

Barnet's New Local Plan: is it addressing our changing needs?

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Barnet Council is in the final stages of reviewing and updating the Borough's planning policies in a document known as the Local Plan, due to receive final approval by the end of 2021. It sets out a vision for how the borough will change over the next 15 years and forms a strategy which emphasises the attractiveness of the borough as a place to live, work and visit. The full current version is available on Barnet's website via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/58ts65et>.

Recent years have seen much technological innovation from smart phones to increased emphasis on energy conservation and re-use of materials. Electric vehicles and lower cost solar panels are relatively new technologies. Online shopping has gained huge momentum and visits to large stores have declined. Many of our roads are choked with congestion and pollution from traffic and commuter rail and tube routes into central London have become ever more crowded. Over the past 18 months, the Covid pandemic has resulted in further change. For many, it has meant much less commuting into the centre of London or cycling rather than taking the tube. Barnet's new plan reflects many of these trends and its ratification is likely to coincide with potentially radical Town & Country Planning reform and supporting legislation.



It's probably safe to assume that Robert Jenrick, Minister for Communities, Housing & Local Government, would agree that Hampstead Garden Suburb contains beautiful architectural and urban design. He is tabling before Parliament the most radical town and country planning reforms in 75 years. The first Town & Country Planning legislation that guides us was introduced in 1947 and echoed the concerns of Henrietta Barnett and her fellow members of The Garden City Movement who campaigned for the building of more inclusive mixed communities offering green spaces for residents to enjoy.

One of the main aspects of the 1947 legislation was to create protected green belt areas to act as a barrier to restrict suburban sprawl and to provide 'lungs' for our cities. For similar reasons, the founders of our Suburb campaigned to raise funds to ensure the City of London could purchase land now forming the Hampstead Heath Extension and that the surrounding land to the north could be purchased to design and develop a state of the art, gardenised housing development, where families drawn from all social classes could live within proximity to each other. Pioneers of the Garden City Movement attracted the interest of leading architects and designers of the era, many of whom were members of the Arts & Crafts Movement.

From October 2021, local air quality should improve with the extension of the ULEZ from central London to the North Circular Road, forcing most vehicle owners to give serious consideration to reduction of their vehicle emissions. Last year, the GLA gained statutory approval for its 15-year London Plan, and its policies continue to ban new developments on Green Belt land. Among the ambitions set out in The London Plan, the GLA wants to slow the growth of vehicle traffic. It is seeking to improve public transport for travelling across London and not just into its central areas. Over the past decades, people's jobs have changed, as have our places of work and our commuting and business journeys, with many people unable to afford to live within Greater London. Travel to access leisure, education, and health care services (with increasingly centralised healthcare facilities) has increased.

The London Plan sets policies to increase the Affordable Housing supply with targets to build tens of thousands of new affordable homes, not just in central areas, but within its suburbs, rather than building new towns further out, as was the case in the 1950's and 60's. Barnet's Local Plan is required to incorporate many of the policies that have been approved within the London Plan, which in turn is influenced by the policies set out within The National Planning Framework. One of Barnet's significant tasks in preparing its plan has been to identify possible sites where developers could construct affordable homes on a commercial basis, including newer forms of social housing.

But what impact do these higher-level policy prescriptions have upon the drafting of Barnet's Plan? Increased emphasis is being placed on the need for people to remain active and Barnet and the GLA are interested in funding a green walkway alongside the River Brent and Mutton Brook between Brent Cross and the Suburb. Golders Green Town Centre will be renovated, and land use around East Finchley and Finchley Central Stations looks likely to change, with commuter parking space reduced as more affordable homes are built. The Local Plan encourages more leisure, entertainment, health, and new community facilities within our town centres. It anticipates that online shopping will increase and our interest in using land greedy mega-supermarkets will continue to decline. Barnet's planners envisage that the redevelopment values of these sites will attract applications for more housing and smaller commercial developments, whether as shared, flexible workspaces or studios suited to high tech designers and the creative industries.

Brent Cross area will become a significant new office and commercial centre whilst retaining its role as a speciality shopping,



Play your part in keeping our Suburb special

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association was formed over 100 years ago. Membership is open to all residents, and non-residents can join as associate members. With nearly 2,000 members, it has grown in strength to become a positive and powerful force on the Suburb, by:

- organising social and cultural events including fêtes, picnics and a New Year's Eve party •
- arranging open meetings for residents to express their views and pre-election political meetings •
 - maintaining and enhancing our environment and the character of the Suburb •
- representing member views by lobbying local councillors, politicians, planning authorities etc •
 - supporting local societies and voluntary organisations •
 - donating to various local charities including The Proms at St Jude's •
- producing the RA website, Suburb News & eNews, the Directory and the HGS List email group •
- giving access to the Master Tradespeople List: recommendations made by fellow Suburb members •
 - helping to keep the Suburb safe and engendering an inclusive community spirit •

Join the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association online at hgstra.uk/join (or post the form below)

Join the HGS Residents Association or renew your membership. (One subscription covers everyone at the address)

Name(s) _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Annual subscription amount (Minimum payment £15 per annum) £ _____

Fellowship donation* (Optional) £ _____

(To support Fellowship, a Suburb charity, in its work for Suburb senior citizens)

Total £ _____

* I declare by making this donation that I want to Gift Aid my donations to Fellowship House and am a UK taxpayer paying sufficient tax to meet the Gift Aid on my donation. I agree to Fellowship receiving my details for this purpose.

I wish to pay: (Delete the above declaration if you do not wish to Gift Aid your donation or do not pay sufficient tax)

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Please return this form (with cheque if applicable) to:

The Membership Secretary, HGS Residents Association, PO Box 67700, London NW11 1NS

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