

WRITTEN STATEMENT

OF

EARLS COURT & OLYMPIA GROUP

FOR

**LONDON PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC
MATTER 4F**

1.0 **Introduction**

- 1.1 This Written Statement is submitted by Capital & Counties (C&C) on behalf of Earls Court and Olympia Group (ECOG). Their holdings total 28 hectares and present a significant redevelopment opportunity, referred to in this statement as the Earls Court Regeneration Area (ECRA).
- 1.2 The ECRA constitutes the majority of the Earls Court & West Kensington Opportunity Area (ECWKOAA) identified as a location for strategic growth and change in the draft Replacement London Plan (RLP).
- 1.3 The ECWKOAA straddles the borough boundary between the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and London Borough Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF). It is recognised by both authorities as a development opportunity in their respective Core Strategies.
- 1.4 The future development of the ECWKOAA would realise regeneration on a strategic scale. The location and accessibility of the ECWKOAA provides the chance to create and evolve a new urban quarter and town centre.
- 1.5 C&C have submitted a **Retail and Leisure Assessment (Core Document RD52)** setting out how a new District Centre at ECWKOAA is acceptable in terms of retail capacity, sequential approach and retail impact.
- 1.6 As set out in greater detail under issue (e) below, the document concludes that the likely development scenarios at ECWKOAA generate a floorspace capacity for retail (use classes A1-A5) ranging from 15,836 – 66,699 sqm, there are no sequentially preferable sites to accommodate this need and that the ECWKOAA proposals are likely to have less than 2.5% impact on any individual centre, an acceptable level of trade diversion that is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on individual centres vitality and viability. Even using the lower development scenario, this translates as a new District Centre, rising to a new Major Centre utilising the medium and upper development scenarios. It is considered that the allocation of a new District Centre at ECWKOAA, as a minimum complies with the requirements of PPS 4.
- 1.7 **On the basis of evidence presented in the Retail and Leisure Assessment, C&C request that Table A2.2 of Annex 2 to the draft RLP be amended to incorporate a reference to the ECWKOAA having the potential to accommodate a new District Centre. C&C also request that this is reflected in Annex 1 Ref.8 of the RLP in relation to the Strategic Policy Direction for the ECWKOAA. It should be made clear that the ECWKOAA has the potential to realise a new District Centre, as a minimum.**

Response to Issues for Discussion

1.8 Of the list of issues identified for discussion, C&C wish to comment on issues (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e).

(a) Does the policy sufficiently reflect the guidance of PPS4 and should there be a reference to the ‘impact test’ (paragraph 4.41)?

1.9 It is considered that in the main, retail policy in the draft RLP reflects the guidance contained within PPS4. However, it is not suitably flexible and proactive in respect of the ability of Opportunity Area’s (OA’s) to deliver significant retail/leisure development and accommodate new centres supporting major regeneration areas.

1.10 Whilst C&C supports suggested amendment 2.53, which highlights the need to review the London Plan hierarchy and bring forward new centres where appropriate and identifies the potential and suitability of OA’s to accommodate new town centres as a result of high density mixed use development, the RLP should identify specific potential new centres in OA’s, in particular at ECWKOA.

1.11 C&C’s Retail Evidence Base Document indicates that under the likely development scenarios for the ECWKOA, the ECWKOA has the ability to generate a retail (use classes A1-A5) floorspace capacity ranging from 16,089 – 68,342 sqm, in addition to 3,712 – 12,060 sqm of leisure. This equates to a District - Major Centre in terms of the draft RLP definition of centres.

1.12 Accordingly, in line with the draft RLP definition of centres and the guidance set out in policies EC2.1(a) and EC3.1(a) of PPS4, we request that Table A2.2, Annex 2, to the draft RLP be amended to incorporate a reference to ECWKOA having the potential to accommodate a new District Centre.

1.13 In addition, the policy should make it clear that a rigid application of the sequential approach is inappropriate for OA’s that deliver town centre uses as part of regeneration of an area, on the basis that the retail need created by the regeneration is best met within the OA. In delivering planned regeneration there is a need to create a sense of place and a sustainable community, including retail and leisure development. Therefore, requiring parts of development envisaged at OA’s to be located within even a number of smaller sites in existing town centres runs contrary to policy aspirations.

1.14 In respect of the specific comment regarding impact, we would support a reference to town centre schemes in OA’s being required to demonstrate that there is no unacceptable impact in terms of the tests set out in PPS4. A more detailed reference is not necessary as the London Plan does not need to repeat national guidance.

(b) Are the forecast requirements for comparison retailing soundly based? Should disaggregated figures be provided to sub-regions, Boroughs or even some categories of centres?

- 1.15 C&C considers that the forecast comparison retailing requirements are soundly based.
- 1.16 However, C&C does not consider it appropriate to provide disaggregated figures. Comparison goods capacity at the local level should be assessed within the context of the overall study, taking account of local factors, demographics and shopping trends.

(c) Does the policy when taken with Annex 2 provide an appropriate balance between flexibility and prescription?

- 1.17 It is considered that as presently worded the policy lacks flexibility in that Annex 2 does not identify the potential for OA's, such as the ECWKOAs, to deliver new centres as part of their comprehensive redevelopment. As set out in C&C's Retail and Leisure Assessment, the development likely to be delivered at ECWKOAs will generate an "indigenous" need/capacity for retail and leisure floorspace, at a minimum, equivalent to a District centre, rising to a Major Centre under the higher growth scenarios. Furthermore, retail and leisure are a key component in creating sustainable urban quarters that are required to unlock the development potential of OA's such as the ECWKOAs. This should be reflected in the RLP.
- 1.18 Whilst this concern has in part been addressed by suggested amendment 2.53, for the reasons expressed in this written statement **the ECWKOAs should be included as a potential future District centre, as a minimum, in Table A2.2 of Annex 2 to the draft RLP.**

(d) Is there any need to refer to convenience retailing?

- 1.19 No. Convenience retailing needs are dictated by local factors and planning policy should be formulated at the Borough level.

(e) Should the potential for new Metropolitan or Major centres within Opportunity Areas (as detailed in Annex 1) which have appropriate sustainable transport provision or potential be flagged-up more strongly?

- 1.20 OAs are designated as they are capable of accommodating substantial growth and have either good accessibility or are capable of delivering the infrastructure improvements necessary to justify high density development.
- 1.21 The ECWKOAs has the potential to provide a retail, leisure and office centre, in addition to significant housing, at the heart of a strategic area of regeneration and renewal. This should be flagged up much more strongly in the RLP at Annex 1 Ref.8 in relation to the Strategic Policy Directions for ECWKOAs. C&C proposes

the allocation of the ECWKOAs as new District Centres, as a minimum, in Annex 1 for the reasons set out below:-

- a. National planning policy focuses on regeneration of brownfield sites for high density mixed use development. Significant emphasis is placed upon creating sustainable communities with easy access to places of work, shops and facilities.
- b. Further, national guidance advises regional authorities to be positive, proactive and flexible in setting policies for their network and hierarchy of centres. Identified deficiencies should be addressed by either promoting existing centres to function at a higher level or through the designation of new centres.
- c. It is the very nature of OAs that they are areas of planned substantial land use change and high density mixed use development, at a scale which can involve the development of new centres, as referred to in suggested amendment 2.53 of the draft RLP.
- d. ECRA has been identified in the draft RLP as forming the majority of the ECWKOAs, with its planned mixed use regeneration and growth. Annex 1 identifies the ECWKOAs as a significant high density regeneration opportunity with potential for various mixed uses, including town centre uses.
- e. ECRA has the potential to provide a hub for the ECWKOAs, focusing on key town centre uses such as retail, leisure, employment space and social and community uses, along with a significant element of residential. The site can incorporate hotels, leisure, restaurants/bars and various community facilities. When these town centre uses are factored in with the proposed residential, office and retail offer it creates a genuine mixed-use place with the potential for a large number of linked trips.
- f. ECWKOAs will deliver a significant number of new homes and jobs. This will generate expenditure that would be sufficient to support town centre uses within the ECWKOAs.
- g. The ECWKOAs can deliver a vibrant place in line with the draft RLP aspirations for the ECWKOAs and in accordance with what one would expect of an area designated as a District Centre.
- h. The designation of the ECWKOAs as a District Centre, as a minimum, would be consistent with policy advice in PPS4, for the following reasons.
 - There would be a need for the town centre uses of retail and leisure. The technical analysis carried out by DP9 demonstrates that redevelopment of the ECWKOAs is likely to be of a scale that will lead to sufficient indigenous generated expenditure to justify the provision of floorspace at

a minimum, of a level which would be consistent with District Centre designation as defined in the draft RLP.

- The provision of these uses within the ECWKOAs, close to the new residential and office development that they would be intended primarily to serve, would allow that need to be satisfied in a highly sustainable and accessible location as part of a broader mix of uses, consistent with the underlying objective of the sequential approach.
- A scheme with the characteristics of District Centre at ECWKOAs would have no material adverse impact on the vitality and viability of neighbouring centres.

- 1.22 The main purpose of both the retail and leisure uses will be to serve the significant number of new residents and office workers that will be generated by the proposals. Analysis by DP9 indicates that the likely development scenarios for the ECWKOAs generate a retail (use classes A1-A5) floorspace capacity ranging from 15,836 – 66,699 sqm (gross). In addition, there is a clear and defined need for the likely quantum of leisure proposed, particularly bearing in mind the existing use of the site.
- 1.23 Therefore, we conclude that a District Centre will have a limited effect on existing nearby centres. Indeed, it is likely that the other centres will benefit from the significant additional expenditure generated by ECWKOAs, as it is not realistic to assert that all of the money generated will be spent at the site.
- 1.24 Nonetheless, DP9 have calculated the worse case scenario, where only approximately 50% of the comparison goods floorspace proposed in the highest development scenario is met by ECWKOAs generated expenditure. A benchmark impact assessment has been carried out to analyse the likely levels of trade diversion from nearby centres.
- 1.25 As set out in the C&C's Retail and Leisure Assessment, the ECWKOAs proposals are likely to have a less than 2.5% impact on any individual centre, a more than acceptable level of trade diversion that is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the individual centres vitality and viability.
- 1.26 The analysis set out in C&C's Retail and Leisure Assessment is reinforced by borough wide retail and leisure studies undertaken on behalf of LBHF and RBKC, both of which demonstrate that there is capacity to support substantial retail and leisure development in RBKC/LBHF in the period between now and 2026.
- 1.27 **Accordingly, we request that Table A2.2 of Annex 2 to the draft RLP be amended to incorporate a reference to the ECWKOAs having the potential to accommodate a new District Centre. We also request that this is reflected in Annex 1 Ref.8 of the RLP in relation to the Strategic Policy Direction for the ECWKOAs. It should be made clear that the ECWKOAs has the potential to**

realise a new District Centre, as a minimum, based on the evidence contained in C&C's Retail and Leisure Assessment.