



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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I write to place on record my response to the open, ongoing consultation on the masterplan for Bromley town centre, also known as Opportunity Site G (OSG). The proposals represent a considerable development in the heart of the town, extending along the west side of the High Street from Bromley South station to the Churchill Theatre in the north.

Whilst I welcome the Council's aim of delivering ambitious mixed-use developments that serve the needs of local residents, and understand the pressure the London Borough of Bromley is under in meeting the housing target imposed on it by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan – which has more than doubled to over 1,400 units a year – such a large concentration of new housing, some of which will necessitate the compulsory purchase of existing properties, will understandably be of concern to residents living and working in the vicinity. Indeed, the majority of the 1,230 residential units being proposed are in high rise, high density buildings that, unless very carefully managed, have the potential to damage the High Street, which continues to draw many visitors to the area and is a significant generator of income for the local economy.

On that basis, I endorse a number of the recommendations put forward by the Bromley Town ward councillors, including ensuring that a greater blend of housing for people of all ages is adopted as a part of any proposals going forward. Where multi-storey development is necessary, I agree with them that this should be focussed towards the south of the High Street, where land levels are lower and there are precedents for taller buildings.

Additionally, I would stress in the strongest possible terms that any development must be accompanied by an increase in hard and soft infrastructure. The local road network is already heavily congested, and any future promoter would have to show very clearly how they intend to mitigate local concerns on this matter. I welcome the fact that OSG Policy requires the provision of up to 2,000sqm of additional community and health facilities, but again, many residents will want to see further details of what this means in reality in terms of health and education provision.



I fully support the plan's dual aim of improving Bromley South station, as well as increasing connectivity and onward journey options from the station itself, but a concerted effort with both Network Rail and the train operating companies will need to begin immediately if a scheme of this size is ever to be viable. Bromley and Chislehurst has the second largest number of rail commuters of any constituency in England and Wales; of the 12,827,112 journeys undertaken by people travelling to and from the constituency in 2016/17, 67 per cent were done so via Bromley South. It remains one of the most congested stations on the entire UK rail network, and the busiest in the Southeastern franchise area after the main London termini.

Capacity will therefore have to be increased significantly, with the creation of additional entrances to the station, something I have been pressing Network Rail on for some time. Facilities will also have to be improved, with greater step-free access to the station, as well as step-free transfer between platform and train. I would suggest that this should form part of a package of improvements that recognises Bromley's status as a major transport hub, including attempts to improve connectivity from Bromley North station through the reintroduction of direct services to and from central London, as well as a renewed effort to bring the Bakerloo line south to Bromley via Lewisham as a part of TfL's ongoing extension project. I have been working with industry representatives on these points over a number of years, and would of course be happy to support the Council on this front.

Finally, I would urge the Council to engage as widely as possible with local residents and businesses throughout this process. This is a large scheme that has the potential to considerably alter Bromley Town for years to come, and significant concerns exist as to its size and design.

**Bob Neill MP**