



CATHERINE WEST MP

Member of Parliament for Hornsey and Wood Green

Wood Green AAP Consultation
Planning Policy, Level 6
River Park House
225 High Road
London N22 8HQ

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Dear Sir/Madam

Wood Green preferred option consultation draft

I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the Wood Green Area Action Plan and welcome the extensive work Haringey Council has undertaken to develop this important document since last year's issues and options paper.

As I noted in my response to last year's consultation, Wood Green is an important area within my constituency, a home to many diverse families on low and medium incomes, an employment centre and a place with a rich cultural history at the heart of the borough of Haringey. Such a large-scale regeneration brings with it exciting opportunities, but it is essential that the area's existing strengths are respected and drawn on and that the diverse communities that have made this area their home feel fully included and involved.

I wanted to set out again what I believe are the key points to any regeneration:

(1) 50 per cent genuinely-affordable housing and affordable homes for rent let at target rent levels

The document (1.13) mentions the concerns raised during the initial consultation about the affordability of new homes that will be created and states that "existing planning policies will be used to ensure that an appropriate proportion of new homes are affordable".

Sadly, Haringey can no longer be considered a borough with affordable rents or house prices for the vast majority of residents. Land values have soared and in areas like Wood Green families that have lived there for generations are being priced out. Your



own report notes that in the study area, only 27.8% of households were owner-occupied, significantly below even the London average. **It is essential that this large-scale regeneration opportunity is used to provide much-needed homes to buy and rent that residents can actually afford to live in.**

I would want to see a clear commitment to a policy of 50% affordable units on all new developments of 10 units or more. Affordable homes for rent should be let at target rent (i.e. current council rent) not Government's 'affordable' definition which is up to 80% of market rate. On publicly owned sites, there should always be over 50% affordable homes, which must be made viable by putting affordable housing ahead of a higher capital receipt. The authority should retain control of the freehold to ensure that service charges remain affordable to tenants.

(2) Defend Wood Green's community and cultural legacy

From the Asian Centre (now the Community Hub) to the Sandbunker Community Centre, the Cypriot Centre to Haringey Chinese Centre, Wood Green has a rich legacy at the heart of civic society in Haringey. It is one of the area's greatest strengths, dating back to a time when there was a generous provision of community space, and it is essential this is not lost. The impact of six years of massive government cuts on Haringey Council has been huge and is ongoing. It is nevertheless vital that recognition is given to the value these community resources bring to the area and to local residents. **I would like to see a firm commitment to community space and for its continued existence to be made viable on publicly owned sites during any regeneration by working closely in partnership with the voluntary and community sector.**

Wood Green also has a rich cultural legacy and reputation that goes beyond Haringey's borders. I welcome the statement in 1.15 that the council seeks to increase the number of jobs within the Cultural Quarter because there is real concern that existing artists are being priced out. The impending loss of Mountview Theatre School is particularly disappointing. I would like to see further detail on how this cultural legacy can be nurtured through the regeneration so the potential of the quarter to offer an affordable and creative place to work and learn is maximized.

(3) Improve the green connection between Alexandra Palace & Park and Wood Green

Your report notes support for "greening the area" and refers to a new "east-west connection linking the town square more directly with the Cultural Quarter and Alexandra Park". I strongly welcome this. Access to parks and open spaces is particularly important in built up urban areas such as Wood Green, where many residents don't have their own gardens. Shoppers can see the magnificent glass dome of Alexandra Palace from the Wood Green Shopping City, but improving the connection between these two areas with a 'green corridor' would bring significant benefit to the area as well as health and wellbeing benefits for residents.



(4) Supporting the town centre

Over recent years, we have sadly seen several large businesses from Marks & Spencer to BHS vacate the area. The Post Office has relocated to WH Smith and most recently HSBC has announced its intention to close its Wood Green branch in May. I have vocally opposed these closures and expressed my concern over the impact on the high street. Your report notes that there has been a 3% fall in the total town centre floor space in Wood Green over the same period as 8 out of the other 12 Metropolitan Town Centres in London have witnessed growth. **This is worrying and I strongly support attempts by the council to encourage a diverse retail and service offer, both to stimulate the local economy and provide employment opportunities.**

(5) Deculverting the Moselle

The AAP makes a number of references to the Moselle River, but makes no firm commitment to deculverting. There is support locally for using the large scale nature of this development opportunity to **actively deculvert the Moselle wherever possible**. Not only would this fulfil statutory obligations, an open watercourse would be a real asset to the area, helping to restore the river and create environments and natural habitats of lasting health and community value. I would be keen to see more ambition in the document in this area.

Finally, whilst the AAP does not make direct reference to Haringey Development Vehicle, my assumption from the section on working in partnership in "delivery and implementation" (page 162) is that there will be a link between the two. I won't repeat here the concerns I have separately raised about the HDV, but am attaching copies of my recent correspondence on the issue together with David Lammy MP.

I trust the above comments can be taken on board and look forward to working with Haringey Council to secure a regeneration that builds on the strengths of Wood Green whilst providing more of the genuinely affordable housing our community so desperately needs.

Yours sincerely

Catherine West MP