

Issues and Options Paper for Kensal Gasworks

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
**KENSINGTON
 AND CHELSEA**

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Introduction

This document is the first stage in developing a brief for the Kensal Gasworks site that will recommend what kind of place it will become in the future. This may be in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) or as a Local Plan (DPD). The Council does not own the site, but it will be up to the Council to decide whether to grant or refuse planning applications that are made by the landowners. The Council will make that decision based on the policies in our Core Strategy and in the London Plan, as well as the content of this brief, when it is finalised. The advantage of producing this brief now is that we can take a view, in advance of any individual planning applications, how the site should be developed overall.

At this stage no planning applications have been received, no decisions have been made and the three options suggested at the end of the paper are for illustrative purposes only.

This is your opportunity to say what you think: we want to hear YOUR views.

Planning policy

The Council's Core Strategy (2010) [Chapter 5](#) sets out a vision for the Kensal area [Chapter 20](#) allocates Kensal Gasworks as a strategic development site. The Core Strategy vision for Kensal was developed in consultation with local people. It states in 2028:

'The gasworks sites will have realised their potential and developed into a thriving and valued community in North Kensington. Along with residential development there will be job creation and regeneration benefits which will be enhanced by a Crossrail station. Kensal will connect North Kensington with central London and beyond. Well connected, high density, mixed use and environmentally responsive developments will have populated the sites. Better use will have been made of the canal and its towpath and over 2,500 dwellings, with offices and a range of community facilities will have been delivered. The area will also have been knitted into the surrounding urban fabric and the development, taken as a whole, will have provided a successful precedent for the remainder of the Borough. Development in the employment zone will support its function as a vital and valued asset for small and medium industries and the cultural and creative sector in particular.'

The current situation

- Land Ownership



- The Council has been campaigning for a Crossrail station on the Kensal Gasworks site. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, set three tests for a Crossrail station:
 1. there should be no additional cost to Crossrail;
 2. that the station must not reduce the reliability of rail services through the area; and
 3. that it must not delay the Crossrail programme.

We think that these tests have been met but the final decision rests with the Secretary of State for Transport and the Mayor of London. If you would like to know more about the campaign for a Crossrail Station please see the Council's website.

- The [Regeneration case for Kensal Crossrail](#) shows that a Crossrail station at North Kensington for Portobello would provide a bigger reduction in journey times for local people than nearly all of the proposed Crossrail stations (reducing times from the West End and the City by more than 20 minutes), serve the fifth most deprived community on the Crossrail route, and could bring £690m in economic benefits and create 2,000 new jobs, see [Economic Impact Study](#).
- The London High Speed Two (HS2) rail route has been announced with a station at Old Oak Common. This will create a new fast link from London to Birmingham, scheduled to open in 2026.
- Ballymore and Sainsbury's, who own most of the land north of the railway, have agreed to develop it as a joint venture and will be ready to start work on site in 2018 when Crossrail services start, ideal timing if there were to be a station. They could start sooner but Crossrail need to use a large part of the site for track works until then.
- National Grid plan to decommission their Gasholders by 2016/2017.
- Land at the eastern end of North Pole Depot (to the south of the railway) is no longer required for railway use and can be released for development. It is owned by the Department for Transport.
- The Greater London Authority (GLA) has designated Kensal as an Opportunity Area in the revised London Plan and we are working with London Borough of Brent, London Borough of Ealing, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and the GLA to produce an overall plan that links the Kensal Canalside Opportunity Area with the Park Royal Opportunity Area.

Opportunities and Constraints

Kensal Gasworks is one of the few remaining undeveloped sites in central London. It is huge - bigger than sites that have been redeveloped recently in Paddington and King's Cross, but it is an isolated cul-de-sac because the canal and the railway line prevent access from the north, south and west.

There are opportunities for this site to establish a new community and provide benefits for the wider area:

- A Crossrail station would allow more intensive development of the site and:
 - Reduce journey times to central London by more than 20 minutes and to Docklands by more than 30 minutes (a trip to the West End would take 10 minutes, as opposed to 32 minutes at present, and travelling to Canary Wharf would take 18 minutes rather than 48 minutes). This will make it much easier for local people to work or study in other parts of the capital.
 - Make it easier for visitors to get to the northern part of Portobello Road and Golborne, increasing passing trade for shops, stalls and other businesses.
 - Make the area more attractive to businesses, particularly the type of creative businesses that have already chosen to locate here.
 - In the longer term it will also allow the area to have easy access to the HS2 interchange at Old Oak Common.
- New homes - depending on the type of development that happens the site could provide up to 3,500 new homes.
- Jobs - the site has the potential to deliver up to 2,000 new jobs (including 600 for construction).
- Community facilities - the development could provide new facilities such as GP surgeries, nurseries and even a new neighbourhood shopping centre. Sainsbury's could relocate on the site, with a replacement, state of the art store to serve existing customers and new residents.
- Reducing the current isolation of the site:
 - Exploring the potential for a new bridge over the railway lines to improve access from the south and make it easier for new residents to get to local facilities like St Charles Hospital.
 - Opening up new footbridge across the canal and improving the footpath through Kensal Cemetery (daytime only).
- Culture - the site could be developed as a new cultural quarter to reflect and build on the area's rich and varied arts heritage.
- Public space
 - Making the most of the canalside by opening up access and possibly re-excavating the canal basin that was on the site.
 - Creating new public spaces and providing opportunities to incorporate public art into the development.

- Environment
 - Creating an environmentally responsible development which generates its own energy through, for example, a combined heat and power source.
 - Part of the site is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) so, where possible, we will create areas of natural habitat to encourage biodiversity.

There are also some constraints that will restrict the type of development that will happen:

- Access
 - There is currently only one road route into the site, which would limit the amount of additional traffic that can come onto the site.
 - Provision must be made for buses to serve the site on both sides of the railway line.
- Land ownership
 - The Sainsbury's supermarket provides an important service for local people and will be retained, although, it may need to be relocated within the site to allow the rest of the site to be developed.
 - Land to the west of the gasholders will be retained by National Grid for their infrastructure requirements.
- Contamination
 - As the site was a former gasworks, there will be some contaminated land. This must be fully remediated to ensure that it is safe for people to live, work and play in the area and will affect the overall cost of the development.
- Existing buildings
 - Kensal House is a listed building and will not be demolished.
 - No decision has been made about Canalside House and other buildings on the canalside. They may be retained, but if demolition is necessary for the overall success of the development, replacement accommodation will be provided on the site in line with the Borough's decant procedure.
 - No change is planned for the water tower.
- The memorial to the Ladbroke Grove rail crash will be retained. If it needs to be moved we will consult with the survivors and relatives of the deceased to ensure a fitting memorial remains on the site.

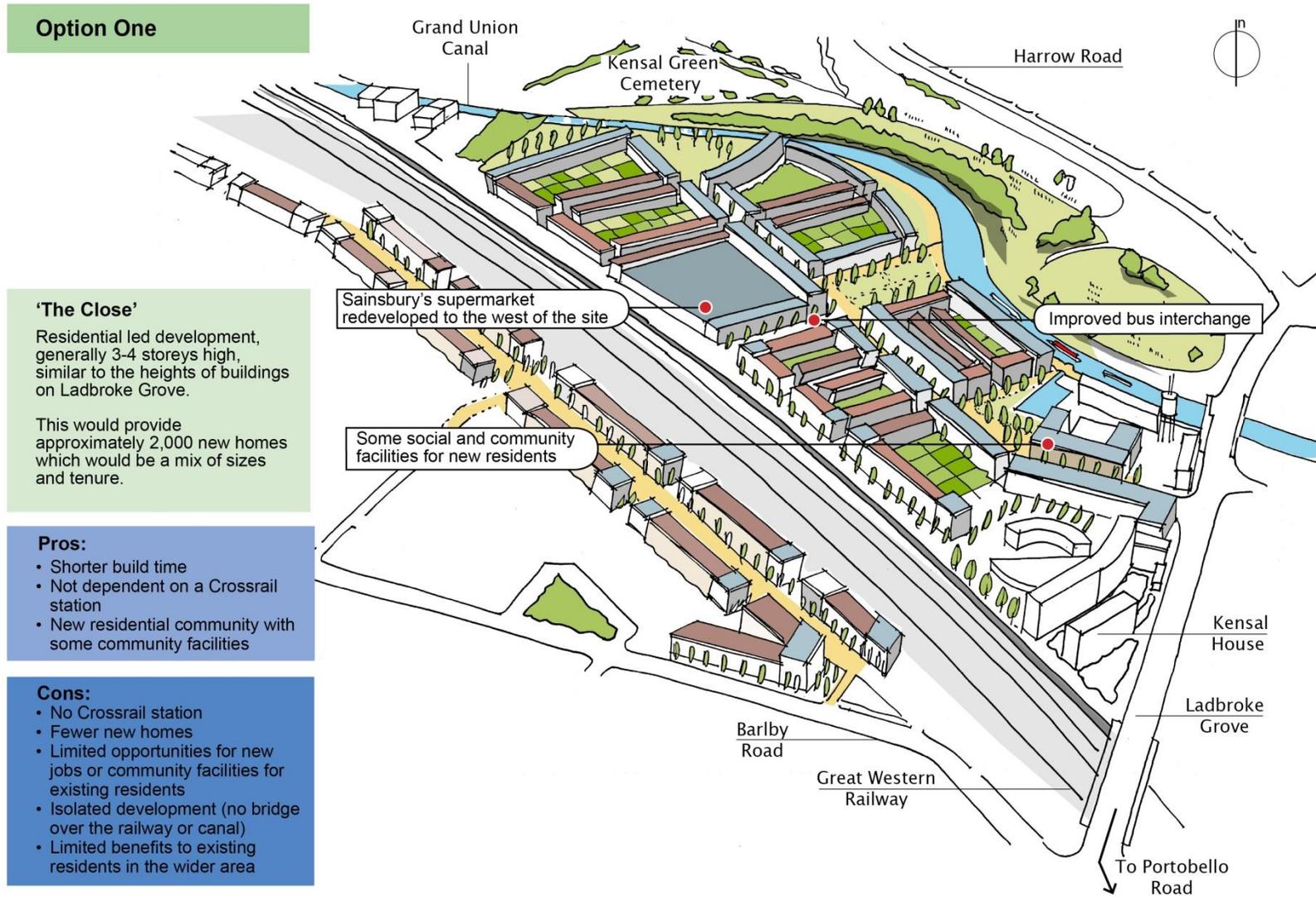
What could happen on the site?

How this site is eventually developed will be the result of a 'trade-off' between the opportunities and constraints described above, and the overall amount of development.

To help people to visualise what the site could look like we have illustrated three different ways that development could happen on the site. These are **only** an indication of the sort of development could be feasible, **not** fixed proposals.

The first option does not have a Crossrail station, options two and three do have a station.

Option One: 'Close' – No Crossrail station, residential-led development



Option two: 'Square' - Mixed use development with a new Crossrail station

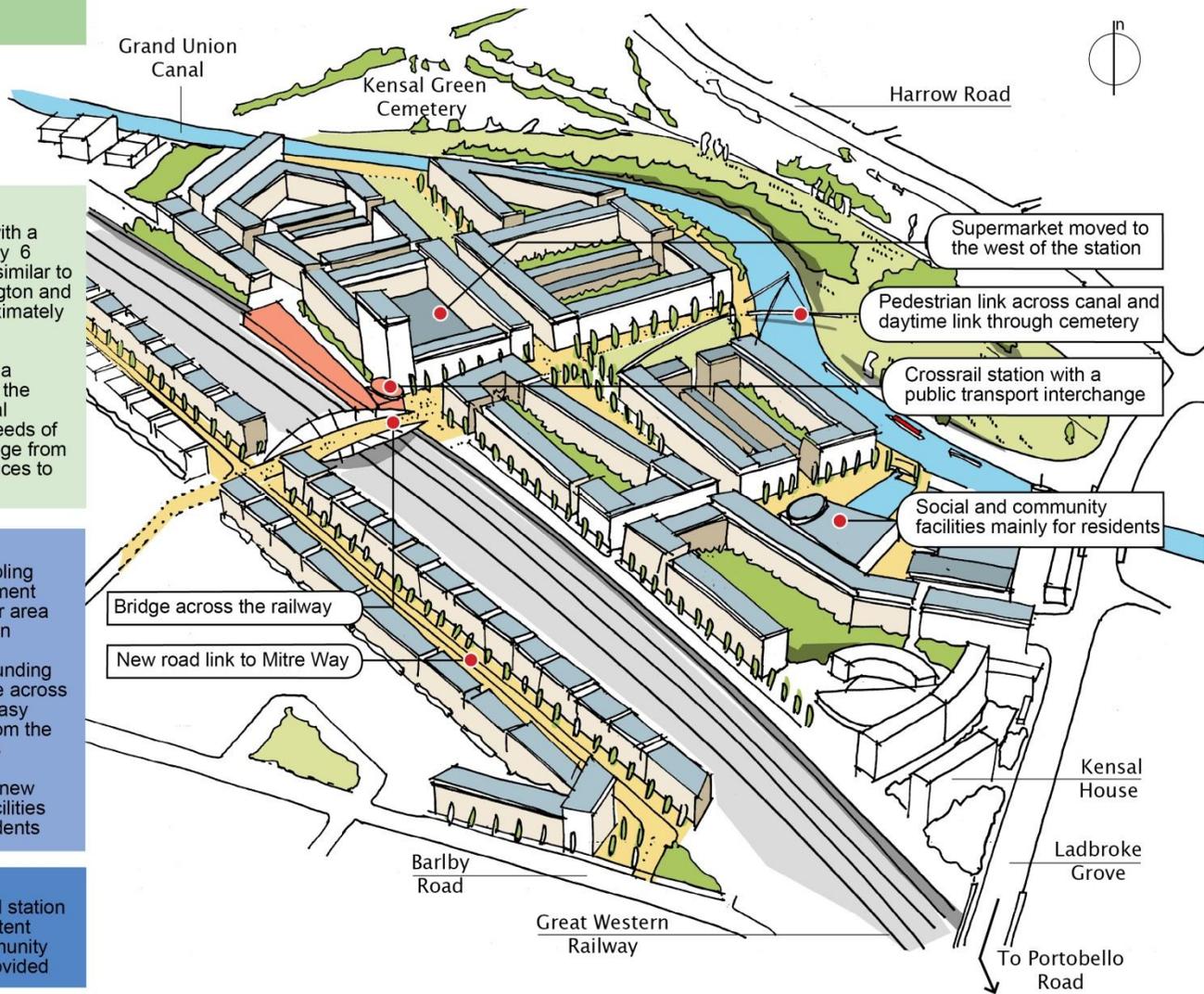
Option Two

'The Square'
 Mixed use development with a Crossrail station. Generally 6 storey residential blocks, similar to mansion blocks in Kensington and Chelsea, providing approximately 2,500 new homes.

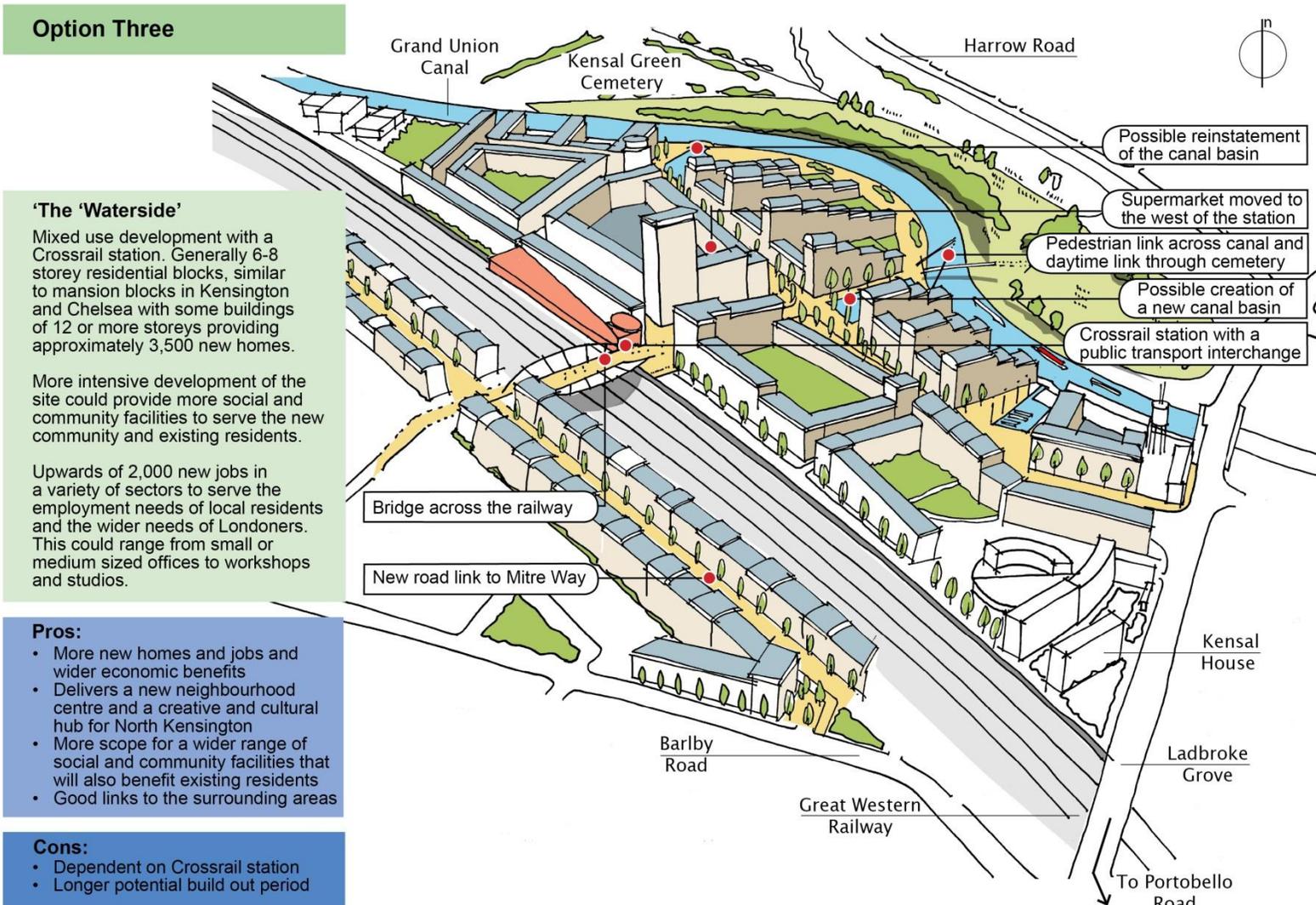
Around 1,400 new jobs in a variety of sectors to serve the employment needs of local residents and the wider needs of Londoners. This could range from small or medium sized offices to workshops and studios.

- Pros:**
- A Crossrail station enabling higher density development and benefiting the wider area
 - More new homes than in Option One
 - Good links to the surrounding areas including a bridge across the railway to provide easy access to the station from the south and to St Charles Hospital
 - Greater opportunity for new jobs and community facilities mainly for the new residents

- Cons:**
- Dependent on Crossrail station
 - Uncertainty over the extent of new social and community facilities that can be provided



Option Three: 'Waterside' Large scale residential, business, leisure and retail scheme capitalising on a new Crossrail station.



Which option do you think is best and why?

Is there anything else you think should be considered?

What happens next?

We will consider all the comments that are made either in writing or during consultation workshops on this document. From this and any new evidence on opportunities and constraints on the site we will write a draft planning and design brief for the site. We will ask for your views on the new document, probably early in 2013.

We will then amend the brief, in response to the comments we receive, to produce a final version. If it becomes a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the Council will formally adopt it and it will become part of the Council's Planning guidance. If it is taken forward as a Local Plan Development Plan Document (DPD) it will be subject to examination for soundness by a Planning Inspector.

Glossary

Core Strategy This is the main document of a suite of documents that make up the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Combined Heat and Power (CHP) The combined production of electricity and usable heat is known as Combined Heat and Power (CHP). Steam or hot water, which would otherwise be wasted when electricity alone is produced, is used to heat buildings. Combined Cooling, Heat and Power (CCHP) systems provide cooling as well as heating.

Crossrail A new railway network running from Maidenhead in the west to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east, through Central London. The largest gap on Crossrail network is located between Paddington and Acton Main Line. The Royal Borough is lobbying to see two new stations open in this corridor, one at Old Oak Common in neighbouring London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and one at Kensal. For more details see <http://www.crossrail.co.uk/>.

Local Development Framework (LDF) A statutory plan produced by each local planning authority that comprises a portfolio of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) and development plan documents (DPDs) including a Core Strategy. This portfolio may include site allocations, development management policies and area action plans. The Local Development Framework replaces the Borough's Unitary Development Plan.

Local Plan Development Plan Document (DPD) A statutory plan produced by each local planning authority which sets the planning policies for the Council. Independent planning inspectors must look at all local plan documents. All local plans undergo a formal examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) An SPD does not form a part of the statutory development plan. It can take the form of design guides or area development briefs, or supplement other specific policies in the plan. However, it must be consistent with national and regional planning guidance as well as the Core Strategy and London Plan. It should be clearly cross-referenced to the relevant plan policy or proposal that it supplements. Public consultation should be undertaken and SPDs should be regularly reviewed. An SPD is a material planning consideration but does not carry the same weight as the Core Strategy as it is not subject to examination by the Planning Inspectorate.