

**London Borough of Ealing
Development (or Core) Strategy
Submission Development Plan Document – Independent
Examination**

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**Inspector initial questions – PART 1
28th July 2011**

- I would like the Council to comment on any applicability of the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation Draft that was published on 25 July
- Also on 22 July The London Plan July 2011 was published and has replaced that from 2008. I need confirmation from the Council that the Core Strategy is in general conformity with the newly adopted plan or whether there are any other changes that are necessary following the publication of that document.

**Council's Response
5th August 2011**

I would like the Council to comment on any applicability of the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation Draft that was published on 25 July

I understand that the framework is part of a bill that will not be enacted until November 2011 at the earliest and the framework is currently subject to a lengthy process of consultation. In other words there is considerable scope and potential for further changes and amendments. It is also proposed that the guidance that underpins the national planning policy statements/guidance will also, in time, be reviewed and heavily rationalised.

However, I also understand that the draft NPPF may be regarded as a material consideration of some weight. I am aware of the subsequent advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate for use by its Inspectors in this regard.

Therefore, for the moment, it is best that the council's position is formally reserved as the devil is likely to be in the detail and we are in the process of reviewing any detailed implications. That said, we are perhaps fortunate in that our emerging local plans must still be in conformity with a regional spatial strategy (i.e. the London Plan) so that, for example, certain targets are still set out.

On the other hand, in the interests of promoting a document that was more accessible and comprehensible we have endeavoured to avoid the needless

repetition of national and regional planning policies. We may need to revisit, at least in part, this approach so as to ensure clarity is maintained.

Of the issues highlighted in the advice note from the Planning Inspectorate those issues of immediate note include:

a) The intention to remove office development from the "town centre first" policy. This would appear at first glance to be a possible matter for concern as our emerging policy has sought to provide a clearer and more robust policy emphasis with the intention of maintaining and sustaining a critical mass in Ealing Metropolitan Town Centre (see Policy 1.2 (b)). However, this is tempered by the fact that actual planning determinations will continue to be taken on a case by case basis that will take account of local and national policies as the draft NPPF currently suggests.

b) The requirement to remove the national minimum size threshold for requiring affordable housing to be delivered. However, this flexibility, particularly in the current economic climate, will be largely welcomed.

Also on 22 July The London Plan July 2011 was published and has replaced that from 2008. I need confirmation from the Council that the Core Strategy is in general conformity with the newly adopted plan or whether there are any other changes that are necessary following the publication of that document.

We have been tracking the timetable for the preparation and production of the Replacement London Plan throughout and believe that our emerging plan is in general conformity with the RLP. We have received some representations from the "GLA family" and are endeavouring to conclude a statement of common grounds that will enable and ensure that any further minor amendments can be sensibly agreed and proposed by the parties before the public hearings commence. It makes sense therefore, for the moment, for the council's position to be formally reserved so as to enable this process to be fully completed.

One other issue has arisen since then following the report by the Planning Inspector into the soundness of the RLP, namely that relating to the future provision of pitches for gypsies and travelling people and we are endeavouring to get some further clarity on the matter.

However, the council stands by its emerging policy (1.2 (l)). We understand that according to the latest HSSA return to the CLG in April 2011 by LB Ealing there is one pitch available with four families on the waiting list. The position is largely unchanged from that reported a year earlier and therefore does not suggest there is a need for additional site to be provided in the short to medium term.