

Meeting	Cabinet
Date	24 June 2013
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Edgware Town Centre Framework</b>
Report of	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services
Summary	The Town Centre Framework for Edgware 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 the town centre.

Officer Contributors	Interim Assistant Director – Strategic Planning, Regeneration and Transport Major Developments 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: Edgware Town Centre Framework Appendix B: Schedule of consultation responses
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## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 **That Cabinet approve the Edgware Town Centre Framework (Appendix A) for formal adoption.**

## **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 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 Edgware Town Centre Framework
  - 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 Edgware. The Secretary of State's statement of May 9<sup>th</sup> 2013 identified those areas where the exemption will apply. 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. Without a framework in place to guide and encourage development on key sites within Edgware town centre, the opportunity for investment and to secure improvements to the town centre could be lost.

## **5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 5.1 Town centre frameworks 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 Frameworks 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 Edgware Town Centre Framework 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 Edgware Town Centre Framework was included in the Strategic Planning service approved budget for 2012/13 of £1.063m.

## **7. LEGAL ISSUES**

- 7.1 The development of Town Centre Frameworks 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 Framework 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 and determining planning applications for development it has significant weight as a material consideration.

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

- 8.1 Decisions relating to the Town Centre Frameworks 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 A draft strategy for Edgware was originally prepared in 2007/08 which responded to the Mall Corporation's aspirations at the time for comprehensive redevelopment of the Broadwalk Shopping Centre. This document was never consulted upon or taken into the public domain. Progression of the strategy was then delayed due to the change in ownership of the shopping centre in 2008/09 and the onset of recession which hampered previous owners, Bride Hall Developments Limited, in developing proposals for expansion of the retail floorspace. The Broadwalk Shopping Centre was then bought in May 2012 by Scottish Widows Investment Partnership who are now looking at investing in the shopping centre to expand and improve the retail offer and introduce new leisure uses.
- 9.2 Edgware is classified as the only Major Town Centre in Barnet and is one of the Borough's Priority Town centres as identified in the Core Strategy for which the Council is preparing town centre frameworks to guide and manage future change. Investment in Edgware town centre is considered to be necessary to ensure that it maintains its position in the Borough's retail hierarchy and continues to compete successfully with other centres. There are several development opportunities which have the potential to deliver major improvements and investment in the town centre and expand the number and quality of shops on offer as well as introduce other uses and activities. If managed correctly, this will provide the opportunity for Edgware to respond positively to the issues it faces and the growing competition from other nearby centres and the changing pace of high street retailing nationally.
- 9.3 A Town Centre Framework has been prepared for Edgware which seeks to create the right environment to encourage private sector investment and growth, and secure a vibrant and viable future for the town centre. The Framework responds to several development opportunities that are emerging in the town centre and aims to guide future proposals for key sites, manage changes in land use and secure infrastructure improvements.
- 9.4 The Edgware Town Centre Framework is the result of detailed analysis of the issues and opportunities for the town and information gathered from questionnaires and traders. This has included discussions with Transport for London in relation to Edgware Underground Station, Bus Station and bus depot and the current owners of The Broadwalk Shopping Centre, Scottish Widows Investment Partnership. Officers have also engaged with the Edgware Town Team.
- 9.5 The Town Centre Framework is intended to be a high level strategy for Edgware that sits within Barnet's overall Local Plan. The Framework does not establish new planning policies but it does provide specific guidance on the implementation of development plan policies within Edgware. It is therefore a material consideration for planning applications in Edgware Town Centre will be used to inform planning discussions with developers, and to make decisions on planning applications within the town centre over the next 5 to 10 years.
- 9.6 The Framework is composed of four sections. This first section provides a vision for Edgware town centre and sets out the opportunities and objectives that underpin it. Section 2 of the document sets out some of the issues facing

Edgware town centre and provides the physical, socio-economic and planning policy context for the strategy. Section 3 sets out an overarching spatial strategy for the town centre which identifies key development sites along with 7 elements of infrastructure which underpin the development opportunities. Section 4 contains information on how the changes in Edgware town centre can be delivered.

### Vision and Objectives for the Town Centre

9.7 A key objective of this planning framework is to enhance and expand the town centre offer in Edgware. This means providing new and better shops that will attract modern retailers to the town centre. This will in turn encourage private investment by retailers in the existing shops within the shopping centre and high street. Other town centre leisure uses such as a cinema, hotel and restaurants can also help attract people to Edgware. Introducing residential flats above some sites will also provide activity at different times of the day and night.

9.8 The following long term vision has been set for Edgware which responds to local issues and opportunities, a sense of the town centres' local distinctiveness and character.

*“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 Edgware Underground Station will provide opportunities for markets and local events while improvements to the public realm and junctions along Station Road will make Edgware a place that people will enjoy shopping and spending time in.”*

9.9 The following objectives underpin the town centre framework and set out how the vision for Edgware will be achieved:

- Protect and enhance Edgware's position as Barnet's Major Town Centre by identifying sites for retail growth and other town centre uses to enhance the 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 more people to access the town centre by walking and cycling along attractive routes and streets;
- Encourage the development of a distinct Northern Quarter around the Hale Lane and Edgwarebury Lane area with specialist shopping and services;
- Identify and deliver new public spaces and improved public realm including new tree planting and improved environment and public space outside Edgware Tube Station;
- Provide an attractive and safe environment, encompassing the highest quality urban design, architecture and open spaces.

## The Spatial Strategy

- 9.10 The spatial strategy is a plan within the Town Centre Framework that provides a visual representation of the vision and objectives for Edgware. It identifies the key development sites in the town centre that could accommodate new mixed use development to deliver expanded retail floorspace, new shops and other town centre uses. It also identifies new infrastructure and physical improvements that are required to ensure that potential new development is integrated with the rest of the town centre to ensure that any retail expansion compliments the existing high street rather than competes with it.
- 9.11 Edgware town centre can be divided into three broad character areas covering the northern, central and southern parts of Station Road. Each of these areas provide different uses and have slightly different functions in the town centre. There are three key sites within the Central Zone which represent opportunities for development that could accommodate a mix and range of town centre uses that will help deliver the vision and objectives of the Town Centre Framework. These are:
- a) The Broadwalk Shopping Centre;
  - b) The Forumside sites; and
  - c) Land around Premier House
- 9.12 The spatial strategy also identifies new streets, spaces, infrastructure and physical improvements that are required to ensure that new development is integrated with the rest of the town centre. These are the Elements of Infrastructure:
1. A new street from Station Road into the Broadwalk Shopping Centre Site
  2. Junction improvements along Station Road
  3. A new street through Forumside connecting the Broadwalk Shopping Centre car park site to the A5
  4. Improved public open space around Edgware Station
  5. Improved public realm along Station Road
  6. Improved bus interchange
  7. A new pedestrian/cycle route from Deans Lane to the town centre
- 9.13 Each site and element of infrastructure is presented in the document and appraised in terms of the issues, proposals, benefits and challenges that relate to it.

## Delivery and phasing

- 9.14 The key sites that offer the opportunity to deliver change and improvements in Edgware are in private ownership. Therefore commercial constraints, and in places complex land ownership will need to be resolved. The scale of change and development anticipated to come forward is significant and cannot be delivered in one go or by one landowner. A phased approach will therefore be necessary in order to coordinate developments with the delivery of infrastructure.

- 9.15 The Council's role will be to bring the key landowners and stakeholders in the town centre together to ensure that their individual aspirations and development proposals are consistent with the vision and objectives of this Framework. To help facilitate this, the Council will consider setting up a stakeholder group to monitor and implement the objectives of the Framework. The Council will also continue to engage with the Edgware Town Team on emerging proposals within the town centre.
- 9.16 The Council will encourage developers to work together to coordinate their plans and proposals within the overall context of the Spatial Strategy. It will be important that different landowners take account of neighbouring land interests to ensure that schemes do no prejudice wider development coming forward.

#### Public Consultation

- 9.17 The Edgware Town Centre Framework was subject to an 8 week period of public consultation from Thursday 29 November 2012 to Friday 25 January 2013. Exhibition boards explaining the draft Town Centre Framework were displayed at Edgware Library and within the Broadwalk Shopping Centre for the duration of the consultation period. Four exhibition sessions were also held in The Broadwalk Shopping Centre where Council officers were present to explain the plans and answer questions. Residents were notified by leaflet and an advert was placed in the local papers.
- 9.18 The draft document and information about the consultation was placed on the Council's Consultation Portal ([engage.barnet.gov.uk](http://engage.barnet.gov.uk)) including an online survey which members of the public were encouraged to fill out. Printed copies of the survey were also left at the library and shopping centre. 74 people completed some or all of the survey with 85% of responses coming from people who live or shop in Edgware. The consultation received a very positive reaction to the draft Framework with 86% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the vision. The positive reaction to the Vision is also reflected in the response to the proposed Spatial Strategy with 79% of respondents agreeing (including 26% strongly) and only 8% disagreeing.
- 9.19 The consultation revealed general concerns regarding the current state of Edgware high street, which generally tend to focus on traffic congestion on Station Road, the adverse affects of buses on this congestion and dominance of pound shops in Edgware Town Centre. Specific concerns were raised by the head teachers and parents from Edgware Junior and Infants schools in relation to proposed new streets which were shown within close proximity to the entrances to the two schools. Specific meetings were held with the head teachers from both schools to understand the concerns.
- 9.20 All the objectives received high support (averaging 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing) with the exception of the fourth objective (Development of the Northern Quarter) which received 64.8% agreement with 13% not agreeing. The proposed improvement and creation of a public square/space outside Edgware Tube Station was recognised as a key feature of the town centre and was generally supported with some respondents identifying problems regarding the space's current use as a drop off and pick up facility, stating that it was "extremely poor" and caused congestion. However other respondents

seemed satisfied with this current use of space and raised anxiety over the possibility of the station development becoming a meeting point for “vagrants”.

- 9.21 Across the questionnaire, buses consistently appear as an issue, particularly regarding its contribution to congestion on Station Road as they turn into the bus station. Infrastructure improvements that respondents felt were absent from the strategy focused on the provision of a cinema and more traffic calming measures.
- 9.22 TfL provided comments on the draft Framework. Comments relate primarily to the operational requirements of Edgware tube station, bus station and bus depot.
- 9.23 Officers also attended meetings of the Edgware Town Team (formerly Edgware Business Forum) to present the draft Framework to local traders and stakeholders and to hear their views. There is recognition that something needs to be done in Edgware and the Town Team welcomed the Council taking the initiative to prepare a strategy for the town centre. However, the economic downturn and challenges facing high streets across the country mean that traders are apprehensive about retail expansion in Edgware.
- 9.24 Part of the town centre falls within the London Borough of Harrow. Harrow Council was consulted on the draft document and have confirmed that they welcome the preparation of a Framework for the town centre and its potential to realise some significant retail growth and investment opportunities in the ‘central zone’ between the Underground station and High Street (the A5). Harrow officers particularly support the Framework’s recognition of the potential need to remodel the A5/Station Road/Whitchurch Lane junction, and for this to improve the quality of the public realm and pedestrian crossing facilities.
- 9.25 A full report on the responses and feedback from the online survey is provided in Appendix B.
- 9.26 The overall response to the consultation was positive with support for the vision, objectives and spatial strategy. Some minor updates to text have been made but otherwise the structure of the document remains unchanged. A number of amendments have been made to parts of the document in response to specific consultation responses.

#### Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 9.27 The Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Edgware Town Centre Framework at the meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and made the following comments on the document:
- 9.28 The Committee noted that the information gathered had included discussions with Transport for London in relation to the Edgware Underground Station and Bus Station, as well as the owners of the Broadwalk Shopping Centre.
- 9.29 The Chairman questioned how many responses had been received from residents following consultation on the scheme.  
*A total of 74 surveys were completed. A summary of consultation responses is provided above and in Appendix B.*



- 9.30 Members commented on the importance of rent and parking on the success of town centres. A Member noted that these issues had not been referred to in the report.  
*The Framework is intended to be a high level planning strategy for the town centre to guide development opportunities and new infrastructure. As a Planning document, the Framework doesn't seek to affect rents on private property. The Framework recognises the importance of the existing Broadwalk Shopping Centre car park and commuter car park which serve the wider town centre and advises that the same number of car parking spaces should be reprovided in any redevelopment. Detailed parking surveys have been undertaken separately by the Traffic and Parking team and new parking controls have been trialed in the town centre.*
- 9.31 The Chairman advised the Committee that he had received a comment from Cllr. Helena Hart, a Ward Member for Edgware, regarding the Edgware Town Strategy. She had emphasised the importance of maintaining and increasing the quality and number of shops in the town centre.  
*This is reflected in the Vision and Objectives contained within the Framework.*
- 9.32 A Member noted that there was not cinema in Edgware and considered that it was important to embrace the evening economy culture of such entertainment venues and eating out to ensure the success of town centres. The Committee stressed the importance of good quality shops to ensure the success of the high street.  
*This is reflected in the Framework which supports the development of a new cinema in the town centre along with associated food and drink to support a healthy evening economy.*
- 9.33 Members voiced concern regarding the number of derelict buildings in the area and advised that action should be taken to bring these back into use.  
*The importance of bring the Grade II Listed former Railway Hotel building back into use is recognised and supported in the Framework.*
- 9.34 The Chairman outlined three factors that were important in attracting people to a town centre:
- 1) Security
  - 2) A no-drinking area
  - 3) Parking
- The Framework is intended to be a high level planning strategy for the town centre to guide development opportunities and new infrastructure. As a Planning guidance document it does not set out detailed proposals in relation to no-drinking areas. The guidance provided in the document in relation to the potential development of the Key Sites as set out in the Spatial Strategy are underpinned by good urban design principles which seek to create safe and secure streets and spaces. The Framework recognises the importance of the existing Broadwalk Shopping Centre car park and commuter car park which serve the wider town centre and advises that the same number of car parking spaces should be reprovided in any redevelopment.*

### Conclusion

- 9.35 The Edgware Town Centre Framework is now ready to be considered for adoption.

**10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None.

<b>Cleared by Finance (Officer's initials)</b>	<b>JH/MGC</b>
<b>Cleared by Legal (Officer's initials)</b>	<b>CH</b>