

Hackney Wick: Draft Phase 1 Area Action Plan (Local Development Framework)

Comments for LBH Consultation:

The Hackney Wick Area Action Plan (AAP) is introduced giving details of its inception and how it was constructed. It is noted that a 'Multi disciplinary team' was appointed to produce the Draft AAP and implementation strategy. It is not evident who this team were, why they were chosen and what other options were considered? The following are mentioned as providing 'further assessment': Architectural History Practice (AHP), Buro Happold, PBA. How were these selections made?

Similar AAPs, such as the 'Dagenham and Barking Abbey Green' regeneration have been the subject to international competitions run through the Architects' Journal, or the RIBA Competitions Office. It is disappointing to note that there was no open competition prior to this stage. It seems that Hackney Council have missed an opportunity to get a broader and more innovative range of ideas, that are exciting and will transform the area for the better. It is essential that more consideration is given to the proposed eleven projects in the AAP. It is also important to involve and use the many high quality design and architectural firms and practices that exist within Hackney.

The Historic Environment: listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit and the recently designated Conservation Area.

The section *Character and Heritage* (point 2.5.27) is weak and does not discuss the architectural and/or historical significance of any buildings in the area. There is no detail regarding the recently designated Conservation Area and its potential significance to the AAP. *The Hackney Wick and the Old Ford Area: Characterisation Study and Assessment of Key Buildings* by AHP is good and should be referenced in the AAP, along with the draft Conservation Area Appraisal. Ideally the main points of the AHP report and the Conservation Area Appraisal should be incorporated into the plan, and preferably contained within the document as appendices for ease of reference.

St Mary of Eton Church

We are concerned about the proposed area of change close to Bodley and Garners' Grade II listed St Mary of Eton Church. More detail of proposals would be required to comment in detail.

Gainsborough Primary School

The 1899 Grade II listed Gainsborough Primary School is of good architectural quality but has over past 50 years has become surrounded by poor quality development. This is one of the few good quality buildings in Hackney Wick and requires very sensitive consideration particularly regarding heights of proposed buildings nearby.

The Vision: proposed projects, plans and design

In the section *A Vision for Hackney Wick* (point 3.2) the Character Areas need to be described in much more detail with better maps and drawings, as well as an in depth assessment of existing features and buildings that need to be respected and enhanced with negative areas and/or characteristics that need to be addressed. The description of the Character Areas needs to be

much more rooted in existing place names. 'Hackney Wick North', 'Creative Media City', 'Hackney Wick Hub' are vague and meaningless. If these names are to be used they need to be further described in terms of what streets make up these areas. For instance is White Post Lane in the Hackney Wick Hub?

In the section *Hub Development Options* point 5.2 (Option 1 Minimal Intervention), 5.3 (Option 2 Station Hub) and 5.4 (Option 3 High Street) there needs to be much more detail about proposed ideas, again with street-by-street plans covering character, interim solutions, permeability, frontages, building heights, land uses, landmarks and corners, public spaces, servicing, transport and parking. These options need to be described visually with the inclusion of axonometric drawings to show how each option differs and the impact of each scheme on the existing streetscape. For instance: what will the new pedestrian routes and public spaces look like? What will the bridges look like? How will the existing buildings relate to new build?

The series of bridges if designed together offer a great opportunity to transform the area and could provide very striking entry and exit points for car users and pedestrians. We would like to see more detail about the bridges.

Overall, the Hackney Wick Area Action Plan does not give enough detail of what exists and what is proposed. The eleven projects proposed in the AAP as listed as follows with our comments noted beneath each.

1. Replace existing Eastway Bridge

This could be a wonderful opportunity for a design competition.

2 Deliver new pedestrian bridge at Gainsborough School

Location and design of this will be critical in relation to the listed building.

Could this also involve some screening of the railway line? This would be a wonderful opportunity for a design competition.

3. Deliver pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Wallis Road to the new vehicular network on the eastern side of the Lea Navigation

This important connection would allow easy access between the proposed Hackney Wick hub and the Olympic legacy site and so is a significant opportunity.

4. Deliver public realm improvements improving connectivity between Hackney Wick and west of A12

This is critical to the success of the project. Existing connectivity is comprised by the A12 and the existing connections are poor. In the overall masterplan it would be logical to consider the compulsory purchase and redevelopment of certain sites such as the 'Top of the Morning' public house to enable better connections to be made through to Victoria Park.

5. Create a continuous pedestrian and cycle route along both sides of the Lea Navigation British Waterways.

This will need to be of reasonable width and scale to work well.

6. Create a new pedestrian and cycle green bridge over the A12 to replace the existing bridge at Rothbury Road, linking to Victoria Park

Consideration must be given to the respect the architecture of Cadogan Terrace but it is recognised that this is a key 'green link' and so would need to be of sufficient scale and quality to provide a clearly defined connection between Rothbery Road and Victoria Park.

7. Improve pedestrian and cycle access under A12 at Wick Road and Chapman Road.
The Wick Road link is a significant connection to St Mark's gate of Victoria Park and so this connection would be very important. See Item 4. Regarding the Top of the Morning Public House.

8. Improve pedestrian and cycle route under the A12 from Eastway to Mabley Green
This is also considered of high importance but will require a creative and practical approach.

9. Design and implement new bus stops
This would be a wonderful opportunity for a design competition.

10. Progress land use and planning brief for 'the Hub' including delivery strategy to inform land assembly strategy
The Hackney Society would welcome the opportunity to comment upon this as the process progresses.

11. Undertake station technical feasibility study to determine future station improvements and implications on the delivery of 'the hub'
The Hackney Society supports station improvements and would welcome to discussion on more detailed proposals.

12. Undertake required property and land assembly and acquire key sites or establish joint venture with existing land owners
The Hackney Society would welcome the opportunity to comment upon this as the process progresses.

13. Develop and implement employment strategy for providing new low cost workspace for creative industries
The Hackney Society supports this idea, but would like to see that the spaces created are suitable for light manufacturing.

To summarise the Hackney Society finds the APP inadequate in terms of detail and would like to see an Area Action Plan that contains a deeper quality of analysis that really reflects the grain of the place. We are not necessarily against any of the eleven proposed projects, but would like to see more information.

During the post-war period Hackney Wick has been blighted by bad and low-quality developments. This AAP needs to be much more ambitious, providing a detailed framework that will guide future development in the area. It also needs to express how Hackney Wick will develop in relation to the proposed Olympic site developments. At the moment the Hackney Wick AAP seems not to consider this in much detail.

We consider that it is essential that the development of the proposals outlined be opened to a wide audience to ensure competition, collaboration and the highest quality of design and innovation.