

# Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031

Adopted January 2020



Managing growth and  
sharing the benefits

**Produced by:**

Strategic Planning Team  
Planning and Building Control Service  
Place Directorate



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# Mayor's Foreword

This Local Plan sets out how we will manage growth in Tower Hamlets and ensure we share the benefits with all our residents over the next 15 years. We have seen the population in the borough double in the past thirty years and it is predicted to rise by almost 100,000 by 2031. This growth shows that Tower Hamlets is a place people want to live and work in, which we should celebrate, however we need to plan appropriately for this scale of growth.

The recent resident survey showed that only 35% of residents felt new housing being built was affordable. This is an issue across the capital but clearly one we have to address in Tower Hamlets. The Local Plan sets out policies on providing the affordable homes we need.

The Local Plan also sets out policies about infrastructure provision, employment opportunities and protection of our environment, including air quality. Along with the policies, developments will need to fit within the ambitious vision of the Local Plan – to help continue to build for the kind of borough we want to enjoy in the future.

Planning impacts on our everyday lives and influences the character of environment – our borough. It is because of this that we need the guidance to help plan for our future and shape the places we live.

Having listened to our local community, here is a Local Plan that reflects their needs and priorities and will help take Tower Hamlets in the right direction.

**John Biggs, Mayor of Tower Hamlets**



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## SECTION 1

# Setting the scene



# 1. Introduction

**1.1** The Local Plan sets out how the borough of Tower Hamlets will grow and develop from now on until 2031. It identifies how many new homes, jobs and services are needed to support our growing population, and where and how they should be provided. It will also shape how our places will look and feel and influence the way that our communities interact with each other and the spaces around them. It also provides a series of policies to ensure development is well-designed, accessible, safe and respects and enhances the environment, and can be delivered alongside new infrastructure and local services.

**1.2** Tower Hamlets is one of the fastest growing areas in Europe. In order to keep pace with this change, this plan has been developed to ensure the benefits of this growth can be spread across the entire borough and also coordinate and manage it in a way that can best meet the needs of our communities.

## Context

**1.3** The Local Plan has also been prepared in line with the London Plan, relevant acts and regulations and the policies set out in the government's National Planning Policy Framework, with input from local residents, businesses, landowners, neighbouring boroughs, statutory bodies and other interested stakeholders. In particular, it positively responds to the minimum targets for housing and jobs set out in the London Plan<sup>1</sup>.

**1.4** The Local Plan will also sit alongside any future neighbourhood plans and area action plans which provide more detailed planning guidance to help shape the development of specific areas and locations in the borough.

**1.5** Together, these documents (along with the London Plan) make up the borough's development plan and will be used to make decisions on planning applications (see Figure 1).

**1.6** This plan must be read as a whole. Proposals will be considered against all relevant policies set out in this plan.

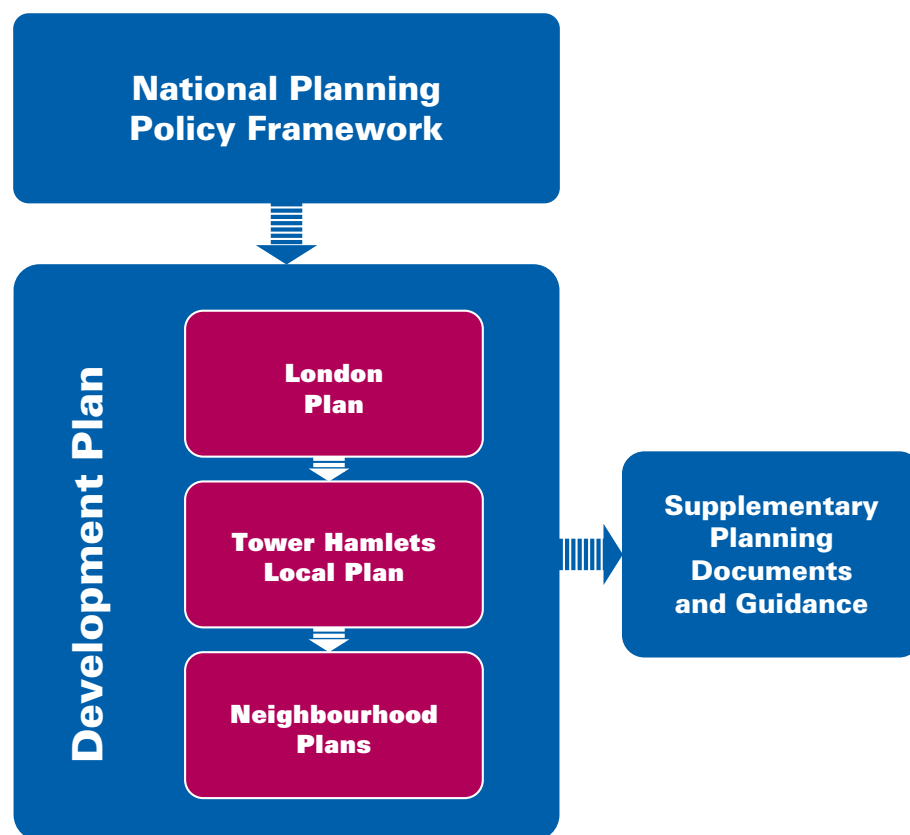
**1.7** The policies and proposals set out in this document are also illustrated on an interactive map (known as the Policies Map). This map identifies areas of change and opportunity within the borough, as well as the open spaces and other important local assets that will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. It also shows the areas identified in the policies where specific guidance will be followed.

<sup>1</sup> The London Plan sets out the overall approach to planning and growth across London, produced by the Greater London Authority on behalf of the Mayor of London. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Local Plan will be in general conformity with the London Plan. Where relevant, cross-references are made to London Plan and other relevant supporting documents and these will be applied alongside the policies in the Local Plan.



**1.8** Part of the borough falls within the boundary of the London Legacy Development Corporation (as shown on Figures 2 and 3). The Local Plan does not cover this area with the exception of waste matters (as detailed in chapter 15). Local Plan designations within this area are shown on the Policies Map and key diagram and are identified in the London Legacy Development Corporation Local Plan which applies in this area.

**Figure 1: Relationship between the Tower Hamlets Local Plan and other relevant documents**



## How the Local Plan fits together

**1.9** This document comprises the following elements:

### Section 1: Setting the scene

This section outlines the borough's characteristics and the key issues, challenges and opportunities it faces, both now and in the future.

### Section 2: Vision and objectives

This section sets out the long term vision of how Tower Hamlets will embrace its role as the engine of London's growth and make best use of its assets (including its links to the City of London and the waterways), while seeking to manage and shape how its places will change and share the benefits of this growth. This vision is linked to a series of overarching objectives and principles.

### Section 3: Policies

This section sets out the policies that we will use to guide and manage development and the use of land across the borough, covering a number of themes, including housing, the economy and jobs, town centres, community facilities, transport and open spaces. Our policies are divided into two types:

- Spatial policies – these set out overarching principles that explain how the vision and objectives of the plan will be achieved (as shown in green and numbered with the prefix 'S').
- Development management policies – these set out detailed criteria that we will use to determine planning applications (as shown in purple and numbered with the prefix 'D').

### Section 4: Delivering sustainable places

This section outlines the priorities and principles that will shape the future development of different parts of the borough and identifies a range of sites where significant housing and employment-related uses alongside key infrastructure will be delivered.

**Section 5: Delivery and implementation**

This sets out how this plan will be delivered and monitored.

**Section 6: Appendices**

This section contains a glossary of terms and abbreviations, a summary of the borough's future housing supply, a series of standards on how certain policies will be implemented, and explains how the policies set out in the Core Strategy and Managing Development Document will be addressed in this document.

**1.10** This document should be read in conjunction with the government's National Planning Policy Framework.

## 2. Borough portrait

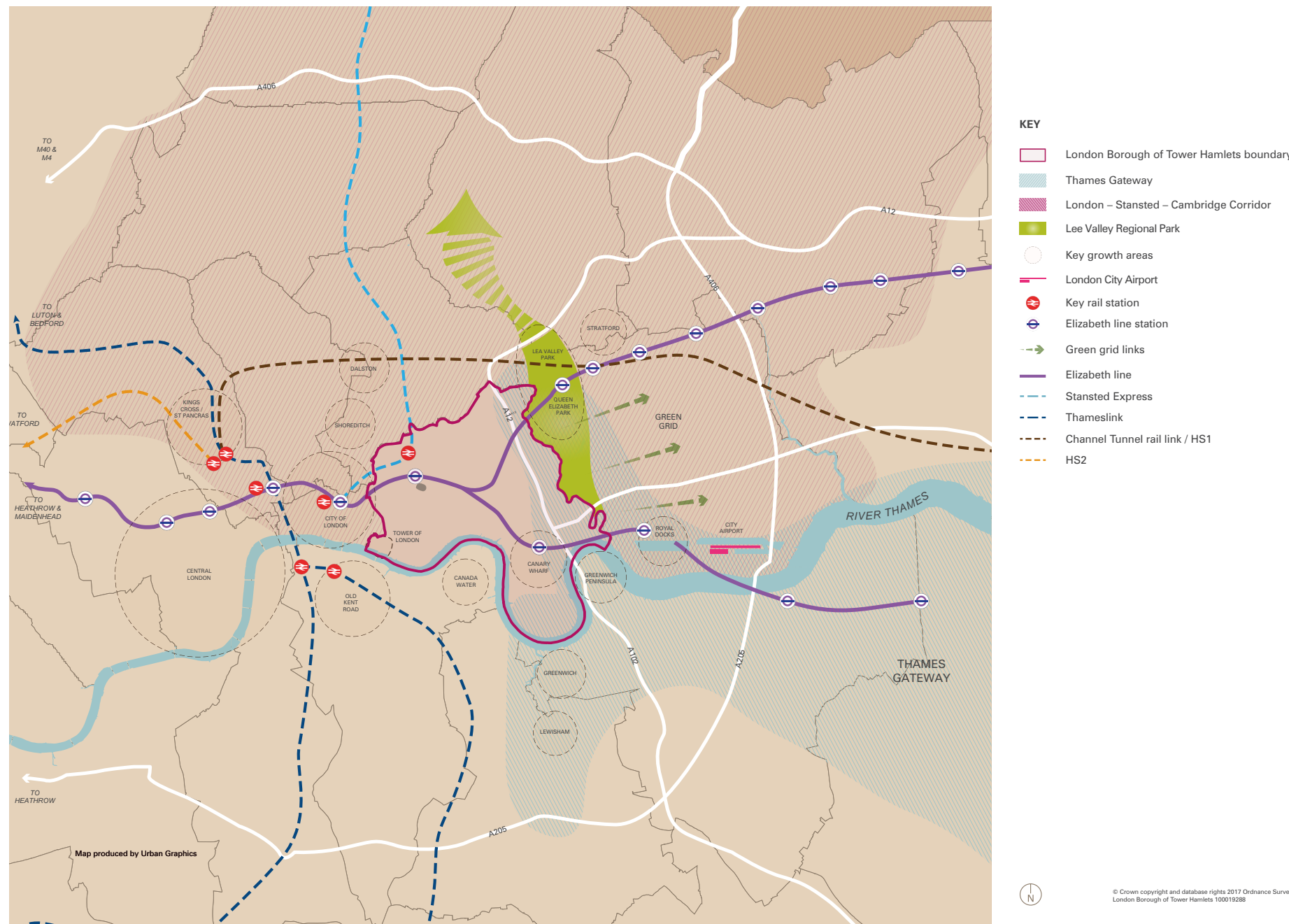
### Introduction

**2.1** Tower Hamlets has played a significant role in the social, political and economic history of London. Over the centuries, the borough has been a focal point for London and the UK, acting as a key trading route to the east from Central London. Today, Tower Hamlets has grown into a world-class hub for financial, technological and creative industries, with the potential to become the setting for exciting innovations and advances in the twenty-first century.

**2.2** However, this growth has brought with it stresses: Tower Hamlets, for example, still has high levels of deprivation and its ever-growing population is placing increasing pressure on local services and resources, including the use of land. Providing enough new homes, jobs and services in the right places to support the needs of our growing population and other parts of London is one of our key challenges.

**2.3** This chapter provides an overview of Tower Hamlets and how it relates to the wider London and UK context. It also looks at the future predictions for growth and the implications this will have on local communities and the look and feel of the borough.

Figure 2: Position of Tower Hamlets within the context of London and neighbouring areas



**2.4** Tower Hamlets is an inner London borough and occupies an important strategic location within London and the south east of England (see Figure 2). The borough shares its boundaries with the City of London in the west and the London boroughs of Newham and Hackney in the north. The River Thames flows along the southern boundary of the borough, separating it from the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the London boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark, while the River Lea runs along the eastern fringe of the borough.

**2.5** Part of the borough falls within the boundary of the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) – the local planning authority that is coordinating the growth and regeneration of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the wider area as part of the legacy of the Olympic Games (as defined on Figure 3). Any planning application relating to land within this area (including Hackney Wick and Fish Island) must be submitted to the London Legacy Development Corporation.

**2.6** As shown in Figure 2, the borough is extremely well-connected with excellent transport links via tube, rail and bus to the City of London, Stratford, Greenwich and other parts of London and beyond, including international airports (e.g. London City Airport and Stansted) and the Channel Tunnel. The borough also forms part of a major growth corridor between London, Stansted and Cambridge, centred on enterprise and innovation within emerging sectors such as digital media, life science, telecommunications and advanced manufacturing.

## Population

**2.7** Tower Hamlets has doubled its population in the past 30 years, from 150,200 in 1986 to 304,900 in 2016<sup>2</sup>. From 2006 to 2016, Tower Hamlets witnessed the fastest population growth of any local authority in England and Wales, particularly among the working-age population, making it one of the densely populated boroughs in the UK.

**2.8** One of the borough's defining characteristics is the diversity of its people. Around two-thirds of the borough's population come from a minority ethnic background and more than two-fifths of the population were born outside of the UK<sup>3</sup>. The borough also has the largest proportion of young people compared to other inner London boroughs.

**2.9** The borough's daytime population has also increased significantly in recent years, primarily as a result of workers travelling to and from the City Fringe and Canary Wharf employment areas, and is approximately 42% larger than its residential population<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/boroughstatistics/population/MYE\\_2015](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/boroughstatistics/population/MYE_2015)

<sup>3</sup> [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/wardprofiles/census](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/wardprofiles/census)

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/daytime-population-borough>

Figure 3: London Borough of Tower Hamlets





## Economy and employment

**2.10** Tower Hamlets has also seen significant economic growth: the total number of jobs in the borough has nearly doubled since the millennium (compared to an increase of around 25% across London as a whole).

**2.11** Tower Hamlets continues to play a major role in supporting both the London and national economy, contributing significantly to the growth of London as a financial and business centre.

**2.12** The majority of employment is concentrated within the City Fringe/Whitechapel and Canary Wharf/Isle of Dogs areas of the borough – these are strategically important employment locations of national and international importance and serve as the headquarters for a large number of multinational businesses. Tower Hamlets also has a very high number of small-to-medium enterprises and micro-businesses, which is characteristic of its role as a seedbed for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. However, the benefits of this growth have not been evenly spread across the borough as only 15% of jobs in the borough go to local residents<sup>5</sup>.

**2.13** While there are fewer people who are economically active than the regional and national average, levels of education attainment have improved significantly in recent years.

## Housing

**2.14** In recent years, Tower Hamlets has delivered more homes than any other authority in England. However, like many London boroughs, Tower Hamlets suffers from an acute shortage of affordable homes and relative high levels of overcrowding.

**2.15** Over the past decade there has been a marked change in housing tenure. Private rented housing is now the fastest growing and largest tenure in the borough. The percentage of social housing has fallen significantly and levels of owner occupation, the smallest tenure, have also slightly fallen. These trends are set to continue.

## Deprivation and inequality

**2.16** Tower Hamlets is a place of extremes and contrasts. While relative poverty in Tower Hamlets has declined, deprivation remains widespread, particularly in central and eastern parts. The borough also has the highest levels of child and pensioner poverty in England<sup>6</sup>. However, there are pockets of affluence within close proximity to the River Thames and former dockland areas. This disparity is reflected in the borough's ratio of low-to-high pay, which is the largest in London<sup>7</sup>.

**2.17** The health of people in Tower Hamlets is significantly worse than the London and England averages, with healthy life expectancy at birth being nearly ten years less than the national average<sup>8</sup>. Health inequalities also persist in the borough, with significant differences in life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards. Physical activity is a major contributor to health and well-being, and levels of physical activity in Tower Hamlets are currently lower than both the London and England averages, with those living in the more deprived areas in the east of the

<sup>5</sup> [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/economyandbusinesses](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/economyandbusinesses)

<sup>6</sup> [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/incomepovertyandwelfare/indicesofdeprivation](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/incomepovertyandwelfare/indicesofdeprivation)

<sup>7</sup> London Poverty Profile (New Policy Institute, 2015)

<sup>8</sup> [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthlifeexpectanciesatbirth](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthlifeexpectanciesatbirth)

borough being less likely to take part in active sport. Levels of childhood obesity are significantly higher in the borough than the London and England averages, with levels of obesity among 10-and-11-year-olds now increasing. Levels of social isolation and loneliness are also relatively high compared to the England average but similar to London.

## Environment

**2.18** Figure 4 illustrates that Tower Hamlets is made up of distinct places (24 in total) with unique characteristics, from the major international business centres of Canary Wharf and parts of the City Fringe, through to residential areas with traditional East End character, such as Bow and Stepney, and vibrant inner city communities, such as Whitechapel and Shoreditch. Alongside these areas are a number of major leisure attractions and landmarks, such as museums, galleries, markets (e.g. Spitalfields Market), parks (e.g. Victoria Park) and traditional shopping streets (e.g. Roman Road)<sup>9</sup>.

**2.19** These places have evolved from a series of ancient hamlets into densely-populated inner-city communities within the heart of east London, encompassing conservation areas, town centres and assets of significant historic and community value, interspersed with open spaces, waterways, streetscapes and views.

**2.20** Steeped in a rich history, Tower Hamlets is blessed with substantial areas of historic and architectural interest, including 58 conservation areas (which cover around 30% of its total area) and over 2,000 listed buildings, with great variation in character and size. Some of these buildings are landmarks of national and international importance, including the Tower of London (a UNESCO world heritage site) and Christ Church, Spitalfields. Other notable historic buildings include the medieval parish church of St Dunstan (which predates the Tower of London) and the high-tech, former Financial Times Print Works (constructed in the late

1980s). One Canada Square, whilst not formally listed, has been a symbol of modern, progressive London for over a quarter of a century and forms the backdrop to the dramatic skyline of Canary Wharf, which is visible over a wide area.

**2.21** Large parts of the borough (including the former dockland areas and part of the City Fringe) have undergone significant change and regeneration, including the refurbishment and restoration of historic buildings along the Thames and within our inner city communities. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of tall buildings, causing notable changes to the borough's skyline.

**2.22** The greatest natural asset in the borough is the River Thames and the network of inland waterways which dissect the borough, such as canals, reservoirs and former working docks (see Figure 5).

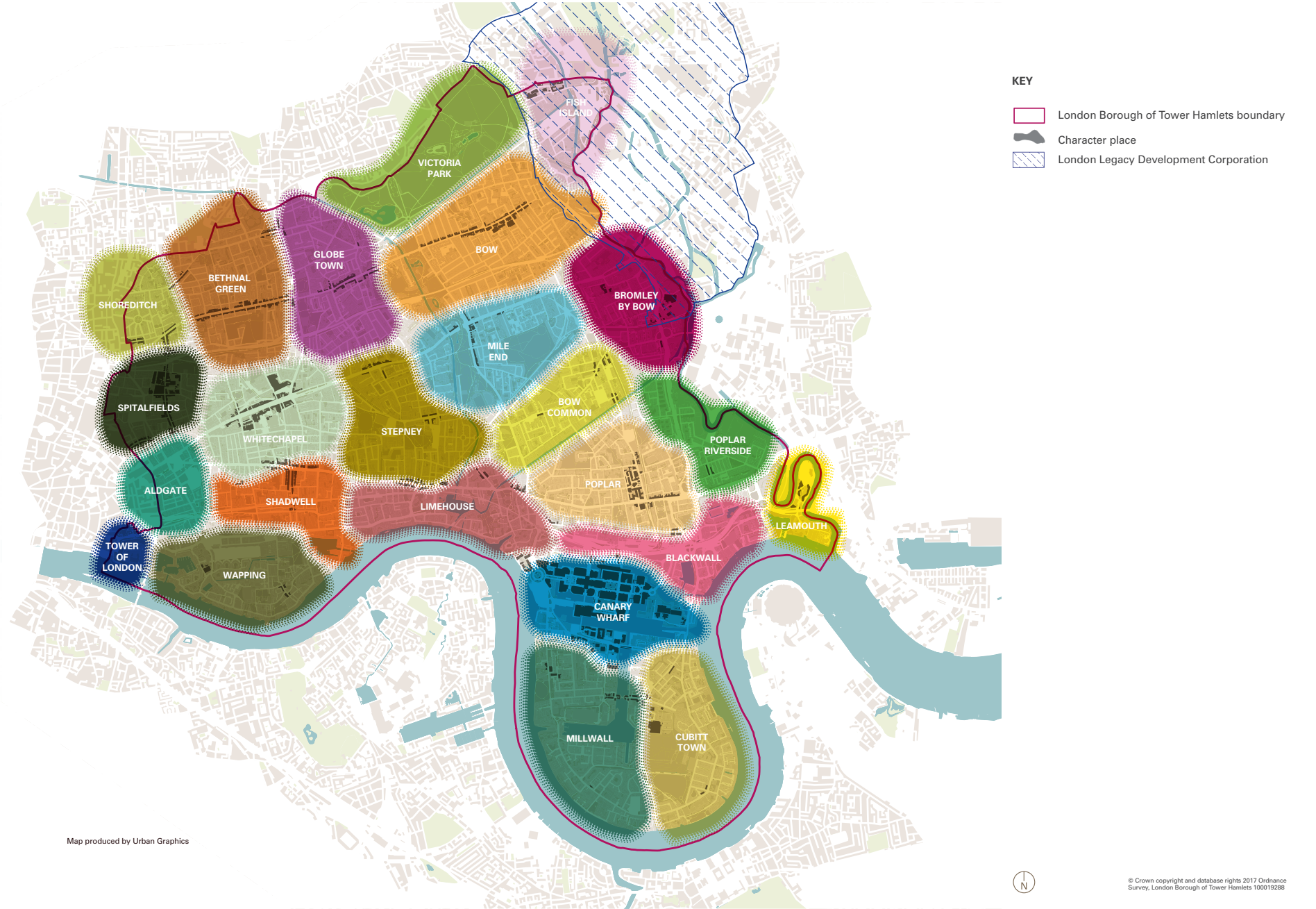
**2.23** The borough also has a range of high quality parks and open spaces ranging from large urban parks (e.g. Victoria Park, Mudchute Park and Mile End Park) through to burial grounds and small pocket parks. However, the overall provision of publicly accessible open space is low compared to other inner London boroughs with similar characteristics, as well as being far below national standards. The topography and urban form of the borough also makes it vulnerable to the effects of climate change, in particular from flooding and the urban heat island effect.

**2.24** While carbon emissions are steadily falling, the borough still emits relatively high levels of carbon dioxide relative to other parts of London, primarily due to emissions from industrial and commercial uses<sup>10</sup>. In addition, parts of the borough, particularly around major roads and junctions, have some of the poorest air quality levels in London.

<sup>9</sup> The Tower Hamlets Urban Structure and Characteristic Study identifies the spatial structure of the borough, comprising 24 individual places.

<sup>10</sup> UK Local Authority and Regional Carbon Dioxide Emissions: 2005- 2014 (National Statistics, 2016)

Figure 4: 24 places of Tower Hamlets





## 3. Trends

**3.1** The following provides a summary of the emerging trends, which will give rise to both opportunities and challenges for the borough over the plan period.

### Our infrastructure



By 2031, the borough's population is expected to increase to nearly 400,000 inhabitants. The greatest increases are expected to be amongst the older working age population. The borough is also expected to become more ethnically diverse in line with national and regional trends.

Population growth will demand more homes and jobs and will significantly impact on existing social and physical infrastructure, including schools, healthcare, open spaces and leisure facilities as well as less visible but very important infrastructure, such as utilities and telecommunications. New delivery models and locations will be required.

Many public sector organisations are seeking to merge services and reduce the number of buildings they operate from. Budgetary constraints and emerging delivery models mean the public sector is gradually reducing its assets and land ownership. This will change the way in which infrastructure and services are planned and delivered in the future.

In order to meet the growth needs of the population, specific requirements include:

- New primary schools
- New secondary schools
- A number of new primary health care facilities
- 2-4 additional local presence facilities (or equivalent expansions to existing idea stores)
- A number of new publicly accessible open spaces and sport halls.

Multiple projects are also underway or planned to improve the public transport network across the borough, including the new Elizabeth line, improvements to the London Underground (e.g. Central and Jubilee lines) and Docklands Light Railway, improved river services and additional river crossings. However, even with these capacity increases, parts of the public transport network will be crowded over the plan period, and further investment in future capacity will be required above that already planned.

## Our local economy



The changing global economy, emerging employment sectors and working trends, including the rise of remote working and self-employment, will have an impact on the type of employment spaces and facilities required in the borough.

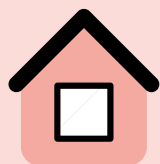
The economic impact of the European Union referendum result is still to emerge, but it may have an impact on the role of London as a financial service hub for Europe.

In Tower Hamlets, economic growth will be concentrated in the following areas.

- City Fringe (including Tech City) which is emerging as one of London's most significant areas for economic growth. Creative, digital and technology-based industries are particularly clustered around Shoreditch, Whitechapel and Cambridge Heath, which is becoming one of the largest technology start-up clusters in the world
- Whitechapel, where a new medical research cluster associated with the Queen Mary University of London is emerging (known as Med City)
- Canary Wharf, where continued growth will place greater demand on employment floorspace in surrounding areas (e.g. South Quay), including small-to-medium-sized business accommodation
- Bow and Poplar Riverside, where the Olympic Games has provided a catalyst for new investment, which is also driving growth in neighbouring areas such as Canning Town and Stratford.

As the nature of the borough has moved from industrial to residential, industrial land has come under increasing redevelopment pressure from other uses. However, there is strong demand for industrial land in inner London and it requires safeguarding to contribute to the borough's and London's economic growth. Ensuring adequate space is available to meet the needs of small-to-medium businesses remains a challenge.

## Our homes



Tower Hamlets continues to be a place where people want to live but there is a limited supply of homes and prices are very high compared to average incomes. The cost of housing is increasing and the borough is likely to become more polarised between those on higher and lower incomes, since those on middle incomes are less able to afford private housing, further increasing inequalities in our local communities.

The current high values of residential development mean that other land uses, including employment space, community facilities and open space, will become even more difficult to secure/deliver and come under increasing pressure for conversion to housing.

Tower Hamlets has the highest target for new homes in London. Consequently, the borough must build more homes than it requires to meet wider London need. This will enable us to deliver the affordable homes we need at a faster rate.

The Poplar Riverside Housing Zone and the remediation of former industrial sites within the Lea Valley is opening up development opportunities on the eastern boundary of the borough, an area which is currently poorly connected.

Population and retail trends (including growing online shopping and smaller chain convenience stores) are changing the use and role of our town centres. Town centres are also valuable economic activity and employment areas: a balance of uses is vital to attracting investment, increasing visits and maintaining vitality and vibrancy during the day and night.

## Our environment



With less land available, more development will come forward on smaller and/or constrained sites, and there will be increasing pressure to regenerate and intensify developments.

The borough already has the third highest carbon emission levels in London and suffers from poor air quality as a result of congestion. Increasing development could worsen both, unless mitigating action is taken.

Long distance transport routes criss-cross the borough, largely from east to west, in the form of rivers, canals, railway lines and major roads. These in turn create physical barriers which restrict movement between Tower Hamlets and adjoining local authorities, such as Greenwich and Newham, and between northern and southern parts of the borough. Improvements are essential to better connect our places and integrate them with neighbouring boroughs.

In some areas, the public realm is disconnected and poorly designed, which contributes to a poor visual appearance in the streetscape.

As the borough becomes more densely populated, levels of open space deficiency are expected to increase. Improving existing open spaces and maximising opportunities to enhance the green grid and deliver small green interventions, such as pocket parks, as well as strategic open space will become increasingly important, especially within deficient areas.

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## SECTION 2

# Vision and objectives



## 4. Our vision for Tower Hamlets

### 4.1 The following vision sets out how the borough of Tower Hamlets and its places will look and feel like in the year 2031.

As the centre of London expands east, Tower Hamlets will embrace its role as a key focus for London's growth, making best use of the economic benefits from Canary Wharf, the City of London and Stratford. The connections between the borough and surrounding areas will be improved, whilst maintaining our distinct East End identity.

This growth will be primarily delivered in the City Fringe, the Lower Lea Valley and Isle of Dogs and South Poplar and at key locations along transport corridors. The benefits of the transformation of our borough will be shared throughout Tower Hamlets, including all our residents, ensuring no-one is left behind.

Tower Hamlets will continue to be home to a wide range of diverse communities. We will support our existing communities and welcome new residents to make their home within liveable, mixed, stable, inclusive and cohesive neighbourhoods, which contribute to a high quality of life and more healthy lifestyles.

These neighbourhoods will contain a broad mix of housing types, prioritising family and affordable housing, and will be served via a range of excellent, shared and accessible community, cultural and recreation facilities and infrastructure. These will be green, safe and accessible to all, promoting walking and cycling and the use of public transport as well as making best use of our network of parks and waterways, including Victoria Park, Mudchute Park and Mile End Park; the Thames and Lea rivers; and our dock basins and canals.

Neighbourhoods will be transformed with high quality buildings and well-designed spaces, while the character of the borough's 24 places that make Tower Hamlets unique, including its cultural heritage, will be protected and enhanced ensuring a sensitive balance between, and integration of, old and new. High standards of environmental sustainability will result in improvements in air quality, carbon emissions, recycling and climate change mitigation. Innovative and smart technology will enhance the provision of services. This will ensure the ongoing social and environmental sustainability of greater levels and higher densities of development.

Alongside high quality residential neighbourhoods, Tower Hamlets will play a significant role in London's global economy, ensuring it remains an evolving, creative and dynamic borough.

The strategic roles of Canary Wharf as a global financial and business hub and the City Fringe and Whitechapel as emerging hubs for life sciences, bio-tech and digital industries will be strengthened. This is alongside nurturing and developing our thriving small-and-medium enterprise sectors, properly recognising the need to support the entrepreneurial and business-focussed dynamism of many of our residents and workers, preserving our remaining industrial heritage and promoting our historic and distinctive town centres, markets and heritage and cultural attractions.

This economic growth will be sustained through the enhancement of our public transport network.

**4.2** Underpinning this vision is the desire to achieve the long-term priorities and cross-cutting themes set out in the Tower Hamlets Community Plan (empowering residents, building resilience, promoting healthier lives, increasing employment and responding to population growth) and other relevant strategies at the regional and national level.

**4.3** This vision has been translated into a series of objectives and principles outlining how growth and regeneration across the borough, and the aspirations of our communities, will be achieved.

## 5. Key objectives and principles

**5.1** In order to deliver this vision, the Local Plan has been shaped around two overarching objectives. Each objective is articulated through a series of principles and implementation actions:

- Key objective 1: Managing growth and shaping change
- Key objective 2: Sharing the benefits of growth.

### Key objective 1: Managing the growth and shaping change

#### Principles

- a. Growth must contribute positively to existing identified social, economic and environmental needs.
- b. Growth must be delivered alongside appropriate social and transport infrastructure, recognising that without provision of adequate infrastructure growth cannot be supported.
- c. When taken as a whole, growth must be balanced, containing a range of employment, retail and community facilities, alongside increasing residential development.
- d. Growth must be well-designed and enhance the distinctiveness of our places, ensuring old and new are properly integrated.
- e. Growth must respect, protect and enhance our environment and our health and well-being.
- f. Growth must optimise the use of the best available technological innovations.

#### This objective will be implemented through:

1. delivering the borough's role as a key location for London's housing and employment growth, while seeking to overcome constraints to sustainable growth through regional and national investment prioritisation
2. positively meeting our duties to deliver our strategic and local housing needs, linked to effective infrastructure planning and delivery

3. securing the timely provision of sufficient infrastructure to meet current and future needs, taking account of the cumulative impact of future development, especially in deficient areas
4. supporting additional transport investment (including improvements to bus, rail and river services, new river crossing opportunities and pedestrian and cycle connections) to support growth
5. protecting a range of land uses (including a wide range of employment spaces, shops, leisure and community facilities) to support a truly mixed-use borough
6. making the best use of our available land (through encouraging the co-location of uses, shared facilities, intensification, integrated infrastructure and the delivery of pocket parks) and ensuring improved connectivity between places
7. strengthening the role of our town centres to encourage a broad range and mix of uses and activities and meet the needs of users
8. creating walkable communities where residents, visitors and workers can easily access shops, services and facilities within town centres
9. protecting the uses, spaces and places, including parks and waterways, which make the borough unique
10. delivering successful place making which conserves heritage assets and their settings; enhances local distinctiveness, character and townscapes
11. encouraging the use of innovative building types and technologies in suitable locations to provide sustainable high quality internal and external living environments
12. requiring developments to reach the highest standards of environmental sustainability and deliver a robust built environment which is designed to adapt to and reduce the effects of climate change
13. achieving a zero carbon borough in the twenty-first century, with a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025, and
14. addressing poor air quality through a range of solutions, including a continuing modal shift away from polluting vehicles (including through traffic).



## Key objective 2: Sharing the benefits of growth

### Principles

- a. Growth must deliver social, economic and environmental net gains jointly and simultaneously and reduce inequalities, benefitting the lives of existing residents.
- b. Growth must promote community cohesion, ensuring the accessibility of spaces, places and facilities.
- c. Growth must enable community leadership and engagement.
- d. Growth must bring an improved quality of life, health benefits and reduce health inequalities.

### This objective will be implemented through:

1. reducing existing spatial inequalities and barriers and preventing the future polarisation of areas or communities, through optimising regeneration opportunities, in particular in the Lower Lea Valley, Isle of Dogs and South Poplar
2. maximising opportunities to create a more connected and well-managed network of open spaces, habitats and waterways via new and improved green links and spaces (including the Leaway and the Whitechapel Green Spine) and public realm works
3. ensuring housing development contributes to the creation of socially balanced and inclusive communities and offers housing choice, reflecting our priorities for genuinely affordable and family homes
4. helping to close the current skills gap, through improving access to education and training and increasing the mix of employment sectors
5. optimising the economic benefits from the borough's proximity to world-class visitor attractions (including the Tower of London world heritage site) and encouraging visitors to explore more of the borough
6. creating buildings, streets, spaces and places which promote social interaction and inclusion, which are accessible to all and which people value, enjoy and feel safe and comfortable in
7. maximising the benefits of the new Elizabeth line, including the stations at Whitechapel and Canary Wharf and other transport schemes, acting as a catalyst for investment
8. delivering healthy streets and neighbourhoods that promote active and healthy lifestyles and recreation, and enhance people's wider health and well-being, and
9. enabling all residents to be involved within the planning system at the earliest opportunity, through consultation; making the process more transparent and accessible; and providing support for the process of neighbourhood planning.

**5.2** The vision and objectives are illustrated within the key diagram (see Figure 5). This diagram provides a spatial representation of the overall approach to managing growth and shaping change across the borough.

**5.3** Section 3 sets out a series of topic-based policies which will guide decisions on development and use of land within the borough, including the overall strategy on how this growth will happen and where it will take place.

**5.4** A series of area-based visions have been developed to shape and coordinate the future planning of the following sub-areas: City Fringe, Central, Lower Lea Valley, Isle of Dogs and South Poplar. Section 4 describes what these areas will look like, how they will change and identifies the priorities and wider principles which will help create more distinctive, vibrant and sustainable places where people want to live, work and enjoy leisure.

**5.5** In addition, a number of significant development opportunities have been identified within these areas (known as site allocations – see Section 4) to deliver new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure.

Figure 5: The key diagram



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## SECTION 3

# Policies

## 6. Introduction

6.1 This section sets out the policies which will help deliver the vision and objectives of the Local Plan. We will use these policies to make decisions on planning applications and other relevant applications.

6.2 These policies will be used with the other documents that make up the development plan (as defined in Section 1) to guide development across the borough up to 2031.

6.3 The policies are arranged around the following themes:

- Achieving sustainable growth
- Creating attractive and distinctive places
- Meeting housing needs
- Delivering economic growth
- Revitalising our town centres
- Supporting community facilities
- Enhancing open spaces and water spaces
- Protecting and managing our environment
- Managing our waste
- Improving connectivity and travel choice.

6.4 The policies are split into two types (as described in Section 1):

- Spatial policies provide overarching guidance to steer development opportunities across the borough.
- Development management policies provide further detail on how development should be managed and implemented.

6.5 For each policy, links are included in the supporting text to other relevant policies and guidance (e.g. supplementary planning documents) which will inform individual development proposals.

6.6 Detailed guidance has also been developed to inform and shape the future planning and growth of specific locations within the borough where growth and change will be focussed (see Section 4).

## 7. Achieving sustainable growth

7.1 The following policies set out a holistic approach to delivering sustainable development and growth in Tower Hamlets.

7.2 These policies directly underpin the vision and the strategic objectives set out in Section 3. Together, they support our aspiration of achieving 'One Tower Hamlets' – a borough where everyone has an equal stake and status; where people have the same opportunities as their neighbours; and where people have a commitment and responsibility to contribute to the well-being of their communities. This is about reducing inequalities, promoting community cohesion and enabling community leadership and engagement.

7.3 This section contains the following policies:

- Policy S.SG1: Areas of growth and opportunity within Tower Hamlets
- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy D.SG4: Planning and construction of new development
- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions.



**Policy S.SG1****Areas of growth and opportunity within Tower Hamlets**

1. New development within the borough will be directed towards:
  - a. The opportunity areas (City Fringe, Lower Lea Valley and Isle of Dogs and South Poplar), and
  - b. Highly accessible locations which have good links to public transport, walking and cycling networks and local services.
2. Development is required to demonstrate how it will address the priorities and principles within these opportunity areas as well as the Central sub-area. Development that is within or part of a site allocation is required to deliver the identified land uses, infrastructure requirements and design and delivery principles.
3. The majority of new housing and employment provision within the borough will be focussed within the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar opportunity area, principally within Canary Wharf and Northern Isle of Dogs. Significant amounts of new housing will also be delivered in the City Fringe and Lower Lea Valley (including those sites which form part of the Poplar Riverside Housing Zone programme) opportunity areas.
4. The borough's town centres will continue to be the focus of shopping, leisure, cultural and community activities and will include a broad range of uses that are accessible to a significant number of people via foot, cycle or public transport.
5. The continued growth of Canary Wharf (as defined on Figure 5) will be promoted to support its strategic role as a metropolitan centre serving the needs of the neighbourhood and the wider area, and to better integrate the public realm and development opportunities with adjoining areas around Poplar and the Isle of Dogs.
6. Canary Wharf and the City Fringe will continue to act as a key focus for financial and business services. Biotech, life sciences and digital industries will be primarily concentrated in the City Fringe opportunity area (including Whitechapel) to support the development of the Tech City and Med City clusters, and a new civic centre will be developed on the site of former Royal London Hospital at Whitechapel.
7. Development will be required to support the delivery of significant new infrastructure to support growth within the four sub-areas, including:
  - a. Improvements to the transport network (including Crossrail 2)
  - b. Green grid projects (including the Lea River Park and Whitechapel Green Spine)
  - c. Social infrastructure, such as schools, open space, health centres and leisure facilities.

## Explanation

**7.4** This policy sets out the broad locations and opportunity areas within the borough where growth and investment will be targeted over the lifetime of the plan.

**7.5** The London Plan (GLA, 2016) has identified three opportunity areas (City Fringe, Lower Lea Valley and Isle of Dogs and South Poplar) in the borough which have significant potential to accommodate new development and support urban renewal. These areas are shown on the key diagram (see Figure 5).

**7.6** Development will also be focussed in highly accessible locations with good links to public transport, cycling and walking networks and town centres in line with policies S.TC1 and S.TR1.

**7.7** The remaining part of the borough is defined as the Central sub-area. Whilst not having the status of an opportunity area, this area has the potential to absorb additional growth, primarily through infill and land use intensification which respects the character of the surrounding streetscape. The Local Plan outlines how these areas will look and develop in the future. New development will be expected to have regard to the design and development principles set out in Section 4 and other relevant policies set out in the Local Plan. In particular, these policies will be used as a place-making tool in the development management process to manage growth and deliver associated infrastructure in a coordinated and timely manner in line with the overall vision and objectives of the Local Plan.

**7.8** Each sub-area (as shown on the Policies Map) is distinctive and new development will need to respond to their individual characteristics to facilitate distinct neighbourhoods and healthy and liveable places where people want to live, work and enjoy leisure.

**7.9** The Local Plan also seeks to protect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the borough's 24 places that make up each of the four sub-areas (see Figure 4). Development within the sub-areas will be expected to have regard to the distinct characteristics of the borough's 24 places, as defined within the Tower Hamlets Urban Structure and Characterisation Study and other relevant guidance, such as conservation area appraisals, design guides, supplementary planning documents and the Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy.

**7.10** Sites have been identified across a range of locations within each of the sub-areas to address the housing and employment needs of the borough as well as facilitate the delivery of key supporting infrastructure, such as publicly accessible open space and schools. These sites (known as allocations) are shown on the Policies Map<sup>11</sup>. Further information on the detailed site-specific requirements that will inform the design, scale and layout of new development within these allocations is set out in Section 4.

**7.11** While the majority of the borough's future housing and employment supply is expected to come forward on allocated sites, significant opportunities exist to bring forward development within other locations, such as small-scale infill sites within existing neighbourhoods and the intensification of existing brownfield sites. These sites (known as windfalls) have the potential to make a significant contribution to the supply of housing and employment land in the borough.

<sup>11</sup> Please note – allocations are sites that can deliver over 500 new net additional homes or sites that can provide a significant quantum of employment floorspace and jobs alongside key infrastructure.



**7.12** Tech City (as identified on Figure 5) is a strategically important business cluster within the heart of the City Fringe sub-area, centred on digital and creative companies, particularly around Shoreditch, Spitalfields and Whitechapel. Whitechapel will also be home to a new state-of-the-art life science research hub (known as Med City) around the existing Queen Mary University campus and Royal London Hospital site alongside residential and commercial uses. This policy seeks to support the continued expansion of this cluster and strengthen the links between bio-tech and life science facilities, including the provision of affordable and shared workspace (see Part 5 above).

**7.13** Canary Wharf (as identified on Figure 5) is a financial and business district of national and international importance. The London Plan sets out an aspiration to re-designate Canary Wharf as a metropolitan centre (as defined in the glossary in Appendix 1) due to its potential to serve a wide catchment area over several boroughs and into parts of the wider South East region. Our evidence suggests that Canary Wharf is already fulfilling this role and policies in this plan provide guidelines to help facilitate and support this designation (see Policies S.TC1 and S.EMP1).

**7.14** Town centres are the economic, transport, social and civic hearts of our communities and offer the greatest accessibility to jobs, services, shops and public transport. They are relatively vibrant and healthy and many have benefited from growth and investment in recent years. Like many other centres in London, our town centres and high streets face particular challenges in the face of global competition, the internet and fluctuations in the property market; and they need to diversify to attract more people and businesses throughout the day and evening as well as meet changing customer demands. The network and hierarchy of centres is set out in policy S.TC1, with each centre performing a different but complementary role.

**7.15** Significant levels of development and resulting population growth will result in the need to deliver a range of facilities, services and infrastructure, such as new schools, open space provision, health facilities and shops. However, much of the borough's existing infrastructure is at or close to full capacity and in many cases requires investment. Developers are therefore expected to contribute towards meeting the additional infrastructure needs arising from new development. Further details (including the mechanisms through which developers will be expected to contribute towards infrastructure provision) are outlined in Policy D.SG5, Section 4 (relating to site allocations) and Section 5 (relating to the monitoring and delivery framework).

**7.16** This policy will be implemented through a number of mechanisms such as supplementary planning guidance, master plans and opportunity area frameworks, which provide more detailed guidance to coordinate and manage development alongside the London Plan.

### Policy links

All policies

### Evidence links

- London Plan (GLA, 2016)
- City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework (GLA, 2015)
- Whitechapel Vision Masterplan (2013)
- Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework (GLA, 2007)
- Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Urban Structure and Characterisation Study (2009 and 2016)
- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan

**Policy S.SG2****Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets**

1. Development will be supported and is considered to contribute towards delivering the Local Plan vision and objectives and to be sustainable where it:
  - a. delivers managed growth, through:
    - i. good design
    - ii. preserving or enhancing the character and setting of the area, and
    - iii. not resulting in unacceptable impacts on the natural and historic environment and its assets, transport capacity and infrastructure.
  - b. shares the benefits of growth, through:
    - i. contributing to creating healthy environments - encouraging physical activity, promoting good mental and physical wellbeing and reducing environmental factors which can contribute to poor health, including poor air quality
    - ii. creating mixed and balanced communities
    - iii. delivering tenure-blind developments
    - iv. increasing opportunities for social interaction
    - v. providing local training or employment opportunities in either, or both, the construction and end use, and
    - vi. delivering social and transport infrastructure and public realm improvements which are inclusive and accessible to all.

**Explanation**

**7.17** This policy seeks to deliver sustainable development and growth in Tower Hamlets, addressing the specific social, environmental and economic challenges facing the borough. It seeks to ensure each individual development positively contributes to implementing and delivering the vision and objectives of the plan.

**7.18** For the purposes of this policy, we will consider the application and design in its entirety and in relation to its surroundings. Impacts will be considered unacceptable when they do not meet the standards and requirements provided in the policies in the plan or where they result in negative impacts that cannot be adequately mitigated.

**7.19** Improving health and wellbeing in the borough is a key priority in our Community Plan, reflecting the borough's significantly high levels of poor health outcomes. This policy seeks to address high levels of poor health in the borough, which environmental improvements, including the principles of active travel, active design and healthy streets, can help to reduce<sup>12</sup>.

**7.20** The design of the built environment and the provision of accessible services are able to directly contribute to reducing inequalities (including health inequalities) and promoting community cohesion. This policy addresses these objectives and helps to ensure the continued delivery of 'One Tower Hamlets' via the built environment and development process. Planning has a particular role to play in ensuring the built environment is accessible to those with physical impairments and this is addressed in part b.vi above. In order to demonstrate compliance, developments will be expected to provide details within the planning application statement, identifying how they have met the principles outlined above.

<sup>12</sup> Further details on the borough's health profile and priorities and the links between health and the built environment can be found in the Tower Hamlets Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Planning and Health (2016) and the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017).

## Policy links

All policies

## Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Community Plan (2015)
- Tower Hamlets Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Planning and Health (2016)
- Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017)
- Healthy Streets for London (GLA, 2017)



## Policy D.SG3

### Health impact assessments

1. The following developments are required to complete and submit a rapid health impact assessment as part of the planning application:
  - a. Major development within an area of sub-standard air quality (as designated and shown on the Policies Map).
  - b. Developments which contain any of the following uses:
    - i. Education facilities
    - ii. Health facilities
    - iii. Leisure or community facilities
    - iv. A5 uses (hot-food-takeaways)
    - v. Betting shops
    - vi. Publicly accessible open space.
2. Developments of a scale referable to the Greater London Authority (as set out in legislation) are required to complete and submit a detailed health impact assessment as part of the planning application.

## Explanation

**7.21** This policy seeks to ensure development contributes towards a healthy built environment in accordance with the London Plan (GLA, 2016) and the objectives of the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017). Developments containing those uses which are most likely to impact health outcomes, or are in locations which may impact on health outcomes, are required to undertake a health impact assessment.

**7.22** Health impact assessments should be undertaken using the recommended guidance from our public health service. For example, the latest Healthy Urban Planning Checklist which also provides a rapid health impact assessment tool (Healthy Urban Development Unit).

**7.23** Part 1 refers to major developments in areas of sub-standard air quality: these are areas where nitrogen dioxide levels exceed 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (the European Union legal limit / national air quality objectives). This includes areas in which fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) levels exceed 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> (World Health Organisation guideline limits). These areas are outlined on the Policies Map.

**7.24** Part 2 states that developments of a scale referable to the Greater London Authority (as defined in the glossary in Appendix 1) will be expected to complete a more extensive health impact assessment. Further guidance on how these assessments should be undertaken will be available from our public health service. A health impact assessment can also be submitted as part of an integrated impact assessment.

**7.25** The health impact assessment should outline how the development could positively or negatively impact on the wider determinants of health and should identify actions to enhance the positive impacts and mitigate the negative impacts. The outcome of these actions should be clearly identifiable within the planning application.

## Policy links

- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy D.TC4: Financial and professional services
- Policy D.TC5: Food, drink, entertainment and night-time economy
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy D.CF2: Existing community facilities
- Policy D.CF3: New and enhanced community facilities
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy D.OWS3: Open space and green grid networks
- Policy D.ES2: Air quality

## Evidence links

- Health Issues in Planning Best Practice Guidance (GLA, 2007)
- Tower Hamlets Air Quality Annual Monitoring Report (2016)
- Health Impact Assessment Matrix (London Healthy Urban Development Unit)

## Policy D.SG4

### Planning and construction of new development

1. All major development should sign up to the considerate constructors scheme and where appropriate a constructors forum. During construction, major development is required to:
  - a. comply with the non-road mobile machinery low emission zone requirements
  - b. minimise levels of noise, vibration, artificial light, odour, air quality, fumes or dust pollution
  - c. consider the routing, timing and frequency of heavy goods vehicle movements to reduce their impact on vulnerable road users, local amenity and congestion
  - d. use, where available, construction and/or freight consolidation centres, and
  - e. consider the impact of construction on the water supply, flood risk and drainage and implement suitable mitigation measures where required.
2. Major development must consider the cumulative impact of other major development occurring in the vicinity on levels of noise, vibration, artificial light, odour, air quality, fumes or dust pollution, and plan timings of works, delivery timings and routes and location of equipment accordingly to reduce this cumulative impact.
3. Development is required to employ the highest standards of sustainable construction, including:
  - a. Sustainable construction methods, such as the use of sustainably sourced and recycled materials, and
  - b. The use of demolished material from the development site, where practicable, in order to minimise the transportation of waste and reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

## Explanation

**7.26** This policy recognises that the high levels of growth within the borough are mainly taking place alongside, or within, areas which are already densely inhabited. It therefore seeks to ensure development minimises its impact on the local environment and existing communities.

**7.27** Developers will be expected to sign up to the considerate constructors scheme and a constructors forum (where appropriate) to better manage and mitigate the cumulative impacts arising from construction on the borough's key development sites.

**7.28** The Considerate Constructors Scheme is a national initiative which seeks to promote safe and considerate building practice and engineering works and improve standards of neighbourliness. Sites that are registered under the scheme are independently assessed and monitored against a code of considerate practice, designed to encourage higher standards of conduct. We may also consider membership of alternative constructor schemes as also meeting the requirements of this policy.

**7.29** Further detail on implementing Part 1(a) is provided in Control of Dust and Emissions Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014).

**7.30** Compliance with Part 1(b) should be evidenced within an air quality (dust) management plan, using the methodology, measures and monitoring process outlined in the Control of Dust and Emissions Supplementary Planning Guidance. In order to demonstrate compliance with Part 1(c) and (d), where appropriate, a construction logistics plan should be submitted in line with relevant Transport for London guidance. In addition, applicants may wish to submit proof of membership of the fleet operator recognition scheme and/or direct vision standard for heavy goods vehicles.



**7.31** Cumulative impacts arising from the construction phase of other major developments within one kilometre radius of the proposal site should be assessed and mitigation actions identified (see Part 2). This should be evidenced through the construction logistics management plan. Further guidance on producing a construction logistics management plan can be found in the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance and our latest code of construction practice.

**7.32** We seek to reduce development waste and encourage the process of limiting waste to begin early in site development. The design and materials used in the construction of new buildings (including the need to choose sustainable materials and sustainable construction methods) can make a significant difference to the energy requirements and associated level of carbon emissions. In order to address Part 3 of the policy, applicants should evidence how the development will meet this requirement in the design and access statement and/or the sustainability statement, as part of the planning application. More detailed guidance can be found in the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm
- Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration
- Policy D.ES2: Air quality
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network
- Policy D.TR4: Sustainable delivery and servicing

### Evidence links

- Control of Dust and Emissions Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)
- Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)



**Tower Hamlets Plan 2031** Managing Growth and Sharing Benefits

## Policy D.SG5

### Developer contributions

1. Development will be expected to:
  - a. pay community infrastructure levy charges required by any charging schedules which are in operation for the area within which the development is located, including the Mayor of London's community infrastructure levy
  - b. enter into Section 106 agreements to provide affordable housing and make provision to mitigate the impacts of the development where necessary or appropriate, having regard to any relevant supplementary planning documents or guidance, and
  - c. submit a financial viability assessment as part of the planning application, where required, which may be subject to independent scrutiny by appointed experts, at the applicant's cost, where they do not meet planning policy requirements or do not propose to deliver required Section 106 planning obligations.
2. For site allocations, the policies set out in this plan may be applied flexibly to ensure that the sites are viable and deliverable.
3. Vacant building credit has the potential to adversely impact our ability to meet the affordable housing target and will not apply in the borough. This policy acts as an exemption from its application in Tower Hamlets.

## Explanation

**7.33** In order to ensure that the policies of the Local Plan are delivered in a way that achieves sustainable development, we will seek contributions from developers to fund improvements to infrastructure and the environment. Contributions will be made through the Community Infrastructure Levy (which applies a standard charge to developers to fund supporting infrastructure such as transport, schools, community facilities and health centres) and/or Section 106 agreements (which address the provision of affordable housing and more site-specific infrastructure requirements).

**7.34** The spatial vision and objectives emphasise the importance of managing growth and shaping change. This puts planning for infrastructure at the heart of the Local Plan, ensuring that new development in the borough contributes towards the provision of the infrastructure that is needed to support growth and enable everyone in the borough to benefit from the opportunities this will bring.

**7.35** Developer contributions can help to contribute to the success of a development and the needs of the wide community in line with the key priorities set out in Sections 2 and 4. For instance, they can enhance the quality of a development and ensure it does not give rise to unacceptable development impacts.

**7.36** We will work collaboratively with our partners to deliver the infrastructure necessary to support the growth and development identified within the Local Plan, understanding the contribution that this growth can make to achieve the wider objectives of the plan and other relevant strategies. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the types of infrastructure required to support the anticipated growth in the borough and includes a summary of the currently identified infrastructure projects is included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be updated in consultation with both internal and external stakeholders, such as other service areas and infrastructure providers.

**7.37** In order to implement Part 1(a), development must follow both the borough-wide Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule, or any subsequent adopted version; and the Mayor of London's Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule, or any subsequent adopted version, and supplementary planning guidance.

**7.38** The borough-wide Community Infrastructure Levy (which was adopted in April 2015) will be used to deliver infrastructure in line with the Regulation 123 List, which sets out the projects or types of infrastructure we intend will (or may) be wholly or partly funded through this levy. Necessary items required to mitigate the impact of development that are not on the Regulation 123 List, such as affordable housing, may be secured through Section 106 obligations.

**7.39** The Mayor of London's Community Infrastructure Levy will help fund strategic transport projects (e.g. Crossrail 2). We collect these receipts from developments in Tower Hamlets and pass them onto Transport for London. Developments in the borough may be liable for both the Mayoral and borough-wide community infrastructure levy and, in certain circumstances, pursuant to supplementary planning guidance, the Mayor of London may also require a Section 106 financial contribution from office, retail and hotel developments.

**7.40** Part 1(b) seeks to address the use of Section 106 planning obligations to secure the provision of affordable housing and mitigate the impact of development where these cannot be addressed through the Community Infrastructure Levy. Section 106 planning obligations will be sought where they are:

- a. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- b. directly related to the development, and
- c. fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

**7.41** The Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document provides detailed guidance on our approach to planning obligations. The measures sought through a planning obligation will vary depending on the nature and scale of a development, its location and impacts. Development which is subject to a Section 106 agreement should apply this document, and will be assessed on an individual basis.

**7.42** Financial contributions may be sought financially or 'in kind' – where the developer builds or directly provides the matters necessary to fulfil the obligation negotiated as part of the planning application. Where provision is made within developments, this will be credited to the scheme and may offset financial contributions that may otherwise be sought. However, financial contributions may be secured for reasonable fitting out and infrastructure costs and this is determined on a case-by-case basis.

**7.43** Part 1(c) aims to ensure developers maximise contributions towards the delivery of affordable housing and infrastructure in line with the vision and objectives of the plan, whilst still ensuring development can be delivered. Development should follow the guidance set out in the Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document. This sets out how the Local Plan policies should be applied in a development viability context when determining planning applications. It aims to provide greater clarity to both applicants and the general public and ensure that the principles of sustainable development are at the forefront of decision-making in Tower Hamlets.

**7.44** Financial viability is a key consideration in terms of the application of Section 106 planning obligations, and where development does not meet planning policy or propose to provide required planning obligations, financial viability assessments are required to be submitted in accordance with the prevailing local validation requirements checklist or any relevant supplementary planning document. The issue of financial viability should be considered at the earliest opportunity. If an applicant is engaged with us in this regard prior to the submission of a planning application, then the chances of a positive outcome for all sides are greatly increased.

**7.45** Part 2 seeks to provide flexibility in the determination of planning applications relating to the site allocations (as outlined in Section 4) to ensure that development is viable and can be delivered during the plan period, having regard to the provision of infrastructure and other site specific requirements set out in the plan.

**7.46** Part 3 sets out our approach to the application of the vacant building credit, which provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings. Viability evidence finds there is no need to apply the vacant building credit mechanism in the borough to 'kick start' development<sup>13</sup>. In addition, the effect of the vacant building credit will be to reduce affordable housing contributions and this is contrary to our need to deliver affordable housing through the planning system<sup>14</sup>. The Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2017) sets out the extent to which vacant building credit should be applied in London and concludes that its application is unlikely to be suitable in London.

<sup>13</sup> Tower Hamlets Local Plan Viability Assessment (2017)

<sup>14</sup> Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)

## Policy links

- Policy S.H1 Meeting housing need
- Policy D.H2 Affordable housing and housing mix
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy D.CF3: New and enhanced community facilities
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network
- Policy D.TR3: Parking and permit-free
- Policy D.TR4: Sustainable delivery and servicing
- Policy D.ES7: A zero carbon borough
- Policy D.WM2: New and enhanced waste facilities

## Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document
- Tower Hamlets Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document
- Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2017)



## 8. Creating attractive and distinctive places

### Introduction

**8.1** The borough consists of a number of distinctive, diverse and vibrant places, such as historic hamlets, ancient markets, urban parks, inland docks, urban farms and a world heritage site. Together, the characteristics of these places make up the distinct identity of the borough, and have evolved gradually over many years. More recently, the pace and scale of growth within the borough and across London has threatened the fabric of these unique places.

**8.2** The policies in this chapter seek to ensure that new development is well-designed, safe, accessible, inclusive and respects the distinctive character of our places, paying careful attention to the layout, scale and form of buildings and spaces, the connections between them, and the mitigation of impacts, such as noise and air pollution.

**8.3** This section contains the following policies:

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm
- Policy S.DH3: Heritage and the historic environment
- Policy D.DH4: Shaping and managing views
- Policy S.DH5: World heritage sites
- Policy D.DH6: Tall buildings
- Policy D.DH7: Density
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy D.DH9: Shopfronts
- Policy D.DH10: Advertisements, hoardings and signage.

### Policy S.DH1

#### Delivering high quality design

1. Development is required to meet the highest standards of design, layout and construction which respects and positively responds to its context, townscape, landscape and public realm at different spatial scales, including the character and distinctiveness of the borough's 24 places (as shown on Figure 4) and their features. To achieve this, development must:
  - a. be of an appropriate scale, height, mass, bulk and form in its site and context
  - b. represent good urban design: provide coherent building lines, roof lines and setbacks, complement streetscape rhythm and associated landscapes (including boundary treatment) and ensure optimal plot coverages to avoid over-development
  - c. ensure the architectural language: scale, composition and articulation of building form, design of detailing, elements and materials applied on elevations, complements and enhances their immediate and wider surroundings
  - d. protect important views of and from landmark buildings and vistas
  - e. use high quality design, materials and finishes to ensure buildings are robust, efficient and fit for the life of the development
  - f. create well-connected, inclusive and integrated spaces and buildings which can be easily adaptable to different uses and the changing needs of users
  - g. incorporate features of positive biodiversity value within the site, where possible
  - h. use design and construction techniques to ensure that the development does not result in unacceptably harmful impacts arising from overheating, wind, air pollution, light pollution and noise pollution and the loss of sunlight and daylight, whilst optimising energy and waste efficiency, and
  - i. provide a mix and range of publicly accessible open spaces and water spaces that promote biodiversity, health and well-being.



## Explanation

**8.4** Delivering high quality design will help to ensure that Tower Hamlets remains one of the most dynamic and attractive parts of London. We are seeking to achieve excellence in the quality of our buildings and spaces which befit Tower Hamlets' location within the heart of London and its world-class urban environment. The purpose of this policy is to outline the key elements of high quality design so that we create buildings, spaces and places that are sustainable, accessible, attractive, durable and well-integrated into their surroundings and that are sensitive to the character of the area, thus contributing to a better quality of life.

**8.5** The character and places of the borough are described in more detail in Section 2 (Setting the scene) and Section 4 (Delivering place-making) of the plan and other relevant studies (e.g. Tower Hamlets Urban Structure and Characterisation Study).

**8.6** Parts 1(a) to (c) provide detailed guidance to ensure that the design, siting and layout of new development is considered in the wider context and is sensitive to the existing character and identity of the area, taking account of the opportunities to improve health and well-being.

**8.7** Part 1(d) refers to views which are locally distinctive and which residents, workers and visitors of the borough recognise and value. In particular, development proposals will need to take account of the views identified in Policy D.DH4 and shown on Figure 6.

**8.8** Part 1(e) seeks to ensure that new development (including materials and finish) is designed and built as robustly and durably as possible to support its users and reduce the need to make additional alterations following construction, particularly where it is associated with family living, social housing and specialist accommodation. Planning applications (including temporary permissions) will need to include technical information regarding materials and finishes to demonstrate their longevity, quality and relationship to the local context.

**8.9** Part 1(f) seeks to ensure that buildings and spaces are designed to be convenient for a wide range of users, including wheelchair users, elderly people with reduced mobility and families with young children. Buildings and spaces should be designed to be adaptable and flexible from the outset, enabling them to respond to the changing needs and lifestyles of the occupier and allow for a variety of uses over time.

**8.10** Part 1(g) will be considered against the objectives set out in the Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan in line with Policy D.ES3.

**8.11** Part 1(h) highlights the importance of integrated sustainable solutions to managing climate change and maximising opportunities to make more efficient and prudent use of energy and waste in line with Policies S.SG2 and D.SG4.

**8.12** Part 1(i) seeks to promote the provision of open spaces and water spaces in the borough and recognises their importance for the health and well-being of the local community as well as their contribution to biodiversity and landscape, as set out in Part 1(g).

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG4: Planning and construction of new development
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water spaces
- Policy D.ES3: Urban greening and biodiversity

### Evidence links

- Streets Toolkit (Transport for London, 2017)
- Character and Context (GLA, 2016)
- Tower Hamlets Urban Structure and Characterisation Study (2009 and 2016)

## Policy D.DH2

### Attractive streets, spaces and public realm

1. Development is required to contribute to improving and enhancing connectivity, permeability and legibility across the borough, ensuring a well-connected, joined-up and easily accessible street network and wider network of public spaces through:
  - a. improving connectivity to public transport hubs, town centres, open spaces, water spaces, social and community facilities and surrounding areas
  - b. maintaining existing public routes or appropriately re-providing access routes during the construction phases of new development, and
  - c. incorporating the principles of 'secured by design' to improve safety and perception of safety for pedestrians and other users.
2. Development is also required to positively contribute to the public realm through:
  - a. optimising active frontages towards public streets and spaces
  - b. providing clear definitions and enclosure through building frontage and massing, and connection and continuity of pedestrian desire lines and street activities, at a human scale
  - c. providing a range of public spaces that can function as places for social gatherings and other recreational uses
  - d. reducing visual clutter and obstacles in the public realm of the scheme and the adjacent area
  - e. ensuring balconies do not over-hang on the public highway or onto neighbouring properties, civic spaces and public buildings, such as schools
  - f. resisting the creation of gated communities which do not promote socially inclusive and cohesive neighbourhoods or connectivity between places
  - g. integrating refuse and recycling facilities within the building envelope
  - h. using high quality paving slabs, bricks and pavers for footways, parking spaces and local streets to create attractive, accessible, comfortable and useable development
  - i. integrating high quality public art into the public realm, especially at gateway locations or other appropriate landmarks, and retaining existing good quality art in the locality of new development, where possible
  - j. ensuring that soft landscaping is maximised to soften the streetscape and provide visual and environmental relief from hard landscaping, buildings and traffic
  - k. locating entrances in visible, safe and accessible locations
  - l. creating opportunities for natural surveillance, particularly at ground floor level
  - m. designing out concealment points and leftover spaces, and
  - n. creating clear sightlines and improving legibility and lighting of the surrounding area at all times of the day and night.

## Explanation

**8.13** This policy aims to deliver an attractive, accessible and well-designed network of streets and spaces which promote social interaction and inclusion where people of all ages and abilities can value and enjoy, and where they feel safe and comfortable.

**8.14** As Tower Hamlets has some of the highest population densities in London, the quality of our streets and spaces is important to maintain and create a high quality of life. The public realm in the borough varies considerably, from the high quality treatments around Canary Wharf (e.g. natural stone paving and tree planting) and conservation areas, through to the isolated, post-war streetscapes beyond Canary Wharf and Aldgate, as well as the severance arising from major arterial routes (e.g. East Cross Route, Aspen Way and The Highway) around Bow, Poplar, Limehouse and the Tower of London.

**8.15** Part 1 seeks to improve connectivity, permeability and legibility, especially around key transport interchanges, town centres and community hubs around the borough, whilst maintaining existing routes through or adjacent to development sites to allow continued access during the construction of development.

**8.16** Connectivity refers to the number of connections and their integration, layout and relationship to one another and the impact this has when moving from one point to another. Permeability refers to the variety of pleasant, convenient, accessible and safe routes through an area and the capacity of those routes to carry the movement of people, whilst avoiding visual clutter in the streetscape and barriers to pedestrian/cycle movement as much as possible. Legibility is the degree to which a place can be easily understood and moved around in and can be called 'way-finding'.

**8.17** In order to improve accessibility and increase movement, new development will also be required to follow a street hierarchy that puts pedestrians and cyclists first and promotes streets as links for movement and as places in their own right to ensure a strategic, accessible and safe street network across the borough. This hierarchy consists of:

- a. Main streets – focusing on movement and prioritising the safe and convenient flow of buses, cyclists and pedestrians
- b. Secondary streets – balancing movement between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, with attractive and convenient places where people gather
- c. Local streets – protecting and enhancing the character and social gathering function that streets provide, alongside their function of providing safe and convenient access to individual properties.

**8.18** In addition, Part 1 seeks to embed the principles of secured by design into the design and layout of new development. Developers should refer to the relevant guidance in relation to counter-terrorist and crime prevention security and engage fully in the pre-application process in order to ensure that measures to mitigate risks are incorporated into developments, where appropriate. Where there is a need to ensure the safety of streets and public spaces, particularly crowded places, the correct level of protection should be provided without compromising the ability to create aesthetic and functional public spaces. Proposals should not impose undue restrictions on other occupiers in the area.

**8.19** Part 2 places public realm as a central component to the design of a development to ensure it is comfortable and functional, well-integrated with surrounding areas (including London's green grid network) and supports the delivery of successful and vibrant places.

**8.20** Development should create streets and spaces with a degree of enclosure by assisting in defining the edges of the public realm, through continuous building lines and active frontages. Development should avoid creating concealment points and external lighting should be an integral component in ensuring safety and security within the public realm in line with the principles of secured by design.

**8.21** Proposals should also use complementary elements, such as materials, finishes, furniture, landscaping, signage, lighting and public art, to ensure that development and the public realm is at a human scale and puts people at the heart of the design process, so that the importance of how people view and feel about their environment is recognised. This should include ensuring design features meet the health and well-being needs of people (e.g. the provision of shade, shelter and places to rest, including seating with supportive backs).

**8.22** Development should aim to ensure building frontages are active and minimise visual and physical obstruction and street clutter. Refuse and recycling facilities should be sensitively and conveniently located so that they are easily accessible by residents and operatives.

**8.23** Gated communities which do not contribute to a well-connected, accessible and permeable public realm and socially inclusive and cohesive neighbourhoods will be resisted (in line with the London Plan).

**8.24** Balconies overhanging the public footway/ highway or onto neighbouring properties and buildings and spaces of civic importance have the potential to harm the safety and amenity of local occupiers, residents and the public highway as well as cause overlooking, especially at the ground floor level.

## Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water spaces
- Policy D.OWS3: Open space and green grid network
- Policy D.OWS4: Water spaces
- Policy D.MW3: Waste collection facilities in new development
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network

## Evidence links

- Streets Toolkit (Transport for London, 2017)
- Character and Context (GLA, 2014)
- Tower Hamlets Urban Structure and Characterisation Study (2009 and 2016)





**Policy S.DH3****Heritage and the historic environment**

1. Proposals must preserve or, where appropriate, enhance the borough's designated and non-designated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance as key and distinctive elements of the borough's 24 places.
2. Proposals to alter, extend or change the use of a heritage asset or proposals that would affect the setting of a heritage asset will only be permitted where:
  - a. they safeguard the significance of the heritage asset, including its setting, character, fabric or identity
  - b. they are appropriate in terms of design, height, scale, form, detailing and materials in their local context
  - c. they enhance or better reveal the significance of assets or their settings
  - d. they preserve strategic and locally important views and landmarks, as defined in Policy D.DH4, and
  - e. in the case of a change of use from a use for which the building was originally designed, a thorough assessment of the practicability of retaining its existing use has been carried out outlining the wider public benefits of the proposed alternative use.
3. Applications affecting the significance of a heritage asset will be required to provide sufficient information to demonstrate how the proposal would contribute to the asset's conservation. Any harm to the significance of a heritage asset must be justified having regard to the public benefits of the proposal: whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and whether the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long term use of the asset.

Factors that will be considered can include:

- a. The significance of the asset, architecturally, historically and contextually
- b. The adequacy of efforts made to retain the asset in use, and
- c. The merits of any alternative proposal for the site.
4. Substantial harm to or the total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset will only be supported where it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or the following criteria can be satisfied:
  - a. The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site
  - b. No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation
  - c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible
  - d. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
5. Alterations, extensions or changes of use, or development in the vicinity of listed buildings (as shown on the Policies Map) will be expected to have no adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest, including their settings.
6. Significant weight will be given to the protection and enhancement of the borough's conservation areas (as shown on the Policies Map), including their setting. Development within a conservation area will be expected to preserve or, where appropriate, enhance those elements which contribute to their special character or appearance. There will be a presumption in favour of the retention of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and



appearance of a conservation area. Planning applications should explore opportunities from new development within conservation areas and their setting to enhance or better reveal their significance.

7. Significant weight will be given to the protection and enhancement of scheduled monuments (as shown on the Policies Map) and other archaeological sites of equivalent importance. Any harm to their significance must be justified having regard to the public benefits of the proposal: whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and whether the works proposed are the minimum required to sustain the asset.
8. Applications affecting the significance of the archaeology will be required to provide sufficient information to demonstrate how the proposal would contribute to the asset's conservation. Where the development includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, field evaluation will be required. Where harm can be fully justified, we will require archaeological excavation and/or recording as appropriate, followed by analysis and publication of the results.
9. Development that lies in or adjacent to archaeological priority areas (as shown on the Policies Map) will be required to include an archaeological evaluation report and will require any nationally important remains to be preserved permanently in situ, subject to consultation with Historic England.
10. We will seek to ensure the protection and appropriate enhancement of the borough's historic parks and gardens (as shown on the Policies Map). Development proposals should therefore safeguard those features which form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden and ensure they do not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance or setting of the park or garden, key views into and out of the park, or prejudice its future restoration. Where development is likely to affect a historic park and garden or its setting, applications should include a heritage impact assessment setting out the likely impact which it would have upon its significance and the means by which any harm might be mitigated.

## Explanation

**8.25** Tower Hamlets has a very rich heritage with enormous diversity and variety (visible historic buildings, structures, parks and open spaces, key views, buried archaeology as well as heritage collections) which is widely valued, cared for and celebrated.

**8.26** Tower Hamlets has a higher proportion of scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas compared to that of other London boroughs. Some of the key elements of the borough's heritage include:

- a. Military and naval buildings (e.g. Tower of London)
- b. Museums, art galleries, music halls and breweries (e.g. Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood and Wiltons Music Hall)
- c. Squares, cemeteries and parks and gardens
- d. Indoor and outdoor markets (e.g. Spitalfields)
- e. Industrial heritage and archaeology
- f. Residential streets and buildings of Georgian and Victorian origin
- g. Innovative post-war housing (e.g. Keeling House and Balfron Tower)
- h. Religious and education institutions (e.g. Christ Church, Spitalfields and Tonybee Hall).

**8.27** Our heritage assets are exceptionally important – they are our most recognisable landmarks and most cherished places, and they contribute to reinforcing the unique character and distinctiveness of the borough (including its 24 places) as well as London as a whole through their individual and group value.

**8.28** This policy sets out how the historic environment should inform development, how planning applications will be assessed and how opportunities can be taken to improve the condition of the borough's historic environment (including individual assets and their settings) to ensure that its distinctive character is maintained.

**8.29** In order to satisfy the criteria set out in Parts 2 to 9, developments will need to demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the relevant asset, including the contribution setting makes to its significance, as part of the planning application process. It should also include an assessment of group value, as well as the individual significance of heritage assets. As a minimum, this should include both desktop analysis and on-site investigation, with reference to the Greater London Historic Environment Record and other relevant documentation. The borough has a local history library, which provides a useful resource. Research undertaken into the heritage asset affected should describe the significance of the heritage asset in sufficient detail to determine its historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest to a level proportionate to its importance. The Greater London Historic Environment Record will help inform whether a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest.

**8.30** Detailed plans to an appropriate level will need to be submitted with applications as part of design and access statements/heritage statements to demonstrate how the heritage asset and its setting will be impacted and to ensure that its significance is protected or enhanced.

**8.31** Where a new heritage asset is discovered, the developer will be expected to work with us to seek a solution that protects the significance of the new discovery, so far as is practicable within the existing scheme. Depending on the importance of the discovery, modifications to the scheme being implemented may be required.

**8.32** In relation to Parts 1 and 4, designated heritage assets include listed buildings and structures, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas. We will not permit harm to or total loss of a designated heritage asset unless the benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm or the criteria set out in Part 4 can be met.

**8.33** In particular, listed buildings and structures in the borough make an important and valued contribution to the character and appearance of the borough and provide places to live and work in, well-known visitor attractions and cherished local landmarks. We have a duty to preserve and maintain these assets for present and future generations.

**8.34** Proposals relating to works to a listed building or within the vicinity of a listed building will be required to demonstrate that it will not affect the special interest of the listed building. In addition to planning permission, listed building consent may also be required for works that will affect the special character of a listed building.

**8.35** When considering proposals within conservation areas, as set out in Part 6, consideration will be given to the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole and its setting.

**8.36** We have prepared a series of conservation area appraisals and management plans that assess and evaluate the character and appearance of each of our conservation areas and set out how we consider they can be preserved or enhanced. We will take these into account when assessing planning applications for development in conservation areas. We will seek to manage change in a way that retains the distinctive character and appearance of our conservation areas and will expect new development to contribute positively to this.

**8.37** In relation to Part 9, any development in or adjacent to archaeological priority areas is required to investigate and consider any archaeological interests in the area. The archaeology of the

borough can best be protected if as much information as possible is available at the planning application stage. The evaluation, which may involve fieldwork, is needed so that we can assess the archaeological implications of proposals. Where appropriate, the evaluation may show how developments can be designed so that they do not harm a site of archaeological interest and/or how the remains will be preserved at the site, and where appropriate, preserve the archaeological findings at the site.

**8.38** The Policies Map shows the location of the borough's heritage designations, namely:

- a. World heritage sites
- b. Statutory listed buildings
- c. Conservation areas
- d. London squares
- e. Registered parks and gardens
- f. Scheduled monuments
- g. Archaeological priority areas.

**8.39** In addition to the above, there are many non-designated buildings and sites of heritage significance within the borough which contribute to its distinctive character, such as unregistered parks and gardens, public houses, cemeteries and places of worship. Details of some of these assets are available in the Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy, Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Guidelines and Local List. The Local List identifies locally important heritage assets which are of community value and contribute to the special character and distinctiveness of the borough.

**8.40** The Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy offers a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the borough's historic environment to ensure that it continues to be appreciated and enjoyed by current and future generations.

**8.41** Where possible, we will seek to work with developers and other partners to secure creative solutions that would conserve heritage buildings, especially those at risk (as identified on the borough's heritage at risk register) and contribute positively to the character and vitality of the surrounding area.

**8.42** We will consider using our legal powers to secure essential maintenance of designated heritage assets is undertaken, where necessary.

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy
- Heritage at Risk Register (Historic England)
- Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 (as amended)
- Tower Hamlets Local List
- Tower Hamlets Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Guidelines

## Policy D.DH4

### Shaping and managing views

1. Development is required to positively contribute to views and skylines that are components of the character of the 24 places in Tower Hamlets. Intrusive elements in the foreground, middle ground and backdrop of such views will be resisted. Development will be required to demonstrate how it:
  - a. complies with the requirements of the London View Management Framework and World Heritage Site Management Plans (Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich)
  - b. positively contributes to the skyline of strategic importance, forming from the silhouettes of tall building clusters around Canary Wharf (as defined on the Policies Map)
  - c. preserves or enhances the prominence of borough-designated landmarks and the skyline of strategic importance in the borough-designated views (as defined in Figure 6)
  - d. preserves or enhances local views identified in conservation area appraisals and management guidelines
  - e. preserves or enhances visual connection of the public realm with water spaces, and
  - f. preserves or enhances townscape and views to and from the site which are important to the identity and character of the place.



## Explanation

**8.43** Views are important elements of townscape and local character, and provide a good test of the contribution that a development makes to a place. Townscape views can be valued for a variety of reasons, but often the most valued views will feature a prominent building that terminates a vista, acts a focal point or establishes some other form of spatial prominence. Such landmarks help to define and identify places and are considered to be a key component of high quality urban design. The policy identifies:

- a. A skyline of strategic importance which is observed from multiple locations within and outside the borough, and
- b. A series of views and landmarks of a borough-wide importance: borough-designated views and borough-designated landmarks.

**8.44** Part 1(a) refers to strategic views identified in the latest versions of the London View Management Framework and Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Management Plans which have impacts on developments within Tower Hamlets.

**8.45** Part 1(b) refers to the group of tall buildings around Canary Wharf that form a distinctive cluster, referred to as the 'skyline of strategic importance'. This cluster is visible across London and has become a globally recognised silhouette. The distinctive skyline of the cluster is a prominent and recognisable feature in views from the surrounding areas, which are of a much smaller scale. The area of skyline of strategic importance covers the tall building zones in Canary Wharf: Canary Wharf cluster and the Millwall Inner Dock cluster, as shown on the Policies Map and set out in Policy D.DH6. Building heights within the designation area should significantly step down towards its boundaries. The heights in the setting of the skyline of strategic importance should be consistent and significantly lower than the buildings at the edge of the designation area. Development should be tested in the views as per Figure 6.

**8.46** Part 1(c) refers to borough designated landmarks – buildings of high architectural and cultural value that can be seen in views to and from a number of conservation areas. These views are referred to as borough designated views. Development should be tested against their impact on the prominence of borough designated landmarks in borough designated views as per Figure 6.

**8.47** Intrusive development (as defined in the glossary in Appendix 1) that competes with the prominence of borough-designated landmarks in the backdrop of the borough-designated views or obscures them at the mid or foreground will be resisted. New developments are expected to make a positive contribution to the skyline, including in their use of palette and texture, in particular where these buildings will have an impact on long-distance views.

**8.48** Part 1(d) seeks to shape and manage the impact of development on views identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Guidelines covering each of the borough's 58 conservation areas. Development that is harmful to the special character of these views will be resisted.

**8.49** Part 1(e) recognises that water space is an intrinsic element of the borough's identity and that its presence is an essential element of the character of a place.

**8.50** Visual connections between public realm and waterfronts should be strengthened. Developments located directly at the waterfront and on streets in their direct vicinity which are parallel and perpendicular to their course should afford views and glimpses of waterscape from the street level.

**8.51** Part 1(f) seeks to shape and manage the impact that development would have on townscape and local views that are important to the identity of Tower Hamlets and its unique places. These will be identified on a case by case basis through the townscape and visual impact analysis in relation to a particular development. Due to relatively flat topography, tall buildings located in the borough can be seen from a number of remote locations. It is important that tall buildings positively contribute to the legibility, character and spatial structure of the borough's 24 places (see Policy D.DH6).

### Policy links

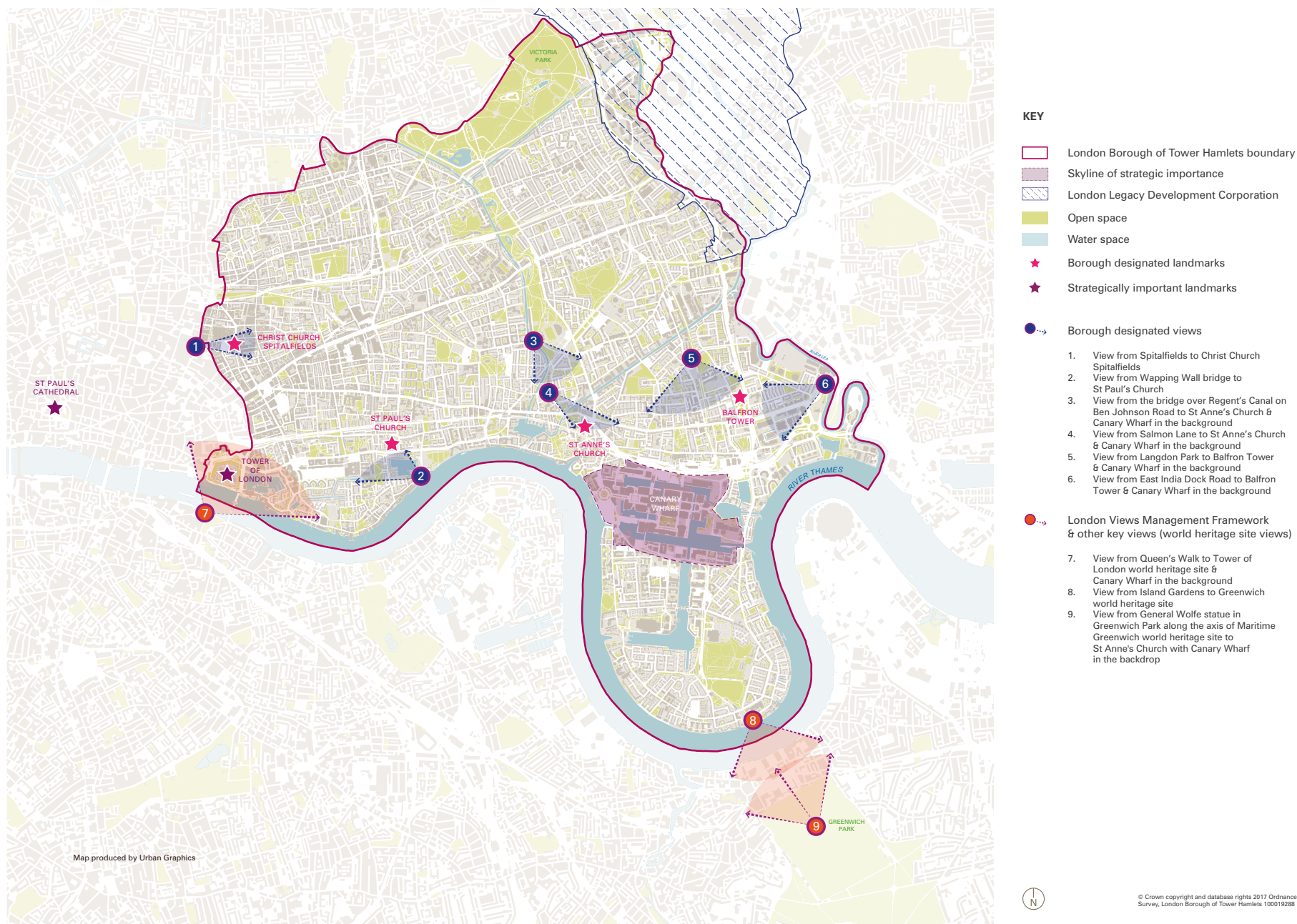
- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water spaces
- Policy D.OWS4: Water space

### Evidence links

- London View Management Framework (Mayor of London)
- Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Management Plan
- Tower of London World Heritage Site Management Plan
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets: Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Guidelines
- Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Guidelines for Fish Island and White Post Lane Conservation Area (London Legacy Development Corporation)
- Tower Hamlets Tall Buildings Study
- Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study
- Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy



Figure 6: Key views, landmarks and the skyline of strategic importance





## Policy S.DH5

### World heritage sites

1. Development is required to ensure it safeguards and does not have a detrimental impact upon the outstanding universal value of the UNESCO world heritage sites: the Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich, including their settings and buffer zones (as shown on the Policies Map).
2. Proposals affecting the wider setting of the Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich or those impinging upon strategic or other significant views to or from these sites (particularly around Tower Hill and Aldgate and within the buffer zone around Island Gardens) will be required to demonstrate how they will conserve and enhance the outstanding universal value of the world heritage sites.
3. Development within the vicinity of the Tower of London is required to demonstrate how it will improve local pedestrian and cycle access routes, particularly signage and way-finding in the surrounding area.



## Explanation

**8.52** World heritage sites are areas of cultural and national significance which include both natural features and man-made structures.

**8.53** London has four world heritage sites, two of which are located within or next to the borough of Tower Hamlets on the banks of the River Thames: the Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich (as shown on Figure 5).

**8.54** The Tower of London, one of the UK's most famous landmarks and tourist attractions, is a Grade I listed castle and royal fortress, which acts as the gateway into the borough from the west. Indeed, the borough is named after the villages and hamlets around the Tower of London. However, many of the streets and spaces in and around this area are dominated by vehicles/heavy traffic and offer a poor public realm and interchange experience from Tower Hill and Tower Gateway stations. These issues are also identified within the Tower of London World Heritage Site Management Plan.

**8.55** Maritime Greenwich lies immediately south of the borough and comprises an ensemble of buildings (including the Queen's House, Royal Observatory and the Old Royal Naval College) set in landscaped parkland (part of the buffer area lies within the borough at Island Gardens on the Isle of Dogs, as shown on Figure 6).

**8.56** This policy aims to ensure that new development safeguards and does not negatively impact on the 'outstanding universal value' of the Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich world heritage sites, including their attributes, settings and views to and from them. In this context, outstanding universal value is defined as "areas of cultural and/or national significance so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity"<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Please note: attributes of the outstanding universal value are usually physical, but can also be processes or practices (such as tradition, or management regimes) that have an impact on physical qualities.



**8.57** Proposals within close proximity to the Tower of London, or which have the potential to affect the setting and views of the Tower of London or Maritime Greenwich, will need to ensure they have regard to the Tower of London World Heritage Site Management Plan and/or the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Management Plan.

**8.58** Potential opportunities exist to enhance the setting immediately around the Tower of London and reinforce the outstanding universal value of the site<sup>16</sup>.

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel

### Evidence links

- Historic England Heritage Protection Guide
- Tower of London World Heritage Site Management Plan
- London View Management Framework (Mayor of London)
- Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Management Plan
- Tower Hamlets Tall Buildings Study
- Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties (ICOMOS)
- Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy



<sup>16</sup> Tower of London Local Setting Study: An Assessment of the Local Setting of the Tower of London and Guidelines for its Management (LUC, 2010)

**Policy D.DH6****Tall buildings**

1. Developments with tall buildings must demonstrate how they will:
  - a. be of a height and scale, mass and volume that are proportionate to their role, function and importance of the location in the local, borough-wide and London context; and take account of the character of the immediate context and of their surroundings
  - b. achieve exceptional architectural quality and innovative and sustainable building design, using robust and durable materials throughout the building
  - c. enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area without adversely affecting designated townscapes and landscapes (including building/roof lines) or detracting from important landmarks, heritage assets, key views and other historic skylines, and their settings
  - d. provide a positive contribution to the skyline during both the day and night time
  - e. not prejudice future development potential of adjacent/ neighbouring buildings or plots
  - f. maintain adequate distance between buildings to ensure a high quality ground floor experience and enhanced residential environment
  - g. demonstrate consideration of public safety requirements as part of the overall design, including the provision of evacuation routes
  - h. present a human scale of development at street level and comprise an attractive and legible streetscape that takes into account the use of the public realm for a variety of users and includes active uses at ground floor level
  - i. provide high quality private communal open space, play areas and the public realm (where residential uses are proposed) for which occupants of the building can use and where appropriate provide shared facilities at the ground floor level to encourage social cohesion
  - j. demonstrate that the development does not adversely impact on the microclimate and amenity of the application site and the surrounding area
  - k. demonstrate that the development does not adversely impact on biodiversity and open spaces, including watercourses and water bodies and their hydrology, and
  - l. comply with civil aviation requirements and not interfere to an unacceptable degree with telecommunications, television and radio transmission networks and river radar equipment.
2. Development of tall buildings will be directed towards designated Tall Building Zones (as shown on the Policies Map and Figure 7) and must apply the following design principles, having regard to the Tall Buildings Study and other relevant policies.
3. Outside these zones, tall building proposals (including those on site allocations) will be supported provided they meet the criteria set out in Part 1 and can demonstrate how they will:
  - a. be located in areas with high levels of public transport accessibility within town centres and/or opportunity areas
  - b. address deficiencies in the provision of strategic infrastructure
  - c. significantly strengthen the legibility of a Major, District or Neighbourhood Centre or mark the location of a transport interchange or other location of civic or visual significance within the area, and
  - d. not undermine the prominence and/or integrity of existing landmark buildings and tall building zones (taking account of the principles set out in Figure 8).

Tall building zone	Principles
Aldgate	a. The background to the views of the Tower of London world heritage site from the Queen's Walk at City Hall should be preserved.
Canary Wharf (Isle of Dogs)	a. Development within this location will be expected to positively contribute to the skyline of strategic importance and maintain the iconic image and character of Canary Wharf as a world financial and business centre. b. Individual buildings should be integrated into urban super blocks set in the public realm. c. Building heights within the Canary Wharf cluster should step down from the central location at One Canada Square.
Millwall Inner Dock (Isle of Dogs)	a. Building heights in the Millwall Inner Dock cluster should significantly step down from the Canary Wharf cluster to support its central emphasis and should be subservient to it. b. Building heights should step down from Marsh Wall and ensure that the integrity of the Canary Wharf cluster is retained on the skyline when seen from places and bridges along the River Thames across Greater London, particularly in views identified in Policy D.DH4.
Blackwall	a. Development heights should step down towards the edge of this cluster. b. The cluster must be subservient to and separate from the nearby Canary Wharf cluster and buildings should be of varying heights allowing sky views between them when viewed from the river or the Greenwich peninsula.
Leamouth	a. Tall buildings in this cluster should step down towards the River Thames and ensure glimpses and views across the cluster.

## Explanation

**8.59** This policy seeks to guide and manage the location, scale and development of tall buildings in the borough. In recent years there has been a surge in the number of tall building developments in the borough, particularly within existing clusters at Aldgate, Isle of Dogs and other clusters emerging along the River Thames waterfront.

**8.60** Whilst tall buildings can positively contribute to the local environment and help to deliver growth in the local economy or much needed new homes, they can also cause harm to the character and identity of an area, either individually or cumulatively.

**8.61** Tall buildings can significantly impact the quality and safety of the public realm (e.g. through blank facades and a poor street interface or through generating adverse micro-climatic conditions, such as wind funnelling). They may cause overshadowing or solar glare and undermine the quality and value of adjacent developments. In low-or-medium rise residential neighbourhoods, tall buildings can feel overbearing and have a negative impact on amenity and views.

**8.62** Beyond the Central Activities Zone and Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, as defined on the Policies Map, the borough is largely residential in nature and includes a relatively high proportion of medium to low rise buildings.

**8.63** In this context, it is important that tall building developments are carefully designed and steered towards locations that positively respond to the context and character of the surrounding area, including the borough's 24 places.

**8.64** For the purposes of this policy, a tall building is classified as any building that is significantly taller than its local context and/or has a significant impact on the skyline. Within the borough, buildings of more than 30 metres, or those which are more than twice the height of surrounding buildings (whichever is less) will be considered to be a tall building.

**8.65** Part 1 of the policy sets out the criteria against which all development involving tall buildings will be assessed. The criteria will guide the visual and contextual development of tall buildings in the borough. In order to enable assessment against the criteria, we will require an accurate visual representation to be submitted alongside the design and access statement as part of the planning application. This model should show the proposal in near, middle and distant views, including the public realm and its appearance at street level. It should include a 360-degree view analysis and a study of relative heights of buildings in the surrounding area. A virtual model and/or visual impact study (including verified views) may be required depending on the scale and nature of the proposal, including an assessment of the cumulative impact of nearby proposals with valid planning permission.

**8.66** Proposals involving tall buildings will need to demonstrate how any adverse impacts on the microclimate will be mitigated in relation to wind, overshadowing, day lighting, solar glare and light pollution. Buildings over 30 metres in height and/or substantially taller than the surrounding area and/or over 150 units must be tested against the industry standard Lawson criteria in relation to wind. The testing of the following scenarios will be required as part of the planning application:

- a. Baseline (i.e. the situation at the time of submission)
- b. The proposed development without mitigation/landscaping
- c. The development with surrounding cumulative developments without mitigation/landscaping
- d. The development with the inclusion of mitigation/landscaping



- e. The development with surrounding cumulative developments with the inclusion of mitigation/landscaping
- f. Specific details on the required mitigation measures must be provided, including where and how these measures will be implemented
- g. It is essential that any required mitigation measures are tested as part of the application. This is to ensure that the mitigation is adequate, and can therefore be relied upon. The mitigation must be implemented prior to occupation of any part of the development and retained for the duration of the development.

**8.67** Proposals involving buildings 90 metres in height or greater must be referred to the Civil Aviation Authority and London City Airport to ensure they will not be a potential hazard to aviation safety and navigation, in view of the proximity to London City Airport.

**8.68** The criteria set out in Part 1 also applies to the redevelopment of existing tall buildings (including those outside the tall building zones). The presence of an existing tall building on the site will not in itself be regarded as justification for replacing it with another tall building or the commencement of a tall building cluster or zone.

**8.69** Tall buildings, by default, house large numbers of people and can support a range of activities, including the provision of amenity areas (e.g. private, communal and public spaces) and active uses. In the majority of cases, tall buildings are communities in their own right. Tall buildings should deliver appropriate quantities of high quality amenity and play space (where residential uses are proposed) which is exclusive to tenants and occupants. Communal spaces should establish platforms for interactions between users to support a sense of belonging. Ground floors of tall buildings, where possible, should introduce uses which would benefit the wider neighbourhood. Tall buildings should also foster social cohesion and support integration between local communities.

**8.70** Part 2 identifies a series of tall building zones (as shown on the Policies Map and Figure 7) to make it clear where tall buildings will be directed. The location of these zones has been derived from a thorough analysis of the character of the borough.

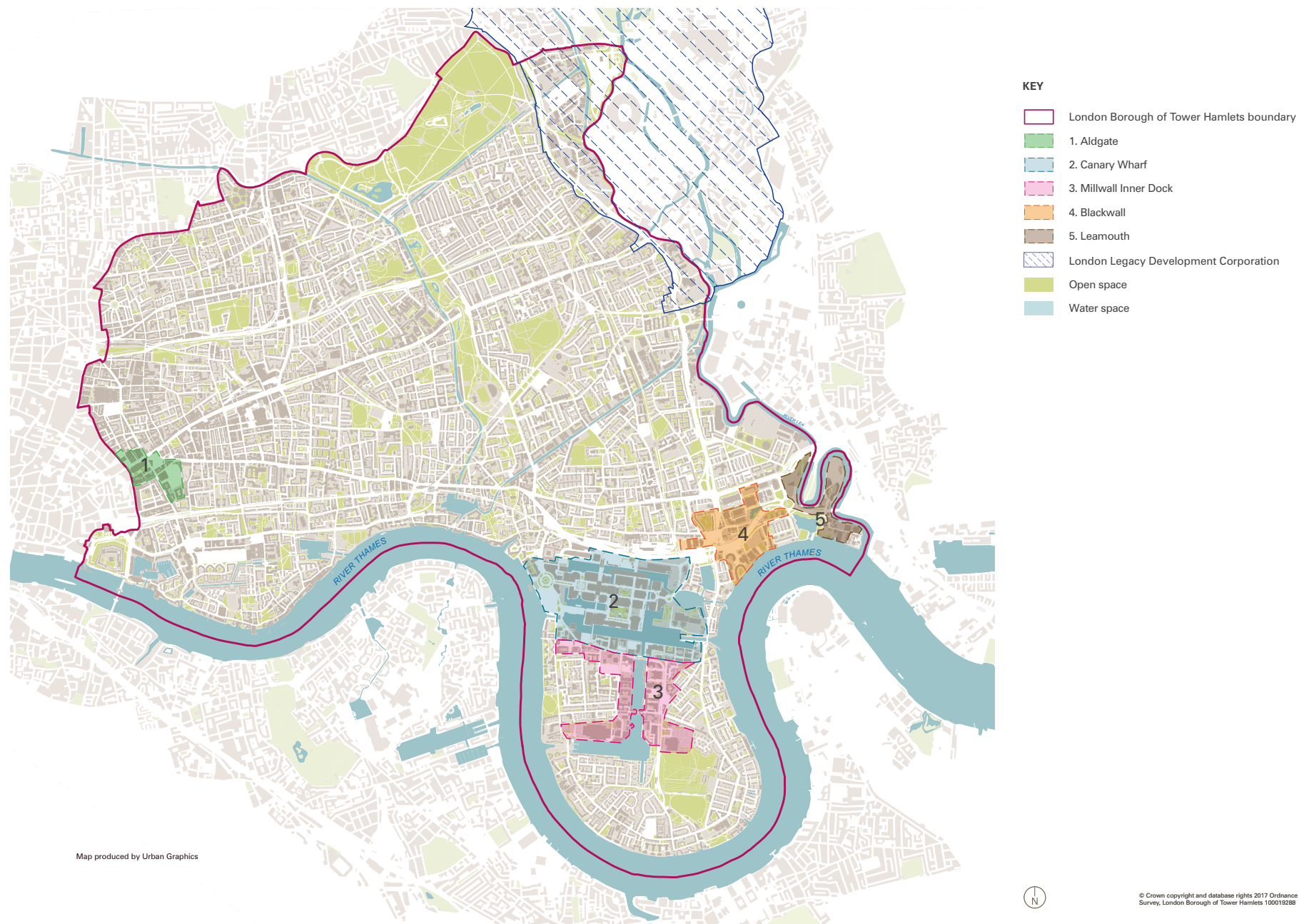
**8.71** The Tall Buildings Study should be read alongside this policy and provides detailed guidance on the potential location, design and height of tall buildings in the borough. It is expected that a new supplementary planning document will be prepared (as a follow-up to the Tall Buildings Study) to explain how the policies relating to tall buildings and other high density developments in the plan will be implemented.

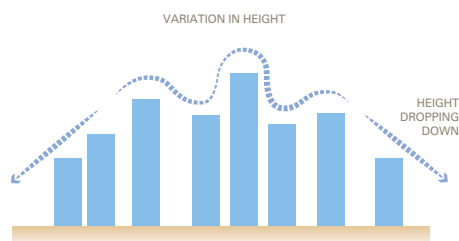
**8.72** Each tall building zone is different and tall buildings proposed within the zones will need to respect the existing character of the area and respond to sensitivities. Tall building development within the zones may require land assembly as not every individual plot within these zones is large enough to meet requirements set out in Part 2.



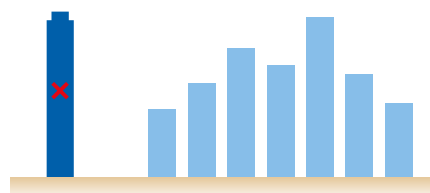


Figure 7: Tall building zones

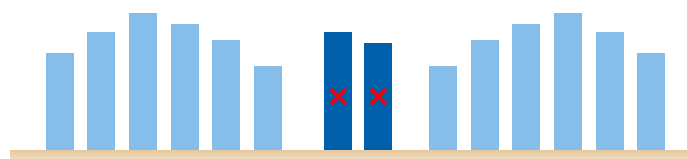


**Figure 8: Principles of tall building clusters**

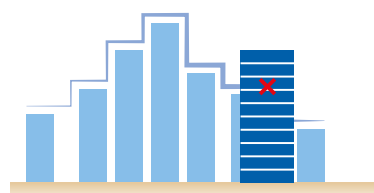
**CLUSTER PRINCIPLE ONE:**  
Height should vary but drop down towards the edge



**CLUSTER PRINCIPLE TWO:**  
Tall buildings outside but within the vicinity of the cluster are not desirable



**CLUSTER PRINCIPLE THREE:**  
Avoid the merging of clusters



**CLUSTER PRINCIPLE FOUR:**  
Tall buildings in the foreground of the clusters should not break the silhouette of this cluster when seen from the southern bank of the Thames riverfront

**8.73** Within tall building zones (as shown on Figure 7), clusters of tall buildings may be developed. The height of tall buildings within a cluster should reflect the role and function of the cluster and normally the tallest elements should be located towards the centre of the cluster, which should mark a particular feature or location (e.g. One Canada Square, Canary Wharf). Developments involving tall buildings will be required to step down towards the edge of the tall building zone (see Figure 8). It does not follow, however, that all buildings within a tall buildings zone will be tall in height/scale and variations in height will be encouraged to create a more dynamic skyline.

**8.74** Proposals involving tall buildings on the edge or within the vicinity of tall building zones will be expected to follow the step down approach from the cluster and demonstrate how they will avoid the merging of clusters and be sensitive to the height of the surrounding context. Building heights in the adjacent tall building zone will not be considered to set a precedent for inappropriate heights on adjoining sites. In the context of this policy, step down sets out how the transition in height takes place in both character and physical form. The Tall Buildings Study identifies other potentially suitable locations outside of the tall building zones where tall buildings might be appropriate, depending on the nature of the proposals and where sensitive receptors have been addressed. However, tall buildings will generally not be supported in sensitive locations (e.g. conservation areas).

**8.75** In relation to Part 3 (a) to (d), tall building proposals outside of the zones will be subject to additional criteria to make sure they are focussed in appropriate locations (e.g. areas of high public transport accessibility) and contribute positively to the character of the site and surrounding area. In such locations, tall buildings will be expected to serve as landmarks and unlock strategic infrastructure provision (specific examples include publicly accessible open space, new transport interchanges, river crossings and educational and health facilities serving more than the immediate local area) to address existing deficiencies and future needs (as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Regulation 123 List and other relevant strategies and in the requirements set out in Section 4). The height of these buildings should relate to their role as a local, district or metropolitan landmark and the surrounding context height (as categorised in the Tall Buildings Study). In addition, proposals should ensure that there is adequate distance between the proposed and existing tall buildings in the area to ensure that the positive aspects of the existing local character and legibility are maintained and/or enhanced.

**8.76** Where possible, we will seek to work with developers, land owners, statutory agencies and neighbourhoods to develop masterplans to guide the scale and location of tall buildings, taking account of their wider and cumulative impacts, in line with the requirements set out above. This includes proposals involving tall buildings located within site allocations where these are considered to be appropriate and in line with relevant policies.

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG4: Planning and construction of new development
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy D.OWS4: Water space
- Policy D.ES3: Urban greening and biodiversity
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Tall Buildings Study
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Guidelines
- Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4 (Historic England, 2015)
- Guidance on Tall Buildings (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and English Heritage, 2007)
- Community Infrastructure Levy Regulation 123 List
- London View Management Framework (Mayor of London)
- Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy

**Policy D.DH7****Density**

1. Where residential development exceeds the density levels set out in the London Plan, it must demonstrate that the cumulative impacts have been considered (including its potential to compromise the ability of neighbouring sites to optimise densities) and any negative impacts can be mitigated as far as possible.

**Explanation**

**8.77** Many proposed developments in the borough are seeking to exceed the highest density levels currently set out in the London Plan's density range. While, in principle, this is allowed as an exception as part of the London Plan's policies, in some parts of the borough, exceptional densities are coming forward in great numbers and concentrated in certain areas, such as South Quay and parts of the City Fringe Central Activities Zone.

**8.78** In order to manage this, the policy requires that developments in excess of the London Plan density levels should consider the cumulative effects from development including the development potential of neighbouring sites. In particular, it seeks to optimise the use of land in the wider area and ensure development takes place in a coordinated manner with neighbouring sites as part of the masterplanning exercise to prevent it from constraining the ability of neighbouring sites to optimise densities.

**8.79** For the purposes of this policy, mitigation may be required to address any negative impacts resulting from a level of development that is excessive in terms of demand on infrastructure and services, or impact on local amenity and character.

**8.80** Where the London Plan density levels are exceeded, schemes must address the cumulative impacts that can be associated with high density development, such as noise, disturbance, highways implications, loss of outlook and overlooking. In addition, developers should consider the existing and planned capacity of infrastructure and services to accommodate the development, including potential mitigation measures to provide additional capacity and unlock any identified constraints.

**8.81** Where residential density guidelines are applied to mixed-use developments, the density figures should be based on the net residential area. Developers are expected to reference in their planning application the relevant London Plan density guidance for their site and the actual net residential density proposed.

**8.82** Tall and dense developments are also required to consider the criteria set out in Policy D.DH6 (taking account of the guidance set out in the Tall Buildings Study).

**Policy links**

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy D.CF3: New and enhanced community facilities
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network

**Evidence links**

- Mayor of London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)



## Policy D.DH8

### Amenity

1. Development is required to protect and where possible enhance or increase the extent of the amenity of new and existing buildings and their occupants, as well as the amenity of the surrounding public realm. To achieve this, development must:
  - a. maintain good levels of privacy and avoiding an unreasonable level of overlooking or unacceptable increase in the sense of enclosure
  - b. ensure new and existing habitable rooms have an acceptable outlook
  - c. ensure adequate levels of daylight and sunlight for new residential developments, including amenity spaces within the development
  - d. not result in an unacceptable material deterioration of the sunlight and daylight conditions of surrounding development and not resulting in an unacceptable level of overshadowing to surrounding open space and private outdoor space, and
  - e. not create unacceptable levels of artificial light, odour, noise, fume or dust pollution during the construction and life of the development.

## Explanation

**8.83** This policy seeks to ensure developments are well designed (both internally and externally) and enable residents and occupants to enjoy a good level of amenity and natural surveillance.

**8.84** For the purposes of this policy, a habitable room is defined as a room within a dwelling, the primary use of which is for living, sleeping or dining. This definition includes living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms, studies, home offices and conservatories but excludes halls, corridors, bathrooms and lavatories. Kitchens which provide space for dining and have windows will be considered habitable rooms and should be included in the assessment of amenity impacts.

**8.85** Applicants or developers will need to give careful consideration to the layout and massing of buildings to ensure that the new development does not result in an increased sense of enclosure and loss of outlook. Single aspect dwellings should be avoided. If dwellings overlook bin stores, then screening and landscaping should be used to limit the impact.

**8.86** Part 1(a) of the policy seeks to ensure there is sufficient privacy and no unreasonable loss of amenity from overlooking between habitable rooms of adjacent residential properties, or onto schools and other community facilities (e.g. health centres) or private open spaces. The degree of overlooking depends on the distance and the horizontal and vertical angles of view. However, a distance of approximately 18 metres between windows of habitable rooms reduces inter-visibility to a degree acceptable to most people. This figure will be applied as a guideline depending upon the design and layout of the development.

**8.87** For the purposes of this policy, outlook is defined as the visual amenity enjoyed by occupants when looking out of their windows or from their garden, see Part 1(b).



**8.88** Part 1(c) seeks to ensure that the design of new development optimises the levels of daylight and sunlight. Part 1(d) seeks to ensure that new developments minimise the impact of the loss of daylight and sunlight and unacceptable overshadowing (including on amenity space and public open space).

**8.89** A sunlight and daylight assessment must accompany all major planning applications and/or smaller schemes where adverse effects on daylight and sunlight levels are anticipated. It should follow the methodology set out in the most recent version of Building Research Establishment's 'site layout planning for daylight and sunlight' guidance and the British Standard Code of Practice for daylighting, the results of which must be submitted with the planning application. Daylight and sunlight assessments should also include consideration of the potential redevelopment of adjacent sites, so as not to prejudice their redevelopment, see Part 1(d).

**8.90** Part 1(e) seeks to ensure that artificial lighting is well-designed and uses appropriate light levels to avoid interference with someone's use of their property and reflects the street hierarchy. Badly designed lighting schemes can be damaging to the environment and result in visual nuisance to residents.

**8.91** For the purposes of this policy, light pollution is defined as the adverse effect of artificial lighting and includes glare, light spillage and sky glow.

**8.92** Odour and fumes from commercial development can also have an adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding residents. Best practice guidance should be followed: development should refer to the most up-to-date guidance and/or best practice on the control of odour and noise from commercial kitchen exhaust systems.

**8.93** Noise and dust pollution can often be a particular problem during the construction phase of the development. Where necessary, we will use planning conditions requiring construction management plans to demonstrate that noise and dust pollution can be satisfactorily managed and/or mitigated along with any adverse impacts on the highway network.

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG4: Planning and construction of new development
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy D.H4: Specialist housing
- Policy D.H7: Housing with shared facilities ('houses in multiple occupation')
- Policy D.TC5: Food, drink, entertainment and the night-time economy
- Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration
- Policy D.ES10: Overheating
- Policy D.MW2: New and enhanced waste facilities
- Policy D.MW3: Waste collection facilities in new development

### Evidence links

- Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice (BRE, 2012)

**Policy D.DH9****Shopfronts**

1. New or replacement shopfronts are required to be robust and well-designed and ensure:
  - a. the maintenance of active shopfronts at all times
  - b. a sensitive relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors
  - c. a sensitive relationship with surrounding shopfronts and buildings
  - d. the use of materials which are appropriate to and enhance the local character and value existing architectural and historic features, and
  - e. the provision of sensitive signage location and design, which is not overly dominant to the shopfronts and the buildings.
2. Shopfront fascias should not extend above ground floor level.

**Explanation**

**8.94** This policy seeks to ensure that shopfronts are attractive, well designed and make a positive contribution to the surrounding streets, spaces and public realm and thereby enhance the overall character and appearance of the borough.

**8.95** Shopfront design should be an integral part of the design process with consideration given to how security measures are incorporated to maintain active frontages at all times. These should include the use of security glass and internal retractable grills rather than the use of closed external roller shutters which result in unwelcoming environments.

**8.96** Shopfronts should incorporate a well-defined frame, stall-riser, door and window units which sit in a defined architectural surround, use appropriate high quality materials and be of a scale which relates to the upper floors of the building and complements the quality and character of surrounding buildings.

**8.97** Achieving a sensitive relationship between the shopfront and its surroundings means for instance: shopfront fascias should be within the width of a single building and should not extend above the ground floor or obscure architectural features of value.

**8.98** Shopfronts which form part of a group of original shopfronts and/or are designated heritage assets should be of a traditional design and incorporate traditional features, character and use traditional materials. Development should avoid the use of neon lighting, animated electronic displays and external solid shutters.

**Policy links**

- Policy SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.TC3: Retail outside our town centres

**Evidence links**

- Shopfronts and Roller Shutter Grilles (London Borough of Tower Hamlets)

**Policy D.DH10****Advertisements, hoardings and signage**

1. Advertisements, hoardings and signage must be well-designed and well-integrated within the public realm, host buildings and the surrounding area. In particular, proposals will be supported where they demonstrate how they:
  - a. complement the character, appearance and visual amenity of the site and the surrounding area
  - b. do not have an adverse impact on the setting or significance of heritage assets (including conservation areas and listed buildings) and do not obscure architectural features
  - c. do not intrude into the outlook of nearby residents
  - d. do not adversely affect public or highway safety or impede pedestrian access, including for those with visual impairment or impaired mobility
  - e. enhance the visual amenity of construction sites and vacant or underused sites/buildings and the surrounding area, including through the use of appropriate lighting
  - f. are subservient in relation to the streetscape or the buildings to which they are attached, and
  - g. do not create or contribute to a proliferation of signs and advertisements which cause 'visual clutter' in the streetscape.
2. Within conservation areas, advertisements, signage and hoardings need to complement the special character of the area and:
  - a. will not be supported above fascia or ground level
  - b. should be externally illuminated, and
  - c. projecting or hanging signs will be restricted to one per frontage.

**Explanation**

**8.99** This policy aims to ensure advertisements, hoardings and signage positively activate the streetscape and enhance the visual appearance of their host buildings or structures.

**8.100** Part 1 provides guidance on the appropriate design and settings of advertisements, hoardings and signage (including fascia and hanging shop signs, A-boards, poster panels, digital billboards and free-standing advertisements).

**8.101** We recognise that well-designed features in the streetscape can make a positive contribution to the public realm and play an important role in providing local information and supporting local businesses. However, poorly designed, excessive or overly dominant features can have negative impacts on the character and appearance of their surroundings and can create hazards for pedestrians and traffic.

**8.102** Advertisements, hoardings and signage should be in keeping with the character of the area and should not negatively affect the amenity of surrounding properties or highway/public safety. There is a particular need to avoid physical and visual clutter in the streetscape as well as problems arising from distraction among road and pedestrian users. For instance, the location of A boards in areas where the width of the footway is less than 2 metres will be resisted. Poster panels/freestanding adverts will generally be out of place within residential areas due to their scale, size and intrusive nature. External illumination for signage will need to be carefully considered at an early stage in the design process to ensure that lighting can be sensitively incorporated, where required.

**8.103** Provision of public artwork or other visual concepts on hoardings will be supported and encouraged, where it can enhance the local streetscape and improve the appearance of construction sites.

**8.104** Part 2 provides guidelines for advertisements, signage and hoardings in conservation areas. The design should complement the historic character of the conservation area in terms of scale, location, composition and materials applied. Any lighting associated with advertisements, signage or hoardings should be discreet and well placed so that it does not interfere with the visual amenity of the historic environment. External lighting should generally be used rather than internal illumination, due to the potential impact on heritage assets.

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG4: Planning and construction of new development
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel

### Evidence links

- Signs and Advertisements (London Borough of Tower Hamlets)
- Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations



**Policy D.DH11****Telecommunications**

1. The installation of new telecommunication apparatus is required to minimise its impact on the street scene and not unacceptably harm the appearance of heritage assets through appropriate design and:
  - a. demonstrate that where a new site is proposed that co-location/ mast-sharing on existing sites has been explored and is not possible
  - b. not create any unacceptable risks to the health and well-being of residents and users of surrounding and nearby sites, and
  - c. not unacceptably detract from the amenity of surrounding properties.

**Explanation**

**8.105** This policy aims to ensure that the design and location of telecommunications equipment does not create a safety hazard or detract from the character of their surroundings, taking into consideration the potential impacts on the amenity of the area and local residents.

**8.106** Proposals to install new telecommunications equipment will be required to submit a written report alongside the planning application demonstrating that similar/compatible equipment has been identified and clearly set out that all reasonable efforts to co-locate have been explored and are not possible, due to incompatibility of equipment.

**8.107** Details should also be included on the frequency modulation, power output and evidence of how the proposal meets the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection to demonstrate compatibility with surrounding uses.

**Policy links**

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration

**Evidence links**

- Guidance Shopfronts and Roller Shutter Grilles (Tower Hamlets)



## 9. Meeting housing needs

### Introduction

**9.1** This chapter sets out the policies to maximise the supply of housing in the borough to meet both local and strategic needs.

**9.2** The London Plan (GLA, 2016) identifies a ten-year minimum housing supply target of 39,314 homes within Tower Hamlets over the period 2015-2025. This is equivalent to a minimum requirement of 3,931 homes per annum. The London Plan does not set out specific housing targets beyond 2025 but expects boroughs to 'roll forward' their annual target. The London Plan ten-year target, plus the annual rolled forward target, results in a housing supply target for the borough (2016 – 2031) of 58,965 homes.

**9.3** This target is greater than our objectively assessed need of 46,458 homes<sup>17</sup>, reflecting the fact that the borough is expected to significantly contribute towards meeting London's strategic housing need. Appendix 7 sets out a summary of the expected housing supply over the plan period.

**9.4** Tower Hamlets also needs to provide at least 21,100 new affordable homes over the same period to meet its future needs, equivalent to an average of 1,407 dwellings per year (45% of the overall need).

**9.5** The delivery and implementation section sets out the strategy on how we are planning to meet both local housing needs and strategic housing needs over the plan period (see Section 5).

**9.6** The figures in Table 1 are based on the estimated capacity of the four sub-areas (further detail on these figures is set out in Appendix 7).

**Table 1: Minimum number of additional homes across sub-areas (2016 - 2031)**

Sub area	Minimum number of additional homes	Percentages
Isle of Dogs and South Poplar	31,209	57%
City Fringe	10,334	19%
Lower Lea Valley	5,748	10%
Central	7,597	14%
Tower Hamlets: total	54,889	100%
Borough-wide windfall allowance (evenly distributed between sub areas)	3,122*	

\*The windfall allowance has been subsumed within each sub area target.

**9.7** In line with Policy S.SG1 of the Local Plan, the majority of the housing growth within the borough will be provided in the following locations (see Figure 9)<sup>18</sup>:

- Isle of Dogs and South Poplar sub-area: the places of Canary Wharf, Blackwall, Leamouth and northern parts of Millwall and Cubitt Town
- City Fringe sub-area: the places of Whitechapel, Wapping and Aldgate
- Lower Lea Valley sub-area: the places of Poplar Riverside and Poplar.

<sup>17</sup> This is identified in the Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

<sup>18</sup> Please note: Figure 9 is a spatial representation of the Local Plan housing supply outlined in Table 1 and provided in greater detail in Appendix 7. Due to how the data is available the distribution of housing growth is based around ward boundaries and is therefore indicative.

**9.8** While there is a currently identified shortfall towards the end of the plan period, we are committed to working with our partners (including the Greater London Authority) to maximise housing supply within the parameters of sustainable development and address this unmet need<sup>19</sup>.

**9.9** In addition, we anticipate that through normal plan delivery over the plan period, sufficient additional units can be delivered to meet the London Plan target. This is due to factors relating to uncertainties and assumptions in the housing supply which have not been factored into the trajectory (see Appendix 7) and are anticipated to accelerate the delivery of new homes over the plan period. This includes higher-than-average density levels and delivery rates (due to the extent of development interest in the borough) and the emergence of new delivery mechanisms (e.g. new council-led housing companies and the GLA-funded housing zone within Poplar Riverside) and other interventions (e.g. brownfield register).

**9.10** If our targets are not being met, we will undertake an update of the Local Plan to explore ways of addressing this unmet need, taking into account the outcomes of future revisions to the London Plan and opportunities to increase the supply of housing as detailed in Section 5 below. Triggers and timescales for an update are outlined in Section 5.

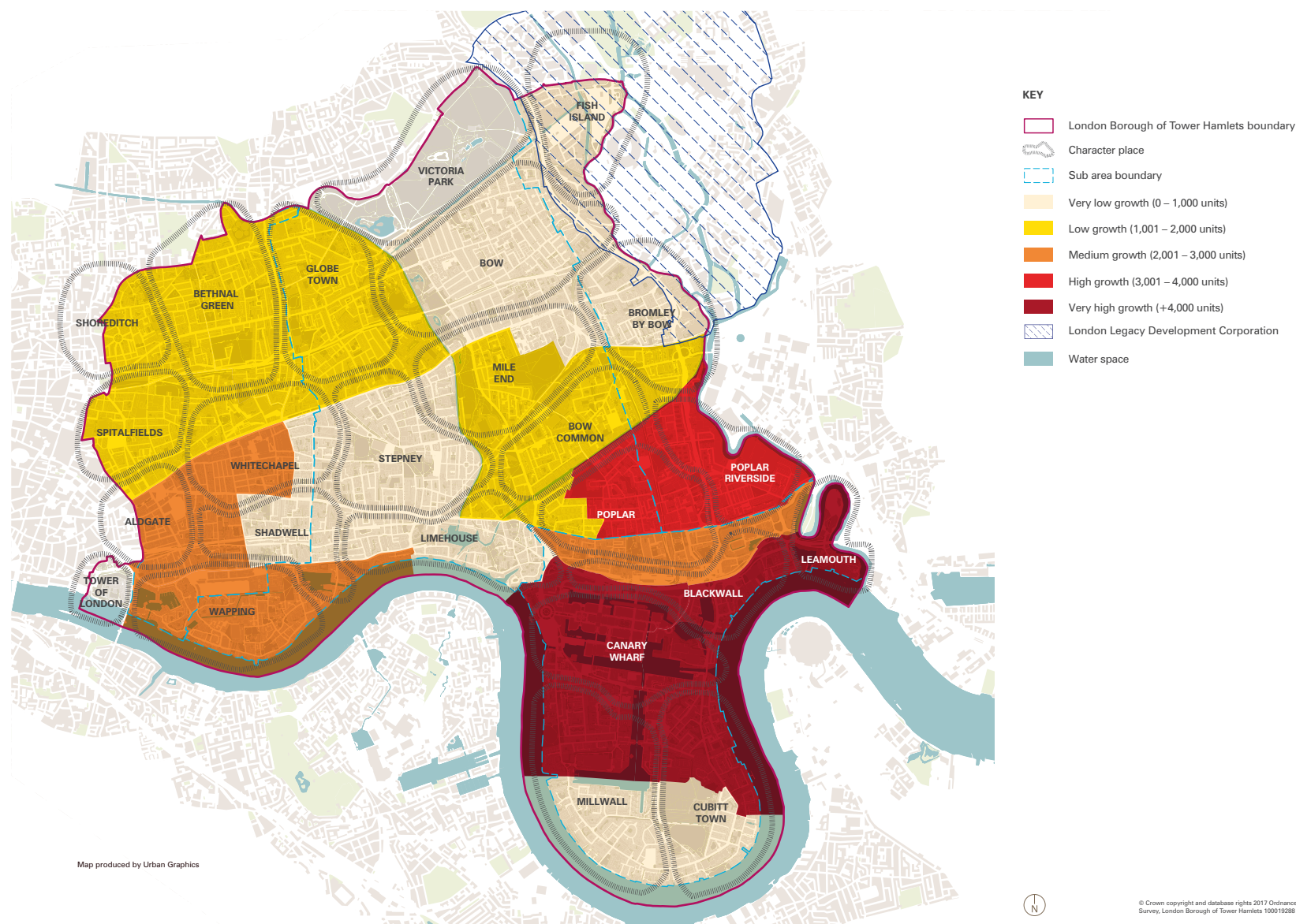
**9.11** This section contains the following policies:

- Policy S.H1: Meeting housing needs
- Policy D.H2: Affordable housing and housing mix
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy D.H4: Specialist housing
- Policy D.H5: Gypsies and travellers accommodation
- Policy D.H6: Student housing
- Policy D.H7: Housing with shared facilities (houses in multiple occupation).



<sup>19</sup> Our approach in this regard is outlined in the Tower Hamlets Housing Delivery Strategy (see also 9.14).

Figure 9: Housing distribution across 24 places



**Policy S.H1****Meeting housing needs**

1. We will secure the delivery of at least 58,965 new homes across the borough (equating to at least 3,931 new homes per year) between 2016 and 2031. This will be achieved through:
  - a. focusing the majority of new housing in the opportunity areas and site allocations (as shown on the Policies Map)
  - b. ensuring development does not undermine the supply of self-contained housing - in particular family homes
  - c. resisting development that would result in a net loss of residential floorspace or family units
  - d. housing estate regeneration schemes delivering homes which meet housing need and provide improved social facilities and environmental amenity, and
  - e. working to return vacant homes back to use.
2. Development will be expected to contribute towards the creation of mixed and balanced communities that respond to local and strategic need. This will be achieved through:
  - a. setting an overall target for 50% of all new homes to be affordable, to be achieved through:
    - i. securing affordable homes from a range of council-led initiatives
    - ii. requiring the provision of affordable housing contributions on sites providing 2 to 9 new residential units against a sliding-scale target (subject to viability)
    - iii. requiring the provision of a minimum of 35% affordable housing on sites providing 10 or more new residential units (subject to viability), and
    - iv. requiring a mix of rented and intermediate affordable tenures to meet the full range of housing needs.
  - b. requiring a mix of unit sizes and tenures to meet local need on all sites providing new housing
  - c. supporting a variety of housing products in the market and affordable tenures which meet local need, and
  - d. complying with our duty to support local demand for self-build.
3. All housing must be well-designed, sustainable and take appropriate account of cumulative development. Developments are strongly encouraged to demonstrate this through meeting the Home Quality Mark standard.
4. Development will be supported which seeks to meet the needs of specific communities, including:
  - a. Older people
  - b. Disabled and vulnerable people
  - c. Students
  - d. Gypsies and travellers, through safeguarding the existing gypsy and traveller site at Old Willow Close and seeking to deliver additional safeguarded pitches adjacent to the site, following the completion of the Elizabeth line.



## Explanation

**9.12** This policy sets out the strategic housing supply requirements for Tower Hamlets as well as our objectives of ensuring the creation of mixed and balanced communities, sustainable places and quality living environments within the borough.

**9.13** The borough's housing supply target relates to total net housing supply. The strategic target is composed of the housing supply target of at least 39,310 new homes between 2015 and 2025 – established in the London Plan (GLA, 2016) – and a rolled-forward target of at least 3,931 new homes per year between 2026 and 2031. The target includes self-contained residential units and non-self-contained residential accommodation, including specialist housing for students and older people in use classes C2, C3 and C4 or sui generis, as identified in Annex 4 of the London Plan (GLA, 2016).

**9.14** Housing growth will be primarily delivered in the locations specified in Part 1(a)<sup>20</sup> via a number of different mechanisms: the regeneration of previously developed land, intensification of the built form in opportunity areas, and in highly accessible locations along transport corridors, and the delivery of site allocations. Sites which form part of the Poplar Riverside Housing Zone programme are also expected to support the delivery of new homes. A smaller proportion of housing will be delivered through town centre intensification, estate regeneration and infill development, bringing back long term vacant properties into residential use and the development of windfall sites. Further details can be found in Sections 4 and 5<sup>21</sup>.

**9.15** Part 1(b) seeks to protect existing and safeguard the future supply of self-contained housing. This is to ensure we meet identified local need as well as strategic targets for housing. Development for non-self-contained units will not be supported where it utilises land identified for self-contained housing through a current planning permission, or through the borough's development plan. It is recognised that other policies in this plan identify suitable locations for other land uses. Developments of other land uses, where supported by policy and/or site allocations, are not considered to undermine the supply of self-contained units. Family housing requires particular protection, due to high levels of identified need<sup>22</sup>.

**9.16** Part 1(c) and (d) will be implemented through partnership working to realise local need as well as strategic targets. Estate regeneration schemes are expected to protect and enhance the estate's physical environment and community assets, as well as deliver at least like-for-like replacement of unit size and tenure mix. The Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy (2016-2020) and the Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration (GLA, 2018) provide further guidance. Policy D.H2 (Part 5) provides further detail on delivering this requirement.

**9.17** Vacant units brought back into residential use also contribute towards meeting the housing supply figure. We undertake a range of activities to bring vacant buildings back into use, such as grants and buy-back of ex-council stock.

<sup>20</sup> Opportunity areas are designated in the London Plan (GLA, 2016) and are considered to be London's main opportunities for accommodating large-scale new development to provide substantial numbers of new employment and housing, due to transport connectivity, land availability and deliverability. Site allocations are sites in the borough which have been identified as able to accommodate new homes and jobs alongside necessary infrastructure such as open space, health and education facilities. Further information about opportunity areas and site allocations are provided in Policy S.SG1.

<sup>21</sup> The Housing Delivery Strategy sets out our approach to managing housing delivery across the borough to 2031 and supports the delivery of the housing target set out in this plan.

<sup>22</sup> Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014 and 2017)

**9.18** Part 2 requires development to respond to local and strategic market housing need. There is a concern at a regional level that a portion of new build homes in London are not being used in a way which meets housing need and GLA-commissioned research indicates that Tower Hamlets has the second highest percentage of overseas sales in London<sup>23</sup>. Developers are encouraged to make a voluntary 'first dibs' offer to the Mayor of London or participate in any replacement initiative which encourages the marketing of new homes for sale to Londoners in the first instance and/or provides Londoners with an opportunity to purchase new homes before they are marketed overseas – particularly lower cost homes.

**9.19** Part 2 sets a target of achieving 50% affordable homes through private development as well as council-led initiatives. This target is considered to best reflect local housing need<sup>24</sup>. On developments that yield 10 or more net additional residential units, at least 35% affordable housing is expected. Developments are expected to maximise the provision of affordable housing, having regard to availability of public subsidy, implications of phased development (including provision for re-appraising scheme viability at different stages of development) as well as financial viability which should, in particular, take account of prevailing local and regional viability guidance. Applicants are strongly encouraged to meet or exceed the delivery of 35% affordable housing. Lower levels will only be accepted where robustly justified through viability evidence and where it is demonstrated that there are clear barriers to delivery. Applications that do not meet policy requirements will be subject to viability re-appraisals. Further guidance is provided in the Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document and the Viability and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2017). The borough's guidance will take precedence.

**9.20** Affordable housing calculations will be made using habitable rooms.

**9.21** Given the extent of local need, it is considered necessary and appropriate to seek financial contributions towards the provision of affordable housing from sites of less than 10 units. Financial contributions will be calculated using our preferred methodology as set out in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document. Over the plan period, developments on small sites have the potential to contribute over 3,000 new homes and could make a significant contribution towards meeting local affordable housing need (see Appendix 7). Financial contributions will be calculated using a sliding-scale target starting at 3.5% across the whole site and increasing by 3.5% for each additional home, reaching 35% for sites of 10 units or more. Further detail (including on financial viability assessments) is provided in the developer contributions policy (D.SG5) and in the latest Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

**9.22** Part 2(b) expects that all housing developments will contribute to delivering mixed and balanced communities. Private student and specialist housing will be required to deliver a mix of affordable and market units of the relevant typology on site in order to meet a wide range of needs. All other housing development will be required to deliver a mix of housing tenures and sizes on site.

**9.23** Part 2(c) seeks to support a range of innovative housing products such as 'build-to-rent' private rented housing. Housing products will be supported where they are compatible with optimising the use of land and facilitate the delivery of housing to meet needs in each tenure. All residential developments, excluding student and specialist housing (which are addressed in Policies D.H6 and D.H4 respectively), must meet the requirements outlined in Policies D.H2 and D.H3, including unit size mix, affordable housing and space standards. In addressing these

<sup>23</sup> Overseas Investors in London's New Build Housing Market (University of York, 2017)

<sup>24</sup> This need is established in the Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014 and 2017).

requirements, consideration will be given to the size of the development. We also support the delivery of residential moorings in suitable locations (further guidance is provided in Policies S.OWS2 and D.OWS4).

**9.24** Part 2(d) demonstrates our commitment to supporting those who wish to build their own home. The current self-build register indicates there is interest in self-build in the borough, however high local land values and housing targets are resulting in the predominance of flatted developments which limits opportunities for viable self-build. Group self-build has the best potential to deliver significant additional housing output in higher cost areas, like Tower Hamlets<sup>25</sup>. We would therefore encourage group self-build as a more viable model of self-build in the borough. Our housing service is working with interested local self-builders to support self-builders overcome challenges to delivery in the borough.

**9.25** Part 3 requires development proposals to appropriately respond to the character of the surrounding area and site-specific constraints, as well as provide a high quality living environment taking account of the Home Quality Mark standards<sup>26</sup>. Further guidance is provided in chapter 2.

**9.26** Part 4 recognises our duty to provide specialist and supported housing for students, gypsies and travellers, the homeless, the disabled, vulnerable and older people. This will be achieved through working with partners to facilitate the appropriate quantity and quality of housing. In addition, specialist housing should be integrated into the wider area through careful design and the sharing/joint use of facilities to encourage a sense of community belonging and social interaction, where applicable.

**9.27** The existing gypsy and traveller site at Old Willow Close (as shown on the Policies Map) has been safeguarded to meet the borough's gypsy and traveller accommodation need. We will also seek to deliver and safeguard any further pitches which may be provided adjacent to the existing site, following completion of the Elizabeth line construction<sup>27</sup>.

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG1: Areas of growth and opportunity within Tower Hamlets
- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water space

### Evidence links

- Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (Tower Hamlets)
- Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy (2016)
- Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration (GLA, 2016)
- Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document (Tower Hamlets)

<sup>25</sup> London Strategic Housing Market Assessment (GLA, 2013)

<sup>26</sup> The Home Quality Mark is a new residential quality design and construction standard, developed by the Building Research Establishment.

<sup>27</sup> This need is identified in the Tower Hamlets Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment. The safeguarded site meets our statutory requirement to ensure adequate provision of sites to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers who meet the new government definition of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople (Policy for Traveller Sites, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015). Any additional capacity on the site and adjacent land will contribute towards providing culturally appropriate housing for gypsies and travellers who do not meet the new planning policy definition.

## Policy D.H2

### Affordable housing and housing mix

1. Development is required to maximise the provision of affordable housing in accordance with a 70% rented and 30% intermediate tenure split.
2. Development is required to maximise the delivery of affordable housing on-site.
  - a. Affordable housing calculations will be based on habitable rooms
  - b. Off-site affordable housing will only be considered in circumstances where it:
    - i. is not practical to provide affordable housing on-site
    - ii. does not result in an over-concentration of one type of housing in any one local area to ensure mixed and balanced communities
    - iii. can provide a minimum of 50% affordable housing overall, subject to viability, and
    - iv. can provide a better outcome for all of the sites, including a higher level of affordable rented family homes.
  - c. If a suitable site cannot be found in accordance with Part 2(b), exceptional circumstances may apply and payments in-lieu will be considered
  - d. Development which provides further housing units either through an amendment to a current permission or an application to extend an existing development on the same or an adjoining site (where the extension is reliant on the existing permission or development to function or to meet policy requirements or standards required elsewhere in the plan), the affordable housing calculation for the new units will be based on the combined number of units.

3. Development is required to provide a mix of unit sizes (including larger family homes) in accordance with local housing need, outlined in the table below:

	Market	Intermediate	Affordable rented
1 bed	30%	15%	25%
2 bed	50%	40%	30%
3 bed	20%	45%	30%
4 bed			15%

4. Development which involves the conversion of family homes will only be permitted when a 3-plus bed unit is retained in the new development. Where applicable, the retained family unit should have access to a private garden.
5. Estate regeneration development schemes are required to:
  - a. protect and enhance existing open space and community facilities
  - b. protect the existing quantum of affordable and family units, with affordable units re-provided with the same or equivalent rent levels
  - c. provide an uplift in the number of affordable homes, and
  - d. include plans for refurbishment of any existing homes to the latest decent homes standard.
6. Major developments and estate regeneration schemes are required to undertake thorough and inclusive public consultations proportionate to the nature and scale of development and submit a consultation statement detailing these activities.



## Explanation

**9.28** Tower Hamlets faces an acute housing need – in particular affordable family housing – a need which is replicated across London. In addition, we face considerable challenges in delivering homes which are affordable to local people on average-to-medium incomes, who are unable to access social housing or afford market housing, particularly if they have children<sup>28</sup>.

**9.29** The policy seeks to ensure new housing maintains mixed, balanced and stable communities across the borough and delivers the right range of housing products to meet locally assessed needs. As outlined in Part 2(a), affordable housing calculations including the percentage of affordable homes delivered in a scheme, the percentage of intermediate and affordable rented homes and any calculation undertaken in relation to assessing Part 2(b) will be calculated using habitable rooms.

**9.30** Where the development provides up to 35% affordable housing, as per Policy S.H1 above, the affordable housing provision should be comprised of:

- a. 70% rented element, of which 50% should be London affordable rents and 50% should be Tower Hamlets living rent
- b. 30% intermediate element, which can include London living rent, shared ownership and other intermediate products<sup>29</sup>.

**9.31** Larger intermediate units (three or more bedrooms) should be prioritised as London Living Rent products, and generally, shared ownership will not be considered appropriate where unrestricted market values of a unit exceed £600,000 (as per the Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance [GLA, 2016]). Where the development provides more than 35% affordable housing, the tenure of the additional affordable homes will be subject to negotiation. GLA developed products (including the London Affordable Rent and London Living Rent) may be subject to change over the plan period. Our affordable housing service will provide further guidance on suitable products when assessing applications. Rent levels are determined as part of the viability assessment of each planning application and undertakings are made to retain similar rent levels at the point of completion. The ownership of affordable homes must be transferred to one of our approved local registered providers or other approved affordable housing providers.

**9.32** Part 2(a) requires proposals to calculate affordable housing using habitable rooms as it ensures the provision of a range of housing sizes more likely to meet the needs identified in the latest housing needs assessment. It is expected that there should not be a greater than 5% variation in floorspace between the private and affordable units, excluding units designed for wheelchair use. This prevents an under-provision of affordable housing where the developer proposes unusually large market homes.

**9.33** In the majority of cases, affordable housing should be delivered on-site. This is important in promoting mixed and balanced communities. In some circumstances, site constraints may lead to applicants proposing to provide affordable housing off-site or through payments in-lieu to contribute to the delivery of affordable housing and in particular rented family housing.

<sup>28</sup> These needs have been identified through the Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which sets out the housing requirements arising from expected population growth.

<sup>29</sup> Further guidance is provided in the Approval to Proceed with Guidance on New Rent Levels (2017)

**9.34** In cases where proposals are seeking to provide housing off-site, there should be no over-concentration of one type of housing in any one area (both off-site and on-site) and a minimum of 50% affordable housing must be provided overall. Part 2(a) and (b) gives further guidance. In addition, the design of the off-site development, the living environment for residents and other elements of the scheme must demonstrate advantages to residents over the option of affordable housing provided on-site.

**9.35** If no suitable sites are available for off-site affordable housing and payment in-lieu is to be acceptable, developers must demonstrate that the payment will enable the construction or purchase of a minimum of 50% affordable housing in the borough and there is no financial advantage to the development of not providing affordable housing on-site. This must be evidenced through the financial viability statement. The payment in-lieu will be ring-fenced for additional affordable housing output.

**9.36** Part 2(d) refers to incremental development. This is housing development where permission is subsequently amended (e.g. by means of a variation of the extant planning permission) to the extent that the amended development would provide new units or the existing development is extended to provide new units by the granting of a new permission on the same or an adjoining site where the units would physically or functionally extend the existing development (e.g. by relying on a common access core or on the existing amenity space or other communal facilities in order to meet the policy requirements or standards required elsewhere in the plan). In these circumstances, we consider the new units to be part of the existing development and the affordable housing requirements will be calculated accordingly, taking into account the affordable housing already delivered or secured. In both cases, where the amended or linked development would provide 10 units or more in aggregate, affordable housing should be provided, in accordance with

Policy S.H1, Part 2 (a)(iii) and Parts 1 and 2 (a) to (c) above. If it would result in less than 10 new units in aggregate, policy S.H1, Part 2 (a)(ii) will apply. If lower than policy compliant levels of affordable housing for the total scheme (as amended or extended) are proposed, this will only be accepted where robustly justified through a financial viability assessment, in line with the latest guidance (as outlined in paragraph 9.18). The financial viability information should be proportionate to the scale of change and time elapsed between the existing approval or development and the proposed amendment or extension.

**9.37** Part 3 requires proposals to provide a range of unit sizes. Unit size distribution will be calculated by unit numbers and not habitable rooms. Developments may be required to meet updated needs as a result of monitoring. Where a development proposes to deliver at least 35% affordable housing (to use the fast track approach) and in exceptional circumstances (e.g. where applications propose to deliver a significantly higher quantum of affordable housing than 35%, whilst meeting the required affordable housing tenure mix, and/or propose to deliver significant social infrastructure on-site), we will consider a different housing mix, having regard to the following factors:

- a. The proposal must meet the tenure split requirements outlined in Part 1.
- b. Proposals will be expected to meet our affordable housing product requirements outlined in paragraphs 9.29 and 9.30.
- c. Greater unit mix flexibility can be applied to the market tenure unit mix, as opposed to the unit mix for affordable housing. However, the scheme must still provide a significant proportion of family housing in the market tenure and proposals will be expected to meet our unit mix requirements to deliver family housing in the affordable tenures.

**9.38** The use of the fast track threshold approach where the unit mix and affordable housing product split is not being met must be confirmed as acceptable by our affordable housing team.

**9.39** In view of the high housing target and the shortage of family housing in the borough, Part 4 seeks to ensure that priority family housing is not unnecessarily lost through development. In order to manage the current shortage of family homes (three or more bedrooms), proposals to convert family homes into smaller self-contained flats will be resisted, unless the conversion enables the retention of a family unit. The continued access to a private garden for the family unit, where applicable, is considered to be appropriate due to the shortage of traditional forms of family housing within the borough. Conversion to residential uses identified as hostels or other forms of shared accommodation (including homes for multiple occupation) will also be resisted.

**9.40** Housing estates in the borough provide a large number of affordable homes, as well as much valued open space and community facilities. Part 5 recognises the importance of retaining these facilities and the existing quantum of affordable housing. Where it would result in an improvement in quantity and quality of open space or community facilities, re-provision will be allowed. Affordable units must be re-provided with the same or equivalent rent levels. This policy also recognises that additional homes may be provided through estate regeneration schemes and seeks to secure that any net additional homes are also subject to the affordable housing requirements in Policies S.H1 (Part 2) and D.H2 (see Parts 1 and 2). Part 5(d) ensures that there is a plan in place to bring any existing homes retained as part of an estate regeneration scheme up to the latest decent homes standards, either during the regeneration works or through a planned maintenance and/or major works programme.

**9.41** Part 6 seeks to ensure that residents, businesses and other stakeholders are able to properly influence and shape the proposed development at the earliest opportunity, helping to better deliver sustainable communities. This is particularly important due to the levels of development taking place in the borough alongside existing communities. The Tower Hamlets Statement of Community Involvement should be used as best practice guidance to inform the types of consultation and co-production methods which proposed developments and estate regeneration schemes are expected to undertake in accordance with the consultation and engagement principles outlined in the Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration (GLA, 2016), or any replacement document. Consultation must be undertaken in advance of submitting a planning application. The consultation statement will be required at planning application validation stage.

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces

### Evidence links

- Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2017)
- Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration (GLA, 2016)
- Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)
- Tower Hamlets Statement of Community Involvement

**Policy D.H3****Housing standards and quality**

1. Development is required to demonstrate that, as a minimum, it meets with the most up-to-date London Plan space and accessibility standards, in particular:
  - a. it provides a minimum of 2.5 metres floor-to-ceiling heights, and
  - b. at least 10% of dwellings are built to the 'wheelchair user dwellings' accessible housing standard M4 (3) and the remainder of dwellings are built to the 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' accessible housing standard M4 (2) both contained within part M (volume 1) of the building regulations
    - i. Where units which meet the wheelchair user dwellings standards M4 (3) (2) (b) are to be delivered above the ground floor, access to a second lift must be provided
    - ii. In exceptional circumstances, where units which meet the wheelchair user dwellings standards M4 (3) (2) (b) cannot be accommodated on site, contributions in-lieu will be accepted.
2. Affordable housing should not be externally distinguishable in quality from private housing.
3. Developments must use hard wearing, durable materials for the affordable housing elements of the development.
4. Development is required to protect or re-provide existing amenity space (private, communal and child play space). Net loss of existing amenity space will be resisted.
5. Development will need to demonstrate how it will meet the following minimum amenity space (private, communal and child play space) standards on site:
  - a. a minimum of five square metres of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwellings and an extra one square metre should be provided for each additional occupant
  - b. balconies and other private external spaces should have a minimum width and depth of 1500 mm
  - c. for developments with 10 or more residential units, the minimum communal amenity space (excluding circulation areas, access routes and waste or bike storage) should be 50 square metres for the first 10 units plus a further one square metre for every additional unit thereafter
  - d. major developments should provide a minimum of 10 square metres of high quality play space for each child
  - e. the child yield calculator should be used to determine child numbers in a development.



## Explanation

**9.42** Currently, Tower Hamlets is London's most densely-populated borough after Islington. Achieving the borough's high housing target will result in further intensification of land use and therefore require an appropriately quality-driven response to maintain and improve standards of living in the borough. High density developments necessitate that development delivers higher than the minimum design, space and amenity standards.

**9.43** Part 1(a) and (b) seeks to ensure all housing development provides adequate internal space to meet relevant space, accessibility and amenity standards and provide an appropriate living environment. It requires development to comply, as a minimum, with the space and accessibility standards set out in the London Plan (GLA, 2016) and the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016), whilst having regard to the particular needs of residents in the borough as well as the increasingly dense character of the built form. If the GLA's space and accessibility standards are updated, we may seek to implement these changes, so long as they are locally suitable. We strongly urge developers/applicants to provide evidence of how the scheme will achieve high quality design in line with the Home Quality Mark standards.

**9.44** In order to implement Part 1(b) and meet standards in the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016), 10% of all new units across all tenures should be wheelchair user dwellings, but this may be varied to at least 10% of habitable rooms where a better outcome is provided in terms of delivery of larger units. All 'wheelchair user dwellings' (the M4 (3) standard) in the affordable rented tenure should meet the M4 (3) (2) (b) standard which meets the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs. It is expected that units which meet the wheelchair user dwellings standards M4 (3) (2) (b) above the ground floor will be provided with access to a second lift for use when the primary lift is not

functioning. We have a preference that units which meet the accessible units standards M4 (3) will be provided below the fifth floor due to difficulties allocating wheelchair accessible units on higher floors<sup>30</sup>. In some circumstances, site constraints (such as the inability to secure sufficient accessible parking, lack of lift circulation space and restrictions on ground floor residential uses) could lead to applicants arguing that units which meet the wheelchair user dwellings standards M4 (3) (2) (b) may not be able to be delivered on site. In these circumstances, we may accept payments in lieu of the provision of units which meet the wheelchair user dwellings standards M4 (3) (2) (b) through the 'Project-120' scheme<sup>31</sup>.

**9.45** Part 2 provides guidance that private and affordable housing should not be distinguishable. Different tenures should be mixed throughout a development, although it is recognised that separate cores may be required to enable effective management and minimise service charges for affordable units. Where separate cores result in separate entrances for market and affordable units, these entrances must also not be externally distinguishable and must be located so that they are of equivalent access and amenity value.

**9.46** Part 3 recognises that due to higher occupancy rates and child yields, affordable housing is likely to be subject to more wear and tear than other housing tenures. In order for these homes to be fully fit for purpose, developers must use hard-wearing, durable materials to ensure the development remains of high quality throughout its lifetime and requires minimal service charges to clean and maintain. This should be evidenced in the design and access statement. In addition, all family-sized affordable homes should have separate kitchens and living rooms, due to local needs. For further guidance, please contact our affordable housing service and/or refer to the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum's Section 106 Design Guide.

<sup>30</sup> Accessible Housing Assessment (2018)

<sup>31</sup> We are working with the borough's development partners to ensure that new homes for wheelchair users are designed to meet the specific needs of families on the accessible housing register and thereby reduce the number of tenants requiring specifically adapted wheelchair accessible homes and the length of time they have been waiting to secure a suitable home.

**9.47** Part 4 aims to ensure that all existing amenity space is protected. Where it would result in an improvement in quantity and/or quality of open space, re-provision will be allowed. Part 5 seeks the provision of new outdoor amenity space on-site which is well located, well designed and functional (including private amenity space, communal amenity space and child play space) to provide opportunities for residents to lead healthy and active lifestyles.

**9.48** In considering the design and layout of private amenity space, it is important that the space meets the minimum standards set out in the policy (see Part 5) to ensure that residents have sufficient space to carry out activities such as drying clothes or eating a meal outside. In relevant areas, developments should also be guided by Policies D.ES2 (Air quality) and D.ES9 (Noise and vibration) in relation to the layout and design of amenity space.

**9.49** Due to the positive impacts of access to nature in terms of well-being, a significant amount of amenity space should include soft landscaping. This also provides greater opportunity to incorporate biodiversity elements and sustainable urban drainage systems. In considering the design and layout of communal space, it is important that this space is integrated into the overall design of the development and the wider public realm. The design should ensure that communal space is overlooked and supports a range of activities including space for relaxation, gardening, urban agriculture and opportunities to promote biodiversity, ecology and intergenerational community cohesion.

**9.50** In considering the design and layout of child play space, it is important to ensure that this responds to the needs of children within the development. Play space for all children should be provided on site. Where there are demonstrable site constraints, play space for under five-year-olds must be on site and older children's play space must be within the GLA's specified recommended distances<sup>32</sup>. This space should be well-integrated into the development and fully considered in the design of the communal space. However, play provision requirements must be provided in addition to other quantitative standards, such as open space provision and communal space provision. In order to demonstrate that the proposed play space is of high quality, applicants will be required to demonstrate within the health impact assessment how they have used Play England's 10 key design principles for creating successful play spaces.<sup>33</sup>

### Policy links

- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open space
- Policy D.OSW3: Open space and green grid networks
- Policy D.ES2: Air quality
- Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration
- Policy D.TR3: Parking and permit-free

### Evidence links

- Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)
- Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2012)
- Tower Hamlets Child Yields Calculator (2017)
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Planning and Health (Tower Hamlets)

<sup>32</sup> Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2012)

<sup>33</sup> For more details, please see the Tower Hamlets Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Planning and Health (2016)

**Policy D.H4****Specialist housing**

1. Existing specialist and supported housing will be protected where it is considered suitable for its use and meets relevant standards for this form of accommodation.
2. The redevelopment of any site which includes specialist and supported housing is only considered acceptable where:
  - a. there is no longer an identified need for its retention in the current format
  - b. the needs met by this form of housing will be re-provided elsewhere within the borough, resulting in no net loss of this provision
  - c. re-provision as part of a development proposal would result in improved standards and quality of accommodation, and
  - d. new accommodation meets the criteria in Part 3 below.
3. Development for new specialist and supported housing is supported where it can be demonstrated that it:
  - a. meets an identified need
  - b. is of high quality and meets relevant best practice guidance for this form of accommodation
  - c. is located in close proximity to public transport and local shops and services, and
  - d. includes provision of affordable units, where appropriate.

**Explanation**

**9.51** This policy aims to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of appropriate housing available for older people, homeless people, disabled people and vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in accordance with our statutory duties. It also seeks to protect appropriate staff accommodation ancillary to a relevant use.

**9.52** The Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy (2016-2021) seeks to create more choice so that development meets a wide range of housing needs. The London Plan (GLA, 2016) provides an indicative benchmark for specialist housing for older people. The benchmark for Tower Hamlets is 70 units a year, of which 45 units should be an affordable product.

**9.53** Examples of specialist housing include:

- a. Sheltered housing – commonly self-contained homes with limited on-site support (usually within use class C3)
- b. Residential care homes – commonly bedsit rooms with shared lounges and eating arrangements (within use class C2)
- c. Nursing homes – similar to residential care, but accommodating ill or frail elderly people, and staffed by qualified nursing staff (also within use class C2)
- d. Dual-registered care homes – residential care homes where nursing care is provided for those residents who need it (also within use class C2);
- e. extra-care homes – combinations of the above providing independent living alongside care and support, and sometimes also offering support for older people in the wider community
- f. staff accommodation ancillary to a relevant use.

**9.54** Development proposals will need to submit details of how they meet the requirements set out in Part 2 (a) to (d) and/or the need for specialist housing set out in Part 3 (a) to (d), as appropriate. Any net loss will be measured using units (for use class C3) and bedspaces (for use class C2), with reference to relevant council or other public sector strategies.

**9.55** New development is required to make use of best practice guidance (as set out below) to develop accommodation which is suitable for the specialist needs of the intended occupants.

**9.56** In addition, new development must demonstrate that it is accessible in terms of location and individual mobility needs. Close proximity to local services is considered to be a walkable distance of no more than 10 to 15 minutes. Where appropriate, the proposed scheme should provide necessary storage for mobility scooters. In addition, opportunities to integrate the development into the wider area should also be explored to encourage a sense of belonging (especially among people from different generations) as well as to protect against loneliness and isolation.

**9.57** Part 3 also ensures that specialist housing contributes to mixed and balanced communities. Older persons' housing will be required to be delivered across tenures in accordance with the latest Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment. It is expected that all specialist housing in use class C3 will provide affordable homes, in line with Policies S.H1 and D.H2.

**9.58** All proposals for specialist and supported housing will be referred to our adult health service to consider the approach to safeguarding and also ensure that a good quality service can be provided to vulnerable people.

### Policy links

- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel

### Evidence links

- Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)
- Design for Dementia (2015)
- Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy (2016-2021)
- Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)





**Policy D.H5****Gypsies and travellers accommodation**

1. Development of a site to meet the long-term needs of gypsies and travellers is required to:
  - a. be suitable for housing
  - b. be in an accessible and safe location
  - c. employ high quality design and be sympathetic to local character and design
  - d. maintain and enhance the quality of the environment, and
  - e. not be located in an area of high flood risk (flood zone 3).

**Explanation**

**9.59** In addition to safeguarding the gypsy and traveller site at Old Willow Close and securing any new pitches that arise as a result of the completion of the Elizabeth line at Old Willow Close, as outlined in Policy S.H1, Part 4(d), proposals which include new gypsy and traveller sites will be considered against the criteria set out above in line with government guidance<sup>34</sup>.

**9.60** This policy aims to ensure that new gypsy and traveller sites are well integrated into their surroundings and respect the interests of existing settled communities. Any new provision should be prioritised for permanent facilities, rather than transit sites, due to the local gypsy and traveller need.

**Policy links**

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy D.ES4: Flood risk

**Evidence links**

- Policy for Traveller Sites (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015)

<sup>34</sup> Policy for Traveller Sites (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015)

**Policy D.H6****Student housing**

1. Proposals involving new purpose-built student accommodation should be directed to locations which are within close proximity to the borough's higher education institutions or in highly accessible locations and must:
  - a. not compromise the supply of land for self-contained homes
  - b. have an undertaking in place to provide housing for students at one or more specific education institutions, or otherwise provide an element of affordable student accommodation
  - c. respect existing residential amenity, and
  - d. provide 5% of student rooms which are wheelchair accessible, including access to a wheelchair-accessible shower room for independent use.
2. The net loss of student accommodation will only be supported where:
  - a. it can be demonstrated that the accommodation is no longer needed because the needs of students can be better met elsewhere, or
  - b. adequate replacement housing will be provided which meets the criteria in Part 1 above.

**Explanation**

**9.61** This policy seeks to support the delivery of student accommodation in suitable and appropriate locations due to the positive impacts it brings to the local economy, our communities and the borough's higher education sector. However, the delivery of a significant amount of student housing may compromise our ability to deliver other priorities, including self-contained housing, employment and infrastructure provision. As such, the delivery of student accommodation needs to be managed in accordance with strategic needs and local priorities.

**9.62** In the context of this policy, student housing relates to private student accommodation, student accommodation with an undertaking with an institution and accommodation provided by an institution. Appropriate locations predominately consist of a dense urban grain where the introduction of student housing could potentially complement the existing mix of uses and the provision of local services, including public transport. Close proximity is defined as adjacent to the institution or within walkable distance of 10 to 15 minutes. Policy S.TR1 provides greater detail on accessible locations.

**9.63** Proposals involving the development of student housing must demonstrate that it will not involve the net loss of existing self-contained homes and/or will not involve land identified for self-contained housing through a current planning permission or through a site allocation set out in the borough's development plan.

**9.64** In order to meet the needs of students with physical disabilities, 5% of student rooms must be wheelchair accessible (capable of being independently accessed and used). To meet this requirement, rooms and bathrooms must meet the requirements outlined in Figure 30 and Figure 52 in the British Standard BS8300: Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment.

**9.65** Part 1(a) supports the delivery of affordable student housing in accordance with the London Plan (GLA, 2016). We will use the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016) to negotiate the proportion of affordable housing, its cost and its allocation to students (an indication of the level of rent and the proportion of affordable housing will be provided through the London Plan annual monitoring report). This suggests that the cost should be no more than 55% of average student income for a UK full-time student living in London away from home, and suggests that the proportion of affordable housing should be the maximum reasonable amount, subject to viability. Planning obligations will be used to secure the affordability and availability of the affordable accommodation for as long as the student housing use continues.

**9.66** Part 1(b) to (c) seek to ensure the suitability of the accommodation in terms of its relationship with the surrounding environment and in terms of living standards. Development will be required to demonstrate how it meets these criteria. There are concerns regarding an over-concentration of student housing in some areas which may have an impact on the amenity of existing residents. The issues relate to noise disturbance or the loss of shops and services that meet the needs of longer term residents. We will therefore assess proposals for student housing having regard to any existing concentrations and the wider housing mix in the area. Where the scale or concentration of student housing is likely to harm the amenity of the local area and undermine the balance of housing and service provision, we will seek a range of mitigation measures, such as management conditions and additional infrastructure provision.

**9.67** Part 2 relates to proposals involving the net loss of student accommodation. The loss of student accommodation should not create additional pressure on the existing housing stock and the supply of new housing, and thus it will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that it no longer serves a purpose or can be provided elsewhere.

### Policy links

- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel

### Evidence links

- Affordable Student Accommodation Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)
- Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016).
- London Plan Annual Monitoring Report (GLA)
- British Standard BS8300: Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment



**Policy D.H7****Housing with shared facilities (houses in multiple occupation)**

1. New houses in multiple occupation will be supported where they:
  - a. meet an identified need
  - b. do not result in the loss of existing larger housing suitable for family occupation
  - c. can be secured as a long-term addition to the supply of low cost housing, or otherwise provides an appropriate amount of affordable housing
  - d. are located in an area of high transport accessibility
  - e. do not give rise to any significant amenity impact(s) on the surrounding neighbourhood, and
  - f. comply with relevant standards and satisfy the housing space standards outlined in Policies D.H3 and D.DH8.
2. The loss or self-containment of good quality homes for multiple occupation will be resisted unless:
  - a. it can be demonstrated that the accommodation is incapable of meeting the relevant standards for houses in multiple occupation, or
  - b. adequate replacement housing with shared facilities will be provided that satisfies criteria (a) to (f) above.

**Explanation**

**9.68** Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) refer to residential properties that take the form of shared houses, flats and non-self-contained dwellings. Planning permission is required for a HMO where there are more than six unrelated individuals forming a household who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. This definition is different to that used by the mandatory licencing scheme. HMOs have traditionally provided lower cost housing, including for those under 35 years of age in receipt of the shared room rate housing benefit. However, there has been a recent growth in London of purpose-built, large-scale, higher quality HMOs charging commercial market rents<sup>35</sup>. This includes, for example, accommodation modelled on student housing but available for a wider range of occupants or accommodation described as 'co-living'.

**9.69** The Greater London Authority (GLA) household projections suggest there is an increasing demand for HMO-style accommodation in the borough, particularly among young people. The number of 'other type' households (which includes HMOs) headed by persons aged 16-34 is projected to rise from 12,295 in 2016 to 16,555 in 2031<sup>36</sup>. High quality, large-scale HMOs can help meet this need. This will need to be demonstrated with regards to the specific scheme and location (Part a). Applications should seek to address housing need, as outlined in Policies S.H1 (see paragraph 9.21) and D.H2. It is considered this is best delivered through a mixed tenure scheme which could meet a range of housing needs. In addition reflecting the changing role of HMO-style accommodation in the borough and the acute shortage of affordable housing, it is appropriate that all forms of market housing (including HMOs) contribute towards meeting the high affordable housing need.

<sup>35</sup> Making the most of build to rent (Future of London, 2017)

<sup>36</sup> Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)



**9.70** Part 1(a), (b) and (c) ensures development contributes towards maintaining mixed and balanced communities. Our affordable housing service – using the evidence from the latest strategic housing market assessment – will assess the proposed rent levels to determine whether the development would primarily provide housing with shared facilities for people with low incomes. Where it would not meet the housing needs of those on low incomes, developments will be required to meet the affordable housing requirements outlined in Policies S.H1 and D.H2. Affordable housing contributions will be sought from all residential developments (as per the GLA's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance).

**9.71** The high-density nature of HMO development means that they should be provided in sustainable locations and must demonstrate they will not create adverse amenity impacts to the immediate and/or surrounding residential area. In order to address this, HMOs should be found in locations which have suitable transport and which will not cause amenity impacts to the surrounding area. Where appropriate, we will seek a planning obligation to protect local amenity (e.g. by securing a management plan).

**9.72** HMO developments must provide high quality living space, in line with relevant standards as outlined in Policies D.H3 and D.DH8. Applicants should also ensure that HMOs satisfy the appropriate environmental health and fire safety standards.

**9.73** Part 2 of the policy seeks to protect existing HMOs where they are of a suitable standard.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel

### Evidence links

- Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)

## 10. Delivering economic growth

### Introduction

**10.1** Tower Hamlets plays a significant role in London's global economy. The west of the borough forms part of the Central Activities Zone (see Figure 10) which contains London's core functions and activities, such as government administration, culture and business. Canary Wharf, located to the north of the Isle of Dogs, contains some of the world's largest financial and professional service organisations.

**10.2** The borough has a proud history of entrepreneurialism amongst local people, with businesses ranging from small family companies, creatives, start-ups, light manufacturers and small-to-medium enterprises, through to multinational corporations. There has also been a growth in hi-tech and creative industries over the last few years, as well as businesses moving from more central parts of London to take advantage of lower rents. Employment space has, however, come under increasing development pressure and legislative changes have broadened the scope of permitted development without full planning applications. Industrial land in particular has been lost at a faster rate than originally planned, creating a shortage that could undermine the ability of the borough and the key international business locations of Canary Wharf and the City of London to function effectively. Alongside this, there has been a shift in the type of employment space that employers and start-ups require. This pressure has meant that it is not just availability but also affordability of employment space that has become an issue, thus threatening the business-focused dynamism of local people and the borough's industrial heritage.

**10.3** The total number of jobs in the borough is projected to rise from 285,600 in 2015 to 410,600 in 2031, an increase of 44% (125,000 jobs), by some way the highest growth figure in London<sup>37</sup>. This is based on previous growth trends being maintained into the future; between 2005 and 2015 there was a comparable jobs increase of 47%. In terms of projected jobs in office and industrial sectors, we have used forecast data from Experian Economics. This identifies a growth of 36,481 employment jobs in the borough over the plan period. Table 2 sets out these forecasts along with estimates of the net additional floorspace that would be required to support these jobs.

**10.4** The table demonstrate that there is sufficient supply of sites identified for future office floorspace. There is however a shortfall of industrial floorspace compared to demand as a result of significant losses of industrial land in the borough in recent years and the displacement of businesses into the borough from the City of London and other inner London boroughs where they have been forced out by higher rents and land values. As such, it is vital that existing provision is protected and that new floorspace is encouraged in appropriate locations to service the needs of industry as well as the needs of the City Fringe and Canary Wharf.

<sup>37</sup> <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/long-term-labour-market-projections>

**Table 2: Jobs and floorspace (sqm) forecasts: 2015-2030**

	Demand			Supply	Balance
		Net	Gross		
	Jobs	Floorspace			
Office	35,716	435,879	729,136	1,369,225	+640,089
Industrial	765	36,366	273,912	82,376	-191,536

**10.5** While the industrial projections cannot be met from identified sites in the development pipeline, potential additional capacity exists within designated employment locations through the intensification of existing provision. There are also numerous opportunities for new employment floorspace to be delivered through 'windfall' sites, generally through mixed-use developments across the borough and in the site allocations listed in Section 4.

**10.6** This chapter relates to employment uses within the 'B' use classes (business, general industrial and storage and distribution) and sui generis industrial functions. While other use classes create employment these are covered within other policy sections within the Local Plan.

**10.7** This section contains the following policies:

- Policy S.EMP1: Creating investment and jobs
- Policy D.EMP2: New employment space
- Policy D.EMP3: Loss of employment space
- Policy D.EMP4: Redevelopment within the borough's employment areas.



**Policy S.EMP1****Creating investment and jobs**

1. Development which supports, protects and enhances the role and function of the borough's designated employment locations (as defined on the Policies Map) and maximises the provision of employment floorspace to contribute towards the borough's target of creating 125,000 new jobs over the period to 2031 will be supported in line with the principles set out below.

**Designated employment locations**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Role and function</b>	<b>Location</b>
Primary Preferred Office Location (POL)	This predominantly consists of offices, and is most suitable for buildings with large floor-plates which can provide significant numbers of jobs. It is unsuitable for housing or any other non-strategic Central Activities Zone (CAZ) use which could undermine its strategic function and prevent the delivery of sufficient land for employment use.	Canary Wharf (as illustrated on the Policies Map)
Secondary Preferred Office Location (POL)	These contain, or could provide, significant office floorspace to support the role and function of the Primary POL and the City of London. Greater weight is given to office and other strategic CAZ uses as a first priority. Although residential uses can be accommodated, these should not exceed 25% of the floorspace provided.	These are illustrated on the Policies Map
Central Activities Zone (tertiary area)	This designation contains areas of the CAZ outside of the Primary and Secondary POLs. They are relatively peripheral compared to the primary and secondary cores but also provide significant existing employment floorspace and capacity to accommodate future growth. There are opportunities for significant provision of office and other strategic CAZ uses as part of employment-led or mixed-use schemes. Residential uses are supported as part of mixed use schemes although the proportion of residential floorspace should not exceed 50% of the total floorspace.	This is illustrated on the Policies Map



Designated employment locations		
Designation	Role and function	Location
Local Employment Locations (LEL)	These are areas of high accessibility that provide or could provide significant capacity for employment accommodation meeting secondary, local or specialist employment needs, and to support the needs of start-ups, small-to-medium enterprises, grow-on space and creative and digital industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Blackwall – which provides secondary large floorplate offices, smaller units suitable for small-to-medium enterprises and data centres which support the needs of Canary Wharf and the City of London.</li> <li>b. Cambridge Heath – which provides a range of office, industrial and studio workspaces meeting the needs of businesses serving a more local need, start-ups, small-to-medium enterprises and creative industries.</li> <li>c. Tower Gateway East – which provides a variety of units supporting both local need and the needs of businesses within surrounding POLs and the City of London.</li> <li>d. Whitechapel – which provides small office spaces meeting local needs alongside a bio-tech and life sciences sector, creative and knowledge-based industries and growing demand from an eastwards expansion of the City of London.</li> </ul> <p>These are illustrated on the Policies Map.</p>
Strategic Industrial Location (SIL)	This designation plays an important sub-regional industrial, warehousing and waste management role serving not just the borough but other parts of central London. Housing is not suitable in this location due to potential conflict with existing and future industrial uses.	Empson Street (as illustrated on the Policies Map). This should be safeguarded in accordance with London Plan policies.
Local Industrial Locations (LIL)	LILs provide important areas of light-manufacturing/ industry and warehousing to meet a more local need and provide local employment opportunities, as well as to support the needs of the global business centres of Canary Wharf and the City of London.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Blackwall Trading Estate</li> <li>b. Gillender Street</li> <li>c. Poplar Business Park</li> <li>d. The Highway</li> <li>e. Thomas Road</li> </ul> <p>These are illustrated on the Policies Map.</p>

Other locations	
Tower Hamlets Activity Areas and Major, District and Neighbourhood Centres	The Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, District Centres and larger Neighbourhood Centres also provide opportunities for purpose-built office buildings with ground-floor retail and leisure uses. The Activity Areas in particular have the potential to accommodate substantial employment growth to support the strategic role of the Primary and Secondary POLs and other parts of the CAZ. These are illustrated on the Policies Map.
Other employment sites	These are sites or units outside of the areas described above. Cumulatively, they provide significant floorspace and jobs across a variety of sectors.

2. Where residential floorspace thresholds set out in Part 1 are exceeded, applicants must robustly demonstrate why it is not viable to deliver the required CAZ strategic uses and that the supply of sufficient employment capacity to meet future need is not being compromised.
3. Proposals will be supported which provide opportunities to maximise and deliver investment and job creation in the borough through:
  - a. supporting and promoting the competitiveness, vibrancy and creativity of the Tower Hamlets economy
  - b. protecting the borough's global, national, regional and local economic roles in delivering jobs and supporting businesses
  - c. ensuring a range of job opportunities at all levels are provided throughout the borough, particularly within designated employment locations, the Central Activities Zone, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas and Major, District and Neighbourhood Centres, and
  - d. ensuring the borough's residents have access to education and skills that will enable them to benefit from local employment and enterprise opportunities.
4. Proposals will be supported which provide opportunities to promote the creation of a sustainable, diverse and balanced economy through:
  - a. ensuring availability of a range of workspaces and unit sizes, start-up space, co-working space and 'grow-on' space by protecting existing floorspace and encouraging the provision of new floorspace, and
  - b. working with affordable and shared workspace providers to bring forward affordable, flexible and shared workspace.

## Explanation

**10.8** This policy sets out our approach to employment provision in relation to the level and distribution of jobs across the borough over the period to 2031. This will help to ensure successful and sustainable local and sub-regional economies, promoting and facilitating a range of employment spaces to meet the needs of different types of occupiers across different locations (see Figure 10 and the Policies Map).

**10.9** We will work with applicants during the pre-application process to ensure that proposals are consistent with the needs and character of their locations, while addressing policies set out elsewhere within this section and the wider Local Plan.

**10.10** Additional office floorspace forms a substantial element of the borough's future employment projections. Canary Wharf and the City Fringe contain a high proportion of primary and large floorplate offices which form part of globally-significant employment clusters. As such, these areas need to be protected and supported to ensure the delivery of sufficient high quality employment land to meet borough-wide needs. This will be achieved through the designation of Preferred Office Locations (POLs)<sup>38</sup>.

**10.11** The Central Activities Zone (CAZ) and the north of the Isle of Dogs (including Canary Wharf) has been subdivided into three distinct areas<sup>39</sup>. Commercial core areas (Primary POL) are deemed to be unsuitable locations for housing or other uses which would undermine the strategic functions of the CAZ and the north of the Isle of Dogs<sup>40</sup>. Employment and defined strategic functions/uses must be given greater weight than residential (Secondary POL) or equal weight to residential use (tertiary areas within the CAZ).

**10.12** Part 1 of the policy identifies the borough's Primary POL which corresponds with the 'commercial core area' of the north of the Isle of Dogs. This area has a high concentration of significant office functions, with high levels of activity and accessibility to London and the wider region.

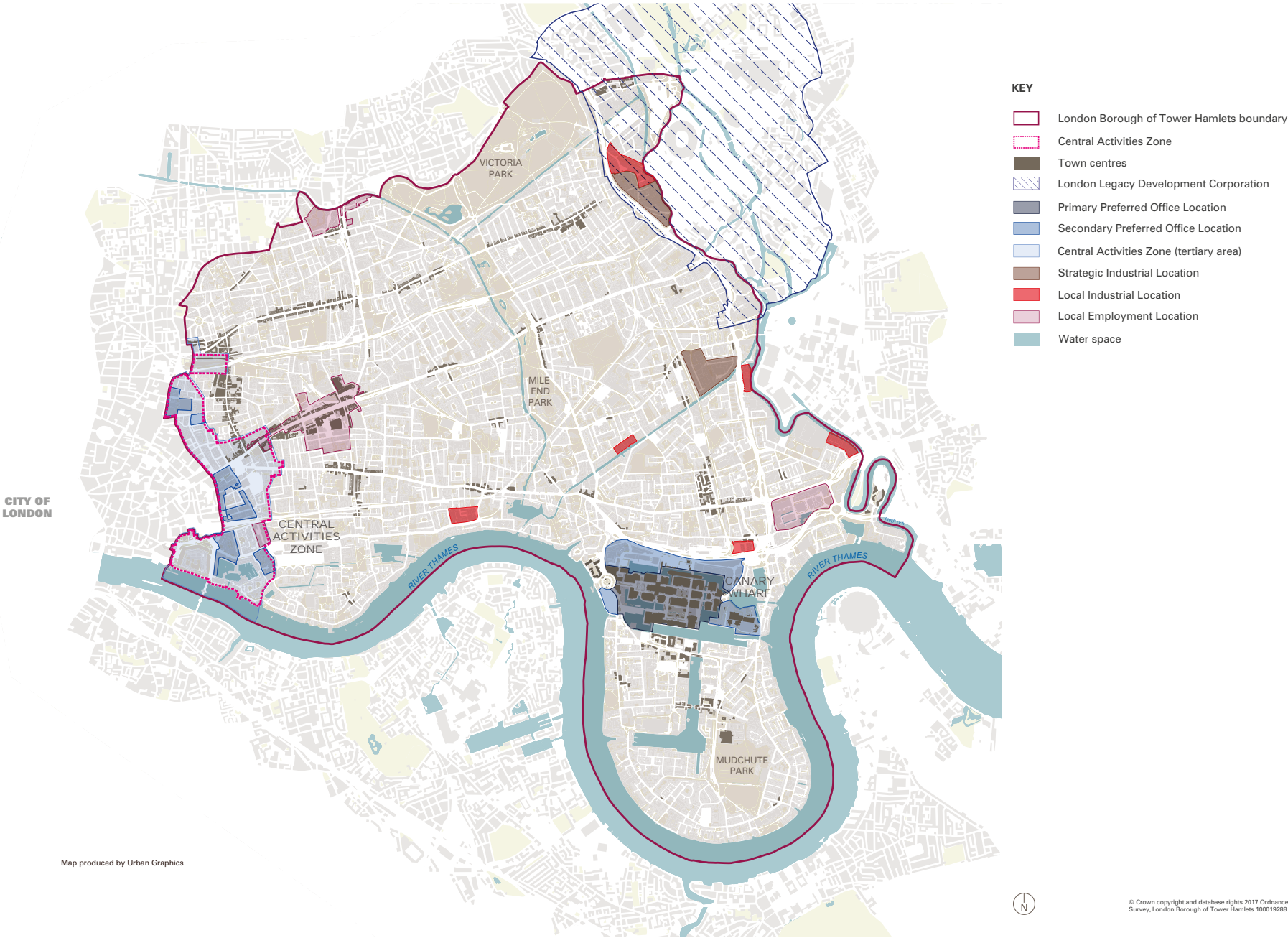
**10.13** The Secondary POL covers parts of the City Fringe and north of the Isle of Dogs. These areas are also key existing or potential employment locations with offices and other strategic functions as the dominant land use. However, in contrast to the Primary POL, residential uses will be acceptable so long as they do not undermine the supply of offices and other strategic uses. This approach seeks to ensure residential development does not prejudice the future intensification of employment floorspace or undermine the predominant employment function of these areas. This will help achieve a sensitive transition between the Primary POL and surrounding areas.

<sup>38</sup> Source: Preferred Office Location Boundary Review (2017).

<sup>39</sup> Further details are provided in the Central Activities Zone Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> These functions include: government institutions, internationally significant business headquarters, cultural, science and tourist facilities of national or international importance and centres of excellence in higher education as set out within the Central Activities Zone Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016).

Figure 10: Distribution of employment hubs and locations





**10.14** The remainder of the CAZ which is outside of the Secondary POL (the CAZ tertiary area) contains a more diverse range of uses and is more peripheral to the 'commercial core areas'. Within this zone, proposals should consist of or provide a significant quantum of employment floorspace or other strategic CAZ uses relative to the surrounding context of the site. Other uses which may include residential will be encouraged.

**10.15** The borough's Local Employment Locations (LELs) have relatively high public transport accessibility levels and support significant numbers of jobs but have unique individual characteristics. Applicants should aim to ensure that new employment space that is brought forward contributes to and meets the demands of each area. In particular within the Whitechapel LEL. New development within LELs will be expected to provide high-quality flexible workspace designed to meet the needs of emerging and growing sectors (e.g. research and development) as well as other small-to-medium enterprises and creative businesses.

**10.16** Tower Hamlets has a relatively limited supply of industrial land and floorspace, despite high levels of market demand, in the face of increasing competition from other land uses, such as housing. There are clusters of existing industrial activity predominantly in the north east of the borough along key transport routes. These sites need to be protected to support the long term needs of the borough and the role of the City of London and Canary Wharf as global economic hubs (some services need to be in close proximity to the end user and immediately available). This will be achieved through the designation of the Strategic Industrial Location (Empson Street) and Local Industrial Locations (see Part 1). As well as retaining existing designations, new LILs have been identified at Blackwall Trading Estate and Thomas Road (as shown on the Policies Map) to secure the long term provision of industrial space.

**10.17** Part 1 also highlights that town centres are locations in which non-retail employment uses will be supported, subject to the provision of active frontages at ground floor level. This is because town centres are located throughout the borough and are able to offer smaller spaces which meet the needs of businesses serving the local community. Within the Tower Hamlets Activity Areas and some District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres (as shown on the Policies Map), purpose-built office buildings can be supported where they are of a nature and scale which corresponds with their surroundings. Within the Primary and Secondary Frontages, employment spaces should be located on upper floors so as not to undermine the retail and leisure functions of those areas.

**10.18** Proposals outside of designated employment locations and the town centre hierarchy (see Part 1) will be supported where they demonstrate that there is a need and demand, with further detail set out in Policy D.EMP2.

**10.19** Part 2 sets out the information required to support proposals that do not meet the employment thresholds under Part 1. Further guidance on how applicants can assess schemes in relation to employment targets is set out within our monitoring and delivery framework (see Table 6 in Section 5).

**10.20** Part 3 describes how development should contribute to meeting our long term objectives to support investment and job creation in the borough. Tower Hamlets has a diverse economy ranging from the globally-significant financial centre of Canary Wharf and the associated services required to support it (and the neighbouring City of London) to creative and cultural industries, industrial uses, secondary offices and businesses, meeting a very local need. Employment activities are distributed across the borough with specific locations supporting clusters of particular businesses or unit types. Development that contributes to meeting these objectives will be welcomed.

**10.21** Part 4 supports the provision of a range of workspaces including affordable workspace, emphasising that spaces suitable for small-and-medium enterprises and microbusinesses are a vital element of the overall mix<sup>41</sup>. This has the dual benefit of supporting new and emerging economic sectors and providing additional space for small-and-medium enterprises and micro-businesses that provide employment for a significant proportion of the borough's population. Development incorporating a range of unit types and sizes will be encouraged, including where these are clustered within a single building and provide shared and networking facilities. Developments should address the most up-to-date requirements as part of pre-application discussions. We will particularly welcome proposals which demonstrate co-operation with recognised workspace providers, for which we hold an approved list. Opportunities for the long-term management of new units by a company specialising in flexible and affordable workspace provision should be fully explored as part of the planning application process and may be secured for the long term through planning obligations.

### Policy links

- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Employment Land Review (2016)
- Central Activities Zone Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)

<sup>41</sup> Tower Hamlets Growth Sectors and SME Workspace Study (2016)

## Policy D.EMP2

### New employment space

1. New or intensified employment floorspace will be supported within designated employment locations, the Tower Hamlets Activity Areas and identified site allocations.
2. Outside of the locations cited in Part 1, new employment space will be directed to town centres and accessible locations along major transport routes.
3. New employment space will be supported at other locations to those specified in Parts 1 and 2 above if:
  - a. it can be demonstrated that there is a reasonable prospect of occupancy
  - b. the employment use would contribute towards integrated place making
  - c. the area forms part of a cluster of similar employment uses, or
  - d. the employment space is being provided as part of a temporary use.
4. Within major commercial and mixed-use development schemes, at least 10% of new employment floorspace should be provided as affordable workspace.
5. New employment space must be completed to a standard which meets the needs of potential end users.
6. Development of employment and residential use in the same self-contained unit (i.e. live-work and work-live) will not be supported.

## Explanation

**10.22** Part 1 of the policy encourages the provision of additional employment floorspace to meet demand and the needs of different business types. Where new provision is proposed, it must be located in the most viable locations to support the role and function of the borough's designated employment locations and to proactively avoid long-term vacancy or subsequent conversion to other uses. This policy seeks to direct new provision to the designated employment locations, activity areas and site allocations which include employment space as a first priority, then to locations of highest activity, accessibility and visibility (see Part 2) and finally to other locations (see Part 3) where it meets strict criteria.

**10.23** For the purposes of this policy, major routes are considered to include the borough's A roads and other roads along the strategic highway network where there is a high level of accessibility, visibility and footfall.

**10.24** Development outside of the areas referenced in Parts 1 and 2 will be expected to demonstrate through a detailed marketing strategy that the demand within the relevant part of the borough has been assessed and that anticipated asking rents/purchase price for the new unit(s) would be appropriate to the location (according to indicative figures) or that an occupier for the space has been secured. Temporary employment units can activate spaces that would otherwise remain redundant in advance of more permanent development. Temporary uses would be expected to only remain in place for a defined period of time, or until the site comes forward for development to meet its full potential or allocated use(s).

**10.25** Part 4 seeks to ensure that major development (i.e. which comprises at least 1,000 square metres of gross commercial floorspace relating to B1, B2 and B8 uses) is flexibly designed to provide at least 10% of affordable workspace to meet the needs of more local businesses as well as start-ups. To address this policy, applicants should let the workspace at an affordable tenancy rate, at least 10% below

the indicative market rate for the relevant location, for a period of not less than ten years. The floorspace and discount thresholds above are treated as minimum targets and anything above will be subject to viability (in line with Policy D.SG5). Applicants should work with our enterprise team and recognised affordable workspace providers (for which we hold an approved list) to determine the nature of the affordable workspace provision on a case by case basis. Applicants may wish to manage the space either themselves or in association with a provider not included on an approved list, provided we can agree on these terms. In all cases, the applicant will be required to provide details of management arrangements as part of the planning application.

**10.26** In exceptional cases, where an occupier requires exclusive use of a single office property, such as a global headquarters building, we may consider implementing the development with alternative affordable workspace provision. Any alternative provision should in the first instance be provided as part of the same development scheme or secondly within the same sub area (as defined in Policy S.SG1). But where this is not possible, nor in our view desirable, then provision elsewhere in the borough may be considered. Any alternative provision should be of equivalent value which may translate into greater floorspace than the original proposal if an alternative location is considered.

**10.27** Part 5 aims to prevent long-term vacancy caused by high fit-out costs and lack of supporting infrastructure deterring interest from potential tenants. For example, development should provide sufficient cycle spaces, appropriate levels of natural light and a range of shared services and facilities appropriate to the size and scale of the unit (such as communal breakout spaces, kitchen areas, showers and childcare facilities) which do not detract from the visual appearance of the development or its surroundings. In the case of office developments high-speed broadband connectivity should be provided to serve the end-user. Industrial units would be expected to provide double-height units with appropriate access and good standards of internal sound insulation to minimise conflict with surrounding uses.

**10.28** Applications to convert live-work units into purely residential units and certificates of lawful development (where the units have not been used for employment purposes) demonstrate a lack of need to secure live-work or work-live within the same self-contained unit. In such cases, applications will not be supported (see Part 6). Instead, we would welcome proposals that offer a range of uses (including employment and housing) as separate units within the same site.

### Policy links

- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Growth Sectors and SME Workspace Study (2016)
- Tower Hamlets Employment Land Review (2016)



## Policy D.EMP3

### Loss of employment space

1. Development resulting in the net loss of employment floorspace within Preferred Office Locations, Local Industrial Locations and the Strategic Industrial Location will not be supported.
2. Development should not result in the net loss of viable employment floorspace outside of the designated employment locations cited in Part 1 above or Local Employment Locations (LELs), except where they:
  - a. provide evidence of active marketing over a continuous period of at least 24 months at a reasonable market rent which accords with indicative figures, or
  - b. provide robust demonstration that the site is genuinely unsuitable for continued employment use due to its condition; reasonable options for restoring the site to employment use are unviable; and that the benefits of alternative use would outweigh the benefits of employment use.
3. Proposals involving the loss or reduction of employment floorspace within LELs must also demonstrate that alternative employment uses would not be viable and the loss of employment floorspace would not compromise the operation and viability of the wider LEL.



## Explanation

**10.29** This policy describes the criteria that will be used to address the potential loss of employment space within the borough in line with the vision and objectives of the plan (see Section 2). To ensure the supply of employment land to meet identified demand is maintained, proposals which result in the loss of employment floorspace within the POLs, SILs and LILs (as shown on the Policies Map and Figure 10) will not be supported. Consequently, we will be seeking to implement an Article 4 direction removing permitted development rights from offices to residential uses covering designated employment areas and other key locations. Within the Primary and Secondary POLs, the expectation is that development proposals are employment-led in line with the policies and principles set out in Policy S.EMP1. Proposals involving the loss of industrial land that is located outside the SIL or LILs will be considered on a site-by-site basis in accordance with Part 2 above.

**10.30** Part 2 requires evidence covering a continuous period of at least 24 months in order to prevent unnecessary loss of existing employment space which would put pressure on the ability of the borough to meet projected need. Applicants should outline where and how marketing has been undertaken, with details also provided to demonstrate that the asking rent has been at a realistic rate for the type, size and condition of the property/unit. Such information should accord with our indicative guidance which is regularly updated. It would be expected that the property or site has been actively marketed, including appearing on local and national commercial property websites and visible display boards being displayed at the site. Applicants should provide us with a report detailing the level of interest in the property over the 24-month period, details of any viewings and offers, and details of why any interest had not been taken forward.

**10.31** It is recognised that, in some cases, requiring 24 months marketing evidence may be counterproductive to enhancing local character if the condition of the property is such that attempting to let it would be unrealistic. In such cases, the applicant should submit a detailed report on the history and condition of the property to robustly justify why marketing evidence should not be required and that reprovided employment space as part of redevelopment would not be viable. It should be demonstrated that the proposed development would not prejudice wider land-use objectives or the delivery of site allocations, and that reverse-sensitivity issues would not arise through conflict with surrounding existing uses, particularly where it lies within a cluster of other employment uses. The report should also demonstrate that the benefits of an alternative use would outweigh the benefits of the employment use to meet other local plan objectives, such as the need for complementary town centre uses or to maintain active frontages within town centres.

**10.32** Due to the mixed employment nature of the LELs, applicants should prove that the site or unit is unsuited to continued employment use in any form (e.g. a B1 office use could not be used for light manufacturing or research and development).

### Policy links

- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Employment Land Review (2016)
- Tower Hamlets Growth Sectors and SME Workspace Study (2016)

**Policy D.EMP4****Redevelopment within designated employment locations**

1. Within the Primary Preferred Office Location (POL), redevelopment should result in an improvement and/or increase of office floorspace. Redevelopment to include residential uses will not be supported.
2. Redevelopment within the Secondary POL must be employment-led and deliver the maximum viable level of office floorspace, or other non-residential strategic functions within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ). Where residential uses are proposed these should not exceed the proportion set out in Policy S.EMP1.
3. Redevelopment within the CAZ (tertiary area) should be employment-led or mixed-use to include office or other non-residential floorspace that supports the strategic function of the CAZ. Residential uses are supported as part of mixed use schemes although the proportion of residential floorspace should meet the requirements set out in Policy S.EMP1.
4. The redevelopment of Local Employment Locations (LELs) to include non-employment uses will only be supported if the existing level of employment floorspace is re-provided on-site and where it:
  - a. is compatible with other uses proposed at the site
  - b. provides separate access and servicing for commercial uses and residential uses
  - c. provides a range of high-quality flexible workspaces designed to meet the needs of the growing biotech cluster, research and development space, flexible workshop space and units to meet the needs of other small-to-medium enterprises and creative businesses within the Whitechapel LEL
  - d. provides a range of units to meet the needs of small-to-medium enterprises and capable of supporting B8 uses, such as data storage, within the Blackwall LEL
  - e. provides a range of units including ground-floor units capable of accommodating 'industrial retail' within the Tower Gateway East LEL, and
  - f. provides a range of units including industrial floorspace, small-to-medium enterprise space or studios to meet the needs of creative industries within the Cambridge Heath LEL.
5. The redevelopment of Local Industrial Locations (LILs) to include non-employment uses will only be supported if the existing industrial floorspace is re-provided on-site and where:
  - a. the proposed non-employment use is compatible with existing industrial uses at the site
  - b. the proposed non-employment use does not jeopardise the function and viability of the LIL
  - c. provides separate access and servicing for commercial uses and residential uses, and
  - d. a range of high quality flexible working spaces are provided, meeting the needs of small-to-medium enterprises.
6. Development which is likely to adversely impact or displace an existing business must find a suitable replacement accommodation within the borough unless it can be shown that the needs of the business are better met elsewhere.

## Explanation

**10.33** Part 1 of the policy reiterates that residential uses are not appropriate within the Primary POL, in accordance with the Central Activities Zone Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Primary POL has the capacity to provide significant additional office floorspace and, as such, proposals which intensify existing sites or provide new office developments will be welcomed.

**10.34** Parts 2 and 3 seek to strike an appropriate balance between offices, CAZ strategic uses and housing to meet future growth and the place-making objectives of mixed-use development. Any redevelopment proposals within the Secondary POL and CAZ (tertiary area) should meet the requirements set out in Parts 1 and 2 of Policy S.EMP1.

**10.35** Part 4 provides guidance as to the types of spaces that are appropriate within each LEL to maintain their function and support their individual characteristics, and should be applied on a case-by-case basis considering other proposals in the area to ensure that a mix of appropriate unit types are provided across the areas as a whole.

**10.36** It is accepted that there are opportunities to redevelop or intensify some LILs and LELs and that in some cases the introduction of residential uses may be appropriate. Parts 4 and 5 of the policy seek to strike an appropriate balance between employment and other uses (particularly housing) to ensure that the employment function of LELs and LILs is maintained. New or re-provided industrial employment units should be completed to a standard that meets the needs of industrial users (e.g. a ground floor location with appropriate unit heights and direct vehicle access). The industrial uses should be the primary consideration early in the design phase.

**10.37** Where development is proposed within a LIL, appropriate justification should be provided to demonstrate that conflict between current and future industrial uses at the site would be avoided and that non-industrial uses are compatible with the function of the site in line with the criteria set out in Part 1. This could include appropriate sound-proofing and/or implementing separate access and servicing.

**10.38** Part 6 encourages the retention of employers and jobs in the borough. However, it is recognised that in some cases it may be beneficial for the business itself to move to another location. This part of the policy will therefore be applied flexibly on a case-by-case basis, but is applicable to all types of application that may result in business displacement and not exclusively within designated employment locations. To satisfy this policy, we will require information about how the existing business which would be displaced as a result of development would be accommodated elsewhere in the borough. If the business is to be located in an out-of-borough location, it would be necessary to demonstrate that there is no disadvantage to existing employees in terms of access; the quality and quantity of such facilities will be improved; and that a suitable site within the borough could not be found.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Employment Land Review (2016)
- Central Activities Zone Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)

# 11. Revitalising our town centres

## Introduction

**11.1** Town centres form an important part of the borough's distinct identity and character, acting as anchors for local neighbourhoods with a mix of uses and activities that draw our diverse communities together. The nature of our town centres continue to change and evolve – they are increasingly becoming hubs for leisure, social and community activities, not just for shopping. They also provide significant opportunities for employment and housing, particularly on upper floors. Additionally, across the borough, there are other areas of commercial, leisure and retail activity (including individual stand-alone units) which have a role in supporting the borough's needs.

**11.2** These policies seek to ensure that our town centres remain vibrant and sustainable while continuing to meet the needs of the people that use them. They also underpin our strategic mission as set out in the Tower Hamlets Town Centre Strategy 2017 to 2022 to 'create places that are at the heart of the community, celebrate local heritage and improve health and well-being' and to 'improve the attractiveness, appeal and ease of use to make each of our town centres more in tune with the shopping and leisure needs of local residents and other visiting consumers'<sup>42</sup>.

**11.3** This section contains the following policies.

- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres
- Policy D.TC2: Retail in our town centres
- Policy D.TC3: Retail outside our town centres
- Policy D.TC4: Financial and professional services
- Policy D.TC5: Food, drink, entertainment and the night-time economy
- Policy D.TC6: Short-stay accommodation
- Policy D.TC7: Markets.



<sup>42</sup> Tower Hamlets Town Centre Strategy 2017 to 2022



**Policy S.TC1****Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres**

1. Development is required to support the role and function of the borough's town centre hierarchy and the provision of town centre uses in line with the principles set out below.

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Functions / roles</b>
Central Activities Zone	Refer to the Policies Map	a. Apply the London Plan's approach to development within the Central Activities Zone.
Major Centre	Canary Wharf	a. Provide a high proportion of comparison retail compared to convenience along with leisure and civic uses. b. Continue to support its role as a key global employment centre. c. Improve local accessibility to Canary Wharf and its strategic transport interchange, and legibility and way-finding across the area.
Tower Hamlets Activity Areas	Refer to the Policies Map	a. Provide areas of transition between the scale, activity and character of the Central Activities Zone and Canary Wharf Major Centre and their surrounding areas. b. Support a mix of uses which make a positive contribution to health and well-being. c. Promote active uses at ground floor level.
District Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bethnal Green Road</li> <li>● Brick Lane</li> <li>● Chrisp Street</li> <li>● Crossharbour</li> <li>● Roman Road East</li> <li>● Roman Road West</li> <li>● Watney Market</li> <li>● Whitechapel</li> </ul>	a. Promote as vibrant hubs containing a wide range of shops, services and employment. b. Direct a new civic centre for the borough to Whitechapel District Centre.

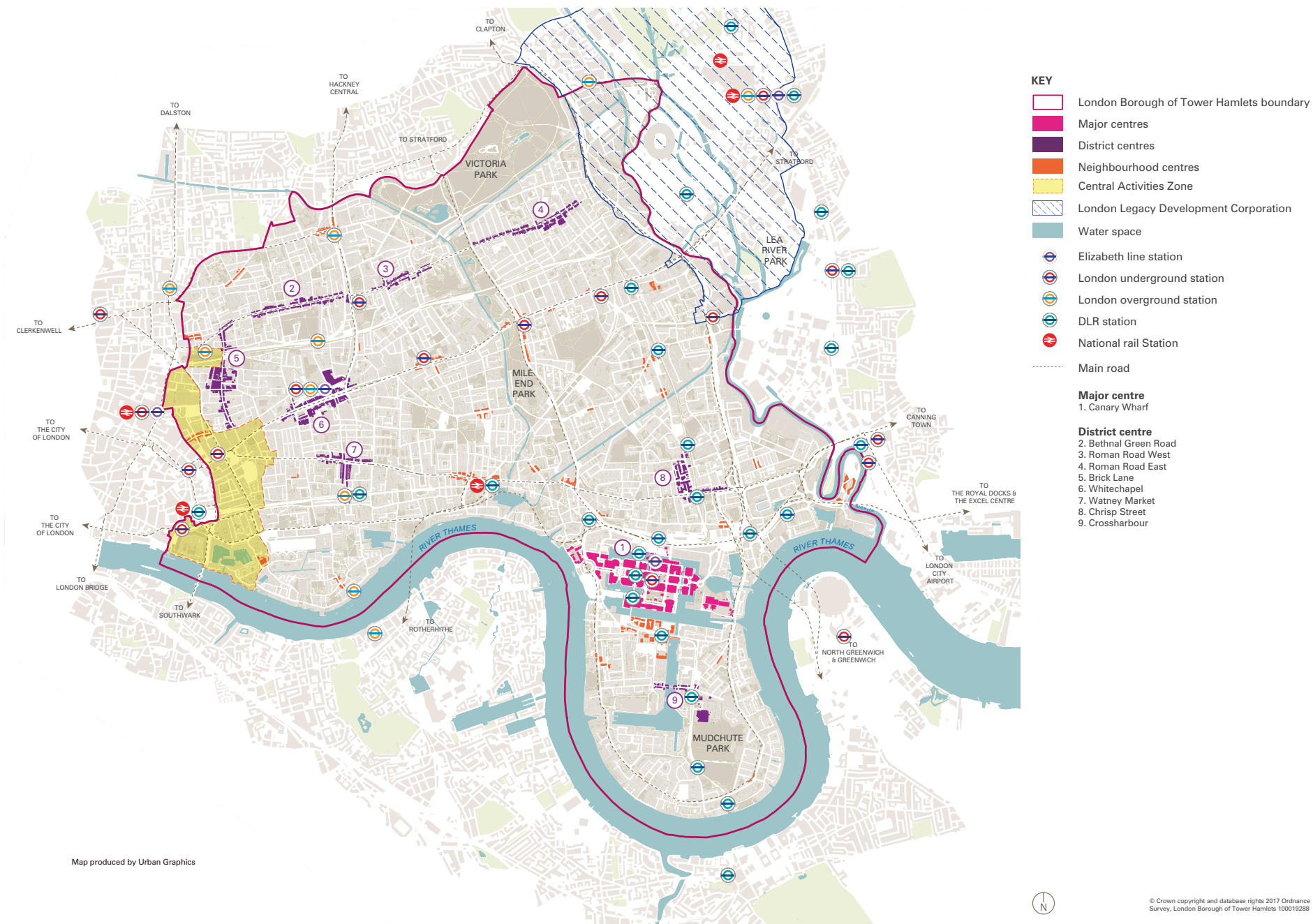
Tier	Location	Functions / roles
Neighbourhood Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aberfeldy Street</li> <li>● Barkantine Estate</li> <li>● Ben Jonson Road</li> <li>● Burdett Road South</li> <li>● Cambridge Heath</li> <li>● Columbia Road</li> <li>● Devons Road</li> <li>● Limehouse</li> <li>● London City Island</li> <li>● Mile End</li> <li>● Poplar High Street</li> <li>● Redchurch Street</li> <li>● Salmon Lane</li> <li>● South Quay</li> <li>● Stroudley Walk</li> <li>● Stepney Green</li> <li>● Thomas More</li> <li>● Wapping Lane</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide a range of shops and services to meet the needs of their local catchments.</li> <li>b. Support the specialist functions that exist within Redchurch Street and Columbia Road Neighbourhood Centres to continue providing vibrant shopping and leisure destinations which attract visitors to the borough.</li> <li>c. Ensure development is appropriate to the nature and scale of each individual centre.</li> </ul>
Neighbourhood Parades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bow Road</li> <li>● Burslem Street</li> <li>● Cambridge Heath Road</li> <li>● Caspian Wharf</li> <li>● Castalia Square</li> <li>● Cleveland Way</li> <li>● Manchester Road</li> <li>● Mile End Road</li> <li>● Old Ford Road</li> <li>● St Leonards Street</li> <li>● St Pauls Way</li> <li>● Westferry Road</li> <li>● West India Dock Road/ Pennyfields</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure that Neighbourhood Parades meet the needs of their local catchments and complement the role of other centres further up the hierarchy.</li> </ul>

2. New development within the Central Activities Zone, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas and Major, District and Neighbourhood Centres will be expected to support the delivery of new retail and leisure floorspace to meet identified needs.
3. New development must contribute positively to the function, vitality and viability of the Major Centre, District Centres and the Columbia Road and Redchurch Street Neighbourhood Centres. New development within other Neighbourhood Centres and Neighbourhood Parades must ensure sufficient provision of local shops and services to meet the day-to-day needs of local communities. The scale and type of development within the town centres hierarchy should reflect the character, scale and role of each centre through:
  - a. ensuring town centres are accessible, active, well-used and safe during the day and night
  - b. encouraging evening and night time economy uses that contribute to inclusiveness, economic vitality and viability and complement existing activities, where appropriate
  - c. promoting mixed-use and multi-purpose town centres (which include new residential uses where appropriate) with a mix of unit sizes and types to assist in the creation of vibrant centres that offer a diversity of choice, and meet the needs of local communities
  - d. supporting multifunctional, diverse and inclusive leisure and cultural venues and promoting associated uses
  - e. promoting and focusing markets in town centres and recognising their role in adding variety, promoting local enterprise and contributing to local character, and
  - f. supporting temporary and community uses where they help to activate and revitalise vacant town centre units and sites.

## Explanation

**11.4** This policy defines the network of centres across the borough (as illustrated on Figure 11) and describes the role and function of each centre and how they will continue to serve the needs of the borough and the wider area. The boundaries of these centres are shown on the Policies Map.

Figure 11: Town centre hierarchy



Map produced by Urban Graphics



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**11.5** Development within these centres will need to demonstrate how it accords with policies and guidance within the hierarchy as appropriate.

**11.6** The western part of the borough (as shown on Figures 5 and 11) lies within the Central Activities Zone. The Central Activities Zone is the geographical, economic and administrative heart of London, one of the world's most important financial and business centres, and contains the major employment, leisure and retail designations within London.

**11.7** All development proposals within this zone should primarily refer to the relevant policies set out in the London Plan and the Central Activities Zone Supplementary Planning Guidance.

**11.8** Major Centres generally contain over 50,000 square metres of retail and leisure floorspace and serve a borough-wide catchment area<sup>43</sup>. Development within the Major Centre of Canary Wharf would be expected to demonstrate that it contributes to the continuing growth of Canary Wharf and supports its role as an important centre for international business and finance within the Primary and Secondary Preferred Office Locations, as well as its emerging residential neighbourhood at Wood Wharf.

**11.9** Canary Wharf is already fulfilling the role of a metropolitan centre because it serves a wide catchment area, extending over several boroughs and into parts of the wider south east region. It contains over 100,000 square metres of retail, leisure and service floorspace with a significant proportion of high-order comparison goods relative to convenience goods as well as significant employment, service and leisure functions. This policy sets guidelines to help facilitate and support the re-designation of Canary Wharf as a Metropolitan Centre.

**11.10** The Tower Hamlets Activity Areas (as shown on the Policies Map) are specific areas bordering the Central Activities Zone and the Major Centre of Canary Wharf where the scale, continuity and intensity of town centre activity and land use is different to that found across the rest of the borough. Within the Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the proposals will enhance movement and connectivity to and through the designation, in particular improving links between Canary Wharf and surrounding areas to the north and south.

**11.11** Where the proposed site is within a Tower Hamlets Activity Area but outside of a Major, District or Neighbourhood Centre boundary, applications should include assessments of the mix of uses within a reasonable surrounding radius, outlining how the proposed use would contribute to and support the area's function to avoid over-concentrations of uses.

**11.12** District Centres (as shown on the Policies Map) generally meet more local needs, with catchments of around 800 metres and provision of convenience goods and services. Typically, they contain around 10,000-50,000 square metres of retail, leisure and service floorspace, and often have specialist functions. They have high levels of accessibility. They are also generally suitable locations for housing and employment.

**11.13** While Whitechapel currently has the status of a District Centre, the opening of the Elizabeth line and the emergence of a nationally important high-tech and bio-science cluster means it has the potential to be re-designated as a Major Centre before the end of the plan period. Such growth in Whitechapel to enable re-designation would include delivery of a new civic centre, additional employment and retail space and public realm improvements, with a relatively high proportion of comparison goods relative to convenience goods. Each year, we will monitor the development of the Canary Wharf and Whitechapel town centres over the course of the plan period to provide evidence to inform future reviews of the London Plan.

<sup>43</sup> The Central Activities Zone, Major Centres and District Centres are defined in the London Plan (GLA, 2016)

**11.14** Neighbourhood Centres (as shown on the Policies Map) contain clusters of retail and services to meet the needs of a more local catchment and typically contain at least sixteen units. Units are predominantly small-in-scale, with convenience supermarkets of around 500 square metres tending to be the largest occupants. Larger neighbourhood centres may also have particular specialist functions, and can be appropriate for some leisure and night-time economy uses. Three new neighbourhood centres have been identified at the following locations: Burdett Road South, London City Island and South Quay, whose designation reflects existing mixed-use activity and/or responds to recent developments and anticipated population growth. In particular, the designation of South Quay reflects the aspiration within the South Quay Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document to create a 'high street' environment along Marsh Wall, with an enhanced convenience offer and other local services to meet the immediate needs of residents. Such provision would complement rather than compete with the adjacent major centre at Canary Wharf.

**11.15** Columbia Road and Redchurch Street have individual characteristics in comparison to other neighbourhood centres that have emerged in recent years, with a growth in specialist retail along with some leisure provision. As such, development proposals within those designations will be subject to additional requirements in comparison to other neighbourhood centres and these are set out in subsequent policies to help maintain their uniqueness and appeal.

**11.16** Table 3 provides a breakdown of the retail floorspace capacity requirements across Major, District and Neighbourhood Centres during the plan period.

**Table 3: Proportion of new retail floorspace required to 2031**

Type of centre	Name	Amount of convenience floorspace (square metres) <sup>44</sup>	Amount of comparison floorspace (square metres) <sup>45</sup>
Major Centre	Canary Wharf	1,119	No capacity
District Centre	Bethnal Green	919	1,868
	Brick Lane	54	63
	Chrisp Street	381	1,077
	Crossharbour	504	No capacity
	Roman Road East	565	1,523
	Roman Road West	48	No capacity
	Watney Market	471	389
	Whitechapel	2,262	3,105
Neighbourhood Centres	All	2,033	2,066
<b>Borough-wide capacity</b>		<b>7,941</b>	<b>No capacity</b>

<sup>44</sup> Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016)

<sup>45</sup> Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016). Please note: Where identified that there is 'no capacity', this represents a negative retail capacity figure as a result of committed development.

**11.17** The level of need for retail floorspace set out in Table 3 is based on a constant market share approach over the plan period. It takes into account the impact of committed development, which is why some town centres do not have any floorspace capacity in the comparison retail sector as a result of the growth potential in these areas, particularly in Canary Wharf.

**11.18** These figures should not, however, represent a ceiling to new development. New floorspace and investment may enhance the profile of a town centre, helping to claw back expenditure, and increase market share and trade retention. Furthermore, there is still no certainty that committed development will come forward as planned in the short term, highlighting the importance of ensuring these figures are kept under review throughout the plan period.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy S.EMP1: Creating investment and jobs
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy D.CF3: New and enhanced community facilities

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016)
- Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)



**Policy D.TC2****Protecting retail in our town centres**

1. Within the Primary Frontages of the District Centres and within the boundaries of Columbia Road and Redchurch Street Neighbourhood Centres, as shown on the Policies Map, development should:
  - a. contribute to achieving a minimum of 60% of ground floor units as A1 (retail) use, and
  - b. contribute to the activity and vitality of the town centre by offering space to meet and relax, subject to A1 (retail) units not falling below the threshold set out above.
2. Development will not be supported where it would have a negative or potentially negative impact on the vitality and viability of Primary Frontages and Columbia Road and Redchurch Street Neighbourhood Centres as well as the health and well-being of local people.
3. Within the Secondary Frontages, development should:
  - a. contribute to achieving a minimum of 40% of ground floor units as A1 (retail) use, and
  - b. support a broad range of non-retail commercial and community uses which support the overall function of the town centre.
4. Outside of the Primary and Secondary Frontages within the District Centres, uses that do not require high levels of footfall (e.g. offices) and supporting town centre functions will be supported alongside retail uses.
5. Within Neighbourhood Centres (except Columbia Road and Redchurch Street) and Neighbourhood Parades, the proportion of units within A1 retail use should not fall below 40% of all units within the designated centre. New development should also be appropriate to the nature and scale of the individual Neighbourhood Centre/Parade.
6. Where the loss of A1 retail units is proposed that results in the overall level of A1 units falling below the proportions set out within parts 1, 3 and 5, it must be demonstrated that the shop has been vacant for a period of more than 12 months and robust evidence of efforts made to market the shop over that period at an appropriate rent (providing three comparable shop unit rents within the town centre) is provided.
7. Where a reduction of A1 retail floorspace is proposed within Major, District and Neighbourhood Centres, development must demonstrate that:
  - a. where there is sub-division of a large unit, the new units are of a size and scale conducive to supporting the role and function of their surroundings
  - b. within Primary Frontages and the boundaries of Columbia Road and Redchurch Street Neighbourhood Centres, any loss of floorspace is of a scale that will not materially alter the nature of the unit, its future viability and the function of the host shopping area, and
  - c. outside of Primary Frontages and the boundaries of Columbia Road and Redchurch Street Neighbourhood Centres, robust evidence is provided demonstrating the existing level of floorspace genuinely cannot be maintained and that appropriate height, width and depth of floorspace would remain for town centre uses.



## Explanation

**11.19** This policy identifies a series of Primary and Secondary Frontages within the District Centres (as shown on the Policies Map). Primary Frontages include a high proportion of retail uses, while Secondary Frontages provide opportunities for a greater diversity of uses to support the vitality and viability of the town centres.

**11.20** Where comprehensive redevelopment alters the layout of existing Major, District or Neighbourhood centres, proposals to change the use of a retail unit within the redeveloped town centre will be assessed based on the character and mix of uses of the surroundings within the redeveloped site.

**11.21** Development will be expected to contribute towards achieving a minimum of 60% of units as A1 retail use within the Primary Frontages and 40% of units as A1 retail use within the Secondary Frontages. Due to their unique nature and characteristics, the minimum 60% figure should also be applied to Columbia Road and Redchurch Street Neighbourhood Centres to promote and maintain the specialist function of those areas. This will ensure that retail remains the dominant use within these areas and core function of the town centre to reinforce its vitality, viability and attractiveness. The Primary Frontages (see Part 1) will have the highest levels of activity and footfall. As such, it is also appropriate to locate uses to these areas which enhance the character and attractiveness of the town centre as a place to visit, such as cafés, restaurants and drinking establishments. Other uses would be appropriate on upper floors within the primary frontages, such as offices, gyms or residential uses. However, access to upper levels must be designed to promote street-level activity and not undermine the viability of ground-level units.

**11.22** Within the Secondary Frontages, a wider mix of uses (e.g. financial and professional services, community and leisure facilities) which contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre will be supported. On this basis, a lower minimum retail threshold will be appropriate. However, it would not be appropriate to allow the clustering of non-retail uses where it would have negative impacts on the health and well-being of the town centre within these or any other locations.

**11.23** Undesignated frontages are areas within the District Centres (see Part 4) that contribute to the overall offer of the centre but perform a more tertiary function (e.g. small offices, wholesalers and market storage) or community functions with little or no retail use.

**11.24** Frontages have not been designated within the Canary Wharf Major Centre. This is because it is a predominantly undercover shopping complex in single, private ownership that functions differently to other town centres in the borough.

**11.25** A minimum proportion of 40% of units within Neighbourhood Centres (excluding Columbia Road and Redchurch Street) and Neighbourhood Parades should be within A1 retail use.

**11.26** As part of the planning application process, applicants are advised to undertake surveys (e.g. vacancy rates) to justify that changes of use would not result in the proportions of A1 units within the Primary and Secondary Frontages falling below the proportions set out in the policy above. Where marketing evidence is required as part of Part 6, applicants should outline where and how marketing has been undertaken, having regard to our guidance on marketing which will be regularly updated. For instance, marketing activity must include evidence that the asking rent has been set at a realistic rate and the site has been advertised on national commercial and retail property websites. Developments should utilise the most recent information

available to justify changes of use from A1 retail use within the Primary and Secondary Frontages to accord with the minimum percentage figures set out in parts 1, 3 and 5. We will regularly monitor the mix of uses within the borough's town centres through the Annual Monitoring Report. Frontages are calculated as a whole across the centre, not within individual stretches of units.

**11.27** The design, accessibility and layout of town centres will have an important impact upon their success, and in turn the health and wellbeing of local people. This policy seeks to promote a range of unit sizes and types within each centre to meet the needs of different users and occupants. In relation to Part 7(a), applicants need to demonstrate that development proposals would not lead to an over-supply of particular unit types which confirms that there is a range of unit types across the wider town centre and that there is a need for the size and type of unit being proposed. In addition, the Transport for London's Healthy Streets principles should be applied to the design, accessibility and layout of town centres in order to ensure they remain attractive and competitive.

**11.28** Whilst the changing nature of town centres and consumer demands may mean less need and demand for retail space in some locations, the requirements set out in the policy where loss of retail (A1 use) is proposed ensures that any loss will need to be clearly justified (e.g. where units are too large to let as a single entity; therefore subdivision would increase attractiveness to potential occupants).

**11.29** However, it is acknowledged that there may be instances where some loss of floorspace within the Primary Frontages contributes to achieving wider objectives, such as the redevelopment of the site or improving access to upper levels. In such cases, street-level retail units should remain of a size and scale that is viable to current or future occupants and that access to upper levels has been designed so as to not undermine the activity and function of the Primary Frontage. In order to satisfy Part 7, applicants will need to provide examples of other retail units of similar proposed size and layout in the area which are occupied and the types of occupants that such units attract. Information on the local market should also be submitted, including details of retailer demands and lettings in the local area to ensure that development does not result in 'token' retail units being created that are too small for the requirements of occupants.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH9: Shopfronts
- Policy D.DH10: Advertisements, hoardings and signage
- Policy S.EMP1: Creating investment and jobs

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016)
- Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)

## Policy D.TC3

### Retail outside our town centres

1. Outside of the borough's Major, District and Neighbourhood Centres, new retail development will be subject to:
  - a. a sequential test, and
  - b. an impact assessment where individual units or extensions exceed 200 square metres gross floorspace.
2. Development resulting in the loss of A1 shops outside of Major, District or Neighbourhood Centres will only be supported where:
  - a. the shop is within a 300 metres walking distance of the nearest alternative A1 shops, and
  - b. the shop has been vacant for a period of more than 12 months and robust evidence is provided of efforts made to market the shop unit over that period at an appropriate rent (providing examples of three comparable shop unit rents within the vicinity), or
  - c. the site is unsuitable for continued retail use due to its accessibility, size or condition and there is no viable prospect of a retail use on the site, taking account of the projected residential growth in the vicinity.

## Explanation

**11.30** New retail development will be directed towards existing centres in accordance with the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which assesses the suitability of alternative sites in the following order of priority: town centres, edge-of-centre sites and other out-of-centre locations which are well connected to existing centres. However, subject to meeting the requirements set out in Part 1, we recognise that demand for retail also exists in locations outside of Major, District and Neighbourhood Centres to meet the immediate convenience needs of local people and/or support the function of designated employment locations.

**11.31** New retail units or extensions outside of the centres set out in Part 1 should not exceed 200 square metres gross floorspace to ensure that they are local in nature and do not harm the vitality and viability of existing centres. Where individual retail units exceed the size limit set out in Part 1, applicants will be required to submit an impact assessment in accordance with the NPPF. The primary shopping areas of the Major and District Centres are illustrated on the Policies Map. For Neighbourhood Centres, their boundaries (as illustrated on the Policies Map) will equate to the primary shopping areas of these centres.

**11.32** The Central Activities Zone and Tower Hamlets Activity Areas have a unique role in the town centre hierarchy. New retail uses may be appropriate in these areas, especially those of a smaller scale, where they would not detrimentally affect the vitality and viability of Major, District or Neighbourhood Centres. We take a judgement-based approach to proposals within these areas and a sequential test and/or impact assessment may still be required where a proposal has a potentially adverse impact on one or more Major, District or Neighbourhood Centre.

**11.33** Part 2 contains a general presumption against the loss of retail space outside of town centres. However, in certain circumstances, such losses may be justified. Applicants should outline where and how

marketing has been undertaken, including evidence of advertising on national commercial and retail property websites and a realistic asking rent. However, it is recognised that in some cases requiring marketing evidence may be counterproductive to enhancing local character if the condition of the property is such that attempting to let it would be unrealistic. In such cases, the applicant should submit a detailed report on the history and condition of the property to robustly justify why marketing evidence should not be required and that re-provided retail space as part of redevelopment would not be viable at the location.

### Policy links

- Policy S.EMP1: Creating investment and jobs
- Policy D.DH9: Shopfronts

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016)

## Policy D.TC4

### Financial and professional services

1. Outside of the borough's Major, District or Neighbourhood Centres, financial and professional services uses will be supported where they are local in scale and there is a reasonable prospect of the unit being occupied.
2. Payday loan shops will only be permitted in the Central Activities Zone, Major Centre, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas and secondary frontages of the District Centres providing there would not be an over concentration of similar businesses.

## Explanation

**11.34** Part 1 of the policy seeks to guide the location and scale of uses within the A2 use class (financial and professional services). Such uses are appropriate both inside and outside of the borough's Major, District or Neighbourhood town centres, although within out-of-town-centre locations, adequate information must be submitted to demonstrate that the anticipated asking rents/purchase price of the space would be appropriate to the location (taking account of our indicative figures) or that a suitable occupier has been secured.

**11.35** Under Part 2 of the policy, applicants proposing new payday loan shops will need to submit details of other businesses within the Major or District Centres (or within a radius of 400 metres where located within the Tower Hamlets Activity Areas or Central Activities Zone) and where such businesses are located in relation to the proposed site demonstrating that the proposal would not give rise to a clustering which could undermine the vitality of the host centre and negatively impact on the well-being of local people.



## Policy links

- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy S.EMP1: Creating investment and jobs

## Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016)
- Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)



**Policy D.TC5****Food, drink, entertainment and the night-time economy**

1. Cafés, restaurants and drinking establishments (use classes A3, A4 and AA) will be supported within the Central Activities Zone, Canary Wharf Major Centre, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres (as shown on the Policies Map) provided that:
  - a. it can be demonstrated that the overall vitality and viability of the town centre would be enhanced, and
  - b. where proposed within Primary or Secondary Frontages, the proportion of A1 (retail) units would not fall below the levels set out in Policy D.TC2.
2. Cafés/restaurants and drinking establishments (use classes A3 and A4) in Neighbourhood Parades and outside of the town centre hierarchy will only be supported provided that they meet the following criteria:
  - a. Cafés and restaurants (A3 uses) can demonstrate that the proposal would support surrounding uses and would not undermine the function of nearby town centres, or form part of a concentration of uses that would cumulatively cause harm to the viability of the borough's town centres.
  - b. Drinking establishments (A4 and AA uses) will only be permitted where they are local in nature and scale.
3. Development of hot food takeaways (use class A5) will only be supported within the Central Activities Zone, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, Canary Wharf Major Centre, Secondary Frontages of District Centres, Neighbourhood Centres or Neighbourhood Parades where they meet the following criteria:
  - a. There must be a separation of at least four non-A5 units between each new hot food takeaway unit.
  - b. The percentage of A5 units would not exceed 5% of the total number of units within Major, District or Neighbourhood Centres.
  - c. Within Neighbourhood Parades there would be no more than one A5 unit.
- d. The proposal is not within 200 metres walking distance from an existing (or proposed) school and/or a local authority leisure centre.
- e. The proposal will not harm the amenity of surrounding properties.
4. New betting offices/shops will only be supported within the Central Activities Zone, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, Canary Wharf Major Centre or Secondary Frontages within District Centres; new amusement centres, casinos and lap-dancing clubs will only be supported within the Central Activities Zone, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas or Canary Wharf Major Centre. Such uses will be resisted where:
  - a. there is an over concentration of such uses which could give rise to negative cumulative social impacts
  - b. the site is in close proximity to a school or sensitive community, cultural or social facilities, and
  - c. the proposal would detrimentally impact the amenity and character of the area.
5. Development of entertainment venues within the D2 or sui generis use classes not referenced in Policy D.TC5 will be:
  - a. directed to the Central Activities Zone, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, Canary Wharf Major Centre and the other town centres (except Neighbourhood Parades) where they are compatible with other uses within the town centre
  - b. only permitted within Neighbourhood Parades or non-designated locations where:
    - i. it can be demonstrated that such uses will not result in adverse impacts on the amenity of the surrounding area
    - ii. the location has good public transport accessibility, and
    - iii. existing venues in town centres would not be undermined.

## Explanation

**11.36** The nature of town centres continues to evolve away from traditional shopping towards leisure and entertainment activities such as cafés, restaurants and drinking establishments (A3 and A4 uses). Such uses have become important in preventing and reducing vacancy in town centres. They can also help to increase activity in town centres outside of traditional shopping hours, thus contributing to town centre vitality and a greater perception of safety from increased natural surveillance.

**11.37** Within the Primary Frontages of the District Centres and the Columbia Road and Redchurch Street Neighbourhood Centres, as shown on the Policies Map, new A3 and A4 uses can be supported where the overall proportion of A1 retail does not fall below 60% of all units. Therefore, where change of use is proposed in those areas, applicants should provide a town centre survey outlining that an appropriate level of A1 retail is being maintained to ensure the vitality and viability of the area as the primary shopping area. Within Secondary Frontages in the District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres, applicants should demonstrate that the overall mix of uses would be conducive to the future vitality and viability of the town centre. Within the Central Activities Zone and Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, proposals involving new A3 and A4 uses will be managed on a case-by-case basis, with the onus on applicants to demonstrate there would not be an over-concentration of similar uses within the surrounding area.

**11.38** We recognise that, in some instances, it may be appropriate and desirable to locate A3 and A4 uses within Neighbourhood Parades or outside of Major, District and Neighbourhood Centres, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas and the Central Activities Zone, although robust justification must be provided (see Part 2). Examples might include

facilities that enhance the enjoyment of open spaces and water spaces; serve transport interchanges or serve out-of-town-centre employment areas. For instance, new or replacement community pubs will be sought to meet local needs in locations where an existing public house may have been lost to redevelopment.

**11.39** Within Neighbourhood Parades and non-designated locations, proposals involving A3 and A4 uses should be of a more modest scale than might be expected in larger town centres. Applicants should robustly state why a café, restaurant or drinking establishment would be appropriate in such a location. Details of any other cafés, restaurants or drinking establishments in the local area should also be provided to mitigate the risk of clusters developing that could undermine nearby town centres. In respect of drinking establishments, a detailed management plan should be submitted alongside the planning application confirming that it will be run as a 'community' public house and that conflicts with neighbouring properties would be avoided. Applicants would also be encouraged to consider our statement of licensing policy.

**11.40** In order to satisfy Part 3, planning applications will be expected to include information (including town centre surveys) in order to ensure that any provision of new hot food takeaways would not exceed the levels set out in Parts (a) to (c).

**11.41** In order to satisfy Part 4, applicants should outline details of other such premises within the local area to demonstrate that there would not be a clustering or over-concentration of such businesses. Please note: sensitive community, cultural or social facilities include but are not limited to places of worship and centres or refuges for the treatment of people with addictions.



**11.42** Part 5 seeks to guide the location of leisure and entertainment venues. In certain circumstances, such uses would be preferable outside of town centres due to the impact on surrounding amenity through noise or the negative impact on town centre appearance resulting from inactive frontages or requirements for space.

### Policy links

- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016)
- Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)
- Takeaway Toolkit (GLA, 2012)



## Policy D.TC6

### Short-stay accommodation

1. Development of visitor accommodation will be supported in locations within the Central Activities Zone, Canary Wharf Major Centre, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas and District Centres (as shown on the Policies Map) or along primary routes where adjacent to transport interchanges, providing:
  - a. the size, scale and nature of the proposal is proportionate to its location
  - b. it does not create an over-concentration of such accommodation, taking account of other proposals and unimplemented consents in the local area
  - c. it does not compromise the supply of land for new homes (in accordance with our housing trajectory) or jobs and our ability to meet the borough's housing and employment targets, and
  - d. the applicant can demonstrate adequate access and servicing arrangements appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the proposal.
2. Applications for serviced apartments must demonstrate that they meet the criteria stated in Part 1 above and will be managed appropriately as short-term accommodation (up to 90 days).



## Explanation

**11.43** For the purposes of this policy, visitor accommodation refers to provision within the C1 use class, such as hotels, bed and breakfasts, traveller hostels, serviced apartments and self-catering apartments. This policy seeks to steer visitor accommodation towards the Central Activities Zone, Canary Wharf Major Centre, Tower Hamlets Activity Areas, and the borough's District Centres, or along primary routes (e.g. A-roads) where they are adjacent to transport interchanges (such as Docklands Light Railway/railway/underground/bus stations).

**11.44** Short stay accommodation schemes should be of a size that reflects their surrounding built environment and reflects the function of the location within town centres or employment areas. For example, a large-scale hotel that is appropriate in the Major Centre of Canary Wharf may not be suitable within a smaller District Centre.

**11.45** This policy applies a flexible approach to the assessment of new visitor accommodation. This recognises the different markets that various forms of visitor accommodation may serve, and the way in which customers and service vehicles may access such accommodation. For example, traveller hostels, budget hotels and small boutique hotels are less likely to require significant space for coaches and other vehicles setting down and picking up movements as customers are more likely to arrive via public transport.

**11.46** Developers and applicants will need to submit information detailing how customers would access the accommodation (e.g. whether this would be mostly utilising existing public transport provision and if not there is appropriate provision for vehicles setting down or picking up). This would also apply to any vehicles required to service the accommodation (e.g. to handle laundry and deliver other supplies to the accommodation). It should be demonstrated that such movements would not create unacceptable impacts on residential amenity or highway safety in accordance with Policies D.DH8 and D.TR2.

**11.47** For serviced apartments, development will be required to provide the following details:

- a. Management will ensure rooms will not be occupied for periods of 90 days or more
- b. Management will provide 24-hour servicing
- c. Telephone lines will be provided in the rooms with no opportunity for personal lines installed by the occupier
- d. Management will ensure rooms will be charged out at a maximum at weekly rates
- e. The use will be secured in the form of a licence, not a lease
- f. The occupants of the room will not have exclusive possession of the room
- g. Management will have access to the room.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy S.EMP1: Creating investment and jobs
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016)

**Policy D.TC7****Markets**

1. Development proposals impacting existing markets will only be supported where:
  - a. they demonstrate that the overall quality of the market and public realm will be improved;
  - b. the capacity for existing numbers of pitches is maintained, and
  - c. they protect or re-provide appropriate storage and servicing facilities.
2. Proposals for new markets, including farmers' markets and 'street-food' markets, will be encouraged. They will be directed to Major, District or Neighbourhood Centres and should enhance the centre's existing offer and contribute to vitality and cohesion.
3. Proposals for new markets outside of Major, District or Neighbourhood town Centres will only be supported where they:
  - a. are temporary in nature
  - b. bring vacant sites back into use
  - c. do not undermine the borough's existing markets and town centres, and
  - d. do not cause unreasonable harm to the amenity of surrounding properties, particularly where evening and night-time markets are proposed.

**Explanation**

**11.48** It is widely recognised that markets act as magnets to create interest and draw people into town centres and support footfall which benefits other businesses. They can also act as incubation space for new ideas and small-to-medium enterprises. This policy aims to protect the borough's existing markets and ensure that new development does not undermine their future role and function (e.g. ensuring that storage facilities are maintained).

**11.49** While new markets within Major, District or Neighbourhood Centres are favoured, this policy also recognises that there may be opportunities for markets outside of town centres where they activate vacant spaces.

**11.50** Applicants and developers should work with our markets team at the earliest opportunity so that information can be provided with the planning application to show that sufficient space will be safeguarded to meet the needs of traders in terms of servicing and storage. Proposals should also detail how the types of goods and services proposed would complement rather than compete with surrounding town centres, as well as how they could contribute to other priorities such as improving access to healthy, affordable food. In addition, a written management and design strategy should be provided which outlines how the proposal will avoid causing negative impacts on markets, such as congestion on footpaths and roads, litter, poor refuse storage and noise.

**11.51** Where proposals seek to re-activate vacant spaces or empty shops, temporary permissions will be favoured. Applicants should demonstrate that the proposed market will have a different offer to nearby Major, District or Neighbourhood Centres to avoid undermining them. They should also demonstrate that noise impacts will be mitigated to protect the amenity of surrounding properties, especially housing.



**11.52** Part 1 of this policy refers to our existing street markets at Bethnal Green, Brick Lane, Crisp Street, Columbia Road, Petticoat Lane, Roman Road, Roman Road Square, Stroudley Walk, Watney Street and Whitechapel.

### Policy links

- Policy D.DH8: Amenity

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Town Centre Retail Capacity Study (2016)
- Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)



## 12. Supporting community facilities

### Introduction

**12.1** Tower Hamlets has a range of community facilities such as health, social, education, leisure and sport facilities providing valuable services to both local communities and visitors. The provision of these essential community facilities plays a vital role in creating and sustaining liveable neighbourhoods through providing valuable services.

**12.2** Community facilities are facing increased pressure from higher land value uses, such as housing and employment, in the face of limited public funding and a fast-growing resident and worker population. Specific need gaps and priorities include the provision of public houses, youth centres, local presence facilities/Idea Stores, indoor sport facilities and community halls.

**12.3** These policies will seek to promote and facilitate the delivery of essential community facilities through new development (including changes of use, extensions and new builds) in line with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which outlines the existing capacity and future needs and priorities facing some of the community facilities in the borough. In particular, they aim to ensure that sufficient facilities are provided to meet the needs of the borough's growing population in the areas of greatest need and growth, as described in Section 4.

**12.4** This section contains the following policies:

- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy D.CF2: Existing community facilities
- Policy D.CF3: New and enhanced community facilities
- Policy D.CF4: Public houses.

### Policy S.CF1

#### Supporting community facilities

1. Development which seeks to protect, maintain and enhance existing community facilities will be supported.
2. Development will be required to contribute to the capacity, quality, usability and accessibility of existing community facilities, particularly where development will increase demand.
3. Development should maximise opportunities for the provision of high quality community facilities to serve a wide range of users. Where possible, facilities or services should be accessible to the wider community outside of core hours and co-located or shared to encourage multi-purpose trips and better meet the needs of different groups.
4. New community facilities will be directed towards the borough's centres in accordance with the town centre hierarchy and/or to locations which are accessible to their catchments depending on the nature and scale of the proposal.

### Explanation

**12.5** This policy seeks to maintain an adequate supply and range of community facilities across the borough to serve local needs and support the creation of more liveable and sustainable places in line with the vision and objectives set out in Section 2. Delivery of new and improvements to existing community facilities will be achieved through the use of developer contributions (as identified in Policy D.SG5) and working together with partners to ensure adequate services are in place to support the sustainable growth of the borough.



**12.6** For the purpose of this policy, community facilities include a range of social infrastructure that provide services to the community such as:

- a. Indoor sports and leisure facilities (e.g. leisure centres and swimming pools)
- b. Health facilities (e.g. hospitals and doctor surgeries)
- c. Cultural facilities (e.g. art galleries, museums and theatres)
- d. Education facilities (e.g. schools, nurseries and universities)
- e. Social facilities (e.g. places of worship, libraries, Idea Stores, local presence and public houses).

**12.7** Playing fields and outdoor sport facilities, such as multi-use games areas and tennis courts, are also important community facilities. These are addressed within Policies S.OWS1 and D.OWS3.

**12.8** Part 1 sets out a presumption against the loss of community facilities to ensure that sufficient provision is available to meet local needs.

**12.9** Part 2 promotes opportunities to expand or improve the capacity and accessibility of existing facilities, taking account of future projected community needs (as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan).

**12.10** Part 3 seeks to encourage the provision of multi-purpose and shared services which provide opportunities to co-locate or integrate a range of community uses and functions, such as community halls and sport facilities. Consideration should be given to promoting community facilities which can be easily accessed, support a wide range of users in line with the principles of active and inclusive design and make relevant provision outside of core hours, particularly in respect of childcare provision, external recreation space, sport facilities and appropriate classroom space.

**12.11** Part 4 seeks to ensure that community facilities are located within or at the edge of town centres in line with Policies S.TC1 and S.SG1. These locations are considered to be the most accessible places in the

borough and such uses contribute to the vitality and viability of town centres. In addition, new facilities will be directed towards locations which are accessible to their catchment areas.

**12.12** This policy will be delivered in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and other relevant strategies, including the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy, Open Space Strategy, Green Grid Strategy and area-based masterplans. We will continue to work with key stakeholders and other service providers to ensure that new community facilities are provided at locations where there is a clearly demonstrated need.

### Policy links

- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Tower Hamlets Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Water Space Study (2017)
- Planning for Sport Development Management (Sport England, 2014)
- Active Design (Sport England, 2015)
- Building Bulletin 103: Area guidelines for mainstream schools (Department for Education, 2014)
- Baseline designs for schools: guidance (Department for Education, 2014)
- Health Building Note 00-01: General design guidance for healthcare buildings (Department of Health, 2014)

**Policy D.CF2****Existing community facilities**

1. Existing community facilities must be retained unless it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. there is no longer a need for the facility or an alternative community use within the local community, or
  - b. a replacement facility of similar nature that would better meet the needs of existing users is provided.
2. Where community facilities are re-provided on site as part of the development, the quality and accessibility of these facilities (including public access) should be enhanced.
3. Extensions to existing schools should demonstrate that:
  - a. there is a demonstrated local need, and
  - b. the current level of child play space will be enhanced and increased.

**Explanation**

**12.13** This policy seeks to protect and enhance the borough's existing community facilities where they are still needed to adequately meet local needs.

**12.14** Part 1 seeks to resist the loss of the borough's valuable community facilities, except in certain circumstances, see (a) and (b). Statements from relevant providers confirming that the existing or alternative community uses would not be needed or possible in the premises will be required. Where the loss of a community facility is justified, the applicant will need to explore the opportunity to accommodate an alternative community use which would better meet local needs, in accordance with relevant strategies, including the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy, Open Space Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Loss of sports and recreational facilities will only be justified where an applicant can provide a robust assessment demonstrating surplus provision or where the proposal includes a replacement of the facility with at least an equivalent function, quality and quantity of sport provision that better meets the needs of the community.

**12.15** We recognise that in certain circumstances site redevelopment will require the relocation of existing uses to a location where the needs of the users will be more adequately met. To ensure that there is no unacceptable disadvantage to existing users, re-provision of community facilities should be within the relevant catchment area and should result in quality and access improvements, reflecting the principles of active and inclusive design. Proposals should also demonstrate that the quantity of floorspace will at least be kept at the same level as the existing uses and, where possible, it should be increased.

**12.16** Part 2 seeks to ensure that new development facilitates and promotes greater public access through good and inclusive design and signage.

**12.17** Where practicable, the replacement facility should be provided before the existing facility ceases operation to ensure that local people continue to receive a high quality service.

**12.18** Part 3 seeks to ensure that any extension to an existing school results in an increase of existing child play space to accommodate the additional needs arising from the development, with a view to promoting shared community use in line with Sport England's guidance. Proposals to replace indoor sports and recreational facilities must be of at least equivalent function, quality and quantity and in a suitable location.

### Policy links

- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Tower Hamlets Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Water Space Study (2017)
- Planning for Sport Development Management (Sport England, 2014)
- Active Design (Sport England, 2015)
- Building Bulletin 103: Area guidelines for mainstream schools (Department for Education, 2014)
- Baseline designs for schools: guidance (Department for Education, 2014)
- Health Building Note 00-01: General design guidance for healthcare buildings (Department of Health, 2014)

## Policy D.CF3

### New and enhanced community facilities

1. Proposals involving the provision of community facilities located outside the borough's town centres will be permitted where an up-to-date and robust local need can be demonstrated.
2. Community facilities within larger developments should be easily accessible to people who live and work outside of the host development.
3. Development of new early education and care facilities and primary and secondary schools which respond to local need will be supported where:
  - a. they are in locations which are accessible to the residents of their indicative catchment areas
  - b. they can demonstrate appropriate learning spaces (including external play space) can be provided, and
  - c. the design and layout of these facilities and play space provision reflects the relevant guidance from the Department for Education and Sport England, taking account of the level of air quality and other amenity considerations.
4. New adult, further and higher educational facilities will be required to provide information of the relevant certification and registration details from the Department for Education and meet Sport England's design guidance and other relevant national governing bodies' guidance.

## Explanation

**12.19** This policy seeks to ensure that appropriate high quality community facilities are provided in accessible locations throughout the borough to adequately support the growing population and meet identified needs.

**12.20** Part 1 seeks to ensure that expansion of existing and delivery of new community facilities is directed towards accessible locations such as town centres. However, new community facilities outside of town centres will only be supported where sufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate that there is a local need not being met elsewhere in the neighbourhood. Facilities provided in these locations need to ensure that they are local in nature and scale and that there is no adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding residents. This includes the impact of people coming and going to the facility and the impact of users within the facility when it is in use, as well as the impact on the highway network and parking facilities. Where the provision of a community facility is proposed as part of a residential development, it should be demonstrated that it is accessible to people living outside of the development and designed to be visible from the street.

**12.21** Part 2 aims to ensure that new community facilities which form part of a wider development are designed to facilitate and encourage wider community use and do not look and feel exclusive to the occupants of the development. Consideration should be given to ensuring that the facility can be easily accessible to a wide range of users.

**12.22** Part 3 encourages the provision of education facilities at early years, primary and secondary level in appropriate locations, where they meet local need and demonstrate high quality and inclusive design in line with the relevant guidance from the Department for Education, Sport England and other relevant national governing bodies (for instance, suitable locations for early years could include the ground floor of residential blocks or secondary frontages in existing town centres).

**12.23** In order to ensure that education facilities are suitably located, applicants should outline the indicative catchment area for the recruitment of pupils and assess the impact of people (including pupils, parents, carers and staff) arriving and leaving the facility as well as the impact on the highway network and parking facilities.

**12.24** Demand for early education and care facilities will increase in the future as the borough's birth rate continues to rise. Early education and care facilities refer to places where a number of children under five years of age are brought together during part or all of a working day on a regular basis where they can play, learn and receive care (e.g. primary school nurseries, children's centres, pre-school and 'wrap-around' childcare). The provision of early year facilities will contribute towards reducing the borough's current below-average levels of achieving good cognitive development at age 5 and enable greater employment rates amongst parents in line with our statutory duty to provide childcare to some 2-year-olds and all 3-and-4-year-olds. Future provision will increasingly require innovative approaches to the use of land and floor space, including the co-location of early education and care facilities with compatible uses, such as primary and secondary schools and office buildings.

**12.25** Further and higher education (see Part 5) refers to the stage of education after secondary school and includes a wide range of institutions including universities and colleges (as defined in the glossary in Appendix 1) which provide lifelong learning. It is noted that some further education colleges do include sixth form provision. In order to meet these requirements, the applicant will need to provide evidence of the relevant certification from the Department for Education as well as details of student and staff numbers, enrolment criteria and curriculum details. Sport and recreation facilities within schools should also reflect Sport England and other relevant national governing body guidance.



## Policy links

- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network

## Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Tower Hamlets Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Water Space Study (2017)
- Planning for Sport Development Management (Sport England)
- Active Design (Sport England, 2015)
- Building Bulletin 103: Area guidelines for mainstream schools (Department for Education, 2014)
- Baseline designs for schools: guidance (Department for Education, 2014)
- Health Building Note 00-01: General design guidance for healthcare buildings (Department of Health, 2014)

## Policy D.CF4

### Public houses

1. Where the loss of a public house is proposed, the following evidence will be required:
  - a. Evidence that all reasonable efforts have been taken to preserve the facility as a public house, including evidence of appropriate maintenance and upkeep and efforts to diversify the business.
  - b. Evidence demonstrating that the public house has been marketed for at least 12 months as a public house at a reasonable market rent and free of tie and restrictive covenant and following this exercise there has been no interest in the property and there is no realistic prospect of continuing its current use.
  - c. Marketing evidence demonstrating there has been no interest in the property for an alternative community use over a further 12-month period following the marketing period in Part 1(b).
2. Where a public house is replaced or re-provided, adequate floorspace must be provided to ensure the continued viability of the public house.
3. Proposals within the curtilage of a public house must demonstrate that the continued operation and viability of the public house would not be compromised. Loss of converted pubs on the grounds of viability as a result of previous development will not be supported.

## Explanation

**12.26** Like many other London boroughs, Tower Hamlets has witnessed a significant net loss of public houses (otherwise known as pubs) since the millennium. The rate of decline has far exceeded both the London and national averages<sup>46</sup>. This policy therefore aims to afford greater protection to the borough's public houses and guard against their unnecessary loss.

**12.27** In order to satisfy Part 1(a), applicants seeking to demolish or replace an existing public house will need to provide evidence of appropriate maintenance and upkeep and efforts to diversify the business. Alternatively, if the property has not been appropriately maintained, we will expect this has been reflected within the asking rent or price of the pub. Details of pub accounts for current and previous trading years should also be provided.

**12.28** In order to satisfy Part 1(b), applicants will need to submit a full detailed marketing report outlining the asking price or rent for the public house and the terms on which it was offered (e.g. freehold or leasehold: whether or not it included living accommodation and whether any part of the property was excluded). The report should include details of any interest in the property, viewings, and why such interest was not taken forward. This information should also be provided for a subsequent 12-month period outlining attempts to let the property for alternative community uses as described under Part 1(c).

**12.29** Part 2 seeks to avoid future examples in the borough of what are termed 'trojan horse' pubs. This term refers to developments that have met policy requirements through the re-provision of floorspace for pub use but at a level that is insufficient to be practically let as a pub, resulting in a subsequent application to convert the space to an alternative use. This part of the policy seeks to ensure that there is a genuine intention to continue pub use where redevelopment is proposed. It must also be

demonstrated that appropriate soundproofing is to be installed so as to minimise conflict between the pub and any residential use. In order to satisfy this criterion, applicants should submit indicative floorplans demonstrating that, at a minimum, the proposed floorspace for pub use can support a bar area, appropriate seating, storage and toilets.

**12.30** Applicants seeking to reduce or remove outdoor space must demonstrate that the remaining space is of sufficient size and quality for the needs of pub users, and that the pub could continue to operate viably following any loss or reduction. It must also be demonstrated that any smokers displaced from such spaces would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding properties by gathering in alternative locations.

**12.31** Where loss or conversion of ancillary function space or living accommodation is proposed, it must be demonstrated that the pub use would not be undermined through such loss. For the loss of function space, evidence is also required to demonstrate the availability of sufficient and suitable alternative facilities available within the local area.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy S.DH3: Heritage and the historic environment
- Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration

### Evidence links

- Pubs in Tower Hamlets – Evidence Study (2017)

<sup>46</sup> Pubs in Tower Hamlets – Evidence Study (2017)

## 13. Enhancing open spaces and water spaces

### Introduction

**13.1** Tower Hamlets has a number of valued open spaces and water spaces which offer many important social, environmental and economic benefits, including:

- Enhancing amenity;
- Contributing to healthy lifestyles through providing opportunities for active travel and leisure
- Providing sport and recreation opportunities
- Providing meeting places for community activities and cultural events
- Helping to manage flood risk and mitigating the risks of climate change
- Enhancing biodiversity, and
- Providing a cooling effect to reduce elevated urban air temperature.

**13.2** The overall provision of publicly accessible open space remains low with some parts of the borough being acutely deficient, including the Isle of Dogs, Shoreditch and Whitechapel. This equates to 0.89 hectares per 1,000 residents, which is less than the borough's open space standard of 1.2 hectares per 1,000 residents<sup>47</sup>.

**13.3** In a densely populated borough like Tower Hamlets facing significant development pressure, there is limited scope to provide major additional open space to accommodate the needs of the growing population, such as new parkland and woodland. Nevertheless, the borough's open spaces make a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of the borough, reflecting their popularity among residents and visitors, relatively good condition and varied use. Some parks (e.g. Victoria Park) are nationally renowned and have been awarded Green Flag status.

**13.4** In order to meet this shortfall, it is estimated that 220 hectares of additional publicly accessible open space will be required across the borough over the period to 2031.

**13.5** As the population continues to grow there will be an increasing need to protect and revitalise our existing open spaces as well as secure additional publicly accessible open space, especially within deficient areas (see Figure 13).

**13.6** Tower Hamlets has access to more water spaces than any other London borough, comprising the rivers Thames and Lea and the other connecting water spaces (e.g. Limehouse Cut, Regents Canal and Hertford Union Canal) as well as several docks and basins. However, much of the potential of the borough's water spaces remains untapped, due to fragmented public access and limited active recreation and leisure opportunities. Tower Hamlets has also experienced significant historic water loss, particularly around Shadwell Basin and the Ornamental Canal, while a considerable amount of water space has been reclaimed and re-used to frame development around West India Docks, Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock in Canary Wharf. This has further limited the availability of water spaces for recreation, transport and other water-related activities. It has also impacted on the biodiversity of the waterways as well as the open character of our valuable water space heritage assets.

<sup>47</sup> In particular, Tower Hamlets faces a significant shortfall in the provision of playing pitches, especially outdoor sports provision, due to the fact that most grass pitches are located at parks or areas of open space where often they serve multiple functions, such as recreational open space and non-sports related activities. These requirements are identified within the Tower Hamlets Open Space Strategy (2017).

**13.7** Hence, it is important that policies protect our valuable water spaces from permanent infillings and oversailing and seek to improve their continuous public access; enhance biodiversity; promote water-related and water-dependent recreation; and ensure the delivery of high quality design to celebrate the heritage of our waterways.

**13.8** Figure 12 illustrates the existing and proposed network of well-connected publicly accessible open spaces and water spaces across the borough, drawing upon the principles set out in the All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Document.

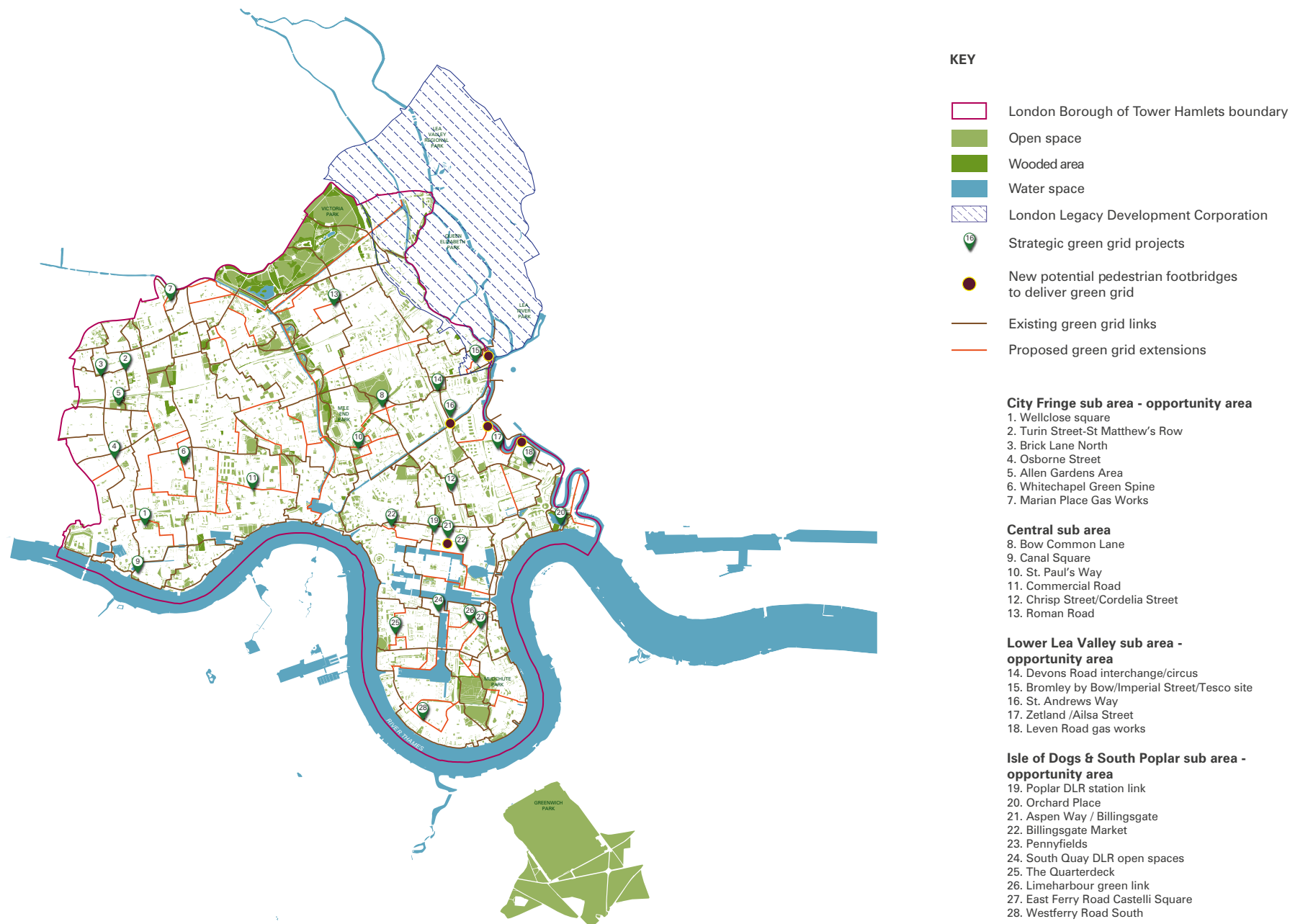
**13.9** This section contains the following policies:

- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water spaces
- Policy D.OWS3: Open space and green grid networks
- Policy D.OWS4: Water spaces.





Figure 12: An enhanced network of open spaces and water spaces



## Policy S.OWS1

### Creating a network of open spaces

1. Proposals will be required to provide or contribute to the delivery of an improved accessible, well-connected and sustainable network of open spaces through:
  - a. protecting all existing open space to ensure that there is no net loss (except where it meets the criteria set out in Policy D.OWS3)
  - b. maintaining the open character of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)
  - c. improving the quality, value and accessibility of existing publicly accessible open space across the borough and neighbouring boroughs, in line with the Green Grid Strategy, Open Space Strategy, Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Sport England's Active Design Guidance
  - d. delivering an improved network of green grid links in line with the Green Grid Strategy to enhance access to key destination points (town centres, community facilities and publicly accessible open spaces) and to and along water spaces, as well as provide ecological corridors for wildlife
  - e. maximising the opportunities to create/increase publicly accessible open space (including playing pitches and ancillary sporting facilities) with a range of sizes and for a range of users, particularly in the following locations (which are expected to experience the highest level of open space deficiency)
    - Bethnal Green
    - Blackwall and Cubitt Town
    - Bromley North
    - Bromley South
    - Canary Wharf
    - Limehouse
    - Poplar
    - Shadwell
    - Spitalfields and Banglatown
    - St Dunstan's
    - St Peter's
    - Weavers
    - Whitechapel
  - f. assisting with the delivery of enhanced new strategic publicly accessible open spaces at Lea River Park (including the Leaway) and within site allocations.
2. Inappropriate development on areas designated as MOL (as shown on the Policies Map) will not be permitted unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated in line with the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Explanation

**13.10** This policy seeks to protect and enhance the borough's valuable network of open spaces as well as promote the creation of new publicly accessible open spaces which are better connected and provide a wide range of opportunities for local communities and visitors in line with the Open Space Strategy, Green Grid Strategy and other relevant strategies.

**13.11** The Open Space Strategy sets out where strategic open space (i.e. one hectare or above) will be provided across the borough. This includes the requirements relating to the provision of playing pitches and a detailed action plan on how our open space priorities will be addressed. Further details on the specific needs and priorities for the provision of playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities are outlined in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Green Grid Strategy identifies opportunities on how to better connect existing open spaces and create smaller scale open spaces in areas of need.

**13.12** For the purposes of the Local Plan, open space means all land that offers opportunity for play, recreation and sport or is of amenity value, whether in public or private ownership, and where public access is unrestricted, partially-restricted or restricted. This includes all open areas consisting of: major parks (e.g. Victoria Park and Mile End Park), local parks, gardens, squares, playgrounds, ecological spaces, housing amenity land, playing fields (including playing pitches), allotments and burial grounds, whether or not they are accessible to the public. This definition does not include water bodies.

**13.13** Figure 12 illustrates the distribution of publicly accessible open spaces across the borough. Detailed boundaries of the borough's publicly accessible open spaces are shown on the Policies Map. Some of the borough's open spaces and water spaces are designated as Metropolitan Open Land (including East India Dock Basin and Brunswick Wharf, Island Gardens, Lee Valley Regional Park, Meath Gardens, Mile End Park, Mudchute Park, Millwall Park, Tower Hamlets Cemetery and Victoria

Park) which form part of London's strategically defined open space network.

**13.14** Part 1(a) seeks to protect all open spaces regardless of their size, type, ownership and where access is unrestricted, partially restricted or restricted.

**13.15** Part 1(b) seeks to protect the open character of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). MOL is a unique open space designation in London and is afforded the same level of protection as the Green Belt within the London Plan.

**13.16** Part 1(c) promotes the enhancement of the borough's existing open space to improve their quality and multi-functionality to serve a variety of users. This will be delivered through the provision of new outdoor sport facilities, such as playing pitches (e.g. ancillary facilities and changing rooms), outdoor gyms and multi-use games areas within existing parks (e.g. Victoria Park, Mudchute Park and Mile End Park). Proposals should also aim to incorporate the principles of Sport England's Active Design Guide.

**13.17** Part 1(d) promotes the delivery of a well-connected and high quality network of publicly accessible open spaces through new and improved green grid connections, in accordance with the Transport for London's healthy streets initiative. This can be achieved through new planting in the public realm (including streets, trees and vegetation) and maximising opportunities to create access to nature, natural play and educational elements along the green grid as well as improved signage and posting to enhance way-finding. The Green Grid Strategy has identified a series of strategic green grid projects (as shown on Figure 12) to improve cross-borough connections and help address deficiencies across the borough as well as other parts of London.

**13.18** Parts 1(d) and (e) promote the provision of new publicly accessible open spaces to serve the borough's growing population, particularly where they are of a wider strategic importance (e.g. Lea River Park) and in areas of significant open space deficiency (see Figure 13<sup>48</sup>).

<sup>48</sup> Publicly accessible open space deficiency is mapped using 400 metre catchment areas from parks of 1 hectare or above.

**13.19** The provision of new or improved publicly accessible open space and green grid linkages will be promoted throughout the borough in accordance with the principles set out in the Open Space Strategy, Green Grid Strategy and Mayor of London's All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance, notably at the following locations:

- a. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (i.e. improving links to open spaces and the Lea Navigation and Hertford Union canals)
- b. Lea Valley (including a series of new open spaces as part of the Lea River Park and a new continuous north-south route through Lea Valley connecting the Lea Valley Regional Park to the River Thames as well as new pedestrian footbridges)
- c. Mile End Park and Victoria Park (including green grid extensions to the existing canal walkways and nearby schools)
- d. Whitechapel (including the delivery of the Green Spine – a new north-south pedestrian route linking Whitechapel District Centre with Commercial Road along with a series of open spaces featuring new public squares behind the proposed civic centre and next to St Augustine with St Philip's Church)
- e. Thames Path (i.e. maintaining and expanding the Thames Path to provide continuous public access to the river).

**13.20** Larger open space (i.e. one hectare and above) provision will be secured on allocated sites (as identified in Section 4) through new development.

**13.21** Delivery of smaller publicly accessible open spaces such as pocket parks and linear verges will be promoted through new development.

**13.22** Innovative approaches to delivering new open space (e.g. roof-top gardens/greenhouses, community gardens and green/brown roofs) in these areas as well as locating parks in areas of the borough where accessibility to public open space is poor will be promoted.

**13.23** There is a general presumption against inappropriate development on areas designated as MOL (as shown on the Policies Map). Inappropriate development (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) will not be allowed in the MOL unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

**13.24** Exceptional circumstances necessitating alteration of the boundary of the MOL to exclude land at 82-84 Rhodeswell Road have been established. Please note: this land has been excluded from the extent of the MOL on the Policies Map which illustrates geographically the application of Policy S.OWS1.

### Policy links

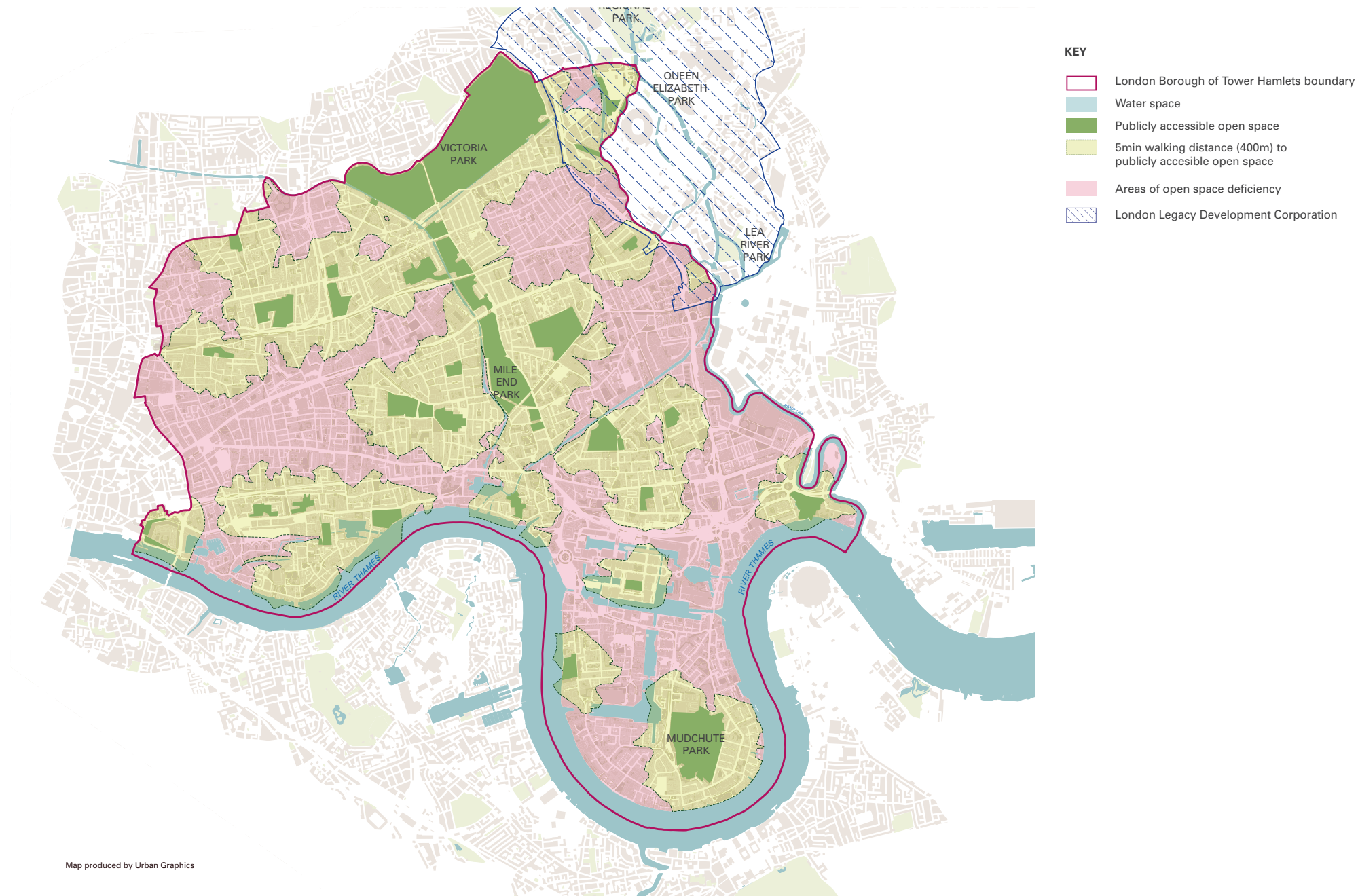
- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy S.ES1: Protecting and enhancing our environment
- Policy D.ES3: Urban greening and biodiversity
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Open Space Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Water Space Study (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2014)
- All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2012)
- Active Design Guidance (Sport England, 2015)
- Tower Hamlets Playing Pitch Assessment (2017)



Figure 13: Areas of open space deficiency



**Policy S.OWS2****Enhancing the network of water spaces**

1. Proposals will be required to support the creation of a network of high quality, usable and accessible water spaces network through:
  - a. protecting the integrity of the borough's water spaces
  - b. maximising opportunities for enhancing the aesthetic, ecological and biodiversity values of the borough's water spaces (including the immediate and surrounding areas) and the water quality, in line with the Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan
  - c. improving accessibility and way-finding to and along water spaces to maximise opportunities for public use and enjoyment
  - d. promote water spaces for cultural, recreational and leisure activities as well as movement, including passenger and freight transport (e.g. along the River Thames)
  - e. working in partnership with the Port of London Authority and the Canal and River Trust to ensure that residential and commercial moorings are in appropriate locations that do not negatively impact on navigation, water quality, the openness and character of the water space and the amenity of surrounding residents, and
  - f. supporting the aims of the European Union Water Framework Directive, Thames River Basin Management Plan, Thames Estuary 2100 Plan, Thames Vision, and any relevant Marine Plans (e.g. South East Marine Plan)

**Explanation**

**13.25** Water spaces make a positive contribution to the economy, society and the environment and should be safeguarded for water-related purposes with priority given to water management, improving water quality, managing land drainage, and avoiding, reducing and managing flood risk.

**13.26** This policy seeks to protect and enhance the borough's valuable network of water spaces and also ensure that they are easily accessible and provide a wide range of water-related opportunities for local communities and visitors.

**13.27** For the purposes of the Local Plan, water space means an area of water (permanently or intermittently) and includes rivers, canals, docks, basins, ponds, marshland and other water bodies.

**13.28** Part 1(a) seeks to ensure that development does not result in further loss or over sailing of the borough's valuable water spaces unless it is a water-related or water-dependent use at appropriate locations. Water-dependent uses are defined as an activity which can only be conducted on, in, over or adjacent to the water because its function requires direct access to, along and across the water or involves, as an integral part of the activity, the use of the water. Appropriate infrastructure to support water-dependent uses includes:

- a. Walkways and slipways for pedestrians, boaters and cyclists
- b. Bridges and tunnels (e.g. across the rivers Lea and Thames)
- c. Water-based sport and leisure (e.g. sailing and kayaking)
- d. Security and safety (e.g. lifebuoys and other life-saving equipment)
- e. Water-based passengers, tourism, transport support and freight infrastructure (e.g. piers and clippers)
- f. Marine support facilities
- g. Moorings (including permanent and visitor moorings) and their support infrastructure.

**13.29** In addition, other water-related uses may also be considered at suitable locations where there is clear evidence that they are specifically designed to enhance the public access, use or enjoyment of the water space and will have a positive contribution to the character of the water space without causing any adverse negative impacts on biodiversity (e.g. activate the water space to enhance it as a waterside destination). An important consideration in decision making will be the cumulative impact of existing and proposed new water related uses in order to ensure that that there is no adverse impact on the character and openness of the borough's water space and the amenity of surrounding residents.

**13.30** Despite their urban setting and heavily modified nature, the borough's network of rivers, canals and docks are important for biodiversity, supporting a wide range of species of wild plants and animals (including rare and protected species) and allowing people to come into contact with nature. In accordance with Part 1(b), development will be expected to preserve and enhance biodiversity and increase the resilience of wetland ecosystems. This can be achieved through a range of measures, such as the restoration and creation of priority habitats and planting native species to create more natural landscapes along the waterways, and the prevention of overspill of artificial lighting onto waterways or onto adjacent areas of soft landscaping.

**13.31** Some of the borough's water spaces are difficult to find and access from nearby transport hubs (e.g. River Lea, Shadwell Basin and West India Middle and South Docks) or have restricted and disjointed access (e.g. River Thames). Part 1(c) of the policy seeks to ensure that access to all water spaces is improved through appropriate signage for better way finding. Many of the borough's water spaces (including Blackwall Basin, Hermitage Basin, Limehouse Basin, East India Dock Basin, Limehouse Cut Canal, Millwall inner and outer docks, Poplar Dock, St Katherine's Dock, Wapping Canal, West India Docks and the rivers Lea and Thames) are located within or adjacent to areas of open space deficiency in access to parks. These water spaces and the adjacent land

therefore provide important open space functions and make a valuable contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

**13.32** In delivering Part 1(d), additional opportunities will be explored to maximise the use of the borough's water spaces for transport and freight at suitable locations (e.g. Trinity Buoy Wharf and along the River Thames), including the introduction of additional Thames Clipper stops. Policies S.TR1 and D.TR4 provide further guidance on sustainable transport and freight.

**13.33** Creating and enhancing the borough's high quality, usable and accessible network of water spaces will be delivered through a coordinated approach with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Canal and River Trust, Port of London Authority, Inland Waterways Association, neighbouring boroughs and other relevant organisations, see Parts 1(e) and (f).

**13.34** This policy also recognises the importance of several strategic documents which provide the framework for the sustainable development of the borough's water spaces and, more specifically, the River Thames and its tributaries, see Part 1(f).

- a. The European Water Framework Directive provides a framework for protecting and improving the ecological quality of all water bodies.
- b. Following on from the European Water Framework Directive, the Thames River Basin Management Plan sets out actions to protect and enhance the river's natural environment.
- c. The Thames Strategy East sets out a long term framework to guide the sustainable management of the Thames Policy Area (as shown on the Policies Map) and promotes development principles, such as greater connectivity through improved foot and cycle access to and along the River Thames and the provision of water support infrastructure (e.g. bridges, piers and flood defences, etc) which respects and contribute to the river's character.



- d. The Thames Estuary 2100 Plan sets out a comprehensive action plan to manage tidal flood risk across the River Thames.
- e. The Thames Vision sets out the goals and priority actions to help manage and promote the River Thames, which include: more trade and more jobs associated with the river; improved use of the river for the transportation of passengers and freight; and an improved environment and river heritage.
- f. Tower Hamlets falls within the remit of the Marine Plan for the South East inshore area. Once adopted, the Marine Plan for the South East will influence the sustainable marine development and activities which include a section of coastline or tidal river. The detailed boundaries of the Marine Plan for the South East inshore area (within the borough) are shown on the Policies Map. Until the Marine Plan is adopted, any development and activities within the rivers Thames and Lea should have regard to the Marine Policy Statement, which sets out the policies for managing development and activities for coastal and tidal waters.



### Policy links

- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy S.H1: Meeting housing needs
- Policy S.ES1: Protecting and enhancing our environment
- Policy D.ES3: Urban greening and biodiversity
- Policy D.ES4: Flood risk
- Policy D.ES5: Sustainable drainage
- Policy D.ES6: Sustainable water and waste water management
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel
- Policy D.TR4: Sustainable delivery and servicing

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Tower Hamlets Open Space Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2017)
- Tower hamlets Water Space Study (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2014)
- European Union Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC)
- Thames River Basin Management Plan (Environment Agency, 2015)
- Thames Estuary 2100 Plan (Environment Agency, 2014)
- Thames Vision Project (Port of London Authority, 2016)
- Thames Strategy East (Thames Estuary Partnership, 2008)
- UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)



**Policy D.OWS3****Open space and green grid networks**

1. Development on areas of open space (excluding Metropolitan Open Land) will only be supported in exceptional circumstances where:
  - a. it provides essential facilities that enhance the function, use and enjoyment of the open space (e.g. ancillary sport facilities to the playing field use), or
  - b. as part of a wider development proposal, both an increase of open space and a higher quality of open space can be achieved, and
  - c. in any of the circumstances described in Parts 1(a) and (b), it is demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impacts on the existing ecological, heritage or recreational value of the open space and the flood risk levels within and beyond the boundaries of the site, and
  - d. it is an outdoor sport and recreational space or facility, the sporting and recreational benefits of which would outweigh the harm resulting from its loss
2. Strategic development should contribute to the delivery of new publicly accessible open space on-site which should:
  - a. be visible and accessible from the public realm surrounding the site
  - b. be of a high quality and inclusive design and provide facilities to promote active recreation and healthy lifestyles
  - c. be well-connected and way-marked to other open spaces, in accordance with the Green Grid Strategy and Open Space Strategy
  - d. contribute towards meeting the demand that they generate through the provision of on-site sport facilities and/or providing additional capacity off-site
  - e. incorporate soft landscaping and sustainable urban drainage systems, and
  - f. enhance biodiversity, contributing to the objectives identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
3. Development should not solely rely upon existing publicly accessible open space to contribute towards on-site communal amenity space and child play space.
4. Development should not adversely impact on the public enjoyment, openness, ecological and heritage value of the borough's publicly accessible open spaces.
5. Development adjacent or in close proximity to the green grid network (i.e. 200 metres) is required to demonstrate that it will not have adverse impacts on the access, design, usability, biodiversity and recreational value of the green grid network. It should also contribute to the expansion and the enhancement of green grid links to connect communities to publicly accessible open spaces and water spaces as well as other main destination points, such as town centres, schools, health facilities and transport hubs.
6. Development of community allotments, gardens and pocket parks will be encouraged, particularly where they bring into use vacant developable land on a temporary basis.

## Explanation

**13.35** This policy aims to ensure that development does not negatively impact on the existing network of publicly accessible open space and contributes to its expansion and enhancement. It also seeks to maximise the opportunities for delivery of new open space and for enhancing accessibility and connectivity to the wider network, which is considered crucial to addressing the borough's open space deficiency (as shown on Figure 13).

**13.36** Development on areas of open space will be resisted unless in the circumstances specified in Part 2(a) and (b). The types of development that are considered to be acceptable in principle within areas of open space include changing rooms, play equipment and seating. They should be of a scale and function proportionate to the open space in which they are to be located and should be purely ancillary to it.

**13.37** In relation to part 1(b), there may be instances (e.g. in housing estate regeneration schemes) where building on fragmented areas of poor quality open space enables the provision of a larger consolidated area of open space which is more usable for the local community. In these circumstances, the starting point will be no net loss of open space but if the development is resulting in an increase in population then additional open space will be required in accordance with the principles set out in Policy S.OWS1.

**13.38** Part 1(d) seeks to ensure that outdoor sport and recreation facilities are protected against unjustified loss in line with the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

**13.39** Part 2 seeks to promote delivery of new publicly accessible open space and the provision of new publicly accessible open space on strategic schemes (i.e. more than 100 homes or over 10,000 square metres floorspace) where development is considered to place significant additional demand on existing publicly accessible open space, particularly in identified areas of open space deficiency (see Figure 13).

**13.40** Where publicly accessible open space is provided on site, it should aim to meet the local standard of 1.2 hectares per 1000 residents (as identified in the Open Space Strategy) and be designed to support the key open space functions, as specified in Part 2 (a) to (e) in line with the All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance. Future management and maintenance of new publicly accessible open space will be secured through planning conditions or legal agreements to ensure the highest possible level of public access, function and use.

**13.41** Where the new publicly accessible open space is delivered to a satisfactory standard that meets all criteria specified in Part 2, we may consider this on-site provision as payment in kind. The provision of amenity space or landscaping required as part of good design to mitigate the impact of development will not be considered as appropriate publicly accessible open space provision. The level and nature of any sports provision should take account of the recommendations set out in Sport England's guidance and our Open Space Strategy and its associated action plan.

**13.42** Where on-site provision of adequate publicly accessible open space is not possible, a contribution will be sought from the developer towards the delivery of the opportunities and the strategic projects identified in the Open Space Strategy and Green Grid Strategy in accordance with the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

**13.43** Part 3 seeks to ensure that residential developments will not place undue pressure on publicly accessible open space and will not be allowed to solely rely upon nearby public open space to contribute to adequate outdoor communal amenity space, including child play space in line with the principles set out in Policy D.H3.

**13.44** In accordance with Part 4, development will be expected to demonstrate that it will enhance and not negatively affect the borough's publicly accessible open space, including the Lea Valley Regional Park (consisting of East India Dock Basin and linear towpaths along the River

Lea Navigation, Hertford Union Canal and Limehouse Cut) the Lea River Park (including the Leaway) and the Transport for London's Lea Valley Walk initiative. The Lee Valley Regional Park forms an important part of the borough's green grid and water spaces network and has the potential to contribute to creating healthy and liveable communities, particularly where links into this network can be enhanced and complemented with new open space delivered as part of development<sup>49</sup>. We will work together with the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority and the Environment Agency to support proposals set out in the Tower Hamlets' Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the Park Plan and Park Development Framework where they relate to the borough. We will also work with neighbouring authorities and relevant stakeholders to support the delivery of the Lea River Park (including the Leaway), which connects Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the Lea Valley Regional Park to the Royal Docks and the River Thames through a new continuous walking and cycling route along the River Lea. Further development principles and guidance are included in the Lea River Park Primer and Lea River Park Design Manual.

**13.45** For the purposes of implementing this policy, development would be considered to be in close proximity to the green grid where it is located within 200 metres (equivalent to around three minutes walking time) of the green grid network (see Part 5).

**13.46** Development sites located adjacent to or in close proximity to the green grid (i.e. within the Green Grid Buffer Zone, (as shown on the Policies Map) – including the Lee Valley Regional Park, Lea River Park, Thames Path National Trail and canal towpaths - will be required to contribute to linking and improving the connectivity of green grid links in accordance with the Green Grid Strategy and the Mayor of London's All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance. This should be supported with adequate signage and facilities for visitors and tourists.

<sup>49</sup> The Lea Valley Regional Park Authority has a statutory duty to either provide directly or work with partners to provide facilities for sport, recreation, leisure, entertainment and nature conservation throughout the park.

**13.47** Part 6 encourages the creation of community allotments, gardens and pocket parks which promote healthier lifestyles and greater social interactions.

### Policy links

- Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets
- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH2: Attractive and safe streets, spaces and public realm
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy S.ES 1: Protecting and enhancing our environment
- Policy D.ES3: Urban greening and biodiversity
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Tower Hamlets Open Space Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2014)
- All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2012)
- Lea River Park Design Manual (2016)
- Lea River Park Primer (2016)
- Park Plan (Lea Valley Regional Park Authority, 2000)
- Park Development Framework (Lea Valley Regional Park Authority)
- Tower Hamlets Playing Pitch Assessment (2017)

**Policy D.OWS4****Water spaces**

1. Development within or adjacent to the borough's water spaces is required to demonstrate that:
  - a. it does not result in loss or covering of the water space, unless it is a water-related or water-dependent use at appropriate locations and of appropriate scale
  - b. there are no adverse impacts on the existing water spaces network, including navigation, biodiversity, water quality, visual amenity, character and heritage value of the water space, taking into consideration the adjacent land and the amenity of existing surrounding developments
  - c. there are no unacceptable impacts on the openness of the water space
  - d. it enhances the ecological, biodiversity and aesthetic quality of the water space, taking into account the design and landscaping of the adjacent land area, in line with the Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the European Union Water Framework Directive
  - e. it does not have an adverse impact on other existing active water uses
  - f. it will provide increased opportunities for continuous public access, use of the water space for water-related uses and sport and recreational activities
  - g. it responds positively and sensitively to the setting of water space, while respecting and animating water space to improve usability and safety, and
  - h. it provides suitable setbacks from water space edges to mitigate flood risk and to allow riverside walkways, canal towpaths and cycle paths, where appropriate. Where necessary, development should contribute to the restoration of the river walls and embankments.
2. Development within the Thames Policy Area (as shown on the Policies Map) is required to consider the guidance provided within the most up-to-date Thames River Basin Management Plan and the relevant Southeast Marine Plan, where applicable.
3. Development adjacent to the borough's waterspaces is required to enhance the area's links with the water space and contribute to the delivery of continuous walkways, canal towpaths and cycle paths (e.g. completion of the Thames Path).
4. Development of moorings will be considered acceptable at suitable locations, and where they do not cause any adverse impact on navigation, biodiversity, micro climate, amenity of surrounding residents and the public enjoyment of the water space.



## Explanation

**13.48** This policy seeks to provide details of how the borough's water spaces will be protected and how the various functions they offer are maintained and enhanced.

**13.49** Part 1 requires development to demonstrate that it will not result in loss or covering of water space and that it will not compromise the suitability of the water space for water-related uses (as defined in Policy S.OWS2). Further water loss and over-sailing from development will be resisted throughout the borough, particularly at locations that have experienced significant water space loss, such as West India South Dock, West India Middle Dock, West India North Dock, Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock in Canary Wharf.

**13.50** In line with London Plan policies and guidance, provision of appropriate water space support infrastructure (including but not limited to: transport and essential access infrastructure into and alongside water spaces, boatyards, moorings, jetties and safety equipment) will be supported at suitable locations. Further details on infrastructure for water-related and water-dependent uses are included in Policy S.OWS2. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan provides information on the current need for some water support infrastructure (e.g. bridges).

**13.51** The sense of openness greatly contributes to a person's perception and enjoyment of water spaces. This is of particular importance in a borough like Tower Hamlets where there is a high deficiency of open space. When assessing planning applications, consideration will be given to the water coverage and human experience of the openness of water space in terms of its visibility and visual connections across the water from the surrounding public realm.

**13.52** Public access to and along the borough's water spaces will be improved, particularly where access is currently restricted, including the docks around Canary Wharf (including West India Middle Dock and Blackwall Basin), the River Lea and the River Thames (e.g. the Thames Path).

**13.53** Safety and public use of the borough's water spaces will be improved through development design which provides good pedestrian access, active frontages to improve surveillance and riparian lifesaving equipment, where appropriate. Increased appeal through active frontages will be particularly important for the docks in Canary Wharf as well as areas around Trinity Buoy Wharf, Limehouse Basin and along the River Lea which can have significant potential to attract visitors.

**13.54** The edges of water space are an extremely important part of the functioning of water space as ecosystems, open space and transport networks. Development proposals must ensure that such areas are protected and provide setbacks from the edges of the water space as well as contribute to restoration following the Environment Agency's Estuary Edges guidance. How this restoration should be undertaken will need to be considered against the functions of the water space and an appropriate balance will be sought between uses on the water space and access to and interaction with the water space and ecological enhancements in line with the Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Setbacks from waterways are also required for flood management purposes and further details outlining their use are provided in Policy D.ES4. Where setbacks are required they provide an opportunity to increase enjoyment of the waterways and should be designed to look and feel publicly accessible (e.g. through the use of signposting).

**13.55** The River Thames provides important additional opportunities to that of other water spaces within the borough, acting as a transport link of strategic and historical importance. Developments in the Thames Policy Area (as identified on the Policies Map) should ensure that their use and design establishes a positive relationship with the river in accordance with the most up-to-date guidance within the Thames Policy Area (e.g. Thames Strategy East and Thames River Basin Management Plan) and supplementary planning documents (see Part 2).

**13.56** Part 3 promotes the improved public access to and along the borough's water spaces, particularly where it is currently restricted, partially restricted or fragmented (e.g. along the River Thames, the River Lea and the docks around Canary Wharf, including West India Middle Dock and Blackwall Basin). The Thames Path forms part of the National Trail. We are committed to maintaining the existing National Trail and expanding the Thames Path along the eastern part of the Isle of Dogs to connect it to the Leaway as a publicly accessible continuous route. Developments adjacent to the River Thames should contribute towards the delivery and maintenance of this route. Where the Thames Path cannot be delivered adjacent to the River Thames, due to heritage reasons, we will require the development to contribute towards the signposting, design and maintenance of an alternative route.

**13.57** We will work together with the Port of London Authority and Canal and River Trust to determine the suitability of moorings (including residential and commercial moorings) on the borough's water spaces. Key considerations in assessing the impact of mooring proposals will include: navigation, water quality, biodiversity, openness and character of the water space and surrounding area, surrounding residential amenity, waste management and air quality as well as the adequate supply of electricity provision. The Tower Hamlets Water Space Study identifies some of the locations which may be considered suitable for further development of residential moorings, including at the Regents Canal, Blackwall Basin, Poplar Dock, Milwall Inner and Outer Docks and the West India South Dock.

### Policy links

- Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions
- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy D.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy D.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm
- Policy S.ES1: Protecting and enhancing our environment
- Policy D.ES3: Urban greening and biodiversity
- Policy D.ES4: Flood risk
- Policy D.ES5: Sustainable drainage
- Policy D.ES6: Sustainable water and wastewater management
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel
- Policy D.TR4: Sustainable delivery and servicing

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Tower Hamlets Open Space Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Water Space Study (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2014)
- European Union Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC)
- Thames River Basin Management Plan (Environment Agency, 2015)
- Thames Estuary 2100 Plan (Environment Agency, 2012)
- Thames Vision Project (Port of London Authority, 2016)
- Thames Strategy East (Thames Estuary Partnership, 2008)
- UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)
- Estuary Edges: Ecological Design Guidance (Environment Agency, 2011)

## 14. Protecting and managing our environment

### Introduction

**14.1** There is a pressing need to plan and manage growth and resources in a sustainable manner in a way that conserves, maintains and enhances the borough's environment. Sustainable growth requires careful stewardship of our resources (land, water and energy) to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, conserve water resources, protect biodiversity and mitigate flood risk.

**14.2** Despite its urban character, Tower Hamlets has areas of notable biodiversity value, including three Local Nature Reserves and 35 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. However, parts of the borough, including the City Fringe, Poplar and the western edge of the Isle of Dogs, are considered to be nature deficient<sup>50</sup>.

**14.3** Parts of the borough are at potential risk of flooding. Whilst the Thames Barrier and other flood defences currently provide effective protection, their continued maintenance, along with further investment in flood defences, is required. Climate change will also have an impact on flood risk and must be considered in order to mitigate the risk of flooding for the expected lifetime of a development. The borough also has a number of critical drainage areas which are at higher risk of surface water flooding. Despite this, London has lower rainfall than the national average, whilst having a very high population density. This combination has resulted in London being declared an area of serious water stress and this trend is likely to be exacerbated by climate change<sup>51</sup>.

**14.4** Carbon emissions in the borough have been falling steadily over recent years, but Tower Hamlets still produces the third highest level of total carbon dioxide emissions of all the boroughs in London <sup>52</sup>.

**14.5** The whole of the borough falls within an Air Quality Management Area (as shown on the Policies Map), parts of which exceed the World Health Organisation guideline limits and European Union safe legal limits / national air quality objectives on harmful pollutants.

**14.6** This section contains the following policies:

- Policy S.ES1: Protecting and enhancing our environment
- Policy D.ES2: Air quality
- Policy D.ES3: Urban greening and biodiversity
- Policy D.ES4: Flood risk
- Policy D.ES5: Sustainable drainage
- Policy D.ES6: Sustainable water and wastewater management
- Policy D.ES7: A zero carbon borough
- Policy D.ES8: Contaminated land and storage of hazardous substances
- Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration
- Policy D.ES10: Overheating.

<sup>50</sup> Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2017)

<sup>51</sup> Securing London's Water Future: The Mayor's Water Strategy (GLA, 2011)

<sup>52</sup> UK Local Authority and Regional Carbon Dioxide Emissions: 2005 – 2014 (National Statistics, 2016)

**Policy S.ES1****Protecting and enhancing our environment**

1. Proposals will be supported which minimise the use of natural resources and work proactively to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment, through:
  - a. reducing the areas of sub-standard air quality in the borough and contributing towards delivering the objectives of the latest Tower Hamlets Air Quality Action Plan
  - b. protecting and enhancing biodiversity, with the aim of meeting the objectives of the latest Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Thames River Basin Management Plan and improving opportunities to experience nature, in particular in deficient areas
  - c. using the sequential and exceptions tests to direct development away from high flood risk areas and reduce flood risk in the borough
  - d. reducing water use
  - e. following the energy hierarchy: be lean, be clean and be green
  - f. maximising climate change adaptation measures, and
  - g. improving water and land quality and mitigating the adverse effects of contaminated land on human health.

**Explanation**

**14.7** This policy seeks to protect and enhance the key aspects of the borough's environment in line with local, sub-regional, regional, national and international plans and programmes.

**14.8** Development plays a key role in improving air quality and reducing exposure to poor air quality. Areas of sub-standard air quality are areas where nitrogen dioxide levels exceed 40 micrograms per cubic meter of air ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ): the European Union legal limit / national air quality objectives. This includes areas in which the particulate (PM2.5) levels exceed 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  annual mean limits (World Health Organisation guideline limits). The Tower Hamlets Air Quality Action Plan identifies the ways in which development can improve air quality in the borough.

**14.9** The Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan identifies priority species and habitats to ensure the ongoing improvement of biodiversity across the borough. The Thames River Basin Management Plan sets out objectives to protect and enhance the water bodies in the basin/catchment. Part 1(b) of the policy ensures that development contributes to meeting the objectives of these plans. In addition, to address nature deficiency and deficiency of access to nature (areas shown on the Policies Map), we aim to maximise opportunities for biodiversity in and around developments in order to deliver a net gain in biodiversity and a range of wider environmental benefits.

**14.10** In recognition of the borough's areas of flood risk, more vulnerable development should be located away from areas of flood risk, as shown on the Policies Map. As part of our commitment to reducing the risk of flooding, we will work closely with national and regional bodies and neighbouring authorities to:

- a. Maintain and improve the existing flood defences
- b. Ensure effective emergency-planning practices are in place
- c. Keeping up-to-date information about flood risk in the borough



- d. Supporting the development of the Thames Tideway Tunnel and associated storm relief connections.

**14.11** Development must also address London's water stress by reducing water use.

**14.12** Development should aim to reduce carbon emissions and adhere to the principles of the energy hierarchy set out below.

- a. Be lean: use less energy
- b. Be clean: supply energy efficiently
- c. Be green: use renewable energy.

**14.13** New development (including buildings and the spaces between them) also needs to be planned, designed and constructed to respond to future anticipated changes in climate such as warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers and the risks associated with such changes: the urban heat island effect, heat waves, flooding and droughts. Further guidance can be found in the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014).

**14.14** Development must also consider and mitigate existing contamination as well as prevent any further contamination of water or land.

### Policy links

- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water spaces
- Policy D.OWS4: Water spaces
- Policy S.MW1: Managing our waste

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Air Quality Action Plan
- Tower Hamlets Biodiversity Action Plan (2015)
- Tower Hamlets Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Thames River Basin Management Plan (Environment Agency, 2015)
- Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)



**Policy D.ES2****Air quality**

1. Development is required to meet or exceed the 'air quality neutral' standard, including promoting the use of low or zero emission transport and reducing the reliance on private motor vehicles.
2. An air quality impact assessment, based on current best practice, is required as part of the planning application for:
  - a. Major developments
  - b. Developments which will require substantial earthworks or demolition
  - c. Developments which include education and health facilities or open space (including child play space), and
  - d. New build developments in areas of sub-standard air quality (as designated and shown on the Policies Map).
3. Where an air quality assessment indicates that a development will cause harm to air quality or where end users could be exposed to poor air quality, development will be resisted unless mitigation measures are adopted to reduce the impact to acceptable levels.
4. New build developments which propose to provide any private, communal, publicly accessible open space or child play space in areas of sub-standard air quality are required to demonstrate that they have considered the positioning and design of the open space to reduce exposure of future users to air pollution.

**Explanation**

**14.15** Improving the borough's air quality is one of our key priorities. Levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulates (PM10 and PM2.5) are of particular concern, due to their impacts on human health<sup>53</sup>. In parts of the borough, including the City Fringe and along all major roads, the levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulates (PM2.5 and PM 10) exceed World Health Organisation guideline limits and, in the case of nitrogen dioxide, European Union safe legal limits /national air quality objectives<sup>54</sup>. Poor air quality has well-evidenced significant adverse effects on health. Further guidance on the 'air quality neutral standard' is outlined in the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)<sup>55</sup>.

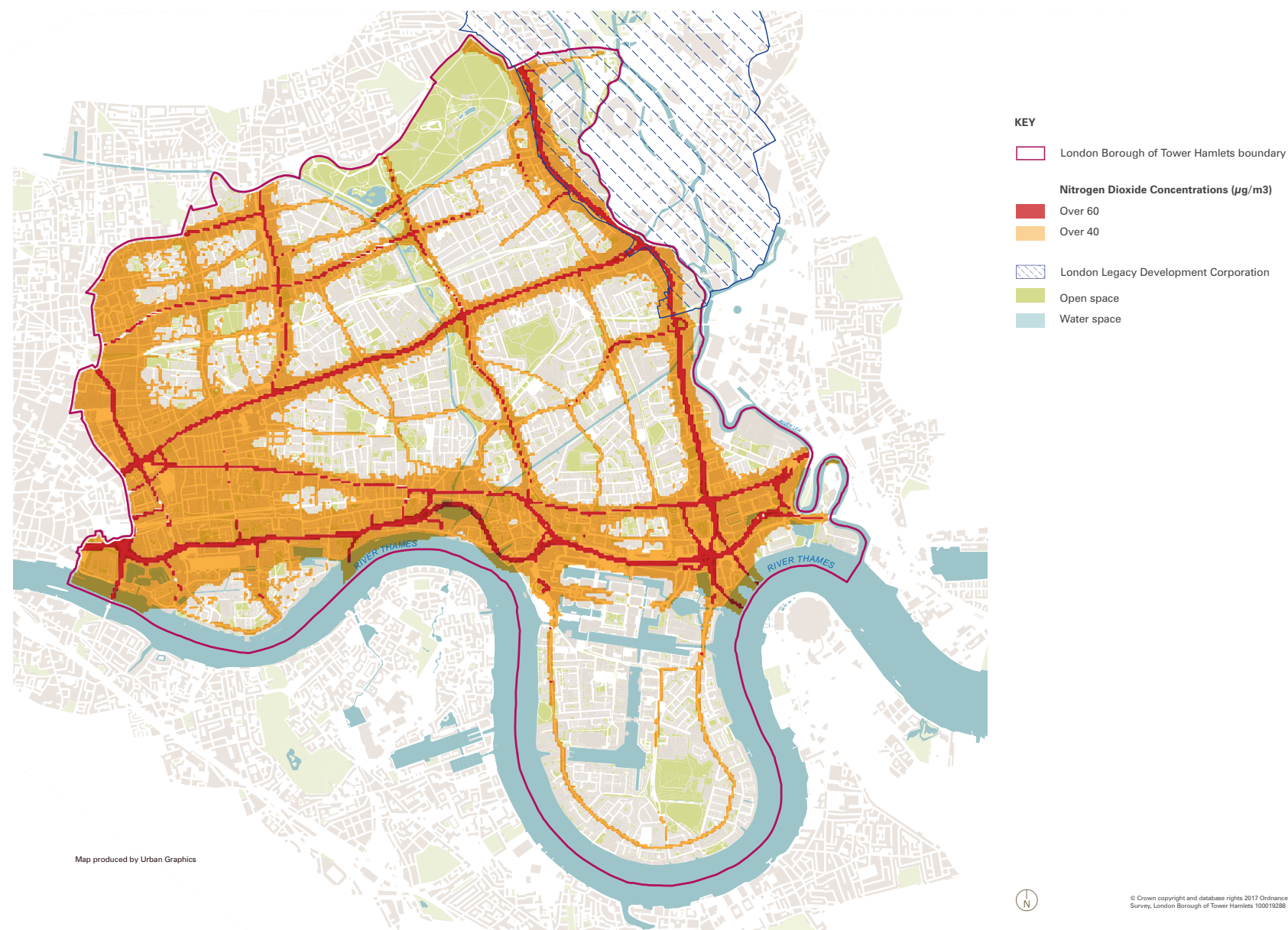
**14.16** In those parts of the borough where air quality is below European Union safe limits for nitrogen dioxide levels, particular focus will be placed on improving air quality, protecting users from the effects of poor air quality and protecting vulnerable uses, such as schools. Education uses covered under this policy are primary and secondary schools and does not include further or higher education facilities. Areas of sub-standard air quality refer to areas where nitrogen dioxide levels exceeding 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (the European Union legal limit / national air quality objectives). This includes areas in which the particulates (PM2.5) levels exceed 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> annual mean levels (World Health Organisation guideline limits) as identified on the Policies Map and Figure 14. Please note: air quality fluctuates and applications should be guided by the latest available monitoring data.

<sup>53</sup> Tower Hamlets Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Strategic Planning and Health (2016)

<sup>54</sup> Tower Hamlets Air Quality Annual Status Summary Report (2016)

<sup>55</sup> Please note: Part 1 does not apply to infrastructure projects, such as road schemes.

**Figure 14: Areas of substandard air quality in Tower Hamlets**





**14.17** The air quality assessment must consider the potential impacts of pollution from the development on occupants of the site and neighbouring areas during construction and operational phases. It should also consider the cumulative impact of surrounding developments. Cumulative impacts should be considered for developments occurring in a one kilometre radius. The air quality assessment and the construction management plan should contain details of compliance with European emissions standards. Proposals that would give rise to diffuse air pollution must consider the potential for effects on European sites of nature conservation importance, in particular Epping Forest.

**14.18** The air quality assessment must also outline the measures to mitigate any adverse effects during construction or operation. This could include:

- a. Reducing vehicular traffic levels
- b. Encouraging sustainable movement patterns
- c. Methods of carrying out construction
- d. Actions to reduce emissions throughout the lifetime of the building
- e. Reducing emissions from associated plant equipment
- f. Improving or greening the public realm
- g. Ensuring decentralised energy facilities do not contribute to poor air quality.

**14.19** Under Parts 3 and 4, mitigation measures to reduce people's exposure to poor air quality could include the following (in order of priority):

- a. Maximising distance from pollutant source (the recommended distance would be over 50 metres from the pollution source)
- b. Considering proven ventilation systems
- c. Parking considerations (in accordance with our transport policies set out in S.TR1 and D.TR3)
- d. The use of winter gardens, instead of balconies
- e. Internal layout and minimising internal pollutant emissions.

## Policy links

- Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments
- Policy D.SG4: Planning and construction of new development
- Policy S.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm
- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities
- Policy D.CF3: New community facilities
- Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy D.ES7: A zero carbon borough
- Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel
- Policy D.TR3: Parking and permit-free
- Policy D.TR4: Sustainable transportation of freight

## Evidence links

- Land-use Planning and Development Control: Planning for Air Quality (Institute of Air Quality Management, 2017)
- London Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (GLA, 2016)
- Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction (Institute of Air Quality Management, 2014)
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 Environmental Assessment (Highways Agency, 2012)



**Policy D.ES3****Urban greening and biodiversity**

1. Development is required to protect and enhance biodiversity, through:
  - a. maximising the provision of 'living building' elements
  - b. retaining existing habitats and features of biodiversity value or, if this is not possible, replacing them within the development, as well as incorporating additional measures to enhance biodiversity, proportionate to the development proposed, and
  - c. protecting and increasing the provision of trees, through:
    - i. protecting all trees, including street trees
    - ii. incorporating native trees, wherever possible
    - iii. providing replacement trees, including street trees, where the loss of or impact on trees in a development is considered acceptable.
2. Major development is required to submit an ecology assessment demonstrating biodiversity enhancements that contribute to the objectives of the latest Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the Thames River Basin Management Plan.
3. Planting and landscaping around developments must not include 'potentially invasive non-native species'. Invasive non-native species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act must be controlled, and eradicated where possible, as part of redevelopment.
4. Development must not negatively impact on any designated European site such as Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation or Ramsar sites. Developments which might have the potential to adversely impact a Special Protection Area or Special Area of Conservation outside the borough will be required to submit a Habitat Regulations Assessment.
5. Developments which affect a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, or significantly harm the population or conservation status of a protected or priority species, are required to be managed in accordance with the following hierarchy:
  - a. Adverse impacts to the biodiversity interest should be avoided.
  - b. Where avoidance is not possible, proposals must minimise and mitigate the impact to the biodiversity interest.
  - c. As a last resort for exceptional cases where the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the biodiversity impacts, appropriate compensation will be sought.
  - d. Where appropriate compensation is not possible, planning permission will be refused.

## Explanation

**14.20** Tower Hamlets has a diverse range of sites of biodiversity value, including areas of open space, waterways and formally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). Living building elements enhance biodiversity, both directly through planting and indirectly through providing habitats<sup>56</sup>. They also have flood reduction, climatic and air quality benefits, helping to remove carbon dioxide from the air and reduce temperatures.

**14.21** In implementing Part 1(a) 'living building' elements need to contribute to local biodiversity through providing priority habitats, and/or features for priority species, as identified in the latest Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The types of 'living building' techniques we consider appropriate include living roofs, walls, terraces and other building greening techniques. 'Living building' elements should also be considered alongside the sustainable urban drainage requirements outlined in Policy D.ES5, and green grid requirements outlined in Policies S.OWS1 and D.OWS3. Providing living building elements is considered particularly beneficial in areas of sub-standard air quality or in areas at particular risk of experiencing the urban heat island effect. The risk of experiencing the 'heat-island' effect should be considered over the lifetime of the development. Details of ongoing maintenance of the 'living building' elements will also be required.

**14.22** According to the London Climate Change Partnership, areas at particular risk of experiencing the urban heat island effect include the following:

- a. Areas of green space deficiency (see Figure 13). This includes developments within identified areas of deficiency of access to nature

- b. Areas of high density development with clusters of tall buildings. This includes developments within identified Tall Building Zones (see Policy D.DH6)
- c. Areas experiencing high levels of pollution. This includes developments within identified areas of sub-standard air quality (as shown on the Policies Map and Figure 14).

**14.23** In implementing Part 1(b), consideration will be given to the size, scale and nature of the development and whether an appropriate level of provision is proposed. Even minor development, such as rear extensions, have the ability to provide biodiversity measures through items such as living roofs, walls and habitat structures (e.g. bat and bird boxes).

**14.24** The latest Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan should give details of priority habitats and/or features for priority species (see Parts 1 and 2). Features of biodiversity or ecological value include:

- a. Linear corridors, such as watercourses, hedgerows and buffer zones
- b. Veteran trees
- c. Old hedges
- d. Habitats or species identified as local<sup>57</sup>, London<sup>58</sup> or national<sup>59</sup> priorities, and features which might support such species.

Where geographically relevant, the Thames River Basin Management Plan objectives should also be incorporated.

**14.25** Due to the environmental importance of trees, at least a 'one-for-one' replacement rate is required for any trees affected by a development (see Part 1). Where we are convinced these cannot be incorporated on site, we will consider the provision of a replacement tree on a suitable site, as close to the development as possible. We will also expect developments to incorporate additional trees, wherever

<sup>56</sup> Tower Hamlet Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2015)

<sup>57</sup> Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2015)

<sup>58</sup> London Biodiversity Action Plan (GLA, 2007)

<sup>59</sup> Species of Principal Importance in England identified under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2016)

possible. Their location must be carefully considered to ensure there is no adverse impact on overshadowing, wind effects, air quality, ecology or flood risk. Where trees are proposed along the river corridor, their positioning must be carefully considered to ensure there are no adverse impacts on ecology or flood risk. A buffer of at least five metres is suggested between the bank and tree. We will take a 'right tree for the right site' approach which takes account of historic context, availability of space, soil conditions, wildlife value, potential improvements to air and soil quality, provision of shade and reducing the effects of and adapting to climate change. This will need to be evidenced in the ecology assessment.

**14.26** 'Potentially invasive non-native species' include plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and plants identified as species of concern by the London Invasive Species Initiative. In addition, planting schemes should be selected according to their suitability for local growing conditions (soil, temperature ranges, rainfall, sunlight and shade), their ability to attract wildlife (e.g. nectar rich planting) and to conserve water. Planting along river corridors should only include native species. This will need to be evidenced in the ecology statement.

**14.27** Part 4 seeks to protect the integrity of any European or nationally designated site of nature conservation importance. There are no such sites within Tower Hamlets, but development may have the potential to adversely impact sites beyond its boundary – such as the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and the Lea Valley Special Protection Area - through air pollution and/or increased visitor pressure. Where the application is of such a scale, location or nature as to potentially have such an effect on a European site, applicants should seek advice from Natural England as to whether a Habitat Regulations Assessment

would be required. The assessment will need to demonstrate that the development will not adversely impact on the integrity of the European site. Proposals will be resisted where they will have significant adverse impact on European sites.

**14.28** Part 5 seeks to protect locally designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and important species. The presence of protected species is a material planning consideration where a development is likely to result in harm to a habitat or species. Priority species are those identified in the Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Species of Conservation Concern in London and Species of Principal Importance in England, as identified under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act. If a SINC or a protected or priority species is likely to be affected, an ecology assessment will be required. The ecology assessment should include:

- a. Information assessing the characteristics and situation of the site
- b. Details on how the proposals will protect, replace and enhance existing biodiversity on the proposed site, including measures for wildlife habitats and features aimed at particular species.

**14.29** Applications should also detail how recommendations are being included in the development proposals. Should the ecology assessment indicate an adverse impact on the biodiversity interest of the site, this will be managed using the hierarchical approach outlined in Part 4. Should compensation be sought, it would be at the level required to adequately offset the impact on the SINC or protected/priority species, through the provision of an alternative site or habitat.



## Policy links

- Policy D.DH8: Amenity
- Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality
- Policy S.OSW1: Creating a network of open spaces
- Policy S.OSW2: Enhancing the network of water spaces
- Policy D.OSW3: Open space and green grid network
- Policy D.OSW4: Water spaces

## Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2015)
- Tower Hamlets Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- London Biodiversity Action Plan (GLA, 2007)





**Policy D.ES4****Flood risk**

1. Development is required to be located in areas suitable for the vulnerability level of the proposed uses with:
  - a. highly vulnerable uses not allowed within flood zone 3a
  - b. essential infrastructure and more vulnerable uses within flood zone 3a required to pass the exception test, and
  - c. highly vulnerable uses within flood zone 2 required to pass the exception test.
2. Development is required to provide a flood risk assessment if it meets any of the following criteria:
  - a. The development site is over 1 hectare in size within flood zone 1
  - b. The site is within flood zones 2 or 3a
  - c. The development may be subject to other sources of flooding, as defined in the Tower Hamlets Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
3. The flood risk assessment should include:
  - a. A sequential test if the development is in flood zone 2 or 3
  - b. The risks of both on and off-site flooding to and from the development for all sources of flooding including fluvial, tidal, surface run-off, groundwater, ordinary watercourse, sewer and reservoir
  - c. An assessment of tidal risk in the event of a breach in the River Thames defences
  - d. The impact of climate change using the latest government guidance
  - e. Demonstration of safe access and egress, and
  - f. Mitigation measures, taking account of the advice and recommendations set out in the Tower Hamlets Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
4. Site design of development which meets criteria outlined in Part 2 above is required to:
  - a. undertake a sequential approach to development layout to direct highest vulnerability uses to areas of the site with lowest flood risk, and
  - b. incorporate flood resilience and/or resistance measures.
5. Development is required to protect and where possible increase the capacity of existing water spaces and flood storage areas to retain water.
6. Development is required to enable effective flood risk management through:
  - a. requiring development along the River Thames and the River Lea and its tributaries to be set back by the following distances unless significant constraints are evidenced:
    - i. A minimum of a 16-metre buffer strip along a tidal river, and
    - ii. A minimum of a 8-metre buffer strip along a fluvial river.
  - b. optimising opportunities to realign or set back defences and improve the riverside frontage to provide amenity space and environmental enhancement.

## Explanation

**14.30** Large parts of Tower Hamlets, including the Isle of Dogs and Lower Lea Valley, are in medium to high risk flood areas (zones 2 and 3a). The flood risk zones are shown on the Policies Map and Figure 15. New development must not increase the risk of flooding and must provide mitigation measures to reduce their impact on flood risk, including enabling the repair and further delivery of flood defences.

**14.31** For Parts 1 and 4 of the policy, the vulnerability of uses is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework and are contained in the latest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Highly vulnerable uses include a self-contained basement without internal access to the upper floors above breach level. More vulnerable uses include a basement with access to upper floors above the breach level. All basement developments are required to conduct a basement impact assessment to demonstrate that proposals safeguard structural stability, are safe from a flood risk perspective, and will not have any adverse impacts on local hydrogeology. It should take account of the guidance provided in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

**14.32** In order to address Parts 2 and 3, the flood risk assessment should also:

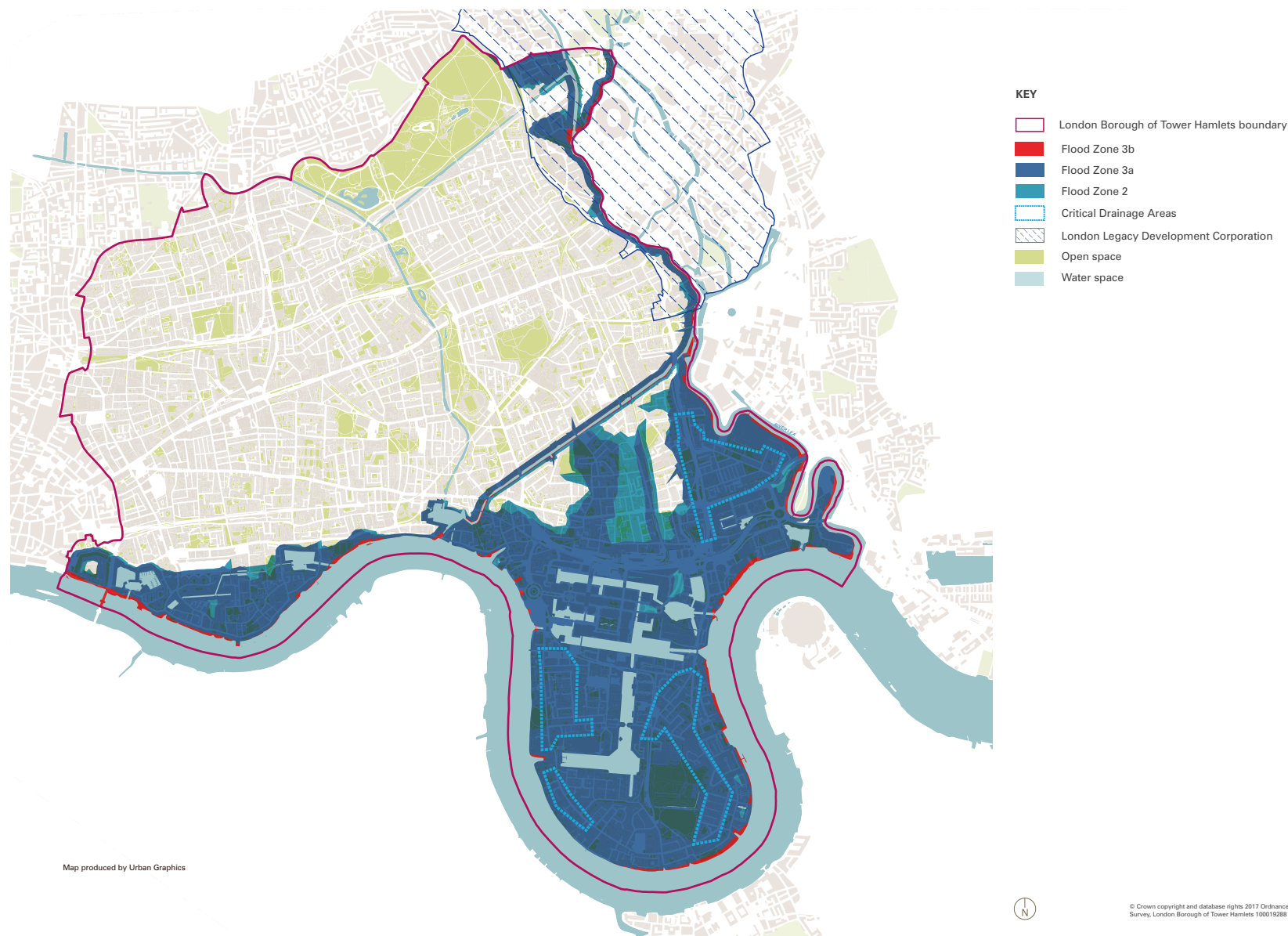
- a. be proportionate with the degree of flood risk that the proposed development is exposed to and may exacerbate
- b. consider the cumulative impact of existing and future development, and
- c. demonstrate where adjacent to flood defences that development will safeguard and maintain the existing flood defences over its lifetime.

**14.33** Developments within site allocations (see Section 4) which seek to deliver their allocated use do not have to undertake a sequential test, even if the site is in flood zone 2 or 3, as required under Part 3(a)<sup>60</sup>.

**14.34** Flood resistance refers to constructing a building in such a way as to prevent floodwater entering the building and damaging its fabric. Flood resilience refers to constructing a building in such a way that, although flood water may enter the building, its impact is minimised (i.e. no permanent damage is caused, structural integrity is maintained and drying and cleaning are facilitated).

**14.35** Part 5 should also be considered alongside Policy D.OWS4. The requirement to include an adequate buffer zone (see Part 6) between waterways and developments applies to main rivers only (as identified in the Tower Hamlets Strategic Flood Risk Assessment). It is to enable sustainable and cost effective flood risk management, including upgrading of river walls and embankments.

<sup>60</sup> The sequential test has already been undertaken in the Tower Hamlets Site Allocation Sequential and Exceptions Tests (2017).

**Figure 15: Flood zones in Tower Hamlets**

**14.36** Where the preferred level of setback is unachievable, current and future flood risk must be alleviated to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency and through consideration of the specific recommendations of the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan. This can include:

- a. Raising existing flood defences to the required levels in preparation for future climate change impacts or otherwise demonstrating how tidal flood defences can be raised in the future, through submission of plans and cross-sections of the proposed raising (in particular to demonstrate that the development does not preclude future raising of the defence in line with the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan)
- b. Demonstrating improved access to existing flood defences and safeguarding land for future flood defence raising and landscape, amenity and habitat improvements
- c. Maintaining, enhancing or replacing flood defences to provide adequate protection for the lifetime of the development
- d. Where opportunities exist, re-aligning or setting back flood defence walls and improving the river frontage to provide amenity space, habitat, access and environmental enhancements
- e. Requiring the delivery of flood risk management infrastructure and/or improvement measures that mitigate directly related impacts from the development, where these have been identified in the Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

**14.37** These setback requirements can also contribute towards opportunities for public access and recreation, as outlined in Policy S.OWS1.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy S.DH3: Heritage and the historic environment
- Policy D.H5: Gypsies and travellers accommodation
- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing a network of water spaces
- Policy D.OWS4: Water spaces

### Evidence links

- Tower Hamlets Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Tower Hamlets Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2015)
- Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Thames Estuary 2100 (Environment Agency, 2011)





**Policy D.ES5****Sustainable drainage**

1. Development is required to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, through demonstrating how it reduces the amount of water run-off and discharge from the site through the use of appropriate water reuse and sustainable drainage systems techniques.
2. Major development is required to submit a drainage strategy which should demonstrate that surface water will be controlled as near to its source as possible in line with the sustainable drainage systems hierarchy.
3. Development is required to achieve the following run-off rates:
  - a. New development in critical drainage areas is required to achieve a greenfield run-off rate and volume leaving the site
  - b. All other development should seek to achieve greenfield run-off rate and volume leaving the site. Where this is not possible, the minimum expectation is to achieve at least 50% attenuation of the site's surface water run-off at peak times prior to re-development.

**Explanation**

**14.38** A further source of flood risk is from surface water flooding. This arises following periods of intense rainfall when the volume and intensity of a rainfall event exceeds the capacity of the drainage system, resulting in localised flooding. Current critical drainage areas in the borough are in the Isle of Dogs, with other smaller areas of high surface water flood risk found throughout the borough. These are shown on the Policies Map and Figure 15.

**14.39** In order to reduce the amount of water being discharged from sites, this policy requires development to reduce the run-off from hard surfacing. When assessing the requirements of this policy consideration will be given to the size, scale and nature of the development and whether relative provision has been made. Even minor development (e.g. rear extensions) have the ability to provide sustainable drainage measures.

**14.40** Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the requirements for sustainable urban drainage systems at the earliest opportunity, as this will enable their more effective integration and provision. Sustainable urban drainage systems should also be considered alongside the 'living building' requirements outlined in Policy D.ES3, and green grid requirements outlined in Policy S.OSW1, as sustainable urban drainage systems can also have biodiversity and urban greening benefits.

**14.41** Applicants should demonstrate that they have considered different types of sustainable urban drainage systems, their ability to remove pollutants, their capacity and future maintenance.

**14.42** In order to satisfy the requirements within Parts 1 and 2, all major developments will be required to submit a drainage strategy alongside the original planning application. All other relevant developments will also be strongly encouraged to do so.

**14.43** Surface water reduction and the required run-off rates should be achieved by following the sustainable urban drainage systems hierarchy, which is outlined in more detail in the London Plan.

**14.44** Infiltration sustainable urban drainage systems techniques should only dispose of clean roof water into clean, uncontaminated ground. They should not be used for foul discharges or trade effluent, and may not be suitable within source protection zone 1<sup>61</sup>.

### Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water spaces
- Policy D.OWS4: Water spaces

### Evidence links

- Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014)
- Tower Hamlets Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- District Heating Manual for London (GLA, 2014)

## Policy D.ES6

### Sustainable water and wastewater management

1. Development is required to reduce water consumption: new residential developments must achieve a maximum water use of 105 litres per person per day and refurbishments and other non-domestic development should meet BREEAM water efficiency credits.
2. New development is required to minimise the pressure on the combined sewer network.
3. Major development is required to demonstrate that the local water supply and public sewerage networks have adequate capacity both on and off-site to serve the development, taking into consideration the cumulative impact of current and proposed development.

<sup>61</sup> The Environment Agency has defined source protection zones: these are available to view from their website.

## Explanation

**14.45** London is an area of serious water stress<sup>62</sup>. Developments should therefore seek to reduce the pressure on the fresh and waste water systems through increasing water efficiency. In recognition of this, Part 1 requires all new residential developments to meet the national higher standard of 105 litres per person per day. BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) applies to non-residential developments, residential development arising from conversions and changes of use. This method provides a holistic assessment of the environmental sustainability of a development.

**14.46** Measures to achieve Parts 1 and 2 could include the installation of water efficient fittings and appliances (which can help reduce energy consumption as well as water consumption) and by capturing and re-using rain water and grey water on site. Major developments and high or intense water use developments, such as hotels, hostels and student housing, should include a grey water and rainwater harvesting system. Where such a system is not feasible or practical, development must demonstrate to our satisfaction that this is the case. Developments are expected to submit a water efficiency calculator to demonstrate how they have met this requirement.

**14.47** In relation to Part 3, major development (as defined in the glossary in Appendix 1) is required to demonstrate that there is adequate capacity both on and off site to serve the development. Developers should contact Thames Water as early as possible (preferably in advance of the submission of a planning application) to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements in order for Thames Water to undertake the necessary upgrades. Where there is a capacity constraint phasing conditions may be applied to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.

<sup>62</sup> Water Stressed Area – Final Classification (Environment Agency, 2013)

## Policy links

- Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design
- Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water spaces
- Policy D.OWS4: Water spaces

## Evidence links

- Water Stressed Area – Final Classification (Environment Agency, 2013)

**Policy D.ES7****A zero carbon borough**

1. Development is required to meet the carbon dioxide emission reduction standards as set out below.

Residential development	
Year	Improvement on the 2013 building regulations
2016-2031	Zero carbon (to be achieved through a minimum 45% reduction in regulated carbon dioxide emissions on-site and the remaining regulated carbon dioxide emissions to 100% - to be off-set through a cash in lieu contribution)

Non-residential development	
Year	Improvement on the 2013 building regulations
2016-2019	45% regulated carbon dioxide emissions reduction
2019-2031	Zero carbon (to be achieved through a minimum 45% reduction in regulated carbon dioxide emissions and the remaining regulated carbon dioxide emissions to 100% - to be off-set through a cash in lieu contribution)

2. Development is required to maximise energy efficiency based on the following standards:
  - a. All new non-residential development over 500 square metres floorspace (gross) are expected to meet or exceed BREEAM 'excellent' rating

- b. All major non-residential refurbishment of existing buildings and conversions over 500 square metres floorspace (gross) must meet at least BREEAM non-domestic refurbishment 'excellent' rating
  - c. As a minimum, all self-contained residential proposals will be strongly encouraged to meet the Home Quality Mark.
3. Major residential and major non-residential development will be required to submit an energy assessment. Minor non-residential development will be strongly encouraged to prepare an assessment.
4. The energy assessment should demonstrate how the development has been designed in accordance with the energy hierarchy and how it will:
  - a. maximise energy efficiency as per the requirements set out in Part 2
  - b. outline the feasibility of low nitrogen dioxide decentralised energy, and
  - c. seek to provide up to 20% reduction of carbon dioxide emissions through on-site renewable energy generation.
5. The sustainable retrofitting of existing development with provisions for the reduction of carbon emissions will be supported.



## Explanation

**14.48** In order to contribute towards the London Plan target of a 60% reduction of carbon emissions (below the 1990 level) by 2025, Tower Hamlets needs to reduce carbon dioxide emissions per person significantly more than most other London boroughs. Currently, Tower Hamlets is the third worst performing borough within London<sup>63</sup>. Since 2010, Tower Hamlets has only achieved a 22% reduction against this target<sup>64</sup>. This policy maintains our long term trajectory which has required progressive reductions in carbon emissions from developments. This follows the London Plan's approach and is endorsed in the Housing Strategic Planning Guidance (GLA, 2016)<sup>65</sup>.

**14.49** Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the policy seek to ensure that all new developments (including non-residential development) in Tower Hamlets contribute towards reducing carbon emissions. The policy also recognises that on-site carbon reductions have a greater impact on reducing carbon emissions than contributions in lieu. Funds raised through carbon offsetting (e.g. retrofitting) are spent on priorities outlined in the Tower Hamlets Carbon Offset Study (2016), as supported in part 4. Further information on carbon offsetting is available in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

**14.50** In relation to Part 1, the improvements in carbon dioxide emission reductions within new build developments are based on building regulations requirements. Should the building regulations be updated during the lifetime of this plan, we will provide an update on the onsite reduction standards required. The requirement to reach zero carbon will remain. For refurbishment schemes, the baseline should be determined by modelling using building regulation compliance software to determine a building emission rate/dwelling emission rate of the regulated carbon dioxide emissions from the existing building before refurbishment<sup>66</sup>.

**14.51** Energy assessments should be informed by preliminary standard assessment procedures for residential developments or the national calculation method for non-residential development. Energy assessments should detail the measures included in the development and the carbon dioxide emission savings achieved at the time of implementing the relevant planning permission. To ensure we achieve our sustainability objectives, energy assessments for non-major development will also be sought.

**14.52** In relation to Part 2, developments should consider how the design, layout, orientation, insulation materials and other sustainable construction techniques can contribute towards maximising energy efficiency.

**14.53** In addition, developments should implement at least the minimum standards set out in BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) which applies to non-residential developments, non-self-contained housing and residential development arising from conversions and changes of use. This method provides a holistic assessment of the environmental sustainability of a development. The Home Quality Mark is one way of demonstrating the standard of a new residential dwelling, which includes measures for low carbon dioxide, sustainable materials, good air quality and natural daylight. We strongly encourage schemes to use the Home Quality Mark. Developments which are unable to meet these standards must provide evidence demonstrating the constraints and provide an alternative assessment against the requirements in the GLA's Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance. If BREEAM/Home Quality Mark/Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance is replaced or amended during the lifetime of the plan, the equivalent replacement requirements will be applied, subject to discussion with our sustainability service.

<sup>63</sup> UK Local Authority and Regional Carbon Dioxide Emissions 2005 – 2014 (National Statistics, 2016)

<sup>64</sup> Tower Hamlets Carbon Policy Evidence Base (2016)

<sup>65</sup> The importance and viability of this approach has been detailed in the Tower Hamlets Carbon Policy Evidence Base (2016).

<sup>66</sup> The implementation dates for the requirements in Part 1 are from 1 October 2016 for residential developments and from 1 October 2019 for non-residential developments.