

# Old Oak and Park Royal Local Plan examination

## Agenda Session 6: Willesden Junction

**Participants:** Inspector, Corporation, HGH Planning on behalf of Queens Park Rangers Football Club and Stadium Capital Developments, Grand Union Alliance,

### Summary of issues

- 1 Whether the proposals for Willesden Junction (Policy P11) would be effective (a) in increasing the accessibility of the Old Oak areas. (derived from the eleventh Key Issue of table 5 of Key document 5 identified at Regulation 19(1) stage and the fifth Key Issue of table 5 of Key document 5 identified at Regulation 19(2) stage and representation 2/P11/1 by LBB amongst others) and (b) in defining the nature of the development to take place at Willesden Junction.

### Links

- 2 Willesden Junction: The proposed links from Willesden Junction Station in the diagram for P11 will not assist in improving connection between Old Oak and Harlesden, and does not reflect Brent's ambition that the Station presents strong frontage to station road. Concern regarding the position of Old Oak High Street and it not adequately serving Harlesden Town Centre/ removing activity on Station Road and to the west of Willesden Junction station routing up to Harlesden. At Willesden Junction, the proposed new High Street should connect to the west via Station Road, rather than to the east to Harrow Road. Primary concern is that Harlesden will not be integrated with the development of Old Oak. The Local Plan does not go far enough in promoting improved links. Development principles for wider area of Willesden Junction should not be driven by station design. Access to Harlesden Town Centre will be key. Overstation development at the western end with active frontages and the provision of a new entrance facing onto Station Road would bring benefits to Harlesden and its community. The character of retail uses in Old Oak North and Willesden Junction could negatively impact on Harlesden Town Centre. As such a lower threshold for retail impact assessments in areas of Old Oak North should be incorporated. Development at Willesden Junction Station and adjacent areas should be included in earlier phases of development to enable better connections to Harlesden.
- 3 Should note the benefits of a new bridge link connection Willesden Junction Station to EMR site. Policy should reference benefits of

early delivery of new bridge link to Willesden Junction Station. Supporting text should acknowledge potential for early delivery of a new bridge link from EMR to an improved Willesden Junction Station. Transport Orientated Development – should note that the provision of a new bridge link between the Station and the regeneration area to the south, landing in the European Metals Recycling (EMR) site, will bring about significant benefits. Policy should acknowledge importance of delivering a link between Willesden Junction and Old Oak North. Policy should emphasise that the provision of a new bridge link between the Station and the regeneration area to the south, landing in the European Metals Recycling (EMR) site, will improve PTAL.

- 4 Key of figure 7 does not show all the illustrated routes. Question direct route to Willesden Junction.

### *Content*

- 5 Lack of clarity about improvements to Willesden Junction station
- 6 Willesden Junction Station should be a site allocation. The Plan should state support for over-station development. The plan is unsound as it does not identify Willesden Junction Station and surrounding land as a site allocation. The site should be allocated due to the urgent need to upgrade the station and surrounding sites as the key gateway to Old Oak in advance of Old Oak Common Station opening in 2026.
- 7 Request for early delivery of enhancements to Willesden Junction station and connections. Willesden Junction Station should be included in earlier phases of development.
- 8 It is possible for two adjacent “new city centres” to be formed in the core area, one more associated with the new stations, the other forming a link with Willesden Junction and Harlesden to the north. A new range of jobs, amenities, homes, shops, and street environments can be brought to the area. All buildings should be scaled in relationship to the qualities of pedestrian streets, - dense, but also able to capture the beneficial effects of sun and with small pocket parks. Historically, this sense of mixed, complex city street can be found in St James, Marylebone, Bermondsey, and Bloomsbury.
- 9 Policy should state that tall buildings may be appropriate near to the bridge leading to Willesden Junction Station.
- 10 Policies for Willesden Junction Station are broadly consistent with TfL's aspirations.
- 11 Any proposals for future development of Willesden Maintenance Depot will need to take account of future operational needs. Any

de-designation would be subject to standard rail industry procedures and consultation.

- 12 It should be assumed that bus interchange and standing facilities should be retained, though longer term solution may be found meaning bus standing is not required.
- 13 Should include public realm improvements for pedestrians walking between Willesden Junction via Station Approach over bridge to Old Oak Lane
- 14 Strongly support rail proposals, and suggest considering opening West Coast Main Line platform at Willesden Junction. Protect the potential for Willesden Junction to have a greater local/west London role with more platforms.

## **The Corporation's response**

### *Links*

There are two links to Willesden Junction station proposed to route north to Harlesden Town Centre in the Local Plan; one to the east and one to the west. OPDC are promoting two entrances to the station to ensure that both routes are equally used and the connections to Old Oak benefit Harlesden Town Centre. OPDC shares the aspiration to enhance Willesden Junction station and deliver connections at the earliest opportunity. This will require collaborative working with landowners, TfL and Network Rail.

OPDC considers that figure 2.1 should provide broad descriptions of the opportunities and challenges in delivering the spatial vision. Policy P11 sets out the connectivity benefits for a bridge connecting Old Oak North to Willesden Junction. This link forms part of Old Oak Street in the local plan. Within P2 the supporting text discusses the aspiration for the early delivery of this link. Policy P2 provides sufficient guidance for the delivery of new connections to Willesden Junction that reflects current phasing of development. Policy P2 acknowledges the importance of delivering timely access to Willesden Junction to support access to public transport and support increased PTAL levels.

The supporting text to Policy P2 sets out the benefits and challenges to delivering a new walking and cycling route between Willesden Junction and Old Oak North.

### *Content*

The Willesden Junction area is identified as a site for long term development. Development will have to take account of the technical requirements for this station. Access to Harlesden Town centre is key. Overstation development is supported in the policy.

Site allocations within the Local Plan are used to help OPDC demonstrate its supply of land for new housing and commercial floorspace. They are

not used to identify transport infrastructure. This guidance is provided within Place Policy P11.

The figure for the Willesden Junction place policy (P11) identifies improvements to the bridge. This is supported by the Victoria Road/ Old Oak Lane supporting study. This is included in OPDC's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Three improvement options were developed and are outlined in the Willesden Junction station supporting study. Further work is underway to investigate this further.

OPDC considers that Policy P2 provides sufficient guidance for the location of tall buildings in Old Oak North based on evidence base.

OPDC has retained the bus interchange and standing facilities at Willesden Junction station. OPDC will support future work investigating longer term solutions.

The policy supports the potential delivery of new platforms on the West Coast Main Line. Additional platforms on other lines would be a considerably challenging and is not currently proposed by either Network Rail or TfL, so it is not appropriate for the Local Plan to safeguard for the provision of this.

The phasing of development is defined in OPDC's Development Capacity Study (DCS) and does not preclude the delivery of new connections between Harlesden, Willesden Junction Station and Old Oak North.

The DCS has been developed in accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance for Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessments. This considers deliverability and developability of sites to inform phasing. Based on current information, potential development over and adjacent to the station is challenging due to the inter-related complexities created by railway infrastructure, restricted accessibility and complex land ownerships. These issues are considered to impact on the developability of development above and adjacent to the station resulting in development to currently be envisaged outside of the plan period.

However, OPDC has established the Willesden Junction Steering Group involving key stakeholders, including the London Borough of Brent, and has commissioned additional work to identify development feasibility and potential capacity.

Policy P11 explicitly supports the earlier delivery of new homes and jobs within the plan period by optimising development on and/or adjacent to the station and tracks. Policies SP10 and DI2 also support the timely delivery of development, potentially in advance of identified phasing.

In light of the areas potential longer term development capacity, the area to the west of Willesden Junction Station will be shaded to represent development capacity beyond the plan period.

Policy SP6 provides guidance for the distribution of land uses, including town centre and employment uses. Policy TCC1 provides further detail for the location of town centre uses and approach to managing impacts on existing centres. Policies SP9, D2, D4, D5 and D6 provide guidance in relation to the design of the public realm and built form.

**Matters for discussion**

- 1)** Have I correctly understood the thrust of the representations?
- 2)** Would the proposals for Willesden Junction (Policy P11) would be effective in increasing the accessibility of the Old Oak areas?
- 3)** Would the provisions of the plan relating to Willesden Junction be effective in defining the nature of the development to take place at Willesden Junction?

*P. W. Clark*

Inspector

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