

Regeneration Committee – Thursday 27 February 2020

Transcript of Agenda item 5 – Delivering on Opportunity Areas

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We are moving on to the substantive item, the Mayor's Opportunity Area (OA) programme. Can I welcome our guests to the meeting and invite them to introduce themselves? Deputy Mayor.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Thank you. Darren?

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Darren Richard, Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority (GLA) Planning Team.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Sarah?

Sarah Scannell (Assistant Director for Planning and Development, London Borough of Hounslow): Sarah Scannell, Assistant Director for Planning and Development at the London Borough of Hounslow.

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): Councillor Martin Seaton, Chair of Planning in Southwark and a Ward Councillor in North Walworth.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Thank you all. We will start with question 1. We should start with question 1, should we not? We will start with the Deputy Mayor. Is the current approach the best means of delivering the intended outcomes for OAs? Why do you not start, sir, by saying what an OA is?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Right. Well, they are simply identifying the capital's most significant growth locations, the definition of that being that they can accommodate at least 5,000 jobs, 2,500 new additional homes or a combination of the two, or something of that order. The documents are not there to impose any new policy or conflict with any existing policy, either London Plan or local. It is about aggregating the information, possibilities and opportunities, and crucially the infrastructure needs that need be to be brought forward and constructed to enable that identified opportunity for homes and jobs to be brought forward.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Is it the best means, do you think? If you were doing this from the start, would you have gone down this route?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It is a contributor to bringing these forward. I would be keen to get across that obviously, yes, they are in place to encourage the development to come forward, the right kind of development - the latest Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks (OAPFs) obviously encourage good growth, drawing on London Plan principles and plans - and obviously we want capacity for new homes and jobs to be brought forward, but at the same time, it would be wrong to say that it is the vehicle through which these things are delivered. It is a sort of contributory information-gathering process.

Also, what I think we could get into is that the process is almost as important as the outcome. It is bringing people together in that phase of constructing the OAPF documents that is a useful thing, as it always is if you just looked at a small development area, an estate regeneration, for example, those initial years of bringing people round the table, drawing lines all over maps and planning. It is part of the suite of documents that you would want in place if anyone challenged, whether it be the Mayor, the Borough or indeed anybody, "What is the intention? What could one build there? What should one build there? If you took that forward, what would it need to make it happen and happen well?" I think the OAPFs are documents that are meant to answer that series of questions, rather than be a vehicle through which City Hall drives something. It is not intended to be like that. It is, as I say, one of a suite of documents, and it is shared between the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the borough. The GLA cannot impose the document on a borough. It has to be a consensual, two-way thing.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Thank you. Has the GLA level of support been sufficient to enable the effective delivery of the intended outcomes for the OAs? Rather than starting with the Deputy Mayor, why do I not start with, dare I say, a customer? Maybe Sarah [Scannell] and then Councillor Seaton.

Sarah Scannell (Assistant Director for Planning and Development, London Borough of Hounslow): The London Borough of Hounslow has two identified OAs, one in the current London Plan and another one in the new London Plan, and we lobbied for those to be included. We were very keen for those to be part of the London Plan identified OAs. We have decided to take those forward as part of our own Local Plan review and we are still to get to adoption but throughout the process we have been closely talking to the GLA at all stages to identify how best we can deliver those through a variety of means. Some parts are to do with transport, parts are to do with homes and parts are to do with releasing and changing the way that we look at industrial land. From Hounslow's perspective it has been an advisory role from the GLA, and we will eventually, once we get to adoption, turn that into an OAPF. We have had the support of the GLA officers throughout that process.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Councillor?

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): Yes. It is useful for me to be here. Usually I am fronted by my colleagues, the Cabinet Member for Great Estates, which is our council home delivery programme, or by my colleague Councillor [Johnson] Situ on Planning, Regeneration and Licensing. I normally sit behind the scenes, although a significant influence. I am here today, I accepted the invitation because it seems right that this time I should be out in the open.

First of all, we have three OAs at Elephant and Castle, Canada Water and of course Old Kent Road. These are significant areas in which we hope we will build more than 20,000 new homes across the piece over a period of time.

Is this the best way of proceeding? Yes and no. Yes, clearly, we need to identify areas which we want to develop because they have capacity for those developments, but clearly if we want such a statement what we are actually saying to industry is, "This is an investment opportunity". The moment you say that, what you effectively do is create a rush to acquire land and plots of development opportunities. A consequence, of course, is that you immediately impact upon the viability of any schemes that are in those areas. I hope later on we can get onto that, as to the impact of, first, a strategic authority such as the GLA identifying in the London Plan, and then a local authority such as Southwark conceding and saying, "This is an area for development", and the consequence it has for the local community whom we ultimately serve. I am going to pause there for the moment because of course what will happen as we proceed, I am sure, is that we will begin to understand the impact of the OAs on the authority, those who live there and of course the industry as a whole.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): You hit the bullseye there, Councillor. I think my third question is almost a repeat of the first two, so I am going to leave that and move on to Assembly Member Shah.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): I want to explore social and economic values of OAs, what was planned and what has been achieved so far. Those are the areas I want to cover. The starting question is: what should be the primary benefits derived from OAs? If we can start with the borough guests. What should be the primary benefits derived from the OAs? What is, therefore, the scale of what you have embarked upon in your areas? How much have you achieved? Starting with Councillor Seaton, you mentioned, for example, 20,000 homes as the target of what you are embarking upon. Not only homes, there are jobs as well. We would want to know what would be the case in your borough, in Southwark. Similarly, Sarah, if you can tell us that as well, the scale and what actually you have achieved. May we start with Councillor Seaton?

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): Thank you. Another reason why I am here is that I want to make sure that as we make decisions, particularly in planning, all of our decisions are in the context not only of our planning policy but our wider responsibility. Of course, we have our Social Regeneration Charter, where we map out what are the needs for local people within those OAs and indeed across the borough. Across the three OAs which we have identified, we identified, first of all, health inequalities; secondly, housing inequalities; and thirdly, job inequalities. Where we identify areas where there are significant deficits, our sole aim, of course, is using the planning and indeed the related policies in order to address those issues.

What have we achieved? First of all, we have a clear intention -- we have the largest council house building programme, I believe, in London, not compared to the Mayor of course. Secondly, we have a clear programme to address health inequalities. Thirdly, we have a clear programme to address housing inequalities. Since my time as Chair we have hit a minimum of 35% affordable home quantum on all of our approvals to date, with the exception of one which I might refer to Jules [Pipe CBE] later on but we will not discuss right now, I suppose.

That has meant that we have been able, through the private sector, to achieve record numbers of affordable homes, but alongside that we have a programme to build just over 11,000 new homes within the immediate future, of which 250 have been brought forward to date and there are a further 1,700 that will be achieved this financial year. In proceeding years, those numbers will rank up quite considerably. Our programme is intended to be sensitive and acknowledge that the market is challenging. Skills are a challenge. Us no longer being part of the European Union, the accessibility of affordable labour is going to be a challenge for us. That may well increase our costs, but that is a genuine increase. It is not caused as a result of pure speculation, it is caused simply by supply of labour.

Secondly and I think equally as important, it is so important that as we begin to project forward what is our genuine achievement, it is measured by our local residents. They have to see a measurable change in their life experience within the borough. This is a measure for us, in terms of broad satisfaction. For a residents who are currently unemployed, not in education and therefore not in any particular scheme, part of our regeneration schemes should contribute - this is linked to our Social Regeneration Charter - to ensuring those individuals find either an apprenticeship or that they are taken on as part of a broader programme to ensure that local people are employed and are therefore trained in what we might call either academic or contemporary - the best word I should use here - plumbing, electrical or general development work. They are actually employed. We chart it by the numbers of those individuals who are entering the workforce. To date, in the past three years, 5,000 individuals who were otherwise not employed are now employed as a result of our regeneration schemes. What we aim to do is to continue to increase those numbers over time. If the OAs are not contributing to improving the life chances of local people, then it is not regeneration; it is something else by another name, which I will not mention today.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Sarah, again, the primary benefits, and then what your plan says you require to achieve in terms of jobs and homes and then where you are in that respect, please.

Sarah Scannell (Assistant Director for Planning and Development, London Borough of Hounslow): The London Borough of Hounslow is working on two OAs. They are both quite different, one for 7,500 homes and 14,000 jobs and the other, in a different part of our borough, for 12,000 homes and 11,000 new jobs. We are getting to the end of the road of putting our plans in place and we know that the biggest issue for the London Borough of Hounslow is the affordability of new homes so that is a key priority in our plan.

The two different areas have distinct needs in terms of the job opportunities. Reflecting what my colleague has said, it is really important that we look at the nature of the jobs that we have. In the west of the borough we have high employment but lots of it is low-skilled and low-paid so we are working on employment plans to improve the quality of the offer that we are providing in those new jobs. In the other OA, the Great West Corridor, we are looking at the affordability of homes because the land values are so high that we have to make our mark that we are providing for our residents in the tenure of homes that we provide.

The challenge in terms of where we have got so far is that the planning policy process is long and arduous. We have been working on these plans for nearly five years. They are still not adopted but we are, again as my colleague has said, dealing with applications coming in on the back of this great label of being an OA. We have had to try our best to enforce what we want from these plans and the social and economic benefits that it will bring, in a world where we do not have the policy backbone to support us in some events. That has led to some challenges.

For example, we have had one scheme that has come in front of the Mayor because we were not in a position where our policy allowed us to make that decision. In the converse to that, in the west of the borough where we have not had very much development movement, we have seen huge rises in the opportunities that have been presented to us as a council because we have the label of an OA and we are going out to the market saying, "We are an outer London borough. You have not heard of Feltham and the west of the London borough of Hounslow borough before, but come and we will be open for business. We have this emerging plan, it is framed, and it is coming".

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Jules, if we can move to you, you have alluded to primary benefits or what you expect OAs to deliver. On the question of delivery, if you want to expand on that basic coverage please do so, but also I think what would be very useful for this Committee to have is Londonwide figures, if you have them - you can write to us - in terms of a borough-by-borough breakdown of the planned delivery figures for homes and jobs, where they are currently in terms of numbers completed, numbers started and so on. I think it would be good to have an audit. And obviously when those were implemented in each case and what the overall target period is for development as well.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes, we would be happy to supply figures. It might be useful to do it by OA, so you would have 47 sets of figures.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Sure. Absolutely, yes.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Obviously some are at different stages. Some are purely recently designated. Are we still calling them "nascent"?

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): That is the designation at the moment, yes.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Then obviously ones that are very well developed out and nearing completion. We certainly can supply the homes delivered for each one. There is more of a difficulty with jobs because we do not actually have the number of jobs but we do have the business floorspace created. I am sure we could come up with a proxy of jobs --

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): From that, you can extrapolate?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Jobs per square metre of the different types, B1, B1(a), B1(c), and so on. We can certainly supply those.

On terms of impact, one of the key things is obviously to prompt interest from the development community in an area that they otherwise might not have been considering, but I am always keen that we try to deter people thinking that -- while I think the "open for business" phrase is a good one and it is one that we all use, it is not running up the flag saying, "This is the Wild West of development here, come and build loads of dense things because that is what the designation is". It is not about that at all. What I would prefer to think is going on when a developer displays interest in an OA is the fact that they have greater clarity about what is wanted in the location, and of course developers like certainty. Their shareholders like certainty. That is a useful thing that the OAPFs bring in terms of a journey towards outcomes, that certainty for developers.

I have mentioned that another outcome is the process itself of engagement and community involvement in shaping it, certainly the ones now. I am not sure that that was always the case but certainly the ones that we have been doing in the last three or so years, that has definitely been a strong focus.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Just to build on that last point about particularly the social and economic impact, the work we do at the moment now with the OAPFs we are working on - particularly in Thamesmead and Abbey Wood, but also work we did in the Isle of Dogs - is we do look at social infrastructure requirements for the growth. We do not just look at how many homes and jobs the area might be able to have capacity for; we also look at what that would mean in terms of the number of schools. What would be the impact on health services? It is a very important part of delivering a framework, whether it is the GLA doing it or whether it is a borough doing it through a local plan. They will prepare their own infrastructure delivery plans. Part of that is assessing what the requirements will be from the level of growth that could occur in those OAs. Those will be built into some of the policies or the recommendations in the OAPF that will then influence planning decisions as those developments come forward.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): That was one of my questions that I was going to follow. It is delivery of social infrastructure, which is what you are talking about, whether it is the health facilities, medical facilities or school places and so on and so forth. At what stage do you plan how it is funded and how it is monitored? We are developing very large neighbourhoods and we want them to be sustainable. Therefore, that delivery of social infrastructure is critical for success. To me, that needs to be part of early planning. How are you managing that important aspect of the whole OA programme?

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Part of the reason we focus on these areas is because they will require funding, and we have already explained in the London Plan that to deliver the level of growth in the London Plan, London requires more investment. Part of the OA frameworks is to justify why this additional housing could only be delivered with a level of investment. Often it is involved closely with transport investment and that is where things like the Old Kent Road OA are very closely linked to the need for the Bakerloo line extension (BLE). Without the BLE we would not see the level of growth at Old Kent Road.

It is also true for the social and economic infrastructure. That is why the partnership is important, because a lot of that funding will either come through the council or through developers paying the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106. Again, by setting out the requirements at the start it gives councils more ability to set out what they will be requiring in their delivery plan through the Infrastructure Levy or through section 106 agreements on individual sites, things like schools, for example, which has happened on the Isle of Dogs, the negotiation with developers on major sites and the requirements for education facilities.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): If we can move on to the bits on affordable housing, are the affordable housing targets for OAs mandatory, assuming there are clear requirements for affordable housing and therefore there are targets associated with that? If so, what powers does City Hall have to ensure that those delivery targets are actually met?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I turn over to Darren on the issue of how different -- because they would not be different to -- in any application, it has to be dealt with on its own terms. The existence of the OA framework does not add any additional policy.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): There are no targets?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): The existing policy would run.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Yes. The London Plan target, 50%, and the strategic target, a 35% threshold, apply in OAs as they do elsewhere. The homes figures in the Plan are not targets. They are our assessment of capacity over the next 25 years. What the policy is asking is that through working with the boroughs or through our work on frameworks, we start to look at what that capacity is looking like on the ground. They are obviously high-level targets at high-level capacity figures. Through the process of the frameworks and through local plans, looking at the sites and looking at things that have changed since then, often the capacity figures can change and we can identify what particular sites could accommodate in terms of development. The affordable housing target would be the requirement in the London Plan, 50% or 35%.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): So, there are no specific or separate targets. They are what the London Plan requires, full stop. OK. Moving on to the next one, I have a figure of 303,000 homes which must be the total delivery figure for OAs. Here it says 40% will be low-cost. The question here is: when does the Mayor expect the OAs to deliver the estimated 303,000 homes? Would it be at the end of 25 years? How does it work? How will it work? When will we have this target achieved?

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): As part of the Examination in Public (EiP) - it is on the website - we were asked about those figures. As I said, we have in the Plan for each OA a homes capacity figure and a jobs capacity figure, but that is to 2041. What we are at and how many of those figures are in the first 10 years, and therefore in the boroughs' 10-year targets for housing, we have split that out in terms of capacity. I can send you those details.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Please, yes.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): I do not have the total in front of me but obviously it is not that 300,000, it is significantly less than that, because, as we state, a lot of the capacity in these OAs is latent. It is capacity if we got the transport investment, if we were able to acquire the land, if developers brought forward development in the next 10 or 15 years rather than hold back and wait for things to change. I think we can be more certain about the next 10 years but for the 25 years, the Plan is very clear that a lot of that capacity will not come forward if we do not have the transport investment. The Bakerloo line [extension]. The West

London Orbital could affect Hounslow. The potential Docklands Light Railway (DLR) extension through Beckton to Thamesmead could potentially deliver another 7,500 homes in Thamesmead that will not come forward if we do not have the DLR connection. It is a latent figure. It is a figure that could be delivered if the investment was made in certain transport infrastructure.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): What about this 47% low-cost?

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): I would have to check. I do not know where that figure --

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): If you could check, yes.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): It would be interesting if you can tell me which document you are quoting from.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): I think we will have to go back to teams outside this meeting.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Certainly, in this plan we do not have a target for low-cost housing and we would not normally set it in an OAPF. Boroughs do set their own affordable housing targets and it is open to them to differentiate those targets in particular areas of the boroughs if they thought that was useful. Often, they do because of the spatial distribution of affordable housing and how they want to plan for that.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): I have two further bits I want to explore very quickly. One has not quite featured in the way I want to see. You talked about social infrastructure. There is the physical infrastructure as well. I am not just talking about public transport, bus and train journey improvements and so on in those areas, which are so critical for the new and existing communities. The question is: I live on the edge of an OA in Harrow. Already, before those 2,000 or 3,000 homes and other activities become functional, you often find gridlock. This is not untypical, I would say, for any area in London, particularly outer London areas where you have huge problems in terms of congestion and pressures on local infrastructure. Is there a planned investment programme to meet those local infrastructure changes that would be required or are required already, in readiness for the large developments that are taking place? It is not fit for purpose now. It probably will be worse when a massive, massive development - which you need - comes into being.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Certainly OAPFs, or today's ones, seek to deliver modal shift and encourage people in walking, cycling and public transport. Obviously in larger areas there might be whole new road layouts delivered. I am thinking there of things like Thamesmead, Abbey Wood and the Royal Docks, where new town centres effectively will be created, with the benefits that those would bring to localities. There obviously is an opportunity there. The problem is where there are already well-established road layouts, speaking directly to your gridlock question. Darren?

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): As part of the preparation - we have been talking about transport infrastructure - we worked very closely with Transport for London (TfL) and they recognise that in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, which does talk about how, particularly in OAs, there is need for future investment, not just about the big schemes. We have been talking about these big, major schemes but we do still look at the smaller interventions, particularly around local connections.

A major part of us working with boroughs on a framework - often the boroughs are the transport authority rather than TfL because they would be borough roads - is looking at how we can encourage people to walk and cycle to those

facilities rather than use cars, or they can use public transport. We do look at that, in terms of: where are those facilities? How are the new residents going to get to them? Are there existing or new links that we need to create? Could that be linked to things like greenways, making those journeys safer and quicker for people so they do default to using sustainable modes rather than using the car?

We would also work with the boroughs if there were existing problems and that would be factored into the work we do on the framework. We do not only look at what the impact of the new development is. A lot of the modelling that is done looks at the impact across the area of existing development, planned development and then what additional infrastructure might be required for the new development.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you very much.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We are moving on to the environment and Assembly Member Arbour.

Tony Arbour AM: I have various questions. Can I firstly say that Feltham, as far as I am concerned, is not a forgotten part of London? I really want to ask whether or not OAs can do anything to combat climate change. Is there anything that local authorities on their own can do to combat climate change? In a direct question to you, Jules, how relevant are OAs in contributing to a low-carbon economy? If I can ask Sarah first because yours is the borough I am most familiar with, how are they combating climate change in Brentford?

Sarah Scannell (Assistant Director for Planning and Development, London Borough of Hounslow):

Interesting. Our plan, as I have said, has been in the making for five years and in that time the world has moved on in relation to energy. The fact that it takes so long to get planning policy through means that the policies that are in that plan reflect old-style thinking. What we are doing at the moment is encouraging every developer we have to be better than what our policy says, specifically in terms of the low-carbon economy, and we are seeing that there has been a very positive response to that in the development industry but mostly because our members are holding us to account when we are saying that to them. We get to Planning Committee and we are seeing things come under lots more scrutiny if they are not higher on the scale of a low-carbon scheme than they would be.

Effectively what we would be looking to do in our plan is to set stringent policies that would mean that all developers have to adhere to higher carbon requirements on schemes, on sites, than they do currently. Effectively the planning system has the power to ensure that all developments are as green as possible; it is just how far and how quickly we can turn the juggernaut that is the development industry to realise that they have to invest more money in making their schemes zero-carbon.

Tony Arbour AM: For example, if I can take the new Brentford stadium and the huge development you have there, 950-odd houses, I wonder if there is not any double-counting in the figures we have here for OAs. Clearly, I am most interested in the Great West Corridor. A great many of the targets which are in there for housing and other things -- notwithstanding you saying it has been thought over for five years, many of these developments have been longer than five years in the making and it may well be that this current Mayor, and indeed his predecessor, seized on stuff which was already in the pipeline and put them into the OAs to make it look as though OAs are more successful than they really are. That is possibly not one for an officer like you but one for a politically appointed officer like Jules [Pipe CBE]. There is an element, is there not, of double-counting?

Sarah Scannell (Assistant Director for Planning and Development, London Borough of Hounslow): Just two seconds to come back on that first. We have been really rigorous about our numbers and we have been held to account not only by the GLA on what numbers go into that capacity but also our own members, because very much like you, the past is the past and developments like the Brentford football club, with its zero affordable housing and the fact that it

does not have very good energy credentials because it was approved in a different plan time, we do not want those developments to be our legacy. The plan that we have specifically about the Great West Corridor, those numbers are capacity sites going forward, not the ones that have been granted planning permission to date.

Tony Arbour AM: I see. OK. Is there any element of double-counting as a sort of general point, Jules?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Not that I am aware of. They are clear that it is additional capacity that is meant to be identified. In terms of keeping score on delivery, I suppose the new London Development Database (LDD) will certainly help us keep track of this better and in real time. I am not aware of systematic or even isolated incidents. No one has ever brought one to my attention that said or claimed there was an element of double-counting.

Tony Arbour AM: And you, Councillor? Does climate change come into any of your thinking at all in Southwark as far as OAs are concerned?

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): It most certainly comes into our thinking in Southwark. We have just recently appointed a Director of Climate Change and we have a cabinet member with responsibility for climate change and developing our strategies. We are, in fact, next month going to hold a conference as to how we can embed that right across the authority.

I am bemused, of course, sometimes when I hear planners talk about this subject because within either Southwark, London or the National [Planning] Policy Framework document, the way it is discussed is as an aside. What we do not have is primary legislation that gives local authorities real powers to implement a strategy to reduce carbon but also implement across the piece, through the local authority, strategies that improve the environment, continue to improve air pollution, reduce the use of plastic and of course also seek to generally teach people how to live healthily.

The challenge we have as local authorities is that the powers rest with central Government and those powers have not yet been fully delegated to local authorities. If we had the powers to implement, say, a truly effective carbon reduction strategy in Southwark, we would do it overnight, but we just do not have those powers. I do not believe it is embedded in our planning policy. We are not allowed, for example, to say to a developer, "Your development must be absolutely neutral when it comes to generating carbon dioxide. It must be neutral". Yes, they pay into our carbon offset fund as a way of mitigating the impact, but the materials and the policies just do not exist at the local level, which is why it has persisted.

We would say to you and to Government that what you need to do is give us real powers to create an environment in which all developers know that if you are going to develop in London, not just Southwark, these are our minimum red lines, and within those red lines you now develop your development proposal. That is the certainty they need. At the moment they can get out of the option by simply paying us money and thereby we come up with a strategy to offset carbon or indeed other materials that might get into the atmosphere.

Tony Arbour AM: Thank you. It sounds like a prescription for lots of climate change enforcement officers, which might well drive developers out of London.

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): Can I respond to that? That is a really important point and it also goes back to the earlier point as to how confident we are as local authorities. Prior to my election as Chair of Planning, I was told one of the reasons why many developments prior to my arrival were yielding less than 35% affordable homes is because the development industry would not tolerate it. I have to say to you that is a complete fallacy.

Tony Arbour AM: Really?

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): We in Southwark are overwhelmed with applications because we have created a certain environment in which developers know exactly what the minimum red lines are that we would accept, and therefore they cost that into their financing prior to making the proposal to the borough. The real problem we have in London is lack of confidence. This is a major financial centre in the world. We have land values which are so through the roof that local people cannot afford either to rent or buy a house in their immediate neighbourhood. That is not the result of the market. It is a failure of politicians like us to be clear about what our policies are and why those policies exist. Confidence is what I say to colleagues. We must have confidence that we are an attractive city. This is a place for investment. We are open for investment but on our terms, not on the terms of the market.

Tony Arbour AM: Strewth! Thank you, Chair.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Absolutely.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Chair, sorry, may I come back on the environment point?

Tony Arbour AM: Please.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Obviously I know the OAPF in its development is expected to very much draw on, absolutely draw on the London Plan, and clearly the London Plan is very specific about environmental requirements and expectations on improving air quality as well as things like modal shift. Whether it is the Transport Strategy or the Environment Strategy, they are played out, although we did not try to duplicate those two documents. The suite of documents together delivers the outcomes that we are looking for. But Darren does have, actually, some good examples of where the recent OAPFs that we have drawn up specifically illustrate the expectations of the policies in the Strategies and the London Plan.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Yes. We take the strategic policies in the London Plan and look at how they would be applied and implemented in the OAs. The example I give you now is the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood OAPF, which is currently out for consultation. There is a whole section on there around the environment and green infrastructure. There is a section on energy because one of the advantages of looking at an area that is going to have significant development is the opportunity for an energy masterplan. We can have a shared look at the energy requirements of that area. Being on the coast or being next to the river, flood risk and the riverside strategy is very important. We work very closely with the Environment Agency about that. That, again, is built into our assessment of the framework. Also, things like waste and recycling, the circular economy, are built in, and air quality. It comes back to this point about creating healthy routes. How can the development in the OAPF contribute to improving air quality and reducing exposure to poor air quality?

For all those things, what we do is take the strategic policies and look at how they could be applied in a local area, supporting the boroughs in applying these policies at the local level, so that developers are very clear - it comes back to this point about certainty - about what the expectations are around the requirements for development.

Tony Arbour AM: No third runway is going to help you, is it not? You have seen the decision, have you not?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I do not know. What is the time? I might be able to comment on that in another 14 minutes, I think.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We are all very happy in this building.

Tony Arbour AM: We are. We are, yes.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Moving on to my colleague, Joanne.

Joanne McCartney AM: I want to ask about some of the challenges there are in OAs. Now, Jules, at the start you said that the process of becoming one is important and it brings partners together, but I think London First did a report in 2015 and they highlighted some challenges about it being quite an informal process. Is one of the challenges for the GLA that you do not have a more formal process and cannot impose a more rigid structure and monitoring requirements on local authorities?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Did you say 2015?

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Obviously I was not here then but I think I am right in saying that the process now is very different to the earlier ones. The ones that we have done more recently, Darren is probably better placed to comment about the way we now go about it.

Joanne McCartney AM: It has changed?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Certainly the documents are a lot thicker and more detailed. Again, maybe we could talk about in what way documents have changed, being more specific about what is needed for delivery rather than being -- I do not mean to be pejorative but I think they were a bit more like brochures before about the opportunity, as opposed to, "Here is the opportunity and this is what we need to put in place in order to get delivery".

Joanne McCartney AM: I suppose my question really is: from a GLA point of view, given that these are going to build the homes that you need for your targets as well, do you think the structures are there that you need?

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Because of the nature of planning in London - the Mayor's powers around planning are quite prescribed - I think we have arrived at the best we can do with the status of the London Plan and the conformity. Local plans have to be in conformity with the London Plan, general conformity. By identifying these areas we have a way to have discussions with the boroughs about how we take forward those OAs. In terms of how they are defined and then adopted, I would disagree about there not being a formal process. The process of preparing the London Plan is a formal process that is set out in statute and in regulations. We consult on them. There is an EiP.

The point to make is that successive panel inspectors have supported the principle of OAs and supported the evidence about why they are required. Often it is around changes, new opportunities around transport infrastructure, opportunities that derive from new schemes coming forward or proposals for new schemes, and us saying, "Well, if those areas are going to be affected by development, we know the areas which will see better accessibility will face development pressures". It must be better to manage those pressures by having a plan, identifying the area and saying we need to plan for those pressures, than just ignoring it and waiting for it to come along.

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes. I suppose my question really is that you have different OAs and they will all have different challenges, but is there anything that you would need in extra powers to make sure that you can drive the necessary development from a regional point of view? I am going to come to the local in a minute.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Powers, yes, but not necessarily as part of the OAPF. The powers and process are there to do what the OAPF needs to do, as I have said, about the identification. Delivery powers, changes to Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) and things like that, whilst welcome, are probably the stage after the OAPF as opposed to part of it.

Joanne McCartney AM: Can I turn now to Sarah and Martin? There is obviously the current structure. Could you just perhaps briefly outline to us what some of the challenges are in delivering those homes and jobs? Perhaps then go on to what you would like to see.

Sarah Scannell (Assistant Director for Planning and Development, London Borough of Hounslow): One of the issues that has not quite come up yet is that our Heathrow OA bridges Hounslow and Hillingdon and there is a bit of a challenge there about the apportionment of numbers. Hounslow, as I have said, is a very pro borough. We are working very hard to make sure that we deliver the most jobs and homes we can for our borough. Hillingdon has a different perspective on what they are doing on the edge of their borough and that means that that part of the OA has come under some scrutiny. We are now facing to go to an EiP with the numbers because we have basically taken up most of the numbers of that OA, on the basis of a quite challenging negotiation with Hillingdon on who is going to take what, effectively. That is part of the duty to co-operate and there is nothing new in that - that is what planning is - but it is something where it seems like there might be an additional power that could help, not that I know the answer when you have boroughs that are very clear on what they are planning to do. It does seem like cross-boundary issues will need more exploring.

Part of our challenge is just the treacle that is the planning process to get plans across the line. It is not a policy vacuum. We deal with schemes all the time in these areas and ensure that they are in conformity with the plans that we have had in place as much as possible, and we have been quite successful in that. On the long-term issue in terms of monitoring, we are held to account in our numbers just as we are for our wider numbers. We report our numbers to the Development Database. Our members require that we report those numbers to them, and we are being held to account over the quality of those as well. We have very much an internal local council process for monitoring and then we have the LDD, or what it will become, to feed into at a London wide scale and how our OA will make that happen.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Martin?

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): Avoiding repeating what has been said, which is quite correct, I said earlier on the greatest challenge we have, particularly, I suppose, being in inner London, is the existing use value once established versus the value when there is a proposal for development are so vastly different that it thereby impacts on the ability for us to secure an acceptable level of affordable homes. That is an issue for us to contend with. If it were possible that we were able to use our CPO powers to secure those plots of land once we have established with a developer what is to be built there and agreed the terms, that would, I suspect, improve the value of the contribution that boroughs are able to make to the overall housing development scheme across London. That is the first issue.

The second issue for us is in terms of the GLA and the grant environment. I understand that many developers do not approach the GLA because of the complexity of applying for grants. Now, it does seem to be a very bureaucratic exercise and the reasons why some developers may not approach the GLA may be purely internal but it does appear that

the realm of the grant funding environment is quite bureaucratic and, if I may say so, may not be working strategically in the public interest, if developers are choosing not to apply for grant funding.

The last issue, as I said at the beginning, as soon as we make the statement, "This is an OA" -- my colleague here said, "We are open for business". In Southwark we are definitely open for business, but we sit on prime land here in London, only a stone's throw from the major financial centres and of course from Parliament. Southwark sits on prime land and therefore the viability schemes do not work in Southwark. A small change to the components in the viability schemes mean a very significant change in the affordable home quantum. In Southwark, we say that developers should think about not the current value of the proposal but what the likely value of the proposal will be over a five or 10-year period. It is highly unlikely, here in London, anyway, that land values or indeed house values are going to decline. They are likely to continue to rise over time. That has been proving the case for the past 50 to 100 years.

Therefore, I would really encourage the GLA and central Government to think carefully about the conditions here in inner-city areas particularly, like Southwark, and the impact broader policies have on our ability to deliver on what is our total commitment to build homes that local people can afford. It should not be purely determined by the market.

Joanne McCartney AM: That leads me on to my question, again to the local authority representatives if I can, and that is just about the funding opportunities that there are in these OAs. You obviously have competing priorities. Infrastructure is extremely expensive. How is providing that infrastructure progressing in your OAs and what are the difficulties?

Sarah Scannell (Assistant Director for Planning and Development, London Borough of Hounslow):

Infrastructure is the biggest cost. We realise that, and as Darren [Richards] has outlined, because we are doing ours through a local plan we have the infrastructure plan attached to that which outlines fundamentally, "If you want to provide this many homes in these capacities on these sites that you have outlined, you will need to do X, Y and Z in your infrastructure to make that happen". We hope that our CIL strategy is aligned with that in the specific areas and we are utilising all the planning powers we can to make that happen, but what we have found is that the plans that we have put in place for those OAs have assisted us in going to other bidding areas, for example, going to TfL and saying, "We have this plan in place. Make this one of the Mayor's transport priorities because we have these plans in place and it will come through. We have planned development and you can identify what time they will come through".

As Darren has already touched on, one of the examples is in the Great West Corridor OA, the West London Orbital. That has now been taken on and developed with the West London Alliance and TfL is working very closely with us to deliver that connection into the Crossrail hub. That is fundamentally because we made a great business case that in the Great West Corridor you have 7,000 homes and 15,000 jobs coming that will make that transport connection work, and then it grew from there and other boroughs came on the back of that and said, "Well, we have an OA. We have these planned sites". That is how we have done things, through our infrastructure plan and our CIL charging, but also using the plan-led approach to justify bidding opportunities in the widest sense for other funding structures.

Joanne McCartney AM: Jules, we have heard that local authorities report to you their targets. Do you think the GLA has a good wealth of information about what is happening in each of the OAs and you are able to monitor what is happening there sufficiently well?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): There is plenty of data, but it is not always in real time, certainly, on both applications and delivery. That is why we want to revolutionise the LDD to make it a more real-time set of data, plus being able to more accurately monitor delivery. There is even work going on talking to the United Kingdom Space Agency about being able to monitor changes in developed surface area of the capital to

enable changes on sites to be picked up more easily, but that is a development down the line. It is no more intrusive than Google Maps, before anyone is worried about that.

Probably Darren is best-placed to go into the technical detail of what data we do have, but just to come back to a point about infrastructure, obviously, as I said, the key thing for OAPFs is to identify what is needed and they can corral different players into being able to bring forward funding. Probably one of the best examples of creating a new mechanism for funding is the Northern line extension at Vauxhall, Nine Elms and Battersea and the whole tax increment financing thing to fund it being born out of an OAPF process.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Just to take your monitoring point, we are producing an annual monitoring report and I think your officers have seen the early stages of that, which we will put up onto the website, that starts to track progress against the OAs using the information we are getting now from the improved LDD.

Just on the infrastructure point as well about preparing these documents when there is not the funding, often they can help make the case for funding. A good example is the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), where a large number of OAs will or could be unlocked by the successful bids around the DLR and the Overground. It was an important part of that bid that we were able to link the improvements to particular sites and particular areas in London because that was what then made the business case stack up to have successful bids. Having those in place, while there might not be a funding stream at the moment, we know that there will be something in the future and having that work means we can very quickly respond to it. If we did not have that, it would take us a lot longer to respond to those requests for information about, "If there is money to invest, where would you like us to invest it?" This gives us an opportunity to put together a bid to be clear about where investment would unlock delivery of new homes and new jobs.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Thank you. On your last point about the HIF, could you write to us just with a very brief -- which ones actually have money and what they are going to do with it? I lose track of what is happening, which ones are happening and which ones are not. It would just be very simple, not a huge *War and Peace*.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I am happy to say something about that. Off the top of my head, obviously there is the DLR depot and extension at South Poplar that the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar OAPF has contributed to. I think I am right in thinking that the Overground one has also got to the stage of acceptance. Things like the Canada Water OAPF would have contributed to justifying that investment.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): That is great. Thank you. That comes on to my next question: what measures has the Mayor put in place to support boroughs that struggle to finance OA development? Other than the HIF what else have you done, Jules?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Sorry, Chair, could you --

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): What measures has the Mayor put in place to support boroughs that struggle to finance OA developments?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): To fund OA developments?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Or pump-prime them, I guess is what we are asking because obviously developers --

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): There are a couple of things here. First, there is obviously the work we do directly in preparing an OAPF. That is particularly

important, and it comes back to Sarah's [Scannell] point about Hillingdon and Hounslow. A good example is Thamesmead. It straddles the boundary between Bexley and Greenwich. Both boroughs preparing their local plans did not have the capacity to do the work that we all agreed was needed there, so we have stepped in using our resources to lead on that proposal.

In other places it will be more support through other teams in the GLA. With Old Kent Road, which Southwark are leading, we have a joint team that works on that. We have a partnership board that Jules sits on that oversees that. There will also be other work we will be doing through the local planners. As Sarah has mentioned, we will put resources in place when local plans are being prepared and meet and talk through the evidence, and we might assess the evidence that is being prepared. TfL will often put in resources around modelling and help with looking at the impact of developments. It will assist using its modelling expertise to assess the impacts of development for boroughs.

On a broader note, there are things like public practice. Quite a few boroughs are using their public practice placements to focus on OAs. Newham and the Royal Docks team there have public practice placement. Bexley have one working on Thamesmead and Bexley Riverside. Therefore, in terms of planning support, that is the support we can provide. There is also money going in from Housing and Land, things like the land assembly pilots. They are looking at opportunities for: could you acquire land? That is more about the expertise of boroughs around things like CPOs, acquiring land and pulling land together. Housing and Land is supporting a project around that. There is also some work around industrial intensification, looking at sites and thinking, "How do we have some exemplar sites that demonstrate what intensified industrial land will look like?"

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): It is a real mosaic of funding all of these things. A good example is probably the meeting we had the other day between Newham, Greenwich and TfL, trying to create a pot of money that could look at both taking the DLR over the river from Beckton into Thamesmead but, also, in the more immediate future, a rapid transport link in the Thamesmead area: £100,000 from one borough, £100,000 from another, £500,000 from TfL, something like that.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Plus the developers.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes, plus the developers. We were looking at in excess of £1 million, £1.3 million or £1.5 million, drawing on all these different interested parties who obviously all have a vested interest in creating transport links.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Thank you. Moving back to local authorities with Andrew.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes. How engaged do you think your local communities and businesses are with OAs, Martin and then Sarah?

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): They are indeed very engaged. Most certainly businesses are engaged because of the potential for profit. They have a vested interest to work with us, as the Southwark local authority, within each of our development OAs and, indeed, wider opportunities that present within the borough.

The challenge with the community, of course - and I alluded to it earlier on - is benefit. They will engage if there is clear benefit. I started off by talking about inequalities: health, housing and job opportunities. If there is genuine benefit, they welcome the investment. If the result of that investment is to effectively disenfranchise them or price them out of the area, clearly, they will not welcome the development. I am always struck that the GLA does not talk about truly

affordable homes. In Southwark the average salary is around £30,000, whereas to rent a two-bedroom property it costs £24,000 per annum. That is crazy. As an elected official - forgive me, colleagues here - I cannot support such a strategy. Therefore, local people would not support an initiative that does not benefit them. There has to be a material benefit for locals so that they will engage in our efforts to regenerate their areas. Generally, they are engaged but they are cautious because what they have seen across London - and parts of Southwark, unfortunately - is that they have been forced out of the area, either on cost or insufficient provisions.

With a local authority, while we have some powers it is really the GLA and central Government that need to give us, I would argue, far more powers to intervene in the market. I mentioned earlier the existing use values being the base values on which a plot of land or property might be assessed, but once it is identified as an OA prices go through the roof. Therefore, why would someone who lived next door to an OA engage positively with you? The policy will be designed to effectively disenfranchise them. That is my response to you: they will respond if they receive material benefit and their families can continue to live in that area and benefit from the inward investment.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes, thanks. That probably coincides with my experience in Barnet with Colindale and Mill Hill, which is a great intensification area. The real problem there is that communities just do not see any benefit. In fact, it is all negative, in that in Colindale all they are seeing is great tower blocks going up and all the car parking being taken up by people in the neighbouring streets, the people from the developments, because those developments are not allowed car parking. The net result is they just fill up the local streets and annoy everybody and change the context of the area.

Similarly, with public transport in Mill Hill. What has happened there is that the single-track line from Mill Hill East is always full before it even leaves the station at the end of the line. There are a lot of problems there. Also, it is to do with the pricing as you say. If we take the Mill Hill one, for example, granted there were 2,500, nearly 3,000 properties but they are only being built at about 250 a year to keep the price up, which is just ridiculous. There is no real help there.

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: I do not know if Sarah wants to comment on any of that.

Sarah Scannell (Assistant Director for Planning and Development, London Borough of Hounslow): Well, like most things in planning, I can echo everything that you have said. Communities find change - and significant change, which we are always talking with OAs - very challenging. I am not going to repeat things that you said but if I think about the positives maybe - which are few and far between - the commercial engagement with the Great West Corridor, for example. We have loads of businesses there. They have decided to locate there. The OA will mean that they have homes for their people to live in and they have new transport opportunities, which eases the ability for their staff to get there. That is a huge positive and a huge benefit, and they have been engaging really well in that.

In the west of the borough, in our Feltham OA, we have, say, 60% of our residents who need to get to Heathrow but cannot get there because of the transport links and it is a prohibitive cost-wise for them to do so. You will find lots of people getting cabs because the buses do not go or the trains do not go. In that way, while most of the community feel like they are going to have a challenge with the scale of growth, they do see the benefits of the improved transport and connectivity that will come with the growth that they are offering. Through that, we have been able to plot a course that means that we have had quite positive engagement overall with the local plan proposals.

The challenge for us has been when individual sites come forward and then the reality of what that means for an individual community is felt, overshadowing it, and those types of things. Overall, the strategic nature of having a

planned way forward for growth gives people comfort about what they are going to have and the benefits that you can reap from that, particularly around the infrastructure.

Andrew Dismore AM: Do you want to comment, Jules? Also, the question is: what levers do you have to do anything other than rely on tall buildings? We end up with great canyons in Colindale, for example.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Yes. I mean I agree very much with what Sarah says. We have been talking around the issue of the value of the strategic approach, but the problem does come when it comes site by site and then viability comes into play. If we could say, "It is in the plan. This is the tariff for these things. This is the contribution you have to make, not just to transport but to the social infrastructure. You have to pay for your share, otherwise the development does not go ahead", then life would be easier for all of us, and certainly for planners, policymakers and administrations in City Hall and in local government.

Site by site, we do see too much development going through at whatever stage, whether it is local authority with the GLA, or it gets called in by the Secretary of State and passed, without sufficient infrastructure associated with the development that actually delivers on the strategic plan.

Andrew Dismore AM: What about tall buildings?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I do not think it is fair to characterise the Plan as relying on tall buildings. The Mayor has been clear when he speaks on this issue that he believes - and the Plan reflects this view - that they have their place, if they are well designed, if they are safe and if they make a positive contribution to the skyline. That is the policy position. Has every tall building that has got through in London - in planning committees and including through City Hall - always achieved all of those things, particularly in terms of its positive addition to the skyline and its wind effects at ground level? No, I do not think it has. That is where the planning system is not sufficiently robust against the whole issue of viability testing.

Andrew Dismore AM: Can you achieve the housing targets without relying on tall buildings?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): The numbers do not rely on tall buildings. The plan is clear that a site should be optimised, not maximised. It should not go as high as possible. It should just go to the height that works well for the context that that site is in.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): The new tall building policy in the plan is very clear that it is for boroughs to identify locations for tall buildings. That might be in an OA, but it might not. It depends on the OA and the context, and we are clear in the policy that context, design context and historic context --

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): Is important to consider.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Yes, it is an important consideration within the OA. It is not a given that OAs should have tall buildings. They may be appropriate in the right places in an OA but the policy --

Andrew Dismore AM: That creates mission creep. If we take Colindale, for example, we have the defined area for the OA but on the fringes of that they are saying, "Oh, we want tall buildings because they have these tall buildings in Colindale. We may not actually be in the OA, but we are sufficiently close to it, so let us have a tall building as well". It is mission creep all around the area.

Darren Richards (Growth Strategies and Urban Design Manager, Greater London Authority): Yes, and that is where the birth of a local plan needs to be very clear about what a tall building is and where they would support them and where they would not support them.

Andrew Dismore AM: Martin, you want to comment. You are obviously grinning.

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): Yes. In my experience, it does appear that, in order to achieve one red line, which is 35% [affordable] with a quantum between 70% social and 30% intermediate, that there is a *quid pro quo* and viability suggests that there is an increased density, and that increased density inevitably leads to taller buildings. That seems to be the formula. My colleague here and others might say otherwise, but that seems to be the formula I am observing both in Southwark and across other parts of London.

Again, I am not going to repeat what I said a moment ago about the viability scheme not being appropriate for inner London or maybe London as a whole, but I can assure you this viability scheme you have is not fit for purpose. It needs to be reviewed. It is not appropriate. It does not meet the needs of local people. For that reason, generally, I have to tell you that applications that are brought to my Committee that include a proposal that might be less than 35%, OK, but includes a tall building, I have to question very closely. How is it possible that a major developer -- before I continue, I should say, just for the record here, that I maintain an open, independent view on all applications that are brought to my Committee. Now to continue: there was a recent approval by British Land in the Canada Water area. It is 38% affordable homes. There were a few taller buildings but that was necessary to ensure viability worked for that organisation. Now if it could work there, it could work anywhere in London, in my view.

It is down to politicians and to experts like you here to ensure it is consistent. It is the inconsistencies which is the problem for the development market and - to answer your question directly - therefore, it is City Hall and local authorities that must work hand in hand to ensure, first, that the viability scheme works in London and, secondly, there is an appropriate funding scheme that allows, where there is a deficit, for that deficit to be met by public funds. The bureaucracy surrounding the determination of availability for that scheme should be less, I suppose, bureaucratic. As I said earlier on, it takes a long time. There is a great deal of paperwork involved, when in fact a chartered accountant or a planning expert could easily resolve it in a single day. It takes the GLA sometimes years to resolve. That is the real problem we have at the moment.

To answer the question even further, my role in planning is to represent local people and, while I absolutely want to attract inward investment, local people must be the beneficiaries. If the systems do not benefit local people, I will resist all applications, OK, whatever their form, because that is not appropriate. What it will do is it will eventually drive industry out of London to other parts of the country. That must be the end result if you price people out of London. That cannot be in the long-term interest of this great city of London.

Andrew Dismore AM: That is an important point. If you look at Barnet's population, all these OAs, very few local people are moving. We are just getting more and more people moving in from outside the borough to fill up these tower blocks. The net result is the population of the borough has increased, not through people moving within the borough but new people coming in to take up all these places.

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): A quick point on that point, and that is a really important one because I have an interesting development in my own ward. I do not need to name it right now, but suffice it to say that it was one of the earlier schemes, not while I was Chair, but I note that many of the dwellings were bought off books overseas, usually the Far East. They are owned, therefore, mainly by overseas persons and they rent essentially to local people. Of course, what we find in those estates is that the percentage that a

person pays in rent, which should be around 30%, is usually closer to 50% because the rent is so expensive. I believe that is a national scandal and should not be allowed to happen, and I will resist all applications of that form while I am chair because that is what is wrong with London at this stage.

These are the obvious mistakes we are making, and we can see the mistakes we are making but I am not seeing an adequate response from the GLA. It is abundantly obvious. You have recited to me, you know it, but I am not seeing a response from the GLA. Clearly we are pricing people out of London. It is unacceptable and therefore we have to change policy.

Tony Arbour AM: Do you get lots of appeals? If you are taking this very personal attitude, are Southwark getting lots of appeals by developers?

Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair, Planning Committee, London Borough of Southwark): No, no, no, we have had a handful in recent time but generally we create certainty. We say, "A minimum of 35% affordable home quantum with a 70/30 split between social and affordable. We should have appropriate amenity space both for young children, middle-aged and so on, and lastly the design should be excellent". That is all we ask, and we can negotiate around the edges. That ensures the sustainability and liveability of those homes. If that is the minimum that is a reasonable expectation. A property developer builds a home for the super-rich and does not have to pay any of the social consequences of their actions. We politicians are at fault. We are the ones that have to change the regime. No, we are not experiencing a flood of outward investment. We have inward investment because we have clear, well defined criteria on which we would accept inward investment into Southwark. It is on our terms and not on the market terms.

Andrew Dismore AM: We will allow Jules to answer that particular point. I remember when Sadiq [Khan, Mayor of London] got elected he was talking about first dibs for local people on these developments. Well, I do not see that happening very much.

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): The first dibs policy is something under Housing and Land because it is not a planning policy. You cannot have first dibs in planning terms. Instead, what the Mayor has secured in first dibs terms is it has to be an informal arrangement with developers that falls outside planning. Obviously, I disagree with a lot of the comments that have just been made. I can agree entirely with the aspiration but, having seen a number of Southwark planning applications here in this chamber for stage 3s and obviously seeing them at stage 1 and 2, I know full well what the issues are and the realities of what all the boroughs have to contend with.

The Mayor sets a strategic target, as the Committee well knows, of 50%. We look to achieve 35% of that 50% through planning gain, the rest being achieved through public sites and industrial sites that should be achieving more, plus the Mayor's grant powers and grant funding for affordable homes.

Coming back to where you started about the density within OAs, the thing is that many OAs will be identified for significant capacity because they are brownfield sites and they are relatively well connected or will be when it is identified that Crossrail is going to come through. There are five stations alone in Ealing, which has obviously had a big impact there as far as this issue is concerned. They are already going to be looked at in terms of density, and then I think it is a separate issue, the whole viability thing that drives them higher is something that applies to all sites, whether or not they are in an OA: the fact that they are expected to work harder than they financially are able to.

We see this with, say, the significant developments over underground stations where they are expected to contribute to step-free access, a contribution to TfL in some other form and supply 50% affordable housing. You can only spend the money once, but these developments are expected to spend the money two or three times over, and then all too often

the balancing factor in the equation is the affordable housing and that is what gets squeezed. Then it is not acceptable to pass something at 10% or 15% affordable housing and that is when the developers start going upwards.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We will move on at this stage. I have three final points on this, and I would like to finish on time.

First, I should also wish your Leader, Peter John [OBE, also Chair of London Councils] the very best in what he does next. He announced last night that he is retiring from Southwark. He is a friend of the GLA, so I wish Peter well.

Can I ask the Deputy Mayor: is one person and one organisation accountable for each of these 47 OAs? You do not have to answer that now. You could write to me. One of the issues is about the huge amounts of different stakeholders, so perhaps you could reflect on that and write to me.

My final question I am going to ask is - I think Jules will like this question actually - what powers, if devolved to City Hall, would best enable you and the Mayor to accelerate the delivery of OAs more effectively, mitigating the challenges faced by local authorities? Do you have a wish list that is practical?

Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills): I would say two things. For powers, it is CPO. Powers over land assembly. That would be that. The other one is not power, it is funding. Well, it could be powers actually; it could be powers to raise funding, so fiscal devolution. That would be it: CPO and fiscal devolution to be able to raise the capital to make significant investments.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Thank you, a nice short summary answer. Anything else from my colleagues before I move on to other business? No. Then may I thank our guests for their attendance in a very heated and very lively debate? Thank you to all of you for your helpful contributions.