



# Report to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

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an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State  
for Communities and Local Government

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PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

SECTION 20

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE LONDON BOROUGH OF  
TOWER HAMLETS CORE STRATEGY**

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

Document submitted for examination on 18 December 2009

Examination hearings held between 13 and 21 April 2010

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Area Action Plan
AHVS	Affordable Housing Viability Study
CAZ	Central Activity Zone
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CS	Core Strategy
DPD	Development Plan Document
EIA	Equalities Impact Assessment
ELS	Employment Land Study
IDP	Infrastructure Delivery Plan
IDPR	Infrastructure Delivery Plan Report
LAP	Local Area Partnership
LDF	Local Development Framework
LIL	Local Industrial Location
LOL	Local Office Location
OSS	Open Spaces Strategy
POL	Preferred Office Location
PPCG	Planning for Population Change and Growth
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SHMNA	Strategic Housing Market and Needs Assessment
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SIL	Strategic Industrial Land
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SMOWS	Small and Medium Office and Workplace Study
SO	Strategic Objective
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
TCSS	Town Centre Spatial Strategy
THHS	Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy
USCS	Urban Structure and Characterisation Study
WEB	Waste Evidence Base Report
WHS	World Heritage Site

### **Non-technical Summary**

This report concludes that the Tower Hamlets Core Strategy provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the Borough over the next 15 years. The Council has sufficient evidence to support the strategy and can show that it has a reasonable chance of being delivered.

A limited number of changes are needed to meet legal and statutory requirements. These can be summarised as follows:

- Wording changes suggested by the Council to ensure that there is better explanation of how and when policy tools and designations will be designated and defined;
- Extension of the timescale for delivery of infrastructure on the Leven Road Gasworks site to ensure delivery timescales are realistic;
- Amended wording to allow the potential for developer contributions to be managed via the Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Re-organisation of the Programme of Delivery to improve its clarity and strengthen the key role it plays in the implementation of the plan;
- Amendments to improve consistency with the London Plan; and
- Re-location of the placemaking section to an Annex to avoid inconsistencies within the main part of the strategy.

Most of the changes recommended in this report are based on suggestions put forward by the Council during the Examination in response to points raised by participants. They do not alter the essential thrust of the Council's overall strategy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Under the terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the purpose of the independent examination of a development plan document (DPD) is to determine:
- (a) whether it satisfies the requirements of s19 and s24(1) of the 2004 Act, the regulations under s17(7), and any regulations under s36 relating to the preparation of the document
  - (b) whether it is sound.
- 1.2 This report contains my assessment of the *London Borough of Tower Hamlets Core Strategy DPD* in terms of the above matters, along with my recommendations and the reasons for them, as required by s20(7) of the 2004 Act.
- 1.3 I am satisfied that the Core Strategy (CS) meets the requirements of the Act and Regulations. My role is also to consider its soundness against the three criteria of soundness set out in Planning Policy Statement 12: creating strong, safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) paragraphs 4.51-4.52. In line with national policy, the starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The changes I have specified in this report are made only where there is a clear need to amend the document in the light of the legal requirements and/or the criteria of soundness in PPS12. None of these changes should materially alter the substance of the plan and its policies, or undermine the sustainability appraisal and participatory processes undertaken.

### *Post Publication Minor Changes*

- 1.4 The submission CS was accompanied by a *Matrix of Changes Table* (Core Document 60). Changes in this document correct typographical errors, address points of clarification and deal with factual updates. They do not undermine the sustainability appraisal or the participatory process previously undertaken and they do not affect or change the overall strategy or any policies in the CS. For these reasons I endorse the changes in the *Matrix of Changes Table* and the starting point for the examination is the submitted CS as amended by the matrix.

### *Organisation of the report*

- 1.5 Section 2 of this report considers the legal requirements and Sections 3 and 4 address the main issues and other matters considered during the examination in terms of testing justification, effectiveness and consistency with national policy.

### *Recommended changes*

- 1.6 A number of changes have been suggested by the Council and these are presented, together with changes that I consider

necessary to ensure soundness, in three Annexes attached to this report.

**Annex A:** Council's changes C1 – C23  
Required for soundness

This is a list of changes that the Council has suggested. These changes are taken from the *Matrix of suggested changes* (Core Document 161B) which the Council prepared during the examination and publicised on its website. However not all of the changes suggested in the Council's matrix are required to ensure soundness. Annex A therefore only lists only the Council's suggested changes that are essential for soundness.

**Annex B:** Inspector's changes IC1 – IC6  
Required for soundness

IC1 – IC3 and IC6 all support or expand upon changes that the Council has suggested in **Annex A**. IC4 is based on a statement of common ground between the Council and National Grid. IC5 relates to the placemaking section of the CS.

None of the changes in **Annex A** or **Annex B** undermines the *Sustainability Appraisal* or the participatory process previously undertaken. They do not affect or change the overall strategy or any policies in the CS. They are all addressed in this report.

**Annex C:** Council's minor amendments  
Not required for soundness

This is a schedule of minor changes suggested by the Council or participants during the examination, set out in the *Matrix of Post Submission Changes* (Core Document 161) and published on the Council's website during the examination. These changes are not required to address soundness and are not referred to in this report. They ensure consistency and correct inaccuracies and drafting errors. I endorse them as they add coherence and clarity to the CS and ensure consistency.

- 1.7 A recurrent difficulty in this CS is the reliance on endnotes which refer to evidence base documents to justify the strategy. The endnotes refer to entire documents and in order to fully understand the reasoning and justification for some policies a detailed reading of these documents is required. This has been exacerbated because the "why we have taken this approach" sections, which are intended to justify and explain policies and link them to the supporting evidence, are placed after the policies. Consequently the CS does not flow or unfold in a logical way and is not an easily accessible document. **This has represented a barrier to engagement with the local community.**

- 1.8 In most cases this does not make the CS unsound and justification for all policies can be found in the evidence base. However in several instances the absence of narrative to explain the approach taken is a serious deficiency, with some policies unsupported by reasoning within the CS. Some of the changes that the Council has suggested are required to make the CS a coherent and accessible document and facilitate participation in future DPDs.

## 2. LEGAL COMPLIANCE

- 2.1 The *Tower Hamlets Core Strategy DPD* is contained within the Council's *Local Development Scheme* the updated version being approved in November 2009. There, it is shown as having a submission date of December 2009.
- 2.2 The Council's *Statement of Community Involvement* (SCI) was adopted in 2008. Following the introduction of the Town and Country (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the Council began a review of the SCI and an amended SCI was adopted in November 2009. The Council's Regulation 30(1) (d) statement explains that engagement and consultation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the 2008 SCI but taking account of changes in the 2008 Regulations and PPS12.
- 2.3 During the examination some participants were critical of the accessibility of the CS and of the effectiveness of the consultation process. However having considered the SCI and the Council's *Statement of Participation* together with all the points put forward in the examination hearings I am satisfied that the consultation process has been carried out in accordance with the SCI.
- 2.4 Alongside the preparation of the CS it is evident that the Council has carried out a parallel process of sustainability appraisal.
- 2.5 In accordance with the Habitats Directive the CS has been the subject of a screening exercise which concludes that there is no need for an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken.
- 2.6 I am satisfied that the CS has regard to national policy. In a letter dated 29 October 2009 the Mayor of London has indicated that the CS is in general conformity with the approved *London Plan* and I am satisfied that it is in general conformity. I am satisfied that the CS has had regard to the sustainable community strategy for the area.
- 2.7 I am satisfied that the CS complies with the specific requirements of the 2004 Regulations (as amended) including the requirements in relation to publication of the prescribed documents; availability of them for inspection and local advertisement; notification of DPD bodies and provision of a list of superseded saved policies.
- 2.8 Accordingly, I am satisfied that the legal requirements have all been satisfied.

### 3. SOUNDNESS – MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 PPS12 states that for a Core Strategy to be sound it should be justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Taking account of all the written evidence together with discussions that took place at the examination hearings I have identified nine main issues that require detailed consideration.

#### **Issue 1: Setting the scene and the big spatial vision.**

*Does the strategic vision address the priorities identified in the Community Plan and embrace the critical issues for the Borough?*

- 3.2 The CS vision statement is entitled "Reinventing the Hamlets." Tower Hamlets will play a significant part in developing London as a sustainable, global city but there will also be an emphasis on regeneration and the prosperity of the economic hubs will filter down to the "places" of Tower Hamlets. The five key priority outcomes of the CS flow from the *Community Plan* and the CS sets out five transformational programmes which outline the ways in which the spatial vision will be delivered.
- 3.3 The *Community Plan* identifies a number of challenges faced by the borough in its aim of improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough. These include low housing affordability, a legacy of poor quality social housing, stark inequality, with Tower Hamlets the third most deprived borough in the country, ethnic diversity and high unemployment levels. Clearly some policy solutions to these challenges lie outside of spatial planning. However it is clear that the overall strategy is underpinned by regeneration and sustainable growth.
- 3.4 The transformational delivery programmes indicate that regeneration, housing investment and the provision of open space will help to address critical issues identified in the *Community Plan*. It is also evident that many of the strategic objectives (SOs) and policies will play a key role in tackling poverty and inequality.

*Does the spatial vision make it clear that the CS will address these issues and deliver regeneration as well as growth?*

- 3.5 Community groups have raised concerns that addressing deprivation, diversity and housing need is given insufficient prominence in the spatial vision. There is a perception that it has been given lower priority than driving sub regional growth and delivering the *London Plan* growth agenda and targets. Furthermore there is scepticism about reliance on economic prosperity "filtering down" to benefit the borough's communities.
- 3.6 Thus it seems that the CS is not successful in explaining the context, "telling the story" of how the strategy has emerged and summarising the overall strategy. Some contextual information is

set out in "diverse communities and distinct places" but this does not describe clearly the social and economic challenges facing the area. "Why we have taken this approach" which follows the Vision Statement and which should explain the issues that it will address focuses almost entirely on "place making."

- 3.7 A clear and coherent urban structure can undoubtedly contribute to sustainable growth and regeneration, but an over emphasis on the physical environment has led members of the local community to fear that the social and economic priorities from the *Community Plan* have been overlooked. There is no mention in this section of the regeneration, economic diversification and growth which are key to the vision and strategy.
- 3.8 It is clear from reading the CS and the evidence base that critical issues from the *Community Plan* feed directly into the overall vision. Furthermore the five priority outcomes, especially "Strengthening neighbourhood well being" and "Enabling prosperous communities" are aligned with the themes of the *Community Plan* and the CS strategic objectives provide strong links with its priorities.
- 3.9 To demonstrate that the CS is based on a clear and complete understanding of all the issues facing the borough the Council has suggested that diagrams in *Options and Issues for Places* which show deprivation, ethnicity and demographics and the accompanying text should be inserted into the description of the borough on pages 20 and 21 [C1].

*Is the overall strategy the most appropriate given the alternatives?*

- 3.10 It is not for a development plan document to set out all the options that have been considered in detail. However the CS gives no indication at all as to how the chosen strategy has emerged. For this it is necessary to look at the evidence base. Early work in *Options and Alternatives 2008* identified two options: refocusing on town centres or organic growth across the borough. The second phase of consultation, *Options and Alternatives for Places 2009*, tested a combined approach with a focus on Town Centres but accepting that there will be organic growth adjacent to the City Fringe and Canary Wharf. This is the approach adopted in the CS.
- 3.11 Clearly the development of the overall strategy has been a complex task. Refocusing on the town centres has had to be balanced with the concentration of development in the *London Plan Opportunity Areas* at Leaside, the Isle of Dogs and the City Fringe, together with areas of regeneration. This is in the context of a shift away from industry to a different range of products and services.
- 3.12 The background evidence does provide an audit trail to demonstrate how and why the preferred strategy was arrived at and demonstrates that this strategy has been developed in parallel with a process of sustainability appraisal. However the evidence base is

extensive, dense and complex and it has been criticised by the local community as being inaccessible. The Council has suggested change C2 to add a summary of how the preferred strategy evolved. This change, which will add clarity and confirm that it is the most appropriate strategy, is required to make the CS sound.

*Has the strategy been developed through work with strategic partners and cross boundary working?*

3.13 It is clear from the evidence base that the CS has been prepared in partnership with a range of agencies and through working closely with the neighbouring boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Greenwich and the City of London. The delivery partners are not listed in the CS but I am satisfied that they are set out in detail in the *Infrastructure Delivery Plan Final Report (IDPR)*.

3.14 In conclusion, I am satisfied that the overall spatial vision is justified by robust evidence and is the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives. To make the CS sound changes C1 and C2 are necessary to ensure clarity and internal consistency. These changes are summarised below and set out in full in Annex A.

C1	Insert diagrams and text from evidence base to expand on "Setting the Scene"
C2	Insert additional text to explain how the preferred approach for the overarching strategy was developed

## **Issue 2: Refocusing the town centres.**

*Is the approach to refocusing the town centres justified by robust evidence?*

3.15 Policy SP01 defines the town centre hierarchy and how the network of town centres will be extended to achieve strategic objective SO4, a hierarchy of interconnected, vibrant and inclusive town centres. It describes the relationship between the scale and type of uses and explains the scale and role of the town centres.

3.16 The Council has undertaken detailed research into the uses, accessibility and urban design of the borough's town centres in the *Borough Portrait of Tower Hamlets*, the *Retail and Leisure Capacity Study* and the *Spatial Baseline Studies*. These studies feed into the *Town Centre Spatial Strategy (TCSS)*. I am satisfied that the methodology used in this research is robust and its scope is comprehensive. It has informed an up to date picture of the borough's town centres and proposes an effective strategy to 2025.

3.17 The TCSS sets out the existing and proposed hierarchies and the designation criteria on which the new hierarchy is based. It identifies a new policy mechanism for "Activity Areas" at City Fringe and Canary Wharf which will differ from but compliment the London Plan Central Activities Zone (CAZ). It also identifies new District

Centres at Bromley-by-Bow and Brick Lane and a range of new Neighbourhood Centres. The new hierarchy of town centres is set alongside the existing hierarchy in Appendix 4 of the CS.

- 3.18 The CS is informed by the TCSS and its supporting documents. The new designations recommended in the TCSS are put forward in Policy SP01 and the net increase in comparison and convenience retail floorspace, for which the *Retail and Leisure Capacity Study* identified a potential, is directed to town centres as recommended in the TCSS. Policy SO1 does not make it clear that the town centre hierarchy aligns with the *London Plan* and does not explain the identification of the two Activity Areas. The Council has suggested changes to address these matters [C3], [C4] and I agree that these changes are necessary to ensure that the CS is justified and effective.
- 3.19 There is little explanation for the approach taken to refocusing on the town centres and the CS relies on broad references to the TCSS for the reasoning behind the choices that have been made. Rather than providing clear links to the evidence that has informed Policy SP01, figures 17 – 20 of the CS are generic, theoretical diagrams imported from the baseline studies.
- 3.20 I recognise that diagrams can be helpful in explaining the relationship between, for example, urban form and accessibility. But taken out of context these diagrams do not explain the reasoning set out in the TCSS. Furthermore despite attempts in Figure 18 to give local examples of spatial layout types these diagrams are not locally distinctive. Their inclusion does not make the CS unsound but at the examination hearings the local community was very critical of them, finding them unhelpful and irrelevant. It is certainly hard to see how they inform the adjacent policy SP01. In order to make the CS a more accessible document that will encourage participation the Council may wish to consider removing Figures 17 – 20 when the CS is reviewed.
- 3.21 The TCSS recommends undertaking a review of the town centre and activity area boundaries which will be dealt with in lower level DPDs and the Proposals Map. However this intention is not carried through into the CS, where there should be an explanation of how detailed policies for the town centres will be progressed. Change C5 sets out the Council's additional wording to address this matter.

*Is the approach to development at the edge of and outside town centres consistent with government guidance in PPS4?*

- 3.22 Strategic objectives SO5 and SO6 promote mixed use on the edge of centres and along main streets and areas outside town centres for residential and supporting uses. This approach, set out in Policy SP01.5 is clear and consistent with guidance in PPS4 which, whilst in draft during preparation of the CS, was published during the examination. I am satisfied that it provides a hook for more

detailed policies on small scale uses and provision for day to day shopping to be provided in forthcoming DPDs.

- 3.23 Subject to the changes summarised below and set out in full in Annex A, which are necessary to ensure soundness, the CS approach to refocusing on the town centres is consistent with national and regional guidance, justified by robust evidence and capable of delivery.

C3	Explain the basis for the town centre hierarchy
C4	Explain reason for identifying Tower Hamlets Activity Areas
C5	Explain that the town centre hierarchy will be carried forward in lower level DPDs

**Issue 3: Housing supply.**

*Is the approach to the delivery and location of housing justified and consistent with national planning policy and with the London Plan?*

- 3.24 The CS sets out a target of 43,275 new homes for the plan period from 2010 to 2025, equating to 2885 homes per year. This figure is consistent with the borough's housing target in the emerging replacement *London Plan (2009)*, which is in turn informed by the *London Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009* (London SHLAA). The housing trajectory is presented as a table in Appendix 2 of the CS. It demonstrates when and where homes will be delivered over the three five year periods to 2025 and is accompanied by detailed information to indicate the timing of delivery in the paired Local Area Partnership areas (LAPs).
- 3.25 The CS housing trajectory is informed by evidence in the *Planning for Population Change and Growth* (PPCG) model. This monitoring and management tool is led by the Local Strategic Partnership. As a live model it enables population change and growth to be monitored to inform infrastructure planning and is based on the expected development of sites with planning permission and potential sites. The evidence base demonstrates that the PPCG model is based on a local understanding and rigorous examination of sites that are capable of coming forward.
- 3.26 The *PPCG Baseline Report* (PPCG Report) sets out key findings from the borough's capacity assessment exercise that was undertaken in July 2009. The PPCG model has enabled the Council to predict with some accuracy the scale and pattern of housing development across the borough. Potential development sites have been identified in accordance with the government's SHLAA process and the suitability, availability and deliverability of the sites has been tested. Although there are some variations between the inputs to the London SHLAA and PPCG model, the housing outputs are closely aligned. I am satisfied that the housing trajectory is based on an up to date and realistic understanding of identified sites in the borough.

- 3.27 Raw data from the PPCG model shows that sites with planning permission will provide the majority of the housing for the first five years of the plan period and will continue to contribute to the supply throughout the plan period. The model indicates that 13,914 homes will be developed in the first five years of the plan period, a shortfall of 511 homes on the draft *London Plan* target. This represents 102/3 homes per annum.
- 3.28 The Council contends that this shortfall will be more than made up by homes provided on sites of 9 or less units, which are excluded from the model and from the London SHLAA. Historic evidence for the last 5 years shows that an annual average of 151 units has been delivered on sites providing 9 or less units and it would be reasonable, in the context of an inner city borough, to assume that this rate would continue. However PPS3 states that unidentified sites such as this should not be included in the first 10 years of land supply unless there is robust evidence of local circumstances to prevent specific sites being identified.
- 3.29 The housing trajectory indicates that sites with planning permission carry through into second and third five year periods of the plan. Figure 23, placed adjacent to Policy SP02, illustrates the permitted and potential amount of housing development each year set against the emerging *London Plan* target. This shows the high level of activity in years 6 – 11 with a total of 21,442 homes coming forward in this five year period. The bulge in the middle part of the plan period relates to the timing of the release of industrial land and the interdependence between regeneration and growth, which is evident from the CS transformational delivery programmes.
- 3.30 The comprehensive regeneration areas and housing investment and delivery programme include, for example, the *Ocean Estate Regeneration Programme*, which is expected to deliver over 900 units in 2017, and the *Fish Island Area Action Plan*. This DPD, programmed for adoption in 2011, will provide the strategy for mixed use development that is expected to deliver over 2,000 units in Fish Island North and East in 2017.
- 3.31 The supply of housing land in Tower Hamlets is inextricably linked to regeneration, the managed release of industrial land and projects which are to be delivered in partnership with other bodies such as Thames Gateway Development Corporation and other London Boroughs. This leads me to conclude that there are genuine local circumstances that determine the rate of housing land supply and prevent specific sites being identified to deliver the required target for years 1 – 5 of the plan period. On this basis I am satisfied that the reliance on some windfalls for this period and the overall approach to the supply and delivery of housing land is sound.
- 3.32 The map of the borough in CS Figure 21 illustrates the differing rates of growth across the borough and Appendix 2 plots in more

detail how this growth will occur in each of the borough's hamlets in each of the three five year periods covered by the strategy. This provides a very useful indication of where and when high growth will take place. It reflects the areas for greatest regeneration and the *London Plan* Opportunity Areas. The Council has indicated that the target bands in Figure 21 require amendment to ensure accuracy and I support this change [C6].

- 3.33 Figure 21 shows that growth will take place predominantly in the eastern part of the borough where it is focussed on the Lower Lea Valley and Isle of Dogs Opportunity Areas. It was confirmed at the examination hearings that the lower level of housing growth in the central parts of the borough is indicative of the limited availability of land.
- 3.34 In conclusion I am satisfied that subject to change C6 to ensure accuracy the CS approach to the supply and location of housing is justified and deliverable.

C6	Amend housing target bands to ensure accuracy
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**Issue 4: Providing for a mix of housing type and tenure, specialist housing needs and housing quality.**

*Are the targets for affordable homes underpinned by a robust assessment of affordable housing economic viability?*

- 3.35 Policy SP02 sets an overall target of 50% for affordable homes throughout the borough. This reflects the borough's annual affordable need shortfall of 2,700 identified in the *Strategic Housing Market and Needs Assessment 2009* (SHMNA) and the level of over occupation which at 16.4% is a great deal higher than the national average of 2.7% of all units. It carries forward the *Community Plan* priority of delivering a range of affordable, family homes for local people and is supported by data in the *Annual Monitoring Report* which identified that the gross affordable homes delivered in 2008/9 were 52% of total homes completed.
- 3.36 Policy SP02 requires 35% - 50% affordable homes on all sites providing 10 new residential units or more, subject to viability. This is in line with emerging *London Plan* policies on affordable housing. The SHMNA notes that the current 50% target has rarely been achieved across London but recognises that it may be achieved with major grant support on some sites.
- 3.37 The Council's *Affordable Housing Viability Study 2009* (AHVS) tested a range of sample sites across the borough with varying characteristics against varying affordable housing percentages, tenure splits and sales values. It took account of current market conditions, future market uncertainty and considered the effect of a range of projected sales values on affordable housing viability. It also took account of potential conflict between existing and

alternative use values in high value parts of the borough and was based on the *London Plan* threshold of 10 units.

- 3.38 The study concluded that the delivery of the upper end of the required range, 50% affordable housing, is an ambitious target that many of the sites coming forward will be unable to achieve without grants or funding. Historically sites in the borough have yielded 35% and it is clear that achieving the lower end of the range is realistic. The proposed range reflects a pragmatic balance between viability, the significant local need for affordable housing identified in the *Community Plan* and the SHMNA and consistency with the emerging *London Plan*.
- 3.39 Concerns have been raised that the targets would not be achievable when replacing existing affordable homes. However it would be appropriate for the test of viability to be applied in such cases. As recommended in the AHVS Policy SP02 is supported by a requirement for detailed and robust financial statements to demonstrate why the targets cannot be met. I consider that with this flexibility incorporated into the policy the proposed target range is justified.

*Is the tenure split for affordable housing locally justified?*

- 3.40 The CS reflects the tenure split for affordable housing in the adopted *London Plan*, with a requirement for 70% social rented and 30% intermediate housing. This target is supported by evidence in the SHMNA, which draws attention to the existing social stock scale and re-let levels and the problem of affordability of shared ownership for local households forming in Tower Hamlets.
- 3.41 The proposed target differs from the emerging *London Plan* which proposes a London wide target of 40% intermediate housing. However I am satisfied that there is sufficient local justification in the SHMNA and the *Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy 2009/12* (THHS) to maintain the higher level of social rented housing proposed in the CS.

*Are the targets for family housing justified?*

- 3.42 Policy SP02 sets an overall target of 30% of all new housing to be suitable for families (3 beds plus) with 45% of new social rented housing for families. This aligns with the *Community Plan* priority of delivering social and family housing above all other forms of housing and is supported by evidence in the THHS and the SHMNA. The latter identifies a very high level of flats and maisonettes in the borough and recommends that the CS should direct both market and affordable housing to address the impact of future demographic change and household formation change and the needs of larger families.

3.43 The SHMNA provides the base figures from which the targets in SP02 are derived and I am satisfied that these figures are justified by the evidence base. However SP02.5.c, which refers to the identification of locations where larger family housing (of four bed plus) will be sought, omits to refer to the vehicle through which such locations will be identified. To ensure that this part of the policy is effective the Council has suggested appropriate wording to confirm that identification of locations will be dealt with in the *Site and Placemaking DPD* and the *Development Management DPD* [C7].

*Is the approach to student housing justified?*

3.44 Policy SP02 (7) proposes to provide student accommodation through working with the borough's universities and focusing on locations with high accessibility and proximity to the universities. *Student Accommodation in Tower Hamlets 2009* provides the background information that feeds into this policy and notes that provision of student housing needs to be balanced with competing land needs, including other housing priorities such as affordable housing. In this context I consider that the broad intentions set out in Policy SP02 are appropriate to guide the provision of housing for this specialist group.

*Does the CS make appropriate provision for gypsy and traveller pitches?*

3.45 The borough has one Gypsy and Traveller site at Eleanor Road. Policy SP02 sets out the requirement to safeguard this site and to identify new sites to meet targets in *London Plan* though the *Site and Placemaking DPD*. The criteria which sites should meet are defined in the evidence base in *LBTH Gypsies and Travellers: Criteria for additional sites in Tower Hamlets (2009)* and are set out in the CS. I am satisfied that this part of the policy is clear, is supported by robust evidence and meets national and regional guidance and targets.

*Does the CS make it clear that requirements for design standards will be implemented?*

3.46 Part 6 of Policy SP02 lists a range of criteria to ensure that all housing is "appropriate, high quality, well-designed and sustainable". In order to ensure that this part of the policy is effective, clear reference should be added to refer to the relevant DPD's which will implement the criteria [C8].

3.47 Subject to changes C7 and C8, to confirm the delegation of detailed matters to lower level DPDs, I am satisfied that the CS is justified and effective in its approach to delivering a mix of housing type and tenure and housing design.

C7	Explain how locations for seeking larger family houses will be identified
C8	Identify the policy vehicle for achieving design standards

## **Issue 5: Successful employment hubs.**

*Does the CS provide for a range of employment sizes and types?*

- 3.48 Strategic objectives SO15 and SO16 set the overall objectives to support the global economic centres of Canary Wharf and the City Fringe whilst supporting the growth of existing and future businesses in accessible and appropriate locations. The 2009 *Employment Land Study* (ELS) identifies the need to plan for a net increase in office floorspace. The ELS demand forecasting exercise calculates a demand for between 685,000 and 905,000 square metres of office floor space to 2026. It anticipates that 70% of this additional demand is likely to be accommodated in Canary Wharf, 25% in the City Fringe and 5% in the "Local" office market.
- 3.49 Policy SP06 reflects these findings. It directs intensification of office floorspace and larger floor plate offices towards Preferred Office Locations (POLs) in Canary Wharf and the City Fringe areas of Bishopsgate Road, Aldgate and Tower Gateway. The POLs are indicated on CS Figure 30 as irregular shapes, suggesting that their exact boundaries have been decided. However this is not the case and the Council will define and designate the POLs in the *Site and Placemaking DPD* and the *Development Management DPD*. To avoid the impression that these designations have already been made the Council suggests amending Figure 30 to show that the POL locations are indicative [C8A]. To ensure that the CS is sound this should be supported by additional text in Policy SP06.2 to explain that the POL areas will be defined in future DPDs [IC1].
- 3.50 The CS supports a range and mix of employment uses through the designation of Local Office Locations (LOLs), the retention and promotion of flexible workspace and the encouragement and retention of small units of less than 250 sq m suitable for small and medium enterprises. The Council intends to designate and define the LOLs through the *Site and Placemaking DPD* and to ensure soundness this should be clearly stated in the policy [IC2].

*Does the CS place sufficient emphasis on micro businesses and their role in addressing the employment needs of the local community, particularly the Black and Ethnic Minority sector?*

- 3.51 Concerns were raised during the examination that continued growth in the POLs will be at the expense of smaller businesses and that the role of micro businesses in providing jobs for local people is not recognised in the CS. The POLs will clearly continue to provide a range of jobs for local residents as well as opportunities for suppliers within the borough. However the need to ensure a range of different sized businesses within the borough is supported by the *Small and Medium Office and Workspace Study* (SMOWS), which found in 2006 that 19,000 of the 38,000 jobs in Tower Hamlets were within Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

- 3.52 The SMOWS, whilst including micro businesses within the overall SME definition, further defines them as start up businesses and those employing less than five or so people. However the CS does not distinguish micro businesses from SMEs, which are defined in the CS glossary as businesses with less than 250 employees (medium) and less than 50 employees (small).
- 3.53 In considering SMEs and diversity the SMOWS identified that 25% of businesses in London with less than 5 employees were Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) owned and that around 53% of BME owned enterprises employ less than 5 people. This link between micro businesses and BME community is reflected in the SMOWS conclusion that access to good quality, affordable space for small businesses employing less than five people is important to sustain the BME sector in Tower Hamlets. Whilst based on data collated in 2006 this link is recognised in the more recent *Equality Impact Assessment of the CS* (EIA), which identifies the likely effects of the policy on minority owned businesses.
- 3.54 The evidence base demonstrates that micro businesses will play an important role in providing a range of businesses of different sizes in the borough and addressing the *Community Plan* priority of reducing worklessness, particularly for the BME community. Policy SP06.3 sets out a clear direction for delivering a range and mix of employment uses throughout the borough and will encourage and retain units suitable for small and medium enterprises. I am satisfied, from the approach taken in the SMOWS, that the CS definition of small and medium sized enterprises includes micro businesses. The Council has suggested changes to the wording of Policy SP06 to refer specifically to micro businesses, but a minor amendment to the glossary is all that is needed to ensure clarity and make the CS sound [IC3].

C8A	Amend figure 30 to clarify that POLs are indicative only
IC1	Confirm vehicle for designating POLs
IC2	Confirm vehicle for designating LOLs
IC3	Confirm that SME definition includes micro businesses

### **Issue 6: Strategic Industrial Land (SIL).**

*Is the proposed release of SIL justified by evidence in the Employment Land Study (ELS)?*

- 3.55 The CS records that since 1998 between 130 hectares and 140 hectares of industrial land has been released for other uses, contributing to regeneration in the east of the borough. The decline of industrial employment leads to a recommendation in the ELS that the CS should plan for a further release of between 20 and 50 hectares of industrial employment land over the plan period. Policy SO6 proposes a managed approach to industrial land, safeguarding and intensifying its use in the SILs and Local Industrial Locations (LILs) identified in the ELS and setting out criteria for intensification

through mixed use in some of the LILs. It also proposes partnership working to coordinate the release of SIL at Fish Island North and Fish Island Mid.

- 3.56 The ELS identifies that existing industrial uses at Fish Island North sit uncomfortably with adjacent emerging land uses in the regeneration area at Stratford City and the Olympic Park. It identifies scope for a reduction of B2 (general industrial) and growth of B1 uses as part of an Industrial Business Park. The strategy for releasing SIL at Fish Island is set out in *Fish Island: A Rationale for Regeneration 2009*. The managed and phased release proposed in Policy CP06 is in conformity with the *London Plan*.
- 3.57 Work on the boundaries between the sub areas of Fish Island and the exact amount and location of SIL release will need to be considered together with regeneration aspirations for the wider area. This exercise is being carried out through the *Olympic Legacy Strategic Planning Guidance* and the emerging *Fish Island Area Action Plan (AAP)* and these two delivery mechanisms will set out the exact location of SIL release.
- 3.58 Concerns have been raised that the masterplan framework is progressing slowly and that a firm commitment in the CS to release SIL, not conditional upon a future DPD, is needed to provide clarity and investor confidence and address decline and policy stagnation. However it is clear that work is ongoing on both the *Olympic Legacy Strategic Planning Guidance* and the *Fish Island AAP*, which is included in the LDS as due for adoption in 2011. I am satisfied that through SP06 and the *Fish Island AAP*, which is recognised in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as a critical priority, the CS provides a clear framework and timescale for the release of SIL at Fish Island.
- 3.59 Fish Island South is sufficiently distant from the Olympic Park to avoid having an impact on the proposed uses there. It has good access and is located away from residential areas. Consequently the ELS recommends that Fish Island South should be retained, enhanced and promoted as SIL, with industrial uses consolidated and relocated from Fish Island North where appropriate. I recognise that there are some non industrial uses in Fish Island South, such as live work units, some B1 uses and a training centre with student accommodation. However I do not consider that the presence of these uses outweighs the clear strategic direction that the evidence base provides. I am therefore satisfied that the CS takes an appropriate approach to the managed release of SIL that is consistent with national guidance and justified by robust and up to date evidence.

#### **Issue 7: Provision of public open space.**

*Does the CS address effectively the existing deficiency and declining provision of accessible public open space in the borough?*

- 3.60 Providing access to nature and open space is one of the key principles of the *Community Plan* and one of the borough's major challenges, with impacts on health, quality of life and biodiversity. The Council's *Open Spaces Strategy 2006 – 2016* (OSS) identifies deficiencies in access to publicly accessible open space and sets out a development standard of 1.2 hectares per 1,000 of population. Annual monitoring reports over the past 5 years indicate that this has not been achieved, with provision of 1.14 per hectare achieved in 2007/8 and 1.12 per hectare in 2008/9.
- 3.61 This evidence of deficiency and declining provision and the physical constraints of a densely developed urban area, where further growth is planned, raise the question of whether the 2006 open space standard can ever be achieved. The Council acknowledges that the OSS is out of date and thus relies on the IDP Report to provide an up to date picture of the borough's open spaces.
- 3.62 The IDP Report provides a fine grain of information on current open space levels based on paired LAP areas. It uses the PPCG model to calculate an overall requirement of 99 hectares which is set out in the CS. The report acknowledges that achieving the quantitative requirement for open space is neither feasible nor practical. The CS therefore takes a pragmatic approach based on "Protect, Create, Enhance and Connect" with the 1.2 hectares per 1,000 as a monitoring standard.
- 3.63 CS Policy SP04 lists projects in the OSS which the PPCG model identifies as being required to support the scale of development in the borough to 2025. The IDP (in Appendix 2 of the CS) sets out timescales for these projects and recognises that their non delivery would have an impact on growth targets and trigger a review of the programme. Policy SP04 also refers to strategic projects which are outside the control of the Council, such as Lea River Park, FAT walk and Olympic Park. These projects, together with their delivery teams and timescales, are also listed in the *Programmes of Delivery* in CS Appendix 2.
- 3.64 Enhancing existing public open spaces and improving accessibility is also addressed in Policy SP04, with individual projects detailed in Appendix 2. A reference to improving access to Metropolitan Open Land needs to be added to ensure consistency with the *London Plan* and to present a complete picture of the strategically important open spaces available to residents of the borough [C9]. The Council's *Green Grid Strategy*, also listed in the *Programmes of Delivery*, takes a management approach to addressing the questions of deficiency and access to open spaces and to create a network of green walking routes to connect open spaces and waterways throughout the borough. This is at an early stage, with only a draft baseline report available to support the CS. However it is included in the *Delivery Programmes* as a key programme and will be taken forward through lower level DPDs.

- 3.65 I have considered the suggestion that additional references should be made to Lee Valley Park to highlight the contributions it will make to strengthening neighbourhood well being and enhancing biodiversity. However I do not consider that the absence of these references makes the CS unsound.
- 3.66 Subject to a minor correction to include reference to Metropolitan Open Land to ensure soundness I am satisfied that the CS takes a realistic approach to providing accessible open space which is justified by detailed research and can be implemented in co-ordination with delivery partners.

C9	Include reference Metropolitan Open Land
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### **Issue 8: Infrastructure, delivery and monitoring.**

*Is there a clear strategy for delivering the key infrastructure requirements?*

- 3.67 The CS places the *Programme of Delivery* at the beginning of the document, following on from the *Vision Statement and Key Principles*. This demonstrates recognition of the essential role that delivery and implementation will play in achieving the CS vision. However there is a confusing relationship between the five programmes in the *Programme of Delivery* and the IDP which is one of these programmes and is set out in detail at the end of the CS (Appendix 2). Furthermore the listing of some, but not all of the projects for each programme early in the CS is imprecise and inconsistent. Changes are needed to provide an accurate and internally consistent summary of the delivery programmes, the projects within them and by whom and when they will be delivered.
- 3.68 The Council has suggested changes to the way in which this information is presented. The *Programme of Delivery* adjacent to the vision statement will be amended to simply summarise the five delivery programmes [C10]. All of the programmes, their projects, key partners and timescale, will be set out in detail in Appendix 2 [C11] under the heading *Programme of Delivery*. The IDP will therefore become one of the five programmes set out in Appendix 2. However it will retain a greater level of detail than the other programmes, including costings, links to policy and risks/contingencies as in existing Appendix 2. These changes are necessary to ensure that the way in which the CS will be delivered is set out in a coherent and consistent way.
- 3.69 The delivery programme is informed by the PPCG Report, which identifies where new social infrastructure will be required to support growth and from the IDP Report which is a supporting document to the CS. The higher density option of the PPCG model, which is required to meet the housing target, is the base on which both reports identify future demand.

- 3.70 The IDP Report, dated September 2009, takes a methodical approach, addressing the questions of why, what, how, where and when for each piece of infrastructure required to deliver the CS. It has a corporate role, supporting and informing other borough strategies and decisions relating to the distribution of funding. Its governance arrangements, which include strategic partners, give it a high level role as a project planning tool. The Council intends to update the IDP annually alongside the AMR.
- 3.71 The IDP, set out in Appendix 2 of the CS, identifies the key pieces of infrastructure needed to support the CS. It categorises each project as critical, necessary or preferred and this informs the identification of risks and contingencies for each project. It identifies those areas where a failure to deliver or delay will trigger a review of the plan. Clearly the annual review of the IDP will provide a sensitive monitoring vehicle, enabling problems with funding, delays or the need for acceleration to be identified at a sufficiently early stage to manage delivery of the CS effectively.
- 3.72 In most cases the location and phasing or timing for each project is set out in the IDP. However some items such as the provision of health care schemes and idea stores have broad timescales or grouped provision and rely on the IDP Report to provide detailed information about phasing. I consider this is appropriate, keeping the IDP in the CS as a concise summary which is supported by more detailed information in the IDP Report which can be kept up to date by annual review.
- 3.73 In general the CS identifies broad areas for development and delegates the allocation of sites to lower level DPD's. However in some cases it is evident that particular sites will be necessary to deliver a particular element of infrastructure. It has been demonstrated that reliance on the Leven Road Gasworks to deliver a new primary school by 2017 and open space from 2010 - 2015 is unrealistic as the site will not be available in time to meet these timescales.
- 3.74 The Council has agreed that the IDP should be amended to reflect a realistic timescale and ensure soundness in this area, changing delivery of the primary school to 2020 and open space from 2015 – 2020 [IC4]. The risks/ contingency column of the IDP highlights that later provision of these facilities at Leven Road will lead to a requirement to review the programme of housing growth in this area. This is an area where a high level of housing growth is anticipated in the second five year period of the plan. In these circumstances I am satisfied that there is sufficient flexibility to address any necessary adjustment to the rate and location of growth in this particular area without undermining the overall rate of housing delivery in the second five year period of the plan.
- 3.75 The CS indicates that an SPD will outline the approach to securing developer contributions which it states will be pooled to meet

significant infrastructure requirements. The IDP and the IDP Report set out detailed and comprehensive information regarding the nature and location of the major infrastructure needed to support the planned growth in different parts of the borough. In this context I am satisfied that the methodology for securing pooled infrastructure can appropriately be dealt with in a future SPD. However in response to the CIL regulations the Council has suggested changes to the "Delivery and Implementation" section of the CS to include a policy hook to allow the option of applying the CIL charging schedule [C13/C14]. These changes will allow the Council flexibility to consider the most effective way to manage the pooling of developer contributions.

*Does the CS set out clear targets and measurable outcomes for monitoring the delivery of the strategy?*

3.76 The Monitoring Framework, set out in Appendix 3, is based on the strategy's 25 strategic objectives (SOs) which the CS policies will deliver. For each SO it sets out Core Output Indicators, Local Output Indicators or Significant Effect Indicators as appropriate and measurable outcomes. Subject to replacing references to N/A with "monitor trend" [C12] to ensure that all outcomes can be monitored I am satisfied that the monitoring framework is based on clear and measurable targets which relate to the delivery of the CS Policies.

3.77 Subject to changes C10 – C14 and IC4, which are required to ensure soundness, I am satisfied that the Programmes of Delivery and in particular the IDP identify the key infrastructure projects that are necessary to deliver the CS policies. They provide a clear and realistic framework setting out the responsibilities, funding sources, timing and critical dependencies for each project. The monitoring framework in Appendix 3 of the CS provides structured framework which will enable the progress of the spatial strategy to be monitored.

C10	Simplify list of delivery programmes to ensure consistency
C11	Extend Appendix 2 to include all programmes for delivery
C12	Add monitoring trend as a target for outcomes with no numerical target
C13	Add reference to CIL
C14	Add reference to CIL
IC4	Amend timescale for infrastructure dependant on Leven Road Gasworks site

**Issue 9: Delivering placemaking.**

*Does the inclusion of a vision diagram and opportunities, priorities and principles for each of the borough's "places" contribute to the effectiveness of the CS?*

- 3.78 Policy SP12 draws together the main themes of the CS that will contribute to improving the quality of the built and natural environment. It is effectively a summary which repeats the content of other policies. The adjacent Figure 36 sets out a strategic vision with a short statement for each of the borough's hamlets. This is a succinct, focused way of capturing the essential issues for each hamlet and it makes a useful contribution to the CS.
- 3.79 The pages that follow SP12 set out the vision, priorities and principles for each hamlet. Whilst PPS12 requires core strategies to set out the local challenges and opportunities for the future of its places, taking the strategy to a finer level of detail requires accuracy, consistency and completeness. I recognise that the Council has sought to be selective of what is important to each place. However this section of the CS raises more questions than it answers. Inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the level of detail provided and the decision to capture some but not all of the spatial issues from the overall strategy is not clearly explained or justified.
- 3.80 I set out below some examples of areas of concern:
- The diagrams for Millwall, Cubitt Town and other growth areas **do not acknowledge the high levels of planned growth** that are so well illustrated on Figure 23. Failure to reconcile this most significant change with the urban design and connectivity aspirations shown on diagrams 59 and 60, for example, means that this part of the CS does not address spatial planning in its true sense. Furthermore it results in a "mixed message" which leaves members of the local community uncertain about the intentions for their areas.
  - Town centres are recognised on the "place" diagrams, but absence of detail about the type of centre leaves **unanswered questions regarding the type and scale of commercial development planned**. For example neither the priorities nor the vision diagram (Fig 39) for Bethnal Green reflect its inclusion in Policy SP01.4 as one of the district town centres to which 16,600 square metres of comparison floorspace will be directed. This has leaves local residents feeling inadequately informed and anxious about the level of retail floorspace likely to take place in their areas.
  - The POL designations are shown on some of the vision diagrams, such as Aldgate (Figure 42) but not on others such as Canary Wharf (Figure 58) and there is no mention of the POL designation in the vision, priorities or principles for Canary Wharf. The City Fringe is not overlaid on the vision diagram for the "places" in the east of the borough or referred to in the priorities. This **failure to represent key spatial planning tools** on the diagrams contrasts with the decision to drill down in great detail, to specific street level, in some areas.

Developers participating in the examination expressed frustration at this lack of clarity and consistency.

- Policy SP01 describes the Tower Hamlets Activity Areas as requiring a distinctive policy response due to their location, characteristics, mix of uses and accessibility. This suggests they will have a key influence over the way in which hamlets such as Spitalfields or Aldgate will develop. However these **important designations are not acknowledged** on the vision diagrams, priorities or principles for these places.
- **Boundaries between the places diagrams are inconsistent.** For example diagrammatic links/ routes and green corridors do not connect on diagrams for adjacent places. Examples include Bow/ Victoria Park, Poplar/Poplar Riverside, Mile End/Bow Common and Bromley-by-Bow/ Bow Common. The interface between the vision diagrams for the adjoining places of Millwall and Cubitt Town is unclear. These matters are not crucial to the information that the diagrams seek to convey, but they raise local concerns and questions about the accuracy and utility of all of the vision diagrams.
- **Lack of sensitivity to local concerns** undermines the credibility of the vision diagrams. For example it was highlighted at the examination hearings that the new shopping centre indicated at Mile End (Figure 51) incorporates residential areas and listed terraced houses.
- **Inconsistencies between the vision diagrams** and text lead to confusion and leave the reader unsure about priorities. For example Figure 38 (Spitalfields) identifies "Regeneration of Bishopsgate Goods Yard" and the Bishopsgate Masterplan is identified as a critical priority in the IDP. However there is no reference to this in the vision, opportunities, priorities or principles for Spitalfields.
- In some cases text on the vision diagrams, for example the new green space referred to at Bromley by Bow (Figure 52) does not make it clear where aspirations are part of **wider comprehensive redevelopment schemes**.

3.81 The Council has suggested extensive changes to this section of the CS to deal with inaccuracies and inconsistencies identified during the examination. However these changes relate to just 6 of the borough's 24 hamlets and would only deal with matters raised at the examination by local residents, landowners and developers. Further work is required to ensure that there are no deficiencies in the placemaking pages for the remaining 18 hamlets.

3.82 Attempting to change the CS at this stage, as suggested by the Council, would be therefore be inequitable and would result in an uneven spread of detail and accuracy through the placemaking

pages. In their current form these pages provide a useful basis for work on lower level DPDs and SPDs. However a considerable amount of further work, including further engagement with the local community, is required to ensure that they are an effective spatial planning tool which will help deliver the overall strategy.

- 3.83 The Council has confirmed that the vision diagrams are not intended as site specific, detailed or technical drawings. To reflect this and to indicate that the placemaking pages complement rather than form an integral part of the strategy, I recommend that they are placed in an annex to the CS.

IC5	Place pages 90 – 114 of the CS in an Annex.
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#### 4. CONSIDERATION OF OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO SOUNDNESS

- 4.1 **Flood risk.** The Council has carried out a *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* (SFRA) which identifies the parts of the borough that are at risk of flooding. This includes some of the Opportunity Areas where development will be focused, particularly to the east of the borough. Leaside lies within flood zones 2 and 3 and the entire Isle of Dogs is in flood zone 3. To the west of the borough the southern part of the City Fringe lies within flood zones 2 and 3. The main risks to these areas are from fluvial flooding from the River Lea, tidal surge breaches of the Thames Tidal Defences and surface water flooding from impermeable surfaces.
- 4.2 Strategic Objective SO13 sets out the objective of reducing the risk and impact of flooding and the SFRA has informed a *General Sequential Test* which provides a basis for sequential and if necessary exceptions testing to inform the allocation of individual sites. Policy SP04 indicates how the sequential test will be used to determine the suitability of land for development. In the justification of the policy in "Why we have taken this approach" paragraph 4.20 needs to be amended to include an explanation of how the SFRA has informed the policy.

C15	Explain the way in which the SFRA has informed the strategy
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- 4.3 **Waste:** The borough operates as a single waste disposal authority and this is reflected in the CS. It is proposed to safeguard all existing waste management sites unless they can be replaced by more sustainable alternative sites which maintain capacity. In addition, informed by the *Waste Evidence Base Report* (WEB), the CS identifies a need for a land area of between 5 – 10 hectares to accommodate house waste facilities with sufficient capacity to meet *London Plan* targets for managing waste. Policy SP05 identifies 4 areas of search for new waste treatment facilities. These areas flow from the short list of suitable sites identified in the WEB report, where sufficient land is identified to allow flexibility in the case of some of the sites not coming forward. The timescale for delivery is

included in the IDP. On this basis I am satisfied that there is robust evidence to demonstrate that there is sufficient land to meet the *London Plan* targets during the plan period.

- 4.4 **Working towards a zero carbon borough** sets out the objective (SO24) of achieving a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025. Policy SP11 sets out goals which are consistent with national guidance and the *London Plan* and provides a hook for more detailed guidance in lower level DPDs. I consider that these goals are justified in the *Climate Change and Mitigation Evidence Base* and the final report of *Sustainable Energy and Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities in LBTH*. To ensure that the CS is sound minor changes are needed to allow for feasibility to be taken into account when considering requirements for on site renewable energy generation [C16], to ensure that the area based approach to carbon reduction is explained [C17] and to define Energy Opportunity Areas [C18].

C16	Add feasibility test to ensure flexibility and consistency with London Plan
C17	Explain area based approach to carbon emissions
C18	Define Energy Opportunity Areas

- 4.5 **Creating distinct and durable places** sets out in Policy SP10 the CS priorities for managing the historic environment and promoting a high standard of design. It includes the requirement for strategic and local views to be protected but there is no explanation of these designations and they are not identified on the accompanying Figure 34. To ensure effectiveness the "Why we have taken this approach" section which follows SP10 should explain that strategic views are designated in the *London Plan* and that local views will be defined and designated in forthcoming DPDs [C19].

- 4.6 Figure 34 includes shaded areas which refer to "areas of priority....." and "areas of established character and townscape." It is clear that these broad areas flow from the *Urban Structure and Characterisation Study* (USCS) and conservation area studies and appraisals. The Council has explained that they will be used to inform conservation of existing character in some areas and improvements to character and distinctiveness in others. However with no reference to this in the policy or the accompanying text they have no meaning. The Council has suggested additional wording which will explain their purpose [C20]. However to ensure that the CS is effective further explanation is needed to describe how these areas will be taken forward [IC6]. Both of these changes are required to ensure soundness.

C19	Confirm consistency of approach to strategic and local views with London Plan and explain vehicle for identification of views
C20	Explain map based identification of townscape character

	areas (on Figure 34)
IC6	Explain vehicle/s for defining and setting criteria for townscape areas

- 4.7 **Tall Buildings** are addressed in Policy SP11 which identifies the preferred locations and the criteria which they meet. The selection of these locations is supported by evidence in the USCS and has been developed in collaboration with English Heritage. Additional wording is required, as suggested by the Council, to confirm the consistency of this approach with the *London Plan* [C21]. It is clear that the policy does not preclude the identification of other areas or individual applications for tall buildings outside the preferred areas. To ensure that the CS is sound the Council has suggested an explanation to confirm the way in which such instances will be dealt with [C22].

C21	Clarify consistency with London Plan
C22	Explain vehicle for identifying sites/locations and criteria for tall buildings

- 4.8 **Historic heritage:** Whilst the CS sets out the need to protect, manage and enhance the Tower of London World Heritage Site (WHS) and its setting it does provide equal protection for the buffer zone and setting of the Maritime Greenwich WHS. I consider that the additional wording to Policy SP10 suggested by the Council is required to ensure soundness by addressing cross boundary issues [C23].

C23	Add reference to protection of the setting of Maritime Greenwich WHS
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## 5 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 I conclude that, with the amendments I recommend, the Tower Hamlets Core Strategy DPD satisfies the requirements of s20 (5) of the 2004 Act and meets the criteria of soundness in PPS12.

*Sue Turner*

INSPECTOR

**Annex A**

**Annex B**

**Annex C**