

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	12 June 2012
Subject:	Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation document
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director Place Shaping
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Environment and Enterprise
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation document (This enclosure will be circulated separately)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report summarises the comments made to consultation on the Preferred Option document in January 2012 and the changes that have been made to prepare it for pre-submission consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to consider and comment on the pre-submission version of the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan which is to be reported to Cabinet at its meeting of 20th June 2012.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To progress production of the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan in

Section 2 – Report

Harrow's Core Strategy and the London Plan identify the Harrow and Wealdstone area as location for further growth and development. It is a corporate priority to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) to give effect to this strategic designation. The AAP is being prepared jointly with the Greater London Authority and other partners and has already been the subject of two rounds of public consultation:

Issues and Options – 13 May to 24 June 2011; and
Preferred Option – 12 January to 23 February 2012

This report introduces the next stage of the AAP's production – the 'pre-submission' stage, and explains how its preparation has responded to the comments received to consultation on the Council's Preferred Option document.

Options Considered

The preparation of the AAP, as a corporate priority, has come about due to the significant existing and on-going development interest in key strategic sites within Harrow town centre and Wealdstone and the identified need to positively respond to such proposals, providing leadership and detailed policy guidance as to the appropriateness and contribution such development is to make in delivering Harrow's vision for the area. The option not to progress with the preparation of the AAP can therefore be discounted.

In terms of policy content, and the allocation of sites for different land uses, the 2012 consultation on the AAP represented the Council's 'preferred option'. The purpose in publishing that document was to seek views and opinions on whether the option put forward had community support. In the most part, the comments received were positive and do not prompt a major re-think to the policies or the suite of site allocations. Therefore, the option to significantly alter the policies or site allocations at this stage would need to be supported by robust evidence to justify the change, and would likely necessitate the need to undertake a further round of draft plan public consultation. In the absence of such evidence, this option is also dismissed.

Comments Received and the Council's Response

In total, we received around 500 specific comments from 58 respondents to the AAP Preferred consultation. The detailed comments, and the Council's response to each, are provided in schedule to be published and made

available on the website alongside the AAP Pre-Submission Consultation document.

The following section of the report summarises the main issues raised through consultation on the AAP Preferred Option and outlines the Council's proposed response to these and the changes made to the document.

The report does not include reference to policies and allocations where the comments were all in support; offered only minor change; or no comments were received.

Policy AAP 1: Development within Harrow town centre

There was general support for the policy, especially the requirements for high quality design. Most of the comments received sought to expand on the existing policy to provide greater clarity and ensure the objectives for the Heart of Harrow and the sub area were adequately reflected. Changes have therefore been made to reflect these where they seek to strengthen the policy. In other instances, in preference to amending the AAP policy, reference has been made to other relevant policies in the AAP or in the Development Management DPD rather than repeating these again here.

Policy AAP 2: Station Road

Most comments sought clarity on the definition of terms used. Changes have therefore been made to provide this. Support is given to the restoration of Safari Cinema and for improving the environs of Station Road. A further policy has been added that advocates the planting of street trees, the segregation of new cycle provision and the establishment of a central reserve, to promote the boulevard character to which Policy AAP2 refers.

Policy AAP 3: Wealdstone

All comments received were in support of the regeneration of Wealdstone through the policy. The only change proposed is to the reference to the 'masterplans' in chapter 6, where it was agreed that the reference should be proposals being in general conformity with the 'site allocation' and 'development principles' set out in chapter 6. This change applies throughout the AAP.

Policy AAP 4: Achieving a high standard of development throughout the Intensification Area

All of the comments were again supportive of the policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide development standards applicable across the whole of the Heart of Harrow, whilst leaving policies AAP1 – 3 to add further detail specific to the broad sub areas. Given the purpose of the Policy, it was felt that it should really come before the sub area policies, so there is a change in sequencing.

Policy AAP 5: Density and use of development

There was opposition from some residents to Policy AAP5 D, which sought to enable consideration of densities in excess of the London Plan density guidelines where development proposals also exceeded the London Plan, Core Strategy and AAP design and environmental standards and made an appropriate contribution to on and off-site infrastructure provision. To overcome these concerns a change has therefore been made to the policy to clearly state that proposals that represent 'over development' of a site will be resisted.

Policy AAP 6: Development height

There was strong opposition to the policy but for different reasons. Some object to the need for tall buildings within the intensification area due to their potential for impact upon the skyline and the Hill. Other wish the guidance to be more detailed, while the agents for the Dandara site object to much of the policy criteria and design parameters, which they consider goes against the Secretary of State's findings from their appeal. The latter also objects to the requirement to provide public rooftop access on tall buildings as being inconsistent with the London Plan.

In light of the comments, significant amendments have been made to the Policy to clarify the strategic approach to tall or taller buildings; the potential impacts to be addressed; their role, function and location; the criteria against which proposals are to be assessed; and the integration with the protection of local views. Other minor amendments are made to overcome the issues of inconsistency identified. Further material is also provided to help illustrate what is intended through application of the Policy.

Policy AAP 8: Enhancing the setting of Harrow Hill

This policy is informed by the Harrow Views Assessment (2012) and is denounced as flawed by the agents for Dandara and broadly supported by everyone else including the GLA. In response to the comments, the AAP has been amended to incorporate assessment criteria drawn from the detailed visual management guidance within the Harrow Views Assessment (2012). Other changes are made to better clarify the relationship between associated policies within the Development Management DPD, and the need for development proposals that would be subject to protected views to submit a views assessment.

Policy AAP 9: Flood risk and sustainable drainage within the Intensification Area

The comments received sought to make the policy more robust, including dealing with surface water flood risk and avoiding increasing the impermeability of the AAP area. These will help strengthen the policy and have therefore been made in the AAP.

Site 2 – Kodak and Zoom Leisure

At the time of consultation on the AAP Preferred Option, consultation was also being undertaken on the Land Securities planning application for the site. A number of representations drew on differences between the two, including:

- the location of the school, which most agreed would be best located on the Zoom Leisure portion of the site;
- the supermarket, which received general support; and
- the footbridge over the main railway line, which most thought was important and should be required of the planning application.

Of the two masterplans, the one submitted with the planning application was noted as being preferred. There was support for the delivery of family housing, new employment space and community facilities, and especially for the concept of a green corridor running through the site to Headstone Manor. A number of representations noted concerns over the loss of open space on Zoom Leisure in terms of its impact on Headstone Manor's setting but not in respect of the loss of the playing pitches.

However, a common theme of the representations is the concerns over traffic impact on local roads and, in particular, the Harrow View / Headstone Drive junction, with most believing that the recent construction of Good Will to All site has compromised a comprehensive redevelopment of the junction being advanced.

Given the comments received, the stage the planning application has reached, and the comprehensive nature of the evidence produced in support of the planning application, the AAP has been changed to more closely reflect the Land Securities proposal in terms of uses, quantum and layout. As the Land Securities proposal is an outline application, much will be left to reserve matters. In consultation with Design for London, further changes have therefore been made in the AAP to clearly articulate the detailed design considerations that will need to be considered through subsequent applications for the reserve matters.

With respect to traffic impacts, these have been modelled by Transport for London (TfL). The Council, TfL and Land Securities are now considering the mitigation measures to be put in place to address the identified impacts.

Site 3 – Teachers Centre

The AAP proposal met with strong opposition from Governors of the Whitefriars Community School. In particular, they felt the wording made it unclear as to the future of their school on the site and were concerned with the loss of their playing fields, and the hall and gymnasium which they share with the Teachers Centre. Changes have therefore been made to the text to assure the community that the school is to be retained on the site and that the proposal for a new secondary school on the remainder of site would include the re-provision of the hall and gym, if these are not to be retained, and would require shared use of such facilities between the schools. The text has also been amended to clarify that, in accordance with the Core Strategy, there is to be no net reduction in the amount of open space provision on the site but that

its reconfiguration is likely to be required to provide for the new school, and to ensure an element of wider public use of the open space is maintained.

The other main concern raised by a number of respondents was the impact on traffic, with many citing that the Teachers Centre is some distance from public transport and that the local roads were already congested as a result of the existing schools in close proximity to the site, including the Whitefriars Community School, Salvatorian College and the Sacred Heart Language College.

Given that the site has a long history of education use, the site remains the Council's preferred option for a new secondary school. Further changes have been made to extend the boundary of site to take in the builder's yard on Cecil Road, the Whitefriars Industrial Estate and Aerospace House. The designation will provide for continued industrial use of these sites as well as for further education use, enabling the consideration of a much larger parcel of land to provide further options to accommodate a new school more comfortably on the site. It will also enable wider options to be considered to mitigate the traffic impacts arising from any school proposal. While TfL have modelled these impacts, the mitigation will need to respond to the final school proposal for the site, and being a free school, this remains unknown at this time. Further consultation with the community will therefore need to take place prior to application coming forward for a new school on the site. The Council will need to be satisfied that any traffic impacts can be adequately mitigated for any proposal to be considered acceptable. This will need to take account of the cumulative impacts of the new and existing schools and will require wider solutions to be considered. Amendments are made to the AAP to reflect these requirements.

Site 4 – Colart

A number of representations oppose the proposals for housing on the site and wish to see it retained for employment. The Salvatorian College also expressed a desire to expand onto part of the site.

The Employment Land Review highlights the lack of demand for industrial uses in the borough, especially large industrial units. The key consideration for this site is in securing new jobs equivalent in number to that achieved when Colart were in operation. This is to be achieved through retention of the Winsor and Newton building but will likely require additional employment provision to be made elsewhere on the site, potentially the area fronting the High Street which is subject to flooding. This part of the site could also provide for community use as an alternative to employment provision should the retention and conversion of the existing unit(s) prove to be a more viable option. As with Kodak and other identified industrial sites, enabling residential development will be required to deliver new employment space and community use, and therefore the allocation of the site for employment-led mixed use development has not changed.

Following further discussion with the College, the Council has requested they submit further evidence to support their proposal for expansion. While this is yet to be received, the AAP has been amended to accommodate this

possibility but specifies that this is subject to the College providing the robust evidence required, including their ability to purchase the land. In making provision for the College's expansion, it is appropriate to include both the petrol station and adjoining workshop unit within that building envelope.

Site 5 – Wealdstone multi-storey car park

The representations to the proposal for this site were limited but mixed. One saw the need for a supermarket as being crucial to support the town centre, two were concerned with the potential loss of the parking and the impact of this on the vitality of the town centre, while Land Securities questioned the deliverability and suitability of the site for a supermarket.

Based on the comments received, and the fact that the Kodak site will now make provision for a large supermarket, the option of pursuing a supermarket on this site does not seem realistic. In the absence of a clear proposal for the site, it is proposed not to allocate it in the AAP. However this would not restrict proposals from coming forwards but would require it to be considered on its merits against the policies of the AAP and the delivery of the sub area objectives.

Station Road Sub Area

Many comments were received on the current state of Station Road, in terms of its low environmental quality, traffic congestion and the difficulties experienced by cyclists and pedestrians. The majority of the representations were therefore supportive of the AAP proposals. However, a number of them raised concern with the expansion of Tesco's as potentially undermining the sub-area objective to continue to maintain and support the small independent shops and businesses present along much of Station Road. A number also wish to know what the future plans are for the Magistrates Court, and query why it is not included as a site in the AAP.

The application to extend the existing Tesco store has already been approved, although yet to be constructed. Evidence was submitted with the application, and independently verified, that showed there would be limited impact on the existing retail within both Harrow town centre and Station Road.

With regard to the Magistrates Court, the Council understands this was recently sold by the Department for Justice to a charity organisation, but as yet their intentions for the site remain unknown. It is therefore not appropriate to include the site in the AAP and provide speculation as to its future use, noting that, if the site was to come forward for development, the policies of the AAP and the objectives for this sub-area provide sufficient basis upon which to determine the merits of the proposal.

Site 10 – Civic Centre

The number of representations made to this site allocation is limited but they note the amount of land currently given over to parking on the site and are therefore generally supportive of development. Issues raised are with the proposed building heights on parts of the site (i.e. those fronting Station Road

and Railway Approach); whether it is necessary to demolish the existing Civic Centre; where a new Civic Centre is to be located; and the need for the pedestrian access through to Wealdstone Station to be prominent and large.

To respond to the above issues a number of changes are proposed to the allocation and its text. These include the realignment of the pedestrian route to provide a more straight line of sight through to the Station from the new civic space; a widening of the pedestrian access and green space; the requirement for an active frontage along the new pedestrian route; a reduction in buildings heights on parts of the site; and a requirement that non-active frontages on Station Road be stepped back.

Harrow Western Gateway Sub Area

The representations note that this sub area is dominated by several large developments which were approved and commenced before the AAP was drafted. They note little can be done in respect of these developments. However there is a clear desire, and one that is shared by the Council, to see the Bradstowe House development completed.

The primary concern raised to the sub area is the inclusion of the northern side of Pinner Road within the AAP boundary, which a number of respondents say should not be subject to intensive development given the residential nature of the area and the fact it borders the recreation ground.

The reason why the AAP boundary extended to the northern side of Pinner Road was not to facilitate development in this location but rather to take account of the junction and the connection between the sub-area and use and access to Harrow Recreation Ground. This is also the reason why the boundary of the Wealdstone West sub area extends to include Headstone Manor, in ensuring development of Zoom Leisure had regard to the setting of this heritage asset. Likewise, within the Wealdstone East sub area, the boundary included Bryon Recreation Ground to ensure development on the Driving Centre respected the open space. However, in light of the comments received, the boundary has been amended as cross boundary matters are adequately dealt with by appropriate amendments to AAP Policy 5.

Harrow Town Centre Sub Area

There is strong support for the improvements of Harrow bus and tube stations, the creation of the link through Havelock Place, and for the enhancements to Lowlands Recreation Ground. Greater clarity is wanted about the provision of the new central library and Civic Centre, and there is general disappointment that the AAP does not make provision for a theatre in the town centre. Concerns over buildings heights are also raised.

Amendments have therefore been made to the site allocations to state Council's preference for the location of a new central library and for the new Civic Centre. The latter also includes the consideration of flexible democratic space to be shared and used as possible theatre space. The issue of buildings heights is addressed earlier in this report in respect of changes to AAP Policy 6.

Site 19 – 51 College Road

The vast majority of representations received to this site allocation were from the agents representing the site. In particular, they do not want the site plan to be so specific as to show a potential site layout; have requested that the figures for housing and jobs to be expressed as targets and not a minima; have requested the design consideration state a building up to 19 storeys in height; query the prescriptive illustration of the proposed view to be created; seek the range of appropriate town centre uses to be included in either the leading or supporting uses described for the site; query viability and policy compliance in meeting some of the objectives for the site; and seek changes to the terminology used.

In response to the representations, changes have been made to the AAP where these sensibly add clarity. Changes have also been made to enable flexibility in the consideration of the design and layout of the final scheme to address the objectives for the site and sub-area, which have not changed.

Site 23 – Lyon Road

The comments received in respect of the Lyon Road development were concerned with building heights and, in particular, the impact upon neighbouring developments and the potential to undermine the sub area objective to create a transition between the town centre and the residential area just beyond the town centre boundary.

The above concerns were considered in the context of the recent granting of the planning application for the Lyon Road site. The changes to the site in the AAP are therefore made to reflect the now permitted development.

New sites proposed

Proposals were put forward by four landowners for the inclusion of their sites in the AAP allocations. These were:

- Plantation Garden Centre, Kenton Rd / Peterborough Rd, for retail and residential use;
- Wealdstone Police Station, Wealdstone town centre, for a residential-led development providing retail units within the central courtyard
- Areospace House, Cecil Road, for residential-led mixed use development to enable relocation and expansion of the existing business to another more suitable site within the borough.
- Wickes House, Station Road, which the land owner states is to be vacated by the current tenants in September 2013, and is therefore being proposed for active ground floor uses fronting Station Road and hotel or residential use above and across the remainder of the site;

The Plantation Garden site is outside of the current AAP boundary area. Nevertheless, the land is designated Metropolitan Open Land, and therefore its allocation for more intensive development would be at odds with the Core Strategy.

With respect to the Wealdstone Police Station, the agents acting on behalf of the Metropolitan Police were to provide an updated estates strategy or other evidence as appropriate, to demonstrate how provision to serve the area is proposed to be met. To date such evidence has not been provided, and without it, the allocation of the site for change of use would be at odds with the Core Strategy (Policy CS1X)

As already outlined above, the Areospace House site is to be included in the extended boundary of the Teachers Centre site and allocated for continued industrial use as well as education / training / community and economic (non-town centre) uses.

While the agents for Wickes House submitted statements to support their proposals for a change in use, the Council notes that the site is currently occupied (at least for another year); that no marketing of the site has taken place upon which to gauge levels of interest; the building is of good quality in comparison to most stock within the AAP area; and that the proposals put forward (with the exception of the hotel development) would be inconsistent with the objective of the AAP to renew the office market. In light of these matters, and without further robust evidence, it is not considered appropriate to include the site as an allocation within the AAP at this time. If the site was to come forward for development, the policies of the AAP and the objectives for this sub-area provide sufficient basis upon which to determine the merits of the proposal.

Next steps

The pre-submission AAP will be published for consultation under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (previously 'Regulation 27'). This represents the final stage of consultation, being the version of the AAP that it is intended to submit for Examination in Public, and requires consultees to consider whether the plan meets legal requirements and is 'sound'.

To be a sound plan, the AAP must be:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with national policy

In relation to each of these tests:

Positively Prepared

The NPPF states that plans should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements.

The AAP represents a pro-active blue-print to deliver growth and development in accordance with its strategic designation as set out in the London Plan and Harrow Core Strategy. It seeks to address the growth of the area as a whole whilst recognizing that the area also contains a mosaic of different characters and functions, and a wide variety of opportunity sites that can each contribute differently to the delivery of the Heart of Harrow spatial strategy and sub areas objectives.

Justified

The NPPF states that the plan should be the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

The evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy also justifies the provisions of the AAP. Where necessary, the Core Strategy evidence has been supplemented by further more detailed evidence specific to the area. This includes a baseline character assessment; transport modeling, view assessment, and building heights analysis. The policies represent the most appropriate local response to the London Plan and the Core Strategy policies.

Effective

The NPPF states that the plan should be deliverable over its plan period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary matters.

The AAP is a joint document with the Mayor for London. The policies have been drafted to provide positive support for appropriate development and to focus on impacts that need to be managed. The Council sought significant input in the early drafting of the document from a consultant team that included urban design, transport, and development viability specialists to specifically ensure that the proposals put forward were both realistic (in terms of quantum and type) and deliverable (in terms of viability).

Consistent with national policy

The Area Action Plan has also been revised to ensure that it complies with the recently published NPPF, as well as taking on board consultee comments wherever possible.

The pre-submission consultation is scheduled to take place during July and August. Following the consultation, the LDF team will consider all representations received and if necessary produce and consult upon any minor modifications resulting from that consultation. It is anticipated that the AAP will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in September and that Examination in Public will take place during December. This programme should enable adoption of the AAP to take place by April 2013.

Further Editorial Requirements for the Pre-submission Publication of the Harrow & Wealdstone Area Action Plan

Members should note that due to the timeframes involved in the Council reporting procedures that the Pre-submission version of the AAP is still very much a work in progress and is subject to further editing.

Legal Comments

The legal requirements for the preparation and consultation of Development Plan Documents are set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A failure to comply with the statutory requirements may result in the AAP being found 'unsound' at the examination in public.

Environmental Screening

It is a statutory requirement that DPDs are subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. A Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken and will be published for public consultation and comment alongside the AAP.

Financial Implications

The cost of preparing, publishing, and consulting on the AAP, alongside the other DPDs currently being prepared, is contained within the existing LDF budget.

Risk Management Implications

33 Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

34 Separate risk register in place? Yes

Potential Risks	Commentary	Mitigation Measures
Compliance with legislation	To meet the test of 'soundness' of DPDs are required to comply with the legal requirements for preparing and consulting on DPDs under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.	Officers will seek to ensure compliance with the relevant legislative requirements, including the undertaking of Sustainability Appraisal, Equalities Impact Assessment and requirements for consultation. The LDF team will maintain a log that chronicles legal compliance of the DPDs as they progress towards examination and adoption.
Reform of the plan-making system	The Government has now implemented many of its reforms including the publication, following consultation, of a new National Planning Policy Framework.	The recent publication of the NPPF has enabled the resulting national policy position to be fully reflected in the DPD which it is intended to submit.
Inappropriate consultation responses	A real risk with consultation on the DPDs is that consultees will make representations in respect of matters that have already been dealt	The DPD is clear that their purpose is to give effect to the London Plan and Core Strategy, including the agreed spatial strategy, which includes the broad distribution and quantum of development to be accommodated, as well as the strategic objectives

	with through the Core Strategy and are therefore not up for further debate.	regarding specific types of land use, including employment and open space.
Resourcing	The AAP is being prepared and published in tandem with other DPDs. There is a risk that at key stages in the plan making process, resources in the LDF team may not be sufficient to maintain the timetable agreed in the revised LDS.	Officers will monitor the workload in respect of the three DPDs being prepared and will seek to manage peaks or crunch points in the process. However, the workload associated with any one DPD is dependant on the level of community interest, number of responses received to consultation and the complexity of the matters raised. Where necessary, additional staff resources may need to be drafted in for short periods. This will be done in consultation with the Director of Planning and seek to give opportunities to those within the department who may wish to gain policy experience.

Equalities implications

35 Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? Yes and will made available to view on the Council website at the time the documents are published for public consultation.

Corporate Priorities

37. The AAP will help to deliver the following emerging corporate priorities:

- **Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe:** by promoting a better quality built environment and public spaces, and considering options for enhancing green infrastructure and access to open spaces.
- **United and involved communities - a Council that listens and leads:** Engagement with the community and others is at the heart of the LDF process. The Area Action Plan, in particular, responds to the community's concerns about the state of Harrow town centre and seeks to ensure that development and growth within the area takes account of the priorities and preferences of residents as well as compliance with national and regional policy.
- **Supporting our Town centre, and local shopping centres and businesses:** The AAP will provide a positive and clear policy framework to guide the future development and growth within Harrow town centre, Wealdstone town centre, and Station Road, as well as securing new employment opportunities, appropriate investment in infrastructure, and much required environmental improvements.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Kanta Hirani	<input type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 28 May 2012		
Name: Abiodun Kolawole	<input type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 28 May 2012		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Matthew Paterson, Senior Professional Planning Policy, Place Shaping, 020 8736 6082

Background Papers: Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan:
Preferred Option Consultation document
Issues and Options Consultation document
LDF Report of December 2011