

BLACKHORSE LANE

Urban Design Framework
& Station Hub & Waterfront and Sutherland Road Planning and Design Briefs

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London Borough of Waltham Forest



CONTENTS

Foreword	2	Development Principles	42
Executive Summary	4	Site wide	43
Introduction	10	Network of Streets	43
Background	10	Green Network	43
Purpose	12	Multiple Modes of Transport	43
Status	12	Improve Station Access	43
Structure of Document	12	Sustainable Development	44
Acknowledgements	12	New Developments	45
Site and Context	14	Housing Diversity and Quality	45
The Site	14	New Businesses	45
Character	16	Appropriate Building Heights	45
Urban Form	16	Active Ground Floors	45
Key Themes	18	Existing Assets	46
Landscape	18	Integrate Buildings of Merit	46
Existing Industries	18	Support Local Enterprise and Businesses	46
Emerging Creative Industries	20	Urban Design Framework	48
Built Heritage	20	Character Areas	49
Policy Context Summary	22	Blackhorse Road Station	50
Policy Framework and Key Policy Messages	23	Forest Road	50
Constraints	26	Blackhorse Lane South	50
Biodiversity	28	Linear Park	50
Flooding and Drainage	28	Hookers Road	50
Land Ownership	30	Blackhorse Lane North	50
Strategic Industrial Location	30	Sutherland Road	50
Utilities	30	Environmental Sustainability	51
Ambition and Vision	32	Minimising Energy Use Including Use of Passive Design	51
Introduction	34	Decentralised Energy	51
What Exists	36	On-site Renewable Technologies	52
Transport Infrastructure	36	Sustainable Design and Construction	52
Lea Valley	36	Green Space and Biodiversity	52
Creative Industries	36	Proposed SIL Release	53
Local Businesses	36	Public Realm Overview	54
Built / Urban Heritage	36	Principal Connections	55
What is Proposed	40	Spatial Structure	56
Facilitating Regeneration	40	Locating Social Infrastructure and Services	57
Acknowledging the Character of the Area	40	Maintaining and Integrating Existing Buildings of Merit	59
Addressing the Aims of LBWF / LDA	40	Active Façades and Uses	60
Viability for the Private Sector	40	Streets	62
		Street Network	63
		Primary Street	64
		Secondary Street	65
		Tertiary Street	66
		Park Street	67
		Lee Valley Street	68

Standard Junction Improvements	69	Station Hub & Waterfront Planning and Design Brief	100
Open Space	72	Existing Local Land Use Patterns	101
Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL)	75	The Existing Situation	101
Development Density	76	Particular Issues	101
Determining the Distribution and Density of Residential Development	76	Existing Building Heights	101
Public Transport	77	Identified Positive Buildings	102
Cycle Network	78	Existing Flood Implications	102
Building Heights	79	Existing Street trees	102
Car Parking	80	Retention of Buildings	103
Housing Design Standards	82	Business Space / Creative Industries and Neighbourhood Centre	103
Tenure	83	Transport and Access Issues	103
Dwelling Mix	83	Illustrative masterplan	104
Dwelling Size	83	Housing	105
Floor to Ceiling Heights	83	Proposed Land Uses	106
External Amenity Space	83	Proposed Building Heights	106
Play Space	83	Layout, scale and design	107
Accessible Housing	83	Open Space and Public Realm	107
Privacy Distances	83	Sutherland Road Planning and Design Brief	112
Daylight and Sunlight	84	Existing Local Land Use Patterns	113
Sustainable Design and Construction	84	The Existing Situation	113
Building for Life	84	Particular Issues	113
Business Workspace Design Standards	86	Existing Building Heights	113
SME	88	Identified Positive Buildings	114
Creative Industries	88	Existing Street trees	114
Illustrative Masterplan	90	Retention of Buildings	115
Linear Park	91	Business Space / Creative Industries	115
Illustrative masterplan	92	Transport and Access Issues	115
Station Hub primary street	93	Illustrative masterplan	116
Sutherland Road	94	Housing	117
Delivery	96	Layout, Scale and Design	117
Using this Document	97	Proposed Land Uses	118
Pre-application Service	97	Proposed Building Heights	118
Supporting Documentation	97	Open Space and Public Realm	119
LBWF and TfL Owned Property	97	Appendices	122
Compulsory Purchase	97	Index	124
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	97	References	125
Partnership Working	98	Glossary	127
Planning Obligations / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	98		



FOREWORD

Over the past few years the Council has been working hard to bring forward regeneration in a number of areas in our Borough. The Blackhorse Lane area is one of our major regeneration sites and is recognised by the Mayor of London as being of strategic importance to the whole of London. Blackhorse Lane has the potential to become an exciting new quarter with new homes, businesses, jobs and infrastructure. It is extremely well served by public transport and on its doorstep are the Walthamstow reservoirs and the Lee Valley Park, which is one of London's great open spaces

The Council is committed to driving forward the regeneration of Blackhorse Lane in partnership with local people, businesses and stakeholders. There has already been significant development since the area was designated as a regeneration priority, most notably at Papermill Place. However, we would like to see our ambitions for the area fully realised.

In recognition of this, and with the help of the London Development Agency, we have reviewed the current Interim Planning Policy Framework for Blackhorse Lane and associated planning briefs for the Station Hub and Sutherland Road, to provide a more pragmatic and realistic approach to delivery.

The document will set a solid and practical foundation for the future development of one of Waltham Forest's key regeneration areas, recognising the history, assets and character of the area whilst planning for the opportunities of the future.

We believe that this will allow sites to be brought forward independently, whilst at the same time within an urban design led framework that results in the regeneration of the wider area, unlocking its opportunities and continuing to create a community where people are proud to live, work and visit.

Councillor Chris Robins
Leader of the Council



Councillor Marie Pye
Cabinet Member for Housing & Development





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blackhorse Lane Urban Design Framework (UDF) provides a strategy for deliverable regeneration. The framework advocates a mixed-use neighbourhood providing a range of job opportunities and housing. Any future regeneration should support the social, physical, cultural and economic infrastructure of the area.

Introduction

The London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF), with support from the London Development Agency (LDA) and other partners, is undertaking a major regeneration programme in the Blackhorse Lane area. Blackhorse Lane is identified as a growth area within Waltham Forest's emerging Core Strategy and the Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework (ULVOAP) and will be transformed over the next 15 years with the development of a number of key sites. This will deliver new homes, encourage appropriate employment uses and improve local amenities and infrastructure.

LBWF, in conjunction with its partner the LDA, commissioned Maccreanor Lavington in August 2009 as masterplanners to produce an Urban Design Framework (UDF) for the Blackhorse Lane growth area, and planning and design briefs for the Station Hub and Sutherland Road areas. A team of specialist consultants acknowledged in the introduction section, supported Maccreanor Lavington in the production of this work. The UDF refreshes the earlier documents by setting out an updated area-wide framework and revised detailed guidance for a more discrete area – the Station Hub and the Waterfront and Sutherland Road areas. This document has been prepared by Maccreanor Lavington with some additional revisions by LBWF.

The purpose of this document is to support future regeneration by reflecting the uniqueness of the Blackhorse Lane area as a residential-led mixed-use neighbourhood with an industrial character. It provides a comprehensive approach to the development and regeneration of the area that will maximise opportunities and benefits for the local community and across the whole of the Upper Lea Valley. Together with the IPPF, the UDF will provide an important part of the evidence base for an Area Action Plan (AAP), informing the identification of preferred options for consultation. The UDF will represent interim planning guidance and form part of the evidence base for the AAP.

Site And Context

The Study Area for the Blackhorse Lane UDF sits within London Borough of Waltham Forest. The area is identified as an area capable of intensification, in both the London-Stansted-Cambridge- Peterborough Growth Area and the Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Area. The study area runs along the western edge of the Lea Valley, and includes its unique chain of reservoirs, wetlands and green spaces. To the south it extends beyond Blackhorse Road to include the Douglas Eyre Playing Fields. The northern extent of the study area is defined by the A406, the North Circular Road, extending to Chingford Road in the east. The easterly boundary is loosely defined and can be summarised as a transition zone from Blackhorse Lane area to Walthamstow.

The UDF focuses on, and considers in detail, the BHL 1, 4 5 and 6 sites. Sites BHL 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9 were not considered in detail subsequent to the issue of the UDF Stage 1 Baseline Report, where it was concluded that these sites were already suitably advanced by other means. These sites have been consolidated into two areas: Station Hub and Sutherland Road. Due to land ownership issues, and different timescales of emerging opportunities, the two sites are considered to be very different in the challenges that they present, and therefore warrant separate Planning Briefs. However, it is important to recognise that the Station Hub and Sutherland Road sites sit within the same context and in no way operate in isolation from each other in regeneration terms.

Character

The Blackhorse Lane area displays a highly diverse built character. Residential dwellings, shops, businesses, a range of social and physical infrastructure and industrial areas are evident within the study area. The building stock is predominantly late Victorian and is constructed in brick.

Key socio-economic characteristics demonstrate it is an area of great diversity. Some neighbourhoods in the area are within the 20% of the most deprived in England. It has a relatively young population with a large, and diverse range, of Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Car ownership is low.

Urban Form

Blackhorse Lane and Forest Road are legible from the earliest documentation of settlement within the area. Today, they function as important high streets providing principal north-south and east-west links. Their intersection is a key node for public transport. The built and natural environment that has developed around the high streets is diverse; residential neighbourhoods to the east are comprised of predominantly terraced streets, these are bounded to the west by industrial units and warehouses before reaching an expansive open environment of reservoirs.

Walthamstow has a distinct topography directly relating to the Lea Valley. The western edge of the study area adjoining the reservoirs and sits at a lower level. The ground smoothly rises up towards the High Street area. To the North the highest point is Higham Hill. The LBWF Characterisation Study (July 2009) notes that there is a particular lack of clarity and identity along the Lea Valley edge, where piecemeal development and areas of industrial activity dominate and where recent developments illustrate a lack of overall composition to their design. The UDF seeks to address these concerns by considering carefully how buildings of any heights relate to the overall skyline and their relationship with topography.

Key Themes

In order to achieve its potential, and contextualise opportunities, the development of the UDF has focused on, and been constructed out of, four themes:

- Landscape
- Existing Industries
- Emerging Creative Industries
- Built Heritage

Policy Context Summary

This section summarises the policy context for the Station Hub and Sutherland Road Development Sites, lists the principal documents reviewed which constitute the Policy Framework and identifies Key Policy Messages, which will guide the regeneration of the Blackhorse Lane area. The UDF has been developed whilst taking account of the relevant planning policy context - national, regional, and local. A full policy review was undertaken and is documented within the UDF Stage 1 Baseline Report.

Constraints

This section summarises the key constraints for the Station Hub and Sutherland Road Development Sites. Information on site constraints has been assembled, collated and mapped. The spatial framework of the UDF has been developed to mitigate the impact of constraints wherever possible. The most substantial constraints are:

- Land ownership boundaries
- Strategic Industrial Location
- Adopted roads
- Utilities infrastructure
- Flooding and Drainage
- Gradients
- Designated open space
- Biodiversity
- Trees

Ambition And Vision

The long-term vision is to evolve Blackhorse Lane into a mixed-use area, comprising a range of housing, interspersed with small-scale local business / commercial uses and public open spaces.

Existing built fabric and cultures are retained and characterise the new neighbourhoods, creating meaningful desirable places to live and work. Residents and employees have access to resources and opportunities locally, offering betterment and wealth generation.

Unique resources such as the phenomenal Lea Valley landscape are integrated into a positive public realm framework, designed to encourage social interaction and create access for all.

Development Principles

A series of urban principles have been developed for the Blackhorse Lane area in order to guide future development and ensure the delivery of the vision. Central to these principles is a clear understanding of the unique character of the area and the key objectives of the LBWF, LDA and the GLA. Accordingly, all subsequent elements of the UDF are determined utilising these guiding principles.

Urban Design Framework

The UDF uses the information contained in previous sections of the document to generate a series of key diagrams. These establish an overarching framework to guide future regeneration and ensure that proposals brought forward meet the ambition and vision.

In order to aid the delivery of the UDF's vision, a vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood, a series of seven character areas are considered both enhance existing and new. This will ensure diversity of built form and encourage the creation of contextual responses that are pleasurable and interesting through acknowledging the unique micro characteristics of the area.

Within these character areas existing buildings of merit, and of social / cultural importance, have been identified which contribute positively. The UDF seeks that these buildings, and their uses where applicable, are maintained and integrated into the regenerated area. The area and its buildings have continuously adapted to fit the current industrial and commercial requirements. This demonstrates the robustness and the adaptability of the original building forms, and suggests that these buildings can be successfully integrated into future new developments, whilst creating a distinct character that is of its place.

The UDF establishes two principal strategies for creating an accessible and attractive mixed-use neighbourhood. Firstly, the UDF seeks to establish a network of permeable residential streets that will form the principle means of access and movement within the regenerated area. Secondly, the UDF proposes a series of adaptations to the existing public realm to improve the pedestrian and cycle environment, the principal intervention will improve crossings and access at the Standard Junction. Both strategies are designed to provide improved access to both existing and new residents to both the wider urban environment and the unique landscape.

Housing Design Standards

This section summarises the key housing design standards that will ensure future development provides a high-quality residential environment. The UDF seeks to deliver a sustainable community based upon a successful residential environment. Strategies have been developed and embed within the UDF to ensure that the integration of different types of housing, typology and tenure, and to provide mixed-income and accessible housing. Key relevant policies and standards have been identified and reviewed, and the development of the UDF places these at its core. The UDF generally allows for these key standards to be met.

Set out below are the key strategies:

- Tenure
- Dwelling Size
- External Amenity Space
- Accessible Housing
- Daylight and Sunlight
- Building for Life
- Dwelling Mix
- Floor to Ceiling Heights
- Play Space
- Privacy Distances
- Sustainable Design and Construction

Business Workspace Design Standards

This section summarises key criteria that will ensure future development provides high-quality business workspaces in support of small and medium enterprises (SME) and Creative Industries. SMEs make up a large proportion of businesses in Waltham Forest. The Blackhorse Lane area currently houses a rich variety of SMEs, creative industries and manufacturing, forming an important location in a dynamic local economy.

The UDF acknowledges that the area is already a mixed-use neighbourhood and that regeneration will provide an increased amount of residential. The UDF establishes strategies to resist the loss of existing successful businesses allowing them to thrive whilst nurturing the area through the augmenting of them with new suitable business floorspaces to create seedbed opportunities for new enterprises thus ensuring the enduring social and economic success of the wider area.

Illustrative Masterplan

The illustrative masterplan section portrays the proposals that will ensure future development provides a high-quality sustainable community.

Delivery

Key delivery mechanisms will ensure that future development provides a high-quality residential and business environment. Guidance is established to ensure the implementation and the viability of the vision, design principles and detailed guidance within the UDF.

- Pre-application Service
- LBWF and Transport for London (TfL) Owned Property
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Planning Obligations / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Supporting Documentation
- Compulsory Purchase
- Partnership Working

Station Hub & Waterfront Planning And Design Brief

The UDF sets out the overarching vision and development principles for the Blackhorse Lane area and establishes guidance on various topics. This planning and design brief develops the guidance set out in the UDF, relating to one of the key sites within the Blackhorse Lane growth area, to create specific principles to guide future regeneration of the site by demonstrating the catalytic opportunities for future investors and as a development strategy for existing landowners. This planning and design brief sets out the following:

- Retention of Buildings
- Transport and Access Issues
- Layout, scale and design
- Business Space / Creative Industries
- Housing
- Open Space and Public Realm

Sutherland Road Planning And Design Brief

The overarching vision and development principles for the Blackhorse Lane area are set out in the UDF, which establishes guidance on various topics. This planning and design brief develops this in relation to one of the key sites within the Blackhorse Lane growth area, to create specific principles to guide future regeneration by demonstrating the catalytic opportunities for future investors and as a development strategy for existing landowners. This planning and design brief sets out the following:

- Retention of Buildings
- Transport and Access Issues
- Layout, scale and design
- Business Space / Creative Industries
- Housing



INTRODUCTION

Background

The London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF), with support from the London Development Agency (LDA) and other partners, is undertaking a major regeneration programme in the Blackhorse Lane area. Blackhorse Lane is identified as a growth area within Waltham Forest's emerging Core Strategy and the Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework (ULVOAPF) and will be transformed over the next 15 years with the development of a number of key sites. This will deliver new homes, encourage appropriate employment uses and improve local amenities and infrastructure.

LBWF published an Interim Planning Policy Framework (IPPF) for the wider Blackhorse Lane area in 2006 and separate Planning and Design briefs for the Station Hub & Waterfront and Sutherland Road sites in 2007. Since the production of these documents, the economic climate has changed significantly and this work evaluates and refocuses elements of the IPPF, ensuring that the objectives remain relevant and deliverable within the current economic climate. The UDF refreshes the earlier documents by setting out an updated area-wide framework and revised detailed guidance for a more discrete area – the Station Hub & Waterfront and Sutherland Road areas.

The UDF draws on a Stage 1 Baseline Report that was published in September 2009. The Baseline Report sets out the social, economic and environmental context of the area, together with a review of a large number of policy, guidance and evidence base documents and an initial urban design appraisal. The findings of this earlier report are not necessarily repeated in this document. However, they underpin it and are a useful reference. The UDF and briefs are also based on discussion and engagement with existing businesses, residents, land-owners, prospective developers and a number of statutory agencies. Wider public consultation will be carried out by the LBWF as part of the preparation of the proposed Blackhorse Lane Area Action Plan.



Purpose

The purpose of this document is to support future regeneration by reflecting the uniqueness of the Blackhorse Lane area as a residential-led mixed-use neighbourhood with an industrial character. It provides a comprehensive approach to the development and regeneration of the area that will maximise opportunities and benefits for the local community and across the whole of the Upper Lea Valley

Together with the IPPF, the UDF will provide an important part of the evidence base for an Area Action Plan (AAP), informing the identification of preferred options for consultation. The subsequent adoption of an AAP will then provide the statutory basis for Council action to achieve regeneration within the Blackhorse Lane area. It also provides interim area-wide and site-specific guidance until the AAP is adopted.

Status

The UDF and detailed planning and design briefs represent interim planning guidance and part of the evidence base for the AAP. Once the AAP is adopted, or earlier at an appropriate stage of the planning process, they may be refreshed to become a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in order to provide design guidance on the delivery of the AAP.

Structure of Document

The UDF establishes the overall context and ambition & vision for the area, before setting out development principles. It then addresses the individual elements that make up the UDF for the area, culminating in an illustrative masterplan. The final sections focus on delivery and providing more detailed guidance for the two areas in the form of planning and design briefs.

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