

## 4. A Safer, Attractive and Valued Urban Environment

- 4.1 Haringey's Sustainable Community Strategy theme 'Safer for All' aims to reduce both crime and fear of crime through good design and improvements to the public realm and by creating safer, cleaner streets. How the urban environment looks and functions can have a significant impact on people's quality of life. This will also influence the image of a place, which in turn can affect the economy of an area. Urban design is about how places work as well as how they look.
- 4.2 Both the conservation of the built environment (in terms of preserving cultural heritage and insuring the efficient use of land and building materials), and good design are seen as integral components of sustainable development.
- 4.3 In line with London Plan policies Haringey will insist on:
- General principles of design (Policy 4B.1);
  - Enhancing the quality of the public realm (Policy 4B.3);
  - Creating an inclusive environment (Policy 4B.5);
  - Respecting and understanding local context (Policy 4B.6);
  - Protection of London's Strategic views (Policy 4B.16);
  - Location of tall buildings (Policy 4B.9);
  - Safety, security and fire prevention and protection (Policy 4B.6); and
  - Adopting sustainable design and construction measures in reducing energy consumption (Policy 4A.3);

### Design

#### Local Considerations

#### High Quality Design

- 4.4 Good urban design is about how places work as well as how they look as this has a crucial impact on people's quality of life and their perception of an area. Good design is seen to be an integral component of sustainable development. Buildings should have as little as possible impact on the environment and the use of natural resources.
- 4.5 With the passing of the Planning Act 2008 and in accordance with government guidance in PPS1, local authorities are required to have regard to the desirability of achieving good design. In doing so, the Council will take account of the Building for Life criteria in the assessment of proposals for residential developments.
- 4.6 The Council will use the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment method (BREEAM) and the code for sustainable homes to

assess the environmental performance of buildings. The Code for Sustainable Homes 'Setting the Standard in Sustainability' for new homes and accompanying technical guidance (amended April 2008) was introduced to improve the overall sustainability of new homes by setting a single national standard within which the home building industry can design and construct homes to higher environmental standards. An assessment against the Code is mandatory for all new residential developments.

## **Tall Buildings**

- 4.7 Haringey is characterised by predominantly low-rise (2-3 storey) residential suburban development across the borough and 3-4 storey development in its town centres, the exception being Wood Green Town Centre where buildings range between 4-9 storeys at its centre. As such, almost the entire borough is particularly sensitive to the adverse impact of high buildings on its character and townscape qualities given its outer borough suburban character. Excessive height can have intrusive effects on the immediate and wider area, altering the established skyline, adversely affecting attractive local views, buildings of townscape importance and important landmarks. The established scale and character of the townscape will normally provide a guide for the bulk and scale of new development, together with conformity to established street patterns, facades, activities, and uses. The scale, height and bulk of new development should relate satisfactorily to its surroundings.
- 4.8 Haringey adopts the definition of tall buildings as “those which are substantially taller than their neighbours and/or those which have a significant impact on the skyline, of 10 storeys and over”.
- 4.9 The Council considers that the two areas, Haringey Heartlands and Tottenham Hale, are the most suitable for tall buildings, because they are close to major transport interchanges and have been designated in the London Plan as an Opportunity Area (Tottenham Hale) and an Area for Intensification (Haringey Heartlands/Wood Green). The precise location of tall buildings will be determined within the context of the relevant development framework, and the design of the tall building considered in the light of CABE/English Heritage ‘Guidance on Tall Buildings’.

## **Preferred Policy**

### **Strategic Policy 7 – Design**

The Council will require development to be of high quality design. Poorly designed schemes will be refused. Developments should:

- Be of high design quality to ensure attractive, durable, and adaptable

development;

- Relate satisfactorily to the spatial and visual character of the site and the surrounding area / street scene;
- Create or enhance high quality public realm;
- Promote inclusive design that is accessible to all users;
- Incorporate solutions to reduce crime and the fear of crime; and
- Maximise energy efficiency, through methods of passive solar design, natural ventilation, use of vegetation on buildings, and sustainable design and construction.

## Discussion of Option and Justification

4.10 The preferred option recognises good design goes beyond building design to include public realm, energy efficiency measures, noise and light pollution and sustainable construction, which offer potential for alternative uses over their lifetime. This meets London Plan requirements for sustainable residential quality. New development schemes can provide an opportunity to shape places by improving the quality of buildings and the street environment and through this improve the experience of the borough for residents and visitors. Haringey will therefore insist on high quality design throughout the borough.

4.11 The Issues and Options consultation identified that the majority of residents supported quality in new design, specifically that developments should improve the character and quality of an area. This is recognised and supported by the London Plan.

4.12 The preferred option performs well against SA Objective 12 (townscape) and indirectly to SA Objective 1 (reduce crime), 5 (community cohesion), 10 (town centres), 13 (landscape), 16 (climate change and reduction in flood risk), 18 (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) and 19 (sustainable use of resources).

## Alternative Option

It is considered there is no alternative to good design, having regard to design principles set out in the London Plan.

*This option considers that there is no alternative to good design and having regard to the design principles as set out in the London Plan. The London Plan promotes good design and its design principles meet SA objectives 3 (health) and 6 (access for all users).*

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## Conservation

- 4.13 Haringey has 29 Conservation Areas and four Article 4 Direction Areas; (Tower Gardens, Noel Park, Rookfield Estate and Peabody Cottages). It has two English Heritage Registered Historic Parks: Finsbury Park and Alexandra Palace Park, as well as 27 Local Historic Parks. It has 462 Statutory Listed Buildings and 1150 Locally Listed Buildings. The borough's built heritage includes locally distinctive landmarks that create a sense of place and stability. Its built form is made up of a series of largely residential communities, each with their own unique identity that has been developed around the distinctive characteristics of the borough's historic town centres, namely Highgate, Muswell Hill, Tottenham, Wood Green, Green Lanes, Hornsey and Crouch End. Some of these settlements in pre-industrial times were small country villages, now interwoven with or replaced by later development, much of it from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, including industrial, commercial, and public buildings. The surrounding residential areas typically comprise a mixture of large detached, semi-detached and terraced housing laid out in a traditional perimeter block form with frontages facing the street and with private rear gardens. Whilst terraced houses are designed in a variety of styles according to the date of construction, they are mainly of two or three storeys high, and typically they create a visually coherent uniform street scene appearance and a distinctive suburban character.
- 4.14 Twentieth Century development has consisted mainly of public and private housing estates on remaining farmland. The names of these developments often reflect their earlier history and topography, for example, Rookfield, Broadwater Farm and White Hart Lane. Areas to the east, of the main railway line that bisects the borough, tend to be of a more sprawling development made up of tightly packed streets of mainly twentieth century smaller terraced houses with smaller gardens. The exception is Tottenham High Road, a historic corridor that still retains many fine Georgian and Victorian properties.

### Strategic and Local Views

- 4.15 In Haringey, strategic views of St. Paul's Cathedral and the City from Alexandra Palace are protected designated views under the category of London Panoramas. Within London panoramas, proposed developments should fit within the prevailing pattern of buildings and spaces and, should not detract from the panorama as a whole. Haringey has sought to take account of this strategic view and promotes the protection of the viewing corridor (the direct view from Alexandra Palace to St. Paul Cathedral), wider setting (the area immediately surrounding the viewing corridor affecting its setting) mid-ground (this covers a high ridge area where any development higher may be visible from the viewpoint) and foreground (the open

landscape with sloping park), against the impact of development proposals which fall within the boundaries of the above zones.

4.16 However, it is not only strategic views that the Council wants to protect. There are many local views, which provide context, landmarks, townscapes and landscapes of historic interest within the borough. These will be identified and included in a schedule of local views in the forthcoming Conservation SPD.

## Preferred Policy

### Strategic Policy 8 – Conservation

In facilitating urban regeneration and fostering a high quality built environment the Council will give priority to:

- Protecting buildings of architectural or historic interest and their settings;
- Preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas;
- Promoting the conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of the borough, including historic parks and gardens and their interpretation and presentation; and
- Protecting strategic views from Alexandra Palace to St. Paul’s Cathedral and key local views.

## Discussion of Option and Justification

4.17 The preferred option continues the current policy approach to the preservation of conservation areas and listed buildings. To discontinue this approach would cause detriment to the local identity and borough distinctiveness.

4.18 The Council has a statutory duty to protect buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest. These buildings are important for the positive contribution they make to the character of an area. They are appreciated and valued by the public as established and tangible evidence of the past, providing a sense of permanence and belonging and a historic perspective with which to approach today’s development opportunities. The retention and conservation of these buildings is therefore important and a wide range of suitable and viable uses should be considered to secure their future.

4.19 The preferred option performs well against SA Objective 12 (townscape) and indirectly to SA Objective 1 (reduce crime), 5 (community cohesion), 10 (town centres), 13 (landscape), 16 (climate change and reduction in flood risk), 18 (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) and 19 (sustainable use of resources).

## Alternative Options

Option 1 takes a blanket approach to the historic environment and promises to "preserve" and "enhance".

*This approach assumes that all buildings should be protected from development and does not appreciate how good design can enhance an historic building.*

Option 2 takes a more flexible approach to the use and re-use of historic areas and buildings in the identified areas of change.

*This option provides a selective approach and only at key sites and therefore was rejected as it does not support principles of good design or respect the borough's historic environment.*

4.20 The above options, which take a more flexible approach to the use and re-use of historic areas and buildings, may result in adverse impacts on townscape (SA Objective 12) and aesthetics. Although the re-use of buildings for other uses, such as housing may have social benefits (SA objective 4 – housing), changes to conservation areas or buildings could have adverse effects on the character of the area if the design does not integrate well with local or historic heritage.

## Green Infrastructure

4.21 Parks and open spaces are of great importance to Haringey in terms of sport, recreation and play, biodiversity, culture, regeneration, the economy and in breaking up built up areas.

4.22 The London Plan identifies the following policies particularly relevant to Haringey:

- Policy 3D.8 Realising the value of open space and green infrastructure makes clear the open space network should be treated as an integrated system which provides a "green infrastructure" containing many uses and performs a range of functions that make a positive contribution to the wider London network.
- Policy 3D.9 Green Belt should be maintained and protected with the general presumption against inappropriate development, unless special circumstances dictate otherwise.

- Policy 3D.10 Metropolitan Open Land should be given the same level of protection as green belt land and protected from inappropriate development.
- Policy 3D.14 Biodiversity and nature conservation ensures a proactive approach to the protection, promotion and management of biodiversity. This is in support of the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy Connecting with London's Nature which sets out key objectives for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity features in London. The Haringey Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), (2002) aims to conserve, enrich and celebrate the wildlife in Haringey through informing local people and involving more people in its enjoyment and conservation and where possible increase the population of key species and habitats, such as ancient woodland.

### **Local Considerations**

- 4.23 Haringey has 600 acres (2.4km<sup>2</sup>) of parks, recreation grounds and open spaces which make up more than 25% of the total borough area. The borough boasts many different types of open spaces which promotes health and social well-being of borough residents.
- 4.24 There are many open spaces of value within the borough which contribute to its historic context and character. Of particular significance is Alexandra Park and Palace, which is identified as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) because of its designation as an historic park and garden and its contribution to London's skyline, offering strategic views of the building beyond the borough boundary and providing a context for the borough within Greater London.
- 4.25 Green belt has a structural role to play and therefore the strongest levels of protection. It is of national and regional importance and its aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. MOL is defined as green belt which is specific to London in that it contributes to the physical structure of London's landscape and helps shape the pattern of development so that it occurs in suitable locations.
- 4.26 Equally important are Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), which have differing levels of protection set by National and European legislation. These sites support a range of flora and fauna considered to be of ecological value. Sites of national importance within the borough include Lee Valley Regional Park, which is designated as a priority area for the protection of Birds<sup>6</sup> and Highgate Woods, one of only eight green heritage sites in London. Other sites of ecological value include green corridors, which mainly comprise operational railway land.

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<sup>6</sup> Lee Valley Regional Plan (2000) and Lee Valley Biodiversity Action Plan, (2000)

4.27 Open spaces of local importance in the borough can include parks, allotments, woodlands, sports facilities, children's play areas (both formal and informal), back gardens and amenity spaces and squares. Local open spaces form part of the wider network of open spaces which are integral and vital to the spatial character of the borough and to residents' quality of life. The borough has achieved Green Flag Status for nine of its parks, which is the highest awarded to any London borough, which exemplifies areas of open space of outstanding quality.

4.28 The Council carried out an open spaces assessment of all its open spaces, in 2005 (updated in 2008). The findings of the study concluded that Haringey has overall provision for 1.7ha of open space per 1,000 population. This is comparable to levels of provision in neighbouring boroughs. However, the study also concluded where open space deficiencies existed, they were related to accessibility and quality.

4.29 However it's not just green spaces that contribute to the borough's open space network but also waterways, which are significant in that river corridors tend to be the only remaining areas of land linking open spaces throughout London. In the borough the two most important waterways are River Lee (as it flows through the Lee Valley) and the Moselle Brooke, which runs through the Heartlands/Wood Green opportunity area. These environmental assets are important in that they promote linkages to the East London Green Grid and London's Blue Ribbon Network.

4.30 The Council's policy approach is one of protection, enhancement and improvements to its existing green infrastructure.

### **Preferred Policy**

#### **Strategic Policy 9 - Green Infrastructure**

The Council will safeguard existing open spaces from development and create new open spaces in areas of deficiency to promote greater opportunities for residents' health and well-being through the:

- Implementation of the borough's green infrastructure projects;
- Protection of the borough's Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt from inappropriate development;
- Protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest at metropolitan, borough and local levels from development, unless it can be demonstrated that such developments will not adversely affect the nature conservation value of the site and through appropriate mitigation measures would lesson the impact of the development;
- Provision of amenity open spaces in all new developments; and
- Contribution of new developments to wildlife and ecological habitats.

*For the purposes of this policy Haringey's Green Infrastructure network is defined as Green Belts, Metropolitan Open Land, woodlands, sites of nature conservation and biodiversity importance, waterways and tributaries, parks, allotments, amenity spaces and civic squares.*

## **Discussion of Option and Justification**

4.31 The preferred option meets national and London Plan requirements to safeguard and enhance the environment. This is consistent with the existing UDP approach.

4.32 The preferred option is the most sustainable option because it not only safeguards existing open spaces from development but also promotes enhancements to the green infrastructure network. This option performs well against social objectives: SA Objective 3 (health) and 6 (access to amenity), 11 (biodiversity), 12 (townscape and cultural heritage), 13 (landscape), 14 (water resources), 16 (climate change and reduction of flood risk) and 20 (sustainable modes of transport).

## **Alternative Options**

Option 1 seeks to protect and enhance all existing open spaces within the borough and provide contributions to the borough's green infrastructure in areas of open space deficiency.

*Option 1 has a more limited impact on SA Objectives as it only proposes contributions to green infrastructure in areas of open space deficiency. This approach seeks to address all open space deficiencies across the borough by open space typology. This is unrealistic and does not consider the need to balance provision of open spaces with other borough targets such as housing and jobs and it is not viable in that it does not consider the high level of resources required to make this possible and therefore was rejected.*

Option 2 protects the best quality open spaces and allows poorer quality open spaces (not in areas of deficiency) to be redeveloped to alternative uses.

*This approach appears to "score" open spaces according to quality which does not take on board the value of green infrastructure to the local community.*