

Planning Committee Report

London Thames Gateway Development Corporation

Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan - Preferred Options

Report of the Director of Planning

1. Purpose Of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider whether it wishes to make comments on the Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) and, if so, the nature of those comments.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan forms part of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham's Local Development Framework. Its production is being funded by LTGDC and undertaken by LTGDC staff seconded to Barking. The Plan covers not only the Town Centre but also the residential areas and the industrial estates which surround it.
- 2.2. Members will recall that last summer the Development Corporation was consulted by LBB&D on the AAP Issues & Options Report which identified the major planning issues facing the plan area and the alternative options for dealing with them. Following consideration by both the Board and the Planning Committee in September 2007, the Corporation submitted a detailed response.
- 2.3. The AAP has now reached the Preferred Options stage, wherein LBB&D set out which of the alternative options previously put forward they prefer and give justification for that choice and the setting aside of the other options. The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham is now undertaking public consultation on the report and, as part of that exercise, is seeking the views of LTGDC. The deadline for response is 11 August, but this has been extended to fit in with the LTGDC committee cycle.
- 2.4. In order to facilitate members' consideration, this report firstly gives a summary of the preferred options which LBB&D have chosen and therefore the likely content of the emerging AAP. In order that members may be aware of the extent to which the Corporation's earlier comments have been taken into account by LBB&D, Appendix 1 sets out in tabular form a précis of the comments and how LBB&D has taken account of them in their development of the Preferred Options Report.
- 2.5. As with the previous committee report, this report focuses on those issues which are of most relevance to the attainment of LTGDC objectives and the delivery of LTGDC projects. It is important that the LTGDC response should make clear to Barking and Dagenham which of their preferred options the Corporation

supports and which it has concerns about so that the Council can take that into account in producing the Submission Version of the Plan early next year

- 2.6. This preferred option document also includes detailed Draft Policy Statements applicable to different uses and issues in the town centre area. This report therefore discusses the policy statements that are of most relevance to the attainment of LTGDC objectives, and requests amendments where necessary.
- 2.7. The AAP can designate land use and at this stage suggests land uses for specific sites in the town centre. This report also comments on these suggested land uses as necessary.

3. The Preferred Options AAP

- 3.1. Copies of the full Preferred Options Report are available from http://barking-dagenham.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning_policy/btcaap/btcaap?pointId=254805 However in order to assist Members' consideration, the preferred options are summarised below:

Issue	Preferred Option/Policy Position
BTC1	Encourage extra shops so as to maintain Barking as a major Town Centre
BTC 2	Make minor adjustments to the secondary shopping frontages in Ripple Road
BTC 3a	Do not allow a new superstore out of the town centre but propose a large food/non-food store within the London Road/North Street development
BTC3b	Use the Abbey Retail Park site for new homes and a new primary school and allow some shopping as part of a scheme
BTC 4	Extend office space at the Town Hall and encourage non-speculative office development in the Town Centre particularly in sites such as Barking Station.
BTC 5	Encourage Hotel Development in the Town Centre possibly in the area around Barking Station, and allow expansion of existing hotel complex facing the A406
BTC 6	Relocate the Station Parade and Ripple Road market stalls lost to East London Transit in a new market square off East Street.
BTC 7:	Encourage evening economy uses around the station, the Broadway Theatre and Town Quay/River Roding area but limit the numbers of bars and late night entertainment venues.
BTC 8:	Allow part of the Fresh Wharf Estate and the Gascoigne Business Park to be lost to industrial use and developed for mixed use including housing, develop the Abbey Road site around Malt House for creative and cultural uses and site the Barking Business Centre within the Lintons development.
BTC 9:	Create a better public transport interchange at Barking Station, support East London Transit and apply a range of policies to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking and to reduce reliance on the private car.
BTC 10:	Provide for a modest 10% increase in off- street car parking to some 1,650 spaces, reduce the number of long stay parkers in the London Road car park and introduce electronic signage showing the location of vacant car parking spaces.
BTC 11:	Provide for a minimum of 6,200 additional homes (in line with current capacity estimates)
BTC 12:	Make sure 40% of new homes are family housing.
BTC 13:	Aim for 50% of the additional homes to be affordable and, of these, 60% to be for social renting from the Council or a Housing Association
BTC 14:	Encourage commercial leisure uses around the station, the Broadway Theatre and Town Quay and promote Barking as a tourist/visitor destination.
BTC 15:	Provide new primary schools on the Gascoigne Estate and on part of a redeveloped Abbey Retail Park and view favourably the provision of training

	facilities for young people, more community/religious meeting spaces and a new police shop [station??] in the Town Centre.
BTC 16:	Only allow particularly tall buildings (15+ storeys) around Barking Station and in the Lintons development but allow buildings of 6-14 storeys at London Road/North Street, Town Quay, the Fresh Wharf Estate, the Gascoigne Estate, the Abbey Retail Park and the Tesco site at the A406/London Road junction
BTC 17:	Achieve high quality public realm improvements by consistently applying the Barking Code, involving artists in design teams and seeking to include public art and seeking further tree planting
BTC 18:	As well as meeting our statutory conservation duties, also protect important local buildings and improve the Conservation Areas.
BTC 19:	Improve the quality of existing parks & open spaces, protect and enhance the informal open space role of the banks of the River Roding and encourage provision of more parks including within the Gascoigne Estate and in areas of deficiency
BTC 20:	Make significant improvements to Abbey Green
BTC 21	Apply the LDF Core Strategy Policy (i.e. protect nature but, in exceptional circumstances, take a more flexible approach)

BTC 22:	Apply the LDF Borough wide Development Policies (i.e. make sure new developments reduce carbon emissions by 32% achieving 10% of this from things such as solar panels and wind turbines and a further 22% from linking to a district heating scheme)
BTC 23	Apply the LDF Borough wide Development Policies Sustainable Design and Construction standards.
BTC 24:	Apply the LDF Core Strategy Policy on Section 106 Agreements but seek contributions for local priorities

3.2. In addition the Preferred Options Report makes a number of specific site allocations as summarised below:

Site 1: London Road/North Street

- Some 540 new homes
- A large food/non-food store with a number of individual shops.
- Cafe
- Further Education facilities, probably an “Advanced Skills Centre and associated Studio School ” for the 14-19 age group
- Underground Town Centre car parking of up to 500 spaces
- New market square for stalls relocated because of East London Transit.

Site 2: Fresh Wharf Estate (part)

- Some 1,150 new homes
- Shops, restaurants, cafes, takeaways and bars
- Business/office uses
- Assembly and leisure uses

Site 3: Barking Station area

- Improved transport interchange,
- Shops, restaurants, cafes
- Office and other commercial uses
- Hotel
- Some 300 new homes.

Site 4: The Lintons.

- Some 560 new homes with a net gain after demolition of some 320
- A community facility
- Barking Business Centre
- 250 Car Parking spaces

Site 5: Axe Street

- Commercial and leisure uses such as a cinema
- Multi-storey Town Centre car park of some 350 spaces
- New homes
- Further education facilities such as Barking College's Digital Media Department
- Larger and improved Abbey Sports Centre

Site 6: The Gascoigne Estate

- Around 3,150 new homes (1,400 additional after demolition of some 1,750 existing homes)
- Small scale commercial and/or community uses on the St, Pauls Road frontages
- New Primary school

Site 7: The Abbey Retail Park

- Some 450 new homes
- A new Primary School
- Some shopping type uses

Site 8: London Road/A406 junction.

- Some 500 new homes
- Possible leisure use, hotel or conference centre.

Site 9 Abbey Green.

- Enhanced open space and improved visitor and heritage interpretation facilities
- Improved link between the Town Centre and Town Quay and the waterfront.

Site 10 The Cultural/Creative Industries Quarter

- Workshops and studios
- Cultural and creative activities such as a museum, art gallery, exhibition hall or non residential education and training centre
- Restaurants, pubs, snack bars, cafes and wine bars.
- Some 400 new homes

Site 11 Town Quay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground floor uses such as restaurants, snack bars, cafes and wine bars • Some 70 new homes

Site 12 Vicarage Field
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional shops • 150 new homes • Additional car parking

3.1 The preferred Options Report also identifies a number of other sites which the AAP will propose be developed/redeveloped for housing. These are listed below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridge Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Men's Club
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanner Street Triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loxford Road
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bamford Road 	

4. General comments

- 4.1. The Development Corporation commented at the issues and options stage of the Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan in September 2007. The majority of LTGDC's comments and the options it supported have been taken forward into the Preferred Options version of the Area Action Plan as can be seen from Appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.2. In general, it is considered that the Preferred Options Report presents a series of policy choices and draft policy statements which provide a very positive policy context to deliver the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the town centre area that the Council seeks. From the Development Corporation's own perspective it is also considered that it provides a policy context which will assist LTGDC in achieving our regeneration objectives and deliver projects.
- 4.3. Generally in the Site Specific Allocations section of the AAP, the proposed mix of uses and the design and implementation issues identified for particular sites align with the projects that we are seeking to take forward at Barking Station and within the River Roding Master plan.

5. Comments on Draft Policy Statements

Draft Policy Statement 10: Abbey Road site - cultural and creative industry uses

- 5.1. In respect of the uses to which the site can be put, the AAP Site Specific Allocation quite properly wishes to keep the main focus of the site for cultural and creative industries. It is possible however that to support the establishment of the creative and cultural industries complex, other uses such as a small element of general B1 floorspace will be needed to help subsidise the creative industries element. LTGDC suggest that additional wording should be added to Draft Policy Statement 10 as follows: "Other uses will be assessed on their merits, but all schemes should support and contribute towards the success of the establishment of a creative and cultural industries complex". The following text should also be added to the Design and Implementation section of Site 10 in the site specific allocations "support and contribute towards the success of the establishment of a creative and cultural industries complex"

Draft policy statement 11: Barking Station Interchange

- 5.2. The masterplan is now being taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document so the text should be amended to reflect this.
- 5.3. This policy should be more explicit about the need for a comprehensive approach to development in this area, and that more detailed guidance will be set out in the SPD. There are a number of emerging schemes that will need to be brought forward in a coordinated way if our shared aspirations for the Station Interchange are to come to fruition.

Draft Policy Statement 18: Off Street Parking

- 5.4. This statement seeks to replace the off street car parking that has been lost to development in 2006 and 2007, and increase the 1,500 spaces identified in 2004 by 10%. There are 4 sites identified for either new or extended car parks within the AAP.
- 5.5. Members may recall that, at the Issues & Options stage, the Development Corporation commented that the selection of the preferred option should be based on some level of up to date empirical data. Although LBB&D indicate that a study of the need for public off-street car parking is being commissioned, it is disappointing that this did not happen earlier so as to allow the policy choice in the Preferred Options Report to be based on up to date information. Anecdotal evidence suggests that large amounts of parking spaces within the town centre are used by office workers, and that this means more space is needed to cater for retail shoppers. Officers would want to see a town centre parking study carried out before agreeing that new parking facilities as proposed in draft policy statement 18 are required.
- 5.6. Accordingly it is suggested that the Corporation reserves its position on Issue BTC10a and Draft Policy Statement 18 but comments that it would be unable to support such a policy in the Submission version of the AAP if the parking needs study has not been completed and its findings justified the policy position taken.

Draft policy statement 24: Health Education and Training and Community Facilities

- 5.7. There are now 2 new primary schools proposed in the area covered by the plan: a new 3 form entry primary school on the Gascoigne Estate (which was included at issues and options stage) and part of the Abbey Retail Park has been allocated for a new 3 form entry primary school (which is new in the preferred options version of the plan). LTGDC understands that this is because of the increased housing numbers that are now expected in the area. It will be essential that there is detailed information available to justify both new primary schools if an application comes forward in the near future on the Abbey Retail Park. LTGDC understands that Barking officers are compiling further supporting information at the moment.

Draft policy statement 26: Tall buildings

- 5.8. LTGDC is working with its partners to bring forward a scheme at the Cultural Industries Quarter / Malt House which is currently proposed at 6-12 storeys. It is considered that, because draft policy statement 26 states “ elsewhere in the AAP area, tall buildings will be resisted unless particular proposals can demonstrate significant regeneration or townscape benefits”, the policy will not frustrate the LTGDC’s proposals, as it is anticipated that the scheme will demonstrate significant regeneration and townscape benefits. LTGDC therefore supports Draft Policy Statement 26 on tall buildings.

Draft policy statement 34: Developer Contributions

- 5.9. This does not specifically mention the LTGDC Planning Obligations Community Benefit Strategy, and seeks to provide a list of priorities for contributions in the area in line with Policy CC5 of the Council's Core Strategy. This is of concern, as the LTGDC strategy sets out mechanisms for pooling contributions on a London Riverside and Lower Lea Valley basis, with the final decision on allocation of monies being decided by the LTGDC Board with the input of the relevant Management Groups. It is considered that the draft policy statement should be amended to refer to the LTGDC Planning Obligations Community Benefit Strategy.

6. Site Specific Allocations

- 6.1. The AAP can designate land use and at this stage suggests land uses for specific sites in the town centre. A mix of uses is proposed for all the sites, in line with achieving the objectives of the AAP.
- 6.2. In accordance with comments made by LTGDC, the AAP does not allocate a site for an out of centre superstore within the plan area. It allocates a site that is being disposed of by the Council on London Road for a large food/non-food store, residential use, further education facilities, car parking and a new market square. It encourages the redevelopment of the Abbey Retail Park for residential and a school, with some element of retail floorspace. Tesco already operate a supermarket on a site at the junction of the A406 and London Road.
- 6.3. The interrelationship between these sites and aspirations of large food retailers is complicated, and it may well be that the scenarios envisaged by the AAP are tested by retailers objecting to the AAP, or submitting planning applications that are not in accordance with it. Such applications would have to be considered by LTGDC at the time, taking into account the relevant planning policies. At this stage, it is not considered by officers that LTGDC should object to the provisions of the AAP in relation to these sites. However, it is recognised that there appear to be a number of aspirations for the site that has been allocated for a food store on London Road, and that it may not be possible to achieve all the suggested land uses on the one site.

7. Other issues

- 7.1. LTGDC support the proposals in the AAP for pedestrian and cycle links across the River Roding, especially the pedestrian bridge and the links along the river
- 7.2. In respect of the moorings issue, it plays a significant role in the River Roding Masterplan and officers consider that the provision of moorings here can add to the diversity of uses and the vibrancy of the area. Officers have discussed this with LBB&D in the context of the Masterplan rather than the AAP and are aware that the Borough has some reservations about the practicability of such proposals. Nevertheless it is disappointing that the AAP has not brought forward proposals either directly associated with the Creative Industries Quarter or the River Roding more generally.
- 7.3. The AAP takes a position of requiring high standards of architecture and urban design but relies on other documents to provide the detailed guidance. Whilst this approach has been criticised by CABE during its consideration of some major development schemes in the Town Centre, officers consider it to be the right approach. It does, however, rely on the supporting documents being of a high quality and providing the detailed design required.
- 7.4. One of the documents that the AAP relies on is the Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document and it is considered that this does not

currently provide the level of detailed design guidance required to support the AAP policy. It is known that Design for London (DfL) are interested in updating the Barking Town Centre Urban Principles document produced by Allies and Morrison in 2006 and which has been somewhat inadequately incorporated into the Urban Design Framework. DfL consider that an updated Allies and Morrison document could itself become a useful Supplementary Planning Document to support the AAP, in addition to the SPD for Barking Station Interchange. It is suggested that the Development Corporation response should support such an approach.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- a) Agree that the Director of Planning respond to the consultation with comments based on sections 4,5,6 and 7 of this report, incorporating any further comments the committee wish to make.
- b) Note that a further report on the Submission version of the Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan will be brought forward in 2009.

APPENDIX 1:

Corporation Comment on Issues & Options Report	LBB&D Response
<p>Vision & Objectives LTGDC welcomes the draft vision for the Plan area, noting that it envisages significant improvements in economic, environmental and social conditions. The Corporation particularly welcomes the acknowledgement in the Vision that, Barking Town Centre has, in addition to its important local role, a key part to play in the development of Thames Gateway. Similarly the objectives appear to be wide ranging and well set, reflecting the Vision and providing the context for the policy issues and options set within them.</p>	<p>LTGDC support welcomed</p>
<p>Issue 3 LTGDC support Option 1 for identifying a site for a superstore since it is more pro-active and there is a distinct possibility that a central site can be identified.</p> <p>In terms of the Abbey Retail Park, LTGDC consider Option 1 for a retail/residential redevelopment to be the best option, provided that any retail expansion meets need, capacity and sequential tests and the need for expansion of primary schools being satisfactorily dealt with elsewhere in the AAP area.</p>	<p>Large food/non-food store proposed at London Road/North Street</p> <p>Rejected. The preferred Option is a hybrid of Options 1 and 2 of the Issues & Options Report. Option 1 was unsatisfactory in both suggesting an expansion of retail warehouse floor space on the site and in ruling out the need to provide a new primary school on the site.</p>
<p>Issue 4 L LTGDC supports Option 2 for the encouragement of office development in the Town Centre. Whilst we acknowledge that the current demand for suburban centre commercial office space is low, we believe that Barking's proximity to, and excellent public transport links with, the City can foster some growth. Office development will provide local jobs, improve the image of Barking Town Centre and be the impetus for the provision of lunchtime and early evening informal leisure uses which will further assist the economic and environmental regeneration of the Town Centre.</p>	<p>Option 2 selected as the Preferred Option</p>
<p>Issue 5 LTGDC supports Option 1 since, as with offices, it regards hotel development as a potential driver for economic and environmental regeneration of the Town Centre and as a boost for the image of the town. There is an obvious synergy with the growth of commercial office floor space and also with the potential growth of heritage tourism</p>	<p>Option 1 selected as the Preferred Option.</p>

<p>which is explored elsewhere in the Report.</p> <p>Despite this, LTGDC would not wish this to mean a restriction on the growth of the existing A406 hotels. They are successful and their wish to expand is reflected in the proposals of the River Roding Master Plan.</p>	<p>Draft policy statement allows expansion of the A406 hotels</p>
<p>Issue 7</p> <p>LTGDC would be strongly opposed to Option 1 of making no provision for additional evening economy uses. Whilst we support Option 3 and the Council’s desire to avoid the anti- social behaviour impacts that can come with a vibrant evening economy, the detailed planning and licensing regime needs to ensure some scope for further bars and entertainment venues.</p> <p>We strongly support option 2 to allow evening economy uses in the Town Quay and River Roding area as well as in the Town centre. We regard such uses as an essential component of the mixed use regeneration that will be undertaken within the area and a significant factor in achieving the objective of reuniting Barking Town Centre with the historic riverfront. Evening economy uses in the Town Quay/River Roding area are a component of the River Roding Master Plan</p>	<p>Preferred Option is a hybrid which accepts LTGDC point about scope for some bars etc.</p> <p>Option 2 selected as the Preferred Option</p>
<p>Issue 8</p> <p>LTGDC strongly supports Option 2 for the release of part of the Fresh wharf Estate for mixed use development. We agree that this will not have an adverse effect on employment levels across the site and believe that the approach will not only offer significant numbers of new homes but also provide for the environmental regeneration of a key site on the riverfront and the consequent boost to the image and perception of Barking.</p> <p>We also strongly support the creative /cultural industries option because it has the potential, not only for significant environmental improvement of the area, but also to promote local distinctiveness and diversify the economic base of Barking.</p> <p>We also strongly support the option to accommodate the Barking Business Centre on the Lintons. Accessibility to Barking Station makes this a better site.</p>	<p>Option 2 has been included with Option 3 as the Preferred Option</p> <p>Selected as the Preferred Option</p> <p>Selected as the Preferred Option</p>

<p>Issue 9 LTGDC considers that all of the measures put forward have merit and can contribute to the objective of creating a more sustainable local transport system. We would, however, suggest that the improvement of servicing the commercial uses in the town centre should be part of the Preferred Options Report since this can offer benefits to traffic flow, the pedestrian environment and the economic functioning of Town Centre shops and offices.</p> <p>We particularly and strongly support the options of supporting East London Transit and providing a more effective public transport interchange at Barking Station. We would stress our support not only for Phase 1a through the Town Centre but also for Phase 2 which we regard as critical for linking Barking to the wider Thames Gateway area and also improving PTAL levels on the fringes of the Action Plan area.</p>	<p>.</p> <p>Improving the servicing for shops in East Street is shown in Site Specific Allocation 1 as one of the design and implementation issues that the developer for the North Street/London Road scheme must successfully address</p> <p>Both options selected as Preferred Options</p>
<p>Issue 10 LTGDC recognises the tensions between the need to reduce car parking as part of a sustainable transport policy and the wish to ensure that the vitality and viability of Barking Town Centre is not compromised. In the light of this, the Corporation considers that the choices between the options presented for the level of car parking provision should only be made in the light of an up to date assessment of parking need and any necessary reassessment of the town centre parking strategy.</p>	<p>A review of the need for public off street parking in the Town Centre Car Parking Strategy is currently being commissioned. However, option 1 for a modest increase in spaces has been included as the preferred option.</p>
<p>Issue 11 LTGDC supports Option 1 and recognises the significant contribution that such provision will make to not only meeting the Borough's housing targets set out in the London Plan but also to meeting the target of 40,000 new homes by 2016 which we have set ourselves in our 2007/08 Business Plan. Whilst we support this option, we would not wish to see the 7,150 seen as a rigid collar and would urge that as windfall sites come forward, their appropriateness for housing is assessed even though this could lead to an excess of the housing target figure.</p> <p>Whilst we welcome the overall housing target for the plan period as a whole and we recognise the difficulty of accurately predicting (particularly further into the plan period) when housing sites will be developed, we consider that the AAP should try to give some</p>	<p>If environmentally acceptable schemes which exceed the currently identified capacity are brought forward on particular sites, they will be approved and a total figure in excess of the currently estimated capacity will be achieved.</p> <p>The Preferred Options Report attempts in Schedule 2 to give an indicative housing delivery trajectory</p>

<p>indication of a housing supply trajectory. This will be useful in not only indicating when housing will be come available but also to assist in identifying the timescales within which associated social infrastructure will need to be provided.</p>	
<p>Issue 13 Whilst LTGDC fully understand and sympathise with the Council's wish to give greater housing choice and create a more balanced community, it considers that the need for affordable housing as a key issue for East London. For this reason and because we are concerned about the potential London Plan compliance issues of a 35% target, the corporation supports the 50% target of Option 1.</p> <p>We do consider, however, that the Council's housing aims can, to some extent, be attained through the type of affordable housing to be provided. Accordingly, in noting that the GLA recognise the need to be flexible in the application of this standard, we support the 60%/40% affordable housing tenure split.</p>	<p>Option 1 selected as the preferred option.</p> <p>The 60%/40% affordable housing tenure split is the preferred option.</p>
<p>Issue 19 The protection of informal open space, its biodiversity importance and the maintenance/enhancement of public access are key elements of the River Roding Master Plan. Accordingly, we strongly support Option 1.</p>	<p>Option 1 selected as the preferred option</p>
<p>Issue 20 With the significant regeneration activity which the Corporation and others are promoting in the Town Quay and the River Roding area, strong linkages with the Town Centre are essential. LTGDC regard Abbey Green as a key space and its improvement as a significant factor in achieving the objective of reuniting Barking Town Centre with the historic riverfront. For these reasons we support Option 2.</p>	<p>Option 2 selected as the Preferred Option</p>
<p>Issue 24 We have no comment to make on the options presented in this Issues and Options Report but would take the opportunity to reiterate that any Section 106 Policy within Barking & Dagenham's LDF should make reference to LTGDC as the determining authority for many of the S106s and our proposed discounted 'tariff' of £6000 per residential units, as well as requirement for affordable housing, subject to financial appraisal."</p>	<p>Noted</p>

Date: 01 September 2008