

## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Plan

- 1.1 The purpose of the UDP is to provide a strategic and local planning framework for guiding future developments in the borough, whether by public or private agencies and individuals, so as to meet the needs and wishes of local people. It contains:
- detailed policies to guide the Council in exercising its development control powers;
  - policies for the protection and improvement of the physical environment;
  - specific proposals for sites where the Council wishes to encourage development.
- 1.2 Developments (which include new development and changes of use for buildings and land) will normally be expected to conform to all the policies in the plan. The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 states that, "Where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise". However, the Council has to consider all applications on their merits and there may be occasions, exceptionally, where departures from the plan will be approved because the benefits of a proposal in meeting the objectives of the plan are judged to outweigh the disbenefits of conflict with specific policies.
- 1.3 In formulating the policies the Council has had regard to current national government guidance, now largely consolidated in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) including Regional and London-wide Strategic Guidance (see Chapter 2).

### Relationship with other Council Policies and Programmes

- 1.4 The UDP is essentially a land use planning document, although its policies are informed by social and economic factors. Furthermore, the main purpose of the UDP policies is to guide development rather than spell out all the means of implementing the Council's strategy. Where possible duplication with other documents is avoided.
- 1.5 Other key Council policy documents include the Council's annually updated:
- 10 year Local Implementation Plan and annual Borough Spending Plan for transport
  - Housing Strategy and Housing Investment Programme
  - Economic Development Plan
  - Community Care Plan
  - Performance Plan
  - Neighbourhood Committee Policy Statements

Other relevant periodically produced material is found in the Parks Development Plan, Sports and Recreation Strategy, Recycling Plan and environmental plans and programmes under the Local Agenda 21 umbrella. Where any of these documents contains relevant policies which necessitate changes to the UDP they will be identified in the Annual Monitoring Report.

- 1.6 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) issued by the Council will often provide more detailed guidance on how to apply policies and can be updated more readily than plan policies. SPG flows from the policies in the UDP; it does not supersede them. Its purpose is to educate, inform, explain and amplify policy. Although it carries less weight than policies in an adopted plan, it may be taken into account as a material consideration in making planning decisions. SPG includes planning briefs which provide more detailed advice on specific sites. Current SPG documents are listed in Annual Monitoring Reports. Planning surveys and studies on particular topics are produced periodically and underpin the UDP policies.

## **Resources and Implementation**

- 1.7 Any plan must be realistic and capable of being successfully implemented. A key factor is likely availability of resources, both from public and private agencies. The private sector is expected to play the major role, with the Council acting principally in an enabling or pump-priming role. The Council cannot guarantee that every proposal can be implemented in the timescale of the plan, particularly where it is not undertaking the development itself. Sometimes it will only identify priorities or criteria for their selection, to be carried out as resources permit.
- 1.8 A more detailed explanation of how the Council's planning strategy and policies are to be implemented and their resource implications is given in Chapter 14. It contains policies which may be of relevance to all potential developments.

## **Keeping the Plan Up to Date**

- 1.9 The Part I policies in the plan are intended to provide a strategic framework over the period to 2016. The more detailed Part II policies have a somewhat shorter life of ten years from adoption. With a potential life of ten to fifteen years, the Unitary Development Plan must be as robust as possible. Inevitably circumstances will change so that some policies will need revision. Annual monitoring is essential and will record trends, identify new issues and problems, and chart the implementation of proposals and effectiveness of policies. With this in mind, the data included in the UDP by way of explanation or justification of the policies and proposals are kept to a minimum. Annual Monitoring Reports provide a more up-to-date account of trends affecting the planning of the borough. If necessary the plan can be amended as a result of annual monitoring and analysis. The legislation allows a comparatively quick and easy mechanism for doing so.

- 1.10 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act received Royal Assent on 13th May 2004. The Act puts in place a new statutory framework for regional planning and a reformed, more flexible local planning system.

Supporting the Act, new regulations have been published including regulations for new processes for regional and local planning and sustainability appraisal. PPGs will be reviewed and issued as Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The UDP Alterations contains reference to PPGs, as the policies will be saved in accordance with the new regulations, and reviewed over time through the Local Development Framework.

