

City Management Plan workshop briefing notes

North Westminster

Economic Development Area

What are the issues?

The objective of the North Westminster Economic Development Area (EDA) is to deliver economic renewal in the north-west of Westminster. The area contains four of the most deprived areas in the city, namely Church Street, Westbourne, Harrow Road and Queen's Park. Unlike other parts of Westminster these neighbourhoods are densely populated with, mainly, social housing. The Paddington Opportunity Area (POA) and the wider Business Improvement District (BID) also fall within the boundary of the EDA, these are areas which have seen significant development and regeneration. It is hoped that the benefits secured in these areas will attract investment more widely.

The EDA has three district shopping centres, Praed Street, Harrow Road and Church Street/Edgware Road. The focus for these district shopping centres is to encourage economic development, without eroding their character, and vitality, and to strengthen their retail function. The City Council considers a more flexible approach in these district shopping centres, as appropriate, by encouraging non retail uses. These uses could include financial and professional services (A2 uses), cafes and restaurants (A3), public houses, (A4) wine bars or other drinking establishments and/or D1 uses, including places of worship, church halls, clinics, health centres and crèches.

The EDA, as a whole, lacks connectivity. Major roads, railway lines and the canal have created significant physical barriers which prevent people from moving between neighbourhoods to access work, services, and open space, and which have contributed to a poor physical environment.

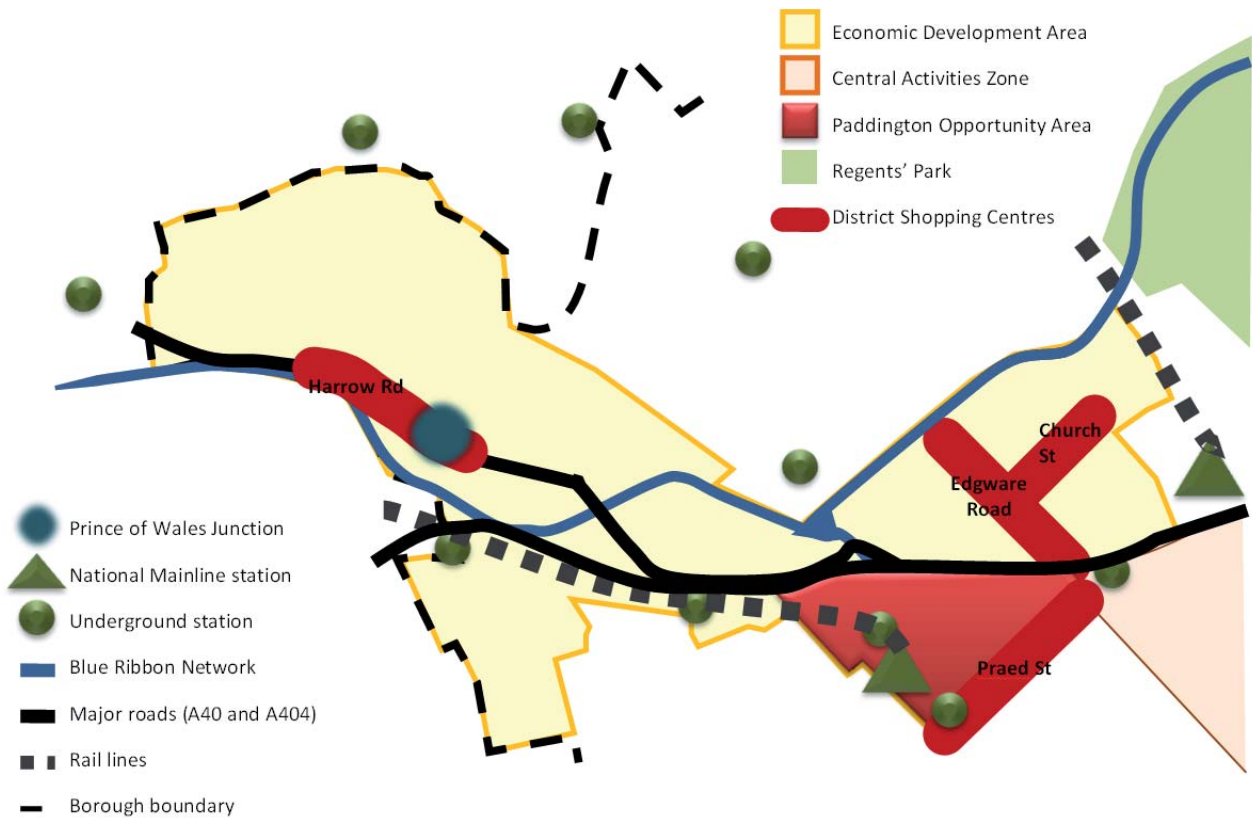
These physical and economic aspects have constrained economic regeneration, and evidence suggests that our existing policy approach, to encourage commercial floorspace, in the area requires revision.

Community priorities identified for the area are, to

- improve the physical environment,
- promote economic development,
- create employment opportunities,
- provide education, skills and training,
- provide quality intermediate housing, and
- improve access to social and community facilities.

The Open Space Strategy identified parts of the EDA as priority areas for additional public open space and play space. Access to open space would encourage healthy lifestyles and provide a valuable recreational asset to local people living in this densely populated area.





The policies contained in the Core Strategy seek to assist in regenerating the area, creating a balanced approach to development and help to reduce crime and disorder, fear of crime, health inequalities and overcrowding.

Despite the issues, identified above, there are a number of opportunities for development and change for the better. As part of the North Central Activities Zone and, with a proposed Crossrail station, the area is an attractive investment location for businesses looking for more affordable office space.

There are a number of clusters of creative industries in the area, for example, software businesses in Paddington/Bayswater, music and visual performing arts and designer fashion businesses in Westbourne and TV and Radio employees associated with the BBC's Delaware Road Studios in Maida Vale and Queens Park. The creative industries provide a unique economic opportunity, in the area, and should be promoted. To support creative industries, we need to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of small business premises. In the Church Street area, Westminster City Council is working with partners to commission consultants to carry out a regeneration master plan which will identify further opportunities and options for the regeneration of the sites.

To create an attractive residential environment, and promote inward investment, improvements to the public realm throughout the EDA are required, along with physical improvements to the Prince of Wales Junction, Church Street market, and other areas.

What have you told us?

Responses from previous consultations on the Local Development Framework (LDF) raised concerns about the amount of social housing, and the need for more affordable intermediate housing. In these neighbourhoods a range of issues affect residents. These include a lack of public open space and play space, lack of local services, low incomes and limited spending power, which limits spending in the EDA.

Other comments received are

- to encourage economic development and regeneration, along with housing development.
- In Church Street ward residents want a restriction on the number of social housing units, unless a development provides a major contribution to regeneration of the neighbourhood.
- To encourage intermediate housing in the area, which is affordable, for young families.

- Small scale loss of housing is incompatible with the overall need for more housing - there should be no net loss. Whilst a portfolio of available commercial premises should be maintained, economic development should not be prioritised at the expense of housing coming forward.
- Additional office/commercial floorspace should be welcomed in this area and should not trigger the necessity to provide housing.
- Economic development should be prioritised at the expense of infrastructure.
- It is important to support the district and local shopping centres in the area.
- There are five factors influencing the improvement of the area over the next ten years, the quality of housing, public services, workforce development, inward investment and the place itself.
- The Council should review Policy NWW2 in the UDP to limit the residential element of large redevelopment sites in the North West Westminster Special Policy Area to 50% or less.
- Support for improvements which attract more investment into the area.
- Need to address the lack of legibility between North Kensington and North Westminster.

National and Regional Policy

Planning Policy Statement (PPS)4. Planning for Sustainable Economic Development which supports regenerating deprived areas by positively and proactively encouraging economic development. The London Plan Policy 2A.7 identifies North West Westminster as an area for regeneration.

Current Unitary Development Plan 2007

Policies STRA 5 – STRA 13 seek to foster economic vitality and diversity of Westminster's economy by allowing the upgrade and renewal of commercial buildings in the city and new mixed use development at Paddington.

SS6 aims to enhance the vitality and viability of the District Shopping Centres.

H4 seeks to achieve a 50% affordable housing target.

NWW 1 protects existing and encourages new small scale (less than 250sqm) business uses within the North West Westminster Special Policy Area.

NWW 2 ensures mixed use development on larger sites (over 0.25 hectares), by requiring no more than half of the total development to be housing.

NWW 3 seeks to improve the overall townscape and public realm of Harrow Road.

Economic Development Strategy

Westminster City Council's Economic Development Strategy 2008-2011 identifies the boundary of the NWW EDA and provides a framework for departments and external organisations to deliver economic development activities in the area.

Core Strategy Publication Draft 2009 (subject to agreement)

This policy seeks to encourage and support a partnership approach to tackle deprivation and to promote economic activity. The policy strives to ensure that all developments within the area contribute to increasing economic activity or provide local services, or improve the quality and mix of housing. Provided below is a summary of the priorities for the area:

- improve physical connections within the EDA,
- address severance caused by major roads, railway lines and the canal,
- improve the public realm and local employment opportunities,
- deliver improved and appropriate range of local services,
- secure a Combined Heat and Power facility,

- redevelopment of some existing housing estates, with a range of housing tenures, consistent with protection of areas of open space,
- Criteria for the district centres,
- B1 uses (including studios and workshops) are acceptable, in principle, throughout the EDA as part of major developments and
- A small loss of residential development may be acceptable in certain circumstances.

Further Information

The London Plan Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London Consolidated with Alterations since 2004, February 2008.

Adopted Unitary Development Plan (January 2007)

Core Strategy Publication Draft

Draft Planning Policy Statement 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Development

Westminster Economic Development Strategy 2008-2011, Department of Planning and City Development Westminster City Council.

The North Westminster Planning Study (2000)

Westminster's Creative Industries (October 2007)
GVA Grimley and Burns and Owens Partnership Ltd

A Study of Small Offices in Westminster, (2008), DTZ June

Westminster City Council Shopping Area Health Checks 2002 and 2007

Glossary

A1 Use Class retail/shops - shops, retail, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices, pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners and funeral directors.

A2 Use Class financial and professional services - banks, building societies, estate and employment agents, professional and financial services and betting offices.

A3 Use Class Restaurant and cafes – restaurants, snack bars and cafes

A4 Use Class Drinking establishments – wine bars or other drinking establishments

B1 Use Class Business – offices, research and development, light industry,

Community Build - Community Build Programme - Housing-led regeneration of Westminster's housing estates, helping to meet the needs of residents by building new, much needed additional affordable and other tenure homes, and providing improved residential environments.

District Centres / District Shopping Centres usually with up to one hundred commercial premises of various kinds, have a predominantly retail function. Situated outside of the CAZ, they ensure goods and services are accessible at a local level.

Open Spaces – including parks, playgrounds, open spaces on housing estates, civic spaces and the canal towpath areas.

North Central Activities Zone – Is part of the EDA is within the North Central Activities Zone. North Central Activities Zone (CAZ) area where the City Council envisages the maintenance or growth of Central London Activities including office uses, shops, entertainment facilities, health uses, and other uses that provide a service to visiting members of the public.

The agenda for the North Westminster EDA workshop is as follows:

Welcome and Introduction

10mins

What should we do?

1. Do you think the proposed 60:40 Social/Intermediate split for affordable housing should be applied flexibly to individual schemes in the EDA in order to achieve a more mixed tenure? 20 mins

2. Should a greater priority be placed on protecting the quantity of open spaces and existing parking spaces around housing estates or are some open spaces and parking spaces under-used and therefore could accommodate additional housing? 20 mins

3. Do you support the continued use of policy NWW2 in respect of large scale redevelopments requiring no more than 50 % housing or is there a requirement for exceptions or flexibility in this policy approach? For e.g. Community Build schemes 20 mins

4. To support economic development should we protect and encourage general industry and commercial warehouse storage and distribution subject to a range of criteria, including the protection of residential amenity? 10 mins

5. How can we encourage business development, more B1 uses studios and workshops into the area and support skills which match local employment opportunities? 15 mins

BREAK – 15 mins

6. The Core Strategy has identified some flexibility in area outside of the district centres by allowing a change of use of long term vacant retail units to B1 uses outside the Core Shopping Frontages. What do you think would be a reasonable time period for a retail unit to be vacant in Church Street/Edgware Road, Harrow Road and Praed Street before allowing a change of use? 10 mins

7. To ensure that these B1 uses do not compromise the retail offer, should a set of criteria be introduced to reduce any adverse impacts on vitality, viability, character and function of centres or adversely impact on residential amenity?

For example:

- Limit the number of B1 uses outside of the Core Shopping Frontages

- Any other suggested criteria? 20 mins

8. Do you agree that other town centre uses, such as A3 café and restaurant uses may be acceptable in the Core Shopping Frontages to encourage more activity in the area? If so should we introduce a set of criteria to reduce any adverse impacts on vitality, viability, character and function of centres, or adversely impacts on residential amenity?

For example

- Limit the number of other non A1 uses such as A3 café and restaurant uses in a Core Shopping Frontage.

- Any other suggested criteria? 20 mins

9. Do you have any suggestions for public realm projects / environmental improvements in the area? 10 mins

10. Are there any issues that have not been covered in the workshop that you would like to discuss? 5 mins

11. Are there issues that the Council should be aware of in it lobbying process? 5 mins

Workshop time 3 hours

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City of Westminster

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