



OLD OAK AND PARK ROYAL COMMUNITY CHARRETTE

RECORD OF ACTIVITIES • MARCH 2016



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The Old Oak and Park Royal Community Charrette was organised by JTP in collaboration with London Tenants Federation, Just Space and University College London. For more information please contact Charles Campion, JTP at cc@jtp.co.uk or on Freephone: 0800 012 6730.



Funding for the Community Charrette was kindly provided by the Engineering Exchange at UCL.

Grand Union Alliance

The Grand Union Alliance (GUA) is a network of residents, community groups and small businesses across sections of the three boroughs that will be impacted by the developments and involves groups from neighbouring White City and Kensal Canalside Opportunity Areas. It aims to influence large scale developments through strengthening a diverse range of local voices, to increase community understanding and influence of the plans. It aims to ensure that local residents and business are well informed, fully consulted and engaged in decision-making about development plans.

GUA can be contacted by:
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Project code	01136
Created By	JJ
Checked By	CC
Issue type	FINAL DRAFT
Issued On	29 MARCH 2016

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*"Avoid rigid boundaries to the Opportunity Area –
new development must be seamlessly integrated!"*

Quote from Community Charrette participant

Significant change is planned for the Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area, with proposals to create 24,000 new homes and 55,000 new jobs at Old Oak, and 1500 homes and 10,000 jobs at Park Royal. Following the adoption of the Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area Planning Framework and before the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) published the first draft of its Local Plan in early 2016, was an opportune moment for community stakeholders to come together to think about and discuss how to participate fully in the development of Old Oak Common and Park Royal to create “opportunity for all”.

On Saturday 5 December 2015 around 50 members and contacts of the Grand Union Alliance participated in workshops and hands-on planning sessions at the Old Oak and Park Royal Charrette held at Harlesden Methodist Church.

Key outcomes included:

- the need for effective community and business involvement in developing the proposals and delivering the new developments;
- the desire to place neighbourhood values at the heart of the development of Old Oak and Park Royal
- the importance of protecting existing facilities and land uses and delivering a balance of employment space, housing, green spaces and amenities to serve local needs; and
- the importance of developing walkable neighbourhoods and a sustainable movement network within the Opportunity Area and connecting neighbouring communities.

“In the future this is going to be the UK’s most connected place.”

“There is a lot of history in the area - it’s important not to lose it!”

“I dream of an all-age, all-class community. Somewhere with permanence where everyone is a homeowner or rents from a housing association (no buy to let) - a whole community with the spiritual, makers, facilitators, educators and carers at its heart and lots of bike routes.”

Quotes from Charrette participants

OLD OAK AND PARK ROYAL COMMUNITY CHARRETTE

SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER 2015



View of Old Oak and Park Royal looking West

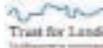
Old Oak and Park Royal Community Charrette

11.00am - 4.00pm
Saturday 5 December 2015
at
Harlesden Methodist Church
25 High Street
Harlesden
London NW10 4NE

You are invited to the Old Oak and Park Royal Community Charrette.

Through workshops and hands-on planning groups we will discuss key issues in relation to the development of Old Oak and Park Royal including how to shape a future strategy for community participation over the next 20 to 30 years to ensure "opportunity for all". A key aim will be to enable the community to better and more positively respond to the forthcoming Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation Local Plan consultations.

Participation is by invitation. If you would like to attend please register with Eva Psychrani, LTF project worker for Grand Union Alliance at grandunionalliance.eva@gmail.com or by telephone 07784 286809.



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OLD OAK AND PARK ROYAL COMMUNITY CHARRETTE

SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER 2015

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

Now that the Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area Planning Framework has been adopted it is an opportune moment for community stakeholders to think about and discuss how to work positively to participate fully in the development of Old Oak Common and Park Royal to create "opportunity for all".

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CHARRETTE?

A Charrette involves community members and stakeholders collaborating with professionals in a workshop setting to co-create plans and strategies for places. Charrettes are being promoted by Civic Voice, the national charity for Civic Societies in England, as a way of involving communities in shaping development processes in their areas.

The Community Charrette will be facilitated by JTP (architects, masterplanners and placemakers) in collaboration with London Tenants Federation, Just Space and University College London.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Participation is by invitation. If you would like to attend please register with Eva Psychrani, LTF project worker for Grand Union Alliance at grandunionalliance.eva@gmail.com or by telephone 07784 286809.



DAY PROGRAMME

VENUE: HARLESDEN METHODIST CHURCH

10.45 Sign in and refreshments with background exhibition

11.15 Welcome and Introduction

11.30 ISSUES AND ACTIONS WORKSHOP

What are the local issues?

What are the community's aspirations?

How do we create "opportunity for all"?

12.45 Lunch

13.00 LUNCHTIME PRESENTATION 1

David Farnsworth, Co-founder, Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network

13.20 LUNCHTIME PRESENTATION 2

Mary Clear, Co-founder, Incredible Edible

13.45 HANDS-ON PLANNING WORKSHOPS

Creating a sustainable community?

Getting about Old Oak and Park Royal?

Connecting neighbourhoods?

Open space and environment?

15.15 Report Back and Refreshment Break

15.45 WORKSHOP - THE WAY FORWARD

16.00 Close of Charrette



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ACTIVITIES

The Charrette was an opportunity for the community to discuss the proposed development and share local knowledge.

Attendees participated in two workshops, where are summarised in the next pages:

- Issues & Opportunities ('Post-It') Workshop
- Hands-On Planning

There were also two lunchtime presentations:

- David Farnsworth, Co-founder, Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network
- Mary Clear, Co-founder, Incredible Edible

Key points from David's talk are included later in this report.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP

In these workshops, participants contributed their suggestions by jotting them down on Post-It notes, which were then gathered in by the JTP facilitators and grouped to identify key themes.

Ideas were discussed as they arose, enabling a full discussion between all participants in a fully inclusive process. The combination of written ideas and professional facilitation allowed the ideas of the less confident to be placed on an equal footing with those of the more experienced.

After the workshops, the community planning team summarised the Post-It notes into Issues and Actions. These summaries are included on the next pages.

HANDS-ON PLANNING

This workshop provided the opportunity for participants to explore the physical implications of the ideas that has already emerged through the Post-It workshops.

Several small groups worked simultaneously with members of the facilitation team around large-scale maps enabling the group to develop their ideas. The results were recorded in a visual form and each group explained their ideas to everyone present in a plenary report back session.

Building on emerging themes from the earlier Issues & Opportunities Workshop, participants broke into the following groups:

- Communities Within the Community
- The Grand and Green Union
- Housing and Community Workshop
- Community Engagement Workshop
- Movement and Transportation
- Creative Community

Each group's work is shown in this report.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP

ISSUES

Catalyst for development?

- What should be a 'catalyst' in addition to HS2 and Crossrail?
- We are not a passive recipient, we are an active client

Human scale/quality of development

- Height – development must be human scale
- Less vehicles, more human dimension – no rich enclave
- How can we ensure the new development has sustainability built into it
- Give development and individual identity
- Future development – quality of architecture
- World class design for HS2/Crossrail station – international competition

Local infrastructure: schools, hospitals, etc

- School places
- Lack of space for necessary rail development
- Impacts on neighbourhood from future rail development
- Plans to decrease hospital capacity in this area – impact of major population increase on these plans

Impact on local businesses

- Existing local business – will they benefit or suffer?
- Loss of local employment
- Development of opportunities for local people to benefit from jobs, training, skills development as a priority rather than those opportunities taken up by users of rapid transport systems
- Making Harlesden shopping worth a visit from NEW Old Oak Common

Community engagement/communications

- How can a community centre communicate complex messages to the local community?
- Building in what's needed to create a local focus – iconic buildings, a visitor destination, serving spiritual needs of the neighbourhood
- There are small and vibrant communities that should be preserved – people who live on the canal, those Portuguese people who use the Hythe Road café etc.
- Invest time making provision to invest in not just the physical developments to ensure that the community and social infrastructure needed, will exist within old Oak Common in the future
- Provision of community infrastructure
- Effect on neighbouring communities? Resources such as doctors and schools

Construction impacts

- Noise pollution
- Worries about living on massive building site – traffic, noise, dust
- Lorries – traffic and air quality during construction
- Impact of 30 years building programme
- Make a new London district, which happens to have a huge station at the edge of it – not a district based around the station

Phasing

- How to phase the development over 20 years so residents don't feel they are living in a permanent building site

Housing density

- Excessive residential density
- Over development – lack of regard for existing communities

Station capacity

- East Acton station capacity

Transport node / interconnectivity

- Poor road links to site, all mainly through WW10
- Dudding Hill line is used for over ground passenger service
- Old Oak Common station proposed is not connecting to other train lines – too far away

Traffic congestion (safety, pollution)

- Local road infrastructure inadequate already
- Traffic on estate, road safety in Old Oak, noise and environmental pollution

Sustainable transport solutions - use of canal?

- Promote the next 200 years of canal transport
- Sufficient access for buses and cyclists
- Use of the canal including development of boarding facilities
- Grand Union Canal is a navigation, not just a decorative backdrop
- We need to make the most of the Grand Union Canal e.g. adjacent green spaces for people to enjoy

Local poverty and decline

- Poverty in Harlesden – in an economy that includes a shrinking state

ISSUES (continued)

Loss of place / heritage assets

- Loss of place – for example, industrial history, heritage buildings, canal history
- Canal – commercial use, leisure use, wildlife walking
- Preserving Victorian buildings in Harlesden, quality stone and red brick

Protection of open space and amenity

- Protection of Wormwood Scrubs
- Wormwood Scrubs – preservation and enhancement
- Density and possible use of scrubs as alternative for amenity
- Scrubs – Impact during and after construction?
- Open space, public use, wildlife
- Enough green space and good quality environment for people and local wildlife – perhaps connecting with Grand Union Canal

How will 'Opportunity Area' fit within the existing situation

- Gentrification
- How much will the community benefit from development or bear all of the costs?
- How will the 'Opportunity Area' fit with what is here already?
- Integration of differing elements: transportation (HS2, Crossrail, local), employment, residential areas, recreation, leisure, park and canal,
- Avoid rigid boundaries to the Opportunity Area – must seamlessly integrate (not just transport issue)
- Integrating existing residential communities with high density and high rise development

Global or local

- London as global city V London as neighbourhoods in which to live?
- London for Londoners – there are signs already of a takeover
- Preservation of existing housing e.g. Wells House Road

Affordable housing?

- Lack of affordable housing
- "Affordable" housing

Coherent masterplan versus opportunistic developments

- Will there be a coherent masterplan or a series of opportunistic developments by developers

Fear of displacement / avoid "them and us" / predictability / gentrification

- How can anyone predict who will live in Old Oak Common and plan for their support or acknowledge that some will be investors and absent or not interested in community.
- Displacement – people, social issues (church, crèche), small businesses
- Making connections between existing and future developments – avoid "them and us" as areas are being created.
- Making Harlesden shopping worth a visit from NEW Old Oak Common

Young people?

- How to involve young people in planning their future environment

Planning issues / local plan implications

- Planning applications will precede the Opportunity Area local plan

Maintain local diversity - arts, industry, skills

- I love my studio on Hythe Road and my business thrives there. I want to stay!
- Huge diversity of designers, artists, makers, potters, furniture makers, glass makers, dress makers, screen printers, scene painters work in the area.
- Lots of people do things in the area – mechanics, dress makers, photographers, furniture makers... West London NEEDS these people.
- ART WEST (artists and makers group) loss of studios - over 100 artist and makers! Studios affected: ACAVA Hythe Road, LIGHT FACTORY Wood Lane, Regents House Hythe Road, Apex House Hythe Road, Cadogan House Hythe Road
- Loss of Industry- Industrial estate are not empty spaces they are vital to the economy
- Create something unique – lido? Skating rink? Arts centre?
- Affordable studios for artists and makers in London continually under threat – short-sited as they can be a very lively element of the community
- The creative community on Hythe Road / Scrubs Lane is great and I fear it being lost

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP

OPPORTUNITIES

Improved local businesses throughout the area

- That the development has improved neighbouring areas in particular Kensal Green High Street
- Harlesden businesses are thriving thanks to the import of 50,000 new residents and workers “just down the road” (which also includes Birmingham and Manchester workers too!)
- Profitable high-tech industry

Create local jobs

- Jobs for local people particularly construction jobs for the younger generation seeking employment

Community of involvement, equality of opportunities, developments

- Ensure for every capitalist business set up, there is an independent business - on a 121 basis.
- Ensure for every property built for open sale, there is a property for young people starting out – on a 121 basis.
- Agree a set of rules for the regeneration. 121 on businesses, 121 on housing
- Look at innovative solutions that meet community needs: respectful care services, high quality care services, promotion of healthy lives- make provision for them.
- High demand for property investment
- “OLD OAK = MANHATTEN, HARLESDEN = OLD AMSTERDAM”

A local community ‘hub’

- Community hub to be developed
- Cultural centre – arts, museum, performance
- Look at new ways for community managed spaces and places
- To safeguard community interest, investment and care for their area
- The opportunity to unite and bring cohesion within troubled areas of community i.e. youth “community hub” or various hubs

Use existing networks, and connect them!

“Hamstead of the west”

Mixed use / diverse area

- Proper mixed use neighbourhood providing for London
- Borrow the best from European capitals rather than more of the same (i.e. Vauxhall & Battersea)
- A vibrant, sustainable community – one for people living and working, including plenty of places to meet and socialise and some semi-natural spaces for people and wildlife to enjoy. Great for health and wellbeing!
- New population can underpin survival and prospering of existing non-clone shops in Harlesden

Lifetime mixed neighbourhoods: “a community to grow old in”

- A joyful community for young and old – a real community – a place to grow old!
- A new community – a trail blazer for the 21st century, all inclusive, thriving, human and beautiful something the whole of the UK would aspire to copy. We can but dream
- Lifetime neighbourhoods
- Social rather than affordable homes
- Learn the lessons from previous Mayoral development areas (Docklands and Olympic park)
- An all age, all class community. Somewhere with permanence where everyone is a homeowner or rents from a housing association (no buy to let or rent) - a whole community with the spiritual, makers, facilitators, educators and carers at its heart and lots of bike routes.
- Opportunity of building mixed community of wide income levels at OOC – including “the poor”
- Surrounding areas: protection for private tenants and social housing – how can London be a good place for ALL its citizens.

Retain local character and heritage

- Preservation of local history
- Strong sense of history informing a strong future
- Fostering links with London's past
- People living in new developments appreciating and using established local shops and services – people in older areas using new facilities in new areas – porous boundaries – mutual respect

OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

Involve young people

- Environment is seen to meet the needs of young people – they see they can have a place in it
- A vibrant hub, full of life enhancing places, art, commerce and diversity of people and activities

Integrate local communities

- Opportunity to integrate isolated communities on edge of Old Oak and Park Royal

Retain and re-use the canal asset

- Build on Camden's success in having construction spoil transported by canal
- Return of canal to transport role

Retain and preserve local open space - Wormwood Scrubs

- Wormwood scrubs not to be changed too much
- More open spaces

S106 / CIL use

- S106 / CIL to be used for community benefit not consumed by local authority
- The section 106 should be defined by the community and not just Opportunity Area / council

Create the “big plan”

- Take these ideas to the Opportunity Area, developers and public service providers
- Stop re-working, repeating consultative processes – get big plan going

Sustainable development

- Create materials rail and canal transfer depots and collect high tariffs from developers who wish to use Lorries instead
- Local people walking to work
- Get rid of the car
- Large cycle network around the area
- Green and sustainable city
- A well connected area by public transport – area within minimum car access

- Set a rule for all new builds to be energy sustaining using solar / wind power, Nano energy

Affordable housing locally run and managed

- Epsom and Ewell is where the RAs run the local council. Maybe set up NW10 in a similar way
- Opportunity for new social rented housing on existing public land at OOC

Transport - connectivity and accessibility

- Stations to be built should be accessible to all as should the trains
- Link HS2 to HS1 via West London line thus connecting “New” Old Oak / Park Royal city directly to South London, Southern England and the continent

LUNCHTIME PRESENTATION: EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

David Farnsworth

Freelance consultant in development and planning

Co-founder, Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network

The question is: how can the community be most effectively involved in decisions on the redevelopment of the Old Oak/Park Royal area?

Some of the answers can be found from hands-on experience: partly in the culture and mind-set of corporate organisations in both the state and the private sectors, including Development Corporations; partly in the limitations as well as the opportunities of the statutory planning system; and partly in the building of a network of community groups across the city of Bristol.

Three questions are addressed here:

- i. What are the main frustrations faced by community groups in dealing with the development system?
- ii. What reasonable expectations should the community sector have for involvement in the system?
- iii. How best might the community sector mobilise itself in order to make involvement effective?

Frustrations

What frustrations do we face as communities wanting more effective involvement?

The development system, including Local Planning Authorities, often thinks of community involvement as a one-off event after most of the plan-making has been done, to be ticked off as quickly as possible in order to complete the process and make a decision. As a community we think of involvement as a learning process and a chance to improve or alter the decision.

An added frustration in the case of Old Oak & Park Royal is that Development Corporations tend to have a prime focus on the delivery of development as quickly as possible, with community involvement as a secondary issue. Such organisations tend to be very nervous of the potential delays that there might be in dealing with a multitude of community groups. They therefore tend to keep behind a defensive wall of jargon, obscure planning methodology and long documents.

Expectations

How should we expect to be treated by the development system?

As communities of residents, businesses and taxpayers we reasonably expect to be recognised as adding value to any project and to have the same consultation status as the other corporate participants in the system: Councils, land owners, companies, developers and government agencies.

We feel that we should have clear, informed choice in any development that has an impact on existing communities. To have informed choice means being involved from the very start; being treated as equal co-producers of the plan; knowing the full range of options available; agreeing with the criteria on which choices are made and agreeing how community views are weighed in the decision, or if not why not.

LUNCHTIME PRESENTATION: EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (CONTINUED)

Mobilise

How do we mobilise to make the development system take more notice?

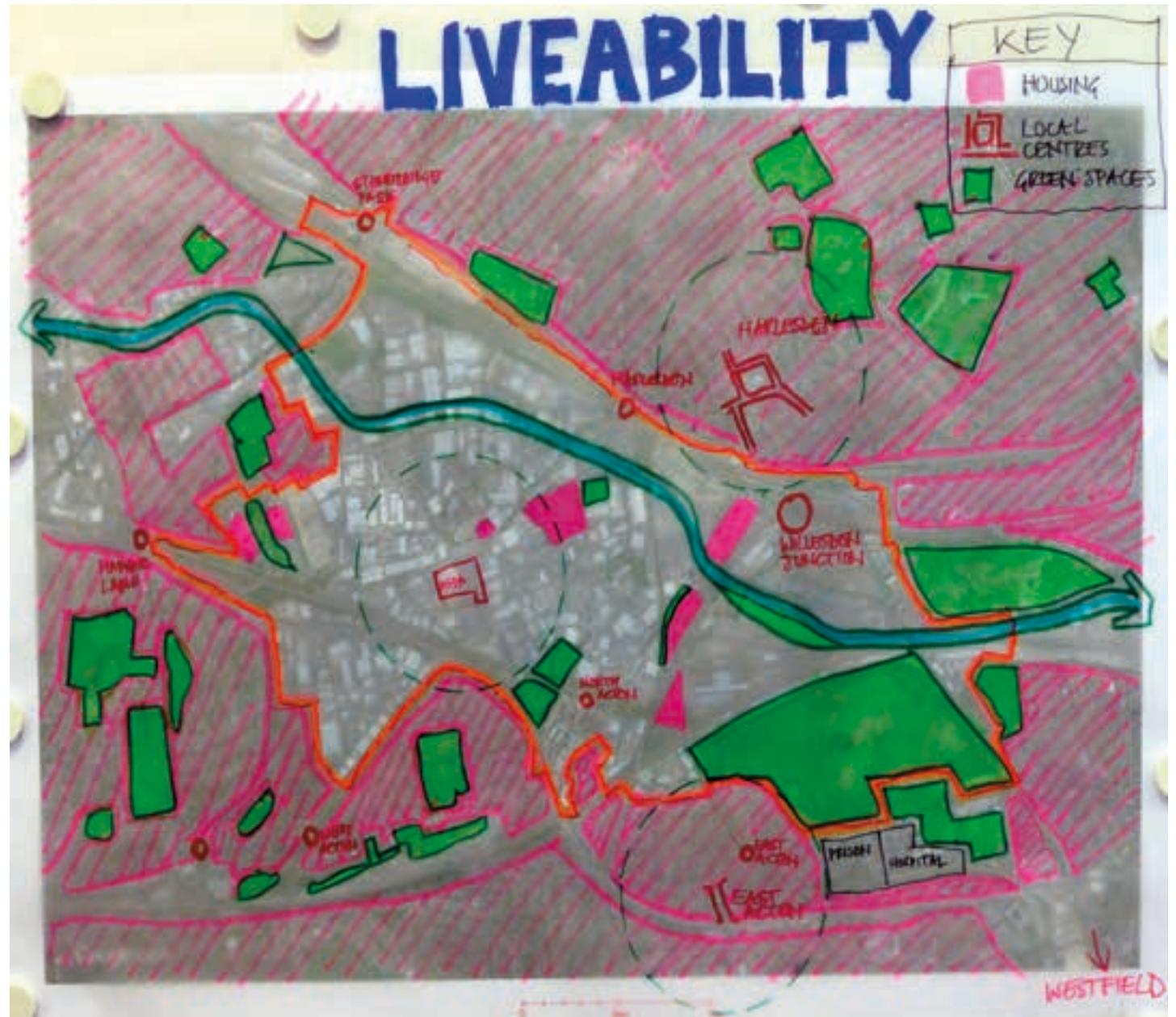
The answer lies to a great extent in our own hands and how far we can show the ability to organise, project manage the process and produce high quality answers to the development issues that are presented.

The skills we need to develop include: creating and maintaining a wide consensus of views on particular issues; setting our own terms on which we wish to be involved in decision making; being clear about where the boundary lies between neighbourhood and local issues and strategic and city issues; being able to come up with alternative plans that will serve local interests better, but are just as feasible as the plans produced by the development system; form alliances with other stakeholders, including private companies, wherever there is a mutual interest; being able to fire-fight more immediate development issues and take hands-on direct community action in small selected projects, at the same time as being involved in more abstract long term plans.

If the community as a whole is to start believing in the value of involvement, members need to see real results on the ground – however small – and not just changes to planning policies.

CONTEXT DRAWING: LIVEABILITY

The context drawings on liveability and infrastructure were created at the event and were used to brief groups before the Hands-On Planning sessions.



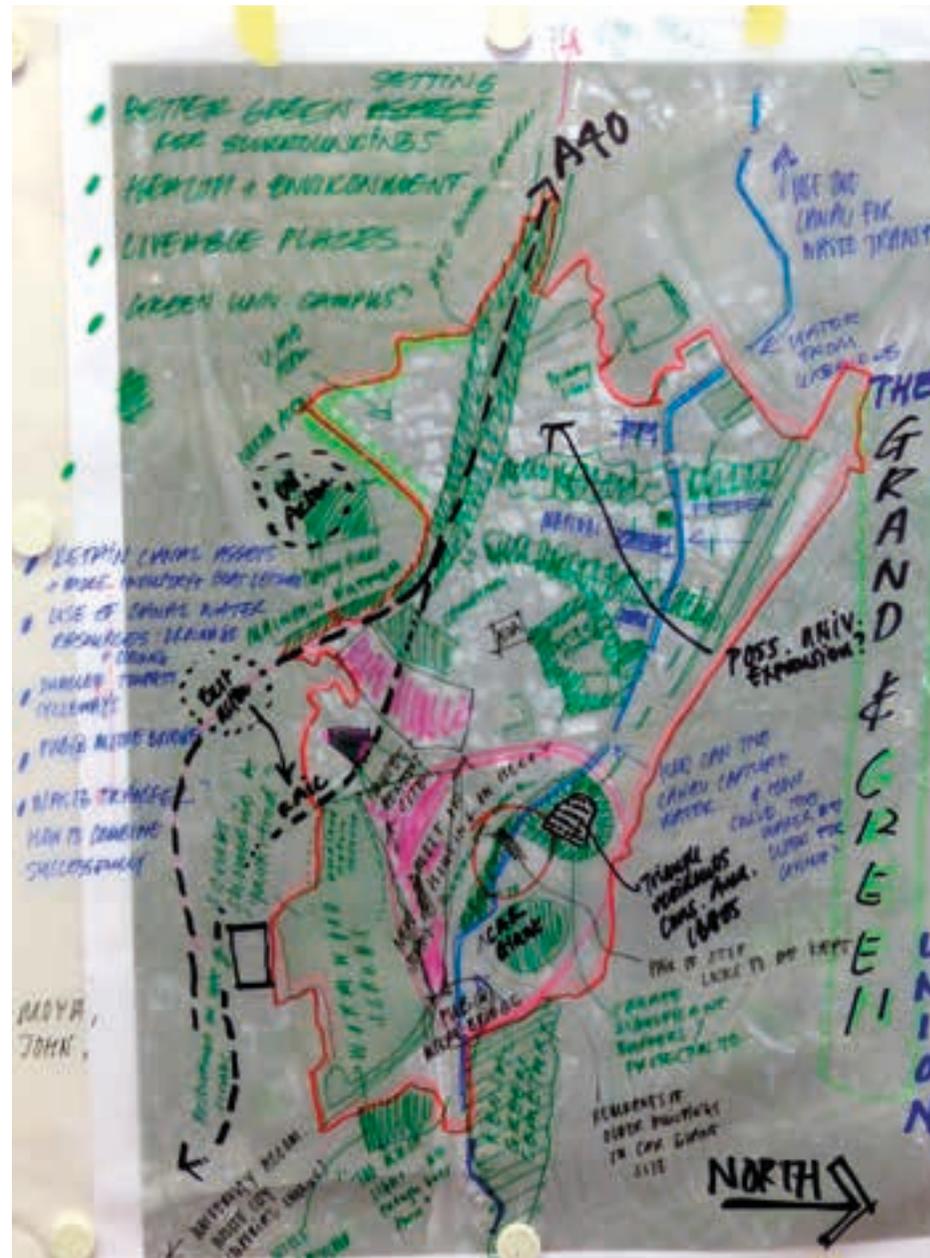


HANDS-ON PLANNING: THE GRAND AND GREEN UNION

This group thought about the open space and natural assets of Old Oak and Park Royal, and how they might be used or protected as the site changes.

Key points included:

- Need to create a better green setting for the surroundings.
- Promote better health and environment.
- Create “liveable” spaces
- Develop a green university campus on the site
- Maintain access to existing and provide new playing fields
- The site design should reference/evoke the canal heritage of the area and retain the canal assets with more localised canal specific industry and boat leisure activities.
- Use of the canal water resources should be made for drainage, transport and potentially for water cooling of the new urban structure.
- Possibly introduce new marina basins throughout the new development?
- The use of dualled towpath/cycleways should be considered in any re-development as there’s often conflicts between users.
- “There should be a new pub at Mitre Bridge”
- Need to carefully consider how a waste transfer arrangement could work using the canal
- Existing pairs of “Stop Locks” must be kept and refurbished
- Use of Wormwood Scrubs should be kept informal..”Too much light, not enough bats there”
- Create significant buffers to the Triangle Conservation Area and the other pockets of retained residential areas.



HANDS-ON PLANNING: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Communities in and around the Opportunity Area boundaries

The group started by identifying the existing communities within and around the edges of the Opportunity Area. Key defined communities on the edges of the area are - Stonebridge, Harlesden, Kensal Green, College Park, (on the northern edge) and West Acton, East Acton, Old Oak Estate and Du Cane Road to Westway (on the southern edge).

The congregation of New Glory International Ministries near College Park is half in Hammersmith and half in Brent. There are some links between the Old Oak Estate and the East Acton community across Old Oak Common Lane. Old Oak Common Lane is the boundary between Hammersmith & Fulham and Ealing. There was some discussion on whether there is cross over between the community on the White City side of Westway (A40) and those living along Du Cane Road or whether the housing association flats on the Du Cane Road were one distinct community.

The three boroughs included within the Opportunity Area (Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham) all have different policies on housing and allocations, and they need to be brought together.

Within the Opportunity Area the small communities of Wells House Road, Midland Terrace, Shaftesbury Gardens and the Island Triangle are relatively close to one another (all in Ealing) and have some relationship with those on Wesley Road Estate.



HANDS-ON PLANNING: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOP (CONTINUED)

Existing housing

Old Oak Estate comprises a mix of social tenant homes managed by Family Mosaic Housing Association, leasehold and buy to let homes. It is a very diverse community. The community had originally been mostly Irish and Scottish but there are also now many new residents. There is some under-occupation amongst the older original residents. There may be limited scope to attract some of the older householders to downsize from 3 bedroom homes, (much needed by overcrowded families), to smaller attractive new homes that will support their independence, if the rent is not higher than they currently pay. However, the group also felt that most would want to stay in their existing homes.

On the northern side of the Opportunity Area, Harlesden particularly, there are many young families. Many of them are living in expensive and insecure private rented accommodation. The area is a magnet for private sector landlords and buy-to-let, with rising rents. There are small pockets of new development, and some Housing associations such as Genesis are developing for outright sale. New homes in Kensal Green and Harlesden are very expensive.

The regeneration of Stonebridge estate has been a success. Its high rise blocks have been demolished and replaced with mid- rise (5-6 stories), which some considered better.

The area around North Acton station has much new high density student housing development.

Both Ealing and Brent have planning targets for 50% affordable housing. Hammersmith & Fulham has a target of 40% (the same as the London Plan). In experience, Brent is often closer to meeting its affordable housing targets than the other boroughs.

Housing requirements

There is a need for special needs / supported housing, as many people are currently cared for by ageing parents who will not be able to continue to provide care.

New housing should be built to lifetime homes standards in lifetime neighbourhoods, with a mix of unit sizes. There is considerable need for affordable family homes, as many are stuck in the private rented sector. The children of existing social housing tenants are leaving the area because of the lack of affordable housing at present.

The group recognised that delivery of affordable housing is in part achieved through cross subsidy from the sale of private market homes, but felt that a fine grain of integration of tenures, with tenure blind design, would help to encourage people living in neighbouring areas to move in.

If possible, there should be restriction of foreign buyers of homes to reduce “investment” housing and enable more local people to buy. Car Giant has a planning application for 9,000 homes. Can anything be done to prevent these being sold off plan in SE Asia?

There is a need to link housing and employment / business and to have some live-work units. It was noted that there will be a new High Street.

Where has the figure of 24,000 homes in Old Oak come from? There needs to be more evidence that this number can actually be accommodated within the space available and to establish an appropriate range of densities. Proposals are for higher densities than those set in the London Plan density matrix.

Other issues

There is a general need for more community infrastructure in and around the Opportunity Area. The Old Oak estate is particularly lacking in facilities (given the number of households there). More is needed for older people in the area. The Old Oak Community Centre has children's activities, but not enough for older people to get them out of their homes.

The tube stations have lots of steps and are challenging for older people.

The group proposed establishing a community hub at an early stage within the Opportunity Area boundaries. This could be a temporary hub similar to the Emerald Centre, which was a temporary portacabin community resource in Hammersmith Broadway. This would support the 4 small communities in Wells House Road, Midland Terrace and Shaftesbury Gardens, the Island Triangle and Wesley Road Estate, which will be at the forefront of long term disturbance and will be most affected by the proposed works.

Harlesden and North Kensington have neighbourhood plans. Could Old Oak also have a neighbourhood plan?

HANDS-ON PLANNING: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Main ideas that came out of the session

There are many disparate groups in and around the development area and no obvious basis for focusing community involvement. More partnership working should be encouraged.

Possible issues on which to focus include:

- Stress which will be created for the road system
- Water run off volume
- Schools
- Health provision
- Arts hub
- Value of neighbourhood planning

Possible solution? Define a Neighbourhood Forum area for the site and involve affected residents and businesses in making a neighbourhood plan.

The group made a start on mapping community groups and organisations in and adjacent to the development area. The mapping work needs to be continued. It would be useful to record what groups are called, the area they cover, their scope of operation and contact details. This will help to clarify what other initiatives may be useful.



HANDS-ON PLANNING: MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

This group looked at movement and transport around the area.

There will be cars or their successors around the area but the discussion focussed on alternative means of getting about.

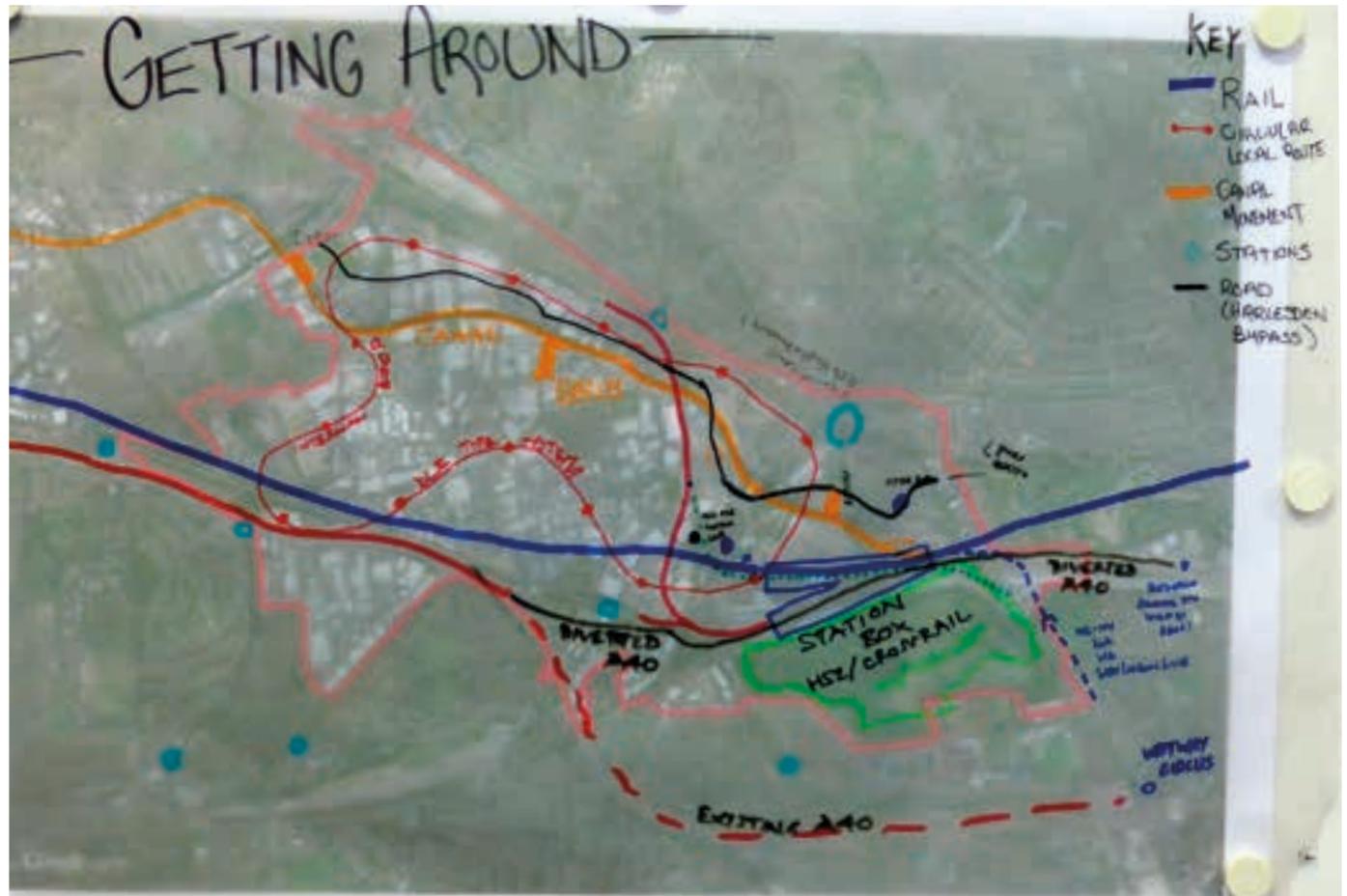
A tension was identified through the discussion between the needs of local movement and interests of local people and the strategic nature of the new proposed transport infrastructure i.e. HS2 and Crossrail.

There was a lot of discussion about through journeys, interchanges and how this will impact on the area.

Walking and cycling are important elements of the future transport plan but walking only works for some trips because area is so big. Cycling can cover the larger distances but is not necessarily what everyone wants.

There was a suggestion of the provision of a loop transit system (something akin to DLR) for local journeys.

Better use should be made of the canal as a freight conduit, possibly introducing additional basins to allow for loading and unloading



HANDS-ON PLANNING: CREATIVE COMMUNITY

This group discussed the breadth of the creative economy and community currently within the area and the key role they should play in providing jobs, training, vitality and community cohesion through the future development and beyond.

It was stressed that there are many people in the area doing and making things that are vital for West London such as mechanics, dress makers, photographers, furniture makers. These people should be thought about and not displaced from the area but integrated into the future plans.

These uses integrate with other cultural and community activities in the area and could be a catalyst for the creation of a community hub in the area - a Cultural Centre for arts and humanities.

This could be the focus for the development of new strategies for community managed spaces and places with the Opportunity Area and help to unite and bring cohesion to troubled areas of the community.

The Cultural Hub could be the focus of the Opportunity Area - not the transport interchange - and this would combine the local industries, heritage and cultures to create the future community organically from the existing assets.



Key Themes

The following key themes are a distillation of the workshops and discussions during the charrette. All quotes are from community participants unless otherwise stated.

Placing neighbourhood values at the heart of the development of Old Oak and Park Royal With the development of Old Oak and Park Royal there is a need to balance the development aspirations with local neighbourhood aspirations. This brings opportunities to integrate isolated communities within the Opportunity Area and those around the edges to deliver a balance of employment space, housing and amenities to serve local needs. There is however concern about future gentrification displacing existing residents and businesses. The aspiration is to maintain a diverse community of all ages, classes and backgrounds with space preserved for small and vibrant communities and creative businesses.

“Making connections between existing and future developments is vital – avoid “them and us” as areas are being created.”

Mixed use, lifetime and walkable neighbourhoods The OPDC should focus on developing human scale, healthy neighbourhoods within and around the Opportunity Area boundary. There are existing centres that can be regenerated and serve existing and new residential areas by planning based on walkable distances. The focus of the development should not be conceptualised around the Old Oak Common station but around community hearts linked by pedestrian and cycling networks and high quality streets and spaces.

“Make a new London district, which happens to have a huge station at the edge of it – not a district based around the station.”

Sustainable movement networks The catalyst for the Opportunity Area is the building of nationally significant rail infrastructure but this hasn't been designed to meet local transport needs. The current road network is often congested and there is concern about how this will cope with years of construction traffic. Suggestions included making use of rail and the canal for transportation of construction materials and developing the canal for freight into the future. Participants recognised the importance of investing early in developing a sustainable movement network, including bus, cycling and walking, within the Opportunity Area and linking to existing neighbouring communities to get people out of their cars and onto more active modes.

“My dream is of local people walking and cycling to work!”

Local culture and heritage The area has a proud local heritage, including the industrial legacy, and the existing cultural economy and diverse residential and business communities. This heritage should be understood, respected and celebrated as an asset and starting point for the new development.

“The strong sense of history will inform a strong future.”

KEY THEMES

Landscape and environment The area is largely industrial and has a range of assets, including Wormwood Scrubs, the Grand Union Canal and existing green and play spaces that can be preserved, enhanced and incorporated into the development proposals. Wormwood Scrubs, with its unique character and ecosystem, should not stand as the amenity space for the Opportunity Area, rather the new development should include new good quality green and open space at various scales to serve the existing and new communities. There is concern about the potential loss of existing green and play spaces, during the construction phases.

“We should develop little pockets of green space where things may happen or things may not happen!”

High quality community infrastructure There are areas of deprivation and need within existing communities and existing community services and support should be protected and new services planned through the development process to bring benefits to existing residents. New schools, medical and community facilities should be developed in line with the expanding population of the area and should serve new and existing communities.

“How much will the community benefit from development or bear all of the costs?”

Create a “community hub” Participants identified the opportunity to develop a Cultural Centre for arts and humanities and the creation of new strategies for community managed spaces and places, including focusing on the needs of young people. This will create a positive focus, help to unite, bring cohesion and help to integrate existing and new residents.

“Create a vibrant hub, full of life enhancing places, art, commerce and diversity of people and activities!”

Housing Whilst the development represents a huge opportunity to deliver much needed housing there is concern that the housing is being proposed at “excessive residential density” and scepticism that the numbers being promoted will actually be able to fit on the available land. Existing housing areas should be respected, preserved and integrated. There is a need for affordable housing for sale and rental with many in favour of affordable rented housing being provided by the council or housing associations. There are opportunities to build new social housing on publicly owned land and participants were keen to explore ways to deter foreign and buy-to-let investment.

“We need to deal with the problem of foreign buyers – it takes housing out of the hands of Londoners!”

Sustainable development Development should have the highest aspirations in relation to sustainability with a set of rules agreed regarding energy, water, materials, waste management and transport. Ideas included establishing rail and canal transfer depots for the movement of materials with tariffs charged to developers choosing to use lorries.

“Create a green and sustainable city.”

Construction impact There is concern about the impacts of construction and the length of the construction period. Some residential communities will be particularly affected by their proximity to major construction projects. How will air pollution and noise be monitored and mitigated and how will large vehicle movements be managed through an already congested area?

The community must be part of the process and construction phasing should be managed so that particular areas don't become permanent building sites. Considerate contractor schemes should be implemented including good communication with the community to help minimise inconvenience.

“I'm worried about living on massive building site – 30 years of traffic, noise and dust!”

Local economy There is a danger that too much focus will be put on new development within the Opportunity Area at the expense of existing businesses within and outside the boundary. The development should be planned to bring major economic and regenerative benefits to the area providing local job and training opportunities within a diverse local economy. Existing businesses should be supported and emphasis given to providing opportunities to local young people.

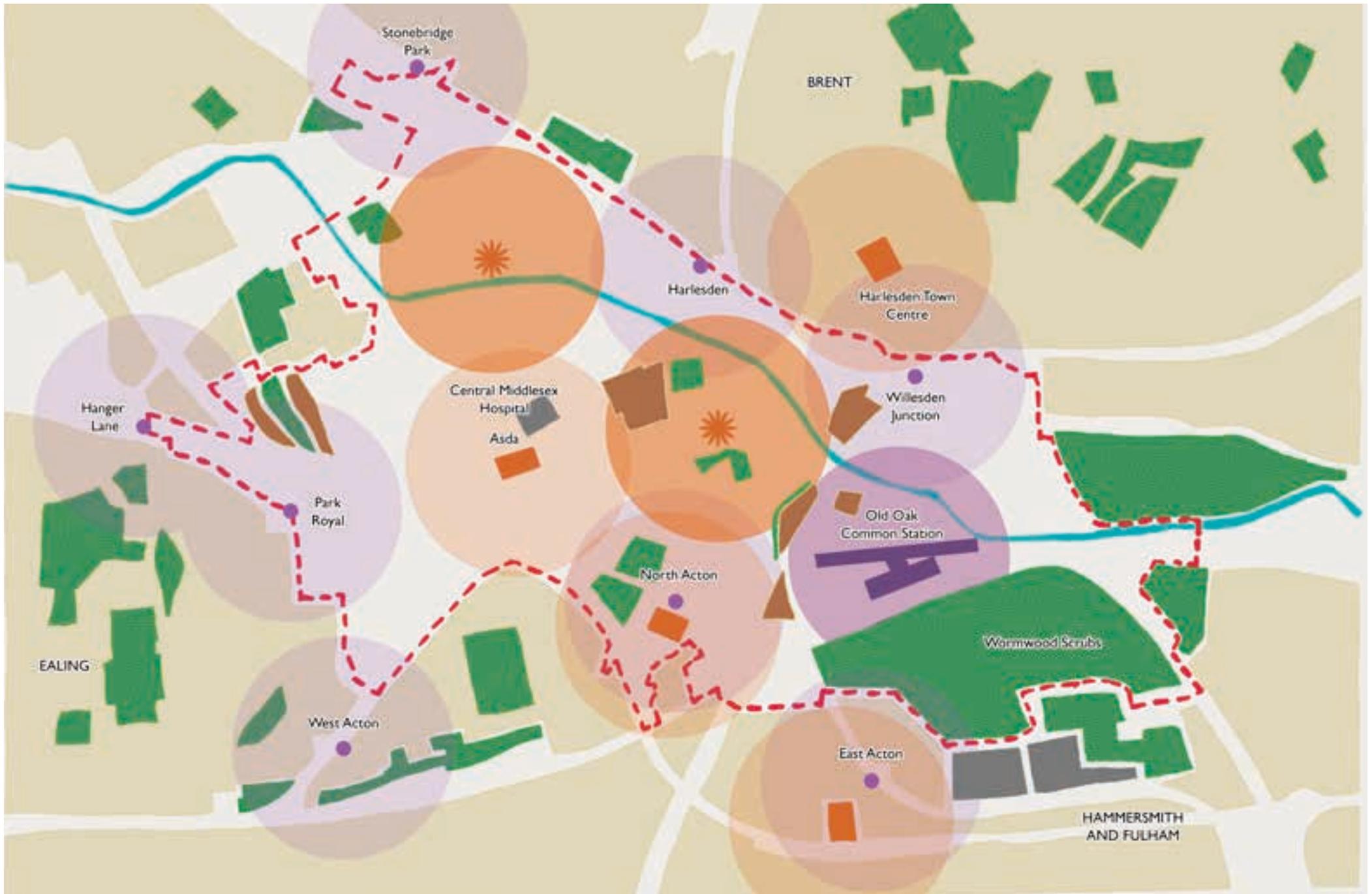
“Lots of people do things in the area – mechanics, dress makers, photographers, furniture makers... West London NEEDS these people.”

Harlesden Harlesden is an area of deprivation but with a vibrant shopping centre and a fine Victorian built heritage. It should remain as a shopping destination with a wide-ranging offer to serve existing residents whilst being marketed to new residents. But, there is concern about displacement of people, social amenities (church, crèche) and small businesses as rents go up and the area is regenerated. Support should be available for the existing community including investment in social infrastructure.

*“Make Harlesden shopping worth a visit from NEW
Old Oak Common!”*

Effective community involvement The local community will play a key role in helping to shape and deliver the new development and regeneration of the existing area. Lessons should be shared from other large-scale development areas and effective structures developed so that the community shares real power to ensure its valuable input influences what happens on the ground in the short, medium and long term. A rule book for regeneration should be drafted and ideas considered including, participatory budgeting (such as deciding how Section 106 and CIL moneys are spent) and communities being given the power to submit their own Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) with developers' planning submissions. Future governance of the area should be considered now with ideas emerging such as establishing a Neighbourhood Forum or a Parish Council for the development area and creating a neighbourhood plan.

*“We are not a passive recipient, we are an
active client!”*



POST CHARRETTE SUMMARY – WALKABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Key

-  Site boundary
-  Existing residential communities (outside site boundary)
-  Existing residential communities (within site boundary)
-  Existing green open space
-  Canal
-  Existing station
-  Proposed station (Crossrail/HS2 interchange)
-  Walkable distance from station (500m radius)
-  Existing local or neighbourhood centre
-  Notional location for local or neighbourhood centre
-  Walkable distance from local or neighbourhood centre (500m radius)
-  Existing institutions (hospitals, prison)

“When I get to the supermarket, the car park is usually full!”

A familiar story, which reinforces the idea that shopping is something people expect to do by car. If you live in a place designed for you to walk to and from the shops, this problem need not affect you.

On foot, you cannot carry as much in one visit, but when the shops you depend on are nearby it's easy to go more often, and simply buy as much as you wish to carry. This can be combined with other regular trips, such as dropping off and picking up children; the crèche or primary school should be located close to shops and other services such as the doctor, dentist, hairdresser.

The proximity of these functions, to one another and to where people live, is the essence of the Walkable Neighbourhood, making it the fundamental building block for sustainable, future-orientated Placemaking. Its importance lies in the comprehensive range of direct and indirect benefits it generates, all of them contributing to a good, long term quality of life for everyone.

A typical residential neighbourhood, about 1km diameter around a mixed use centre, enables residents to walk to the facilities they need, and avoid driving. What are the benefits of this?

a) Fewer car journeys:

- Less congestion, reduced carbon footprint, better air quality, less space needed for private cars, whether in motion or parked, more regular and efficient public transport, safer cycling, fewer serious accidents, improved experience for people with reduced mobility

b) A compact mixed use environment with more people on foot:

- Lively streets and squares, meeting greeting eating as well as shopping, daily exercise, safer streets, attractive public realm, integrated green spaces

c) Better quality of life and reduced pressure on NHS through:

- Better physical health due to active lifestyles for young and old, and benefits of improved air quality
- Better mental health due to social interaction, cohesive and supportive communities, access to green space

d) Helping to protect the natural environment:

- Less pollution, more green space and biodiversity
- Lower emissions, reduced pressure for fossil fuel extraction
- Controlling climate change and extreme weather events

POST CHARRETTE SUMMARY – WALKABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The study area can accommodate several Walkable Neighbourhoods, some of them reinforcing existing local centres such as Harlesden and North Acton and all benefitting from positive connections to the proposed new railway station complexes.

The **design challenge** is to reconcile the need to establish cohesive, sustainable, local communities with the demands of a major new transport interchange.

The **social challenge** is for individuals to recognise, collectively, the many ways that the quality of their lives can be improved by living in Walkable Neighbourhoods, and for this to give rise to concerted, coordinated demand for the creation of a functional, healthy, sustainable environment. This recognition must be matched by that of the 'top down' decision makers when designing major new infrastructure projects, in genuinely respecting the needs, rights and aspirations of existing local communities.

For legal and planning reasons the Opportunity Area has a distinct boundary but, the development should neither focus just on what's within the boundary nor be conceptualised around Old Oak Common station. Rather it should focus on the creation of walkable, healthy, mixed use neighbourhoods, centred on community hearts/hubs with e.g. shops, local services, primary school, crèche, employment, etc. linked by pedestrian, cycling and public transport networks and high quality streets and spaces. Some of these community hearts/centres are existing regenerated places, such as Harlesden (outside the boundary) and North Acton, and some will be newly created, stimulated in the early stages by interim uses such as pop-up economic activity and community spaces and activities.

