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## Wandsworth Local Plan

# Employment and Industry Review Policy Options Document October 2016

## Response by Covent Garden Market Authority

1. The underlying rationale of the redevelopment plans for New Covent Garden Market (NCGM) currently being implemented is to ensure the fruit, vegetable and flower wholesale market continues to operate and flourish in the long term.
  2. Since NCGM moved to Nine Elms in 1974, significant changes have taken place in the food wholesaling sector, particularly due to the increased dominance of supermarkets with their own distribution systems. NCGM has changed its activities in response to these changes which has seen increased fresh food distribution and food processing, a greater focus on central London end users and a widening of activities in the food sector generally.
  3. A key factor for the market is accessibility to central London, and this was the reason for the market remaining in its current location, rather than moving to a more suburban location. A PwC report showed a small, but significant, environmental benefit to the market's current location.
  4. The redevelopment proposals will provide facilities better suited to current activities and to provide flexible floorspace that is better able to respond to future changes in the food industry. Whilst the market will operate on a reduced size site, the total trading space and level of activity will increase. As such, it is incorrect to suggest the market is consolidating.
  5. With the continuing pressures on employment and industrial land in this part of London, due to higher value residential and other uses, it is important that planning policies continue to protect such uses.
  6. The wholesale market includes the various core activities of the fruit, vegetable and flower markets, but also other added value food activities such as food processing, and it is anticipated these types of activity could increase in the future. The recent planning permission for redevelopment of the market (Ref
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2014/2810) categorised the wholesale market as sui generis, reflecting the activities that take place that do not fall into Business Use Class (B1, B2 and B8).

7. It is important to ensure that the wholesale market activities are protected not only from changes of use to non-employment uses, but also from changes of use to B Use Classes, as there could be pressure from such uses as the quantum of employment land further shrinks.
8. However, the policy needs to recognise that the wholesale market business will continue to change and develop in the future and therefore need to include some flexibility to reflect this. An important part of the redevelopment of NCGM is to create a food hub for London. As well as the core wholesale activities, the new market will include incubator space and business support for startup businesses, workspace for food-related businesses, a retail market, restaurants, food shops and education floorspace. The aim is to become a showcase for food in London.
9. NCGM is an important employer (over 2,500 work at the market a good proportion of whom live locally) but it also has links to other employment uses in the area who form part of the “supply chain”. A study by Aston University gives a multiplier factor of 3 jobs for every job based at a wholesale market. It is important that general industrial, uses are protected to enable these synergies to be maintained and enhanced in the future. For example tenants’ vehicles and equipment needs to be maintained, so it is important that these services are available in close proximity.
10. The decline in local industry space has already led to the displacement of food service businesses who use the market. Demand for space from existing tenants at NCGM has meant that CGMA has only been able to rehouse two of those businesses. Recently the need to expand has seen some NCGM companies relocate out of the borough, to Park Royal and East London.
11. On a point of accuracy, paragraph 8.16 sets out total industrial land in the Borough - 141.9 ha. It is stated that Nine Elms (including NCGM) contributes 11 ha of this figure. However NCGM is currently 24.57 ha and following redevelopment, the main market site will be 14.5 ha (plus the entrance road from Nine Elms Lane).

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