

Assessing the Walthamstow Development Options

White Young Green Environmental (WYGE) was commissioned by the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) to undertake the first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process for the whole of Waltham Forest under the Borough's proposed Local Development Framework (LDF).

Waltham Forest is currently operating under a Unitary Development Plan that will be replaced with a LDF for the Borough post 2009. However, in the interim period, planning documents developed by LBWF will follow the LDF process closely so that they may conform with the proposed LDF when it is adopted.

WYGE has developed a SA for the proposed LDF that resulted in the production of a SA Scoping Report and Sustainability Appraisal Objectives. This report is available as part of the development of a blueprint for Walthamstow.

This report details the third stage in the SA for the Walthamstow plans, a sustainability appraisal of the preferred option. A sustainability appraisal has already been undertaken for the 3 options previously consulted on in March 2007.

In this document, the Walthamstow preferred option is assessed by the London Borough of Waltham Forest against the Sustainability Objectives that are set out in the SA Scoping Report. The preferred option is still at the principles stage and has limited detail. As the preferred option is developed from principles into a framework the delivery and detail of the proposals will be developed and further assessment of the sustainability of the framework will be undertaken at that development stage. The Sustainability Appraisal does however give

an understanding of the impacts of the option.

At the completion of the SA process, recommendations for the mitigation of negative impacts associated with the option are developed.

The purpose of this Option Appraisal is to present the findings in a manner that could be used for consultation regarding the selection of the preferred option. This report has the following format:

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Option Assessment *Provides details of the Sustainability Appraisal objectives against which the Walthamstow Town Centre preferred option has been assessed.*

Chapter 3 Next Steps

Appendix A Sustainability Objectives

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

By White Young Green

1.1 Requirement for Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainability Appraisal is a process through which the sustainability of a plan under preparation is assessed. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires local planning authorities to carry out a SA of their LDF process. All Development Plan Documents (DPDs) for adoption under the new LDF must undergo SA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a requirement of the EU Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment more commonly known as the SEA Directive.

The principal objective of the SEA Directive as stated in Article 1 is:

“...to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans ... with a view to promoting sustainable development...”

The SEA Directive was brought into effect in the United Kingdom (UK) on 21st July 2004 through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. Local planning authorities are required to carry out an environmental assessment of their LDF under these regulations.

Sustainability Appraisal involves a thorough assessment of the impacts of the proposed development. For this reason, SA addresses the interlocking social, economic, and environmental issues. Although the statutory requirements for carrying out Sustainability Appraisal and SEA are distinct it is possible to satisfy both through a single but integrated

Sustainability Appraisal process. Such a joint approach is advocated in ODPM guidance. For ease of reference, the combined SEA and Sustainability Appraisal process is simply referred to as Sustainability Appraisal throughout this Report.

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal Process

SEA is a means of evaluating the environmental acceptability of a plan in a formalised and systematic manner by identifying key environmental issues associated with the study area and how adoption of the plan will influence them.

SEA occupies a central position in the hierarchy of land use planning, sitting between high-level government planning policy and environmental assessment at project level. The SEA process considers similar issues to project level environmental assessment but differs in that the existing environment is examined in broad terms and strategic options are evaluated against environmental objectives. This is because the site specific information needed to complete a project level environmental assessment and quantify environmental effects is not available at the strategic stage.

Sustainability Appraisal differs from SEA in that it expands the focus of the assessment process to encompass social and economic issues. Sustainability Appraisal is described by the ODPM (2004) guidance as:

“An iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of the plan and the extent to which implementation of the plan will achieve the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined.”

The combined Sustainability Appraisal process identifies key social, economic, and environmental issues associated with the LBWF and how adoption of the proposed Plans will influence them. It will ensure that significant effects arising from the Walthamstow Interim Planning Policy Framework (IPPF) (and subsequent Area Action Plan) are either avoided or mitigated.

The process will also identify requirements (or indicators) for monitoring the implementation of the Area Action Plan following its adoption. Monitoring will identify any unforeseen impacts and inform the next revision or replacement. The Sustainability Appraisal process must be fully integrated into the Area Action Plan process.

1.3 Objectives of Sustainability Appraisal in the Option Assessment

The key objective in undertaking Sustainability Appraisal is to ensure that any significant effects arising from adoption of the Area Action Plan are (at least in principle) acceptable to the LBWF and other stakeholders. Undertaking Sustainability Appraisal allows for the social, economic and environmental acceptability of the strategic options to be determined and thus taken into account in the decision making process.

However, it should be noted that whilst the Sustainability Appraisal will inform the decision making process, the Area Action Plan may not always recommend the strategic option that is considered most sustainable. Where the most sustainable option is not selected as the preferred option, this will be justified accordingly.

1.4 Background to the Walthamstow Blueprint

Walthamstow is at the heart of our borough, both geographically and economically. The last five years has seen a major change in the prospects for Walthamstow. It is now an economically healthy local town centre with few empty or vacant retail units or market stalls and considerable investor interest in a number of key sites.

However, despite this success Walthamstow now finds itself at a crossroads. The exceptional economic success of London as a world city; its forecast continued growth, especially in locations such as Stratford City; and the hosting of the Olympic and Paralympics games in 2012, all present huge challenges, as well as opportunities, for East London and particularly for outer London town centres like Walthamstow. These challenges will require a new and innovative response, particularly in relation to climate change. Therefore the Council is in the process of developing a blueprint for the future of Walthamstow that builds on Walthamstow's strengths, particularly the diversity of its community, its position as an important transport node and its distinct retail offer. The blueprint will be presented to the Council for adoption and the results will be integrated into Council strategy in town centre management, maintenance and planning to ensure that 'on the ground' results of the blueprint are realised.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest have entered into a partnership with the Prince's Foundation for the Built

Environment to assist them in the drawing up of this blueprint for the future of Walthamstow.

The new planning regulations set by central government require that a series of options be presented to the community for consultation before a final option is presented for consultation. Therefore the first stage of the work of the Prince's Foundation has been to develop these options with input from the community, local businesses, Councillors, regional and local government offices and The Foundation's wide range of world-wide experienced experts.

1.5 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology in the Option Assessment

The Sustainability Appraisal process adopted by WYGE for the proposed LBWF Local Development Framework (LDF) has been developed following current guidance produced by the ODPM. The Sustainability Appraisal process involves the following steps organised according to the ODPM (2005) guidance stages:

STAGE A Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

- A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives.
- A2: Collating baseline information.
- A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems.
- A4: Developing the SA Framework.
- A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA - Stage A has been completed

STAGE B Developing and refining options and assessing effects

- B1: Testing the Development Plan Documents (DPD) revision objectives against the SA framework.
- B2: Developing the DPD options.

- B3: Predicting the effects of the DPD.
- B4: Evaluating the effects of the DPD
- B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximizing beneficial effects.
- B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPDs.

We are currently at stage B3, predicting the effects of the DPD, or in this case the preferred option.

CHAPTER 2 - OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

Assessment devised by White Young Green and undertaken by LBWF

2.1 Testing the Walthamstow Development Options

In order to determine whether the Walthamstow options are in accordance with established sustainability principles, the compatibility of identified options against agreed SA objectives has been evaluated. The Walthamstow Development Options have been assessed using the above Sustainability Appraisal objectives (see Appendix A) and taking into account the key issues identified during Stage A.

For objective, it has been determined whether the option will move towards, or away from, achievement of the objective. In some cases the option will have no influence on the objective or the “sustainability outcome” will be determined by how the option is implemented and whether its implementation would move towards or away from the achievement of an agreed sustainability objective. This is illustrated through the use of symbols in the Options Appraisal Matrices.

In each matrix, commentary has been provided to explain the likely effects that have been identified. In addition, where necessary, changes to the option or mitigation measures have been recommended to reduce potential adverse effects and maximise beneficial effects.

Walthamstow: Options Assessment cont.

- ✓ □ Minor beneficial. Option moving towards the achievement of Sustainability Appraisal objective
- ✓ ✓ □ Moderate beneficial. Option moving towards the achievement of Sustainability Appraisal objective
- ✓ ✓ ✓ □ Significant beneficial. Option moving towards the achievement of Sustainability Appraisal objective
- X** Option moving away from achievement of Sustainability Appraisal objective
- ?** Unknown: depends on how the option will be implemented
- n** Neutral: no relationship with Sustainability objective
- m** Mitigation

Sustainable Appraisal Objective	Baseline: No development and no change to current situation (undertaken by WYGE)		Preferred Option:	
1. Sufficient affordable housing	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional housing or change to current situation. • Currently able to re-house less than 10% of cases on the housing register due to shortage of affordable housing 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,400 new homes provided • All housing over 10 units to provide 40% affordable • Town Centre housing primarily for key workers/ young/ elderly • Family housing on edges of town centre • Good, flexible range of housing types
2. Reduce waste/ increase recycling	n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This objective is in the Council's Best Value Performance Plan for 2005-2008. The aim is through the introduction of household recycling; to increase the household recycling composting rate. 	✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policy require all new build to provide recycling facilities • Larger developments to exceed standards
3. Conserve energy	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No conservation in energy but there is the potential to improve if any refurbishment takes place. • The LBWF Improvement Plan aims to increase SAP energy efficiency rating in Private Sector Housing from 35-55 by April 2008 	✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger developments to exceed standards • Improved pedestrian and public transport links to reduce car born traffic • Reuse of key buildings
4. Protect/ enhance water, soil, air quality	n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All will continue to decline in the absence of intervention 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policy requirement for car free development will enhance air quality • Building management technology in new builds used to minimise pollution • Development of transport efficiency model (intensification around transport nodes) and car

				sharing schemes proposed to reduce use of car
5. Reduce crime/ fear of crime	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LBWF Improvement Plan sets a target to increase by 10% the number of people who feel safe by March 2008 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved links encourage pedestrian/ cycle movement Opening up of Selborne Walk shopping centre onto High Street increases permeability and walkability and improves safety along the High Street New residential community for town centre and encouragement of night-time activity
6. Improve health/ wellbeing	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential plans to improve St James Street Health Centre 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved links encourage pedestrian/ cycle movement Better integration of public transport Need to provide additional health provision for the new communities
7. Increase provision of and access to community facilities to meet local cultural, recreational and social needs	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No provision for facility development 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New community facilities to be provided, located around focal points at the centre of neighbourhoods, which will be within easy walkable access of everyone Additional green spaces to be provided, 1.6 -1.8 ha outdoor space per 1,000 population, in line with NPFA's Six Acre Standard
8. Improve condition of public/ private housing	n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term restructuring of local authority estates Improved town centre encourages individual investment into private housing stock
9. Conserve/ enhance ecology/ increase understanding	n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on brownfield land New formal public green spaces
10. Clean, well maintained attractive public realm	n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited funding for improvements or for high level maintenance of existing spaces 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved and new public realm, green spaces Holistic management framework introduced
11. Preserve historic environment, improve access to	n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve and enhance setting of listed buildings/ conservation areas Reuse of some existing buildings

culture				
12. Maintain/enhance vitality of town centres	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change, so only the 'maintain' state will be applicable. There is limited future funding for enhancement 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidating existing retail core and provision of new population for strengthening town centre. Improved environment and increase in population density in town centre.
13. Attract investment to improve local economy	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The town centre is currently a thriving local centre but with the threat of Stratford City and other town centre developments without future investment and intervention the town centre will start to decline 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing profile of Walthamstow Improved public realm and accessibility New retail and commercial space New day time workforce with increase in commercial/ office space provision New opportunities for night time economy including cinema
14. Improve educational attainment	n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106 education contribution New primary school places to be provided
15. Improve education and training for all residents, particularly for employment	n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to employment including the provision of new commercial and retail space Better integration of public transport to town centre Business Improvement District proposed, making the town centre more prosperous
16. Reduce overall level of deprivation	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis shows that Waltham Forest has been ranked 47 out of 354 districts (with 1 being the most deprived) and is the 12th most deprived borough in London. At present there are 45 SOAs in Waltham Forest that are in the top 20% and 11 in top 10% of the most deprived in the country and one (in Hoe Street Walthamstow Town Centre) in the top 5% most deprived 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved public realm including long term management New business opportunities for all sectors and levels
17. Encourage community understanding cohesion and participation	M	<p>Mitigation – need to ensure community engagement and consultation maximizes attendance at consultation events, involvement of community in design development, encourage involvement in community events</p>	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New community facilities, primary school and new residential community for town centre.
18. Ensure safe,	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walthamstow has good transport links to the City and to Chingford in the North on the over ground line, to Victoria via 	✓ ✓ ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to public transport system Integrated approach to transport system including vehicle borne traffic, pedestrian environment

integrated transport to access facilities/ jobs. Concentrating development at transport hubs		<p>central London on the Victoria underground line and has the 3rd busiest bus station in London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The retail offer, including the street market (as well as a wide range of housing) is available within walking distance of this transport interchange 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure of town centre to provide clustered developments around existing transport hubs S106 contributions opposite key transport modes Better access to bus station for buses
Total	0 ✓ ✓ ✓ 0 ✓ ✓ 0 ✓ 5 X 4 ? 8 n	Option Ranking: 4 Least beneficial in moving towards achievement of Sustainability Appraisal Objective.	13 ✓ ✓ ✓ 5 ✓ ✓ 0 ✓ 0 X 0? 0 n	Option Ranking: 1 Most beneficial in moving towards achievement of Sustainability Appraisal Objective.

Preferred option against options A-C as undertaken previously:

Baseline		Option A		Option B		Option C		Preferred Option	
0 ✓ ✓ ✓	Ranking: 5	1 ✓ ✓ ✓	Ranking: 4	7 ✓ ✓ ✓	Ranking: 3	11 ✓ ✓ ✓	Ranking: 2	13 ✓ ✓ ✓	Ranking: 1
0 ✓ ✓	Least beneficial in moving towards achievement of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	5 ✓ ✓	Moderately beneficial in moving towards achievement of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives.	10 ✓ ✓	Beneficial in moving towards achievement of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives.	7 ✓ ✓	Most beneficial of original options in moving towards achievement of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives.	5 ✓ ✓	Most beneficial of all options in moving towards achievement of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives.
0 ✓		7 ✓		1 ✓		0 ✓		0 ✓	
5 X		0 X		1 X		0 X		0 X	
4 ?		1 ?		0 ?		0 ?		0 ?	
8 n		4 n		1 n		0 n		0 n	

3.0 Next Steps by White Young Green

The Appraisal Matrices above, together with comments and mitigation notes, form the second stage (Stage B) of the Sustainability Appraisal of the LBWF options assessment process for the development of Walthamstow Town Centre. These will form the basis of ongoing stakeholder consultation. The

findings of this consultation will be taken into account in the development of the preferred option into a planning framework.

The next steps of the Sustainability Appraisal and of the Walthamstow Interim Planning Policy Framework are noted in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 - Next Steps in the Sustainability Appraisal of Area Action Plan

ODPM Stage	Sustainability Appraisal Steps	Links to LDF Process
B2	Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging options.	The results of consultation will feed into the selection of the Preferred Option.
B3	Predict and assess the significant effects of the Walthamstow Preferred Option.	Undertaken after draft Preferred Option developed. The Preferred Option will then need to be revised in line with any findings.
B4	Evaluate the effects of the Develop Plan Document.	Undertaken after draft Preferred Option is selected. The Preferred Option will then need to be revised in line with any findings.
B5	Develop mitigation for any adverse effects and to maximise beneficial effects.	
B6	Develop recommendations for monitoring and indicators. Draft indicators have been developed at scoping stage.	

Appendix A: Waltham Forest Sustainability Objectives by WYGE

Objective	Economic	Social	Environmental
(1) Provide sufficient affordable housing of good quality to meet local needs, making good use of derelict and vacant property bearing in mind their nature conservation value	✓	✓	✓
(2) Reduce production of waste and increase recycling		✓	✓
(3) Conserve energy		✓	✓
(4) To protect and enhance water, soil and air quality through reducing pollution			✓
(5) To reduce crime and the fear of crime and to ensure public safety		✓	
(6) Improve standard of health and wellbeing of those who live and work in the borough		✓	
(7) To increase the provision of and access to community facilities to meet local cultural, recreational and social local needs		✓	
(8) Improve condition of public and private housing stock		✓	✓
(9) To conserve and enhance all aspects of the ecological environment, in particular designated sites and protected species, and provide opportunities for local residents to access and understand these including consideration of biodiversity within new development		✓	✓
(10) Provide a clean well maintained public realm		✓	✓
(11) To preserve and enhance all aspects of the historic environment and to provide opportunities for all residents to access and understand local cultural heritage		✓	✓
12) Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the borough's town centres	✓	✓	
(13) Improve the local economy, by attracting inward investment	✓		
(14) Improve educational attainment in schools		✓	
(15) To provide and improve the existing education and training opportunities for all local residents of all age groups, including the young, deprived, disabled, the elderly and particularly to enable access to local employment	✓	✓	
(16) Reduce the overall level of deprivation	✓	✓	
(17) Encourage community understanding, cohesion and participation		✓	
(18) Ensure a safe integrated transport system that provides easy access to local facilities and jobs and concentrate new development at transport hubs	✓	✓	✓

