

**Report of: Executive Member for Housing and Development**

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Ward(s)</b>
Executive	12.03.15	Finsbury Park

**SUBJECT: Finsbury Park Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)****1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 The Council has a long standing ambition to improve the Finsbury Park area. As a first step towards partnership working to deliver lasting change in the area, Islington, Haringey and Hackney Councils signed the Finsbury Park Accord in June 2012: a tri-borough agreement that establishes the terms of cross-borough delivery of strategic policy, planning and public services in the Finsbury Park area. One of the priorities of the Accord was the development of a tri-borough spatial strategy in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Finsbury Park Town Centre. This SPD was prepared and consulted on jointly by the three local authorities, and adopted in summer 2014.
- 1.2 Following the adoption of the joint SPD, the Council has taken the decision to prepare further detailed planning guidance for the specific area directly west of Finsbury Park Station. This area is currently the focus of development activity and the Council anticipates that further development proposals will come forward in future years. The Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD provides a further layer of detail to the broad development objectives that are outlined in the adopted Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD.
- 1.3 Public consultation on the draft SPD took place between Monday 17 November 2014 and Monday 15 December 2014. A consultation report that sets out how the Council sought the views of the local community on the draft SPD, what the responses were and how the comments have informed the proposed adoption draft is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 Once adopted, the SPD will form part of the Council's Development Plan, and will therefore be a material consideration in determining any future planning applications for the area.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the key points raised during public consultation and the proposed Council response as presented in the consultation report (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 To agree to adopt the revised Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD (Appendix 2).

## 3. Background

- 3.1 Finsbury Park Town Centre occupies a unique position at the meeting point of three London boroughs. The excellent and improving public transport connections, the area's growing creative and cultural industries and the strong historic legacy of mid-late Victorian building stock, including the Grade II\* listed former Rainbow Theatre, all contribute to the area's unique and vibrant character.
- 3.2 For many years, the town centre's location on the boundary of Islington, Haringey and Hackney has complicated the adoption of a co-ordinated approach to securing positive change. The first step in working together and overcoming cross-boundary challenges to deliver lasting change came in the form of a tri-borough agreement: the Finsbury Park Accord. In June 2012 Islington, Haringey and Hackney Councils signed the Accord to establish the terms of cross-borough delivery of strategic policy, planning and public services in the Finsbury Park area. One of the Accord's eleven key priorities was the creation of a cross-borough spatial strategy in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide the area's future development.
- 3.3 The Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD was prepared and consulted on in 2013, and was adopted by Islington, Haringey and Hackney Councils in summer 2014. The SPD sought to set out a single vision for the regeneration of Finsbury Park Town Centre, parts of which fall within each of Islington, Haringey and Hackney.
- 3.4 Following the adoption of the document, the Council took the decision to prepare further detailed planning guidance for the area within Islington directly west of Finsbury Park Station, which includes the John Jones and City North sites, Wells Terrace bus station and the neighbouring Clifton House, the retail section of Fonthill Road and a small section of Seven Sisters Road, including the former Sir George Robey Public House site. The eastern boundary of the framework area is defined by the railway lines that bisect the town centre and Finsbury Park Station. The area covered by the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD is approximately 5.3 hectares and falls within Finsbury Park Ward. The Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD is attached at Appendix 2.

### **Purpose of the SPD**

- 3.5 The area subject to this SPD is currently the focus of development activity, and the Council anticipates that further development proposals will come forward in future years. The intention behind the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD is to provide additional guidance on how the Council wishes to see the area developed through the application of its adopted planning policies to secure the highest possible quality of development within a key part of the town centre. The Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD will provide a further layer of detail to the broad development objectives that are outlined within the adopted Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD for the area directly west of Finsbury Park Station.
- 3.6 Once adopted, the framework will be used by the Council as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. National, regional and local planning policy may change and any

applications will be determined in light of the adopted planning policies at the time a decision on an application is made.

### **Vision**

- 3.7 The Council wishes to see future development proposals contribute positively to the local environment, building upon the framework area's strong character and capitalising on its unique characteristics. New development will contribute to the further development of the framework area as the commercial and cultural heart of Finsbury Park, reflect the area's status as a District Town Centre and focus for investment, respect existing townscape context, and contribute to the area's vitality and vibrancy.
- 3.8 Future development in the SPD area will be of an appropriate scale, respond to key heritage and amenity considerations, be of high quality contextual design, explore opportunities to improve connectivity and contribute to achieving a high quality mixed use environment. To assist in achieving this, the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD provides guidance on appropriate building heights, heritage and amenity considerations, design quality, movement, connectivity and land use, all ensuring that the area's unique character is enhanced and protected.

### **Area objectives**

- 3.9 Based on Core Strategy Policy CS 2 (Finsbury Park), the Council's Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2013) sets out high-level objectives for the wider Finsbury Park Town Centre. The future development of certain sites will play a key role in:
- enhancing the vitality of the Town Centre as a retail centre;
  - the redevelopment of the low-density employment sites around the station to provide mixed-use development including housing, employment, retail and leisure uses;
  - providing between 400-600 new homes;
  - re-providing storage and distribution floor space;
  - improving transport interchange and public spaces, with increased legibility and design that leads to an increased sense of safety;
  - improving walking and cycling connections to the park, Highbury Fields/Highbury Corner and the Emirates (Arsenal) Stadium;
  - respecting and enhancing the historic character of the area; and
  - improving and providing new open space; Finsbury Park ward and neighbouring areas are identified as some of the highest priority areas for increasing the provision of public open space.

These core objectives provide a broad framework within which to bring forward the area's regeneration.

### **Opportunities in the wider Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD**

- 3.10 The following opportunities were identified within the wider Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD (July 2014) as having the potential to deliver elements of the above key objectives:
- I. Strengthen the existing retail offer in the town centre, including on Fonthill Road, Stroud Green Road, Blackstock Road and Seven Sisters Road, to include the strengthening of the specialist retail functions, diversification of the retail offer, promotion of creative industries and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the improvement of shop fronts and the surrounding public realm.
  - II. Promote mixed use development and employment and training opportunities around Finsbury Park Station, including: housing, employment (office, light industrial, storage and distribution,

and affordable space for SMEs), retail, arts and leisure, in particular at the following sites: City North, John Jones, the Rowan's site and other allocated sites and the site of the former Sir George Robey public house.

- III. Improve the function and role of the station by delivering works that will facilitate an improved and less confusing transport interchange, enhancing connections and safety through high quality public realm. This would include improvements to the station itself, such as the western ticket hall, and improvements to Station Place, Well's Terrace and the areas under the railway viaducts (e.g. by improving the area through public art and improved lighting).
- IV. Enhance walking and cycling routes, strengthening links between Finsbury Park, the Parkland Walk, Gillespie Park, Highbury Corner, Highbury Fields, Caledonian Park and the Emirates (Arsenal) Stadium, encouraging walking and cycling for local residents and visitors. This should include joint working with TfL to improve pedestrian and cycling links across Seven Sisters Road.
- V. Protect and enhance the historic character of the area through high quality design, respecting the local context of Finsbury Park and its surroundings; in particular by improving the setting of its listed buildings (i.e. the former Rainbow Theatre and 85 Stroud Green Road) and improving the appearance and condition of the area's Victorian building stock, both within and outside conservation areas (e.g. the triangle site).
- VI. Improve connections to the wider area by establishing a clear physical and visual link between the station and the Park (Finsbury Park), and improve access to the station from the west (i.e. encouraging redevelopment of the City North site).

### **Key principles of the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD**

3.11 Based on the above area objectives and opportunities, and the area's context, the Council is seeking to ensure that new development within the framework area is brought forward in line with the following key principles:

- A. New development should provide an appropriate response that is respectful to the townscape context of the framework area, reflecting existing scale, form and character. Development proposals should be designed in line with Islington's adopted policies for building heights.
- B. Development proposals should conserve and enhance the historic character of the area. This includes but is not limited to the setting of the Grade II\* former Rainbow Theatre at 232 Seven Sisters Road, the locally listed buildings at 4-5 Goodwin Street, 240 Seven Sisters Road and 149 Fonthill Road and the area's historic building stock. Development proposals should also respect the scale, grain and appearance of historic street scenes.
- C. Development should achieve an acceptable noise environment for future occupiers of any residential development taking into account the constraints imposed by the major road network and railway infrastructure.
- D. Buildings should be of high quality design that represents an appropriate response to the surrounding streetscape and townscape context. Buildings should also contribute towards achieving safe, direct, active and overlooked pedestrian routes and should not unacceptably harm the amenity of any nearby residential properties.
- E. New development should, where possible, improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and

bus passengers, in particular on routes to Finsbury Park Station and bus stations, including the nearby areas beneath the railway viaducts and the future pedestrian route into Finsbury Park Station via Goodwin Street.

- F. New development should contribute to the achievement of a high density, high quality mixed use environment with uses including retail, commercial, housing, including affordable housing and public and community leisure space. Intensification and redevelopment offers the opportunity for renewed employment floorspace and a new business hub in the area. The provision of affordable accommodation for small and medium size enterprises (SME) within the framework area is also strongly encouraged.

### **Public consultation**

- 3.12 The Finsbury Park Regeneration Board has acted as the steering group during the development of the SPD. This includes Executive and Cabinet Members from Islington, Haringey and Hackney. The board reviewed the consultation draft SPD at its meeting on 7 October 2014 and the proposed draft for adoption on 22 January 2015. Finsbury Park Ward Councillors were briefed on 4 November 2014.
- 3.13 Public consultation took place between Monday 17 November 2014 and Monday 15 December 2014, allowing four weeks for the local community to express their views and feedback on the draft SPD. Comments submitted up to 22 December 2014 have been considered, Three drop-in information sessions were held during the consultation period, attended by around 30 people in total.
- 3.14 Approximately 3,000 information letters were distributed to residents, businesses and stakeholders in the local area. Information about the consultation was posted on the Council's website. Full details are set out in the consultation report at Appendix 1.
- 3.15 The objectives of the public consultation were to:
- give local residents, businesses and stakeholders the opportunity to feedback on the draft SPD and which has informed the final SPD;
  - understand local views on the draft SPD;
  - demonstrate that the Council is being open and transparent; and
  - answer any questions that people may have about the draft SPD.
- 3.16 Twenty three responses were received in total. This response rate was lower than anticipated. For the tri-borough Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD that was consulted on in 2013, 523 responses were received. However, the boundary of the adopted tri-borough SPD and the consultation covered a much larger area, and the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD builds upon principles already established. Therefore consultees may have felt little need to provide further comments.

### **Feedback from the consultation**

- 3.17 Five main messages emerged from the responses that were received:
- General support for the six key principles of the SPD.
  - General support for the building heights guidance set out in the document. This supports key principle A of the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD. A small number of comments expressed concerns that the building heights guidance may restrict development activity on certain sites.

- General support for respecting and enhancing the character of the area, including the retention of the former Sir George Robey public house. This broadly supports objective B of the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD and supports the Council's statement that it wishes to see the building retained and brought back into use at section 2.5.3 of the document. One consultee objected to the SPD's statement on the retention of the building.
- Support for measures that will improve the local environment for cyclists. This supports key principle E of the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD.
- Concerns relating to the potential impacts of new development in the area, including the impacts of increased population, increased pollution levels and disruption as a result of construction work.

### **Changes to the SPD**

- 3.18 The majority of comments expressed support for the SPD's core objectives and proposals. Therefore there are no changes to the SPD's six key principles.
- 3.19 A small number of changes have been made to the document in response to the comments that were received. A list of the main textual changes is included at Appendix C of Appendix 1.
- 3.20 A number of small textual changes have been made, including clarification of meaning where appropriate.

### **SPD adoption**

- 3.21 Where appropriate, the SPD has been revised to take account of any relevant planning issues raised during public consultation, and is attached at Appendix 2.

## **4. Implications**

### **Financial implications:**

- 4.1 The cost of producing the SPD and consultation costs has been met through existing budgets within the Planning and Development division.

### **Legal Implications:**

- 4.2 The Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD has been prepared in line with the relevant planning regulations. The statutory policy basis for the SPD is Policy CS 2 in the Council's Core Strategy.

The Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD has been subject to consultation in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). In deciding whether to approve the SPD the Executive must have due and proper regard to the consultation responses and to the revisions to the draft SPD proposed as a result of those responses.

Following adoption, the SPD will assist with the assessment of any future planning applications. However, the SPD will be without any prejudice to any decisions that the Council may take as Local Planning Authority in respect of individual site/s and any future planning applications.

### **Environmental Implications:**

- 4.3 New development within the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD area will require detailed planning consent and so will have to comply with all policy requirements on sustainability, including, where appropriate submission of a Sustainable Design and Construction Statement, which will include an Energy Assessment.

A Screening Statement to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been prepared. The screening has concluded that an SEA does not need to be prepared as the SPD does not introduce new policies but provides guidance on already adopted Local Plans that relate to the regeneration of the Finsbury Park Town Centre. These policies have been sufficiently appraised in the Sustainability Appraisals of the Local Plan documents adopted by the Council. It is considered that the Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD will not result in any additional significant effects to those already identified through the higher level Sustainability Appraisals. The SPD will provide more detailed guidance to ensure that the potential positive effects identified within the Sustainability Appraisal for Islington's Core Strategy, including opportunities for protecting heritage assets and improving design quality, are realised.

#### 4.4 **Resident Impact Assessment:**

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.

A full Resident Impact Assessment was completed on 14 November 2014 and is available on request.

The SPD sets out requirements for new developments to meet that may have positive equality impacts relating to improving accessibility, reducing opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour and encouraging the provision of affordable housing and affordable accommodation for small and medium sized enterprises (SME).

## 5. **Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

- 5.1 The SPD will be used by the Council to assess planning applications within the SPD area. It will be a material consideration in the determination of any planning application for the area in future years. The public consultation process has enabled local people and other interested parties to engage with and feedback on the planning brief at an early stage.
- 5.2 The SPD has been reviewed against the comments received as part of the public consultation, and, where necessary, amended in the light of any relevant planning concerns raised, whilst continuing to comply with relevant planning policies. Adoption of the SPD will provide greater certainty to both the local community and other interested parties about the nature of development that is likely to be acceptable to the local planning authority.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD Consultation Report
- Appendix 2 – Finsbury Park Development Framework SPD document

Final report clearance:

**Signed by:**



26.2.15

Executive Member for Housing and Development      Date

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