

Community Wealth Building
Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD

Report of: Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance

Meeting of: Full Council

Date: 28 September 2023

Wards: All

The appendices to this report have been circulated in a separate despatch of papers.

Subject: Adoption of new Local Plan

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The Council has prepared a new Local Plan. This is a set of documents that are used in making decisions on planning applications. It has the weight of the statutory development plan in planning law. The new Local Plan consists of three elements: the Strategic and Development Management Policies; Site Allocations; and Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan together with the Main Modifications and additional modifications detailed in the report (“the new Local Plan”).
- 1.2 The new Local Plan will guide development in the borough over the next 10-15 years and will play a vital role in helping deliver the council’s priorities including its social, economic and environmental objectives. It includes a robust, ambitious and innovative set of planning policies, with some key policy requirements going over and above the London Plan policies. For instance, the new Local Plan sets higher requirements for securing genuinely affordable housing. Similarly, Islington’s policies on tackling climate change go beyond the London Plan requirements in several ways, including in relation to energy efficiency and whole-life carbon.
- 1.3 The new Local Plan will play a critical role in delivering the missions set out in the Islington Together 2030 Plan and will support the council in creating a more equal future. For example:
 - **A Safe Place to Call Home** – the new Local Plan sets out ambitious and robust targets and policies to ensure that the council is able to secure genuinely affordable homes for local people, prioritising the provision of social rented housing in particular. This includes securing affordable homes on-site for major residential developments as well as financial contributions towards affordable housing for residential developments of less than 10 units. The new Local Plan also seeks to ensure that all new homes in the borough are accessible, inclusive, built to a high standard and relate positively to neighbouring residents and the local area. The new Local Plan directly helps with meeting acute housing need in the borough and reducing overcrowding, as well as enabling older and disabled residents to live independent lives.

- **Child Friendly Islington** – the new Local Plan ensures that new development and the wider environment are child friendly, by being inclusive and well connected, and by improving safety and promoting positive social contact to enable children to thrive. The new Local Plan: protects and provides social infrastructure such as schools, libraries and community centres; protects a range of spaces of all shapes and sizes, both soft and hard landscaped, where play and outdoor activity can occur; and ensures high quality housing with enough space for children and young people to lead healthy lives.
- **Fairer Together** – in addition to the delivery of genuinely affordable housing, which will help tackle inequality in the borough and improve the quality of life for residents, the new Local Plan also ensures social infrastructure is protected and the needs of different groups are considered to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet community needs. The new Local Plan also contains policies which help to protect cultural facilities and provide for new cultural uses which can help local residents to access cultural and creative opportunities and build connections to local heritage.
- **Community Wealth Building** – the new Local Plan includes a range of policies focused on protecting and strengthening the diversity of local retail and employment areas including the borough’s town centres and maintaining a diverse network of small local businesses as well as identifying sufficient land to deliver a significant uplift in space for new businesses. It also includes stronger requirements for delivering affordable workspaces from new commercial space which play an important role in supporting local organisations and business as well as delivering social value. The new Local Plan therefore contributes to the creation of a more sustainable, inclusive local economy.
- **Greener Healthier Islington** – by ensuring that the built and natural environment of the borough is protected and enhanced and that all development contributes to the achievement of the Council’s net zero carbon, climate change and transport ambitions. The new Local Plan contains a range of policies which seek to promote positive health outcomes for example limiting direct adverse health impacts by restricting hot food takeaways near schools to help tackle childhood obesity. There are also a number of policies which protect and enhance the borough’s green infrastructure and biodiversity. Finally there are multiple robust policies through at the plan which help to tackle climate change and as well as mitigate its impacts.

1.4 The new Local Plan preparation process has taken several years and culminated in an Examination by Planning Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State. The Independent Examination has now finished with the Planning Inspectors issuing their final report on 5 July 2023. The Inspectors found the new Local Plan to be ‘sound.’ This means it can be adopted by the Council with the changes (referred to as Main Modifications) set out by the Inspectors, which accompany their report. The changes set out by the Inspectors are binding on the Council. Once adopted, the new Local Plan will have full weight in decision making and replace the current Local Plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note that the Executive has recommended that Council adopts the new Local Plan.
- 2.2 To adopt the new Local Plan (attached as Appendices 5-7) with the main modifications as set out in the Inspectors' report and appendices 1-4 as well as the Council's additional modifications as set out in appendix 10 and the new, Policies Map attached as Appendix 8.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Community Wealth Building, to prepare and publish an Adoption Statement in accordance with section 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and all other necessary procedural requirements following adoption of the new Local Plan.
- 2.4 To delegate authority to the Corporate Direction of Community Wealth Building in consultation with the Executive Member of Finance, Planning and Performance to make any typographical amendments and other minor corrections to the new Local Plan documents as required prior to publication.
- 2.5 To note that the current Local Plan, which consists of the Core Strategy (2011), Development Management Policies (2013), Site Allocations (2013) and Finsbury Local Plan (Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (2013), will be superseded in its entirety by the new Local Plan.
- 2.6 To note that a consolidated version of the Integrated Impact Assessment which includes the Sustainability Appraisal and Equalities Impact Assessment has been created and updated to consider the Inspectors' final modifications and is attached at Appendix 9.

3. Background

- 3.1 Each Local Planning Authority (LPA) is required to produce a Local Plan setting out the strategic planning priorities for its area, opportunities for development and clear land use policies on what will or will not be permitted and where. The Local Plan provides the basis for making decisions on planning applications together with other material planning considerations.
- 3.2 Islington's current Local Plan covers the period up to 2026 and includes four elements: the Core Strategy (2011), Development Management Policies, Site Allocations and Finsbury Local Plan Development Plan Documents (DPDs) (all 2013). It was necessary to review the Local Plan to ensure that it is up to date in light of new evidence, and national and regional planning policy changes.
- 3.3 The new Local Plan consists of three documents: Strategic and Development Management Policies; Site Allocations; and Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan and covers the period up to 2036/37. As outlined above, implementation of the new Local Plan will play an important role in delivering the council's priorities and helping to create a more equal future for local people.

The Local Plan Process

- 3.4 The new Local Plan has been through a long process of production. This has included several rounds of consultation between 2016 and 2019. The plan was then submitted to the Secretary of State on 12 February 2020 to be Examined by independent Planning Inspectors. This examination process took several years, with consultation on pre-hearing Modifications taking place in spring 2021 and Examination Hearings taking place in September and October 2021. This was followed by further consultation on Main Modifications to the Local Plan in 2022, that included extensive additional changes. The Examination concluded with the issuing of the Inspectors report on 5 July 2023.

The Outcome of the Independent Examination

- 3.5 In their report the Inspectors found Islington's new Local Plan - meaning all three documents which comprise the Local Plan - to be 'sound' subject to changes (referred to as Main Modifications). The Main Modifications set out by the Inspectors are binding on the council. A 'sound' plan means it is compliant with planning legislation, policy and guidance. A Local Plan must be considered 'sound' in order for it to be formally adopted. In their report the Inspectors have amended some of the detailed wording and/or added consequential modifications to the Main Modifications – these are summarised in section 5 of the Integrated Impact Assessment.

Additional Modifications

- 3.6 In addition to the Main Modifications set out in the Inspectors' report and the additional minor changes previously published, some further minor amendments have been made to each document. This includes minor typographical corrections, factual updates, changes needed for consistency with other modifications and presentational amendments. These are summarised in Appendix 10.

Next Steps

- 3.7 After the new Local Plan has been adopted by the Council, a formal adoption process will be undertaken. This includes publishing an adoption notice and adoption statement for the Integrated Impact Assessment. Final designed-up and web content accessible version of each of the new Local Plan documents and the Policies Map will also be published within 6 weeks of the meeting of the Council. The current Local Plan will also be superseded.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations / Decision:

- 4.1 The Strategic and Development Management Policies, Site Allocations and Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action plan are important statutory planning documents which together form the borough's new Local Plan. The documents have been subject to extensive consultation and have been found 'sound' at Independent Examination (subject to the Main Modifications).

- 4.2 It is recommended that the Council formally adopts the new Local Plan, and the accompanying Policies Map, following successful completion of the final stages of plan making.

5. Implications

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The costs of producing the Local Plan have been met through existing budgets within the Planning and Development division. The costs of producing the final versions of the Development Plan Documents and undertaking the adoption process will amount to approximately £10,000.

Legal Implications

- 5.2 The new Local Plan has been prepared in line with relevant planning regulations. The documents have been prepared and consulted on in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 5.3 Once adopted the three documents which form the new Local Plan (as set out in paragraph 3.3.) will be development plan documents. Alongside the London Plan and the North London Waste Plan these documents will constitute the development plan for the borough. Policy designations and site allocations contained in the three documents are reflected on the accompanying Policies Map, which also forms part of the development plan. The Council must have regard to the development plan when it determines planning applications and the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4 Upon adoption of the new Local Plan (as set out in paragraph 3.2) the existing Local Plan will be wholly superseded.
- 5.5 Under the provisions of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, it is the function of the Executive to recommend to Council the adoption of Development Plan documents and the function of Full Council to adopt the Plan.

Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

- 5.6 The new Local Plan is subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). This brings together into a single framework a number of assessments of the social, environmental and economic impact of planning policies. The IIA follows the prescribed structure for the Sustainability Appraisal process as the basis of the framework while incorporating Equalities Analysis (EqA) and a Health Impact Assessments (HIA). The process is iterative, with the sustainability of the new Local Plan and its potential environmental impacts considered at each stage of plan preparation. The new Local Plan proposes a number of policies to mitigate and prevent climate change, including policies which seek specific energy efficiency standards and which promote decentralised energy networks.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 5.7 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 5.8 As part of the production of the new Local Plan, a contemporaneous process has been undertaken as part of the Integrated Impact Assessment (the IIA). This brings together into a single framework a number of assessments of the social, environmental and economic impact of planning policies. The IIA follows the prescribed structure for the Sustainability Appraisal process as the basis of the framework while incorporating Equalities Impact analysis as well. The relevant information from three IIA assessment documents prepared during the contemporaneous Local Plan production process have been consolidated into one report and are included at appendix 9 for ease of reference.
- 5.9 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. This has been updated to reflect the Inspectors' final recommendations, including the additional Modifications in relation to Gypsy and Traveller matters. The draft Local Plan policies, taken together and including proposed Modifications, are not considered discriminatory for people with any of the protected characteristics. Overall, there are unlikely to be negative impacts in relation to equality of opportunity and they are unlikely to have a negative impact on good relations between communities with protected characteristics. The intention of the new Local Plan is to address inequality within the boundaries of national and regional planning policy.

Appendices

- [Appendix 1 – Inspectors report](#)
- [Appendix 2: Strategic and Development Management Policies Main Modifications](#)
- [Appendix 3: Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan Main Modifications](#)
- [Appendix 4: Site Allocations Main Modifications](#)
- [Appendix 5: Local Plan Strategic and Development Management Policies](#)
- [Appendix 6: Local Plan Site Allocations](#)
- [Appendix 7: Local Plan Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan](#)
- [Appendix 8: Local Plan Policies Map](#)
- [Appendix 9: Integrated Impact Assessment](#)
- Appendix 10: Summary of additional modifications

Final report clearance

Authorised by:

Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance

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