

Appendix 2 – Summary of draft Local Plan

Outlined below is a summary of the draft Local Plan, including key policy positions and changes from the current Local Plan. However, the nature of the Local Plan is that it covers a wide range of policy areas, types of development and different areas / constraints within the borough. It is therefore an extensive document. The draft at Appendix 1 should therefore be reviewed for detailed provisions relating to any specific aspects of interest as the summary below cannot fully reflect the extent and detail of all the policies in the draft Plan:

Spatial Strategy

- A. The Spatial Vision and Strategy, and Strategic Objectives (Chapter 1) provide the overarching narrative for the document from which detailed provisions / policies follow.
- B. In general terms, the overarching spatial strategy for the Local Plan remains to direct the majority of new development to the Harrow and Wealdstone Opportunity Area, with other town centres accommodating more modest levels of growth commensurate to their character, role and function. The predominately suburban areas of the borough (outside sustainable locations) will retain their character as low-density, family housing. Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Open Space will be retained and enhanced. The borough's network of town and district centres will be retained and managed to promote vibrancy and vitality. Existing employment land will be retained. Existing infrastructure will be retained, and additional infrastructure required to support the level of development envisaged by the Local Plan. Social and environmental assets will be protected and enhanced, including a net gain in biodiversity. The location and design of new development will respond to climate change.

High Quality Growth

- C. This chapter outlines the design policies that will apply to all development proposals where relevant. They largely reflect an evolution of current Local Plan policies, updated in the context of the increased emphasis nationally and regionally for 'design-led' development, 'good growth' and 'beauty and placemaking'.
- D. The new Local Plan introduces for the first time a specific policy on building heights, as required by the London Plan. It defines tall buildings as being 7 storeys or 21 metres (from the ground level to the highest point of the building) across the entire borough. (Note: the current Local Plan definition is 10 storeys / 30 metres within the Opportunity Area). The draft identifies the Opportunity Area as having areas suitable for tall buildings and identifies appropriate heights in specific areas within the Opportunity Area (based on the evidence base supporting the Local Plan). The policy also specifically indicates that areas outside the Opportunity Area are not suitable for tall

buildings; the current Local Plan is comparatively silent on this (with guidance being provided by way of the recently adopted Tall Buildings (Building Heights) SPD).

Heritage

- E. The draft Heritage policies are largely an evolution of policies in the existing Local Plan, updated to reflect new designations (i.e. Local Areas of Special Character) and to address weaknesses with existing policies (i.e. securing the benefits sought through enabling development of heritage assets).

Meeting Harrow's Housing Needs

- F. The housing policies in this chapter commit the Council to deliver a minimum 16,040 (net) homes over the Plan period (2021-2041), based on the annual London Plan target for Harrow of 802 homes per year. The Plan specifically commits to delivery of a minimum of 8,020 homes per year between 2019 and 2029, as required by the London Plan. It also identifies broad locations as follows:

- (i) Harrow and Wealdstone Opportunity Area – minimum 7,500 homes
- (ii) Outside the Opportunity Area (existing permissions / allocations) – minimum 2,500 homes
- (iii) Small sites (unallocated sites below 0.25 ha and in accessible locations) – minimum 4,125 homes
- (iv) Windfall sites

At present there is a modest shortfall against the proposed housing target over the full plan period but the ten-year London Plan requirement can be met. Additional sites may come forward during the plan-making process to close the current shortfall.

- G. A key underlying element of the draft housing policies is the need to protect existing family sized housing stock (three or more bedrooms) within the borough and increase the rate of delivery of family sized housing in new development (including in flatted development). Such an approach reflects the housing need identified in Harrow's evidence base. The draft Plan therefore sets a target to ensure a minimum of 25% of new dwellings delivered are three bed (or more) family sized dwellings. Additionally, it seeks to ensure the size of any 2-bedroom dwellings is capable of accommodating 4 bed spaces, so that they can be used by families, if household circumstances change and avoid overcrowding.
- H. The draft Plan also proposes greater control over the conversion of existing family sized housing into flats by introducing a dwelling size threshold for conversions (i.e. internal floor area above 130 sqm) and a location criteria where they may be permitted (i.e. Public Transport Accessibility Levels 3-6). Additional requirements are also proposed to avoid the over concentration of flat conversions within a street. Where

such a conversion is accepted, the Plan seeks re-provision of a three-bed family size home as part of any conversion.

- I. In terms of affordable housing, the draft Plan sets a strategic target of 50% affordable homes (consistent with the London Plan), with a 70% / 30% tenure split between low-cost rented tenure (with social rent as a priority) and intermediate tenure (share ownership / London Living Rent). This represents greater emphasis on low-cost rented tenure (currently Local Plan policy is for 60%) and a more genuinely affordable tenure (social rent) within the 70% (rather than 'affordable rent' tenures). The policy will apply to major development (i.e. 10 dwellings or more), which will be required to deliver affordable housing onsite to deliver mixed and inclusive communities, unless exceptional circumstances apply to make off site /or a financial contribution.
- J. Several new policies are included to reflect the requirements of the NPPF or London Plan [i.e. small sites (less than 0.25 ha), older persons' accommodation, self-build housing] or to reflect new development types since the current Local Plan was adopted (i.e. large scale purpose built shared accommodation) or where the current Plan is silent (i.e. housing estate renewal, purpose built student accommodation). The policy approach to matters such as Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO), supported and sheltered housing, is proposed to be strengthened in the Plan.

Local Economy

- K. The policies in the Local Economy chapter respond to broader changes in society and the economy with respect to how town centres function since the current Local Plan was adopted. Only modest growth in town centre use (retail, food / beverage, leisure and entertainment) floorspace is envisaged (based on the Local Plan evidence base). With national policy and legislative changes, the scope to manage specific uses ('use classes') within town centres has been diminished, so the town centre policies seek to focus on the function of town centres in the town centre hierarchy (i.e. metropolitan, major, district, local) and promoting vibrancy and vitality of the borough's town centres.
- L. A strategic policy specifically for the Harrow and Wealdstone Opportunity Area is also proposed. This sets out the overarching principles for development within the Opportunity Area, given its focus for new development and infrastructure within the borough. It will replace the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan. The policy provides the basis for any subsequent, detailed master plans within the Opportunity Area, such as that proposed to be prepared for Harrow.
- M. In terms of employment use (i.e. industrial, offices), the draft Local Plan seeks to protect existing industrial floorspace / yard space from any further loss as across Harrow / London, too much industrial land has been lost given recent changes to the economy (growth in data

centres, warehouses for online retailing etc). A modest increase in industrial floorspace (6,000 sqm) will be sought within established industrial areas, based on the Local Plan evidence base.

- N. In terms of offices, the evidence base indicates there is sufficient office space within the borough for the plan period to 2041. However, the draft Local Plan policies will require that any loss of office space will continue to be monitored and managed in accordance with up-to-date evidence, given the current uncertainty around office space provision post-Covid. The policy identifies that when releasing office floorspace, this follows a sequential approach which seeks to ensure that office space within the Metropolitan Town Centre, and then other town centres is the least preferable to be released, compared to offices in out of centre locations.
- O. The draft plan also seeks to promote the night-time and evening economy, culture and creative industries, and tourism and visitor accommodation, reflecting the emerging importance of these elements of the economy and to support Council strategies and investment in these areas.

Community Infrastructure

- P. A new strategic policy has been included to set out the overarching approach to Social Infrastructure, and infrastructure more broadly. Policies in this chapter continue the current Local Plan approach of retaining existing community infrastructure and links the provision of new infrastructure to the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that will identify the infrastructure required to support the level of development and population growth envisaged during the plan period.

Green Infrastructure

- Q. This chapter includes a new strategic policy that sets the overarching policy direction for green infrastructure in the borough. Policy in relation to Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land continues to reflect the national and regional policy. Open space policy continues to seek to retain open space, but has been updated to provide potential scope for essential community infrastructure uses on open space where there are no viable alternative sites; this reflects practice in reality in recent years.
- R. The policy position around biodiversity has been updated in line with new requirements of the Environment Act requiring at least 10% biodiversity net gain from new development. The draft Plan is proposing that 20% biodiversity net gain is achieved from new development, reflecting the significantly degraded biodiversity in the borough.
- S. Policies in this chapter also seek to strengthen (and consolidate) requirements around Urban Greening, Landscaping and Trees and a new policy relating to food growing proposes to require the retention

of existing allotments/community gardens and encourage the incorporation of new food growing infrastructure in developments.

Responding to the Climate and Nature Emergency

- T. This chapter includes an overarching strategic policy that sets the direction for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the recovery of habitat. It has been informed by the recently adopted Climate and Nature Strategy.
- U. The chapter also includes a policy (Policy CN1 Sustainable Design and Retrofit) that sets the Council's definition of net zero buildings, detailing that all new development should be net zero carbon in operation considering both regulated (space heating, hot water, 'hard wired electrical equipment' i.e. lighting) and unregulated (appliances) carbon emissions, utilising on-site electricity generation and using offsetting of carbon emissions as a last resort. This is an evolution of existing London Plan policy that only addresses 'regulated' emissions. Retrofit standards for net zero have been updated in this policy.
- V. This chapter also contains policies in relation to reducing flood risk, sustainable drainage and waterway management, which have been updated from the existing Local Plan to reflect the West London Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

Managing Waste and Supporting the Circular Economy

- W. The policies in this chapter seek to continue to safeguard existing waste facilities in the borough (i.e. the Civic Amenity Site) and ensure adequate waste facilities in new development. Policies have also been updated to reflect emerging requirements from the Environment Act with respect to waste and recycling. The chapter also introduces the concept of the circular economy for building construction and adaptation, with a new policy that reinforces the London Plan standards for major applications and indicates that the circular economy principles should be considered for all types of development, where possible.

Transport and Movement

- X. The policies in this chapter largely reflect the requirements set out in the London Plan. The overarching strategic policy reflects the Council's new Transport Strategy. Throughout the document, including in the policy relating to parking standards, provision of electric vehicle charging points is required, with the intention that these requirements exceed the minimum requirements of the London Plan; this will support the Council's recently adopted Electric Vehicle Strategy.