

Report for: Cabinet, 18th April 2023

Title: Wood Green Voices Vision Document

Report

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Lead Officer: Peter O'Brien, Assistant Director of Regeneration & Economic Development

Ward(s) affected: Woodside, Noel Park, Bounds Green, Harringay, West Green

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. This report introduces a new vision for Wood Green, called '*Shaping Wood Green*'. It sets an overarching vision for the area and articulates six main themes which will guide change. Alongside this, it describes a set of strategic opportunities focused around 'Placemaking Areas' which have been highlighted as areas which have the greatest potential to deliver new social and physical infrastructure that Wood Green needs to be a successful place for the next generation.
- 1.2. This document will be used to guide the Council's approach to investment, public services, and placemaking in Wood Green in the years ahead. It will also shape the Council's partnerships with external stakeholders, ranging from community groups to landowners and investors.
- 1.3. Each high level theme will be developed through further participation with partners, residents and businesses, with a view to delivering a series of short, medium, and long term improvements under each theme.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1. Wood Green is the economic heart of the borough, and North London's only metropolitan centre. It has excellent transport links locally and to central London, and enjoys a high footfall along the High Road. It boasts two cinemas, a multitude of restaurants, a diverse retail offer which includes many independent businesses. It is already one of North London's most popular town centres but we know it can be even more.
- 2.2. From the recent '*Wood Green Voices*' engagement, the Council also understands that Wood Green faces many challenges and that local people often feel let down by some of its shortcomings.
- 2.3. Shaping Wood Green will set a vision for maximising the potential of Wood Green – building on its strengths. It will guide how the council works with partners and will seek to address the challenges raised in Wood Green Voices in order to deliver a placemaking programme that both meets the concerns of

local people, and also looks to make the most of potential opportunities that that could transform the area. This includes ensuring Wood Green is welcoming to all, improving the public realm and greening the area; continuing to build the local economy and attracting new institutions; changing the way we deliver public facing services in Wood Green and enabling community initiatives to flourish.

- 2.4. Wood Green Voices was one of the first major public engagement projects undertaken since the launch of the Haringey Deal. We have learned a lot through this process, which we will be applying to how we work in the future. The commitments in the Haringey Deal are also at the heart of Shaping Wood Green with the continuing participation of residents and communities running throughout.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet agrees:

- 3.1. to consider the successes and learning from Wood Green Voices, set out in section 6, which will inform work to continue to embed the Haringey Deal; and the proposed approach to ongoing resident participation at the heart of Shaping Wood Green.
- 3.2. to note the actions already taken by the council following the feedback from residents during the Wood Green Voices project contained in section 6.
- 3.3. to approve the Shaping Wood Green document attached in Appendix 2, which sets out a vision, six themes for improvement, and five placemaking areas in Wood Green.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1. The vision and themes within Shaping Wood Green have been carefully developed from the extensive Wood Green Voices engagement programme that took place in November 2022, and therefore is rooted in recent conversations with a wide range of residents and stakeholders.
- 4.2. The strategic spatial proposals in the five placemaking areas bring together recent public engagement with the potential opportunities created by the Council's consolidation of its corporate estate on to the Civic Centre (cabinet – January 2022), and the chance to strategically consider how the Council delivers its front-facing services.
- 4.3. Shaping Wood Green is a high-level document, that will guide more detailed conversations with residents, businesses, external partners, and internal council teams, on how to best to respond to the vision and placemaking areas. This process will continue to serve as a test bed for other projects adopting the Haringey Deal approach.

5. Alternative options considered

DO NOT APPROVE 'SHAPING WOOD GREEN' DOCUMENT

- 5.1. From the Wood Green Voices engagement the council has developed a deeper understanding of some of the issues raised by local people about Wood Green. Council responses to improving Wood Green could be taken forward based on the information of this report and the Corporate Delivery Plan, without the need for the publication of a high-level vision document.
- 5.2. The council has committed itself to sharing power with residents as part of the Haringey Deal. This high-level vision document communicates the outcome of an extensive process of engagement and will be used as a basis for further conversation around change in Wood Green. Publishing this document is an important pre-requisite for future collaborative working and public participation.

6. Background information

WOOD GREEN VOICES

- 6.1. The 2021 Haringey residents survey identified a deficit in participation in Wood Green, with findings that showed that less than 20% of Wood Green residents felt like they were able to influence decisions made by the Council, but over 55% would like the opportunity to be more involved with decision making.
- 6.2. As part of a new approach to Placemaking in the borough, and in response to this, the council undertook a significant engagement programme in November 2022, under the name of 'Wood Green Voices' to create space for local people and businesses to have their say on what they love about Wood Green, what places and spaces are important to them, and what needs improving. Over 350 people were engaged via workshops, online surveys and face to face drop-in sessions, including several communities the council has not often spoken to before. The findings of Wood Green Voices have been collated into an engagement report – see Appendix 1.

SHAPING WOOD GREEN

- 6.3. Shaping Wood Green is the council's response to the Wood Green Voices engagement. The six themes are grounded in what we heard during the Wood Green Voices programme. They also reflect the ambition of the draft Haringey Placemaking Principles of the Local Plan, and the council's Corporate Delivery Plan 2023/2024. They were 'tested' at a feedback event with residents who were part of Wood Green Voices in late March 2023.
- 6.4. The high-level document is intended to start the conversation both within the council and with external stakeholders for how Wood Green's potential can be realised, and how the community will play a greater role shaping Wood Green's future.
- 6.5. The text for the Shaping Wood Green vision, the six themes, and placemaking areas are described in Appendix 2. A summary of the themes can be found below:
 - 6.5.1. **Making Wood Green a welcoming place**
To create a safer, cleaner Wood Green, that has well-maintained public realm, and where positive stories support improved public perceptions of the area.

6.5.2. Bringing culture to the heart of Wood Green

By working with partners to promote a wider range of cultural events across Wood Green, from public art, to performances, street markets and community events. Ensuring that affordable workspace is available to support the Cultural Quarter's creative industries, and working with them so their activities are more accessible to the public.

6.5.3. Supporting people to live well

By ensuring our council services are fit to meet residents' needs in the 21st Century, and that facilities for local communities and young people are in easy reach, including sports and leisure to help people live a healthy life. Our public buildings and outdoor spaces should be accessible for all. And our residents should be able to live in comfortable, habitable homes.

6.5.4. Becoming North London's town centre for all

To help our town centre to continue to thrive through more diverse retail and food offerings, with a view to encouraging a vibrant evening economy, as well as attracting a wider range of institutions, such as civic, cultural and community anchors. Re-focussing our public realm so that it feels inviting and distinctive for local people, and encouraging safer, more convenient forms of active travel into Wood Green.

6.5.5. Putting the green in Wood Green

By maximising opportunities for greening our streets and public spaces, and making the most of our parks to help improve air quality, mitigate the effects of climate change, and encourage more wildlife and biodiversity.

6.5.6. Growing our economy to benefit everyone

By attracting inward investment into Wood Green to help to deliver new social and physical infrastructure, and promote an inclusive economy that supports new businesses and start-ups, and offers employment and skills opportunities for our residents. This will involve convening and building connections to broker partnerships with a range of organisations from large external partners to local VCS and small community groups.

- 6.6. The second part of the document highlights key spatial opportunities to deliver on the ambition of the themes. Five Placemaking Areas, illustrated on a spatial diagram, have been identified that will catalyst change in Wood Green through the redevelopment of its sites. The council is a major landowner in each area. Partnerships will be critical with external landowners on some sites if the vision of Shaping Wood Green is to be realised. The Placemaking Areas are as follows:

Civic Centre and grounds

- 6.6.1. Station Road Sites, Arriva Bus Garage, and Green Ridings House

- 6.6.2. Library Site and surrounds

- 6.6.3. Wood Green Cultural Quarter

- 6.6.4. High Road and Turnpike Lane (including Bury Road and Lymington Avenue)

SHAPING WOOD GREEN WILL BE USED FOR

- 6.7. Guiding Council's approach to investment, the delivery of our services, and Placemaking in Wood Green
- 6.8. Supporting and steering the Council's partnerships with external stakeholders, including investors and other landowners.
- 6.9. Leading to a series of short, medium and long term improvements to be developed and delivered under each theme.

LESSONS LEARNT FOR THE HARINGEY DEAL

- 6.10. The Haringey Deal was launched in November 2022. It sets out a series of commitments made by the council about how we will work differently in the future.
- 6.11. This includes pledges to focus on building greater trust between the council and residents, getting the basics right, learning when mistakes are made and putting things right quickly, empowering communities to make change happen for themselves, and finding new ways to share power with residents and communities.
- 6.12. The Deal was launched on the first day of the Wood Green Voices project. As such this work was our first practical example of the new way of working with residents at the heart of the conversation. We learned a great deal from this process and will be applying these insights to our work in other places and on other issues as part of embedding the Haringey Deal in all we do.
- 6.13. **Key lessons:**

There were many important lessons learned during the Wood Green Voices project. Some highlights included:

- Ensuring genuinely inclusive engagement requires real relationship building and this takes time, persistence and the support of trusted community members. It is also resource intensive. Significant officer time across multiple Directorates and external support was required to deliver the engagement. Having a clear idea of what residents would be feeding into the process helped give structure to the programme from an early stage.
- The importance of meeting residents and communities in their own spaces, and not simply expecting them to come to venues arranged by the council, at times that we dictate. Recognising that different communities will require different and tailored approaches.
- Ensuring that resident engagement work across the Council is as joined up as possible so that the council doesn't ask residents to take part in different conversations on the same or related issues, or at the same time. Online engagement attracted very different types of people from the in-person workshops. The council needs to continue to ensure that future engagement is both online and in person.

- Where the Council intends to work differently and share power with residents in new ways, we need to be flexible and learn as we go. Section 10 describes how this learning will be embedded in the structures for ongoing participation in future work.

COUNCIL ACTIONS SINCE WOOD GREEN VOICES

- 6.14. The participants of the Wood Green Voices raised many issues around the current condition of the town centre. For example, that Wood Green wasn't clean enough and didn't always feel safe. Many said the High Road lacked colour and vibrancy. Some said the library should feel more like a library.
- 6.15. Hearing these messages is really important and will directly shape our work as we move forward. Some activity has already been undertaken which begins to address some of these issues. These initial actions include:
- 6.15.1. A 'Week of Action' in December 2022, in which additional police patrols around the High Road and a deep clean of Station Road and the High Road took place. Members of the public could also talk to council officers about their concerns.
- 6.15.2. A new campaign has been launched to encourage visitors to the High Road to dispose of chewing gum in the many bins provided.
- 6.15.3. Public artworks have been delivered on shop shutters on Station Road. A wayfinding artwork to guide people to Blue House Yard is also in development.
- 6.15.4. The council continues to work with the Business Improvement District to find a new home for a Post Office in Wood Green.
- 6.15.5. A community gardening project on the roof of Bury Road car park is being progressed.
- 6.15.6. A public engagement event took place to introduce proposals for new sports facilities on Wood Green Common.
- 6.16. These first steps precede a more comprehensive plan of short-, medium- and long-term actions that will be developed under the heading of each theme in the coming months.

A PEOPLE POWERED WOOD GREEN

- 6.17. One of the messages we heard clearly during Wood Green Voices was that residents and communities wanted to be more involved in shaping the future of Wood Green going forward.
- 6.18. Developing a comprehensive and strategic placemaking programme, centred around community participation, represents a substantially new and different way of working for the Council. As one of the first projects under the Haringey

Deal, it has always been understood that the development of Wood Green Voices would be an iterative process, whereby the Council tests new approaches at each stage, and learns from these as it goes.

- 6.19. As such, developing any approach to ongoing participation with the public for Shaping Wood Green will need to start with an acknowledgement that the Council does not have an off-the-shelf solution to be deployed. However, the council will commit to an approach that puts resident, community and partners' voices at the heart of proposals to improve Wood Green. Including:

6.19.1. In the further development and implementation of the six themes

6.19.2. In the council's work on the five placemaking areas

6.19.3. Via an overarching participatory group (or groups) that will be established to work with the council in the delivery of the Shaping Wood Green vision

6.19.4. An annual Wood Green summit to discuss progress and develop the next steps together.

POLICY CONTEXT

6.20. Shaping Wood Green will inform the council's approach to delivering a number of Placemaking strategic aims, as well as several aims around resident experience, participation and collaboration in the Corporate Delivery Plan.

6.21. Shaping Wood Green will complement the planning policy for Wood Green in the upcoming Local Plan.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes'?

7.1 This proposal will contribute to High-Level Outcome 5: Placemaking in the Placemaking and Economy Theme, by leading to the publication of the 'Wood Green Voices Action Plan' which will allow 'Greater community input into shaping the future of Wood Green'.

7.2 It will also contribute to High Level Outcome 1: Positive Resident Experience, and High-Level Outcome 2: Inclusive Public Participation; High Level Outcome 4: Developing Young Voices in the Resident experience, participation, and collaboration theme by committing the council to further conversations with the public about how Wood Green could be improved.

8. Statutory Officers comments

8.1 Finance

8.1.1 The recommendation in this report do not have any immediate financial implications. Where scheme and projects are developed the financial

implications of them will be assessed and will form part of the decision-making process.

8.2 Strategic Procurement

- 8.2.1 Strategic Procurement note the recommendations of the report and that they are not a procurement related decision currently. Strategic Procurement would require that any future procurement decision required because of the recommendation will be part of a formal decision-making process.

8.3 Head of Legal & Governance

- 8.3.1 The Head of Legal & Governance has been consulted on the content of this report. There are no legal reasons as to why the recommendations cannot be approved.

8.4 Equality

- 8.4.1 The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not

The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

- 8.4.2 This decision will result in the creation of a series of high level themes for action in a final vision document. It also commits to the ongoing participation of residents in developing further projects and schemes for Wood Green. As the decision will not mandate or create any particular projects or schemes to be taken forward, it is considered to have a neutral equalities impact, as there will be no disproportionate or notable impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

8.4.3 However, as and when projects which fall under the broad themes defined in the course of this work come forward for design, they will be subject to detailed equalities analysis, including a full Equalities Impact Assessment where appropriate. Similarly, as detailed proposals for ongoing participation are developed, they will be assessed to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty also.

9. Use of Appendices

Wood Green Voices Engagement Report
Shaping Wood Green Document

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Wood Green Voices Engagement Report
Shaping Wood Green Document