

To: Haringey Council

Wood Green Area Action Plan, "Preferred Option" Consultation, 14.2.17 – 31.3.17

1. On page 8 of the consultation document it is alleged that "The community and major landowners of Wood Green together with public bodies (who??) are mostly supportive of 'widespread redevelopment' or 'significant transformation' of Wood Green (Options 3 & 4 in the 2016 Issues & Options consultation document)." **NB.** There is, however, no indication **what** 'widespread redevelopment' or **what** 'significant transformation' most people were allegedly in favour of, and **no** evidence is presented.
2. On page 9 of the consultation document it says, "This consultation is on **the Council's** 'preferred option' Wood Green AAP.... This is an open consultation, and comment is welcomed on any part of the document." (emphasis added)
3. This consultation is likely to mislead the public. There is a lot of talk about "improvements" (who could be opposed to that?), better public spaces (who would not want that?), and "landmark buildings" (which sounds good until one sees what the Council has in mind). After the previous consultation of 2016 (which I did not see), it was alleged that most people chose option 4, which has now become the so-called "preferred option". Without knowing **the details** of what is proposed, people have no idea what they are "choosing", but the Council can then allege that the public agreed with the proposals. This is **not** a proper consultation. We need far more concrete information to see any **damage** that these proposals will inflict on the local environment through over-development and detracting from the traditional area and its attractive houses.
4. I went to a "drop-in session" at Wood Green Library in March. When I read the large poster (and was subsequently handed a leaflet to the same effect), where Haringey Council writes, "We believe Haringey is the future of London and our ambition for Wood Green is a key part of our aim to transform the borough...", I concluded that this Council has lost the plot. Haringey is not, and never will be "the future of London." But without due care it may be badly damaged and over-developed into an ugly area of clusters of high density blocks and tall buildings, an area which people, who can afford to do so, move away from. One only needs to look at north-east Tottenham to see the terrible destruction that has taken place there in the name of "regeneration", and the absurd eyesore in the shape of a huge tower block of 100 flats, built by Newlon Housing Trust (I am told), to the west of Tottenham High Road, which looms over our formerly pleasant residential areas more than a mile away and should never have been given planning permission.
5. There seems to be a fundamental misconception about what Wood Green is or should be. This is an **outer**-London, largely residential area, where most people live and travel to work from, and where fewer people work. In addition, there are unemployed and retired people living here. It is not a "destination" (to use the Council's terminology), and it is most certainly not "the future of London", nor does

it need to be. There is a town centre at Wood Green, which serves the wider community. This is **not** a barren brown field site available for new development from scratch. Any new development in the area of Wood Green must be small-scale, take place slowly, allowing the area to grow organically and without making the existing residents' lives a misery or driving them out of the area by disrupting and destroying their quality of life.

6. The consultation document talks ad nauseam about "visions". One person's "vision" differs from another's. We do not need to be consulted on "visions", but on the realities of the Wood Green Area and how Haringey Council is planning to change it in the name of "regeneration". Every single planning application must be consulted on, and all planning applications which do **not** respond sensitively to the surrounding area in terms of style, mass, height, materials to be used, etc. should be **refused**.
7. It appears that Haringey Council wants to build 7,700 new homes in the Wood Green Area. **This area does not need 7,700 new homes**. Most people cannot afford such newly built flats or do not want to live in them, and many are likely to remain empty. More housing should **only** be built **as and when required, and of the type needed**. The Council is putting the cart before the horse. **If** there is strong economic growth in the area, more housing may be built, not the other way round.
8. The consultation document claims, "Wood Green has been identified as being potentially suitable for tall buildings". Identified by whom? **Objection:** Wood Green is most definitely **not** suitable for tall buildings, that would clash with the surrounding traditional Victorian and Edwardian buildings and would **destroy** the looks of the area. Tall buildings in inappropriate places are **eyesores**. This is **not** "the City of London".
9. The proposed massive destruction of large parts of the Wood Green Area and proposed over-development, all in anticipation of a Crossrail 2 station which may or may not come to Wood Green, is reckless and damaging. Haringey should wait and see if Crossrail 2 arrives at Wood Green, and if it does, **some** appropriate development, which is sensitive to the surrounding area, may take place.
10. What will actually happen to Wood Green in the years to come remains to be seen. The Council's record is very poor:
 - (i) I remember the time when the Mall was built: badly designed, over-crowded and rather ugly.
 - (ii) I also remember when the Wood Green Library was supposedly "refurbished". The work went on for ages, causing noise, dust and enormous disruption. And the result? No improvement whatsoever, the dust still lingers on the old computers which were never properly cleaned, the library space and computer area were greatly reduced, and a noisy and wholly inappropriate new "Customer Service Centre" was squeezed into the library

space; whereas the toilets were left untouched and are still as disgusting as before.

- (iii) I also remember when the pavement was “renewed” not long ago in a large area on both sides of Wood Green High Road. The work was done in such an incompetent manner (who was commissioned to do it?) that many of the **same areas** were newly done and then **torn up again** (because they had forgotten something; or changed their minds; or failed to plant a tree....), in some areas this happened **up to four times in a row**. This inefficiency and incompetence is paid for out of council tax payers’ money. If you look at the new paving stones, most of them were covered in muck and chewing gum only weeks after they were put down. Now, only a couple of years (?) later, many are damaged or have shifted, making for an uneven surface. These paving stones seem to have been unsuitable in the first place. Now, the Council seems to want to tear up the area again, so shortly after the previous disturbance, allegedly to “create a new town square”.

11. The Council’s office blocks in Station Road are said to be “approaching the end of their commercial life”. Surely not the ones on the north side and the corner building in the High Road! I remember them being built, not all that long ago. Why could the Victorians construct beautiful buildings that have lasted well over a hundred years and Haringey Council’s only last a couple of decades?
12. **None** of the lovely Victorian and Edwardian houses in good condition are to fall victim to the proposed developments. We cannot afford to lose our heritage due to developers’ greed, to be replaced by unattractive, short-lived modern developments.
13. Any development behind the **Civic Centre** requires the greatest care and must **not** be taller than, and loom over, this locally listed building.
14. I do not object to **some** development at the Clarendon Road Gas Works, but it must be appropriate and consulted on, just like all other potential developments.
15. I **oppose** moving the Wood Green Library to Coburg Road. This library is essential and should be greatly improved and remain in its prominent position in Wood Green, not be tucked away at the back of the area.
16. Finally, I would like to say that the consultation document is beautifully produced and illustrated. Top marks for that! In fact, the area looks rather better (and certainly cleaner) on the lovely photos than in reality!

Ursula Riniker

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