



CONSULTATION STATEMENT

# Draft Catford Town Centre Framework

April 2021

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## Part One: Purpose of Framework

The Framework Plan for Catford is long-term in its outlook. A blueprint for the change to guide the development of the town centre in the decades to come.

The purpose of the Catford Town Centre Framework is to provide area-specific principles for the application of policies within the Lewisham Local Plan and to provide a vision to help shape the future development of sites located within the Catford Town Centre study area.

Gathering feedback from Catford's community has been central to the development of this vision.

This document provides a summary of community consultation undertaken between November 2020 - February 2021 and supplements previous reports with insights gathered from public engagement on Catford town centre from March 2017 - June 2018 and also from May - August 2019.

### 1.0 The vision

The vision within the Catford Town Centre Framework is captured through three themes.

#### **A green town centre**

Access to green spaces and a healthy environment are everyone's right. The ambition is for Catford to be the greenest town centre in London. Nature will be prioritised to create a cleaner, healthier and a more sustainable town centre for the benefit of people, urban wildlife and ecology.

Space will be prioritised to meet others, pause, unwind and play. Public space is vital as we have all learnt through the pandemic. A variety of space will be created in and around the places we gather - the train stations, Catford Broadway, the riverside and a new heart for the town centre.

Planting on streets and in public spaces will enhance biodiversity providing new habitats for birds, insects and other species creating 'green stepping stones' from natural spaces around the town centre including the River Pool Linear Park and Ladywell Fields. Green space helps to cool the urban environment, improve air quality, noise pollution and also support sustainable drainage reducing the risk of flooding and providing resilience against climate change.

#### **A vibrant town centre**

A refurbished Old Town Hall and Civic Suite for Lewisham Council's offices will provide an opportunity to celebrate the Grade II listed Broadway Theatre and create public space around this important heritage building. Catford will remain the civic heart of the borough and there is an opportunity to introduce educational institutes, leisure uses, new public space and entertainment and performance venues.

Affordable workspace and more flexible retail space will encourage and nurture start-up and growing businesses as well as provide new space for all existing businesses. We will give Lewisham's start-up businesses the help they need to grow and become sustainable.

### **An accessible town centre**

New residential neighbourhoods will be created in and around the town centre with affordable homes, thoughtfully designed to be safe, welcoming and encourage local living. We will make cycling safer and more attractive.

Walking and cycling routes will weave and stitch into surrounding neighbourhoods. More safe crossing points for the South Circular Road will help Catford become more pedestrian-orientated and a new network of lanes will improve the connectivity across the town centre. Improvements to the station area will create a sense of arrival in Catford with a generous pavement to walk to and from the town centre.

## Part Two: Community engagement

The draft Catford Town Centre Framework reflects the needs of the community and what the Council has heard from local people. Community consultation began four years ago as Team Catford, on behalf of the Council, took the time for everyone's voice to be heard, sometimes formally and sometimes casually talking to the seldom heard in the pop-up shop and engagement space - House of Catford (formerly known as Catford Cornucopia), breaking down the barriers that too often prevent people engaging in a regeneration discussion.

### 2.0 Principles of community engagement

Community engagement to support the Framework Plan over the last four years has been driven by the following principles.

**Engagement is clear, concise, open and allows for two-way discussion.** This means careful consideration of the channels for communication and discussion to ensure easy participation for members of the local community, resisting jargon and overly complicated terminology to ensure our language is always easy to understand.

**Straightforward and honest communications.** This means transparency on the timescales, scope and constraints and what will be deliverable and also a thorough approach with a commitment to answering all questions and responding in a timely manner.

**Inclusive and reflecting Catford diversity.** This means having a broad reach within the local population and taking time to engage seldom-heard groups that make up our community as well as ensuring there are a range of ways to participate that accommodates those who may not have digital access or those who do not usually participate in a regeneration discussion.

The approach is underpinned by best practice in community engagement, building on the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2006) and aligns with subsequent addendums (December 2020).

### 2.1 Who is Team Catford?

Team Catford works on behalf of Lewisham Council. Funded by the Council, they are a small team of consultants who live in the borough, mostly Catford, and have led the engagement with the local community on the Framework Plan.

The team specialises in engagement, placemaking, economic development and meanwhile use. As well as leading the engagement, Team Catford manages the monthly Catford Food Market, events including the Catford Beer Festival, Catford Gin Festival and Catford Vegan Festival, the

retail initiatives that support local good causes [www.houseofcatford.com](http://www.houseofcatford.com), [www.houseoflewisham.com](http://www.houseoflewisham.com) and the online newspaper [www.catfordchronicle.com](http://www.catfordchronicle.com). They also organise free family events including outdoor cinema screenings and children's craft activities and helped coordinate the meanwhile use programme for the Catford Shopping Centre which introduced Catford Mews and Yoga House.

Team Catford was named *Best Community Engagement in the Planning Process* at London First's Building London Planning Awards 2020 and commended for their creative approach to community engagement and the use of the digital platform, Commonplace. Team Catford also gained the award for *Community-Led Placemaking* in the national Planning Awards 2020.

## 2.2 Approach

Lewisham's population growth is rapidly accelerating and young people make up a significant and growing demographic group (one in four people are under 19). Overall, 46% of the population are from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic heritage, but this rises to over 75% among school children. Notably, the borough is in the 20% most deprived areas in England, with a particular pocket of high deprivation in Rushey Green ward. Lewisham has the highest proportion of children and young people (29.6%) and older people (25.7%) in economic deprivation in England.

Team Catford's approach has been carefully considered to ensure it is effective for the diverse community of Catford. Over the last four years, they have worked hard to ensure the team is locally knowledgeable, genuinely interested in the future of Catford and is of a broad range of backgrounds reflective of the local population.

*"I was surprised to meet Team Catford in person at this event. I thought they would be corporate suits that didn't know the area but they were down to earth and local. It was also refreshing to see an all female team that was racially diverse. Diversity sees diversity and representation is important."*

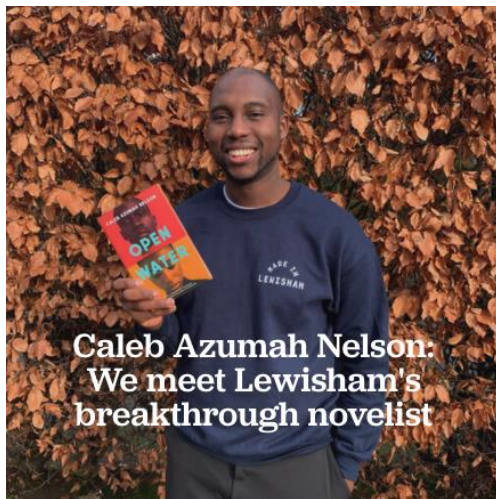
Participant in the community engagement

Alongside this latest phase of community consultation, Team Catford has helped bring together local businesses creating a digital resource of local shops, cafes and restaurants offering takeaway services throughout the pandemic. Team Catford has regularly been promoting and featuring local businesses on social media and through online blogs, this has encouraged many local residents to share their positive experiences of local traders and we have even received nominations of which local businesses we should promote next. Team Catford also produces positive content related to the Framework Plan such as blogs on the importance of public space in a post-COVID-19 world and the value of parks and green spaces as well as sharing

information on important local events such as an NHS blood drive and updates from the Council on grants to those who may not be following the Council directly.



[Catford Chronicle](#) is the digital home for Catford's stories and champions the achievements of everyday people in Catford.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, Catford Chronicle launched a series called 'Catford Entrepreneurs' which aims to introduce people to inspiring Catfordians, who have launched, pivoted or expanded businesses since the pandemic hit last March.

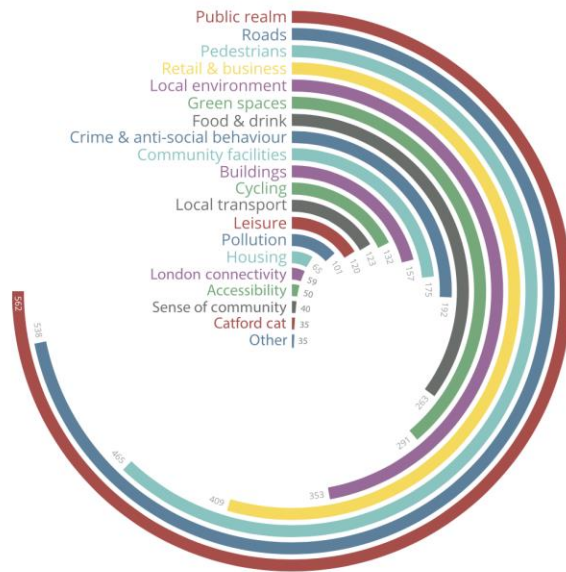
Catford Chronicle has also developed a sense of local pride by featuring interviews with popular author Caleb Nelson and Mercury-nominated Jazz star Moses Boyd.





## 2.3 Gathering ideas

Since March 2017, Team Catford has led a comprehensive public engagement programme supported by placemaking, a meanwhile use strategy to make use of vacant retail units and a series of community events to raise awareness of the prospect of change for the town centre, encourage a sense of community pride and gather early ideas to help the appointed architects to develop a draft Framework Plan to respond to community needs.



*Number of comments shared by topic, Mar 2017-Jun 2018*

This public engagement captured views through [catfordtowncentre.commonplace.is](https://catfordtowncentre.commonplace.is) and also from hundreds of feedback forms and conversations with members of the public.

With almost 2,000 comments shared between March 2017 and June 2018, these early ideas were instrumental in the design process and helped inform the Ten Strategic Principles that the architects established as part of the draft Framework Plan.

As the architect team was appointed in summer 2018, feedback from a broad reaching community engagement programme provided a clear starting point for developing the Catford Town Centre Framework.

## 2.4 Early ideas for the Catford Town Centre Framework

In May 2019, the emerging themes informing the architect's work on the draft Framework Plan were shared with the local community.

Team Catford supported the Council and the architects to seek feedback from the local community on some key areas including public space, civic buildings and public amenities and new homes.

These sessions were an opportunity to explain the Ten Strategic Principles and parameters for redevelopment of the town centre over the next 10-15 years, including the housing targets (as set out in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Assessment), proposals to reroute a section of the South Circular Road, ownership of key sites across the town centre and the potential for the Bakerloo Line Extension to be extended to Catford.

As with the early engagement, feedback was gathered via the digital hub, **catfordtowncentre.commonplace.is** as well as a new, dedicated website **catfordframework.commonplace.is** and through conversations held at face-to-face events throughout Catford.



*Photos taken at Team Catford engagement events*

During May - August 2019, 12 public events were held including dedicated events at the Civic Centre, in Catford Cornucopia - a pop-up engagement space and shop then located at 17 Catford Broadway, stalls at three Catford Food Markets, the Catford Vegan Festival, local school fetes and community festivals, local assemblies - Catford South and Rushey Green and the Lewisham Pensioners' Forum. Three members' workshops for Lewisham councils were also held.

In-person community consultation was supported with a collection of [exhibition boards](#) and a model that was assembled to illustrate how 3,100 - 3,500 new homes could be distributed across town centre sites, showing the resulting building densities and heights.

Overall, there was a very strong level of engagement with the draft Framework Plan with ample opportunity for discussion around the themes. Thousands of in-depth conversations took place and much effort was put into verbally updating members of the local community on the early ideas and setting the themes in context.

Views towards change in the town centre were generally positive, although often met with an element of scepticism as to when the plans would ever come to fruition.

The subject of **new homes** prompted a largely negative response to the prospect of taller buildings and people felt that a significant increase in density would have a negative impact on life in the town centre. Comparisons were drawn to other centres - most commonly Lewisham - where many felt the regeneration had not been positive. A sizable proportion of people noted that they understood the need for homes (although they didn't necessarily support the resulting building heights) and some supported the prospect of new homes and the layout of building heights. Affordable homes were a priority for many with emphasis given to providing homes for social rent for those living locally. On the subject of distribution of building heights across the town centre people generally supported the notion of clustering buildings on the central site although there were some who thought other sites - usually Halfords / Wickes could support further height in order to bring the overall height down.

Issues around **transport infrastructure** were often mentioned in the context of new homes with many noting that trains to and from Catford and Catford Bridge were already at capacity and any further new people in the area would further exacerbate this problem.

**Pollution** was raised as a concern in relation to the proximity to the South Circular Road and also some felt that further development would lead to more pollution from additional vehicles in and around Catford. Most who raised pollution as a concern suggested the Council should come up with measures to address air quality in the town centre and several suggested further tree planting should be prioritised to at least mitigate the impact of pollution.

Broadly speaking, everyone welcomed the prospect of fully pedestrianised **public space** in the town centre and there was a dominant view that this should be larger public space with greenery, specifically trees and planting to mitigate the impacts of pollution.

On the **civic hub**, there was a strong preference for this building to 'lead the way' with innovative building methods to make it sustainable, an 'eco green building' that will stand the test of time. Many people called for flexible creative and business space and a new improved library that will better meet the needs of the community. A broader range of shops, cafes, restaurants and bars as well as support for independent traders and retaining the current mix of retail featured highly when people the 'ingredients' for the town centre - the town centre uses that would create a sustainable centre for Catford.

## **2.5 Changes following feedback on early ideas**

All of the comments and feedback received at this stage of the community consultation were carefully considered and helped inform the further development of the draft Catford Town Centre Framework. Most notably, in response to general feedback about the height ranges associated with 3,000+ homes, the team focused the next version of the draft Framework Plan on a lower housing target of 2,700 new homes, a reduction of 10-20%. This reduction in the housing target, results in a lower density and height range.

Greenery and planting were mentioned in feedback responses throughout this phase of consultation and this helped to shape the central ambition to create one of London's greenest town centres.

## Part Three: Consultation on draft Catford Town Centre Framework

Coronavirus, and the Government restrictions during this timeframe, presented a significant challenge for community consultation and Team Catford's approach was necessarily predominantly digital supported by 'discoverable' information in the town centre and information delivered directly to households.

### 3.0 Approach

The purpose of this phase of consultation was to capture a snapshot of views towards the emerging draft Framework Plan ahead of Lewisham Council determining the next steps. The presentational material demonstrated how the draft Catford Town Centre Framework reflected feedback shared by the community over the last four years and also explored how the Framework Plan could respond to the challenges and uncertainties presented by COVID-19.

The objectives for consultation were to:

- Promote the draft framework plan widely encouraging everyone to engage with the proposals
- Explain the parameters, constraints and decision-making that led to the preferred framework plan option, clearly communicating the design rationale
- Gather feedback that reflects views from Catford's diverse community

This phase of consultation ran from Friday 12th November 2020 until Friday 5th February 2021.

### 3.1 Methodology

To hear directly from the local community, new feedback tiles were created on **catfordframework.commonplace.is** and a pull-out response form (with freepost return) was included in the Catford Conversations newsletter distributed to 18,000 households in Catford and Rushey Green.

These feedback questions were launched on Friday 12th November to coincide with the start of the consultation.

Prompts were provided to gather open feedback on eleven key aspects of the draft Framework Plan

- A green town centre
- More public space
- Opening up the river
- Improvements to the stations area
- A vibrant town centre

- The Yards
- A new cultural and civic hub
- Restoring the Catford Constitutional Club building
- The Lanes
- Ravensbourne Quarter and Plassy Island
- Rushey Green
- Getting around

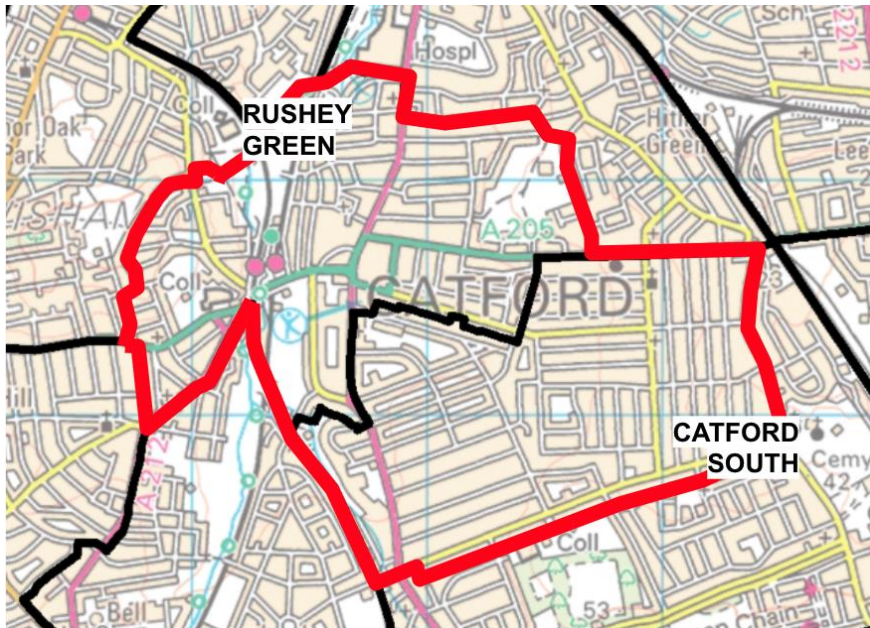
A series of ten Zoom sessions for members of the public - Catford Chat - were organised to hear more about the draft Framework Plan, share feedback and ask questions of the project team. Sessions were widely promoted via Team Catford and Council communication channels (see 3.3 for more details).

Aware that the majority of local residents would not necessarily seek out the consultation, the team wanted to ensure that we used places of high footfall such as the Catford Shopping Centre to attract attention in the vision. The prominent position of a vacant shop window in the shopping centre was used to feature visuals and information on the Framework Plan with prompt questions and clear signposting to Commonplace to share feedback (see 3.4 for more details).

The established telephone information line (free of charge) and free post address were used to gather feedback as well as our dedicated email address and social media channels.

### **3.2 Key consultees**

The target audience for the consultation was everyone who lives, works or visits Catford and there was a particular emphasis on reaching all households within the wards - Rushey Green and Catford South (see 3.4 for more details on publicity).



*Map showing target area for publicity for community consultation across Rushey Green and Catford South wards.*

Emails were sent to all stakeholders and key consultees that have engaged with Team Catford over the years. These included:

**Area-based groups** such as Blythe Hill Action Group (Ravensbourne Road), Wildfell Road Residents' Association, Brownhill Road Residents' Association, Ravensbourne Residents' Association, Corbett Residents' Association and Culverley Green Residents' Association.

**Park user groups** such as Friends of Mountsfield Park, Friends of Blythe Hill Fields, Ladywell Fields User Group and Friends of River Pool.

**Community groups** such as Irish Centre, Diamond Club, Catford Community Association and the Rushey Green Time Bank.

**Interest groups** such as Lewisham Disability Coalition, Lewisham Pensioners' Forum, Selvis, RNIB, Quaggy Waterways Action Group, Lewisham Pedestrians, Lewisham Cyclists, Lewisham LGBT Forum.

Information was also shared with community hubs and networks to help amplify our consultation with emails to places of worship, charities, cultural organisations, estate agents, housing associations, schools and nurseries and bloggers/social influencers.

### **3.3 Events**

Team Catford ran ten online consultation events using the digital tool Zoom. A total of 263 signed up to attend these events with 231 joining the sessions. Ahead of each session

attendees were invited to submit questions in advance for the project team and reminded that they would have the opportunity to ask a question during the event itself.

A range of events were held on mid-week early evenings and weekend mornings.

- Thursday 10th December 7-8pm
- Saturday 12th December, 10-11am
- Thursday 7th January, 6.30-7.30pm
- Saturday 9th January, 10-11am
- Monday 11th January, 6.30-7.30pm
- Saturday 16th January, 6.30-7.30pm
- Saturday 23rd January, 10-11am
- Wednesday 27th January, 6:30-7:30pm
- Saturday 30th January, 10-11am
- Thursday 4th February, 6:30-7:30pm

Each event started with a welcome and introduction to Team Catford and the wider project team before a poll was launched asking whether attendees had participated in the community engagement on the Framework Plan before. This helped to indicate to the presentator whether to spend more or less time outlining the context of the plan in the presentation. The presentation provided an overview of the Framework Plan and focused on the key projects within it, aligning with the feedback prompt questions encouraging people to respond. The presentation was amended after each session to reflect common themes which came up in the Q&A for instance providing more clarity on the role of a Framework Plan.

After the presentation, a live discussion session was coordinated with a member of Team Catford fielding both the pre-submitted questions from email and those submitted in the Q&A function to the project team. The team answered as many questions during the session as possible but attendees were assured that any unanswered questions would receive a response via email. The length of the presentation was adjusted to allow the team to answer as many questions as possible in these sessions.

### **3.4 Publicity**

Publicity for the consultation included a window display in 17/18 Winslade Way, a prominent location in Catford town centre. This display featured details on the plans as well as how people could get involved, a QR code linked directly to the Team Catford website when scanned. Posters were displayed advertising the online engagement events which were put up around the town centre and given to local businesses with the ask that they put them up in their windows.

Two videos were shared in which Catford residents expressed their views on the plans to create a vibrant and a green town centre. These videos were shared via social media channels and email news updates.



Communications continued through Team Catford's established channels and via Lewisham Council:

**Lewisham Life** - an article in the quarterly print newsletter distributed to all 116,000 households in Lewisham.

**Catford Conversations** - quarterly print newsletter distributed to 18,000 households in Rushey Green and Catford South in November 2020, with further editions hand-delivered in January 2021.

**Website updates** - project websites were updated with the latest information including key pages on [lewisham.gov.uk](http://lewisham.gov.uk), [teamcatford.com](http://teamcatford.com), [catfordframework.commonplace.is](http://catfordframework.commonplace.is), [catfordtowncentre.commonplace.is](http://catfordtowncentre.commonplace.is) (as well as signposting on [houseofcatford.com](http://houseofcatford.com), [catfordfoodmarket.com](http://catfordfoodmarket.com) and [catfordchronicle.com](http://catfordchronicle.com)).

**Fortnightly email updates** to over 1,000 subscribers. This audience included influencers and connected locals who helped promote the consultation on hyper local channels such as Nextdoor and WhatsApp groups.

**Social media** - regular posts to followers on Twitter (4,200), Facebook (2,200) and Instagram (3,100). Recognising not everyone is active on these channels, it nevertheless provided opportunity for influencers and community gatekeepers to help promote the consultation. To coincide with major milestones, updates were regularly shared via @LewishamCouncil channels.

As the consultation was heavily reliant on digital engagement during the pandemic, targeted adverts for Facebook and Instagram were launched to encourage participation in the Zoom sessions.

**Media updates and blog posts** - regular updates to [teamcatford.com](http://teamcatford.com) and news updates for local media and influential bloggers were shared to coincide with major milestones such as the launch of the consultation and next steps for the Catford Town Centre Framework.

### **3.5 Responding to enquiries**

Throughout this phase of consultation, a total of 103 enquiries were received via Zoom sessions, email, phone or social media relating to the consultation, many of which included a range of specific questions. Enquiries from all channels were added to a weekly log which was then sent with drafted responses from Team Catford to the project team and other Council officers for input.

### 3.6 Community participation

Coronavirus restrictions meant that overall participation in this phase of consultation was lower than we would have expected given previous phases of community engagement. 263 expressed an interest in joining a consultation session on Zoom and in total, 232 joined sessions meaning we had an attendance rate of 87%. In total, 148 comments and questions were shared during these sessions alone.

Overall, 910 responses were shared across all channels including those shared during the consultation sessions.

The nature of engagement was very different and there are a few observations to note, as we consider the main issues in Part Four.

- Coronavirus restrictions meant that in most instances, regular meetings of community groups were not taking place, so there was very limited input from interest groups or specific stakeholders unlike previous phases of consultation where Team Catford attended a roadshow of events and presentations.
- There was limited opportunity for a rounded discussion on the Framework Plan to hear a full range of views from individuals. Responses tended to be single-issue, expressing very strong views on certain topics without consideration for the 'bigger picture'.
- A misconception that the draft Framework Plan would dictate specific building heights was widely circulated among local social media networks and it is felt that some community responses were influenced by this despite efforts in communications and during events to explain that the Framework Plan should not be considered prescriptive on such details.
- Despite mechanisms in place to capture views via post, feedback form or through telephone calls, the vast majority of responses were via digital channels.

## Part Four: Summary of main issues

During this phase of consultation on the draft Catford Town Centre Framework a total of 910 responses were shared through a variety of channels including our digital consultation hub, Commonplace; by email to [hello@teamcatford.com](mailto:hello@teamcatford.com); through social media channels; and during the Q&A on our Zoom consultation sessions.

### 4.0 Overview

Feedback shows general positivity towards the principles of a green town centre, with many respondents urging the Council to be bolder with this ambition. The role of the cultural and civic hub was recognised as an important asset. New homes and the resulting density and indicative building heights prompted considerable concern among respondents, many of whom commented on the prospect of a 20-story building, rather than the indicative height ranges explored through the draft Framework Plan.

The key issues raised, by topic and number of respondents, is outlined below:

#### 4.1 Tall buildings

111 responses were shared on the height of buildings explored through the Framework Plan and the overall sentiment was negative.

Particular concerns raised were a view that tall buildings would not respect the scale of surrounding buildings, would detrimentally affect local views, feel oppressive, overlook homes in surrounding streets and affect the character of the area.

Many respondents commented on the prospect of a 20-storey building, rather than the indicative height ranges explored through the Framework Plan. Comments were made on a perceived lack of honesty on the actual height proposed indicating a lack of understanding of the role of a Framework Plan (as compared to a planning application).

Several people made comparisons to the development of Lewisham town centre which many felt was overdeveloped and bleak.

The need for more new homes appears to be appreciated by respondents and some recognised the resulting need for tall buildings to ensure viability, however, the majority of respondents stated that the heights were excessive. Respondents noted support the overall vision within the Framework Plan but some were concerned about the perceived risk of developing tall buildings and not getting the benefits of green space, a new school, rerouting the South Circular and community space. Respondents who acknowledged the need for new homes, expressed a desire for a compromise, a consideration of a range of options or a maximum height threshold.

General comments raised on tall buildings were around the potential for loss of light, the risk of a wind tunnel effect, the proximity of the buildings and the resulting impact on the experience for residents and pedestrians at ground floor.

## **4.2 A green town centre**

84 responses were shared on the principles of a green town centre including the idea to open up the river and the overall sentiment was positive.

The majority of respondents welcomed the vision and recognised that trees and planting are vital. Comments suggested this would improve the character of the town centre, helping it to feel vibrant and fresh.

Several respondents called for a broad consideration of green principles including power generation, sustainable construction, drainage, car usage and parking as well as transparency on the Council's targets and evaluation. Some comments noted the importance of long-term green solutions, not just box ticking, and welcomed the involvement of environmental consultants at an early stage. Some comments also acknowledged that locating homes, shops, public transport and other amenities within walking distance was an important way to cut carbon emissions.

Many respondents noted the importance of green spaces that were sustainable, long-lasting and realistic with maintenance requirements noting there should not be 'trees in tubs' or 'designer patches of grass'.

A few comments called for transparency on the reuse potential of existing buildings, noting the embodied carbon. Other comments suggested a more negative view that the prospect of green space was just a way of softening the impact of the high density homes.

Strengthening the connections between natural spaces was broadly welcomed and a few comments suggested more should be done to improve the east / west connections through Catford.

Respondents were very supportive of the idea to open up the river, agreeing that it would create a pleasant route from Ladywell, Lewisham and beyond. A number of comments stated the importance of the River Ravensbourne functioning as an eco corridor and called for genuine bank naturalisation and for the careful consideration of how shading from new buildings might impact river ecology.

## **4.3 Getting around**

94 responses were shared on the topic of getting around, with a wide variety of comments on how the Framework Plan envisages improvements for walking, cycling as well as vehicle access and overall the sentiment was negative.

Many respondents welcomed the priority given to cycling and walking in the Framework Plan with some noting it will align well with ideas for future Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Some noted that cycle lanes should be better segregated, suggesting further work to improve connectivity for

cycling and pedestrians with better links from the town centre to Stanstead Road and routes to the south including access improvements onto Canadian Avenue and Fordmill Road.

Several comments responded to the perception that current residents may have restricted vehicle access to homes or that traffic flows from the South Circular would be restricted and many of these comments were raised by residents in the area west of Rushey Green. It was noted by some that many Catford residents are likely to continue to rely on cars and not everyone is able to switch to walking or cycling. Concerns were also raised about the potential for parking to be displaced into surrounding residential areas and the impact of traffic flow changes on roads such as Brownhill Road. A couple of comments noted the importance of well-managed access for commercial vehicles making deliveries to shops and businesses in the new neighbourhoods.

Improvements for cycling and the prospect of safer routes were broadly welcomed and many comments called for more immediate action to improve cycling safety under the railway bridge and on the stretch of Catford Road from the stations through to the town centre with ideas such as reviewing the phasing of traffic lights at key junctions. A few comments noted that The Yards and The Lanes should not be exclusively for pedestrians but also open for cyclists.

Comments on the pedestrian experience welcomed the improved legibility for those on foot but also noted the danger posed to pedestrians from cyclists and there were calls for the area around Catford Bridge station to be pedestrianised. The previously proposed footbridge across the railway line was mentioned as an example of how east / west connectivity could be improved.

Some respondents noted that the major roads in Catford would continue to sever the vision to make the town centre more pedestrian-orientated and urged further influence on Transport for London, beyond new road crossings. Some comments urged improving air quality to be a priority, citing examples of idling vehicles contributing to air pollution.

There were a few comments questioning the dependency on the Bakerloo Line Extension, noting the importance of improved transport infrastructure on the ambition to deliver new homes at the scale envisaged in the draft Framework Plan.

#### **4.4 New homes**

71 responses were shared on the new homes explored in the Framework Plan and overall the sentiment was neutral.

Many comments recognised the huge need for housing, of all kinds, but especially the need for affordable homes specifically homes for social rent. It was recognised that housing was needed for the town centre to survive and succeed in the future.

A lot of comments questioned the commitment to the proportion of affordable homes and the tenure split. Some comments expressed a concern about the town centre becoming a ghost

town with empty living spaces that aren't affordable. There was a desire for true local living with a number of comments strongly in favour of prioritising affordable homes for local people, for Lewisham's housing list rather than for a 'new population'. Linked to this view, several respondents feared the new homes, especially if the mix of tenures wasn't affordable, would create a barrier for local people with comments suggesting how gentrification could displace local people and businesses.

Many comments raised the impact on public transport with concerns about overcrowded trains with the growth in population putting significant pressure on existing infrastructure. Some comments expressed a view that the draft Framework Plan would be unsustainable without a firm commitment to infrastructure upgrades and questioned the certainty of the Bakerloo Line Extension.

A number of comments noted that a high proportion of apartments would encourage a more transient population, with views that flats were not appropriate for families and lacked gardens and outdoor space. It was also noted that the market for apartments may have declined, especially in light of COVID-19 and a recent trend to move out of urban centres with a desire for more outdoor space.

There were several comments on the housing targets and why 2,700 new homes were considered acceptable. A few respondents expressed the view that high density did not have to mean high rise buildings. Several comments noted that adequate provision should be made for community infrastructure for services and facilities including doctors, hospital provision and schools.

#### **4.5 The Lanes**

91 responses were shared on the ideas presented in the Framework Plan for The Lanes with the overall sentiment negative.

The vast majority of comments responded to the prospect of taller buildings in this location. A few comments were positive recognising that increased density would help unlock investment for community benefits such as green space.

Most comments related to the view that the height was inappropriate and not in keeping with the current buildings and would be overbearing for residents, especially those living in the surrounding streets.

Many respondents commented on the prospect of a 20-storey building, rather than the indicative height ranges explored through the Framework Plan. Comments were made on a perceived lack of honesty on the actual height proposed indicating a lack of understanding of the role of a Framework Plan (as compared to a planning application).

Some comments drew comparisons to the ongoing redevelopment of Lewisham town centre with the majority feeling it does not set a positive precedent, concerned at what was perceived to be poorly designed, characterless blocks lacking a sense of place.

#### **4.6 Ravensbourne Quarter, Plassy Island and Rushey Green**

79 responses were shared on the ideas within the Framework Plan for these regeneration sites owned by third parties with the overall sentiment negative.

On Ravensbourne Quarter, some respondents indicated more support for regeneration in this location as compared to the central site, but there was a general view that the ideas explored in the draft Framework Plan were too dense and the building heights too tall. A number of comments suggested that new buildings should reflect the heights of existing buildings at Catford Green and as proposed, there would be a risk that views from these homes would be obstructed. It was noted that the ideas represented an overdevelopment of the site, at odds with the ambition to make it more attractive for walking and cycling.

Some comments suggested that taller buildings might be appropriate but of a more slender footprint than those shown in the Framework Plan with the height stepping down from the north of the site towards south. Comparisons were drawn to the planning application for Catford Green, noting that any new buildings should take into account local opposition to the previously proposed 19-storey building.

There was broad support for creating public space, a riverside setting, new shops and amenities with a suggestion that the railway arches should be explored for commercial purposes, like Deptford.

On Plassy Island, most comments noted that the indicative height for buildings would be imposing given the limited size of the site, although one comment acknowledged potential for further appropriately designed tall buildings in this location. A few comments welcomed the green, open space envisaged on Plassy Island and noted the need for connectivity to the central area for pedestrians.

On Rushey Green, the sentiment was more neutral with some comments noting a need for improved facades to the buildings, with the remaining Victorian buildings preserved. A few comments noted that Capital House should be redeveloped to create a consistent style for this part of the town centre. On building height, most agreed that it should be consistent with existing buildings and several suggested that the current wide pavements should be retained with more communal green areas to provide 'shelter' from the road.

#### **4.7 Improvements to stations area**

66 responses were shared on the ideas to improve the station area with the overall sentiment neutral.

The vast majority of respondents welcomed the principle of improving access and the environment for those walking and cycling with several comments acknowledging how the roads surrounding the stations are currently considered dangerous for cycling and there was broad support for the aspiration for the cantilever bridge with segregated cycle lanes.

Comments on the ideas to improve access to Catford Bridge station (east side) were welcomed and several respondents noted that allowing two-way cycling along the one-way Doggett Road would be an improvement. A couple of comments noted that the area around Catford Bridge should be prioritised for pedestrians.

Several respondents suggested that consideration needed to be given to those using the stations from the west and improving access and the environment from Catford Hill and Stanstead Road. The previously proposed footbridge was mentioned in improving the east / west connections and a couple of comments noted the need to address the localised flooding under the railway bridge.

Several comments welcomed the idea to improve the environment between the stations, supporting the idea to explore reusing the old ticket office and noting that the maintenance of green spaces should be carefully considered. There was a suggestion that the adjoining railway arches could be repurposed as 'makers yard' with commercial uses. It was also suggested residents of Grosvenor Court should be invited to share more detailed views on the area between the station as immediate neighbours.

Several respondents supported the idea to widen the underpass with some noting the need to consider the underpass on the east side of Catford Bridge also. The need for disabled access to Catford Station was raised by a couple of respondents. There was also a suggestion for visible, accessible cycle parking outside Catford Station with vehicle drop-off and pick-up discouraged in this location.

#### **4.8 The Yards**

44 responses were shared on the ideas for The Yards presented in the draft Framework Plan. On balance, the sentiment was marginally negative.

Many comments supported the principles of an open, pedestrianised space but there was some concern about the potential for the area to become soulless and too quiet in the evenings. A few comments welcomed the flexible space that could be allocated for start-up businesses but noted the need for these to be affordable for small sole traders and also well-considered space to encourage artists and makers to stay in Lewisham. A few comments noted concerns around the height of buildings in this location and the impact on surrounding residential areas.

#### **4.9 More public space**

41 responses were shared on the idea to create new public space in the town centre and overall the sentiment was positive.



The vast majority of comments welcomed the idea for more pedestrianised areas and recognised this would hugely improve the look and feel of the town centre. Comments called for characterful spaces, with a distinct atmosphere to set it apart from existing parks and space and an emphasis on quality green space sufficient to accommodate the new residents.

There were a couple of comments raising concern that traffic and parking would be displaced into other areas if access were to be restricted.

#### **4.10 A new cultural and civic hub**

11 responses were shared on the new cultural and civic hub and all of the comments were positive in sentiment. Comments welcomed the scale and the vision to create a distinct identity. Several comments acknowledged the value of the library, the community buildings and the Broadway Theatre.

## Part Five: Response to issues

**This section covers the Council's response to community feedback (outlined in Part Four).**

The Council welcomes the comments on the draft Catford Town Centre Framework in this final phase of consultation - November 2020 to February 2021- as well as the significant contribution Catford's community has made to the development of the Framework Plan by participating in consultation and sharing ideas over the last four years.

### 5.0 Overview

General statements of support and identification of topics of particular importance that were communicated included:

- acknowledgment of the need for more new homes, of all kinds, and a recognition that housing is needed to support town centre vitality
- a recognition of the resulting need for some buildings of height to ensure viability
- the need for a greener and healthier town centre and the importance of having an ambitious sustainability vision
- a recognition that trees and planting are vital and must form part of the new town centre character
- a recognition that connections between natural spaces need to be strengthened to benefit the town
- the importance of improved legibility for a better pedestrian experience
- the importance of priority given to cycling and walking to improve safety for people moving about
- the need for creating new public space, a riverside setting, new shops and amenities including the reimagined spaces of the railway arches and the benefits these would bring to Catford
- the need for greater connectivity between the town centre sites and the taming of the main roads
- a recognition that more pedestrianised areas would hugely improve the look and feel of the town
- the importance of characterful spaces, distinct from existing parks and spaces, to set Catford apart
- the potential to strengthen the town's atmosphere and community spirit in the unification of the library, theatre and community buildings and the identity and programming created in these spaces

### 5.1 Background to the strategy for the draft Framework Plan

Catford is a major town centre in the borough, well served by public transport and has a generally urban scale that is surrounded by smaller scale residential areas and high quality open spaces.

Catford is also part of the New Cross, Lewisham, Catford Opportunity Area in the London Plan which states that “approximately 2,700 new homes can be accommodated in the heart of the town centre”.

Together with Lewisham’s adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan, the draft Framework Plan sets the planning policy context for the delivery of new homes over the next 20 years and within which the vision has been developed.

The brief for the team preparing the draft Framework Plan noted that the London-wide Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA, 2017) identified the potential future supply of 2,301 homes (net of existing homes) across the four housing/mixed use development sites in the town centre (see table) and a total of 2,582 (net) within the town centre and its immediate surroundings.

Sites	Number of homes
Catford Centre and Milford Towers	878
Plassy Island	660
Wickes and Halfords	513
Laurence House	250

In this context the draft Framework Plan sets out design and development principles for these key regeneration sites including layout and access, land use mix and height ranges for the new buildings. The draft Framework Plan illustrates how the sites might be developed following these principles however the images included in the draft Framework Plan are not detailed designs. This detail will be developed and tested and subject to further community consultation through future planning applications.

## 5.2 Response to specific issues

A summary of responses to specific issues raised is outlined in the following sections .

### 5.2.0 Tall buildings

Delivering this number of new homes represents a significant level of growth and will involve developing at higher densities and with buildings of greater height than existing.

The draft Framework Plan sets out a number of important development principles including creating new streets and spaces as well as the location of taller buildings across the town centre as well as on individual sites. The strategy focuses taller elements towards the centre of sites, with buildings stepping down towards the predominately two-storey buildings around the town centre to seek to avoid an abrupt transition from one side of a street to the other.

As detailed proposals are progressed through the next stages and the detailed layout, massing and design of new buildings are developed and refined consideration will need to be given to addressing a range of potential impacts including daylight and sunlight, wind conditions and overlooking both within the developments and for existing homes adjacent to the site.

Rather than stating specific heights for buildings on the key regeneration sites the draft Framework Plan identifies an indicative range of heights. It is considered appropriate however, to identify a maximum (20 storeys) that might be achieved in a very limited number of locations that will be tested as individual schemes come forward.

### **Proposed changes to the draft Framework Plan**

- A diagram has been added to p.13 to distinguish the difference between a Framework Plan and planning proposals or applications.
- Building heights have been reviewed for consistency between text and images.
- Text has been added to p.52 clarifying (a) planning policy context; (b) status of the Framework Plan and the relationship to future planning application process and consultation; (c) that building heights are presented as a range (rather than maximum heights as the norm) to promote height modulation; (d) individual schemes need to assess impacts and demonstrate how relevant standards have been achieved.
- Image on p.53 has been presented as a simplified 'development density heat map' for building heights and a diagram illustrating principles of varied building heights has been added.
- Text has been updated on p.56 on potential building heights. The narrative has been simplified, explaining the overall strategy. Clarification has been added that sets out the assessment that will be required for determining building heights for each specific site. A paragraph has been added to the end of this section to emphasise that a Framework Plan is a study, not a final scheme proposal, and that content is indicative.
- Text has been added to p.70, 78, 90, 102, 108 under a new subheading - Development Impacts - clarifying that The London Plan, Core Strategy and draft Local Plan set out design requirements for tall buildings and individual schemes will need to demonstrate how they have responded to site specific conditions and sensitivities. It has also been noted that schemes will be required to consider and address local and strategic impacts, both within the site as well as to adjoining and surrounding properties, including daylight and sunlight, overshadowing, overlooking and the amount and quality of public and private amenity space as well as impacts on key views. Text has been added to note that schemes will need to demonstrate how building height, massing, form and detailed design of proposals mitigates development impacts.

- Text has been added to p.70, 78, 92, 102, 108 clarifying that layouts are illustrative and detailed layout will need to meet relevant design standards and accommodate relevant town centre infrastructure projects.
- The legibility of the plans and keys on p70, 78, 90, 102, 108 (Yards, Lanes, Civic Centre, Plassy Island, Ravensbourne Quarter) has been corrected for consistency with massing sketches, the town centre building height heat map and the Local Plan site allocations.
- The parameter plan on p.78 has been amended to recommend the tallest buildings on the central axis away from the perimeter of the site. Height has been reduced on the corner of Holbeach Road and Thomas' Lane from 9-12 storeys to a recommended 6-8 storeys.
- The parameter plan on p.108 has been amended to recommend a lower maximum height on the Halfords site. The height at the entrance of the site has been reduced to 9-12 storeys. The new recommended position for the tallest building range is further away from Catford Road towards the centre of the site.

### 5.2.1 A green town centre

'Urban greening' combines a range of measures and these will be developed and refined as projects across Catford are progressed. This will apply to public realm works as well as individual sites through the integration of sustainable development principles in design, construction and operation and providing new public spaces on the key sites.

As well as opportunities to reveal and improve access to existing natural and green spaces Catford is within walking distance of a number of parks and areas of open space. There is an opportunity to improve links to these existing green spaces.

Catford is located within a Heat Network Priority Area and the Council will work with the GLA and landowners as part of a strategic approach to the supply of heat to buildings.

#### **Proposed changes to the draft Framework Plan**

- Text has been added clarifying:
  - (a) The requirement for major developments to assess Urban Greening Factor and Biodiversity Net Gain
  - (b) On p.108 text has been added clarifying:
    - 'The river environ is to be naturalised, allowing points of access, from the water's edge up to development'

### 5.2.2 Getting around

Catford is already well-served by public transport with two mainline rail stations serving different destinations and a number of bus routes. However the potential for the Bakerloo line Extension to Catford will provide significant additional capacity to support the planned uplift in

homes and jobs identified in planning policy and reflected in the draft Framework Plan. In this regard, major development proposals will need to be appropriately phased and planning permissions may be contingent on the provision of the necessary infrastructure to cater for additional demand arising from the scheme.

Careful consideration will need to be given to the detailed layout and design of the realigned South Circular and the relationship between vehicular, pedestrian and cycle movements and access on adjoining roads and at major junctions.

Detailed proposals including measures to reduce 'rat-running' through the area will be the subject to further review and consultation.

### **Proposed changes to Framework**

- Text has been added clarifying:
  - p. 48/50 - indicative bus stops removed where they have been incorrectly placed
  - p.108 – text has been added referring to cycling interchange points and a minimum offset width to be met to allow for and maintain an off-road, compliant two lane cycle track along the northern boundary of the site as well as access to the buildings. A clear and legible route is to be provided to transition from the cycle track on Catford Road onto the Ravensbourne Quarter residential access road, with clear signing to the national cycle route. A separate space for cyclists on the approach to the junction is illustrated on p. 110. Clear signage should be provided at the public square to indicate continuation of cycle route options to the town centre and Ravensbourne north. The stairs and ramp (see Proposed Stations Framework, key No.21 on pg. 65) is a replacement and betterment of the existing stair access on the site. The design should allow for pedestrian, wheelchair users and cyclists to transition from the road bridge level to the site level.

### **5.2.3 New homes**

The draft Local Plan has a strategic target for 50% of all new homes delivered in the borough to be for genuinely affordable housing. The draft Framework Plan will support the implementation of this policy.

Major development proposals will need to be appropriately phased and planning permissions may be contingent on the provision of the necessary infrastructure to cater for additional demand arising from the scheme.

Social infrastructure needs will continue to be assessed with funding secured through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

### **Proposed changes to the draft Framework Plan**

- Note there is no change to the housing target

- Text has been added clarifying:
  - (a) planning policy context and status of the draft Framework Plan and relationship with Local Plan
  - (b) CIL

## 5.2.4 The Lanes

Changes to this section relate to comments in previous sections – see comments 5.0, 5.1, 5.4

### **Proposed changes to the draft Framework Plan**

- Text has been added clarifying:
  - p. 83 new images with examples of taller buildings added

## 5.2.5 Ravensbourne Quarter, Plassy Island and Rushey Green

Responses in this section relate to comments in previous sections - see comment 5.1

The draft Framework Plan sets out development and design principles, which are diagrammatic. The detailed layout and design of buildings on the site will be subject to further discussion and consultation prior to submission of planning applications.

## 5.2.6 Improvements to stations area

The feedback responses have been noted and detailed comments will be fed into discussions with landowners and transport operators.

### **Proposed the draft Framework Plan**

- Text has been added clarifying:
  - p.65 bullet point about new station platform access points has been added to 3.5.1
  - p.65 label 3 has been added to supermarket/retail forecourt
  - p.65 label 4 has been added to Ravensbourne Quarter site arches
    - p.65 key number 10 has been corrected: forecourt fully pedestrianised
  - p.65 vehicle roundabout has been removed from station forecourt in image
  - p.65 key number 16 has been clarified as toucan pedestrian crossings

p.65 label 16 has been added west of the railway lines on Catford Hill Road  
p.65 cars removed from Adenmore Road in the image  
p.65 underpass has been added on the image under the number 15 label  
p.66 car in foreground of sketch has been removed  
p.67 new page for sketch of updated public realm around Catford Bridge Station has been added

### 5.2.7 **The Yards**

The provision of new homes and business space together with improved public realm aims to reinvigorate this space. The detailed design will need to address concerns regarding the level of activity and vibrancy of this area and balance this with residential amenity.

### 5.2.8 **More public space**

Concerns regarding displacement of traffic will be examined when detailed proposals are developed.

### 5.2.9 **A new cultural and civic hub**

The feedback responses have been noted.