

LB Richmond upon Thames response to the two main Lyons' questions

	Barker review of Landuse Planning	Eddington transport study	Leitch review of Skills	General comment
<p>1. Do local authorities have the powers they need to undertake place-shaping, particularly in pursuing economic prosperity?</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p><i>The ability of authorities to place-shape is reduced by proposals of the Government and the Barker Review. Of most concern are:</i></p> <p>(i) Recommendation 10 - the proposed fast-tracking of decision-making on major infrastructure projects will potentially mean that the views of local communities will be overridden.</p> <p>The additional powers being given to the Mayor Of London will affect the authority's ability to place-shape.</p> <p>More welcome are:</p> <p><i>(i) recommendation 14 - to streamline national policy guidance;</i></p> <p><i>(ii) recommendation 15 - to simplify the LDF process.</i></p>	<p>Governance</p> <p><i>Recommendation A1 and A2, B5 are disappointingly unambitious and short-term in nature, dealing in only marginal improvements to existing transport systems for meeting short-term demand for travel. There is little hope of achieving the additional capacity and efficiency commensurate with a successful economy, beyond, say 2010, on the Eddington recommendations alone.</i></p> <p>We concur that a national, strategic transport plan is vital, with a 10-25 year horizon that the whole UK can relate to and expect to materialise.</p> <p>Regional and local transport planning should then be complementary and supplementary, reflecting the needs of the local economies, contributing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - take up of local jobs by local residents, hence reducing daily commuting into and out of the borough; yet, - provide fast, efficient and low cost travel into central London, between boroughs and Heathrow, to improve links for all travellers, in particular to support business. 	<p>Governance</p> <p>Leitch recommendations place much of the responsibility for attaining skills and getting work, or up-skilling whilst in employment, with the individual. Improvement is seen as dependent on demand-led activity from employer and employee coherently.</p> <p>Successive legislation has reduced the involvement of LAs in employment and skills' sectors.</p> <p>Employer influence can currently be channelled through LSPs, yet actual employer engagement with the LSP is minimal and will need to be encouraged. It is doubtful that additional "powers" would succeed in achieving such engagement.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>We must reiterate the need for only frameworks and guidance at the national level, with sufficient autonomy given to local authorities to achieve these, complement and supplement them at the regional and local level.</p> <p>To deal comprehensively with the full range of local issues raised in the three reports and to be detailed in the forthcoming Lyons report, partner bodies of the LSPs should be well-informed and persuaded to work collaboratively in response to local issues.</p>

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	<p>Convening</p> <p>With the right agreed strategies in place at the regional level, local authorities should be in a stronger position to negotiate individually and collectively to deliver the regionally strategic proposals.</p> <p>More flexibility is needed locally for reviewing and amending LDFs, once adopted, to allow them to be responsive to the needs of local public bodies. For example, whilst the Local Strategic Partnership partners convey their landuse needs to the local planning authority, the LDFs 10-20 year horizon does not accord with the much shorter (probably 2-5 year) timescale for health, police, further education and other public bodies' forward planning.</p> <p><i>Re. recommendations 3, 4, 6</i> Greater recognition of the effect of planning policy and practice on economic development is generally welcomed, but any guidance will need to provide sufficient flexibility for authorities to determine priorities in relation to local considerations. ED is not a statutory service provision at the local level, so data and reliable advice for landuse policy planning and its implementation can be limited.</p>	<p>Convening</p> <p>Local authorities and local strategic partnerships should be empowered to identify and rectify local problems relating to particular communities gaining transport access to training and employment.</p> <p>LB Richmond upon Thames is over-reliant on funding from the Mayor of London, and whilst able to identify transport issues clearly, is not always able to rectify them owing to the level of funding-control exercised by Transport for London.</p>	<p>Convening</p> <p><i>Recommendation 8.9, 8.24, 8.26</i> Our contribution can be only through influence, working with the LSP to create a climate where employers and companies are attracted and retained and that they invest in workforce skills.</p> <p>The Council has been able to make an important contribution in one area of skills development through the Personal and Community Development Learning programme (PCDL), but this has become substantially reduced, in favour of the Skills Strategy.</p>	<p>Convening</p> <p><i>The aim of developing a culture of learning and raising aspirations</i> needs to be tackled robustly and uniformly at the national, regional and local levels. It is doubtful that the regional development agencies and local strategic partnerships are sufficiently empowered, resourced and aligned to sustaining this type of encouragement to communities and individuals.</p> <p><i>Place-shaping</i> tends to give the notion of discrete localities. The Barker and Leitch reports both seem to have taken the national, regional and local perspectives to heart, but the Eddington report says little on co-ordinating transport services, let alone aspiring to any nationally integrated system. This lack of a defined and understood hierarchy and division of responsibilities is likely to cause confusion and hamper the local delivery of policy and programmes.</p>

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	<p>Funding</p> <p>The proposal that a form of Planning Delivery Grant be maintained is welcomed and essential to maintaining the improved performance of the planning system. Any reduction in the PDG not accompanied by an increase in application fees would have an adverse financial effect for the local authority and is likely to lead to a reduction in performance.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 8</i> Apply a graduating payments scheme (say 20% first year – 100% in fifth unoccupied year) for business rates where property is vacant or on derelict brownfield land, with the funds collected remaining with the local authority for investment in those sites and/or linked to the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme.</p>	<p>Funding</p> <p><i>Recommendation A3</i> Revenues from road-pricing schemes should be used to fund new or expanded public transport systems, in order to provide an alternative to private road transport and contain demand for road space. This is welcome, but urgently needs the backing of comprehensive and complementary national, regional and local transport strategies. (See comment above, under “Governance”.)</p> <p>The investment of income raised from road-pricing will need to be managed and apportioned to schemes that deliver the most effective solutions to demand for travel.</p>	<p>Funding</p>	<p>Funding</p> <p>Improving incentives: the LABGI scheme is welcomed, although its local impact could be offset by any reduction in planning gain heralded in the expected Planning Gain Supplement, particularly if income from PG is partially diverted from the local administration to regional.</p> <p>As Eddington reports, the current levels of congestion in urban areas, and their catchments and along inter-urban corridors and at key international gateways are increasingly <i>contributing to the escalating cost of goods and services and having an adverse effect on the economy</i>. In addition to his advice on making better use of existing transport systems, he rightly makes the case for sustained public and private investment in transport schemes.</p>

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<p>2. Highlight any variations on implications of the Barker, Eddington and Leitch reviews for LBRuT</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>The London Plan provides a clear strategy: some flexibility and streamlining would assist in delivering and maintaining an effective LDF.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>Towns and cities are recognized by Eddington as already “showing signs of increasing congestion and unreliability ...in the most heavily used and economically significant parts of the network”</p> <p>These problems contribute to lost productivity time, affecting movement of goods, services and employees, and are present in outer London boroughs. Re-investment of funds raised from road pricing could be used effectively at local and national levels to provide significant improvement.</p> <p>(see comments under “Governance” above)</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>At the regional, London, level the main delivery agencies already co-operate and co-ordinate services to some extent and the Leitch recommendation for employment and skills boards should, in theory, consolidate this joint working. For Richmond, there could be some loss of influence over local priorities if greater emphasis is given to London-wide issues.</p> <p>The extent to which relevant employers will be prepared to engage with the LSP remains to be tested.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>The juxtaposition between London Assembly and London boroughs – transport and investment is very much geared to the centre and east; yet south and west boroughs have traditionally been the initial attractors, partly by dint of their location, proximity to Heathrow and established business and trading areas, now suffer severe transport congestion and a distinct lack of proposals and investment hope for infrastructure to serve future growth.</p>

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	<p>Convening</p> <p>In London, we are concerned that current strategies do not sufficiently recognize the discrete economies of the suburbs and will lead to more centralisation of employment and visitor activity at the expense of the local borough economies that run the risk of becoming “dormitory” areas.</p> <p>Clearer structures and processes that define the responsibility of different authorities; for example, on local strategic roads Transport for London and the local highway authority mix of roles can lead to indecision and delay in construction of new schemes.</p> <p>Scope to vary the parameters in some policies at the London borough level would help to tackle wider social and economic issues; for example, the application of affordable housing quotas to small residential developments (less than 10 units).</p>	<p>Convening</p> <p>Commissioning of some supplementary services to meet the needs of the growing economy and social and leisure demands of the community; e.g. late night bus and train services for employees and participants of cultural activities that provide safe and affordable means of transport.</p> <p>LB Richmond upon Thames would, for example, like more of a say in the planning of local bus and rail services and facilities, which are currently controlled by other organizations. Our current role is not always sufficient and we would welcome more empowerment.</p>	<p>Convening</p> <p><i>Recommendation 8.7</i> is particularly relevant and specific to LB Richmond, where demographic trends show an increased number of 16-18 years olds for the coming years. LSCs and LSPs could assist in embedding the work and training ethic in this key age-group.</p> <p>The emphasis on NVQ level 2 qualifications has meant a reduction in subsidies for adult learning programmes, with residents facing a very sharp increase in fees.</p>	<p>Convening</p> <p>The most mentioned barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups are housing costs and transport costs. In order to tackle these and any other locally occurring issues that might arise in Local Area Agreements, it is important that all types of national guidance is restricted to the strategic and matters of national and international importance, leaving an appropriate amount of autonomy for LSPs and local councils to respond to their area-specific needs.</p>

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	<p>Funding</p> <p>Considerable progress has been made in LB Richmond in meeting the criteria of the Planning Delivery Grant. We are keen that this source of income continues, in order to allow us to deliver at a good level of service.</p>	<p>Funding</p> <p>LB Richmond upon Thames helpfully receives significant funding from the Mayor of London, but would welcome more flexibility in determining how the money should be spent at the local level.</p>	<p>Funding</p> <p>The South London Learning and Skills Council and partners, generally monitor and respond well to changing employer needs and demographic trends in their financing of local training programmes, but we would be concerned about diversion of funds to London-wide priorities.</p>	<p>Funding</p> <p>Financial resource is needed to “grow our own economy” in response to issues of the day; for example, in affordable housing policy or transport subsidy for long-term unemployed people.</p>