Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1   What is a Unitary Development Plan?

1.1.1   A Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is a land use plan that seeks to make the most efficient and effective use of land in the public interest. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, requires that councils provide plans to guide development and the determination of planning applications, and in Section 54A states that:

> Where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the Development Plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.1.2   This is a significant change from previous planning law as there is now a presumption in favour of development which accords with the development plan. In the case of development that does not accord with policies in the development plan, the local authority is obliged, if not refusing or granting it subject to conditions to ensure compliance with the development plan, to advertise the application as a "departure application". In addition, for those departure applications that are for more than 150 houses or flats or for more than 5,000m^2 of retail, leisure, office or mixed commercial floorspace, the First Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government has to be notified and can "call-in" the application for his or her own determination.

1.2   Reason For a New Plan

1.2.1   The lifetime of a UDP is 15 years for the strategic policies and 10 years for detailed policies. Barnet's previous UDP was adopted by the council in November 1991, covering the period up to 2001, and is now out of date. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the council is required to regularly review those matters that may affect the development of its area.

1.2.2   Since Barnet's first UDP was adopted in 1991, the lifestyle of people has changed. For example, there have been changes in the composition and size of households, type and nature of employment, shopping, leisure and travel patterns. The UDP has been updated to reflect these changes within the context of new government planning guidance, circulars and strategies, and new legislation for London. There is new guidance on a range of topics, and 'sustainable development' is now a fundamental theme of planning policies. In London, the Greater London Authority has been established, with the Mayor and Assembly overseeing strategic decision making on development in the capital, and has responsibility for production of a spatial development strategy, the *London Plan* (February 2004). The *London Plan* replaces existing strategic guidance, and boroughs' UDPs must be in "general conformity" with it.

1.3   Content of the UDP

1.3.1   The main framework for a UDP is provided in statute by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, by secondary legislation in the Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) (England) Regulations 1999 and in policy guidance by PPG12 – *Development Plans*. General considerations on planning decisions are given in PPG1 – *General Policy and Principles*, published in February 1997.[1] Paragraph 41 of PPG1 sets out a summary of the aims of the planning system:
- Ensuring rational and consistent decisions;
- Achieving greater certainty;
- Securing public involvement in shaping local planning policies;
- Facilitating quicker planning decisions; and
- Reducing the number of misconceived planning applications and appeals.

1.3.2   Section 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) (England) Regulations 1999, and paragraph 3.3 of PPG12, require UDPs to have regard to:
- Regional and strategic guidance given by the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions;
- Current national policies;
- The resources likely to be available; and
- Social, economic and environmental considerations.

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[1] Although PPS1 – *Delivering Sustainable Development* (2005) supersedes PPG1, reference is made to the latter because of its significance in the preparation of the UDP.

1.3.3   Planning Policy Guidance Notes 1, 6 and 12 have been superseded by new Planning Policy Statements 1, 6 and 12 (PPS1, PPS6 and PPS12):[2]
- PPS1 – *Delivering Sustainable Development* (2005) states that "good planning is a positive and proactive process operating in the public interest through a system of plan preparation and control over the development or use of land". It sets out the government's vision for planning and the key policies and principles which should underpin the planning system, built around the themes of sustainable development, the spatial planning approach and community involvement.
- PPS6 – *Planning for Town Centres* (2005) sets out the government's planning policies relating to the future of town centres, and their main uses. The government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability.
- PPS12 – *Local Development Frameworks* (2004) sets out the government's policy on the preparation of Local Development Documents which will comprise the Local Development Framework. PPG12 remains in operation for those development plans still being prepared under the 1999 Regulations.

1.4   How the Plan is Set Out

1.4.1   The UDP comprises a Written Statement and a Proposals Map with the former in two parts. Part 1 states strategic or broad-level policies taking into account national, regional and London-wide policies. Part 2 deals with more detailed policies to provide a more certain basis for the determination of planning applications. Each policy has a justification before it. An "Implementation" chapter deals with monitoring the effectiveness of policies, issues to be taken into account in Section 106 agreements and schedules of specific sites for development.

1.5   Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

1.5.1   In addition to and complementary to the Plan is supplementary planning guidance that further assists in decision making on many topics in the UDP such as urban design, retailing and affordable housing. Although not having the weight or primacy of the UDP, under Section 54A of the Planning Act 1990, an SPG will be given substantial weight as a "material consideration" in planning decisions by Barnet Council, and by the Planning Inspectorate in determining appeals by an applicant against a decision of Barnet Council as the Local Planning Authority.

1.6   Timescale

1.6.1   The strategic policies within Part 1 of the UDP are designed to guide development for 15 years after its adoption and the detailed policies in Part 2 for 10 years after adoption. This gives a medium-term basis which, with short-term monitoring, evaluation and changes to policies, gives an optimum time horizon for planning for development.

1.7   The Process

1.7.1   The timescales of the stages that are required before the adoption of a UDP were tightened by the Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) (England) Regulations 1999 to ensure effective and up-to-date development plans. The stages that this Plan went through, with preliminary dates and the periods allowed for objections, were as follows:

Table 1.1: Stages in Plan-making

Plan Stage	Preliminary Date for Plan Stage	Statutory Period for Comments After Plan Stage Met
Pre-Deposit	April 2000	None
1st Deposit	July 2000	Six weeks plus time to discuss any changes with interested parties.
2nd Deposit	March 2001	Six weeks plus time to discuss only those changes made by the authority as a result of previous stage.

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[2] Although PPS1 and PPS6 supersede PPG1 and PPG6, reference is made to the latter documents because of their significance in the preparation of the UDP.

Plan Stage	Preliminary Date for Plan Stage	Statutory Period for Comments After Plan Stage Met
Public Local Inquiry	March to May 2004	None
Inspector's Report	November 2004	None
Post-Inquiry Proposed Modifications	July 2005	Six weeks
Secretary of State's Direction	December 2005	None
Post-Direction Modifications	February 2006	Six weeks
Adoption	May 2006	None

1.8 National Policy Context

Encouraging an Urban Renaissance

1.8.1 In order to accommodate the projected growth of 3.8 million extra household numbers in England between 1996 and 2021 (mostly on brownfield sites that are derelict, vacant and underused), state intervention is required to channel private sector investment and to limit greenfield land release. The *Urban White Paper* (2000) developed the recommendations first put forward by Lord Rogers's Task Force report on cities, towns and suburbs. The White Paper sought to identify the causes of urban decline in England and recommend practical solutions to bring people back into cities, towns and urban neighbourhoods. Overall it sought to encourage a change in the culture and values of living in town and city centres, to ensure a market for these sites and their regeneration.

1.8.2 In terms of planning this can be achieved by:
- Recycling land and buildings and introducing an empty property strategy. This is with the intention of accelerating the release of land which is no longer needed in its previous use for suitable mixed uses.
- Ensuring suitable densities and targeting transport expenditure on public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.
- Creating neighbourhoods with mixed tenures and incomes and devolving decisions to that level while strengthening the strategic planning powers of local government.
- Introducing Urban Priority Areas in which dedicated companies can assist in clearing sites and assembling land, using public money to lever in larger sums of private sector investment.

This advice, and future legislation, will guide Barnet in planning for the regeneration of parts of the borough and in redeveloping underused employment sites.

Integrating Land Use Planning and Transport Planning

1.8.3 Government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 – *Development Plans* (PPG12), published in December 1999, stresses the importance of:
- Integrating land use planning with transport planning; and
- Seeking sustainable forms of development.

1.8.4 The integration of land use planning and transport planning is vital to ensure that developments are provided with a satisfactory level of accessibility and to avoid overwhelming the existing transport network. This integration is especially important at, and between, both the regional and local levels. In London, the Mayor's *Transport Strategy* (2001) sets out the transport vision for London as a whole, and boroughs are developing Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) to set out how the strategy will be implemented at a local level. Issues arising from local transport and development needs also need to be taken into account in developing the regional strategy.

1.8.5   Development and regeneration can provide opportunities and funding for improvements to the transport system, but can also have a negative effect on the operation of the existing transport network. It is vital that planning guidance and decisions strike a balance between the conflicts which inevitably occur to ensure the delivery of truly sustainable development.

1.8.6   The concept of 'sustainable development' is to pervade all policies in the UDP and is a strategy with the following objectives:
- To maintain high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. This can be undertaken by encouraging the clustering of knowledge driven companies through the provision of suitable commercial sites.
- Effective protection of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources. The use of water, land and mineral resources can be assessed through environmental appraisals of policies (as distinct from Environmental Impact Assessments for particular planning applications). Two separate studies were undertaken which informed production of the UDP, but do not form part of the document – a 'Policy Impact Analysis' for each topic chapter, and a larger table called a 'Policy Compatibility Analysis' ensuring that all policies in the UDP are consistent with each other.

1.9   Regional and London-wide Context

General Background

1.9.1   The regional strategic planning context for the UDP is provided by the spatial development strategy for London, the Mayor's *London Plan* (February 2004). Within the *London Plan*, the Mayor identifies six objectives which UDP policies should take fully into account. They are:
- Accommodating London's growth within its boundaries without encroaching on open spaces;
- Making London a better city for people to live in;
- Making London a more prosperous city, with strong and diverse economic growth;
- Promoting social inclusion, tackling deprivation and discrimination;
- Improving London's accessibility; and
- Making London a more attractive, well-designed and green city.

1.9.2   As well as the *London Plan*, the Mayor is required to produce other strategies for the capital, which include:
- Mayor's Transport Strategy (July 2001)
- Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy (July 2002)
- Mayor's Municipal Waste Management Strategy (September 2003)
- Mayor's Air Quality Strategy (September 2002)
- Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy (March 2006)
- Mayor's Culture Strategy (April 2004)
- Mayor's Energy Strategy (May 2004)
- Mayor's Economic Development Strategy (January 2005).

1.9.3   The Mayor has to be notified by boroughs of "strategically relevant" planning applications, as identified in the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2000. Under the terms of the order the Mayor can direct refusal of an application that the borough is minded to approve. The criteria for identifying strategically relevant applications are listed below:

Table 1.2: Strategically Relevant Planning Applications to be Notified to the Mayor

Large Scale Development
• Development for dwellings numbering more than 500 units or on sites of more than 10 hectares in area.
• Erection of buildings of more than 15,000m^2 externally measured floorspace.
• Where the height of an existing building is increased by 15 metres or more and the resulting height is greater than 30 metres.

Major Infrastructure Applications
• Waste handling facilities dealing with more than 50,000 tonnes per annum of waste.
• Tramways, railway stations, bus/coach stations or heliports.
• Development for B8 use occupying more than four hectares of land.
Development Which May Affect Key Strategic Policies
• Involving the loss of more than 200 dwellings whether replaced or not, or prejudicing the use of more than four hectares of residential land.
• Prejudicing more than four hectares of land for B1, B2 or B8 uses.
• Prejudicing the use of more than two hectares of playing fields.
• Involving the construction of a building of more than 1,000m² floorspace, or the change of use of this size, on Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land.
• That does not accord with the UDP and is for 2,500m² of floorspace or for more than 150 dwellings.
• Non-residential developments with more than 200 car parking spaces.

London-wide Context

1.9.4   In 2005, the population of London was estimated to be more than 7.5 million people, based upon the government's 2005 mid-year estimates. According to the national census, the number of lone parent households in Greater London more than doubled from 132,822 to 274,597 between 1991 and 2001. In addition, the number of households with a single adult and no children rose from 880,526 to 1,046,888, representing a rise from 31.9% to 34.7% of all households.

1.9.5   Using various scenarios, the Mayor's *London Plan* assumed a population growth for the capital of 800,000 people to 2016. This projected growth could lead to a possible increase of 336,000 households over the next 15 years, thereby creating a total of around 3.4 million households in London – equivalent to 22,400 additional households each year. However, this did not address the issue of existing need. Based upon estimates from The Housing Commission, an annual figure of 11,200 additional dwellings would be required to achieve the Mayor's objective of meeting need, thereby creating a total forecast demand of 33,600 new homes in London each year. Following an Examination in Public, the *London Plan* included a policy target of 30,000 additional homes per year from all sources. In the case of Barnet, this equated to total target of 17,780 additional homes over the period 1997 to 2016.

Capacity Based Approach to Housing

1.9.6   The ability of London to accommodate households was assessed explicitly by the former London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) through a capacity based approach, and was published in the study *London's Housing Capacity* (GLA, 2000). The conventional provision of new build housing will provide 14,780 dwellings in Barnet of which 37% should be from large windfall sites (10 units and above), 23% from large identified sites, 20% from smaller sites, 15% from small conversions and 4% from office conversions. In addition, 3,000 homes could be provided that are either non-self contained housing in multiple occupancy (HMOs), hostels, sheltered accommodation or student halls of residence. LPAC considered that the growth in households in London could be met (LPAC report 85/99).

Population Context of the Plan in Barnet

1.9.7   Following the 2001 census, the Office for National Statistics revised its population estimates for all local authorities. In the case of Barnet that revision has been downwards, suggesting that previous inter-census estimates considerably inflated the true population. However, it is still clear that the borough's population is rising: recent revised estimates suggest a steady increase from 319,500 in 2003 to 329,700 in 2005. Households are estimated to have increased from 131,000 to 133,100 over the same period. This 2005 estimate was approximately equal to the 135,300 households predicted for Barnet by the GLA for 2011 in projections benchmarked to Scenario 8.1, the dataset used for the *London Plan*.

1.9.8   The 2001 census and other data indicate a diversity in income and ethnicity across the borough. Thus, on an index recently produced by the GLA, Barnet is ranked as the twentieth most ethnically diverse district in England. The largest ethnic minority groups are Indian and Black African, while Barnet also has the highest proportion of Jewish residents of any local authority. The proportion of the population describing itself as belonging to ethnic groups other than White British, White Irish and White Other varies at ward level from 11% in High Barnet to 48% in Colindale. Data based on the 2001 census suggest that the borough's Black African population will be among those groups likely to increase most rapidly in number. The English Index of Deprivation (2004) indicates that two areas in Colindale are within the 11% of most deprived areas in the country while another in Oakleigh is within the 5% of least deprived areas.

1.9.9   The borough's 2005 estimated population of 329,700 was broken down into the following broad age groups:

Table 1.3: Estimated Population by Age

Age Band	Number	Proportion
Under 20	81,000	25%
20 to 59	189,900	57%
60+	58,700	18%

1.9.10   The numbers in these broad categories are likely to increase as illustrated below, regardless of any contribution by the large scale developments scheduled in the borough up to 2016.

Figure 1.1: Projected Borough Population by Age
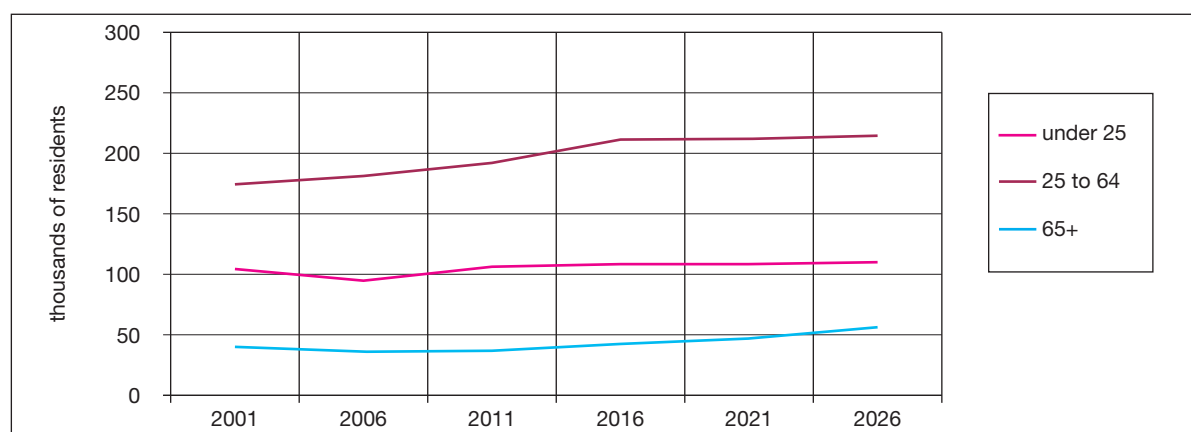
Source: *Office for National Statistics*, 2003-based projections by Barnet

1.9.11   A comparison of 1991 and 2001 household data from the census shows an increase in one-adult households from 29% of the total to 31%. Over the same period the number of lone parents rose from 3,667 to 9,130.

1.9.12   These demographic changes show that Barnet will become increasingly cosmopolitan. There will be increased demand for housing, leisure and community facilities – particularly places for religious groups, for public transport and for health facilities. The numbers of elderly people will remain largely static over the coming four to five years, but are likely to increase sharply thereafter, which may affect the demand for care homes.

1.10   Retailing

1.10.1   Geographical trends in the expenditure on retail goods have become more dispersed since 1991 as a result of out-of-centre stores being built either in or on the borders of Barnet. In the convenience retail sector (including food) this has reflected growing car ownership and the convenience of parking at the small number of retailers catering for wider catchment areas. This has resulted in approximately half of all convenience expenditure being spent in out-of-town-centre shops, in locations typically less well served by public transport than town centres. National trends show a

contraction in the number of shop units, and the growth of grocery multiples and specialist large retail stores that dominate their larger catchment areas (for example Petsmart and Toys 'R' Us). This trend will continue and a modest expansion of retail floorspace is expected overall although smaller town centres may need to diversify to survive. Nevertheless, as the population figures indicate, more income will be available in Barnet for retail expenditure to support town centres and the local economy.

1.10.2   Brent Cross is a Regional Shopping Centre and the most important retail destination in North London, containing the only department stores within Barnet, John Lewis and Fenwicks.

1.11   Economy and Small Businesses

1.11.1   The UDP will be a prime motivator for regeneration schemes, encouraging sustainable local economies and protecting employment sites and ensuring more sustainable practices in travelling to work.

1.11.2   Locally and nationally there has been a continuing loss in recent years in the number of jobs in manufacturing, and a growth in the service sector (financial services, tourism, distribution, transport and administration) within offices. In 1998, 91% of employees in Barnet were employed in the service sector and 5% in manufacturing. According to data from the Office for National Statistics's *Annual Business Inquiry* (available at www.nomisweb.co.uk), in 2003 the service sub-sector with the highest number of employees in the borough was 'distribution, hotels and restaurants'. There was a loss of 88,000m^2 of industrial/warehouse and distribution floorspace between 1986 and 1994 partly caused by redevelopment. At the same time there was a growth in office floorspace of 59,000m^2. This caused an overall loss of 29,000m^2 of employment generating use.

1.11.3   Barnet has a high number of its workers in small businesses or self-employed, given that it has the highest number of businesses registered for VAT amongst the Outer London boroughs. In 1998, 27% of the borough's workforce were employed in companies with less than 10 employees. This indicates a strong demand for small business units and at current trends there is expected to be a shortfall in supply of at least 21,485m^2 for such use by the year 2015.

1.12   Leisure and Tourism

1.12.1   Tourism attractions include the RAF Museum in Colindale, the Museum of Jewish Life and the artsdepot in North Finchley. The countryside and shopping facilities are also considered tourist attractions.

1.12.2   There has been a significant growth in the demand for indoor sports and recreational facilities in the form of large, purpose built leisure developments containing cinemas, bowling, bingo and restaurants on one site. Other demands include floodlit sports pitches and golf courses on open land. Some areas of Barnet have a deficiency of public open space that needs to be improved.

1.13   Movement

1.13.1   The greatly increased freedom of movement by road over the last 20 years has caused problems of congestion, social exclusion, safety and environmental damage. As car ownership increases damage is occurring to our towns and cities. Traffic saturation might eventually limit growth and reach a point which is unacceptable economically and physically. In co-ordinating land use planning with transport planning, an attempt can be made to plan for reduced car mileage by encouraging people on to the public transport system, into alternative modes of travel and into reducing their need to travel by locating land uses efficiently.

1.14   Housing

1.14.1   The growth in household numbers across London in the late 1990s reversed a post-war decline and this growth is expected to continue. Increased house prices have led to a lack of affordability in Barnet, especially for those on below average income levels. The majority of new housing development has been on previously-developed sites and this trend will have to continue to meet future demand.