

Meeting	Cabinet
Date	24 June 2013
Subject	Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy
Report of	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services
Summary	The Town Centre Strategy for Chipping Barnet will help to guide and manage future development and change, promote improvements to ensure its long term health and will help determine future planning applications within area.

Officer Contributors	Interim Assistant Director – Strategic Planning, Regeneration and Transport Planning Policy Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards Affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	N/A
Function of	Executive
Enclosures	Appendix A: Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy Appendix B: Schedule of consultation responses
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Cabinet approve the Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy (Appendix A).**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 On 3 April 2008, Cabinet (Decision item 10) approved the Suburban Town Centre Strategy for Barnet.
- 2.2 On 3 February 2010, Cabinet (Decision item 6) approved Responding to the Recession – Suburban Town Centres.
- 2.3 On 17 July 2012, Cabinet (Decision item 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.
- 2.4 On 17 July 2012, Cabinet (Decision item 8) approved the Planning Framework for the Spires Shopping Centre, Market site and Territorial Army Centre.
- 2.5 On 11 March 2013 Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Decision item 8) considered and made comments and recommendations on the draft town centre strategies for Chipping Barnet and Edgware.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The following priority outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2013 -2016 are embedded within the Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy
 - To maintain a well-designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough.
 - To maintain the right environment for a strong and diverse local economy.
- 3.2 Through the preparation of Town Centre Strategies the Council can deliver the Corporate Plan strategic objective of promoting responsible growth, development and success across the borough.
- 3.3 In September 2012 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that he would change the Planning Use Classes Order to make it easier for offices to be converted into residential without planning permission. In February 2013 the Council applied for an exemption to the proposed change and this exemption included Chipping Barnet. The Secretary of State's statement of May 9th 2013 identified those areas where the exemption will apply from June 2013. This did not include any parts of Barnet. In his Budget Statement of March.2013 the Chancellor announced that he will introduce a similar change to make it easier for retail to be converted to residential. These changes reduce the ability of the Council, local communities and local businesses to manage change in town centres.

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 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.
- 5.2 Individual Town Centre Strategies 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.
- 5.3 As part of the consultation the Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy was placed on the Council's Consultation Portal.

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

- 6.1 The cost of preparing the Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy was included in the Strategic Planning service approved budget for 2012/13 of £1.063m. Consultation and the majority of document preparation took place within 2012/13. Implementation of the Strategy will utilise existing resources.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 The development of Town Centre Strategies is currently not a statutory requirement. However, the London Plan which forms part of Barnet's Development Plan emphasises the strategic importance of town centres and contains a series of specific policies for London's town centres. This includes maximising choice in town centres and promoting sustainable access to goods and services.
- 7.2 The Town Centre Strategy is not a Supplementary Planning Document. However it is specifically identified in Barnet's adopted Core Strategy Policy CS 6 as a mechanism for promoting competitive town centre environments and promoting consumer choice. In delivering the Core Strategy it has significant weight as a material consideration.

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

- 8.1 Decision relating to the Town Centre Strategies are for the Executive as a whole. Responsibilities of the Executive are set out in Constitution, Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions).

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 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 the 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

- 9.2 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'

- 9.3 The Town Centre 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.
- 9.4 The focus of this Strategy for Chipping Barnet is about collective action and an Action Plan has been drawn up to clearly 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.
- 9.5 The Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy was subject to a four week period of consultation between February and March 2013. Members of the Strategy Board circulated the web consultation link to their membership of residents and businesses and posters advertising the consultation were displayed by local shops in the town centre. The Council issued a press release to further

publicise the Study. Hard copies of the document were made available for viewing at Chipping Barnet Library. Although the number of responses (14) was low in comparison with last years consultation on the Spires Framework respondents to the Strategy made a number of detailed comments about the document. Respondents included Theresa Villiers, Transport for London, English Heritage, Barnet Society, Friends of Barnet Market, Barnet Borough Arts Council and SPACES as well as a number of local residents. A summary of the consultation is set out at Appendix B.

9.6 Comments were generally supportive of the document in having a shared vision for the future of Chipping Barnet Strategy. A number of detailed issues combined with proposed solutions were raised about junction improvements, pedestrian safety and parking management. These cannot be addressed in this Strategy but can be considered more widely by the Council. More generally concerns :

- were expressed about lack of urban design content
The Town Centre Strategy is a platform for further work. It highlights that we will work with the new owners of the Spires and the Market to create an urban design led Masterplan. The Strategy sets out the foundations for future urban design work and in Appendix One clearly sets out general principles of urban design for the Town Centre Character Areas.
- were expressed about the relationship between the Strategy and the Spires Planning Framework
The relationship between the two documents is more clearly set out at para 1.37 and more cross references have been added.
- were expressed about lack of reference to how history has shaped the existing town centre and opportunities to make more of the proximity of the Battle of Barnet battlefield site.
A new section on the development of Chipping Barnet from medieval settlement to a district town centre has been added. The Strategy now highlights the proximity of London's only battlefield site.
- were expressed about the lack of activity by the owners of Barnet Market and the Spires Shopping Centre in improving their sites
The Council will work with the new owners to bring these sites forward as part of an overall strategy for the town centre. Good foundations have been laid to secure the future of Chipping Barnet
- were expressed about the junction between Wood Street and the A1000
this has been highlighted in the Strategy as a public realm improvement and specific action which will require further discussions with Transport for London in consultation with the community
- were expressed about the lack of a night time economy as well as the need to manage it carefully
the night time economy has an important part to play in improving the offer of Chipping Barnet. As this economy grows it is important that it is managed effectively. The Mayor's draft SPG on Town Centres sets out the key areas of responsibility for managing the night time economy and a cross reference has been added to it.

- were expressed about access to High Barnet station
Action 18 highlights how we will work with Transport for London to secure funding for improving pedestrian access to the station.
- were expressed about inclusion of the Action Plan as an Appendix
the Action Plan sets out roles and responsibilities for taking the Strategy forward under the scrutiny of the Town Centre Strategy Board. It is therefore considered to add transparency to this collective approach for Chipping Barnet.
- were expressed about the future role and constitution of the Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy Board
- *The Board have a clear role in ensuring delivery of the Strategy through the Action Plan and are due to meet to consider feedback on the document. More formal arrangements of the Board can be discussed at the next CBTCSB meeting.*

9.7 The Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Strategy document at its meeting of March 11th and made comments on :

- importance of students and education staff and their spending power to Chipping Barnet.
This is reflected in the designation of the Cultural Quarter to the south of the High Street.
- traders considered that more could be done on parking charges.
Car parking charges have been highlighted as an issue in the Town Centre. Changes to the parking regime are monitored on an on-going basis.
- level of consultation across the business community
through the members of the Town Centre Strategy Board consultation with residents and businesses has taken place.
- importance of communicating with Transport for London and full engagement with elected Members.
Transport for London submitted comments. Ward Members for High Barnet and Underhill were notified of the consultation. Theresa Villiers MP for Chipping Barnet submitted largely supportive comments of the Strategy.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

Cleared by Finance (Officer's initials)	MC
Cleared by Legal (Officer's initials)	CH