

25 June 2020

Submitted by the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (respondent ref. no. 51)**WESTMINSTER CITY PLAN EXAMINATION – MATTER STATEMENT 9****Matter 9 – Infrastructure, Implementation and Monitoring*****5) What will be the relationship with the Site Allocations DPD?***

- 9.1 The way that the Key Development Sites are addressed in both the Regulation 19 version of the draft City Plan and in the proposed minor modifications is not effective in demonstrating that the sites can come forward and deliver the stated quantum of development and therefore give assurance that the overall housing requirement can be met. Moreover, there is no indication given of the potential issues that may act as constraints to delivery or will require mitigation. The Housing Supply Topic Paper (EV_H_013) simply states that a site is ‘developable’ without explaining why. As stated in national Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), for a site to be considered developable, its suitability, availability and achievability must be assessed. The NPPG states that, “Where constraints have been identified, the assessment will need to consider what action could be taken to overcome them” (Paragraph: 021 Reference ID: 3-021-20190722). There is no such assessment to accompany the overall consideration that any sites are developable.
- 9.2 Specifically in respect of the Hyde Park Barracks Key Development Site, the Housing Supply Topic Paper simply refers to ‘nearby heritage assets includ(ing) the registered Hyde Park’. No reference is made to heritage constraints, either on site or on nearby heritage assets which may undergo setting change. For the draft Plan to be effective, it should make clear that there is a need for a detailed assessment of heritage significance, impact on MOL and other constraints prior to the inclusion of the site in the Site Allocations DPD or formulation of any design proposals. The requirement for an Act of Parliament to release the site for development is also a significant consideration, in that without this the site cannot be considered to be ‘developable’.
- 9.2 In addition, there is no recognition in the Housing Supply Topic Paper that large scale housing development on the Hyde Park Barracks site is likely to be harmful to the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). It simply states that, ‘Although it is designated as Metropolitan Open Land it is a brownfield site.’ It fails to acknowledge that the MOL designation means a developer would need to demonstrate ‘very special circumstances’ for development which harms it.
- 9.3 Issues such heritage and impact on the MOL have not been established yet could result in the site not being capable of being developed or only being capable of supporting a lower number of dwellings without conflicting with other requirements of the City Plan. As set out in our statement in respect of Matter 3 (Question 16), it is considered that there are a number of subjects that need to be considered in the Site Allocations DPD to inform any proposals at the site.

6) What is the intended relationship with Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and what role will these play in implementation?***7) Is the distinction between matters to be dealt with by the City Plan and SPDs appropriate?***

- 9.4 A large number of matters have been left to be addressed through Supplementary Planning Documents. Many of these issues relate to the critical policy requirement for the City Plan to meaningfully contribute towards the requirement to be net zero carbon by 2050 (in the case of the legal target set by the UK Government) or 2040 (in the case of the Westminster City Council commitment for Westminster borough).

- 9.5 NPPG states that, “Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan” (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 61-008-20190315). Given the metaphorical new territory that local plans must establish in order to contribute towards a legally binding target of the UK Government, it is clear that these matters should be presented clearly in policy. As little as possible should be left to SPDs, not least because these will take time to prepare and the matter at hand requires a strategy that must be put into place as soon as possible.