

Local Plan Independent Examination

OPDC Response to Matter and Issue 6

Matter 6: 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.

Notwithstanding the officers' response to my questions and to the Key Issues and representations set out in Appendices E and J to Key Document 5, a Hearing session will be required if representors exercise their right to be heard.

OPDC response:

This response has been informed by Transport for London.

- 1.1. OPDC considers the Local Plan proposals within Policy P11 for Willesden Junction to be effective in increasing the accessibility of the Old Oak areas. OPDC recognises that delivering high quality access to Harlesden and Old Oak North is key to ensuring communities in Harlesden benefit from the regeneration of Old Oak. This recognition is set out in paragraph WJ.3. The proposed connections depicted in figures 3.10 and 4.44 have been informed by the evidence base set out in the Willesden Junction Station Feasibility Study (document SD39) , the Public Realm, Walking and Cycling Strategy (SD38) and the Old Oak North Development Framework Principles (document SD4).
- 1.2. The Old Oak North Development Framework Principles was developed by OPDC based on the outputs of the Old Oak North masterplan consortium of consultants. The consortium of consultants led by AECOM, undertook a detailed assessment of the technical constraints of Old Oak North, Willesden Junction and the required retention of the Elizabeth Line Depot to identify deliverable connections to surrounding areas. This work shows that it will be very challenging to technically and viably deliver Old Oak Street from Old Oak North to Harrow Road as a vehicular connection. The priority will therefore be to deliver a high quality walking and cycling route. However, if future work shows the delivery of this route as a vehicular connection is feasible, viable and acceptable in terms of its transport impacts, this would be supported. In addition to this route, improvements to Scrubs Lane and Old Oak Lane are also defined in policies SP7, T6, P2, P8, P10 and P11 to support walking, cycling and bus services to access Old Oak and Harlesden from Willesden Junction Station.
- 1.3. The walking and cycling route will bridge the West Coast Main Line, landing in Harlesden Place within Old Oak North. The Old Oak North Development Framework Principle PR7(g)(iv) identifies Harlesden Place as an arrival space continuing the route of Old Oak

Street to the south from Willesden Junction. Further guidance for the design and function of Harlesden Place will be provided in a future Old Oak North and Scrubs Lane Supplementary Planning Document.

- 1.4. Local Plan supporting text paragraph WJ.12 states that there is also an aspiration for the upgraded station to have two entrances, one to serve Harlesden via Station Approach and one to serve Old Oak North benefiting from the direct route along Old Oak Street from Harlesden Place.
- 1.5. The phasing of development is defined in OPDC's Development Capacity Study (DCS) (document SD56) and does not preclude improvements to Willesden Junction Station and the delivery of these 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 (PPG 006 Reference ID: 3-006-20140306). 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 ability to develop above and adjacent to the station resulting in the potential for such development currently being envisaged outside of the plan period.
- 1.6. OPDC has established the Willesden Junction Steering Group involving key stakeholders, including the London Borough of Brent, Transport for London and Network Rail, and has commissioned additional work to identify development feasibility and potential capacity. Policy P11 explicitly supports the earlier delivery of new homes and jobs where feasible 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, Policy SP10 supporting development potentially in advance of identified phasing depicted in figure 3.16. In light of the area to the west of Willesden Junction's potential longer term development capacity, this area will be shaded to represent potential development capacity beyond the plan period.
- 1.7. The Willesden Junction Steering Group will inform the scope of a further GRIP study to identify and agree required improvements to Willesden Junction Station. This group, and any further work, such as the GRIP study, will seek to ensure that over-station and adjacent-station development is not precluded. This study will aim to ensure that enhanced links to Willesden Junction station, station improvements and development capacity are optimised.
- 1.8. OPDC officers have sought to address concerns raised by the London Borough of Brent and the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum during the Local Plan consultations through amendments to the Willesden Junction Place Policy diagram (Figure 4.44 at Policy P11) and other adjacent Place Policy Diagrams of figure 4.7 (Policy P2), figure 4.27 (Policy P8) and figure 4.34 (Policy P10).