





Tower Hamlets Water Space Study

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Final Report
Prepared by LUC in association with Marina Projects
September 2017

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Tower Hamlets Water Space Study

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council

Final Report
Prepared by LUC in association with Marina Projects
September 2017

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1 Introduction

1.1 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets commissioned LUC and Marina Projects to prepare this Water Spaces Study for the Borough. The Study considers the Borough's extensive water spaces, drawing attention to their historic and current uses and future potential. It will inform a wide range of Council-led and other initiatives relating to the use and management of water spaces. However, the main focus of this Study is to support the Council in its planning functions. This includes:

- Highlighting water space opportunities that can be incorporated into the emerging Local Plan;
- Defining the recommendations for development adjacent to water spaces, in order to conserve and enhance these important assets; and
- Identifying the need for new infrastructure to support water-related recreation and other access to the water.

Why are the Borough's Water Spaces important?

1.2 Tower Hamlets has more waterside than any other London borough, due to its location on the Thames and its historic role at the heart of the London docklands. The borough's water spaces vary considerably in character and function, ranging from the green leafy corridors of the Hertford Union and Regent's Canals, to the post-industrial landscape of the docks. These docks were a centre for shipbuilding and were, and remain so today, a centre for trade. Water sports activity centres are also present in the Borough and the wide exposed River Thames borders its south, with its fast moving boats and long views across London. Despite the varying character of the water spaces, all are invaluable parts of the Borough's heritage. They tell the story of the evolution of the 24 hamlets that give the Borough its name. This is reflected in the way the water spaces are at the core of many of the Borough's Conservation Areas and their key features listed. The waterways provide important linkages between key areas of London and their associated health and recreation opportunities, such as Lee Valley Park, the Greenway and Central London. The cooling effect of waterways also helps the Borough's microclimate.

1.3 The presence of water spaces has contributed to the regeneration of many parts of the Borough since the 1980s, most notably Canary Wharf. Despite this, the enhancement of the waterways themselves has been limited. Future regeneration and investment in the Borough should seek to enhance these important spaces, to allow their use for transport, recreation and leisure where there is current demand, and to protect them in anticipation of potential future need. In an area as urban as Tower Hamlets, with extensive regeneration underway and the scale of new buildings ever increasing, the water spaces offer important respite for both people and wildlife. They create appealing destinations for recreation and leisure, and there is great potential to utilise the waterside to increase appeal to visitors.

Purpose of this Study

1.4 The aim of the Water Space Study is to highlight opportunities to enhance the water spaces of Tower Hamlets, with regard to:

- Access and leisure;
- Recreation which utilises water spaces;
- Heritage;
- Biodiversity; and
- Sustainable transport.

The Vision for Tower Hamlets' Water Spaces

Tower Hamlets' valuable and unique water spaces will be protected and enhanced to provide opportunities for leisure, recreation and general enjoyment. The heritage of the waterways and their surroundings will be enhanced and celebrated. Existing biodiversity assets will be protected, new habitats created, and public access to nature increased. Enhanced access to waterways and improved transport infrastructure will facilitate increased water-based recreation as well as commuting opportunities. Waterways and surrounding new developments will enhance safety and public access, as well as deliver high quality, sustainable design.

Middle Dock.

Source: Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre.

Millwall Outer Dock.

Millwall Outer Dock.

Source: Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre.

Shadwell Basin.

Water spaces: a summary of the benefits

Social

Health and Well-being

Water spaces can have important health benefits for local communities, providing for leisure activities and exercise. They also offer mental health benefits by providing open space for activity and relaxation. Water space towpaths contribute to walking and cycling networks.

Social Capital

Water spaces contribute to increased leisure opportunities, well-being, culture, volunteering and educational benefits. These activities have important benefits in community development, bringing together people from different backgrounds in the enjoyment of these water spaces.

Economic

Leisure and tourism

Water spaces have the potential to generate high levels of recreational use contributing to the local economy. For example via pubs, cafes, accommodation and water sports can contribute to the local economy.

Commercial developments

Water spaces provide an attractive setting for both sensitive new development and restoration of historic buildings. As well as the impact on the local economy, restorations can often bring increased vitality to local centres by boosting the numbers of visitors and the attractiveness of areas.

Transport

By the utilisation of towpaths as a means of travel, water spaces can contribute to reduced traffic congestion and improved air quality through reduced car use. In suitable locations, waterways can be utilised for the movement of building materials and other cargo, supporting regeneration.

Environmental

Water management

Water spaces can contribute to flood management, and increase drainage in the surrounding area. Waterways are often used to assist in mitigating flood risk for new and existing development. They act as an important channel for flood alleviation and the disposal of surface water run-off.

Biodiversity

Within urban areas such as London, water spaces often act as important wildlife corridors. Water spaces will often provide opportunities to create new habitats including reed-beds and marginal plants, benefitting the nation's much-loved species such as water voles, otters and kingfishers.

Urban Cooling

Water Spaces also provide urban cooling benefits, improving the urban environment for people and wildlife.

Sources:
Canal and River Trust (2017): West India Docks
Canal and River Trust and The Inland Waterways Association (2014) Highlighting the impact of the restoration of our waterways
Canal and River Trust and University of the Northampton (2014) A review of the impact of waterway restoration
The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (2016) Mental Health Benefits Of Waterways The Centre For Sustainable Healthcare For The Canal & River Trust
Town and Country Planning Association, with the support of British Waterways (2009) Policy Advice Note: Inland Waterways Unlocking the Potential and Securing the Future of Inland Waterways through the Planning System

Scope of the Study

1.6 As noted above, the Study seeks to inform the planning and development process in the Borough. It does not cover all management issues affecting water spaces.

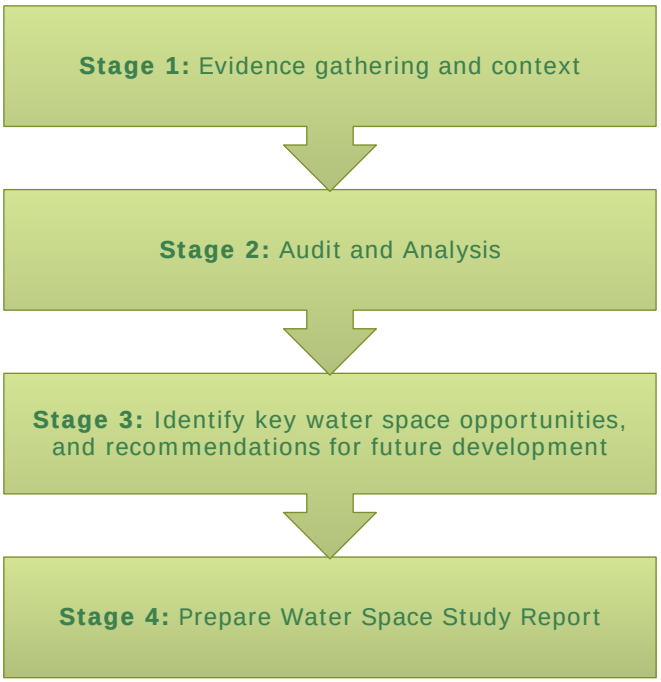
1.7 The Study provides:

- an assessment of the character and quality of the Borough's water spaces
- an assessment of the key challenges which need to be addressed to deliver the benefits of water spaces across the Borough
- mapped evidence base to ensure water space opportunities are integrated within the emerging Local Plan
- an assessment of the need for water space enhancement in light of likely future development
- an indication of where water space enhancement should be a priority, to encourage the main functions listed above
- information on suitable locations for specific waterway support infrastructure, to facilitate appropriate uses of water spaces

1.8 The Study also includes recommendations on mechanisms to deliver water space enhancements, including through new development.

Methodology / Stages of work undertaken

1.9 The approach to the study and key stages is outlined below. The method involved extensive desk based research, mapped data layers, visits to all the Borough's water spaces, and consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Canal and River Trust, Port of London Authority and Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. More detail is provided in **Appendix 2**.



2 Key issues for Tower Hamlets' water spaces

Context

Character of Tower Hamlets water spaces

2.1 Tower Hamlets has an extensive network of water spaces (see **Figure 2.1**). Nineteen main water spaces are considered in this study. In addition to this, there are a number of smaller water spaces present, such as ponds and small lakes, which are not considered due to their small size and limited associated functions.

2.2 The Borough is bounded by the River Thames to the South and River Lea to the East. Numerous canals extend through the Borough: the Regent's Canal, Hertford Union Canal, Limehouse Cut, and River Lea Navigation. There are many docks located around the Isle of Dogs and a number of basins. These predominantly connect to the River Thames by lock gates.

2.3 The Borough's water spaces are used for a variety of purposes. Moorings for residential boats are present in many locations across Tower Hamlets and the number of such boats on waterways across London is increasing[1]. The canals are used recreationally for kayaking and rowing and their towpaths used for walking and cycling, with the Sustrans National Cycle Route running along the Lea Navigation and parts of the Hertford Union and Regent's Canals. The banks of the rivers bounding the Borough are also used for walking and cycling, with parts of the River Thames lined by the Sustrans National Cycle Route and the Thames Path. The River Thames is also used for sailing, canoeing and rowing, as well as public transport via the Thames Clipper, and freight transport. The basins connected to the River Thames are predominantly used for boat moorings, and Millwall Dock and Shadwell Basin are used by watersports centres for kayaking, canoeing and other recreational activities.

2.4 With the exception of West India South Dock, the majority of docks on the Isle of Dogs are unused for docking larger vessels. Many host a few moorings and jetties for houseboats and yachts. Pathways around the docks are used for walking and some have active frontage for waterside amenities such as eateries and benches surrounding Canary Wharf.

2.5 The water spaces within the Borough also represent significant heritage assets. All of the Borough canals and adjacent rivers are at least partially within Conservation Areas and Regent's Canal and Limehouse Cut are designated as Conservation Areas themselves.

2.6 All of the water spaces within the Borough represent significant biodiversity assets and are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

2.7 A number of issues are currently affecting the water spaces in Tower Hamlets, including issues regarding access, recreational opportunities, waterside development, water quality and biodiversity, as well as threats caused by climate change. Furthermore, there are many opportunities to enhance these water spaces to improve access, recreational opportunities, transport opportunities, biodiversity and waterside infrastructure, which are presented in **Section 3**. The characterisation of all of the Borough's water spaces has been completed as part of this Study, and is provided in **Appendix 2**.

[1] Cana; & River Trust: Hundreds of boats used as homes in London as numbers Soar (December 2016): https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/original/30911-hundreds-of-boats-used-as-homes-in-london-as-numbers-soar.pdf

National Policy

2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[2] considers areas of water, such as canals and rivers, as open space. It highlights that such open space makes an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Therefore, planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open spaces and such spaces should not be built on.

2.9 The NPPF highlights the issues facing water spaces caused by climate change; flooding, water stress and biodiversity and landscape impacts. The NPPF also highlights the issue of water quality and pollution and indicates that opportunities for climate change adaption and water pollution prevention should be pursued. The NPPF also indicates that local planning authorities should make provision of water space infrastructure, such as for transport, and should safeguard existing, planned and potential wharfage.

London-wide policy

2.10 The London Plan[3] specifically recognises the quality of life benefits of waterways, such as by providing leisure and amenity benefits, and enhancing London's natural environment. The plan indicates that new development should protect and enhance the waterways within London. It also highlights that strategies should identify areas of deficiency and the actions needed to address these for:

- water-based passenger, tourism and freight transport;
- water-based sport and leisure;
- access and safety provision;
- marine support facilities; and
- infrastructure and moorings.

2.11 The London Plan also highlights the issues facing water spaces caused by water pollution and its impact upon the ecological status of water bodies. It highlights the need for local planning authorities to reduce such impacts including biodiversity restoration, protection and enhancement, as well as increasing awareness of biodiversity and issues affecting water spaces.

2.12 The London Plan highlights the need for enhancement of the 'Blue Ribbon Network' across London, and includes policies to:

- promote its restoration;
- protect its open character;
- increase habitat value; and
- prevent non-water-related-development into water spaces.

2.13 It also includes policies to promote its use for:

- passenger and tourist river services;
- freight transport;
- supporting infrastructure; and
- recreational use, including waterborne sport and leisure facilities, access points, boatyards, moorings, jetties and safety equipment.

[2] Department for Communities and Local Government - National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
[3] Greater London Authority - The London Plan (2016).

2.14 The Canal and River Trust (CRT) is the statutory body responsible for canals and rivers and provide policy regarding London's water spaces. On many parts of the canal network in London (and nationally), boaters with a licence from the CRT are able to moor alongside the towpath for a period of 14 days[4]. In some areas, shorter periods may be specified and in other areas no mooring may be allowed at all. Mooring on the off-side (non-towpath side) will usually require the agreement of the owner of the land to which the boat is moored and the CRT as the owner of the water space. CRT has a national Online Mooring Policy that it uses to assess new proposals for such moorings. It sets out a range of issues that will need to be considered, such as the supply of moorings in the area and its operational and environmental constraints, such as water resources and navigational safety.

Local policy

Water quality and biodiversity

2.15 Local policy highlights water quality issues, opportunities to create connections with the Green Grid, and opportunities to protect and restore biodiversity and habitats on and around the East London water spaces. Such policy includes:

- The City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework[5];
- The Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework[6];
- The Lower Lea Valley Water Space Strategy[7];
- The River Lea Catchment Partnership: London Lea Catchment Management Plan[8];
- The Thames Strategy East[9]; and
- The Canal & River Trust Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework[10].

2.16 The Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework also highlights opportunities to protect and restore heritage sites along the waterways.

Access and connectivity

2.17 Several local policy documents highlight the quality, connections and amount of access along waterways and between open spaces, including for both cyclists and pedestrians. Documents include:

- The City Fringe and Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks;
- The Lower Lea Valley Water Space Strategy;
- The Thames Strategy East[11];
- The Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework;
- The Isle of Dogs Draft Opportunity Area Planning Framework[12];
- The Lea River Park Primer and Lea River Park Design Guide; and
- The Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance[13].

[4] Canal and River Trust - Policies for moorings along the banks of our canals and rivers (2009); Greater London Authority - Moor or less: Moorings on London's waterways (2013)
[5] Greater London Authority - City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2015)
[6] Greater London Authority - Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2007)
[7] Peter Brett Associates and LDA Design - Lower Lea Valley Water Space Strategy (2011)
[8] River Lea Catchment Partnership - London Lea Catchment Management Plan
[9] Thames Estuary Partnership - Thames Strategy East (2008)
[10] Canal & River Trust - Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework (2012)

[12] Greater London Authority - Isle of Dogs Draft Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2017)
[13] Greater London Authority - Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance (2012)

2.18 In addition, the Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework is exemplar in promoting innovative use of waters paces.

Climate change and flooding

2.19 Issues surrounding climate change, such as water stress and flooding, and opportunities to enhance flood defences in relation to East London water spaces are highlighted within the Thames Strategy East, Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework and the Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Character and appeal of water spaces

2.20 Local policy highlights opportunities to enhance waterway attractiveness and improve security. Policy also encourages high quality sustainable development and regeneration that considers and improves water environments. Policy includes:

- The Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework;
- The Lea River Park Primer and Lea River Park Design Guide;
- The Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework ; and
- The Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance.

2.21 The Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework also highlights the opportunities to create a strong 'sense of place' for waterways, respecting their rich heritage and encouraging high quality integrated development.

Recreation

2.22 Opportunities are highlight for enhanced recreation within the Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework, Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework, Lower Lea Valley Water Space Strategy and the Thames Strategy East (2008).

2.23 Opportunities to provide waterside amenities, such as bars, cafes and restaurants, are also highlighted within the Lea River Park Primer and Lea River Park Design Guide.

Transport

2.24 Enhanced transport opportunities on the water spaces in East London are highlighted within:

- The Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework;
- The Isle of Dogs Draft Opportunity Area Planning Framework;
- The Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework;
- The Lower Lea Valley Water Space Strategy; and
- The Thames Strategy East.

Tower Hamlets

2.25 The emerging Tower Hamlets Local Plan will cover the plan period until 2031. This plan highlights opportunities to increase access to and connections between waterways and open spaces, as well as opportunities for enhancement and protection of the water spaces themselves. The plan also highlights opportunities to enhance water-borne recreation and transport.

2.26 The plan requires developments adjacent to the Blue Ribbon Network to provide suitable setbacks to mitigate flood risks and allow restoration of riverside walkways, canal towpaths and cycle paths. It also requires developments to protect and enhance water spaces, including their navigation, biodiversity, visual amenity, openness, existing water uses and public access.

2.27 In addition, Tower Hamlets provide Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Guidelines[14] for developments within Conservation Areas. Many of the water spaces within Tower Hamlets are also within Conservation Areas and therefore these documents should be read alongside this strategy with regard to the heritage of the water spaces.

Tower Hamlets Green Grid

2.28 In addition to the Local Plan, the emerging Tower Hamlets Green Grid Update (2017) highlights the opportunities to link the Green Grid to water spaces. The Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2020 (2017) also plans to increase the use of open spaces, such as water spaces, and create better connections between green spaces.

[14] Tower Hamlets: Character appraisals & management guidelines: http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/environment_and_planning/conservation/conservation_areas/character_appraisals.aspx

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 2.1: Water Spaces

Hertford Union Canal
River Lea Navigation
River Lea
Regent's Canal
Limehouse Cut
Limehouse Basin
Shadwell Basin
Wapping Canal
River Thames
St Katharine Docks
Hermitage Basin
West India North Dock
West India Middle Dock
West India South Dock
Poplar Dock
Blackwall Basin
East India Basin
Millwall Inner Dock
Millwall Outer Dock

Hackney
Hackney Wick
Stratford
Kingsland
South Hackney
Old Ford
West Ham
Haggerston
Hoxton
Bow
Festubert Place
Alameda Place
Mill Meads
Bethnal Green
Shoreditch
Bromley
Canning Town
Stepney
Spitalfields
Bow Common
Coleman Street
Tower Hamlets
Broad Street
Cornhill
Aldgate
Langbourn
Portsoken
Limehouse
Poplar
Tower Bridge
Rotherhithe
Blackthorn House
North Greenwich
Bermondsey
Duke Of Suffolk House
Cubitt Town
Walworth

0 1 2 km

London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary

Water space

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_1_7064_r1_Water_Spaces_A3L 20/09/2017 Source: OS

Historic loss of water spaces in Tower Hamlets

2.29 **Figure 2.2** shows the extent of historic water loss in Tower Hamlets. There have been particularly significant losses around Shadwell Basin and Wapping Canal; historically there were two additional docks (London Dock and East London Dock) and a basin in this location. Similarly, in 1947 East India Dock was located north west of East India Basin. Small areas of water still exist but the majority of the dock has been reclaimed and used for development.

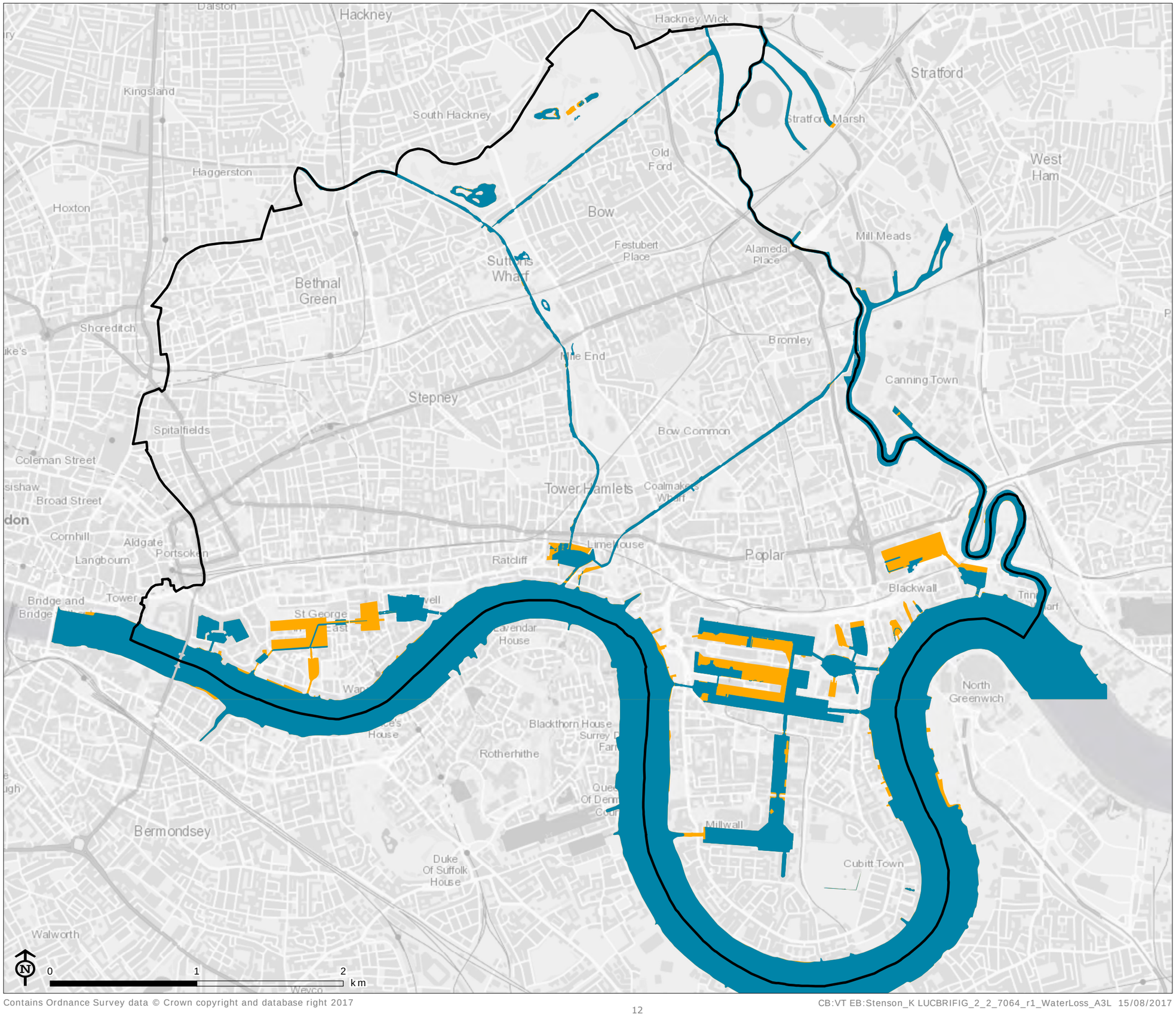
2.30 West India South Dock, West India Middle Dock, West India North Dock, Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock in Canary Wharf have all experienced water loss since 1947 due to reclamation and 'over-sailing[15]' for development. It is also noted that since the map was produced planning permission for Wood Wharf has been granted and will contribute to further waster space loss.

2.31 This loss of water spaces has negatively affected the Borough by limiting the availability of water spaces for uses such as recreation and transport, and limiting the available water based and waterside riparian habitats for biodiversity. Furthermore, this loss of water spaces has reduced the heritage assets within the Borough, reducing the open character, sense of place[16] and history.

[15] Part of a building extending beyond a lower level – in the case of water spaces, this results in the building extending over the water.
[16] As highlighted in Objective 2 of the Canal & River Trust - Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework (2012)

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 2.2: Historic Water Loss



London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary

Current surface water (2017)

Surface water lost since 1947

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

LUC

TOWER HAMLETS

CB:VT EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_2_7064_r1_WaterLoss_A3L 15/08/2017 Source: OS

Public access to water spaces

2.32 **Figure 2.3** shows access to water spaces including paths adjacent to water spaces and points of access to the paths. The desk analysis and site visits have highlighted the following key issues in relation to public access to water space:

River Thames Access

2.33 Whilst much of the River Thames has good quality footpaths, public access along much of its length, access to the river in Tower Hamlets is limited by a combination of physical barriers (e.g. walls and fences erected along the length of the riverside path), and gated access. Many of the gates between buildings along the footpath in the Isle of Dogs are often locked, restricting public access.

Canary Wharf Access

2.34 Access to the docks around Canary Wharf is partly restricted, with access only via buildings in some places. West India Middle Dock and Blackwall Basin also have limited public access around it.

Canal Access

2.35 Access to Tower Hamlets' canals (Hereford Union Canal, Regent's Canal, Wapping Canal and Limehouse Cut) is continuous along their lengths. Regent's Canal and Wapping Canal in particular have an extensive level of access including sections with paths on both sides of the canal and points of access at frequent intervals. Limehouse Canal has a continuous path on the south east side; however points of access are infrequent and the canal lacks crossing points for pedestrians.

River Lea Access

2.36 Access to the River Lea is very intermittent due to the towpath being located on the Newham side. Large sections on the Tower Hamlets side of the river lack access and there are very few crossing points for pedestrians. Efforts have been made to maintain the path and access points to the River Lea in and around the ongoing development taking place at Leamouth Peninsula North.

Tower Hamlets
Water Spaces
Study

Figure 2.3: Access to Water Spaces

London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary

Water space

Foot paths adjacent to water spaces*

Access to foot paths

Access to foot path from one side

Access to foot path from both sides (bridge or tunnel)

*some foot paths have access constraints

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

0 1 2 km

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_3_7064_r1_Public_Access_A3L 15/08/2017 Source: OS, NE, OSM, Sustrans

Regeneration and change

2.37 Tower Hamlets is going through a period of rapid growth. The emerging Local Plan, subject to adoption, makes provision for 39,310 new homes between 2015 and 2025 (equating to 3931 homes per year)[17]. The need to deliver new housing and associated infrastructure is fuelled by a rising population which is expected to increase by an additional 22% from 2016-2026[18]. A key challenge of the Water Space Study is to ensure that the benefits of development, particularly at identified sites, contribute to the enhancement of the borough's water spaces through both good design and financial contributions. Financial contributions from development are currently secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).

2.38 If not carefully planned, major developments can result in loss of access to water spaces for walking, cycling, and passenger, freight and recreational transport. It can also cause loss of the space needed to provide ecological corridors along water spaces and associated riparian habitats for biodiversity. This is in addition to the loss or reduced quality of water spaces themselves.

2.39 Most of the Borough's water spaces have an open character, with long views in the context of the dense surrounding townscape. These water spaces offer some of the benefits of open space, which is particularly relevant where they are located within areas of open space deficiency, such as West India Docks. Recent development adjacent to some of these water spaces, such as Wood Wharf and Crossrail, has already eroded their open character. To protect water spaces from similar impacts from future development, the principles proposed in **Section 4** of this report should be applied.

2.40 The importance of these water spaces as amenity spaces has increased as the development densities around the docks have increased, most notably around Marsh Wall and Bank Street. Therefore, the safeguarding of water spaces, such as the docks on the Isle of Dogs and the wider Borough, is a priority and the water spaces should not be viewed as an extension of the developable land. Any detrimental impact upon the open character of the Borough's water spaces resulting from development and regeneration should therefore be resisted.

2.41 The detrimental impacts include:

- building right up to the canal/dock edge;
- over-sailing (extending on top of water space);
- reducing the extent of the space itself; and
- reducing and the value of the space for other functions.

2.42 Several of the Borough's water spaces have been lost due to land reclamation during the 1980s and 1990s (see para. 2.29). This highlights the need to consider the cumulative impacts of development and the importance of good design.

2.43 Water spaces can form part of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDs), thereby providing and important environmental benefit.

2.44 The Water Space Study will help to ensure that future developments are designed and located appropriately to protect and enhance the remaining water spaces and their uses.

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 'Managing Growth and Sharing the Benefits'

2.45 Regeneration and change in the Borough will be shaped at various scales through the spatial strategy within the forthcoming Local Plan. The spatial strategy is sub-divided into three scales.

- **Borough-wide** - strategic policy will support the process of delivering the Local Plan's spatial vision and the required infrastructure to support growth.

[17] Tower Hamlets Council - Tower Hamlets Draft Local Plan 2013: Managing growth and sharing the benefits (November 2016).
[18] Tower Hamlets Corporate Research - Population Projections for Tower Hamlets (December 2016).

- **Sub areas** - containing a summary of the characteristics and challenges together with detailed priorities and principles for development.
- **Site allocations** - within each sub area there are sites allocated for specific land uses, e.g. residential or employment land. These sites are the primary resource for delivering growth.

2.46 **Figure 2.4** shows the site allocations and sites proposed for development within 200m of one or more water spaces. The distance of 200m represents a 5 minute walking distance, as developments and residents within this distance are most likely to benefit from the surrounding water space. These allocations present a unique opportunity to enhance water spaces through good design and investment in the surrounding area. The 13 water spaces that are most likely to experience significant regeneration nearby or directly adjacent are listed below:

- Blackwall Basin;
- East India Basin;
- Lea Navigation;
- Limehouse Cut;
- Millwall Inner Dock;
- Millwall Outer Dock;
- Regent's Canal;
- River Lea;
- River Thames;
- Wapping Ornamental Canal (Wapping Canal);
- West India Middle Dock;
- West India North Dock; and
- West India South Dock.

2.47 The Tower Hamlets Local Plan[19] highlights how new development on such site allocations should support the creation of high quality, usable and accessible water spaces. This includes through safeguarding existing water spaces, improving the quality and accessibility of water spaces and using water space for movement including passenger and freight transport.

2.48 In addition to the Local Plan, a number of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) provide more detailed design guidance on specific places in the Borough and incorporate some of the site allocations identified within the Local Plan. The SPDs currently adopted by Tower Hamlets which affect water spaces within the Borough are Fish Island Area Action Plan and Bromley-by-Bow Masterplan:

- **Fish Island Area Action Plan**[20] provides development management principles requiring new waterside development to contribute towards public realm improvements, access point improvements, active frontages and water space infrastructure. It also requires such development to protect or enhance active use of the waterways and waterway biodiversity, as well as make use of the waterways for industrial uses including freight transport. The plan requires waterside development to safeguard space to enhance existing towpath connections and plans to add additional bridges across the waterways for all transport modes.
- **Bromley-by-Bow Masterplan**[21] identifies potential opportunities to deliver and maintain new accessible towpaths, incorporating new access points and links. The plan indicates the new development adjacent to towpaths should adopt appropriate scale and architecture to create a strong sense of enclosure and place along the waterways. The plan also provides guidance on the design of the towpath, suggests introducing active frontages along the waterways and highlights that opportunities to enhance biodiversity should be pursued.

2.49 The areas affected by these plans are within the London Legacy Development Corporation area, and were not considered within the scope of this study.

[19] Tower Hamlets Council - Tower Hamlet Draft Local Plan 2031: Managing growth and sharing the benefits (November, 2016)
[20] Tower Hamlets Council - Fish Island Area Action Plan (2012)
[21] Tower Hamlets Council - Bromley-by-Bow Masterplan (2012)

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 2.4: Sites Allocations

London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary

Water space

Permitted development

Permitted development within 200 m of water spaces

Other permitted development

Site allocations

Site allocations within 200 m of water spaces

Other site allocations

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

LUC

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CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_4_7064_r1_Site_Allocations_A3L 09/06/2017 Source: OS, LBTH

Destinations and active frontage

2.50 Several water spaces across the Borough currently offer destination points and active frontage attracting visitors. St Katherine Docks, the westernmost water space within the Borough, is a key water space destination, including extensive active frontage and good pedestrian access. These docks are therefore popular with visitors and have an associated high footfall. Despite the extensive water space in Tower Hamlets, there are few waterside destinations and several water spaces would have increased appeal through increasing the offer at these sites. Trinity Buoy Wharf in the south east and the Lea Navigation in the north east of the Borough offer some active frontage and facilities to attract visitors; however there are opportunities to further develop these areas to become water space destinations. Furthermore, Limehouse Basin has a central location within the Borough; however the lack of commercial offer reduces its attraction to visitors. Further studies could explore the extent to which addition of active frontage around the basin could attract more visitors to this location in the centre of the Borough.

Transport and access issues

2.51 **Figure 2.5** shows transport links in Tower Hamlets. The River Thames and many water spaces in the Isle of Dogs are well connected by the DLR. However, there are some areas in the southern parts of the Isle of Dogs that are less well connected by either DLR or ferry. Parts of this area feel rather isolated given its location in a central part of London.

2.52 Water spaces in the north of the Borough are less well served by rail, meaning water space users likely rely more heavily on other forms of transport such as bus or bicycle.

2.53 The River Thames is a major barrier to pedestrians in Tower Hamlets, with only three crossings suitable for crossing on foot; Tower Bridge, Rotherhithe Tunnel and the Greenwich Foot Tunnel.

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 2.5: Transport

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary
- Water space

Thames crossings

- Pedestrian tunnel
- Rail tunnel
- Road tunnel
- Road/ pedestrian tunnel
- Road/pedestrian bridge

Transport

- Crossrail (2018 opening)
- Rail (DLR, underground, overground, National Rail)
- Pier

Map Scale: 1:27,000 @ A3

LUC

TOWER HAMLETS

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_5_7064_r1_Transport_Links_A3L 15/08/2017

Source: OS, NE, OSM, Sustrans

Cultural value and volunteering on water spaces

2.54 Water spaces are important cultural assets, providing cultural inspiration as well as hubs for art and social activities. Within Tower Hamlets, Three Mills on the Lea is hosting 'Changing Places'. This is a touring Canal and River Trust (CRT) 'Arts on the Waterways' programme running from 2017-2018 which offers moving-image work by artists from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Line is London's first dedicated modern and contemporary art walk and within Tower Hamlets it runs along the Lea from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to Cody Dock. This offers free art for the public to travel along the river to view and connects the Olympic Part to the O2 Arena.

2.55 The East End Canal Festival, organised by Friends of Regent's Canal, and the Regent's Canal Birthday Event, organised by the CRT, Friends of the Regent's Canal and the London Canal Museum, took place in 2016 to celebrate 200 years of the Regent's Canal and the industries that thrived alongside it. The festival took place at the Mile End Park Art Pavilion, adjacent to the canal. This pavilion also offers a range of art exhibitions open to the public. The annual Greenwich and Docklands International Festival also takes place in parts of the Borough, offering free performing arts performances.

2.56 These arts and cultural events and exhibitions make use of the waterways' existing cultural value and bring further cultural value and opportunities to the Borough's water spaces and population.

2.57 In addition to arts and culture, the water space also offer social benefits through volunteering. Volunteering on water spaces encourages people to go outside, get exercise, and build communities. In Tower Hamlets, CRT organises volunteer maintenance of the canals, Thames 21 organise volunteer 'Clean-ups' of the River Lea and Shadwell Basin Outdoor Activity Centre and Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre offer volunteering opportunities.

Recreation and leisure uses of water spaces

2.58 **Figure 2.6** shows recreation and leisure uses of the water spaces in Tower Hamlets. Only six water spaces in Tower Hamlets have water recreation centres or clubs:

- River Thames: Poplar, Blackwall and District Rowing Club
- Millwall Outer Dock: Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre
- Shadwell Basin: Shadwell Basin Activity Centre
- Docklands Scout Project
- Limehouse Basin: Moo Canoes
- Limehouse Cut: Moo Canoes
- West India South Dock: Docklands Scout Project

2.59 In addition to the above, Regal Boat Hire in Victoria Park offers recreational boat hire.

2.60 The Thames Path national trail runs adjacent to the River Thames from the west of the Borough to the Greenwich Foot Tunnel. There are multiple national cycle routes throughout the Borough. Some of these routes and trails cross or are adjacent to water spaces and highlight some of the ways people potentially use these spaces for recreation.

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 2.6: Recreation

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary
- Water space
- Cycle routes*
- National trails
- Water recreation centres and clubs

*Data from Sustrans, does not represent all cycle routes in the borough

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

0 1 2 km

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_6_7064_r1_Recreation_A3L 15/08/2017

Source: OS, NE, Sustrans, LUC

Biodiversity assets and issues

2.61 **Figure 2.7** shows biodiversity assets in Tower Hamlets. All water spaces in Tower Hamlets are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). 14 of the 46 SINCs in Tower Hamlets include water spaces, highlighting the importance of water spaces for nature.

2.62 The Green Grid Strategy[22] and its subsequent update[23] also highlight the many interconnected green and blue links across the Borough, providing wildlife habitats and corridors. These links between green corridors and water spaces can be seen in **Figure 3.2**.

2.63 A large area in the Isle of Dogs and an area north of Tower Bridge are deficient in access to nature. This highlights the opportunity for investment in water spaces to improve access to nature in these areas.

[22] Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy (2010)
[23] Tower Hamlets Green Grid Update (2017)

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 2.7: Biodiversity

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary
- Water space
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Areas deficient in access to nature
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

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CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_7_7064_r1_Biodiversity_A3L 09/06/2017

Source: OS, LBTH, NE

Heritage of water spaces

2.64 Tower Hamlets has a rich heritage and the Borough has played an important role in the history of London. Heritage assets in the Borough are protected at the local, regional, national and international scale (**Figure 2.8**).

2.65 Tower Hamlets contains a World Heritage Site, the Tower of London, and falls within the buffer zone of Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site (located in London Borough of Greenwich). In addition, there are two Scheduled Monuments linked or in close proximity to water spaces in Tower Hamlets, including the Tower of London and the Launch Ways of the SS Great Eastern. 16 of the 58 Conservation Areas in Tower Hamlets are linked to its water spaces. The following waters spaces are within or partially within Conservation Areas:

- Blackwall Basin;
- Hertford Union Canal;
- Limehouse Basin;
- Limehouse Canal;
- Regent's Canal;
- River Lea Navigation;
- Shadwell Basin;
- St Katherine Docks; and
- The Thames.

2.66 There are 900 listed buildings and other structures in Tower Hamlets, including a number of Grade I listed buildings within proximity to water spaces. There are also a number of docks and basins that are listed:

- Grade II listed: Dry dock at Blackwall, Trinity House Buoy Wharf Quay and Orchard Dry Dock, Poplar Dock Original Eastern Part, Limekiln Doc, Newcastle Draw Dock
- Grade I listed: Blackwall Basin, West India Docks (quay walls, copings and buttresses are Grade I listed features)

2.67 Additionally, a large number of listed structures are linked to Tower Hamlets' docks and basins, including listed bollards, warehouses and walls.

2.68 All of the water spaces within Tower Hamlets also have heritage value themselves. The water spaces' archaeological and historic qualities provide evidence of past use for travel and industry. For example, Regent's Canal was built as a connection to Birmingham. Named after Prince Regent and completed in 1820, Regent's Canal was used by horse drawn barges to transport coal. Numerous features such as locks, bridges, towpaths and moorings along the length of Regent's Canal offer insight in to the canal's original purpose. An example is Stop Lock Bridge (Grade II listed), an iron bridge built for towing over the historic junction between Regent's Canal and Hertford Union Canal.

2.69 In addition to the physical heritage features of the water spaces, the historic sense of vibrancy and activity is an important feature of the water spaces within the Borough. This character of the water spaces provides a timeless quality and is an important heritage feature of each water space that should be protected.

2.70 Development can have an impact the settings of heritage features; fragmenting towpaths, breaking up the open space of docks and basins, obstructing public use of space and affecting the setting and historic character of the water spaces. When planning developments on or adjacent to water spaces, maintaining or enhancing the water space heritage should be a key consideration.

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 2.8: Heritage

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary
- Listed dock/ basin

Listed building within 100 m of water space

- Listed building linked to dock/ basin
- Other listed building
- World heritage site
- Scheduled monument linked to water space
- Conservation area linked to water space
- Water space

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

LUC

TOWER HAMLETS

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_8_7064_r1_Heritage_A3L 15/08/2017 Source: OS, HE, LBTH

Open Space Deficiency

2.71 **Figure 2.9** shows deficiency in access to parks in relation to water spaces across Tower Hamlets. This deficiency primarily affects the City Fringe, Lower Lea Valley, and Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Sub-Areas of the Borough.

2.72 Many of the water spaces within the Borough are located within or adjacent to areas of deficiency in access to parks, inclusive of:

- Blackwall Basin;
- Hermitage Badin;
- Limehouse Basin;
- Limehouse Cut Canal;
- Millwall Inner Dock;
- Millwall Outer Dock;
- Poplar Dock;
- St Katharine's Docks;
- The River Lea;
- The River Thames;
- Wapping Canal; and
- West India Docks.

2.73 These water spaces are therefore valuable open spaces within the Borough, making an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities within Tower Hamlets. As previously mentioned, many of these water spaces are also adjacent to development sites. This new development threatens the openness of these water spaces and thus their contribution to health and well-being.

2.74 Therefore, water spaces within or adjacent to areas of deficiency in access to parks should be prioritised for public access enhancements and their open character maintained to limit the loss of open space across the Borough.

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 2.9: Areas Deficient in Access to Open Space

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary
- Areas deficient in access to parks
- Water space

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

0 1 2 km

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_2_9_7064_r1_Open_Space_Deficiency_A3L 09/06/2017 Source: OS, LBTH

3 Challenges, opportunities and water space-specific recommendations

Introduction

3.1 **Section 2** of this report describes the key issues associated with water spaces in Tower Hamlets. This Section summarises the key challenges and opportunities for each water space in Tower Hamlets, and makes site-specific recommendations based on these. These opportunities were identified through desk audit, site visits, and consultation with stakeholders, including Council officers and Members. The identified opportunities do not represent a comprehensive list, and other water space-specific opportunities may exist within the Borough.

Water space challenges and opportunities

3.2 The water spaces within Tower Hamlets are diverse and varied in terms of both function and character. Therefore, the key challenges faced by these water spaces are also varied. To ensure this study enables the Council and its partners to target specific issues, we have listed the key challenges for each broad type of water space and then have identified key opportunities to enhance these spaces.

3.3 The water space opportunities (see **Figure 3.1**) have been identified through desktop and on-site analysis and seek to address issues highlighted in **Section 2** (e.g. connectivity, access, health, biodiversity etc.) whilst also taking into account planned regeneration in Tower Hamlets.

3.4 These opportunities are presented in conjunction with the Green Grid opportunities in **Figure 3.2**. This highlights the wide coverage of the Green Grid and water spaces across the Borough and indicates that the integrated delivery of the Green Grid and water space opportunities would provide better connectivity for pedestrians across the Borough.

3.5 It is noted that no opportunities have been identified at West India Middle Dock or St Katherine Docks, although they are key water space within the Borough. This is due to the constraints of West India Middle Dock water space limiting opportunities, particularly for active frontage and habitat development. St Katherine Docks were also identified as being exemplar with limited scope for opportunities for improvement.

3.6 Further detail on the heritage of Tower Hamlets' water spaces, including their associated challenges and opportunities is provided in the Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Guidelines[24]. These have been considered as part of this study.

[24] Tower Hamlets: Character appraisals & management guidelines: http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/environment_and_planning/conservation/conservation_areas/character_appraisals.aspx

Strategic Projects

3.7 Whilst all of the projects identified below would benefit the surrounding area, several projects that have a wider strategic importance. These projects will help to connect Tower Hamlets to neighbouring boroughs and wider London, or act as drivers for the regeneration of neighbourhoods. The strategic priority projects include:

- **The River Lea:** Strategic destination and improvements to access and connections to the East
- **Millwall Outer Dock:** New park and associated access to Thames
- **New Thames Clipper stops at Reuters and Trinity Buoy Wharf:** to improve connections to wider London
- **Shadwell Basin:** new park at Brussels Wharf and enhanced access to water space

Canals

3.8 The canals in the Borough are generally good quality, offering water-based recreation, good access in many locations, attractive open space, and have a strong historic character, which is part of their appeal. They are quiet green corridors that provide an important refuge for people and wildlife.

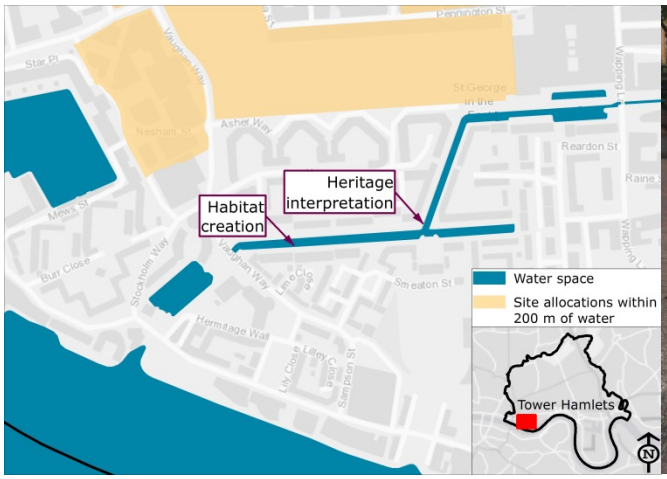
Limehouse Cut.

Hertford Union Canal.

3.9 The key challenges along the canals include:

- **Lack of natural surveillance**: Perception of being unsafe in parts due to buildings facing away from the waterside, with limited windows.
- **Access:** Some stretches of the canals have limited access (especially Limehouse Cut), reducing use and appeal to some users.
- **Poor design of development:** Poorly designed development in some locations has resulted in unattractive, poor interface with the water space, with some buildings overhanging or overshadowing. This reduces their value visually and in terms of potential for recreation. With regards to the heritage value of water spaces, developments have also been designed out of keeping with the historic scale and form of waterside development, and without consideration of the canal and towpath edges.
- **Limited space for nature:** Historical development has not allowed for a reasonable buffer between the building and the water's edge, limiting potential for the canals to function effectively as wildlife corridors.

1. Wapping Canal



Wapping Canal proposed infrastructure.

Wapping Canal with stepped access to the water and trees lining the area.

3.10 Wapping Canal is the only remaining area of the original Western Dock, which was part of the extensive London Docks in this area. The canal utilises what was originally a dock wall, on the eastern side of the canal, and has been integrated with new housing and public space to create an attractive water feature. There is a large site allocation for housing to the north of the canal, which offers an opportunity to enhance the infrastructure and functions of this water space. The water space is well used by pedestrians, cyclists and joggers, and housing on either side provides some natural surveillance.

3.11 There is potential for habitat creation along the western side of the canal, where a wider area of paving could be transformed into a green area to support the local bird population. There are also Council plans to introduce native marginal vegetation on floating rafts along the wall on the western edge of the Canal and this could develop to be a potential enhancement along the whole length of the canal. Habitat creation could connect to the Green Grid and its associated opportunities (**Figure 3.2**).

3.12 The canal is well sign-posted and an important part of the pedestrian/cycling network linking Shadwell Basin to Hermitage Basin and the Thames. The canal could provide more historic interpretation, such as by the use of information boards and public art, on the important heritage of the wider area as a trade centre for tobacco, spices, coffee and cocoa.

3.13 The water space could also be used for informal swimming during summer months, given its shallow stepped access, following the completion of a feasibility study. Any such study would need to explore:

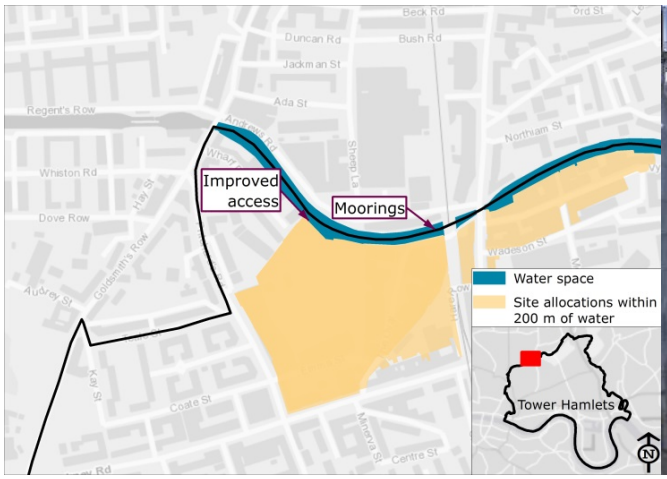
- The legal issues associated with swimming at the Canal
- Water quality issues
- Safety considerations including water depth and any tidal influence of associated rivers to which the canal is connected
- Wider consultation with the community

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.14 Infrastructure associated with the opportunities includes the following:

- Steps into the Canal and lifebuoys
- Habitat creation along the western side of the canal
- Vegetation on floating rafts where appropriate
- Heritage interpretation, such as information boards and public art

2. Regent's Canal North/Cambridge Heath



Regent's Canal North/Cambridge Heath proposed infrastructure.

Regent's Canal North/Cambridge Heath with residential moorings and scope to improve moorings.

3.15 Regent's Canal extends along part of the northern border of the Borough of Tower Hamlets. Multiple site locations are located adjacent to the southern bank of this section. The towpath runs along the north of the canal in the adjacent borough, as much of the existing development to the south backs directly on to the canal edge preventing access. Therefore, development at these site allocations has the opportunity to enhance access on the off side and connect to the northern bank via the A107 crossing over the canal. Such development would need to be designed sympathetically to the character of the canal and set back to allow access and space for nature.

3.16 This section of the canal is also heavily used for residential moorings. However, the existing canal space is unsightly and unappealing. This limits perceptions of safety and potential for enhancements of the existing recreational activities, such as kayaking. Therefore, regeneration at site options adjacent to the canal presents the opportunity to enhance the aesthetics of the water space as well as its biodiversity assets.

3.17 This section of the canal is also within the Regent's Canal Conservation Area and the Management Guidelines for this area also highlights such key opportunities including opportunities for moorings, sport and leisure activities, and biodiversity enhancements.

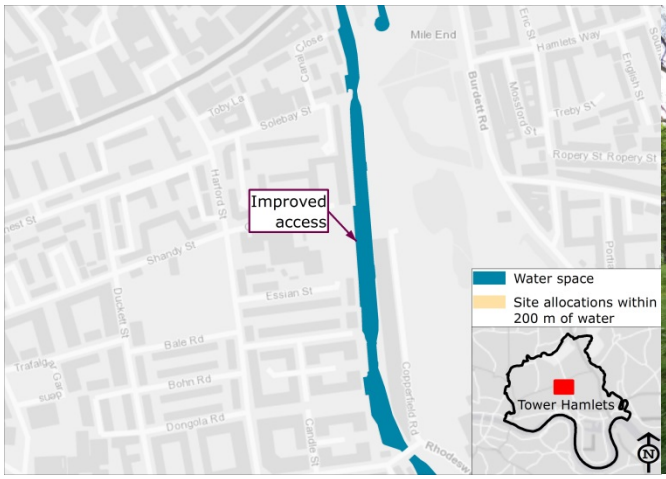
Infrastructure context and considerations

3.18 The aesthetic improvement of the water space could enhance its use for recreation and residential mooring. Additional infrastructure and aesthetic improvements would need to make careful consideration and reflect the heritage of Regent's Canal, including its associated Conservation Area, its links with Victoria Park Registered Park and Garden, and its heritage and listed features.

3.19 Strategic improvements that could 'unlock' the waterways potential include:

- Improved access and unobstructed walkways and sidings for pedestrians, boaters, cyclists.
- Improved security and safety, including clearly lit walkways and life-saving equipment
- Improved landside development adjacent to the water ways
- Improved linkages with landside uses to create integration with the water
- Improved and dedicated mooring areas with linkages to public transport
- Enhancement of 'green' areas & public open spaces

3. Regent's Canal



Regent's Canal proposed infrastructure.

Regent's Canal with residential moorings, residential developments to the right and Mile End Park to the left.

3.20 Regent's Canal extends through the Borough from north to south and includes a variety of heritage and biodiversity assets throughout its length. The canal is also accessible throughout its length on the eastern site and in many locations along its western side also, with many crossing and access points available. There is an opportunity to enhance access from the residential areas around Commodore Street to the west to the canal, making use of the existing river crossing to the north to access Mile End Park and the walkway along the east of the canal. Any redevelopment of sites along the west bank of the canal should respect the historic setting of the canal, and allow space for nature along the canal side.

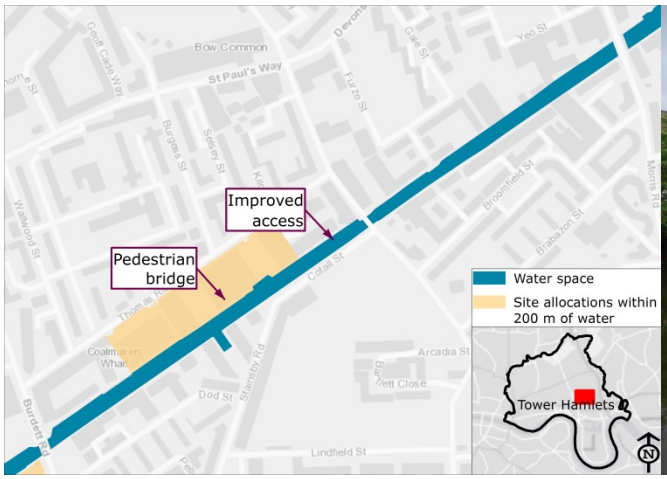
3.21 The canal also offers cultural opportunities as recent events have taken place to celebrate 200 years since it was built. In 2016, Friends of Regent's Canal organised the East End Canal Carnival at the Mile End Park Art Pavilion. This community event could be continued in 2020, marking 200 years since the canal's completion, and could be mirrored to celebrate the history and culture of other water spaces in the Borough.

3.22 This section of the canal is also within the Regent's Canal Conservation Area and the Management Guidelines for this area highlight key opportunities include opportunities for moorings, sport and leisure activities, and biodiversity enhancements.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.23 Improved access to the canal from Commodore Street would increase usage of the existing canal crossing and access to Mile End Park. Additional infrastructure to provide this assess would need to make careful consideration of and reflect the heritage of Regent's Canal, its important links with Victoria Park Registered Park and Garden, and its associated Conservation Area. This would include consideration of numerous heritage and listed features along the canal, such as Bonner Hall Bridge.

4. Limehouse Cut



Limehouse Cut proposed infrastructure.

Limehouse Cut with bare towpath and 'lookout' point.

3.24 Limehouse Cut provides a quiet and sheltered route connecting Limehouse Basin (and subsequently Regent's Canal) to the southwest and the River Lea to the northeast. A towpath extends along the southern bank of the canal and is heavily used by walkers, joggers and cyclists. However, in places the towpath is of poor quality, composed of either bare ground or rough cobbles, which require many cyclists to dismount causing access issues for pushchair and wheelchair users. There is an opportunity to enhance the quality of the existing towpath along the length of the canal, as well as the existing stepped and narrow access points. Moreover, there is an opportunity to introduce an additional pedestrian crossing over the canal (the exact location of which would be subject to further site work) to resolve the issue of limited pedestrian access across the canal.

3.25 There are several site allocations along Limehouse Cut, which could contribute to access enhancements, as well as enhancing biodiversity along the canal. New development could also assist in increasing natural surveillance along the river and this could increase the perception of safety along the canal. The water space is also used by kayakers and by residential boats, therefore there is an opportunity to increase the available infrastructure along the canal for these uses. Furthermore, the connecting waterways of Regent's Canal and the River Lea operate water buses. Therefore, there is an opportunity to extend such transportation links along the route of Limehouse Cut.

3.26 The canal is within the Limehouse Cut Conservation Area. The Management Guidelines for this highlights similar opportunities for the area, such as increasing access to the canal and waterside activity, encouraging use of the water by all types of waterborne craft and improving surveillance.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.27 Additional infrastructure would need to make careful consideration of and reflect the heritage of Limehouse Cut and its associated Conservation Area with regards to design and scale.

3.28 Access improvements along the river may require the following:

- Access improvements along towpath, including a minimum towpath width of 1.5 metres[25] to allow for access by all users
- Pedestrian bridge (location to be determined further site work)

[25] Adler, D (1999) Metric Handbook - Planning and Design Data (2nd Edition)

Docks

3.29 Most of the docks are located in shadow of Canary Wharf, with the exception of St Katherine Docks, and were redeveloped in the 1980s and 1990s. Some docks may appear to have few obvious remaining signs of their heritage due to the loss of surrounding buildings. However, it is important to appreciate that the docks themselves and their associated features, such as quaysides, copings and historic characters, are important heritage features. Moreover, some docks experience very low use by boats for leisure, recreation or transport.

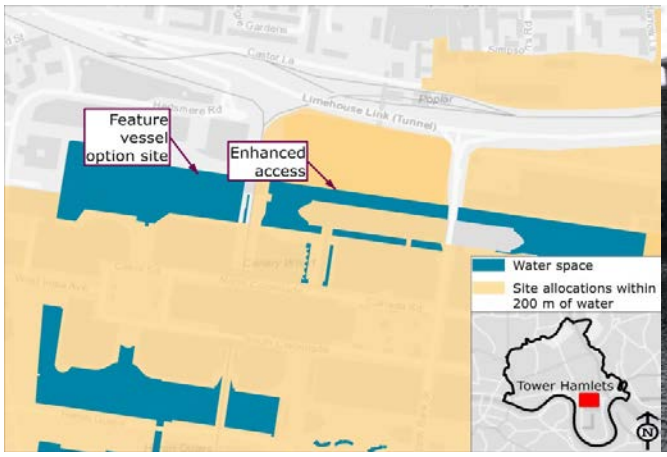
West India South Dock.

Millwall Outer Dock.

3.30 Key challenges for the docks include:

- **Access**: Very limited use by boats for recreation, due in part to high freeboard (so the docks cannot be accessed by smaller boats) and limited or exclusive access infrastructure, e.g. jetties.
- **Poor design of development:** Poor design of development, which has resulted in buildings and walkways being built on the water space itself, reducing its future potential for water-based recreation and also for the creation of wildlife habitats.
- **Overshadowing:** The docks are often overshadowed by tall buildings, reducing their value for recreation and wildlife. Without careful design, site allocations adjacent to the docks could exacerbate this.
- **Scale and severance effects:** Some docks are very large, and create barriers to movement of people around the Isle of Dogs.
- **Wind tunnelling:** The scale of many buildings around the docks has resulted in wind tunnels being created, and this can reduce the appeal of parts of the docks to visitors, potential recreational users, and wildlife.

5. West India North Dock



West India North Dock proposed infrastructure.

West India North Dock with moored boats and landside open space and eateries.

3.31 The West India North Dock is the northernmost water space within Canary Wharf and has nearly halved in size in the past 70 years. Ongoing development is taking place along the north-eastern part of the dock and site allocations are proposed to the north, south and east. This presents the opportunity to enhance the access across this waterway to increase connectivity from the north to Canary Wharf.

3.32 The dock currently accommodates a number of houseboats located on pontoon moorings in the northwest corner. However, access constraints, due to a number of lifting bridges, limit the use of the water for frequent vessel movement. The site also provides an opportunity to introduce a feature/ museum vessel that would encourage the public to engage with the water space. Any such vessel should be designed to reflect and respect the industrial heritage of the docks. Therefore, the installation of floating structures that are not ships, boats or barges should not be permitted. These floating vessels must also enhance the public access, use or enjoyment of the water space and have a positive contribution to the character of the water space without causing any adverse negative impacts on biodiversity.

3.33 The north west of the dock is also adjacent to the West India Docks Conservation Area. The management Guidelines for this area highlights opportunities for new development to respect the historic and architectural significance of the dock warehouses and to include detailed proposals for a high quality public realm at ground level.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.34 A key is that the access to the water is constrained, requiring vessels to travel through a number of lifting bridges from Blackwall Basin to the dock, however, there is an opportunity to potentially introduce a feature/ museum vessel. It is also understood that there are suitable moorings located in North Dock to accommodate the berthing of such a feature/ museum vessel.

3.35 Additional infrastructure would need to make careful consideration of and reflect the heritage of West India Docks with regards to design and scale. The West India Docks quay walls, copings and buttresses are Grade I listed features. The West India Docks Conservation Area is located adjacent to the northeast of the dock and contains the Grade I listed warehouses and general offices. These are currently utilised as pubs and restaurants and are exemplar of a key 'leisure' area development that has been well-designed to retain the heritage of this water space.

3.36 Supporting infrastructure could include:

- Appropriately rated access ramps & hand railing
- Lifesaving equipment
- New and improved access

6. West India South Dock

West India South Dock proposed infrastructure.

West India South Dock surrounded by modern development and ongoing development.

3.37 West India South Dock remains the largest of the three West India Docks at Canary Wharf, despite a considerable reduction in its size since the 1950s. It connects to North Dock via Bellmouth Passage to the east, to West India Middle Dock to the north west, and has access to the Thames via West India Dock Entrance Lock to the east. However, this access point is cumbersome and expensive to operate, therefore a strategic approach to the operation of the lock and management of the entire water space would be required to realise its potential. There is an opportunity to improve the existing berthing arrangements at the dock, to host historic vessels. This would make this water space feel less sterile, and could attract visitors to this water space, enabling it to become a waterside 'destination'.

3.38 There is a need to improve access across this large water space and there are numerous site allocations surrounding the dock that could contribute to enhancing access. For example, a new pedestrian crossing over South Dock would enhance connectivity between the surrounding development sites and the centre of Canary Wharf. This should be designed carefully so as not to limit large vessel mooring. In addition, new developments could contribute to increasing the green infrastructure available along this waterway, such as planting additional landside trees. Developments could also contribute to improving the quay walls along the southwestern side of the dock, which are in a poor condition and in need of repair if they are to be used for berthing vessels.

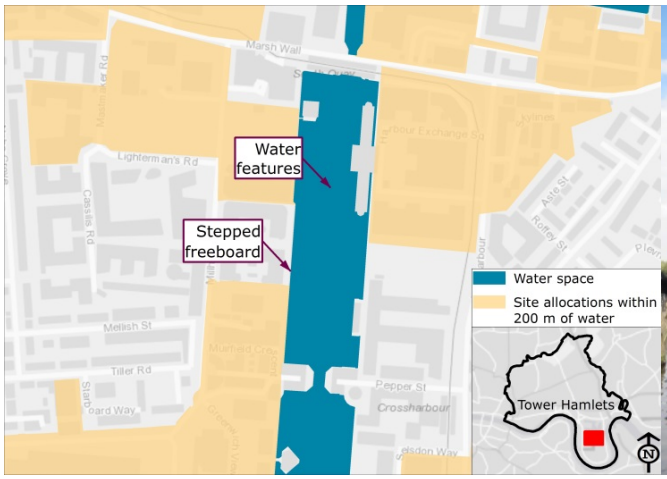
Infrastructure context and considerations

3.39 Improvement to the berthing arrangements could be made, as well as to security and access - required to meet minimum end-user requirements that maximise the 'offer'. Additional infrastructure would need to be sympathetic to the heritage of West India South Dock in terms of design and scale. The West India Docks quay walls, copings and buttresses are Grade I listed features and the South Dock former west entrance lock Grade II listed.

3.40 The support infrastructure required to facilitate berthing and the improved access across South Dock includes:

- Berthing pontoons - to create separation from berthing alongside quay walls and improve security, and service pedestals providing power (high & low voltage) & water
- Access ramps, handrails and security gates
- Concrete 'anchor' blocks & mooring chains (pontoon restraints)
- Large vessel moorings along quay walls
- Lifesaving equipment
- New pedestrian bridge

7. Millwall Inner Dock



Millwall Inner Dock proposed infrastructure.

Millwall Inner Dock overshadowed by surrounding development and building present on the water.

3.41 Millwall Inner Dock is one of the few water spaces on the Isle of Dogs that has not significantly reduced in size over the past 70 years. This water space is largely sterile and overshadowed by surrounding development. The limited access options for this water space mean that, without investment in a new lock to create access from the Thames, the scope for enhancement is limited. A new lock will be costly, but should be further explored through a more detailed study of the options and feasibility for the Isle of Dogs docks and basins. This study should also consider the potential for a Dock Ferry service to better connect the southern parts of the Isle of Dogs to the rest of the Borough. Any future enhancement of this water space should ensure its active use for recreation or transport. The use of this dock as a marina is considered inappropriate as it would restrict other more active use.

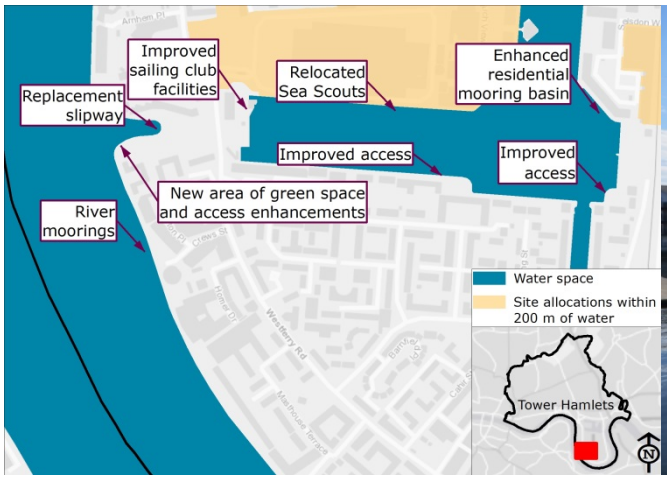
3.42 In the short term, proposed site allocations adjacent to the dock provide the opportunity to create active frontages, increasing the appeal of and attracting visitors to this water space. Access to the basin from either South Dock or Millwall Outer Dock is constrained as both entrances include lifting bridges. The northern entrance also includes a 'Fixed walkway', introducing additional constraints for boats with high air drafts and masts. A stepped dock edge could enhance access to the water to encourage its use for water-based activities, creating a more animated and better utilised waterside.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.43 The unanimated nature of this water space could be reduced by the introduction of water features to the space and improved access to the water to encourage its use, as well as increase active frontage along the water spaces. Infrastructure required could include:

- A stepped dock edge
- Water features

8. Millwall Outer Dock and Slipway Park



Millwall Outer Dock proposed infrastructure.

Millwall Outer Dock with the Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre.

3.44 Millwall Dock was originally connected to the Thames and provided access from the Docks to the river. The Dock is now separated from the Thames by a road, and the slipway on the Thames side is aging and poorly maintained. Despite this, the Dockland Sailing and Water sports centre is thriving. The site allocation to the north of the Dock creates an opportunity to further enhance this attractive water space, and improve access for a greater range of users. This should connect access around the Dock, particularly on the south side. The Thames slipway is dilapidated and should be reinstated, guided by the needs of the local user groups. There is also scope to enhance and extend the green space on the east of the site, to encourage more use, and to create connections to Mudchute Park to the south east, and the Green Grid to the north and south.

3.45 The watersports centre already offers volunteering opportunities and could also offer additional cultural benefits. The East End Canal Festival took place in 2016 to celebrate the heritage of Regent's Canal. Social events such as this could be mirrored at Millwall Outer Dock to celebrate the history of the docks and provide community activities in collaboration with the watersports centre and other community groups. There could also be potential to collaborate with the annual Greenwich and Docklands International Festival, which provides free performing arts for the public and attracting people to the water space.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.46 This location would benefit from further enhancement of the water sports centre through a new replacement slipway providing unobstructed access to the Thames. This access would widen the scope for water-based recreation and enable an increased range of water activities on the Thames. When increasing the level of access and activity in this area, the installation of a number of swing river moorings should also be considered, for the use of small sailing craft. These moorings would enhance the centre's capabilities further and provide assistance with daily operations (i.e. launching & recovering craft), hosting events and regattas.

3.47 The dock basin is an option site for Sea Scouts, which would be complemented by the nearby location of the water sports centre and residential land uses. Improved access, particularly to the south and east of site, would improve connectivity with the wider Green Grid network. Any additional non-recreational infrastructure would need to make consideration of and not threaten the existing recreational use of the dock.

3.48 The support infrastructure required to facilitate these recommendations are as follows:

- A new pedestrian bridge to address access issues on the south side of the Dock at Clippers Quay
- New area of green space and associated footpaths, gates, access infrastructure and signage

- New slipway providing access to the Thames with potential onshore boat storage facilities
- Swing mooring equipment; including buoy and ground tackle
- Enhanced on water club equipment i.e. launching & recovery pontoons & floating slipway, event pontoons etc.
- Support infrastructure for Sea Scouts i.e. mooring equipment & access ramps as required
- Lifesaving equipment

Basins

3.49 The character of the basins in the Borough varies depending on their current use and adjacent land uses. Limehouse Basin feels exclusive due to the many yachts moored there; whereas Shadwell has a more open and appealing feel, with its long views, historic features and trees.

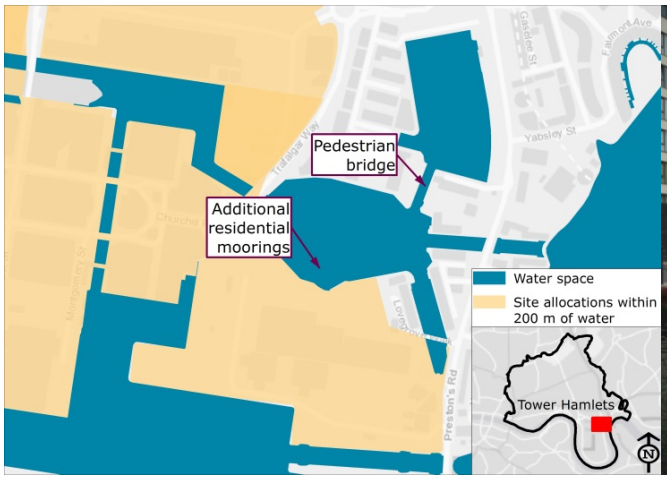
Limehouse Basin.

Shadwell Basin.

3.50 Key challenges for the basins include:

- **Access:** Most basins have steps limiting access for those with wheelchairs, bikes or buggies.
- **Space and views:** High number of moorings in Limehouse mean that the basin is crowded with yachts and locked at night, reducing visual and physical access.
- **Complimentary land use and features:** The basins have potential to be appealing community hubs, but need some food and drink outlets and investment in adjoining land (e.g. creating a green space at Shadwell) to create appealing destinations for a range of visitors.
- **High freeboard:** Some basins (e.g. Limehouse) have a high freeboard, limiting potential use by smaller recreational and leisure boats.

9. Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock



Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock proposed infrastructure. *Interface between Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock.*

3.51 Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock are both attractive water spaces, sheltered by surrounding development but also offering wider views towards Canary Wharf. Parts of the water spaces have been lost over the past 70 years. The pedestrian access around these water spaces is predominantly good and will be enhanced once the ongoing development to the south of Blackwall Basin is complete. Also, parts of the available access adjacent to Poplar Dock are heavily used by commuters. However, there is no direct access available over the waterway that links the two water spaces together. Therefore, users are required to walk around the edges of the entire water spaces to access either side. This is a good opportunity for the creation of access over this water space via a pedestrian bridge, improving connectivity to the Canary Wharf hub.

3.52 Whilst there are number of pontoon moorings located within Poplar Dock and along the northern side of the Blackwall Basin, the southern side remains vacant. Therefore, in conjunction with the high demand for moorings within London, there is an opportunity to introduce additional residential moorings within this water space. The extent and form of these additional moorings should be the subject of further studies. However, they could take a similar form and density as those on the north side of the Basin. It is also noted that moorings could provide the opportunities for habitat improvement.

3.53 The south and east of the docks are adjacent to the Coldharbour Conservation Area. The Management Guidelines for this area highlight opportunities for new land-based development to have regard to the area's heritage as part of the mixed-use historic Blackwall village, with a mix of houses, the former River police station and the historic public house.

Infrastructure context and considerations

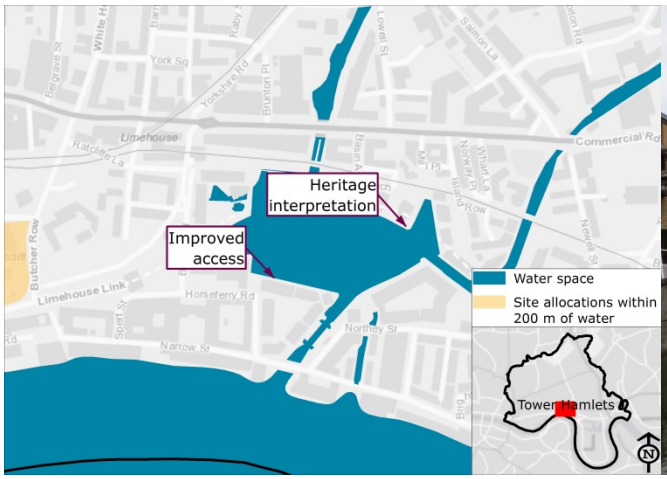
3.54 The southern side of Blackwall Basin is vacant of residential moorings therefore additional moorings could be introduced. Additional infrastructure would need to make careful consideration of the extreme sensitivity of the Grade I listed Poplar Docks (original eastern part) and Grade II Blackwall Basin with regards to design and scale of additional moorings. This includes the Grade II accumulator towers on the west side and south east corner of Poplar Dock.

3.55 The supporting infrastructure required would include:

- Berthing pontoons
- Access ramps, handrailing and security gates
- Steel wall guides / columns
- Tubular steel piles with rise and fall pontoons (pontoon restraints)
- Facilities infrastructure (e.g. refuse storage, bike storage, washing facilities, toilets)

- Service pedestals providing power (low & medium voltage) & water
- Lifesaving equipment

10. Limehouse Basin



Limehouse Basin proposed infrastructure.

Limehouse Basin with surrounding residential development and yacht moorings on the water.

3.56 Limehouse Basin is a sheltered basin that connects to the River Thames, Limehouse Cut and Regent's Canal. The basin is predominantly used for yacht moorings and limited other water usage; however some kayaking trips along the canals begin at the basin. There is very little active frontage and the water space has an 'exclusive' and private feel to it. As a consequence, footfall around the basin is limited which could affect the perception of safety. Moreover, although there is good access around the canal, this is limited to daytime hours only.

3.57 There is an opportunity to improve access, enhance recreation opportunities and incorporate active frontage such as shops and cafes. This could attract visitors to the basin and enhance it to become a destination and this would enhance the perception of safety. This would need to be balanced with the needs of boat residents, and uses promoting the night-time economy would not be appropriate. Interpretation of the heritage of the basin, such as through information boards and public art, would provide an attraction for visitors as well as celebrate the history of the water space. There may also be opportunities to extend Regent's Canal Water Bus to the basin or provide connections through the basin between Regent's Canal and potential Limehouse Cut transport links.

3.58 The basin is also within the Narrow Street Conservation Area. The Management Guidelines for this area highlights opportunities such as the introduction of active frontage in locations and the preservation of particular groups of buildings.

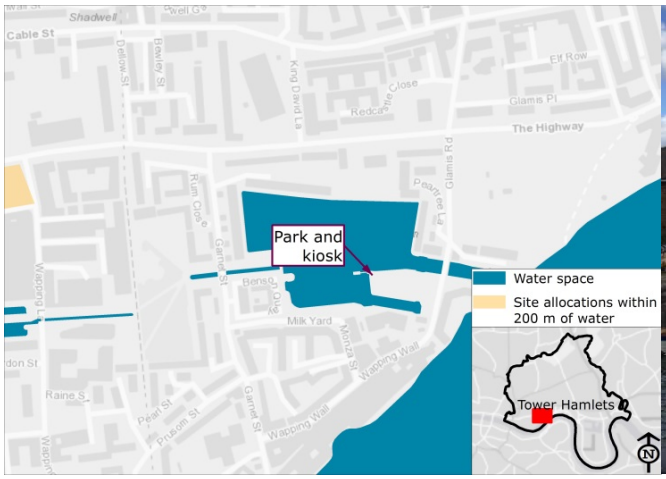
Infrastructure context and considerations

3.59 Improved access and interpretation of the basin heritage will encourage visitors to this water space 'destination'. Additional infrastructure would need to make careful consideration of and reflect the heritage of Limehouse Basin and the associated Narrow Street Conservation Area with regards to design and scale. This includes consideration of the surrounding heritage and listed features, and the adjacent Regent's Canal and St Anne's Church Conservation Areas.

3.60 Required infrastructure could include:

- Heritage interpretation, such as information boards and public art
- Improved Access

11. Shadwell Basin



Shadwell Basin proposed infrastructure.

Shadwell Basin existing recreational facilities.

3.61 Shadwell Basin is an attractive water space with a contained, intimate character, which should be protected. The basin also offers views of both the City and Canary Wharf, providing context and interest for water space users. The microclimate of the basin is also attractive, sheltered to reduce the wind but not significantly overshadowed by surrounding development. The basin is already used for water recreation, including by the Shadwell Basin Outdoor Activity Centre, which is located just to the east.

3.62 There is scope to enhance this water space, through creation of new public space on Brussels Wharf on the south east side, near the Prospect of Whitby pub. This area is currently comprised of bare ground, a few trees and an adjacent car park. This space could be utilised to improve biodiversity, for example as a park, and could connect to the Green Grid within the Borough (**Figure 3.2**). The heritage features of the basin could be conserved further and celebrated, along with some interpretation of the heritage of the London Docks. A well-designed kiosk or coffee van could provide refreshments and help to create a community hub at this appealing space, and attract visitors to the basin.

3.63 Shadwell Basin is also contained within the Wapping Wall Conservation Area. The Management Guidelines for this area highlight opportunities to protect the coherence and harmony of refurbished warehouses and to re-open the river steps.

3.64 Recreational swimming occasionally takes place at the basin, although this is not permitted and is discouraged by the police due to previous incidents of drowning. However, there is a local community campaign to promote a lido at the Basin, and this could be further explored through a feasibility study. Any such study would need to explore:

- The legal issues associated with swimming at the Basin;
- Water quality issues;
- The scope to create a lido area that would not create conflict with existing use by the Outdoor Activity Centre;
- Safety considerations including any tidal influence of associated rivers to which the basin is connected;
- Wider consultation with the community.

3.65 The watersports centre already offers volunteering opportunities and could also offer additional cultural benefits. The East End Canal Festival took place in 2016 to celebrate the heritage of Regent's Canal. Social events such as this could be mirrored at Shadwell Basin to celebrate the history of the docks and provide community activities in collaboration with the watersports centre and other community groups. There could be potential to collaborate with the annual Greenwich and Docklands International Festival, providing free performing arts for the public and attracting people to the water space.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.66 Additional infrastructure would need to need to be sympathetic to the heritage of Shadwell Basin in terms of design and scale. This includes with regard to the Wapping Wall Conservation Area, in which the basin is situates, as well as the St Paul's Church Conservation area adjacent to the north of the basin.

3.67 Required infrastructure may include:

- A new slipway is under construction to provide direct access to the Thames. This is a key opportunity as this slipway will allow much better access to the tidal Thames and contribute significantly to the open space deficit experienced in the borough. Therefore, there are further opportunities to enhance & improve this access to the water.
- A new pontoon infrastructure and floating slipways to facilitate greater use of the water space, particularly in the main basin area, which can be accessed by the general public.
- Creation of a lido would require associated infrastructure including steps and lifebuoys.

Rivers

3.68 The River Thames and the River Lea are the natural boundaries of the Borough to the south and east respectively, and their physical and cultural influence on the area is hugely important. They are very different in character, but share some common challenges to enhancing their character, function and appeal in the future.

3.69 This Study highlights some key locations at site allocations along the river where regeneration offers potential opportunities for improvement. It also proposes some overarching opportunities along the rivers.

River Thames.

River Lea.

3.70 Key challenges for the rivers include:

- **Access:** The Thames Path is a national trail, but due to inappropriate development and removal of access, the path is unclear, broken up by barriers and suffers from inconsistent wayfinding discouraging use. The River Lea has good access on the East side, but there are few bridges to the path from Tower Hamlets, and these are inadequately signposted in places.
- **Connecting over the rivers:** There is a need for better connections over both the Thames (linking the Isle of Dogs to south London) and the River Lea (linking to the Lea River Park, Lee Valley Regional Park and the Olympic Park). This is likely to be through a ferry crossing/additional Thames Clipper berthing on the Thames, whereas additional bridges could be constructed along the River Lea**.**
- **Provision for water recreation**: The Thames in particular has very limited infrastructure within Tower Hamlets to support water recreation such as sailing and canoeing.
- **Historical neighbouring uses:** The River Lea in particular has a long history of industrial uses, and much of the land on the west of the Lee supports polluting land uses with associated poor environmental quality. This limits the appeal of the area to visitors and reduces its role as an important wildlife corridor.
- **Wind tunnelling**: This part of the Thames is a natural wind tunnel and this effect is exacerbated between buildings along the riverfront. This can cause discomfort and reduce the appeal of parts of the docks to visitors, potential recreational users and wildlife.

River Thames

3.71 The River Thames is unique amongst the Borough's water spaces in terms of its character, scale and potential. This presents a certain challenges, as well as opportunities. The benefits of the large stretch of Thames-side within the Borough have yet to be fully realised, and the river offers great potential as a catalyst for regeneration and to create new waterside destinations and recreational hubs. In 2016, the GLA commissioned a Strategy for the Urban Thames[26], which highlighted multiple benefits of investment in new access infrastructure (e.g. Clipper stops and piers) along the river, including in Tower Hamlets. These included:

- Enhanced tourism potential as a destination;
- Promote unique cultural heritage of this part of the riverside;
- Trigger for regeneration of some parts of the riverside;
- Enhanced leisure and recreation benefits; and
- Better use of Thames as a transport corridor for small vessels.

3.72 The scale of the Thames also means that some parts of the riverside are more suitable for the creation of waterside destinations than others. Meanders and associated wind tunnelling and microclimate mean that some stretches feel exposed and less appealing. Where the microclimate is more favourable, the Thames can offer a destination of international appeal, as demonstrated by the success of the South Bank. This water space should be the subject of further studies to identify suitable locations for a new destination within Tower Hamlets, and the associated social and economic benefits this could bring.

3.73 As a large tidal river, the Thames is less suitable for water sports novices, due to its current and tides. It is suitable however for more experienced water sports enthusiasts, and potential for this use has not yet been realised.

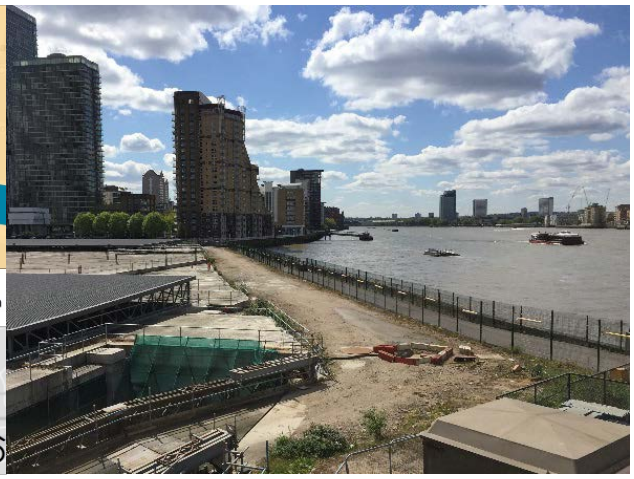
3.74 This study has indicated that both Trinity Buoy Wharf and Reuters have potential for new Thames Clipper Stops, which if well-planned alongside regeneration will help create new destinations along the Tower Hamlets stretch of the riverside, as well as enhancing access to these locations which are currently isolated from surrounding parts of London.

3.75 This study has also identified the potential for new recreational facilities along the Thames, including the proposed slipway, park and pier at Millwall Dock, which will enable a wider range of users to access the Thames. In addition, the interpretation and celebration of the beaches and historic Thames Stairs could encourage better use and appreciation of the river. This should be delivered alongside the necessary improvements to the Thames Path, as detailed below (Thames Path at Canary Wharf West), including both access to the Path, and better signposting. More detail on these opportunities is provided below.

[26] Plan Projects for the GLA (2016) Urban Strategy For River Thames

12. Thames Path at Canary Wharf West

Thames Path at Canary Wharf West.



Thames Path at Canary Wharf West with development site present at site allocation.

3.76 The Thames Path is a National Trail (the purpose of which is to provide appealing and continuous strategic walking routes) which runs along the River Thames within Tower Hamlets. However, in many places the path is disjointed with access limited by walls and inaccurate wayfinding. There is an opportunity to enhance wayfinding to improve access to and along the length of the Thames Path.

3.77 King Edward Memorial Park is an example of recent investment along the Thames in association with new development (the Thames Tideway Tunnel), which can provide opportunities for improvement. The site allocation west of Canary Wharf also presents this opportunity. Access to the Thames Path west of Canary Wharf is limited and therefore the new development should seek to address this. This location, with its west-facing views, is an ideal location where bars, restaurants and the night time economy could attract people to this destination.

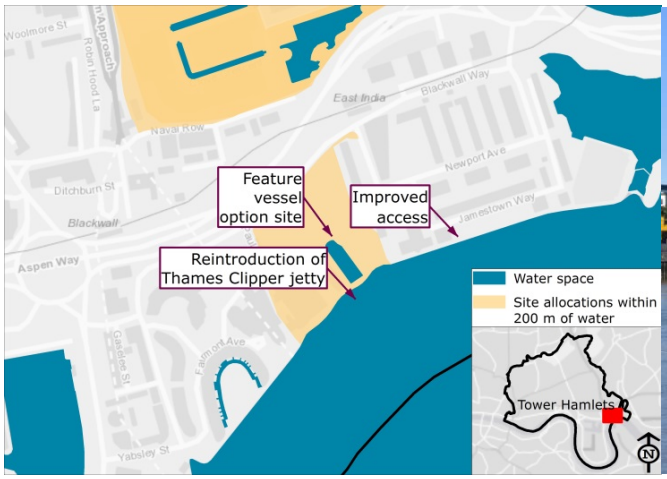
3.78 The River Thames is culturally significant, playing a key role in art, literature and poetry. As such, there are opportunities to celebrate the heritage and cultural importance along the river, providing enhanced access to the river and enabling views across the important water space. This part of the river path is a particular opportunity for this as it is in close proximity to performance locations for the Greenwich and Docklands International Festival. Therefore, enhanced access could contribute directly to additional performance locations for this and other cultural events.

Infrastructure context and considerations

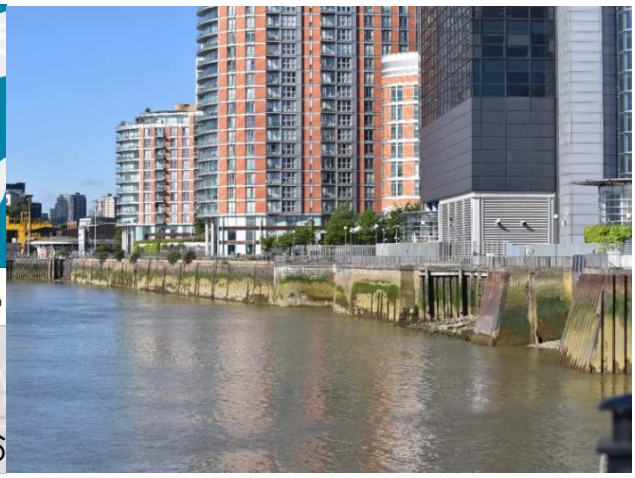
3.79 The Thameside west of Canary Wharf is tidally restricted and there is currently no access to the water. The river frontage is located on the approach to a relatively tight bend in the Thames and is in close proximity to an existing Thames Clipper jetty. There is therefore an opportunity to promote links with the Thames Clipper jetty and its associated landside uses. However, in this area of the river there is significant water-based activity making it less navigable. Therefore, there is limited opportunity to introduce additional water-based infrastructure at this location to provide Thames Clipper links.

3.80 There is an opportunity however to improve pedestrian access and wayfinding along the Thames Path, utilising planned development to enable the improvement of this important riverside footpath. The design of additional infrastructure would need to consider the heritage of the River Thames and the adjacent West India South Dock with regards to design and scale. This includes the Grade II listed former South Dock west entrance lock.

13. Reuters



Reuters proposed infrastructure.



Reuters Thames frontage.

3.81 The Grade II listed Dry Dock at the Blackwall Engineering site occupies this site on the landside. This is one of the largest remaining dry docks on the Thames. The Thames Path is disjointed in locations and requires enhancement to become a continuous and attractive access route. This site and its neighbouring allocated development sites provide the opportunity to enhance Thames Path and its connections with the neighbouring historic East India Basin, Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock.

3.82 The site previously had access to the River Thames via a jetty but this has been removed. There is therefore an opportunity to reinstate a public jetty to accommodate a Thames Clipper stop, in conjunction with the potential rising demand and improved access associated with surrounding development sites and the shortage of Thames Clipper stops along the northern side of the river. Furthermore, there is also potential to introduce a feature vessel to the site to enhance interest and visitors to the area, as well as to celebrate the heritage of the area.

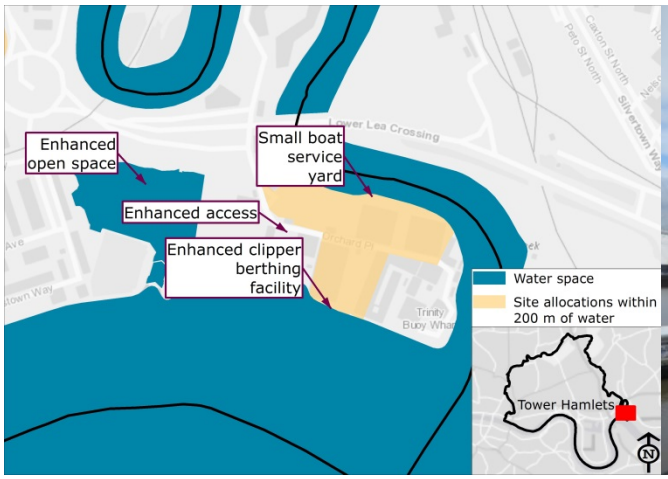
Infrastructure context and considerations

3.83 The immediate foreshore to this site is tidally restricted and no longer has access to the River Thames via a jetty. As a result, there is no access to the water at present and the opportunity to reinstate a public jetty to accommodate a Thames Clipper stop exists. The support infrastructure required for the proposal includes:

- Piled dolphin structure (2no)
- Heavy-duty commercial pontoons
- Access ramp / gangway and bankseat

3.84 Access enhancements could also improve connections between this site and neighbouring historic water spaces.

14. Trinity Buoy Wharf



Trinity Buoy Wharf Thameside Destination proposed infrastructure.

Trinity Buoy Wharf Thameside Destination with Thames Clipper facilitates to the south.

Trinity Buoy Wharf Thameside Destination with existing active frontage and private developments.

Trinity Buoy Wharf Thameside Destination with nature reserve and open space at East India Basin.

3.85 Trinity Buoy Wharf area is a key opportunity to become a Thames-side destination. It presently provides a variety of facilities, including eateries, public art, education establishments and event space. There are opportunities to enhance the active frontage at this site and access from Hercules Wharf and East India Basin, potentially also linking the Thames Path to the Leaway Path and linking to the Green Grid and proposed Green Grid Opportunity IOD2: Orchard Place / Hercules Wharf / East India Dock Basin (**Figure 3.2**). This could develop this location to be a hub of activity.

3.86 Due to increased demand from surrounding site allocations and the new City Island development, there is an opportunity to develop this site to also become an additional Thames Clipper stop. The south side of the Wharf is currently occupied by the existing pier, presenting an opportunity to extend and enhance a purpose built facility for the Clipper fleet. There is also an opportunity for the north side of the wharf, which offers good access to the Thames as well as a degree of protection from activity on the river, to introduce a small boat service yard to provide facilities for users such as marine leisure vessels and light commercial operators. The boat yard would provide services for typically marine leisure vessels and light commercial operators, such as pilot boats, RIB charter vessels and water taxis. The boatyard could enable the wharf to establish itself a 'Marine Related Business Park' that complements the adjacent Thames Clipper fleet. There is already a range of marine and boat related businesses in the area, so this would extend the existing uses.

3.87 Hercules Wharf is currently used for various warehouses and office spaces, however it is a proposed development site. Development at this site could contribute to the connection of East India Basin and Trinity Buoy Wharf, as well as the emerging City Island development. The site itself could also enhance the access along the Thames and provide additional active frontage and landside recreational facilities to attract visitors to this area.

3.88 East India Basin, located to the west of Trinity Buoy Wharf, has substantially reduced in size over the past 70 years and is now predominantly used as a nature reserve for estuarine wildlife as part of Lee Valley Park, offering a wildlife walk through the riparian habitats and hides for bird watching. This sheltered basin is pleasant and tranquil; however, an area of open space to the east of the basin itself, within the gated confines of the reserve, is largely unused, composed of undulating gravel and rough grass cover.

3.89 With the ongoing surrounding residential development, the importance of this open space will increase over the next few years . There is an opportunity to utilise this space for recreation and biodiversity via the creation of a park. Furthermore, the entrance to this site on the eastern side could be enhanced to be more appealing and noticeable, with clear wayfinding. This could attract visitors to the site, enhance the perception of safety and connect the site more clearly to the areas of Hercules Wharf and Trinity Buoy Wharf.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.90 Additional infrastructure would need to reflect the heritage of Trinity Buoy Wharf. This includes Trinity House Buoy Wharf Quay and Orchard Dry Dock, as well as Trinity House Chain Locker and Lighthouse Block, which are listed Grade II features.

3.91 The supporting infrastructure required would include:

- Boatyard area (1-2 hectares, including undercover storage);
- Static Crane (approx. 40t capacity);
- Launch / recovery pontoons;
- Commercial units & office space.

3.92 Additional wayfinding to East India Basin could also be introduced, as well as an additional pedestrian bridge across the River Lea to increase access to the Trinity Buoy Wharf area as well as continuation of the River Lea Path down river.

15. Lea Navigation Waterside Destination

Lea Navigation proposed infrastructure.

Lea Navigation with existing active frontage.

3.93 There is a small area of leisure uses, including eateries and art galleries, located along the Lea Navigation that utilise their waterside locations and offer canal side seating and leisure destinations. Parts of the land adjacent to the River Lea south of the Navigation are development site allocations. Therefore, there is an opportunity for new developments to further utilise their waterside location and complement the active frontage present along the Lea Navigation, for example by offering waterside dining and bars. This, in collaboration with the area's close proximity to the Olympic Park, could enable this section of waterway to become a destination for visitors.

3.94 This part of the river is also within the Fish Island Conservation Area. The Management Guidelines for this area also identify opportunities to enhance the area, such as opportunities for new development to preserve the coherent character of the existing industrial buildings, to improve the public realm at the open space adjacent to Old Ford Locks, and to retain the cultural activities currently present within the area. New development could therefore be designed to celebrate the heritage of the river and provide a cultural destination.

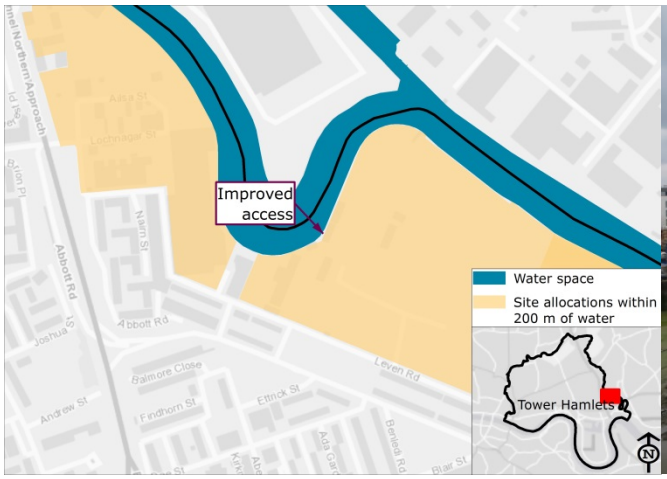
Infrastructure context and considerations

3.95 Improved access along the west of the river, in association with development sites, and recreational facilities could improve connectivity of this water space and attract visitors to this waterside 'destination'. Additional infrastructure would need to be sympathetic to the heritage of the Lea and the adjacent Fish Island Conservation Area in terms of design and scale.

3.96 Infrastructure required could include:

- Improved access, along the west of the river particularly
- Recreational infrastructure, such as access points and lifesaving equipment

16. River Lea Regeneration



River Lea proposed infrastructure.

River Lea Site Allocations with no current access along the river on the western side.

3.97 The River Lea flows along the eastern edge of Tower Hamlets and, although relatively exposed at its southernmost extent, the river is predominantly sheltered and connects to various surrounding canals. From the junction between Limehouse Cut and the River Lea, down to the point where the A13 crosses the river, there is no access along the western side of the River Lea. The southern portion of this stretch has limited access on the eastern side. There are multiple development site allocations along the western banks of the River Lea throughout this stretch, and the area will change significantly over the next 15 years. As such, it is recommended that a strategy is prepared for the River Lea and surrounding land, to ensure that its regeneration is well planned, and future land uses balanced with the needs of the community and potential users of this important river.

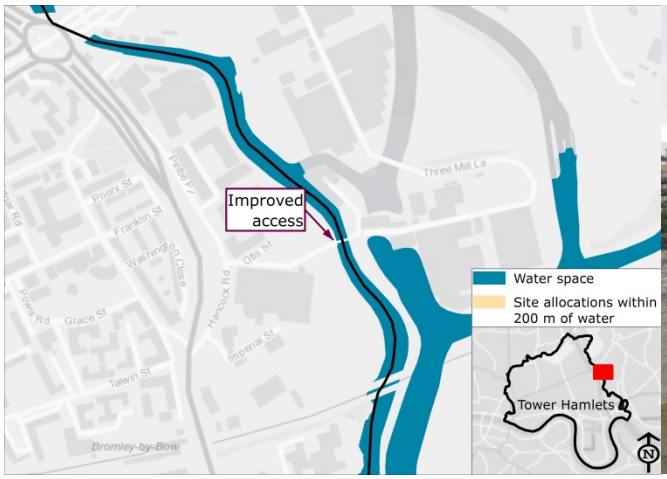
3.98 There is an opportunity for new development to contribute to improve access along this stretch of river, including enhancement of existing river crossings. Future development could contribute to enhancing biodiversity linking to the Green Grid (**Figure 3.2**), and be designed to reflect the rivers character and flood management function

3.99 This part of the Lea is also on 'The Line'; a modern and contemporary art walk. Enhanced access along the river on the Tower Hamlets side could link with this walk and incorporate public art celebrating the heritage and culture of the river.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.100 Access along the river could be improved for pedestrians and cyclists, and complement the Leaway Path on the eastern side.

17. River Lea Access



River Lea proposed infrastructure.

River Lea Access with poor access point.

3.101 Access along the much of the River Lea is mainly along the towpath, which is located on the eastern side of the water in Newham. Where the pathway crosses into the Tower Hamlets side of the river there is a need to maintain consistency in quality and ensure this access is clearly marked by wayfinding and suitable for all users. The crossing at Three Mills Lane is a particular issue, as this requires users to cross a road, traverse uneven land and access the canal path via a tight corner, requiring cyclists to dismount and path users give way to one another. This access point is also adjacent to security chain link fencing topped with barbed wire surrounding a car park. In comparison to the pathway on the alternate side of this crossing this appears unwelcoming, disjointed and of low quality.

3.102 Access here could be improved by levelling the land at the access point, widening the access point, lining the fence with vegetation and providing clear wayfinding, as well as potentially connecting to the nearby green grid opportunity LLV2: Bromley By Bow / Imperial Street / Tesco Site (**Figure 3.2**). New development along the river would need to consider the principles of the Lea River Park, which connects the Thames to Queen Elizabeth Park and the Lee Valley Regional Park, and promote public access along the river.

3.103 This part of the river is within the Tower Hamlets Three Mills Conservation Area and adjacent to the Newham Tree Mills Conservation Area. The Management Guidelines for this area highlights opportunities to enhance the riverside area and to ensure new development respects the scale and presence of the historic mill buildings.

Infrastructure context and considerations

3.104 Due to the tidal nature of this river south of Bow Locks, there is no potential to install new water-related infrastructure at present. There are also a number of bridges spanning the width of the river, which would restrict access for many freight vessels. However, access along the river could be improved for pedestrians and cyclists along the rivers length, and particularly at Three Mills Lane.

3.105 As part of Crossrail 2 construction, there could be opportunities around the Bow Locks to utilise barges for transporting materials. Different types of barges would be required to navigate the Lea to the north of Bow Lock and to navigate the Lea south along Bow Creek and down to the Thames. Therefore, Bow Locks could be utilised for transferring material between these types of barges.

3.106 Additional infrastructure would need to make careful consideration of and reflect the heritage of the Lea with regards to design and scale.

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 3.1: Water Space Opportunities

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary
- Water space
- Foot path adjacent to water space*

Access to foot paths

- Access to foot path from one side
- Access to foot path from both sides (bridge or tunnel)
- Water space opportunity
- Strategic priority project

1: Wapping Canal
2: Regent's Canal North/Cambridge Heath
3: Regent's Canal
4: Limehouse Cut
5: West India North Dock
6: West India South Dock
7: Millwall Inner Dock
8: Millwall Outer Dock and Slipway Park
9: Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock
10: Limehouse Basin
11: Shadwell Basin
12: Thames Path at Canary Wharf West
13: Reuters
14: Trinity Buoy Wharf
15: Lea Navigation Waterside Destination
16: River Lea Regeneration
17: River Lea Access

* some foot paths have access constraints

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

LUC

TOWER HAMLETS

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_3_1_7064_r1_Water_Space_Opportunities_A3L 16/08/2017

Source: OS, NE, OSM, Sustrans, LUC

Tower Hamlets Water Spaces Study

Figure 3.2: Water Space and Green Grid Opportunities

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets boundary
- Water space
- Water space opportunity
- Strategic priority project

1: Wapping Canal
2: Regent's Canal North/Cambridge Heath
3: Regent's Canal
4: Limehouse Cut
5: West India North Dock
6: West India South Dock
7: Millwall Inner Dock
8: Millwall Outer Dock and Slipway Park
9: Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock
10: Limehouse Basin
11: Shadwell Basin
12: Thames Path at Canary Wharf West
13: Reuters
14: Trinity Buoy Wharf
15: Lea Navigation Waterside Destination
16: River Lea Regeneration
17: River Lea Access

- Existing Green Grid network
- Proposed Green Grid extensions
- Opportunity from Green Grid Strategy

CA1: Bow Common Lane
CA2: Canal Square
CA3: St. Paul's Way
CA4: Commercial Road
CA5: Chrisp Street/Cordelia Street
CA6: Roman Road
CF1: Well-close square
CF2: Turin Street-St Matthews Row
CF3: Brick Lane North
CF4: Osborne Street
CF5: Allen Gardens Area
CF6: Med City Campus Green Link
CF7: Marian Place Gas Works
IOD1: Poplar DLR Station Link
IOD2: Orchard Place
IOD3: Billingsgate Market
IOD4: Pennyfields
IOD5: South Quay DLR Open Spaces
IOD6: The Quarterdeck
IOD7: Limeharbour Green Link
IOD8: East Ferry Road Castelli Square
IOD9: Westferry Road South
LLV1: Devon's Road Interchange/Circus
LLV2: Bromley by Bow/Imperial Street/Tesco Site
LLV3: St. Andrews Way
LLV4: Zetland /Ailsa Street
LLV5: Leven Road Gas Works

Map Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

LUC

TOWER HAMLETS

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRIFIG_3_2_7064_r1_Water_Space_and_Green_Grid_Opportunities_A3L 16/08/2017 Source: OS, NE, OSM, Sustrans, LUC

4 Strategic recommendations

4.1 **Section 3** made a number of site-specific recommendations concerning the water spaces that offer the greatest opportunity for enhancement. This section complements this with some over-arching recommendations for Tower Hamlets Council in preparing the Local Plan and working with partners to enhance the Borough's unique network of water spaces.

Key objectives

4.2 This study has highlighted the social, economic and environmental value of water spaces within Tower Hamlets. There is potential, however, to derive further benefits from these spaces, including improved public access, enhanced biodiversity, and more water based recreation. In order to realise this potential, the following objectives should be pursued:

- Prepare masterplans for water spaces where regeneration is planned, to guide and integrate the individual development proposals, and reduce the potential for negative effects.
- Adopt design principles on the height, scale, appearance and location of development adjacent to water space: the recommendations below provide some guidance on the scope of these.
- Promote recognition of Tower Hamlet's water spaces are a key part of the Borough's heritage, through working with partners and developers to reveal, protect and interpret the significance of these features.
- Deliver water space enhancement alongside Green Grid opportunities through development, to ensure a high quality network of connected water spaces, attractive routes and multifunctional green space. The Local Plan should recognise the potential for water spaces to help alleviate deficiency in access to nature.
- Explore feasibility of a new modern lock connecting the docks on the Isle of Dogs to the Thames. This would increase the options for docks which have limited functions due to lack of access for boats.
- Undertake further engagement with the Canal and River Trust and other key stakeholder organisations to secure partners for the delivery of opportunities.

Embedding the Water Spaces Study within the Tower Hamlets Local Plan

4.3 The findings of this Water Space Study will inform new policies within the Local Plan. This will ensure that water spaces are fully considered through future planning decisions, and that the benefits of the extensive development in the Borough are shared with residents.

Recommendations for new development adjacent to water

4.4 Emerging water space policies in the Local Plan will outline the key issues relevant to new development in proximity to water spaces, and provide design principles.

Overarching recommendations

4.5 All development adjacent to water space should recognise and conserve its importance as a valuable social, environmental and economic resource (see **Section 1**).

4.6 Draft Policy OS2 of the Local Plan above refers to 'no net loss' of water space. Loss in this context includes development covering and over-sailing water spaces. This design of proposed development should ensure that the water space is protected and enhanced (avoiding any reduction in open water space) with high quality public realm, appropriate facilities and active frontage where appropriate.

4.7 Development adjacent to water space should be considered holistically, recognising the context and character of the area in which the water space is located (See **Appendix 2: Water Space Characterisation**), and enhance access for the local community.

4.8 Where heritage assets are present, design should pay special regard to protecting their setting.

4.9 The value of water spaces as wildlife habitats and ecological corridors should be reflected, and enhancement delivered through adjacent development.

4.10 Development adjacent to water space should conserve and enhance Local Views. It should ensure that the siting and orientation of buildings maximises visual access to the water, as well as natural surveillance.

4.11 Water-related functions should be encouraged as appropriate to the individual location and local constraints, in line with Policy 7.28 of the London Plan[27].

4.12 The potential for cumulative impacts of development on water spaces, particularly in terms of daylight/sunlight, overshadowing, win turbulence, microclimate and noise should be addressed in Environmental Statements associated with proposed development. The Council may need to update its guidance to applicants on what is considered appropriate.

Design of new development

- The extent of water space should be protected – new buildings should not reduce, cover or over-sail water space.
- Where appropriate, development should be set back from the water's edge to allow space for current or future public access needs, and to protect wildlife corridors.
- Buildings should an appropriate scale, and should not overshadow adjacent water spaces. Overshadowing reduces the recreational and biodiversity value of water space, and this issue should be considered when reviewing planning applications.
- Views from the water spaces and views between buildings surrounding water spaces should be conserved and enhanced. Development restricting existing views, infilling of gaps between existing buildings, and large moorings that restrict views should not be permitted.
- Development should be designed with consideration of the important heritage of water spaces, including their character and features.
- Natural surveillance should be provided through building design, and the inclusion of commercial and leisure ground floor uses where appropriate to encourage visitors.
- The role of water as an important open space resource should be reflected through the creation of active frontages alongside water spaces where appropriate, to encourage access and create community hubs.
- A detailed strategy should be developed for water spaces within the Borough, where significant change and development is anticipated, in order to determine the best locations for active frontage, and appropriate uses to promote in these locations, based on the needs of the surrounding community and the water space users themselves.
- Commercial moorings should be considered as a means of increasing visitors to some water spaces, increasing their appeal as open space destinations and community hubs.

[27] Greater London Authority - The London Plan (2016) Policy 7.28 Restoration of the Blue Ribbon Network.

Access and leisure

- Access enhancements should ensure water spaces and their towpaths contribute to a permeable borough with attractive off-road routes, ensuring an appropriate balance of use by pedestrians and cyclists.
- Future development should enable the connection of footpaths, which benefit from consistent width and available views along their length.
- Frequent access points should be secured along the canals and rivers, to reduce perceived isolation along some waterways.
- Ramps should be provided where appropriate to facilitate access for all, including wheelchair users, and those with buggies.
- Historic river stair access to the River Thames should be protected and where appropriate restored.
- Development should deliver infrastructure that supports appropriate use of the water space, including wayfinding, interpretation, ramped access and cycle parking.
- Residential and commercial moorings should not be permitted if they result in a stretch of water becoming less navigable, or where they may result in conflicts with other users.
- The delivery of new residential moorings should be discussed with the Council, and should reflect the locations highlighted in this Study, and the guidance of the Canal and River Trust.

Recreation which utilises water spaces

- Recreational activities that utilise water spaces, including rowing, sailing, canoeing, fishing and swimming should be encouraged and provided with suitable locations and facilities.
- Development should provide increased opportunities for continuous public access to the water space for water related uses.
- Where there is a demonstrated need, new facilities to support recreation that utilises water space should be provided, such as jetties, slipways, life rings and amenities.

Heritage

- All development should recognise the historic value of the Borough's water spaces and ensure that their design is sensitive to the character, historic features (e.g. locks, slipways) and setting of water spaces.
- Views and settings of historic buildings associated with the water spaces, and the water spaces themselves, should be protected to provide a sense of place.
- Interpretation of the significance of the Borough's water spaces, such as information boards, should be provided.

Biodiversity

- Development along water spaces should deliver a net gain to biodiversity, through the provision of new areas of wetland habitat within the water space, or the creation of green areas alongside the water space.
- Where development is proposed on the off-side of canals in the Borough, consideration should be given as to whether it is appropriate to create public access here.

Sustainable transport

- Wayfinding between water spaces and transport hubs (tubes, trains and DLR stations, ferry stops) should be improved.
- Opportunities to create sustainable transport across water spaces should be considered alongside new development, including the identification and protection of location for ferry stops for a Docks Ferry Service.

Water management and climate adaptation

- Enhancement of the water spaces should improve the micro-climate through using trees to create shelter, shading or alleviate urban heat island effects.
- Enhancement of water spaces should consider their potential to contribute to natural flood management through alleviating pluvial flooding.

Engaging stakeholders

4.13 Due to the varied land ownership and because many opportunities relate to site allocations for future development, the Council will need to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations and developers to effectively deliver the water space opportunities. These organisations will include:

- Canal and River Trust
- Port of London Authority
- Greater London Authority
- London Legacy Development Corporation
- Neighbouring boroughs
- Shadwell Basin Outdoor Activity Centre
- Docklands Sailing and Water Sports Centre
- Poplar, Blackwall and District Rowing Club
- Neighbourhood Forums, community groups

Feasibility assessment

4.14 This Study has involved an audit of all 19 of the Borough's water spaces and identified a number of potential opportunities for water space enhancements. Where there is an opportunity to deliver these opportunities, further feasibility work will be required to ensure that the opportunities are feasible. It is recommended that where significant regeneration is planned adjacent to a water space, a masterplan and water space-specific strategy is prepared for the location, to ensure the recommendations of this study are achieved on the ground. This would identify all of the fundamental issues across the areas that relate to access, management and cost. All of these issues need to be understood and addressed if the full potential of the water space is to be realised and achieved.

4.15 The following issues should be explored as part of such a study:

- Strategic allocation of sites for different types of water use
- Land ownership
- Underground utilities
- Planning permission and building consent
- Health and safety issues
- Legal issues
- Water quality
- Costs

Examples of Best Practice: Regent's Canal

Views of Canary Wharf provide context and interest for water space users

Adjoining green spaces make increase use and accessibility

Historic and natural features inform visitors on heritage and support biodiversity

Scale of buildings ensure water space is not overshadowed

Buildings set back slightly from the water space and provide natural surveillance

Wide towpath provides good access for range of uses, with capacity for more users

Example of Valuable Water Space for Recreation: Millwall Dock

Example of Good Quality Water Space: Shadwell Basin

Views of the City provide context and interest for water space users

Adjoining green space could be enhanced to create a community resource

Wide footpaths provides good access for range of uses, with capacity for more users

Scale of buildings ensure water space is not overshadowed

Sheltered water space and moderate freeboard create potential for range of activities

Buildings set back slightly from the water space and provide natural surveillance

Historic features visible around the water space provide character and sense of place[i]

i- As highlighted in Objective 2 of the Canal & River Trust - Olympic Legacy Waterways Framework (2012)

Examples of Good Quality Water Space: River Thames

Adjacent buildings overlook pathway to enhance perception of safety

Lamp posts and other street furniture create a welcoming feel

Stepped access to the Thames is both a heritage feature which could be celebrated and also an opportunity for waterway access

Open views of downstream development provide context and interest for water space users

The area is open and exposed- additional tree planting could enhance micro climate

Water movement creates an 'active' feel to this area

Delivery mechanisms

Community Infrastructure Levy

4.16 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced through the Planning Act (2008) as a capital cost payable by developers towards the cost of local and sub-regional infrastructure to support development. Green infrastructure is included in the types of infrastructure that are eligible for CIL funding. The NPPF states that the CIL should 'support and incentivise new development' and encourages local authorities to test the feasibility of proposed CIL charges alongside the Local Plan. As stated in the National Planning Practice Guidance:

- "The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development."

4.17 The Council has adopted CIL and has an associated Regulation 123 List which does not explicitly refer to water spaces, but does include some types of infrastructure associated with water spaces, such as Leisure facilities such as 'sports facilities', and 'open space'. The Regulation 123 List includes the above as categories of Strategic Infrastructure, defining this as: 'infrastructure that is designed to serve more than those residents or workers within one particular development by contributing to infrastructure improvements across the wider borough.'

4.18 As such, it would be helpful to determine whether CIL should be seen as the main mechanism for delivering water space enhancement through planning and development management. This approach would fit with the proposals of the recent Housing White Paper, which suggests that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should be replaced by a Local Infrastructure Tariff (LIT), a streamlined low level tariff that would be supplemented by Section 106 contribution for larger developments.

Section 106

4.19 Developer contributions under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 should provide a key mechanism for securing funding for the enhanced water spaces. Section 106 agreements are a tool that makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, which would not otherwise be acceptable. There are three legal tests which must be met, in order for a Section 106 agreement to be appropriate:

- Must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- Must be directly related to the development
- Must be reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

4.20 The use of Section 106 as the main mechanism for securing funding from development therefore only enables funding to be secured where the proposed development is likely to have a direct impact on a water space or associated issues.

4.21 It is therefore recommended that Section 106 should be the mechanism employed to secure financial contributions from development where the proposal is less than 200m from a water space. This is based on the assumption that residents and employees of developments within 200m of a water space would be likely to utilise the water space as a destination for relaxation, socialising, healthy exercise or as a walking route on a regular basis. In these cases, it is reasonable to determine a 'direct relationship' between the development and the water space network.

Partner with water space management organisations

4.22 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets does not have a department or officer directly responsible for water spaces, which means that responsibility for ensuring delivery of the opportunities should be delivered through a partnership between a number of departments, including planning, public health and infrastructure. This will require effective and ongoing partnership between these Council teams.

4.23 In addition, the Council should engage with other organisations responsible for maintaining water space, in particular the Canal and River Trust, and in regard to many of the docks and basins on the Isle of Dogs, with the Canary Wharf Trust.

Neighbourhood Forums

4.24 Neighbourhood Forums have been formed for a number of communities in Tower Hamlets, and neighbourhood plans are in various stages of preparation. These Neighbourhood Forums can be consulted on 25% of CIL funding from development within their agreed boundary. In addition, the Council welcomes Neighbourhood Forums using Neighbourhood Plans to continue to protect and enhance waterway functions and design.

Local water recreation clubs and charities

4.25 There are a number of local clubs and charities that utilise the Borough's water spaces, and that are keen to see new uses and activities around them. The Council should aim to engage with and support these local organisations, and their input could be helpful in both designing enhancements to water space, and ensuring the effective and sustainable management of these spaces.

Appendix 1
Methodology

Task	Overview
Stage 1: Evidence gathering and context	
Task 1.1: Inception	• Agree proposed methodology • Share relevant evidence base and context documents • Agree programme and meeting dates • Agree project communications • Agree outline structure of the report • Agreement of consultation format and questions
Task 1.2: Compile data in GIS	• All water bodies within the Borough including docks, canals, reservoirs, lakes, rivers and other smaller water bodies. • Infrastructure relating to water space including, locks, jetties, bridges, aqueducts, wharves, embankments. • Environment Agency data on flooding, drainage and discharge of treated effluent. • Green Grid – to allow for consideration of green infrastructure, links and access within water spaces • Accessibility - identification of current access points as well as real and perceived barriers. • Proposed development areas adjoining water spaces. • Public Rights of Way • Sustrans Routes • Habitats – Designated areas for biodiversity as well as planned areas of ecological interest such as Poplar River Park.
Task 1.3: Review policy and local context	• An outline of relevant national, regional and local planning policy context for the study • A review of the relevant evidence base documents available for this study.
Stage 2: Audit and Analysis	
Task 2.1: SWOT analysis, including current barriers to access and potential through planned development	• Review of evidence base and define strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to delivering Water Space ambitions, the potential need for water space and the likely impact of future growth. Overlay maps of existing, proposed and potential future development and water spaces, to determine where there are current deficiencies in access and infrastructure, and where development could create further deficiencies in the future. • Identify the key issues to be addressed to improve the quality, accessibility and use of water spaces

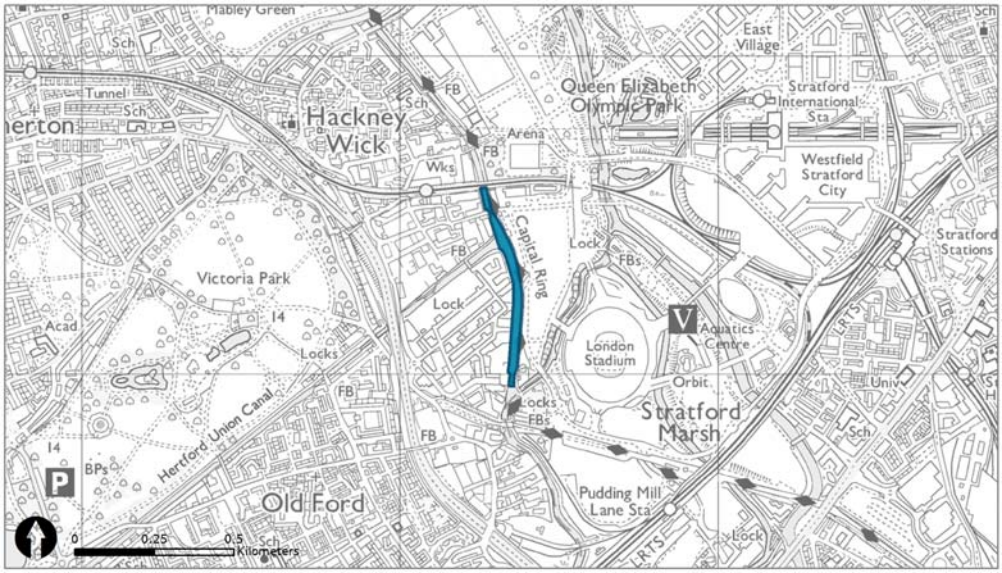
Task 2.2: Consultation – including with Duty to Cooperate partners and in response to Regulation 18 Consultation on the Local Plan	• Internal Council colleagues • External partners within Tower Hamlets • Canals and Rivers Trust • Neighbouring authorities in line with Duty to Cooperate • Identify/confirm current water space projects which are underway • Identify future plans for water space enhancement • Identify/confirm recognised deficiencies or needs •
Task 2.3: Qualitative and quantitative audit existing water space – simple criteria, social and environmental functions	• Assess the water spaces using simple criteria, to determine their contribution to promoting and enabling recreation, leisure, active travel and transportation channels ,biodiversity networks and heritage conservation. • Mapped presentation of all water spaces and the socio-economic and environmental context
Task 2.4: Progress meeting	• Review findings of the desk study and audit of water spaces • Agree an approach to prioritising sites for investment • Explore findings from stakeholder consultation •
Task 2.5: Water space characterisation	• Visit all 19 water spaces in the Borough, to identify the existing character, key challenges and opportunities relevant to each water space. • Define the specific challenges and opportunities for each water space, to inform future management and guide nearby development.
Task 2.6: Recommendations on River Thames	• Consider the specific challenges relevant to the Thames, and highlight how future investment should achieve its potential.
Task 2.7: Produce new data layer on public access to water space	• Prepare a map of public access to water space, based on a combination of mapped information, web-based applications and site visits to map the extent of access to water spaces from the surrounding streets.
Stage 3: Identify Water Space priorities and delivery mechanisms	
Task 3.1: Identify suitable locations for waterway support infrastructure to support water dependent uses.	• Identify the need and suitable locations for new infrastructure, including boatyards, moorings, jetties and safety equipment to support a range of users.
Task 3.2: Recommend proposals for the enhancement of quality, quantity and accessibility	• Develop proposals for the enhancement of quality and access to water spaces, based on identified need and potential.

in identified priority areas	
Task 3.3: Prioritise sites for investment – criteria e.g. deficiency analysis, existing quality, accessibility	• Identify the water spaces that are strategic priorities for investment and enhancement, based on their potential benefits to residents of the Borough and location in proximity to areas of significant regeneration.
Task 3.4: Identify and recommend interventions to improve the borough's usability for water related users.	• Define new water space enhancements and projects, including location, features, functions and connectivity. • These new Water Space projects will reflect planned projects identified by stakeholders, plus any development proposals which should address local deficiency and barriers to Water Space connectivity.

Appendix 2
Water Space Characterisations

1. TITLE

Lea Navigation



2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

The predominantly industrial use of the area in the past has shaped its spatial development creating a number of vacant and under-used riverside sites and very poor environmental quality. The rapid increase in road traffic on the A12 has resulted in very high levels of air pollution. Whilst Victoria Park lies to the north of the area, it is still experiencing open space deficiency with a particular concern of access to and availability of small and district parks meeting more local needs. The area is a home to a significant residential community with more densely populated areas located to the west of the A12. Currently, there are nine conservation areas within the area, which shape its character and give a sense of history and identity.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Traditional bridges are still in place along the canal and the moored residential boats create a timeless feel.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Swans and other bird life are present along the canal. Fringes of greenery are also present along the canal edges.

- **Use, activities, movement**

Residential moorings are present and used by boats along the canal. Canoes and rowers use the Lea Navigation for recreational use. Commercial boats are also present including a kayak hire boat which also operates as a café. Runners and cyclists use the towpath which links to the Olympic Park in the neighbouring Newham Borough.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

Many buildings along the canal are orientated with their backs facing the canal, reducing natural surveillance. Sporadic surveillance is provided by canal-side bars present on the Navigation. The canal has an intimate scale as well as open views, such as towards the Olympic Park, which creates an appealing landscape. The informality of the canal should be maintained.

- **Functions**

Residential boats moor and navigate along the canal. Recreational boats also navigate the canal, such as kayaks and canoes, and a commercial boat hires out canoes and also operates as a café.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

There are bridges and frequent access points along the canal. These should be maintained and protected to retain good levels of access.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The existing cultural heritage assets of the canal should be enhanced and protected, such as the bridges, moored boats, and cobbled paths.

☑ **Biodiversity**

Habitat creation should be pursued on the off-side of the canal where possible.

☑ **Transport**

Additional moorings should be limited to maintain the navigability of the canal.

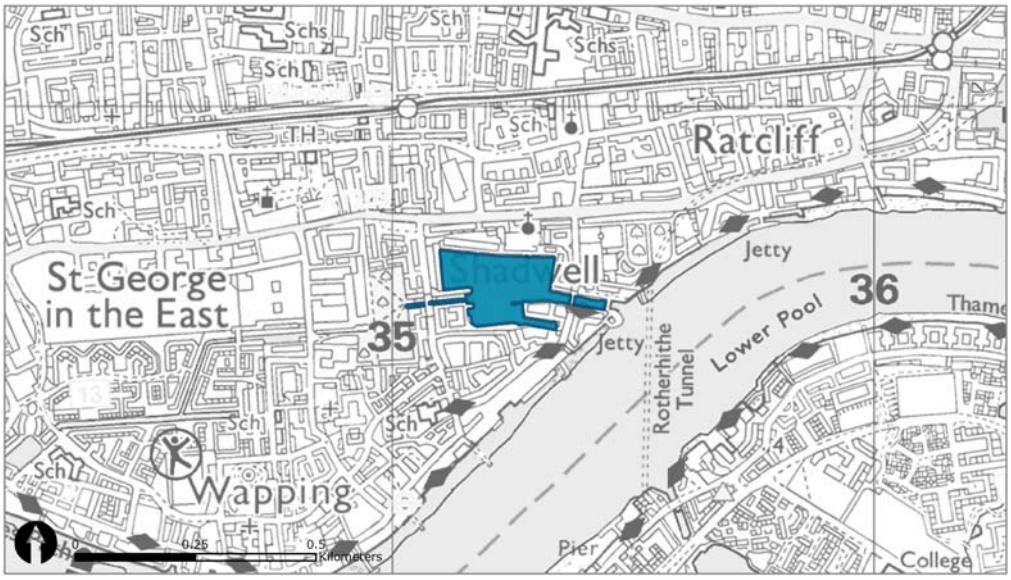
☑ **Recreation**

The existing recreational facilities should be maintained along the Navigation.

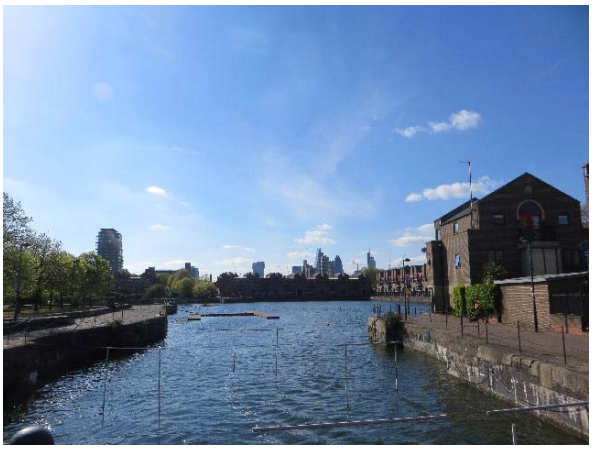
☑ **Safety**

Additional lighting could enhance the perception of safety along the canal, especially in locations where buildings lining the canal are oriented with their backs to the water's edge.

1. TITLE **Shadwell Basin**



2. PHOTOS



3. AREA CHARACTER

The area is predominantly residential and comprises of a number of smaller 'places' each with a distinct character. However these areas do share a number of characteristics and have a sense of coherence. This includes the predominance of residential uses of various styles and typologies. These residential uses are supported by a number of town centres (both district and neighbourhood centres). The variety of styles and distinct character of each 'place' stems from their historical development as distinct historical hamlets, with their own centres, uses and dominant typologies. There are still large areas of historic housing remaining, many of which are protected through conservation areas.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

A traditional bridge is present at the east of the basin and cobbled paths are present around the water space. Views are available across the water to the northern side of the basin where a cluster of trees and St Pauls Church are present.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

A few trees are present to the north and south of the basin and a patch of open space is located on the land protruding in to the basin in the southeast.

- **Use, activities, movement**

An activity centre is located on the east of the basin which utilises the water for watersports. Additionally, the centre offers other recreation opportunities such as rock climbing. People walk around the basin with their children and walk their dogs.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The basin is attractive with a contained intimate character which should be protected. The basin also offers a sense of views of both the main city and Canary Wharf. The microclimate of the basin is also attractive, sheltered to reduce the wind but not significantly overshadowed by surrounding development. The architecture surrounding the basin is in keeping with its character and the area is not too built up.

- **Functions**

The water space is predominantly used by the adjacent activity centre for recreational use.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

Access to the basin and surrounding the basin is predominantly good however there are some steps present which limit access.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The heritage features of the basin could be conserved further and celebrated. For example, information boards could provide information regarding the heritage of the water space and could also attract visitors to the basin.

☑ **Biodiversity**

The open space in the southeast of the basin presently is comprised of bare ground and a few trees, with a car park adjacent. This space could be utilised to improve biodiversity, for example as a park, and could connect to the green grid within the Borough.

☑ **Transport**

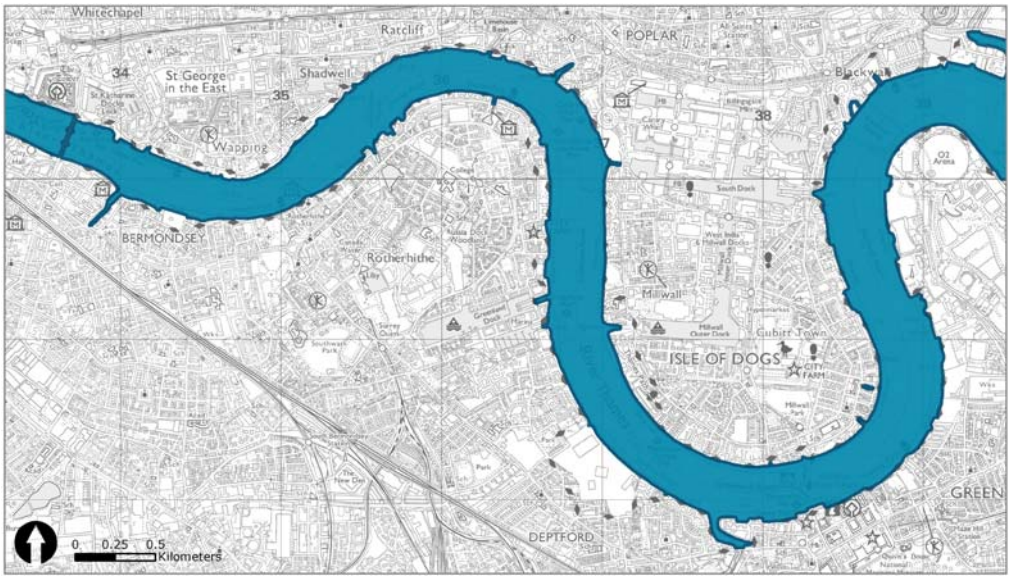
There is a need for better wayfinding to the basin from nearby centres.

☑ **Recreation**

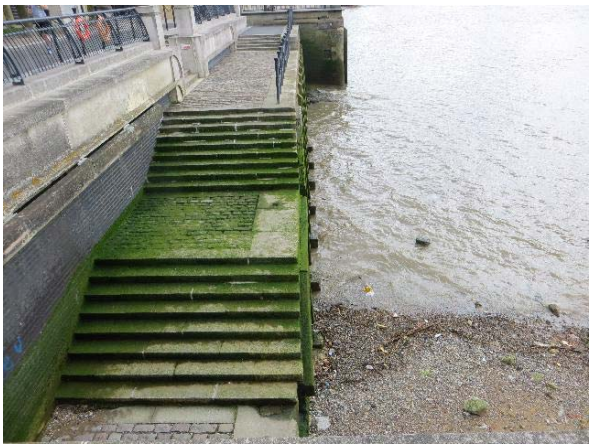
The existing recreational used of the water space could be enhanced further. The open space in the southeast of the basin should be utilised, for example as a park.

☐ **Safety**

1. TITLE **River Thames**



2. PHOTOS



3. AREA CHARACTER

Geographically, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar are shaped by waterways, the Thames River and the River Lea. Consequently, the southern area of the Isle of Dogs and Orchard Wharf experience limited connectivity. Similarly the result of this is poor north south connectivity between Poplar and the Isle of Dogs. Presently, the area is made up of two predominant land-uses, residential and office. The office uses are generally located within Canary Wharf and have attracted a significant amount of retail floor-space and establishing the area as a 'Retail District Centre'. The historical character of the docklands is still present in pockets throughout the island, particularly around the dock basins. The areas waterspaces are both natural and man-made and provide relief to a dense inner city location, deficient in open space. Employment in the area is dominated by large floor plate office space and retail units concentrated in Canary Wharf. To the west the Central Local Plan Area is largely residential, and not a focus for

economic activity, most economic activity is focused in the town centres, which largely supports the local economy, providing a focus for SME business, local retail and community facilities.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Cultural heritage features include the Thames Steps and moorings. Additionally, some of the adjacent building designs attempt to reflect the imagery of boats, however most buildings adjacent are modern.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Many birds are present along the Thames. In some locations 'Thames Beaches' appear at low tide. Small parks are located sporadically along the Thames and well as some trees lining the path.

- **Use, activities, movement**

Boats navigate the water including recreational boats, such as sailing boats, passenger boats, such as the Thames Clipper, and cargo boats.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The Thames has a predominantly open, bleak, windy and wavy character, although parts of the path are more populated and appealing. The space between buildings and the river varies, however there is capacity for a continuous path along the length of the Thames in Tower Hamlets.

- **Functions**

Cargo boats navigate the river as well as passenger ferries which dock at ferry stops including those within Tower Hamlets. Limited recreational boats navigate the river due to lack of access, with the exception of predominantly sailing boats.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

The positioning of benches and lampposts in places limits cycle access. The path route along the Thames is disjointed with walls blocking sections of the route and unhelpful and inaccurate wayfinding in places. Projects such as the King Edward Memorial Park enhancement could increase connections.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

Protection of the Thames Steps could help limit their damage. Signage interpreting the cultural heritage features along the Thames could also provide enhancement.

☑ **Biodiversity**

Litter is an issue along the Thames. Greenery connections could also be enhanced and opportunities should be sought where these arise.

☑ **Transport**

There is a need for better wayfinding along the Thames and from London itself. Additionally Thames Clipper stops could be added to the south of the east of the Isle of Dogs with clearer wayfinding to these and existing stops.

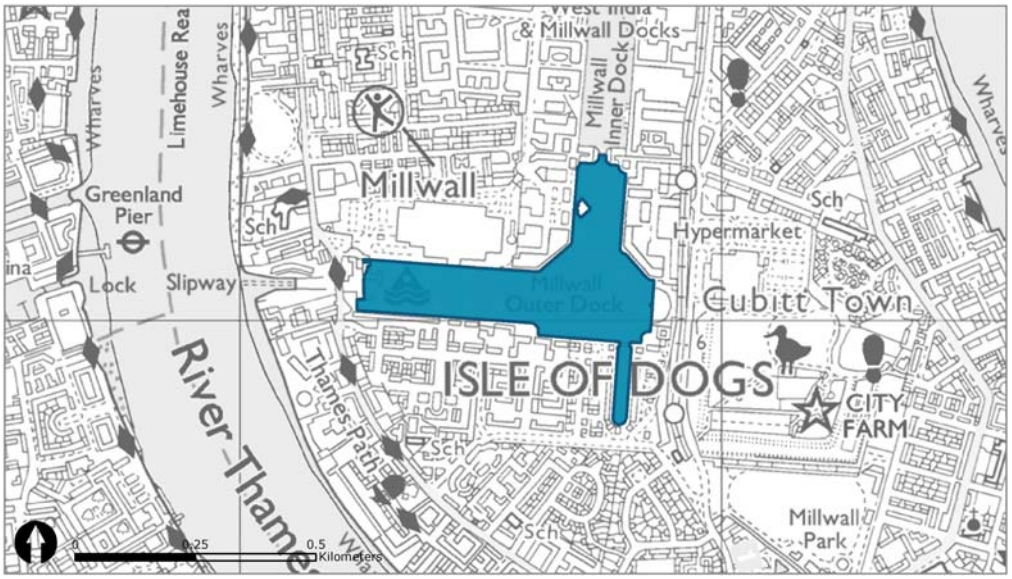
☑ **Recreation**

The need for better water access could be reviewed, such as for sailing, and the Docklands Sailing Club could be expanded with new Thames Access near Millwall Dock. Enhanced and less disjointed access could encourage walkers and cyclists. There is a potential opportunity for recreational Thames Beaches at low tide.

☑ **Safety**

Generally there is good lighting along the Thames however some sections are presently unappealing due to ongoing construction.

1. TITLE **Millwall Outer Dock**



2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

Geographically, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar are shaped by waterways, the Thames River and the River Lea. Consequently, the southern area of the Isle of Dogs and Orchard Wharf experience limited connectivity. Presently, the area is made up of two predominant land-uses, residential and office. The office uses are generally located within Canary Wharf and have attracted a significant amount of retail floor-space and establishing the area as a 'Retail District Centre'. The historical character of the docklands is still present in pockets throughout the island, particularly around the dock basins. The areas waterspaces are both natural and man-made and provide relief to a dense inner city location, deficient in open space. The built form consists of a number of divergent character areas and architectural style and is host to a significant volume of 1970s Council estates, new high-rise and high density executive apartments, Georgian terrace housing and piecemeal sites with a unique identity. Employment in the area

is dominated by large floor plate office space and retail units concentrated in Canary Wharf.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Information boards are present providing detail about the heritage of the dock and the historic shipping cranes. There are some token references to the past including a chimney on the eastern edge of the dock.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Many birds utilise the water space and there are some trees located alongside the dock. A green space is located on the eastern edge of the dock.

- **Use, activities, movement**

The dock is primarily used recreationally for boating, canoeing and social use by the watersports club on the waterside. Additionally, there are some residential moorings on the eastern side.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The dock is large however it is also contained, sheltered and is less exposed than the River Thames creating a pleasant feel. The dock is actively used, however a poorly designed Balmore Property building on the western edge of the dock is a detractor.

- **Functions**

The dock is primarily used for recreational uses.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

The access is predominantly good around the dock and the low freeboard provides good access to the water. Additionally, jetties and other infrastructure provide good access to the water. The water space however is very open and there is potential for bridges across the water to enhance access. There is an opportunity for a park to be located between the Thames and the activity centre however there would be need to improve pedestrian access to this.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The existing cultural heritage features should be protected and maintained.

☑ **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity in the dock should be maintained and where possible enhanced. Floating plant beds could be installed and habitats could be created and enhanced in the open space to the east of the dock.

☑ **Transport**

There is potential to create a public transport link between the inner and outer docks.

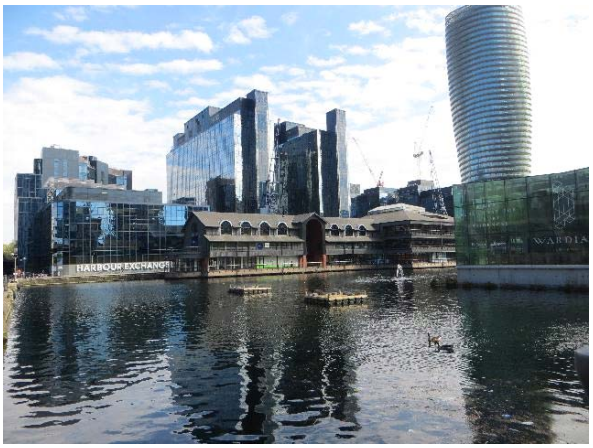
☑ **Recreation**

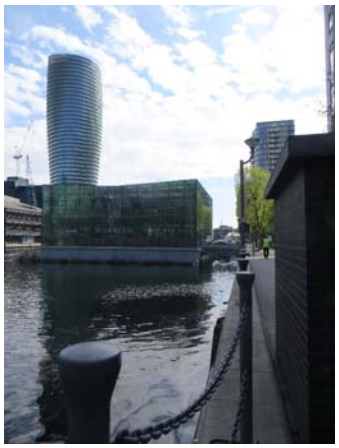
The existing green space to the east of the dock could be enhanced as well as the existing recreational use of the dock. A pier at the slipway to the Thames opposite the activity centre could also enhance recreational usage.

☐ **Safety**

1. TITLE **Millwall Inner Dock**

2. PHOTOS





3. AREA CHARACTER

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is dominated by large floor plate office space and retail units concentrated in Canary Wharf.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Some information boards about the heritage of the dock are present. Cranes adjacent to the dock have been retained. The dock has a sense of heritage as an active industrial dock.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Biodiversity within the rock is limited due to the steep freeboard.

- **Use, activities, movement**

Although the dock has a lower freeboard than the West India docks, Millwall Inner Dock suffers from overshadowing by adjacent buildings, limiting the use of the water.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The dock is completely overshadowed by surrounding development, making the water appear dark and unappealing. A building located on the water also detracts from the water.

- **Functions**

The water itself is predominantly unused in the dock.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

Access is predominantly good around this dock however the water itself appears inaccessible due to the high freeboard, overshadowing by surrounding buildings and presents of a building on the water space.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The existing cultural heritage features should be protected and maintained.

☑ **Biodiversity**

The opportunities for biodiversity within this dock are limited. Habitat creation is an option, however the overshadowing of the dock may reduce success.

☑ **Transport**

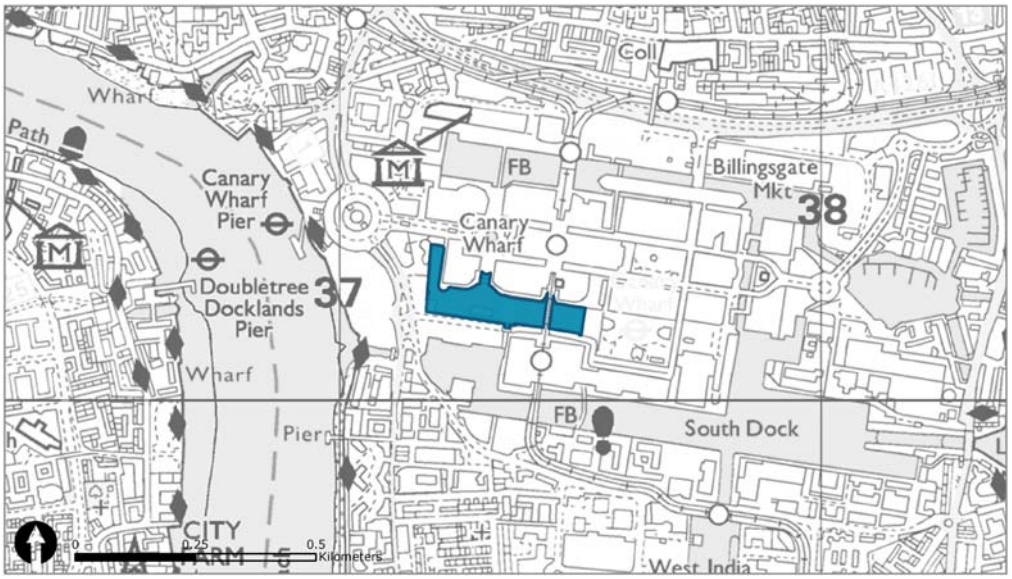
There is potential to create a public transport link between the inner and outer docks, thereby linking southern parts of the Isle of Dogs to Canary Wharf and its associated transport connections.

☑ **Recreation**

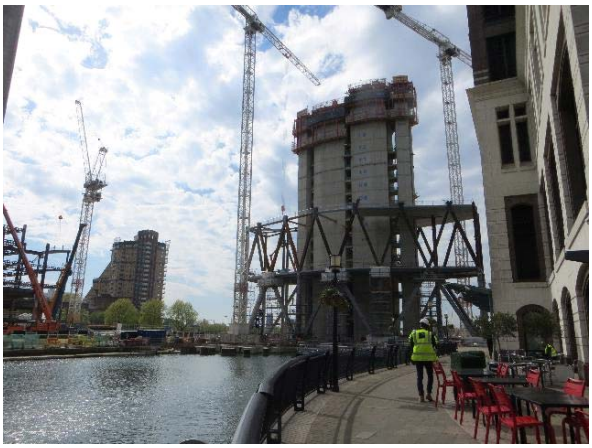
Recreation opportunities are limited within this dock due to the overshadowing by surrounding buildings and presence of a building on the water.

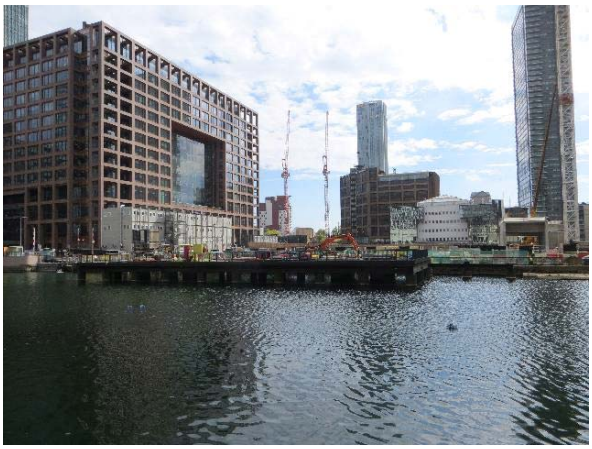
☐ **Safety**

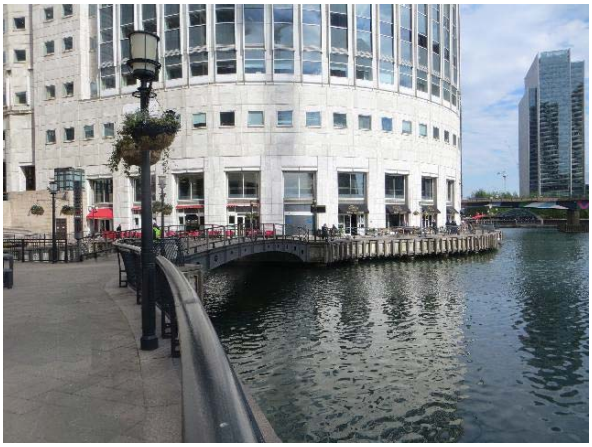
1. TITLE **West India (Middle Dock)**

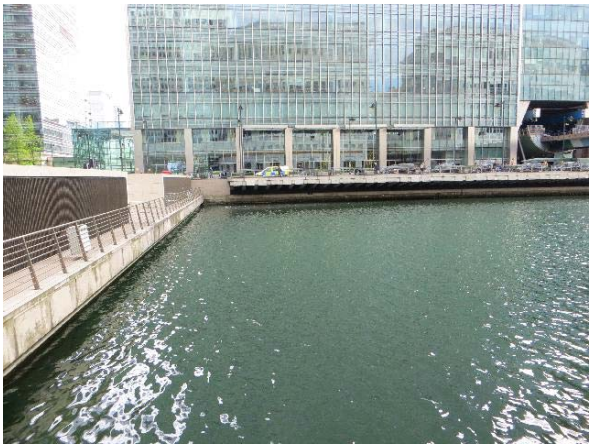


2. PHOTOS









3. AREA CHARACTER

Geographically, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar are shaped by waterways, the Thames River and the River Lea. Consequently, the southern area of the Isle of Dogs and Orchard Wharf experience limited connectivity. Presently, the area is made up of two predominant land-uses, residential and office. The office uses are generally located within Canary Wharf and have attracted a significant amount of retail floor-space and establishing the area as a 'Retail District Centre'. The historical character of the docklands is still present in pockets throughout the island, particularly around the dock basins. The areas waterspaces are both natural and man-made and provide relief to a dense inner city location, deficient in open space. The built form consists of a number of divergent character areas and architectural style and is host to a significant volume of 1970s Council estates, new high-rise and high density executive apartments, Georgian terrace housing and piecemeal sites with a unique identity. Employment in the area

is dominated by large floor plate office space and retail units concentrated in Canary Wharf.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

There are limited historic features retained within this dock and the information boards present interpret the modern development rather than the heritage of the dock.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Biodiversity within the dock is limited as much development overhangs the water.

- **Use, activities, movement**

Overhanging development and walkways around the dock built on platforms over the water prevent water use, therefore there are no boats or activity on the water.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

A café located on the waterside makes the space feel welcome and lively. However, the architecture surrounding the dock is generally modern creating a 'sterile' feel to the water space.

- **Functions**

A café was located on the water's edge however additionally facilities could be created.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

Access around the dock on the walkways is predominantly good.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The heritage of the docks should be conserved and promoted, for example through information boards interpreting the historic context of the dock.

☑ **Biodiversity**

There is limited potential for biodiversity enhancements in the dock. Floating plant beds could be installed.

☑ **Transport**

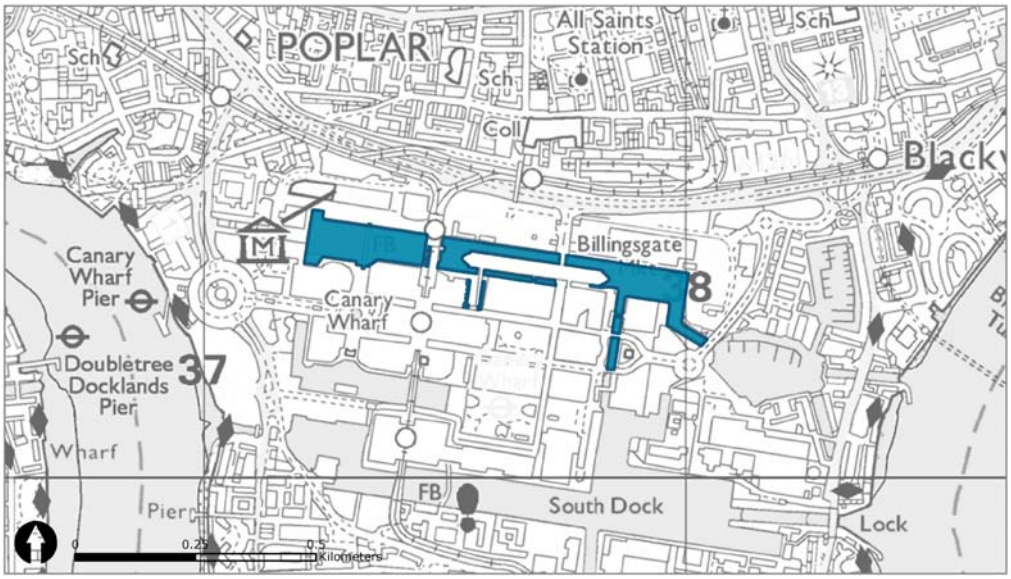
There is limited potential for transportation improvements in this dock as this is a smaller dock and there is a bridge already present to provide access. The DLR stations located around the West India Docks could celebrate the water spaces more, for example by connecting the water to transportation links via wayfinding.

☑ **Recreation**

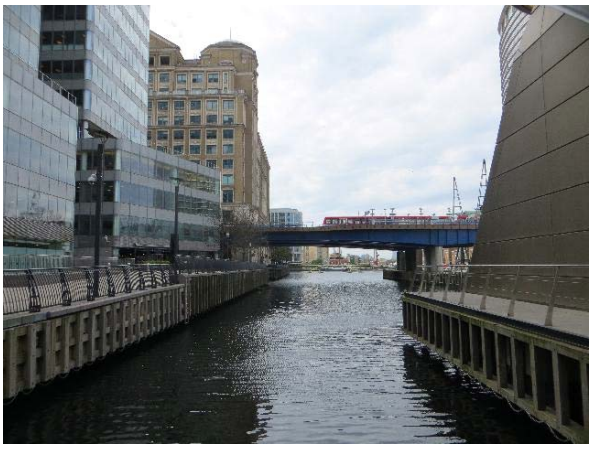
Recreation is not practical within this dock due to the high freeboard and overhanging by surrounding development.

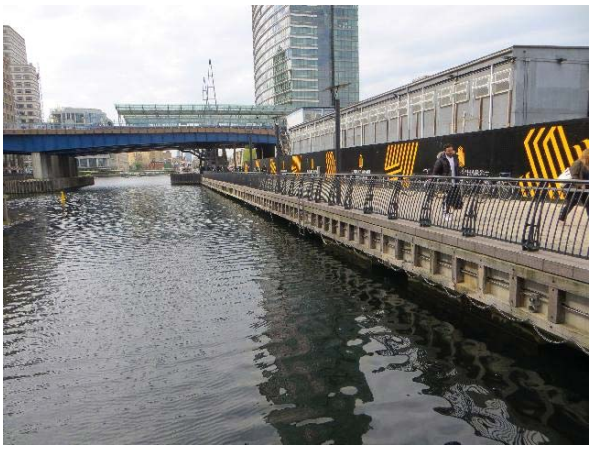
☐ **Safety**

1. TITLE West India (North Dock)



2. PHOTOS





3. AREA CHARACTER

Geographically, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar are shaped by waterways, the Thames River and the River Lea. Consequently, the southern area of the Isle of Dogs and Orchard Wharf experience limited connectivity. Presently, the area is made up of two predominant land-uses, residential and office. The office uses are generally located within Canary Wharf and have attracted a significant amount of retail floor-space and establishing the area as a 'Retail District Centre'. The historical character of the docklands is still present in pockets throughout the island, particularly around the dock basins. The areas waterspaces are both natural and man-made and provide relief to a dense inner city location, deficient in open space. The built form consists of a number of divergent character areas and architectural style and is host to a significant volume of 1970s Council estates, new high-rise and high density executive apartments, Georgian terrace housing and piecemeal sites with a unique identity. Employment in the area

is dominated by large floor plate office space and retail units concentrated in Canary Wharf.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Information boards present interpret the modern development rather than the heritage of the dock. Cranes alongside the dock have been retained and preserved. Historic buildings are present alongside the dock with a museum connected.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Biodiversity within the dock is limited, with the exception of some birdlife, as much development overhangs the water.

- **Use, activities, movement**

A jetty is present which has potential for use and private hire boats are located in this dock. There is a need for connectivity with the new development taking place.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

Historic buildings and restaurants alongside the dock create more of a character than is present in the middle dock. The south of the dock is part of Canary Wharf and has more of a chaotic feel to it. To the north of the dock a large open space between the water's edge and the restaurants appears unused.

- **Functions**

The jetty on the water indicates the dock is used by boats. Restaurants also make use of the waterside along the north of the dock.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

There is a need to improve the north-south access across this dock to increase connectivity to Canary Wharf.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The heritage of the docks should be conserved and promoted, for example through information boards interpreting the historic context of the dock and the historic cranes present.

☑ **Biodiversity**

Additional trees could be added along the waterside to the north of the dock. This would additionally improve the microclimate of the dock.

☑ **Transport**

The DLR stations located around the West India Docks could celebrate the water spaces more, for example by connecting the water to transportation links via wayfinding. There is a need for additional and clearer wayfinding to the water space from Canary Wharf.

☑ **Recreation**

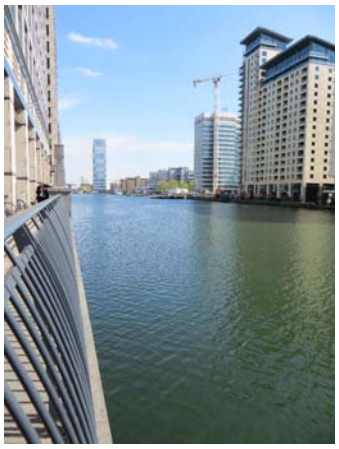
The potential use of the jetty for recreational purposes could be explored further. The open space along the north of the dock could be used for recreational purposes such as markets.

☑ **Safety**

The majority of the dock appears very safe. However, when crossing the east of the dock, where construction is taking place along the north of the dock, there is lower footfall and the walkway feels out of the way and less safe.

1. TITLE **West India (South Dock)**

2. PHOTOS



3. AREA CHARACTER

Geographically, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar are shaped by waterways, the Thames River and the River Lea. Consequently, the southern area of the Isle of Dogs and Orchard Wharf experience limited connectivity. Presently, the area is made up of two predominant land-uses, residential and office. The office uses are generally located within Canary Wharf and have attracted a significant amount of retail floor-space and establishing the area as a 'Retail District Centre'. The historical character of the docklands is still present in pockets throughout the island, particularly around the dock basins. The areas waterspaces are both natural and man-made and provide relief to a dense inner city location, deficient in open space. The built form consists of a number of divergent character areas and architectural style and is host to a significant volume of 1970s Council estates, new high-rise and high density executive apartments, Georgian terrace housing and piecemeal sites with a unique identity. Employment in the area

is dominated by large floor plate office space and retail units concentrated in Canary Wharf.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

There are limited historic features retained within this dock and the information boards present interpret the modern development rather than the heritage of the dock.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Biodiversity within the dock is limited as much development overhangs the water. Some trees are present along the waterside and some birdlife is present.

- **Use, activities, movement**

Overhanging development and walkways around the dock built on platforms over the water prevent water use. The walkways are utilised by pedestrians walking and eating lunch.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The dock has an urban, modern and sterile feel. Benches are present however there are no facilities such as cafes. During the daytime the dock feels safe with a high footfall.

- **Functions**

Navigation is available and has potential on this water space however this was not being utilised.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

There is limited access to this water space as many pedestrians access the water from Canary Wharf by travelling through a building which is likely closed at night. Improving the waterside appearance and feel could enhance the quality of access along the dock. A north-south bridge towards the east of the dock could improve access.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The heritage of the docks should be conserved and promoted, for example through information boards interpreting the historic context of the dock.

☑ **Biodiversity**

There is limited potential for biodiversity enhancements in the dock. Floating plant beds could be installed as well as additional trees and greenery planted alongside the dock.

☑ **Transport**

The DLR stations located around the West India Docks could celebrate the water spaces more, for example by connecting the water to transportation links via wayfinding. Enhanced bridge access could also improve access for commuters.

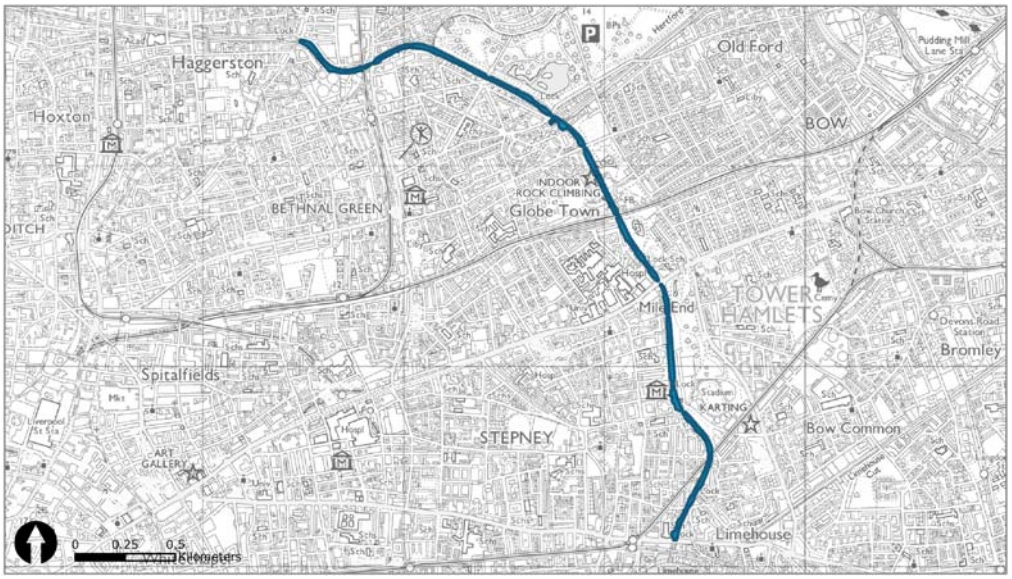
☑ **Recreation**

There are limited opportunities for recreational use of this dock due to the high freeboard present and overhanging by surrounding development.

☐ **Safety**

1. TITLE

Regent's Canal



2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

The area is predominantly residential and comprises of a number of smaller 'places' each with a distinct character. However these areas do share a number of characteristics and have a sense of coherence. This includes the predominance of residential uses of various styles and typologies. These residential uses are supported by a number of town centres (both district and neighbourhood centres). The variety of styles and distinct character of each 'place' stems from their historical development as distinct historical hamlets, with their own centres, uses and dominant typologies. There are still large areas of historic housing remaining, many of which are protected through conservation areas.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Many heritage features are present along this canal from contrasting time periods, such as bridges and chimneys. The heritage of the canal has also been interpreted, including through sculptures and information boards.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Attempts to create habitats on the water are located on the off-side of the canal in places. Birdlife is present along the canal as well as trees and open space in locations on both sides of the canal. The Mile End Ecology Pavilion is also located on the towpath side of the canal.

- **Use, activities, movement**

The canal is used for residential moorings and the path alongside used for walking and cycling. The canal is also part of the Jubilee Greenway walking and cycling route. Parts of the canal towpath are very wide and heavily used. The canal is also used recreationally for kayaking and the Regents Canal Water Bus.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

Sections of the canal are wide and readily used, creating the perception of safety. Sections of the canal were also well contained, creating a sense of place, however longer views are also available of historical features and Canary Wharf. This is especially prominent to the south of the canal as when canal users travel under a southerly bridge Canary Wharf is 'revealed'.

- **Functions**

The canal hosts numerous residential moorings as well as commercial moorings and is part of the Jubilee Greenway walking and cycling route.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

There are many access points to the canal as well as multiple crossing points.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The existing heritage features should be protected and maintained.

☑ **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity features should continue to be enhanced and opportunities should be pursued to make connections between features and the Green Grid.

☑ **Transport**

Regents Canal Waterbus operates along the canal recreationally. There is however potentials for additional boat tours and water taxis along the canal. Additional wayfinding and publicity could enhance such use of the water space.

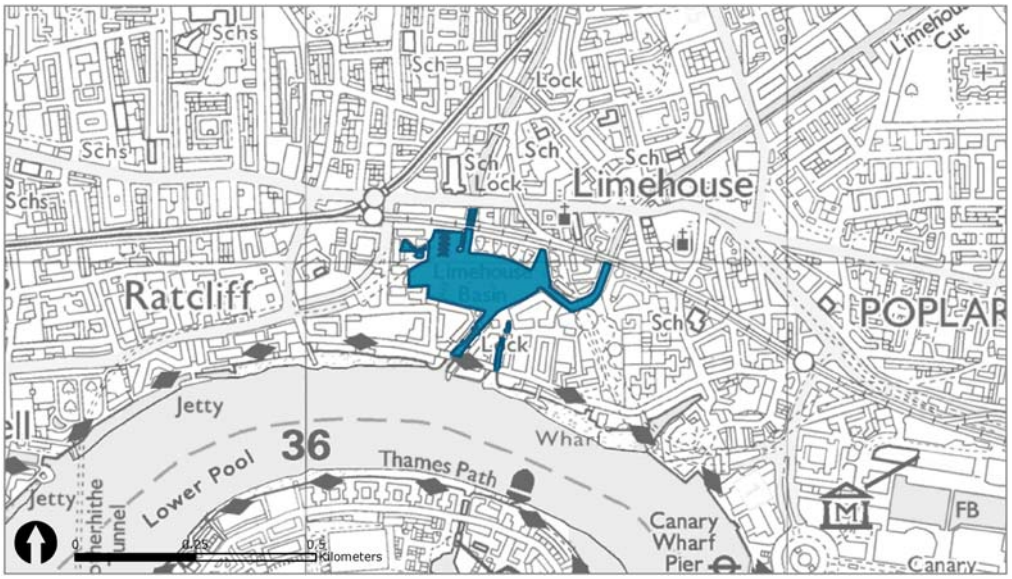
☑ **Recreation**

There is conflict of use of the towpath between pedestrians and cyclists at busy times. Path markings and signage could assist in alleviating this conflict.

☐ **Safety**

1. TITLE

Limehouse Basin



2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

The area is predominantly residential and comprises of a number of smaller 'places' each with a distinct character. However these areas do share a number of characteristics and have a sense of coherence. This includes the predominance of residential uses of various styles and typologies. These residential uses are supported by a number of town centres (both district and neighbourhood centres). The variety of styles and distinct character of each 'place' stems from their historical development as distinct historical hamlets, with their own centres, uses and dominant typologies. There are still large areas of historic housing remaining, many of which are protected through conservation areas.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

There is a mixture of modern architecture surrounding the basin and a limited sense of the heritage. A galley in the basin has some cultural features associated including head-shaped moorings. Locks are also present at the basin entrance.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

There is limited biodiversity present within the basin with the exception of a small section of grass. Informal floating habitat creation has been attempted.

- **Use, activities, movement**

The basin is predominantly used for moorings for yachts and there are limited other uses of the water space.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The basin is very quiet and unanimated with no attractions for visitors. The basin is very urban and the water is well covered by yachts limiting the open feel of the water space.

- **Functions**

The basin has a steep freeboard, limiting access to the water, and is predominantly used for yacht moorings.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

Steps around the basin limit access. Gates limit access to the basin to daytime hours only, giving the basin an exclusive feel.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The locks and gallery provide the only obvious heritage features within the basin. The heritage of the basin should be promoted for example through information boards.

☑ **Biodiversity**

There are limited opportunities for biodiversity within the basin. The yachts present limit space available for meaningful habitat creation.

☑ **Transport**

A sign is present for the Regents Canal Water Bus which could be further linked through this dock. However, the moored yachts limit transportation opportunities in the water space.

☑ **Recreation**

There a no amenities or outlets to attract visitors to the basin to make use of the waterside space.

☑ **Safety**

There is very low footfall around the basin. Attracting more people to the basin could make it feel safer. However, this could be considered a low priority as the basin feels so private and such change would be a challenge.

1. TITLE Herford Union Canal

2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

The area is predominantly residential and comprises of a number of smaller 'places' each with a distinct character. However these areas do share a number of characteristics and have a sense of coherence. This includes the predominance of residential uses of various styles and typologies. These residential uses are supported by a number of town centres (both district and neighbourhood centres). The variety of styles and distinct character of each 'place' stems from their historical development as distinct historical hamlets, with their own centres, uses and dominant typologies. There are still large areas of historic housing remaining, many of which are protected through conservation areas.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

The canal includes Three Colts Bridge (a Scheduled Monument) as well as old brick features and locks.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Birdlife is present along the canal as well as numerous trees. Victoria park and its associated biodiversity features are located adjacent to much of the length of the towpath.

- **Use, activities, movement**

Residential moorings are located along most of the canal. The towpath is also used for walking and by cyclists.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

From east to west the canal becomes progressively more urban. The canal feels very safe during the day, with views available along much of its length. Residential properties also overlook much of the length of the canal and the majority of the canal is adjacent to an open park. The canal has a generally present feel.

- **Functions**

Residential moorings are located along much of the length of this canal. In some locations the canal is narrow which may limit navigation.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

There are many access points to the canal as well as multiple crossing points. Steps are present in certain parts of the canal limiting access. The path is relatively narrow but passable and there are also alternative paths available in the adjacent park.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The existing heritage features should be conserved and promoted, for example through information boards.

☑ **Biodiversity**

The existing biodiversity features should be protected. The offside is lacking in biodiversity features as it is more built up than the towpath side.

☑ **Transport**

There is already plenty of wayfinding available along the canal and the canal is not located near to water taxis of ferries.

☑ **Recreation**

The towpath is relatively narrow with conflicting use between running, cycling and walking. However the adjacent park does offer additional pathways. Kayaking is available along this canal and this usage could be enhanced, however the steep freeboard along the canal may limit access points. Additional moorings along the canal should be limited to maintain navigability.

☑ **Safety**

There is predominantly good natural surveillance along the canal. However, there are locations where this is limited, for example due to the high mound in the park adjacent to the towpath and dilapidated factories located on the offside of the canal.

1. TITLE **Wapping Ornamental Canal**

2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

Recently small businesses serving local communities, have begun to characterise parts of the City Fringe. The area has a rich built form with many areas still retaining their historic, fine-grained street patterns. Historic areas are interspersed with some modern development of variable quality. The City Fringe contains many Listed Buildings. The area's unique diversity and character of the urban environment are protected through designated Conservation Areas. The historic assets are very important for the character of the area and continue to make an important contribution to the attractiveness of the area for creative industries.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

The historic bridge on the approach from Hermitage Basin, the offside wall and the steps are intact and integrated with newer housing development on the west side. There is no interpretation of the canal but it retains its historic feel.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

An avenue of trees on either side creates a green corridor along the canal, and ducks can be seen and heard.

- **Use, activities, movement**

The canal is used by pedestrians, cyclists and joggers. Signage restricts access for skateboards. There is no obvious use of the water space itself.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The canal is contained and sheltered, with pleasant views along it. The canal is only overlooked in parts and the isolation created by the high offside wall and tree canopy could make some visitors feel unsafe.

- **Functions**

The Ornamental canal is not navigable due to its short length, although it does have a useable towpath for pedestrians.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

The creation of more access points part way along the canal could in turn improve perceptions of safety.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The cultural heritage of the canal could be promoted, for example through interpretation boards.

☑ **Biodiversity**

There is space part way along on the west (towpath) side to create a small habitat for wildlife. This area is already used by ducks however could be enhanced further.

☐ **Transport**

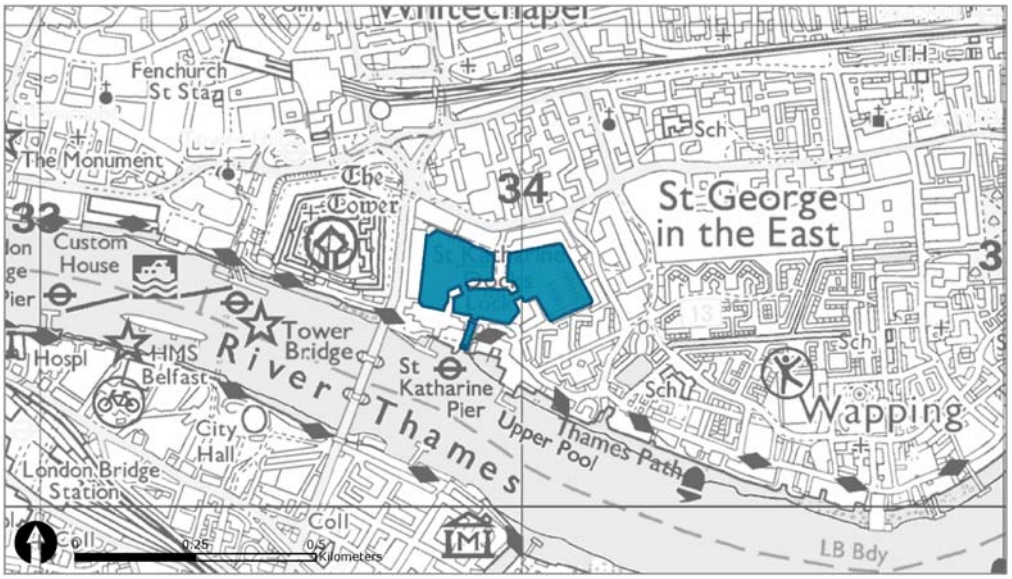
☑ **Recreation**

The potential for swimming in the canal could be explored subject to depth and water quality. The stepped shallow freeboard means this is more feasible and appealing here than many of the water spaces in Tower Hamlets.

☑ **Safety**

To improve the perception of safety along the canal, improvement's to natural surveillance should be pursued where possible.

1. TITLE **St Katharine's Docks**



2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

Recently small businesses serving local communities, have begun to characterise parts of the City Fringe. The area has a rich built form with many areas still retaining their historic, fine-grained street patterns. Historic areas are interspersed with some modern development of variable quality. The City Fringe contains many Listed Buildings. The area's unique diversity and character of the urban environment are protected through designated Conservation Areas. The historic assets are very important for the character of the area and continue to make an important contribution to the attractiveness of the area for creative industries.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

There are many historic buildings still visible around the docks, and there are several interpretation boards present. Additionally, preserved features such as bridges, moorings and anchors are also present around the docks. Historic boats sit in the docks and original street lamps are still present.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

There are few naturalistic features around the docks. A couple of installed green features are visible, including green roofs. There is also some birdlife in the docks.

- **Use, activities, movement**

The docks are heavily used by yachts, which create an exclusive feel. Many private boats are also available for hire. The docks are a popular destination with extensive active frontage. Many pedestrians walk along the docks however cycling is not permitted.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

A feeling of safety is created by the high footfall and extensive active frontage in the docks. The atmosphere of some parts, especially Commodity Quay, is negatively affected by jumbled views with lots of signage and infrastructure, as well as sewage odours.

- **Functions**

The docks are a navigable water space, with extensive yacht moorings.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

Good access is available around most of the Docks but is restricted on the northern side.

☐ **Cultural heritage**

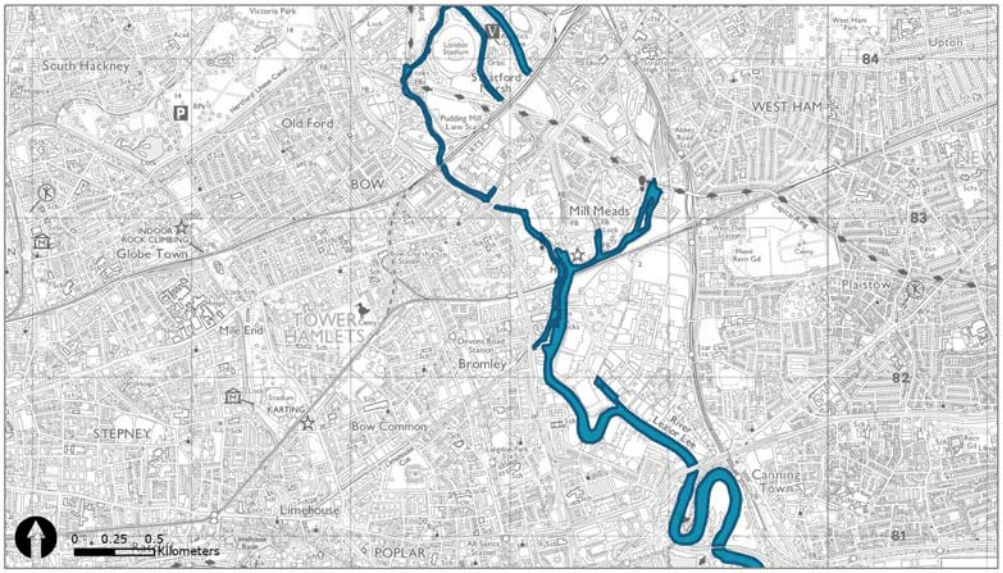
☐ **Biodiversity**

☐ **Transport**

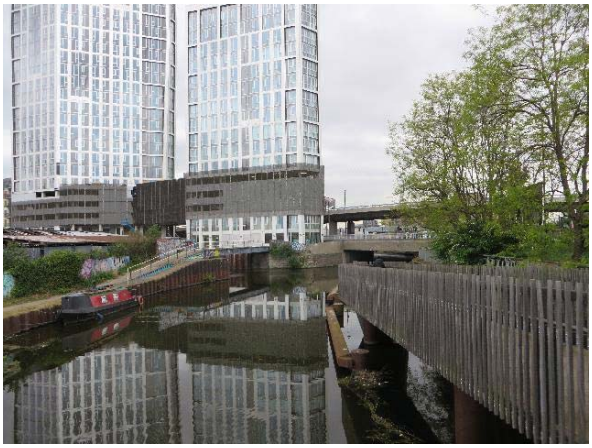
☐ **Recreation**

☐ **Safety**

1. TITLE **River Lea**



2. PHOTOS



3. AREA CHARACTER

The predominantly industrial use of the area in the past has shaped its spatial development creating a number of vacant and under-used riverside sites and very poor environmental quality. The rapid increase in road traffic on the A12 has resulted in very high levels of air pollution. Whilst Victoria Park lies to the north of the area, it is still experiencing open space deficiency with a particular concern of access to and availability of small and district parks meeting more local needs. The area is a home to a significant residential community with more densely populated areas located to the west of the A12. Currently, there are nine conservation areas within the area, which shape its character and give a sense of history and identity.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Some information boards and public art are present interpreting the cultural heritage of the river. The original moorings have been retained and the historic locks and bridges across the river are present. Many parts of the pathway following the Lea are labelled with wharf names at relevant locations, linking to the cultural heritage of the river.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

The presence of natural features varies along the banks of the river, including riparian and tidal habitats. In many locations along the northern section of the river, where the path lining the Lea is within the boundaries of the adjacent borough, the off-side of the river in the boundary of Tower Hamlets is retained as natural habitat.

- **Use, activities, movement**

Cyclists, runners and walkers make use of the path along the river.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The far south of the river is exposed with open views to the Thames and Greenwich, whilst further north many sections of the Lea are more enclosed and sheltered. In places, the access along the river is high quality and is well lit, however in other places the access along the river is low quality and is not overlooked by surrounding buildings, limiting the perception of safety. The pathway is also disjointed and parts of the river feel separate from one another.

- **Functions**

Residential moorings are located in the northern section of the river.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

Access to the river is limited on the side of the river within Tower Hamlets. In places, it is not clear how to continue along the path where it crosses the river. At the crossing at Three Mills Land, where the path returns to the Tower Hamlets side of the River, the access is very poor; it is narrow, steep and requires a road to be crossed. The access along the river needs to feel more joined up with clearer wayfinding and consistent high quality.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

At Trinity Wharf at the southernmost section of the river there are various artworks celebrating the cultural heritage of the river. Wayfinding to such works and additional artworks and information boards could be added along the river to promote its heri

☑ **Biodiversity**

The existing biodiversity features should be protected and enhanced where possible.

☑ **Transport**

Signage indicates the Water Bus makes stops along the Lea in the neighbouring borough. The feasibility of additional stops on the Tower Hamlets side of the river could be investigated.

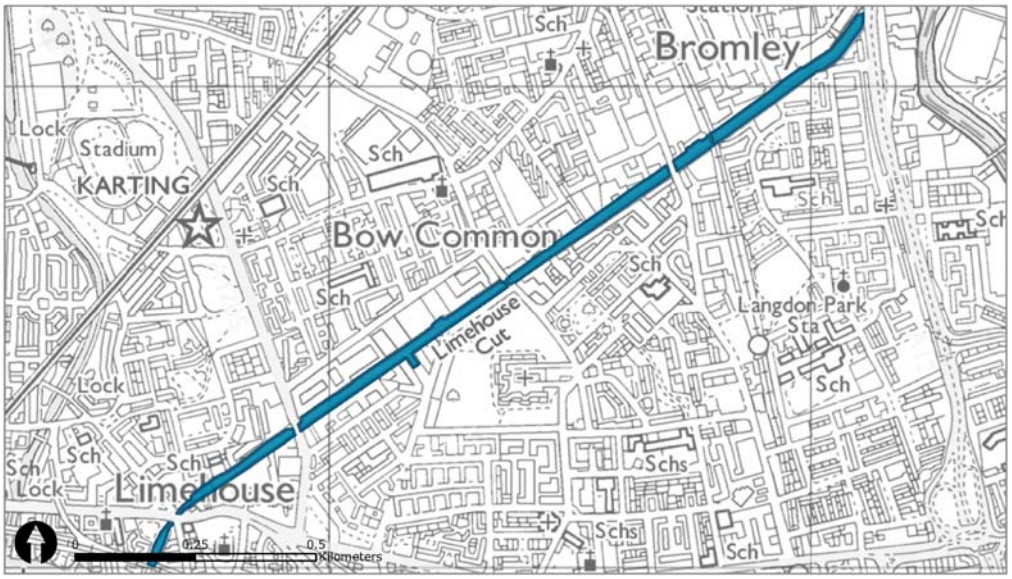
☑ **Recreation**

Access along the length of the river should be enhanced to make it a coherent single feature with clear links and wayfinding to access the paths on either side of the river. Where opportunities are available the path could be extended along the river within the boundaries of Tower Hamlets. Access points on the Tower Hamlets side of the river could be improved to be wider and more attractive, thereby enhancing the perception of safety at these points.

☑ **Safety**

Access points to the river could be enhanced to be wider, clearer and more attractive to enhance the perception of safety. Opportunities to increase natural surveillance along the river should be pursued.

1. TITLE **Limehouse Cut**



2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

The area is predominantly residential and comprises of a number of smaller 'places' each with a distinct character. However these areas do share a number of characteristics and have a sense of coherence. This includes the predominance of residential uses of various styles and typologies. These residential uses are supported by a number of town centres (both district and neighbourhood centres). The variety of styles and distinct character of each 'place' stems from their historical development as distinct historical hamlets, with their own centres, uses and dominant typologies. There are still large areas of historic housing remaining, many of which are protected through conservation areas.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

There are numerous cultural heritage features present along the canal; cobbled pathways, traditional bridges and information boards where the canal meets the River Lea. Moored canal boats along its length give the canal a timeless feel and 'lookout points' along the towpath allow visitors to view and appreciate the canal heritage.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

The off-side of the canal is often lined with vegetation and in places a park overlooks it. The canal has much birdlife present and trees overhang the canal in many places.

- **Use, activities, movement**

The canal is used by residential canal boats and kayakers. Many cyclists, joggers and walkers make use of the canal towpath.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

In places along the canal there is limited natural surveillance and bends in the canal limit visibility along its length, impacting the perception of safety. Some narrow and unwelcoming access points to the canal may also impact the perception of safety. However, the canal towpath has high footfall and, although it is enclosed and sheltered, in many locations long visibility along the length of the canal is available.

- **Functions**

The canal is used for residential moorings and additional moorings on the off-side are being developed in locations. Kayaks also used the canal in addition to towpath users such as cyclists and joggers.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

In many places the quality of the towpath is poor, either uncovered bare ground or heavily cobbled and steep, which prevents cycling rather than just reduces cycling speed. In places access points to the canal are steep and stepped.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The heritage features of the canal should continue to be preserved and information boards could further celebrate the history of the canal.

☑ **Biodiversity**

The existing biodiversity features should be protected and enhanced where possible.

☑ **Transport**

There may be opportunities to offer water bus transportation to link with the Regents Canal and the River Lea Water Buses.

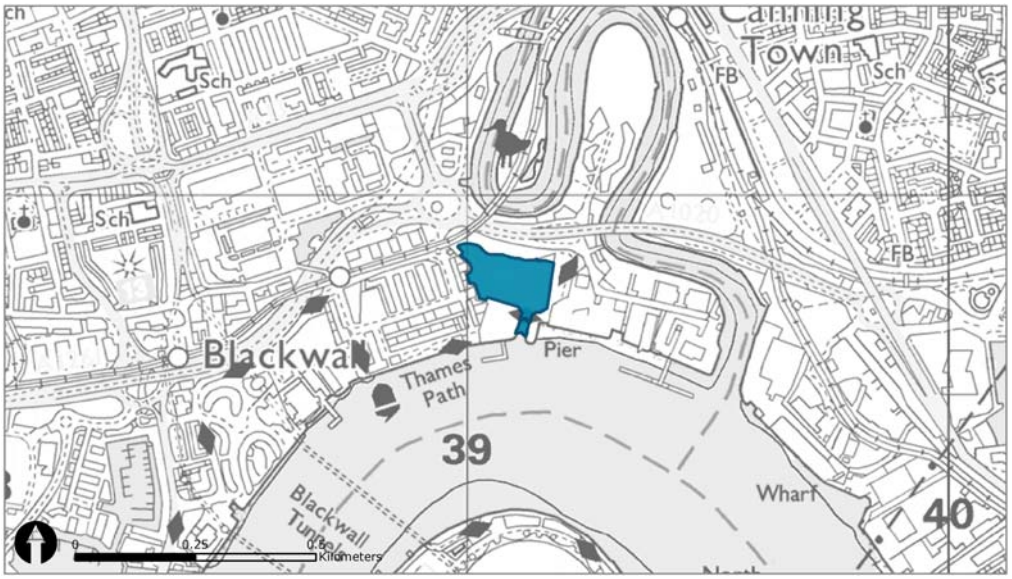
☑ **Recreation**

The quality of the towpath could be improved along the canal, especially for cyclists.

☑ **Safety**

Natural surveillance and more open access points along the canal could improve the perception of safety.

1. TITLE **East India Basin**



2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

The predominantly industrial use of the area in the past has shaped its spatial development creating a number of vacant and under-used riverside sites and very poor environmental quality. The rapid increase in road traffic on the A12 has resulted in very high levels of air pollution. Whilst Victoria Park lies to the north of the area, it is still experiencing open space deficiency with a particular concern of access to and availability of small and district parks meeting more local needs. The area is a home to a significant residential community with more densely populated areas located to the west of the A12. Currently, there are nine conservation areas within the area, which shape its character and give a sense of history and identity.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

The original large moorings around the basin are retained. Information boards interpret the heritage of the basin. A lock is present where the basin meets the Thames and a Millennium Beacon is preserved at the basin.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

The basin is utilised as a nature reserve incorporating riparian habitats, grassy areas, and patches of woodland, as well as created floating habitats. Birdwatching hides are also present around the basin celebrating its biodiversity.

- **Use, activities, movement**

The water itself is designated for use by wildlife. Dog walkers and runners make use of the open space and paths surrounding the basin and birdwatchers can utilise the hides and nature path available.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The basin is enclosed and tranquil, although the road can still be heard. The basin is also open and exposed to the Thames to the south and offers views to the city. A Lee Park information board makes visitors feel welcome. A disused ticket booth appears unwelcoming however and there is no lighting. However, the gated basin is only open during the day.

- **Functions**

The water space is designated to be used by wildlife.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

The basin is gated and is only open during the daytime. There is good ramped access provided as well as bridges over the lock.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The heritage features of the basin should continue to be celebrated and preserved.

☑ **Biodiversity**

The biodiversity features of the basin should continue to be conserved and enhanced. The open gravel and bare grass areas adjacent to the basin could be enhanced through planting and creation of a park.

☑ **Transport**

Limited potential due to the use of the water space by wildlife.

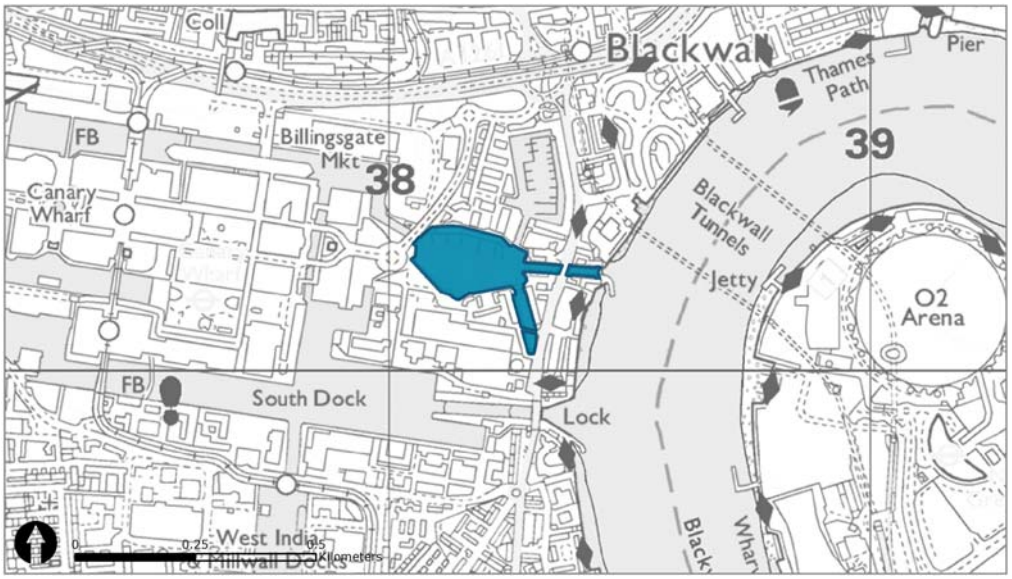
☑ **Recreation**

The open space adjacent to the basin could be utilised as a park. The walking route into the riparian habitats could be permanently open and potentially expanded for bird watchers.

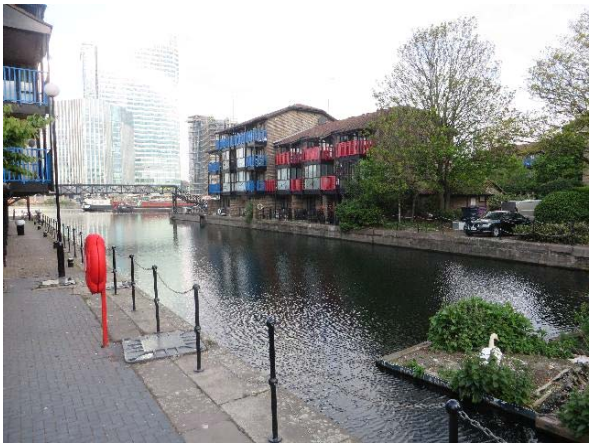
☑ **Safety**

The gated access to the basin could appear more welcoming and open to provide more natural surveillance and enhance the perception of safety. The disused ticket booth should either be utilised or removed.

1. TITLE **Blackwall Basin**



2. PHOTOS



3. AREA CHARACTER

Geographically, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar are shaped by waterways, the Thames River and the River Lea. Consequently, the southern area of the Isle of Dogs and Orchard Wharf experience limited connectivity. Presently, the area is made up of two predominant land-uses, residential and office. The office uses are generally located within Canary Wharf and have attracted a significant amount of retail floor-space and establishing the area as a 'Retail District Centre'. The historical character of the docklands is still present in pockets throughout the island, particularly around the dock basins. The areas waterspaces are both natural and man-made and provide relief to a dense inner city location, deficient in open space. The built form consists of a number of divergent character areas and architectural style and is host to a significant volume of 1970s Council estates, new high-rise and high density executive apartments, Georgian terrace housing and piecemeal sites with a unique identity. Employment in the area

is dominated by large floor plate office space and retail units concentrated in Canary Wharf.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

The original large moorings around the basin have been retained and dockside cranes have been preserved. Traditional style bridges cross the basin and some information boards interpret the history of the basin.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Birdlife is present within the basin and some floating habitats have been created on the water. On the dockside, there are a few trees and some shrubs located around the surrounding residential buildings.

- **Use, activities, movement**

Residential moorings are located in the basin and recreational boats were observed outside of the surrounding residential buildings. Signage states that the water space is private property and that swimming and fishing is not permitted.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

Sections of the basing are enclosed however from the majority of the basin open views are available towards Canary Wharf. The western side of the basin is currently exposed as it is currently being developed and may therefore increase the enclosed sheltered nature of the basin in the future. A mixture of modern and more traditional style buildings surround the basin. The basin is well lit and natural surveillance is good, with the notable exception of the western side adjacent to the construction site.

- **Functions**

The basin is predominantly used for residential moorings.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

Steps up the bridges to cross the water space limit access and in places access points are private. A large section of the basin is currently inaccessible due to the adjacent building site and this new development could enhance access to and along the basin. There is no access over the water separating this basin and Poplar Dock, therefore a new pedestrian crossing in this location could enhance access.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The heritage features of the basin should continue to be celebrated and preserved, and additional information boards could enhance this.

☑ **Biodiversity**

The existing attempts at floating habitat creation could be enhanced and further habitats developed.

☑ **Transport**

A lock separates the basin from the River Thames and could be used as an additional Thames Clipper stop.

☑ **Recreation**

Recreational boats were observed at properties adjacent to the basin and therefore recreational facilities and opportunities within the basin could be enhanced.

☑ **Safety**

Parts of the basin adjacent to the building site currently suffer from poor natural surveillance. This new development could offer natural surveillance as well as good quality access along the basin that could enhance the perception of safety.

1. TITLE **Poplar Dock**

2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

Geographically, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar are shaped by waterways, the Thames River and the River Lea. Consequently, the southern area of the Isle of Dogs and Orchard Wharf experience limited connectivity. Presently, the area is made up of two predominant land-uses, residential and office. The office uses are generally located within Canary Wharf and have attracted a significant amount of retail floor-space and establishing the area as a 'Retail District Centre'. The historical character of the docklands is still present in pockets throughout the island, particularly around the dock basins. The areas waterspaces are both natural and man-made and provide relief to a dense inner city location, deficient in open space. The built form consists of a number of divergent character areas and architectural style and is host to a significant volume of 1970s Council estates, new high-rise and high density executive apartments, Georgian terrace housing and piecemeal sites with a unique identity. Employment in the area

is dominated by large floor plate office space and retail units concentrated in Canary Wharf.

4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Old large moorings along the dock have been retained as well as the dockside cranes. Public art is also located adjacent to this dock celebrating its heritage.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

Trees line sections of the dockside and shrubs are located adjacent to the dock in association with surrounding residential buildings. Birdlife is also present within the basin.

- **Use, activities, movement**

The majority of the dock is occupied by a marina for residential boats and an associated building next to this provides facilities for residents of the boats. People also commute alongside the dock.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

Some parts of the dock are enclosed and sheltered however much of the dock obtains open views towards the city. Public art is present alongside the dock and the good lighting and high footfall along the dock provide a good perception of safety.

- **Functions**

The dock is predominantly used for residential moorings and a car park is located alongside the dock adjacent to the east.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☑ **Access**

There is no access over the water separating this dock and Blackwall Basin, therefore a new pedestrian crossing in this location could enhance access. Some gated access along the dock limits access to the daytime only. There is good access around the dock overall however some steps in places limit access.

☑ **Cultural heritage**

The heritage features of the dock should be preserved and could be promoted, for example through interpretation boards.

☑ **Biodiversity**

Floating habitats could be created on the water space to enhance biodiversity. The slipway to the west of the dock is commonly used by ducks therefore additional habitat creation could enhance this. Parts of the car park adjacent to the docks could be further enhanced for biodiversity via planting and potential creation of a park.

☑ **Transport**

Limited potential as the dock has no direct access to the Thames.

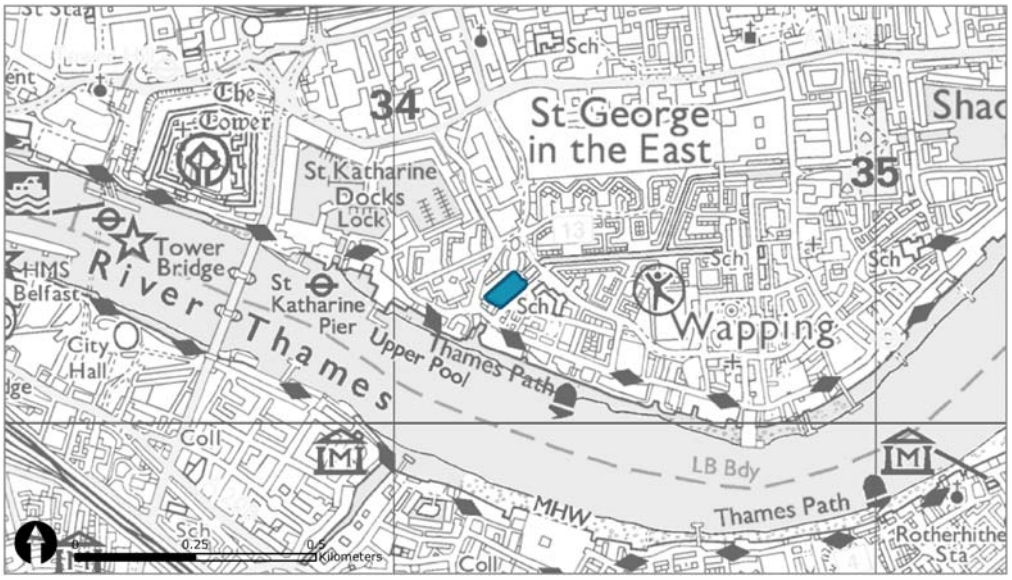
☑ **Recreation**

The slipway on the west of the dock is fenced off. This could be utilised for recreational purposes.

☑ **Safety**

The dock has good natural surveillance. The car park is less overlooked however does have lighting to enhance the perception of safety.

1. TITLE **Hermitage Basin**



2. PHOTOS

3. AREA CHARACTER

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4. WATER SPACE CHARACTER

- **Cultural and heritage**

Several historic features are still visible around the basin, including the 1914 Port of London building, and the entrance. Views of the Shard create a sense of place in the city.

- **Natural and semi-natural features**

More visible wildlife than many of the water spaces, including several species of bird and also audible bird song. Some artificial islands used by wetland birds have been created. The unmanaged area on the south side of the basin provides space for nature.

- **Use, activities, movement**

There are many signs highlighting inappropriate uses of the water space (swimming, fishing) and restrict access on west side. The basin is accessible on east side and benches are used but are not busy. Joggers pass through the basin as well as some cyclists.

- **Perceptual elements including feel, views, safety**

The basin is fairly sheltered and contained, with natural surveillance from the private properties creating some sense of safety. The basin is quiet and serene with bird song creating a haven from the nearby Tower Bridge area.

- **Functions**

This is a small water space not suitable for boats.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THIS WATERWAY

☐ **Access**

☐ **Cultural heritage**

☐ **Biodiversity**

☐ **Transport**

☑ **Recreation**

The potential of this site for swimming could be explored, subject to water quality checks.

☐ **Safety**