than repeating it.

### **Recommendation 8**

The Mayor should add to policy 7.22 under 'LDF Preparation' that food growing is one of the most productive land uses in the Green Belt and is relevant to Outer London boroughs.

### **Cooperation between Greater London and adjacent counties**

Outside Greater London there is the space for more extensive commercial growing but attracting young people into agriculture has proved difficult. Within London there is potentially a large number of people who are interested in becoming involved in growing food but there is not enough land to do so – which becomes clear when looking at the waiting lists for allotments in the capital. Initiatives could be developed to match the skills of farmers and the sites available outside London's boundaries with the growing number of Londoners wanting to get involved in growing.

For example, Defra currently offers a number of services as part of their "Fresh Start" initiative. This includes provisions for mentoring and matching - older farmers providing advice and business opportunities to new entrants. These roles have traditionally been part of the inter-generation family transfer process but this is less and less the case and young people look for opportunities in urban areas. Up to now the services appear to focus predominantly on the rural countryside. A specific focus on London and urban fringe regions with their specific requirements is missing.

Potentially there is a role here for the Inter-regional Forum.

### **County Farms**

Some of the consultation responses the Assembly received, highlight the value of retaining and expanding the 'County Council Smallholdings scheme'<sup>74</sup>. We understand that the former Greater London Council (GLC) had an extensive estate of let smallholdings and farms in the London area, which passed to the respective Local Authorities where they were located<sup>75</sup> when the GLC was abolished.

There are no complete records regarding the status of this land. Some

Attracting young people into agriculture has proved difficult

Boroughs have provided the Assembly with information on Council owned farmland, other stated they have no records or have not responded at all. Council owned farmland tends to be leased out to individual tenants, often through commercial property managers. The remaining farmland could make a valuable contribution to retaining and perhaps expanding, commercial food production in London.

A Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Commission carried out a consultation on their County Farm Service in the year 2000 and found that most County Councils have been disposing of their Agricultural Estates since the late 1990s. Of the counties bordering London only Hertfordshire have developed a Rural Estate Masterplan setting out a number of policy objectives on managing principles for both environmental and commercial parts of the estate.

A 2003 report by the Tenancy Reform Industry Group (TRIG) recommended that “Defra should use the powers under the Agriculture Act 1970 to scrutinise plans for re-organisation and disposal of smallholding estates to require Local Authorities to account for their future management strategies”<sup>76</sup>. Five years later a report by Sir Don Curry concluded that County Council smallholding estates are an important, strategic, national asset that should be retained and receive more support and investment from Local Authorities<sup>77</sup>.

Cambridgeshire County Council, whilst not bordering London, is a good example, having the largest County Farms estate in England and Wales, and is said to have a strong record of achievement and support. The Estate aims to promote and encourage commercial farm enterprises, making the best use of land and encouraging new entrants.

The National Farmers Union voiced their support for the retention of County Council farms recognising them as valuable contributions towards providing an opportunity for pursuing a range of policy objectives linked to the environment. A number of individual consultation responses gave support to Country farms in their function as a stepping stone for new farmers and that they should be treated in the same way as education services if there was an established need for it that cannot be met otherwise.

It is part of the Mayor's statutory duty to promote London's sustainable development

## Conclusions

There are a number of ways in which the Mayor can play a leadership role in encouraging the development of commercial food growing in London.

The Mayor needs to work with the Inter Regional Forum to co-ordinate land use, training and grant funding for agriculture with surrounding counties. He should consider putting food growing on the agenda for 2010 in addition to housing, transport and economic development issues. Representatives of Defra's Fresh Start programme could be invited to discuss opportunities for the London region.

## Urban agriculture, waste, water and energy

It is part of the Mayor's statutory duty to promote London's sustainable development. Chapter 3 of this report sets out a range of ancillary uses suitable for farms and food growing businesses related to waste and energy. Composting food waste from a farm and the local area could provide additional income as well as environmental benefits. Other alternatives are anaerobic digesters. The re-use of waste and provision of renewable energy can help London achieve its vision for reducing waste going to landfill and reducing its carbon emissions.

Farming not only produces a certain amount of waste, predominately food waste, that could be recycled and brought to a number of good uses, e.g. compost and organic fertiliser. There is also the opportunity for farm business to diversify into commercial composting by taking on food additional waste from the region and recycling it which would be in line with national and regional policies on recycling and waste reduction<sup>78</sup>.

Another use of organic materials produced on the farm and elsewhere in the area is anaerobic digestion, which can provide both renewable energy as biogas and heat, as well as fertilisers. Anaerobic digestion facilities are less capital intensive than large power plants.

Aside from the benefits mentioned earlier, increased food growing also presents some risks that have to be addressed, e.g. a potentially increased water demand. At the same time agriculture can utilise 'grey water' and recycled water for irrigation and use and promote rainwater-harvesting techniques.



## Conclusions

The Mayor should promote and develop food-growing activities as part of his duty to promote sustainable development, and this should be reflected in all relevant strategies, not just the London Plan.

Both London Plan policies on waste and energy and any Mayoral strategy on either waste or energy should recognise the significant opportunities and contributions urban agriculture can provide in terms of recycling of compost and production of biogas renewable and energy. It also seems useful to cross reference the strategies with the respective planning policies in the London Plan as they both follow the overarching goal of sustainable development whilst seeking to address climate change.

Reference to urban agriculture should be made in London Plan policies and any Mayoral Strategy dealing with water to water to recognise its potential for grey water use and water recycling. Consideration should be given to the demand for additional water that may arise from food growing uses in London and how this demand can be met.

Mayoral strategy should recognise the significant opportunities and contributions urban agriculture can provide

### Recommendation 9

The Mayor should integrate urban agriculture into waste, water and energy policies in the London Plan and link these with the expanded draft policy 7.22. The Mayor should also integrate urban agriculture into waste, water and energy strategies (at GLA and Borough level).

### The London Food Strategy and London Food Board

The London Food Board<sup>79</sup> (“London Food”) is the agency responsible for leading on food matters for the Mayor. In 2006 the Board published the London Food Strategy, which has five broad objectives. They are to:

- Improve Londoners' health and reduce health inequalities via the food they eat;
- Reduce the negative environmental impacts of London's food system;

- Support a vibrant food economy;
- Celebrate and promote London's food culture;
- Develop London's food security.

To meet the strategic objectives, a series of actions are proposed. Some directly relate to farming and food production in London. Actions V1a and V2a of the strategy recommend increasing (organic) food production within London and the surrounding regions in response to consumer demand. Action V2d recommends increasing product diversification to supply and meet the London market. These actions would help to ensure that food and drink consumed in London will be produced to the highest possible standards and that more of London's food will be 'local' and diverse<sup>80</sup> (further details are set out in Appendix 9).

The Mayor has appointed Rosie Boycott as chair and tasked her with developing a sustainable food system and securing the implementation of the Food Strategy, including expanding food growing in London<sup>81</sup>. London Food has a broad remit in relation to food in the capital. However, the Board's current work programme does not include an examination of the impact of the planning system on food growing.

There is currently no direct link to the London Plan as to how planning guidance can assist in achieving this. Neither does the Food Strategy mention how its proposals support any London Plan policies.

By continuing to fund the priority projects of the London Food Strategy (e.g. the 'Local Food Infrastructure Project', 'Good Food Training for London', the 'Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative' - page 33 and 'Capital Growth'), the Mayor of London can help to provide the infrastructure within London for local and regional produce and help stimulate markets in both the private and public sector for local food.

## Conclusions

A number of boroughs in London and elsewhere in the UK are setting up food strategies, which also include advice for growing and buying food locally. Other boroughs could use these good examples and the Mayor should encourage all boroughs to adopt a food strategy.

The London Food Strategy supports food growing in London<sup>82</sup>. Whilst London Food has a broad remit in relation to food in the capital, cross-referencing the Food Strategy and the London Plan could further support this common objective assist in achieving and implementing it. London Food should include the conclusions of the Committee's review in their Business Plan for 2010/11.

### **Recommendation 10**

The Mayor should ensure that the London Plan contains stronger links with the existing policies of the London Food Strategy that are relevant to planning matters. The Mayor should direct London Food to consider this report and integrate the recommendations in any future work.

### **The 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games**

As a part of the bid for a truly 'green Games', Great Britain promised "to support consumption of local, seasonal and organic produce". Provision of food is a particularly important factor in sustainability, in terms of providing meals during the Games but even more so in the longer-term sustainable approach to food provision for the communities, created for the legacy stage<sup>83</sup>.

The Olympic Park could offer a number of opportunities to promote local food and local businesses, for example through provision for food growing, local food businesses and diverse retail and market outlets.

The bid for the Games pledged that in legacy mode the communities created would have markets, catering and retail outlets supplying local and seasonal food, and provide increased markets for farmers in the region<sup>84</sup>. Some believe that there are as yet few signs that these two pledges are going to be honoured, or that provision will be made for the support of independent stores within the Stratford City development or the surrounding residential areas<sup>85</sup>.

There is a commitment for the provision of 2.1 hectares of allotments (to replace those that were lost through the site development) and possible community gardens.

The LDA have confirmed there is further potential for food growing on green roofs and for 'edible landscapes' within the parklands and other

Some believe that there are as yet few signs that these pledges are going to be honoured

green spaces and the LDA and the Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) are further exploring opportunities for interim uses, including food growing, on the development plots that will be built out over an extensive period of time.

The LDA states it is still an option to support local food production and distribution and to integrate farmers markets with an accent on local produce and diverse food, and to provide commercial and retail space for local food sale concessions and independent SME's focused on food manufacture, processing, sale and restaurants – both interim and permanent<sup>86</sup>.

The Commission for a Sustainable London 2012, launched in 2007, has been tasked to independently assure London's 2012 pledge to host the most sustainable Games to date and its legacy. The Commission will advise the Olympic Board and report to the public on sustainable development across the entire Games programme, from delivery to staging and legacy. It is also looking into issues concerning food provision and production.

### **Conclusions**

In terms of the Olympic Legacy Plan the Mayor should realise the potential for green roofs and 'edible landscape' and potential areas for intensive food production as well as parkland. There are also opportunities for interim uses, including food growing, farmers' markets or retail space for local food sale and the Mayor should make sure these are sufficiently assessed and implemented (also see international example of Vancouver at Appendix 6).

### **Food – the future**

This report has dealt with measures that are needed to increase food production in and around London: with planning policies that prioritise food growing that can be implemented in the short term and measures designed to promote the distribution and markets for locally grown food in the medium term.

In the longer term the issue of food security will have to be addressed

In the longer term the issue of food security will have to be addressed. London has only three or four days stocks of food should there be any disruption to supply. The Government has set up a major project to examine the future of food and farming given the challenges of food security and climate change<sup>87</sup>. The world's only Professor of food policy told the Committee "we are sleep walking into a major problem

when it comes to food<sup>88</sup>. Growing more food in this country is going to become more and more critical over the next ten years. An increase in the production, processing and distribution of locally grown edible agricultural products will also lead to an increase in food security.

Sustainable food security is a key function for planning, education and health.

Future work on this issue will have to deal with this and a good first step will be for the Mayor to conduct a review of the GLA group's potential contribution to food security and resilience.

The Mayor needs to drive this vital issue forward.

Sustainable food security is a key function for planning, education and health.

# Appendix 1 Recommendations

## Recommendation 1

The Mayor should include in the London Plan reference to Green Belt Policy (PPG2). To better support the objectives of the London Food Strategy, Draft policy 7.16 (Green Belt) should specifically state that food growing is one of the most beneficial land uses in the Green Belt. Draft policy 7.16 should also include a requirement for boroughs to give added weight to food growing as one of the most productive activities in the Green Belt when preparing policies for their Local Development Frameworks.

## Recommendation 2

Through draft policy 7.22 Boroughs should incorporate urban agriculture in Local Development Frameworks as a desirable urban activity that can help improve the quality of urban life, food security, neighbourhood safety and environmental stewardship and utilises vacant land.

## Recommendation 3

The Metropolitan Police Service should compile annual data on farm related crimes by ward and borough in London with a focus on the Green Belt. If evidence emerges of there being a significant problem, the MPS should also look at appointing a farm crime liaison officer for London to raise the profile of farm crime and support a strategic as well as a local response.

## Recommendation 4

The Assembly welcomes draft London Plan policy 4.8, which supports the range of street and farmers' markets and their contribution to the vitality of town centres. The London Plan should specifically support the potential for farmers markets in the public realm and in particular public squares and large open public spaces. The proposed Town Centre SPG should specifically include detailed guidance regarding farmers markets and distribution networks for locally grown food.

## Recommendation 5

The Mayor should through the London Plan encourage the temporary use of vacant public and private land for urban agriculture and encourage Boroughs to include relevant policies in their Local Development Frameworks.

The Mayor should also promote the inclusion and preservation of productive land for growing food within housing developments as well as green roofs and other “unconventional” growing spaces.

#### **Recommendation 6**

The Mayor should amend draft London Plan Policy 5.21 (Contaminated land) to include food growing in raised beds or skips on potentially contaminated sites as a feasible temporary alternative to the often expensive remediation of contaminated soil.

#### **Recommendation 7**

The Mayor should commission an assessment of sites owned by the GLA group regarding their potential for short or long-term urban agriculture including both commercial and community growing opportunities in the next two years. Boroughs should do the same for Council owned land as well as existing brownfield sites through the LDF process.

#### **Recommendation 8**

The Mayor should add to policy 7.22 under ‘LDF Preparation’ that food growing is one of the most productive land uses in the Green Belt and is relevant to Outer London boroughs.

#### **Recommendation 9**

The Mayor should integrate urban agriculture into waste, water and energy policies in the London Plan and link these with the expanded draft policy 7.22. The Mayor should also integrate urban agriculture into waste, water and energy strategies (at GLA and Borough level).

#### **Recommendation 10**

The Mayor should ensure that the London Plan contains stronger links with the existing policies of the London Food Strategy that are relevant to planning matters. The Mayor should direct London Food to consider this report and integrate the recommendations in any future work.

## Appendix 2 Definitions of urban agriculture and commercial food growing

Urban agriculture is a broad term referring to a range of activities for the growing of plants for food and other related uses within or surrounding cities and towns. Within the literature, urban agriculture takes upon many names, such as entrepreneurial gardens, market gardens, for-market or for-profit urban agriculture, urban food production and market city farming. All these labels represent the same concept, although throughout this report, we will be using the terms “urban agriculture” and “commercial food growing”.

Urban agriculture can briefly be defined as:

*“commercial operations that involve the production of food in greenhouses, vacant lots and other spaces within the city but it is more often small-scale and scattered around the city.”* (Fairholm, A. (1998): Urban Agriculture and Food Security Initiatives in Canada: A Survey of Canadian Non-Governmental Organizations; Victoria: Lifecycles Cities Feeding People Series: Report 25).

In relation to community food growing with a more commercial focus, another definition often used is that:

*“urban agriculture is where inner city residents grow food in the soil, in raised planting beds or in greenhouses, and then market their produce at farmers markets, to local restaurants, or to city and suburban residents eager for fresh, locally grown food.”* (Kaufman, J & Bailkey, M (2000): Farming Inside Cities: Entrepreneurial Urban Agriculture in the United States; Wisconsin: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy)

The UNDP, the United Nation's global development network, defines urban agriculture as follows:

*“Urban Agriculture is an activity that produces, processes, and markets food and other products, on land and water in urban and peri-urban areas, applying intensive production methods, and (re)using natural resources and urban wastes, to yield a diversity of crops and livestock.”* UNDP (1996): Urban Agriculture: Food, Jobs and Sustainable Cities. United Nations Development Program, Publication Series for Habitat II, Volume One; UNDP, New York, USA)

Urban agriculture links farm cultivation with small scale enterprises, such as farm shops, street food stands, and farmer’s markets but also



to fencing industry, pumping, irrigation, processing and transportation industries.

More traditional farming on larger plots found on the outskirts of a city but within the political boundaries of a city should also be included in these definitions. These businesses are subject to the same planning polices for the city and part of a city's economy providing local food.

# Appendix 3 National planning policies

A summary of national planning policy guidance most relevant to the topics of the Assembly's report is set out below.

## Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) sets out the Government's planning policies for rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas.

The policies set out in this PPS will need to be taken into account by regional planning bodies in the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies, by the Mayor of London in relation to the Spatial Development Strategy in London and by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development documents. They may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications.

The Government's objectives for rural areas that are relevant to this Planning Policy Statement (PPS) are:

- (i) **To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas** (this includes the promotion of sustainable economic growth and diversification)
- (ii) **To promote more sustainable patterns of development:**  
(this includes promoting a range of uses to maximise the potential benefits of the countryside fringing urban areas)
- (iii) **Promoting the development of the English regions by improving their economic performance so that all are able to reach their full potential**
- (iv) To promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agriculture sectors where farming achieves high environmental standards, minimising impact on natural resources, and manages valued landscapes and biodiversity; contributes both directly and indirectly to rural economic diversity; is itself competitive and profitable; and provides high quality products that the public wants.

**Section 27 (Agricultural development)** refers to objective iv and advises that planning policies in Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and

Local Development Documents (LDDs) should support development proposals that will enable farming and farmers to:

- (i) Become more competitive, sustainable and environmentally friendly;
- (ii) Adapt to new and changing markets;
- (iii) Comply with changing legislation and associated guidance;
- (iv) Diversify into new agricultural opportunities (e.g. renewable energy crops); or
- (v) Broaden their operations to 'add value' to their primary produce.

Section 28 (Best and most versatile agricultural land) notes that the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification), should be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations (eg biodiversity; the quality and character of the landscape; its amenity value or heritage interest; accessibility to infrastructure, workforce and markets; maintaining viable communities; and the protection of natural resources, including soil quality) when determining planning applications. Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land (grades 3b, 4 and 5) in preference to that of a higher quality.

Section 29 adds that local planning authorities may wish to include policies in their LDDs to protect specific areas of best and most versatile agricultural land from speculative development. It is for local planning authorities to decide whether best and most versatile agricultural land can be developed, having carefully weighed the options in the light of competent advice.

**Section 30 (Farm diversification)** recognises that diversification into non-agricultural activities is vital to the continuing viability of many farm enterprises, and advises local planning authorities to:

- (i) Set out in their LDDs the criteria to be applied to planning applications for farm diversification projects;
- (ii) Be supportive of well-conceived farm diversification schemes for business purposes that contribute to sustainable

development objectives and help to sustain the agricultural enterprise, and are consistent in their scale with their rural location. This applies equally to farm diversification schemes around the fringes of urban areas; and

- (iii) Where relevant, give favourable consideration to proposals for diversification in Green Belts where the development preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

### **Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green belts (1995, amended 2001)**

Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2) outlines the history and extent of Green Belts and explains their purposes. It describes how Green Belts are designated and their land safeguarded. Green Belt land-use objectives are outlined and the presumption against inappropriate development is set out.

Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning. Local planning authorities must take their content into account in preparing their development plans. The guidance may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

Paragraph 1.4 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. Green Belts can shape patterns of urban development at sub-regional and regional scale, and help to ensure that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans. They help to protect the countryside, be it in agricultural, forestry or other use. They can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development.

### **Purposes of including land in Green Belts (para 1.5)**

There are five purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

### **The use of land in Green Belts** (para 1.6)

Once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

- To provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- To retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- To improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- To secure nature conservation interest; and
- To retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

Section 3 sets out restrictions to development in green belts. Other general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. The construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for the following purposes:

- Agriculture and forestry (unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn);
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt;
- Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- Limited infilling in existing villages and limited affordable housing for local community needs or

- Limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in adopted local plans

Provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, the extension or alteration of dwellings is not inappropriate in Green Belts. The replacement of existing dwellings need not be inappropriate, providing the new dwelling is not materially larger than the dwelling it replaces.

**Paragraph 3.7 (Re-use of buildings)** adds that, the re-use of buildings should not prejudice the openness of Green Belts, since the buildings are already there, and it can help to secure the continuing stewardship of land, especially by assisting farmers in diversifying their enterprises, and may contribute to the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts. The re-use of buildings inside a Green Belt is not inappropriate development providing:

- (a) It does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- (b) Strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings, and over any associated uses of land surrounding the building which might conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it (eg because they involve extensive external storage, or extensive hardstanding, car parking, boundary walling or fencing);
- (c) The buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and
- (d) The form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.

**Paragraph 3.15 (Visual Amenity)** highlights that any proposals acceptable in principle will also have to be tested in terms of their potential visual impact on the Green Belt by reason of their siting, materials or design.

## **Consultation paper on a new Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Prosperous Economies (2009)**

This consultation paper seeks comments on a new draft planning policy statement: Planning for Prosperous Economies. This planning policy statement sets out the Government's comprehensive policy framework for planning for sustainable economic development in urban and rural areas including town centres.

This draft PPS will achieve three key outcomes:

- Update draft Planning Policy Statement 4: Sustainable economic development
- Update draft Planning Policy Statement 6: Town centres and
- Consolidate national planning policy on economic development into a single streamlined planning policy statement

The policies set out in this PPS should be taken into account by regional planning bodies in the preparation of revisions to regional spatial strategies, by the Mayor of London in relation to the spatial development strategy for London, and by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development documents. In considering proposals for development, before development plans can be reviewed to reflect this planning policy statement, local planning authorities should have regard to the policies in this PPS as material considerations, which may supersede the relevant policies in their development plan.

In regards to agriculture, Draft Policy EC9.2 (Local planning approach to rural area) states that subject to recognising the need to protect the countryside, the policies for economic development in this statement apply to rural areas as they do to urban areas. In addition, in rural areas, local planning authorities should:

(...)

3. Set out the criteria to be applied to planning applications for farm diversification, and support diversification for business purposes that are consistent in their scale and environmental impact with their rural location

4. seek to remedy any identified deficiencies in local shopping and other facilities to serve people's day-to-day needs and help address social exclusion

(...)

**Draft Policy EC13.1 (Village and local centre shops and services)** highlights that local planning authorities should:

(...)

4. Consider the role of farm shops to meet a demand for local produce in a sustainable way and contribute to the rural economy, taking care to ensure that they do not adversely affect easily accessible convenience shopping available to the local community.

**Section 3**, among other things, looks at the Implementation of new policy in respect to planning for sustainable economic growth. In rural areas, subject to the need to protect the countryside, the general policies for economic development should apply to planning for development as they do in urban areas. This will include promoting farm diversification for business purposes by providing opportunities for non-agricultural enterprise which support job creation and economic activity consistent in scale with the rural location.



# Appendix 4 London Plan policies

The current London Plan (The London Plan - The Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy (consolidated with alterations since 2004) was published in February 2008. The London Plan is the strategic plan setting out an integrated social, economic and environmental framework for the future development of London, looking forward 15–20 years

A draft replacement plan has been published for public consultation in 2009. While this process is going on, the adopted London Plan will remain in force until the replacement plan is formally published. However, the draft replacement London Plan will be material considerations that can be taken into account in deciding planning applications, and they will gather weight the further into the replacement process they go.

## Selected adopted London Plan policies

### Policy 3D.9 (Green belt)

The Mayor will and boroughs should maintain the protection of London's green belt and proposals for alterations to green belt boundaries should be considered through the DPD process in accordance with government guidance in PPG2. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the green belt, and such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Mayor will and boroughs should encourage positive uses for the green belt that realise the potential to improve the environmental and landscape quality and accessibility of the land while meeting its statutory purposes.

### Policy 3D.17 (London's countryside and the urban fringe)

The Mayor will work with strategic partners to improve access to the countryside and the quality of landscape in the urban fringe. The Mayor will and boroughs should support sub-regional and cross-borough boundary urban fringe management through the Green Arc partnership initiatives and explore the potential for taking forward the concept of the Community Forests within London.

DPD policies should:

- Support the Green Arc vision of creating and protecting an extensive, attractive and valued recreational landscape of well-

connected and accessible countryside around London for people and wildlife

- Include proposals to improve access to open land and to conserve and enhance biodiversity value
- Encourage appropriate attractive destinations for visitors and the local population
- Support appropriate initiatives that contribute to sustainable development, including environmental management projects, renewable energy, flood management and water gathering areas
- Promote positive management and enhancement of the urban fringe.

### **Policy 3D.18 (Agriculture in London)**

The Mayor will and boroughs should seek to encourage and support a thriving agricultural sector in London. Policies in DPDs should provide for the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land in accordance with national guidance, and allow for appropriate projects for farm diversification and other measures to meet the needs of farming and rural business development. Such policies should be consistent with the other policies of this plan, such as having regard to sustainable development and transport, tackling climate change and the presumption against inappropriate development in the green belt.

### **Draft London Plan policies**

#### **1. Policies that mention food or agriculture**

#### **Draft policy 7.22 (Land for food)**

##### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor will seek to encourage and support thriving farming and land-based sectors in London, particularly in the Green Belt.
- B Use of land for growing food will be encouraged nearer to urban communities via such mechanisms as 'Capital Growth'.

## **LDF preparation**

- C Boroughs should protect existing allotments and identify other potential spaces that could be used for community gardening. Particularly in Inner London innovative approaches to the provision of spaces may need to be followed, these could include the use of green roofs.

## **Draft policy 7.16 (Green Belt)**

### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor strongly supports the current extent of London's Green Belt, its extension in appropriate circumstances and its protection from inappropriate development.

### **Planning decisions**

- B The strongest protection should be given to London's Green Belt, in accordance with PPG2. Inappropriate development should be refused, except in very special circumstances. Forms of development that might be appropriate together with high quality management practices that improve access to and/or the environmental and landscape quality of London's Green Belt, while ensuring it continues to meet its statutory purposes, will be supported.

## **Draft policy 2.18 (Green infrastructure: the network of open and natural spaces)**

### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor will work with all relevant strategic partners to protect, promote, expand and manage access to London's green infrastructure of multi-functional green and open spaces and to secure benefits including, but not limited to, biodiversity, landscape, culture, building a sense of place, the economy, sport, recreation, local food production, mitigating and adapting to climate change, water management and the social benefits that promote individual and community health and well-being.
- B The Mayor will pursue the delivery of green infrastructure by working in partnership with all relevant bodies including the

Green Are Partnerships, publishing Supplementary Guidance to apply the principles of the East London Green Grid SPG across London, and beyond.

- C In areas of deficiency for regional and metropolitan parks, opportunities for the creation of parks should be identified and their implementation be supported such as in the Wandle Valley Regional Park<sup>11</sup>. The Mayor will support this work.

### **Planning decisions**

- D Enhancements to London's green infrastructure should be sought from development and where a proposal falls within a regional or metropolitan park deficiency area (Policy 7.17), it should contribute to addressing this need.
- E Development proposals should:
  - a Incorporate appropriate elements of open space that are integrated into the wider network of green infrastructure
  - b Encourage the linkage of green infrastructure to the wider public realm to improve accessibility for all and develop new links, including Green Corridors and Green Chains and the innovative use of street trees.

### **LDF preparation**

- F Boroughs should:
  - a Follow the guidance in PPG 1712 and undertake audits of all forms of open space and assessments of need. These should be both qualitative and quantitative, and have regard to the cross-borough nature and use of many open spaces
  - b Produce Open Space Strategies<sup>13</sup> that cover all forms of open space. These should identify priorities for addressing deficiencies and should set out positive measures for the management of open space. These strategies and their action plans need to be kept under review
  - c Within DPD policies to ensure that green infrastructure needs are planned and managed to realise the current and potential

value of open space to communities and to support delivery of the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits

- d In London's urban fringe, support through appropriate initiatives, the Green Arc vision of creating and protecting an extensive and valued recreational landscape of well-connected and accessible countryside around London for both people and for wildlife.

### **Draft policy 5.11 (Green roofs and development site environs)**

#### **Planning decisions**

- A Major development proposals should be designed to include roof, wall and site planting, especially green roofs and walls where feasible, to deliver as many of the following objectives as possible:
  - a Adaptation to climate change(ie aiding cooling)
  - b Sustainable urban drainage
  - c Mitigation of climate change(ie aiding energy efficiency)
  - d Enhancement of biodiversity
  - e Accessible roof space
  - f Improvements to appearance and resilience of the building
  - g Growing food.

#### **LDF preparation**

- B Within LDFs boroughs may wish to develop more detailed policies and proposals to support the development of green roofs and the greening of development sites.

Boroughs should also promote the use of green roofs in smaller developments, renovations and extensions where feasible.

## **Draft policy 4.8 (Supporting a successful and diverse retail sector)**

### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor will and boroughs and other stakeholders should support a successful, competitive and diverse retail sector which promotes sustainable access to the goods and services that Londoners need and the broader objectives of the spatial structure of this Plan, especially town centres (Policy 2.15).

### **LDF and planning decision preparation**

- B LDFs should:
- a Bring forward capacity for additional comparison goods retailing particularly in International, Metropolitan and Major centres
  - b Support convenience retail particularly in District, Neighbourhood and more local centres, to secure a sustainable pattern of provision and strong, 'lifetime neighbourhoods' (see Policy 7.1)
  - c Provide a policy framework for maintaining, managing and enhancing local and neighbourhood shopping and facilities which provide local goods and services, and develop policies to prevent the loss of retail and related facilities that provide essential convenience and specialist shopping
  - d Identify areas under-served in local convenience shopping and services provision and support additional facilities at an appropriate scale in locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport to serve existing or new residential communities
  - e Support the range of street, farmers' and, where relevant, strategic markets, complementing other measures to improve their management, enhance their offer and contribute to the vitality of town centres
  - f Support the development of 'e-tailing' and more efficient delivery systems.

## **2. Policies with potential to add reference to food or agriculture**

### **Draft policy 5.21 (Contaminated land)**

#### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor supports the remediation of contaminated sites and will work with strategic partners to bring contaminated land to beneficial use.

#### **Planning decisions**

- B Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that development on previously contaminated land does not activate or spread contamination.

#### **LDF preparation**

- C LDFs should encourage the remediation of contaminated sites and set out policy to deal with contamination.

### **Draft policy 5.8 (Innovative energy technologies)**

#### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor supports and encourages the more widespread use of innovative energy technologies to reduce use of fossil fuels and carbon dioxide emissions. In particular the Mayor will seek to work with boroughs and other partners to:
  - a Maximise the uptake of electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles
  - b Plan hydrogen supply and distribution infrastructure
  - c Maximise the uptake of advanced conversion technologies such as anaerobic digestion, gasification and pyrolysis for the treatment of waste.

#### **LDF preparation**

Within LDFs boroughs may wish to develop more detailed policies and proposals to support the use of alternative energy technologies (particularly in infrastructure and masterplanning opportunities).

The Mayor has also set up a Food to Fuel Alliance Programme to promote the development of exemplar projects turning London's food waste into renewable energy including renewable transport fuel.

### **Draft policy 5.10 (Urban greening)**

#### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor will promote and support urban greening, such as new planting in the public realm (including streets, squares and plazas) and green infrastructure, to contribute to the adaptation to, and mitigation of, the effects of climate change.
- B The Mayor seeks to increase the amount of surface area greened in the Central Activities Zone by at least five per cent by 2030, and a further five per cent by 2050.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Planning decisions**

- C Development proposals should integrate green infrastructure from the beginning of the design process to contribute to urban greening, including the public realm.

Elements that can contribute to this include tree planting, green roofs and walls, and soft landscaping. Major development proposals within the Central Activities Zone should also demonstrate how they are contributing to the target outlined above.

#### **LDF preparation**

- D Boroughs should identify areas where urban greening and green infrastructure can make a particular contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change, such as the urban heat island.

### **Draft Policy 5.15 (Water use and supplies)**

#### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor will work in partnership with appropriate agencies within London and adjoining regional and local planning authorities to protect and conserve water supplies and resources in order to secure London's needs in a sustainable manner by:



- a Minimising use of treated water
- b Reaching cost-effective minimum leakage levels
- d In conjunction with demand side measures, promoting the provision of additional sustainable water resources in a timely and efficient manner, reducing the water supply deficit and achieving security of supply in London
- e Minimising the amount of energy consumed in water supply
- f Promoting the use of rainwater harvesting and using dual potable and grey water recycling systems
- g Maintaining and upgrading water supply infrastructure
- h Ensuring the water supplied will not give rise to likely significant adverse effects to the environment particularly designated sites of European importance for nature conservation.

### **Planning decisions**

- B Development should minimise the use of treated water by:
  - a Incorporating water saving measures and equipment
  - b Meeting water consumption targets of 105l/p/d in residential development.
- C New development for sustainable water supply infrastructure will be supported.

### **Draft policy 5.16 (Waste self-sufficiency)**

#### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor will work with London boroughs and waste authorities, the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWaRB), the Environment Agency, the private sector, third sector groups, and neighbouring regions and authorities to:
  - a Manage as much of London's waste within London as practicable

- b Create positive environmental impacts from waste processing
  - c Work towards zero waste to landfill by 2031.
- B This will be achieved by:
- a Minimising waste
  - b Encouraging the reuse of and reduction in the use of materials
  - c Exceeding recycling/composting levels in municipal solid waste (MSW) of 45 percent by 2015, 50 per cent by 2020 and aspiring to achieve 60 per cent by 2031
  - d Exceeding recycling/composting levels in commercial and industrial waste of 70 per cent by 2020
  - e Exceeding recycling and reuse levels in construction, excavation and demolition (CE&D) waste of 95 per cent by 2020
  - f Improving London's net self-sufficiency through reducing the proportion of waste exported from the capital over time
  - g Working with neighbouring regional and district authorities to co-ordinate strategic waste management across the greater South East.

# Appendix 5 Possible content of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

An SPG provides more detailed guidance on how to implement specific London Plan policies. Once adopted, it is a material consideration when determining planning applications, having substantial weight as a formal supplement to the London Plan.

Supplementary planning guidance to assist urban farming and food production in London should cover the following areas:

- Incorporating growing spaces into new developments (gardens, balconies, roof gardens, etc)
- Retro-fitting growing spaces into existing development and open spaces
- Green Belt farming
- Inner-city farming and temporary uses
- Sectors of farming (horticulture, livestock, beekeeping etc) and its suitability and requirements for specific locations
- Related topics (water usages, grey water and rainwater harvesting), composting of food waste, waste heat or energy use etc

# Appendix 6 International policy examples

## **Southeast False Creek Urban Agriculture Strategy (Vancouver, Canada)**

Southeast False Creek (SEFC) near downtown Vancouver, will be the future site of the Vancouver Olympic Village during the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. It is envisaged to be a leading model of sustainability in North America. After the 2010 Games, SEFC will eventually become home to 16,000 people. In November 2009 the Olympic and Paralympic Village was officially completed.

The SEFC Policy Statement was adopted by Vancouver City Council in October 1999 and is unique in that it provides general planning principles to guide the future development of the SEFC site, as well as provide additional guidance to realise the vision of a sustainable community. The statement sets out that an urban agriculture strategy should be developed for SEFC by the City, in consultation with the developer, to consider issues such as the city's role and responsibility in securing a food supply for its population; opportunities for, and constraints on, urban agriculture; and gardening opportunities on private land, on rooftops, and in public parks.

The SEFC Urban Agriculture Strategy was published in 2002 and sets out the fundamental goals of urban agriculture and the strategic objectives to achieve these goals in the SEFC sustainable community. Urban agriculture is defined in this study to include food production, food processing, and food distribution opportunities.

In 2003, the Official Development Plan process was launched to determine the configuration of development parcels, parks, rights-of-way, public amenities, overall densities and massing of buildings. It includes a sustainability strategy for urban agriculture, which sets out a requirement for a community demonstration garden in the park and a site for a farmer's market.

The strategy also encourages green roofs for urban agriculture, on-site composting, rain water collection and seeks edible landscaping within public spaces.

Design Guidelines for urban agriculture opportunities were published in 2007 to be used as a tool by City staff, community members and organisations, developers and design teams to realise the many urban agriculture opportunities in SEFC and Vancouver. The document explores innovative strategies for integrating urban agriculture into

new high-density developments; explores and highlights the positive attributes and benefits of urban agriculture; advises on the technical aspects of urban agriculture as well as on the management of urban agriculture spaces in the public and private realms.

### **‘Agromere’ and ‘Almere 2.0’ (Almere, The Netherlands)**

The city of Almere (30 kilometres east of Amsterdam) is planned to nearly double in size (from 190,000 to 350,000 inhabitants) over the next 20 years.

The Dutch University in Wageningen designed, in cooperation with a network of stakeholders, a virtual rural-urban city district called ‘Agromere’. In this virtual district, agriculture and urban living merge with each other, taking into account the needs of all parties concerned.

The Agromere project inspired the city council of Almere to implement urban agriculture in its development plans. The draft structural vision ‘Almere 2.0’ allocates land for 15,000 homes with urban agriculture as main element of the green infrastructure to the east of Almere (Almere Oosterwold) with the objective to combine urban development with sustainable food production.

There will be small scale agriculture will can provide the city and region with agricultural products, especially locally produced food, which is expected to reduce food miles, energy consumption and carbon emissions. The agricultural businesses can also provide different forms of green energy production, water purification, and waste management. Other opportunities related to agriculture include green space, recreation, health care and tourism.

Work with stakeholders on the Agromere project has shown that local residents are open to incorporating agriculture in their new town and that the interest and positive reactions of the residents for urban farming grew during the discussions, indicating that more information on the added value of urban farming can increase the commitment of stakeholders to this new concept.

Will this district become reality? After years of research, in 2009 the city council took a decision to go ahead with this draft vision for the growth of Almere. In order to formally adopt the plan, the Dutch government has to approve it as the growth of Almere is part of a

national strategy. Informally, the government has already provided strong support.

# Appendix 7 Site visits

In order to inform the Assembly's investigation, two site visits were undertaken in September 2009. The first was to a large commercial vegetable farm with packing and distribution facilities that is partly located in the London Borough of Bromley.

## **A.V. Produce (Upper Hockenden Farm)**

A.V. (Albert Vinson) Produce Ltd is a grower, packer, distributor and importer of vegetables and salad crops. The land owned by the business sits in and around Swanley (Kent) and covers Sevenoaks, Bexley and Bromley authorities. The principal holding covers about 200 acres with an additional 150 acres rented North of Swanley and a further 100 acres share farmed on the Isle of Grain.

## **History**

Albert Vinson brought the farm in about 1890; he was attracted by the close proximity to London and the trade opportunities. The farm has always been farmed intensively with a range of vegetables and salads crops with diversification into fruit in the 1950's, however this has since ceased. The business became a limited company in 1939 and is still run by the Vinson family, now in its fourth generation.

## **Distribution, investment and diversification**

A.V. Produce supplies High Street Retailers, Foodservice Companies, leading UK supermarkets, wholesale and catering outlets and occasionally export supermarkets. The business also sells a large percentage of wholesale crops into the London markets and serves Covent Garden, Spitalfields and Western International on a daily basis.

In order to provide supply produce all year round, A.V. imports foodstuffs throughout the winter or the non-UK growing season.

A.V. were able to secure planning permission from Sevenoaks District Council for a purpose built modern packhouse that meets current British Retail Consortium protocol and complies with Health & Safety standards. The £1.8 million investment has gone into loading bays, warehousing, cold storage, canteen and locker rooms and A.V. were awarded a Defra processing and marketing grant representing a 30 per cent contribution to the cost.

Five acres of poor land were recently sold to a third party (TJ Composting) to develop a compost-processing site. This scheme takes green waste from Bromley together with green waste generated by the

farm, and A.V. guarantees to take 8,000 tonnes of compost from the 20,000 tonnes generated to spread back onto the land which adds much needed organic matter to the soil and acts as a fertiliser.

The second site visit was to a social enterprise with two small 'urban market gardens' in the London borough of Hackney selling produce at a Farmers Market and operating an organic box scheme in the area.

### **Growing Communities**

Growing Communities is a social enterprise run by local people in Hackney, East London. It is working to create a more sustainable food system, supporting small organic farmers through a box scheme (the sale of boxes of salads and vegetables to customers in Hackney) and farmers' market, and growing salad crops on parkland in Hackney. Its two main growing sites are at Springfield Park, in Upper Clapton (which has a polytunnel and a greenhouse) and Allens Gardens on Bethune Road, Stoke Newington.

It currently employs 18 part-time members of staff and is supported by up to 80 volunteers working throughout the year. The also offer apprenticeships and are advising and mentoring other community groups and businesses in their efforts to replicate the scheme elsewhere. Since 2006, Growing Communities has been financially self-sufficient.

### **History**

Growing Communities started life as a Community Supported Agriculture scheme that linked members up with a farm in Buckinghamshire. The box scheme started in 1993. In 1997 Growing Communities got its first London site and in 2003 set up the UK's first all-organic farmers' market currently operating from Stoke Newington Church Street.

### **Key aims and achievements**

A local organic fruit and vegetable box scheme in Hackney, provides a weekly selection of seasonal organic produce from £6 per week. The scheme allows members of the box scheme to collect their boxes from five pick-up points across Hackney, as well as one in Islington and one in Tower Hamlets. It supplies over 480 households every week.

The Stoke Newington Farmers' Market supports small environmentally sustainable farmers and producers based within a 100 miles of



Hackney. It runs every Saturday and currently provides space for 14 farmers and producers to sell direct to the public. Over 1,500 people shop at the Stoke Newington Farmers' market every Saturday.

The Urban Market Gardens, where organic vegetables are grown on three small Soil Association certified growing sites, specialise in mixed salad bags and aims to supply all the salad needs of the Box Scheme from those sites.

Future projects include setting up "patchwork farms" made up of small plots in the local area and "Starter Farms" on peri-urban land comprised of groups of urban growers (peri-urban areas are located at the fringe of metropolitan centres and forms the boundary between urban and rural areas).

# Appendix 8 Capital Growth

## Strategy

The Capital Growth campaign wants to help Londoners transform the capital by creating 2,012 new food growing spaces by 2012 by offering practical advice and support to communities around London, helping people get access to land and create successful food growing projects.

In the initial phase of Capital Growth (November 2008–March 2009) Capital Growth offered financial support (facilitated by a grant from the London Development Agency) to 70 new London food growing spaces and in-kind support to a further 25 new spaces. These spaces represent a diverse range of communities and sizes of growing space across London.

They are continuing to offer in-kind support to people setting up new food growing spaces and further funding rounds will be held at various stages of the campaign, up to the end of 2012.

Capital Growth is coordinated by London Food Link, a large and rapidly growing network of people and organisations, interested in healthy and sustainable food for the capital. London Food Link is part of Sustain – the alliance for better food and farming

## Example sites

Hancock Nunn House Gardening Club (Camden): A patch of land at back of a housing estate has been cleared to be used by local residents for community building. They have formed the Hancock Nunn Gardening Club and have residents from Belsize Transition Town involved.

Friends of Hillside Gardens Park and Palace Nature Garden (Lambeth): Supported by Lambeth council some unused and overgrown parkland will be converted into a food growing space for local people.

RU Outdoors – Roehampton University Campus (Wandsworth): An allotment area was created on campus grounds for food growing managed by staff and students. They have established a number of beds and plan to put in many more for the staff, students and the wider community of Roehampton University as well as the beginnings of a forest garden area for everyone to use.

# Appendix 9 London Food Strategy

'Healthy and Sustainable Food for London - The Mayor's Food Strategy' was published in 2006. The Food Strategy focuses on five themes; health, environment, economy, social/ cultural and security. These themes capture the breadth of issues affecting food and affected by food, and incorporate the Mayor's cross-cutting themes of health, equality and sustainability.

Corresponding to these five themes, the London Food Strategy has five broad objectives. They are to:

- Improve Londoners' health and reduce health inequalities via the food they eat
- Reduce the negative environmental impacts of London's food system
- Support a vibrant food economy
- Celebrate and promote London's food culture
- Develop London's food security.

In the light of the strategic objectives, the Mayor and the London Food Board have a vision of a world-class, sustainable food system for London.

The full Strategy details eight stages of the food system.

1. Primary production (Growing or harvesting produce, either for sale or for use in processed food and drink)
2. Processing and manufacturing (Processing and packing food and drink and manufacturing packaging and machinery)
3. Transport, storage and distribution (The storage and movement of food between producers, processors and retailers)
4. Food retail (The sale of food, either directly or through wholesale markets and retailers)

5. Purchasing food (The purchasing of food or drink for consumption)
6. Food preparation (The storage and cooking of food ready for consumption)
7. Consumption (Eating and drinking)
8. Disposal (The removal and processing of all unconsumed food and drink)

A full set of actions is aligned both to the eight stages of the food chain and to those components of the Vision against which they deliver. Those of particular relevance to the topics of the Assembly's report are listed below:

#### **Stage 1: Primary production:**

Actions V1a/V2 a (Increase (organic) food production within London and the surrounding regions in response to consumer demand);

Action V2d (Increase produce diversification to supply and meet the London market);

Action V3c (Ensure farmers are able to access and use water supplies in a sustainable fashion)

#### **Stage 3: Transport, Storage & Distribution**

Action V3a (Establish local food distribution/wholesaling hubs);

#### **Stage 4: Food Retail**

Action V1c (Use planning system to protect the diversity of food retail provision where viable and appropriate, including the positive functions of street markets);

Action V3a (Identify and support food clusters, both retail and manufacturing, in London)

# Appendix 10 Written views

In order to understand the problems faced by commercial food growers in and around London we contacted around 160 organisations and individuals, including all London boroughs, individual growers, retailers and restaurants, government departments, growers associations and many more.

Forty seven formal responses were received between July and October 2009. The submissions received are listed below.

<b>Individual or organisation</b>	<b>Reference Number</b>
Daltons Farm Ltd	UA/001
Deen City Farm Ltd	UA/002
Theresa Villiers MP (MP Chipping Barnet)	UA/003
LB Tower Hamlets	UA/004a
LB Tower Hamlets	UA/004b
Waitrose Ltd	UA/005
London Green Belt Council	UA/006
Alara Wholefoods	UA/007
London Parks and Green Spaces Forum	UA/008
Café Spice Namaste	UA/009
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens	UA/010
National Farmers' Union (NFU)	UA/011
Peter Clarke, Kingcup Farm, Denham	UA/012
Dr Richard Wiltshire (King's College London)	UA/013
Lea Valley Growers	UA/014
London Development Agency (LDA), Olympic Legacy Directorate	UA/015
Knight Frank LLP	UA/016
LB Hillingdon	UA/017
Marks & Spencer Ltd	UA/018
RB Kingston	UA/019
City of London	UA/020
Colne Valley Development Forum	UA/021

LB Bromley	UA/022
Arup Ltd	UA/023
LB Lewisham	UA/024
Planning Aid for London (PAL)	UA/025
Bohn & Viljoen Architects	UA/026
Tesco	UA/027
LB Camden	UA/028
The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) London	UA/029
What If: Projects Ltd	UA/030
Mayor's Office, Greater London Authority	UA/031
Government Office for London (GOL)	UA/032
Sustain	UA/033
LB Greenwich	UA/034
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	UA/035
LB Redbridge	UA/036
LB Richmond Upon Thames	UA/037
Fresh Farm Foods	UA/038
National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd	UA/039
LB Barking & Dagenham	UA/040
LB Merton	UA/041
English Farming and Food Partnerships	UA/042
LB Bexley	UA/043
Growing Communities	UA/044
LB Hounslow	UA/045
LB Lambeth	UA/046
LB Southwark	UA/047

# Appendix 11 Orders and translations

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### Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

### Greek

*Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.*

### Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta adresi aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçin.

### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਅਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

### Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज़ का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফোন করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

### Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

### Arabic

الوصول على ملخص لهذا المستند بلغتك،  
فارجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على  
العنوان العبري العادي أو عنوان العبري  
الالكتروني أعلاه.

### Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટપાલ અથવા ઈ-મેઇલ સરનામા પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

# Appendix 12 Principles of scrutiny page

## **An aim for action**

An Assembly scrutiny is not an end in itself. It aims for action to achieve improvement.

## **Independence**

An Assembly scrutiny is conducted with objectivity; nothing should be done that could impair the independence of the process.

## **Holding the Mayor to account**

The Assembly rigorously examines all aspects of the Mayor's strategies.

## **Inclusiveness**

An Assembly scrutiny consults widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost.

## **Constructiveness**

The Assembly conducts its scrutinies and investigations in a positive manner, recognising the need to work with stakeholders and the Mayor to achieve improvement.

## **Value for money**

When conducting a scrutiny the Assembly is conscious of the need to spend public money effectively.



# Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> *London Development Agency (2006): The Mayor's Food Strategy: Healthy and Sustainable Food for London*
- <sup>2</sup> *James Petts, World Health Organization (2001): Urban agriculture in London - Case Study 2 (Series on Urban Food Security)*
- <sup>3</sup> *Department of Environment, Development and Transportation, Cleveland County Council on behalf of the County Planning Officers' Society, the Metropolitan Planning Officers' Society and the District Planning Officers' Society (1992): Planning in the Urban Fringe: Final Report of the Joint Special Advisory Group*
- <sup>4</sup> *Land Use Consultants for the GreenArc Steering Group (2004): Improving the countryside around London: The Green Arc approach'*
- <sup>5</sup> *James Petts, World Health Organization (2001): Urban agriculture in London - Case Study 2 (Series on Urban Food Security)*
- <sup>6</sup> <http://www.londonfoodstrategy.org.uk>
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/planning/2009/jun09/07-agriculture-food-growing.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> The weekly home delivery or collection of boxes of assorted selections of fruit and vegetables
- <sup>9</sup> Note of meeting with Knight Frank LLP (UA/016)
- <sup>10</sup> Informal meeting at Konstam Restaurant attended by Assembly Members, farmers and members of other organisations (8 June 2009)
- <sup>11</sup> Note of meeting with Knight Frank LLP (UA/016)
- <sup>12</sup> *London Assembly (2006): A Lot to Lose: London's disappearing allotments*
- <sup>13</sup> *London Development Agency (2006): Health and Sustainable Food for London, The Mayor's Food Strategy*
- <sup>14</sup> Consultation response from Government Office for London (UA/032)
- <sup>15</sup> *Land Use Consultants for the GreenArc Steering Group (2004): Improving the countryside around London. The Green Arc approach*
- <sup>16</sup> *Greater London Authority (2007): Mayor of London, State of Environment Report for London.*
- <sup>17</sup> <http://www.sustainweb.org/localactiononfood/greenbeltlondonarea/>
- <sup>18</sup> The farm gate value of a cultivated product in agriculture is the net value of the product when it leaves the farm, after marketing costs have been subtracted. Since many farms do not have significant marketing costs, it is often understood as the price of the product at which it is sold by the farm (the farm gate price). The farm gate value is typically lower than the retail price consumers pay in a store as it does not include costs for shipping, handling, storage, marketing, and profit margins of the involved companies.
- <sup>19</sup> Land banking is the practice of purchasing undeveloped land with the intent to hold on to it until such a time as it is profitable to sell it on to others for more than was initially paid. Changes in the Land Registration Act 2002 enabled companies to purchase land sites and easily divide them into smaller plots to then offer these for sale to individual investors.
- <sup>20</sup> *Land Use Consultants for the GreenArc Steering Group (2004): Improving the countryside around London. The Green Arc approach*
- <sup>21</sup> *Sustain (1999): City Harvest. The Feasibility of Growing more Food in London*

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- <sup>22</sup> Various news articles, e.g. BBC News 9 September 2002  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/2246456.stm> and Telegraph 7 July 2008  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthnews/3346451/Price-of-British-farm-produce-will-have-to-rise.html>
- <sup>23</sup> *Cabinet Office (2008): Food Matters. Towards a Strategy for the 21st Century*
- <sup>24</sup> Planning and Housing Committee meeting, 13 October 2009  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/planning/2009/oct13/minutes/appendix-a.pdf>
- <sup>25</sup> *J. Kaufman, M. Bailkey (2000): Farming Inside Cities. Entrepreneurial Urban Agriculture in the United States*
- <sup>26</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmmanage/working/new-entrants/index.htm>
- <sup>27</sup> *Department for Communities and Local Government (1995, amended 2001): Planning Policy Guidance PPG2 (Green Belts)*
- <sup>28</sup> For example Redbridge Core Strategy - March 2008; Redbridge Borough Wide Primary Policies DPD - May 2008; Barking & Dagenham Core Strategy pre-submission report - November 2008
- <sup>29</sup> For example Barking & Dagenham Core Strategy pre-submission report - November 2008; Barking & Dagenham Borough Wide Development Policies DPD pre-submission report - November 2008
- <sup>30</sup> BRC Global Standard - Food (2005) - <http://www.brc.org.uk>
- <sup>31</sup> Consultation responses by e.g. National Farmers Union (UA/011) and Planning Aid for London (UA/025)
- <sup>32</sup> A polytunnel is a plastic or polythene tunnel or greenhouse with a metal or wooden frame used to grow plants that require a higher temperature and/or humidity than that which is available in the environment.
- <sup>33</sup> *Department for Communities and Local Government (2004): Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)*
- <sup>34</sup> *K. Pothukuchi, J. Kaufman (2000): The food system: a stranger to the planning field; in: Journal of the American Planning Association, c.66, No2; consultation response by National Farmers Union (UA/011) and Lea Valley Growers' Association (UA/014).*
- <sup>35</sup> National Farmers Union - South East Regional Media Releases 2007  
[www.nfuonline.com/x14430.xml](http://www.nfuonline.com/x14430.xml)
- <sup>36</sup> Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) provide a regional level planning framework for the regions of England and establish a 'spatial' vision and strategy specific to the region.
- <sup>37</sup> Local Development Documents (LDDs) are a set of documents which a Local Planning Authority creates to describe their strategy for development and use of land in their area of authority.
- <sup>38</sup> *Greater London Authority (2008): The London Plan - The Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy (consolidated with alterations since 2004)*
- <sup>39</sup> *Greater London Authority (2009): The London Plan. Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (Consultation draft replacement plan)*
- <sup>40</sup> Consultation responses from e.g. Campaign to protect rural England CPRE (UA/029) and LB Richmond (UA/037)
- <sup>41</sup> Consultation response from Peter Clarke, Kingcup Farm (UA/012)
- <sup>42</sup> Consultation response from Colne Valley Development Forum (UA/021)

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<sup>43</sup> Mayor's response to MQ3145 / 2009

<sup>44</sup> Consultation response from Peter Clarke, Kingcup Farm (UA/012)

<sup>45</sup> Consultation response from Colne Valley Development Forum (UA/021)

<sup>46</sup> Mayor's response to MQ3145 / 2009

<sup>47</sup> *London Development Agency (2006): Health and Sustainable Food for London, The Mayor's Food Strategy*

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *London Development Agency (2007): Healthy and Sustainable Food for London, The Mayor's Food Strategy Implementation Plan*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Prorustica Ltd - Rural Business Development Specialists (2006): Investing in local food supply chains: A funding proposal to pilot value-chain development*

<sup>52</sup> The partners are: CPRE, the Campaign to Protect Rural England; Co-operativesUK, the trade association for all types of co-operative enterprise throughout the UK; Country Markets Ltd, a co-operative social enterprise that organises and promotes individual Country Markets throughout England, Wales and the Channel Islands; FARMA, the National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association; the Plunkett Foundation, an educational charity which supports the development of rural group enterprise world-wide; Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming; and the Soil Association, UK's leading membership charity campaigning for sustainable food and farming - <http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/who/index.cfm>

<sup>53</sup> CSA offers an innovative business approach where a food or farm enterprise has members who own 'shares' in the harvest and therefore also share in the risk.

<sup>54</sup> This includes the full range of different types of open space, including both publicly accessible and private land, such as parks, allotments, commons, woodlands, natural habitats, recreation grounds, playing fields, agricultural land, burial grounds, amenity space and children's play areas.

<sup>55</sup> *Greater London Authority (2008): East London Green Grid Framework. London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2004) Supplementary Planning Guidance*

<sup>56</sup> *Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (2004): Creating sustainable communities: Greening the Gateway. A greenspace strategy for Thames Gateway*

<sup>57</sup> Other examples that can restrict the possible use of a site include the proximity to major roads, railway tracks or power lines, limited access for construction vehicles or the gradient of the land.

<sup>58</sup> Permaculture is about creating sustainable human habitats by following nature's patterns. It introduces design into agriculture in order to create permanent high-yielding agricultural ecosystems, in order to use as little land as possible. A Forest Garden is a low-maintenance garden that consists of trees and shrubs, with bushes below and a ground layer of perennial or selfseeding plants underneath. All plants are edible or useful in some other way.

<sup>59</sup> Anaerobic digestion is the natural breakdown of organic materials into methane and carbon dioxide gas and fertiliser. Anaerobic digestion is widely used as a renewable energy source helping to replace fossil fuels

<sup>60</sup> The Guardian (16 June 2009): City of London plans guerrilla allotments for vacant building sites <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/jun/16/city-london-allotment-food>

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- <sup>61</sup> Planning and Housing Committee 13 October 2009  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/planning/2009/oct13/minutes/appendix-a.pdf>
- <sup>62</sup> An area of relative exclusion where people experience physical and economic barriers to accessing healthy food <http://www.fooddeserts.org/images/whatisfd.htm>
- <sup>63</sup> *London Assembly (2008): Who gains? The operation of section 106 planning agreements in London*
- <sup>64</sup> *London Assembly (2006): A Lot to Lose: London's disappearing allotments*
- <sup>65</sup> Consultation responses from e.g. Growing Communities (UA/044) and Sustain (UA/033) and informal discussions with these organisations.
- <sup>66</sup> *Portland State University (2005): The Diggable City - Making Urban Agriculture a Planning Priority; prepared for the City of Portland, OR*
- <sup>67</sup> *Mikey Tomkins, University of East London (2006): The Edible Urban Landscape – an assessment method FOR retro-fitting urban agriculture into an inner London test site*
- <sup>68</sup> <http://www.nlud.org.uk>
- <sup>69</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/environment/derelict-land.pdf>
- <sup>70</sup> <http://www.londonbrownfieldsites.org>
- <sup>71</sup> The Inter-regional Forum is the Advisory Forum on Regional Planning for London, the South East and East of England. Its role is to advise their respective bodies on planning issues of inter-regional significance.
- <sup>72</sup> Mayor of London, Letter to Darren Johnson (unpublished) dated 18 December 2008, Ref: MGLA251108-8370
- <sup>73</sup> *Greater London Authority (2009): The London Plan. Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (Consultation draft replacement plan)*
- <sup>74</sup> The origins of county farms (or smallholdings as they are more traditionally and commonly known) gathered greatest momentum during the interwar years of the agricultural depression. A Land Settlement concept was developed, whereby small holdings comprising a house, a few acres and a basic range of buildings were let to ex-servicemen and their families to enable them to subsist from a living off the land. A 'ladder' concept was introduced after the Second World War, to provide an effective means of entry to able and aspiring farmers without sufficient financial means or opportunity to start up a farming business on their own account, progressing to larger farms at a later stage (*C. Coats, no date: The county farms service*)
- <sup>75</sup> Consultation response from Peter Clarke, Kingcup Farm (UA/012)
- <sup>76</sup> *Tenancy Reform Industry Group (2003): Final Report, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*
- <sup>77</sup> *Sir Donald Curry (2008): The importance of the county farms service to the rural economy*
- <sup>78</sup> These include, for example, The Environmental Protection Act 1990, The Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989 and the Waste Strategy for England 2007
- <sup>79</sup> In September 2004 the Mayor of London established the London Food board ("London Food") to lead on food matters in the capital. London Food represents the diversity of London's food system and helped develop and deliver a London Food Strategy to improve the health of Londoners and make London's food sustainable over the 10 years to 2016. London Food is chaired by Rosie Boycott and funded through the London Development Agency (LDA).

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<sup>80</sup> *London Development Agency (2006): Health and Sustainable Food for London, The Mayor's Food Strategy*

<sup>81</sup> London Development Agency, Terms of Reference for the London Food Board, London Development Agency website, viewed on 26 February 2009  
<http://www.lda.gov.uk/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.2877>

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Sustain (2008): Feeding the Olympics – London 2012*

<sup>84</sup> *Bioregional / WorldWide Fund for Nature /One Planet Living (2005): Towards a One Planet Olympics: Achieving the first sustainable Olympic Games and Paralympic Games'*

<sup>85</sup> *Sustain (2008): Feeding the Olympics – London 2012*

<sup>86</sup> Consultation response from the London Development Agency (UA/015)

<sup>87</sup> Foresight Project on Global Food and Farming Futures  
<http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/FoodandFarmingFutures/FoodandFarmingProjectHome.asp>

<sup>88</sup> Prof. Tim Lang, Planning & Housing Committee meeting, 13 October 2009  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/planning/2009/oct13/minutes/appendix-a.pdf>