

MACCREANOR LAVINGTON



NEWHAM CHARACTERISATION STUDY

Part 1: Baseline, Neighbourhoods, and Principles

With New Practice, Avison Young and GHPA

DECEMBER 2022

Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
0	21 / 10 / 21	Initial draft	Team	ML	ML
1	21 / 01 / 22	Working draft	Team	ML	ML
2	11 / 02 / 22	Updated neighbourhood boundaries	Team	ML	ML
3	22 / 04 / 22	Interim working draft	Team	ML	ML
4	06 / 05 / 22	Working draft	Team	ML	ML
5	30 / 05 / 22	Working draft	Team	ML	ML
6	13 / 07 / 22	Working draft	Team	ML	ML
7	28 / 11 / 22	Working draft	Team	ML	ML
8	02 / 12 / 22	Full draft	Team	ML	ML

CLIENT

London Borough of Newham

PROJECT TEAM

Maccreanor Lavington

- Project lead | Urban design

Avison Young

- Market Economics

New Practice

- Public Engagement

GHPA

- Planning

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1. INTRODUCTION



PURPOSE AND STATUS

This report offers guidance on where and how future growth could be delivered in the borough to support the review of the Local Plan, and wider social objectives. More specifically, it forms part of the evidence base that will inform the emerging revised Local Plan's spatial strategy, design policies and housing trajectory and provide guidance on how these policies should be implemented. In doing so, it provides a bridge between 'evidence' and local 'policy/guidance' in relation to character and growth. The report is divided into two parts.

Purpose

The purpose of the first part of the report is to set out an understanding of the character of Newham – from the perspective of its historical development, built form and urban morphology. It also considers how the borough functions, particularly in relation to delivering 15-minute neighbourhoods. This includes an understanding of how residents access services and amenities within the borough and what they consider to be their neighbourhoods. Through this analysis the report establishes a series of neighbourhoods to help inform the spatial strategy for the new Local Plan.

For each neighbourhood, borough wide analysis is used to consider its opportunities and challenges as well as where growth can be accommodated and what it will look like. The report also considers how future development can contribute to addressing the challenges, building on the opportunities and the delivery of 15-minute neighbourhoods. These are expressed in a bespoke vision and set of design principles for each neighbourhood.

The report aims to simultaneously understand the places of the borough - its urban form, character, typologies, services and street network – and the people – how residents use and perceive their neighbourhood. By engaging with these layers, the report provides each 15-minute neighbourhood with a coherent vision for change that is cognisant of its emerging aspirations and needs.

The report is evidenced by a public engagement programme to uncover residents' perceptions of what contributes to the character of their neighbourhoods and how they understood their local areas in terms of the 15-minute neighbourhood concept.

Policy and guidance

The study took account of the findings of a wide range of data and existing reports, including the Newham Character Study (December 2017) and, in so far as they relate to the areas in Newham, the Characterisation Study (April 2019) and Density Study (January 2021) prepared by the London Legacy Development Corporation.

The study was undertaken in general accordance with the requirements of London Plan Policy D1 (London's form, character and capacity for growth) and the Mayor of London's Characterisation and Growth Strategy London Plan Guidance (Consultation draft, February 2022).

This report needs to be read alongside the findings of other reports that form part of the Local Plan evidence base.

METHODOLOGY

Process

The study was undertaken in several stages, with chapters 2 to 5 focused on gathering and presenting analysis. The objectives of this first stage was concerned with building up a robust and holistic portrait of the borough and how it varies in terms of its physical, functional, socio and economic character.

Chapter 6 focused on analysing existing geographies and spatial definitions, layering this with the understanding of the borough assembled through chapters 2 to 5. A series of neighbourhoods were drawn and the concept of the 15-minute neighbourhood introduced, before refining these boundaries through extensive community, LB Newham officer and Councillors engagement.

A series of assessments were undertaken to identify which parts of the borough had greatest opportunity for change. Findings were organised into three categories that provide a steer on the role and form of new development in regards to local character.

The refined neighbourhood boundaries were used to organise the 'so whats?' ascertained through chapters 2 to 5. A tailored vision was drawn together for each neighbourhood, setting a strategic brief for new development and how this could help improve character and address localised need to achieve 15-minute neighbourhoods across the borough.

A series of borough-wide design principles were prepared to address common design opportunities challenges found across Newham. Principles are prepared to be holistic and applicable across a range of different schemes - acting as a series of design priorities to be addressed in well resolved proposals.

Finally, recommendations are made about how to best embed an appreciation of context and character across the planning process, allowing findings of this report to gain material weight in developing policies and determining applications.

A summary of this process is illustrated opposite.

Analysis of the borough's historic evolution, functional components and urban morphology built up an understanding of how physical characteristics vary across Newham. This provides cues as to the form of development that could be appropriate in different parts of the borough.



15-minute neighbourhood analysis was used to reveal the distribution and concentration of different amenities across the borough. This provides a cue as to any gaps which may exist and which amenities should be planned for in the future.



Socio-economic analysis provides a baseline to understand the relative opportunities and challenges facing different parts of the borough, building up a holistic evidence base and highlighting any trends or patterns.



Review of administrative and functional geographies provides a basis for initial neighbourhoods, sense checked against physical characteristics and refined through extensive community, LB Newham officer and Councillor engagement.



A sequence of assessments was undertaken to understand opportunities for change across the borough, providing a steer as to the appropriate scale, form and role of new development in each setting e.g. conserve, enhance, transform.



Visions are assembled for different neighbourhoods, drawing together findings from across previous chapters, forming a tailored strategic brief to help achieve the different components of successful 15-minute neighbourhoods across the borough.



Design principles are prepared to address common opportunities and challenges found across the whole borough, organised by theme and designed to be used by Development Management officers and applicants alike.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

1. Introduction

Use chapter 1 to understand the purpose, scope and status of the study.

2. Historic development patterns

Use chapter 2 to understand how Newham has evolved and changed over significant historical periods of development.

3. Functional character

Use chapter 3 to understand how the distribution and accessibility of key infrastructure, services and amenities shapes how the borough functions and is experienced; including analysis of 15 minute walking distances from such assets.

4. Urban morphology

Use chapter 4 to understand the mix of conditions and built typologies associated with different character areas found across the borough.

5. Socio-economic analysis

Use chapter 5 to understand the demographic, social and economic make-up of the borough in the context of broader shifting commercial trends.

6. Neighbourhoods

Use chapter 6 to understand the how borough-wide analysis has informed the definition of neighbourhoods alongside the Newham-specific ingredients of a 15 minute neighbourhood.

7. Opportunities for change

Use chapter 7 to understand assessments that underpin the identification of areas designated as conserve, enhance and transform, as well as guidance on the appropriate locations and heights for tall buildings.

8. Vision - neighbourhood design principles

Use chapter 8 to understand the strengths and challenges facing each neighbourhood, alongside a holistic vision and set of principles guiding future growth and change.

9. Borough-wide design principles

Use chapter 9 to understand strategic design priorities prepared to improve the character and amenity of different types and scales of development found across the borough.

10. Recommendations

Use chapter 10 to understand key recommendations for embedding the consideration of context and character across the planning process in Newham.

Appendix

Use the appendix to find definitions of key terminology, evidence underpinning the drawing of neighbourhood boundaries and explanations on how to measure density.

