

	<p style="text-align: center;">Executive 14 December 2009</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards Affected: Alperton, Wembley Central and Stonebridge</p>	
<p>Alperton Growth Area – a vision for change</p>	

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-09/10-10

1. Summary

- 1.1 Alperton is situated in the south west of Brent, set within the wider environs of Park Royal. Physically Alperton consists of 1930s suburban residential streets, cul-de-sacs and industrial estates sitting uneasily side by side. Alperton has a number of assets: a 1.6km stretch of the Grand Union Canal, Ealing Road and the Shri Sanathan Hindu Temple, good public transport and it's proximity to Park Royal.
- 1.2 Alperton has been identified as a growth area within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. Alperton's assets mean that it is an excellent location for new housing, new local employment and new amenities. The area is promoted in the Core Strategy for mixed use regeneration along the Grand Union Canal including at least 1600 new homes in the period to 2026, supported by infrastructure identified within the Infrastructure Investment Framework. The Core Strategy was approved for submission to the Secretary of State on 6th April 2009, and was subsequently agreed at Full Council.
- 1.3 This part of London is going to undergo significant change over the coming years and there is the potential to transform this run down and disjointed part of Brent into a coherent and attractive place to live and work. Guidance for Alperton growth area will be produced in the form of a Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (Masterplan SPD). The document will establish principles for development including uses, physical and social infrastructure, the relationship of the development with the canal, phasing and delivery.

- 1.4 This report outlines a vision for how Alperton could be developed over the coming years. The intention is for this vision to form the basis for the Masterplan SPD.
- 1.5 Initial informal consultation with Council Officers, community groups, local businesses and land owners has been undertaken and the feedback from these has informed the vision. A summary of this consultation is included in this report.
- 1.6 The vision for Alperton set out in this report will be illustrated and published in a prospectus document which will be used to describe the vision to stakeholders and statutory partners. This prospectus is being developed by Regeneration Team and is attached in *appendix i*.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To approve the vision as set out in this paper and attached prospectus.
- 2.2 That the regeneration team should feed back to the local businesses, residents, landowners and all stakeholders the vision for Alperton.
- 2.3 That a multi-disciplinary project team is established to drive forward the regeneration of this area in line with the ambitions set out in the vision. Encompassing Regeneration, Planning, Housing, Transportation, Communication, Consultation and Property specialists, the team will provide a holistic service for all development partners.

3. **A Vision for Alperton**

3.1 **Introduction**

- 3.1.1 Alperton growth area includes Northfields Industrial Estate, Abbey Industrial Estate, Sunleigh Road and sites at the crossing of Ealing Road and Grand Union Canal. Please refer to *appendix ii*.
- 3.1.2 Due to the proposed growth area status there is significant developer interest in the area and much of the land adjoining the canal has already been assembled for residential led redevelopment. Currently there is little policy in place to manage this growth, and the new development being proposed does not necessarily align with the aspirations or agenda of the community, local businesses or the Council.
- 3.1.3 As well as providing new homes, we believe that there is an opportunity to substantially renew and improve local business and employment opportunities. Our vision for Alperton is to transform a disjointed and rundown part of London into a coherent and attractive place to live and work.

3.2 A Visionary Approach

3.2.1 There are some great things happening in Alperton today, Ealing Road is one of London's best Asian shopping areas and the stunning new Shri Sanathan Hindu Temple, will be a key visitor destination.

3.2.2 Hidden behind the housing and industrial estates is Alperton's great surprise – one of the most under-appreciated stretches of the Grand Union Canal. Running along the canal is a network of small industrial estates, supporting a wide variety of businesses.

3.2.3 But these positive parts do not make a cohesive or identifiable whole; Ealing Road loses its unique character as it nears Alperton Station and Alperton Community School and the streets are visibly run down and disadvantaged by conflicts between the industry and housing. The canal itself is underused and, combined with the industrial estates acts as a physical barrier separating the existing and established communities

3.2.4 There are four key objectives to the transformation of Alperton:

- We want to open up the canal for local people – as a place to travel to and from home, work and school, as an open space for them to enjoy and as a place for recreation, respite and peace.
- We want to find ways of drawing the attractions of Ealing Road closer to the tube station in order to link the new community by the canal to the high street.
- We want to provide new homes for families, couples and individuals, and we want to provide new facilities and open spaces.
- We plan to exploit Alperton's proximity to Park Royal Industrial Estate to generate more local jobs.

4. Key Components of the Proposal

4.1 A canal runs through it

4.1.1 Our vision seeks to establish three distinct new neighbourhoods linked by a lively stretch of canal. The vision statement describes a journey through Alperton in 15 - 20 years time, outlining the character of the new neighbourhoods and describing how they will be linked.

4.1.2 The canal will act as a spine connecting communities and local facilities. As you walk east along the canal from the cultural core of Alperton at Ealing Road you will encounter a series of green spaces changing in character from active centres for play and gathering to tranquil spots for contemplation.

- 4.1.3 We will work to introduce new water features and frontages within developments – marinas, pools, moorings – and provide more opportunities for people to access the water along both sides of the canal.
- 4.1.4 New conveniently located bridges will allow you to easily cross over the canal, connecting communities either side of the canal with local facilities, local jobs, and local transport hubs. We want to increase activities on the canal and encourage its use as a leisure destination.
- 4.1.5 Alperton will no longer turn its back on the canal; instead the canal will be opened up and drawn out into the surrounding communities. It will connect a network of open spaces that extend from Ealing Road through Alperton to the Brent River Park, through three distinct new neighbourhoods:
- Alperton's Local Centre
 - Waterside Residential Neighbourhood
 - Industrial Transition Zone

4.2 **Alperton's local centre**

- 4.2.1 Alperton's local centre, located around Alperton Station and the proposed extended community school on Ealing Road, will be a busy, cosmopolitan destination catering for its culturally diverse population. The Shri Sanathan Hindu Temple will re-enforce the cultural significance of the centre.
- 4.2.2 Alperton is a key shopping destination specialising in Asian food, fashion and music. The entrepreneurial spirit which exists will be nurtured and encouraged; existing businesses will have room to expand in appropriate accommodation. A new and improved business offer will raise the aspirations of the existing business community and attract investment.
- 4.2.3 In keeping with the existing and emerging character the new development at this centre, nearest to Alperton Station, will be high density and mixed use with exemplar designed tall buildings at the crossing of Ealing Road and the canal marking the entrance to this destination. We want to introduce opportunities for young people and small families to participate and enjoy a new form of local centre living, where residential properties sit adjacent to a revived Ealing Rd that offers access to local services and good transport connections.
- 4.2.4 The new public space outside Alperton Station will be the start of a busy and energetic high street with high quality public realm and a diverse retail and restaurant offer. It will be a flexible space which is designed to be able to be closed to vehicular traffic for festivals such as Diwali; it will also provide a navigable and safe connection between the Grand Union Canal and One Tree Hill.

4.3 **Waterside Residential Community**

- 4.3.1 As you move east along the canal a different neighbourhood emerges, quieter and more residential, a new type of sub-urban community which provides family accommodation in a compact modern environment.
- 4.3.2 New residential development will activate the canal, taking advantage of the views and atmosphere. The industrial heritage of the canal is revealed as key buildings that reinforce the existing character of the area are retained.
- 4.3.3 Scale and massing of the new development will acknowledge the adjacent existing neighbourhoods to the north and south, the massing can increase as you move east into the Northfield Estate. The residential development will set a benchmark in environmentally sensitive design. A series of private and semi-public open spaces emerge with the new developments. Existing open spaces will be improved to provide high quality public space suitable for recreation and sports.
- 4.3.4 The canal will form part of a wider pedestrian and cycle network, providing a pleasant, safe route through the area. There is an opportunity to explore the relocation of new community facilities along the canal, such as a doctor's surgery, library, learning centre or café, thereby introducing more activity to the area.
- 4.3.5. The new residential neighbourhood will be made accessible by improvements to public transport. Initiatives could include: a more frequent local bus route joining Alperton and Stonebridge Tube Stations and a 'fast bus' link to Wembley. The impact of increased private vehicle demand can be mitigated through initiatives, such as car clubs and other travel demand management initiatives.

4.4. **Industrial Transition Zone**

- 4.4.1 Development on the Northfield Estate will provide enhanced employment space where local industry can be relocated and consolidated. New development in this area will provide a mix of modern intensified light industrial units, studios, managed workspaces and new homes. Home-work units will provide a buffer zone between the light-industrial and residential area.
- 4.4.2 Local spaces and cafes will provide places where residents and businesses can feel connected. The Ace Café will continue to be a significant landmark and social hub for the area.
- 4.4.3 A new access road to the North Circular Road will reduce existing conflicts between residential and employment land and improve established business links to Park Royal. There is a long-term ambition for Stonebridge Park Station to become a transport interchange, as proposed as part of the NCR regeneration area and the Park Royal Public Realm Strategy.
- 4.4.4 The new green corridor along the North Circular Road regeneration area extends into Northfields Estate linking with Brent River Park. The walk along the canal

from Alpertons local centre meets the River Brent and North Circular Road where a choice of routes then lead you into Wembley, Ealing or Central London.

5. Community Consultation

5.1 Preliminary consultation has been carried out with local businesses, landowners and community leaders. The purpose of this consultation was to inform the vision document by establishing what parts of Alpertons were considered to be positive, key areas of concern and comments on the type of development which could emerge along the canal. The activities also served to raise awareness about the work the Council has undertaken and the Masterplan SPD.

5.2 The two main approaches to consultation and raising awareness were by using canvas cards to interview members of the community within the area and meetings and telephone conversations with local businesses. Key findings of the consultation are outlined below:

5.3 Canvas Cards

5.3.1 A total of 124 canvas cards were collected from three areas around the site, Ealing Road, the residential area to the north of the canal and Abbey Road residential estate to the south of the canal. An additional small number (7) were collected offsite. The following is a summary of the responses collected:

5.3.2 When asked '**what is Alpertons identity?**' Interestingly, 21.6% of respondents felt that Alpertons had no particular identity; 22.5% of respondents said that this was Alpertons mixed, diverse community; 12.7% of respondents noted a run-down/ dirty environment; 7.8% stated the canal, and 7.8% noted Ealing Road shopping.

- A driving ambition of the Alpertons Masterplan SPD is to make Alpertons into a destination with a strong identity and sense of place, the vision seeks to draw out Alpertons unique assets, its mixed and diverse community, Ealing Road and the Grand Union Canal.

5.3.3. When asked '**what would you introduce (to Alpertons) that you think is currently missing?**' 23% of respondents said sports and leisure facilities, and a further 8% said a swimming pool; 17% said activities for young people, and 21% cited open spaces and parks. All of the above answers tended to be given by younger respondents, aged less than 20 or 20 to 29. In addition, 12% said Alpertons needs to be cleaner and less run-down, and 10% said the area was missing a 'cafe, restaurant and pub culture'. Those giving these two responses tended to be aged 30 and over.

- The Infrastructure Investment Framework has identified the need for 1 hectare of public open space, improvements to the quality and accessibility of existing open spaces and 3 x 0.2 Ha (minimum) of public squares and pocket parks along the canal and within development sites. A series of play areas within new developments and open spaces is proposed.

- New and improved public open space would require a robust management and maintenance strategy to ensure that they remain clean and useable.
- The transformation of this neighbourhood is intended to attract new investment which will include ground floor cafes and restaurants across the development.

5.3.4 When asked '**what would make you use the canal more?**' respondents overwhelmingly mentioned the canal's amenities and its environment. Nearly a third (31%) said they would use the canal if it were safer and better lit; 26.2% of respondents would use the canal if the environment was cleaner, (a further 16.5% said that the canal itself would need to be cleaned); 15.5% would use the canal if there were more open spaces and parks. Other suggestions to make people use the canal included cafes/ shops on the canal (15.5%) and boat trips (13.6%).

- The vision for Alperton focuses on making the canal a well used and enjoyed spine which links the new neighbourhoods, the need for public realm improvements and robust management and maintenance would be part of the Masterplan SPD policy.

5.3.5 When shown images of different building types, the most popular options for alongside the canal were 'medium rise residential' (58.8% of respondents chose this), 'higher residential buildings' (24.7%), 'living/ working mix' (24.7%), and 'light industrial' (18.5%).

- An approach to acceptable massing and density within the three character areas is being explored as the Masterplan SPD develops.

5.4 **Meetings with businesses:**

5.4.1 A total of four meetings were held in Alperton where a total of approximately 10 local businesses were represented. Whilst the sample size was too small to carry out any statistical analysis some key issues could be identified:

5.4.2 Location for business: Alperton is considered to be a good location for business due to its good public and private transport links. Workspace offer is affordable with a good range of unit sizes available (not too big). The proximity to local shops and restaurants was seen to be an advantage though several respondents said that there were currently limited places to entertain clients.

5.4.3 Overall appearance: It was generally agreed that Alperton was run down and scruffy; it was generally agreed that the canal was not looked after properly and this led to management and maintenance issues.

5.4.4 Traffic issues: traffic congestion was cited as an issue and concerns were raised about this getting worse with new development. Difficulty to find parking along Ealing Road has been mentioned in several conversations as being detrimental to the survival of the high street businesses.

- 5.4.5 Local businesses did express some concerns about losing employment space/ properties to the new residential led development.
- 5.4.6 It is important that the team delivering the transformation of Alperton support the local businesses and landowners through this period of change.

5.5 Public Display

- 5.5.1 The final step of this first stage of consultation and awareness raising is to feed back the results of the discussions and the emerging vision to the community using the links which have been established. Posters outlining the results of the consultation and the vision will be on display during January/February in the following locations:

- Alperton Community School, Stanley Avenue
- Alperton Community School, Ealing Road
- Lyon Park School
- St James Church, Stanley Avenue
- Alperton Baptist Church
- Wembley Gospel Hall
- Shri Sanathan Hindu Temple
- Abbey Road Community Centre
- Ealing Road Library
- Ace Café
- Alperton Train Station

- 5.6 Further consultation on the Masterplan SPD will take place after the document has been developed during the Summer 2010.

6. Communication management plan

- 6.1 Brent Council's communication team are actively involved in this plan and will be the key drivers in its delivery.

7. Next Steps

7.1 Key Dates

Date	Activity
Dec '09	Executive approval sought for the vision document Masterplan – preferred option developed Transportation study completed
May '10	Draft SPD
July '10	CMT - SPD Executive - SPD
Aug '10	Formal consultation
Oct '10	Executive approval sought for SPD
Nov '10	Formal SPD in place

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The development of the Masterplan SPD to date has been part funded by the Policy and Regeneration Unit and by external funding provided by a number of Housing Associations: Network Housing, Octavia and Asra. This covers the cost of the consultant urban designers who have been appointed to develop ideas to inform the vision and to set out the principles of the masterplan before it is taken in-house by The Planning Service to be developed into the Masterplan SPD.
- 8.2 The Policy and Regeneration Unit have a modest budget remaining to cover the cost of the consultation work for this stage, the preparation of the vision documentation and for contributing to the transport study (see item 7.3).
- 8.3 Additional studies are being undertaken to support the Masterplan SPD including a Transport Study (funded jointly by LBB Transport, LBB Regeneration and the BSF Estates Team), Affordable Housing Viability Study (funded by LBB Planning).

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 As stated above, the vision for Alperton will form the basis of an SPD. Planning Policy Statement 12 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12) sets out the procedural policy and process of preparing Local Development documents, including SPD. The guidance PPS12 requires the production and consultation on a Sustainability Appraisal which has been carried out previously as part of the Core Strategy.
- 9.2. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are produced as part of the Council's Local Development Framework and replace Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The SPDs expand on the Council's adopted policies to provide more detailed information than can be contained in the policies themselves. Supplementary Planning Documents are not statutory documents in the same way as the Unitary Development Plan or the Local Development Framework (which will replace the former) but are material considerations to be taken into account in determining individual planning applications.

10. Staffing Implications

- 10.1 The project is currently driven through a cross-departmental team chaired by Melissa Clark (Regeneration), including staff from Planning Services, Housing and Transportation teams. Section 2.3 recommends an expanded team from these departments as well as Communication, Consultation and Property.

11. Diversity Implications

- 11.1 Alpertons identity is one of a diverse and mixed community, the population is largely Asian with proportionally more Asian residents (32% Indian, 12% other Asian) compared to Brent as a whole. The Masterplan SPD will be designed to benefit this community as this unique selling point will ensure the success of this diverse neighborhood. A specific aim of the Masterplan SPD is to maximise the benefits to local people where much of the development will be developer led.
- 11.2 The initial community consultation events have been designed to ensure that a representative cross section of the community are involved at this early stage. All businesses affected by the growth have been contacted as well as community leaders from a wide range of organisations within the ward. The canvas carding exercise was carried out in a selection of locations to ensure that different members of the community could be interviewed, ranging in age, ethnicity, neighbourhood and reason for being in Alpertons (living, working or studying).
- 11.3 The age and ethnicity of respondents was compared to 2001 census data to check whether the profile of the sample population was similar to that of the Alpertons population. However, a relatively large number of respondents did not wish to provide this information, which may have skewed the results.
- 11.4. Following the consultation stage, it is proposed that an equalities and diversity audit is conducted on the draft vision documentation.

Appendix i

A Vision for Alpertons (File - A vision for Alpertons.pdf)

Appendix ii

Map indicating masterplan study area (File - Existing Alpertons Masterplan Area.pdf)

Map indicating site specific allocations (File - Alpertons SSA.pdf)

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