

Our ref:
Your ref:
Email: 13 September 2021
Date:



Strategic Planning & Design
 Enfield Council
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 By Email

Dear Sir/Madam

Draft Enfield Local Plan Consultation

Quod act on behalf of IKEA Properties Investments, who have an existing store in Enfield Borough, at Glover Drive, London N18 3HF.

IKEA is a key employer in the Borough and employs in the region of 600 people directly at their store, of which 80-85% are drawn from the local area/Borough. They also rely on a local supply business chain which they support through their operations in the Borough.

IKEA is a long established retail destination in the Borough, which attracts significant business to the Borough, given it serves a wide catchment area encompassing North London and beyond.

The store is located to the south of, and fronts onto, Glover Drive. Customer car parking is provided at surface level to the north east of the store, and in an undercroft level beneath the store. There are proposals to modify the local highway network as part of the wider regeneration plans for Meridian Water by Enfield Council ("EC") and the northern car park is shortly to be functionally "severed" from the store (via the creation of the new Central Spine which is being brought forward by EC), and a new car park is proposed to the west of the store (as permitted under planning consent reference number 20/00111/RE4). Work on the new Central Spine and the new car park is due commence shortly.

As well as the store itself, IKEA own substantial land to the south, west (as noted above to be used for new car parking) and east of the store.

The IKEA site sits centrally within the Meridian Water area, which has been identified in the emerging New Enfield Local Plan ("NELP") for major transformational change to accommodate a new residential community (c10,000 new homes) and associated employment (c6,000 new jobs), a new 'Town Centre', and supporting community facilities.



IKEA support EC's vision to transform Meridian Water into a new community and have been working collaboratively with EC in the recent past in helping to facilitate this regeneration.

IKEA make the following Representations to the Plan in the context of positive dialogue and encouragement of regenerating the area, but their support is conditional upon appropriate development management in the area, as outlined below.

IKEA's support for the Regeneration Vision of Meridian Water

IKEA's overarching case, which underpins these Representations is the need for the NELP to pay appropriate regard to IKEA's existing operations, and the need for the NELP to not undermine the company's future operations as part of the planning strategy and vision for Meridian Water.

These representations are specific to the following policies:

- Draft Strategic Policy SP PL5 – Meridian Water.
- Strategic Policy SP SS1: Spatial Strategy.
- Draft Strategic Policy SP T1: Promoting Sustainable Transport.
- Site allocation SA19.

Meridian Water Masterplan

Before going on to consider each of these policies, IKEA note that achieving the vision for Meridian Water in the NELP requires a separate supporting Masterplan, which will come forward under a separate planning policy document. Given the pivotal role that IKEA play in the Meridian Water area, IKEA are a key stakeholder in the future regeneration of this area, and it is important they are involved in this Masterplan process.

Consequently, IKEA reserve their views on the masterplan, which is being undertaken in parallel with the NELP, although its production is running behind the NELP. It is IKEA's view that the strategic policies of the NELP need to be established, prior to the conclusion of the masterplan. It would be premature to determine the masterplan, where it was reliant upon strategic decisions and issues, which were still to be resolved through the NELP.

The following comments are, therefore, made in the context of the above principal issue.



Draft Strategic Policy SP SS1 Spatial Strategy

Policy SP SS1 sets an overarching spatial strategy of providing sustainable growth and supporting infrastructure, across the Borough with one of the key spatial strategies to deliver a “large proportion of the Borough’s future development needs (housing especially) in one of four main “placemaking areas”, one of which is Meridian Water. IKEA support the identification of Meridian Water for significant growth in new homes and employment at Meridian Water, but only where it is proven that there is sufficient infrastructure capacity (which is available or can be made available) in the area. Notably, it is important to IKEA’s future operations that the infrastructure capacity, especially transport infrastructure, is capable of meeting the newly arising needs of development as well as existing businesses (such as IKEA).

The Policy identifies Meridian Water, along with six other areas, as major urban foci for high quality growth of a range of uses, including employment, retail, leisure and cultural uses to support the area’s role as a vibrant centre. IKEA support this aspect of the Policy and wish it to be noted at this point that the existing IKEA store performs a major role in providing retail to both residents of the Borough and beyond. The policies of the Plan should not undermine IKEA’s present role or future role in the area, given the potential adverse consequences on the local economy.

Criterion 6 of the Policy supports “higher intensity” development near (and within) the Meridian Water Station area, given that it is the most sustainable area to benefit from the new transport links that have been delivered at the new station. IKEA support the identification of areas close to the Station as being suitable for high intensity development but note that high intensity development should not be ruled out elsewhere within the Meridian Water area where it is appropriate in terms of infrastructure capacity, locational reasons or in the interests of good place making principles.

Section 3.5: Meridian Water

Section 3.5 of the Plan sets out a Vision for the regeneration and transformational change to the Meridian Water area. The Section contains a Meridian Water Placemaking Vision, to which IKEA do not object, but note that the lack of recognition of the retail role that the area will perform in the future. Notably, elsewhere in the Plan, it is recognised that in the Meridian Water area the objective is to develop a new Town Centre, and this should be recognised within the Placemaking Vision.

Draft Strategic Policy SP PL5: Meridian Water

IKEA support this Policy, which is to focus development on the western side of the Harbet Road Industrial Estate, subject to the previous caveats (ie, that new development must be capable of being accommodated within the existing (or planned) infrastructure capacities without harming or undermining existing operations that are important to meeting the needs of the Borough or beyond, such as the IKEA store).



The Policy notes at Criterion 2 that in order to realise the place vision, a new “*large local centre*” will be created for the Borough. There is, however, no recognition of managing the existing retail function of the area, and IKEA would wish to explore how their store is to be accommodated within the retail function of the Meridian Water area. IKEA, therefore, reserve their views on this aspect of the Plan.

Explanatory text to Policy SP PL5 notes that the aspirations for the Meridian Water placemaking area is to delivery 10,000 homes and 6,000 permanent jobs. As noted IKEA support the areas regeneration and do not object to this scale of development, so long as it can be proven that it can be satisfactorily accommodated within existing/proposed infrastructure.

It is, however, noted that this scale of growth is inconsistent with that suggested in the site allocation reference SA19, which identifies growth of a capacity of 5,000 homes. It is notable that SA19, however, only incorporates the ‘West Bank of the Meridian Water’ area, therefore, suggesting that only half of the homes proposed in Meridian Water would fall on the “West Bank”. Given that this will be the most sustainable location within Meridian Water and subject to appropriate capacity in the infrastructure in the area, it is IKEA’s view that the 5,000 new home vision for the West Bank should be a “minimum” target, rather than a “ceiling”.

In response to the specific questions raised in the consultation, IKEA considers that the overall Vision for Meridian Water is appropriate for the future of this area, subject to the above modifications. The Policy can appropriately deliver the aspirations of the vision, again subject to the above modifications.

Draft Strategic Policy SP T1: Promoting Sustainable Transport

IKEA support the Plan’s approach to encouraging travel choice, and sustainable transport connectivity. Notably in relation to Meridian Water, there is already a new rail station developed to serve the area and IKEA support improvements to the frequency of rail services and future changes to the rail station to improve the accessibility of the area in the future.

Consequently, IKEA support Policy SP T1 and EC’s objective of encouraging more investment in the existing rail infrastructure at Meridian Water.

Site Allocation – SA19: Meridian Water West Bank

IKEA support the allocation of the Meridian Water West Bank for future mixed uses, including new homes, non-residential uses and associated social and community infrastructure. However, for the reasons outlined previously IKEA note that the allocation (and the Plan as a whole) fails to recognise IKEA’s current role in the area and the importance to both local employment and meeting retail needs. IKEA wish to explore how their existing store can be accommodated into the wider Placemaking Vision for Meridian Water, without adversely affecting their future business plans.



IKEA supports the timeframe for delivery of the Meridian Water West Bank, recognising that development could come forward in the early years of the Plan and, notably, in the case of IKEA's estate, the north eastern car park is shortly to become redundant, and would be available for early development. Aside from the store, other parts of IKEA's estate may also similarly be available for future development in the short term.

Summary

In summary, IKEA generally support the vision of the NELP, especially where it relates to Meridian Water, subject to a more express recognition of the IKEA store's role in the area and ensuring that any future development that takes place in Meridian Water can be proven to be accommodated within the existing (or planned) infrastructure capacity.

IKEA recognise that much of the detail of the transformational change to Meridian Water will be in a supporting masterplan document but, for the reasons outlined above, the masterplan can only come forward once the strategic vision has been resolved. IKEA will be a key stakeholder in the Masterplanning of this area and look forward to engaging with EC on the masterplanning of the area.

IKEA welcome the opportunity to engage with EC on the NELP and the forthcoming masterplan.

Yours sincerely