

**“Planning for Growth”:  
The role of Tottenham’s industrial and employment land in  
accommodating London’s expansion**

A Policy Review



*Warehouses off of Eade Road, Tottenham (photo by author)*

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## Introduction

In January 2014 Haringey Council released two documents intended to guide the future development of Tottenham: the first is the *Tottenham Area Action Plan* (AAP), the second the *Site Allocations Development Plan Document* (SADPD), which details 54 sites in Tottenham to be redeveloped. In reviewing these documents, it is clear that industrial land figures very prominently in areas of Tottenham slated for redevelopment. As both of these documents are in draft form and were open for consultation, a response was put together by Our Tottenham, a network of over 40 different community groups, showing concern for the level of redevelopment planned for the area. In order to gather further information a walkabout was undertaken in February 2014 by UCL students to explore four of the sites listed in the SADPD, all of which contained industrial and employment land (see Annex). This led to a desire to further explore how industrial land is classified in Tottenham, and how developments proposed (largely a change of use to residential) are being justified. The questions therefore being asked are: 1) where is this change of use of industrial sites located in the policies? And 2) how does the development of Tottenham fit in with the larger context of London growth and regeneration?

To answer this I examined documents pertaining to Tottenham itself, such as those mentioned above, as well as borough-level and wider London planning documents that relate to industrial land, including the London Plan. Figure 1 shows the hierarchy of applicable planning documents. Given the sheer magnitude of available documents intended to guide planning at various levels, which is in itself a major reason the planning realm remains so inaccessible, I have looked at the central planning framework at each level in addition to documents I find relevant, including some seen as “supplementary guidance,” which, while non-binding, do form part of the “evidence base” upon which planning frameworks are built. It should be noted that while boroughs can make their own plans, ultimately they may not contradict what is laid out in the London Plan.

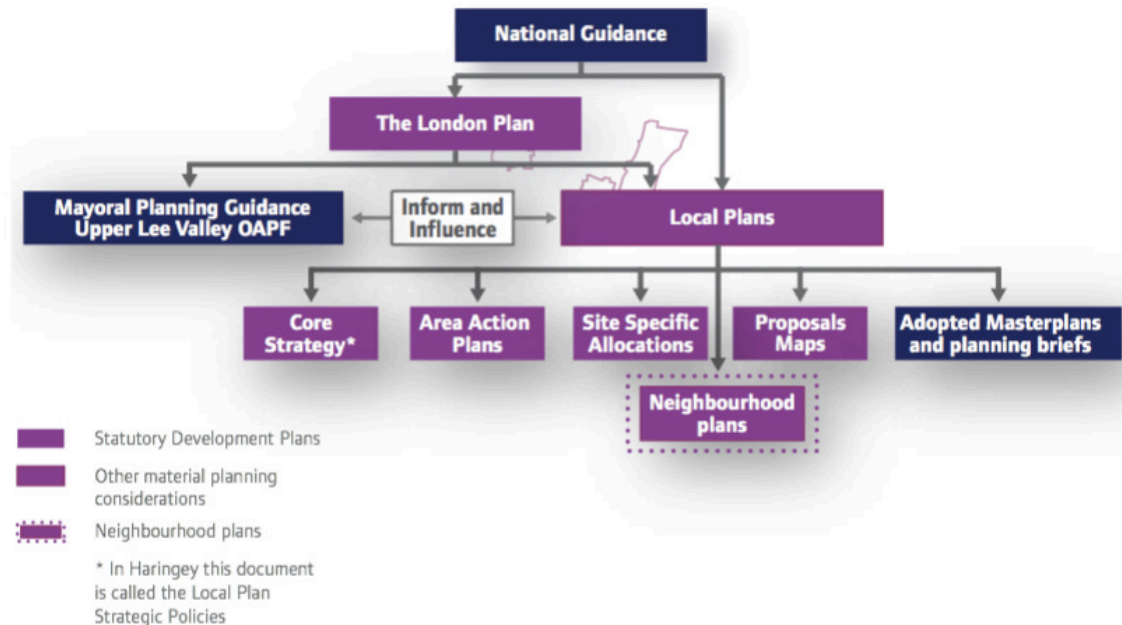


Figure 1: London planning hierarchy. Source: Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Planning Framework, p. 17.

The aim of this project is to provide an overview of policy as applicable to industrial and employment land in London and Tottenham specifically, especially because many of these documents are very recent or still in consultation phases. I look first at how industrial land is dealt with at various levels of policy, and then make use of Our Tottenham and the Just Space network's responses that they have submitted in relation to industrial and employment land to inform further analysis. It becomes clear that due to the presence of industrial spaces perceived to be less dense or not efficiently used, Tottenham is being used as an area to expand housing in order to accommodate the growth of London. Industrial spaces may therefore be converted to high-density housing without much regard to the needs of the communities that live in the area. This process is being driven by private consulting firms and developers that inform the very evidence base upon which regeneration frameworks are created.

I hope that it will be useful to Our Tottenham as well as to planning groups across London but especially those in similar areas targeted for regeneration, as the conversion of industrial land is pertinent to these areas and also integral to the question of new housing for London's growing population.

## Tottenham level documents

### *Area Action Plans and Site Allocations Development Plan Document*

The *Area Action Plan* (AAP) is a statutory planning framework to guide development in an area of intense regeneration, in this case identified as Tottenham. It is in the AAP, which focuses on Northumberland Park and South Tottenham, that Tottenham is said to be “the most significant development opportunity for London for the next ten years” (AAP p. 4). There is a mention of the next *Employment Land update* (discussed later) and that release of employment land may be facilitated with no net loss of jobs (ibid., p. 8), which at least indicates a willingness to retain employment. Then, the *Site Allocations Development Plan Document* (SADPD) allocates strategic sites which will “make a significant contribution to meeting the growth aspirations set out in the Local Plan” (SADPD p. 4). The document outlines specific sites designated for redevelopment and suggests what kinds of uses should take place on them. There is a general focus on industrial sites that may be converted to other uses. Though there are many mentions of retaining and/or providing new employment, it is clear that a huge intention with most of these sites is to develop housing. The document covers a range of designations for land which include the following:

- **Strategic Industrial Locations (SILs)** are designated under the London Plan as industrial areas that must be protected in the interest of London as a whole. Two of these are located in Haringey, and both are in Tottenham: part of Central Leaside, which the plan states “will be protected against redevelopment and retained in employment” and Tottenham Hale (Haringey Local Plan p. 92).
- **Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS)** are identified by the council as important to the borough and are to be safeguarded “for a range of industrial uses (B1 (b), (c), B2 and B8) where they continue to meet demand and the needs of modern industry and business” (ibid., p. 91). It is stated that, “in line with the 2009 Employment Study, the Council will protect these areas to provide choice and flexibility in employment land” (ibid., p. 92).
- **Local Employment Areas (LEAs)** are “employment sites that offer a more flexible approach to the uses on them” (ibid., p. 91).

All of the 54 sites listed in the draft Site Allocations document are clearly present in the document because they are the focus of redevelopment. The expansion of residential capacity figures into all of them. From the descriptions of the designations in the Local Plan, LSISs are clearly a designation that are meant to be protected and retained for their employment uses. Five sites in the draft SADPD are listed as LSISs: NT1, TH8, S2, NT3, and S3. All of these contain the potential for expansion of housing, many explicitly mentioning changes of use to residential. Six sites in the SADPD are designated as LEAs: TH2, TH3, TH4, TH5, TH7, and NT2. While under the Local Plan definition there is some room for more “flexible” uses, surely the purpose of the designation is to keep them as important employment sites in the borough. And yet, all of these sites in the document are listed for residential expansion. This is at the heart of a tension that comes up repeatedly in looking at the designation of land in Tottenham: various levels of policy refer to the land designations that imply a degree of protection, which only cover a certain amount of industrial land in the area. But even these “protected” sites are not free from being redeveloped towards residential use.

### *Strategic Regeneration Framework*

Another document relevant to Tottenham regeneration is the *Strategic Regeneration Framework* (SRF), also in draft form, that echoes many of the overall goals of the AAP and SADPD. The 32-page document lists 6 strategies for regeneration, outlining “Tottenham today” and a vision for “Tottenham tomorrow,” containing criteria for the achievement of each strategy. In general, the document supports the conversion of industrial spaces, implying that current industrial sites are not being used efficiently and that Tottenham must “attract new uses”. In the strategy to “create new jobs and employment opportunities,” it is stated that many industrial sites are operating but at a low employment density, and that some industrial sites contribute to a poor image which has made it difficult to attract new uses (SRF p. 14). The document therefore recommends working with business owners to “manage the operations and image of industrial estates to create a more desirable setting for new investment” (ibid., p. 15). Though it is unclear what kind of investment could be meant by this, nor is it clear what is meant by “more efficient” uses, the SRF also states it aims to “encourage denser and more productive economic activity in industrial areas that support [small and medium enterprise] growth and job opportunities for

local people” (ibid.). The question ultimately will be whether it will be possible to hold investors and developers accountable for employment that truly does meet the needs of local people.

### Haringey level documents

#### *Haringey’s Local Plan*

The *Haringey Local Plan* sets out the vision and policies for the borough of Haringey up until 2026, and is meant to guide the Tottenham-level documents. The borough-level plan makes it clear that the focus of new growth and development in the borough is to take place in Tottenham. The document lays out Haringey’s “Growth Areas,” areas with the “greatest capacity for growth” (Haringey Local Plan p. 47), one out of two of which is in Tottenham (Tottenham Hale). There are also “Areas of Change,” which hold “considerable potential for growth” and 3 out of 4 of these are in Tottenham (Northumberland Park, Tottenham High Road Corridor, Seven Sisters Corridor) (ibid., p. 46). A table showing the “location and number of dwellings” planned for these areas shows that the highest number of residential units is planned for Tottenham (ibid., p. 47).

This focus on Tottenham is partially justified by a particular narrative of industrial land in the borough:

Haringey has a relatively large amount of industrial land. In the past, this land provided many jobs for manufacturing. But manufacturing has declined and we need to plan for new jobs to replace those being lost and to provide jobs for the increasing population. Travel to work patterns have become increasingly complex. It is accepted that many working residents in Haringey travel to work outside of the borough (ibid., p. 31).

This assumes that much employment provided by industrial land has been lost because of the lower prevalence of manufacturing. Coupled with the idea that many residents may be working outside the borough, this may be used to justify the conversion of industrial sites to other uses, especially to housing.

In terms of industrial land in Haringey, the Local Plan corroborates that SILs and LSISs are to be protected. The Plan also refers to the Mayor’s *Supplementary Planning Guidance* (SPG) on industrial capacity, which estimates that there is scope for the release of around 814

hectares of industrial land in the north sub-region of London in the period leading up to 2026 (ibid., p. 92). “Haringey is classified as a “limited transfer” borough of industrial sites, which means safeguarding the best quality sites and managing the rest to reduce vacancy rates where possible” (ibid.). Again, there is a clear drive to safeguard certain industrial sites and reduce vacancy rates, which in theory should not lead to the automatic conversion of industrial sites to other uses (especially as so many cannot be said to be “vacant.”)

The plan also touches upon the London Plan’s employment growth projections for the north London sub-region (37,500 additional jobs over the period 2011 – 2031) and states that Haringey has a “key role” in contributing to this target, citing the Area Action Plan process as key in identifying opportunities for new employment and investment (ibid., p. 95). In stating a commitment to providing employment, the hope is that this would not just be employment for new higher-income populations moving to the borough. In a separate section, the plan states a clear aim to support social inclusion by “ensuring that the impact of development on the social fabric of communities is considered and taken into account” and “taking into account the needs of all the community” (ibid., p. 32). If the council really aims to follow through on this then aims of expanding housing and employment should not contradict this.

### *Haringey Employment Study*

The *Haringey Employment Study*, released in 2009 with an update in 2012, is the key evidence base on which the Haringey Local Plan decides its policies. This document is also crucial because besides the Local Plan, it directly informs the AAP and SADPD for Tottenham (SADPD p. 30). In general the document advocates ensuring the availability of employment land along with the release of industrial land where possible. A table outlines criteria for justifying the retention or release of sites in industrial use, and it is stated that this should be used in conjunction with guidance found in the Mayor’s SPG (Haringey Employment Update p.11). Another table (shown below) contains a summary of employment land designations for Haringey, specifying the categories listed above (including SIL, LSIS, etc.). Going down the list of specific sites it is again clear how Tottenham figures prominently, but mostly in the last two categories indicating the most “flexible” use of land: most LEA sites are located in Tottenham, and all three Regeneration Areas are in Tottenham. Still, it says that employment land should

support employment uses, and only the Regeneration areas are mentioned as possibly allowing residential uses (ibid., p.13).

**Table 3-2: Summary of Core Strategy Employment Land Designations**

<b>Employment Designation</b>	<b>Policy Description</b>	<b>Site Designations</b>
Strategic Industrial Locations	The Council will safeguard these sites as Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL) as identified in the London Plan	Brantwood Road, N17; Lindens / Rosebery Works, N17; Marsh Lane, N17; North East Tottenham, N17; Millmead.
Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS)	The Council will safeguard the following sites as Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS) for a range of industrial uses (B1 (b), (c) B2 and B8) where they continue to meet demand and the needs of modern industry and business	Crusader Industrial Estate, N15; Bounds Green Industrial Estate, N11; Cranford Way, N8; Friern Barnet Sewage Works, N10; Vale Road / Tewkesbury Road, N15.
Local Employment Area (LEA) – Employment Land (EL)	Employment Land (EL) is land that is deemed acceptable for other employment generating uses that complement the traditional 'B' use classes, such as a small scale "walk-to-retail", cafes and creche/nursery.	Campsbourne, N8; N17 Studios, 784 – 78 High Road, N17; High Road West, N17; Queen Street, N17; South Tottenham, N17; White Hart Lane, N17; Wood Green (northern area), N22; High Road East, N17; Land west of railway / Milmead SIL; and Rangemoor Road / Herbert Road, N15.
Regeneration Area (RA)	Regeneration Area (RA) is the most flexible of the categories as it can include uses appropriate in a mixed use development, such as small scale "walk-to" retail, community and residential uses. However, the approach to mixed uses in Regeneration Areas must have regard to London Plan town centre and retail policies, so not to encourage retail development outside of town centres.	Hale Wharf, N17; Tottenham Hale, N17; and Willoughby Lane, N17.

Source: Haringey Employment Update



However, the study does not necessarily support the protection of industrial land in the way that is advocated in the other policy documents, in fact it states expressly:

Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of employment land and applications for alternative uses of designated land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need of different land uses (ibid., p. 8).

In other words, land use should depend on “market signals” leading to perhaps the most profitable use for land but not necessarily according to industrial/employment land designations. Most surprisingly, the document reflects the desire to get rid of planning permissions in order to convert “derelict” spaces into new homes:

The Government recognises the importance of house building in supporting the growth of the economy, as well as meeting housing needs. Consequently, the Coalition [government] is proposing to remove the need to get planning permission to change vacant and derelict offices and warehouses into new homes (ibid.).

The building of housing is thus presented as being integral to supporting the economy, and therefore justifies the conversion of current industrial land (which also provides employment) into housing. This circular logic is juxtaposed in the very next paragraph by the recognition that, in speaking about neighborhood planning, “the Government considers that local communities should make the decisions about the location, type, and scale of development they need” (ibid.). If the decision to develop new housing on sites deemed to be inefficient or “vacant” has already been made, clearly local communities are not deciding what kind of development they need. As the land review is set to be updated in the near future, this may be an important opportunity to try to influence the research that informs Tottenham’s regeneration frameworks, assuming any channel of influence exists.

### London level documents

#### *The London Plan*

In terms of designated industrial areas, the *London Plan* focuses on SILs, and designates that development proposals in SILs should be refused except in exceptional situations, for

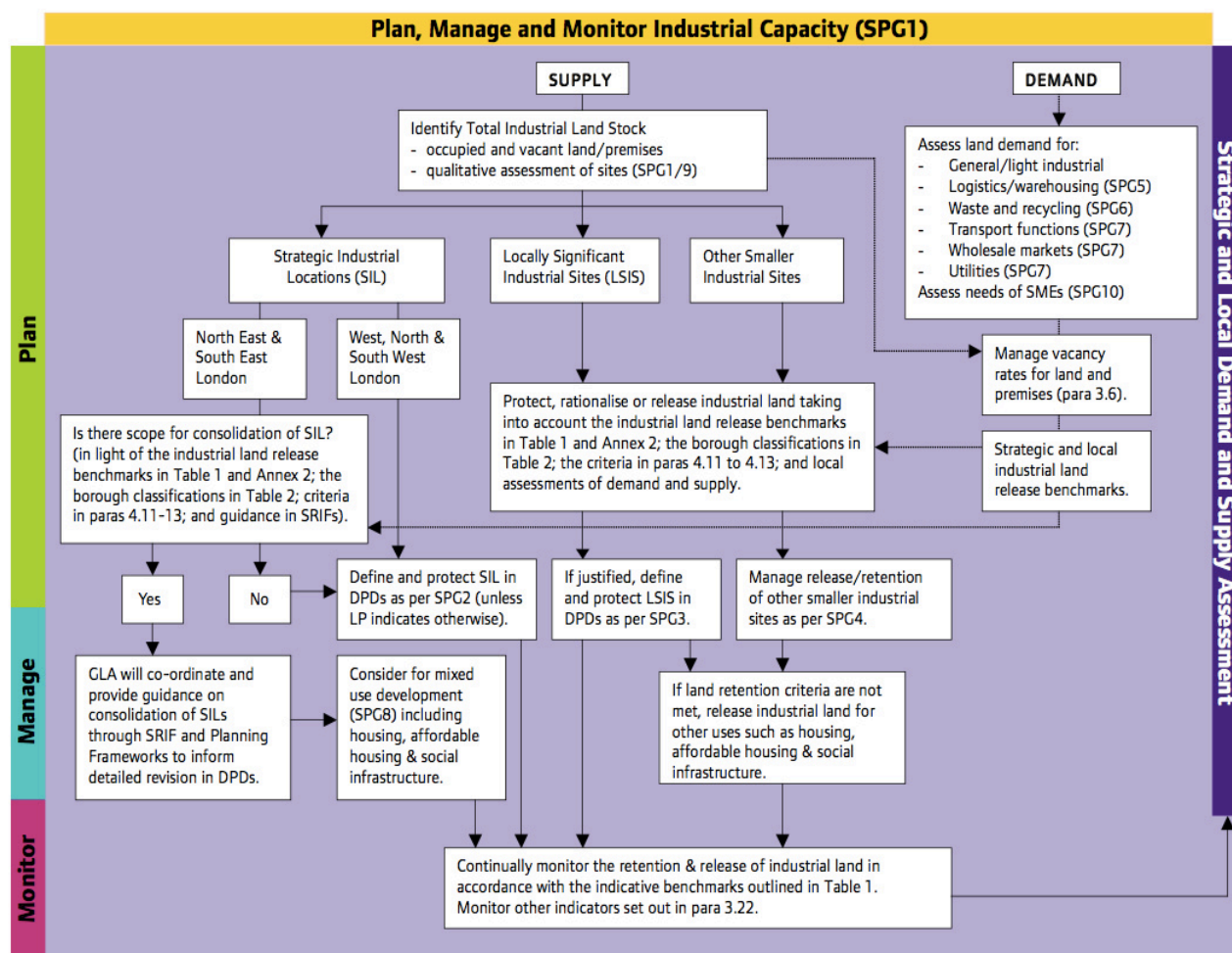
example when industrial land can be consolidated or other employment can be offered for smaller enterprises (policy 2.84). In general the area must always be used for industrial purposes and employment, and proposals for adjacent areas should not compromise the effectiveness of the locations (policy 2.17). The plan stipulates that LSISs should be identified and protected based on evidence of demand for industrial land in the borough. It also indicates generally that the “redevelopment of surplus industrial land should address strategic and local objectives particularly for housing, and for social infrastructure such as education, emergency services and community activities” (policy 4.23). Map 4.1 in the London Plan shows the greatest scope of transfer of industrial land in east and north London. This supports the London Plan’s overall goal which is “planning for growth”.

The draft *Further Alterations to the London Plan* (FALP) were released this year, and propose changes to certain parts of the London Plan that are then open for consultation. Numerous points of the FALP propose further facilitating the release of “surplus” industrial land to enable “high density development” (FALP 2.16) or otherwise emphasizing the urgent need for housing in London and that further land may be found in Opportunity Areas and industrial land, for example. It seems the FALP intend to make conversion of industrial land even more flexible.

### *Mayor’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on Industrial Capacity*

This is the primary document on which industrial land guidance in the London Plan is based. It also explains how policies in the London Plan are to be implemented, in addition to guiding borough-level Development Plan Documents (DPDs) (SPG p. 10). The 80-page document provides great detail on the designation of industrial sites as well as guidance on transport planning. In the introductory statement, mayor Boris Johnson states that the goal is to “plan, monitor and manage the release of surplus industrial land so that it can better contribute to accommodating and supporting London’s growth” (ibid., p. 5). This includes, he says, making sites available for additional housing. The goal of accommodating London expansion with the building of new housing is present throughout, especially when it comes to “less dense” or “vacant” industrial sites. A particularly useful chart on page 65 (shown below) maps out the management of industrial land in London in light of established supply and demand for the land. Interestingly, any route on the chart ends at the same place “continually monitor the retention

and release of industrial land” in accordance with the benchmarks laid out in the same document for industrial land release in each borough (ibid., p. 65).



Source: Mayor’s SPG on Industrial Capacity

### *Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework*

This 223-page Framework for the Upper Lee Valley covers Tottenham Hale and all of Tottenham High Road including Seven Sisters. The Framework echoes the London plan on the question of SILs in that these are meant to be safeguarded and maintained, though it does state that some areas would benefit from better management and maintenance (Upper Lee Valley OA Planning Framework, p. 24). The Framework asserts that “Though there are some vacancies, there is no evidence to suggest these sites are no longer suitable for employment use. The retention and renewal of the protected industrial land is therefore an important element to the

success of the Upper Lee Valley” (ibid.,). Interestingly, the document mentions efforts to release industrial land from its “protected designation”, and that a number of SILs and LSISs in the Opportunity Area have been “identified for mixed-use intensification” due to a variety of factors such as accessibility to transport. For Tottenham this means Tottenham Hale. The document states that “changes to these Strategic Industrial Location designations have been brought forward through the individual boroughs’ Local Plan processes” (ibid., p. 23). There is at once an apparent interest in retaining industrial land, and also a move toward more flexible designations.

### Responses from Tottenham and London community groups

Our Tottenham (OT) submitted responses to both the AAP and the SADPD, as both of these were open for consultation up until March 2014. These responses covered a range of issues relating to potential development of Tottenham but also touched upon employment and industrial land as a crucial area of concern. For the Area Action Plan, Our Tottenham asserts that contrary to the implications given in the AAP, Tottenham is already extremely dense, and therefore the plan for 10,000 new homes is of concern. Less-dense areas contain important employment land, and OT rejects the possibility that this would be converted to housing:

The improvements in accessibility in North Tottenham should not lead to a mass conversion of employment land into housing land for the purpose of capturing increasing land values for private developers, as there is a need to (i) maintain all existing sources of employment in the Borough and (ii) maintain industrial uses in London to keep a diverse economy” (Our Tottenham p. 19).

OT also sets out that any release of employment land to other uses should be exceptional (if the site is clearly vacant or derelict, for example), and establishes a very clear condition that a site must be demonstrated to be unviable for a three year period prior to being converted to other uses (ibid., p. 19).

For the Site Allocations document, OT notes that many of the sites are on designated industrial land, and that “such a designation is important to safeguard the sites and their usage.” (ibid., p.4) Indeed the SADPD contains sites which have already been designated as LSISs or as SILs, which by definition are meant to be protected. Yet here they are being suggested as areas for redevelopment. For example, TH8 (ibid., p. 33) is listed as an LSIS, and the recommendation is a change of use to residential. What then is the purpose of a LSIS designation if the council

recommends a change of use that may compromise the industrial character of the site? Accordingly, OT recommends against many of the listed sites being listed for redevelopment. Rather, fringe areas or obviously vacant sections of some sites may be redeveloped for housing or live-work units, but this should be in exceptional circumstances and not compromise the industrial character of the sites (ibid., p. 4).

The Just Space economy and planning section produced a response to the Further Alterations of the London Plan that very thoroughly covers the main issues regarding industrial land in London as a whole. They view the FALP as going increasingly towards converting employment land towards high-density housing, especially in Opportunity Areas (Just Space p. 5), which does not support the growth of local economies or the accessibility of services to local communities. Flexibilities proposed risk worsening the situation of affordable workspace and affordability in London. Just Space rejects proposals for the highest release of industrial land in areas already undergoing rapid change for the same reasons. Accordingly, release of land suggested around transport nodes (ibid., p. 11) is likely to push up the value of industrial land, and also goes against the point of SILs which is to protect the area. It is also mentioned that London is losing industrial land at more than twice the rate set out in the current London plan (ibid., p. 27). Ultimately Just Space proposes an altogether new approach to industrial land:

We recommend that targets for release are reduced further, stronger protections introduced, and commitments made to developing a new approach to the management of industrial land in London, as part of a full, transparent and participatory review of the economic evidence base and economic development strategy for London (Just Space p. 14).

### Who is planning Tottenham?

A very crucial point brought up by the Just Space response is the fact that the “evidence base” for the London Plan is based on the interests of property developers. Indeed a bit of digging confirms that this is likely the case. The policies that dictate the future of London begin with research that is usually conducted by private firms. The Haringey Employment Study, which informs the Local Plan and other policies relating to employment in the borough, was undertaken by Atkins, a private design and engineering consultancy (Atkins). Most data in the Mayor’s SPG on Industrial Capacity comes from the URS Corporation, another large-scale international construction firm (URS Corporation). A substantial evidence base that contributes

to how employment land is dealt with comes from private consulting firms who have a direct interest in the design and construction of London, and whose ultimate motive is profit. This is bolstered by other documents further promoting the development of Tottenham such as the SRF discussed earlier, which was developed by Urban Strategies Inc., a consulting firm based in Toronto (Urban Strategies Inc.). An aesthetically-pleasing *Physical Development Framework* brochure was also developed by ARUP, an example where a private firm develops its own plan for this Opportunity Area and this is then taken on by the Mayor of London (whose name appears on the document).

This speaks to a much larger issue of research and knowledge in planning. Is it surprising that the Employment Study refers to efforts to remove planning permission needed to turn “vacant” spaces into new homes (Haringey Employment Update p.8)? Can it be surprising that the ultimate conclusion of these policies is that London needs more housing and developments to accommodate growth, when the research was conducted by those that may end up developing the property? Private firms decide what kinds of developments are needed in London, and also prepare the plans for such developments. Thornley et al. (2005) also show the major influence that business interests, especially real estate developers and professional services, had on the formation of the London Plan. Plans for Tottenham were therefore largely influenced by larger private interests at the London level. Residents of Tottenham may be able to respond during consultation periods for two particular development documents, but they currently have no opportunity to influence how plans are developed in the first place or to contribute to the “evidence” upon which the plans are based.

Conducting an overview of planning documents reveals a number of contradictions regarding planning in Tottenham. First, the need to protect certain industrial and employment sites are acknowledged and designations exist that seem to support this protection. At the same time, increasing “flexibility” for these areas is proposed, meaning the future for much industrial and employment land, even for sites designated to be protected, is entirely unclear. Second, a general logic indicates that a decline in manufacturing or “underuse” of certain areas warrants their redevelopment, but terms like “underuse” and “inefficient” are not defined, and in addition to that, “the role of real estate speculation for residential conversion in driving deindustrialization” (Just Space p. 14) is not acknowledged. Finally, references to local communities are peppered throughout, with assertions that their needs should be answered to and

local economies supported. But these needs are not necessarily taken into account in the evidence gathering process; communities are asked to provide input much further down the line in limited consultation processes.

The intense focus on Tottenham is indication of the perceived importance of the area in accommodating London's growth. The question is how this designation as "strategic" can be used as a point of leverage for local groups to assert the kind of "regeneration" they want, if any. If plans begin with "evidence", even the act of gathering evidence at the community level is potentially a significant entry point for change.

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## **Annex : Walkabout February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

### **S3: Vale Road/Tewekesbury Road**

#### **Observations:**

It is true that the area appears to have a mixed use. There are artist live/work spaces by Eade Road (where it meets Seven Sisters Road) and they appear very well maintained and neat. This part of the site appears well laid out and there is a decent amount of floor space – adopting a real estate planners mind you can see why they may want to try and build property here, however, I do feel that this would be to the detriment to the open feel of that area. A police car seemed to be surveying the area and as one man (possibly a resident) was exiting a building he exclaimed, ‘they can’t seem to stay away from here,’ upon noticing the police car.

As you move down along Eade Road there are big industrial warehouses containing building material and these warehouses are fully operational and neatly laid out. Further down Eade Road where it starts to meet Vale Road there is construction work going on where the National Grid are doing work trying to build tunnels for electrical cables.

Along Vale Road there is a long stretch of clothing manufacturers, all of which appear to be fully operational and in trade. On the left hand side of the road, just a few of the buildings seem to be of worse physical quality than the buildings on the right side of this road (which are of a high physical quality). As you turn right into the sight at the bottom of Vale Road you meet purely residential spaces – apart from a church (which is definitely in use every Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Again these residential properties appear to be occupied and well maintained. There is no space here to build any extra residential accommodation.

Overbury Road is an “artists’ village” according to a large mural on one building. The mostly two-storey buildings seem to be live/work spaces and in fairly good condition. There appeared to be a community sort of feel here and an acceptance of these places as live/work spaces, e.g. through the prevalence of residential bins outside these spaces.

Along Tewekesbury Road there are Automobile workshops along one side of the road and living spaces along the other side of the road, these living spaces appear to be slightly less well-maintained.

Along Seven Sisters Road we liked the look and design of the buildings as we were walking up. I am not sure what development along this part of the site would actually achieve as on the ground floor all the buildings are in use and the homes above appear to be occupied and of a good design as well.

The Site Allocations document states that any development is “dependant on decisions on the future of current industrial uses,” which makes it seem that the future of this area is very unclear. It seems that current employment sites (the document lists four main ones) could be

“regularized,” “redeveloped,” etc., but there seems to be no guarantee they would be retained. The document certainly makes clear the potential for residential developments, and says that the site should contribute to the Council’s “50% affordable housing” target, but again there is no guarantee this would happen or that new housing would be genuinely affordable.

### **THR9: Gourley Place & Wickes Site**

The site is a rather small triangle consisting of mostly industrial units, the largest of which is the Wickes trade/retail unit. Along Seven Sisters road there are a number of businesses selling furniture or other textiles. Some of these buildings are 2-3 storeys but it is unclear how upper floors are being used. There are a number of warehouses and autosshops which are in use, along with a few residential spaces behind Seven Sisters road.

Only a couple of the buildings seem dilapidated and the use is unknown, however we saw one man emerge from a building (on Gourley Street) carrying wood and other materials so it is possible they are being used for storage.

Around the perimeter of the site is extremely lively with a number of restaurants and businesses, many pedestrians and transport including the rail lines which intersect at one corner of the site.

A number of casual workers (mostly Eastern European) hang out around the Wickes unit and across the street on Seven Sisters Road.

The Site Allocations document states that development of the site “should not remove employment uses from the site, but the nature of this employment could change...” and mentions including “office space, professional services, research and higher value workshop space.” Considering it also mentions casual workers as a “blight” on the local area, it could be presumed that developments aim to remove these workers and convert employment from industrial use to more professional services.

There is also the aim to build more residential space, which might include 3-4 new streets running off the main road frontage. Presumably this would entail the removal of the warehouses and industrial units. There is no mention of what kind of housing will be built and whether it will be genuinely affordable.

The Site Allocations document claims there is “considerable evidence that a much better use of this site could be made”; it does not detail what this evidence actually comprises.