

# Hackney's People

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SUPPORTING PAPER

Strategic Policy

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# Introduction

Each policy in Local Plan 2033 is supported by text which explains the Council's chosen policy position and also provides additional information necessary to understand how the policy will be implemented. Where it has been considered necessary to do so, the supporting papers provide additional justification and explanation for some of the planning policies included in Local Plan 2033, drawing on various studies and evidence the Council used when drafting the policies. This supporting paper provides further justification behind the following policies contained in the chapter "Hackney's People" of Local Plan 2033:

- Policy 7: Social and Community Infrastructure
- Policy 8: Health and Wellbeing

## Policy 7: Social and Community Infrastructure

Social infrastructure covers a wide range of facilities such as health provision, nurseries, schools, childcare facilities, colleges and university, community, cultural, play, recreation and sports and leisure facilities, places of worship, fire stations, policing and other criminal justices or community safety facilities and many other uses and activities which contribute to making an area more than just a place to live. Social and community facilities are distinct from other uses in that they support the quality of life and health and well-being of the local population and are there to meet their needs at all stages of their lives.

The protection, enhancement and provision of new social infrastructure in the Borough is supported by strategic policies in the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

A key issue for infrastructure provision is understanding and planning for population growth but also a change in the likely profile of future residents, which will vary across the Borough. The Council produces and updates an Infrastructure Assessment & Delivery Plan (IDP) regularly which identifies whether existing infrastructure provision is sufficient for current demand and whether known future provision is sufficient for projected future demand. The IDP is based on up to date information from key services providers on current and future demand, supply, population forecast for the Borough. Where service providers are working on modelling demand and capacity to deliver services and plans to meet need, the Council will liaise with service providers regularly to provide evidence to inform planning decisions. Additional evidence in the form of strategies and plans produced by key service providers which have undergone public consultation can also inform planning decisions. Meeting infrastructure needs may not simply mean providing more facilities and could involve changing approaches to how service providers attempt to meet the needs of residents. The Council will seek to ensure planning policies are responsive to this. Policy 7 is therefore linked to the IDP and the Council will approach planning decisions involving social infrastructure floorspace with a view to assisting key community service providers deliver their strategies. More specific requirements for locally specific social infrastructure requirements may be identified by local

communities, for example through the Neighbourhood Planning process, and through Area Action Plans.

With the expected population growth over the plan period, and the fact that the Borough is undergoing significant regeneration and growth, there is a need to protect, improve and provide new social and community facilities. This is placing pressure on the provision of critical elements of social infrastructure such as childcare, education and healthcare. The IDP essentially emphasises that provision of key social infrastructure in the short-term is relatively good in the Borough, but there will be deficiencies in the medium and long-term and strategies including increased supply of key facilities will be required.

Existing facilities also need to be protected by planning policy. Social infrastructure may come under pressure from uses which attract higher land values. Once these sites are lost to other uses it can be very difficult to find alternative sites, especially for use by voluntary groups. Demand for different types of social infrastructure will change over time, but it is important these sites and facilities are retained to meet the future needs of Hackney residents. The potential for re-using, refurbishing or redeveloping existing sites for social infrastructure uses will therefore be assessed before a change of use may be considered acceptable. In the case of a potential loss of health and social care facilities, the CCG, NHS England or other relevant organisation should be consulted to discuss their needs for health floorspace in the area. Additionally, development can lead to increased pressure on Hackney's existing social and community facilities and infrastructure, either cumulatively or individually. It is understood that in certain circumstances additional development to subsidise the cost of providing social infrastructure uses might be required to ensure long-term viability of the development. In certain circumstances this kind of development may be acceptable provided the delivery and function of the social infrastructure facility is not compromised and any application is supported by a financial viability assessment. This kind of development can also help to make more efficient use of land. Mixed use development which combines residential and social infrastructure will therefore be supported where the proposed social infrastructure use meets an identified need.

This policy incorporates the need for new developments to contribute to social infrastructure provision, and sets out criteria for the protection, improvement and provision of social infrastructure. Essentially, the Council seeks to protect and retain such facilities, ensure re-provision of facilities in redevelopment schemes, and facilitate the provision of appropriate new facilities. For proposals involving the loss of such facilities or floorspace, it will need to be demonstrated that the facility no longer meets any current or future need or has been assessed as not suitable for any other community use for which there is a defined need in the locality, and the loss of the facility would not have a detrimental impact on social infrastructure service provision to the Borough's communities. This can be demonstrated through evidence from service providers (e.g. the City and Hackney Primary Care Trust, if relating to health facilities) and/or providing marketing evidence to show that premises have been offered at a reasonable charge to appropriate user groups (e.g. community groups or voluntary organisations in the case of community halls).

In addition to social infrastructure needs identified by the IDP, adopted Area Action Plans (AAPs) for Dalston, Hackney Central, Manor House, and emerging AAPs for Stamford Hill and Shoreditch, further identify area-specific infrastructure required to support growth in those areas. Further local infrastructure requirements may come forward in neighbourhood plans.

The Council will use the regularly updated IDP as well as adopted development plan documents to inform planning decisions.

The shared/dual use of facilities is considered appropriate as a means to assist in service delivery and improving facilities, providing there is no detrimental loss of social infrastructure provision.

In certain circumstances, there may be a need to rationalise both the services and estates of some key public services in order to ensure that services provided to the community are from more accessible properties, and this may result in the net loss of some social infrastructure floorspace. In these exceptional circumstances, the net loss of social infrastructure floorspace can be considered where the proposals are part of the rationalisation of the estates of key public services, such as the Emergency Services, the City and Hackney CCG, MOPAC, and the Learning Trust. The IDP is informed by key service providers and the Council will work with them to ensure their estates strategies help inform planning decisions.

It is important that facilities are located close to the people who use them, and that they are easily reached by a choice of means of transport, particularly walking, cycling and public transport. Town centres and high PTAL areas are generally the most appropriate locations for facilities that may attract large numbers of people, and need to be served well by public transport and which rely on the concentration of other services. Some facilities may not be appropriate in such centres so in certain circumstances development may be acceptable outside. Smaller facilities which will attract people from a local area should be located within their catchment area or in other locations where they are easily reached by the community they serve.

### **Education and Training**

The London Plan supports the provision of childcare, primary and secondary school, and further and higher education facilities adequate to meet the identified need, and supports the establishment of new schools, including free schools.

Education and training uses are a form of social infrastructure and so policy 7 applies in planning decisions involving them. In cooperation with the Learning Trust and other educational providers the Council assesses through the IDP existing and future provision and demand for nursery, primary and secondary schools places, and post age 16 education. There is currently capacity to accommodate the projected demand for primary school places but if demand for secondary school places is to be met, additional school places will need to be provided for. The Council is actively seeking to allocate new sites for schools and encourage the extension, redevelopment or refurbishment of existing schools where appropriate. Mixed use developments which incorporate school facilities and residential use together will be supported in principle.

The IDP concludes that population change is placing pressure on the provision of primary and secondary school places. Spare capacity can be utilised over the short term but the medium to long term situation needs to be kept under review as an increase in provision is likely to be required.

## Policy 8: Health and Wellbeing

Promoting health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities is a key Council objective, and is reflected through Hackney's emerging Sustainable Community Strategy. The London Plan and NPPF also require borough's to plan for improving health through their Local Plans.

Hackney's 2017 Health and Wellbeing Profile identifies a number of health issues facing Hackney residents. Despite significant economic growth and regeneration in recent years, Hackney remains one of the most deprived local authorities in England (based on the Government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation), with some specific pockets of very high deprivation (e.g. in the north-west and east of the borough). At 30%, child poverty in Hackney is the fifth highest in London.

Deprivation is linked to poorer health outcomes and this is reflected in a number of ongoing challenges locally. Healthy life expectancy is significantly below the national average and levels of diagnosed serious and common mental health problems are amongst the highest in London. The main causes of death in Hackney are cardiovascular disease (including heart disease and stroke), cancer and respiratory disease (including chronic obstructive airways disease and pneumonia), many of which are considered preventable. Hackney has the second highest rate of preventable mortality in London.

The most important preventable risk factors for premature mortality, disease and disability include smoking, obesity and physical inactivity. All of these factors are prevalent locally. For example, Hackney has one of the highest rates of adult smoking in London at 20% (although this has been falling and is now similar to the England average); child obesity in reception and year 6 is consistently higher than most other London boroughs; and a quarter of adults are estimated to be inactive (i.e. do less than half an hour of moderate activity a week).

Although deprived, the borough also has considerable assets in both its physical and community resources. Our community is one of the most richly diverse in the country and Hackney has historically been a borough that welcomes people from all walks of life and all parts of the globe. Nearly nine out of 10 residents say that Hackney is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. This is reflected in the vibrant voluntary and community sector. The Borough is also one of the greenest in London, with excellent access to parks and open spaces.

Studies show that there are two broad interlinked factors that influence the general health and well-being of communities. The first revolves around behaviour, lifestyles, diets and exercise. Social and cultural factors may influence behavioural choices which may have an impact on the

well-being of individuals. The second main factor is the built environment and how it can address existing and influence changes in lifestyle and help shape positive health outcomes.

Healthcare facilities such as GP surgeries, dental surgeries and hospitals are sources for both treatment and, importantly, education, especially around diets and lifestyles including exercise. However, the Council seeks to secure a local environment conducive to preventing health problems through a clean and safe environment and the design of buildings to encourage people to be physically active. Poor environmental quality and arrangement of development can have a detrimental impact or exacerbate health inequalities. The creation of new or enhancement of existing usable open space can make them more attractive and easier to access for both formal and informal forms of physical activity which could range from walking to organised sport. Play space facilities are important for exercise for children, and the Hackney Pathfinders programme has resulted in the enhancement of play space facilities. However, informal outdoor areas are often more interesting for older children and can result in the same health benefits as exertions in formal play areas or through organised play.

A number of other factors influence health and well-being. Hackney experiences high levels of air and noise pollution that need to be addressed. The availability of services and facilities easily accessible on foot and bicycle, and a safe network of pedestrian and cycle routes, are important to encourage exercise and reduce pollution through vehicle use. Proposals such as Home Zones and shared spaces that result in child friendly streets that are designed to minimise traffic speeds and flows are to be welcomed. This in turn will allow public realm and streets in residential areas to be used as informal areas for social interaction and perhaps children's play. Access to healthy food, and the design and type of business uses within new developments, are important in addressing health issues. Provision and access to arts, culture and entertainment facilities are important in contributing to mental well-being.

The IDP will be updated regularly and used to inform planning decisions on the protection of existing health and social care facilities and support for new facilities. To ensure successful implementation of this policy a close working relationship will be maintained with the City and Hackney CCG. At present, the largest concern identified in the IDP regarding health and social care facilities is the anticipated future demand for GP services in certain parts of the Borough, for example around Woodberry Down and Stamford Hill in the north of the Borough where significant population growth is expected.

Hot food takeaways are a type of small business that provides entry level jobs to many people. They are also in many cases more affordable than alternatives. Hot food takeaways however also generally serve unhealthy food. Several studies have shown links between the proximity of hot food takeaways to secondary schools and unhealthy eating. Childhood obesity levels are already higher than the national average in Hackney. Government guidance aimed at promoting healthier communities encourages planning authorities to manage the proliferation of fast food outlets. A report from the Nutrition Policy Unit of London Metropolitan University<sup>1</sup> in 2008 found that of the three sources of food available to pupils during the school day (home, school, surrounding area), shops and takeaways from the surrounding area were the most

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<sup>1</sup> The School Fringe: What pupils buy and eat from shops surrounding secondary schools. Sarah Sinclair and Jack Winkler, Nutrition Policy Unit, London Metropolitan University, January 2008. found at [http://www.fhf.org.uk/meetings/2008-07-08\\_School\\_Fringe.pdf](http://www.fhf.org.uk/meetings/2008-07-08_School_Fringe.pdf)

widely used. Public health care guidance published by the National Institute for Health Care Excellence in 2010<sup>2</sup> states that planning authorities should restrict planning permissions for takeaways and other food retail outlets in specific areas such as within walking distance of schools.

The Council considers that the planning system can therefore play a role in limiting the prevalence of childhood obesity by limiting access to fast food establishments for secondary school pupils. This will require controlling any clustering of these uses in town centres generally and restricting them to locations beyond easy walking distance of schools. This would to some extent discourage secondary school children from walking to hot food takeaways and therefore limit their access to unhealthy food. 400m is considered to be an appropriate walking distance to use as a threshold beyond which secondary school children would not be prepared to walk to access hot food takeaways.

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool to appraise both positive (e.g. improving open space) and negative (e.g. poor air quality) impacts of development on different groups in the community that might result from the development. HIAs are aimed at assisting developers to help identify important health impacts and ensure that decisions on proposed development carefully consider key determinants to protect and positively influence health and wellbeing in the Borough. Applicants should use the HUDU Rapid Health Impact Assessment Tool as a guide to completing HIAs.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph25/resources/guidance-prevention-of-cardiovascular-disease-pdf>