



# SITE AND CONTEXT

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## The Site

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 borough is also closely linked, and directly adjoins, with Stratford and the Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Areas within the Thames Gateway. In addition, LBWF is one of five host boroughs of the 2012 Olympic Games. The anticipated **regeneration of north-east London presents the borough with equally an opportunity and challenge in terms of meeting increased demand for homes, jobs and associated infrastructure.**

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 **transition from Blackhorse area to Walthamstow.**

The study area comprises 11 Super Output Areas (SOAs), and includes parts of **three of the Borough's Wards: Higham Hill, William Morris and High Street Wards.** An appraisal of the site history and socio-economic context can be found in the **Stage 1 Baseline Report, published September 2009.**

The IPPF identified three key growth areas within the Study Area; Station Hub, Sutherland Road and Billet Works. Specifically, it identified sites BHL1 to BHL7. Sites **BHL8 and 9 were added later.**

**Sites BHL2, 3, 7, 8 and 9 were not considered in detail in the UDF study subsequent to the Stage 1 Baseline Report, when it was ascertained that these sites either were already advanced in the process of obtaining planning permission, or in the case of the Willowfield School site, the Borough was undecided on its future. BHL2 had been allocated as the site for the relocation of Willowfield School to a new building as part of the BSF programme - although this has now been suspended.**

The remaining sites, BHL 1, 4 5 and 6 have been considered in detail as part of the UDF. These sites have been consolidated into two areas: Station Hub and Sutherland Road for the purposes of the two Planning Briefs that form part of this document. Due to land ownership issues, and different timescales of emerging proposals, these 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 should be considered as part of the same UDF, in no way in isolation from each other.



## 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 representing the 'working' character of the landscape in the Lea Valley are evident within the study area. The building stock is predominant late Victorian, constructed in brick.

The Stage 1 Baseline Report summarises some of the key socio-economic characteristics of the area. It demonstrates that some neighbourhoods are within the 20% most deprived in England, the population is relatively young and from a large and diverse range of Black and Minority Ethnic communities and that 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 comprise 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 adjoining the reservoirs sits at approximately 7 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The ground smoothly rises up towards the High Street area reaching 27 meters AOD at the corner with Hoe Street. Continuing East a steeper hill peaks at 43.8meters AOD. To the North the highest point is Higham Hill at 20.4 meters AOD.

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 Study goes on to acknowledge the pressure for high density development in this area, given the context of the Valley setting and the opportunity for long views from taller buildings, but warns that given the low lying nature of this fringe, there is a need to consider carefully how buildings of any height might disrupt the overall skyline and relationship with topography. The study makes a number of important recommendations for policy development which are reflected in this document

Figure Ground diagrams showing variations in urban grain across the Blackhorse Lane study area, clockwise from the top left

1. Warner Estates along Blackhorse Road
2. Blackhorse Lane residential to industrial interface
3. Garden city block structure along Sutton Road
4. Street hierarchy and amenity space provision along Millfield Avenue
5. Billet Road residential to industrial interface
6. Amenity space provision along Mayfield Road



## Key Themes

### Landscape

The landscape of the Lea Valley is an immense natural asset that could provide an **important recreational opportunity for both the Blackhorse Lane area and the broader region**. The High and Lower Maynard Reservoirs have been identified as providing significant habitats for birds and are popular with anglers and bird watchers who pay a nominal fee to gain access. Thames Water together with the Environment Agency own the reservoirs and the surrounding area. The UDF advocates increasing public access to **the reservoirs and the necessary infrastructure to support this aim**.

### Existing Industries

The Blackhorse Lane area is home to a range of existing industries. They vary greatly in **terms of business type, number of workers and area of land occupancy. Industry is most concentrated in a north-south band bounded by Blackhorse Lane and the Lea Valley**. This area is identified in the London Plan as a Strategic Industrial Location (SIL).



## Emerging Creative Industries

An emerging arts and cultural landscape can be observed in the Blackhorse Lane area; however, it is not immediately visible within the urban realm. Providing better opportunities for smaller, knowledge-based businesses, with an emphasis on creative industries, would be in line with the LBWF's aspiration to create a strong identity for Blackhorse Lane and develop "a 21st century business area".

Existing creative industries include music recording and production, architecture, graphic design, product design, communication designers, fashion designers, print-makers, photographers and visual artists. Arts-related social enterprises and training facilities have also been established.

The E17 Art Trail is an annual event organised by locals and sponsored by the Arts Council. The event has expanded five-fold since its inception, providing evidence of the growing creative environment within the area.

## Built Heritage

The built heritage could be broadly described as comprising historical buildings that are typically Victorian or Edwardian with modern buildings resulting from extensive damage in WWII and subsequent developments. Throughout the area, there is a tendency towards two storey residential development. However, within the study area there are examples of taller non-residential buildings, predominately on the westerly edge of Blackhorse Lane. An appropriate level of existing taller building retention could help to contextualise redevelopment that needs to achieve similar building heights to meet viability requirements.

Blackhorse Lane, in urban design terms, is as a primary street / high street, and the existing buildings contribute in a fundamental way to its character and continuity as a street. The UDF seeks to preserve and enhance this character and encourages that non-residential uses be located on the primary street / high street, rather than concentrations of residential use which are not overly beneficial to qualities of the high street.





# POLICY CONTEXT

## SUMMARY

This section summarises the policy context for the Station Hub and Sutherland Road Development Sites.

## Policy Framework and Key Policy Messages

The 'development plan' comprises the Waltham Forest Unitary Development Plan (UDP) - 'saved' policies March 2009 - and the London Plan - February 2008. The London Plan is under review, with the Draft Replacement London Plan published in October 2009.

**LBWF is bringing forward the following relevant Development Plan Documents as part of its Local Development Framework:**

- Core Strategy (Preferred Options, January 2010 / Submission Draft January 2011)
- Development Management Policies (Issues and Option February 2010, Preferred Options July 2011)
- Proposals Map

NATIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development ( Jan 2005)</li> <li>- PPS3 – Housing ( June 2010)</li> <li>- PPS4 – Planning of Sustainable Economic Growth (Dec 2009)</li> <li>- PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment (March 2010)</li> <li>- PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (August 2005)</li> <li>- PPS10 – Planning for Sustainable Waste Management ( July 2005)</li> <li>- PPG13 – Transport (April 2001)</li> <li>- PPS22 – Renewable Energy (August 2004)</li> <li>- PPG 24 – Planning and Noise (October 1994)</li> <li>- PPS25 – Flood Risk (March 2010)</li> </ul>
REGIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessible London SPG (April 2004)</li> <li>- Sustainable Design + Construction SPG (May 2006)</li> <li>- East London Green Grid SPG (February 2008)</li> <li>- Industrial Capacity SPG (March 2008)</li> <li>- London Housing Design Guide (August 2010)</li> <li>- London Housing Strategy (Feb 2010)</li> <li>- Interim Housing SPG (April 2010)</li> <li>- Lee Valley Regional Park Authority Park Plan (2000)</li> <li>- Emerging Upper Lee Valley OAPF and Landscape Strategy</li> </ul>
LOCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blackhorse Lane IPPF (September 2006)</li> <li>- Sutherland Road Brief (May 2007)</li> <li>- Station Hub &amp; Waterfront Brief (May 2007)</li> <li>- Planning Obligations SPD (November 2008)</li> <li>- Urban Design Principles SPD (February 2010)</li> </ul>

There is a range of relevant guidance as set out below:

IPPF = Interim Planning Policy Framework, OAPF = Opportunity Area Planning Brief, PPG = Planning Policy Guidance, PPS = Planning Policy Statement, SPD = Supplementary Planning Document, SPG = Supplementary Planning Guidance

**Blackhorse Lane is situated within the Upper Lea Valley Opportunity Area, where growth is encouraged and the proposed Blackhorse Lane AAP will be key in maximising the redevelopment potential of this area. The LBWF's emerging Core Strategy proposes a number of interventions for this area which include:**

- The creation of a new Neighbourhood Centre around the Blackhorse Lane station;
- **To create new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes to the Park, more views of Walthamstow Reservoirs and Tottenham Marshes, and encourage the development of new and improved leisure and recreational facilities making full use of the landscape;**
- The release of employment land for new housing and mixed-use developments will **optimise redevelopment potential, whilst encouraging the provision of a wider range of business premises, including creative industries;**
- Managing traffic and encouraging sustainable transport: There is potential to improve

the Royal Standard junction primarily for pedestrians and cyclists, improve local bus services and provide new pedestrian and cycle routes for new developments.

- Walthamstow Wetlands and Green Corridors: To increase access to Walthamstow Reservoirs by providing attractive walking and cycling connections throughout the area."

Other key messages from the above policy framework are:

- Deliver environmentally, economically and socially sustainable development
- Mitigate against climate change and make sure new development and public realm is adapted to its consequences - including being lean / clean / green in terms of energy and minimising use of water and other resources
- Support Small and Medium size Enterprises (SMEs) and make appropriate provision for industrial and other employment generating uses - including safeguarding / adjusting the area identified as SIL
- Provide a new neighbourhood centre of local convenience shopping facilities for local residents and workers
- Deliver high-quality housing that maximises development potential, meets locally identified needs and results in mixed-income sustainable communities
- A target of 50% affordable housing will be sought as the starting point for negotiation in mixed-tenure schemes, on the basis of 60% affordable rented and 40% shared ownership accommodation. Developments proposing less than 50% will need to demonstrate a viability case.
- The preferred dwelling mix for affordable rented and shared ownership accommodation to meet local need is more specific and is as follows:

	Social Rented	Intermediate
1-bed	10%	10%
2-bed	30%	40%
3-bed	50%	40%
4-bed+	10%	10%

- The Council has produced guidelines for affordable rent in the borough (2011) which state that rents for affordable housing should be: 1 bed - up to 80% market rent; 2 bed - up to 70% market rent; 3 bed - up to 60% market rent; 4 bed - up to 50% market rent. These guidelines are available on the Council website.
- Safeguard and enhance biodiversity, particularly the important habitats in the adjoining Lea Valley and reservoirs – which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Provide additional high-quality publicly accessible open space, play facilities and access to nature to help address existing deficiencies and serve the growing population
- Reduce the need to travel and encouraging sustainable modes of getting around - walking, cycling and public transport
- Improve vehicular access to and through the Station Hub site and improve pedestrian crossing facilities across Forest Road
- Improve east-west vehicular movements between Blackhorse Lane and Sutherland Road
- Safeguard archaeological heritage - the area is an Archaeological Priority Zone
- Ensure a sufficient and high-quality range of publicly accessible open spaces that promote healthy lifestyles and social inclusion
- Make sure that contamination from previous uses is properly dealt with and that air quality and noise levels are appropriate for the uses that are proposed - the whole of Waltham Forest is an Air Quality Management Area
- Take account of flood risk and the 'sequential' and 'exceptions' tests and make sure that new development is flood resistant and resilient
- Create safe, accessible and attractive places that reflect their context and the character of the area



# CONSTRAINTS

This section summarises the key constraints for the Station Hub and Sutherland Road Development Sites.

