

Planning for the future of Barking and Dagenham

Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan



Adopted February 2011

Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Barking and Dagenham’s Local Development Framework.....	6
3	Policy context.....	9
4	Key issues for the Area Action Plan.....	12
5	Vision and Objectives.....	22
6	The Policies of the Area Action Plan.....	24
	BTC1 Additional Shopping Floorspace.....	24
	BTC2 Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages.....	27
	BTC3 Office Development.....	28
	BTC4 Hotel Development.....	29
	BTC5 Leisure Uses and the Evening Economy.....	30
	BTC6 Barking as a Visitor Destination.....	32
	BTC7 Improving Public Transport.....	32
	BTC8 Traffic Management/Abbey Road Home Zone.....	35
	BTC9 Town Centre Car Club.....	36
	BTC10 Pedestrian Movement.....	37
	BTC11 Cycling Facilities.....	39
	BTC12 Off-Street Public Car Parking.....	40
	BTC13 Housing Supply.....	43
	BTC14 Estate Regeneration.....	45
	BTC15 Social Infrastructure/Community Facilities.....	45
	BTC16 Urban Design.....	47
	BTC17 Tall Buildings.....	48
	BTC18 Public Realm.....	52
	BTC19 Heritage and the Historic Environment.....	54
	BTC20 Parks, Open Spaces, Play Areas and Tree Planting.....	56
	BTC21 Riverside Development and Informal Leisure.....	57
	BTC22 Sustainable Energy.....	59
	BTC23 Developer Contributions.....	60
7	Site Specific Allocations	
	BTCSSA1 London Road/North Street.....	62
	BTCSSA2 Fresh Wharf Estate.....	66
	BTCSSA3 Barking Station.....	69
	BTCSSA4 King William Street Quarter.....	73
	BTCSSA5 Axe Street/Abbey Sports Centre.....	76
	BTCSSA6 Gascoigne Estate.....	78
	BTCSSA7 Abbey Retail Park.....	82

	BTCSSA8	Abbey Green.....	86
	BTCSSA9	Cultural/Creative Industries Quarter.....	88
	BTCSSA10	Vicarage Field.....	93
	BTCSSA11	A13 Frontage around Gascoigne Road.....	95
		and King Edward Road	
8	Implementation and Monitoring.....		97
	Schedule 1	Monitoring Framework.....	101
9	Appendix 1		
		Saved DPD Policies to be Superseded by the BTCAAP.....	112
10	Glossary of Terms.....		119

4 Key issues for the Area Action Plan

- 4.1 This section gives a brief summary of the current situation in the AAP area and draws out the key issues for the Plan.

Commercial Barking

a) Shopping

- 4.2 According to the 2009 Retail Capacity Study, Barking Town Centre contains some 45,500 sq. m. of retail/service floor space spread over 266 retail and service outlets. It had a comparison goods turnover totalling some £122m in 2008 and a convenience goods turnover of some £42.6m. Generally, Barking Town Centre's catchment area is quite limited with the overwhelming proportion of shoppers being drawn from within the Borough.
- 4.3 There has been no investment in additional shopping floorspace in the town centre in the recent past and the under-representation of comparison goods units. The lack of a department store or a large modern food store and the very limited presence of well known national comparison goods retailers is a source of concern. It prevents Barking from reaching its potential and means that local people travel further a-field to secure a greater range and choice of such products in other centres such as Ilford, Romford, Gallions Reach and Lakeside.
- 4.4 There is a very successful street market which is a key element of the attractiveness of Barking as a destination for shoppers and visitors with shopper numbers very significantly higher on market days than non-market days.
- 4.5 The significant levels of housing proposed in the Plan area, at Barking Riverside and elsewhere within the Borough will significantly increase the size of the catchment population in the period up to 2025. This will be the main driver for increased levels of retail spending which Barking Town Centre is well placed to capture.
- 4.6 The Barking Town Centre Retail Study Update 2009 found that, although Barking is relatively healthy in terms of vitality and viability, there is scope to consolidate and improve its retail provision and that it needs to improve its retail offer if it is to prosper. If Barking is to compete with neighbouring shopping destinations such as Ilford, Romford, Gallions Reach, Stratford, East Ham and Lakeside the town centre needs to develop a more diverse multiple retail base. The study concluded that the projected levels of consumer spend in the catchment area suggested that the Council should aim to accommodate up to 9,000 sq. m. (net) of additional shopping floorspace within the town centre up to 2016. Opportunities exist to meet this requirement within a scheme at London Road/North Street (see BTCSSA1) where the Council is advancing a redevelopment scheme which incorporates a superstore of some 4,500 sq. m. net, through the expansion of Vicarage Fields (see BTCSSA10) and through new retail floorspace provided within the Station Masterplan area (see BTCSSA3). The study identifies that whilst Barking has a strong independent retailing offer it also needs to increase the presence of national multiples to help

attract more visitors and these three schemes will be very important in achieving this balance.

- 4.7 There is also significant retailing outside the Primary Shopping Area principally at the London Road Tesco's store and on the edge of centre Abbey Retail Park which the Action Plan must deal with. BTCSSA7 explains that there is merit in allowing the replacement of the existing Tesco store with a larger store on the Abbey Retail Park as part of a single/linked development of both sites therefore moving it from an out of centre location to an edge of centre location. Due to the significant comparison floorspace which exists on the Abbey Retail Park this proposal would only lead to a limited net increase in convenience floorspace. For this reason this should not have any adverse impacts on the viability and vitality of the town centre itself.
- 4.8 The AAP needs to assess whether changes should be made to the boundaries of the primary and secondary shopping areas and the extent of the primary, secondary and unprotected frontages within those areas.

b) Offices

- 4.9 The town centre contains a number of significant commercial and public administration office buildings. There is some 50,000 sq. m. of office floor space employing some 2,000 people. However, much of the existing commercial office stock is becoming dated, is often of poor quality and does not meet the needs of current and future potential occupiers.
- 4.10 Whilst the commercial office market in Barking is currently considered to be fairly stagnant, the 2006 draft Sub-regional Development Framework for East London regarded Barking as a centre where *"some office provision could be promoted as part of a wider residential or residential and retail/leisure mixed use development"*. In the same vein, the 2008 King Sturge report "Demand for Office Use in Barking Town Centre" concluded that there is a latent demand for small scale offices in the town centre.

c) Industrial/Employment Land

- 4.11 Barking has experienced manufacturing decline over recent years and primary and secondary industry is not now a major employer in the plan area following the redevelopment of a number of former industrial premises for retail distribution, hotel and residential use. The significant remaining industrial locations in the Plan area are at Fresh Wharf, Hertford Road and the Gascoigne Business Park.
- 4.12 Although the southern part of the Fresh Wharf Estate (now known as Muirhead Quay) and the western part of the Gascoigne Business Park have been redeveloped to provide modern industrial/commercial units, much of the remaining land within their original boundaries is occupied by low grade industrial/storage uses which, because of low employment densities, offer few jobs and which, because of their poor appearance, detract from the environment and the image of Barking.

- 4.13 There are benefits in releasing them for housing led mixed use schemes although the corollary of that release would need to be strong protection of the remaining land on the estates and of the Hertford Road Estate.
- 4.14 In the area bounded by Abbey Road and the eastern bank of the River Roding, the historic Malthouse and Granary buildings in the area south of the Town Quay are already becoming the focus of cultural and creative industries development and the remaining low grade industrial and storage uses could be redeveloped for similar purposes.

d) Hotels

- 4.15 Current provision is poor. There is a cluster of budget hotels which were built during the 1990s fronting onto the A406 but they are on the fringe of the AAP area and have little relationship to it due to the lack of direct, easy and pleasant access to the town centre. The hotels are, however, successful and are currently seeking to expand.
- 4.16 A budget hotel opened within the Town Square Phase 2 development in late 2008 but there are no other hotels within the commercial heart of the town centre.

e) Leisure Uses and the Evening Economy

- 4.17 Whilst there are a number of public houses, a night club in London Road, the Abbey Sports Centre and the very successful Broadway Theatre, Barking Town Centre itself is poorly served in respect of leisure and entertainment uses and, in particular, has a very limited restaurant offer.
- 4.18 Entertainment and leisure uses such as bowling and cinemas are now provided at nearby out of centre locations such as Dagenham and Beckton and, although this may limit the scope for securing additional leisure uses, the increasing numbers of new homes proposed in the AAP area may provide a market to sustain new small scale leisure uses in the town centre.
- 4.19 Bars and late night entertainment venues aimed at the predominantly young 'vertical drinking' market present challenges for the police, transport providers and communities generally. However, the evening economy can take a more balanced form by also providing more family oriented leisure facilities such as good standard family-friendly and high quality restaurants thus providing attractions for all sections of the community.
- 4.20 The River Roding master plan suggests that there is significant scope for the inclusion of restaurants and bars in mixed use schemes in the area which would not only contribute to the regeneration of the river area but also help to achieve the strategic objective of better linking the town centre with the historic riverside area.

f) Tourism

- 4.21 Barking Town Centre currently has very limited visitor/tourist attractions. However, the street market, the Broadway Theatre, the significant heritage assets located within the Plan area and a burgeoning evening economy all can give Barking Town Centre some tourism potential.

Transport in Barking

- 4.22 Easy access to and from Barking Town Centre is extremely important if it is to continue to thrive as a place to live and work. In particular, its ability to realise its potential depends upon capturing spend from the growth areas in the Thames Gateway and, in particular, Barking Riverside and South Dagenham. Ease of access is also an important criterion for attracting future employers and is also a key 'driver' for residential development.

a) Public transport accessibility

- 4.23 Barking Town Centre has the highest level of public transport accessibility within the Borough, being served by both mainline and underground train services and 10 bus routes. The focus for current bus activity is along London Road and Station Parade/Longbridge Road and, apart from the station, stops for these services currently cluster in various locations along these roads and at the boundary of the pedestrianised shopping areas of Ripple Road and East Street.
- 4.24 There is substantial scope for qualitative improvements to both bus and rail services in terms of usability, capacity and reliability, as well as further improvements to the sub-regional public transport network, particularly in the form of East London Transit (ELT). The East London Transit Link will link Ilford and Barking Town Centre to the new development at Barking Riverside and to Dagenham Dock. Although planned initially as a dedicated bus service, using state of the art technology, an option for upgrade to a tram service will be retained. Phases 1a and 1b are committed. Phase 1a is in operation and connects Ilford to Dagenham Dock via Barking. Phase 1b is scheduled to commence in 2013 and will connect Barking to Dagenham Dock via Barking Riverside. Phase 2 from Barking Town Centre to Gallions Reach and Phase 3 from Dagenham Dock to Rainham, although included in the London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2004), are not included in the 2008/09 – 2017/18 Transport for London Business Plan. However, the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation is advancing proposals for the Barking to Royal Docks Bus Corridor scheme which follows a similar route to Phase 2. More detail is provided in the Housing and Implementation Strategy.
- 4.25 Public transport accessibility decreases towards the edges of the Action Plan area, where the public transport network is less dense. Phase 2 of ELT, which was originally conceived to connect Barking to the proposed Thames Gateway Bridge and would have further increased the regeneration benefits for Barking. However, the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation is advancing proposals for the Barking to Royal Docks Bus Corridor scheme which follows a

similar route to Phase 2. The Council still believes that such public transport improvements are essential both because of the local accessibility benefits but also because of the sub-regional benefits that can still be obtained through links to City Airport and to Custom House with interchange to Crossrail.

b) Barking Station

4.26 Barking Station is the busiest rail station in the Borough both for main line and underground services with some 30,000 passenger movements on an average weekday. It is the focus of considerable interchange between different modes of transport and is currently at or close to capacity in both the morning and evening peak hours.

4.27 The station, which is a grade II listed building, suffers from a very congested layout both in the passenger concourse itself because of the retail facilities and at the exits onto Station Parade where the movements of passengers entering and leaving the station conflict with bus passengers waiting at the stops immediately outside. There are also issues around bus stop/ taxi rank conflicts and accessibility to the station platforms for the mobility impaired.

c) Pedestrians and cyclists

4.28 The Council's Local Implementation Plan (LIP), which was adopted in June 2007, is committed to improving the environment and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in Barking Town Centre and the rest of the Borough.

4.29 Although there are some 2 kilometres of cycle paths in and around the town centre, routes do not always serve their purpose as well as they might as they do not directly reflect cyclist desire lines and no cycle provision is made on footbridges over the railway or the River Roding. The cycle lanes on the Northern Relief Road are alongside fast moving traffic which is an unpleasant environment and there is also a shortage of secure and covered cycle parking facilities within the town centre and particularly at Barking Station.

4.30 In relation to pedestrians, there is significant severance of the town centre from the surrounding residential areas caused by the Northern Relief Road, Abbey Road and St Paul's Road and the high volume of vehicles using them. The railway tracks are a further source of severance since crossings are not on pedestrian desire lines and where there are bridges, the routes are remote and not adapted for use by the mobility impaired. In addition, there are a number of badly lit subways which are intimidating to use, particularly at night.

4.31 Whilst the heart of the shopping centre is pedestrianised providing direct access to shops, services and to the street market, the pedestrian experience can still remain poor because of overcrowding on footways and conflicts with loading/unloading on market days.

d) Roads/Traffic Congestion

- 4.32 Barking Town Centre is effectively encircled by the Northern Relief Road, Abbey Road and St. Paul's Road all of which are key routes for vehicular traffic. Some of the traffic using Abbey Road and St. Paul's Road is seeking to avoid the congestion that occurs at the Beckton roundabout which is the junction between the A406 and the A13.
- 4.33 The Longbridge Road entrance to the Fanshawe Avenue/Longbridge Road roundabout, the Northern Relief Road and the stretch of London Road between the Lighted Lady roundabout and the A406 experience some minor level of congestion and queuing traffic during peak hours. However during most other times the road system can adequately cater for existing levels of vehicular demand and there is little queuing and delay experienced by traffic.
- 4.34 Transport for London has set a target of limiting traffic growth in the east London sub-region to less than 6% between 2001 and 2011 and the Borough's LIP states that the Council will apply this figure to the town centre.

e) Public Off-Street Car Parking

- 4.35 Being a Major Town Centre, Barking needs to provide public off-street car parking for shoppers and other visitors. The 2004 Car Parking Strategy identified some 1,560 off-street spaces including the London Road and Vicarage Field multi-storey car parks. Following the loss of a number of surface car parks to redevelopment, the figure for early 2009 was just under 1,400.
- 4.36 The Council's intention in the 2004 Interim Planning Guidance was that, in the longer term and by the development of further off-street car parking, provision would be at the 2004 level with a 6%-10% addition. The issue of whether the AAP should seek to increase off-street car parking provision has been contentious and accordingly the Council in 2008 commissioned an up to date Off-Street Public Car Parking Demand Study. The AAP needs to balance the benefits to encouraging sustainable transport of maintaining or even reducing off-street car parking provision against the need to ensure the ongoing prosperity of the shopping centre.

Housing

- 4.37 There are both national and regional pressures to accommodate additional housing into the AAP area. The Government sees the Thames Gateway area as a focus for significant growth in new homes and expects that the Borough, including Barking Town Centre, will play a major role in delivering them. The London Plan sets a housing supply target for the Borough of 1,190 additional homes per annum and whilst it does not seek to direct where within the Borough they will be provided, Barking Town Centre has the potential to make a substantial contribution towards meeting the target.

- 4.38 The Borough's LDF Core Strategy accepts the London Plan housing targets and acknowledges that Barking Town Centre will make a significant contribution to meeting them by delivering some 6,000 additional homes over the plan period. The housing trajectory in the Core Strategy includes those sites which the AAP identifies for housing. The economic climate, particularly in respect of market housing, has changed since starting work on the Core Strategy and the housing trajectory seeks to address this by taking a more conservative approach to when new housing will be delivered and by seeking to assess the levels of risk of non-delivery. The Implementation section in Chapter 8 of this Plan gives an indication of how the Council will seek to minimise delays in housing delivery within the AAP area.
- 4.39 The area's capacity to accommodate additional homes is not, however, the only housing issue for the AAP. There are qualitative issues around the high rise housing provided the Gascoigne Estate which does not meet the Decent Homes Standard and which suffers from the environmental and social problems common to flatted high rise social housing estates. These same issues saw the demolition of the Lintons Estate in 2008.
- 4.40 The lack of affordable housing and the need for more family homes are further issues, particularly since the AAP area comprises wards which are within the top 10% of most deprived in England and most of the new housing units currently being built in the AAP area are one and two bed flats. However, the need for affordable housing has to be balanced against the relatively high levels of Council owned homes in the Plan area and the desire to create more balanced communities and give greater housing choice.

Community Facilities

- 4.41 The additional population that the homes will generate will, inevitably, put pressure on current physical and social infrastructure (e.g. schools, health facilities and leisure, play and open spaces) in the Plan area. If Barking is to be a successful, thriving and sustainable community, it needs to have a good range of facilities to satisfy the needs of existing and new residents.
- 4.42 Accordingly, in June 2006, the Council commissioned a Social Infrastructure Assessment and produced the Social Infrastructure Framework for the period between 2006 and 2027. This related to the supply of and future demands for a range of social infrastructure services such as healthcare, education, leisure, recreation, open space and community facilities including libraries and adult learning and youth services.

4.43 The Social Infrastructure Assessment and subsequent work on building the evidence base for the AAP has identified the need to provide various facilities. The Foyer in Wakering Road and the Children's and Family Health Centre next to the Town Hall were completed in 2008 but additional needs have been identified for:

- Two additional primary schools to serve the Plan area.
- Further education and training facilities within the town centre.
- More community and religious meeting space.
- A town centre police shop and 'back office' space elsewhere in the AAP area.

Urban Design and Public Realm

4.44 Although the Council's commitment to high quality design is beginning to change the look of the town centre, apart from some individually fine buildings, public realm improvement schemes such as Town Square and high profile pieces of public art, the standard of urban design throughout the Plan area remains undistinguished.

4.45 It is consequently important that all new buildings and public realm improvements in the AAP area are of the highest quality in terms of architecture and urban design if the quality of life for residents is to be improved and Barking Town Centre is to compete with nearby town centres and attract the right sort of investment. There is significant pressure from developers for tall buildings within the town centre and the wider AAP area. Again it will be important that they are well located and of high quality design.

4.46 The Plan area lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance and also has a rich architectural and historic heritage containing two Conservation Areas, the Barking Abbey Ancient Monument site and a number of statutory listed buildings and other buildings of local interest, which, although they do not meet the criteria for statutory listing, are nevertheless worthy of protection/preservation. The protection and enhancement of these assets is an important element of Barking's attractiveness as a commercial, cultural and residential town centre.

Parks and Open Spaces

4.47 Although there are many grassed amenity areas within housing estates in the town centre, the Plan area contains few parks and public open spaces. Consequently, there are significant areas with deficient access to local parks.

4.48 As well as a need to provide additional parks and open spaces to remedy this deficiency, there are qualitative issues in terms of facilities and environmental quality about the condition of many of the existing parks and open spaces in the AAP area.

- 4.49 Abbey Green is the most central open space in the town centre, it contains key heritage sites and buildings and is occasionally used for major events. However, it is an under-exploited resource with almost no provision of amenities such as seating areas, sports spaces or play areas for children.
- 4.50 Although not open space in the usual sense of the word, the publicly accessible banks of the River Roding offer very significant opportunities for informal leisure to the local population. Sites with frontages to the River Roding are likely to be brought forward for development during the Plan period and it will be important that the AAP secures enhancements to the continuity and the quality of riverside areas rather than allowing developments to disrupt public access and thus reduce access to informal leisure.

Sustainability

- 4.51 The issues of achieving low carbon development and securing high standards of sustainable design and construction in new developments have been explored during successive stages of producing the AAP, particularly in the context of the AAP area being designated as a pilot Energy Action Area (now Low Carbon Zone) by the Mayor for London in 2005.
- 4.52 However, the Council is of the view that, as the relevant policies in the Core Strategy and the Borough Wide Development Policies apply to the AAP area, this Plan need contain no additional general policies around these issues. Despite this, it does need to address the issue of implementing the combined heat and power system to serve the new developments within the Plan area which is a vital element of working towards achieving the challenging low carbon targets set for the AAP area.
- 4.53 Whilst the town centre itself has a low probability of flooding (Flood Zone 1), areas adjacent to the River Roding and towards the southern boundary of the plan area are at high risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3a). Consequently, as part of the evidence base for the AAP, the Council has undertaken the Sequential and, where necessary, Part a and Part b of the Exception Tests in respect of all of the sites where the Preferred Options Report suggested a Site Specific Allocation would be made.
- 4.54 The application of the tests has indicated that the forms of development which the AAP proposes on sites within Flood Zone 3a are acceptable subject to developers submitting a flood risk assessment (completing Part c of the Exceptions Test) setting out details of on-site measures to reduce the likelihood and impact of flooding. Developers should refer to the Council's document "PPS25 Sequential Test for Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan" for further information.

Developer Contributions

- 4.55 Although direct expenditure by the Council and other public sector bodies (see Chapter 8 Implementation and Monitoring) will be an important element in delivering key elements of the plan such as enhancements of the public realm, the provision of social infrastructure and transport improvements, developer contributions will also be essential. The Council acknowledges that the slow down in economic activity may delay development in the AAP area and, with it the receipt of such contributions. Whilst the Council would, if this were to be the case, seek alternative funding streams, this could see delay in the implementation of some physical and social infrastructure.
- 4.56 The Council has set out in the Core Strategy its policy regarding the circumstances in which it will seek Section 106 contributions from developers. This policy will apply across the whole Borough, including the AAP area. The Council is also currently preparing a Community Benefits Supplementary Planning Document which will amplify the policy in respect of how developer contributions will be sought and applied. The London Thames Gateway Development Corporation has also adopted a policy for developer contributions in respect of applications for which it is the Local Planning Authority.
- 4.57 Accordingly the AAP does not need a different policy approach but there is merit in it identifying some locally specific priorities for developer contributions to those more general ones set out in the Core Strategy.

5 Vision and Objectives

The Vision

- 5.1 By 2025, Barking Town Centre will become a vibrant, environmentally sustainable, prosperous and well designed destination. Its distinctive character will be preserved and enhanced through increasing access to heritage assets such as Abbey Green and improving the setting of the town centre's two Conservation Areas. A high quality public realm will be sought through the implementation of the Barking Code. There will be excellent transport accessibility with marked improvements to the town centre's gateway Barking Station. The health, educational attainment and qualification levels of the local population will have significantly improved, assisted by new primary education facilities and a Skills Centre for young people. In addition to providing 6,000 new homes for all sections of the community, the town centre will serve as the retail, leisure, commercial and training centre for Borough residents and grow in vitality and importance as it plays its full part in the expansion of the Thames Gateway.

The Objectives

Objective 1: Commercial Barking

- 5.2 Enhance the strength of Barking Town Centre as a major retail, leisure, employment and training location so that it can both meet local needs and fulfil its strategic role within Thames Gateway and the London town centre network.

Objective 2: Transport

- 5.3 Produce an efficient, integrated and sustainable transport system by improving public transport through implementation of East London Transit and the Barking to Royal Docks Bus Corridor, providing appropriate levels of car parking, improving conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, mitigating the impacts of road based freight and promoting alternatives and reducing reliance on the car.

Objective 3: Housing

- 5.4 Deliver 6,000 high quality homes, including affordable housing. Seeking to balance this requirement with the need to create a more balanced community by providing a greater variety of housing types and ensuring that the appropriate social infrastructure is in place to serve both the existing and new communities.

Objective 4: Social Infrastructure

- 5.5 Improve the health, educational attainment and qualification levels of local people. Ensure that all new development, including the provision of new health, education, training and community facilities such as the Skills Centre, build on local strengths, promote a sense of pride and fosters community cohesion.

Objective 5: Urban Design and the Public Realm

- 5.6 Protect local character by ensuring that new development and improvements to the public realm are of the same high quality design as the award winning Town Square and create a safe and secure environment accessible to all. Conserve, invest and increase access to Barking's heritage assets and wider historic

environment, including the Abbey and Barking Town Centre and Abbey Road Riverside Conservation Areas.

Objective 6: Parks and Open Spaces

- 5.7 Protect and improve the accessibility, connectivity and quality of parks, play areas and open spaces within and outside the town centre such as Abbey Green at the heart of the town centre and Barking Park which is on the edge. To also open up the frontages of the River Roding and its corridor and seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity as identified in the Barking and Dagenham Biodiversity Action Plan.

Objective 7: Sustainability

- 5.8 Champion sustainable design and construction in new development and initiatives such as the Barking Town Centre Low Carbon Zone. Avoid, reduce and manage flood risk and other impacts of climate change, remediate previously contaminated land and minimise carbon production.

Objective 8: Developer Contributions

- 5.9 To secure appropriate developer contributions that will assist in meeting the key priorities of Barking Town Centre.

6 The Policies of the Area Action Plan

- 6.1 The policies are set out below under the AAP objective to which they relate. Some policies set out positive actions which the Council and other agencies will undertake to secure the AAP vision. Others describe criteria against which planning applications will be determined. All applications for planning permission within the AAP area must satisfy the relevant policies in the Core Strategy, the Borough Wide Development Policies and the AAP as well as taking account of any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 6.2 The policies have been informed by the sustainability appraisal process and take account of the feedback received from the community and other stakeholders during the consultation exercises undertaken on the Scoping, the Issues and Options and the Preferred Options reports. The AAP Sustainability Appraisal Report and the Pre-submission Statement of Consultation should be consulted for more information on this.

Objective 1: Commercial Barking

POLICY BTC1: ADDITIONAL SHOPPING FLOORSPACE

In order that Barking can better perform its Major Centre role, the Council will encourage the provision of additional shopping within the town centre (as defined on the Inset Proposals Map).

In line with the conclusions of the Barking Town Centre Retail Study Update 2009, the Council considers that up to 9,000 sq. m. (net) of additional shopping floorspace should be provided in the town centre in the period up to 2016.

Within the town centre, schemes which help to maintain a balance between Barking's local distinctiveness and the larger national multiple retailers currently missing will be particularly encouraged.

In addition, the Council will be prepared to allow the relocation of the existing Tesco store at the junction of London Road and the A406 to a larger store on the Abbey Retail Park. This replacement store on the Abbey Retail Park will only be acceptable as part of housing- led mixed use development (see BTCSSA7), the cessation of retail use on the present site and its use for housing, and subject to the Council being satisfied that it would not adversely impact on the planned town centre retail development proposed by this policy.

All schemes proposing additional retail floorspace will need to demonstrate that they comply with the environmental and transport policies of the Local Development Framework and do not prejudice the achievement of other proposals contained in the Area Action Plan.

POLICY BTC6: BARKING AS A VISITOR DESTINATION

In line with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy, the Council will seek to develop and promote Barking as a recognised visitor destination. As part of this, the Council will seek to improve the interpretation resources and visitor facilities associated with the Abbey ruins, the Curfew Tower and St Margaret's Church.

REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.6.1 Although the AAP area has a number of potential attractions, little is currently made of them and Barking does not function as a visitor destination in any real sense other than as a shopping centre. Making Barking a visitor destination will help to create jobs and improve the vitality and prosperity of the town centre and this would be particularly the case if town centre hotel development associated with tourism takes off.
- 6.6.2 Strengthening and diversifying the street market and promoting it as a major visitor attraction, making the most of a burgeoning evening economy, ensuring the success of the Cultural Industries Quarter and building on the success of the Broadway Theatre possibly by the development of a cultural hub around it, all have the potential to give Barking Town Centre some tourism potential.
- 6.6.3 However, the Council considers that the significant heritage assets located within the Plan area are the key element and that these will be supplemented as the industrial, maritime and fishing heritage assets of the River Roding area are reclaimed and made more accessible from the town centre through work to Abbey Green and Town Quay.
- 6.6.4 Improving the interpretation facilities at, and the promotion of, the historic Abbey monument, St. Margaret's Parish Church and the Curfew Tower (see BTCSSA8), improving the links between heritage assets and linking them with the closely adjacent and historic Eastbury Manor House are essential elements of this.

Objective 2: Transport

POLICY BTC7: IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Council will seek improvements to the public transport network serving Barking Town Centre and the rest of the Plan area and land will be safeguarded for transport infrastructure schemes that could be implemented in the lifetime of the Plan.

In particular, it welcomes and will promote the development of East

London Transit and the Barking to Royal Docks Bus Corridor through the town centre and the wider AAP area on the alignments shown on the Inset Proposals Map, subject to:

- **Design and layout of the initial bus based systems not precluding subsequent upgrading to a tram based system.**
- **The provision of appropriate associated public realm improvements undertaken in line with the Barking Code.**
- **Acceptable interchange arrangements as part of the creation of a major transport interchange at Barking Station (see BTCSSA3).**
- **It not causing unacceptable environmental impacts on areas within the Plan area through which the transit schemes pass.**
- **Ensuring that the detailed design provides fully for pedestrian safety in the town centre, including for those with physical or visual impairment.**

Whilst the bus-based systems are likely to be implemented within existing highway boundaries, the Council acknowledges that the acquisition of some small areas of land, the precise extent of which it is not possible for TfL to identify at this stage, may be required. If the upgrade to a tram based system is implemented, it is likely that larger areas of land could be required. In either case, the Council will support such future acquisition provided it will not prejudice the attainment of other AAP policies and proposals.

REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.7.1 Barking Town Centre is a major transport hub giving connections onwards to other local and sub-regional areas, London wide and national destinations. It is also a major destination for shopping, employment and a range of other services. Given this, the Council will continue to lobby Transport for London and Service Operators for improvements to the public transport network, particularly bus, rail and underground services, to meet the needs of residents, employees, businesses and visitors to the area.
- 6.7.2 East London Transit is a Transport for London (TfL) project to upgrade public transport in Thames Gateway on the north side of the River Thames. ELT is designed to help meet the growing demand for travel in the area and will offer passengers quicker journeys through better segregation and bus priority measures, new vehicles, better information and new, modern stops and shelters.
- 6.7.3 The construction of the Phase 1a, which connects Ilford to Dagenham Dock via Barking Town Centre, became operational in early 2010. It is bus based, although the detailed design will allow for upgrading to a tram based system if this proves viable.
- 6.7.4 Phase 1a enters the AAP area at the Longbridge Road roundabout and passes along Longbridge Road past the station before entering the pedestrianised

sections of Station Parade and Ripple Road. The streets remain essentially pedestrian in nature but with ELT buses running down the middle. The Council will ensure that ELT is accompanied by significant improvements to the quality of the town centre environment and rigorous safety measures to protect pedestrians.

- 6.7.5 Phase 1b will also use the pedestrianised sections of Station Parade and Ripple Road but as it begins and completes its route at Barking station, it will require waiting space for its buses to be incorporated as part of the overall scheme to improve the Barking Station Interchange (see BTCSSA3).
- 6.7.6 The Council welcomes ELT since it will assist the regeneration and enhance the image of the town centre and improve the accessibility of Barking Town Centre from the surrounding areas including the new residential developments at Barking Riverside and South Dagenham. It will also, in line with its sustainable transport objectives, encourage modal shift away from the private car and onto public transport.
- 6.7.7 Phase 2 of ELT, which was originally conceived to connect Barking to the proposed Thames Gateway Bridge and which would have further increased the regeneration benefits for Barking, was omitted from the 2008/09 Transport for London Business Plan. However the Council still believes that such public transport improvement is essential both because of the local accessibility benefits but also because of the sub-regional benefits that can still be obtained through links to City Airport and to Custom House with interchange to Crossrail. The Council is, therefore working with the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and Transport for London to deliver the Barking to Royal Docks Bus Corridor (BRDBC).
- 6.7.8 BRDBC will follow the same route as ELT Phase 1 as far as the bandstand but from there it will go along London Road and North Street providing ready access to the shopping and the further education facilities proposed as part of the London Road/North Street Site Specific Allocation (see BTCSSA1). The route will then use the Broadway and Gascoigne Road before turning right along the Shaftesburys and crossing the River Roding by a new bridge linking the Cultural/Creative Industries Quarter (see BTCSSA 9) and the Fresh Wharf Estate (see BTCSSA2).
- 6.7.9 In order to improve public transport accessibility for the community, the Council will wish to explore with TfL the scope for and the benefits of BRDBC being delivered as part of the creation of a new neighbourhood where the Gascoigne Estate currently is.