



## HOLLOWAY WOMEN'S BUILDING DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION – ISSUED 22 JUNE 2020

### Introduction and Background

- 1 The purpose of this document is to support engagement and consultation on the council's plans to secure a Women's Building on the Holloway Prison site.
- 2 In January 2018 Islington Council published its Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Holloway Prison site. This stated, in section 3.1, that one of the key planning and development objectives sought from the site's redevelopment was for:

*"The provision of a women's building that incorporates safe space to support women in the criminal justice system and services for women as part of a wider building/centre that could also include some affordable workspace to support local organisations and employment opportunities".*

The SPD makes clear that the land use of the site, a prison, is considered to be a community use, part of the social infrastructure of the borough and London. The Borough's planning policies strongly protect existing social infrastructure uses and emphasise the importance of providing new social infrastructure to support new large developments.

Para 4.14 specifically states that:

*"Indeed the prison played a valuable social role both within the borough and beyond in supporting women within the criminal justice system".*

Para 4.16 goes on to stress that while the prison was an unusual form of social infrastructure, it is important to look at the local impact of the prison relocation and:

*"ensure that relevant social infrastructure is still adequately provided for".*

The SPD requires a continued presence of a base for women's services, including services for women within the criminal justice system, and indicates that such facilities *"should therefore be provided as part of any future development proposals for the site in order to ensure equivalent levels of provision and access"*.

The SPD goes on to state, in Para 4.21 that:

*"In addition to space to provide support for women in the criminal justice system, it will also be important to provide space for support and services for women more generally. .... The long standing connection between the presence of a women's prison and the growth of locally based specialist women's voluntary and community groups should continue to be supported".*

This need for a women's building is noted in Para 4.24 as being:

*"something that has been identified by a number of stakeholders as part of the consultation process including the voluntary and community sector, local residents, and public sector bodies".*

- 3 The prison site was bought by Peabody in March 2019. The council and Peabody are currently engaged in pre-application discussions, and it is expected that Peabody will submit a planning application to the council in autumn 2020. The current round of public consultation on the draft planning application began on 12 June 2020.

#### **Roles of the different organisations involved**

- 4 To support the preparation of this draft brief, the council has been consulting with a diverse group of women's organisations, local community groups, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and Peabody. Peabody will be responsible for appointing architects to design the building and for appointing contractors to construct it. The council will work with Peabody and MOPAC to commission an organisation to deliver services from the building. Both organisations are being consulted on this DRAFT brief.

#### **Purpose of the Draft Brief**

- 5 This document is not a statutory planning document. The purpose of this DRAFT brief is to:
  - A. Ensure that potential future service users, service providers and the local community are fully involved in developing detailed plans for the building.
  - B. Inform the council's ongoing discussions with Peabody concerning the location, size and internal and external design of the Women's Building.
  - C. Start to identify the types of activities that will take place within the building to inform: a) its internal and external design; and b) the process for commissioning a tenant/operator for the new building.

Following consultation, the brief will be finalised and published. It will be provided to Peabody and their architects to guide and inform the design process going forward.

#### **Consultation to Date**

- 6 A first round of engagement on a draft brief for the Women's Building took place between August 2019 and February 2020. The draft brief has been produced with the benefit of specialist inputs from a broad range of women's organisations, MOPAC, and following feedback from early consultation events for the local community delivered by Peabody. It has also been significantly shaped by a series of meetings, workshops and discussions with a wide range of people and organisations who are actively involved in the provision of services for women in London, and further afield in the UK, including women who are, or who have been, involved in the criminal justice system or who are risk of being so. The groups and organisations that were consulted to date are listed in Appendix One.
- 7 Each organisation, group, and individual, has brought invaluable information to the consultation exercise. They are thanked for their input to date. The council has carefully considered the many and sometimes competing views that have been expressed to date. These views have informed the development of this draft brief.

## Purpose of the Draft Brief

- 8 This draft brief provides an opportunity for a second round of more detailed consultation with the local community and women's organisations. It contains a number of questions that highlight some of the key issues and competing views that have been raised so far. The council would be extremely grateful for your responses to these questions, but please do also tell us about any other issues relating to the proposed Women's Building that you may want to raise at this stage.
- 9 As noted above, consultation on this DRAFT brief is taking place alongside Peabody's consultation on the draft planning application.

## How to respond to this Consultation

- 10 If you wish to respond to the consultation on this DRAFT brief in writing please reply to [linda.aitken@islington.gov.uk](mailto:linda.aitken@islington.gov.uk). Your response should be with us by Friday 10th July.
- 11 There will also be two on - line meetings to discuss the DRAFT brief. Please let Linda Aitken know if you wish to register for these meetings. Due to the sensitive nature of the issues that will be discussed at these meetings **only people who have registered in advance will be allowed to participate in the on-line meetings.**

## Structure of the Draft Brief

- 12 Section One of the DRAFT brief considers who will use the building.
- 13 Section Two of the DRAFT brief proposes a set of high level design principles for the building.
- 14 Section Three contains more detailed DRAFT guidance on the internal layout of the building and considers the amount of floor space that is required for the principal uses.
- 15 Section Four considers how the building can support a sustainable operating model.
- 16 Section Five considers how the architectural practice that will design the building will be appointed.

## Section One – Who is the Building for?

- 17 Following the first round of public consultation there appears to be an emerging consensus that the building should provide a wide range of services, activities and facilities to women from across North London.
- 18 This consensus suggests that the building should accommodate services to support women who are: a) in the criminal justice system; b) moving on from the criminal justice system; or c) who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. For the sake of clarity, we call this element of the building the "Women's Centre".
- 19 The emerging consensus also suggests that support services for women in the criminal justice system should be delivered in tandem with a broader range of services for all women across North London. It has been suggested for example that these services could support local women to escape domestic violence, participate in therapy or learn new skills. Beyond this, there are views that the building could enable a far wider package of services such as art and

exercise studios. Such an approach would provide an integrated and holistic package of support services and activities for users of the Women's Centre as well as women within the wider community.

- 20 It has been suggested that some of the activities in this latter category e.g. art and exercise classes could be paid for by better - off service users. This would partially financially support the other activities that take place within the building.
- 21 The seminal Corston Report of 2007 encourages Women's Centres to provide safe spaces where women are treated as individuals and their needs are holistically addressed
- 22 The DRAFT brief therefore proposes that the building should provide a **centre** for women affected by the criminal justice system. However, in accordance with the principles established by the Corston Report, these services should be delivered within a more celebratory women's **building** that provides a comprehensive package of services, activities and facilities for women across North London.

### **Question One**

***Do you agree with the proposal that the building should accommodate a women's centre that will support women in the criminal justice system and women who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system alongside a wider ranging package of services and facilities for women contained within a women's building?***

During the initial consultation exercise many people and organisations advocated for a women only building. MOPAC has also stated categorically that the women's centre element has to be women only or many vulnerable women simply will not use it.

- 23 However, it was also advocated by some that the building should be opened up to all members of the community including men, and that it should also serve as a general purpose community centre for all members of the local community.
- 24 The history of the site as a women's prison should be commemorated. It has also been reported that the closure of the women's prison has undermined a cluster of services that had grown up in the local area to support women in the criminal justice system, and their support network of family and friends. The council therefore believes that the building should be a women only building, and that a separate space should be provided for the wider community on the site if needed.

### **Question Two**

***Do you think that all of the building should be for women only or do you think that all members of the community including men should be allowed to use some of the building?***

## **Section Two – High Level Design Principles**

- 25 If a women's centre is located within a more public facing women's building, the building could benefit from being designed to enable a progression between the more public spaces and activities of the Woman's Building to the more sensitive functions of the Women's Centre. The latter would be located progressively more privately and discretely within the building.

### **Question Three**

***Do you agree with the proposal that the women's centre that will support women in the criminal justice system and women who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system should be located in the more private parts of the building with these more private areas being provided alongside more publicly facing areas that will facilitate a more wide ranging package of services and facilities to all women?***

- 26 Some groups have advocated for a stand - alone women's building. However, the council wants to ensure that the development capacity of the site is optimised particularly where this will support the delivery of genuinely affordable housing. It is therefore currently proposed that the women's building is incorporated into the lower floors of one of the residential buildings. Again to optimise the capacity of the site to deliver affordable housing, a multi-storey space may be acceptable (up to a maximum of 3 levels) providing that this does not impede the accessibility to all users and the ability of people to easily navigate their way around the building.
- 27 Following the initial round of public consultation and engagement with women's organisations, the council has identified the following additional key principles that must inform the design of the building.

#### **Outstanding Design and Architecture and a Flagship Building**

- a) Outstanding architecture and design will be required to celebrate and honour the history of women on the site. This should be a flagship building with inspirational spaces that women can feel proud to visit.

#### **Location and Presence**

- b) The building should sit well within the overall context of the masterplan for the site. It should have a public and celebratory presence onto Camden/Parkhurst Road.

#### **Entrances, Exits and Routes**

- c) The main public entrance of the building should be on Camden Road.
- d) The building should have an additional discrete, anonymous, and safe means of secondary access/s and egress in order to protect the personal safety and privacy of some service users. However, it should not be apparent why service users are accessing the building.
- e) Well lit and overlooked routes to and from the building with active frontages must be provided to ensure the safety of women travelling to and from the building.

#### **Safe and Private**

- f) There should be a progression of spaces through the building from open, public and celebratory, to increasingly private and safe.
- g) The design of the building will be 'trauma informed' to ensure a comfortable and comforting environment particularly for vulnerable service users.

h) Access to some parts of the building will be carefully managed to safeguard the safety and privacy of service users. Care must be taken to avoid triggering memories or feelings of being imprisoned.

i) Some acoustically secure rooms should be provided to protect the privacy of service users.

#### **Future Proof and Flexible**

j) Generous floor to ceiling heights should be provided particularly for some primary ground floor spaces.

k) Generous levels of built - in storage should be provided to enable flexible use including 'time-sharing' of rooms.

l) The design of the building should be future proofed by ensuring that it is sufficiently flexible to allow changes and adaptations to its layout if the provision of services and activities changes in future.

#### **Well Lit and Avoidance of Overlooking**

m) Excellent use should be made of natural light so as to create high quality spaces that are a pleasure to be in.

n) The more sensitive women's centre element of the building should not be overlooked from the street or adjoining buildings.

#### **High Quality Outdoor Space**

o) The building should have high quality outdoor spaces including a garden at ground level to promote sociability, health and wellbeing.

#### **Honouring the Social History of the Site as a Women's Prison**

p) The architecture of the new building must respond positively to the history of the site as the location of the Holloway Women's Prison.

q) The architecture of the building will also need to respond sensitively and creatively to the wider redevelopment scheme coming forward on the site whilst being a distinct and unique component of the overall redevelopment.

#### **Accessible and Navigable**

r) The building including all internal and external space should be fully accessible to all users in line with best practice. It must be easy for users to find their way around the building.

#### **Sustainable**

s) The highest sustainability and energy efficient credentials are required in line with best practice.

### **Affordable to Run and Maintain**

- t) The building should be designed to be robust and affordable to run and maintain so as not to burden future operators of the building with high management and maintenance costs.

### **Question Four**

***Do you agree with the overarching design principles that the council has established for the building as set out in paragraph 27 above?***

### **Question Five**

***Has the council failed to identify any key design principles that should be incorporated into the brief for the building?***

## **Section Three – Space Requirements**

- 28 The building will contain a range of services and spaces. As noted above, some of these are likely to relate to services associated with the criminal justice system in the form of the 'Women's Centre' while others are likely to be available for a broader range of functions and women's groups with less specific, more fluid configurations, and that are not associated with the criminal justice system or process (although they may provide services that will complement this).
- 29 This DRAFT brief provides an initial list of possible spaces that the building could contain. The identification of these spaces and functions has been informed by the extensive research and consultation that has already fed into and shaped this brief. All the floor spaces suggested below are indicative only at this stage and are intended to act as a guide.
- 30 The council has concluded that a variety of spaces is needed within the building - ranging from a large multipurpose 'hall' to serve a variety of activities down to a series of small 1:1 meeting rooms. It has been concluded that the building needs:

**A Reception** – a prominent and welcoming reception area (30 sq metres)

**A large multi-purpose hall** - (180 – 200 sq metres). This should be a large space suitable for larger scale functions, from dance and theatrical productions, to conferences, art exhibitions, and such like. It should be:

- Prominently located on the ground floor;
- Have a sprung loaded floor suitable for dance/gym/sporting activities;
- Acoustically protected; and
- Readily sub-dividable into smaller spaces with 'easy to use' sliding partitions.

**A range of multi-purpose smaller rooms** (up to 670sqm in total)

These rooms would range from more flexible 70sqm rooms down to 8sqm – 10sqm rooms suitable for 1:1 meetings, all with built in 'in-room' storage facilities. The indicative range is as follows:

- 4 x 70sqm rooms - 280sqm
- 5 x 30sqm rooms - 150sqm
- 6 x 20sqm rooms - 120sqm
- 12 x 10sqm rooms - 120sqm

**A kitchen** with training facilities (e.g. 25 - 35sqm), dining area and street facing cafe (e.g. 100sqm)

**WCs, showers, changing rooms, and laundry**

**Crèche (e.g. 100sqm)**

This should provide short term child care for users of the building, primarily the women's centre, (up to 25 children max.) with access to outdoor amenity space:

- Children under 2: 3.5m<sup>2</sup> per child (10 children – minimum requirement 35sqm)
- 2 year olds: 2.5 m<sup>2</sup> per child (10 children - minimum requirement 25sqm)
- 3 to 5 years: 2.3 m<sup>2</sup> per child (10 children - minimum requirement 23sqm)

**Secure storage space for prams, pushchairs, mobility scooters etc.**

**Dedicated staff only relaxation rooms/facilities/offices** (e.g. 50 - 70sqm)

**External Amenity Space**

To include:

- A garden and/or food growing area;
- Outdoor play space for the creche; and
- Balconies and/or roof terraces to upper levels.

**Secure Cycle Parking and cycle facilities for staff and visitors**

The council considers that a building with a minimum of 800sqm of floor space to a maximum floor space of up 1200sqm will be needed. Based on the above requirements a figure closer to 1200 sq metres is likely to be required.

**Question Six**

***Does this DRAFT brief identify all the space requirements for the building? Is there anything that we have missed?***

**Question Seven**

***Do you have any thoughts about the proposed sizes of the different elements of the building as outlined above?***



## **Section Five - Sustainable Funding Model**

- 31 Together with MOPAC and other expert bodies, women's organisations, and local community groups, the council will develop a service specification for the building. We will also work with the relevant organisations to commission an organisation to manage and operate the building in line with the service specification.
- 32 The council is not able to fund any of the activities that will take place in the building. Furthermore, it is proposed that the building will support services for women from across North London and not just Islington. The council therefore wants to ensure that any organisation that occupies the building can develop a financially sustainable operating model that does not rely on council funding.

### **Question Nine**

***What can the council do to ensure that the physical layout of the building facilitates a sustainable funding model for its future operators?***

## **Section Six - Commissioning Architects**

- 33 The council would like to encourage a women centred and inclusive approach to the design of this building given its uniqueness as well as its social, communal and cultural significance. This could be best achieved through an open design competition that invites women led architectural practices to develop proposals for the building.
- 34 Unfortunately this approach is not possible in this instance because Peabody has entered into a framework for the procurement of architectural services, and is not able to commission architects outside this framework. Secondly, the Women's Building is unlikely to be a stand - alone building but is likely to be integrated within a residential building.
- 35 In these circumstances the council will encourage Peabody to undertake a limited architectural competition whereby, for example, practices on the Peabody framework that have leading women practitioners, would be invited to prepare initial scheme designs based on the final version of this brief. The resulting scheme designs would then be subject to a public exhibition the feedback from which could be used to help select the winning scheme.

### **Examples of Similar Buildings**

38. Appendix Two contains some examples of similar buildings that have been built elsewhere. However, it should be noted that these examples are stand - alone buildings, and as noted above it may not be possible to deliver a stand - alone women's building on this site due to the need to optimise the delivery of genuinely affordable homes for local people.

### **Question Ten**

***What do you think of these examples? Can you think of any other examples of best practice?***

## **Conclusion**

- 39 Thank you for responding to this consultation. Please do tell us about any other issues relating to the Women's Building that we may have missed. Please do forward this draft brief on to any organisation that may have an interest in this building.

DRAFT