

Good Growth M9.

(a) Are Good Growth policies GG1 to GG6 consistent with national policy and/or justified, and would they help ensure that the Plan provides an effective strategic framework to achieve sustainable development? (b) Are the policies in chapters 2 to 12 of the Plan appropriately informed by and consistent with Good Growth policies GG1 to GG6?

GG1 Building strong and inclusive communities

Para 1.1.2 says that *'London must remain open and inclusive, allowing everyone to share in and contribute towards the city's success'*, and Para 1.1.5 says *'Taking advantage of the knowledge and experience of local people will help to shape London's growth that works better for the full diversity of its inhabitants.'* I agree totally with both of these statements. However I can't see how the Plan as it is drafted will achieve either of these without stimulating a positive strategic change in the way the community is acknowledged and supported to make that contribution in neighbourhoods, at borough level and at London level. So it does not yet provide an effective strategic framework to achieve sustainable development.

Formal and informal community organisations are a fundamental part of the nature of the community that citizens use to develop their collective voice. To achieve sustainable development, they need to be integrated properly in the planning process to be able to contribute their knowledge and experience. This is an essential complement to the methods that are used to seek information and views from the public in what is referred to as 'community conversations'

The Plan says in para 1.0.1, *'London's growth and development is shaped by the decisions that are made every day by planners, planning applications and decisions-makers across the city.'* This has now been amended by adding *'and Londoners'* which deals with my comment at the previous stage that millions of decisions by Londoners, in a whole variety of social, economic and physical contexts taken every day, also shape the environment of London. This is a welcome addition to bring in the whole human social system which is part of London as a city. But there is a fundamental difference between the social systems of those in the original sentence, and the new category of person as 'Londoners'. The original contained just the institutional and corporate public and commercial system, and the other is the horizontal system of informal social and personal decisions of the millions of Londoners. These two systems interact continuously every day. The differences between them result in negative constraints on the effectiveness of their interactions.

I have set out in my paper *'Community engagement in the social eco-system dance'* ways in which the two social systems have significantly different organisational dynamics. The paper is available here: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tsrc/documents/tsrc/discussion-papers/discussion-paper-b-community-engagement.pdf> supplemented by a short youtube video: *'Why community groups are more energy waves than organisational matter'*: <http://www.socialreporters.net/?p=455> The differences arise because the corporate and institutional systems have mainly formal and vertical incorporated structures, whereas the community systems are mainly informal, fluid and horizontal. Partly because community organised collective action therefore looks and is different in its operations, there is a widespread tendency on the part of the corporate and institutional systems to behave as if the community had no organised actions.

This is especially the case for planning, development and regeneration, and tends to result in a marginalisation of the community's organised collective efforts. Yet it is this sphere of activity at community level that is well placed to encourage, motivate and bring forth the knowledge and

experience that the London Plan wants correctly to take advantage of. This is the case at all levels of planning – neighbourhood, borough and London-wide. There are organised community structures at all these levels that are a key part of the system as illustrated by the diagram in the Annex below. It is essential that the London Plan recognises this and creates a framework for boroughs and the GLA to develop a consistent and effective approach to collaborating with neighbourhood, borough and London community structures in all planning matters.

This needs an additional point inserted into the policy GG1 ‘Building strong and inclusive communities’:

- Ensure full public participation and scrutiny of all planning matters from the earliest stages through to implementation and monitoring, and, in collaboration with the community sector involved in planning at the appropriate level, the development of support structures to enable a wide range of interests to take part effectively.

Policy GG2 Making the best use of land

This section needs to recognise that to realise the Plan’s aspirations to benefit all Londoners, and ‘take advantage of the knowledge and experience of local people’, the best use of land must include making the best of what already exists as well as what might be built new. Too often, sites are identified for new plans before there has been any possibility for local people, who know the place and its current uses and potential, to contribute. There should be an additional Point or it could be incorporated in Point C:

- At the earliest stage, there should be a social, physical and economic fact audit of what exists on the land and its potential, in collaboration with all stakeholders, and the audit report should be subject to public consultation before plans are developed.

ANNEX

Reclaim our Spaces Coalition: Some London Community Networks

