

# Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>Name of Service Area</b>	Spatial Planning and Transport (Planning and Development)
<b>Staff conducting assessment, including contact details</b>	Martijn Cooijmans ( <a href="mailto:martijn.cooijmans@islington.gov.uk">martijn.cooijmans@islington.gov.uk</a> ) Deanna Walker ( <a href="mailto:deanna.walker@islington.gov.uk">deanna.walker@islington.gov.uk</a> )
<b>Date of assessment</b>	12 June 2013
<b>Reason for assessment</b> (what are you aiming to do?)	Identify and mitigate the equalities impacts of the draft Finsbury Park Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that will be used to guide the regeneration of the Finsbury Park Town Centre.

<b>Description of the project/program/strategy/policy/procedure being assessed (aims, objectives and purpose)</b>
<b>Background and purpose</b> <p>Islington, Hackney and Haringey Councils have agreed to work together to develop a joint Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Finsbury Park Town Centre. Although the emphasis will lie on the area directly surrounding Finsbury Park Station, it will also include the high streets (Seven Sisters Road, Fonthill Road, Blackstock Road and Stroud Green Road). Whilst the SPD will deal with the linkages to the park (Finsbury Park) and surrounding local neighbourhoods, it will not provide planning and development guidance for surrounding residential areas, such as the Andover and Six Acres Estates and the Park itself.</p>

The primary purpose of the Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD is to guide and inform the continuing redevelopment of the area, ensuring that development proposals that come forward do so within an agreed framework, and that small-scale improvements are linked to an overarching area strategy.

The aim of the draft Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD is two-fold:

- To promote the incremental regeneration of the area to reduce deprivation and support the town centre's economic, social and physical development; and
- To set out a place-based approach to tackling cross-boundary issues in the area.

The SPD is aimed at realistic, organic, incremental improvements rather than unrealistic wholesale redesign of the area.

The Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD will form part of each of the Local Development Frameworks (LDF) for Islington, Haringey and Hackney. The SPD will be used by all three councils to make decisions about future development and investment in the area. The objectives of the SPD align with adopted and emerging LDF documents of the three local authorities.

The draft SPD has been developed in close partnership with planning officers at Haringey and Hackney Councils, who will be managing the democratic processes (i.e. sign off for consultation and adoption later in 2013) within their organisations.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The Council's adopted Core Strategy sets out a specific policy for the regeneration of the Finsbury Park area. Policy CS2 states that the council will, in partnership with the adjoining boroughs of Haringey and Hackney 'seek extensive redevelopment in the area surrounding Finsbury Park Station'. The policy goes on to outline the Council's aspirations for the area's regeneration, including managing development within shopping areas, delivering mixed-use development on low density employment sites close to the station, carry out improvements to create an improved transport interchange, and protecting and enhancing the area's historic character.

The draft SPD summarises the main planning policies that should be addressed by future development proposals, sets out planning and

design issues particular to the area, and some of the key information that an applicant should include in any future planning application. The recommendations of the draft SPD reflect the relevant policies from each of the three local authorities' Development Plans and the London Plan to provide a clear and unified vision for the continuing regeneration of Finsbury Park Town Centre.

Islington Council's Core Strategy Policy CS 2 seeks to:

- enhance the vitality of the Town Centre as a retail centre;
- redevelop the low-density employment sites around the station to provide mixed-use development including housing, employment, retail and leisure uses
- provide between 400-600 new homes
- re-provide storage and distribution floor space
- improve transport interchange and public spaces, with increased legibility and design that leads to an increased sense of safety;
- improve walking and cycling connections to the park, Highbury Fields/Highbury Corner and the Emirates (Arsenal) Stadium;
- respect and enhance the historic character of the area; and
- improve and provide new open space; Finsbury Park ward and neighbouring areas are identified as some of the highest priority areas for increasing the provision of public open space.

### **Delivery and implementation**

The SPD will be used to guide the delivery of area-based improvement works within Finsbury Park Town Centre. The draft SPD therefore includes an Implementation Strategy and Monitoring Framework to assist the delivery of area based improvements in the short to medium term.

**Main Stakeholders/Beneficiaries** (staff; service users; tax payers; voluntary, community and faith organisations; other council departments; public and business partners)

Relevant stakeholders include the following:

- Neighbouring residents (in particular those directly affected by the construction works and any future development);
- People who work in and visit the area;
- Local businesses, developers and landowners in the area;
- Islington Council;
- Haringey Council;
- Hackney Council;
- Council partner organisations (e.g. NHS Islington);
- Local organisations and amenity groups, such as FinFuture and traders associations,
- The Finsbury Park, Tollington, Highbury West and Highbury East Ward Partnerships; and
- Statutory stakeholders (including the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, Network Rail and the emergency services).

The SPD will have particular relevance for Islington Council officers in Development Management, Planning Enforcement, Conservation and Design, Greenspace, Highways, Transport Planning, Regeneration, Estates and Housing and Education.

The main beneficiaries will be local residents and those working in/visiting the area who are likely to benefit from better quality and more accessible public environments, new jobs and training opportunities and new shops and services, an improved station, enhanced walking and cycling routes and a clearer route between the town centre and Finsbury Park itself.

## **Will the proposed policy/project/ strategy etc impact on equality groups?**

The boundary of the Finsbury Park Town Centre draft SPD interfaces with four wards: Finsbury Park, Highbury West, Tollington and Highbury East. The document's main recommendations affect the Finsbury Park ward the most, therefore in the following section where demographic information has been used, this refers to the Finsbury Park ward.

### **1. Gender**

It is not expected that the SPD will have either a positive or negative impact on people because of their gender. Section 4 of the SPD includes guidance on Inclusive Design, and sets out policy standards that any new development in the area will have to achieve. The general approach to achieving an inclusive environment is set out at Section 4.2.40, which clarifies the Council's commitment to ensuring that new development employs design methods that will achieve aesthetically pleasing, functional environments that can be enjoyed by everyone, taking into account gender among other considerations.

Section 4.2.40 specifies that the Council will require that any new development can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all regardless of disability, age or gender and references the requirement for this within London Plan Policy 3.8 and Policy 7.2.

The EqIA carried out as part of the preparation of the Council's Core Strategy detailed that where specific consultation was carried out with female residents in Islington, access to housing, improved housing and a better and safer built environment were raised as issues. The draft SPD directly links to these issues: Section 1.5.2 of the SPD sets out the document's key objectives, which includes new housing (quality standards of which are set out in Section 4 of the document and controlled through the Council's Development Management Policies to ensure that the requirement for quality from female residents is met) and identifies the opportunity to carry out environmental improvements (such as improved lighting and works to viaducts) to discourage crime and anti-social behaviour and meet the request for a safer built environment.

One of the key recommendations of the SPD is to improve accessibility and safety within Finsbury Park town centre. Section 5 of the SPD identifies actions that should be taken to address this, which includes the installation of CCTV, improved lighting and working with the local police teams to reduce opportunities for crime. It is considered that these measures will benefit residents and visitors of all genders.

## 2. Age

It is expected that the SPD will have a positive impact on people of all age groups. Section 4.2.40 sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring that new development employs design methods that will produce aesthetically pleasing, functional environments that can be enjoyed by everyone, and specifies that the Council will require that any new development can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all regardless of age.

People of all age groups are expected to live and use any new development and new and improved public space within Finsbury Park Town Centre. Therefore, people of all age groups will benefit from new developments and improvements that are delivered in response to the SPD. Section 4.2.32 of the draft SPD includes guidance on required standards for circulation, parking, access and transport that any new development must meet, whilst section 4.2.40 relates to inclusive design principles that must be utilised. These standards and policies specify that all development meets accessibility and inclusivity standards, which will benefit many elderly people.

The EqIA carried out as part of the preparation of the Council's Core Strategy detailed the outcome of engagement with young people, who are often excluded from and difficult to engage on strategic planning issues. Feedback included the need for more council housing and larger homes for families, new local facilities rather than improving existing recreation and open spaces, and additional training and employment opportunities.

Whilst the SPD document does not specifically allocate council housing within the area, section 1.5.2 includes one of the document's core objectives to deliver between 400 and 600 new homes within Finsbury Park Town Centre, and section 4.2.13 of the draft SPD references the Council's Core Strategy Policy CS 12 Part G, where any development proposal for housing would be required to include the maximum reasonable amount of affordable homes. In addition to this, in line with Islington Core Strategy Policy CS 12 (Meeting the Housing Challenge) any residential development proposals in the area should provide a range of housing unit sizes, in accordance with Part E of the policy.

In respect of additional local facilities, the area's current built form provides little opportunity for major new facilities, but Section 1.5.3 of the draft SPD identifies opportunities for new mixed use development in the area (which may include new facilities) and creating a new high quality link to the major greenspace of Finsbury Park itself. This section also identifies opportunities for new mixed use development within the area to provide new employment and training opportunities.

Section 1.5.3 of the draft SPD seeks to encourage improved routes and public spaces across the Finsbury Park Town Centre, and is likely to have significant positive effects for those with age-related accessibility requirements. It therefore assists those who may not find it convenient or

are not able to travel longer distances, which may include older people, people with disabilities and carers with children. Section 5 of the SPD identifies the need for public realm improvements in the area (particularly on Seven Sisters Road and Blackstock Road) which would result in higher quality public areas with improved surfacing and enhanced facilities.

### **3. Disability**

It is expected that the draft SPD will have a positive impact on people with disabilities.

The EqIA carried out as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy detailed the outcome of engagement with disabled residents in conjunction with Disability Action in Islington. The main challenge identified was ensuring disabled residents have equal status with non-disabled residents in terms of living in and getting round the borough and equal access to jobs, homes and green spaces. Section 4.2.32 sets out requirements for new development in respect of circulation, access, parking and transport, which sets out standards for providing wheelchair-accessible parking for new homes within the area. New development including housing and other land uses that will come forward in response to the draft SPD will be designed in accordance with the principles of inclusive design (section 4.2.40 sets out requirements for new development) and will be more accessible as a result. The draft SPD specifies that the Council will require that any new development can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all regardless of disability. Section 5 of the SPD identifies the need for public realm improvements in the area (particularly on Seven Sisters Road and Blackstock Road) which would result in higher quality public areas with improved surfacing and enhanced facilities.

### **4. Race**

It is expected that the draft SPD will have a neutral impact on people regardless of their race or ethnicity. Section 4.2.39 sets out the Council's commitment to new development employing design methods that will produce aesthetically pleasing, functional environments that can be enjoyed and used by everyone with dignity, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

The EqIA carried out as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy considered the impacts of Core Strategy policies on groups and concluded that future development provided the opportunity to benefit the race/ethnicity equality strand through:

- The provision of high quality education and community facilities for people regardless of ethnic background; and
- The provision of housing as all Black Minority Ethnic groups (with the exception of Indian/Pakistani and White Other households) are

more likely to be in social rented housing than 'White British' (Housing Needs Study 2008).

The draft SPD references the wealth of community facilities within Finsbury Park Town Centre, and whilst the document does not set specific objectives for the provision of new facilities, new mixed use development in the area as envisaged in Section 1.5.2 of the draft SPD could include new community facilities. Whilst the draft SPD document does not specifically allocate council housing within the area, section 1.5.2 includes one of the document's core objectives to deliver between 400 and 600 new homes within Finsbury Park Town Centre, with section 4.2.13 of the draft SPD references the Council's Core Strategy Policy CS 12 Part G, where any development proposal for housing would be required to include the maximum reasonable amount of affordable homes.

## **5. Religion and belief**

It is expected that the draft SPD will have a neutral impact on people regardless of their religion or belief.

Any future development within Finsbury Park Town Centre will consider the safety and accessibility of the design of any buildings or public or private spaces which will help address concerns about the potential for any hate crime to be perpetrated in poorly designed new development. Section 4.2.20 of the SPD requires that new development comes forward in line with London Plan Policy 7.3 which requires any new development within Finsbury Park Town Centre to create safe, secure and appropriately accessible environments where crime and anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Improving public spaces in the area is a key objective of the draft SPD and is set out at Section 1.5.2. Design standards that will reduce the potential for crime to take place are set out at Section 4.2.18. In addition, Table 1 in section 5 of the document sets out a number of area-based activities that should take place to reduce the risk of and incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour within the area.

## **6. Sexual orientation**

It is expected that the draft SPD will have a neutral impact on people regardless of their sexual orientation.

Any future development within Finsbury Park Town Centre will consider the safety and accessibility of the design of any buildings or public or private spaces which will help address concerns about the potential for any hate crime to be perpetrated in poorly designed new development. Section 4.2.20 of the SPD requires that new development comes forward in line with London Plan Policy 7.3 which requires any new development within Finsbury Park Town Centre to create safe, secure and appropriately accessible environments where crime and anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Improving public spaces in the area is a key objective



of the draft SPD and is set out at Section 1.5.2. Design standards that will reduce the potential for crime to take place are set out at Section 4.2.18. In addition, Table 1 in section 5 of the document sets out a number of area-based activities that should take place to reduce the risk of and incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour within the area.

## **7. Gender re-assignment**

Any future development within Finsbury Park Town Centre will consider the safety and accessibility of the design of any buildings or public or private spaces which will help address concerns about the potential for any hate crime to be perpetrated in poorly designed new development. Section 4.2.20 of the SPD requires that new development comes forward in line with London Plan Policy 7.3 which requires any new development within Finsbury Park Town Centre to create safe, secure and appropriately accessible environments where crime and anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Improving public spaces in the area is a key objective of the draft SPD and is set out at Section 1.5.2. Design standards that will reduce the potential for crime to take place are set out at Section 4.2.18. In addition, Table 1 in section 5 of the document sets out a number of area-based activities that should take place to reduce the risk of and incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour within the area.

## **8. Marriage and Civil Partnerships**

It is expected that the draft SPD will have a neutral impact on people regardless of their status as married or within a civil partnership.

## **9. Pregnancy and maternity**

It is expected that the draft SPD will have a positive impact on people who are pregnant or on maternity leave. Sections 4.2.40 and 4.2.41 of the draft SPD provide that new development in the area should be 'convenient and welcoming with no disabling barriers, so everyone can use it independently without undue effort, separation or special treatment'. It is considered that this approach would result in development that would not negatively impact upon women who are pregnant or on maternity leave.

## **10. Child Poverty and other socio-economic impacts**

It is expected that the draft SPD and any future development in the area will have positive implications for residents who are living on low-income or are unemployed, and enhance the economic prosperity of Islington overall. The Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) that covers much of the core SPD area) was identified within Islington's March 2012 Demographics Profile as within the most deprived quintile of the borough.

In the short-term it is considered that the opportunities for environmental improvements within the area identified at section 3.8.2 will improve day to day life for many residents and visitors, and an improved local environment could assist in attracting new shops and services to the area which would drive the local and borough-wide economies.

Section 4.2.20 of the draft SPD provides that any new development within Finsbury Park Town Centre should seek to create safe, secure and appropriately accessible environments where crime and anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life of community cohesion. High quality housing design, safe and attractive streets, enhanced public spaces and facilities for play all contribute towards wider objectives related to alleviating poor housing conditions, promoting walking and exercise, tackling health inequalities and reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. Enhanced access to the major green space of Finsbury Park, as envisaged by Objective 6 of the SPD, will also contribute towards tackling health inequalities and promoting healthier life choices.

In the long-term new housing development will provide a number of high quality homes. Section 4.2.13 of the draft SPD states that any future housing development within the area must include affordable housing, and that the affordable homes provided are designed to a high quality and fully integrated within the overall scheme. The additional affordable housing provided because of this requirement will help low-income households in need of affordable housing, including families with children. Section 4.2.13 of the draft SPD also specifies that the housing redevelopment should provide a range of housing unit sizes. Given the residential nature of parts of the surrounding local area, and the potential for good access to public open space, family-sized homes in particular will be encouraged to help meet Islington's housing needs.

Objective 2 of the draft SPD focuses on delivering new development around Finsbury Park Station, which will create new employment and training opportunities for local people and in the long-term can contribute to increasing the area's economic activity.

# IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Improvement Plan needs to outline actions you propose to take to mitigate actual or potential negative impacts. Actions from Improvement Plan should be included as part of the final report and implementation taken forward as a part of that process.

ISSUE IDENTIFIED	ACTION REQUIRED	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
<b>Future review</b>	A further EqIA for the Finsbury Park Town Centre will be undertaken upon completion of public consultation on the draft document. The review will assess any significant changes that may be made to the draft SPD and considers the potential impacts of those changes.	Martijn Cooijmans Planning and Development	Review to be carried out in September 2013.	