

4. Issues and opportunities

This section sets out the issues and opportunities identified for the Station Hub and Waterfront site, as highlighted by the urban design analysis as well as the extensive research that has been undertaken to inform the IPPF and this brief. In particular, the urban design analysis in the previous section highlights the rare opportunity that the site presents to create a dramatic and striking, high quality development for Blackhorse Lane.

4.1 Key issues

Key issues for the Station Hub and Waterfront site

1. Proximity to main thoroughfare and impact on residential amenity

The site is currently devoted almost exclusively to light industrial, commercial, and warehousing operations, and is bounded A503 (Forest Road) and B179 (Blackhorse Lane). This generates a convenient location from which to conduct commercial operations of the type currently on the site, but means that any new residential development should take into consideration measures such as double-glazing and other forms of sound insulation, in order to protect amenity values.

2. Relocation of tenants

The site provides accommodation for a range of business types, including retail, warehousing, light industrial, and office uses. These are valuable employment generators for the local area, and should be relocated elsewhere in the local area, either in the remainder of the Blackhorse Lane industrial area to the north or proposed Sutherland Road business park to the east.

3. Maintaining industrial capacity

The IPPF proposes releasing a large proportion of the site from the SEL on the condition that the site area that remains within the SEL is renewed and intensified for employment use. Industrial capacity will also be maintained through the eastward expansion to the SEL to incorporate a new business park on the Webbs site.

4. Maintaining employment levels

Redevelopment and the introduction of new business uses will alter the profile of employment provision on the site. A recent study, *A Labour Market Assessment of Physical Development at Blackhorse Lane* (May 2006) has been prepared by consultants SQW which supports an overall strategy of retaining and attracting businesses which provide an employment mix which closely matches the skills profile of the local population, thus improving opportunities for local employment.

5. Flood risk

Approximately 35-40% of the station hub and waterfront site is located within Flood Zone 3, and a small fraction in Flood Zone 2. Available maps suggest that in the event of a 1 in 100 year flood, actual flood water levels could reach depths up to 57cm on some parts of the site. As such, in accordance with Policy WPM18 in the Waltham Forest UDP First Review (adopted March 2006), any proposals in areas at risk of flooding will require a Flood Risk Assessment in line with PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk.

The site's proximity to the Lee Flood Relief Channel (FRC) and Dagenham Brook is also a key issue which needs to be considered in the design of any development on the western edge of the site in particular. In particular, there is a requirement by the Environment Agency for a buffer zone so that new development is 8metres away from Dagenham Brook (which is a main river) and east of the FRC.



The Flood Relief Channel and Dagenham Brook (looking north)

6. Flood Relief Channel and Dagenham Brook

The FRC to the west of the site is crucial to the local infrastructure, and cannot be compromised by future development. However, the existing channel obstructs views towards the reservoir, and compromises the environmental benefits that could be achieved on the site through redevelopment. As such, any development on the waterfront needs to take the FRC and Dagenham Brook into consideration.

Further work on the feasibility of the waterfront park and its relationship with the FRC and Dagenham Brook will be commissioned by the Council, and early discussions have indicated that there may be potential to de-culvert and naturalise Dagenham Brook to improve its amenity and ecological value.

Developers for the site should liaise with the Council and the Environment Agency at the early stages of planning and design, in order to gain a full understanding of the issues relating to the FRC and Dagenham Brook.

4.2 Key opportunities

Key opportunities for the Station Hub and Waterfront site

1. Dramatic, gateway development

The site offers a rare opportunity to create a striking, visual gateway or landmark development for the Blackhorse Lane industrial area (and Waltham Forest as a borough), for people entering from Haringey in the west and at Blackhorse Road station. In particular, the 'gateway' development should be located at the south-western corner of the site and at the corner of the Standard junction. A cohesive and comprehensive approach to development is essential if a high quality gateway development is to be achieved.

2. High quality, waterfront development

The site offers opportunities for new residential development to benefit from the close proximity of the Maynard reservoirs and the Lee Valley Regional Park, in terms of views and recreational opportunities.

3. A new waterfront park for the area

The proximity of the site to the significant natural assets of the Maynard reservoirs and the Lee Valley Regional Park offers the site a unique selling point. This should be maximised through the creation of a new linear waterfront park which can provide enhanced access and/or views to the reservoirs, as well as clearer linkages to the Lee Valley Regional Park.

4. Raising the profile of Blackhorse Lane

The redevelopment of the site presents Blackhorse Lane with an opportunity to raise its profile and image in the local area, and in the North London sub-region as a whole. In turn, this could help to secure high quality, higher density development in the area.

5. Proximity to Blackhorse Road transport node

The Blackhorse Road transport node offers access into the West End and City of London, Walthamstow Town Centre, and other eastward destinations via the Victoria Line, Silverlink rail, and bus services. These are invaluable features of the local infrastructure, and will act as a major incentive to future investors or developers connected to the site.

6. Provision of high density, mixed-use development

The position of the site between the reservoir and the Blackhorse Road transport interchange suggests that it would be an ideal location for high density, mixed-use development to include residential provision. This would allow for diversification in an exclusively commercial/ industrial location, which would prompt improvements to the local environment, potentially through Section 106 contributions. It will also provide a spur to attempts to introduce a wider range of local amenities and services into the area around Blackhorse Road station, which would benefit the wider area.

7. Improvements for pedestrian and cycle access in and around the site

There are opportunities to improve the permeability of the site for pedestrians and cyclists in particular, in order to enhance access and views to the reservoirs and the proposed waterfront park.

8. Land assembly

Though the site comprises a number of different plots of land, some of the key landowners are already working together on developing a

coherent vision for the future development of the site. This cohesive and comprehensive approach is essential for delivering the principles set out in this brief. The Council is particularly keen to encourage proposals that seek to redevelop the whole site or a large proportion of the site in order to realise the design principles set out in this brief.

9. Proximity to areas undergoing major regeneration

English Partnerships and Circle 33 who own sites immediately south of Blackhorse Road station, including the former British Rail goods yard, have plans for new residential development on their sites. In addition to this, the site is located within the Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Area, as identified in the London Plan, and as such is close to other sites undergoing major transformation including Tottenham Hale on the opposite side of the Maynard reservoirs. There may also be benefits from the Olympic Park site which is under construction for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to the south, in the Lower Lea Valley.

As such, redevelopment of the Station Hub and Waterfront site would be well-placed to take advantage of the socio-economic benefits emerging from these new developments.

10. Re-provision of a music venue for the area

The redevelopment of this site offers the area an opportunity to re-provide a music venue for the local community and as an attraction to visitors from outside the area.