

Meeting	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	11 March 2013
Subject	Town Centre Strategies for Chipping Barnet and Edgware
Report of	Cabinet Member for Planning & Regulatory Services
Summary	This report provides the Committee with an update on the development of the Town Centre Strategies for Chipping Barnet and Edgware in advance of formal approval by Cabinet in June 2013

Officer Contributors	Martin Cowie - Assistant Director for Strategic Planning & Regeneration
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards Affected	Edgware, High Barnet, Underhill
Key Decision	N/A
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	N/A
Function of	Committee
Enclosures	Appendix 1 – Draft Town Centre Framework for Edgware Appendix 2 – Draft Town Centre Strategy for Chipping Barnet
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Committee consider and make appropriate comments and recommendations on the draft town centre strategies for Chipping Barnet and Edgware as part of the final stage of consultation and in advance of formal approval by Cabinet in June 2013.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet, 3 April 2008, Decision 10 (Vibrant and Viable Town Centres – A Suburban Town Centre Strategy for Barnet).
- 2.2 Cabinet, 3 February 2010, Decision 6 (Responding to the Recession – Suburban Town Centres).
- 2.3 Cabinet, 17 July 2012 Cabinet Decision 9, followed by full Council 11 September 2012 (item 4.1) approved the formal adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies documents.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2012/13 Corporate Plan are: –
- Better services with less money
 - Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities
 - A successful London suburb
- 3.3 Through the preparation of Town Centre Strategies, the Council can deliver the Corporate Plan strategic objective of ensuring that our town centres are vibrant places where business can thrive.
- 3.4 In September 2012 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that it will remove requirements for planning permission for change of use of office accommodation to new homes. This will reduce the ability of the Council, local communities and local businesses to manage change in town centres. The Council has, therefore, on the basis of its work on town centre strategies sought exemption for town centres including Edgware and Chipping Barnet and awaits a response from the Secretary of State.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Failure to sustain and enhance Barnet's town centres will impair their key contribution to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the borough.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”), the council has a legislative duty to have ‘due regard’ to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations in the contexts of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy, and maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- 5.2 In addition to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, and in so far as relating to matters within its remit, the responsibility of the Committee is to perform the Overview and Scrutiny role in relation to:
- Council’s leadership role in relation to diversity and inclusiveness; and
 - fulfilment of Council’s duties as employer including recruitment and retention, personnel, pensions and payroll services, staff development, equalities and health and safety.
- 5.3 Town centre strategies aim to create the right environment for vibrant and viable town centres in Barnet. Integral to this is the need to respect the diversity of the town centre network and to take into account the different requirements of each town centre, and the different needs and preferences of those who use them.
- 5.4 The individual Town Centre Strategies will identify opportunities to enhance the public realm and improve accessibility for all users and will seek to support the provision of a wide range of shops and services to meet the needs of diverse local populations.
- 5.5 Both documents and information about the consultation were placed on the Council’s Consultation Portal (engage.barnet.gov.uk) including an online survey which members of the public were encouraged to fill out.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 Use of resources implications will be addressed when the draft town centre strategies for Chipping Barnet and Edgware are reported to Cabinet, and will be contained within existing EPR budgets.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 The development of Town Centre Strategies is currently not a statutory requirement in the United Kingdom. However, the London Plan emphasises the strategic importance of town centres and contains a series of specific policies for London’s town centres, which all local authorities must be in general conformity with. This includes maximising choice in town centres and promoting sustainable access to goods and services.
- 7.2 Any decision relating to the implementation of the draft town centre strategies for Chipping Barnet and Edgware which has legal implications will be addressed at the time of reporting to Cabinet.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS (Relevant section from the Constitution, Key/Non-Key Decision)

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).
- 8.3 Item 2 of Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference details that the Committee has "...responsibility for the review of the policy framework and development of policy and strategy not within the remit of other overview and scrutiny committees."
- 8.4 Decisions relating to the Town Centre Strategies are for the Executive as a whole. Responsibilities of the Executive are set out in Section 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council's Constitution.

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 The Council is preparing Town Centre Strategies for Chipping Barnet and Edgware as part of a programme of strategies for four priority town centres in the borough that seek to promote Barnet as a place of economic growth and prosperity. The purpose of these documents is to provide a high level planning strategy to respond to town centre development opportunities and create the right environment to encourage private sector investment and secure a vibrant and viable future for Chipping Barnet and Edgware.
- 9.2 The two documents will be used to guide future development proposals for key sites and offer significant opportunities to secure infrastructure improvements to support existing businesses, address traffic issues and enhance attractiveness of both town centres as places to live, work and shop. These documents will be used to inform planning discussions with developers, negotiations over infrastructure and planning contributions, and to inform decisions on planning applications over the next 5 to 10 years in a manner that facilitates the overall improvement of the town centre.
- 9.3 Following review of feedback on the two documents the draft Edgware Town Centre Framework and the draft Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy will be amended as necessary before final documents are reported to Cabinet in June for adoption. Reports on the public consultation will be published on the Council's Consultation Portal.

Edgware Town Centre Framework (TCF)

- 9.4 A draft strategy for Edgware was prepared in 2007/08 which responded to aspirations for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Broadwalk Shopping Centre. The draft document did not progress largely due to the recession. The revised draft TCF is the result of information gathered from questionnaires and traders. This has included discussion with TfL in relation to Edgware Underground Station and Bus Station, as well as the owners of Broadwalk.
- 9.5 There are a number of development sites within Edgware which, if managed properly will help retain existing and attract new retailers. Broadwalk

represents the largest development opportunity with 1,100 car parking spaces and 18,500m² of floorspace shared between 43 retailers. The Broadwalk owners want to deliver major improvements by extending its anchor stores and adding new retail units, a new cinema and associated food and drink offer. Other town centre opportunities include the Forumside area and land around Premier House. In terms of vacant office blocks the floorspace can be made more attractive to home workers and small business through the provision of formats such as enterprise hubs or innovation centres as part of a mixed use development including new homes which will make the town centre feel more active, particularly in the evenings.

- 9.6 A key objective of the Edgware TCF is to enhance and expand the retail offer through providing the shops that will attract modern retailers as well as encourage retail investment in existing shops within Broadwalk and the high street. Leisure uses such as a cinema, hotel and restaurants can also help attract people to Edgware.
- 9.7 The TCF vision is *“Edgware town centre will be a successful and thriving place with new and expanded shops around The Broadwalk Shopping Centre integrated with Station Road and the surrounding residential suburbs by new streets and connections. Improved public space outside the Tube Station will provide opportunities for markets and local events while enhancements to the public realm and junctions along Station Road will make Edgware a place that people will enjoy shopping and spending time in.”*
- 9.8 The vision will be delivered through the following objectives :
- Protect and enhance Edgware’s position as a Major Town Centre by identifying sites for retail growth and other town centre uses to enhance range of shops on offer and secure a vibrant local economy;
 - Secure transport and infrastructure improvements so that new retail development is fully integrated with Station Road;
 - Reduce congestion on Station Road and encourage walking and cycling along attractive routes and streets;
 - Encourage the development of a distinct Northern Quarter around the Hale Lane and Edgwarebury Lane with specialist shopping and services;
 - Identify and deliver new public spaces and improved public realm including new tree planting outside Edgware Station;
 - Provide an attractive and safe environment, encompassing the highest quality urban design, architecture and open spaces.
- 9.9 The draft TCF was subject to 8 weeks public consultation between November 2012 and January 2013. Exhibition boards were displayed at Edgware Library and within the Broadwalk Shopping Centre for duration of the consultation. Four exhibition sessions were held at the Broadwalk where Council officers explained the plans. Residents were notified by leaflet and an advert was placed in the local papers. Officers also attended meetings of the Edgware Town Team (formerly Edgware Business Forum) to present the draft TCF. The Town Team welcomed the TCF but expressed concerns about retail expansion in Edgware given the economic pressures on high streets.

- 9.10 Part of Edgware town centre is within London Borough of Harrow. Harrow Council welcome the TCF and its potential to realise some significant retail growth and investment opportunities in the 'central zone' between the station and High Street (the A5). Harrow officers highlighted the TCF's recognition of the need to remodel the A5/ Station Road/ Whitchurch Lane junction, and for this to improve quality of public realm and pedestrian crossing facilities.
- 9.11 The consultation revealed a positive reaction to the draft TCF with general concerns raised about Edgware High Street in particular traffic congestion on Station Road, the adverse affects of buses on this congestion around the bus depot and the dominance of low quality retailing. Specific concerns were raised by Edgware Junior and Infants schools in relation to the proposed new streets in the TCF which are close to the entrances to the two schools.
- 9.12 Nearly 90% of TCF survey respondents agreed with the Vision. There was significant support (averaging 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing) for TCF objectives with exception of the objective relating to the Northern Quarter which received 65% agreement with 13% not agreeing. The proposed improvement and creation of a public square/space outside Edgware Station was recognised as a key feature of the town centre and was generally supported, although some respondents thought it currently worked well. The proposal for a bus strategy for Edgware Town Centre was met favourably while respondents highlighted the lack of focus on a new cinema and need for more traffic calming measures.

Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy

- 9.13 Work on developing a strategy for Chipping Barnet started in 2009. Initially driven by the 2008 Suburban Town Centres Strategy and local concerns about high business turnover and vacancy levels, car parking, congestion, appearance of shopfronts and future of Barnet Market the context changed in 2011 with the creation of the High Barnet Town Team, the Localism Act 2011 and the review of High Streets by Mary Portas. A Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy Board was created to guide the Strategy
- 9.14 Prior to the Strategy a Planning Framework for three strategic sites (the Spires Shopping Centre, Barnet Market and the Territorial Army Centre) was adopted in July 2012. This Framework set out key development principles to support future growth while managing anticipated change. The Strategy goes beyond the Framework focusing on the wider issues facing the town centre, identifying what makes it distinctive and what can be done to improve it in both the short and long term. Collaboration with residents, traders, Barnet Market, local community groups as well as the Police and Barnet and Southgate College through the Town Team has created the following vision :
- '... a town centre that is economically, commercially and environmentally viable and is a vibrant destination with quality shopping and leisure facilities, well designed housing and a high quality sustainable environment that serves the needs of the local community'*
- 9.15 The Strategy vision is delivered by five high level objectives
- To respect and celebrate the town centre's history and character;
 - To improve the quality and range of retail and leisure with re-provision of Barnet Market at its heart;

- To improve accessibility, ensure better parking, cycling and traffic management;
- To provide a high quality public realm and improved town centre appearance;
- To promote cultural, leisure and student activities in town centre.

9.16 The focus of this Strategy for Chipping Barnet is about collective action and an Action Plan has been drawn up to set out short, medium and long term actions to deliver its objectives. The delivery of the Action Plan will be monitored by the Strategy Board who will keep it up to date and ensure continuous improvement.

9.17 The Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy was launched on February 19th and the public consultation will last until March 19th. Reflecting the consultation already conducted in Spring 2012 on the Spires Planning Framework and the collaborative approach behind the document members of the Strategy Board have circulated the web consultation link to their membership. Posters advertising the consultation have been displayed by local shops and hard copies of the document are available for viewing at Chipping Barnet Library.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Department for Business Innovation and Skills, High Street Review, Portas Review:
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.bis.gov.uk/highstreet>

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