

10 OBJECTIVE 5: NEW HORIZONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Public and community facilities including schools, health centres, community centres and places of worship all have an important role in ensuring that the regeneration of the Blackhorse Lane area produces the maximum possible benefit for local residents. Such facilities not only provide vital services but also serve to build a sense of community, a key ingredient of an attractive, safe and cohesive area.

Community safety is also a key issue for local residents which needs to be considered at the earliest possible stage of planning new developments and services.

Policy BHL10 In line with the Council's Community Strategy and UDP, the Council will work with partners to enable the development of public and community facilities to meet the needs of both existing and new residents and improve quality of life for local people.

In particular, the Council will seek to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate population growth. Where new or relocated services are developed, the Council will aim to ensure that such services are accessible to both existing and new residents (both in terms of location and admissions policies) so as to encourage integration of existing and new communities.

10.1 Key sites for new or improved services

Figure 17 identifies a number of key sites that have the potential to accommodate new or improved service provision across a range of service areas. All are well located in relation to both existing communities and the main growth areas, being either within walking distance or on a major bus route.

Essex Hall: A major new Joint Service Centre is planned on the site of the current Essex Hall on the corner of Blackhorse Lane and Billet Road. The new facility is expected to include a Children's Centre offering flexible childcare and services for parents, a new health centre, a re-provided day-care centre and a range of other services such as business support, training, youth work and community space.

Willowfield School: It is proposed to relocate Willowfield School to a new larger site just south of Blackhorse Road station, adjacent to (and including part of) the Douglas Eyre Playing Fields. The new site would offer pupils a new purpose built school capable of expanding capacity if needed along with direct access to excellent outdoor sports facilities. Through the Extended Schools initiative, the new school would also offer the wider community access to much-enhanced sports, leisure and other community facilities.

Walthamstow Academy: A new school for the local community, Walthamstow Academy is to be built on the site of the existing McEntee School on Billet Road. Under the Government's City Academies programme, the new school will be encouraged to offer services to the wider community for sports, leisure and learning.

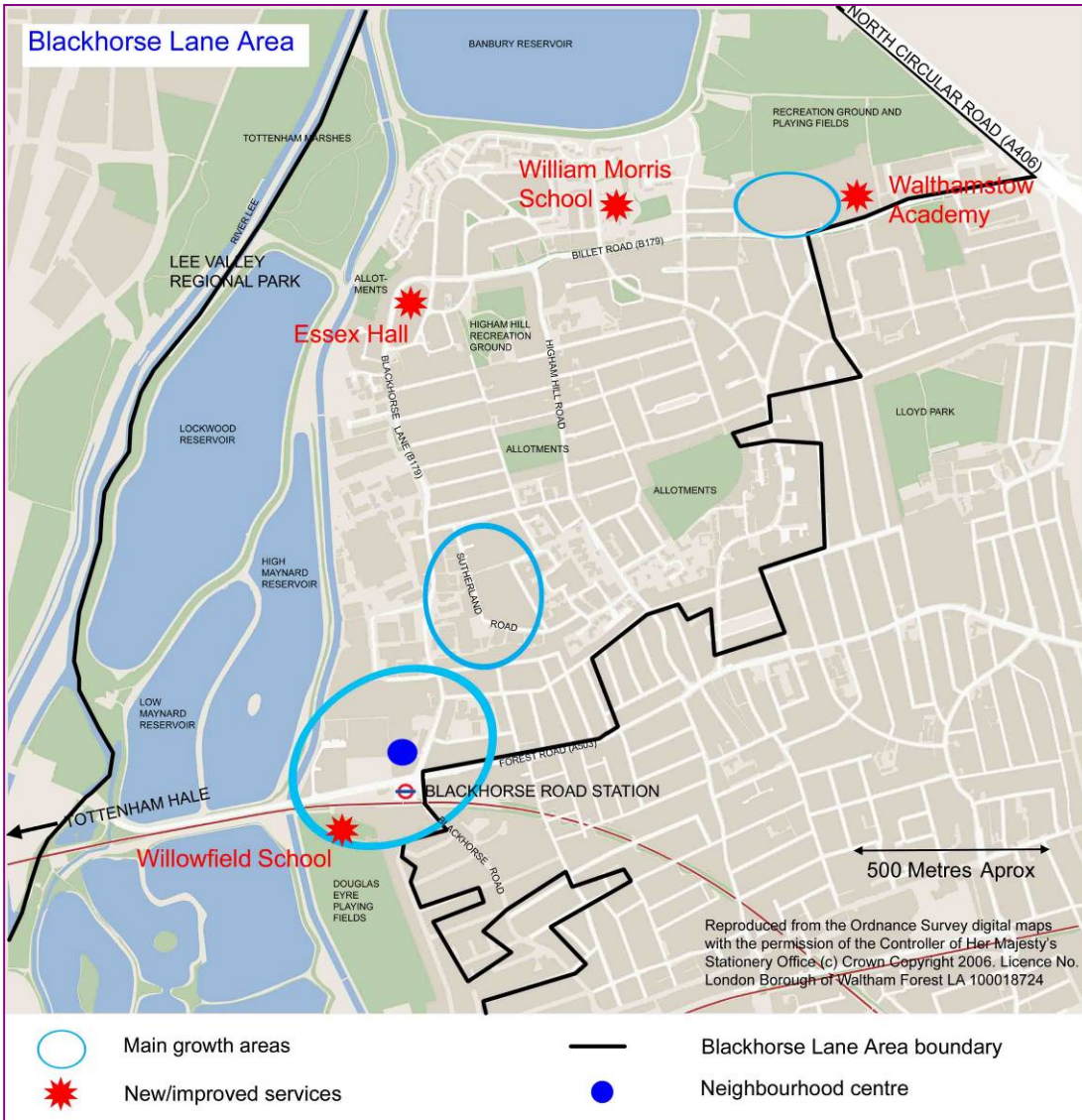
William Morris School: This school, located within one of the most deprived parts of the area and conveniently close to the Billet / Kimberley Growth Area, has expressed an interest in offering community learning and leisure facilities. The school has substantial facilities that are underused including a large hall, two IT suites and an outside playground and field.

10.2 Education and childcare

The proposed new Children's Centre as part of the Joint Service Centre development at Essex Hall will offer families with children under five integrated childcare (around 60 places), early education, health and a range of family support services. The centre is also intended to link with Jobcentre Plus to support parent with training and job search and with the Extended Schools initiative (see below).

The Blackhorse Lane area contains five primary schools, two secondary schools and one special school. The council has embarked on a major programme of renewing schools in the area. Hillyfields Primary School on Higham Hill Road has been completely rebuilt. It is proposed to relocate Willowfield Secondary School to a new larger site behind Blackhorse Road Station and to replace the McEntee with a

Figure 17. Sites for new/improved public/community services



new school, Walthamstow Academy, on its existing site.

These three brand new purpose built schools will provide a much improved educational environment that will contribute to the borough's targets for improving educational achievement⁵¹. The new schools will also improve the image and desirability of the area, particularly for families with children.

The Council has undertaken a detailed capacity assessment to look at the impact on pupil numbers of the proposed level of housing growth. This assessment suggests that building up to 2,000 new homes in the area over the next ten years would result in

an increase of around 330 primary school pupils and 240 secondary school pupils. The area's two new secondary schools should be able to absorb this level of growth in secondary pupils. There is capacity at Hillyfields Primary School to absorb some of the growth in primary pupils but it is likely that additional places would have to be created by expanding one or more of the other primary schools on their existing sites.

The impact of developments on school capacity will be kept under review. Where developments will require additional capacity to be created in local schools, the developers will be required to fund the additional capacity through planning

obligations (details of how this will be calculated will be set out in guidance on planning obligations being prepared by the Council).

Through the Extended Schools programme, the Council is promoting a stronger role for schools within the local community. An Extended School provides a range of activities over and above the normal level of provision, from increased study support and better access to sports and ICT activities, to the development of an explicit role as a provider of health and social care services. The proposed new schools represent an excellent opportunity to extend the Extended Schools model to Blackhorse Lane.

10.3 Health

Local residents in the Blackhorse Lane area have significant health needs, for example, of all wards in Waltham Forest, Higham Hill has the second highest proportion of the population who are long term sick or disabled. In particular, there is a high prevalence of diabetes. At the same time, the area has inadequate primary care facilities. There are issues registering with a GP in this area and accessing a GP at a convenient time. Most of the existing surgeries are out dated or unsuitable accommodation that is not accessible for disabled people and offers little or no space for additional services such as district nurses, health visitors or specialist treatments.

In order to address these issues, Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust is planning to develop a new health centre, provisionally to be located as part of the Joint Service Centre at Essex Hall. The new centre will bring together three of the area's existing GP practices in purpose built premises with room for expansion plus the facilities needed to offer additional services such as minor operations, family planning clinics, diet and nutrition clinics, group therapy, specialist optometry and retinal screening. There will also be shared office space, group room and shared staff facilities.

As well as offering a much higher quality and wider range of healthcare services, based on current benchmarks the new centre will offer sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional patient numbers generated by up to 2,000 new homes.

The impact of developments on the capacity of health services will be kept under review. The Council will consult with the Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust on all relevant planning applications and, where an increased demand for additional health provision would result from a proposal, will seek planning obligations towards additional provision within the catchment area of the development.

10.4 Community, voluntary and faith centres

The Council commissioned an audit of community, voluntary and faith centres offering either services or space for hire to the local community in order to ensure that there are sufficient facilities of this type within the area.⁵²

The main findings of the audit were:

- The area contains a large number of facilities available to either individuals or groups from the local community. The audit identified at least 19 buildings with space for community use.
- There was a general consensus that there is a shortage of youth facilities and activities. A dedicated youth centre is unlikely to be financially viable and many unmet needs could be met through planned and existing resources such as making better use of school facilities out of hours.
- Lack of co-ordination of community facilities was a recurring theme. Services to the local community would be greatly enhanced through proper sharing of information and co-ordination of provision.
- There are a number of existing ICT facilities and many more planned. In order to avoid duplication and promote flexible use these developments need to be properly co-ordinated.
- The supply of community facilities needs to be kept under review as new developments lead to a change in the size, structure and needs of the community.

Policy BHLP11 The Council will support efforts to improve the co-ordination of existing community facilities including ICT facilities and will prioritise meeting the needs of young people through developments within local schools and by supporting the refocusing or expansion of existing provision.

10.5 Community safety

Consultation shows that crime and anti-social behaviour are areas of concern for local residents. The Council works closely in partnership with the Metropolitan Police to improve community safety across the borough.

The roll out of Safer Neighbourhood teams to the Blackhorse Lane area will increase levels of visible policing and improve police understanding of and response to local community safety issues.

In addition, a major police operation base is located on Uplands Business Park just off Blackhorse Lane, which offers an opportunity to increase police presence in the area and improve response times.

It is known that the design of buildings and public spaces and issues such as planting and lighting have a major impact on community safety and particularly on fear of crime, so all new development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they will incorporate measures to 'design out crime', for example by increasing natural surveillance of public spaces and improving lighting (see Section 8.3.2). The council will seek planning obligations and other funding to improve the streetscape incorporating improved lighting, focused on the area around Blackhorse Road Station and the main roads marked on the key diagram (Blackhorse Lane, Billet Road and a section of Forest Road).