

# WORKSHOP 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA WORKSHOP

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009, 17th Floor, Committee Rooms 3&4 Westminster City Hall

Chairman: Councillor Moss

Facilitator: Lisa O'Donnell

Officer Panel: Barry Smith, Daniel McCarthy, Graham King, Mandy Coulson, Margaret Handovsky, Matt Blades, Mike Fairmaner

## **1. Do you think the proposed 60:40 Social/Intermediate split for affordable housing should be applied flexibly to individual schemes in the EDA in order to achieve a more mixed tenure?**

Cllr Graham	[North Westminster Economic Development Area] groups 4 wards together but they have quite different characteristics with the only commonality deprivation. Church Street is distinct it link in well it has tube, well connected and rather compact. It almost has its balance it is not a "ghetto"
Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	It should only be housing with a balance of community provisions. The close knit and diverse nature of the community is valued and is something that they wish to retain.
Kenneth Smalley (North Paddington Society)	The area is widespread to generalise is to no-ones benefit.
Daniel McCarthy (Housing)	There is great demand for social rented housing, but in places such as this the balance isn't right. There needs to be opportunities for other tenure. Intermediate housing is expensive and not really affordable. There is a need for more options above social rented to create more tenure mobility.
Cllr Graham	The take up of intermediate housing has been low.
Daniel McCarthy (Housing)	For example, Grosvenor Waterside is struggling to shift Intermediate Housing at £300,000 a share at £150,000 is simply not affordable.
Name not recorded	We need to think about viability.
Daniel McCarthy (Housing)	The current system has a product which doesn't work in the context of Westminster high land prices.
Ed Sneddon (Westminster Property Association)	Flexibility is already applied; this should be dealt with on a case by case basis. How would this be different?
Margaret Handovsky (Officer)	There would be an overt statement in the policy that flexibility would be applied in these circumstances and assumption that a different mix would apply in this area. [Pointing to the map showing areas with high concentrations of social housing in North Westminster] are there might be specific areas within North Westminster where flexibility might be applied?
Cllr Marshall	Use the market, if development is not viable it will not be carried out. But the issue is parameters. We want things to happen -

	sometimes 90:10 or 80:20. Flexibility is the best way. Let the market decide what is right through site by site negotiations. We want to avoid social engineering.
Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	Sounds sensible to use a 60:40 rather than 70:30 split. Church Street has problems arising from 80% affordable housing and we now have such a high level of need shifting the balance a little might be useful.
Sarah Beuden (Savills)	Is the issue really about flexibility given the new London Plan will look for a 60:40 split. What are the additional tests? What is different?
Cllr Marshall	The whole point about flexibility is that it needs to be on a site by site basis.
Ed Sneddon (Westminster Property Association)	Westminster is easy to deal with. We have open dialogue and the communications lines are open. Flexibility written down or not has always been part of the process.
Daniel McCarthy (Housing)	Higher intermediate to social rent is more viable subject to subsidy but further subsidy is needed.
Ed Sneddon (Westminster Property Association)	A new product is need.
Toby Gale (Westbourne LARP)	Share Marcos's earlier point.
Cllr Marshall	St Mary's may need a specific / tailored type of response in terms of... key worker housing.
Kenneth Smalley (North Paddington Society)	Will the policy approach consider the economic policy climate?
Lisa O'Donnell	Yes, and beyond. The policy will need to be applicable across economic cycles.
Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	Intermediate is not welcome on the basis of flexibility.
Cllr Graham	If the need is for family housing and it is unaffordable and smaller units are more viable there are conflicting needs.
<b><i>2. Should a greater priority be placed on protecting the quantity of open spaces and existing parking spaces around housing estates or are some open spaces and parking spaces under-used and therefore could accommodate additional housing?</i></b>	
John Richards (Knight Frank)	The emphasis need to be on the quality of open spaces. Presumption should be open space protection but hard surface, car parks and poor quality open space could be use to provide better quality spaces, potentially through Section 106/ CIL.
Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	Open spaces are sacrosanct the emphasis should be on improvement.
Kenneth Smalley	Potential for improvements should be borne in mind.

(North Paddington Society)	
Sarah Beuden (Savills)	When thinking about the quality of open spaces is it thought that the emphasis should be protecting the number of these or the area. What about verges not used? Should it be about quantity.
Daniel McCarthy (Housing)	There needs to be greater emphasis on useable spaces. Safeguarding all spaces for funding to improve is one thing but there is not always funding available unless there is development.
Kenneth Smalley (North Paddington Society)	Westminster City Council put temporary uses on open spaces. This is ongoing.
Cllr Graham	The problem with open spaces is they need better management divide up for ownership.
Fabian Sharpe (Paddington Development Trust)	Open space is at a premium. Spaces like car parking could be used for play space for children or bicycle storage. It is in too short supply [for residential developments] and needs to be protected, emphasis should be on changing these spaces.
Daniel McCarthy (Housing)	But there is a need for family housing.
Name not recorded	Quality of life is enhanced by having opens spaces on the estates.
John Richards (Knight Frank)	Not just open space versus development - best of both worlds – development and open spaces can achieve both aims.
Name not recorded	If redevelopment is of a garage – yes – but again this would need to be dealt with on a case by case basis.
<b>3. Do you support the continued use of policy NWW2 in respect of large scale redevelopments requiring no more than 50 % housing or is there a requirement for exceptions or flexibility in this policy approach? For e.g. Community Build schemes</b>	
John Richards (Knight Frank)	The principle is good but too simplistic, there are viability issues – is there a market for development when it is built. Rather look at why the market is not attracted – look at market blockages.
Cllr Marshall	Why is not attractive?
John Richards (Knight Frank)	The success of the basin is that it turns is back on residential and the A40. It is the quality of the environment, access.
Cllr Marshall	We are concerned about encouraging businesses e.g. supporting functions to the centre [of the city] e.g. plumbers and electricians.
John Richards (Knight Frank)	London Plan Opportunity Area fringes may have a role.
Kenneth Smalley (North Paddington Society)	It is up to developers to use initiative and get it let out. Hardly any small businesses.
Name not recorded	It discourages sites coming forward so no housing development – stagnation.
Sarah Beuden (Savills)	What is the capacity for different employment types?
Matthew Blades (Officer)	Research has been undertaken to demonstrate a high demands for creative industry spaces and facilities. There is demand from the sector, not so on other sectors. The quality of the environment is important. It is not up to scratch. But there has been significant investment in the public realm. Also we have facilitated the move of

	Great Western Studios, which is to be demolished for Crossrail. This has secured space for 140 small businesses.
Graham King	Paddington attracted a range of office occupiers including HQs of major advertisers. This feeds off the central London officer markets. The other part has been to talk to public agencies to bring their estate into full use. Partly due to pressure from Crossrail and changes to the 1987 use class order all light industrial uses became office overnight leading to problems for hat market to survive.
Cllr Marshall	Is it possible to use land swaps?
Margaret Handovsky/Amanda Coulson (Officer)	We'd look at this but it is not straight forward. It would need to be in the vicinity of the site and there would need to be confidence about deliverability.
Name not recorded	In favour of more flexibility but equally need to understand the need for a starting point.
Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	There is optimism about economic development in Church Street – new east end in West End.
<b><i>4. To support economic development should we protect and encourage general industry and commercial warehouse storage and distribution subject to a range of criteria, including the protection of residential amenity?</i></b>	
Amanda Coulson (Officer)	At present only small light industrial uses are protected, small garages and similar fall outside the definitions. Small workshops are protected but there are larger scale uses. Would you want to protect these all? Highlighted Jug Foods in Queens park which is subject to a planning application, but industrial use is not protected under the current policies.
Toby Gale (Westbourne LARP)	What freedom of flexibility does the LPA have – where is the band – how big?
Name not recorded	Employment generation is key. We lost a row of garages some years ago to residential use. There should be some mean of protecting the larger [industrial] uses.
Ed Sneddon (Westminster Property Association)	There needs to be some flexibility for example not just B1. Why did it fail? Protect employment use rather the use class.
Fabian Sharpe (Paddington Development Trust)	Not all one way traffic. If designed as residential (upper floors) fine, but the group floor needs to be retained as commercial.
Name not recorded	Any regeneration schemes should have the possibility of running pilots – bend the rules for pilots.
Cllr Graham	Church Street is near a lot of employment opportunities – perhaps Edgware Road.
Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	Old Vauxhall garage has housing above and commercial below.

John Richards (Knight Frank)	Is the 1940s-60s walk to work mentality the correct one? It is about access.
Cllr Bush	There is ongoing work looking at the effectiveness in policies. There is also work on the changing demographics of the areas contained in the Public Health Reports.
Fabian Sharpe (Paddington Development Trust)	The Retail Group Study suggests that we could sustain something more diverse.
Cllr Marshall	In certain areas we need to be a lot more flexible subject to protecting residents interests.
<b>5. How can we encourage business development, more B1 uses studios and workshops into the area and support skills which match local employment opportunities?</b>	
John Richards (Knight Frank)	Required as part of development, but the city council is helping development e.g. affordable business space/ what for and how to design it. There is need for discussion in advance of development.
Cllr Marshall	We will be looking at this. This “we” can talk to planners.
Name not recorded	On top of Great Western Studies, worked with Paddington Studies and development provision in legal agreements. We offer this to anyone who will meet us half way.
Ed Sneddon (Westminster Property Association)	For large developers it is outside the comfort zone to provide small business. There us a risk of being forced into un-lettable premises.
Cllr Marshall	We are often talking about smaller developments rather than big developments.
Name not recorded	Support affordable business space? What does <i>affordable</i> business space mean?
Amanda Coulson (Officer)	This would be 50% below market rent and secured through a section 106 agreement this could be small scale.
Cllr Marshall	£15 p/sqf is affordable – need to change terminology. Below market rate housing. Can’t have affordable commercial spaces – the market sorts out the right level.
Kumar Usher (Victoria Interchange Group)	Could focus on certain business, for example, dry cleaners, shoe repairs.
Matthew Blades (Officer)	The focus is on start ups.
Cllr Bush	From own experience took advantage of such schemes in the voluntary sector offering low rent. There is a need to work low rent into the mix.
Ed Sneddon (Westminster Property Association)	A difficult issue and distinct to affordable housing as it can cause problems with tenure. They want short leases, so if subsidised offices you need them to take a lease and run an incubator. Difficult through Section 106 to say one aspect below market rent.
Name not recorded	With Section 106, can we demand tenure, say an X year lease?
<b>6. The Core Strategy has identified some flexibility in area outside of the district centres by allowing a change of use of long term vacant retail units to B1 uses</b>	

<b>outside the Core Shopping Frontages. What do you think would be a reasonable time period for a retail unit to be vacant in Church Street/Edgware Road, Harrow Road and Praed Street before allowing a change of use?</b>	
Cllr Marshall	Not just time period – also where – outside Core areas and secondary areas.
Name not recorded	UDP approach works very well – this is 18 months.
Cllr Marshall	18 months is too long a timeframe. It should be something like 6 months.
John Richards (Knight Frank)	It could take 6 months to get a property deal. Developers will just switch.
Cllr Bush	The trigger should be what should be there – look at what it [the unit] is. Putting in a time frame is inflexible.
Sarah Beuden (Savills)	It is about activity, The frontage can be there.
Cllr Marshall	The emphasis is on bringing into use – not necessarily about “vibrant” neighbourhoods.
Name not recorded	Canal terrace is 30 retail units with a blank frontage which can detract. Should retain the character of the street.
Name not recorded	Do you need to be prescriptive about time?
Name not recorded	Depending on circumstance we would expect a reasonable rather than specified period.
Name not recorded	In the core area there is a need to accept that there might be insufficient demand. Create demand if possible but if not the use should change.
Fabian Sharpe (Paddington Development Trust)	Regeneration is often triggered by an anchor tenant e.g. a Gastro pub – so A3.
John Richards (Knight Frank)	Can't control type of A1. The use class system says A1 is the best use. A3 can be difficult but gastro pub versus mobile phone shop.
Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	A gastro pub won't provide anything for lots of residents who need certain A1.
Cllr Bush	Does planning have the capacity to deal with this? I sit a planning matter.
Kenneth Smalley (North Paddington Society)	Need to consider the needs and desire of residents.
<b>7. To ensure that these B1 uses do not compromise the retail offer, should a set of criteria be introduced to reduce any adverse impacts on vitality, viability, character and function of centres or adversely impact on residential amenity?</b>	
<b>For example:</b>	
<b>- Limit the number of B1 uses outside of the Core Shopping Frontages</b>	
<b>- Any other suggested criteria?</b>	
Name not recorded	Should we look at other things e.g. employment areas?
Name not recorded	A gastro pub offers employment other tertiary occupiers may not.
Name not recorded	Co-location of public services from property department.
<b>8. Do you agree that other town centre uses, such as A3 café and restaurant uses may be acceptable in the Core Shopping Frontages to encourage more activity in the</b>	

**area? If so should we introduce a set of criteria to reduce any adverse impacts on vitality, viability, character and function of centres, or adversely impacts on residential amenity?**

**For example**

**- Limit the number of other non A1 uses such as A3 café and restaurant uses in a Core Shopping Frontage.**

**- Any other suggested criteria?**

Name not recorded	A1 in Core.
Name not recorded	Yes, but need to be careful around opening times. Yes an evening economy -but one that finishes at 8pm! There is a tension.
Cllr Marshall	This is taken into account on licensing.
Cllr Graham	A3 would be along the Edgware Road.
Matthew Blades (Officer)	Also people complain about the area. It is quite isolated at night.
Name not recorded	Do we really want a night-time economy – no an early evening economy.
Cllr Bush	There is a sort of night-time economy with retailers staying open late or all night. Around the Prince of Wales Junction the purpose have been to generate night uses. For leisure activity – knock 3 units together – gives capacity for some imaginative thinking.

**9. Do you have any suggestions for public realm projects / environmental improvements in the area?**

Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	We are aware of Church St Markets. Parson House is a massive waste of space this is under review. The canal is a huge resource that goes through 4 wards. We have been looking at improvements here. Area alongside needs to be thought about and looked at. Harrow Bridge to Great Western Road Bridge.
Amanda Coulson (Officer)	Great Western Studios are looking at this area including pedestrian access.
Marco Torquati (Church Street Neighbourhood Management)	Rembrandt Garden to Stone Wharf. Talking to British Waterways to upgrade.
Name not recorded	Can you remove the dead tree.
Cllr Bush	Genesis development on canal side – is there potential for using canal to take away spoil or other commercial uses. Spoil from Crossrail is an example.
Graham King (Officer)	This is unlikely to be feasible as the issue then becomes transferring spoil to the canal. The other options are by rail and discussions are being had.
Name not recorded	How we fit together all of these issues <i>is</i> interesting. Canal side space lots of education uses use St Mary Magdalene Church. It is Grade II listed which is why we need to do something about it.
Name not recorded	Liton Street Children's Play Cam.
Name not recorded	Under the A40 and underground.
Name not recorded	Lisson Arches.
Name not recorded	Innovative environmental systems.
Cllr Bush	Juggs Food Site

	Canal Terrace Dart Street (cuts through Mozart Estate).
Fabian Sharpe (Paddington Development Trust)	Economic development in the area.
Sarah Beuden (Savills)	Health/ education facilities.
Toby Gale (Westbourne LARP)	The Retail Group study by Harrow Road partnership includes viable uses.
<b><i>Other questions</i></b>	
Cllr Bush	VAT on refurbishments.
Name not recorded	Empty Rates.
Name not recorded	Car Parking Approaches – promoting lower parking provision.
Name not recorded	Crossrail Levy.
Kenneth Smalley (North Paddington Society)	How CityWest Homes environmental considerations are implemented.
<b>END</b>	