

**North London**

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010**

**APPENDIX 1**

**Detailed local policy context to the SHMA**



## Introduction

1. This section builds on the Borough/City of Westminster pen profiles in Section 2 of the SHMA report. It aims to summarise the strategic aims and policy context at this spatial level. Documents are constantly being reviewed and updated and the following information is up to date as at November 2010.
2. The following documents have been reviewed for each local authority in the production of this appendix ;
  - the community strategy;
  - the core strategy; and
  - the housing strategy.
3. Together with commentary from stakeholders it will enable SHMA findings to be related to the vision and established direction of travel for the Boroughs and the City of Westminster.

## Local policy context

### Barnet LBC

#### The Borough

4. According to the Council, Barnet contains 20 town centres and many more neighbourhood centres as well as the Brent Cross regional shopping centre. The amount of retail floor-space in the borough is one of the greatest in London, exceeded only by Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea. Town centres vary in size and purpose but most of them are the hub of civic, retail, leisure and commercial activity and serve the needs of residents and those working in the borough. Brent Cross is planned to become a sustainable new Town Centre complementing the role of other town centres nearby.
5. The borough comprises a variety of townscapes, many attractive and reflecting the long history of settlements. Large parts of the borough are designated as Conservation Areas in order to reflect their special character and value. Much of the borough has been developed as low density suburbs. Many of Barnet's residents travel to work in central London and use the radial underground services of the Northern and Piccadilly Lines but orbital routes are less well served by public transport and therefore people travelling within the borough or to adjoining areas need to rely on private transport.

#### Community Strategy

6. In 2008, the Local Strategic Partnership agreed Barnet's Sustainable Community Strategy, which sets out a shared vision and strategy for the borough. The vision statement from the Community Strategy is the overarching vision for Barnet's Local Development Framework Core Strategy and other related policy documents to ensure Barnet is a successful city suburb as the borough changes, develops and grows. The vision is:

*'It is 2026. Barnet is known nationally and internationally as a successful city suburb. Its new, inclusive and thriving neighbourhoods have made it one of the largest boroughs in London. Residents enjoy access to large green open spaces, clean streets, an excellent transport network and affordable, decent homes. It is a place where both young and old can enjoy fulfilling and healthy lives. There is consistently high educational attainment and new local employment opportunities. Crime and the fear of crime remain low and communities, established and recently formed, take pride in their area. Public services are of a consistently high standard and meet the needs of the diverse population they serve.*

*Barnet is a successful city suburb where people want to live and enjoy a high quality of life. We aim to continue to promote this vision by building on the known and relevant success factors. However, a truly successful suburb will be one where all residents have the opportunity to share in wider success. We therefore, also need to tackle disadvantage by securing an improved quality of life for those experiencing multiple disadvantage'.*

7. The community strategy has a major focus on housing challenges facing Barnet. , Barnet must enable the building of a significant number of new homes in the next decade in order to play its part in meeting London's growing population. The strategy recognises that a key challenge will be to set clear guidelines for the location and characteristics of homes to ensure that the council maximise housing choice.
8. Furthermore, it states that residents put the provision of affordable housing among their top concerns. Ensuring that the Council continue to develop opportunities for low cost home ownership is essential if they are to meet the needs of low income households, first time buyers and those providing key services, such as teachers, nurses and police officers. The quality of housing in local communities has a major impact on the physical and mental health well-being of those that live there. Finally, the strategy states that to improve the quality of life for all residents in Barnet must ensure that everyone has access to a decent home.

### **Core Strategy**

9. Barnet has developed a series of core objectives to deliver the LDF vision. The core strategy has now reached a late stage in its development and the following objectives are stated in the Core Strategy Publication Stage (September 2010):
  - to manage housing growth to meet housing aspirations;
  - to meet social infrastructure needs;
  - to promote Barnet as a place of economic growth and prosperity;
  - to reduce the need to travel;
  - to promote strong and cohesive communities;
  - to promote healthy living and well-being;
  - to protect and enhance the suburbs;
  - to ensure efficient use of land and natural resources ; and

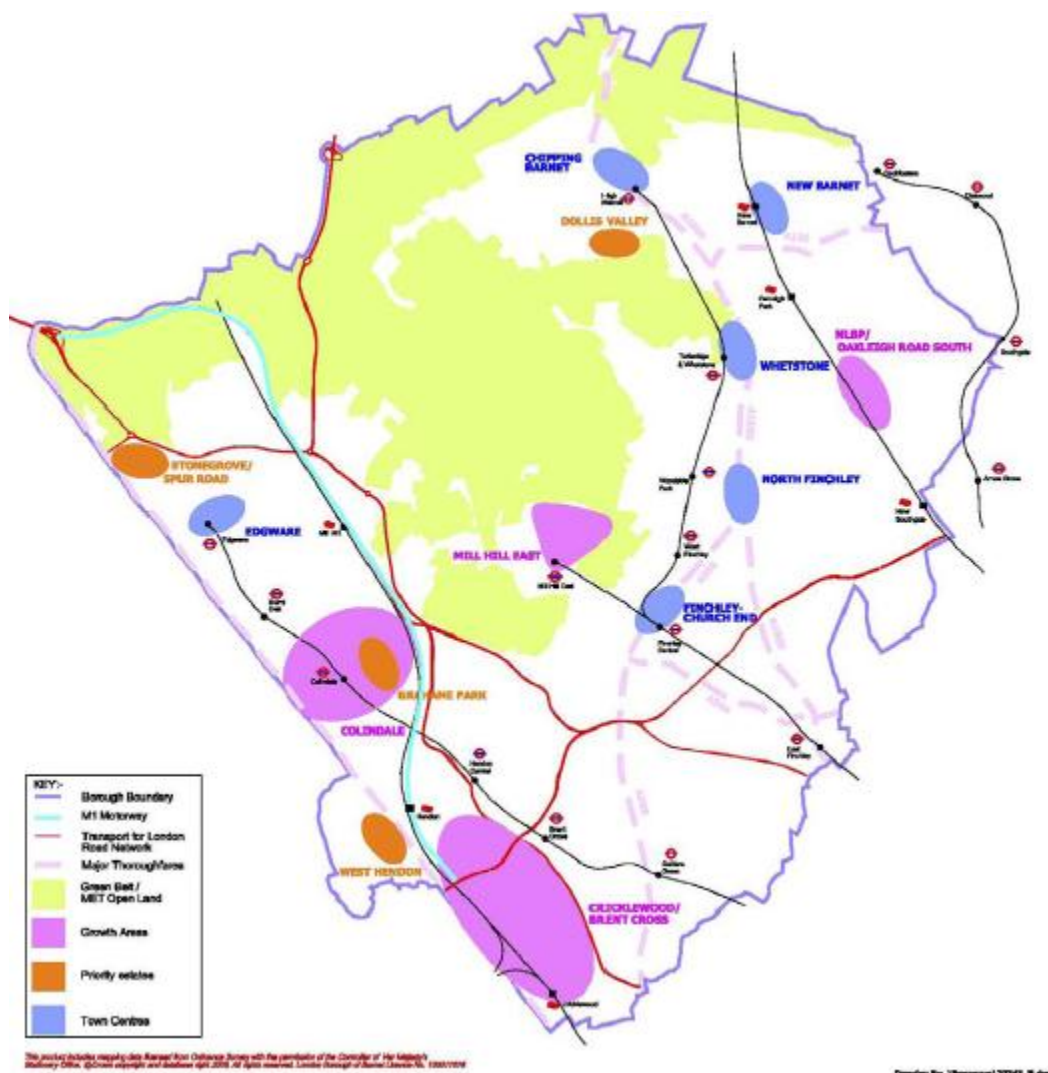
- to enhance and protect our green and natural open spaces.

10. A number of policy statements are now highlighted
11. Policy CS 1 sets out the spatial development strategy for Barnet. This sets out our overarching Three Strands Approach to protect, enhance and grow ensuring that in guiding future planning, regeneration and development we keep what is best about the borough, what makes Barnet a distinctive place. Barnet's Three Strands Approach to development, planning and regeneration provides the vision for sustainable development: protection of open spaces, enhancement of the suburbs and targeted growth in designated areas. This strategy allows for growth in housing and employment to be accommodated within the existing built up area of the borough on 'brownfield' or previously developed land and concentrates new development in the most accessible locations around public transport nodes and town centres where social and physical infrastructure is to be improved.
12. The overall strategy is to manage growth in Barnet so that it meets the need for homes, jobs and services in a way that conserves and enhances the character of the borough and contributes to what makes Barnet distinctive.
13. Regenerative development will predominantly be delivered in three growth areas, Brent Cross - Cricklewood, Colindale and Mill Hill East. These areas will be the primary focus of housing and employment growth and are identified in the London Plan as having significant potential for accommodating new homes and jobs. The regeneration of Brent Cross - Cricklewood is expected to deliver 20,000 jobs by 2026/27 with Colindale and Mill Hill East adding a further 500 each. In terms of housing delivery these growth areas are expected to deliver up to 20,000 new homes within the next 15 years.
14. Policy CS 7 deals with providing quality homes and housing choice in Barnet. This recognises that in order to create sustainable and successful communities we have to maximise housing choice providing a range of sizes and types of accommodation that can meet aspirations and increase access to affordable and decent new homes. This includes homes for those who need large places to live including families, homes for smaller households such as single key workers, or older and vulnerable people who may require accommodation in order to live independently.
15. The Council wishes to help residents take a property and home journey from renting to home ownership through appropriate stages and recognises that housing affordability is a major challenge in Barnet.
16. The strategy states that in order to create mixed and balanced communities the Council has to maximise housing choice providing a range of sizes and types of accommodation that can increase access to affordable and decent new homes. This includes homes for those who need large places to live including families, homes for smaller households such as single key workers or older and vulnerable people who may require accommodation in order to live independently.
17. The Council will seek to negotiate the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing on sites of ten or more units (gross) or on 0.4 hectares in site area. This approach is supported by the London Plan policy that 50% of new housing development should be affordable. However,

the strategy recognises that the new Mayor of London has indicated that the 50% target is too prescriptive and in many cases unviable.

18. In February 2007 the Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Affordable Housing in order to clearly set out our approach to affordable housing provision and provide detailed advice and implementation guidance to developers, including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The Council is keen to encourage a 'housing journey' for as many as possible so as to meet the aspirations of home ownership. Housing and planning policies and strategies can assist in providing greater flexibility between tenures, maximising housing choice on a lifelong pathway from social rented through intermediate and into owner occupation.

Figure 1  
 LB Barnet Key Diagram (Source: LB Barnet Core Strategy Publication stage September 2010)



19. The Council expects to submit its Core Strategy to the Secretary of State in 2010 and adopt it in 2011.

## **Housing Strategy**

- <sup>20</sup>. The key objectives under the general heading of “Providing housing choices that meet the needs and aspirations of Barnet residents” are;
- increasing housing supply, including family sized homes, to improve the range of housing choices and opportunities available to residents;
  - improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock;
  - promoting mixed communities and maximising opportunities available for those wishing to own their home;
  - providing housing related support options that maximise the independence of residents;  
and
  - providing excellent value services that exceed residents’ expectations.

## Camden LBC

### Background

21. The borough covers approximately 22 square kilometres (11 square miles) in inner London. The southern part of the borough forms part of Central London with its dynamic mix of uses, activities and facilities of London-wide, national and international significance. It is also home to a significant resident population. Camden has many residential areas and neighbourhoods with their own distinctive characteristics, many of which are of architectural or historic importance. It contains numerous parks and open spaces, ranging from Hampstead Heath, Primrose Hill and the Regents Canal to historic squares and local parks and playgrounds.
22. The borough has a range of centres providing shopping and services and local employment. These include town centres such as Camden Town, West Hampstead and Finchley Road, areas that contribute to the retail attraction of the West End like Tottenham Court Road and Seven Dials and a variety of neighbourhood centres, street markets and local shops.
23. Camden is a borough of diversity and contrasts. It contains wide inequalities in household income, health and other characteristics and every part of the borough has areas of relative affluence alongside areas of relative poverty. Camden is the most polarised borough in London with some of the wealthiest areas in England as well as some of the most deprived.
24. The population will grow by about 15% between 2006 and 2026. The increase in population will largely be due to more births and fewer deaths in future years, although migration will also play a part. The Borough's population is ethnically diverse, with around 30% of residents from black or minority ethnic groups (compared to the England average of 9%). Camden has a relatively young population, with the highest percentage of people between 25 and 40 in the UK, relatively few children and older people and the highest proportion of full-time students in London.

### Community Strategy 2007-12

25. The vision of the strategy is that 'Camden in 2012 will be a borough of opportunity'
26. There are 4 themes to the vision;
  1. A sustainable Camden that adapts to a growing population
  2. A strong Camden economy that includes everyone
    - Camden's economy will be stronger and more Camden residents, especially young people, will have the skills, education and training to take part in the job market.
  3. A connected Camden community where people lead active, healthy lives
    - Camden will have a greater sense of community and individuals will be supported to be active citizens who can influence local decisions and lead healthy lives.
  4. A safe Camden that is a vibrant part of our world city
    - Camden will be a safer place where local people can benefit from cultural and leisure opportunities including the London Olympics.
27. The Community Strategy's aims for housing are part of the sustainable growth theme. The strategy identifies the following housing challenges;

- population growth;
  - high levels of overcrowding; and
  - demand for social housing, supported housing and residential services that outstrips supply.
28. The Community Strategy identifies a number of existing activities that will help to meet these challenges;
- redevelopment of King's Cross with 1700 new homes including 750 affordable homes and 650 student units as part of a new and exciting quarter for London that acts a cultural hub and gateway for London;
  - seeking to get better use of existing Council housing by looking at overcrowding and under-occupation and supporting people to move to smaller homes; and
  - linking upgrades of the Council's housing stock to wider regeneration work which focuses on decent places.
29. The housing aims and actions of the Community Strategy include;
- working to meet the challenges of supply, affordability and mix of sizes;
  - increasing the provision of affordable housing;
  - ensuring that all developments are high quality, sustainable and sensitively designed, with an appropriate mix of uses and supported by employment, health centres, leisure, retail, community and education facilities and waste disposal;
  - improving the quality and availability of social housing and working with tenants to raise the standard of social housing across the borough and regenerate individual estates;
  - tackling housing supply, community safety and energy efficiency through a Council-led partnership with Registered Social Landlords and other housing players;
  - bringing empty properties back into use;
  - making supported housing work better for everyone; and
  - preventing homelessness.

### **Core Strategy 2010-15**

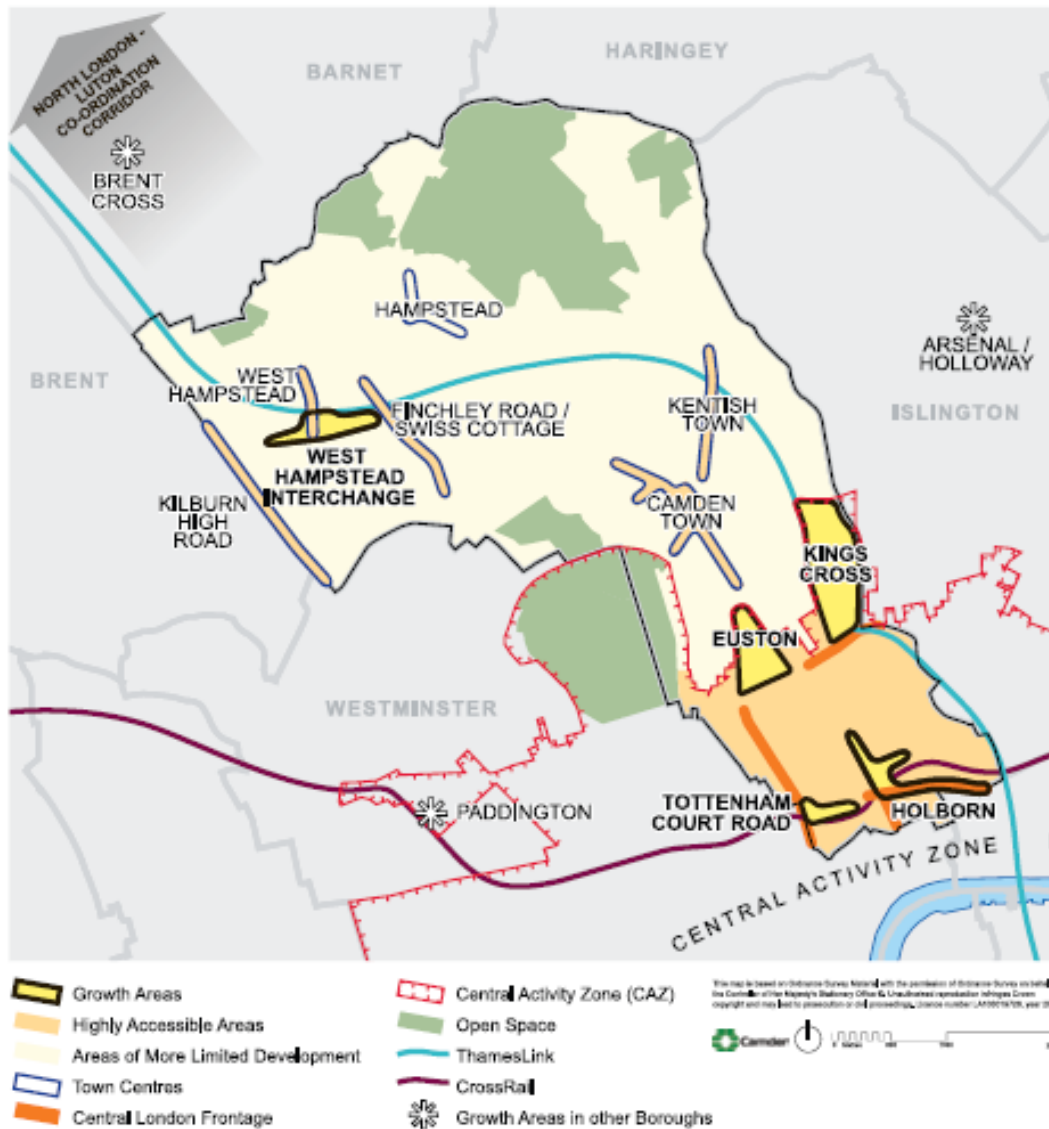
30. The core strategy was adopted by the Council in November 2010. The Core Strategy groups the matters covered into four sections which reflect the vision statement shared by the Core Strategy and the Community Strategy;
- location and management of Camden's growth;
  - meeting Camden's needs – providing homes, jobs and facilities;



- a sustainable and attractive Camden – tackling climate change and improving and protecting our environment and quality of life; and
- delivery and monitoring.

31. The Core Strategy identifies areas for growth in the context of the overall spatial characteristics of the borough and this is described in the Key Diagram.

Figure 2  
LB Camden Key Diagram (Source: LB Camden Core Strategy November 2010)



32. Section 2 of the Core Strategy sets out the Council's approach to meeting Camden's needs for homes, jobs, and facilities. The approach includes providing homes to meet housing needs and targets, securing affordable homes and encouraging mixed communities.

33. Camden is a small part of the housing market that extends across London and into other parts of the South East. The Core Strategy states that as a relatively small area within a much larger housing market, Camden cannot realistically expect to meet the needs of everyone that might

wish to live in the borough. The Strategy indicates that the Council will seek to establish a plentiful supply and a broad range of homes, by;

- making full use of Camden's capacity for housing;
- securing high quality affordable housing;
- tackling social polarisation and creating mixed and inclusive communities; and
- implementing the Core Strategy objectives flexibly to maximise the delivery of additional housing.

### **Housing Strategy 2005-10 (updated 2007)**

<sup>34.</sup> Like the Community Strategy, the Housing Strategy identifies overcrowding and high demand for housing as challenges for Camden. The Strategy also identifies the following challenges;

- a large number of homeless households live in temporary accommodation;
- a large number of Council homes have been sold through Right to Buy;
- Camden house prices are 6.5 times average earnings (2006);
- a high proportion of Council tenants are reliant on Housing Benefit and a high proportion are not in employment;
- Camden suffers from high levels of deprivation; and
- half of the Council's tenanted homes are below the Decent Homes standard.

<sup>35.</sup> The Housing Strategy has visions in a number of areas, including the following;

- pathways for all Council tenants to move from dependence to independence with the aid of access to information, advice and skills;
- maximising supply of all housing and making the best use of existing stock. The Council intends to use the planning system to deliver more housing, with major developments providing housing at King's Cross and Euston. The Council will support refurbishment that creates more family sized units and encourage under-occupying households to downsize, increasing the supply of family housing;
- bringing all tenanted Council housing up to Decent Homes standard by 2012. The Council will develop a new strategy in consultation with tenants to close the investment gap by targeting Decent Homes works and mechanical and engineering equipment, selling up to 500 empty residential and commercial properties and working with residents to explore estate regeneration where housing is in need of the greatest investment;
- making greater use of private rented housing. The Council will help low income households to access private rented housing, work with landlords to improve the quality of private sector housing and bring empty homes back into use;

- preventing homelessness where possible, reducing the use of temporary accommodation and ensuring that temporary accommodation is good quality, suitable and safe; and
- increasing the opportunities of vulnerable people for independence by providing timely and effective support for them in hostels, supported housing, sheltered housing and their own homes. The Council will continue to operate a hostels pathway, a young persons' pathway and a mental health pathway providing routes towards independent living, will seek funding to bring hostels up to modern standards and will replace some care homes for older people with new provision that incorporates extra care sheltered housing.

<sup>36.</sup> The Council updated its Housing Strategy in 2007 to sharpen its focus on a number of key areas including reduction of overcrowding and tackling worklessness. The Housing Strategy also seeks to make the housing stock more sustainable, to improve energy efficiency and affordable warmth, to ensure community cohesion, and to ensure that people feel safe and secure in their homes and in the vicinity of their homes.

## Enfield LBC

### The Borough

37. The London Borough of Enfield covers 32 square miles of London's northern suburbs. Housing occupies one-third, another third is Green Belt, mainly farming, country parks and horticulture. The rest includes commerce, industry, shops and transport, although much is open land used as parks, sports fields, golf courses, allotments and back gardens and there are more waterways than in any other London borough. Traditionally, Enfield has combined leafy suburbs within easy reach of central London with traditional working class areas in the east close to sub-regionally important manufacturing along the Lee Valley. In many ways Enfield continues to fulfil these roles.
38. The borough has also become increasingly diverse in terms of wealth, with wide variations between the most affluent and deprived wards. It is one of the most highly deprived outer boroughs, with most deprivation in the south and east and affluence increasing to the north and west. The borough's economic base continues to recover from severe damage caused by the economic recession of the late 1980s, but there remain significant pockets of deprivation, particularly amongst black and minority ethnic communities which face difficulties in breaking down barriers to employment.
39. The borough has some 118,000 dwellings comprising of about 74,000 houses and 44,000 flats. The last comprehensive survey, the 2001 census, showed that 71% were owner occupied, 18% Council/Housing Association and 12% privately rented. Local experience suggests that the proportion of private rented dwellings has increased materially since then. Enfield has a particularly strong offer in terms of attractive pre-war family housing situated in peaceful suburbs. Owner occupation is higher than in neighbouring North London boroughs, and much higher than the London average.

### Community Strategy 2009-2019

40. In 2007 the first Sustainable Community Strategy was launched setting out the ten-year vision for the future of Enfield, describing how it would look and feel for all Enfield's communities by 2017. It is Enfield Partnerships main ambition that Enfield has;

**"A healthy, prosperous, cohesive community living in a borough that is safe, clean and green"**

41. In 2009, after consulting with key stakeholders and partners, the strategy was updated to ensure that it remained current. It has eight themes;
- Children and Young People
  - Safer and Stronger Communities
  - Healthier Communities
  - Older People
  - Employment and Enterprise
  - Environment

- Leisure and Culture
  - Housing
42. The strategy includes several important aims regarding the place and the quality of life. Housing aims form part of this approach;
- to deliver the housing element of place shaping and achieve sustainable housing growth;
  - to improve housing conditions and prevent homelessness;
  - to ensure that residents have the opportunity to live in a decent home they can afford;  
and
  - to protect and improve the quality of built and open environment.

### **Core Strategy**

43. The core strategy was adopted in November 2010 and contains the spatial vision for Enfield:

*'A HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE BOROUGH*

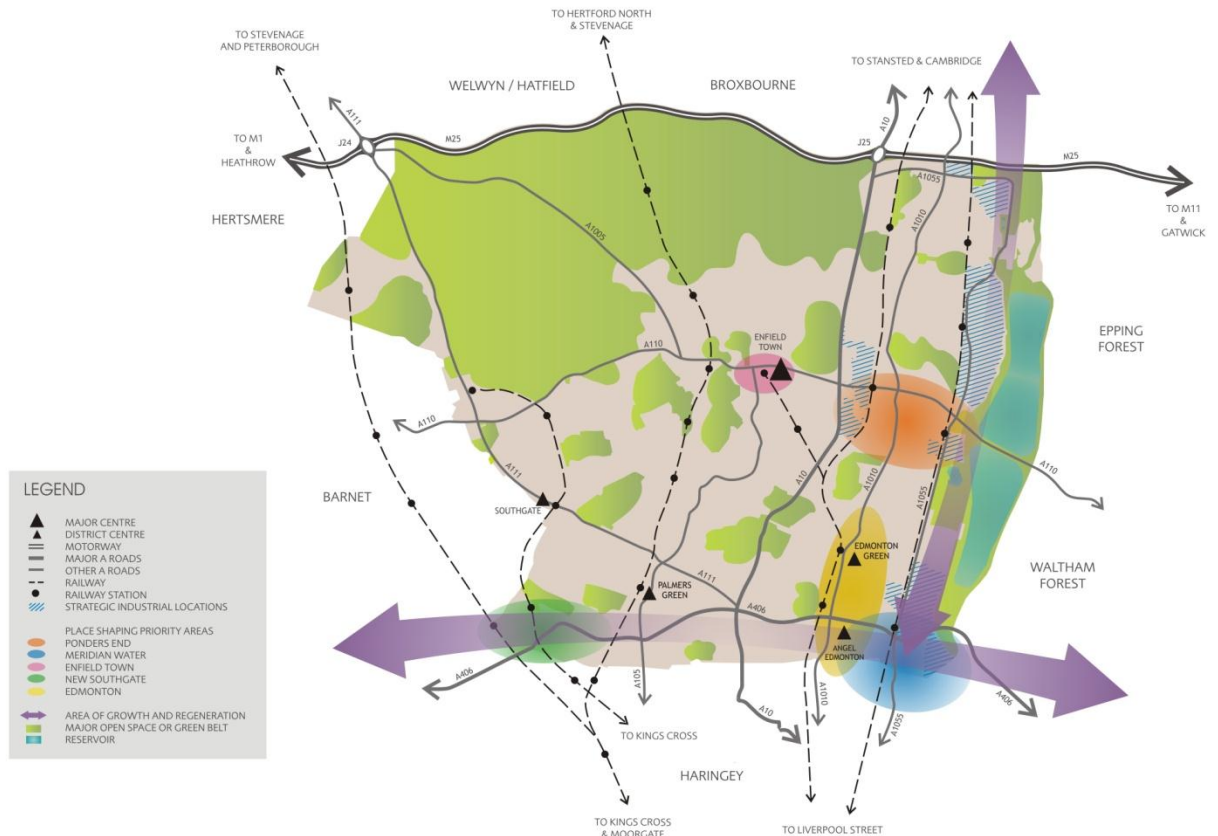
*In 2026 Enfield will be a prosperous and sustainable Borough with a strong sense of place and identity. It will be a place that people are proud to call home and want to invest in. Both the resident and working population will grow, due to Enfield's strategic position relative to two of the Government's growth areas and the UK's main economic driver, Central London.'*

44. The strategy has 10 strategic objectives and those most closely related to SHMA issues are included here in an edited form:
- **Enabling and focusing change** - To meet the future needs of Enfield's existing and future population by focusing transformational change and growth in the Upper Lee Valley, in existing town centres and new neighbourhoods, where physical and social infrastructure already exists or can be improved through planned and phased development. To protect and enhance those parts of the Borough which currently offer a good quality of life to Enfield's communities.
  - **Environmental sustainability** - To promote a sustainable pattern of development integrating infrastructure and housing, reducing the Borough's carbon footprint, minimising the need to travel and protecting the Borough's green belt and biodiversity.
  - **Community cohesion** - To build upon and work together to revitalise the capacity of existing communities in those parts of the south and east of the Borough where deprivation and lack of opportunities are prevalent,
  - **New homes** - To facilitate the provision of sustainably constructed new homes of exemplary space and design standards to meet the aspirations of local people. To meet the housing needs identified in Enfield's Housing Market Assessment, improving the existing housing stock, developing new housing, including mixed tenure and providing housing that people choose to make their long term home. To ensure new residential development is supported by good public transport, social, green and utilities

infrastructure and achieve the maximum intensity of use having regard to development plan policy.

45. The Core Strategy identifies areas for growth in the context of the overall spatial characteristics of the borough and this is described in the Key Diagram.

Figure 3  
LB Enfield Key Diagram (Source: LB Enfield Adopted Core Strategy November 2010)



### Housing Strategy 2005-2010

46. Enfield's Housing Strategy reflects the above issues by aiming to increase the supply of affordable, sustainable homes for local people. Combined with the LDF, the strategy aims to;

- preserve and create family sized housing;
- preserve houses of multiple occupation;
- create accessible housing for people with physical disabilities;
- create affordable housing for the community of Enfield; and
- create sustainable communities.

47. It states that in line with the concerns of Enfield residents about sustainable communities and Enfield's social housing tenants' and key workers' aspirations to home ownership, a significant proportion of affordable housing across Enfield needs to be shared ownership. In wards with high levels of social rented accommodation, market housing is valuable in maintaining sustainable communities and the affordable housing element should be shared ownership rather than social rented.

## Hackney LBC

### The Borough

48. The London Borough of Hackney is situated in the north east of the City of London. The Borough contains 210,000 people and its population is one of the most ethnically diverse in the capital.
49. Hackney adjoins the Boroughs of Haringey, Islington, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest and the River Lea forms the eastern boundary, providing quite a different environment from the rest of the Borough. Hackney has a dense urban setting, scattered with celebrated parks and open spaces which provide crucial relief and recreation resources for the local residents and visitors.
50. Traditionally, Hackney provided accommodation for the manufacturing industry and services related to the City and although many of the service functions remain, the advent of globalisation has seen a reduction in the manufacturing sector within Hackney. In its place, employment in the creative, media, banking, fashion and technology industries have developed locally. The Borough has seen huge change in recent years economically, socially and physically and this transformation is set to continue for the foreseeable future as regeneration gathers pace.
51. The Borough has, however, been surprisingly isolated in terms of rail and road connections for an inner London location. This is now changing fast with the construction of the East London Railway (Overground Network) extension of the Tube to Dalston and imminent improvements to the east/west running North London Railway (Overland Network) which connects with Stratford and the Olympic complex.
52. Hackney has two main town centres; Dalston, and Hackney Central. These were developed mainly in Victorian times and retain much of the physical fabric of that era, some of which has not been well maintained. They provide the context for potentially exciting regeneration which will redefine their functions for the 21st century.
53. In the southernmost part of the Borough, known as South Shoreditch, there is major pressure for change on the City fringe from large commercial and mixed developments extending the City to the north. These present challenges to the existing local communities and opportunities for high quality regeneration to improve local conditions.
54. Despite this vitality, and close proximity to the wealth of Central London, Hackney still demonstrates significant levels of deprivation throughout the Borough. Traditionally, crime levels in the Borough have been high and so is the fear of crime, but rates are falling due to effective inter-agency initiatives. Historically, low expectations have been combined with poor health, low skills and lack of qualifications, unemployment and low pay. Focused local interventions are challenging worklessness, promoting prosperity and social equality and championing community cohesion.
55. Over half the Borough's dwellings are socially rented, including rented from the Council and other social landlords. There are significant levels of homelessness and overcrowding and private housing prices are beyond most people's reach.



56. However, regeneration is gathering pace, transforming the physical and economic vitality of town centres through multi-agency intervention and a huge Decent Homes programme which is improving housing estates. Significant regeneration funding has been invested in housing, training and education programmes and cultural, community facilities and reducing crime.
57. The last ten years have seen a burgeoning cultural and leisure scene developing, especially in Hoxton and South Shoreditch in the City Fringe, but also in areas like Stoke Newington and Dalston. Together with the Olympics and Paralympic Games and Legacy and other regeneration programmes such as the City Fringe, Thames Gateway and the London-Stansted-Cambridge growth corridors, they present huge opportunities for Hackney in the years ahead.

### **Hackney Community Strategy 2008-2018**

58. According to the Community strategy Hackney faces a number of housing related challenges. Hackney's rate of growth is faster than that of the London average. It is one of London's most densely populated Boroughs and demand for housing in Hackney continues to grow. A combination of this growing demand and an improving local area have meant house prices have risen faster than in many other parts of North and East London and property prices appear to be holding up in the face of a national downturn.
59. Many of its residents have been priced out of the market and this presents a threat to a sustainable community. The Council's response is to provide a mix of housing including homes to rent and buy for people on middle incomes, more family homes and to support creative financing solutions to help local people get onto the property ladder.
60. The strategy recognises the interrelationship of factors such as housing, income, education, employment, crime and the quality of the local environment all in relation to sustainability. Interestingly, in terms of employment, the Council are using housing providers' trusted status amongst residents and local networks to disseminate information via housing offices and community centres. They also use housing services to help overcome barriers to employment, such as fast tracking housing benefit claims for residents who lose employment.
61. The strategy seeks promote a mix of tenures, both in new developments and existing estates, because they believe that is preferable to people living in segregated enclaves according to level of income. It states that people choose to live in Hackney because of the diversity and mix of different types of people and we think we should build on that as a strength.
62. The strategy's ambition is to provide more quality, affordable homes for all income groups, with homes that are large enough for those with families and affordable at different life stages, with more housing options for a greater range of people on low and middle incomes and links between tenures. We will continue to develop a range of innovative mechanisms to achieve this.

### **Hackney Core Strategy**

63. In preparation for its Core Strategy, in 2006 Hackney Borough Council carried out consultation with its local residents in order to identify the main planning issues for Hackney. In accordance

with the Council's Local Development Scheme, and after further consultations and reviews, the final version of the Core Strategy was adopted in November 2010.

### **Aims and objectives**

64. The strategy's overall vision is for a sustainable Hackney in 2025 which is;

*an aspirational, working Borough, a vibrant part of this world city, renowned for its innovative and creative economy; a place that values the diversity of its neighbourhoods and makes the most of their links across the globe to enrich the economic and social life of everyone who lives in the Borough; a Borough with greater opportunity and prosperity for everyone, whatever their background, and narrowing economic, environmental and health inequality. We will have secured the benefits arising from hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games; a green, cosmopolitan part of London with safe, strong and cohesive communities, and a shared sense of fairness, citizenship, and social responsibility.*

65. To achieve this vision, the Council has identified six principal objectives for the Borough;

- a good place to grow up in;
- a dynamic and creative economy;
- thriving, healthy communities;
- better homes;
- a safer, cleaner place to live; and
- a sustainable Borough.

66. It identifies four further areas for increased interventions to achieve the corporate vision for Hackney in 2025;

- tackling worklessness;
- address the housing gap;
- enhance the education trajectory; and
- environmental sustainability.

67. According to the strategy, Hackney's built environment has evolved from its medieval origins characterised by the complex network of routes, through formalised Victorian streets, terraces and spaces, to the present pattern of post-war housing estates, high rise blocks and modern buildings. Its fine grain in varying architectural styles is punctuated by relatively generous open spaces

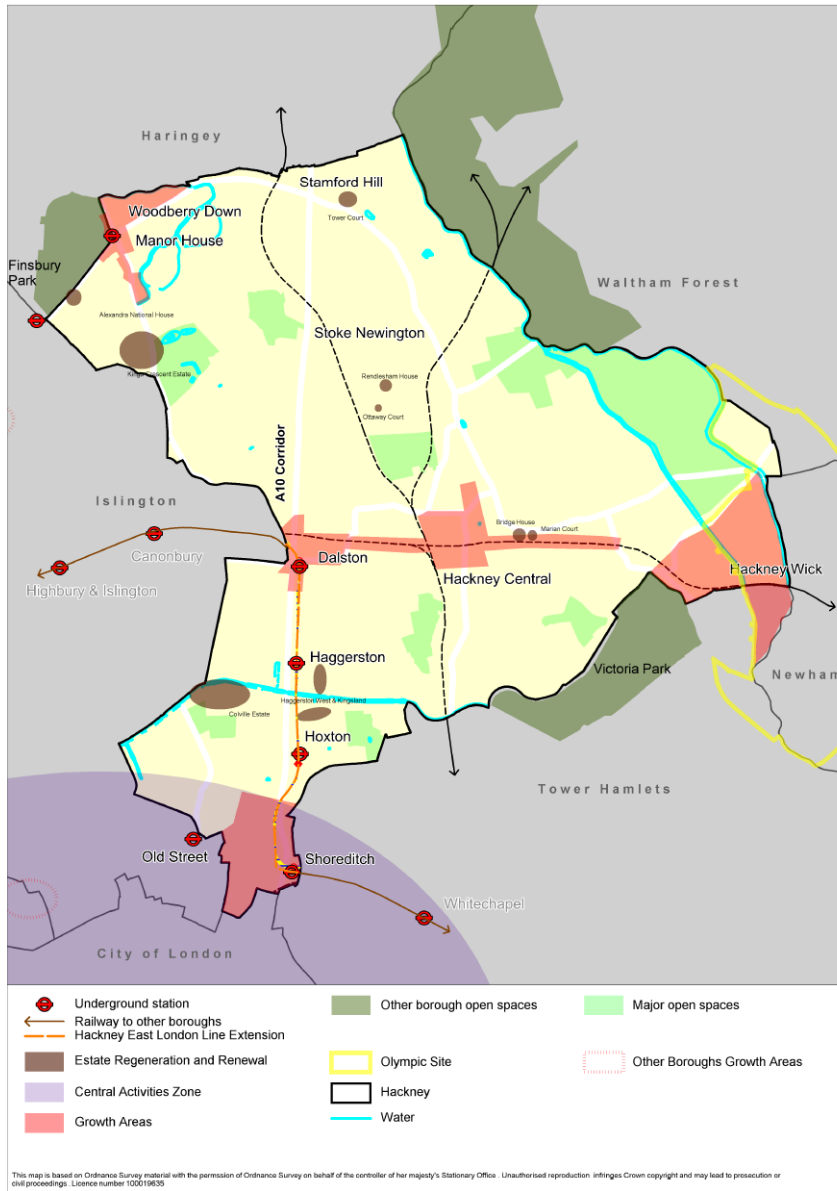
68. However, it states that within the urban fabric there are significant pockets of unsympathetic development and under-utilised and empty buildings. While the development pressure to develop these sites is welcomed by the Council, there is an unfortunate presumption on the part of some developers that in such areas poor design should be acceptable as it constitutes an improvement to the existing environment.

69. As such, the Core Strategy will follow the 'Compact City' model, as promoted in the London Plan. Successful urban management and regeneration is founded on principles of design excellence, economic prudence, social well-being, environmental responsibility and increased density. Well designed infill and the intensification of uses should seek to integrate living, working and leisure uses into the existing urban grain.
70. Furthermore, it states that in an already urbanised area, opportunity for housing development comes through more intensive use, higher development density, mixed use and the use of 'air space' such as the Dalston deck above the East London Line (Overground Network) station. Such distinctive local factors require front loaded investment to bring forward sites and sustainable and innovative regeneration.
71. In response, its Preferred Policy Option 8 is that residential development should accommodate Hackney's increasing population and provide for families and larger households with a wide range of incomes by;
- regenerating existing housing estates through the coordinated programmes of the Hackney Estate
  - renewal programme and other major residential projects;
  - enabling one of the largest housing regeneration project in the United Kingdom at Woodberry Down ; and
  - promoting high quality mixed tenure private sector housing projects.

72. Hackney's spatial plan is set out below.

Figure 4  
LB Hackney Key Diagram (Source: LB Hackney Core Strategy adopted November 2010)

Map 4.1 Key Diagram



73. It suggests that Hackney can more than meet its housing supply targets. However, planning interventions are required to bring forward housing sites and provide decent homes. Public consultation underlined the desire for new homes to be well designed, provide good internal space and have a high standard of neighbourhood amenities.

74. Despite the importance of providing new housing to meet population growth, an appropriate balance needs to be achieved with other land uses, such as employment, to ensure residents have access to job opportunities and other essential services. Suitable types of housing also need to be provided to ensure that the different needs of Hackney's residents are met.

75. As such, it argues that specific areas should be identified in the Core Strategy for intensification through the development of opportunity sites that exhibit high public transport accessibility and close proximity to essential services. This approach is consistent with a housing strategy which delivers a flexible land supply for housing and to projected population growth. Resources and associated implementation plans will be delivered as Area Action Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents and initiatives such as Hackney's Estate Renewal programme.
76. The strategy also recognises the importance of affordable housing to sustainability. It states that Hackney has the highest proportion of affordable housing in London, accounting for just over 50% of all housing in the Borough. Despite this there is still a severe shortage of affordable housing and the Borough's Community Strategy aims to reduce overcrowding and homelessness and increase the stock by securing additional affordable homes.
77. Finally, the Council is working with a wide range of institutional partners to promote bids to the Homes and Communities Agency (formerly the Housing Corporation) for a programme of new, large family sized social rented homes. The Core Strategy should provide a Borough wide target for the provision of affordable housing to ensure that the regional affordable housing target (set out in the London Plan) is achieved.

### **Housing Strategy 2010-15**

78. The following is taken from the executive summary of Hackney's Housing Strategy consultation draft.
79. Key challenges for the development and delivery of the housing strategy include;
- dealing with land use pressures in a high density area that is experiencing growing popularity but which remains the third most deprived Council area in the UK;
  - ensuring that housing growth delivers high quality homes in liveable and sustainable environments that are the right homes in the right locations and this growth is fully integrated with plans for the wider regeneration of the Borough;
  - maintaining, improving and climate proofing Council (and other social) housing beyond the current Decent Homes standard;
  - finding new ways to deliver our estate renewal programmes, given changed housing market conditions have much reduced the cross-subsidy previously available;
  - the GLA's ambitions to see major reductions in severe overcrowding and under-occupation in social rented housing by 2016; and
  - better integration of housing and non-housing services, both at the Borough and local level, to tackle worklessness and deprivation and improve local areas.
80. As a consequence, 3 Core Objectives are listed together with the proposed key priority areas for policy. The following is particularly relevant to the content of the SHMA;

Mixed and sustainable communities – quality and affordable homes for all income groups:

- tackling homelessness and overcrowding, including the best use of existing resources and close engagement with those affected;
- managing housing growth so we address the most acute local housing needs and enable mixed and sustainable communities to flourish;
- increasing housing choices and wider mobility by improving housing advice and information on all housing options and ensuring greater “housing literacy”;
- promoting the growth of intermediate housing, especially Low Cost Home Ownership (including options to convert to it from other tenures), with a particular focus on assisting sustainable access by those on middle incomes and those in social rented housing;
- supporting the growth of the private rented sector where this is consistent with the aims of our Sustainable Communities Strategy. We will lobby vigorously to ensure no work disincentives are created by the high market rents involved; and
- ensuring there is enough supported housing to meet changing needs and requirements.

## Haringey LBC

### The Borough

- <sup>82.</sup> Haringey is located in the centre of North London although, historically, considered an outer London borough. Large parts of Haringey have the social and economic characteristics of an inner London borough. It is strategically located in the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth area. With strong links to the City, West End and Stansted Airport, the borough is very well placed for both business and commuting. By 2016 it is estimated that approximately 350,000 new London jobs will have been created within one hour's commuting time of Haringey. These include the new job opportunities being created at Stratford City and the Olympic 2012 site and accessible by rail in 15 minutes from Tottenham Hale.
- <sup>83.</sup> Haringey is home to 226,200 people (AMR 2009) living in an area of 30 square kilometres. Nearly half of the population comes from ethnic minority backgrounds. This diversity is reflected in the fact that almost half of all pupils in Haringey schools speak English as an additional language. Haringey has a relatively transient population.
- <sup>84.</sup> Around one third of Haringey's population live in central and eastern areas in the borough which are amongst the 10% most deprived in England. This has been recognised in recent years by the award of Neighbourhood Renewal funding for deprived parts of the borough. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the borough has significant potential to deliver major growth and regenerate communities and has received growth area and community infrastructure funding from the Government to redevelop major opportunity sites in the borough at Haringey Heartlands and Tottenham Hale.

### Community Strategy

- <sup>85.</sup> Haringey Strategic Partnership developed Haringey's Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016 which identifies priorities and a ten year vision for the Borough. The overall vision of the Community Strategy is that Haringey will be: "A place for diverse communities that people are proud to belong to".
- <sup>86.</sup> In order to achieve this vision, the strategy identified six key themes;
- people at the Heart of Change by delivering new homes and new jobs, with supporting services and transport and utility infrastructure at the right place and the right time;
  - an Environmentally Sustainable Future by responding to climate change and managing our environmental resources more effectively to make Haringey one of London's greenest boroughs;
  - economic vitality and prosperity shared by all by meeting business needs and providing local employment opportunities and promoting a vibrant economy and independent living;
  - safer for all by reducing both crime and fear of crime, through good design and improvements to the public realm and by creating safer, cleaner streets;

- healthier People with a better quality of life by providing better housing, meeting health and community needs and encouraging lifetime well-being at home, work, play and learning; and
- people and customer focused by providing high quality, accessible services that give value for money, respond to people's need and meet their aspirations. Put greater emphasis on community engagement and tackle social exclusion.

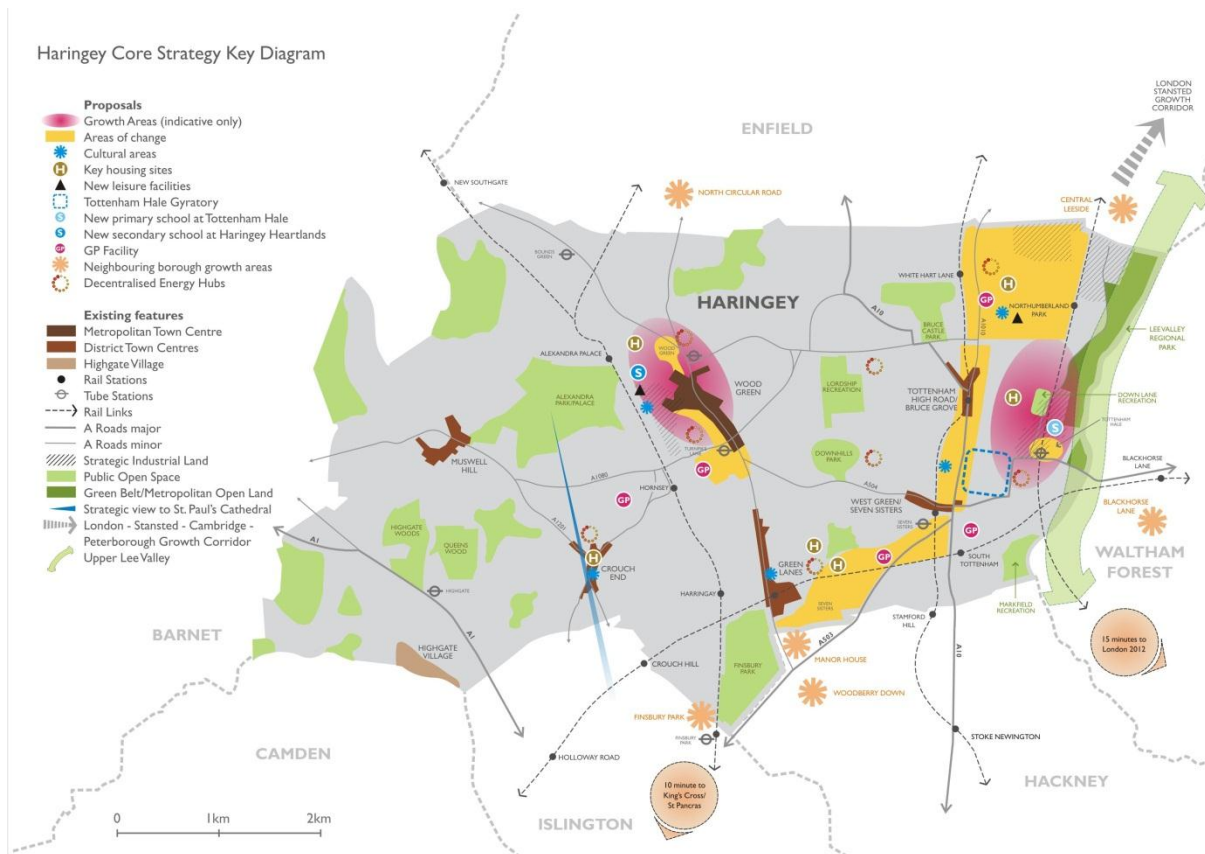
### **Core strategy**

87. Haringey Core Strategy Preferred Options public consultation took place May and June 2009, following the first stage of consultation in early 2008. In May 2010 it published the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Proposed Submission prior to submission to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public by an Independent Planning Inspector.
88. Analysis of the formal representations received between May and June 2010 shows that fundamental changes to a number of policies were being sought notably in the areas of the affordable housing element of the SP2 housing policy.
89. The core strategy considers that there are a number of cross cutting social, environmental and economic challenges that the Council needs to shape Haringey's Core Strategy. The key challenges are as follows:
- Population change
  - Housing
  - Worklessness
  - Health inequalities
  - Climate change
  - High quality design
  - Equality and inclusion
  - Transport
  - Crime and safety
90. The core strategy provides further analysis. In particular it notes that the dynamics of the borough's population lie behind the change and growth in housing demand in the borough. Currently, just under half of Haringey's households are owner-occupiers, with around 29% living in the social rented sector (18% Council stock, 11% Housing Association) and 22% in private rented accommodation.
91. Owner occupation is greater in the west of the borough, with concentrations of social rented housing in the east of the borough, reflecting a wider social and economic polarisation. 30% of Haringey's population live in central and eastern areas of the borough which are among the 10% most deprived in England, and it is in these areas that regeneration efforts are currently concentrated.



92. There is a high demand for housing across all tenures. In the private sector this can be seen in house prices, which rose by 94.9% over 2002-7. Although prices subsequently fell the long-term trend is for house prices to increase.
93. The need for affordable housing outstrips supply, with a shortfall in provision of 4,865 units per annum, or 52 per 1,000 head of population - outstripping the average Inner London shortfall of 32 units per 1000 head of population. Housing need disproportionately affects BME households, and 40% of Black African and Asian households are living in unsuitable accommodation.
94. Responding to this shortfall is a priority for the borough: 26% of residents consider affordable decent homes to be the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, and 17% think that it is the thing that most needs improving in the local area. Housing need is reflected in high demand for social housing. In 2007/8 1488 households joined the Housing Register, while only 868 households secured a permanent social rented home. In November 2008 about 4,800 Haringey households were living in temporary accommodation, and the borough continues to face a huge challenge in meeting government targets to reduce these numbers.
95. The strategy identifies that approximately 9% of land in Haringey has 1 in 100 year probability of flooding from rivers. About 8,000 properties are at risk of flooding although the defences such as the Lee flood relief channel reduce the risk of this happening. In developing this document the Council has worked on a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the borough and consulted with Environment Agency on measures which are necessary to reduce flood risk in the area.
96. Most of Haringey's growth will take place as part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth area. The Core Strategy will direct development to the most appropriate locations so that housing growth is supported by sufficient jobs and key infrastructure including community facilities such as health, education and sports facilities.
97. There are two key areas of growth within the London Borough of Haringey. These are Haringey Heartlands/Wood Green and Tottenham Hale. Their significance lies in their location within the London-Stansted-Cambridge- Peterborough Growth Area and the opportunities that they offer in terms of regeneration and housing delivery. These locations will be subject to considerable change over the plan period with new transport infrastructure and major housing growth.
98. The London Plan designates Haringey Heartlands/Wood Green as an area of intensification with proposals for the creation of approximately 1500 new jobs and 1700 new homes as part of an intensive mixed use redevelopment.
99. The strategy describes Wood Green as a vibrant and busy town centre, which has an important role to play within the London and North London Sub-regional town centre hierarchy. It is designated as a Metropolitan Centre in the London Plan (2008), one of only 10 identified in London, which reflects its role as a key retail and commercial destination in North London. The growth areas are shown below.

Figure 5  
**LB Haringey Key Diagram** (Source: LB Haringey Core Strategy Proposed Submission, November 2009)



### Housing Strategy 2009-2019

100. The Council's vision for housing in the borough is: "To create balanced neighbourhoods of choice, which meet the housing aspirations of Haringey's residents and offer quality, affordability and sustainability for current and future generations".
101. The strategy states that in order to achieve this vision, the Council will aim;
  - to meet housing need through mixed communities which provide opportunities for residents;
  - to ensure housing in the borough is well managed, of high quality and sustainable;
  - to provide people with the support and advice they need; and
  - to make all homes in the borough a part of neighbourhoods of choice.
102. These aims for Haringey will be based on the following principles;
  - partnership between organisations, agencies and residents in the borough;
  - strong relationships with government and national agencies (such as HCA and TSA) that will get the best deal for Haringey's residents; and

- engagement with residents and communities so that decisions and service improvement are shaped by what they want.

- <sup>103.</sup> The strategy states that the Council needs to respond to housing need in the borough by increasing housing supply. The Council will do this through new build and by making the most of the housing they have, for example, tackling under-occupation and reducing the number of empty homes in the borough.
- <sup>104.</sup> However, it recognises that the credit crunch has changed the housing market and to continue to deliver new homes the Council will need to explore new models and products to drive delivery. Currently different types of housing are unevenly spread in the borough.
- <sup>105.</sup> As such, they state that they need to create communities with a mix of housing tenure type and size. Mixed communities are more sustainable in terms of their impact on services and amenities and allow for natural shifts in family size and the economic advancement of individuals. This aim allows housing to offer a range of opportunities to residents, allowing people to access housing suited to their needs and aspirations at different points in life, including accessible opportunities for affordable home ownership and other intermediate housing options.

## Islington LBC

### The Borough

- <sup>106.</sup> Islington is the second smallest borough in the capital, covering an area of just over six square miles. However, it is one of the most densely populated. More than 175,792 people live in the borough and that figure is greatly increased during the working day. Islington also has a thriving night time economy and attracts many visitors.
- <sup>107.</sup> It is one of London's oldest boroughs, with a substantial built heritage as well as modern developments such as the N1 shopping and leisure centre and new apartment blocks. As such, it is an area of remarkable cultural and environmental diversity, with some of the most famous Georgian squares, a canal system, the New River Walk, Arsenal Football Club and Highbury Fields. Yet it has the least open green space of any London Borough. There is limited land available for development which means that there is pressure on existing buildings and land.
- <sup>108.</sup> Islington has a rapidly growing population. The population is one of the youngest in the country, with a mean age of 34.7 years compared with 36 years in London and 38.7 years in England. As well as a young population, Islington has a high number of single person households (ranking 5th highest out of 33 regional local authorities). An estimated 16% of residents declare themselves as people with a disability and some 1,500 people in Islington receive home care.
- <sup>109.</sup> Islington's economy mirrors the extremes of its population. There is a very vibrant small business sector and a very high number of VAT registered new businesses and business start-ups. There are local job vacancies, which are highest in business services, retail and the hotel and restaurant industry. 91% of jobs are in the service economy, compared with 81% in Great Britain. Islington has the 7th highest job density in the country at 2.19 jobs per working age resident.
- <sup>110.</sup> However, Islington experiences high levels of 'population churn'; as people are assisted into work they often achieve a higher standard of living and move out of the borough. Evidence shows that, particularly for those who occupied social housing, they are generally replaced by people with less educational achievement and/or skills who may not speak English as a first language and who may have multiple health challenges. All of these factors serve to accentuate inequalities in the borough. Improving the employment prospects of all residents and enhancing the success of local businesses have been identified as priorities.
- <sup>111.</sup> Islington has around 86,300 residential properties. 35.5% of these are owner occupied, 15.6% are rented privately and 48.9% are Council or Housing Association owned. Affordability and choice of housing are two key issues faced by the residents in the borough. There is excess demand for social housing and whilst the cost of private housing is high, demand is also high. The effect is that households are becoming increasingly polarised economically. To achieve the government's Decent Homes standard, Islington properties require significant investment. This includes private sector stock, of which 7% of dwellings were deemed unfit.

### Community Strategy

- <sup>112.</sup> The overall vision of the Islington Strategic Partnership is for the borough to be a place where:

- 'We will have made bold steps towards reducing poverty in the borough;
- We will have removed barriers that prevent anyone from taking full advantage of services, support and opportunities; and
- We will have helped people raise their aspirations, encouraging them to make the most of all the opportunities available to them and enable them to make a positive contribution, ultimately helping to fulfil everyone's potential'.

113. These statements reduce to a vision single statement:

*Overall in 2020, Islington will be a place where we have achieved real change to create a stronger, sustainable community.*

114. The strategy is focused on delivering three key objectives:

- Reducing poverty
- Improving access for all
- Realising everyone's potential

115. These will be addressed through focusing on improvements under seven outcome areas:

- Improving employment and prosperity
- Improving learning and attainment
- Improving health
- Improving safety
- Improving the environment
- Improving housing
- Building stronger sustainable communities

116. Regarding housing challenges, the strategy identifies that social housing in Islington accounts for almost 50% of all available accommodation, significantly higher than the London and national average. Forty eight percent of social housing residents are from non-white backgrounds.

117. It identifies that access to affordable housing is the key challenge. It considers that there is not enough of both available and affordable housing within the borough, yet demand for social housing continues to grow while demand for private housing irrespective of price increases is also growing. This has led to polarisation between income groups. The strategy states that there are too few opportunities to develop new affordable housing and overcrowding is a significant issue.

### **Core Strategy**

118. Islington's Core Strategy was adopted in February 2011, following successful completion of the lengthy statutory plan making process.

<sup>119.</sup> The Core Strategy vision statement sets out an aspiration for Islington to become “a place where real change has been achieved to create a stronger and economically, environmentally and socially sustainable community.”

<sup>120.</sup> Accordingly the Core Strategy is tasked with addressing a number of related key issues. From the perspective of the SHMA several are particularly noteworthy:

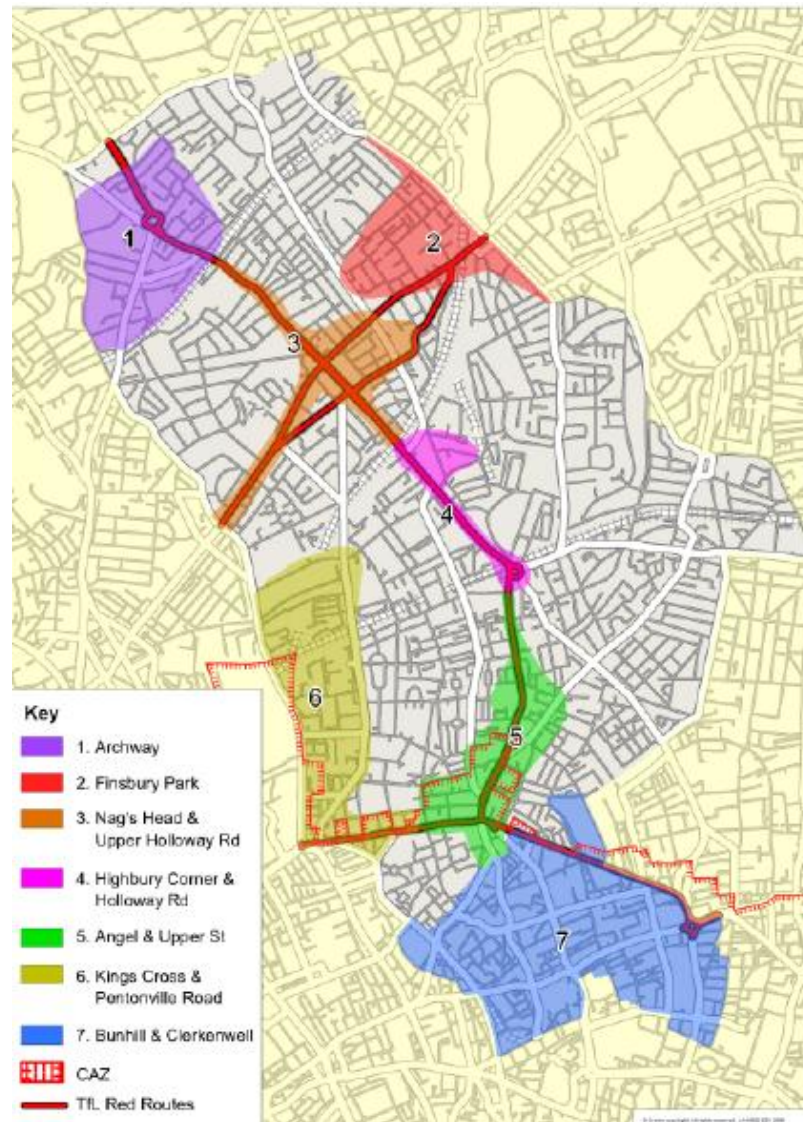
- the need for more housing in the borough and for more of this to be affordable;
- the missing middle - that is those middle income households including families with dependent children;
- balancing the demand for housing against the need to accommodate a growth in employment and tackle worklessness; and
- ensuring a balance between a growing population and the quality of life for those who live, work and study in the borough

<sup>121.</sup> The vision will be achieved through several objectives of which the following are most closely linked to the SHMA:

- Tackling inequality and exclusion in the borough, and seeking to ensure that local residents share in the prosperity of London.
- Securing a supply of housing which encourages mixed communities;, where the main priority will be maximising provision of social rented housing. Mixed communities include, (but are not limited to), different tenures, household sizes, and ages (including families, older people and disable people).
- achieving a 70:30 ratio of social rented and intermediate affordable housing in new developments;
- meeting and seeking to exceed the minimum regional targets for housing supply, with new housing contributing to the increased quality of life for residents;
- resisting the loss of family housing through conversion; and
- resisting the growth of student housing except in designated campus areas.

<sup>122.</sup> The strategy has a major focus on seven key areas where a large amount of growth is anticipated, and contains the following key diagram.

Figure 6  
 LB Islington Key Diagram (Source: LB Islington Core Strategy Submission, 2010)



123. Overall the Council recognises that access to adequate and affordable housing remains crucial for many residents in the borough. Delivering affordable, and particularly social rented accommodation, is an absolute priority for the Council. High rates of overcrowding reflect the problems that many find in seeking larger accommodation as families grow. Affordability is the major issue in the borough. The proportion of households living in the social rented sector is still amongst the highest in London. **Housing Strategy 2009-2014.**

124. Consultation led to the identification of four main issues:

- tackling overcrowding;
- the gap between the rich and the poor (polarisation);
- homelessness;

- accessing social housing.

<sup>125.</sup> Other issues it identified are:

- the need to encourage more people to stay in their homes for longer to make Islington's communities more settled;
- the need to tailor services to meet the needs of specific communities;
- the lack of tenure security in the private rented sector; and
- the need to make housing more affordable and reduce the 'benefit trap'.

<sup>126.</sup> The strategy states that it will meet its housing challenge, providing more high quality, inclusive and affordable homes by:

- ensuring residents have a good quality of life while living in the second most densely developed borough in the country;
- seeking to meet and exceed the borough housing target;
- requiring a range of unit sizes within each housing proposal to meet needs in the borough, including maximising the proportion of family accommodation, in both affordable and market housing;
- ensuring affordable housing units are designed to a high quality and be fully integrated within the overall scheme;
- building all new housing to 'flexible homes' standards, with at least 10% wheelchair housing provided as part of all new developments.



## The City of Westminster

### The City

- <sup>127.</sup> The City of Westminster contains vital elements that make London one of the most successful world cities. It is the home of Government and the monarchy. It has a range of internationally important businesses and corporate headquarters and an unrivalled range of professional services and world renowned cultural and entertainment facilities. Its townscape contains internationally recognisable buildings, famous streets and squares. Westminster is also an area where rich and poor live side-by-side and a first home for many migrants. Westminster has a residential population of 230,000 but its daytime population is closer to 1 million and Europe's largest night-time economy (over 3,000 eating, drinking and nightlife establishments).
- <sup>128.</sup> It is the largest centre of employment in the UK with 577,000 jobs and has one of the busiest planning authorities in the UK (10,000 planning applications per year). It is the home to state and national ceremonies and many internationally famous buildings and tourist attractions (25m visitors in 2006 – 39% of London's hotel bed-spaces). The internationally renowned shopping streets of Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street have between them almost 1.6m square metres of retail comparison shopping floor-space, the highest in the UK. Oxford Street's prime retail rents are the fourth highest in the world.
- <sup>129.</sup> Westminster is a centre for the headquarters of national and international organisations associated with business and trade and a location of regional, national and international significance for retailing, higher education, religious affairs, the medical, legal and other professions, media, arts, culture, entertainment and tourism. Many of these activities are concentrated in the Central Activities Zone, shown on the Key Diagram below, where planning policies protect and encourage mixed uses. The service sector is by far the largest employer, with most of these jobs located within the Central Activities Zone and its Frontages and in the Paddington Special Policy Area, close to Paddington Station.
- <sup>130.</sup> The city includes all or part of five Royal Parks, 4.7 kilometres of tidal Thames riverside, 21 English Heritage listed parks and gardens, over 11,000 buildings which are listed as having special architectural or historic interest and 55 conservation areas which cover 77% of the city's area. It has four of London's main line railway termini with two, Paddington and Victoria, having direct connections to Heathrow and Gatwick airports and ten out of twelve London Underground lines, including the network's busiest underground station at Victoria. To the north and west of the Central Activities Zone and to its south as far as the River Thames, housing, in a wide variety of built forms, is the principal land use.

### Community Strategy (the Westminster City Plan)

- <sup>131.</sup> The shared vision for Westminster is that:

*'by 2016 it will be the best city to live in, work and visit in the UK, a vibrant city with great quality of life, strong, united communities and excellent services, offering real opportunities for everyone to achieve a better future'.*

Specific aspects of the vision are as follows. It will be 'An improving city environment, developing a safer, more sustainable, well-designed and distinctive city'.

132. The four community strategy goals are:

- better life chances for all our citizens Improving health, care, housing, learning, employment and enterprise opportunities in an economically thriving city;
- a better city for children and young people;
- a city of opportunity where everyone can improve their life chances, well being and health; and
- a strong city economy with a skilled workforce and successful businesses strong, united and engaged communities building a stronger and more united city.

133. Addressing the shortage of affordable housing and high levels of housing need, including homelessness and overcrowding, are key issues in maintaining and improving overall quality of life in Westminster. Protecting and improving the natural environment and promoting more sustainable approaches to urban living are becoming increasingly important to everyone and taking forward this agenda will be a major priority.

### **Core Strategy**

134. Westminster's Core Strategy submission draft was published in November 2009 for consultation prior to its examination stages in the spring of 2010. The strategy is expected to be adopted by the Council in January 2011.

135. The spatial vision for the City of Westminster is:

*To make Westminster the foremost world class sustainable city: A city which values its unique heritage and accommodates growth and change to ensure the city's continued economic success while providing opportunities and a high quality of life for all its communities and a high quality environment for residents, workers and visitors alike.*

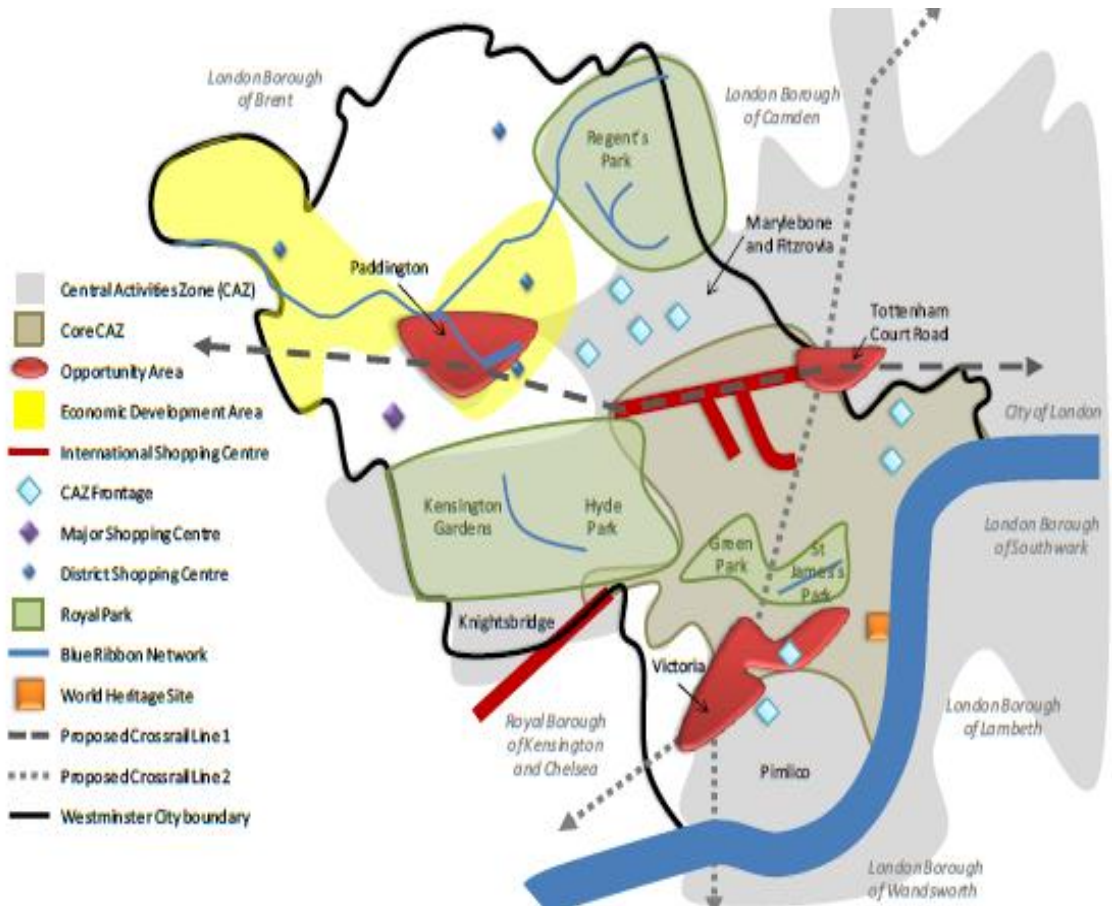
136. The Core strategy cites the following objectives;

- to accommodate sustainable growth and change that will contribute to enhancing London's role as a sustainable world class city, including its international business, retail, cultural and entertainment functions within the Central Activities Zone; whilst maintaining its unique and historic character, mix, functions and townscapes;
- to sensitively upgrade Westminster's building stock to secure sustainable and inclusive exemplary design which minimises energy and resource consumption and the production of waste, reduces the impacts of local environmental pollution and meets both today's needs and those of the future, including the effects of a changing climate; creating attractive places that function well whilst ensuring that the historic character and integrity of Westminster's built fabric and places is protected and enhanced;

- to maintain and enhance the quality of life, health and well-being of Westminster's residential communities; ensuring that Westminster's residents can benefit from growth and change, providing more employment and housing opportunities, safety and security, and better public transport and local services; to work with our partners to foster economic vitality and diversity, improved learning and skills, and improved life chances in areas of deprivation;
- to increase the supply of good quality housing across all parts of the city to meet Westminster's housing target and to meet housing needs, including the provision of affordable housing and homes for those with special needs;
- to manage the pressures on the city from its national and international roles and functions, business communities and tourism, including the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and their legacy and to ensure a safe and enjoyable visitor experience;
- to accommodate the safe and efficient movement of growing numbers of people entering and moving around Westminster by facilitating major improvements to the public transport system, improving the public realm and pedestrian environment, managing vehicular traffic and making walking and cycling safer and more enjoyable; and
- to protect and enhance Westminster's open spaces, civic spaces and Blue Ribbon Network and Westminster's biodiversity; including protecting the unique character and openness of the Royal Parks and other open spaces; and to manage these spaces to ensure areas of relative tranquillity in a city with a daytime population increased every day by over 1 million workers and visitors.

<sup>137.</sup> Specific proposals within the Core Strategy designed to meet these objectives are described spatially in the Key Diagram.

Figure 7  
 City of Westminster Key Diagram (Source: Core Strategy Submission Draft November 2009)



138. The impact of London's growing population on the borough with its limited space and housing will be significant. Addressing the shortage of affordable housing and high levels of housing need, including homelessness and overcrowding, will, therefore, be key in maintaining and improving overall quality of life in Westminster.
139. Disparities between new and more established communities and between poor and wealthy are likely to continue to increase. These disparities will lead to pressures on neighbourhoods and on community cohesion. The Council states that it will need to counter the possibility of developing more socially polarised communities, promoting the idea that they have a shared future and addressing community tensions that arise.
140. Taking into account the challenges and drivers set out above the Council have identified the following six key strategic issues that the Core Strategy will need to address:
- how to mitigate against climate change and ensure that the City plays its part in delivering sustainable development;
  - how and where to accommodate growth and change and how to maintain economic diversity and vitality;
  - how to strike the balance between growth in housing and employment whilst meeting our housing challenges;

- how to support Westminster's role as a world class City while maintaining local distinctiveness;
- how to build cohesive, tolerant and neighbourly communities; and
- how to balance the needs of the night time economy with a large and growing residential population and the needs of the day time economy.

<sup>141.</sup> However, it recognises that the challenge facing Westminster is not just about balancing and accommodating growth in housing and employment but about the type of housing that is provided, especially in terms of affordability, size, and tenure. With the average price of a home nearing £495,000 it is virtually impossible for those on low to middle incomes to purchase a home in the City. There is, therefore, a high demand for housing at below market prices.

<sup>142.</sup> In addition, Westminster has a large supply of social rented housing which also experiences high demand. There is typically a waiting list of around 5,500 'households in priority need' for social housing. The City Council currently expects that most of the affordable housing provided by developers will go to meet the high level of residents' housing need.

<sup>143.</sup> South Westminster is situated in the River Thames flood plain area defined by the Environment Agency as a high risk flooding zone. Below ground excavations could run the risk of flooding in the future. The resilience of buildings to flooding is an issue and flood risk assessments are one way to ensure that flood damage prevention measures are built in, particularly in areas near the River Thames.

### **Housing Strategy**

<sup>144.</sup> According to the Housing Strategy, in 2006 the Council updated its Housing Needs Assessment. It showed that the need for affordable housing had grown substantially since its last study in 2001.

<sup>145.</sup> Housing affordability in Westminster continues to worsen as price rises outstrip growth in household incomes. Research carried out for the Westminster Housing Commission found that there are many households in Westminster that fall into the 'intermediate market' – households who do not meet the criteria for social housing, but who cannot afford market priced housing in the city. Opportunities for finding affordable accommodation that meets their needs within Westminster are severely limited.