

Local Development Framework



NORTHERN OLYMPIC FRINGE AREA ACTION PLAN

Preferred Options

January 2011

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Introduction and Context

1 Introduction	2
Document Purpose	3
Background	4
Preferred Options Methodology	6
Stakeholder Consultation	6
2 Context	10
Planning Area	10
Policy Context	13
Key Opportunities	16
Key Challenges	19

Vision, Objectives and Proposals

3 Area Action Plan Vision and Objectives	24
Area Action Plan Objectives	24
4 Key Proposals Plan	26
Character Areas	29
Leyton	29
Marsh Lane and Church Road	34
Lea Valley	39

Lea Bridge 46

Proposed Policies

5 Introduction 52

6 A Town Centre Place 54

 Policy NOF1 - Leyton and Lea Bridge Centres 54

7 A Place to Live 60

 Policy NOF2 - Providing High Quality Homes 62

8 A Green Place 66

 Policy NOF3 - Open Spaces 66

 Policy NOF4 - Flooding and Waterways 69

9 A Well Designed Place 76

 Policy NOF5 - High Quality and Mixed Use Development 76

 Policy NOF6 - Heritage 77

 Policy NOF7 - Building Heights 79

 Policy NOF8 - Public Realm 81

10 A Place to do Business 84

 Policy NOF9 - Employment Land 84

 Policy NOF10 - Promoting Creative Industries 88

11 A Sustainable Place 90

 Policy NOF11 - Reduction of Carbon Emission through Energy Efficiency 90

12 A Connected Place	94
Policy NOF12 - Connectivity	94
13 A Community Place	100
Policy NOF13 - Social Infrastructure	100

Implementation and Monitoring

14 Implementation Framework	2
15 Monitoring	4

Appendices

1 Appendix 1 - Monitoring table for NOF Character Areas and Key Opportunity Sites	2
2 Appendix 2 - Monitoring Table for NOF Policies	6
3 Appendix 3 - Key Evidence for NOF Area Action Plan	12

Glossary

1 Glossary	2
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List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Local Development Framework Document	3
Figure 1.2 NOF AAP Boundary	4
Figure 1.3 Methodology	6

Figure 2.1 NOF Context	10
Figure 2.2 NOF Character Areas	12
Figure 2.3 Existing 2006 UDP Proposals Map for NOF area	15
Figure 2.4 NOF Opportunites and Constraints	18
Figure 4.1 Draft NOF Proposals Map	28
Figure 4.2 Character Area - Leyton	31
Figure 4.3 Character Area - Marsh Lane and Church Road	35
Figure 4.4 Character Area - Lea Valley	40
Figure 4.5 Character Area - Lea Bridge	48
Figure 5.1 Northern Olympic Fringe Structure	52
Figure 7.1 Key Opportunity Sites for mixed uses including residential	63
Figure 8.1 NOF Green Space	68
Figure 8.2 NOF Flood Risk Zones	71
Figure 9.1 NOF Building Height	80
Figure 12.1 NOF Movement	96
Figure 13.1 Key Opportunity Sites for incorporating Social Infrastructure	102

1 Introduction

Capitalising on Regeneration in East London

1.1 The Olympic and Paralympic Games and its Legacy, in parallel with extensive regeneration and development of the East of London, presents a significant opportunity for the Northern Olympic Fringe area. The purpose of this Area Action Plan (AAP) is to provide broad planning and development guidance to deliver positive, managed change that harnesses the potential of the Olympics and its Legacy and delivers ambitious, appropriate and sustainable development. This document will ensure that development benefits new and existing communities and reinforces the economic potential of the area.

Olympic Investment In the Future of East London

1.2 The decision to bid for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games was predicated on what could be achieved in east London after the Games. The contract for the Games stated that 'The most enduring Legacy of the Olympics will be the regeneration of an entire community for the direct benefit of everyone who lives there'.

1.3 The Olympic Park and the Stratford City development are currently ringed by some of the most deprived and diverse communities in England, including the communities around Leyton and Lea Bridge on which this Area Action Plan is focused. As such, the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will not only be an exceptional sporting event but also a unique opportunity to bring about fundamental and lasting change in east London.

1.4 The immediate Games 'inheritance' will be five new major world-class sports venues, the conversion of the Athletes Village into new homes, world-class utilities and communications infrastructure, and dramatically improved bridge, cycle, pedestrian and road connections into and through newly created parklands. This huge investment being made in the Park must act as a catalyst to the regeneration of neighbouring areas.



Picture 1.1 Olympic Legacy

Convergence

Convergence: Within 20 years the communities who host the 2012 Games will have the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London.

Strategic Regeneration Framework (Nov, 2009)

1.5 The Olympic host boroughs including Waltham Forest developed a Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) that links the physical investment brought about by the Olympics and its Legacy with socio-economic change in the surrounding areas.

1.6 The overall ambition within the SRF is that in the next 20 years, residents in areas near the Olympic Park, such as Leyton and Lea Bridge, will achieve the London average in a range of life indicators expected in successful communities. Specifically, employment rates, average incomes, young people's GCSE results, educational attainment of 11 year olds, the number of families in receipt of benefits, rates of violent crime and life expectancy (particularly for men) will be improved to at least their respective London averages. For too long, the East of London has been deprived and been sub-standard on the above indicators.

1.7 The concept of convergence is endorsed by the Mayor in the London Plan and is therefore the foundation for this AAP. All aspects of policy and proposal development in the document seek to promote convergence. Through influencing a range of factors in the physical environment in the Northern Olympic Fringe area, this AAP will ensure convergence is achieved.

Document Purpose

Local Development Framework

1.8 The Local Development Framework (LDF) seeks to co-ordinate and plan the physical, social and environmental development of Waltham Forest. It consists of a number of documents including the Northern Olympic Fringe AAP. This AAP needs to comply with the Core Strategy, Development Management Policies, Government's statements on planning policies and also the London Plan. The policies in this AAP will contribute towards the achievement of the Council's wide aims and objectives, including those set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, adopted by the Council in May 2008.

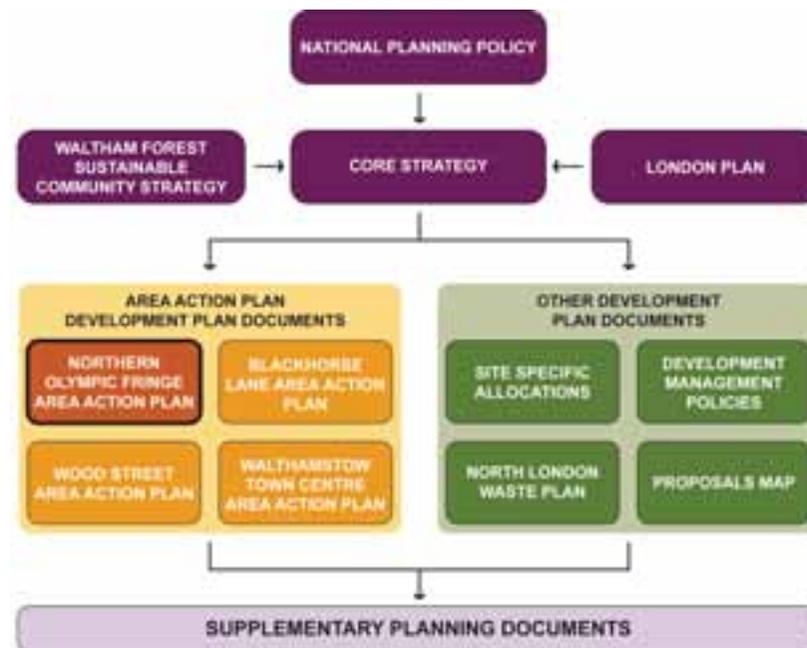


Figure 1.1 Local Development Framework Document

Northern Olympic Fringe Area Action Plan

1.9 The Northern Olympic Fringe AAP will set out a comprehensive range of policies and proposals to guide future development in the Northern Olympic Fringe area. As a Development Plan Document (DPD), it provides planning and design guidance that will be used to:

- Co-ordinate development in a holistic manner within the Northern Olympic Fringe;
- Identify potential sites for enhancement;
- Support and develop the creative, commercial and industrial sectors in the area;
- Ensure an appropriate mix of activities by serving as the basis for land use allocation;
- Assess developer proposals and be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications; and,
- Identify future service and community infrastructure needs in relation to growth.



Figure 1.2 NOF AAP Boundary

1.10 The purpose of this document is to outline the framework for future development in this area, as part of the Olympic Legacy and wider regeneration aims of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. It aims to stimulate development interest and encourage regeneration projects whilst protecting those areas sensitive to change.

Structure

1.11 Following this introductory section, the remainder of the document is structured into the following sections:

- Section 2 – the Policy Context, Key Challenges and Opportunities provides an assessment of the issues affecting and the opportunities in the Northern Olympic Fringe area.
- Section 3 – the Vision and Objectives section establishes the long term vision for the area. These are further defined as Objectives to realise the vision, and the proposals plan. An overview of the opportunity for four character areas is also provided in this section.
- Section 4 - the Draft Policies section outlines the future plans and accompanying policies for the area.
- Section 5 – the Implementation Framework outlines how the proposals will be delivered, who has responsibility for taking them forward, and what are the next steps required for implementation.

Background

Issues and Options

1.12 Two separate studies undertaken by Consultants have been brought together to form the basis for this AAP. The Northern Olympic Fringe Masterplan examined options for future development in the Leyton and Stratford New Town areas, in which future inward investment would enable a whole range of improvements to travel routes, open spaces and shopping areas in light of the Olympics and its Legacy. The Lea Bridge Planning Framework sought to establish

a long-term vision for the Lea Bridge area that would underpin major changes and development proposals affecting residents, transport corridors and the Lee Valley Regional Park.

1.13 Local residents, businesses and other stakeholders were consulted on these two documents as part of the Issues and Options stage of the Development Plan Document in July and August 2009. Reports on these exercises were taken to the Council's Cabinet in November 2009.

Issues and Options Findings

1.14 Community consultation was carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's best practice outlined in 'Creating Successful Masterplans' 2004 and 2008 and English Partnership's principles for community engagement. Statutory and non-statutory consultation involved a number of events including workshops, open days and exhibitions. The following key issues were raised by the various respondents:

- Flood risk: flood zones should be considered and reference relevant Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, indicating the importance of sequential testing for development in areas with potential flood risk;
- Water and waste issues: the plan should seek to emphasise the need to minimise water consumption and waste generation, and promote sustainable urban drainage;
- Contaminated land issues should be recognised and considered at a later stage in a separate study;
- Employment land: the document should refer to the need for compliance with London Plan policy and justification;
- Traffic impacts: the plan should provide an assessment of traffic impacts from the proposals using high level modelling. Any necessary mitigation measures will then need to be proposed.

Congestion along Leyton and Leytonstone High Roads is a particular issue in this regard.

- The plan should assess the need and appropriate location for social infrastructure facilities in light of residential development;
- There should be greater reference to Legacy Masterplan Framework throughout the document;
- The plans should seek to be clearer as to where demolition or enhancement is needed;
- Implementation/Delivery Strategy: this should provide more detail in support of proposals which may not be obviously viable, and to be clearer on phasing. This will provide greater certainty among delivery agencies and greater awareness of the strategic relationship between Northern Olympic Fringe projects, the Olympic sites and Stratford City;
- There was concern from local residents as to the scale of development in the proposals and what impact this would have on the community.

Changes Since the Issues and Options

1.15 The draft proposals outlined in this Preferred Options document may differ slightly, and in some cases even significantly, from that set out by the Consultants documents in the Issues and Options stage. The Council has used the responses from the community during the consultation, as well as informal discussions with stakeholders, businesses and land owners to help shape and alter the proposals. The overall vision for the Northern Olympic Fringe and its relationship with the Legacy of the Olympic Park remains unchanged, however in some places specific proposals have been altered.

Preferred Options Methodology

Preferred Options Methodology

1.16 The Council has been working to further develop the plans laid out by the Consultants in the Issues and Options stage, so that it reflects the community's views and any changes in the aspirations for the area. The following diagram outlines the methodology for this AAP document.

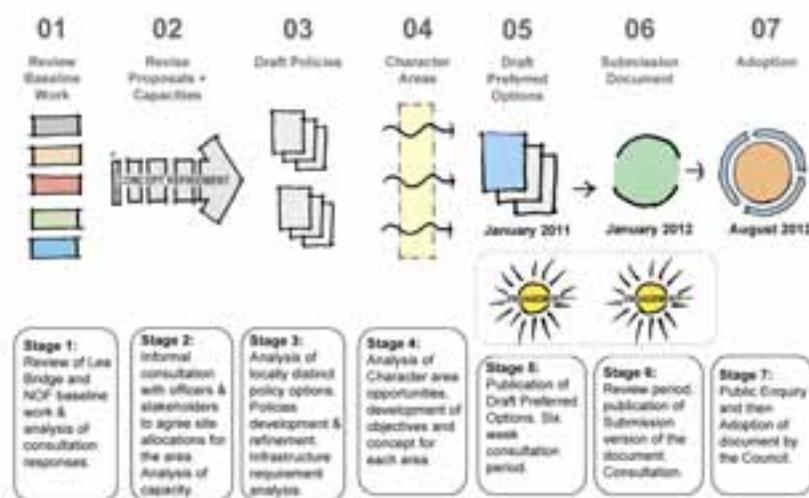


Figure 1.3 Methodology

Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation Strategy

1.17 The development of this Preferred Options document has involved significant consultation with landowners, the community and various other stakeholders. The Council worked with in-house

stakeholder engagement experts to develop the Consultation Strategy for this Preferred Options document. The strategy has two parts, informal consultation and statutory consultation, and was designed to reach a large number of stakeholders from locations across the Northern Olympic Fringe and London.

Informal Consultation

- Stakeholder and land owner discussions - the Council informally consulted a range of stakeholders including relevant authorities, land owners and interested community groups as a means of understanding the issues, opportunities and potential in the area.
- Young Advisors - The Council undertook a youth engagement exercise to reach out to the youth of the Northern Olympic Fringe, to understand more about their perceptions of the area and what they think could be improved. The Young Advisors developed and delivered a youth-led consultation exercise with a group of young people. They recruited peers and carried out an extended focus group consultation. They sought to pinpoint the things young people like in the area, the issues they feel need to be addressed as well as offering their views as to how we can make the area better. The participants were taken on a tour of the NOF area, stopping at key locations where they filmed short 'snippets' of footage on what they thought of each site. They then went to the E10 Legacy Business Centre where the Young Advisors facilitated a discussion group with the young people. The findings of these study were very interesting and highlighted a lack of access to safe leisure and sporting opportunities in the area.
- Open Sessions - the Council held an open session at the end of October, consulting with a range of stakeholders, including community groups, land owners, previously involved parties and relevant authorities.

Statutory Preferred Options Consultation

1.18 The current consultation stage is supported by the following activities:

- Notification to statutory consultees, and a link to the Northern Olympic Fringe web pages within the London Borough of Waltham Forest's website from where they could review the document and make formal comment.
- An exhibition and questionnaires in local libraries and at local festivals to reach a wide range of members of the public and local residents.
- Electronic copies of the AAP available at Waltham Forest's web pages, accompanied by an online questionnaire.
- One to one meetings with land owners, authorities and community groups.



2 Context

Planning Area

2.1 The Northern Olympic Fringe site occupies a key location at the heart of the Lower Lea Valley and adjoins east London's important green network. The neighbourhoods included within this AAP are Lea Bridge and Leyton.

2.2 Parts of the study area suffer from significant deprivation and include a number of pockets of very poor quality environments with high levels of crime. The communities themselves are diverse with a number of different ethnic minority groups. These communities exhibit many qualities which are strong assets to be preserved. However, there is transience in some areas, with a high proportion of housing stock in the rental market. The network of streets and the quality of the built environment are particularly important.

2.3 The study area is a diverse landscape of communities and land uses which have developed over many years. The area is an interesting mix of light industry, open spaces and residential buildings. In many parts, there is an industrial legacy with a combination of historic features, a diverse range of light industrial and employment premises. The history and character of the Lea Valley has created a sequence of green spaces and as industry has moved out, a number of development sites have become available. The site's proximity to Stratford City and Olympic Park presents many exciting opportunities for this area.

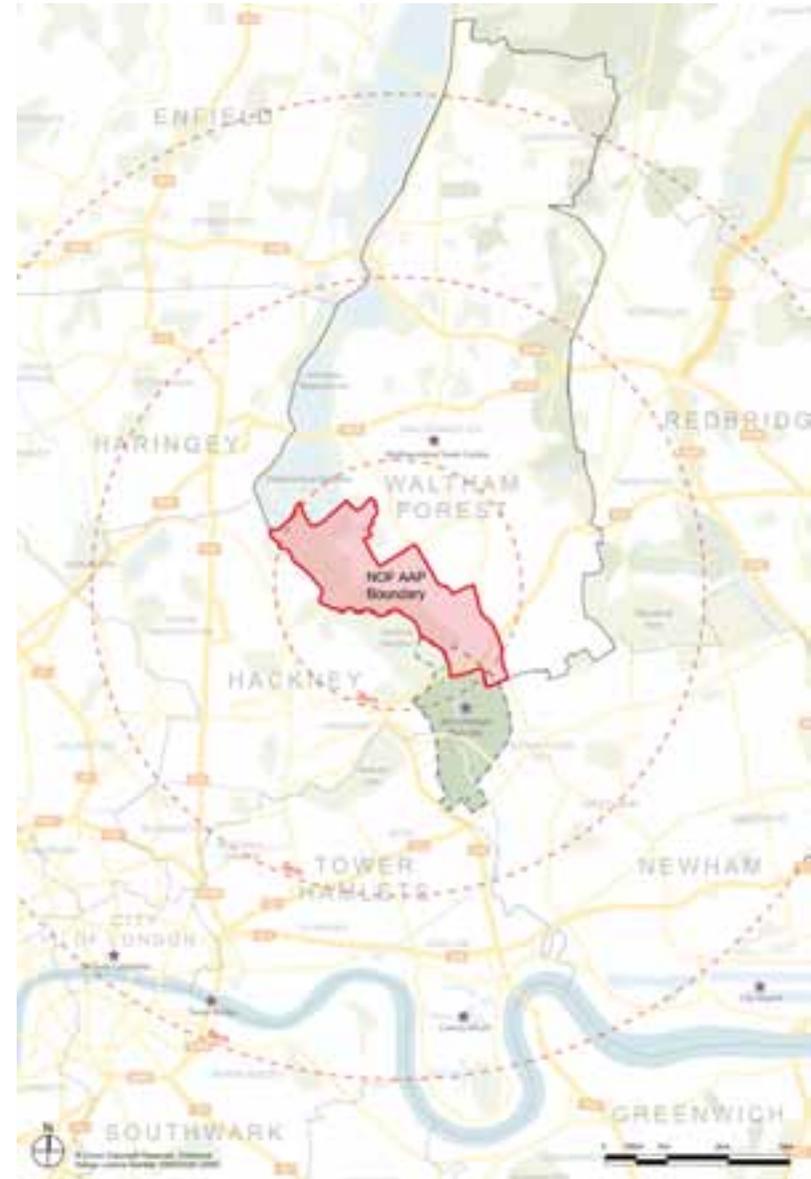


Figure 2.1 NOF Context

2.4 The study area can be seen to consist of four character areas:

- **Leyton** - the tightly knit urban fabric of **Leyton**, centred around Leyton High Road and the Leyton Mills site, with a typical pattern of long narrow streets and terraced housing. Key locations exist in this character area for development to improve the quality of the environment and establish landmark gateway sites into the Borough. This area is also very important because it provides the interface between the Olympic Park, with Eton Manor a key location, and the rest of Waltham Forest.
- **Marsh Lane/Church Road** - In the centre, this area is characterised by a small amount of traditional Victorian housing,

with clusters of playing fields and other open space uses at Marsh Lane and a number of light industrial and employment uses adjacent to Dagenham Brook.

- **Lea Bridge** - In the north east, this area is characterised by a number of strategically important industrial sites, such as Argall Way and Rigg Approach, as well as the small town centre around Lea Bridge Road.
- **Lea Valley** - In the north west, this area provides a gateway from Lea Bridge Road into the Lee Valley Regional Park and Walthamstow Wetlands, and is characterised by a section of Lea Bridge Road, and number of recreational facilities such as the Ice Rink and Riding School.

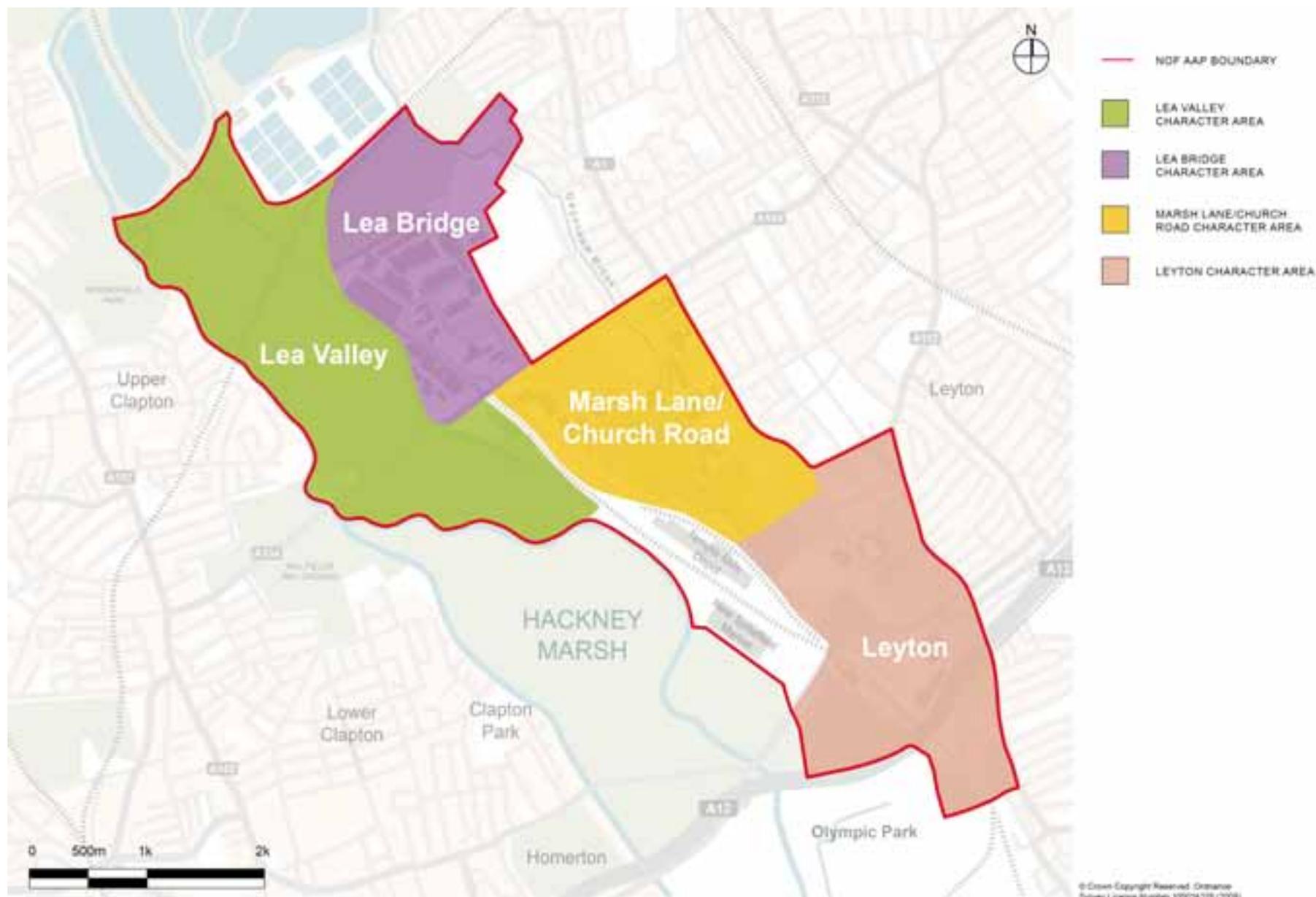


Figure 2.2 NOF Character Areas

Policy Context

2.5 There is a range of planning and regeneration policy which is of relevance to the Northern Olympic Fringe study area. The key policies are summarised below.

National Context

2.6 The AAP has been prepared in compliance with a range of Government planning and design policy statements and guidance documents including Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning.

Regional context

Greater London Authority - The London Plan

2.7 This document is in general conformity with the regional planning guidance of the the London Plan and the London Plan Review. The plans emphasise the regeneration of East London. Regeneration and intensification is focused in defined Opportunity Areas and Areas for Intensification. The Northern Olympic Fringe site is situated in the Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area. As such, this AAP seeks to support and bring forward development as envisioned by the London Plan. The AAP has been developed with the requirements of the London Plan and the London Plan Review in mind, with particular attention being paid to the Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance.

2.8 The Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance (OLSPG) covers the period 2011 to 2031 and sets out how the Mayor of London envisages the areas within and around the Olympic site at Stratford should change to help achieve the lasting transformation of east London that was at the core of London's successful bid to host the 2012 Games. This AAP has been developed through a collaborative process with the Greater London Authority who are developing the OLSPG.

2.9 The OLSPG is a tool to visualise and help implement the London Plan and is designed to assist negotiations on planning applications that will come forward in the Legacy area and to inform and shape funding decisions and local policy thinking. Specifically, it sets out a strategic planning context for land-use change in the Legacy area so as to maximise the regeneration potential of the Games and its investment. For the Northern Olympic Fringe area, the OLSPG support the objectives of this AAP, and seek to ensure that the goal of convergence is met.

Legacy Masterplan Framework

2.10 The Legacy Masterplan Framework (LMF) is focusing on the post-Olympic delivery of residential, commercial and community facilities in the park. The LMF involves the preparation of a spatial masterplan for the core Olympic site to articulate the vision shared by partners and to create a deliverable framework for regeneration. This will be supported by delivery strategies for specific land uses and elements that successfully integrate new development proposals with the emerging Olympic facilities and developments and existing and planned new uses in the wider area.

2.11 Key points of overlap with this AAP include opportunities to establish Eton Manor as a key node in linkages – both existing and new routes, the development of Chobham Farm Academy providing key community playing fields, and the future of Drapers Fields.

The Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework

2.12 The Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework was agreed by the Mayor of London in January 2007 and sets out his strategic planning vision for the Lower Lea Valley. It identifies the potential for The Valley to accommodate up to 40,000 new homes and provide 50,000 new jobs. The Framework builds on the planning policies set out in the London Plan for an area of nearly 1450 hectares,

extending from the Thames in the south to Leyton in the north, straddling the borders of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Waltham Forest.

Lee Valley Regional Park Development Framework

2.13 The Park Development Framework (PDF) sets out the preferred options for the future development of the Lee Valley Regional Park. It outlines the Authority's emerging vision with a clear statement of proposals and policies to inform the development of the Regional Park for the next 5-10 years. It is essential that the Northern Olympic Fringe AAP connects into this framework and supports its objectives.

Waltham Forest Policy

Our Place in London - Waltham Forest Sustainable Community Strategy

2.14 The Sustainable Community Strategy has been developed by the Council and its partner organisations on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). It is about unlocking the potential of Waltham Forest – the borough, its residents and their neighbourhoods. It sets out aims for the borough over the next 20 years with particular reference to:

- Managing population, growth and change;
- Creating wealth and opportunity for residents;
- Retaining more wealth in the borough;

Waltham Forest Local Development Framework

2.15 The Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) guides the implementation and delivery of the community strategy. The Core Strategy is the primary and strategic Development Plan Document that guides the content of other Local Development Documents within the LDF including this AAP. The Core Strategy policies form the strategic policy basis for this document and recognise the Northern Olympic Fringe as a significant retail, commercial and housing growth area in its proximity to the Olympic Park and its Legacy. The AAP has been prepared in parallel with the emerging Core Strategy, and adopted Core Strategy policies will apply across the Northern Olympic Fringe area. Strategic issues, such as any changes to Metropolitan Open Land or Strategic Employment Land will need to be identified in the Core Strategy. These AAP policies need to read in conjunction with the Core Strategy and emerging Development Management policies.

Key Opportunities

There are a significant number of opportunities in the Northern Olympic Fringe area that make it an important place for regeneration and redevelopment. Some of these opportunities are outlined below.

2012 Olympic Games

2.16 The Olympic Park, including the Athletes' Village and the myriad of new sporting venues provide a completely new offer in this part of East London. The focus on this area in 2012 will be intense and the stimulus this brings will be felt widely.

2.17 There is a significant programme of 'Games Time' improvements planned for the Northern Olympic Fringe Area, particularly parts of Leyton that will be used by people to access the Olympics. Whilst not technically to be planned as part of this Area Action Plan, these represent significant opportunities, the result of which need to be taken into account when planning the long term future of the area. Public realm improvements to Leyton High Road and the Leyton Mills site, as well as a new pedestrian and cycle bridge next to Ruckholt Road bridge are such planned 'games time' improvements.

2.18 Once the Games are over, the translation of the venues and the development in the wider area will be to maximise the integration with local areas and support ongoing regeneration. The role of the Legacy Masterplan Framework will be to set the scene for the legacy development of the site. It will ensure the regeneration benefits are maximised for the existing and future communities of the Lower Lea Valley, and as such there is a significant opportunity to connect into these plans.

Convergence

2.19 Despite being in some instances only a matter of metres from the Olympic Park, the existing deprivation in the Northern Olympic Fringe does not reflect the inherent opportunity. Regeneration of East London as part of the Legacy will be based on the principle of convergence. This will mean halting a century of social decline and instituting a pace of change that, in many cases, is two to three times the average London improvement rate. If the host boroughs are successful, significant numbers of families will see dramatic improvements to their lives and the country as a whole will benefit. There is a clear need to utilise the proximity to the Olympics as a positive driver to both enhance access for local residents to the Park and encourage investment in the adjacent centres.

Dagenham Brook and other local waterways

2.20 Dagenham Brook, the Lea Navigation and the River Lea are important features in the Northern Olympic Fringe. In many places this inherent waterside opportunity is underutilised, and as such this AAP will be seeking to support and enhance the connection to and use of the area's waterways.

2.21 In particular, the AAP supports landscape improvements to the banks of Dagenham Brook, including opening it up for the benefit of the public. Designs for this should also be taken as an opportunity to implement flood risk alleviation measures. Residential blocks along the banks of Dagenham Brook are set back from the Brook itself to sit outside of its fluvial floodrisk area.

Job Creation and Creative Industries

2.22 There is significant potential for job creation and the creative industries in the Northern Olympic Fringe area. The Council's recent Local Economic Assessment shows that smaller scale and IT related workplaces are in demand in that area, which supports the growth of clean, modern and creative enterprise. Furthermore, the area's location in proximity to Stratford City and Canary Wharf also means that there

will be ample employment opportunities for residents in the East of London if an appropriate public transport connection can be established.

Chingford to Stratford Rail Link

2.23 The Hall Farm Curve is a currently unused rail link that could provide Chingford to Stratford connections from the north of the Borough down to Stratford if it was reinstated, with stops along the way opening up the whole of London. Current connections to Stratford from the middle and north of the Borough are slow, and a rail link with

be very important to the regeneration of the Northern Olympic Fringe area and the Borough as a whole. A journey that currently takes an hour by bus could be reduced to approximately 15 minutes. Furthermore, this link would also offer access for people who live in Stratford, the Olympic Park and the rest of East London to the Lea Valley Park and Epping Forest. An outline business case for this link showed that the project was viable, and as such this is seen as a major opportunity for Waltham Forest.

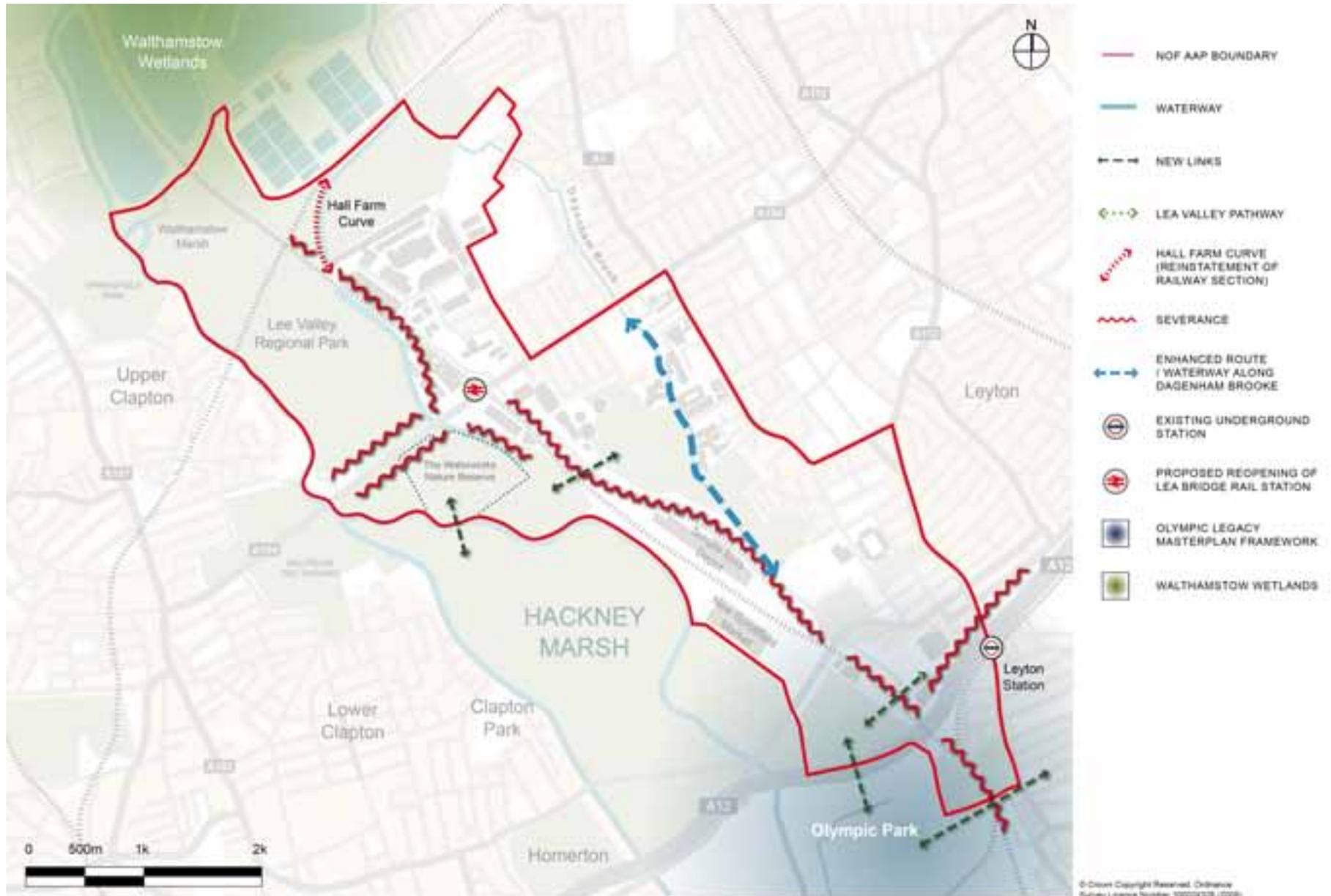


Figure 2.4 NOF Opportunities and Constraints

Key Challenges

There are a number of challenges for the Northern Olympic Fringe area that this AAP seeks to overcome through coordinated development.

Severance and Poor Connections

2.24 The band of land occupied by the rail line, the canyon effect of the A12 road and industrial uses form a major barrier between the Lea Valley and the Northern Olympic Fringe area. This ‘Severance Valley’ poses a major physical barrier between the communities of the Northern Olympic Fringe and the Olympic Park and Stratford City. This could be bridged by making existing connections more useable and inviting and by establishing visual connections with the Olympic park. This AAP seeks to put in place a number of new and upgraded connections so that residents in the area can fully access the significant opportunities available to them.

Poor Quality Public Realm

2.25 The quality of public space in the Northern Olympic Fringe is varied, but in general needs enhancement. The landscape character and quality of the network of green spaces could be enhanced through design enhancements, new links and increased street tree planting. Existing shopping streets and centres such as Leyton High Road and Lea Bridge Road need upgrading. The character and quality of shop fronts currently degrade the local centres, and the dominance of vehicular traffic detracts from the shopping experience. Higher quality public spaces, street trees and street furniture would improve both this experience and public perceptions.

Flood Risk

2.26 Given the AAP's location in proximity to the Lea Valley, there are flooding issues that exist within the area. A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk assessment has been undertaken as part of this AAP which has

shown that in terms of site proposals, there are issues that will need to be mitigated in regards to redevelopment. Sequential and Exception testing has been undertaken as part of the preferred options on the proposals outlined in this document.

Crime and Deprivation

2.27 The Strategic Regeneration Framework area accounts for the greatest cluster of deprivation in England and Wales. On almost every indicator available, the fate of families and communities living in the host boroughs is on average worse than other communities in London. For example:

- 64.2% of the population are employed in the host boroughs area compared with 70.4% in London. This means 77,000 fewer people are in employment in the host boroughs.
- The percentage of households who live in overcrowded conditions is between 18% and 38% in the five host boroughs. The London average is under 7%.
- 17% of adults in the host boroughs have no qualifications, compared to 11.6% in London. This gap means 67,000 more people than the London average have no qualifications.

2.28 As such, there is obviously an overwhelming need for the AAP to tackle deprivation in the Northern Olympic Fringe area. Furthermore, the Council is aware that there are issues in the area regarding antisocial behaviour and gang culture that need to be tackled through this AAP.

Areas Suffering from Isolation

2.29 The western side of Leyton High Road and Church Road includes some unused and inactive spaces. Many of these sites are used for light industry, and whilst important as employment generators, the sense of isolation means that neighbouring open spaces are often

unsafe and prone to anti-social behaviour. As such, these areas require enhancement which could be achieved either through landscape work or high quality redevelopment.

Underutilised Land

2.30 Land uses in many areas of the Northern Olympic Fringe are of low quality and intensity. The land use mix should be upgraded and intensified with respect to new developments and public green space. A substantial number of additional residential units could be considered along this stretch to enable enhancements and positively address the need for activity and identity in many places.

Climate Change

2.31 The climate change challenges which the Northern Olympic Fringe AAP must consider are:

- Mitigating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the construction and operation of the built environment and transport patterns;
- Adapting to new climates by improving the ability of the area to provide comfortable environments and to be robust in the context of an increase in extreme weather events;
- Ensuring that those who are particularly vulnerable to climate change are appropriately provided for;
- Ensuring competitiveness – making sustainable growth and successful economies mutually supportive.

2.32 Any future growth within the AAP area must consider its environmental impact and energy efficiency from the outset.



