

London planning news

MAY 2017



Headline News

8 June general election

A snap general election will take place on 8 June, the House of Commons having voted by 522 votes to 13 to bring forward the scheduled election date from 2020. Parliament will be dissolved on 3 May, and it is anticipated that the major parties will publish their manifestos during the following week.

Pre-election 'purdah' currently affects the local, mayoral and general elections and has implications for planning legislation, government policy-making and decision-taking.

As a consequence of the general election date, the Neighbourhood Planning Bill's last debate was moved forward a day; in a very short debate the final version of the Bill was agreed in the Lords and it now has Royal Assent (see Lichfields' blog for more).

It is also possible that purdah hastened the publication of DCLG's 'Frequently asked questions on brownfield land registers and permission in principle' (on 21 April). But at the same time, the statutory guidance seems to be delayed, as the intention is that it will now be published by the summer – it was due by June.

The snap general election also means other delays; there is no certainty now as to when the Housing White Paper's consultation on a standardised methodology for assessing 'housing requirements' will be launched – it was expected very soon. Inevitably too, the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework committed to in the White Paper, alongside those subject of its consultation, will be delayed at least for several months.

Post-election and once the incoming government is in office, it will have to

decide relatively quickly whether there is to be any new planning-related Bill, for inclusion in the Queen's Speech at the next State Opening of Parliament (on 19 June).

An announcement sooner rather than later would be expected then on the stance being taken to the Housing White Paper's proposals – and the recently consulted-on Industrial Strategy Green Paper too. Confirmation or otherwise would also be likely in the first few weeks of the new administration, on current infrastructure initiatives, including: Heathrow's expansion; Crossrail 2; and HS2. It also may be the case that Osborne's/ Clark's legacy of planning-related initiatives would be pronounced on relatively quickly, including the review of the community infrastructure levy.

Other news

Stakeholders unite in calls for Government Crossrail 2 backing

Diverse coalitions of homebuilders, property industry leaders, housing associations, councils and Members of Parliament (MPs) have all called for the Government to reiterate its support and firmly back Crossrail 2 in three separate letters.

On 3 April, 66 homebuilding and property industry leaders wrote to the Chancellor, Transport Secretary and Communities Secretary to underline the crucial importance of Crossrail 2 for unlocking 'new, good-quality homes, offices and other commercial uses' and supporting the delivery of up to 200,000 new homes. Ten days later, London Boroughs and councils from the wider South East sent a letter to the Chancellor and Transport Secretary, urging them to back the project, stressing in particular the benefits that would result from the new railway that 'would be felt nationwide'.

Finally, and following the call for a general election (see headline news), 59 MPs ►►

QUOTE OF THE MONTH



I have been clear that fixing the housing crisis will be a marathon and not a sprint, but I am determined to lead from the front and get on with building affordable homes for Londoners to rent and buy.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announcing the partnership agreed with housing association L&Q to build 20,000 new homes

THE LICHFIELDS PERSPECTIVE

The snap general election comes after Housing and Planning Minister Gavin Barwell's extensive tour of England, meeting with those responsible for delivery to discuss the approach taken in the Housing White Paper. Both the consultation and Mr Barwell have taken a considered, deal-making and holistic approach to housing and planning policy, one that incentivises local authorities and private developers to focus on the great delivery challenge faced by London and the rest of the country

Justin Gartland, Chairman

CONTACT US

Margaret Baddeley
margaret.baddeley@lichfields.uk
T: 020 7837 4477

Jennie Baker
jennie.baker@lichfields.uk
T: 020 7837 4477

Giorgio Wetzl
giorgio.wetzl@lichfields.uk
T: 020 7837 4477

LICHFIELDS

Disclaimer

This publication has been written in general terms and cannot be relied on to cover specific situations. We recommend that you obtain professional advice before acting or refraining from acting on any of the contents of this publication. Lichfields accepts no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of any material in this publication. Lichfields is the trading name of Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Limited. Registered in England, no.2778116. Registered office: 14 Regent's Wharf, All Saints Street, London N1 9RL © Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd 2017. All rights reserved.

representing constituencies 'from as north as Newcastle upon Tyne and as far south as Portsmouth' urged the Government to back the scheme; the letter they sent to the Chancellor and Transport Secretary focused on the economic benefits that would result from the project, that would be felt across the UK - the economy is expected to be boosted by up to £150bn.

As highlighted in all of the various press releases, the (next) Transport Secretary is expected to make a decision on further Government support for Crossrail 2; this follows an updated business case and funding plan that Transport for London (TfL) has submitted to the current Transport Secretary.

A recently-updated House of Commons Library briefing paper provides information on Crossrail 1 (the Elizabeth Line), which is nearing completion, and Crossrail 2. On the latter, the (pre-election) briefing paper's webpage highlights how 'Crossrail 2 managing director Michèle Dix has indicated a hope that the Government will give Crossrail 2's business case and funding plan the green light in May 2017'.

Draft London Night Time Economy SPG consultation

Ahead of the publication of the new draft London Plan, expected in the autumn, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has published the draft Culture and Night Time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The draft SPG is aimed at providing guidance to ensure that existing policies are used as effectively as possible to avoid further pub and club closures, and to maximise the economic benefits relating to night time industries and services.

The consultation document underlines how London counts for 40% of the estimated £66bn total UK night-time economy; however, the SPG also states that 35% of London's grassroots music venues have been lost (since 2007), while the number of pubs in the capital fell by 25% (since 2001).

The SPG suggests the adoption of Article 4 Directions to protect pubs from permitted development rights conversions and demolitions, as already done in Wandsworth and Southwark (note however that this may be superseded by a provision in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 removing the rights). It also underlines how development proposals

'should seek to manage noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development or add unduly to the costs and administrative burdens of existing businesses', making reference to the 'agent of change' principle already included in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The draft SPG is out for consultation until 31 May.

Mayor's partnership with housing association

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has announced a new £8bn partnership with housing association L&Q, aimed at delivering over 20,000 new homes across the capital, 12,000 of which will be 'genuinely affordable'. This is the first partnership the Mayor has agreed, following the £3.15bn affordable housing deal secured from the Government in last year's Autumn Budget.

City Hall has committed £400m towards the L&Q partnership, to support the delivery of 60% affordable housing units, and to contribute to land purchases and infrastructure costs.

Lambeth Article 4 direction to protect office space

Lambeth Council is confirming an Article 4 direction to protect office spaces from PDRs to convert to residential; the Council states that since the right was first introduced (in May 2013), over 20,000 sq. m. of office floor space have been lost.

The decision of the Council's cabinet will cover Brixton town centre, a series of sites around Clapham town centre and ten of the Borough's designated 'Key Industrial and Business Areas'; the Article 4 direction will become effective on 15 September.

Other London boroughs have or are progressing Article 4 directions: Hackney Council to protect its local laundrettes and warehouses, while both Southwark Council and Wandsworth Council are to protect pubs (potentially to be superseded however by a provision in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 removing the rights concerned).

Mayor increases support for community-led housing

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has announced plans for a £250,000 Homes for

Londoners Community Housing Hub; the Hub will provide support to citizens and community groups aiming to build their own homes by themselves, offering advice on how to access funding and unlock land, as well as providing technical support.

The announcement came as the Mayor confirmed a £500,000 investment to deliver 22 custom-built 'new and permanently' affordable homes for first-time buyers in Enfield; this is the first time that a community-led housing group has received funding from City Hall.

Consultation on future of Oxford Street

TfL, together with Westminster City Council and the Mayor, has launched a consultation on plans to 'transform' Oxford Street; the consultation recognises that 'there are lots of issues', these being overcrowded pedestrian spaces, road safety problems and poor air quality in the area. The consultation does not provide 'a fully developed set of proposals' but focuses instead on the impacts and benefits that could arise from the street's transformation. Furthermore, the consultation seeks to 'describe how a transformed Oxford Street might look and feel in the short term', while asking for views from the public on how the area could be developed in the longer term.

The consultation closes on 18 June.

New Lower Thames Crossing's route

The Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, has announced the preferred route for a new Lower Thames Crossing; the planned route will connect the M25 near North Ockendon to the A2 near Shorne, crossing the A13 at Orsett, and the river Thames east of Tilbury and Gravesend via a bored tunnel.

The route was chosen by the majority of respondents to a Highways England consultation launched in January last year. The new crossing is expected to ease pressure on the existing Dartford Crossing, which is the only road crossing of the River Thames east of London. ■