Borough Plan Advisory Committee

Housing update: converting offices to homes

06 March 2014
Government prioritizing new homes

• Fiscal incentives: Help to Buy

• Cutting Red Tape / speeding up the planning process

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

• “to significantly boost the supply of housing…”

• Requires development plans and sites to be viable

• Must meet “objectively assessed housing need”

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London’s challenge

A population boom:
- 9 million by 2020
- 10 million by 2030
2001-11 London grew by 30% more than expected

A changing tenure pattern

An affordability crisis

Mayor’s view: housing is essential infrastructure:
- building homes creates jobs
- supporting London’s skilled workforce

Source: Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates to 2001, GLA estimates 2002 to 2036
Housing need in London

- London Plan 2011 = 34,000 homes p.a. (actual construction is c27,000 homes p.a.)
- Central Government = 53,000 homes needed p.a. (increase of 33%) to address objectively assessed housing need
- London Mayor’s London Plan 2014 set target for 42,000 new homes per year until 2031
Merton’s share of London’s challenge

c200,000 = Merton’s population from Census 2011

320 homes p.a. Merton’s current (2011) share of London’s housing target

411 homes p.a. = Merton’s future share of London’s homes (33% increase)
Cutting red tape: “prior approval” to turn offices into residential

- No need for planning permission so no design standards, space standards, support for necessary local infrastructure etc.

- Introduced May 2013; homes must be built by May 2016

- CLG refused Merton’s exemption for Wimbledon town centre and the main industrial estates
Prior approval - office to residential

Prior approvals:
- 77 schemes submitted,
- 19 schemes granted, creating 131 units
- 17 refused
- 17 awaiting a decision, if granted will create an additional 140 unit

Graph – size of home granted through prior approval
How many flats does each application seek?

- Providing one flat: 6
- Providing between 2 and 9 flats: 2
- Providing between 10 and 15 flats: 1
- One scheme 32 units: 1
- One scheme 71 units: 1

One scheme = 32 units
One scheme = 71 units
Merton: number of units per ward

Prior Approvals by ward from Office to Residential (May 2013-February 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Approved (Units)</th>
<th>Not Required Prior Approval (units)</th>
<th>Awaiting decision (units)</th>
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Office to residential developments in Merton - size
London: prior approval schemes received

Prior approvals received

- Providing one flat
- Providing between 2 and 9 flats
- Providing between 10 and 15 flats

One scheme = 32 units
One scheme = 71 units
Next steps

Article 4 direction
• Will require offices in Wimbledon town centre and Merton’s industrial estates to seek planning permission if they want to convert to residential

Sites and Policies Plan
• Providing new policy framework in line with NPPF to guide development
• Proposing sites for allocation

Community Infrastructure Levy
• To help fund the infrastructure necessary to support development

Retail to residential?
• Government consultation (August 2013) to include more permitted development: small shops and financial services to residential

• Quasi planning permission: *economic health of area, loss of essential services, impact on local character, design, materials, outlook*

• Officers examining where this might affect Merton

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