

Haringey Council Site Allocations DPD Consultation Document

Friends of the Parkland Walk response – Sites HG1 and HG3

Friends of the Parkland Walk urges Haringey Council to remove both HG1 and HG3 from the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) for the following reasons:

Biodiversity and amenity

- Listing HG1 and HG3 in the Site Allocations DPD would help smooth the way for property development which would detract from the amenity of the Parkland Walk as it is at the moment, adversely affecting the Ecological Corridor, and also detracting from the open space at Highgate Station.
- The design principles of the Site Allocations for both HG1 and HG3 feature opening up the former railway tunnels for pedestrian/cycle use. These have been colonised by bats. It has been established that bats roost in the tunnels. The pinnacle of achievement in terms of local biodiversity projects is the Highgate Tunnels Bat Project. The HG1 and HG3 proposals threaten it. Bats have statutory protection. Therefore the HG1 and HG3 cases should be removed from Haringey Council's Site Allocations DPD.
- Converting even one of the pairs of tunnels would involve lighting it, dealing with the surface and drainage, and protecting it from vandalism. It would become noisier and lighter, and would interfere with the seclusion deliberately created for the bat roosting habitat.

Crime

- Tunnels are equivalent to subways. These have been problematic, and unsafe. They are not popular. People feel trapped and very insecure. Many road junctions had them included in the 1960s and 70s, but most have since been abandoned and filled (e.g. Archway). The southern tunnel here is over 100m long, and the northern more than 300m.

MOL

- The HG1 and HG3 parts of the Site Allocations DPD Consultation Document conflict with the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) designation of the Parkland Walk and Former Highgate Rail Station. MOL is an important element in the urban mosaic and should be safeguarded in perpetuity from inappropriate development. Developers will always be attracted to MOL as it represents a hole in the urban fabric to spread into. Haringey Council's planning policy on MOL should be to defend it from all inappropriate development, in perpetuity. The HG3 proposal in the Site Allocations document is therefore unsound as it identifies land as MOL (HG3), but presents the designation as just one of a platter of implementation considerations. Haringey Council should be urged to keep safeguarding MOL.

Change to type of cycle route

- The former track-bed of the Parkland Walk is a shared use path with priority for pedestrians. It is not a cycleway. Making the proposed section into a cycleway would be incompatible with the amenity use and conflicting with the established pedestrian priority.

Extending the Parkland Walk

- The design principle in HG1 suggests that the two detached parts of the Parkland Walk could be linked up. In fact that is not practicable as there is a school (St James' Primary) and a home for the elderly (Cranwood) built across the ribbon of railway land where the former Cranley Gardens Station had stood. That is therefore not a good reason for specifying HG1 in the Site Allocations DPD.

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