



Planning Committee
20th October 2010

**Report from the Assistant Director,
Regeneration and Major Projects**

For Action

Wards Affected:
Wembley Central, Tokyngton

**Report Title: Wembley Link SPD – Draft for Public
Consultation**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for part of Wembley High Road linking the main town centre with the new retail development in the stadium that will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It is proposed that the draft SPD be approved for public consultation and any representations made on the draft plan will be reported back to Planning Committee for their consideration and Executive for their approval. The SPD will be used as guidance in determining planning applications in the Wembley Link area.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Planning Committee approves the attached Wembley Link (appendix 1) as a draft Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of public consultation; and
- 2.2 Agrees that the consultation will take place for a seven week period from 1 November to 17 December 2010 as set out in paragraph 3.16; and
- 2.3 Delegates minor changes to text and diagrams to the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Major Projects

3.0 Detail

Introduction

- 3.1 Supplementary Planning Documents are intended to provide more detailed planning guidance. They are not intended to introduce new policy but expand on existing policy and they must supplement an adopted planning document such as the Core Strategy or an extant policy in the Unitary Development Plan. The Wembley Link SPD

provides the detailed proposals that flow from the council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy, notably policies CP1, CP2, CP7 and CP16. The Core Strategy was adopted by the council in June 2010 and sets out the spatial strategy for the whole borough. The LDF will eventually replace the former borough plan, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in 2004.

- 3.2 The Wembley Link SDP refers to the stretch of Wembley High Road from Wembley triangle to Chesterfield House (at the corner of High Road and Park Lane). It provides a link between the new retail proposals approved and proposed in the Stadium area and the main shopping core around Wembley Central station. The LDF Core Strategy sets out a strategy to promote the expansion of the town centre eastwards towards the Stadium and this requires an improved retail presence in the Wembley Link. This SPD provides the detail to achieve the LDF Core Strategy.
- 3.3 As well as this Core Strategy imperative, there are other good reasons to promote development in the Wembley Link. The Wembley Link is made up of an incoherent patchwork of 1960's to 1980's office blocks that were built on existing two-three story turn of the century and 1930's development. Many of these office blocks are no longer suited to modern needs and have significant amounts of vacancy. There is an opportunity to provide new residential development as part of the mix of development proposed in the SPD and thereby help meet the housing targets set out in the LDF Core Strategy. A number of design studies and market tests have been carried out on this area and a specific site boundary has recently been established for a zone that would form the key anchor to kick-starting regeneration.
- 3.4 The Wembley Link includes land on both sides of the Wembley High Road including the Brent House and Copland school sites on the south side. Copland School is badly in need of redevelopment and in order to facilitate bringing this forward, it is essential to provide clear guidance about acceptable land uses and development details such as building heights and access arrangements.
- 3.5 The Wembley area has a mix of different guidance and proposals applied to it. This contains Site Specific Proposals in the 2004 UDP, draft Site Specific Allocations in the council's 2010 Development Plan Document and SPD in the form of the Wembley Masterplan (covering the Stadium Area) The intention is to bring all this planning guidance to one document which will be an Area Action Plan. This will be a Development Plan Document and will need to go through an Examination in Public. Although a DPD has more planning weight than an SPD, it takes considerably longer to adopt, usually at least a year. It is proposed to complete the Wembley Link document as a SPD in order to maximise the opportunities arising from current developer interest in some of the Wembley Link sites, particularly Brent House and Copland School.

Key Features of the Missing Link SPD

- 3.6 The Key points of the SPD are to:
 - Encourage new development along the Wembley Link that has retail and other town centre uses on the ground floor;

- Retain some office floor space but allow for residential uses over the ground floor retail;
- Bring forward good servicing arrangements for new shops while, limit car parking for residential development and secures improvements to key junctions and bridges
- Limit development to between 4 and 8 stories generally except for the end blocks of the link;
- Show proposals with and without the Network Rail embankment on the north side of the High Road;
- Limit development on the north side of the railway;
- Promote a foodstore on the Brent House site that enables the redevelopment of Copland school to the rear; and
- Encourage family housing where ever possible.

- 3.7 The new LDF proposes linking the two retail areas of Wembley Central and Wembley Park by facilitating the eastward expansion of Wembley Town Centre (The Wembley Link area). This is committed through existing permissions for the development of a number of sites including Copland School. The LDF states that the council will also produce design guidance for the High Road and develop a new retail street in the Wembley City area. The development of a new retail street in the North West Lands area of the Stadium is supported by the improvement of the retail link from the High Road. This creates the notion of a single town centre from the High road through to the Stadium area. This SPD will facilitate improving the retail 'value' offer of the High Road and creating well serviced larger footprint stores that the main town centre often lacks. This is also part of the "Wembley Growth Area" aiming to generate 10,000 new jobs across a range of sectors and at least 11,500 new homes to 2026.
- 3.8 Design studies have been carried out on the Wembley Link area both by the Council and by external consultants. In addition to this, market testing and viability assessments have been carried out. The most recent was a study by Navigant Consulting and GVA Grimley on the Brent House/ Copland School sites. It is recognised that the sites will not be easy to develop, but the intention of the SPD is to encourage landowners to come forward with proposals.
- 3.9 Some of the challenges to the successful implementation include fragmented land ownership, whether Network Rail wishes to bring forward its land and the reduced demand for office space. A key test will be whether the council can promote development and limit the amount of parking and transport movements so that the traffic problems of the High Road do not get worse. Officers have carried out some initial work by consultants to re-model the triangle and widen the road bridge over the Chiltern railway at Wembley Hill Road. The development of the Wembley Link can provide developer contributions to assist funding the work.



Copland School and Brent House

- 3.10 Copland School and Brent House sites are located in the Wembley Link area to the south of the High Road. Brent House is owned by the council and will be vacated in 2013 into the new Civic Centre. Copland School is in a state of serious disrepair and badly in need of redevelopment. A plan for delivering the new school building through a private developer building over 200 homes, some of which were in a 28 storey tower has foundered. The council's subsequent attempt to resurrect a different development -led approach was thwarted by a cut in Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding which was needed to bridge the gap. In order to facilitate bringing forward the school development, it is essential to harness the current market interest in the Copland and Brent House sites that has been tested by consultants talking with interested parties. With the intention of giving the market more certainty over the acceptability of development proposals, the SPD sets out the form and nature of development that would be supported by the council.
- 3.11 The anchor development on the Copland/Brent House sites could be a mixed use development of residential accommodation combined with a reasonably large food store, probably best located on the Brent House site. It is envisaged that this would encourage an additional limited amount of adjacent local retail on the Copland School frontage. This would make a significant contribution to the retail offer on the High Road as well as providing family housing to the rear of the site. The market study has shown that a medium density and height scheme would be the most viable. In planning terms this would be preferable to the 28 storey tower previously proposed for the Copland School redevelopment. This would mean an approximately eight storey development along the frontage of development (on the Copland and Brent House frontage) and in the worst case scenario, no higher than Brent House as it currently stands. It is proposed that the school would be re-located on the playing field land to the rear (on the same site as the consented scheme) but may have to be re-configured for viability reasons.
- 3.12 The council has engaged transportation consultants to look at how a food store with a significant amount of parking could be accommodated and not worsen the traffic problems along the High Road. Their advice is that a food store of up to 6,000m² could be accommodated and would be supported by changes to the Wembley Triangle junction. It

will also be important to reduce car parking elsewhere in the Wembley Link area so as not to further overload the key junctions. It is therefore proposed that the SPD encourages limited parking for residential schemes, including car free development (particularly to the development to the north side of the High Road). This is an area of parking control and very good public transport accessibility and would allow a viable quantity of development without over-stressing the road junctions. It would also allow servicing to be a priority in laying out service roads particularly from development on the north side of the High Road.

Accommodation schedule

Foodstore	6265m ²
Local Retail	1400m ²
Residential	328 Flats (flexible) 38 Houses
Total Parking	356 spaces
Residential	0.3-0.5 per unit = 90-150 spaces
Retail	= 206-266 spaces



Brent House Copland School

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- 3.13 The following illustrations show the overall proposal for the Wembley Link area. These are set out in more detail in the attached SPD –see appendix 1. The SPD breaks the Wembley Link down into a number of plots. For each plot on the north side of the High Road, proposals are suggested for development if the railway embankment is included and if it is not. The embankment is owned by Network Rail who may or may not wish to pursue development options. Having two options provides flexibility to achieve good regeneration outcomes in either scenario. If the embankment land could be included, a tighter grained development clustered around squares could be achieved. If not there is more limited space and this will require a more limited ribbon of development with a service road to the rear. It is important to be as flexible as possible with any option to allow regenerative development to proceed.
- 3.14 Within each option, on the north side, different options are considered but they revolve around creating a strong retail/town centre frontage and allowing development above between 4 and 8 storeys. This illustrates what the council believes to produce viable quantities of floor space that encourages development to come forward. Again the council will need to treat the guidance in a flexible way if this is not the case.



3.15 The SPD concentrates on Plot 2 of the north side of the High Road, the middle section currently occupied by three large office buildings, one of which is vacant and the other two have vacant floor space. The council has been approached by the owners of some of these blocks looking at longer term development solutions. This is the plot that has least ownership constraints in that there are four main landowners. Other sites are in multiple ownership and it will be difficult to develop in a comprehensive manner. None more so than plot 3 where a small terrace of homes (Ecclestone Place) sits behind the High Road frontage. Again it is possible to develop the site leaving the terrace intact or as part of a wider scheme but the SPD suggests that either option is possible and supportable in the longer term. This flexibility is built into the SPD.

Chesterfield House

3.16 The council is currently considering an application for a very tall hotel building of striking contemporary design. This is yet to put before members. The site already has an approved scheme for an office building of 17 storeys (in part). The Wembley Link SPD has considered this site afresh, particularly in the context of the two new

taller buildings on Elm Road and Central Square. The SPD recommends that any new development on this site should be broadly similar fitting into the new built context and responding more sympathetically to building heights, scale and massing of that proposed in the SPD.

- 3.17 This report has picked out some of the key features of the draft SPD but members are urged to consider the document as a whole as set out in Appendix 1. The next stage will be to undertake consultation and for the council to consider representations made on the attached draft SPD.

Next Steps

- 3.18 The proposed timetable for the production and consultation of the Wembley Link SPD is set out below and members are asked to agree the timetable. To complete the SPD as guidance expeditiously, members are asked to support bringing back the results of the consultation as an item on the xx February Planning Committee so that any SPD can be put to the council's Executive for adoption in February 2011.

Key date	Event
20th October 2010	Planning Committee approves draft spd
1st November 2010	Public Consultation commences
10 th November 2010	Public Consultation Meeting
17 th December 2010	Consultation ends (7 weeks)
2 nd February 2011	Report to Planning Committee
15 th February 2011	Executive Committee

Conclusions

- 3.19 The Wembley Link requires urgent action, none more so than Copland School. The SPD attempts to bring forward guidance that encourages regenerative development at an appropriate scale. It provides options so that guidance can respond to market changes and flexibly adapt to different market conditions. The SPD is a stepping stone on the way to an Area Action Plan for Wembley to be completed next year but it is important to get early guidance in place to assist the regeneration of Wembley and support the overall growth strategy.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There is an existing budget to cover the cost of consultation work for this stage.
- 4.2 The intention of producing the Wembley Link SPD is to promote regeneration both in the town centre, and assist in the regeneration of

wider Wembley City and provide a means of addressing the urgent need of redeveloping and improving Copland School.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Any legal implications arising from particular development will be dealt with accordingly through the process.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The Copland School takes the majority of its pupils from diverse ethnic backgrounds. By assisting the improvement of the school, the council will be helping these communities. The proposals also attempt to secure larger family homes that are in greater demand from many of its black and ethnic minority groups. The SPD will also support skills and other training and job placement such as by Brentin2work, or successor organizations adept at placing new migrants.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

- 7.1 Brent House is within the SPD area. The intention is to vacate Brent House when the new Civic Centre is completed. The SPD proposes suitable new uses for Brent House but the council can still retain Brent House for office uses if it so wishes.

Background Papers

Core Strategy, Adopted July 2010

Unitary Development Plan 2004

Site Specific Allocations Submission Version June 2010

London Plan consolidated with amendments 2008

Consultation Draft Replacement London Plan, October 2009

Contact Officers

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Dave Carroll, Planning Service, 020 8937 5202, dave.carroll@brent.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 1 Draft Wembley Link SPD