

From: Laura Jorgensen [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 May 2024 06:45
To: Planning Policy Consultations
Subject: City Plan 2040 Consultation

Categories: CONFIRMED

THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL

Dear Planning Team,

I write as the Rector of St Botolph's without Aldgate in response to the consultation on the City Plan 2040. Our parish mainly sits within the Portsoken Ward, and I am in my 15th year as Rector here.

Ministry in the City is very varied, especially when located in a residential ward, where housing estates, towers, and tourists all share the ward. The City of London has always been a place of diversity and change, and at St Botolph's we are delighted to be part of that.

City Plan 2040

There is much to commend in City Plan 2040, however, I also have the following points to make.

General tone and direction

In comparison to the City Plan 2015 which focussed on all the different aspects of the City, the proposed City Plan 2040 seems to place its focus entirely on growth of office space and encouragement of visitors to the City, and does not seem to recognise the importance of residents, nor the presence of communities other than the large corporations, such as the churches.

Strategic Policy 1.3 Social Objective

Paragraph 3 - all the areas of change are to the edge of the City, and will have a big impact on those living in social housing in the City

This mentions 'engaging with' communities, which is the task of any local authority, but does not say what purpose this would serve. Later in the document it seems to suggest that community facilities could be located outside the City walls - expansion of office space at the expense of the community.

Section 3

Strategic Policy 1

6.d As so much of the open spaces in the City are churchyards, please could this be mentioned specifically. The redevelopment of our churchyard by the City of London means that office workers seeking a quiet place during the working day, can now enjoy the excellent work by Open Spaces in maintaining this green space.

7 The Aldgate School is an outstanding school and the only state school in the City and I suggest it is named here.

10 It would be good here to underline what 'support' might look like.

11 The Aldgate School would value this support.

Section 3 Policy HL3

1 Quiet open spaces include many churchyards and it would be good to mention them here.

The 2015 plan has greater protection for residents than this one is proposing. The cumulative effect of development work should be considered - for example, the residents of Middlesex Street have had a number of consecutive developments. Noise from Licensed premises is a big issue for residents and is worth being mentioned here.

Policy HL5 for community facilities to be relocated away from residents. It would be good to see the City Plan committing to its residents with facilities that are close to them. I note that developers now seem to be asked to provide 'community space' within buildings - the conversations I have had with people where this has happened and they have asked to use that space is that it is all booked up for months, if not years, without any idea who is using it. I have also been approached by developers to talk about 'community spaces'. In Portsoken Ward we are quite well served by community spaces now, what we don't have always is the funding to run them - Artizan Street Library is well used, as is Portsoken Community Centre, and our own community hall is now open.

3.6.2 Rather than just 'potential' to accommodate activities, Churches already do have many activities. Churches often have spaces for community activities but can struggle to find funding to support them. In my own church we run community choirs for adults and children and are in the process of seeking funding for community provision.

Policy HL6 Public Toilets

One of the reasons the Portsoken Pavillion was built in Aldgate Square was for the provision of public toilets. This lasted only a few years, and so I encourage more toilets, especially as churchyards attract public urination, but also encourage the City to ensure toilets it does provide continue in use more than a couple of years.

Policy HL8

I commend the commitment to Play Areas and would like to note that there are children in the City - in our schools, but also in the increasing number of tourists. As a parent, I know that when I'm on holiday finding nearby playgrounds is always a wonderful moment of relief in a busy day - play facilities located within the City are as important as those outside. I would also underline how transformatory Aldgate Square was as a safe space for children to play - it is the only grass my children get to play on with their friends - until recently when a bar was granted a lease on the Portsoken Pavillion and the children were excluded from the area by the vast number of drinkers. Places for children to play are very limited, and those spaces should not be taken over by adults who drink.

Policy HS1 - 2 a In the Portsoken KAOC it would be good to note that social housing is important here and that even if it took away potential office space it would be possible to build here.

Strategic Policy S6

Churches are places of worship, but they are also places of culture and visitor experience The GLA recognise the Church of England as one of the anchor institutions - there are many concerts throughout the week, and the City's grade 1 listed churches draw people into the City to visit our

buildings and for services, particularly at Christmas. Our churches are important film locations and places where school children come to take part in curriculum learning.

CV5 1 'unacceptable impact' - this will very much depend on the definition of what is acceptable. With the plan in general emphasising a 7 day a week model there needs to be a very tight line drawn for what 'acceptable' might be.

Section 11 Heritage and Tall Buildings

Unlike the 2015 Plan which underlined the importance of the many listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments etc, the fact that this section combines heritage and tall buildings seems to indicate that the City is moving away from protection and protected views and is valuing a vast increase in office space over its heritage assets. As detailed above, churches are not merely heritage assets, but places of rest and quiet, of community cohesion, and work hard to encourage not just our own faith community, but are there for anyone in the community, of any faith or none.

As part of the heritage of the City, as a group the City Churches bring together in a small area much historic value. The City Churches have applied for World Monument Fund recognition. This section places undue emphasis on the '1.2 msqm net' and does not give sufficient weight to the heritage and living communities - I note that Bevis Marks is given 'protection' but that the line is drawn very tightly and does not include the Bury Street site.

S12 Tall Buildings - it is noted that although many of these are deemed to have an element of 'public access' this excludes many from surrounding boroughs who would not choose to have to show ID to access them.

I wish to appear in examination hearing sessions.

Thank you,

Laura Jorgensen

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