


Non-Executive Report of the: Health and Wellbeing Board New Local Plan	
Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place	Classification: Unrestricted

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Wong, Plan Making Manager Marissa Ryan-Hernandez, Head of Service Strategic Planning Katy Scammell, Associate Director of Public Health
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets adopted its current Local Plan in January 2020. Officers in the Strategic Planning – Plan Making team have begun a review of the Council’s adopted Local Plan. The main purpose of the Local Plan is to inform decision-making on planning applications, respond to community needs and aspirations, as well as to meet the Council’s national and regional obligations as a Local Planning Authority (LPA).

Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) LPAs must review Local Plans at least once every 5 years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.

Officers have initiated the process by undertaking a review of planning policies against national and regional guidance, identifying borough changes, scoping evidence requirements and are now looking to engage with colleagues, services and with the wider borough community.

In determining the extent of changes that will be needed to bring the current plan up-to-date and to ensure the Council’s Local Plan is fit-for-purpose, officers have engaged with various teams across the Council and begun preparing and commissioning evidence base studies.

A programme has been prepared for the project which seeks to adopt a new Local Plan in Autumn of 2025. The adoption of a new Local Plan will provide an up-to-date development plan framework, that will be in conformity with government’s latest policies and will facilitate the delivery of the Mayor’s priorities on housing, employment, environment and public realm, providing positive impacts into local community, improvements in housing, infrastructure and the environment.

Recommendations:

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

1. Consider the presentation on the New Local Plan approach
2. Respond to the Local Plan engagement with any comments on the current content and progress

Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

The Local Plan objectives are consistent with and will respond to and reflect the 6 principles upon which the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is grounded, i.e.,

1. Resources to support health and wellbeing should go to those who most need it
2. Feeling connected and included is a foundation of wellbeing and the importance of this should be built into services and programme
3. Being treated equally, respectfully and without discrimination should be the norm when using services
4. Health and wellbeing information and advice should be clear, simple, and produced with those who will benefit from them
5. People should feel that they have equal power in shaping and designing services and programme that impact on their health and wellbeing
6. We should all be working together to make the best use of the assets we already have that support people's health and wellbeing.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Item is for information and discussion, no decision required

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Item is for information and discussion, no decision required

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 There is a statutory requirement to prepare a new Local Plan to appropriately manage and guide development anticipated over the next fifteen years which maximise the benefits from development across the borough as well as respond to policy changes and priorities at a national and regional level, as well as respond to local needs. Primarily, this need arises from population changes, and how that translates in providing housing to meet specific needs, as well as infrastructure related to such things as schools and health.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY PLACES

- 3.2 The place where our residents grow up, live and work has a significant impact on their health and wellbeing. This was recognised by residents during the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy consultation, with residents commenting on the importance of having safe, social spaces near their home; and

highlighting the impact that housing, green spaces and air quality has on their health and wellbeing.

- 3.3 This local feedback is supported by the academic literature, which highlights the impact of place on people's health, as well as on health equity. Housing, the food environment, neighbourhood design, transport and green infrastructure can all have a positive (or negative) impact on residents' health.
- 3.4 Tower Hamlets could be much healthier as a place: there is limited access to green space, poor air quality, significant overcrowding and a high density of 'junk food' outlets. However, we have seen improvements in some areas: the capital programme has supported the development of a number of new primary care centres to meet future demand; air quality has improved; 12 parks have Green flag awards; work has been commissioned to deliver 16 new play streets/estates; and the number of fast food outlets signing up to Food for Health (to make their food healthier) increases each quarter, with applications for new ones near schools being rejected.

DEVELOPING A NEW LOCAL PLAN

- 3.5 The Local Plan is the borough's key planning document and is a statutory requirement. It sets out policies to guide future growth and investment, as well as secure benefits from new developments.
- 3.6 As part of the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy, we have committed to 'make best use of land and spaces': the Local Plan gives us this opportunity.
- 3.7 The Local Plan covers a fifteen-year period, from 2023 until 2038.
- 3.8 The vision for the Local Plan is derived from existing strategies and plans, such as the Strategic Plan, as well as discussions with the Mayor and Cabinet. Underpinning the vision, are key objectives, which will be linked to a series of principles and implementation actions identified which will be delivered through a series of supporting policies.
- 3.9 Policies are divided into two types.
- Spatial policies. These set out the overarching requirements and land designations covering different themes.
 - Development management policies. These provide further guidance on the spatial policies where it is considered appropriate and relevant.
- 3.10 Site allocations have been identified detailing the land use and infrastructure requirements as well as the design principles and delivery considerations.

DRAFT LOCAL PLAN AND HEALTH PRIORITIES

- 3.11 The important role that planning can play in improving public health has been recognised in both the preparation and contents of the new draft Local Plan.

- 3.12 The Plan Making Team has worked closely with the Public Health Team to identify the key public health areas the Local Plan can influence.
- 3.13 Several evidence base documents have also helped identify key health priorities the Local Plan could help deliver. Some of the key evidence base studies with particular reference to public health include:
- Integrated Impact Assessment (Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation, Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment)
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Spatial Planning and Health
 - Air Quality Action Plan (2022-2027)
 - New Zero Carbon Policy Study
 - Safety in the Public Realm Study
 - Various Topic Papers – Betting Shops, Hot Food Takeaways, Leisure, Overcrowding, Health Facilities, Play Space
- 3.14 It is intended that the above evidence base studies identify relevant health and wellbeing issues and resulting policy recommendations for the Local Plan.
- 3.15 The outcome of these studies is to embed health improvements in the new Local Plan and ensure development brings an improved quality of life, health benefits and reduce health inequalities. This will be implemented through delivering healthy streets and neighbourhoods that promote active and healthy lifestyles and recreation and enhance people's wider health and well-being.
- 3.16 Health and wellbeing is a cross-cutting theme throughout the adopted Local Plan and a new Local Plan will continue to cover the following areas:
- A requirement for all major developments or those in particular areas (e.g. area of sub-standard air quality) or containing particular uses to complete a health impact assessment.
 - A strengthened policy on hot food take-ways.
 - A policy to limit over-concentration of betting shops and payday loan shops.
 - A strengthened policy on the provision and standards of child play space in new developments.
 - An approach to the provision of open space to ensure we maximise provision and enhance connectivity.
 - A strengthened policy on water spaces to optimise public use and enjoyment.
 - A focus on active travel and promoting walking and cycling.
 - A strengthened policy on air quality to reduce the impact on air quality of new developments and to better protect users of new developments from existing poor air quality.

- Site allocations will accommodate health facilities to ensure new provision in areas of growth.

WORK TO DATE

Key work to date has included:

- Lead Member + Mayor Briefings: October-December 2022
- Internal stakeholder and workshop meetings with all services (May 2022 onwards)
- Call for Sites 8 July – 19 August 2022
- Commissioning evidence base (July – December 2022)

PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NEXT STEPS

- 3.17 The first engagement event on the Local Plan is set for January 23 2023 and will run for 6 weeks until 3 February 2023.
- 3.18 An engagement document and digital, interactive ‘StoryMaps’ platform will be published on the council’s website where residents and stakeholders will be able to make comments on the document online, via email or post. The website will also contain details of all the consultation activities.
- 3.19 The six week consultation is the first opportunity for the public and stakeholders to influence the content of a new Local Plan. At this stage, we are seeking initial suggestions, views and considerations on how the plan should be prepared and feedback on initial policy themes as to whether they capture the important aspirations and needs of the community.
- 3.20 The first formal consultation on a new Local Plan will be conducted in Summer 2023 with the second formal consultation stage to take place in Summer 2024.
- 3.21 The timetable for adopting the Local Plan in accordance with statutory requirements is set out in the table below.

Stage	Output	Timeframes
Stage 0: Initiation and Programming	Project Initiation Document (PID) - Finalised and submitted	March 2022
Stage 0: Initiation and Programming	Present to DLT and CLT	April 2022
Stage 0: Initiation and Programming	Internal engagement across organisation (Introductory meetings)	April 2022
Stage 0: Initiation and Programming	Identify evidence base requirements	May 2022
Stage 0: Initiation and Programming	Set-up/initiate internal working groups	June 2022

Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	Report progress to senior management, Lead Member and Mayor	August 2022 - December 2022
Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	Commissioning evidence base	July 2022 - December 2022
Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	Document development - Drafting and developing policy	November 2022 - May 2023
Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	Preparation for December 'First Proposals' Engagement Event	August 2022 - December 2022
Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	'First Proposals' Engagement Event	January 2023 – February 2023
Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	Summarise feedback from engagement + respond to submissions	February 2023
Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	Final document development	January 2023 - May 2023
Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	Approval/reporting submission document by Cabinet to consult	May 2023 - June 2023
Stage 1: Regulation 18 (Preparation of Local Plan and Consultation)	Public consultation on the draft Local Plan	June 2023 - August 2023
Stage 2: Regulation 19 (Publication of Local Plan)	Review, summarise and respond to Regulation 18 submissions	August 2023 - September 2023
Stage 2: Regulation 19 (Publication of Local Plan)	Further document development - drafting and developing final policy/direction + identify need for further evidence	September 2023 - November 2023
Stage 2: Regulation 19 (Publication of Local Plan)	Further internal engagement + key stakeholder engagement	November 2023 - December 2023
Stage 2: Regulation 19 (Publication of Local Plan)	Approval/reporting of submission document to Cabinet	December 2023 - January 2024
Stage 2: Regulation 19 (Publication of Local Plan)	Public consultation on submission document	Summer 2024
Stage 3: Regulation 22 (Submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State)	Modifications to the Local Plan	August 2024 – November 2024
Stage 3: Regulation 22 (Submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State)	Sign-off for submission to the Secretary of State	November 2024 - December 2024
Stage 3: Regulation 22 (Submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State)	Submit document to Secretary of State	January 2025

Stage 4: Regulation 24 (Examination in Public)	Examination in Public (process & hearing)	February 2025 - May 2025
Stage 4: Regulation 24 (Examination in Public)	Final Modifications	June 2025 - July 2025
Stage 5: Regulation 26 (Adoption)	Adoption process	July 2025 - September 2025

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Relevant equality impact assessments will be carried as required as part of the Local Plan Review process. Such assessments are requirements set-out in the Town and Country Planning Regulations.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Local Plan Review Project Initiation Document (PID)

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended) List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

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