

Morgan, Jackson

From: Tom Sweetman [REDACTED]
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Please find attached representations submitted on behalf of our client, GPE Plc to the draft City Plan. I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt.

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17th June 2024

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Dear Sir/Madam,

REPRESENTATIONS ON THE CITY OF LONDON- CITY PLAN 2040 REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment on the City of London City Plan 2040 (April 2024). These representations are submitted on behalf of Great Portland Estates Plc (GPE). GPE is also a member of the City Property Association (CPA).

GPE welcome the aspirations of the draft City Plan and many of the policies within it. However, there are elements which GPE feel should be amended in order to provide a more balanced and flexible approach to development within the City.

In preparing these representations, we have considered the tests within the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") and whether the draft City Plan and its policies are sound, meaning; positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. These representations relate to general policies and chapters within the City Plan 2040 (the "Plan"). Suggested amendments to a number of draft policies are set out below, with additional text shown in bold.

Policy SA1: Publicly Accessible Locations

GPE believes that the need for a full risk assessment for all major developments is onerous. Given the relatively low threshold for a development to be considered 'major', this will capture a large number of developments. Not all of these developments will raise issues associated with counter-terrorism. Instead GPE would suggest 'where relevant' is inserted into policy to allow flexibility to only seek an assessment where one is required.

The draft policy should be amended to say:

"All major developments **where relevant** are required to address the issue of publicly accessible locations and counter-terrorism by".



Draft Policy OF1: Office Development

As currently drafted, Part F of the draft policy states that office development should *'Where appropriate, provide a proportion of flexible and affordable workspace suitable for micro, SMEs'*. London Plan Policy E3 'Affordable Workspace' part C, states that Boroughs, in their development Plans, should consider detailed affordable workspace policies in light of local evidence of need and viability.

The evidence base which supports this policy does not provide evidence to demonstrate a need for affordable workspace. The CPA has explained in their representations that the sub-markets in the Square Mile already provide a wide variety of inherently affordable office accommodation options which includes serviced offices. The draft policy also set out that the workspace should be suitable for micro, SMEs. Arup and Knight Frank's 'Future of Offices' Report states that over 98% of all City businesses are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), with fewer than 250 employees.

Whilst GPE support the principle of affordable workspace in appropriate circumstances, they do not believe it should be included under part 1 of draft policy on the basis there is no identified need for it. Part F of the policy should either be deleted or a new separate element of policy should be added in which encourages its inclusion as set out below:

'Affordable workspace will be encouraged as part of major office developments which provides flexible and affordable workspace suitable for micro or SMEs.'

Draft Policy CV2: Culture and Visitors

GPE question the need for all major developments to submit a Culture and Vibrancy Plan. This blanket requirement would become an unnecessary burden on those bringing proposals forward. Given the size threshold for a development to be considered major, there is not a demonstrated need for all these types of buildings to make a contribution to culture. Part 1 of the policy needs to introduce some flexibility for the consideration of the need for an assessment or increase the threshold to large-scale development.

Parts 2 and 3 of the draft policy require provision of arts, cultural or leisure facilities as part of large scale and major developments. This blanket approach should be revised to allow the consideration of whether the provision for space is required. Whilst the focus of on-site provision is large-scale developments there should still be an assessment of whether there is an identified need which a particular development generates. As currently drafted this could result in the provision of a large number of unused spaces across the City.

It should also be recognised that there is no commercial marketplace for speculative cultural uses due to operational funding constraints. It very challenging to secure cultural occupiers until developments are nearing completion.



Part 2 should be amended to state:

~~Requiring~~ Large scale development proposals of 10,000 sqm or more in size **should explore the provision of to make provision** on-site for arts, culture or leisure facilities;'

The supporting text should also make clear that the 10,000sqm threshold is based on uplift in floorspace. It should not apply to an existing building which is already 10,000sqm but then proposes a 1,000sqm extension to make provision for these types of uses.

Part 3 of the policy also requires major developments below 10,000sqm threshold to make provision for arts, culture or leisure facilities. The size should be commensurate with the size of the development. Again, this blanket approach could deliver a large number of spaces across the City which could call into question their overall viability and it could dilute the overall cultural offering of the City. The formula for calculating an off-site payment also needs to be clarified.

Part 3 should be amended to state:

~~Requiring~~ Major developments below 10,000 sqm in size *should explore* the ~~to make~~ *provision of* for arts, culture or leisure facilities of a scale commensurate with the size of the development, or to provide off-site provision or contributions towards arts, culture and leisure facilities and infrastructure. **Should a need be identified** ~~On-site~~ provision will be preferred, with off-site provision only being appropriate where a specific project has been identified through partnership working.'

Draft Policy S8: Design

GPE supports the overall ambition of policy to create high-quality buildings, streets and spaces. However, point 17 is overly restrictive and not justified. As drafted point 17 seeks publicly accessible space within developments by maximising the amount of accessible, inclusive and free to enter open spaces, roof terraces, cultural offers and other spaces, including in tall buildings and along the river and around City landmarks. Whilst it can be appropriate to provide such spaces when proposing large-scale projects, there will be many instances when it is not appropriate or practical to include these types of spaces.

As currently drafted these types of spaces could be sought on any scale of development which will likely have a significant impact on the overall viability and deliverability of the project but also create management problems if these types of facilities were put into smaller-scale buildings. We propose the following amendments:

~~Delivers publicly accessible space within the development~~ **where appropriate, and encourage** ~~by maximising the amount of~~ accessible, inclusive and free to enter open spaces, roof terraces, cultural offers and other spaces, including in tall buildings and along the river and around City landmarks.'



Draft Policy DE1: Sustainable Design

Whilst there is overall support for this policy, there need to be some amendments to provide a more balanced approach which recognises the need to balance sustainable design, economic and social benefits of proposals which deliver the wider objectives of the City Plan and London Plan.

The policy should be amended to include this balanced approach, specifically where it seeks to ensure the 'most sustainable and suitable approach' for any given site and before introducing the need for development to 'minimise whole life-cycle carbon emissions'.

As currently drafted, these explicit requirements have no balancing or reciprocal wording that acknowledges the need to optimise sites in the context of the wider economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. Without that balance, the draft policy could be interpreted and applied as one which always favours the least carbon intensive development option in any given scenario.

The draft policy also includes requirements for major developments to achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of 'excellent' and aim for 'outstanding'. Flexibility should be applied to the requirement to achieve outstanding on a case-by-case basis. There may be site specific factors which means an outstanding rating cannot be achieved, particularly for retrofit projects.

The draft policy also includes a Nabers rating of 5* may not be practical or reasonable for retrofit schemes. The Nabers 5* rating needs to be applied flexibly which also recognises this has recently been introduced to the UK. It is assumed that the requirement for Nabers rating only relate to office developments, however this should be clarified.

Draft Policy DE2: Design Quality

Part K of the policy states that plant and building services equipment should be fully screened from view and integrated into the design of the building so there are no adverse impacts on the amenity of surrounding areas. Whilst design teams work extremely hard to minimise the impact of plant, it is not always possible to fully screen the plant. The draft policy needs to be more flexible to require the visual impacts of plant to be minimised. We would propose the following amendments:

~~'The plant and building services equipment are fully screened from view and integrated into the design of the building such that there are no adverse impacts on amenity in surrounding areas;~~

'Development should seek to fully screen plant and building services equipment from view and integrate it into the building design. Where it has been demonstrated this is not possible, consideration will be given to minimising as far as possible the impacts on the amenity in surrounding areas'

Draft Policy DE4: Terraces and Elevated Public Spaces

See comments in relation to draft policy S8. It is not always possible or necessary to accommodate these types of spaces into major developments. Policy needs to be suitably flexible.



Draft Policy OS2: Urban Greening

Whilst project teams work to maximise urban greening, it is not always possible to meet the UGF scores set out by policy. There might be site specific constraints which limit this. GPE would suggest draft policy is amended to say:

‘Major development proposals will be required to:

- a. Include an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) calculation demonstrating how the development will meet the City’s target UGF score of 0.3 as a minimum, **unless site specific considerations make this undeliverable**’.

We trust the comments of GPE will be taken on board in progressing the City Plan review and we look forward to engaging further with you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

DP9 Ltd