

**PINKHAM WAY SITE ALLOCATION**

**OUTLINE OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

**on behalf of**

**Pinkham Way Alliance**

**by**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**Earlier this year I was asked by the Pinkham Way Alliance to carry out a review of potential future uses for the Pinkham Way site.**

**The central purpose of this initial study was to examine and present potential solutions that would facilitate and empower the local communities to successfully design and control their own environment.**

**Clearly from past evidence of planning failures in the UK and elsewhere, places and communities decline and fail when they do not interrogate their past and present, or re-assess all of their resources and future prospects.**

**Therefore, a crucial part of this initial process was to consult with representatives of the local community many of whose families have lived in the area for multiple generations in order to harness the collective imagination and channel this into any future plans for the area.**

**It should be noted that there is a strong sense of community in the areas surrounding the site. These are historically places of anchorage where people feel "at home", where there is a sense of stability, tradition and distinctiveness.**

**The key drivers highlighted by the community concerning any proposed future use for the Pinkham Way site are as follows:-**

- To minimise any environmental and ecological impact on the SINC (designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, Grade 1 Borough Importance)**
- To minimise any traffic generation to the site and thus avoid any further environmental pollution hazards for residents living in the area**
- To create positive links to the site from the adjoining areas and satisfy community needs**

**OPTION 1- SINC Grade 1 incorporating Natural Woodland, Grassland and Wetlands**

**The high Bio-Diversity of the site is recognised and reflected in its status as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, Grade 1 Borough Importance.**

**In general the site is an important part of a larger ecological complex and corridor including Hollickwood Park, Muswell Hill Golf Course, Tunnel Gardens and Bluebell Wood, Albert Road Rec and Rhodes Avenue Spinney.**

**The site has been found to have a high botanical diversity with over 100 different species.**

**The site is also extremely rich in wildlife and its Ecological value is currently being appraised in detail by an independent consultant whose findings will be published later this year.**

**Approximately 50% - 60% of the site area is Woodland. One of the Council's objectives is to increase Woodland in the Borough.**

**Given this context OPTION 1 builds on the existing maturity of the site regarding its importance in terms of the Nature Conservation of its flora and fauna.**

**Within the existing framework of the site's topography and natural features, informal pathways / cycle paths would be knitted into the contours of the land.**

**The stream which flows beneath the site could be de-culverted (such as has been realised at the River Moselle in Lordship Rec) and utilised to help create a Wetlands area in an appropriate location. The water environment has potential Biodiversity value with the retention, enhancement and creation of flora and fauna along water frontages.**

**Both rivers and wasteland are London Biodiversity Partnership priority habitats and the water course running in a culvert beneath the site is highlighted in the London Rivers Action Plan for de-culverting.**

**I understand that it is also the Council's policy to seek to restore and enhance natural elements of river environments by de-culverting and/or naturalisation.**

## **OPTION 2 – SINC Grade 1 with Eco-Educational Centre and Nature Reserve**

**Given the existing status of the Pinkham Way site as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, Grade 1, the feedback from the community centres on any potential development as a Nature Reserve where ancillary and supporting uses could be integrated into the existing eco-systems with a "light touch".**

**It is felt that these functions would be complementary to the existing conditions on the site whilst strengthening the connective tissue of land uses to the adjacent communities.**

**The following ancillary uses were proposed:-**

- **Education Centre for schools**
- **Visitors Centre**
- **Eco Training Centre by London Wildlife Trust**
- **Restaurant / Coffee Shop**
- **Food production by local growers**
- **Orchards**
- **Kew Gardens seed bank**
- **Allotments**
- **Farmers market**
- **Short lease studio accommodation for start-up, creative businesses**
- **RSPB, RHS and LWT facilities**
- **Prince of Wales Trust centre**
- **Wheelchair routes, pedestrian and cycle paths**

**It is unanimously agreed that the site could be positively utilised to create a place of possibility and stimulation – where people can self-improve, learn and reflect – from the youngest member of society to the oldest – a place of inspiration.**

**The community believes that such a place would facilitate schools to connect with the local community in multiple ways across all demographics to utilise their talents and express their potential which can be harnessed and promoted for the common good.**

**Such a solution would create a place where myriad, high quality learning opportunities, both formal and informal, would offer a forward looking, sustainable curriculum for the long-term benefit of the communities it serves.**

### **OPTION 3 - SINC Grade 1 with NATURE RESERVE with Eco-Educational Centre and Eco-Village**

The Community recognise that there are practical issues at stake in order to make such a proposal for a Nature Reserve viable and support the SINC.

Consequently the representatives of the community have come up with an alternative proposal which involves the use of the existing Hollickwood Park to compensate and support the Nature Reserve.

This proposal would involve the transformation and development of Hollickwood Park into a residential Eco-Village as an extension and enhancement of the existing community.

The overall benefits of this proposal would be numerous as identified by the community as follows:-

- Provides a good overall balance of built development / open space that will benefit the community
- Provides long-term, sustainable funding for the Nature Reserve / SINC Grade 1 Borough Importance
- Provides a solution to the need for housing in the area
- Enhances the existing connections to the site and beyond to the Friern Barnet Retail Park and Alexandra Palace
- Creates the potential for new connections to the site and to the Friern Barnet Retail Park from Bounds Green (including that part of Bounds Green that has been identified as being deficient in open space)
- Provides opportunities for self-policing and management of the Nature Reserve

It is envisaged that the residential development would comprise and integrate a rich mix of unit sizes from studio flats to 5 bed units including affordable housing. This Eco-Village would incorporate sustainable homes designed to high standards of energy performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

Each of the options suggested above and illustrated on the attached schematic drawings would I believe comply with the current aims of Government.

The coming together of Town & Country Planning (through the lens of spatial planning and land-use objectives) and National Environment Planning (through the lens of the eco-system approach) could produce an integrated and sustainable planning solution to meet the long term needs of the community.

The adoption of current requirements within current planning legislation such as the National Planning Policy Framework places an emphasis on recognising the value of eco-system services and can show the benefits of connecting diverse areas of policy.

I believe the solutions described above reflect and model what is becoming best practice, building on themes that are currently embodied in the London Plan (2011) – namely:-

- to protect and enhance Bio-Diversity in the capital
- the Mayor's objective to increase the number of "grow your own food" community and educational projects in London
- the strategic role that communities should play in helping to determine long-term sustainable futures.
- The Mayor's "2020 Vision"

The "Nature Reserve with Eco-Village" solution described above will help to promote truly vibrant and sustainable communities. With minimal impact on the natural environment and eco-systems which contribute directly to our individual and communal well-being, it will provide an increase in much needed housing supply with local services that reflect actual needs.

Yours faithfully

Paul A Scott

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