

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: Frognal, Gospel Oak, Hampstead Town, Highgate
REPORT TITLE Adoption of Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 (SC/2025/24)	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Cabinet Council	DATE 4 June 2025 21 July 2025
STRATEGIC CONTEXT <p>We Make Camden is our joint vision for the borough, developed in partnership with our community. Neighbourhood planning accords with the ambitions set out in We Make Camden, in particular those relating to safe, strong and open communities and Camden being a green, clean and sustainable place where everyone is empowered to contribute to tackling the climate emergency.</p> <p>The Way We Work is the Council's response to We Make Camden. The proposals set out in this report contribute to the commitments and ambitions in the way the Council works to supports its citizens as designation allows neighbourhood forums to play an active role in planning for their community and local area.</p>	
SUMMARY OF REPORT <p>This report seeks the 'making' (that is, adoption) of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040, which updates, and would supersede, the current version of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan adopted by the Council in 2018. This follows an independent examination which found that the revised Plan, subject to further amendments, was in line with the statutory requirements.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan relates to an area that includes the entirety of Hampstead Town ward, approximately one third of Frognal ward and some parts of Gospel Oak and Highgate wards.</p> <p>The report is coming to the Cabinet because the Council's Constitution requires all of the Council's development plan documents (which includes Neighbourhood Plans) to be agreed by Cabinet, recommending them to full Council for approval where appropriate. The Local Government Act 2000 requires local plan documents to be adopted by full Council.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.</p>	

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet

That the Cabinet, having due regard to the equality impact assessment in Appendix 4 and the obligations set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, note this report and refer it to full Council for a formal resolution to make the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040, set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Council

The Council is asked to make the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025 - 2040, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Signed:



Neil Vokes, Director of Development
Date: 23 May 2025

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This report seeks authority to make (adopt) the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 following an independent examination. This is an update to the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan adopted by the Council in 2018.
- 1.2. Communities can prepare neighbourhood plans to influence the future of their areas. These are statutory planning documents which can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. Neighbourhood plans must be prepared by the community through designated neighbourhood forums, and once prepared, are subject to public consultation, independent examination and, if necessary, a local referendum.
- 1.3. The Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) relates to the whole of Hampstead ward, about a third of Frognal ward and some parts of Gospel Oak and Frognal & Fitzjohns wards. It excludes Church Row and Perrins Walk which has been designated as a separate neighbourhood area (although a neighbourhood plan has not been prepared for this area). A map of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Area is set out on page 11 of the revised Plan, which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.4. The overarching Vision of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025 - 2040 is *“is to conserve and foster Hampstead’s charm and liveability by protecting the distinctive character of buildings and open spaces, the Heath, healthy living, community spirit and the local economy, while also increasing sustainability, mitigating climate change and enhancing the natural environment”*. As with the adopted Plan, it is structured around 6 main topics:- Design and heritage (introducing a new policy on Sustainable Construction); Natural Environment; Basements; Traffic and Transport; Economy and Housing and Community.
- 1.5. The statutory process for updating a neighbourhood plan is broadly similar to preparing a neighbourhood plan for the first time, the main difference being an assessment of the need for a referendum, see paragraph 1.6 below. Two stages of public consultation were undertaken on the draft Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 (see Section 5 of this report). During the second consultation, the Council appointed an independent examiner (Jill Kingaby) to assess the plan against statutory requirements.
- 1.6. Where an existing neighbourhood plan is being updated, the Examiner is also required to set out an opinion on whether they consider the extent of modifications being made to the plan justify the holding of a referendum of residents living in the neighbourhood area.
- 1.7. The Council submitted a representation on the submission draft Plan for the Examiner to consider (the submission draft sets out the forum’s proposals to make changes to the adopted HNP). The representation expressed support for the proposed Neighbourhood Plan but identified a number of areas where the clarity and flexibility of the Plan could be improved. These suggestions principally related to how the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan would work alongside the planning policies set out in the Camden Local Plan (2017) and associated planning guidance and how it would be applied taking into account development schemes at different scales/size.

- 1.8. The Examiner issued her report to the Council and Forum in March 2025. The Examiner found that, subject to modifications being made, the Plan meets the 'Basic Conditions' – the statutory tests which neighbourhood plans are expected to meet. The Examiner recommends that the Council should make (adopt) the Plan with the necessary modifications. Under delegated powers, officers have considered each of the modifications and a 'Decision Statement' has been published setting out the decision to agree them. The modifications address the vast majority of matters raised in the Council's submitted representation. The published Decision Statement is provided at Appendix 3 for information.
- 1.9. The Examiner also considered that the changes being made to the Plan were not so significant or substantial as to change its nature, and therefore, a referendum for approving the revised Plan would not be necessary.
- 1.10. Amendments proposed to the adopted Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:
- A new policy identifying 'Sustainable development' principles.
 - Identification of measures to enhance local biodiversity including the review of mapped biodiversity corridors and the identification of 'priority areas' which can be used to restore/create missing links between corridors.
 - A new policy 'Clean and considerate construction' which sets out how developers should seek to minimise disruption to neighbours and the natural environment. It also encourages the use of off-site fabrication and modular construction to minimise the length of construction programmes and advocates use of the Considerate Constructors scheme.
 - Design criteria added to address the installation of dormer windows, arrangements for bin stores and to resist gated development.
 - Inclusion of measures that developments can take to protect, enhance and safeguard biodiversity, such as prioritisation of soft landscaping and the inclusion of garden 'gaps' / corridors.
 - Resisting excessive or overly bright lighting on shopfronts.
 - Principles set out for how the public realm can be enhanced and public open spaces enhanced.
 - Guidance for how two strategic sites in the plan area might be developed or improved (intended to complement allocations for these sites in the Draft New Camden Local Plan).
 - Minor updates to other plan policies to reflect changing circumstances, including revisions to national planning policy and the London Plan, the emergence of the Draft New Camden Local Plan, the Forum's review of the effectiveness of existing neighbourhood plan policies, and the outcome of community engagement and consultation for amending the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.11. A significant outcome of the Forum's review is that the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan will remain up-to-date and this removes the potential risk that policies are challenged as no longer relevant, up-to-date or fit for purpose due to the period of time that has elapsed since they were prepared.

2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

- 2.1 As set out above, the forum's proposed changes to the adopted Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018) have been independently examined and the Examiner has issued their report to the Forum and Council. Under the legislation, the Council is also required to formally 'make' (that is, adopt) the Plan.
- 2.2 Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic planning policies of the development plan for the neighbourhood area, and should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. The examination found that this requirement had been satisfied, taking into account the representations made by Camden Council and also Transport for London.
- 2.3 The Examiner of the Neighbourhood Plan is required, where necessary, to identify and recommend changes to the neighbourhood plan (as submitted) to the local authority. These changes are to ensure the plan meets the 'basic conditions' (statutory tests all neighbourhood plans must meet). The local authority is required to review each of the recommendations and publish, in a formal 'Decision Statement', its decision whether to accept the Examiner's recommendations for modifications to the Plan. The Examiner's recommendations have been formally accepted by the Council through a decision by the Chief Planning Officer under delegated powers.
- 2.4 The published Decision Statement also clarifies that the Council supports the Examiner's opinion that it is not necessary to hold a local referendum of those living in the neighbourhood area on whether to support the Plan.
- 2.5 The Council's Constitution requires all of the Council's development plan documents (which includes Neighbourhood Plans) to be agreed by Cabinet, recommending them to full Council for approval where appropriate. The Local Government Act 2000 requires local plan documents to be adopted by full Council.
- 2.6 As soon as reasonably practicable after a neighbourhood plan is made, the Council must publish the Plan together with an 'Adoption Statement', setting out where, and at what times, the Plan can be viewed.
- 2.7 The Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 will help enable the delivery of 'We Make Camden' ambitions particularly around ensuring that neighbourhoods in Camden are green, clean, vibrant, accessible and sustainable. In the context of revised policies and legislation concerning climate change and biodiversity (especially the adoption of a new London Plan in 2021 and the emerging draft new Camden Local Plan), the Forum has sought to strengthen policy on environmental sustainability and biodiversity enhancement. The revised Plan also retains objectives around other local priorities such as maintaining vibrant and healthy centres, promoting alternatives to motor vehicle traffic and ensuring that the impacts of construction on residents and the local environment are well managed.

3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 3.1 Under the legislation, where a plan has been found to meet the 'Basic Conditions', the Council is also required to formally 'make' or adopt the Neighbourhood Plan. This is to confirm that the Council is satisfied that a neighbourhood plan meets all the statutory requirements. The alternative would be that Council decides not to make ('adopt') the Plan. This is not the recommended option as it would mean that the opportunity to bring the adopted Plan's policies fully up-to-date, taking into account the effectiveness of these policies in decision making and the community's participation in the drafting of these amendments, would be lost. Council officers have reviewed the Examiner's recommended changes to the local authority and consider these to be appropriate and justified.
- 3.2 Officers are satisfied that the making of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 would not breach, nor would otherwise be incompatible with any legal obligations.

4. WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

- 4.1 The key impact is that the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025 - 2040 will be used alongside the Council's own adopted planning policies to make decisions on planning applications in the area, superseding all policies set out in the adopted neighbourhood plan. The 'making' of the revised Plan confirms the agreement of the Council that the Plan meets all statutory obligations.
- 4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum, with the support and advice of Council officers. Draft versions of the Neighbourhood Plan were reviewed by relevant Council services to ensure that any issues relating to the Plan's impact on other Council strategies and duties could be identified and addressed. Advice was also sought from the Council's technical advisors for basement development (Campbell Reith). The Examination secured changes to the Plan that responded to the matters raised in the Council's representation.
- 4.3 Prior to submission, the draft Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 was also subject to an independent 'health check' commissioned by the Forum. The purpose of the health check was to identify and address key issues likely to impact on the Plan's ability to meet the basic conditions prior to its formal submission for examination. The health check reporter (who is also a neighbourhood plan examiner) set out general advice on where the plan's policies needed to be revised and checked whether the relevant supporting documentation was in place.
- 4.4 During the Examination itself the Neighbourhood Plan was found to be in general conformity with the Council's adopted strategic planning policies set out in the Camden Local Plan.

- 4.5 The Council undertook an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to assess the Plan's impact on 'protected groups' and how the policies might impact on equality. The findings were shared with the Neighbourhood Forum. This found that all of the draft Plan's policies were likely to have positive or neutral effects on people with protected characteristics and other characteristics assessed through the Council's EqIA.
- 4.6 Many of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies seek to improve the quality of the environment for all and a particular theme of the Plan is to enhance the quality of place and positively manage the adverse impacts of development on the local community. It should be noted that the neighbourhood plan does not exist in isolation. Potential effects on people with protected characteristics are also managed through borough wide and London planning policies.
- 4.7 Under the legislation, forums exist for a period of five years, after which they must be renewed if they are to retain their statutory plan making powers. The Council has been actively supporting forums with their redesignation applications to ensure that diversity and inclusion considerations are fully taken into account, in line with the Council's Diversity in the Public Realm Strategy. The Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum sought redesignation last year and made several commitments around furthering diversity, including changes to its Constitution. This will help strengthen previous commitments that the forum's activities are open to all, including people from different parts of the neighbourhood area and different sections of the local community. The EqIA is attached as Appendix 4 to this report.

5. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 Consultation has occurred throughout the preparation of the Plan. The Neighbourhood Forum implemented a comprehensive community engagement strategy up to the Plan's submission for independent examination. Details of the consultation methods used and how the community was engaged, including hard to reach groups, are set out in the revised Plan's 'Consultation Statement' – one of the supporting documents submitted at examination. The Neighbourhood Forum undertook consultation on a full draft Plan commencing in January 2024 (Regulation 14). The Forum then made changes to the Plan taking into account the comments received.
- 5.2 This was followed by a further consultation on the submission draft version of the Plan during August to October 2024, undertaken by the Council in accordance with statutory requirements. The Plan was publicised for eight weeks and representations invited.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor's comments are included in the text of this report.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report seeks the approval of Cabinet for the making of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040. This supersedes the current version of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan adopted by the Council in 2018.
- 7.2 The costs of preparing and examining the plan are funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The draft vision of Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 includes “protecting the distinct character of buildings and open spaces, the Heath, healthy living, community spirit and the local economy, while also increasing sustainability, mitigating climate change and enhancing the natural environment.” Aims of the Plan include “promoting sustainability and energy efficiency, in order both to mitigate and adapt to the climate emergency” and “be enduringly green, with the Heath, open spaces, trees and landscapes well protected”. Further it aims for Hampstead to be “safe and walkable, with good public transport and alternatives to the use of cars”.
- 8.2 Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan demonstrably contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development (one of the Basic Conditions tested at examination). The revised Plan incorporates a new sustainable development policy which sets out the expectations around energy and resource consumption of new development. The Plan also strengthens policies relating to the natural environment and biodiversity.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 The adoption of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 concludes the neighbourhood plan making process. It confirms that the Council is satisfied that all of the relevant statutory requirements have been met. This means the plan will have full weight in making planning decisions and the first adopted Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018) will be superseded.
- 9.2 Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 will form part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area. It will be for the Forum to decide whether it wishes to update its neighbourhood plan policies in the future and undertake a review of the revised Plan.
- 9.3 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 31), once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict (unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently).

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040
- Appendix 2 - Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 appendices
- Appendix 3 - Decision Statement
- Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment

REPORT ENDS