An Update Report for Place Shaping and Enterprise Scrutiny Panel
March 2011

1. Background:

1.1. The Ponders End Regeneration programme represents an excellent opportunity to improve the physical environment; capitalise on the opportunity to create comprehensive, joined up site development; improve socio-economic wellbeing through a package of long and short term measures; utilise Council assets to leverage investment into the Borough; set the context for disposals; and increase the supply of quality, sustainable housing.

1.2. This report provides an update on the Ponders End Regeneration programme, focusing in particular on the South Street Planning Brief area (gasholder site, South St and Alma Towers) and Ponders End Central (or former Middlesex University site and High Street), but also updating on the Ponders End Waterfront Planning Brief area and current live projects.

2. Laying the Foundations – Governance, Planning and Consultation:

2.1. The North East Enfield Partnership met for the second time in early March 2011. At this meeting, Partners started the process of creating a Delivery Plan for this part of the borough. The Vision Team, which was set up especially to start the process of community engagement, still meets to shape plans for the area, although its function and the way it relates to decision-making structures within the Council will be considered this year. This group presents officers across the Council with an opportunity to “test out” Ponders End ideas prior to implementation.

2.2. The Ponders End Framework for Change, which sets out the overarching development aspirations for the area, including how socio economic interventions could improve quality of life, was published for consultation for a period of twelve weeks, closing in December 2009. A final version will be published following decisions around how best to improve quality of life for residents of the Alma Towers.

2.3. A number of projects outlined in this document have already moved towards delivery on the ground and are reported on in this paper. These include Oasis Hadley Academy; South Street footway improvements; adoption of the Ponders End Central Planning Brief, which will now be a material consideration in all planning decisions in the Planning Brief area; working with businesses to improve the quality of the retail offer; completing design work with residents in Ponders End Park; creative/arts events around the High Street; and the Ponders End Business Forum.

3. Ponders End Central Delivery:

3.1. The Ponders End Central Planning Brief, which was approved for adoption by the Council on 8th February 2011, sets out development guidelines for the former Middlesex University Site and sets out an integrated approach to regenerating the wider area, focusing especially on the High Street, Queensway, and Ponders End Park. The Planning Brief was published for a six week period of consultation on 20th July, ending 5th September, 2010. A huge amount of information was gathered from a diverse sample of the community, so responses given were naturally varied. Many respondents chose to answer in their own terms rather than making specific reference to proposals in the Planning Brief. In summary:

- Priorities for improvement – The highest priorities for improvement identified were improvements to community safety, sensitivity to the environment in new developments and better access to public transport.
- **High Street** – Improvements to the pedestrian environment, in particular crossings, would be welcomed. Most participants support limiting the number of takeaways, with some exceptions amongst children and young people. A greater diversity of shops, transport improvements and support of non-retail business were also identified as important.

- **Queensway** – Continued and intensified employment use is widely supported on this site.

- **Queensway Campus** – There are concerns amongst some in the community about the impact on the community that the Queensway Campus development will have, although a number supported the development on account of the need for more and better housing in the area. There was a strong view that priority should be given to local people in the allocation of housing.

- **College Court** – There was general support to the moving of a library to a High Street location. There were mixed views on the provision of a vehicular access to Queensway Campus at this location. Some were concerned about the potential increase in anti-social behaviour in this area that may result from the addition of a public square. Many supported this improvement, and made a range of suggestions regarding what it could include.

- **Heritage, Environment and Sustainability** – It was generally supported to retain buildings of historic character, as long as they are in a good state of repair and serving a positive purpose. Sensitivity to the environment was one of the main priorities identified.

- **Community Facilities** – There was no clear consensus between the two community facility options presented, although it was indicated that community facilities should not have residential uses above. Additional community facilities, in particular a flexible hall space, are essential to cater for the needs of the community, and a number of quality factors were identified. Swan Annex was specifically referred to by a number of respondents as an ideal location for grouped community uses.

- **Transport Connections** – Traffic congestion is identified as being one of the main problems in Ponders End, and it is perceived as having an adverse impact on local business, ability to get around and quality of the environment. This is a fundamental priority for improvement if any major developments are to be considered viable by the local community. Improved train, bus and cycle connections would be supported.

- **Ponders End Park** – Improvements to Ponders end Park are strongly supported, and there is a desire for decent toilet facilities and more activities in this important open space.

- **Services** – The need for additional services to support an increase in population was identified, in particular more nursery, primary and secondary school places, and a police station that is open to the public.

3.2. The full results of this consultation are available in the full consultation report at: [www.enfield.gov.uk/placeshaping](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/placeshaping).

3.3. Negotiations are ongoing with In Path, who control the Queensway Campus (former Middlesex University) site. They are working towards submitting a planning application in summer 2011 and are seeking to resolve issues to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and its partners.

3.4. In order to open up the Queensway Campus site and regenerate the town centre, there is an opportunity to assemble a number of sites to create a new mixed use building on the High Street. In the Planning Brief, 3 options were presented to the community: Option 1, a new community focused building with residential above, to the west of the High Street; Option 2, commercial and community uses spread across two sites (to the west of the High Street and on the Swan Annex site); or Option 3, other options not yet considered. Consultation revealed a
community preference for Option 2. Proposals to develop High Street Phase 1 will be brought forward in Summer 2011.

3.5. Traffic congestion in Hertford Road is being separately reviewed as part of a wider corridor study. This further work will be brought forward for consideration in due course with a view to assessing what specific junction improvements can be agreed to help alleviate congestion, help regenerate the area, and assist pedestrians. This work will develop a phased programme, with potential improvements for the key junctions along the A1010 corridor, from Carterhatch Lane in the north to Nightingale Road in the south. The corridor review will also look at general congestion and rat-running issues.

3.6. Improvements to transform Ponders End Recreation Ground into “Ponders End Park”, a healthy, playful, sustainable space are progressing, with high levels of community input shaping the final designs. Following a number of workshops with key stakeholders, including Ponders End Community Development Trust and the Friends of the Park, the final design for an east-west route connecting the High Street to South Street has been unanimously agreed. Proposals to open up and improve the entrance on the High Street are being detailed up with the community this Spring. The final phase of works, which include upgrade of the existing changing rooms into a community pavilion and improvements to play equipment, will be subject to a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for People pot in 2011.

4. Ponders End South Street Planning Brief and Delivery:

4.1. In December 2010, the Department for Education confirmed £20.6m funding for the new Oasis Hadley Academy to be built on the former gasholder site near Ponders End Station (Woodall Road). At Cabinet on 9th February, delegated authority was granted to approve the preferred bidder for the build contract. Remediation of the site is well underway. A planning application is expected in Spring 2011 and, subject to approval, the contractors will start on site in Summer 2011. The Academy is scheduled to open Spring 2013.

4.2. Also at Cabinet on 9th February, Cabinet confirmed that the first phase of footway improvements on South Street (west of Scotland Green Road) should be considered for inclusion in the Council’s proposed capital programme for 2011/12 and onwards, that a Compulsory Purchase Order should be made if necessary, and that an authorisation report should be brought to full Council to embark on this. Design work for the east end of South Street (east of Scotland Green Road), which will provide frontage to the new Academy and gateway to the Lee Valley Regional Park, is being undertaken separately but will be integrated with the South Street West works.

4.3. Dramatically improving the quality of life for residents of the Alma Towers has emerged as a priority. Options are being considered to improve this area, building on the principles of the Ponders End Framework for Change. Papers will be brought forward by Housing as the project develops.

4.4. A currently vacant shop front in South Street is being converted into an Enfield Jobsnet ‘shop’—a base for the job brokerage service using Working Neighbourhoods Funding. The Ponders End job brokerage, benefits advisors, Neighbourhood Regeneration team and possibly Estates Managers will have a presence in the shop, providing residents with the opportunity to view the latest plans, as well as access to services in the area.

4.5. The South Street Planning Brief, which will bring together and seek community views on all the proposals for this area, will be published for consultation in late Spring 2011, following decisions around how best to improve quality of life for residents of the Alma Towers.

5. Ponders End Waterfront Planning Brief and Delivery:

5.1. The Planning Brief for the area now known as Ponders End Waterfront will be published for consultation in 2011. It covers the southern end of the Brimsdown Industrial Estate, which has been released from its Strategic Industrial Land Designation to a more flexible mixed use
classification. Kier, the owners of the southern end of Brimsdown, have indicated that they wish to proceed with a planning application for industrial units on this site. The industrial units proposed may be at odds with the Council’s aspirations for the site and the developer has been invited to discuss their proposals.

5.2. The Planning Brief also covers land owned by British Waterways, Thames Water, the Lee Valley Regional Park and Mitchell and Butler, all of whom are committed to improving access to their land and create recreational / nature activities for local residents and visitors to the Borough. This project presents Enfield with the opportunity to benefit from the Olympic legacy and play its part in the improvement of the Lee Valley.

5.3. A planning application on the former Visteon site (in Meridian Business Park, now owned by SEGRO) has presented an opportunity to secure a strip of land to enable a pedestrian/cycle connection and environmental improvements down the western edge of the River Lee, and developer contributions from this application will contribute towards delivery of the recreational opportunities identified in point 5.2.

5.4. A number of other changes in Meridian Business Park present Enfield with an opportunity to restructure this estate in the longer term and will be picked up in the Ponders End Waterfront Planning Brief.

6. Crosscutting Projects in 2011/12

6.1. Enfield is currently lobbying the Department for Transport to ensure the current review of the train operator franchise connecting Ponders End to London Liverpool Street accommodates the need for increased services to this station. A Local Implementation Plan bid is being submitted to TfL to fund transport related infrastructure in Ponders End.

6.2. The Ponders End Business Forum is an evolving group brought together by Enfield Business Retailers Association and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team. It is an opportunity for local businesses to discuss day-to-day concerns and have the opportunity to get involved with plans for the area. It is hoped this group take up offers of business support and advice from Enterprise Enfield.

6.3. Working Neighbourhoods Funding has also been used to enhance the retail offer in Ponders End, providing support and advice to businesses to enable them to compete more effectively. This work, alongside the Business Forum and cultural activity, is designed to support the physical regeneration of the area.

6.4. Work to improve the cultural offering in Ponders End is underway. The Culture Services Team has used Working Neighbourhoods Funding to hold events and run creative/arts activities to increase footfall to the High Street, which has suffered since the departure of Middlesex University. An event on 11th December which brought live music into Millennium Café alongside music workshops and the illumination of the Christmas tree was a welcome addition to the calendar of community events in Ponders End. An artist (Mem Morrison) has been commissioned to engage local businesses with activities designed to increase their bottom lines, promote the town centre, help change the perception of Ponders End and celebrate the cultural diversity of the area.

7. Next Steps for 2010/11

7.1. Procure contractor for Oasis Hadley Academy; planning application; anticipated start on site summer 2011
7.2. Progress works to improve South Street (east and west of Scotland Green Road)
7.3. Complete next phase of works in Ponders End Park
7.4. Bring forward proposals for High Street regeneration project as set out in Central Planning Brief
7.5. Publish Ponders End South Street Planning Brief for consultation following decisions around how best to improve quality of life for residents of the Alma Towers
7.6. Publish Ponders End Waterfront Planning Brief for consultation in Summer 2011
7.7. Publish final Framework for Change following decisions around how best to improve quality of life for residents of the Alma Towers
7.8. Progress projects in all areas