

# New Cross Gate NDC/Trust

## Draft Housing and Environment Forward Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this strategy is to be an informative and useful document. By including suggestions on the role of the Trust it is hoped that members of the Trust will continue to promote environmental and housing issues, either as projects or as campaigns to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

The strategy addresses the key 'outcomes' prescribed by the NDC by describing the projects undertaken within the Housing and Environment Programme. Unlike other NDCs the New Cross Gate NDC did not include a major housing component. This was mainly because Lewisham Council chose to manage their own housing programme in the area. Housing has formed an important aspect of the legacy to generate income for the NDC's successor body, the New Cross Gate Trust.

### 2. The Vision

"New Cross Gate will be a place where people can take great pride in their area. Public spaces will be clean and inviting, and both new and historic buildings will be a credit to excellence in architecture. The local economy will reflect a new confidence in New Cross Gate as a place to invest and the area will be in the front line of innovation in dealing with environmental issues".

*(New Cross Gate NDC Year 7 Delivery Plan)*

### Strategic outcomes

**ENV1 Create good quality community, leisure and training facilities**

**ENV2 Increase satisfaction and pride in the environment of New Cross Gate**

### Strategic Objectives

- Enable the development of effective partnerships with key local agencies that play a part in delivering services and initiatives directly affecting the local environment. This will include London Borough of Lewisham, third sector agencies, private development agencies, local businesses, Transport for London, and Registered Social Landlords (RSL), amongst others.
- To use NDC resources to add value to the current and proposed work programmes of partner agencies, and to positively influence their strategies in the interests of the people of New Cross Gate
- Engage community members in learning about, understanding, and actively participating in the promotion of green issues

### Climate Change

Since the NDC was first established in 2001 the issue of climate change has grown in global significance and awareness is gradually spreading to all levels of society. Lewisham council have developed their safer, cleaner, greener strategy and tailored their environmental services to meet targets set by the government to increase recycling and reduce waste. There are numerous publications offering advice on saving energy, recycling waste materials such as packaging, composting raw food and garden waste. These are available in print and on line. Lewisham's Green Scene are willing to attend all public events and the NDC makes a point of inviting them to raise awareness within the community of environmental good practice and related services.

### **3. The Housing Programme**

#### **Housing**

Although housing is an important factor in the regeneration of New Cross Gate, rather than include housing as an element of the New Deal for Communities bid Lewisham Council took the strategic step to fund their own housing improvement programme for the three estates in the NDC area and offer the investment as match funding to add value to the New Deal for Communities programme. This has had the advantage of providing environmental benefits particularly in the Kender triangle which has benefited from a large development by Hyde Housing Association. The NDC has complimented this initiative by part funding a major roads project that will remove the gyratory traffic system from the triangle and restore a fragmented residential area that has been nothing short of a traffic island for the past 40 years.

On the Winslade Estate the council funded some estate remodelling that entailed the removal of the high level link bridges and new entrances to the upper storey maisonettes including security doors and waste disposal enclosures. At the request of the Tenants and Residents Association NDC funding has provided play facilities, street lighting and a ball games area. In the next few years the East London Line extension will improve the transport connections to Winslade which will further add to revitalising the estate.

The third estate in the NDC area is Somerville. Lewisham has undertaken decent homes works and the NDC has commissioned a masterplan framework to explore the potential for sustainable community facilities and environmental improvements.

Lewisham's housing strategy included the opportunity for tenants to vote for a transfer to a new social landlord who would own and manage their homes. Hyde Housing Association campaigned for over two years and offered to invest £50m into improving all the council owned properties in New Cross Gate except for Somerville who chose to remain Council tenants at the outset. In December 2007 a narrow majority of tenants voted against transferring to Hyde. The result of this decision will mean that less investment will be made to improve the council's housing stock and any improvements will be delayed.

The NDC has initiated projects that have or will generate housing. For example the NDC Centre is planned to include at least 170 new homes. The development of the Sainsbury's site includes the provision of student accommodation and a substantial number of flats for mixed tenure in a range of sizes. The Electric Empire development includes 12 affordable flats and 5 flats owned by the NDC as an asset for the Trust. A refurbished house in Brocklehurst Street will be transferred to the Trust as an asset and the development of land acquired in Fishers Court will provide an income stream generated from rents.

## 4. Projects

Projects that will add to the NDC legacy by improving the environment are described below.

### **NDC Centre**

The idea of the NDC Centre arose from the community's contribution to the bid for New Deal funding and from the First Health Impact Assessment report 2002. The desire for a multipurpose centre in the heart of New Cross Gate that would provide health and leisure services received the highest priority. Construction of the centre is due to commence in 2010 and complete in 2014. The centre will provide a focus for supporting services that cover the main themes that underpin the NDC programme. Namely, health, education, community development, housing and environment.

It will contain a state of the art GP surgery, pharmacy, gym, community space, library, crèche, community café, out door space, retail units and 170 mixed tenure residential units. The rental income from the scheme will be managed by New Cross Gate Trust.

**Sustainability:-** The NDC Centre has a viable business plan based on sustainable uses such as the GP surgery, pharmacy and residential units. The other uses are less certain as they are dependant funding from Lewisham Council for the library and crèche and the gym and café will rely on use by local residents.

### **Clutch Clinic (Electric Empire) Development**

.The Electric Empire site, formerly used as a motor repair shop. The NDC partnered with ASRA Housing Association to develop the site for social housing, office accommodation and a retail or restraint outlet. The scheme enhances the streetscape close to the busy junction with Queens Road. The rental income from the scheme will be managed by New Cross Gate Trust.

**Sustainability:-** The properties owned by the NDC are managed and maintained by Hindewood Hunter Payne estate agents.

### **Fishers Court**

In 2006 the NDC acquired the vacant plot on the corner of Fishers Court from Lewisham Council with the intention of developing the site for residential use. To the rear of the site are a number of small plots. The NDC has purchased all but two of these to assemble a site large enough to create a mews development befitting the Victorian character of the area. Two plots have recently been developed as 2 flats for special needs accommodation. The NDC commissioned Archipelico architects to design a scheme for 15 flats that will significantly improve a derelict site previously used for dumping abandoned vehicles. Income generated from the scheme will be transferred to the New Cross Gate Trust. RSLs will be invited to partner the NDC to develop this project.

**Sustainability:-** The properties owned by the trust will be managed by Hindewood Hunter Payne Estate Agents

### **Besson Street Garden**

This tropical community garden was laid out by Lewisham Council in 1992. The NDC temporarily leased the garden from the Council and took on responsibility for its up keep as well as converting the building in the garden for use as an office and community space. The NDC has supported the 'Green Shoots' project which is an ecologically based initiative that combines with the Family Learning programme. A

new ecology building has been erected in the garden for ecology lessons and activities. The gardens are used as a base for Family Learning and sessional use by other projects such as Aging Well and Sure Start.

**Sustainability:-** The gardens are maintained by a part time worker and volunteers.

### **Hatcham Gardens**

This under used local park will become more accessible once the traffic is redirected from Kender Street. The gardens will be planted with trees to provide shade and new play facilities that will attract families and children. Play builder funding was awarded in 2008/09 which funded a sand pit, slide, birds nest swing, and 6 trees. Logs and basket ball posts were a free gift from other schemes and have been installed in the park. The GLA may provide more funding to pay for more play equipment, seats and more trees. A path along the southern edge of the park has been widened to provide a cycle route.

**Sustainability:-** Lewisham parks department will manage the gardens.

### **Hanging Baskets**

The NDC has funded hanging baskets and barrier planters for the past 4 years. The flowers make a colourful improvement to the area and have won appreciation from local people and visitors. The funding for the baskets will end in October 2009 and currently pays for 60 baskets and no planters. With the change to the traffic system the barrier planters will become redundant when the traffic island is removed and moreover TfL consider them to be an obstruction. The hanging baskets do brighten up the busy roads but at a cost of £9,000 pa either the New Cross Gate Trust or the ward localities fund will need to agree to support a joint funding strategy. Approaches have been made to the larger retailers to contribute but they have all refused.

**Sustainability:-** The trust will need to decide if it wishes to fund the baskets from its own resources or ensure that annual applications are made to the Localities fund.

### **Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)**

The importance of playing sports for good health and wellbeing has led the NDC to fund multi use games areas in Eckington Gardens, Winslade Estate and Edmund Waller School. The MUGAs have been extremely popular and well used.

**Sustainability:-** The MUGAs will be managed and maintained by Lewisham Parks department or, in the case of Edmund Waller School the school will manage and maintain the facility.

### **Somerville Adventure Playground (SAP)**

SAP are a well established independent organisation providing open access adventure play to children aged 6 to 16 years. SAP receives an annual grant from Lewisham Council that covers staff costs and insurance. The grant does not extend to repairs and improvements of the playground building and structures. The NDC funded detailed designs of a new building but the tendered build cost substantially exceeded the NDC budget. A more sustainable solution is proposed in the Somerville master plan framework in the form of a multipurpose building that would accommodate SAPs indoor requirements, a community centre (Barnes Wallis), a local shop, nursery with flats above. This building arrangement will reduce the cost of repairs and heating for all the community facilities including SAP. This option is dependant on the implementation of the master plan by Lewisham Council. In the interim period SAP need urgent repairs to their building and will need to bid for grant funding to pay for them.

**Sustainability:-** Sap is an independent adventure playground with its own management committee. Lewisham Council fund the salaries of the play workers and also the public building insurance. SAP must fund raise for all other expenses.

### **Somerville Estate improvements**

The NDC assisted the Tenants and Residents Association of Somerville Estate to select architects to prepare a master plan framework that analysed the design issues and social issues of the public realm. A comprehensive report proposed development of various under used spaces that would bring architectural enhancement as well as generate capital and revenue to provide community facilities and infill housing units. Lewisham Council have taken the key concepts forward with a feasibility study and outline designs for new homes and amenities for the community.

**Sustainability:-** Lewisham Council will develop the project and may invite a Housing Association to fund and build the proposed new housing and social facilities

### **Restoration Retail**

A feature of New Cross Gate is the preserved Victorian retail terraces. The restoration retail scheme has funded improvements that restore the period architectural features such as cornices, pilasters and corbelling. Brick cleaning, pointing and external decorations has made a significant visual impression and has helped to achieve the objective to restore pride and character and enhance local trade. A number of businesses are investing their own money into repairing and decorating their properties.

**Sustainability** The shop owners will be responsible for maintaining their properties. Lewisham planning enforcement officers will be responsible for ensuring that property owners do not change their properties without planning permission and that any change should be in line with the requirements of the conservation area. The Town Centre Manager will also be able to advise and refer matters to planning officers.

### **All Saints Church Community Centre refurbishment**

The All Saints Community centre is a heavily used facility for a wide variety of activities ranging from wedding receptions to boy scouts meetings. The two halls were in need of repair and redecoration as were the services, kitchens and toilets. Intensive work has been done to establish a management committee and formal administrative procedures that will enable the centre to remain in good repair and constant use long into the future. The NDC has funded an ambitious scheme to restore the building and improve the facilities to create flexible spaces that will accommodate more users. The Centre will reopen on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

**Sustainability** The NDC is currently part funding an officer to manage the premises and the room bookings. If the centre is able to generate sufficient income from hiring space the manager will continue in post.

### **Gyratory**

The Kender triangle gyratory system will be removed from Kender and Besson Street by 2010. The one way traffic system will be reconfigured to provide two way traffic on Queens Road and New Cross Road. Kender and Besson Streets will become 'streets for people' that will give pedestrians priority over the car and also provide better cycling routes. This scheme fits in with the north Lewisham links project that aims to encourage more walking and cycling by improving routes that offer a pleasurable alternative to using the car and avoid the noise and pollution of the main roads.

Kender primary school and local residents will enjoy a quiet, safe and cleaner environment and more trees.

**Sustainability** Lewisham Highways will take on the responsibility of maintaining the roads transferred from TfL

### **Child Friendly Cities**

Lewisham council are currently working up an EU bid under the child friendly cities initiative in partnership with the GLA, Delft, Utrecht, Munich and Ghent. The Lewisham project is focused on the effects of removing the gyratory traffic system from the Kender Triangle. The project will include the involvement of children and young people in the aspects of design and place making that will make the area 'child friendly'. The bid will be submitted in October 2010 and the result will be known by Christmas. If successful it will not only involve young people in the area in a very exciting project but will also add £500,000 to the budget to improve the streetscape.

**Sustainability:-** If successful Lewisham will manage this project

### **New Cross Gate Station/Retail Park**

The Station is a vitally important local amenity and with the extension of the East London line will grow in significance. New Cross Gate Station and adjoining retail park is an area ripe for redevelopment. The master plan commissioned and funded by the NDC has served as a catalyst to stimulate other partners to regenerate the area. Sainsbury's now own the site and are intending to provide more shops with residential units above and replace a petrol filling station with a town square. Sainsbury's are in discussion with Network Rail to include a Sainsbury's 'local' store within a new fully accessible station also with residential property above.

A key aspect of this project is the improvement to the Hatcham Park pedestrian ramp. This is a much used route that enables people to access Sainsbury's and New Cross Gate station without recourse to the busy A2. The existing station is not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the aim is to provide a fully accessible station ready to open when the East London Line is completed. This scheme, when built, will help to give New Cross Gate a focal point and sense of place.

**Sustainability** Network Rail and Sainsbury's will fund and manage this project

### **5. Role of the Trust**

1. The Trust should ensure that at least one member looks at planning applications related to the NDC area and comments as necessary. At least one member should attend planning committee meetings when relevant application are presented.

2. The trust should campaign on environmental issues. For example Brixton is a 'Transition Town'. <http://www.transitiontowns.org/TransitionNetwork/12Steps>  
Pepys Estate have their own composting system where they collect kitchen and garden waste and convert it into top quality compost. The trust could campaign for a similar set up in New Cross Gate or campaign to have their kitchen and garden waste taken to Pepys for composting.

3. Joan Ruddock MP holds round table meetings two or three times per year regarding the issues and developments associated with New Cross Road. A trust member should attend these meetings.

4. The Trust will need to have a major involvement in the development of the legal agreement between the Council and Developer partner (probably BBH) to ensure that the agreement matches the desires and aspirations of the community.

The development period will extend beyond the life of the NDC so Trust member involvement will be crucial to oversee a satisfactory outcome

5. Trust members should consider how the library will operate in the NDC Centre. The original proposal was to relocate the New Cross library into the NDC Centre but recently the Council's library service have reservations about the cost of this option. The trust may wish to research examples of community libraries that are run largely by volunteers or they may seek sponsorship from business or an academic institution or a grant funding body. Sale of books, greetings cards and wrapping paper could be investigated as a way to help sustain the library funds . The premises management of the library was planned to be included in the brief of the leisure provider.

6. Besson Street Gardens could be transferred to the Trust to manage and maintain. Currently the Green Shoots and Family Learning projects include maintaining the garden within their activities along with some local volunteers. Trust funds could be used to cover the costs of management and maintenance.

7. Hanging Baskets have been mentioned above. Other town centres in Lewisham have hanging baskets funded by Lewisham, the Trust could urge Lewisham to do the same in New Cross Gate. Alternatively Trust funds could be used as previously suggested.

#### 8. Sainsbury's development

The development of the Sainsbury site at New Cross Gate will make a huge impact on the area. The Trust should become actively involved in encouraging the planning department to approve the scheme.

#### 9. Other ways the Trust could encourage greater environmental interest in New Cross Gate

1. **Utilising the local factor.** Make full use of the existing groups of local residents, either already involved with green issues or having shown an interest in being so, by facilitating their continued input into the development (and delivery) of a local environment strategy until 2011 and beyond. Resources from the 'unlimited' project have assisted community members to develop some environmental projects of their own.
2. **Campaigning.** Develop effective methods of enabling local people to campaign on green issues which have been identified as priorities. These may include, for example, campaigns for the reduction of waste and promotion of recycling. Local residents may decide to motivate local traders to launch 'refill instead of recycle' schemes as a pilot in the NDC area
3. **Innovation.** Research and identify potential innovative methods of positive environmental action. For example, this may be through designing a partnership pilot project seeking to address the issue of recycling kitchen waste in households on local estates. Such pilot schemes could be designed so as to offer the Local Authority examples of local interventions that could deliver impact across a wider-scale, thus becoming best practice in their own right.