



# Area 51 Education

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Dear Sirs,

Area 51 Education has read the Wood Green AAP with some interest and would like to share its views both on the proposals and on our own needs as a local organisation directly affected by some of the proposed options.

Area 51 Education is a significant provider of employment opportunities to Haringey residents. As one of the small number of medium-sized enterprises in the local area, we offer a unique mix of innovation and growth typical to SME's, with the increased stability of a medium-sized enterprise. 35% of our current employees live and work in Haringey. Area 51 Education provides services which are needed by local residents. We work with some of the most disabled young people in Haringey. Our services directly benefit over 35 families in Haringey, enabling either parents/carers or young people with disabilities to actively contribute to their local community. Our services allow parents to return to paid work and people, with or without a disability, to contribute socially or economically through voluntary or paid work.

Overall, we support the need to regenerate the town centre and surrounding areas. The Town Centre is tired and old, with poor accessibility and permeability for both pedestrians and traffic. The shopping mall creates a tunnel-like route which feels claustrophobic and captures noise and fumes. Many of our autistic students find accessing the high road shops near to the bridge and higher buildings on either side very difficult due to the increased sensory input of noise, smell and reduced lighting and space. Our parents, carers and students say that they do not feel safe walking in the evenings, particularly after dark, in the Heartlands area due to the poor lighting and low occupation after 5.30 – 6.00pm.

We therefore agree that the retail space in Wood Green High Road and immediate areas would benefit from being expanded and welcome the proposals to offer some larger footplates to attract bigger retailers whilst also maintaining terraces or equivalent space for local traders who bring character and local colour to the area. We also welcome the focus on improving the night-time economy in the area, both through a change in usages, extended retail hours and improved lighting. We would support the comments already made through consultation about reducing high-rise buildings wherever possible, and making more creative use of low-rise buildings and rooftop views.

We welcome the suggestions in 1.17 to improve the public spaces and streets by making them cleaner, and potentially more pedestrianised; and in 1.12 to maximise the potential offered by Crossrail linkages. We would very much welcome an interim solution to reduce HGV traffic along Clarendon Road North as we feel the frequency of large vehicles reversing without banksmen, along a congested single carriageway poses numerous hazards to pedestrians and other road users. We would also welcome an interim solution to improve street hygiene, particularly in walkways connecting the High Road to other areas around Wood Green as these are often unpleasant to walk along.

We are concerned, however, at the absence of any apparent consideration for disabled access throughout all of the proposals and trust that this will be embedded in all aspects of planning at subsequent stages in compliance with DDA, including ensuring that within the allocation of affordable and intermediate new homes, there is an appropriate percentage that are fully adapted for people with disabilities.

We note that in the proposals for mixed usages across all 20 sites make limited reference to community and leisure usages, with a majority focus on retail, residential and commercial usages. We would urge the Council to ensure that there is sufficient consideration of wider community and leisure facilities. We fully agree that the Bingo Hall and Vue Cinema sites could be re-purposed (WGSA 5 & 6) and would wish to see an increase in low-cost, active leisure facilities to fully reflect the economic diversity of this area. We would love to see a new swimming pool in the area. Haringey is under-resourced with only two public pools serving the whole of Haringey compared with five in Enfield and three in Islington, for example. A new swimming pool (and wider leisure facilities) would support key targets in Haringey's Corporate plan, namely to reduce social isolation, increase inward investment and increase local satisfaction.

There is a clear opportunity to regenerate the Heartlands sub-area, which is clearly under-utilised in many ways presently. The north-south route around the town centre offered by Mary Neuner Way into Western Road and on towards Alexandra Palace is significantly under-utilised and we broadly agree with the implied intention to re-route in order to create, in effect a ring road around the town centre. Clearly, there are additional implications for residential usage if this roadway becomes more intensively used however and it is unclear from the plans so far how this impact would be mitigated.

We broadly agree with the re-purposing of Coburg Road to form a pedestrianised route with a focus on Civic functions in this area. We see a clear opportunity to embed our valuable service into the planned redevelopment areas of either WGSA16, WGSA18 or WGSA 24 through the inclusion of a new, purpose-built facility.

We would suggest there is an opportunity to consider combining the proposed primary school in WGSA24 with Area 51 Education (post 19 Specialist Education provider) and the West Indian Cultural Centre. Combining three community focused services onto one site allows the possibility of shared services and facilities, thereby reducing overall ongoing costs. For example, an all-weather sports pitch shared between the new

primary and ourselves could then also be available for community sports in the evenings and weekends. Similarly, we would also foresee opportunities to work alongside the Haringey Adult Learning Service (HALS) to maximise use of purpose-built spaces during evenings and weekends. For example, an ICT suite built into Area 51 Education's facility could be used by HALS to offer adult education in the evenings and weekends. Such a partnership would enable improved access to adult education in the west of the borough and increased footfall through an area that will otherwise be left behind in terms of evening economy.

We believe that our organisation has, at least, comparable social and economic impact to other local education and community providers, who are currently identified throughout the plan. For this reason, we would wish to be named under Policy WG9 Community Infrastructure as an Education Provider in section 7.66 or 7.67; and in Section 7.71 as a provider of community space. Our building is currently used by several other community-based groups during the evenings and weekends and has facilities available to hire by members of the public who could benefit from them (Sensory Room, Rebound therapy equipment, hall etc).

Yours sincerely,

Nicki Quarterman  
Principal  
The John Dewey Independent Specialist College  
(part of Area 51 Education Ltd)