

## **GENERAL APPROACH AND STRATEGIC POLICIES**

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### 3. GENERAL APPROACH AND STRATEGIC POLICIES

- 3.1 This Chapter considers the Borough's function in terms of London as a whole and how the strategic policies relate to the Government's objectives set out in Strategic Guidance for London Planning Authorities, and the emerging London Plan. The strategic policies deal with matters of importance either because of their significance to the wider urban area or because of their direct physical implications for neighbouring boroughs.

#### BOROUGH OVERVIEW

- 3.2 The Borough is closely interrelated with London and neighbouring counties, particularly Surrey, both functionally and physically in the following ways:
- a) the natural and open environment, including the River Thames, and the built environment are of national and international significance;
  - b) there are 53,900 jobs (1995) in the Borough of which 48% are taken by people travelling into the Borough; on the other hand 59% of working residents travel to job outside the Borough;
  - c) the Borough is an important location for business, particularly financial and professional services and high technology, tourism and media industries. Although the majority of firms are small they provide specialist services to larger firms and therefore contribute to the World City role;
  - d) through providing an attractive residential environment, cultural, entertainment and education facilities, the Borough can attract specialist labour, (including the internationally mobile), again contributing to the World City role;
  - e) the Borough's heritage supported by its cultural, entertainment and shopping facilities is an important asset in attracting tourists to London and helping to spread benefits of tourism from central London;
  - f) the Borough is an attractive residential area and can assist in meeting a small amount of the demand for new housing which Government seeks to provide within urban areas;
  - g) the Borough's regional and metropolitan parks, including outdoor sports provision, serve the recreational needs of Londoners and particularly those living in areas deficient in playing fields. It also provides open land for burials;
  - h) the Borough has habitats of metropolitan importance for wildlife and there are green corridors and chains which provide direct links for wildlife to adjoining areas;
  - i) the Borough is part of the wider network of transport infrastructure including pedestrian routes, cycle routes, railway corridors and primary roads (A316, A205). Richmond Station is a key transport interchange. A number of recreational walks, including the Thames Path, Capital Ring and London Loop pass through the Borough. Green chains also provide strategic links;
  - j) the River Thames with its important visual, transport, recreational and nature conservation roles dissects the Borough;
  - k) there are a number of strategic viewpoints within the Borough;
  - l) the Borough is an 'importer' of energy and aggregates and most manufactured products; it remains an 'exporter' of waste to landfill sites;
  - m) local residents, businesses and visitors contribute to local and global air pollution.

- 3.3 The strategic policies of the Plan below take forward the local policy context the Mayor of London's Vision for London and Strategic Guidance for London Planning Authorities (RPG3).

## **STG 1 OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL**

- 3.4 **The Council will seek to ensure that the Plan promotes an adequate range of opportunities for all residents including those with physical disabilities or hearing or sight loss or other special needs.**
- 3.5 The Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunities in its service delivery, and in its wider role as a planning authority in which it must take into account both geographical opportunities and provision for different groups. In pursuance of the policy, which also takes forward the Mayor's vision of opportunity for all the Plan adheres to the following principles:
- a) buildings, community facilities and the wider environment should normally be conveniently accessible to all people, not excluding those with disabilities, or with mobility problems or with young children;
  - b) shop and services and small scale employment opportunities should be provided as locally as practicable and, where they are dependent on a larger number of customers or workers, in areas accessible to public transport;
  - c) buildings and public areas should be designed to minimise the risk to personal safety and security;
  - d) as far as possible a range of housing, employment and recreational opportunities should be provided for all groups and within different areas of the Borough;
  - e) provide integrated transport to ensure that all groups have convenient and safe access to service and employment opportunities.

## **STG 2 THE ENVIRONMENT**

- 3.6 **The Council will protect and enhance the open and the built environment. In particular it will:**
- (A) safeguard the Borough's green belt and metropolitan open land and protect green chains and green corridors and other areas of open land which are important for visual reasons, agriculture, nature conservation, biodiversity, or sport and recreation;**
  - (B) conserve and enhance areas and buildings of historic or architectural interest or of special townscape value, and ancient monuments and sites of archaeological interest and registered parks and gardens of special historic interest;**
  - (C) protect the character of established residential areas, particularly from inappropriate infill and backland development**
  - (D) seek to ensure that developments enhance their surroundings, and do not impair important views or skylines.**

- 3.7 The Council places a high priority on the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment at its present high level of quality without compromising its future and its wider local, national and global context. This means that the Borough can remain an attractive area for people to live, work and enjoy their heritage and leisure time. Nature conservation is being promoted through the designation of nature conservation areas, green chains and corridors and statutory nature reserves, and opportunities will be taken to create new habitats. The Thames, its islands, and its banks are vital elements in the Borough's environment and it is important that this area of metropolitan open land is protected and conserved. Metropolitan open land, green chains and corridors are linked across borough boundaries (see Map 1) to enhance their strategic function in south west London.
- 3.8 The Borough's built environment will be protected and enhanced through the operation of the planning system including the designation of conservation areas and the Thames Policy Area. All developments are expected to pay careful regard to their surroundings and their impact on all aspects of the environment. The Council is committed to conserving and enhancing the biodiversity and natural heritage of the Borough for the benefit of future generations.

### **STG 3 CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES AND POLLUTION**

- 3.9 **The Council will ensure that development is consistent with the need to conserve energy, resources, including water and materials, and to reduce pollution. In accordance with this principle the Council will require the provision of non-residential development at the most local level to reduce the need to travel. Major trip generating developments must be within town centres or at other locations that are highly accessible by foot, cycle and by public transport.**
- 3.10 The Plan's overall strategy seeks to achieve the efficient long term use of resources. In implementing this policy the Council will adopt a sequential approach to development based on the following principles.

#### **In considering whether new building is necessary:**

- Retain and, where appropriate, refurbish existing buildings, rather than re-develop them.
- Maximise the use of existing facilities through management initiatives, such as dual use.

#### **If new building is necessary:**

- Minimise the use of greenfield and open land for development and seek to maintain the natural vegetation, especially trees, to help facilitate natural regulation of the ecosystem.
- Provide facilities and services at the most local level possible to reduce the need to travel. Where it is not practicable to provide facilities within walking distance, they should be within town centres, which are accessible by public transport and where several tasks can be accommodated in one trip.
- Maximise the use of town centre sites (and sites within walking distance) through the provision of more intensive developments including high density housing within and near to town centres when this is environmentally appropriate.
- On appropriate sites provide for a mix or combination of uses, which again has the potential to reduce the need to travel.
- Promote developments which maximise the effective use of resources including water and energy, and assist in reducing potential impact on the environment in terms of pollution, water and waste.
- Provide improved facilities for walking, cycling and public transport and limiting commuter car parking.
- Encourage the use of local labour to reduce unnecessary car commuting, such as through creche provision and secure cycle parking.

- Seek environmental gain to compensate for any environmental cost of development.

**More generally the Plan will:**

- Protect local facilities to avoid the need for unnecessary journeys.
- Increase travel choice to reduce dependency on the private car and encouraging more energy efficient forms of transport.
- Provide a network of recycling facilities throughout the Borough and within major development schemes.
- Seek to reduce the consumption of mineral and aggregates.
- Resist developments that will result in unacceptable levels of air, noise and water pollution.
- Encourage the use of clean/renewable energy.

This policy reflects the Mayor's Vision for London, and the Government's objectives to encourage a pattern of land use which minimises harm to the environment and reduces the need to travel especially by car and to seek to improve air quality, to reduce waste, pollution and the use of energy, and to encourage recycling.

## **STG 4 TOWN AND LOCAL CENTRES AND RETAILING**

- 3.11 **The Council will seek to maintain and reinforce the vitality and viability of existing centres defined in the Borough's town centre hierarchy (see Map 1). Major new developments which generate a substantial amount of travel will be encouraged to locate in the major centre of Richmond and the district centres, where consolidation and improvement of the centres are sought. Where no suitable town centre sites, or buildings suitable for conversion are available, edge-of-centre-proposals, and only then, out-of-centre proposals will be considered. Out-of-centre proposals will not normally be permitted.**
- 3.12 Richmond town centre is defined under the Greater London Authority's (GLA) classification as a major centre having an extensive local catchment area with a wide range of comparison and convenience goods shopping as well as being a cultural centre for the Borough. The four district centres (Twickenham, Teddington, East Sheen and Whitton) have a range of shops selling mainly convenience goods and providing services. Day-to-day needs are met by local centres and in some areas by isolated groups of shops. Together these three layers comprise the Borough's town centre hierarchy. Town centres are preferred locations for new, major trip-generating development, because in general, there is a choice of different forms of transport available, including accessibility for visitors on foot. They also provide shopping facilities and other services to residents. The Council will apply the following principles when considering development in town centres:
- Major generators of travel, including shopping, employment, leisure, cultural and entertainment facilities will be required to locate in Richmond town centre and the district centres.
  - Uses which serve the local community should be concentrated in the smaller centres.
  - Development should have easy access to all forms of public transport and main pedestrian and cycle networks and where practicable improve overall accessibility through establishment of new links.
  - Higher density developments, small housing units and the use of vacant space above shops will be encouraged, provided that an acceptable level of residential amenity is provided for occupiers.
  - High quality design which reflects the individual characteristics of town centres and the provision of public art will be encouraged.
  - Developments which enhance the evening economy will be encouraged subject to residential amenity and to the overall balance of uses in the town centre.

- 3.13 Mixed use areas based on town and local centres are defined on the Proposals Map. These indicate the extent of related business activity, however they are not intended as town centre boundaries and development proposals for specific uses should adhere to appropriate locational policies. Developments which incorporate a mix of uses will reduce the need to travel. They can also add to the vitality and attractiveness of an area and assist in creating a safe and secure environment.

## **STG 5 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.14 **The Council will seek to concentrate uses which serve the local community or attract visitors in areas of mixed use shown on the proposals map. Within these areas proposals will be expected to maintain or enhance the mix of uses; mixed use developments will be sought on appropriate sites. Outside mixed use areas, mixed use schemes will generally be encouraged.**
- 3.15 The strategy of the Plan is based on maintaining the existing diversity of uses with the aims of reducing the need to travel and maintaining and enhancing local communities through the provision of opportunities at the most local level practicable. This approach means that the existing mix of uses should generally be maintained and that new schemes should include a mix of uses, particularly in the mixed use areas, subject to them not leading to the loss of existing uses protected by the policies of the Plan, particularly employment uses.

## **STG 6 HOUSING**

- 3.16 **To meet the Borough's share of the additional dwellings needed in London, the Council will seek to ensure that the minimum strategic dwelling requirement for an increase of 4550 dwellings in the Borough between 1 January 1992 and 31 December 2006 is met, and to exceed this requirement where this can be achieved in accordance with the Plan's other objectives and in particular the need to maintain and enhance the environment. All proposals for new housing development should take into account the need to use land efficiently, including and take account of the provisions of the environmental policies in the Plan. Housing provision is expected to include a range of housing to meet the needs of all types of households. The Council expects that over the Plan period, at least 40% of all new units will be permanent affordable housing.**
- 3.17 LPAC's Housing Capacity Study 1998/9 confirms that the strategic dwelling requirement of 4550 dwellings over the 15 year period to 2006 can be met. Actual completions between 1 January 1992 and 31 December 2001 totalled 3300 units. The Borough collaborated with LPAC officers in a rigorous exercise to identify capacity for the 1997-2016 period, which has been agreed as 4860 units of conventional capacity. This figure includes sites identified in the Plan, an allowance for large windfall sites, and estimates for small sites and conversions. Within this expected housing capacity, consideration will be given to the range of housing, and its relationship with the wider issues of sustainability, economic buoyancy, the labour market and Care in the Community. The Council recognises the need for dwellings of a variety of sizes, types, tenures and costs throughout the Borough to meet the requirement of all types of households, including those with special requirements such as the elderly, key workers, single persons, the less mobile and those with low incomes and the homeless. Due to the Borough's substantial need for permanent affordable housing, which has been confirmed in a study and a survey carried out in 1999 and 2000, the Council will expect 40% of all new residential units developed within the Plan period to be permanent affordable housing. The Council will generally resist the loss of housing to other uses, and any reduction in housing units.
- 3.18 New residential development must ensure that land is used efficiently, including the provisions of the environmental policies of the Plan, whilst respecting the quality, character and amenity of the area. The prevailing nature of established neighbourhoods should be maintained. The Council will encourage relatively higher density development in town centres and areas within walking distance

of town centres or otherwise well served by public transport, subject to compatibility with established character.

## **STG 7 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

- 3.19 **The Council will retain and promote the creation of a hierarchy of public open spaces, providing regional parks and open spaces, metropolitan open spaces, district parks, local parks and open spaces.**
- 3.20 Many of the Borough's parks and open spaces are of metropolitan importance in providing opportunities for recreation (see paragraph 5.3 and Table 1 in Chapter 5 for the context of the public open space hierarchy). Areas of public open space will be safeguarded and where practical opportunities will be taken to improve both the provision and quality of open space and associated recreational facilities. Opportunities will also be taken to improve the value of public open space for walkers and wildlife. The major areas of public open space have a London-wide function.

## **STG 8 EMPLOYMENT**

- 3.21 **The loss of employment sites will generally be resisted. New development for business, industrial or storage and distribution use will be permitted subject to other policies of the Plan.**
- 3.22 It is important that employment sites are retained to provide a range of employment opportunities within the Borough in order to maintain opportunities for people who wish to work locally, now or in the future. The Council will seek to retain the existing dispersed pattern of employment opportunities with main concentrations of employment in town centres and other locations that are accessible by public transport. These will provide opportunities for people living in parts of London where unemployment is higher and personal mobility relatively low.
- 3.23 The employment policies of the Plan are essential to all the elements of the Mayor's Vision for London. The development of a specialist economy makes an important contribution to the London economy as a whole. The policies take forward Strategic Guidance objectives in relation to promoting London as a World City, maintaining and enhancing the competitiveness of business, and encouraging a pattern of land use which minimises harm to the environment and reduces the need to travel especially by car. The approach balances the need for growth of the local economy with the consolidation principle (see paragraphs 2.9-2.10) applicable in west London to ensure that labour and transport capacity are not exceeded.

## **STG 9 RECREATION, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT**

- 3.24 **The Council will resist the loss of sites in leisure, recreational, cultural, entertainment or community use and will encourage new provision in suitable accessible locations.**
- 3.25 Where practicable new facilities should be within walking distance of people's homes. More specialised facilities should be conveniently accessible by public transport. Many facilities are of London-wide importance and therefore contribute to the strategic vision in relation to quality of life and establishing a strong economy.

## **STG 10 TOURISM**

- 3.26 **The Council will seek to maximise visitor satisfaction while protecting the interests of residents and the environmental character of the Borough.**
- 3.27 The Council recognises the value of tourism both to the local and London economy and will encourage the provision of accommodation to enable visitors to stay longer and spend more. However, it is anxious that any adverse effects it may have on residents, traffic and the character of the Borough are kept to a minimum. Strategic Guidance recognises tourism as one of London's growth sectors and that it is vital to the future success of London's economy.

## **STG 11 TRANSPORT**

- 3.28 **The Council will seek to reduce congestion and pollution through promoting a choice of means of travel including, low emission motor vehicles, walking, cycling and public transport and river transport.**
- 3.29 In implementing this policy the Council will seek:
- To provide choice of alternative modes of transport
  - To promote walking and cycling.
  - To improve road safety for all.
  - To press for new and improved bus, tube and intermediate mode rail services.
  - To lobby for the development of new orbital rail services in south west London.
  - To reduce the impact of traffic in residential areas and streets unsuitable for through traffic.
  - To give priority to pedestrians in district and local shopping centres.
  - To locate major developments on sites well served by public transport.
  - To manage car parking in areas where commuter parking is prevalent
  - To control heavy goods vehicle movements to minimise their harmful and intrusive effects.
  - To continue to liaise with neighbouring local authorities, London-wide bodies, the Department of Transport, Transport for London, the Strategic Rail Authority and the transport operators to secure innovative and effective improvements in pursuit of its transport policies.
  - To improve interchange facilities at railway stations and other public transport interchanges including those with river transport services.
- 3.30 The Council considers that further provision for orbital and radial travel in south west London should be achieved through a strategy based on new and improved public transport provision rather than major road expansion. The approach is consistent with the objectives of the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 and of Strategic Guidance to facilitate the development of transport systems which are efficient and safe, and which contribute to the achievement of competitiveness, regeneration and urban quality.

## **STG 12 AIR TRANSPORT**

- 3.31 **The Council will oppose further developments likely to lead to an expansion in services or an increase in flights to and from Heathrow Airport, or any increase in commercial or private helicopter activity over the Borough. It will seek a ban on night flights.**
- 3.32 The Council is concerned that any increase in flights over the Borough will lead to increased noise and, in the case of Heathrow, additional traffic within the Borough and increased threat to safety of

residents. In addition to their environmental impact the Council recognises that airports can have a powerful effect on the type and level of economic activity and urbanisation and this must be a major consideration in their siting and expansion. It would be bad planning to encourage more airport activity in a heavily populated 'overheated' area such as west London where it would put large numbers of people at increased risk of a major accident and exacerbate development pressures, transport congestion and labour shortages whilst perpetuating the east/west imbalance in London. The Council supports the development of regional airports. Within the South East it considers that there would be regional planning benefits in catering for expected growth in airport activity in less buoyant parts of the region and that all alternatives should be thoroughly investigated to this end. The Council is opposed to the development and use of further supersonic aircraft because of their excessive noise nuisance. Although Heathrow Airport is outside the administrative boundaries of the Borough, the Council will oppose further developments likely to lead to an increase in flights or services. The air transport policies of the Plan will only be relevant where there is a need for planning permission, or where the Council is consulted on land use, or environmental conditions.

## **STG 13 LIAISON**

- 3.33 **The Council will continue to liaise with neighbouring local authorities and London-wide bodies, the Department of Transport, Transport for London, and the transport operators to secure innovative and effective improvements in pursuit of its transport policies.**
- 3.34 Many things which happen outside the Borough boundary have significant effects on the Borough, such as proposals on the opposite river bank, developments which add excessive traffic to the Borough's roads, growth in nearby shopping centres, and changes in aircraft movement. When the Council is consulted on planning applications and local plans, or given other opportunities to make representations, it will assess proposals in relation to their achievement of the Plan objectives. Equally plans and proposals in the Borough may have an impact on adjoining areas and the Council will consult other authorities on these matters.

## **STG 14 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 3.35 **The Council will review the policies and proposals of this Plan and amend them where necessary.**
- 3.36 The Plan is intended to guide development and land use change over the next ten years or so, and most proposals in it can reasonably be expected to start within ten years of the adoption of the Plan. So that the Council has an up to date Plan, the Council will bring the policies and proposals of the Plan into line with new government and regional strategies and planning advice, take into account any new planning guidance to be issued by the Greater London Authority and Mayor of London; and will regularly monitor changes which are occurring in the Borough and surrounding areas, and also the effectiveness of the Plan in achieving its objectives. In the light of monitoring, the Plan will be amended as and when necessary, subject to consultation as statutorily required. A set of targets is given below.

### **UDP performance targets**

#### **Appearance and design**

No loss of listed buildings/buildings of townscape merit

#### **Overall structure**

50% of sites in mixed-use areas are redeveloped for mixed uses (STG5).  
90% of net increase in retail provision in Richmond and district centres (TC2)  
85% of employment floorspace is created in Richmond and district centres (EMP2)

### **Opportunity for all**

40% of new housing units are affordable housing (HSG6)  
10% of homes built to wheelchair standards (HSG8)  
Maintain level of local shopping facilities (TC 7)

### **Housing**

1992-2006 housing target of 4550 is achieved (agreed in RPG 3)/ 1997-2016 housing target of 4860 is achieved (agreed with GLA) (STG6/HSG1)  
95% of new housing on previously developed land (STG3)  
25% of new units are small (HSG11)

### **Employment**

Net increase of 150 per annum in firms registering for VAT in the borough  
1% net growth in business and industrial floorspace per annum

### **Town and local centres**

Maintain proportion of retail uses in key frontages at existing levels (TC5/6)  
No loss of basic convenience facilities in smaller centres

### **Nature conservation and open spaces**

No development contrary to Metropolitan Open Land, Green Belt or Other Open Land of Townscape Importance policy (ENV 1,2,3)

### **Implementation**

10% proposal sites developed each year Plan is operational  
Less than 5% departures of total applications

### **Protection of community facilities**

No net loss in floorspace of community facilities