

Central Leaside

Joint Area Action Plan



A Joint Plan for Enfield's Local Development Framework and Haringey's Local Development Framework
Central Leaside AAP - Issues and Options Report
February 2008

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Foreword

This document marks the start of ambitious plans to breathe new life into the Central Leaside Area, which lies on the borders of Enfield and Haringey, at the heart of the Upper Lea Valley. Lying mainly within Enfield and also including parts of Haringey, the area has suffered from the general decline in traditional industry and a step change is now needed to halt this trend and bring long term and sustainable regeneration.

This will be a long term regeneration process, which needs careful planning to make sure all the necessary infrastructure is in place to accommodate new businesses and new residents, as well as improving the well being and prosperity of existing communities. That is why our two boroughs have taken a bold step of working together to prepare an Area Action Plan as part of our Local Development Frameworks.

We are very pleased to introduce the first stage of the Central Leaside Area Action Plan, the Issues and Options Report. The report identifies relevant issues to be addressed and alternative actions that could be taken. We now seek your views on the issues, opportunities and options for the Central Leaside area today, to help us decide what actions should be taken.

We would urge everyone who is interested in planning the future Central Leaside to send us your views now, and to continue to contribute to this new plan as it is prepared.



Handwritten signature of Terence Neville in black ink.

Handwritten signature of Kaushika Amin in black ink.

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Cabinet Member for Environment and
Street Scene
London Borough of Enfield

Councillor Kaushika Amin
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London Borough of Haringey

February 2008

1 Introduction

1.1 Introducing Central Leaside

- 1.1.1** Central Leaside is the collective name given to the strategic employment area that lies on the borders of Enfield and Haringey. It extends from Pickett's Lock in the north to North East Tottenham / Northumberland Park in the south (see Figure 1.3 'Central Leaside AAP area').
- 1.1.2** Central Leaside is at a crossroads, literally. It is in a key location in North London where the North Circular crosses Meridian Way and the Lee Valley Rail Line. You can get easily to the major growth areas of the City, Stratford, the Olympics site, Stansted and Cambridge (see Figure 1.1 'Location of Central Leaside AAP area'). It is part of the Upper Lee Valley, which is an Opportunity Area in the London Plan. The growing centre of Tottenham Hale lies immediately to the south and Brimsdown - London's second largest concentration of employment land - lies to the north. Central Leaside itself is strategically important because of its large cluster of industrial estates, its big shops such as IKEA and Tesco, and its leisure and recreational assets such as the national athletics centre at Pickett's Lock, and the Lee Valley Regional Park. A great many people live nearby, particularly in the communities to the west.
- 1.1.3** But at the moment Central Leaside is much less than the sum of its parts. Many of the employment areas are not attractive to look at, even by the standards of industrial areas. Dominated by a waste incinerator station and elevated highway, it consists of a series of disjointed land parcels containing retail units, industrial areas and vacant land. Some of the industrial areas suffer from outdated industrial stock, poor infrastructure, access and environmental quality. The very transport routes that make the area accessible also slice it into a series of poorly connected segments. The employment areas have no overall real "sense of place".
- 1.1.4** Not so long ago Central Leaside, along with the rest of the Upper Lee Valley, was an innovative area, spawning inventions that were employed in the growing consumer market of the early 20th century. Its substantial industrial estates, covering over 130 hectares, are a legacy of that era of consumer-oriented manufacturing and are still an important source of jobs for the sub-region. However, for over 30 years, the trend has been away from manufacturing and towards service and distribution. Some industrial production remains and thrives, the new Coca Cola plant on the Eley Estate is a good example of investment that has been attracted to the area as a result of the positive interventions that have taken place. Mostly, however, the old discarded shells of the former manufacturing units provide cheap homes for service and distribution uses and automotive activities, a visible reminder of the erosion of the former industrial base. Opportunities do exist to capitalise on the continued importance of high value-added niche manufacturing and the growing role of the food and drink and logistics sectors, however significant investment would be required to attract such employers.

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Figure 1.1 Location of Central Leaside AAP area

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- 1.1.5** The social and economic changes of the last 30 years are also reflected in other problems in the wider area including low average household income and educational achievement, under-investment in the housing and employment stock, and deterioration and shrinkage in local shopping streets as a result of changing shopping patterns and relatively low spending power. The overwhelming impression is that Central Leaside has drifted; it has adapted to economic change to some extent, but has not yet found a new role. If the existing economies and communities are to be revitalised, a step change is now needed.
- 1.1.6** Recently however, the North London Strategic Alliance, which includes the London Boroughs of Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest, produced a Vision for the Upper Lee Valley as North London's waterside. This looks at the long-term potential of the valley to raise its performance in every way and make much more of its assets: its good connections, growth potential, housing capacity and the Lee Valley Park. Central Leaside is in a crucial position to help achieve this vision.
- 1.1.7** So what role should Central Leaside have in the future? How might it fit into the golden triangle of growth from London to Cambridge and the south Midlands? Clearly, industry will continue to play an important part. The London Plan recognises this, particularly for businesses with less environmentally demanding requirements. But that cannot be the end of the story. There are unparalleled opportunities here to improve the profile and image of the area, to broaden the range of businesses, jobs and homes, and to improve the public transport connections. Higher value activities with more dense employment could be encouraged. New residential communities could be developed, perhaps as part of mixed use developments, to help meet housing needs. Environmental issues, such as climate change and the flood plain, will need to be taken into account, and there are opportunities to promote exemplary sustainable, eco-friendly new developments. A decision also needs to be made as to whether Central Leaside should accommodate much needed waste facilities and technologies for north London.
- 1.1.8** So Central Leaside is at a crossroads, not just physically, but in terms of its future direction. To encourage beneficial change throughout the area, the London Boroughs of Enfield and Haringey have agreed jointly to develop an Area Action Plan. This is a vital piece of collaborative working between the two boroughs and is one of two Area Action Plans being developed for the Upper Lee Valley, the other being North East Enfield. When it is finally adopted, the Area Action Plan will be a statutory planning document, and part of both councils' local development frameworks. The plan will set the framework for the long-term future of the area and will help unlock its potential. There is a huge opportunity for a step change which would help regenerate Central Leaside, raise the profile of the area, promote sustained economic growth and provide for a healthy, balanced and sustainable community.
- 1.1.9** The report you are reading, the Issues and Options Report, is the first key stage towards producing the Area Action Plan. It looks at the decisions that need to be taken to steer the area in a new direction. Your views are important because they will help us to develop the plan in more detail. We hope you find time to look at the questions and let us know what you think about the possible options for change.

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Figure 1.2 Central Leaside, from the air (looking north)

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1.2 Central Leaside's Choices

- 1.2.1** The Area Action Plan for Central Leaside is set within a broader policy context, which includes the London Plan, the emerging Core Strategy for Enfield and the Haringey UDP, together with the Area Action Plan for North East Enfield. Both Enfield's emerging Core Strategy and Haringey's UDP have a series of strategic objectives which are taken into account in this report. There is also a non-statutory Plan for the Lee Valley Regional Park, a new Master Plan for Tottenham Hale and the neighbouring borough of Waltham Forest is also working on regeneration plans for nearby Blackhorse Road. You can read further about the policy context in the Appendix to this report and in the Baseline Study. These planning documents all recognise the opportunities presented by the study area.
- 1.2.2** One of the most important functions of the area is as a place where people work. There is a lot of employment land (see Figure 1.4 'Land Uses in the AAP area'). This is a very special feature of the area and the London Plan recognises this by designating part of Central Leaside as a Strategic Employment Location. But planning for the future of Central Leaside is not just about industrial land and floorspace. The draft vision for the Upper Lee Valley recognises that there are many other matters in need of improvement, including recreation, transport, the green environment, housing, skill levels, and the quality of life generally.
- 1.2.3** There are big decisions that need to be taken about the area. These relate to the quality of the environment, the balance between industry and other uses, the types of business that might grow here, how many new homes should be accommodated, where and what type of education, health, retail and recreational facilities should be provided, and how the area might be transformed to include a richer mix of uses, a better walking environment and better public transport.
- 1.2.4** Central Leaside, for all its large buildings and industrial estates, is not a typical urban environment. There are few routes that could genuinely be called attractive urban streets. The image is of a series of separate pieces of land with industrial estates and sheds. If you travel through the area, on the North Circular Road or Meridian Way, or on the rail lines, that is what you see; the residential communities are quite hidden. It is often difficult or unpleasant to get from one part of Central Leaside to the other except by motor vehicle. This report asks questions about whether we should start re-casting the character of the area to turn it into a more people-friendly place.

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Figure 1.3 Central Leaside AAP area

1 Introduction

- 1.2.5** Much of the industrial base of Central Leaside is geared towards storage and distribution, large and small, together with service industries, automotive supply and repair and some manufacturing. Typically, these operate out of large sheds or other industrial estate premises. Indeed, the London Plan regards Central Leaside as a location for industry that is not environmentally sensitive. One option would be to accept that this is the essential purpose of Central Leaside. There are certainly some strong factors that point in that direction: the good connections for freight, the links to the strategic road network and local markets, the existing character of the area and the ability to operate industry without harming residential living conditions. Some industrial estates could remain as they are, others might require investment to modernise in order to attract employers that provide more jobs. Others may be suitable locations for waste facilities or green industries. Or could there be a different approach to parts of Central Leaside? There is, for instance, much unused and underused land in the area. So one alternative approach would be to plan for changes in the industrial base to consider whether parts of Central Leaside can be turned into more of a mixed community of businesses and homes, and to attract higher value businesses. Section 2 looks at the options for employment in Central Leaside.
- 1.2.6** For an area which is seen as industrial, Central Leaside contains a surprising number of homes - more than 4,500 people live on the fringes of employment land within the study area and there are large areas of established residential communities to the west (see Figure 1.4 'Land Uses in the AAP area'). Houses tend to be medium sized and low-rise terraces, which are a good housing resource although they no doubt could benefit from improvements, including improved energy conservation. But there is a great need for more housing and both Haringey and Enfield have to make provision for a lot more homes within their areas. Between 2007/08 and 2016/17 the London Plan requires a minimum of 3,950 new homes to be provided in Enfield and 6,800 in Haringey, based on existing housing capacity estimates. But more could be accommodated in Central Leaside, which has brownfield land as well as areas that might be redeveloped.
- 1.2.7** However, to make Central Leaside a place where people might want to live, a great many things need to be improved – transport, walking connections, green space and access to community facilities and local shops. New homes can only come in as part of an overall package to include all these things, and they must be a part of an overall strategy to change the character and image of the area. If we are to accommodate more housing in Central Leaside, we need to decide how much, whether we want housing to be built as part of a mix of uses, what the mix should be, what type of housing we want and where it should be built. At present, shopping is dominated by the “big box” retail units and traditional street-based shopping has suffered. Is this an inevitable trend or should more be done to encourage the return of sustainable, walkable shopping streets? The retail units have big car parks; how could this land be used more efficiently? And communities need good health and education facilities, particularly if families are to be encouraged into the area. To achieve this transformation, a lot would need to be done, and the impacts on existing local communities and shopping areas would need to be considered. Section 3 looks at the options for new homes and all the facilities required to support new communities.

1 Introduction

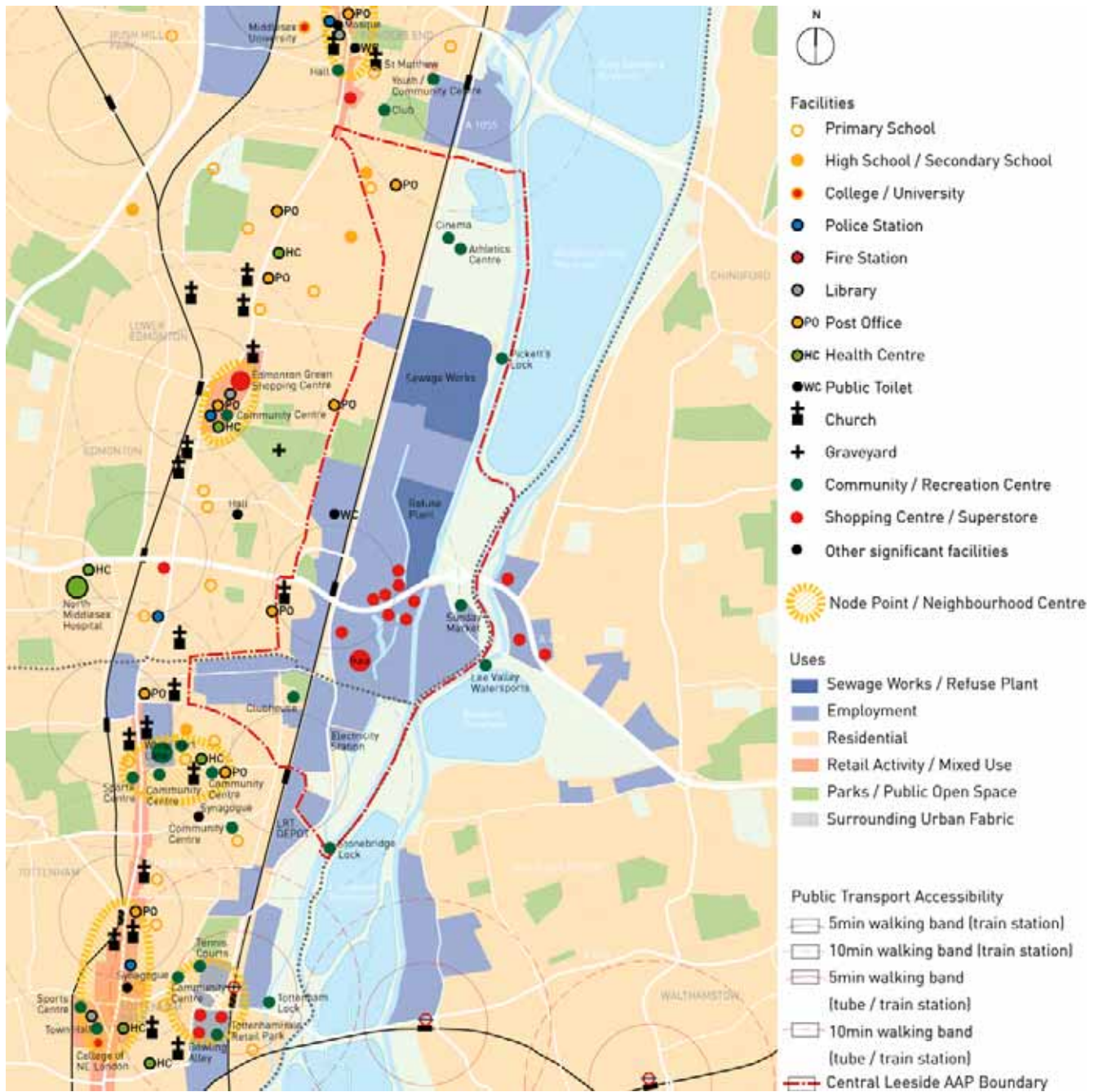


Figure 1.4 Land Uses in the AAP area

1 Introduction

- 1.2.8** One advantage of fostering a more urban, mixed use character is that a greater number of people can support better public transport. The area is currently dominated by cars and lorries. The encouragement to walk or use public transport needs to be built into the design of new development. Section 4 of this report looks at the improvements that might be made in public transport, for example by moving Angel Road station to a more reachable location and by improving east-west bus routes. How can the proposals for improved rail connections between London and Stansted be used to greatest benefit? What would be the implications of moving Angel Road station for the existing nearby stations at Northumberland Park and Ponders End?
- 1.2.9** The Lee Valley Regional Park is a unique asset on Central Leaside's doorstep, with its associated waterways, reservoirs and green space. But historically, manufacturing industries required the waterways for freight transport and the recreational or aesthetic value of the reservoirs – as London's water supply - was not considered. If the area is to be transformed, the Lee Valley Regional Park could provide the centrepiece for new emerging business and residential communities and access to it from surrounding residential communities in Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest could be opened up. This is important for these communities who currently suffer from a shortage of public open space and from difficulties accessing the Regional Park either because the routes are unpleasant or because they are blocked by major roads, railway lines or swathes of industrial land. Section 5 looks at the options for open spaces and the image and identity of Central Leaside.
- 1.2.10** The potential to provide more housing, to broaden the employment and skills base, to attract higher value businesses, to make Central Leaside more sustainable, to improve the area's environment and image, all require a change in the way we regard the area and the way we think about the area's brownfield land and employment sites. Given Central Leaside's inclusion within the Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Area in the London Plan, "do nothing" is not an option. This is supported by its recognition in Enfield's emerging Core Strategy and Haringey's Sustainable Communities Strategy. However, there are choices about the type of intervention required and where to focus it; some sites will need to be retained or improved in order to support continued future employment use. However, on other sites, an option is to be much more proactive about encouraging mixed-use development. But which sites should be considered for such development, and which areas should stay as conventional industrial sites?
- 1.2.11** In order to develop a clear vision for Central Leaside, it is suggested here that there are three distinct sub-areas (see Figure 1.5 'Opportunity Areas') with different characteristics and opportunities for change which are considered in detail in sections 6 to 8.

How to get involved

Enfield Council has an on-line consultation system, which you can use to comment on this document. On-line consultation is the easiest and most convenient way to make comments on the Central Leaside Area Action Plan. To view the document and submit your comments please use the following link:

<http://consultation.limehouse.co.uk/enfield>

You may also make your comments in writing and send them to:

The Planning Policy Team
London Borough of Enfield
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The Planning Policy Team
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London
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Tel: 020 8379 5181
Fax: 020 8379 3887

or email: ldf@enfield.gov.uk

or email: claaap@haringey.gov.uk

Please also remember to complete and return the equal opportunities monitoring form, which can be found on Enfield's website.

The closing date for comments is Friday 4th April 2008

Note on the Text

All references to the DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) include its previous titles (ODPM, DTLR, DETR) and all policy statements / guidance published under those banners.

Lee or Lea?

Historically, the river has been called the "Lea", "Lee" or "Ley". The "Ley" spelling is seen in medieval documents but subsequently passed from common usage. Currently, "Lea" and "Lee" are the generally accepted spellings, with "Lea" used in reference to the original natural river and "Lee" referring to the canalised parts, such as the Lee Navigation. However, both spellings are often used. For the purposes of consistency and to avoid confusion, this report uses the spelling "Lee" when referring to the waterways in the area.

Note on the Mapping

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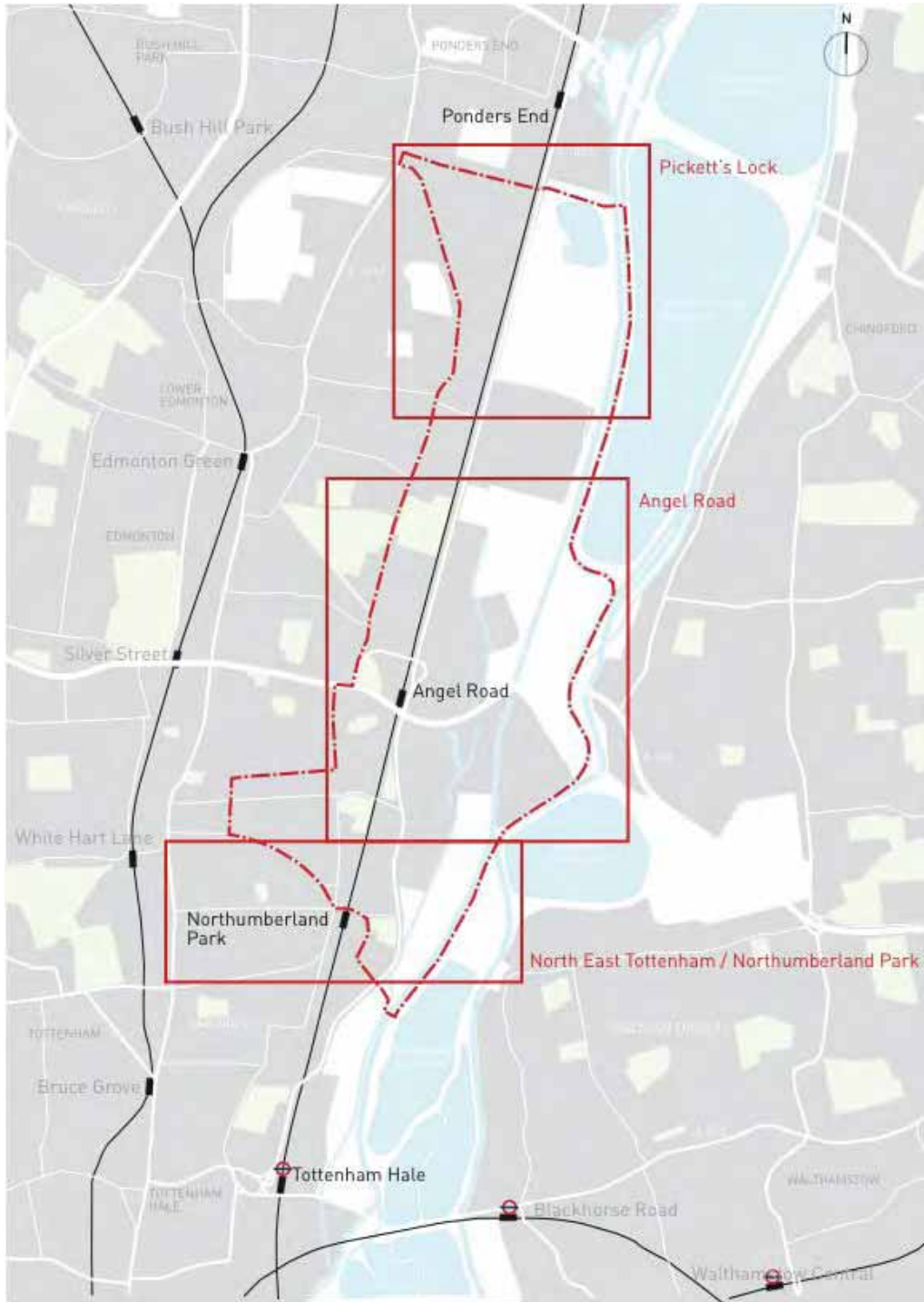


Figure 1.5 Opportunity Areas

1 Introduction

Angel Road

1.2.12 If pro-active mixed use development were to take place, this report suggests that it would make most sense to promote it in the area around IKEA and Tesco (the 'Angel Road' area) in Enfield, where retail development has already compromised the integrity of the strategic employment land and there are surrounding underused and vacant employment sites. There is already substantial developer interest in these sites, which suggests that there is market interest. Do you agree that this could be a location for any mixed use development? If so, section 6 considers how extensive this change could be, whether other adjoining sites north and south of the north circular could be included and if so, which.

North East Tottenham/Northumberland Park

1.2.13 This area lies in Haringey to the immediate south of the Angel Road area with mostly employment areas and open spaces (see section 7). Given the likely impact of development pressures that could occur in the Angel Road area, how should North East Tottenham/Northumberland Park respond? Should it broadly retain its existing mix of employment and residential land or seek to manage change in a more pro-active way? Some industrial estates might require investment to modernise in order to attract employers that provide more jobs. What type of employment uses will provide the best options for modernisation and intensification? Is the mixed use with residential an option in parts of North East Tottenham/Northumberland Park area? How can we improve life and infrastructure for existing communities in the surrounding residential areas?

Pickett's Lock

1.2.14 Another area of opportunity is around Pickett's Lock at the northern tip of Central Leaside in Enfield (see section 8). This is one of the few easy points of access to the Lee Valley Park and its waterways, the adjacent land is home to a national athletics centre, golf course and cinema complex. But there are important choices to be made about how this area can be made to sit more comfortably adjacent to strategic employment land, how we can make the most of the links with Lee Valley Park, and how we can improve life for existing communities in the vicinity.

Question 1

Sections 6-8 look at each of these sub-areas in turn. Do you believe this is the best approach for Central Leaside? Are these suggested key issues and choices to be made the right ones for each area? Can you suggest any others?

1.2.15 This report presents the issues and options for all these subjects and opportunity areas. It has been informed by consultation with stakeholders (see appendix D). There are clearly some fundamental decisions to be made about the balance between employment and housing, the fostering of a more urban character, and the sort of employment land we need to provide and protect. Once these fundamental decisions are made, the Area Action Plan will provide the springboard for a number of supplementary planning documents which will explain in more detail how parts of the area should be developed.

This document has been produced by Urban Initiatives for Enfield Council and Haringey Council.

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February 2008