



Press Release

For immediate publication

MAYOR PROPOSES MAJOR NEW THREAT TO LONDON'S GREEN BELT

Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, has indicated that he is likely to allow several large rail freight facilities to be built on greenfield land within London's Green Belt.

This substantial policy shift is revealed within the Mayor's 500-page proposals for alterations to his land use planning framework (the '*London Plan*') which were published last week[1]. These 'Draft Alterations' address '*a requirement for three or four large multi-modal freight facilities on or close to the periphery of London*' and propose the **deletion** of a requirement that such facilities:

'should be located wholly or substantially on previously developed land.' [2]

The removal of the requirement for using '*previously developed land*' ('brownfield' sites) would make it very much easier for development proposals on open, greenfield land within the Green Belt to be approved, and is likely to encourage such proposals to be brought forward by developers.

By way of an example of the size of the threat, a current proposal for one such facility on greenfield land in the borough of Bexley would consume 63 hectares (156 acres). The Mayor has already offered his support 'in principle' for that development.

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The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

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Commenting on the proposed changes to the *London Plan*, Nigel Kersey, Director of CPRE's London Region[3] said:

“This proposal is completely at odds with the Mayor's claim to be a defender of the Green Belt. These rail freight facilities would consume huge areas of land and cause enormous harm to London's countryside. They would lead to a rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of the Green Belt. No justification has been offered for this major policy retreat and all Londoners who live in or enjoy visiting London's 'rural fringe' should let the Mayor know that it's not acceptable.”

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

- [1] Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London). Mayor of London (September 2006):

<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/further-alt/sds/docs.jsp>

- [2] Paragraph 3.218, page 156. The proposed replacement text is vague and allows substantial scope for development on greenfield land within the Green Belt. Freight transport interchanges facilities will consume large areas of land, comprising substantial new buildings including freight storage facilities ('sheds') and marshalling areas, parking and manoeuvring space for lorries and manoeuvring areas for trains. They are also likely to attract substantial 'supporting' and consequential development in the vicinity, much of which would be likely further to erode the Green Belt.

- [3] CPRE London is the London Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. CPRE exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. We promote positive solutions for the long-term future of the countryside to ensure change values its natural and built environment. Our Patron is Her Majesty The Queen. We have 59,000 supporters, a branch in every county, nine regional groups, over 200 local groups and a national office in London. CPRE is a powerful combination of effective local action and strong national campaigning. Our President is Sir Max Hastings.