

Briefing

Welcome to our Briefing section which includes the usual elements of *Planning in London* magazine: planning performance statistics; minutes of the LPDF's last meeting; London First's take on planning issues, Andy Rogers' Almanac and Terry Farrell's regular column

LONDON PLANNING STATEMENT

The Mayor has published for public consultation a draft "London Planning Statement" as proposed London Plan supplementary planning guidance. This is intended to fill the gap left by the Government's revocation of the former Government Office for London Circular 1/2008 by pulling together information about the Mayor's role in the London Planning system.

The document:

- 1 Sets out some general principles of fundamental importance to the planning system in London
- 2 Explains the Mayor's role in London's planning system, both in preparing strategic housing policy through his spatial development strategy (The London Plan) and in taking planning decisions on strategic developments
- 3 Highlights the issues the Mayor considers to be particular priorities for the London planning system
- 4 Sets out the Mayor's intended programme of planning-related work for the next four years.

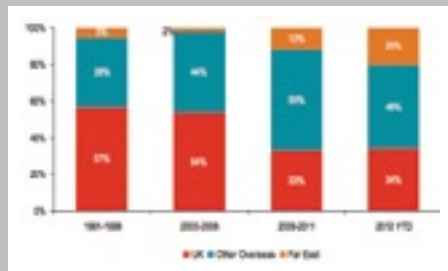
Comments on the draft SPG should be sent by 6pm on Tuesday 5 February 2013 to: lps@london.gov.uk with "London Planning Statement" as the subject. ■

GLIMMER OF HOPE ON THE HORIZON

Jones Lang LaSalle has published its 2013 Property Predictions, which suggest that it will be a transitional year for the UK economy as recovery is slowly re-established.

The pain of recession has not been evenly shared across the UK. London has been most resilient and is where much of the recent jobs impetus has been concentrated. The capital is expected to drive the UK economy in the

recovery led by its world-leading business services sector. The rest of the country bore the brunt of the recent downturn, but there too, growth re-starts in 2013, albeit at a fairly modest pace.



"In short, the next 12 months are unlikely to bring a dramatic turnaround. But, in a year's time, the foundations for recovery should be in place and some light will be visible at the end of the tunnel. For property markets the implications are clear. Demand will respond slowly to the economic thaw as occupier confidence rebuilds. Even with limited quality space in many markets, rents are unlikely to see much uplift, outside of central London office and retail. Cautious global investors are likely to stick to prime buildings in liquid, international markets, implying limited interest outside of core assets in the capital. Of particular interest is whether 2013 will herald a slow return to development as supply of new grade A space falls to historic low levels across most sectors." says Guy Grainger UK chief executive at Jones Lang LaSalle.

Download a copy of the full Property Predictions 2013 report at joneslanglasalle.co.uk ■

MAYOR APPOINTS NEW DESIGN ADVISORY GROUP

The Group will be chaired by Fiona Fletcher-Smith, the mayor's executive director of development and enterprise. It will meet up to four times each year, with the mayor chairing

at least one meeting.

- Joyce Bridges, Former Cobe Commissioner, Former English Heritage Commissioner and Chair of EH's LAC. Member of EH's Urban Panel. Design Council CABA Built Environment Expert panel.
- Sir Terry Farrell, Architect, Farrells
- Eric Parry, Architect, Eric Parry Architects
- Sunand Prasad, Architect, Penoyre & Prasad LLP
- Patricia Brown, Director of Central
- Fred Manson – Former Director of Regeneration Southwark, Associate Director Heatherwick Studio; Chairman UDL Design Surgery
- Peter Murray – Chairman, New London Architecture
- Colin Haylock – President of Board of Trustees, RTPI
- Fiona Scott – Director Gort Scott
- Stephen Witherford – Member Tate Modern Council; CABA; RIBA Advisor; Visiting Fellow LSE Cities
- David Levitt – Design champion Catalyst Housing Group; Board, Design for Homes; CABA Enabler
- June Barnes – Group Chief Executive, East Thames Housing Group; Board Member National Housing Fed.
- Richard Powell – Director of Planning and Development, Capital and Counties.
- Pam Alexander – Pam Alexander – Trustee of the Design Council, non-exec Director of DC Cobe and a Built Environment Expert for Cobe, non-exec Director of Crest Nicholson and a Director of the Academy of Urbanism.
- Roger Hawkins – Partner Hawkins\Brown.
- Bob Allies – Partner Allies and Morrison; a member of the CABA National Design Review Panel and a member of the RIBA Awards Group. ■

Little change over the year

The number of applications received and decided is still relatively low, although not to the historically low levels recorded in 2009-10. But there has been a recent improvement

Summary: England

In the period April to June 2012 authorities undertaking district level planning in England:

- received 121,150 applications for planning permission, a decrease of 1 per cent compared with the corresponding quarter in 2011;
- decided 110,500 planning applications, 1 per cent higher than in the same quarter in the previous year;
- granted 90,200 permissions, 1 per cent higher than in the same quarter in 2011;
- and decided 2 per cent fewer residential decisions compared to the June quarter 2011.

In the year ending June 2012, district level planning authorities:

- received 476,100 applications, a decrease of 1 per cent on the year ending June 2011 figure;
- decided 436,000 planning applications, a slight decrease on the year ending June 2011 figure;
- granted 355,200 permissions, a small increase compared to the figure for the year to June 2011;
- decided 57 per cent of major applications in 13 weeks, 70 per cent of minors and 82 per cent of others in 8 weeks. This compares to 65 per cent for majors, 74 per cent for minors and 85 per cent for others in the year ending June 2011. However in the last quarter there

has been an upturn in the proportion of major applications decided in 13 weeks, increasing from 53 per cent to 60 per cent;

- and decided 1 per cent fewer residential decisions compared to the year ending June 2011.

Boroughs and districts: speed of decisions

In April to June 2012, 60 per cent of major applications were processed within 13 weeks compared with 62 per cent in the June 2011 quarter. Also, 69 per cent of minor applications and 82 per cent of other applications were processed within 8 weeks compared with 72 per cent and 84 per cent respectively for the quarter ending June 2011. District level planning authorities decided 53 per cent of large-scale major applications, and 62 per cent of small-scale major applications within 13 weeks compared with 57 per cent and 63 per cent respectively for the quarter ending June 2011. Also, 92 per cent of all major decisions were within 52 weeks compared to 93 per cent in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Major applications

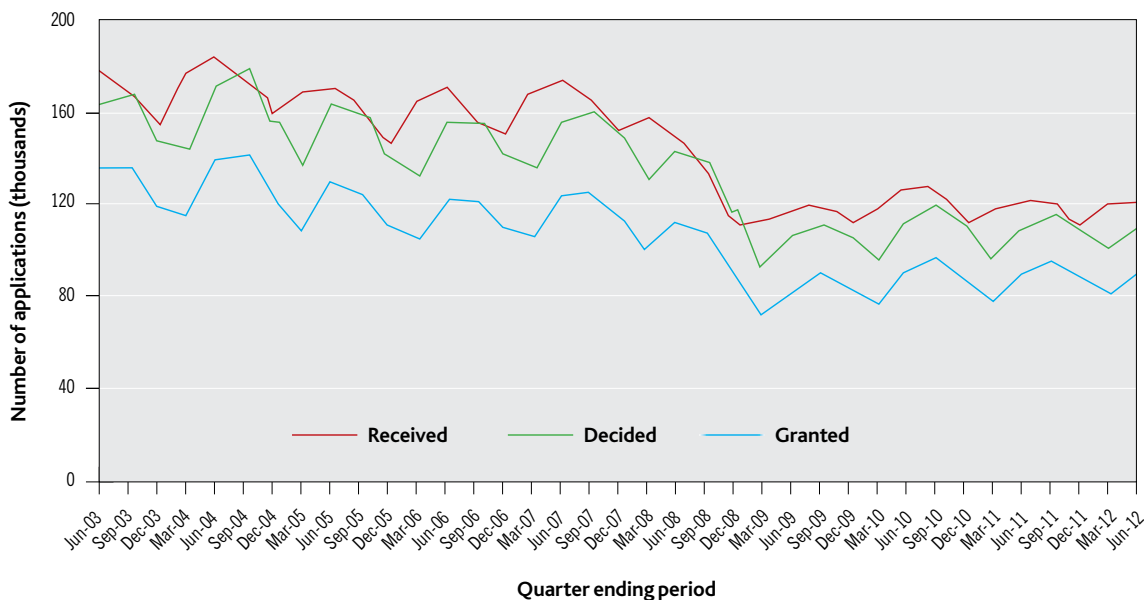
In the year ending June 2012, 57 per cent of major applications were processed within 13 weeks, compared with 65 per cent in the year ending June 2011. Also, 70 per cent of minor applications and 82 per cent of other

applications were processed within 8 weeks compared with 74 per cent and 85 per cent respectively in the year ending June 2011. District level planning authorities decided 48 per cent of large-scale major applications, and 59 per cent of small-scale major applications within 13 weeks compared with 58 per cent and 66 per cent respectively in the year ending June 2011. Also 91 per cent of all major decisions were within 52 weeks, compared to the figure of 93 per cent in the previous year.

Residential decisions

In April to June 2012, there were 11,800 decisions on applications for residential developments, compared with around 12,000 decisions in the June quarter 2011, a decrease of 2 per cent. The number of major residential decisions decreased by 8 per cent compared to the June quarter 2011, while minor residential decisions decreased by 1 per cent. Authorities granted 81 per cent of major residential applications, a 1 percentage point increase from the June quarter 2011, and determined 49 per cent of them within 13 weeks, down from 53 per cent in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Authorities granted 74 per cent of decisions on minor residential applications and determined 62 per cent within 8 weeks, compared with 73 per cent and 65 per cent respectively in the June quarter 2011.

In the year to June 2012, residential



Left: Number of planning applications received, decided and granted by district level planning authorities

Planning authority	Major Developments				Minor Developments				Other Decisions					
	Total Major Decisions	Number granted	Percentage granted	Percentage within 13 weeks	Total Minor Decisions	Number granted	Percentage granted	Percentage within 8 weeks	Percentage of major and minor decisions granted	Total Other Decisions	Number granted	Percentage granted	Percentage within 8 weeks	Percentage over 8 weeks
England	2,915	2,533	87	60	29,729	25,075	84	69	85	77,832	62,628	89	82	18
Barking and Dagenham	1	1	100	-	44	32	73	64	73	125	84	82	60	40
Barnet	7	7	100	43	146	108	74	29	75	680	439	89	40	60
Bexley	5	4	80	80	82	68	83	72	83	358	263	85	93	7
Brent	9	7	78	78	166	111	67	80	67	508	275	81	84	16
Bromley	11	7	64	55	124	78	63	57	63	585	373	79	72	28
Camden	15	8	53	92	349	284	81	82	80	458	246	81	86	14
City of London	12	12	100	83	52	52	100	81	100	86	85	99	73	27
Croydon	5	3	60	40	234	187	80	67	79	363	219	77	77	23
Ealing	12	11	92	67	190	141	74	88	75	603	299	73	92	8
Enfield	5	4	80	20	111	84	76	50	76	374	244	83	61	39
Greenwich	4	3	75	75	121	93	77	86	77	290	198	83	88	12
Hackney	9	6	67	89	172	130	76	84	75	367	178	76	89	11
Hammersmith and Fulham*	5	4	80	60	93	77	83	69	83	445	320	80	72	28
Haringey	1	1	100	100	71	46	65	73	65	372	227	77	74	26
Harrow	4	4	100	100	101	56	55	72	57	470	224	65	88	12
Havering	11	9	82	45	79	58	73	71	74	301	211	84	89	11
Hillingdon	17	10	59	65	121	87	72	76	70	541	267	66	94	6
Hounslow	6	2	33	50	89	67	75	58	73	535	319	75	76	24
Islington	10	6	60	50	119	94	79	59	78	299	200	76	65	35
Kensington and Chelsea	1	1	100	100	320	262	82	67	82	657	462	80	58	42
Kingston upon Thames	3	2	67	100	49	37	76	69	75	316	199	83	83	17
Lambeth	13	12	92	8	208	163	78	44	79	415	236	75	61	39
Lewisham*	-	-	-	-	164	134	82	67	82	225	133	81	75	25
London Thames Gateway	7	7	100	29	-	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-
Merton	10	8	80	50	57	43	75	67	76	400	230	83	86	15
Newham	8	6	75	86	121	70	58	92	59	259	129	70	93	7
Redbridge	4	3	75	50	78	52	67	26	67	539	289	80	61	39
Richmond upon Thames	1	1	100	100	242	204	84	70	84	718	415	79	82	18
Southwark	9	7	78	56	194	158	81	73	81	338	221	80	79	21
Sutton	6	5	83	33	57	34	60	74	62	262	176	81	80	20
Tower Hamlets*	15	12	80	93	133	110	83	68	82	220	167	81	73	27
Waltham Forest	8	6	75	100	133	80	60	81	61	268	117	70	91	9
Wandsworth	15	14	93	87	221	194	88	57	88	520	400	93	71	29
Westminster	18	18	100	65	643	560	87	61	87	1,097	905	86	68	32

Table P131: District planning authorities – planning decisions, by development type, speed of decision and authority

April to June 2012 Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics>

decisions decreased by 1 per cent from 50,900 in the 12 months to June 2011 to 50,200. The number of major and minor residential decisions decreased by 4 per cent and 1 per cent respectively. Authorities granted 82 per cent of major residential applications, compared with 80 per cent in the year ending June 2011, and determined 47 per cent of them within 13 weeks, down from 57 per cent in the previous year. Authorities granted 74 per cent of decisions on minor residential applications and determined

62 per cent within 8 weeks, compared with 72 per cent and 67 per cent respectively in the previous year.

Historical context

The numbers of applications received and decided are still relatively low, having fallen back from the slight increases from 2009-10 to 2010-11 although not to the historically low levels recorded in 2009-10. However, the percentage of applications granted continues to rise and, at 88%, is at its highest for

more than 10 years. At the same time, the percentage of major applications decided in 13 weeks has declined markedly since Q3 2009-10, when it stood at 71 per cent, although there has been a significant upturn since the March quarter 2012, increasing from 53 per cent to 60 per cent. However, this indicator can be volatile, and was 43 per cent in 2002-03. The speed of decisions for minors and other applications have also fallen although not as quickly or steeply as that of major decisions. ■

'Orbirail' gets all the way around

The Forum discussed the implications of the newly published census figures and learned the long history of London's orbital railways from Sir Peter Hall



Left: Map extract from 1999 Report for London Development Partnership
Above: "Orbirail"

The census figures were outlined by Baljit Bains: Head of Demography, GLA and are fully reported on page 14 – see 'Damned statistics...'

The second topic was the evolution and Significance of the Orbital Rail Network (Orbirail) completed in December introduced by Sir Peter Hall.

Sir Peter's presentation was entitled *London Going Round in Circles: a Celebration of Orbirail*.

He explained the newly completed circle is in fact two half circles – part Alternating Current (AC) – overhead pantagraph - and part Direct Current (DC) – third rail. The DC interchange is at Highbury and Islington and Clapham Junction.

Semi orbital travel as an idea derives from several Victorian circular routes around London: Inner Middle, Outer and Super Outer Circles. Congestion at the centre has increased the benefit of travelling around parts of London without using the main radial lines is clearly attractive

The idea for Orbirail/Ringrail was developed in a proposal to the London Development Partnership by Sir Peter Hall in association with Michael Edwards and Drummond Robson in 1999. As well as its connection benefits it also offered a substantial increase in public transport capacity and many interchange regeneration opportunities. It complements the two cross London routes: Thameslink and

Crossrail. It was also, at some £750 million, very cost effective compared in particular with Crossrail, and Thameslink. It was further promoted after the mayoral election in 2000 as part of a wider case for a polycentric London. The Deputy Mayor (Nicky Gavron) took up the idea as did Ken Livingston.

The key elements of the route are the North London Line through Highbury and Islington which went on to the docks (now served by DLR to Woolwich), the old West London Line through Earl's Court via Chelsea Harbour/Imperial Wharf/Lots Road and the East London Line which was operated formerly as an anomalous Underground route.

Now that the line is complete it also offers scope for further connections via trams and bus rapid transit as well as other bus services.

be found in the Imperial Wharf area, and Shepherd's Bush/White City already a transport hub and interchange, where a massive development is under consideration to the north of Westfields.

Earl's Court (below and next page) regrettably has a missing interchange which does not form part of the present plans. There should be one as indicated with a red oval on the plan to link West Brompton and West Kensington.

Other suitable interchanges are at Willesden Junction and Old Oak (HS2 and Crossrail also pass through here) and at West Hampstead (Midland Main Line, Thameslink Metropolitan and Jubilee Lines, (currently

linked by a busy surface connection only), Bermondsey where Thameslink crosses the new Orbital, and at Loughborough Junction where the new Orbital can link to Sutton. As well as these there is a need for a proper link between the new Orbital at high level east of the crossing over the lines to Herne Hill.

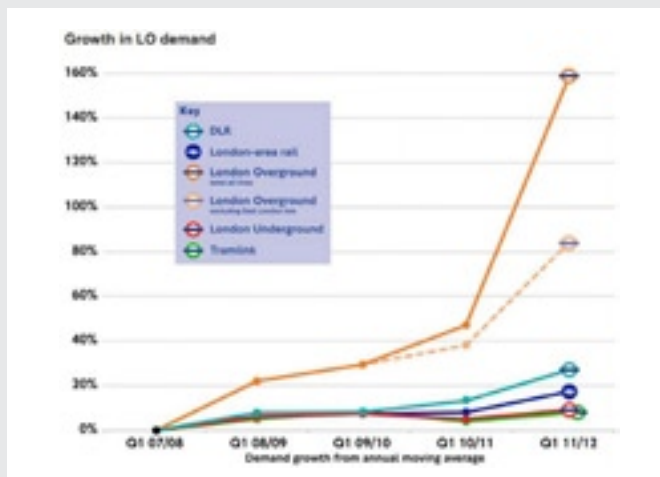
Sir Peter suggested that we could learn from the SBahn network in Berlin with its North, East, South and West Cross Interchanges.

He also said the new London Overground is already overwhelmed by its success in passenger numbers.

After this present stage there is considerable scope to extend platforms to increase capacity, although new extensions in North London are harder since it lacks the density of suburban rail network of the south. There is scheme called Orbirail 2 which links Richmond and Wimbledon via the "Kingston Loop" using reversing track near Earlsfield and then on to Bromley or Hayes branch to provide a tram or train to Lewisham.

Drummond Robson supplemented Peter Hall's presentation with additional material from his experience as Consents Manager on the East London Line and its extensions.

The most obvious major change was at Bishopsgate Goods Yard where the former Liverpool Street/Broad Street corridor had to be connected via Bishopsgate Goods Yard and a replaced Shoreditch Station on towards Whitechapel.



Top: Link plan between West Brompton and Kensington
Far right: Earl's Court Masterplan



London Underground secured powers under the Transport Works Act etc. to build the railway, which was then redesigned to meet the more onerous Railtrack/National Rail standards.

Other major works sites were Dalston, Haggerston, Hoxton, Whitechapel, Wapping, Rotherhithe and Canada Water.

This involved bridging the site of Holywell (St John The Baptist's) Priory and avoiding the site of the first London playhouse, built in 1576 by the English actor and entrepreneur

James Burbage and Shakespeare's original theatre (discovered in 2008) as well as averting the total listing of the Goods Yard under pressure from activists and the Prince of Wales and negotiations with Tessa Jowell in her role as Minister for Culture Media and Sport.

Michael Bach recalled the 1980s campaign to stop the motorway box, notably the proposed road through west London. This has had the effect of increasing the need for this section of the Orbital Rail network dubbed the Clapham Flyer.

Michael Edwards said that most of the desirable schemes do not get implemented because of the bottlenecks to their realisation. Opportunities are likely to be missed for this reason in many of the London Plan's Opportunity areas. The achievement involves pressure being applied at the right moment, particularly for modest improvement schemes rather than the very large investment schemes. He wondered why some of the larger schemes happened in spite of their poor cost benefit ratios. ■

Next meeting of the London Planning & Development Forum

- at the GLA, City Hall meeting room 4
- Monday 10th March 2013, 2.30pm
- Discussion topics: see planninginlondon.com >LP&DF

Visitors are welcome. Please notify the Hon Secretary Drummond Robson at robplan@btconnect.com



The London Planning and Development Forum (LPDF)

The LPDF was formed in 1980 following an all-party inquiry into the development control system. It selects topics to debate at its quarterly meetings and these views are reported to constituent bodies. It is a sounding board for the development of planning policy in the capital, used by both the public and private sector.

Agendas and minutes are at planninginlondon.com. To attend please contact secretary Drummond Robson: robplan@btconnect.com

The LPDF is administered by:

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Member bodies

Association of Consultant Architects
Association of London Borough Planning Officers/Planning Officers' Society
London Councils
British Property Federation
Design Council CABE
City of London Law Society
Confederation for British Industry DCLG
Design for London
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Greater London Authority
Home Builders Federation
Landscape Architecture SE

London Chambers of Commerce & Industry
London Forum of Amenity Societies
London Housing Federation
National Planning Forum
RIBA, RICS, RTPI, UDAL
Transport for London
London University (The Bartlett, UCL)

Affiliated members:

University of Westminster
Planning Aid for London
Berkeley Group plc
London Metropolitan University

Performance matters



Performance standards for local authorities planning functions are an essential part of the jigsaw to ensure the wider set of planning reforms is achieved



By Faraz Barber

London First's executive director, planning

As the Government continues to reform the planning system under the guise of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill, the detail that underpins some of the proposals is now available to help comprehend the likely impact they will have. Some of the proposals could have an immediate effect on how planning departments operate even before they hit the Statute Book.

A prime example will be how local planning departments manage their caseload to determine major planning applications within the statutory 13 week period. The Government has now consulted on how it proposes to assess performance standards in local planning authorities by assessing how fast and well major planning applications are determined within the statutory 13 week period, averaged over a two year period. If an authority determines 30% or fewer major applications within the statutory period, or more than 20% of major decisions have been overturned at appeal, the Government

would designate the planning department as a poorly performing authority. The intention is to review this designation annually.

The first designations would not be made until the Bill receives Royal Assent and secondary legislation is in place (which the Government is targeting for October 2013); performance data taken from 2012/13 and 2011/12 is likely to determine which planning authority will be designated.

Using the assessment criteria on which the Government consulted, the current planning performance data suggest that a handful of London boroughs would automatically be designated as poorly performing and a number of London boroughs would be on the borderline. It will be important, particularly for those that are way under the proposed threshold of being designated or on the borderline, to use the coming year to improve their performance levels and lift their average score.

While it is imperative to drive up performance, the danger of such a blunt approach may bring unintended consequences, such as an adverse effect on determining minor planning applications within the statutory period as authorities re-align their resources. It is disappointing that the Government has taken such a blunt approach and not tried to

tie in the performance levels of determining minor planning applications, which can equally have a cumulative effect of the delivery of jobs and economic growth. The criteria could have also included whether the planning authority has an up to date local plan in place, especially as the full impact of the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development kicks in at the end of March. Clearly, the approach is to place a marker on the need for improved performance, but the dangers of such blunt performance indicators are evident.

It is surprising that planning authorities have been slow in taking up Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) for handling major planning applications. The Government's data show that only 151 PPAs were determined over the last year across England (of which 48 PPAs were in London). The threat of the "poor performing" designation may help to reignite the interest to set-up a PPA service. If this is to happen, local planning authorities must ensure that they are resourced with the staff and skills to meet the obligations that come with setting up a PPA with applicants.

While driving up performance standards in planning departments is one element of the Government's proposals, it is an essential part of the jigsaw to ensure the wider set of planning reforms is achieved. ■

The first London property summit

The inaugural London Property Summit, London First's joint venture with property networking forum Movers and Shakers, came to the capital as 500 delegates filled the Hilton Metropole on 15 October to hear from a multitude of speakers from the property and construction and discuss the future of development in London.

Opening the day, Ben Page, of market research company Ipsos MORI, reassured delegates that, despite the economic downturn, London is still seen internationally as a great city in which to invest and do business. A quick survey of the audience showed 54% felt a stable regulatory system is the

most important factor in attracting inward investment to London and 40% believed it's the city's financial services that make it a world class place to do business. Discussing the housing challenge, Page outlined the public's concerns around further development in the capital, if it were not seen to bring about benefits such as encouraging young people to stay in the vicinity or providing more affordable housing for local people. In terms of solving the housing crisis, 42% of delegates thought the potential for joint public/private sector investment could be the single biggest factor in improving housing stock. Over half (54%) thought that East London will see the

most growth to 2020.

Panellists including Chris Grigg (British Land), Martin Moore (Prudential Property Investment Managers), Collete O'Shea (Land Securities) and Tony Travers (London School of Economics) shared their thoughts on how to maintain London's status. Moore stressed the importance of the UK capital on the world stage, describing how its large and liquid market makes the city globally attractive as an investment, while Grigg added that the stability of the UK Government and advances in transport gave London an edge on its international competitors. He emphasised the vital role that the Government has to play in driving



growth and was supported by O'Shea, who agreed that more flexibility in the planning system is needed to encourage further development in the capital. She also stressed the importance of responsibility being taken at a local level, stating that while Boris Johnson's 2020 vision was a positive foundation, the Mayor needed to begin considering development in even longer terms. For Travers, immigration was key to giving the capital access to vital skills and maintaining the city's image as a cosmopolitan and inclusive hub; however, he warned of the elastic effect tax policies pose in attracting talent.

Ian Hawksworth (Capital and Counties Properties Plc), Alison Nimmo (the Crown Estate), David Atkins (Hammerson) and the Mayor of Newham, Sir Robin Wales took the stage to offer their opinions on developing a modern London. All were agreed that it is the city's diversity and 'everybody's welcome' attitude that makes it great, with Nimmo praising its 'hedonistic tolerance' and Hawksworth stating that all that was required to keep modernising the capital was "more of the same". Sir Robin expressed concern that this may not be possible as new housing policies drive the poor to the outer boroughs, leaving pockets of wealth in the centre and creating significant political ramifications that risked making London untenable. Wales also provided a political insight into the problems around development, arguing that the challenge is not planning, but rather an overly complex procurement and legal system. Atkins suggested that retail-led development was most appropriate in the modern era, while Nimmo felt that as long as London planned any growth properly with a clear vision and delivery plan, it would continue to be successful, rounding up the discussion nicely with a thought about what development success will look like in the

future – "will it be measured in GDP or GNH – gross national happiness? she asked"

A short discussion on the challenges around matching planning policy with the localism agenda ensued before Stephen Howlett (Peabody), David Lunts (GLA) and Mark Clare (Barratt Developments plc) led the final discussion around meeting the housing challenge.

Lunts described the market as 'buoyant but dysfunctional'. Howlett suggested that displacement of those on lower incomes and land availability are the key issues, prompting suggestions for potential solutions from Clare around quicker land release and using public sector land to build private rental housing. Both panellists and the audience were agreed that the private rental market is the most likely to see growth in the coming years, and that central and local government and developers need to plan accordingly, building properties that are appropriate for families as well as young, single individuals.

A delegate suggested that a new longer, standard lease, providing security and more freedoms to private renters over a longer period of time, may help the market evolve from its transient and costly state.

There was support for the new Community Infrastructure Levy and its aim to make development more transparent, but Clare was explicit that it needs to be implemented properly and help drive development in the mutually beneficial way CIL intends.

During the afternoon, delegates had the opportunity to attend breakout sessions and hear about development projects in London, including plans for a new Metropolitan Centre in Croydon and the Earl's Court Project. Experts from the sector also offered their views on key strategic issues such as regenerating London, the local high street and the London office market. ■

¡PILLO!



QUEENS WHARF DEVELOPMENT

A2Dominion has been granted planning consent for its 25 million Queens Wharf development by Hammersmith and Fulham. The scheme has been designed by Assael Architecture, replaces an existing, derelict four-storey office building with 89 homes and a restaurant with river views, while also creating a new section of Thames footpath.

The new building will rise from four storeys on its Crisp Road frontage to seven storeys facing the River Thames. The design of the scheme creates a curved façade in response to the Grade II* Listed Hammersmith Bridge and was supported by English Heritage. ■

THE CURSE OF TALL

Londoners can breathe a sigh of relief, according to the *Financial Times*. The Shard has been overtaken as the Europe's tallest building by Moscow's Mercury City. "With luck the four months the Shard was number one will go unnoticed by the economic gods who have a long history of punishing countries with the highest buildings", they say. Barclays' Skyscraper Index shows a strong correlation between building the world's tallest building and financial crises for more than 140 years, featuring NY in 1930, KL in 1997 and Dubai in 2010. ■

THE NEW CENSUS FIGURES...

may be interpreted in many ways. A letter in *The Economist* quotes a Russian proverb: "Married men live longer, but want to die more often." ■

FOR THOSE OF A MAYAN MINDSET

it is interesting to note that the numerically repetitive recent date 12.12.12 will not occur again for 88 years (on 1st January 2101 - 01.01.01) but the next palindromic date is 31.11.13 (the last being 21.11.12). ■

Crossrail 2 – serious planning must begin now

We cannot afford to spend 40 years planning for something we know we need

After decades of discussion and campaigning, the sea of blue hoardings that has sprung up across London is testament to the fact that Crossrail is at last well and truly underway. Even so, Crossrail won't be fully operational for passengers until 2019.

If we want London to remain competitive we can't afford to take such a leisurely approach to major infrastructure planning in future. London expects around 1.3 million more people and over 750,000 more jobs over the next 20 – years. We must therefore begin planning for the next generation of transport improvements now.

At the top of the list should be Crossrail 2 – a new line from the South-West to the North-East of London based on the old Chelsea-Hackney scheme. This scheme is the current focus of a London First working group, chaired by former Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis, which will produce its final report next year.

The conclusions of the working group's initial report, published in May 2012, were clear – that by the late 2020s, even after the completion of Crossrail 1, Thameslink and the current Tube upgrades, London's rail and underground networks will be heavily congested and there will be a critical need for new capacity, particularly on the SW-NE corridor.

In central London, a Crossrail 2 alignment via the West End offers considerable scope

to alleviate congestion on the Victoria and Piccadilly lines as well as key stations such as King's Cross and Victoria. It would also offer scope for interchange with Crossrail 1,

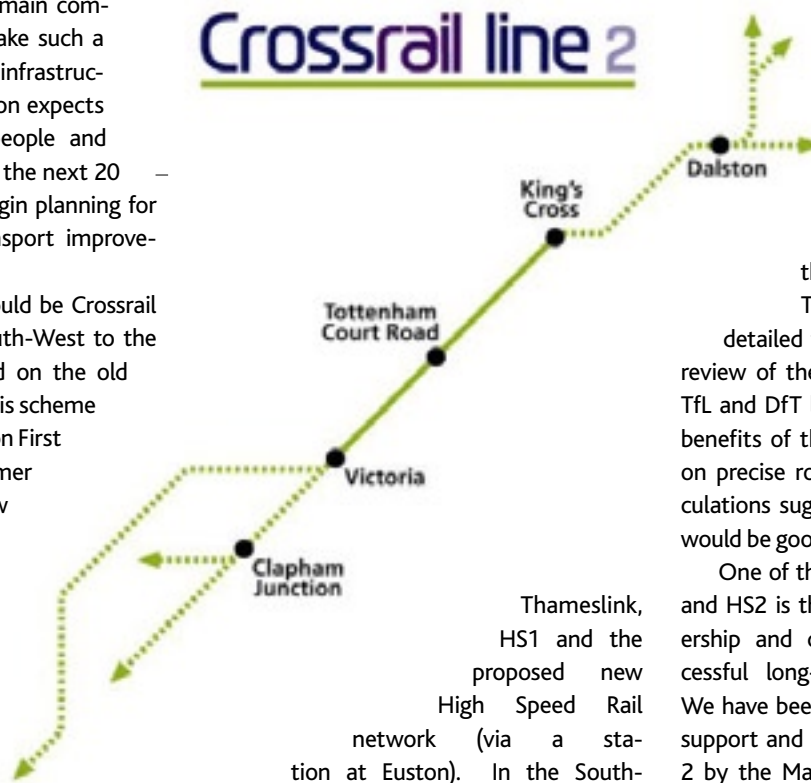
ever more severe crowding in the coming years.

The north-east section of the route also has strong potential to relieve overcrowding, especially on the Victoria and Piccadilly lines. Crossrail 2 could also provide vital new connectivity to support economic development in the Upper Lee Valley, potentially stimulating far more regeneration potential than could be achieved by enhancing existing rail links in the area.

The working group will set out its detailed findings in February, ahead of a review of the current safeguarded route by TfL and DfT later in the year. The costs and benefits of the scheme will vary depending on precise route and length, but initial calculations suggest that a Crossrail 2 scheme would be good value for money.

One of the lessons from both Crossrail 1 and HS2 is the importance of political leadership and cross-party consensus to successful long-term infrastructure planning. We have been extremely encouraged by the support and enthusiasm shown for Crossrail 2 by the Mayor – and indeed by all major political parties in London – and strengthening this consensus must be a priority for the months ahead.

We must not repeat the mistakes of Crossrail 1 and spend 40 years planning and generating support for a scheme needed within 20 years. Serious planning must begin now. ■



Thameslink, HS1 and the proposed new High Speed Rail network (via a station at Euston). In the South-West of London, there is considerable potential for a new scheme to alleviate current congestion on the District and Northern lines, and also on main line and suburban National Rail services into Waterloo, Victoria and Clapham Junction from Wimbledon and South-West London and beyond. Without additional action these services will face



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What do you think of it so far?

Andy Rogers looks back and courageously brings us his Almanac for 2013



I suppose that the turn of the year is a time when traditionally we assess performance to date. In my Almanac column at the start of 2012 I made at least one prediction that turned out to be accurate – that the hosepipe bans would inevitably lead to widespread flooding.

So let's take a look at the Coalition Government's record – from Dave "We've got to beat off this suffocating bureaucracy once and for all" Cameron to Eric "I'm very self-contained" Pickles.

Three years ago, in February 2010, the Conservatives published their Green Paper Open Source Planning as a response to "Labour's failing planning system". This

boldly set out policies for a new planning regime, which would (among other things) "eliminate large amounts of unnecessary bureaucracy... create a new system of collaborative planning... [be] much more open and responsive... abolish the unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission... [and] publish a simple and consolidated national planning framework [with] a reduced number of simplified guidance notes".

Well, we do now have the NPPF and the welter of detailed policy have gone, but I'm still waiting for the simplified guidance notes and particularly for the promised elimination of "large amounts of unnecessary bureaucracy". For localism, this was to have been achieved by four key actions:

- "abolishing the RSSs, national and regional building targets" No, not yet;
- "amending the Use Classes Order so that people can use land and buildings for any purpose allowed in the local plan" Try again;
- "abolishing the power of inspectors to rewrite local plans" You can do better;
- "limiting appeals against local planning decisions". Please try harder.

According to the Green Paper, the unelected IPC, RSSs, LDFs, and CIL were all to be scrapped or severely altered; this has not yet happened, although the East of England Regional Strategy was revoked on 3 January 2013. CIL was singled out as being

a twin-track approach that was "unnecessarily complicated" and an unfair "additional planning charge".

What we have now is an even more unwieldy tax system than was proposed, which threatens to put the brakes on new development for the 20 per cent of local authorities that research in 2010 showed plan to introduce a CIL before the 2014 deadline.

So have local planning authorities seen "a sizeable fall in the volume of paper that have to handle" as promised by the Green Paper? Are we likely ever to achieve the aim of "automatic permission in the case of sustainable development that meets no objections from a significant number of immediate neighbours"? And when can "local planning officers go back to focusing on what they were originally employed to do – designing and implementing visionary plans"?

When pigs fly over Eland House. ■

To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind.

Edmund Burke 1770

My other almanac predictions for 2013

January Nick Boles proposes the replacement of London's Green Belt with a series of Green Fingers "bringing the countryside to the city": heavy rain, floods.

February Boris Johnson publishes the first revised GLA charging schedule, to include additional payments to finance two more runways at Heathrow: thunder and lightning.

March Haringey is the first borough to have its major applications determined by PINS: sunny periods.

April Growth and Infrastructure Act becomes law, with new clauses to ensure London is reorganized into neighbourhood parishes: heatwave.

May GPDO makes change of use of business premises to residential and new house extensions of up to 500 sq m permitted development: windy.

June New housing busting out all over, additional Government borrowing to cover the New Homes Bonus payments: hottest June since 1776.

July Emergency legislation proposed when it's discovered

that most of Heathrow doesn't have proper planning permission due to a 1940 restrictive condition: drought.

August The Mayor's draft CIL revisions are rejected by an inspector – revisions proposed to fund a new estuary airport and Stansted Hub: hosepipe bans.

September UKIP merges with the LibDems to form a new UKLib party under the joint leadership of Nigel Farage and Vince Cable with 75 per cent popular support: cyclones and whirlwinds.

October David Cameron

announces yet another major Planning Bill, saying "This suffocating bureaucracy has gone on long enough": earthquakes, hurricanes.

November Melting icecaps cause the Thames barrier to be permanently closed with the Olympic Park becoming a new inland sea: plague of locusts.

December The New Olympic Sea becomes London's first seaplane airport following the new developments in aircraft design: mild with sunny spells.

"...and then: bloody January again!" – Flanders and Swan

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Big Bang v. incremental approach – let's plan first, then design



Sir Terry Farrell

To understand the benefits of an incremental approach to planning over a single 'big bang' solution which has characterised the debate over our airport capacity – one must look back and learn lessons from the past. There is a fundamental which deserves to be debated more but is very rarely raised in this country. That is the difference between planning and design and the relationship between the two.

I was invited to speak at an event recently organised by CABE, RTPI and NLA which was entitled "Good Design = Good Planning". I was disappointed by the apparent misunderstanding of this relationship implied by the title of the event. Good design can only be effective when it has been informed by good planning and in doing so usefully connect to wider networks.

There has been much talk about big projects and recapturing the heroic Victorian spirit in London, and the U.K. In my view there is often a fundamental misreading of these Victorian times driven a lot by the misreading of Britain's post-industrial position in the world. Britain's infrastructure genius was in adapting – incrementally and pragmatically – the benefits of inventions usually much more than the inventions themselves. In other words, when it comes to London, planning at its best recognises the organic nature of its growth and allows it to be a self-ordering city which respects underlying patterns and forms.

Brunel is often cited as a model to follow – but brilliant as he was, he left a trail of failed applications of his inventions. His first project (with his father) was the Rotherhithe pedestrian tunnel which was rescued by its being re-used as part of the underground rail network; then the great Hungerford suspension bridge failed because the town planning concept was flawed – and the market at Charing Cross failed to rival Covent Garden – and its ultimate re-use at the Clifton

suspension bridge was a triumph more than anything of pragmatic re-use. Broad gauge railway was the ideal design but like the perfectly designed and conceived Betamax it failed to become a part of the bigger commercial network. And yes, he invented iron ships and screw propellers but the ships, their part in trade and shipping networks left them stranded all to be taken up by others. It's not the inventive hardware of these or any civil engineering projects on their own but the software, the town planning integration, that

The Victorians were 'big picture' thinkers but...



...their genius was their pragmatism

was the key to what prevailed.

And so it was with all our infrastructure systems networks. Our industrialised water transport of canals and docks were brilliant town planning products of experimentation and step by step integration into a network of related patterns of use, re-use and pragmatic application. So it was with rail – London's mainline stations were originally built as goods stations outside the city core – when subsequently it was learnt that the main trade was passengers not goods, and so the answer was to invent the Underground Railway (eventually re-using Brunel's inventions of the tunnelling shield from the failed Rotherhithe tunnel). But the Underground grew, and connected, and grew again to keep

evolving today with new computerised card ticketing systems.

The "ideal and perfect" response to the motor car was drawn up by Abercrombie in the 1940's – an eight lane motorway that ran right through the centre of Camden Town, Primrose Hill and on through Maida Vale, Paddington round to Elephant & Castle destroying inner London and most of its urban villages in the process. What was then built? Well we learnt that the motor car had to be tamed to be integrated and adapted to the planning realities and we have instead Congestion Charging, pedestrianized streets and investment in the reinvention of the tram, more underground rail, and Boris Bikes as part of a comprehensive, integrated networked solution.

China, with its population of 1.3 billion, where my firm has built the world's two largest (high speed) stations is only now industrialising and urbanising – but will by 2050 be twice the GNP size of the USA. This is not a model for us, we have been there done that, our infrastructure has matured and integrated into our lives and built fabric – and also the UK is quite a different model and national scale – we will no longer be in the big league of China, Brazil and India.

Our airport planning cannot be based on the big scale of China – neither can it afford the hit and miss experimentation of early UK industrialisation. Closing major airports, building giant new hubs or any other grand gestures must only be considered in the light of looking first at what we have now and how they can be better utilised. We should capitalise on the investment already committed for additions to these networks of high speed rail and other rail improvements like Crossrail which will all re-change and re-balance the potentialities of the total system. My personal conviction is that an evolutionary and networked approach to our airport capacity will obviate the need for new mega projects. They never were how we did things, and they will be too grandiose and too costly for us now. ■