

# Shaping Wood Green:

## The heart of North London

### 1. Introduction

This document sets out a high-level vision for the future of Wood Green over the short, medium and long term, underpinned by a series of six themes for improvement, and five placemaking areas of transformation. It seeks to articulate the sort of Wood Green that the Council is committed to creating, in collaboration with local people and with help from our partners in the years ahead. This will be rooted in what residents, businesses and visitors have recently told us through Wood Green Voices and supported by the Council's own evidence and ambitions.

Many of the challenges we face and the opportunities we want to realise are not unique to Wood Green, but our response will be. It will need to grow out of the unique mix of assets that Wood Green possesses as well as being tailored to and developed with the unique community that lives, works and studies here.

*"When you are in Wood Green, you feel alive... it's a place to go and meet people."  
(Community workshop)*

*"You have every culture you can think of. It's stimulating to meet people from lots of different backgrounds... It's educational. It allows you to be more tolerant of differences."  
(Community workshop)*

### 2. A vision for Wood Green: a summary

The full version of this vision can be read in the draft Local Plan. It has been written to reflect the main messages that we heard through the Wood Green Voices engagement programme:

*"Wood Green will strengthen its position as the economic and cultural heart of North London. It will be a vibrant community hub, providing a wealth of services and experiences for locals and visitors alike. Residents, businesses, and local partners shall be proud of their neighbourhood, having worked together to deliver and maintain shared aspirations.*

*Wood Green's unique attributes will be enhanced. Our town centre will be an enjoyable place to spend time, with more high-quality public spaces to rest and relax, complemented by a compelling mix of a diversified retail and food offer, leisure and culture facilities, and better health and public services. Connections to the Cultural Quarter will be improved, and its creative activities will become easier to access. More will be done to ensure our parks and green spaces meet the needs*

*of our residents and provide respite from the effects of climate change. The council and its partners will work with our diverse communities to create a cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhood, where all feel welcome.”*

### 3. Six themes to inform how we work towards the vision

#### Making Wood Green a welcoming place / A Welcoming Place

Lots of things go into making a place welcoming, and it starts with being clean and safe. So many people across our community work hard to improve how their street, neighbourhood or local park feels, yet we know that too many people feel unsafe or unwelcome as they move around Wood Green – especially young people, and especially after dark. We also know that the litter and waste made by some make it hard for the majority to fully enjoy their surroundings or take pride in where they live.

Our ambition is for a Wood Green where people of all ages can enjoy spending time in their neighbourhood and where the public spaces people see around them are clean and well-maintained. We’ve heard clearly that people want to feel safe from the threat of violence and anti-social behaviour, and safe to walk or cycle along our streets. The result should be a Wood Green that works for all its residents, that promotes more positive connections and cohesion between neighbours, and which lays the foundations for everything else we want to achieve.

*“People value their area when they feel their area values them.” (Community workshop)*

*“Common spaces create relationships.” (Community workshop)*

#### Bringing culture to the heart of Wood Green / Culture at the heart of Wood Green

Our ambition is that Wood Green becomes a place where culture and creativity are woven into the fabric of the place, enriching the lives of our residents and attracting visitors from other boroughs. We have been told by many residents that they want to see more opportunities for venues and events to enjoy music, performance and our diverse heritage, and to celebrate Wood Green’s unique multicultural identity.

We will support the retention and growth of our creative industries through the protection of affordable workspace and will make them a more visible part of Wood Green life by finding ways to bring activity from the Cultural Quarter into the town centre.

Locally rooted cultural events, delivered through partnerships with the area’s creative organisations and community groups, will make Wood Green a major destination to experience culture in North London. Open air performance, alongside markets and street food, will breathe new life into our public spaces during the day and into the evening.

*“I want to see the multicultural nature of Wood Green reflected in the fabric of the place – food events, celebration events... seeing the culture of the place in the street and how it’s used.” (Community workshop)*

*“There is not much to do at weekends. It would be great to have a museum or art gallery to visit in Wood Green.” (Primary School workshop)*

*“The N22 Open Studios event is the only time culture is accessible in Wood Green... if you’re not in the industry you don’t know about it. There’s an opportunity to highlight it locally.” (Creative sector workshop)*

### Putting the green into Wood Green / Greening Wood Green

We have been told that parks and green spaces are important assets for residents, but they want them to be improved – and for Wood Green’s streets to be greener spaces too.

We will focus on greening our streets, seeking opportunities to introduce more trees, biodiversity and sustainable drainage features into the public realm. This will help us to improve air quality, support wildlife, adapt better to the impacts of climate change – such as flooding and overheating – and make Wood Green a more pleasant place to be for residents and visitors.

We will also work to get the most out of our existing parks and green spaces both for people and for the environment. Our ambition is that they are places that *all* residents can enjoy, whether that’s to exercise and play sport, to relax and unwind, to meet friends or to enjoy nature.

*“I like the parks because they are beautiful.” (Primary School workshop)*

*“It’s quite a grey area – if it was more colourful and with more greenery it would be a nicer place to live.” (Youth workshop – HLP)*

### Supporting people to live well / Living Well

Wood Green residents already have many services and facilities in close proximity. Our aim is that their quality, mix and accessibility is uplifted to give more of our residents the support they need for a good life, day-to-day, here on their doorstep.

That means joined-up, easy-to-use and well-managed council services, policing, health services and community facilities. It means buildings and public spaces that are accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities, and ensuring our residents live in comfortable, habitable homes.

Wood Green will be a local hub that caters for more of our residents' needs and interests, building on the delivery of the new NHS Diagnostic Hub and Rising Green youth hub. There is a clear need for further investment in the Council's directly delivered services in Wood Green

and to be ambitious for the services we deliver, whether that's a new library, customer services centre, or potentially a new leisure centre.

*"We need more intergenerational stuff, making this a place that works for young and old people. Facilities can encourage this – physical spaces, projects where older people share skills." (Service providers)*

*"Sports pitches like Sky City Basketball Courts and the ones at Ducketts Common – people travel for those." (Community workshop)*

*"The library could be a hub for exploring cultural diaspora of the area." (Community workshop)*

### Becoming North London's town centre for all / North London's town centre for all

Wood Green has a popular, well-established retail offer. Like other town centres, however, it will need to adapt to changing trends in how people are shopping and using their high streets.

Our ambition is that Wood Green town centre responds to this challenge by building on its strengths - it should be a place that nurtures quality local businesses alongside big retailers, where independent food and drink businesses, extend its appeal in ways that foster a more vibrant and safer town centre that operates into the evening. Wood Green must also grow and diversify its offer with more community, cultural and civic anchors, which will be vital to its survival and revival - and this is already underway. A health hub, a leisure centre, a higher education institution and a cultural anchor building could all be part of making Wood Green a destination to learn, socialise and to enjoy leisure and cultural activities.

We've heard that many residents would like to see more opportunities to inject further colour and character into our public realm, making buildings and public spaces attractive and enjoyable places to spend time - to play, watch performances or just eat a sandwich. It is also important that routes into and around Wood Green make walking and cycling as safe and pleasant as possible, so that more people can be confident moving around the area on foot or by bike.

Fundamentally, we want it to be a town centre that reflects and serves its community in a range of ways, whilst continuing to draw visitors from across North London. It will be a place that gives more people opportunities to earn a living, to socialise, to enjoy leisure and cultural activities as well as to shop, eat and drink.

*"I'm imagining a town centre and routes into it that support those who walk, making it better for them... in the 21st Century we shouldn't have a town centre dominated by traffic." (Community workshop)*

*"Wood Green needs to promote a more 'local ecology' that makes it work for local people – not just for the big retailers." (Community workshop)*

*“There are restaurants, the cinema, but do we promote the culture that is already here? Do we do what other boroughs do with the public realm celebrating the local culture?” (Services workshop)*

#### Growing our economy to benefit everyone / An economy to benefit everyone

Delivering on this vision for Wood Green will demand energy, skills and investment from a range of partners. In many cases the Council’s role will be to drive collaboration, convening, facilitating and connecting with others. That will include different partners at different times, but always requires the involvement of local people.

We will need to make the most of our Council assets to ensure that resources are directed to deliver social value with tangible benefits for local people.

We will strive to bring the right people together at the right time to build momentum, secure investment, develop projects and take practical actions that progress our vision. That could be our statutory partners at local and regional level; our businesses; and our VCS partners – including those small community groups who make such a big contribution to life in Wood Green.

*“I’m imagining a place that’s moving through time – it has a sense of history and that’s visible and celebrated; it’s a place that has developed over time and is still developing, and that I feel part of that... it would be a place that feels more personalised, thought-through, designed for people.” (Community workshop)*

*“There are lots of people working really hard in our communities – residents’ groups, friends’ groups attached to parks and so on – they already care, they’re already mobilised, but mostly around the ground level activity like litter picks. The council needs to involve them in the more strategic work too. There are lots of people in Wood Green with additional skills we could be using.” (Community workshop)*

#### **4. Placemaking Areas**

Shaping Wood Green articulates six main themes to guide improvements, as set out in the themes above. Alongside this, the council has identified strategic opportunities focused around ‘Placemaking Areas’. These have been highlighted as locations that have the greatest potential to deliver social and physical infrastructure that will catalyse a wider transformation of Wood Green.

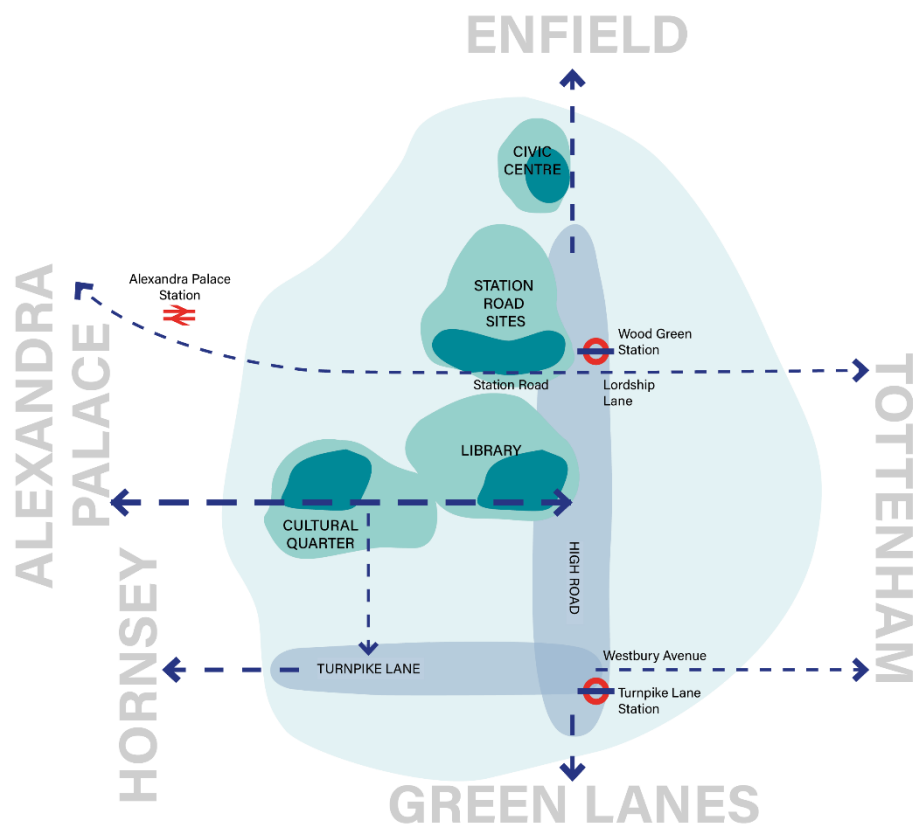


Fig 1. Long term strategic Opportunities

The **Cultural Quarter** contains an ecosystem of creative businesses, some with a global reach, that are often hidden away from public view. There is an opportunity to boost the role the creative businesses play in Wood Green and increase accessibility of culture for the public through activity on council owned sites. Culture will be made more visible by **creating public realm and active frontages that reflect the creativity of what happens behind closed doors**, as well as delivering **employment and studio space to support the existing economy of the area**. Kingfisher Place and Mallard Place offer a major opportunity to catalyse and uplift the profile of the area by **attracting a Cultural Anchor to boost footfall**, as well as giving a platform from which existing creative businesses can gather around and reach out to the public. The formation of an East-West link to connect back to the High Road will help to increase visibility and accessibility to the area.

*“We have 185 artists, a theatre, 38 recording studios. [The Cultural Quarter] is the biggest secret in the area.” (Creative sector workshop)*

The **Library site** sits at a strategically important location in the centre of the high road with the potential to make **a new, critically important, attractive link to the Cultural Quarter**. Its highly visible, central location means it could be the **public services hub of the borough**, thereby supporting town centre revival. The library mall is a potential development site for the council that could be used to augment the public services offer (such as a new Customer Services

Centre, or a leisure centre). There is a key relationship with Capital & Regional's Wood Green Mall, and the council owned sites in the area. The Library site offers an opportunity to **create a new public space, activated through new uses** and serving as the start of the link to Wood Green's Cultural Quarter.

*"I try my best to get people there [the Cultural Quarter] from my community but because of the structure of the High Road, it's not accessible." (Creative sector workshop)*

The **Station Road sites**, along with the adjacent Arriva bus garage and Green Ridings House, offer the greatest potential for Wood Green to be ambitious and attract new economic growth to the area. The site overlooks an important East-West and North-South corridor, and acts as a gateway on the route up to Alexandra Palace. There is the potential for several tall buildings that can **deliver residential and commercial space** to support Wood Green's growth, and house **major new anchor institutions, such as a university**. A **new tree-lined area of public realm** could be delivered, to offer respite from the summer sun and soften the character of the High Road and Station Road.

The **Civic Centre**, along with **George Meehan House**, will act as the **heart of democratic and civic life in Haringey**, and as such should embody a sense of civic pride. It will be a place for **convening, public accountability, ceremony, and celebration**, where residents and visitors should feel welcome. The Civic Centre will house the majority of the council's staff and will extend the footfall and economic activity of the High Road northwards. The greenery of the grounds offers a haven from the hard urban nature of the Town Centre.

The **High Road and Turnpike Lane** will seek to deliver a **network of high-quality public realm improvements** so that the town centres feel more like a place for people to dwell and less like a traffic thoroughfare – a more welcoming place. This will involve **creating new spaces** as well as thinking how our **existing public realm**, such as the Library Forecourt, Lymington Avenue and Spouters Corner, could better serve our residents. We want our shared spaces to be **cleaner and safer**, and **animated through a wider range of activities**, with more trees, places to sit and rest, and watch performance. They will host a variety of events and public artworks, to reflect the many communities of Wood Green, and aim to welcome all generations including our young people. For Turnpike Lane and Ducketts Common this will mean celebrating its cultural heritage, international restaurants and food outlets. The High Road will continue to thrive through an augmented street market offer and encouraging a more diverse evening economy. **Safer and more pleasant links to the wider borough**, including Wood Green's residential areas and Hornsey, will be created to make walking and cycling as convenient and pleasant as possible.

*"Why don't we turn underused spaces into performances spaces like outside the Vue Cinema, or car parks for events or theatre?" (Community workshop)*

*"More community events so people feel better connected to one another, such as markets that bring together different cultures." (Community workshop)*