



Planning Committee
20th October 2010

Report from the Director of Planning

For Action

Wards Affected:
Alperton, Wembley Central and
Stonebridge

Report Title: MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR ALPERTON – APPROVAL FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for public consultation for a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Alperton.
- 1.2 Alperton has been identified as a growth area within the adopted Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy. This draft planning guidance for Alperton is being developed in the form of a Masterplan by council officers.
- 1.3 In December 2009 the council's Executive approved a vision for Alperton, which was illustrated and published in a prospectus document used to describe the vision to stakeholders and statutory partners.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That members agree the draft SPD (set out in appendix 1) for the purposes of public consultation;

the extent and timetable for consultations as set out in the report.
- 2.2.1 Members are asked to delegate any minor changes to the final consultation draft to the Head of Planning.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Identified within the adopted LDF Core Strategy, the Alperton “growth area” is a strip of brownfield land along the Grand Union Canal from Middlesex House in the west to Northfield Industrial Estate in the east, encompassing some of the poorest quality industrial land in the borough. The abiding impression of people visiting the industrial areas is not just its poor quality but the potential of the canal in creating a new waterside residential neighbourhood.
- 3.2 The LDF Core Strategy has identified this land for approximately 1600 new homes with supporting physical and social infrastructure. The Council has also identified most of the sites contained in the SPD within its Site Specific Allocation document which is soon to be considered at a public inquiry. This means the council has agreed the land use changes in broad terms, therefore officers are not seeking approval to change land use designations. The purpose of the SPD is to set out how the council will facilitate the transformation of this poor quality industrial area into a new, mostly residential neighbourhood. It will provide clear guidance for developers, landowners and residents about the significant scale of change proposed.
- 3.3 Emerging Site Specific Allocations introduce specific policy requirements for the individual development sites, including the provision of new commercial floorspace as part of development proposals.
- 3.4 The strategic objectives of the document are to:
- Demonstrate how Alperton can be transformed through growth to deliver homes, business space and jobs, services and infrastructure
 - Deliver a definable and legible place where people will want to live, work and visit through a robust urban structure and a quality environment
 - Develop a distinct urban character of buildings, streets and spaces building upon the huge potential of the canal and Ealing Road
- 3.5 The approved “Vision for Alperton” described a transformed Alperton as having three distinct character areas by virtues of use, scale and appearance, linked together by a lively stretch of the Grand Union Canal. Each character area is described in terms of its overall feel and character, land use, building height, street hierarchy, public realm and open space improvements and housing density, types and tenure. Viability appraisals have been undertaken to test that the housing types and density suggested are feasible and deliverable considering current and emerging market conditions. The three zones are as follows:
- 3.6 “Alperton’s core: a cultural centre” is the area stretching from Alperton House and Middlesex House to Atlip Road. It also includes Alperton Station and Alperton Community School. It will be a lively centre for cultural activities, community facilities and local shopping.

Development will be mixed use with a supply of modern business space for economic growth.

- 3.7 The “Waterside residential neighbourhood” begins at Atlip Road and stretches further east towards the beginning of the Northfields Industrial Estate. It includes the poor quality industrial land within the Abbey Estate. This will predominantly be a place to live for families within a compact environment defined by a network of connected streets and public spaces. Access to the canal for existing and new residents will be introduced on the off-side.
- 3.8 The “Industrial transition zone“ comprises of the Northfields Industrial Estate. It will be a new working suburbia” will combine new homes with modern business space for large and small operations. Taking advantage of the topographical changes at Northfields Industrial Estate, the uses will have a clearly defined separation. A road bridge link across the River Brent will connect the estate with the North Circular Road and onwards to Park Royal.
- 3.9 As well as the canal, the three character areas are linked by a network of streets, public spaces and canal crossings.

Key considerations:

- 3.10 **Introducing a distinctive residential character**
Proposals within the central character area – “Waterside Residential Neighbourhood” portray the compact and tight-knit character described in the vision that is sympathetic with the surrounding building heights and generally seeks maintains the spirit of existing development control standards within SPG17. Building heights range from two to five storeys.
- 3.11 Some standards, such as physical separation, have been challenged in the Masterplan SPD and it is suggested that good quality residential amenity can still be achieved through the careful design, placement and orientation of windows to prevent overlooking. It is intended that the masterplan document will clarify how design quality will need to be demonstrated to support development types that challenge existing development control standards, including where new development forms a boundary relationship with existing dwellings.
- 3.12 There will be a strong emphasis on the quality of development and of streets and public spaces for pedestrians and cyclists to move through and use. It is intended that new dwellings should be in the form of family housing wherever possible and that high density flatted development all over the masterplan area is inappropriate and not conducive to achieving the vision.

Industrial land policy change

- 3.13 The adopted Core Strategy has re-designated previously protected industrial land in Alperton to become a “growth area” to facilitate mixed use development. This re-designation is supported by evidence (2009 Industrial Land Study) that shows that Brent has an excess of industrial land and that the council can re-designate some of this land to other uses in the Alperton area.
- 3.14 The council has already decided on the change of use from industrial land to largely residential uses. However the SPD sets out how some industrial warehousing and business uses will be either kept on site, redeveloped for new business premises or developers will contribute to pay for new premises in the wider area that can provide potential opportunities for displaced businesses in the area. This does not mean that all firms can be relocated, but it is recognised that there is a significant amount of vacant land and premises locally at very competitive rents
- 3.15 The Industrial Transition Zone includes the Northfields Industrial Estate that is identified by the Mayor of London as a Strategic Industrial Location. This land has not been re-designated and is not technically within the “growth area”. However the masterplan includes a development possibility for the site that considers how a quantum of residential development can be used to subsidise the delivery of a large supply of commercial floorspace and a number of physical infrastructure projects, such as a bridge across the River Brent to the North Circular Road. Officers will work with colleagues at the GLA to explore a policy vehicle to justify this approach.
- 3.16 Forthcoming proposals will also be expected to provide appropriate types and sizes of space, including for business that could potentially be displaced by development. Businesses will be encouraged to take opportunities within modern premises. Draft Site Specific Allocations have been used to secure space within planning permissions at the former B&Q site and Minavil House, both at Ealing Road.
- 3.17 A similar concept, but on a grander scale is for businesses to be relocated east to the Northfields Industrial Estate referred to above. Alternatively, the council work with business to explore opportunities to relocate elsewhere in the wider Alperton or Park Royal area where there is a high level of vacancy and generally low rents.

Movement and transportation

- 3.18 A sustainable approach to transport proposes fewer cars (and an average parking ratio of 0.5 spaces per dwelling – although a slightly higher ratio is proposed for the less accessible locations) and improved connections to public transport, including improvements to the frequency and accessibility to bus route 224. The document explains that Controlled Parking Zones will need to be delivered as

part of new developments so that new residents do not overspill park along neighbouring streets that are currently uncontrolled.

- 3.19 Much is made in the masterplan of improving the experience of Alperton for pedestrians and cyclists. People will be able to move through the area along a connected axis of streets, public spaces and across canal bridges. These connections will help to improve access to Alperton and Stonebridge Park Stations and local bus services.

Delivery

- 3.20 Although property interests in the area are very limited, the council's role in delivery is to facilitate development and prioritise the physical and social infrastructure needed to support new homes and adapt to changing economic circumstances. For example, the funding of the redevelopment of Alperton School requires reconsideration and may now rely more heavily on the pooling of s106 receipts.
- 3.21 Using the adopted Core Strategy and the Infrastructure and Investment Framework, the masterplan considers the type and delivery of infrastructure that is required to support additional residential across the masterplan area, including:
- improved bus services and attractive, safe pedestrian routes
 - additional school places including expansion of local primary schools funded by developer contributions
 - a delivery mechanism for Alperton School needs to be established in the light of the withdrawal of BSF funding
 - improvements to road junctions and pedestrian crossing
 - a series of new open spaces and improvements to existing parks
 - accommodation for doctors and dentists
 - canal crossings

Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.22 An appraisal is not deemed necessary for this document as both the "growth area" status of Alperton and individual Site Specific Allocations have been tested in detail through the Local Development Framework process.

4.0 Public Consultation

- 4.1 Consultation on the masterplan document will be completed in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement. In addition to statutory consultation for the LDF Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations, a series of informal consultation exercises for the Alperton Vision and Masterplan have already been undertaken. These include:
- presentations and workshops with Alperton Community School pupils;
 - questionnaires with shoppers and passersby;
 - posters and leaflets distributed;

- residents and community leaders through Safer Neighbourhoods Forums; and
- interviews with businesses and employers

4.2 Formal public consultation of the Masterplan SPD will be carried out for a minimum of 6 weeks from the 15th of November 2010 which will allow consultees to submit written representations upon its content. Any comments made in writing and officers responses will be reported to Planning Committee for comments and then reported to the Councils Executive. Any changes to the document will need to be agreed by the Executive, the SPD will then be adopted and will then be a material consideration for determining planning applications in this area.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 The costs of preparing the document have been met within existing budgetary constraints, although financial support has also been provided by a number of the council's RSL partners that are active within the area.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 The masterplan document has been prepared in accordance with PPS12 – Local Spatial Planning and supporting regulations.

7.0 Diversity Implications

7.1 The Statement of Community Involvement identifies how the public are to be engaged in the preparation of SPDs in general. An inclusive approach is suggested to ensure that different groups have the opportunity to participate and are not disadvantaged in the process

7.2 Alperton's 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 neighbourhood. A specific aim of the Masterplan SPD is to maximise the benefits to local people where much of the development will be developer led.

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact:

Alex Hearn or Beth Kay
Major Projects Team
Policy and Regeneration Unit
Brent Council
Brent Town Hall
Forty Lane
Wembley
HA9 9HD

t: 020 8937 1048 / 1038

Chris Walker
Director of Planning