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**From:** Martin Ball  
**Sent:** 27 March 2015 16:25  
**To:** LDF; Kelly Stephen; Cllr Demirci Ali  
**Cc:** Simon G; Cllr Rice Reg; Cllr Carroll Vincent; Cllr Reith Lorna  
**Subject:** FDLP official response to planning consultation March 2015

Please acknowledge receipt of this response.

Friends of Down Lane Park official response to consultation on Haringey Council planning documents, including the Tottenham Area Action Plan.

Forwarded by Martin Ball, Chair of the Friends of Down Lane Park.

27th March 2015.

## **1 The Friends of Down Lane Park**

1.1 The Friends of Down Lane Park is an organisation bringing together local residents and park stakeholders to lobby for improvements to the park and to assist Haringey Council's management of the park. The Friends hold public meetings, organise events in the park, and are active in the debate over the future of the park and surrounding areas.

1.2 Down Lane Park is at the heart of the local community, For those people living near it and for those using it, the park is the most precious thing possible. It offers a place of relaxation and a place of recreation. A vital resource in an area of flats where a significant number of residents don't have access to private gardens or can afford the financial cost of participating in exercise.

1.3 The Park is used by a wide variety of people. There are teenage football matches at the weekends, and a football club for youngsters runs two-three times a week. This club runs more in the school holidays. There is regular sports playing, including high use of the popular tennis courts, and an outdoor gym, and there is often volleyball using a net strung between a tree and a lamppost. There are dog walkers, people walkers, and people cycling though. In addition, there is a private nursery and a bowling club.

1.4 The park is protected from development as a Fields-in-Trust Queen Elizabeth II site, and in November 2014 received its first Green Flag Award. In achieving both of these national recognition standards the Friends have worked co-operatively with the parks department of the council. In the past five years this has been a dramatic turn-around in the condition and use of the park.

1.5 Yet much of this might not be happening if the Friends had not resisted Haringey Council 2009 plans to build blocks of flats on the southern section where the playground areas are positioned. A campaign of opposition to the plans involved 600 people in lobbying the council to protect the park, and to secure immediate investment in new playgrounds. The Friends campaign was successful in both respects.

1.6 Subsequently there have been further improvements such as the new tennis courts, new outdoor gym, new fencing, part of which was secured after Friends negotiated with TfL as compensation for a sliver of land being taken for road widening as part of the nearby road changes. This £12,000 fencing is because of the Friends lobby of TfL for compensation for the loss of park land.

1.7 Yet the ambition of the Friends and local people expressed in the park's masterplan still remain undelivered by Haringey Council. The promised MUGA (mulit-use games area), the new cafe with

community facilities, the new half basketball courts, the climbing wall, and the water feature beside the cafe are yet to be built. These are developments local people want the council to be focussed on and welcome them before any new tower blocks are considered.

1.8 The Friends group has supported the improvement programme, both in facilitating resident and user feedback on proposals to improve the park. It has also organised activities in the park, such as an annual summer festival and litter tidy-up sessions involving local people.

1.9 The Friends have established links with Business in the Community and have brokered corporate volunteering days. We are involved again this year in BitC's Give and Gain Day 2015. In 2014 the Friends brought volunteers into the park the day before a visit by the Green Flag Award judges. The volunteering days have helped the parks team to deliver improvements that local people requested but council staff couldn't put resources into doing. This includes the cutting back of over hanging shrubs along the fence on Park View Road and the removal of old hedge along the line of the new fence near the corner with Monument Way.

1.10 The Friends have pressed the council for smaller changes in and around the park that make improvements to the park and users experience. For example, recently the Friends persuaded the council to introduce the new double yellow lines on Ashley Road outside the Burdock Road junction park gate. Previously vehicles would park there and block sight of moving vehicles on Ashley Road, but also prevent safe movement along the narrow pavement. At the moment the pavement is still narrow, but there are no parked vehicles and this has improved safety as well as allowing access to the drop-down kerbs.

1.11 The Friends have also represented the view of residents in day-to-day management of the park. We led on highlighting the presence of an anti-social behaviour gang in the summer of 2013 and lobbying of the police to tackle the successful action they eventually did in combating the problem. The Friends led community complaints against the damage caused by the Mauritian Festival in 2014 and by other commercial hire of the park. The Friends also championed that the park's facilities - such as the tennis courts and any future MUGA - be there for the community and not the Harris School seeking to hire them. In the last case, we had to oppose the intention of the council leadership to do a deal with Harris whereby the community would be restricted in accessing public sports facilities.

1.12 More improvements to the park are happening in Spring 2015. This includes a widening of the path through the open land part of the park, new fencing, hopefully pink painting of the lampposts, the altering of two gateways to improve safety, and new equipment for the children's playground.

1.13 First there are comments on the frankly potty idea of a green road link and the unacceptable damage it will cause to the park and use of the park. Then, then there are comments on the various TH sites proposals where they have a damaging impact on Down Lane Park and on the current green space in the Tottenham Hale ward.

## **2 The green road link idea**

2.1 The first thing to mention is that the Tottenham Area Action Plan section on the green road link doesn't actually refer to it passing through Down Lane Park. The park is the significant bit of green land along the way and it is bizarre that it is not mentioned. That creates the suspicion that the proposals avoid any reference the route going through the park because Haringey Council is seeking to avoid any public discussion of the damaging impact of the route going through the park.

2.1 The green road link will damage Down Lane Park with a thoughtless planned straight link throughway. It pushes through the new fence secured by the Friends through negotiation with Transport for London, at a point where there is play equipment and a natural play area plus some trees. The route will cut through the large grassed mound that is a distinctive feature of the park and a popular play feature for younger children.

2.3 The green road link will result in security problems both for parks users and the managers of the park. At present the southern section of the park is fenced off, with access being through a gate on Park View Road and then through internal fencing to the children's playground. It is this enclosed aspect that means toddlers and young children can roam safely. They can't get out onto the road and the public can't simply wander in unseen. A new route through here ends that safety feature as well as creating management of the park issues.

2.4 The route will also result in the loss of actual park land and effectively isolate the southern edge of the park along Hale Road. The intention in isolating that part of the land might be to come back at a later date with plans to build flats there because of alleged under-use. The route also involves re-positioning or removing altogether the new play and other facilities positioned there in the past few years. The route is bizarre given that there is an existing gateway, recently restored, where people can access the playground area of the park. It is stupid to introduce a new gate a very short distance from a well-established gate, where those entering and leaving the park can be observed by those in the playgrounds.

### **3 Comments on other aspects of the green road link**

3.1 There is no case made for the need for a new green road link from the Tottenham High Road to the Tottenham Hale station. There is already a good route along Monument Way and along Hale Road. This is a route with a wide cycle lane on the pavement along Hale Road, and a set-back path along Monument Way. Both are safe and the Monument Way stretch is picturesque.

3.2 In addition, the proposed green road link takes no account that people from the residential areas close the Tottenham High Road actually pass through Down Lane Park to use Ashley Road to get to the station. That is the desired walking and cycling route of importance from the residential streets through Down Lane Park to the transport station.

3.3 There is no evidenced need for a bridge across Watermead Way elevating green road linkers to the heights of Hale Village. There is no evidence of the public demanding a bridge or a new link. Residents can easily get around Tottenham Hale using the present road and pavements network, and cycle paths. There is no evidence that more people will go between the Tottenham High Road and the Lea Valley because a green link road is built. Or, that people would use the route? What is the basis of the claim that connectivity will be increased?

3.4 The green road link is not about linking Tottenham to the Lea Valley. Rather, it is about claiming that the developers' zone that is Hale Village has connectivity to a number of places for base marketing reasons. So, the future advertising puff for the new flats will have great illustrations of what 'vibrant' retail and entertainment areas you can reach if you choose to leave your flat using the link. The green road link idea has been dismissed in the past by the community as irrelevant to the needs of local people. It is wrong to remove existing successful businesses such as Murphy Ltd on Ashley Road from the area to enable the green road link to pass through. For a designers folly the area will lose jobs and employment land. If the existing businesses on Ashley Road are not immediately going then the green link road is going nowhere for a number of years. The dangers of starting it in stretches is that the project might be dropped and then the community is left with an unfinished and useless green road adding problems to the area.

3.5 The impetus for linking green areas and building bridges would be better applied to improving access points at the northern edge of Down Lane Park for people to get to the Tottenham Marshes and the Lea Valley. In addition, there should be improvement of the walking bridge further north linking the 'avenues area of N17 via a walking bridge over the tube lines and Watermead Way to the Tottenham Marshes. This would further open the Lea Valley to people from that residential area

## **4 The detrimental impact of the various sites around Down Lane Park**

4.1 The park is threatened with being encircled by high tower blocks and new buildings installed as part of the Harris Federation school. If realised the proposals would result in building blocks on the north edge of the park along the recycle centre and council depot. Then there will tall buildings on the Ashley Road sites that will tower over the tennis courts to children's playground area. In addition, the south edge of the park will face on to tower blocks on Hale Road and the Welbourne site. This enclosure of tower blocks will be over-bearing on a community park, as well as the terraced housing on Park View Road. It is a park for people, not a patch of green between tall buildings.

4.2 The housing proposals for the recycle site and the current depot site could result in unsightly and too high tower blocks sitting ugly next to a community park and low-level street terraced housing. Yet the removal of the depot offers an opportunity to improve the access to the Lea Valley and the Tottenham Marshes at the northern end. This end is where a genuine green link could improve access for residents to the beauty of the Lea Valley. Achieving this would be a significant boost to environmental and health capital in the area.

4.3 The proposed tower blocks on the Ashley Road sites (TH2 and TH3) would similarly have a detrimental impact on the park and its positioning in the park. The same is true of the site along Hale Road the current petrol station (TH1), while a ten storey tower block on the Welbourne site next to a park is a mistaken judgement that stands out as starkly as such a building would. The fantasy of twenty storey towers on Watermead Way is an alarming prospect for those who would have to look at them, and a likely nightmare existence for any residents. You don't have to make a lengthy case against tower blocks that are surrounded by other tower blocks, the railway line with tower blocks the other side, and a busy road with tower blocks the other side to begin to recognise what an appalling development that would be.

4.4 A community park should not become a grassed area between tower blocks. Parks are there to replicate being in the countryside and provide an outlet for the human desire to be detach at times from the bustle of the urban world. They are great places because they are not surrounded by a screen of concrete and glass slabs. A bank of tall towers will cast long shadows over the park. It is important to remember that psychologically parks play a vital function in our lives. They provide tranquility and enable us to get away from stressful living because they are secluded or have secluded sections.

4.5 The impact of any increased number of new dwellings will be to increase usage of the park. At present the park is very busy and more local people will mean more demand for the facilities and the outdoor space the park provides for many people. For those in flats, the park will effectively be their garden and healthy outdoor play space.

4.6 To provide recreational options for people in any new flats in the area the case for a bigger park providing more open green space and more play facilities is clear. Therefore it is proposed that if the council acquires land between Hale Road and the existing footprint of the park, and land between Ashley Road and the existing footprint of the park, then that area be used to expand the park. Such an expansion would provide enhanced park opportunities for current local people and any new residents moving into the area.

4.7 The land along Fairbanks Road (site TH8) should be enhanced both as attractive landscaping along the Chesnuts Estate, but also have installed outdoor gym facilities, such an investment will provide accessible in terms of being free and locally based on the estate. It is an investment that will result in healthier and more active lives for the estate's residents.

4.8 Living in Tottenham Hale, in zone 3 of the transport network, and the Lea Valley in close proximity then residents would expect to see the sky above. Yet, the planned forest of tower blocks will substantially ruin the skyline. The area has the advantage of being open and with a rural landscape context. Yet, the plans to create a Manhattan-esque new entity threatens that and represents an architectural abuse of the area. Seeing the sky is important to human life. There are psychological benefits to feeling the warmth of the sun,

as sunshine improves the mind and gives us health benefits. Living and working in the shade of the proposed tower blocks is not healthy or desirable.

## **5 The need for green development in the future of Tottenham Hale.**

5.1 Now some points about the impact of the Tottenham Hale top-down development agenda's proposals on parks in the Tottenham Hale ward, about the need for improvements to green landscape around buildings, and about the need for new play facilities for existing residents.

5.2 The Paddock green space is in an unacceptable poor condition. Yes, some improvements have been started, but it is largely unkempt and there are areas of dumped rubbish. It could do with a significant investment to both safeguard it as a green area and enhance it as a resource for the community to enjoy. This should be a priority of the work for improving the future of the area.

5.3 The existing glass towers of Hale Village have spoilt the skyline of Tottenham Hale. People passing through are frequently critical of the green and orange face of the block along the station and railway line. More tower blocks will increase the likelihood of people passing through the area having a negative view of the area. So far from staying, the proposals will result on people passing through quicker or potentially avoiding the area. This is an important point because of the common stereotyping of Tottenham and the worth of its residents. More ugly tall buildings make the area less attractive and less a place where residents have strong civic pride. An outcome of the council's proposals could be to make Tottenham Hale an area residents are less willing to associate with and a place where people might be put-off from living in.

5.4 This is the Lea Valley. A regional park. An area of beauty. An area of environmental importance. An historical area. The monstrous development plans will damage all of this. If the plans are ever realised then history would surely view it as a mistaken period of urban planning never to be repeated. The council's proposals need to be stopped now so that the area doesn't go in the wrong direction, with the consequences remaining with us the residents for decades.

5.5 The proposed development on Hale Wharf (TH7) is out-of-step with the character of the area. A line of tall tower blocks along the Lea will destroy the skyline, affect bird migration, and have a detrimental impact on the context of and to the area and its relationship with the river. A new Wetlands is being developed at the Walthamstow Reservoirs to encourage people to appreciate and enjoy nature more. In contrast, Haringey Council's contribution to the environment is to plonk a series of tower blocks adjacent to this development to exploit it for the sale of property.

5.6 Hale Village is an existing blot on the landscape. So, any new tower blocks (TH6) over-shadowing the Tottenham Marshes and Lea Valley would made the blot bigger. What a dreadful legacy that the future dominant view in Tottenham Hale will be of a concentrated suite of tall buildings and not the beauty of the open wildness of the marshes and reservoirs.

5.7 The housing on Bream Close and the Ferry Lane estate show how housing can be built without destroying the natural setting of those areas and providing harmonious riverside living. The buildings blend into their surroundings. Animals actually roam the green space around the houses along the waterways. It is difficult to imagine tall tower blocks having the same togetherness of nature and communities.

## **6 General and concluding remarks about the proposals and the detrimental impact on the lives of people living and working in Tottenham Hale**

6.1 The combined building proposals of Haringey Council are monstrous and would not just damage the existing area, but probably fail to create anything other than a vacuous cluster of tall buildings. The council's agenda impacts negatively on the existing population and current community, but the proposals

(TH 4 and TH5) are also not convincing on whether the planned district centre will be a great place for the workers and residents envisaged making up the future population.

6.2 An alternative agenda is very possible. With appropriate scale of buildings, the retention of employment land on Ashley Road in particular, as well as the investment in and enhancement of the green public realm then the area could offer something for current residents. A different approach will also have a better chance of creating functioning and welcomed additions to the Tottenham Hale community. The council's agenda is about cobbling together of public land in a desperate attempt to conform to the stricture of meeting unrealistic housing targets and the profiteering of its Cannes Chums.

6.3 Haringey Council should focus on completion of the promised improvements to Down Lane Park. Then an expansion of the park, joined to a green corridor around the Welbourne site and up the side of Chesnut Estate to the Tottenham High Road, would improve the area and increase green space with all the benefits that brings. There needs to be substantial investment in the green environment of Tottenham Hale. The size of green space and facilities in Down Lane Park need expanding. Plus, there has to be a major programme of improvements works to The Paddock, And, the focus of providing usable routes to the Lea Valley should be on improved access from the north of Down Lane Park to Tottenham Marshes better utilising the existing subways and footbridges.

## **7 The Friends of Down Lane Park involvement in the consultation process**

7.1 This response follows on from the response sent in March 2014 as part of the earlier round of the sites allocation consultation. That response is included below. We are disappointed that the latest round of the consultation shows little indication of responding to the comments made in March 2014.

7.2 Representatives of the Friends group are willing to meet to discuss this response.

## **Appendix A**

March 2014 response to planning documents development

From:

To: [stephen.kelly@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.kelly@haringey.gov.uk); [ldf@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@haringey.gov.uk)

CC: [lorna.reith@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:lorna.reith@haringey.gov.uk); [reg.rice@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:reg.rice@haringey.gov.uk);

Subject: FDLP reply to site allocations proposals

Date: Fri, 7 Mar 2014 23:29:51 +0000

Dear Mr Kelly,

In responding to the consultation about the site allocation plan I am setting out the concerns the Friends of Down Lane Park - a group of residents who are active in improving Down Lane Park in the Tottenham Hale area - has regarding the development proposals for Tottenham Hale as they impact on the park.

We are pleased that the proposals do not seek to erode the size of the park, which is already small, or suggest any land swap significantly altering the boundaries of the park. It is welcomed that the proposals for the area don't repeat the mistake of Haringey Council's previous attempt to build flats on the southern area of the park. Down Lane Park is a protected recreational site as part of the Fields-in-Trust's Queen Elizabeth II Challenge initiative to safeguard green space as part of the London 2012 legacy and in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee. Achieving this status was a major plus that offers a platform for improving the park and community play opportunities. Together with the Get Active Tottenham programme it means we can increase participation in regular exercise amongst local people.

While there isn't any land grab for housing this time, we are concerned that the draft agenda for transforming Tottenham Hale will have a detrimental impact on the current setting of the park. At present we have a park for local people where they can relax and play, as well as socially meet up with others. The imposition of tower blocks similar to those at Hale Village around the park will crowd-in an open green space and also result in a significant increased use of the park that it is easy to imagine will squeeze out local people from their local green space. Further, the protection of our sky view is important, as there is personal enjoyment of seeing the blue sky above and a public health benefit of green space not being surrounded by high-rise buildings. As an outer London area we would expect the sky-line to not be littered with tower blocks. The Hale Village buildings have already changed the landscape view around here for the worst and we don't want to see that extended to near Down Lane Park or the edge of the Tottenham Marshes. Both our view of the expanse of the Lea Valley area and our urban green spaces need protecting from over-bearing developments. We currently have a wonderful open park and it should not be downgraded into a landscaped grassed area between tower blocks. Excessive building on Ashley Road in particular would have an adverse impact on Down Lane Park as an essential amenity for local people and worsen the quality of life for local people.

The proposed sale of the Technopark to become a Harris Federation school is a worrying indication of how Down Lane Park will soon be negatively impacted on by so-called development of the area. The proposal would result in a large school being sited in an inappropriate location with inadequate space for play facilities for pupils. To compensate for a lack of playground space and to make the property more attractive to Harris Federation, the Council wants the sale to involve both park facilities being annexed by the school and public land along Watermead Way being bundled into the deal. This is an abuse of public land and not beneficial for local people. The public land should be maintained as a public right of way, and remain as an access route along Watermead Way and to the Tottenham Marshes. Furthermore, it is essential that we defend the principle of park facilities being available to local residents and not 'sold' as a sweetener in future commercial deals in the area. Down Lane Park's facilities are vital to the health and mental well-being of local people. Especially those living in over-crowded rented accommodation and without access to gardens.

What is disappointing in the development proposals for Tottenham Hale is the lack of ambition for developing Down Lane Park and creating new 'pocket' green spaces. There is page after page proposing high-rise buildings. Little on how the area will be made more pleasant for the existing population, let alone the proposed surge of new people whether living or working in the new buildings. The Council recognises that the park needs significant improvement to provide better green space and play facilities for the current population. A plan for more sports facilities and a cafe with community rooms for life-enhancing activities has been developed after regular discussion with the Friends group and other park users. This is set out in the management plan recently submitted by the Council in applying for Green Flag status for Down Lane Park. Even if a quarter of the proposed new homes were built then it is obvious that the park needs improving more than is presently being aimed for. As part of the Green Flag application the Friends advocated a 20-point agenda of improvement. Key to this is the extension of the park into adjacent sites such as the recycle centre, the depot, and alongside Monument Way. These sites are owned by the Council and it would be relatively straightforward for them to be used to increase the size of Down Lane Park and through creative use of the Monument Way land create a green corridor to the High Road. Turning the depot site into park land would also create the potential for significantly improving the link between Down Lane Park and the Tottenham Marshes, providing a gateway to the Lea Valley and the many outdoor opportunities there. For the Friends and other local groups the expansion of the park with increased facilities for people and improved connections is a desired outcome that would make the area more attractive and contribute to reducing health inequalities.

The Council must give consideration to actually using some of the Tottenham Hale sites for expanding the park as well as creating pocket park areas to provide environmental 'breathing' space within and around any new buildings. There is a need for more park and green space in Tottenham, and a sizeable part of the debate about the future of the area must be about creating greater provision. For this reason, it is disappointing that the proposals include replacing the green space between Monument Way and the Chesnut

Estate with buildings. This is an example of an important space being concreted over and over-densification/intensification being the norm.

I am happy to provide further information and am willing to arrange a meeting with the Friends group to discuss how Down Lane Park can be protected as a community asset and enhanced as the green jewel in the Tottenham Hale community.

All best,  
Martin Ball

Chair, Friends of Down Lane Park.

Note: I have copied in my local councillors Alan, Lorna, and Reg. As well as Simon (FDLP Secretary) and Zena (Chair of the local RA).

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