

I am Michael Hodges. I have lived and taught in Tottenham for 25 years. I am writing to formally object to the Haringey Local Plan. I would like the opportunity to speak at the inspection in public. My representation is below.

Primarily, the plan is unsound because it is not objective. The plan does not apply its own criteria equally to all parts of Haringey. In effect, by selectively applying these criteria, it protects the electorally marginal council wards in the west of the borough, from all major construction. The requirements of the London Plan are hence concentrated here in the east. This resulting concentration makes it easier to justify high density, tall buildings as the only way to meet the targets in the London Plan.

Secondly, an invisible 'consultation' process has further smoothed the path for the plan.

Finally, but for me most significantly, these proposals do not attempt to address the dire housing need of the families currently living in Tottenham (the children of whom I teach). This omission creates the perception that the 'Local Plan' is being misused as a tool for social and ethnic cleansing. To some councillors, Tottenham's problem is its people, rather than its poverty. Instead of meeting the objectives of the London Plan, whilst protecting our community cohesion, it will ferment a sense of injustice. In short, it risks ripping our community to pieces for the third time.

I will now address each of these objections.

Objectivity

Viewpoints

The plan specifies 15 local viewpoints (Map 2.3 and Appendix B) that should be protected and with which developments would not be permitted to interfere.

Thirteen of these viewpoints are within the west of the borough and the remaining two, although in the east, **look out to Alexander Palace in the west!**

Both the historical townscape of Tottenham, and the views across Tottenham Marshes have been completely ignored for designation. Hence viewpoints have been used to protect the west whilst disregarded in Tottenham. This is despite the fact that we have many buildings of architectural and historical interest. This plan fails to consider a single Tottenham townscape worthy of designation – in contrast to two townscapes in the west.

I would like the following views considered for addition to the list of Local Views:

1) The views across Tottenham Marshes, from within the marshes itself.

When I take my class to the marshes and canal, they enjoy a real sense of space – they even ask, “Are we in the countryside?” This sense of openness will be completely destroyed by the proposed tall buildings at Tottenham Hale and Hale Wharf, looming over it. Also, future developments in neighbouring Enfield may affect the view. I believe this is a serious omission from an objective analysis of ‘Local Views’.

2) Tottenham High Road, across Tottenham Green to the old Town Hall and Fire Station.

3) From the War Memorial to Holy Trinity Church.

These views uniquely display Tottenham’s heritage across a rare open space. They can currently be seen, by all people travelling through Tottenham along the High Road.

Proposals have in the past been suggested for a development on ground adjacent to Tottenham Green, which would detract from this currently unprotected townscape.

4) The view on Bruce Grove towards the historic Bruce Castle.

5) The view across Bruce Castle Park, towards the Georgian Houses and public house on Church Road - the remaining part of the original Tottenham village. (A designation as ‘an asset of

community value' prevented the Antwerp Arms actually being replaced by flats.)

The fact that these views were not identified in the plan is evidence that views in Tottenham were not considered objectively on their merits.

6) The view south, down Tottenham High Road, towards the Tower of St Ignatius Church.

For over 100 years, this Tower has been the tallest landmark looking down the High Road, towards Stamford Hill. Built by the architect Benedict Williamson, it was "designed in the spirit of the early Middle Ages," as a signpost for Tottenham. A tall building at Seven Sisters will detract from this 'tower' and its significance.

Proximity to transport hubs.

The plan states:

"The Council considers that currently only two areas, Haringey Heartlands/Wood Green and Tottenham Hale, have sites that may be suitable for some tall buildings, because they are close to major transport interchanges, "

Bounds Green station lies in the west of the borough in the ward represented **by the councilor for planning** Ali Demirci. It is on the Piccadiilly Line – one stop from Wood Green. Thus if tall buildings were appropriate due to proximity to a 'transport interchange', it too should be considered as an area suitable for 'some tall buildings.' This criterion has not been applied to this part of the borough.

Height of Local Buildings

Point 2.29 of the plan states that 'Elsewhere tall buildings are considered inappropriate to Haringey's predominately 2 - 6 storey prevailing heights and character. '

The buildings opposite and surrounding Seven Sisters station are also within this height range yet a council building, Apex House,

has been sold by the council with planning permission for a tall building.

The criterion for considering 'prevailing heights' has been applied to Bounds Green station in the west, yet ignored at Seven Sisters in Tottenham.

No consideration to alternatives to tall buildings.

The plan fails to consider meeting the objectives of the London Plan, through a **borough wide** development of lower rise family homes. The council has an estate a few yards from Bounds Green station – which too could be demolished and rebuilt, as is proposed for estates in Tottenham. Ali Demirci cabinet member for planning, has not proposed this for Bounds Green, his own ward. If this is inappropriate for Bounds Green it is also inappropriate for areas of Tottenham which meet the same criteria.

A Tottenham community group won planning permission for a medium density development at Wards Corner, adjacent to Seven Sisters in Tottenham. The plan fails to mention this alternative. Instead point 2.30 states, 'Tall can contribute to townscape Place making'. The name 'Wards Corner', comes from the former Edwardian department store which still stands on this site. As the name suggests, this is already a **current historical place making landmark**, which has established the 'prevailing heights' criterion.

Other groups have proposed low family developments e.g. over car parks – maintaining the community car parks but also providing housing. The Local Plan has not considered these or similar strategies. The Local Plan has failed to consider alternatives to high - density development in the east of the borough, such as **borough wide medium density family** developments.

Consultation

I do not believe the consultation has been satisfactory.

Publicising the Local Plan

When I asked the parents of children I teach, about their opinions of the Local Plan, they had no knowledge of it. The council circulate the magazine: 'Haringey People' to every household, yet this has not mentioned the consultation and the closing date for comments.

Yesterday, 2/3/16, **two days** before the consultation closes, a local ward councillor sent out an email suggesting residents should send in any comments by Friday. I do not believe this is adequate notification and only those people that are on a councillor's email list would receive it.

Meetings

The public meetings held have all been on weekdays and finished before many are home from work. I would have attended a Saturday meeting if it had been organized or a later evening meeting starting at 7pm. (In any case – I only knew they were taking place from the website, which I was only consulting because I already knew of the Local Plan.)

If a resident did discover that there was a Local Plan for consultation, it has not been easy to find out more.

Website Copies

I have used these to try and discover what is happening – but it has been difficult moving between four separate documents. In particular, the keys on the maps in the versions available on the website (Map 2.2 and 2.3) are not readable even on maximum zoom. Hence it is not possible to see clearly what the colours designate and the planned sites for tall buildings. A red speck may be indicated at Seven Sisters, but is easily missed with out very close attention. This lack of clarity remained the case when I

printed the maps out. Ideally I would have liked to have use of a printed copy.

Printed copies

Apparently the council printed 200 copies of the local plan – 57 of which were for the personal use of councillors. Although a copy was given to each library for reference - the main library in Tottenham, Marcus Garvey, has been closed for refurbishment for the past 6 months. I enquired at 329 High Road, where the website indicated there was a copy, but the assistant was unable to locate it. Eventually my local resident's association obtained a single copy, which I was able to briefly consult, although referring across four documents in a limited time was still confusing.

The need for the protection of social housing.

The plan should specify the target for social housing that it will provide. Currently a separate 'development vehicle' is being proposed in which council estates will be handed over to developers without any guarantee of the continuance of social housing. The proposals should be brought within the Local Plan so that they are open to scrutiny by the inspector.

Tottenham is the centre of the Ghanaian community in the UK. These and other West African children represent the majority of those attending the school in which I teach. The council's own equalities assessment has shown that black people will be adversely affected by the plans as they will not be able to afford properties in the proposed new developments. I asked the leader of the council if she could guarantee that council housing would be protected as part of the 'development vehicle.' She stated that she could not make any guarantees. If the current families cannot be accommodated in new developments, they will not leave Tottenham. Family and community connections will keep them homeless here, either living in sheds or living in cars. The latter is what happened to a child I taught after being burnt out of her home in the riots of 2011 (despite her parents being offered accommodation outside of the borough). Hence people will see

new towers arise on the site of their old homes, which they can neither afford to rent or buy. They will see these occupied by wealthy new residents, who are unaware that the rough sleepers they step over are the former residents they have displaced.

I honestly hope a future enquiry will not identify the Local Plan and its inspection as yet another missed opportunity to have averted the physical destruction of this community.

Michael James Hodges 3/3/16