

**The London Borough of
Barking and Dagenham
Religious Meeting Places
Planning Advice Note 4 (2012 update)**

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Section 1- Introduction

1.1 What is the aim of this Planning Advice Note?

The aim of this Planning Advice Note (PAN) is to provide guidance for those people considering making a planning application for religious meeting places in Barking and Dagenham. The Council recognises that the provision of religious meeting places is both valuable and important for community cohesion and equality of opportunity; however provision of new or expanded religious meeting places needs to be given careful consideration. The need to be mindful is necessary so that religious meeting places do not give rise to issues such as increased noise, disturbance, parking problems or lead to having an adverse effect on the amenities of neighbouring residents and occupiers. The issues outlined here will be discussed in more detail in section 3 of this guidance.

If you are thinking of submitting a planning application for a religious meeting place, the Council encourages you to take advantage of the Council's pre-application process details of which are available at:

<http://www.lbdd.gov.uk/8-leisure-envir/planning/pdf/pre-application-fees.pdf>

It is important to emphasise that the Council is not able to financially support the provision of religious meeting places.

1.2 Do I have to follow the advice in this Planning Advice Note?

This PAN complies with local, regional and national statutory guidance and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Core Strategy and Borough Wide Development Policies. Further reference to what these are and more detail of the Council's planning policy is given in section 2 of this guidance.

This PAN provides guidance on implementing the policies in our Local Development Framework (LDF) – this is the document which sets out the Council's policies for the planning of the whole borough, and it is against these policies and the guidance in this document that planning applications for religious meeting places will be determined. Although you do not have to follow all of the advice in this PAN to get planning permission, it provides important guidance about how to meet certain LDF policies. When we are deciding whether to approve planning applications, we will consider whether you have followed the advice in this PAN.

1.3 What are religious meeting places and why are they important for Barking and Dagenham?

Religious meeting places have historically played an important part in the development of our nation, often being a focal point for people to meet, worship, socialise, exchange ideas and celebrate important milestones in their family and community lives. Barking and Dagenham is home to a very rich and diverse range of faith communities and the demand for religious meeting places in the Borough is increasing.

In 2001 the Census collected information about religious identity. In that survey, over three-quarters of the Borough's population reported belonging to a faith.

The 2001 Census figures clearly indicate that Barking and Dagenham is a multi-faith Borough; after Christianity (69%) the largest religious group in the Borough is made up of the Muslim population (4.4%), then Hinduism at 1,867 (1.1%), Sikhism at 1,800 (1.1%), Judaism at 500 (0.3%), Buddhism 400 (0.2%) and other religions at 308 (0.2%). More recent data indicates that there will continue to be demand for religious meeting places in particular for churches, mosques, mandirs and gurdwaras.

It is important that all sections of the community are catered for in the Borough. Barking and Dagenham is already home to a number of significant religious meeting places that attract congregations from both inside and outside of the Borough.

Resident population (percentage)

| Religion | Barking and Dagenham | England and Wales |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Christian | 69.0 | 71.8 |
| Buddhist | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Hindu | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Jewish | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Muslim | 4.4 | 3.0 |
| Sikh | 1.1 | 0.6 |
| Other religions | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| No religion | 15.3 | 14.8 |
| Religion not stated | 8.4 | 7.7 |

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

Religious meeting places can also have wider community functions. For example, religious meeting places can provide access to training and education opportunities and provide ongoing support for health problems such as drug / alcohol abuse. They can also act as banqueting halls for weddings and other functions of a religious nature. Providing facilities which can be used for such a variety of functions can contribute towards better community cohesion and offer a focal point at which people can come together.

Religious meeting places also help meet the challenge of social exclusion of disadvantaged groups in the Borough, such as Black and Minority Ethnic Groups (BME) and older people.

Section 2 - Relevant Policies and Legislation

2.1 The Use Classes Order

Under planning law, religious meeting places fall within Class D1, non-residential institutions, of the Town and Country (Use Classes) Order 1987(as amended). Following are a set of the key statutory policies and legislation at national, regional and local levels that have been considered in the preparation of this PAN.

2.2 National policy and legislation:

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

(2005) - paragraph 16 states, *“development plans should promote development that creates socially inclusive communities.”* Plan policies should (amongst other factors) *“take into account the needs of all the community including particular requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability or income.”* Paragraph 27 (v) states; when preparing development plans, planning authorities should seek to *“provide improved access for all to jobs, health education, shops, leisure, and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car.”*

Paragraph 27 (viii) further outlines that more efficient use of land should be promoted through higher density, mixed use development and through the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings. *“Planning should seek actively to bring vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings back into beneficial use to achieve the targets the Government has set for development on previously developed land.”*

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

Paragraph 4 makes clear that economic development includes development within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses and policy EC2.1 states that at the local level, local authorities should, where necessary safeguard land from other uses and identify a range of sites, to facilitate a broad range of economic development, including mixed use.

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning 2008

Paragraph 2.5 states that spatial planning is critical in relation to economic growth and regeneration by providing a robust basis for assessing the need for, and providing supporting infrastructure and natural resources for economic development.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 13: Transport (2001) - sets out that its key objectives include: to promote more sustainable transport choices for people, to promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services - by public transport, walking and cycling, and to reduce the need to travel especially by car. Paragraph 52 encourages the use of maximum levels of parking provision for broad classes of development.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 24: Planning and Noise (1994) - section 2 specifies, “wherever practicable, noise-sensitive developments should be separated from major sources of noise (such as road, rail and air transport and certain types of industrial development). It is equally important that new development involving noisy activities should, if possible, be sited away from noise-sensitive land uses.” Section 6 further outlines that “the Secretary of State considers that housing, hospitals and schools should generally be regarded as noise-sensitive development.”

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) - from 1 October 2004, Part 3 of the DDA 1995 has required businesses and other organisations to take reasonable steps to tackle physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people who want to access their services. This may mean to remove, alter or provide a reasonable means of avoiding physical features of a building which make access impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people. This includes access to services such as shops, restaurants, leisure centres and religious meeting places.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) - under the Race Relations Act planning authorities now have a statutory general duty to promote race equality, including taking measures to: eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equal opportunities and encourage good race relations.

2.3 Regional policy and legislation:

The London Plan 2011

The London Plan which was published in July 2011 recognises that London requires additional and enhanced social infrastructure provision to meet the needs of its growing and diverse population. It states in policy 3.16 that facilities should be accessible to all sections of the community (including disabled and older people) and be located within easy reach by walking, cycling and public transport. Wherever possible the multiple use of premises should be encouraged. In Policy 3.1 it states that boroughs should make provision to ensure the needs of disadvantaged groups are met and makes specific reference to religious meeting places in this regard.

2.4 Local policy and legislation:

Barking and Dagenham's Community Plan (2009) aims to work together for a better borough that is safe, clean, fair and respectful, prosperous and healthy and where our young people are inspired and successful. It emphasises the importance of fairness and respect and endeavours to create an even stronger and more 'together' borough, so it is a place where we all get along, and a place we feel proud of.

Section 3 - What Do I Need to Consider If I Want To Use An Existing Building or Develop a New Building For a Religious Meeting Place?

3.1 Potential impacts of religious meeting places:

We have identified a number of potential impacts associated with religious meeting places; the extent of the impacts can depend on whether the religious meeting place is a local facility or whether it has a wider catchment area. Should you want to convert a building to a religious meeting place or build or extend a religious meeting place within Barking and Dagenham, you must consider the following impacts.

3.2 Increased noise:

Religious meeting places do not always increase noise levels. However, when planning a religious meeting place you should consider the level of noise that may be emitted in the area in which you plan to meet and worship, especially if the site or property you are interested in is located in or near a residential area. This is

particularly important if your religious meetings will involve loud music, or if events and celebrations (e.g. weddings) will take place at your religious meeting place, which may temporarily increase noise (for example from music, higher than usual number of visitors or additional traffic noise).

We would like to make sure that local residents are not affected by unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance. With this in mind we prefer religious meeting places to be located away from residential areas if at all possible (refer to section 4).

However, measures can be put into place to reduce noise levels including soundproofing insulation to buildings; this will help reduce the impact of noise on local residents.

3.3 Car parking and traffic:

A number of transport considerations should also be taken into account when planning a religious meeting place. You should consider the level of car parking that will be required for your religious meeting place and make sure that there are sufficient numbers of parking spaces to cover your needs at times of weddings and other events. In order to minimise noise and disturbance, on-site parking should be provided for religious meeting places. On-site parking is also important to help eliminate congestion in local roads.

You must also consider how well served the site is by public transport and make sure that local bus services can cope with the anticipated extra demand. Through the pre-application process applicants should advise the Council when their peak demands are likely to occur so that the Council can liaise with Transport for London and local bus operators to ensure sufficient capacity is available at these times.

As set out in Borough Wide Development Policy BR10 “Sustainable Transport” where a development is likely to lead to a significant increase in traffic around the site, or the traffic generated is going to have a significant impact on the local area, then you may be required to submit a Transport Assessment with your planning application. Where the development would have minor transport impacts a Transport Statement is suffice. Advice is available at the following link.

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/businessandpartners/transport-assessment-best-practice-guidance.pdf>

A Travel Plan is a package of measures aimed at promoting sustainable travel, with an emphasis on reducing reliance on car journeys. We will secure this either through what’s known as a Section 106 Agreement or a Planning Condition (refer to section 5 for more information about planning conditions).

A Travel Plan will normally be required for a place of worship of 2500 m² or over in line with advice published by Transport for London. When a Transport Assessment is required this should always include a Travel Plan. Advice on Travel Plans is available at the following link - <http://www.lscp.org.uk/newwaytoplan/>

Generally, religious meeting places should be located in areas which can be easily accessed without the use of a car (refer to section 4).

Section 4 - Locations for Religious Meeting Places

4.1 Preferred locations:

Locations which are easily accessible by walking and cycling and benefit from good public transport links are preferred. Good public transport links will help to reduce the number of car journeys. This is better for our environment and helps to deliver the Government's sustainable development agenda, as well as help minimise the impacts associated with car parking and traffic, such as increased noise and congestion, as discussed in section 3.

This approach is compliant with Core Strategy policy CC2 which states that community facilities should be located where they can be accessed on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than by car.

For these reasons we prefer religious meeting places to be located in or near to **town or district centres** within the Borough i.e. Barking Town Centre, Dagenham Heathway District Centre or Chadwell Heath District Centre, because of their high levels of accessibility. These centres are defined areas which include the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses adjacent to the primary shopping areas. The extent of these centres is defined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

However in line with policy CE1 of the Council's Core Strategy, it is important to stress that the Council is permitted to ensuring that retail is maintained as the predominant ground floor use within town centres. For this reason, Borough Wide Policy BE1 states that in Barking Town Centre, 15% of the measured primary shopping frontage and 30% of the measured secondary shopping frontage will be permitted for non-retail uses. In the district centres of Dagenham Heathway, Chadwell Heath and Green Lane this is 30% and 60% respectively.

There are however a number of unrestricted frontages in Dagenham Heathway and Barking Town Centre. These are frontages with no restrictions on non-retail uses.

Within the borough's 32 neighbourhood centres, non-retail uses are restricted to a maximum of 35% of the measured frontage.

The extent of all the frontages in the borough's District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres are provided on pages 40-42 of the Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document. The extent of the frontages in Barking Town Centre is provided in Policy BTC2 of the Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan.

Any development at ground floor level within the borough's town centres must satisfy the design criteria in Borough Wide Policy BE2

Religious meeting places should also provide safe and widespread public access to and from the premises, including disability access, and should be compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, as outlined in Core Strategy policy CP3.

Finally policy CC2 of the Core Strategy makes clear that where possible community facilities should be located in close proximity to the community that the facility will

serve. Therefore applicants should demonstrate that their religious meeting place is meeting a predominantly local need and the Council discourages speculative planning applications where this cannot be established or verified.

Employment areas or industrial sites. The borough's main employment areas are either designated as Strategic Industrial Locations or Locally Significant Industrial Sites. Policies CE3 and CE4 of the Core Strategy make clear that our first objective is to safeguard employment areas to retain and encourage employment opportunities in the Borough and therefore any proposal which is detrimental to this objective will not be permitted. The Core Strategy therefore aims to ensure that designated employment areas comprise an appropriate mix of employment uses including B1 (Light Industry), B2 (General Industry) and in certain locations B8 (Storage and Distribution)

Therefore proposals for religious meeting places within the borough's designated employment areas will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that:

- The premises have been unused for at least 12 months and marketed during that time at reasonable rents for the permitted uses;
- It would not result in the amount of vacant employment floorspace falling below 8% of total existing employment floorspace in the area.
- There is a robust transport assessment which demonstrates that it will not lead to unacceptable impacts on the existing highway network;
- Car parking demands can be met within the curtailage of the development;
- There would be no conflicts between the proposed use and the day to day operation of existing businesses in the area.

We do not normally consider **retail warehouse parks** to be suitable locations for religious meeting places as these sites are designed for retail warehouse uses. However exceptions could be made if retail warehouse buildings become vacant and if it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed for retail warehousing purposes.

With regard to these considerations and to help provide more certainty to applicants, the Council has identified the following locations where it will look favourably on proposals for religious meeting places, maps of these sites are provided in Annex 1:

- South Dagenham West. Site Specific Allocation SSA SM2
This is the site bounded by the A13, the A1306 (New Road), the Ford Paint Trim Assembly site and Chequers Lane.
- South Dagenham East. Site Specific Allocation SSA SM4
This is the site bounded by the London Tilbury Southend railway, Thames Avenue, the A1306 (New Road) and Kent Avenue.

SSA SM2 and SSA SM4 are policies within the Council's Site Specific Allocations document which is available at the following link.

<http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/8-leisure-envir/planning/local-dev-framework/site-specific1.html>

Residential areas and designated local centres and parades which are outlined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map may be considered as appropriate locations for religious meeting places. However, it must be demonstrated that the proposal will have no significant adverse effect on surrounding neighbours (refer to section 3) and that there are no opportunities in the other preferred locations for the proposed facility.

As explained at the outset of this advice note, the Council will – in all instances - aim to make sure that planning applications do not give rise to issues and concerns including increased noise, disturbance, parking problems or lead to having an adverse effect on the amenities of neighbouring residents and occupiers. This applies equally to the preferred locations detailed in this section.

4.2 Suggestions:

We recognise that with the number and variety of faith communities in the Borough having increased significantly in recent years; finding suitable land and premises for religious meeting places can be challenging for faith groups. As a solution we suggest that religious meeting places are located in existing premises, which are either under-used or would be vacant at certain times or on certain days. We recommend that the following types of premises could be suitable for temporary dual or multi-use by faith groups, subject to residential amenity considerations and the beliefs of individual faith groups:

- Underused existing religious meeting places;
- Vacant buildings in retail parks;
- Community halls;
- Schools, colleges and public libraries (outside of operating hours)
- Other public venues (e.g. theatres and public houses)

Section 5 - What Do I Need to Know If I am Submitting a Planning Application for a Religious Meeting Place?

5.1 Checklist for potential planning applications for a religious meeting place:

When submitting a planning application to the Council, please make sure that the following information is provided:

- How many people will be using the religious meeting place, at what times of the day and which days of the week?
- How wide is the catchment area for the religious meeting place?
- Details about festivals and ceremonies and how often they occur?
- How much space is required and for what purpose (e.g. prayer rooms, offices or teaching rooms)?
- How would people get to the religious meeting place (e.g. walking / cycling, private car, minibus, coach or public transport)?
- The parking and access arrangements and whether drop-off facilities will be provided for larger vehicles or coaches?
- The level of noise expected to be generated?
- What disabled access is provided?

5.2 Planning conditions / temporary planning permission:

We may grant planning permission subject to certain conditions. Planning conditions may be used to restrict activities at the religious meeting place, for example by limiting operational times and helping to control noise levels, where it is considered necessary. Alternatively the Council may grant temporary planning permission to enable us to assess the impacts of a particular proposal or to allow time for you to seek alternative premises.

5.3 Pre-application discussions:

We strongly advise applicants to arrange to talk to a Planning Officer from the council's Development Management team before any commitment is made in buying or renting a property for a religious meeting place. This is important and could save you a lot of time and money later.

You should always arrange a pre-application meeting with a council Planning Officer before you submit your planning application as it will help identify any potential problems and allow them to be changed at an early stage.

<http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/8-leisure-envir/planning/pdf/pre-application-fees.pdf>

Section 6 - Useful Contacts

| | |
|---|---|
| Development Management, Enforcement and Building Control London Borough of Barking & Dagenham 3 rd and 4 th Floor Maritime House 1 Linton Road Barking IG11 8HG Tel: 020 82273933 Fax: 020 8227 3490 Textphone: 020 8227 5755 E-mail: planning@lbbd.gov.uk | Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum c/o The Salvation Army 240 Ripple Road Barking IG11 7DJ Tel: 020 8594 2964 E-mail: lbbdfaithforum@yahoo.co.uk |
|---|---|

(Please note that these contact details were correct at time of writing and are subject to change).

Appendix A

Explanation of the Relevant Local Development Framework policies

- 1 Barking and Dagenham's Local Development Framework replaces the Unitary Development Plan. The Local Development Framework comprises:
 - Core Strategy
 - Borough wide development policies
 - Site Specific Allocations
 - Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan
- 2 The Local Development Framework contains a number of policies and proposals which set out our commitment to the provision and retention of religious meeting places in central and accessible locations.
- 3 Applicants are advised to consult the Local Development Framework in their site selection process and when drawing up their proposals. Of particular importance are:
 - Policy CC2 of the Core Strategy which sets out the criteria proposals for community facilities should meet
 - Policy BE1 of the Borough Wide Development Policies which sets out the proportion of non retail uses which are allowed in shopping frontages.
- 4 In addition there are a range of Core Strategy and Borough Wide Development Policies which set out criteria for the layout and design of new development including:
 - CR4 Flood Management
 - BR1 Environmental Building Standards
 - BR2 Energy and On Site Renewables
 - BR3 Greening the Urban Environment
 - BR4 Water Resource Management
 - BR9 Parking
 - BR10 Sustainable Transport
 - BR11 Walking and Cycling
 - BR13 Noise Mitigation
 - BR15 Sustainable Waste Management
 - BC7 Crime Prevention
 - BP8 Protecting Residential Amenity
 - BP11 Urban Design

Glossary of Terms Used

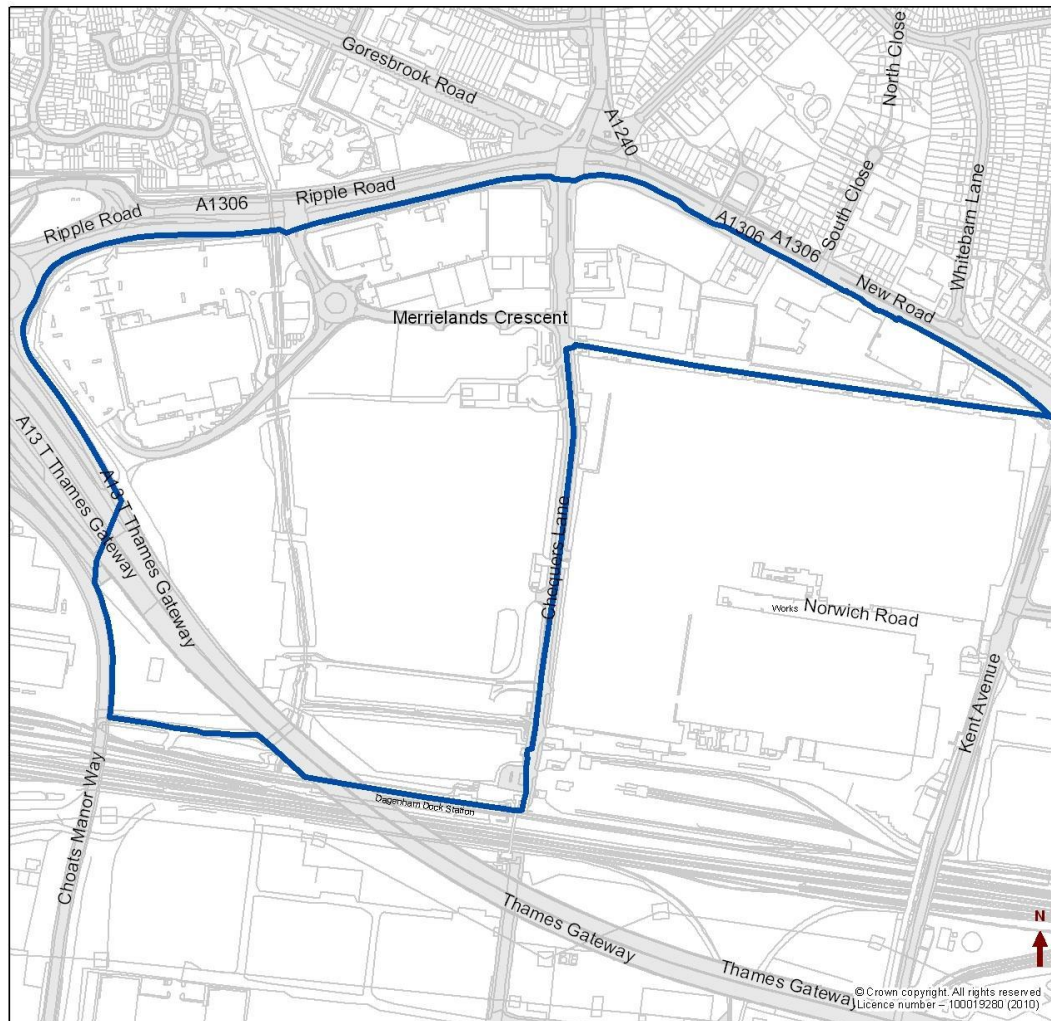
| Term | Definition |
|---|--|
| Amenity | A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings or less material factors such as a pleasant atmosphere. |
| Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) | The term "Black or Minority Ethnic" refers to all groups that are not recorded under the "white British" census category. The term also includes minority ethnic groups in England who have white skin (i.e. those recorded under any of the "white" groups other than "white British"), such as Gypsies, Irish Travellers and people from Eastern Europe. |
| Borough Wide Development Policies | This document within the Local Development Framework will contain detailed forms of development policies. It will have the status of a Development Plan Document. <i>Also see Local Development Framework (LDF).</i> |
| Census | A counting of the population (as of a country, city or town) and a gathering of related statistics. In the UK Census information is collected every 10 years. |
| The Barking and Dagenham Community Plan | The Community Plan provides a long term vision and action plan for Barking and Dagenham. It outlines the aspirations, needs and priorities of the local community. It is prepared by the Barking and Dagenham Local Strategic Partnership. |
| Conditions / Planning Conditions | Requirements attached to a planning permission to limit, control or direct the manner in which a development is carried out. |
| Core Strategy | The Local Development Framework document which sets out the long term spatial vision for the local authority and the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision. |
| The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) | The Disability Discrimination Act is a UK parliamentary Act of 1995 which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people in respect of their disabilities in relation to employment, the provision of goods and services, education and transport. |
| Diversity | The difference in the values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, sexuality, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people constitute the diversity of that group. This term refers to differences between people and is used to highlight individual need. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Dual / Multi–Use | Premises which are used for more than one purpose, at different times of the day or week. |
| Infrastructure | Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities. |
| Local Development Framework (LDF) | The Local Development Framework comprises a portfolio of development documents which includes the Core Strategy, Borough Wide Development Policies and Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan. The framework will help implement a wide range of programmes, such as regeneration, environmental protection, transport improvements, and waste disposal and management. |
| London Plan (The) | The Mayor of London has produced a new planning strategy for London. The London Plan replaces the previous strategic planning guidance for London (known as RPG3), issued by the Secretary of State. The London Plan is the name given to the Mayor's spatial development strategy. |
| Planning Policy Guidance Note(PPG) | Guidance produced by the Government on planning matters (these are gradually being replaced by Planning Policy Statements). |
| Planning Policy Statement (PPS) | Statements of National Planning Policy issued by the Government (to replace Planning Policy Guidance Notes). |
| Primary / Prime Shopping Area | An area where retailing and the number of shops in a town centre is most concentrated. |
| Proposals Map | The adopted Proposals Map illustrates on a base map all the policies and proposals contained in the Local Development Framework. |
| Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) | Legislation seeking to prevent discrimination directly or indirectly in any functions carried out by public authorities. |
| Retail Park | A grouping of retail warehouses. |
| Secondary Shopping Area | A retailing area, secondary to the primary shopping frontage that provides greater opportunities for a diversity of uses. |
| Section 106 Contributions | Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows the local authority to enter into an agreement which can mean that a developer must make a financial or non–financial contribution to reduce the effect of a development and make it acceptable in planning terms. The contribution will usually go towards providing necessary “infrastructure.” For example, a developer may pay for a road to be built to service a new development. Section 106 agreements are known as planning obligations. |
| South Asian | People of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Sri-Lankan origin. |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Sustainable Development | <p>A widely used definition of sustainable development is drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."</p> <p>The government has set out four aims for sustainable development in its strategy "A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK."</p> <p>The four aims to be achieved are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone • Effective protection of the environment • Prudent use of natural resources • Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment |
| Unitary Development Plan (UDP) | This is the old-style development plan which is replaced by the Local Development Framework. |
| Use Classes Order | The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class. |

Preferred locations for Religious Meeting Places

South Dagenham West. Site Specific Allocation SSA SM2



South Dagenham East. Site Specific Allocation SSA SM4

