LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

CORE STRATEGY

RESEARCH REPORT

AUGUST 2009
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE AND FUNCTION</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOROUGH OVERVIEW</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International, National, Regional and Local Context</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National, Regional and Local Guidance and Strategies</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current research</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships and stakeholders</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PEOPLE</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Statistics</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLACE</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAP Areas and Places</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENT</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Built Environment</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Urban Form</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tall Buildings</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Art</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible &amp; Inclusive Environments</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage &amp; Conservation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Environment</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Play Space</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Pitches</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Space</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterspace</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Contamination</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMY</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Development &amp; Employment</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment and Worklessness</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income levels</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-work</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative and Cultural Industries</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Profile</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial &amp; Office Profile</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Issues</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing supply</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of affordable housing</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market housing</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-decent homes</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Issues</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Housing</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible and wheelchair homes</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student housing</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies and travellers</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Density</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available Land</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing design</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL</strong></td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vitality &amp; Viability</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy / Designations</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening and Night-time Economy</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Olympics and High Street 2012</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed use developments</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National programmes</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery Schools</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Schools</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher and further education</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Facilities</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Centres/Surgeries</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Practices</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Care for Adults</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Facilities</strong></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries and Idea Stores</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure centres/sports</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth centres</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial grounds</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HARD INFRASTRUCTURE</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gas</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sewerage</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electricity</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLOODING AND FLOOD RISK</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency planning</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORT</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking and cycling network</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transport network</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Transport Projects</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLIMATE CHANGE</strong></td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview</strong></td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon emissions</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and climate change</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1 - Environment</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2 - Economy &amp; Employment</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3 - Town Centres &amp; Retail</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4 - Social &amp; Community Infrastructure</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5 - Infrastructure</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endnotes</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following the withdrawal of the previous version of the Core Strategy in 2007, a review of the existing evidence base was undertaken. This was accompanied by a gap analysis of information needed to inform the development of the current Core Strategy. This Research Report is the outcome of this process and was developed during 2007 and 2008.

It aims to provide an overview of the relevant information existing during that stage and identifies which evidence was needed to be developed. To achieve this, a review of existing evidence base and a gap analysis were carried out.

It should be noted that this report is primarily based on desktop research. It does not discuss issues at the level of detail that evidence base documentation provides.
Tower Hamlets is a diverse borough, which is reflected in the local people, local economy and in the built environment. Its growth and regeneration is accompanied by a number of issues and challenges. These factors include among many others, disparity in the distribution of wealth, health inequalities, worklessness, lack of affordable and appropriate housing and poor open space accessibility and provision.

As part of the Thames Gateway region and one of the five host 2012 Olympic boroughs Tower Hamlets will experience significant growth and regeneration in the form of new jobs, homes and major transport improvements over the next 25 years. Consequently its location and economic role is integral to the future and ongoing success of London and the Thames Gateway region as a whole.

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

International role
Tower Hamlets will continue to play an important part in supporting London’s function as a world city. Canary Wharf and Aldgate are key financial centres which are home to a number financial services and affiliated employment sectors.

Culturally, Tower Hamlets’ has an international profile due to its creative and cultural industries and the World Heritage Site of the Tower of London.

National role
Tower Hamlets has a strong national financial profile due to Canary Wharf and Aldgate. The continuing growth of Canary Wharf has helped to deliver high level of job creation.

In addition Tower Hamlets is renowned as a creative hub, particularly within the City Fringe.

Regional role
Due to its close association with the City and location at the western part of the Thames Gateway growth corridor, Tower Hamlets is one of London’s most strategically important boroughs. Consequently Tower Hamlets has been a focal point for many regional transport and accessibility improvements such as Crossrail, the Docklands Light Railway 3-Car Extension and the East London Line extension. Tower Hamlets is also a key driver in facilitating London housing and employment growth.

Local role
Underpinning Tower Hamlets vision for the future is the aim of the Council’s 2020 Community Plan whose aim is to “improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough.”

Although Tower Hamlets has benefited from massive inward investment over the past ten years more can be done to ensure this filters through to local residents’ daily lives. Accordingly, a prime focus of the Tower Hamlets Partnership (which brings together all of the key stakeholders in the borough1) is to tackle issues such as unemployment, poverty, wage inequality and housing affordability.

NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL GUIDANCE AND STRATEGIES

The Research Report refers to and is informed by a number of national, regional, local guidance and strategies. These include:

- Regional guidance: London Plan, Sub-regional Development Frameworks, Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks
- Local guidance: LBTH and LSP strategies, Supplementary Planning Guidance, masterplans, evidence reports, studies and best practice

Other evidence and reports from other organisations have also informed this report.
CURRENT RESEARCH

Current Tower Hamlets research includes:

- Urban Structure and Characterisation Study
- Town Centre Spatial Strategy
- The Green Grid

PARTNERSHIPS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- English Heritage
- English Nature
- Environmental Agency
- Government Office for London
- Greater London Authority
- Highways Agency
- London Boroughs of Newham, Hackney, Greenwich, Lewisham, Waltham and Southwark and the City of London.
- London Development Agency
- London Thames Gateway Development Corporation
- Mayor of London
- National Health Service
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Olympic Delivery Authority
- Tower Hamlets’ Primary Care Trust
- Transport for London
OVERVIEW

Tower Hamlets has historically been a place of change. The arrival and departure of different communities in areas of the borough has influenced the culture, built environment and population demographics. This has provided both opportunities and challenges in a multicultural environment.

Through the interplay between its diverse population, significant events such as the Battle of Cable Street, and the economic prerogatives of certain times such as the Victorian era, Tower Hamlets places have developed a strong and dynamic place identity. This place identity is in turn reflected in the borough’s physical form. Consequently, these echoes of history are seen throughout Tower Hamlets, whether it is in the connection between Bethnal Green’s community and its architecture such as the York Hall, the large scale economic building projects which are currently redefining the landscape in the Isle of Dogs, or in the close knit street patterns in Spitalfields which reflect centuries of mass immigration and overcrowding.

The importance of recognising Tower Hamlets’ historical development as a way of guiding development is captured in the Big Spatial Idea of “Reinventing the Hamlets”. This Idea is articulated in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Core Strategy consultation documents.
POPULATION STATISTICS

**Snapshot**

**Tower Hamlets’ past and predicted population**
- 1901 - 500,000
- 1981 - 185,000
- 2008 - 232,000
- 2031 - 324,000

**Growth**

Tower Hamlets has one of the fastest growing populations in the country. Between 2001 and 2006, the population of Tower Hamlets increased by 8.3%. In comparison, during the same period, London’s population increased by only 1.7%. Tower Hamlets’ 2008 population is estimated to be 232,042 and is projected to increase by a further 38% over the next 25 years, taking it up to 324,161 by 2031.

![Population Growth for Tower Hamlets (1996-2016)](image)

**Ethnicity**

Tower Hamlets is home to an ethnically diverse community. Almost 49% of the Borough’s population is non-White with the largest Bangladeshi community in the country comprising 33% of the population. Ethnic group population projections prepared by the GLA indicate that this trend will continue. By 2026, the GLA projections indicate Tower Hamlets will be one of 8 London boroughs where the BME population will represent more than 50% of the total population. Another dynamic of the Borough’s population is that a high percentage of the under-16 age group are from BME groups Local evidence confirms that the arrival of new migrants into the Borough will continue to contribute to the Borough’s increasing population growth.

Research commissioned by the Tower Hamlets found that:
- There will be a continued predominance of Bangladeshi and White ethnic groups;
- There is a continued and growing trend of new migrants from Bangladesh and Somalia;


**Figure 1**

**Ethnicity**

Tower Hamlets is home to an ethnically diverse community. Almost 49% of the Borough’s population is non-White with the largest Bangladeshi community in the country comprising 33% of the population. Ethnic group population projections prepared by the GLA indicate that this trend will continue. By 2026, the GLA projections indicate Tower Hamlets will be one of 8 London boroughs where the BME population will represent more than 50% of the total population. Another dynamic of the Borough’s population is that a high percentage of the under-16 age group are from BME groups Local evidence confirms that the arrival of new migrants into the Borough will continue to contribute to the Borough’s increasing population growth.

Research commissioned by the Tower Hamlets found that:
- There will be a continued predominance of Bangladeshi and White ethnic groups;
- There is a continued and growing trend of new migrants from Bangladesh and Somalia;


**Figure 1**
• There is a growing trend of new migrants arriving from Eastern Europe, in particular Lithuania and Poland, as well as from Latin America, particularly Columbia and Brazil;
• The most rapidly growing of the smaller communities are Lithuanians and Chinese.
• In terms of the age and gender composition of new migrants, the research also confirmed that the new communities tend to be young (under 40) and that there are more women (77.7%) than men (42.2%).

**Faith**
Reflecting its ethnic composition, the population of Tower Hamlets is of predominantly Christian (38.6%) and Muslim (36.4%) faith. A significant proportion of the population also state they have no religion (14%).

London and England in comparison have significantly higher proportions of Christians (58% and 71.7% respectively) and lower proportions of Muslims (8.5% and 3% respectively).³

**Level of Deprivation**
Despite this rapid economic growth, Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD2007) published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in December 2007 ranks Tower Hamlets as the 3rd most deprived area of the 354 local authorities in England. According to the IMD2007, deprivation is still widespread in the borough with a significant number of neighbourhoods ranking amongst the 1% most deprived in England.

**Health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snapshot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Average life expectancy for males living in LBTH: 75.2 years (London 77.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coronary heart disease: 723 per 100,000 (European Union average is 598)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 15% of four to five year olds are obese (third highest obesity rate for that age group in the country)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health is poorer in Tower Hamlets than in London on a number of key measures. The average life expectancy in Tower Hamlets is 75.2 for males and 80.2 for females, compared to 77.4 for males and 82.0 for females in London as a whole.

Evidence shows that key health-related lifestyle behaviours such as smoking prevalence is higher, as are alcohol-related deaths are worse in Tower Hamlets than in the nation as a whole. The national smoking rate is estimated to be 27% while the rate for Tower Hamlets is 37%, one of the highest in the country. Death rates associated with alcohol are also higher in Tower Hamlets than in London: 16.2 compared to 12 per 100,000 European Standard population.

Overall mortality rates are higher in Tower Hamlets than London: 723.2 compared to 598 per 100,000 standard European population. The death rate for all cancers is higher in Tower Hamlets than London: 148.7 compared to 114.6 per 100,000 standard European population. In addition, the mortality rate for premature coronary heart disease death is 81.6 per 100,000 European Standard population compared to 47.8 in London.

Mental health also appears to be worse in Tower Hamlets than London, with the suicide rate being 6.2 compared to 5 per 100, 000 European Standard population⁵.
OVERVIEW

For the purpose of this report the borough can be roughly divided into four areas which correspond with the Local Area Partnership service provision boundaries. Within these paired LAP areas (i.e. 1&2, 3&4, 5&6 and 7&8) 24 places have been defined. These places, are defined by indicative boundaries, informed by historic and cultural perceptions. Each paired LAP area can be said to contain certain patterns of development/evolution and distinct higher level characteristics.

Map 1: Tower Hamlets’ Places
LAP AREAS AND PLACES

LAPs 1 and 2

This constitutes part of the City Fringe and is a generally a mixed use area, with a history of providing a range of employment uses which serve local communities or which need to be close to the economic activities of the City.

The area has a rich history whose population and character has changed over hundreds of years. During the 16th century and to the middle of the 17th century the area was home to wealthy traders and factory owners but then became an area for poor immigrants which offered a place for cheap housing and living. The area has a diverse socio-economic profile, with many deprived communities, as well as pockets of great affluence. The history of the area is reflected in the diversity of the environment and the retention of many significant historical townscape buildings such as the Boundary Estate in Shoreditch and the York Hall in Bethnal Green.

LAPs 3 and 4

This area has a strong connection with the City which is represented in the area’s urban grain and built environment by the pattern of historical development along Whitechapel Road.

The strong historical inheritance of the places in the west of the LAP area continues into the places of Wapping and Limehouse which are primarily defined by the area’s relationship with the water through warehouse conversions and near residential apartments.

The places of Shadwell and Stepney in the centre of the LAP areas of Shadwell and Stepney were largely rebuilt following World War II and as a consequence were developed with little regard to the historic street patterns that previously influenced development forms.

The high concentrations of social housing in post-war estates provide a number of opportunities and challenges.

LAPs 5 & 6
Places: Bow, Fish Island, Victoria Park, Bromley-by-Bow and Bow Common.

Dating back almost a thousand years the historic hamlets of Bow, Mile End and Bromley-by-Bow define this area. These were places that evolved through their trading connection with the City, along routes such as Old Ford and Bow Road.

During the early 19th century industrial uses were located in the area to maximise the benefits of its comprehensive canal and river network. Throughout this period overcrowding became an issue, leading to the creation of Victoria Park in 1845.

With the recent decline in industrial and manufacturing industries key riverside sites in the area are now coming under market pressure to be redeveloped for alternative, primarily residential, uses.

The biggest catalyst for change in LAPs 5 & 6 are the 2012 Olympic Games. This project presents a real opportunity to transform the Lower Lea Valley and this area of Tower Hamlets. One mechanism of delivering this change is High Street 2012 which will deliver significant public realm improvements in the form of a connected network of open spaces.

LAPs 7 and 8
Places: Canary Wharf, Millwall, Cubitt Town, Blackwall, Poplar Riverside, Leamouth and Poplar.

Historically, the main land-uses in this area have strong links to the docks and the shipbuilding industry which started to decline rapidly after 1969. Although preserving remnants of its historical appearance, particularly around the dock basins, the character of the area has now substantially changed. Today the area is characterised by the high density tall buildings of Canary Wharf and surrounding areas.

The Isle of Dogs’ two predominant land uses are residential and commercial offices. Within Canary Wharf commercial uses are predominant, attracting a significant amount of retail floor-space. The south of the island is predominantly residential with associated activities.

12
In general pedestrian and vehicular movement within the area is poor. Many of the new residential areas lack through routes and the waterway rather than creating a chance for the community to meet and gather creates an extra barrier. In addition the new residential developments tend to ‘turn their backs’ on the existing residential area, which isolates the community.

The preceding summary of each LAP has been taken from a number of sources including Tower Hamlets Character Area Assessments and the emerging Urban Structure and Characterisation Study.
Tower Hamlets’ diverse urban form has been a positive element in determining its character, however, following World War II, the post war housing estates led to fragmentation of previously interconnected areas by restricting permeability, legibility and by prioritising vehicular traffic above pedestrians. This fragmentation is seen in places including Limehouse, Stepney, Mile End, Poplar and Globe Town. In many cases these places experienced a lack of economic investment, deterioration in retail provision, poor amenity, maintenance, access routes and high levels of crime.

In order to address the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 1, Character Area Assessments were prepared as a way of understanding and evaluating the nature of the borough’s identity and to pursue an agenda of high quality of design.

These assessments were intended address a number of key issues which detrimentally affect the borough. These issues include poor public realm, street clutter in the form of excessive signage and the lack of street furniture.

Following these assessments it was recognised that gaps existing, particularly in the central areas of the borough. As a result, the Urban Structure and Characterisation Study was undertaken to identify key areas of potential change. This study builds upon the broad information provided by the Character Area Assessments by providing a comprehensive understanding of the borough’s local distinctiveness.

The emerging Urban Structure and Characterisation Study will bring together earlier work including the places visioning work carried out in the first two consultation stages of the Core Strategy. This study is designed to address issues such as the:

- Morphology – physical development of the area;
- How the physical development of a place may have undermined town centres;
- How people and major stakeholders have informed the character of an area;
- Major historical events; and
- Evolutionary patterns of development

Other work which looks at specific elements and/or areas of the borough include:

- Transforming St Paul’s Way project
- Whitechapel Master plan

Key Documents

- Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing
- Planning Policy Guidance16 Archaeology & Planning
- GLA: The London Plan 2008
- CABE: By Design: urban design in the planning system: towards better practice
- Tower Hamlets Supplementary Planning Guidance: Street Design 2002
- Tower Hamlets Cultural Strategy 2008
- Tower Hamlets Character Area Assessments: November 2006
- Tower Hamlet’s Local Implementation Plan 2005/6 2010/11
- Tower Hamlet’s Urban Structure & Characterisation Study
Tall Buildings

Reflecting the lack of national, regional and local tall building definitions, guidance from the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment and English Heritage states that a rigorous definition is neither useful nor necessary.7 There continue to be many criticisms of tall buildings, particularly through their design’s lack of appreciation of an area’s surrounding context. In response CABE and English Heritage8 recommend that local planning authorities identify appropriate locations for tall buildings in their development plan documents. Such an approach is intended to ensure that tall buildings are properly planned as part of an exercise in place-making informed by a clear long-term vision, rather than in an ad hoc, reactive, piecemeal manner.

The London Plan identifies the commercial area of Canary Wharf as an appropriate location for a clustering of tall buildings. At present this cluster is witnessing a consolidation and expansion eastwards. In addition the London Plan identifies Aldgate and Bishopsgate as appropriate locations for tall buildings. Reacting to the size and prominence of these tall buildings and their location within a mixed use area, their design needs to be of an exceptional standard in order to avoid a detrimental impact upon the public realm. Accordingly, the local context for tall buildings is much wider than for low-rise development; design must therefore show a deeper understanding of its immediate environs. This is particularly important at street level where tall buildings tend to deflect focus away from interconnecting space.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO and the International Council on Monuments and Sites ICOMOS have expressed strong concerns over the impact of tall buildings on the Tower of London world heritage site.

Consultation responses

Tower Hamlets continues to face pressure from the development industry for commercial and residential tall building development. Developmental sector comments from the first phase of the LDF consultation indicated that the Council’s tall building policy was too prescriptive and detailed and should allow scope for high quality building outside of the Council’s designated areas. As such this sector argued that the degree of sensitivity should be attributed to relevant land designations such as Conservation Areas, Metropolitan Open Land and Listed Buildings.

Conversely, residents felt that tall buildings should be restricted to the designated areas, adding that residential tall buildings create social problems and in general create negative effects, such as overshadowing and wind tunnelling. Residents also expressed concerns over the general proliferation of tall buildings in the borough.
Amenity

As defined by the London Plan, ‘an amenity is an element of a location or neighbourhood that helps to make it attractive or enjoyable for residents and visitors.’

Amenity covers issues such as daylight, sanitation privacy, noise, vibration, artificial light, odour, fume and dust pollution.

Consultation messages

Community concern over amenity has been expressed regarding the impact of development on existing neighbourhoods. With the pressure for high density development in Tower Hamlets, including the need to build over 30,000 new homes in the Borough over the next 10 years, overdevelopment is a significant issue. Therefore maintaining and pursuing the provision of a high standard of amenity for existing and new residents will be a key part of delivering sustainable communities.

Public Art

Although there is no clear direction from national and regional bodies on the development and application of public art policy there is considerable support from bodies such as the Arts Council for the inclusion of art in the public realm. In response the updated draft London Borough of Tower Hamlets Cultural Strategy (2003) identifies that the current approach to Public Art in the 1998 Unitary Development Plan is too restrictive and needs to be revised.

In the past, Percent for Art schemes have been supported by the Council. However, many developers oppose this delivery method. The Council’s Environment and Culture team are preparing a Strategy for Public Art. This strategy may identify existing public art locations, potential locations for new public art, and potential funding mechanisms. These locations could be picked up through area based planning documents.

Consultation messages

Residents were supportive of the provision of public art. Conversely, the private sector felt that public art should only be required where tests in government guidance are met, or alternatively, that provision should be considered on a site by site basis where there will not be an impact on viability.

Accessible & Inclusive Environments

PPS1 advocates and envisages good design as a mechanism of delivering connections between people and places.

Arising from the Borough’s fragmented urban form the council’s Local Implementation Plan 2005/6-2010/11 identifies the following issues as physical barriers to movement in Tower Hamlets:

- **Transport infrastructure** elements such as major roads, railways, DLR lines and canals often makes it difficult for people to move easily through parts of the Borough
- **Aspen Way**: acts as a significant barrier to movement because it physically separates communities in Poplar from the business and residential communities in Canary Wharf and its surrounds.
- **Housing estates**: these areas act as physical and psychological barriers to movement as they can be difficult to navigate through, and are perceived as unsafe.
- **Large, poorly lit open spaces**: act as psychological barriers to movement at night-time, e.g. Mile End Park.
- **The A12**: causes severance along the east of the borough.
- Many of the key barriers to movement in Tower Hamlets run in an east-west direction, which makes north-south movement difficult for pedestrians and cyclists.
A variety of routes need to be provided to support movement across and around the borough. The movement network should promote connected, permeable and accessible environments; however there are many locations in the borough where this is not the case.

In some locations the quality of the borough’s connections is poor as the pedestrian often comes second to the car. Aspen Way and the A12 are examples of poor multi functional routes as they marginalise the pedestrian in order to fulfil the movement needs of vehicles. Because these routes are car friendly they end up forming barriers to pedestrian movement forcing people to go over or under them in order to reach their destination.

Other Barriers

In Tower Hamlets psychological barriers to movement exist. This is particularly prevalent in and around housing estate areas, and can affect the use of space by different groups, particularly young people.

Inclusive Access

Inclusive access varies across the borough. Examples of poor accessibility include a number of tube stations having access to these services limits access to the wider opportunities within London. As a result TfL are also looking at the feasibility of some London Underground stations within Tower Hamlets to be accessible through the implementation of the ‘step free access strategy’ (See Transportation section).

Heritage & Conservation

The borough is rich in historic buildings and monuments. However, development pressure is threatening the historic environment, in particular those elements that are not afforded high levels of protection (e.g. characterful buildings outside a conservation area). Consequently, it is vital that existing heritage and conservation listings are properly consolidated to ensure the list is easy to use and to prevent delays and uncertainty in the planning process.

Although PPG15 recognises that the historic environment cannot remain unchanged it advocates managing that change to protect the special architectural and historic interest of building and places.

The primary document that addresses Heritage and Conservation is the emerging Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy.

Consultation messages

Tower Hamlets’ residents want to protect their East End heritage and the positive local identity and sense of place that it provides.

Conservation Areas

The Planning Act 1990 imposes a duty on local authorities to designate as conservation areas any areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (Section 69 (1) (a)).

There are 57 conservation areas in the Borough. The Council has prepared and adopted Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Guidelines for 50 of these areas. The Council is preparing CACAs and MGs for the remaining 7 conservation areas. The Council is also working on draft boundary alterations for 18 existing conservation areas.

Tower Hamlets’ conservation areas are largely focused around the linear routes of Bethnal Green Road, Mile End Road and Commercial Road, and the historic town centres. There are also a number along the River Thames and a large proportion in Bow. However, the amount of conservations areas in the east of the borough is lower than in other areas.

Tree Strategy

LBTH’s Tree Strategy is currently in the preparation stage. This strategy will identify the Boroughs assets and provide a vision of how they are to be protected and maintained. It is intended that this strategy should follow the Council’s forthcoming Conservation Strategy.
Statutory & Locally Listed Buildings

In Tower Hamlets, there are –

- Approximately 2000 statutorily Listed Buildings
- 184 Locally Listed Buildings

While Statutory Listed Buildings are predominantly clustered around the historic centres of the borough and along the same linear routes as the conservation areas they are also concentrated in the City Fringe. Often these buildings offer the focus around which a Conservation Area is drawn. Locally listed buildings are much more sporadically located throughout the borough, with a concentration around Bow and Limehouse.

Of the 2000 Listed Buildings, there are currently 32 which are on the Buildings at Risk Register (See Map 5 and Appendix 1).

While the demolition and inappropriate alteration of statutory listed buildings can be prevented, locally listed buildings are more vulnerable. A locally listed building while identified as being of local significance and interest can be demolished without the need for planning permission if it lies outside of a conservation area.

Consultation Messages

Through consultation, it was identified that residents felt more should be done to encourage the refurbishment rather than demolition of buildings with historic value. It was also felt that demolition of listed buildings should be resisted.

World Heritage Sites

Tower of London

The Tower of London, located in the south-eastern corner of the Borough, was inscribed onto the World Heritage List in 1988. The impact of development on the setting of the Tower of London has become an international concern. In 2006 UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee expressed concern about new development around the Tower and the inadequacy of planning policies to offer the level of protection that is expected. A joint ICOMOS-UNESCO delegation to the site took place in November 2006, to understand the extent of impacts on the site, and the weight give to protection policies in UK legislation versus development policies in the London Plan.

A draft Tower of London World Heritage Site Management Plan was published in June 2007. Although a final version of the document is yet to be published it will only have the status of a material consideration in planning decision-making.

The final London View Management Framework SPG gives some weight to the World Heritage Site Management Plans, by stating that reference should be made to the relevant management plan when undertaking Qualitative Visual Assessment for views which contain a World Heritage Site.

The LVMF SPG addressed some of the concerns raised by the UNESCO report (see the Strategic Views section for further details), but it needs to be clarified as to whether or not there are additional policies/mechanisms that need to be put in place to protect the Tower of London as a result of the UNESCO report.

Maritime Greenwich

Island Gardens, on the Isle of Dogs, forms part of the buffer zone for the Greenwich Maritime World Heritage Site.

Ancient monuments

Adhering to the criteria contained in Annex 4 of Planning Policy Guidance 16 there are 7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Tower Hamlets (See Appendix 1 for a full register).
The Government is currently looking at unifying the system for dealing with all heritage assets. The intention is that all heritage assets will be dealt with under a single regime.

**Historic parks & gardens**

The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England is maintained by English Heritage, to whom all enquiries about its compilation should be made. Sites of exceptional historic interest are assessed as grade I, those of great historic interest as grade II* and those of special historic interest as grade II.\(^{13}\)

The borough has many open spaces that contribute to the wider landscape character or structure of Tower Hamlets, including Victoria Park, Mile End Park and Millwall Park / Mudchute Park and Farm. The significance of these sites in landscape terms is recognised with their designation as metropolitan open land (MOL) and their contribution to the Townscape Character Assessment set out in the Council’s Street Design Guide (2002).

Island Gardens, Victoria Park and Boundary Gardens\(^{14}\), are on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

Island Gardens is a riverside park which offers the visitor a modern-day view of Canaletto’s famous 18th century painting ‘A View of Greenwich from the River’. There are three acres of waterfront parkland and easy access to Greenwich via the foot tunnel under the River Thames. This park is part of the buffer area for the Greenwich Maritime World Heritage Site.

Victoria Park has been an integral part of life for those living in Tower Hamlets and surrounding areas ever since it was completed in 1845. The park is split in two by Grove Road which effectively creates western and eastern parts.

Boundary Gardens (Arnold Circus) lies at the centre of the Boundary Estate and forms an integral part of the scheme. The seven main streets of the estate converge onto the Circus, at the centre of which are the raised gardens surrounded by perimeter railings. The gardens are approached through wrought-iron overthrows (listed grade II with the perimeter fencing) and up four sets of steps, at the four main compass points.
Archaeological Priority Areas

In accordance with PPG16, PPG15 and guidance in the London Plan the following areas in the borough are of particular archaeological importance:

- Tower of London and surrounding area
- Parts of Wapping – this part of the Borough is probably the richest part of the Borough in terms of known archaeological sites, including industrial archaeology sites
- The site of the medieval hospital of St Mary’s between Bishopsgate and Spitalfields Market
- A Roman road and cemetery in the Mansell Street area
- A Roman settlement and road at Old Ford
- A Cistercian Abbey and plague cemetery at the Royal Mint site

Areas of potential archaeological importance include:

- Evidence of prehistoric occupation in the Stepney Green area
- The Lea Valley may include well preserved objects
- The possibility of Roman occupation in the Poplar High Street area

Some of these existing and potential areas are key areas of change within the Borough and may be a future constraint to development which requires phasing over long periods of time.

Views

Strategic Views

The London Plan designated 26 views that are strategically important to London through the London View Protection Framework with several cutting across the borough. A key change in the revisions to the
London View Protection Framework SPG that affects the borough has been the reclassification of the “Townscape View” from City Hall to the Tower of London as a “Protected Vista”.

In line with Policy 4B.15 of the London Plan, the SPG identifies the Tower of London as a Strategically Important Landmark. Interpreting London Plan policy 4B.17 (Townscape View – City Hall to the Tower of London) the SPG regards the clear backdrop (i.e. clear sky) to the White Tower as an important attribute of this view.

The SPG delineates an immediate setting for the Tower of London and requires applicants to use a Qualitative Visual Assessment to demonstrate that proposals will respect the immediate setting. The SPG refers to the Tower of London World Heritage Site Management Plan for further guidance in respect of managing the immediate setting.

Island Gardens, on the Isle of Dogs, is the “Viewing Place” for the “Townscape View” to the Royal Naval College in Greenwich. Island Gardens allow the viewer to enjoy the axial relationship between the Royal Naval College and the Queen’s House against the backdrop of Greenwich Park.

Local Views & Landmarks
The London Plan states that Boroughs should base the designation and management of local views on London Plan policies 4B.15 – 4B.17. According to the GLA, this policy encourages the identification of local views.

One outcome maybe that local authorities identify local views within conservation area appraisals and management guidelines.

Maintaining locally significant views are important for the purposes of legibility and place identity and are a mechanism in protecting the character of areas experiencing a lot of growth and change.
The approach to local view management in the adopted UDP and the IPG has been to identify local landmarks and broad policies for their protection. Although this is less detailed than the approach recommended by the Mayor of London a total of 12 local landmarks have been identified for protection and management (see Map 6). Under the UDP (saved policy DEV8) there are 9 local landmarks and 3 other local landmarks. UDP Policy DEV8 also identifies 4 landmarks outside the Borough whose views the Council will seek to protect.
Community Safety
Reflecting national perceptions, fear of crime is a significant issue in Tower Hamlets. Although not directly proportionate to levels of actual crime which reduced in 2007\textsuperscript{16} over half of all residents count it among their three top key concerns.

Consultation Messages
Fear of crime is actually rising. In 2007/08 concern over crime showed a significant increase with an additional 5\% of residents identifying it amongst their top three concerns. Concern of crime however remains around the London average.

Since 2003/04 perceptions of specific kinds of anti-social behaviour have improved. The percentage of people citing teenagers hanging around on the streets, vandalism, graffiti, damage to property, drug dealing and use, drunkenness and rowdy behaviour, have all fallen in the period 2003/04 to 2007/08.

Conversely the perception of rubbish in the street has increased. The percentage of people citing rubbish and litter as a very big problem remained static between 2003/04 and 2006/07, while rising slightly in 2007/8.

While perceptions of particular types of anti social behaviour have improved, the percentage of people saying it has worsened or remained the same has risen significantly since 2003/04.
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Key Planning Policy Documents
Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity
Planning Policy Guidance 15 Planning & Flood Risk
Planning Policy Guidance17 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation)
ODPM Developing Accessible Play Space: Final Research Report 2006
ODPM Creating sustainable communities: ‘Greening the Gateway 2004
GLA: The London Plan
The Countryside Commission: The Thames Path National Trail
The East London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance 2006
Opportunities for Sustainable Energy and Biodiversity Enhancement within Tower Hamlets (2008)
Tower Hamlets’ Open Space Strategy SPG 2006-2016
Tower Hamlets’ Annual Monitoring Report 2007/08
Tower Hamlets’ Thames Pathway Report
Tower Hamlets’ Housing Strategy 2008
Tower Hamlets’ Design Guidance and Principles

Open Space

The provision, quality and maintenance of open space is a cross cutting issue that is linked to quality of life and the topography and function of a place. Topics affected by open space issues are therefore numerous and include transport and its promotion of sustainable modes of transport (walking / cycling), housing (amenity space), health (levels of obesity), biodiversity and climate change (carbon emissions), accessibility to infrastructure and the general condition of the public realm (permeability) and built environment (e.g. Mile End Park and its relationship with the canal).

All of these topics are particularly relevant to Tower Hamlets due to high levels of expected future growth. Consequently it is important to see open space as an integral component to addressing the inter-related issues and problems.

The London Plan defines open space as:

“all land that is predominantly undeveloped other than by buildings or structures that are ancillary to the open space use. The definition covers the broad range of types of open space within London, whether in public or private ownership and whether public access is restricted, limited or restricted.”19

Deficiency

Using as its terms of reference the London Plan20 and National Playing Field Association open space standards, Tower Hamlets is highly deficient on access and provision of publicly accessible open space21.

According to Tower Hamlets’ Open Space Strategy (OSS), in 2005 the borough had approximately 1.2ha of open space per 1000 population, which corresponds to only 50% of the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) target.
The borough’s 2007/08 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) has indicated that the borough is falling short of its’ objective to maintain this 1.2 ratio, currently providing only 1.14ha per 1000 population. This has raised concerns about the level of protection provided to existing open spaces and the method in which the Council monitors open space gains and losses.

Tower Hamlets places that are most deficient in open space are Bromley by Bow, Spitalfields and Whitechapel. Correspondingly the areas that have the worse access to open space are located on the east and west fringes of the Borough.

Open space provision is affected by a number of factors such as development pressure and predicted population increase. The current approach of delivering open space targets, such as those set by the London Plan and the NPFA is limiting, as it does not enable councils to adequately address the purpose and function of open spaces.

Two methods of increasing the quality and quantity of publicly accessible open space within the borough relate to changing the status of housing estate open space and new creative types of provision. At present housing estate open space is not counted under NPFA provision as it is privately maintained and in many cases discourages public use. This is a significant issue in Tower Hamlets as many of its housing estates are large in size and disconnected, promoting feelings of territoriality.
In order to address open space deficiency Tower Hamlets started work on the Green Grid project in 2008. The grid will identify current and potential new open spaces, incorporating both green and blue corridors. In the first instance, the green grid will address existing provision by improving open space connections, focusing on walking routes to infrastructure such as schools, while improving accessibility to destination points. In the second instance, the Green Grid will identify areas of limited public accessibility. This includes identifying both semi public and semi private space and linking these sites with measures that improve the quality public realm. Where open space is not readily accessible, such as in the city fringe, concepts such as green roofs will be utilised.

Planning Policy Statement 17 states that population growth should not increase demand on overstretched existing open spaces. If this aim is to be implemented in Tower Hamlets this entails that that the Council:

- Develops a more effective monitoring system that does not rely solely on open space that is publicly maintained, but also includes space that is privately maintained;
- Effectively protect existing open spaces from development and negotiate bigger gains on open space as part of Planning Contributions Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy

Integral to open space provision within the Borough is the Lea Valley Regional Park and East London Green Grid.

Development pressures will have an effect on sites identified as having high biodiversity value. As a result the Council has reviewed its Local Biodiversity Action Plan in order to provide strong policies for their protection.
Lea Valley Regional Park
The Lea Valley Regional Park stretches 26 miles along the banks of the River Lea, from Ware in Hertfordshire, through Essex, to the Thames at East India Dock Basin. The park is located on the eastern boundary of the borough.

The Lea Valley Regional Park has been established to regenerate the East End through the creation of approximately 2000 new homes and 40,000 jobs and to provide East London with a ‘green wedge’ extending from the countryside, to the city.

The plan for the linear park was updated in 2008. The Lea River Regional Park Authority has engaged with LBTH in order to secure benefits from the parks development and to ensure that both the council and the park have the same objectives which are implemented in unison.

East London Green Grid

The Mayors East London Green Grid Framework (2006) highlights six Green Grid areas on which the aims of the green grid can be developed. The first of these areas is the Lea Valley which contains two sub areas affecting the Tower Hamlets Central Area. These are the Victoria Park/ Mile End Park Link (within the Central Area) and the Northern Outfall Sewer Link (or The Greenway: linking to the eastern Central Area.

The East London Green Grid SPG aims to create a network of interlinked, high quality open spaces that connect town centres with public transport nodes, the Green Belt, the Thames and major employment and residential areas. The East London Green Grid is the delivery mechanism for the Department of Community and Local Government’s ‘Greening the Gateway’ strategy. The main aims of this Strategy for Area 1 (in which Tower Hamlets is included) are to:

- Create a major new park in the Olympic legacy proposals;
- Improve access to the Thames and links across watercourses in the Lower Lea Valley (the Fat Walk and the Lea River Park are part of this broad objective);
- Create high quality community-orientated urban parks linked by the Regent’s Canal integrating art and culture;
- Refurbish and enhance the Northern Outfall Sewer Link and connect it with the Thames Gateway Bridge proposals.

Children’s Play Space

Children’s play space is an important component of open space provision. In response to PPG17 and FALP, the Council has produced a play strategy entitled ‘Play Matters in Tower Hamlets’ 2007. This strategy seeks to provide an integrated and comprehensive overview of the types of play spaces that currently exist in Tower Hamlets along with its deficiencies and predicted future demand. In addition it measures the associated local communities’ level of satisfaction. The strategy identifies through a spatial portrait that:

- The poorest quality provision of parks and open spaces play spaces as a percentage of current provision against child population are in LAP1 and 2.
- The lowest (average to poor) accessibility levels to parks and open space play provision as a proportion of provision currently available in each LAP is LAP2 (6 out of 6) LAP5 (6 out of 6), LAP6 (10 out of 11) LAP7 (8 out of 10).
- Areas in the Borough that are predicted to have the highest concentrations of children by 2017 are: LAP1, LAP6, LAP8, closely followed by LAP3 and LAP7.

Key objectives of the Play Strategy are to:

- Support children and young people to develop positive attitudes to difference and diversity within play environments.
- Promote the contribution of play to maintaining healthy lifestyles.
- Safeguard and extend children’s and young people’s access to designated play space.
To make best use of land and existing play spaces, the Council is preparing a design guide that seeks to promote a consistent approach in implementing play spaces that meets the needs of the local community. In addition the Council has prepared *Playlink – Design Guidance and Principles* document in order to ensure that the play spaces that come forward in the future will be designed to a high standard and meet the needs of the community.

**Playing Pitches**

With regards to playing pitches the Council is developing a playing pitch strategy that aims to promote better playing pitches for Tower Hamlets and identify areas of need. This is being undertaken in conjunction with the London Playing Fields Foundation. It is recognised that this strategy needs to be in line with the Council’s Open Space Strategy and Sports Strategy (see Map 13 for the location of the Borough’s playing pitches).

**Amenity Space**

**Housing amenity space**

As with the Further Alteration to the London Plan the Housing Amenity section is included in the Open Space section.

The provision of amenity space for new dwellings in Tower Hamlets is important in order to ensure a high quality of life of its residents. Given the lack of existing open space, amenity space provides an opportunity increase access to outdoor space.

Ensuring the appropriate location and design of amenity space is essential in order to maximise its usefulness and to increase enjoyment of the space. Careful consideration at the design stage should be given to the location and design of the amenity space in relation to the building to ensure that amenity space, such as balconies, are integrated into the building design. This should be done in such a way that they make best use of daylight and their relationship with the surrounding environment while not detracting from the building’s overall visual appearance.

**Private housing amenity Space**

Private amenity spaces are intended to be located so that they provide an extension to living spaces. They should be additional to the internal residential unit space and consider the climate, functionality of design and be proportionate and responsive to the size of the unit.

Ground floor family dwellings were recommended to have 50m² of private amenity space. This is in accordance with the Council’s existing *Residential Space Supplementary Planning Guidance* and is considered appropriate in order to ensure adequate amenity space for family housing on the ground floor.

Identified within the Interim Planning Guidance terrace/ground floor units that comprise less than 3 bedrooms are recommended to have 25m² private amenity space. This allows for less provision of amenity space, given that less people are likely to reside within the dwelling, and is considered more realistic to implement given the space constraints within the Borough. Additional specifications for units above the ground floor are as follows:

1. **1 bed – 6m²**, this gives adequate space for possibly 2 seats. If the shape of the amenity space is suitable, this becomes useable for the occupants.
2. **2 bed or more – 10m²**, this gives adequate space for seating and a small table becoming a useable space for the occupants.

**Communal Amenity Space**

While it is preferable to have some communal open space at ground level it is not always possible, especially in redevelopment and conversions and in some dense and compact areas such as the city fringe. As a result innovative approaches to provision such as roof and podium gardens, and winter gardens may be appropriate.

The needs of families with children must also be considered when designing communal amenity space, including the provision of children’s play areas which are to be located in appropriate places to maximise...
safety and casual surveillance. The size of the children’s play space should be relative to the proposed child density on site.

The IPG allowed the Council to consider variations to the requirements for communal amenity space where it is accepted that the provision of high quality, useable and publicly accessible open space in the immediate area of the site (including as a provision on site) would justify a reduction. In this instance, the Council will seek contribution towards the improvements of this open space in terms of “quality of open space” through Planning Obligations. In cases where new dwellings result from conversions or subdivisions of existing building, the Council will seek to maximise all opportunities for either private and/or communal amenity space, within the constraints of the site.

**Biodiversity**

In accordance with PPS9 areas of biodiversity as defined by *Tower Hamlet’s Local Biodiversity Action Plan* take into consideration the Borough’s characteristics.

Tower Hamlets often faces very strong pressure to allow for development in areas that could have some sort of value for biodiversity or that are registered as valuable for biodiversity conservation purposes. The most often designations are on SINCs26 (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance).

SINCs are divided into different categories according to their importance. On Map 14 the areas of deficiency are highlighted in blue. These concentrate mainly on the City Fringe area and the Isle of Dogs.

As referenced in Tower Hamlets’ *Opportunities for Sustainable Energy and Biodiversity Enhancement report* one measure of securing biodiversity enhancement zones in the Borough includes setting in place management and funding mechanisms for SINCs. This should include long-term management plans and community involvement during design, habitat creation and management. This will ensure that biodiversity benefits are achieved.

The report goes on to identify 14 Biodiversity Enhancement Zones based on certain definable criteria. The BEZs are listed in Appendix 1.
Map 11 Tower Hamlets Areas of Deficiency

Map 12 Biodiversity Enhancement Zones

Map 13 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
European Sites

European sites provide ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites which are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Union. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs: natural habitats and wild fauna), Special Protection Areas (SPAs: the Birds Directive). Government policy (PPS927 and Circular 06/0528) recommends that Ramsar sites29 are treated as if they are fully designated European sites for the purposes of considering development proposals that may affect them.

In March 2007 a screening report30 for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was prepared which set out the Council’s view on whether a full appropriate assessment (AA) would be required for the Local Development Framework (LDF) suite of documents. The report found that, based on planning priorities at the time, certain elements of the Core Strategy and Leaside Area Action Plan could have adverse effects on both these sites. The effects identified centred on air pollution and recreational pressure (at Epping Forest), and water consumption, water quality and recreational pressure at Lee Valley. It is yet unknown as to whether a full Appropriate Assessment will be required; however an updated HRA screening report may be necessary following the development of the emerging Core Strategy.

The European sites relevant to development within Tower Hamlets are:

- Epping Forest SAC, a woodland site which is one of the best examples of Atlantic acidophilous beech forest in its UK range, which also hosts the stag beetle; and
- Lee Valley SPA / Ramsar, a wetland site composed of a series of reservoirs and reedbed habitat that hosts internationally important communities of bittern, gadwall and shoveler.

Waterspace

Safeguarded Wharfs

Safeguarded wharves are sites that have been safeguarded for cargo handling uses such as intraport or transhipment movements and freight-related purposes.31

In 1997, the GOL produced the Regional Planning Guidance 3b/9b ‘Strategic Planning Guidance for the River Thames’ to ensure a consistent and coherent approach by Local Planning Authorities adjacent to and often divided by the river. In addition, the Secretary of State Direction which served under Section 12(7A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, require local authorities to have regard to the maintenance of the specified Safeguarded Wharves when formulating their development plans.

Tower Hamlets has two safeguarded wharves. These are Northumberland Wharf and Orchard Wharf. These have been safeguarded for cargo handling. For more information see the London Plan Implementation Report, Safeguarded Wharves on the River Thames 2005

Blue Ribbon Network

The Blue Ribbon Network (BRN), as defined in the London Plan, includes the Thames, canal network and other tributaries, rivers and streams within London. This also includes open water spaces such as docks, reservoirs and lakes. The London Plan also defines the uses that are appropriate for the BRN. These include: transport, tourism, leisure, sport, uses.

Boroughs should identify, through their Open Space Strategies, potential opportunities alongside waterways for the creation and enhancement of open spaces. This type of research is not available in the present version of LBTHs’ Open Space Strategy. The importance, scale and historic connection the waterways in Millwall, Canary Wharf, Limehouse and Mile End have to various places within Tower Hamlets merits the development of a borough wide water space strategy.

A number of these places are included within The Thames Strategy East document. This document identifies the Thames Policy Study Area in Tower Hamlets and includes parts of the Limehouse Basin, the entirety of the Isle of Dogs and the mouth of the River Lea.
Waterside Walkways

The Thames Path objectives are laid down in the 'The Thames Path National Trail', produced by the Countryside Commission and its value is recognised in the London Plan and the Thames Strategy, produced by GOL. Gaps in the path have been identified and with access harder on the eastern end of the path. The development of the Thames Path should be achieved in conjunction with the Blue Ribbon Network and consolidated wherever possible.

In May 2005 the Council produced the ‘Thames Pathway Report’. Its remit was to investigate ownership/improvements to the river walkway from Leamouth to Limehouse and consider the options for establishing a new walkway from Island Gardens to Canary Wharf.

This document could form the basis for a borough-wide study regarding strategic walkways, with a special focus on the waterside walkways. It should also take into consideration the role of the Thames Path and other strategic walkways within Tower Hamlets.
**Land Contamination**

The UK’s rich industrial heritage has resulted in a legacy of land contamination caused by industrial development. Bearing in mind the pressure for new housing in Tower Hamlets and the nationwide decline in industrial employment added pressure has been put on industrial land in the Borough for redevelopment for residential purposes. The remediation of brownfield land will be key to ensuring safe regeneration of this land.\(^{32}\)

**Air Quality**

Poor air quality has an impact on human health and in London causes an estimated 1,600 accelerated deaths and 1,500 respiratory hospital admissions annually.\(^{33}\) Particularly affecting the most vulnerable in society such as the very young and the old, high levels of pollution are known to affect cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, both of which are common causes of death in London. In terms of the environment air pollution also has negative impacts both in terms of the direct effects of pollutants on vegetation, and indirectly through effects on the acid and nutrient status of soils and waters.

Introduced on the 4\(^{th}\) February 2008 the Mayor of London introduced a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) across Greater London. The aim of the LEZ was to improve air quality in London by deterring the most polluting vehicles from being driven in the area. The vehicles most affected are older diesel-engined lorries, buses, coaches, large vans, minibuses and other heavy vehicles that are derived from lorries and vans such as motor caravans. There will be a phased introduction of the scheme, with different vehicles affected over time and increasingly tougher emissions standards. Cars, motorcycles and small vans are not included in the LEZ.

In terms of Tower Hamlets, the area has been declared an Air Quality Management Area for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO\(_2\)) and Particulate Matter (PM\(_{10}\)).\(^{34}\) The Council’s review and assessment of air quality has revealed that road transportation is the main source of air pollution in the Borough. The LBTH Air Quality Action Plan was published in 2003 and is currently being reviewed.

In Tower Hamlets one of the most significant contributors to air pollution are the cross borough traffic routes including the A1202, A11, A12, A102 and the A13 (Bromley by Bow is particularly affected). Air Quality assessments show that the main source of CO\(_2\) emissions come from vehicular through traffic.\(^{35}\)

At present the Council is looking into the possibility of introducing a Clear Zone in the borough. This zone will be broadly located in the city fringe area (see Strategic Transport Map).

Reflecting both national and regional guidance and the prominence to which air quality holds in the 2006 LBTH Community Plan the Council has three automatic monitoring sites and 90 diffusion tubes which determine ambient concentrations of nitrogen dioxide in the borough.
Water Quality

The Environment Agency is responsible for maintaining or improving the quality of fresh, marine, surface and underground water in England and Wales. Main sources of water pollution are from industry, urban infrastructure, transport and road run-off. Pollution may arise as point sources, such as discharges through pipes, or may be more diffuse, such as from run off from streets and buildings.

There is also diffuse water pollution from transport, on-street activities, leisure industries, discharges from contaminated land. Unlike point source pollution, the Council cannot easily control diffuse pollution by issuing licences or permits. Regulatory approaches have to be more subtle and in many cases need to be well connected to the land use planning system.

The Water Framework Directive is a new piece of European legislation which promotes a new approach to water management through river basin planning.

This legislation will help the Council improve and protect inland waters; drive wiser, sustainable use of water as a natural resource; and create better habitats for water based wildlife.
OVERVIEW

Largely due to Canary Wharf and its location close to the City of London, Tower Hamlets is one of the most economically competitive areas in the country. The local economy is underpinned by high levels of productivity, business enterprise, office floorspace growth and a strong knowledge economy. However, the wealth generated by the local economy has not filtered down to its inhabitants partially due to its low level of residential skills and issues surrounding generational worklessness.

The mismatch between the profile of workers and local residents is reflected in the Borough’s social profile. Some residential pockets appear to be prosperous, with significant shares of the population in ‘high end’ occupations. However, national and local figures show that a large share of local jobs are taken by non-residents, and a large share of residents work outside of the Borough in comparison to national levels. This has resulted in high levels of deprivation within certain demographic groups and areas, a situation exacerbated by significant crime rates and poor health relative to both London and national standards.

The economic and employment situation is a cross cutting issue and is strongly linked to the housing provision. Accordingly, when Tower Hamlets’ housing profile is analysed and we see that housing affordability in the Borough while average by London standards, is low by national standards.
Correspondingly, workplace-based earnings measuring affordability are skewed by the powerful local economy, leaving most residents renting accommodation.

During the development of this Research Report a global economic downtown has occurred. Consequently, Oxford Economics estimates that employment in Tower Hamlets will decrease by 8% with the main job losses in financial services. Further job cuts in construction and distribution, hotels & catering sector also be expected. For 2008, Oxford Economics predicts a net job loss of around 97,000 in London. Over the next two years the economists predict there will be job losses of up to 18,500 in Tower Hamlets.37

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT**

Over the last 10 years Tower Hamlets has had the fastest growing economy in the country.38 Despite this level of growth the latest figures show that between April 2007 and March 2008 Tower Hamlets had the lowest employment rate in London at 58.4% (London 70.1%)39.

Much of this growth has been provided by the development of Canary Wharf into a global financial centre. In 2006 there were measured to be 192,578 jobs in the Borough.40 This was an increase of 5.6% on the previous year (+10% in Canary Wharf) nearly 5 times the rate of London and 6 times the rate for Great Britain.41

One explanation for the mismatch between employment growth and local employment could lie in the workforce’s lack of experience and qualifications, as suggested by high levels of NEETs and under 25s JSA claimants. Currently, 19% of Tower Hamlets’ working age residents have no qualification (London: 14.3% and GB: 14.3%) and only 32.% have qualifications of NVQ 4 and above (London: 37.4% and GB: 28.6%).42

In order to address the situation LBTH is actively working with a range of partners to bring together a skills and employment agenda including the Skillsmatch Programme.

In 2006 the Banking, Finance and Insurance (BFI) sector was the largest employment sector in the Borough providing 103,713 jobs.43 Although 2006 experienced a minus growth rate in the BFI and Construction sectors at 5.6% compared to 11% in 2004-5 it this level of employment growth far outstripped London as a whole. In 2005, these sectors now provided more than half of the total sectoral jobs.45

Employment growth in the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector moderately increased while growth in self-employed Small Medium Enterprises remained static.

Conversely, the Borough’s manufacturing sector declined in 2004-05. This followed national and regional trends but with a more marked effect. Likewise, there was decline in Transport and Communications, Public Administration Education and Health sectors.46
Despite the present economic downturn, the GLA estimates a strong increase of jobs in the Borough over the next 20 years, based on the presumption that long-term economic growth will continue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of jobs</td>
<td>182,000</td>
<td>192,600</td>
<td>203,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>271,000</td>
<td>306,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: GLA Employment projections)

**Unemployment and Worklessness**

**Snapshot**

- Unemployment gender split: Male 73.4% Female 26.6%
- Signing off: Within first six months Male 55% Female 60%
- Long term unemployment – LBTH 24.5% - 14% London (12 months)
- Claimant count by location – High: Shadwell
  Low: Blackwall Cubitt Town
- Highest level of unemployment (20.6%) amongst 16-24 year olds in London.
- Bangladeshi/Pakistanis residents are almost five times as likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts, and black residents more than three times.

Jobseekers Allowance claimant count unemployment rates as calculated by the GLA are higher than the rates calculated by ONS due to the different methodology incorporated.

Despite the government’s National Welfare to Work programmes, Tower Hamlets, standing at 12.2% had the second highest unemployment rate in London between April 2007 – March 2008. This problem was exacerbated by recurrent unemployment, whereby unemployed residents who move into work find themselves unemployed again within a few months.

In addition to high unemployment, the borough has low levels of economic activity. Between April 2007 and March 2008 only 58.4% of the working age population were economically active compared to 70.7% in London. Likewise, we have the second highest proportion of economically inactive female and BME residents in Great Britain at 45.4% and 41.7% respectively.

For more detailed information see the LBTH Economic and Labour Bulletin (December 2008) and the LBTH Employment Strategy.

**Income levels**

The unequivalised median (i.e. the middle) income, not the mean (average) household income in Tower Hamlets is £32,200 and London is £33,700.

15.2% of households in the Borough have earnings of less than £15,000 income per annum. 9 of the 17 Tower Hamlets wards are below the Borough’s overall middle income of with only four above. Thirteen of the wards are below the middle London income. Just over 3/5ths (61%) of households has an income under the average household income for Tower Hamlets.

The highest concentration of households earn between £20,000-£25,000 well below the median and average income. On average, Tower Hamlets residents earn 33% less than Tower Hamlets workers. This suggests that highly paid people who work in Tower Hamlets, do not live in the Borough. According to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Tower Hamlets workers receive the second highest earnings in London.

The wards with the highest unequivalised mean income in Tower Hamlets are St Katherines and Millwall at £54,306 and £50,903 respectively while the wards with the lowest are East India and Lansbury and Bromley by Bow at £28,666 and £26,502 respectively. The average mean income in the Borough is £37,634.

The most widely used information for changes in the number of enterprises is the number of new VAT registrations and de-registrations. It is the best official guide to the pattern of business start-ups and
closures. This data provides an indicator of the level of entrepreneurship and of the health of the business population.56

In 2005 Tower Hamlets had a net gain of some 1,250 businesses and a total of 7,800 VAT registered businesses. Up to the end of 2005, this had been an average growth of 208 enterprises per year.57

The largest increase of registrations occurred in the education, health and social work areas (35% business openings) followed by real estate, renting and business activities and while there were slumps or stagnation on the wholesale, retail and repairs sectors across the rest of the country and London as a whole, Tower Hamlets saw an increase of 15%.58

In order to promote and facilitate business growth within the Borough, the East London Business Place offers a supply chain programme to link businesses and supply opportunities arising from the major developments in the area.

**Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)**

Despite the large provision of office floor space there is currently a mismatch between small business needs and affordable supply. This runs counter to the objectives of the London Plan which views small and medium sized enterprises as mechanisms for meeting and delivering London’s diverse employment needs.

The extent of the opportunities that are offered by SMEs is reinforced by the data in Tower Hamlets’ 2005 Central Property Study (Draft)59 which identifies that SMEs in the form of public administration, business services as the largest form of commercial development. Conversely, rising rents in the City Fringe and the Isle of Dogs are forcing small businesses, in particular, creative and cultural industry, to move further east.

As part of Tower Hamlets’ City Fringe area the Aldgate Property Study has identified that SME & BME existing/latent demand is unlikely to be satisfied by current planning pipeline in terms of size and grade of space. SMEs are considered a vital element in enhancing the role of town centres although it is recognised that more advice is required in terms of the locations, criteria for location, size, configuration needed to create SME’s. Accordingly any further research undertaken by the Council should address the best locations for small-med and large office & workspace in the Borough and their relationship with other uses, eg. when in mixed use development.

Contradictory opinions have been expressed with regards to subsidising rents for SMEs. Some organisations feel that market forces should be the determining factors; conversely other organisations feel that if a greater variety of choice is to thrive, assistance is required.
**Live-work**

As live-work units are classed as a sui-generis use, they have been allowed in areas where C3 residential uses would not be permissible. The Fish Island industrial location being a prime example.

Despite recognition that live-work units can aid inner city regeneration the provision of these uses in industrial locations has resulted in residential development with very poor access to services and amenities. This has been a key problem for many of the live work Fish Island residents. In LDF Submission version representations residents objected to the island’s industrial designation, identified the need for regeneration of the area, and cited the need for residential services and amenities which have not been on offer in the area.

Based on previous evidence, the Council’s Interim Planning Guidance seeks to refuse any applications for live-work units as they are predominantly used for housing. This can be evidenced by the level of applications the Council received for the conversion of live-work units to straight C3 residential uses.

**Creative and Cultural Industries**

Under the 2008 document Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy’ the first ever comprehensive plan for Government support of the creative industries was published. This document marked the creative and cultural industries shift from the margins to the mainstream of economic and policy thinking.

The creative industries have been defined by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.”

The creative and cultural industries are increasingly recognised as making a major and increasing contribution to the UK economy. This is supported by figures showing that the sector grew by 6% per annum from 1997 to 2005 while accounting for £60 billion, or 7.3 per cent of Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2005.

The Mayor’s London Plan expresses clear support for London’s cultural sector and creative industries. In Policy 3B.9 Creative industries states that DPD policies should identify and support the development of clusters of creative industries and related activities and environments while noting that existing clusters should be protected. It states that this sector can “provide a trigger for local regeneration” and that “cultural facilities are vitally important to all London’s town centres”.

The London Plan identifies the City Fringe area and the Leamouth Peninsula in East London as one of a number of existing clusters of creative industries, and argues that they should be actively protected. Within the City Fringe, The City Growth Strategy – London City Fringe (2004) document identifies that the creative industry cluster forms a competitive edge in this area whose largest creative sectors are designer fashion and publishing.

Within Leamouth, the Leaside Arts and Creative Industries Strategy (2003) identifies that a significant number of visual artists along with a growing film and media sector are active in the area. It also added that the arts and creative businesses in the Leamouth area were mostly self-employed, and have a strong need for affordable workspace. The Strategy also identifies a key need to develop a greater profile for Leamouth as a creative quarter, and to enhance supply chains in local community, arts/creative industries, leisure and retail markets in Three Mills, Stratford and Canary Wharf.

In addition Tower Hamlets City Fringe Area Action Plan 2007 identifies existing clusters of cultural and creative industries in Bethnal Green, recommending that Roman Road should become a new location of cultural and creative industries, as a means of regenerating the area. It is noted that the cultural and creative industries within the City Fringe area are coming under increasing pressure due to rising rents. As a result many small businesses are being forced to move further east.

Within Tower Hamlets’ 2005 Central Property Study, it is identified that organic change has occurred around the Unity House and Vyner Street/Regent Canal sites, where manufacturing premises are being transformed by creative industries into new employment hubs. These locations have provided the low cost, flexible space required by developing companies.
Tourism

It is likely that an overarching assessment of tourism in Tower Hamlets will be required. The only existing ‘East London’ work was undertaken by the London Development Agency in the form of a Local Area Tourism Impact model (LATI). Tower Hamlets Council summarised these findings in a 2008 document entitled Evidence from the Local Area Tourism Impact model.

Initial findings from this model indicate that Tower Hamlets’ total day visitor spending (£259 million) is far higher than income from either overseas visitors or domestic visitors staying one or more nights. Conversely, overseas visitors to the borough tend to stay for longer on average than those to surrounding areas.

New attractions to the east of the Borough which will affect projected tourism levels are the Excel Centre, the Aquarium at Silver Quay and proposed 2010 surfing basin. Some key locations for tourism in Tower Hamlets are:

- Tower Bridge
- Columbia Road Flower Market
- St Katharine Docks
- Petticoat Lane Market
- The Tower of London
- Victoria Park
- Canary Wharf
- Spitalfields Market
- Brick Lane
- Trinity Buoy Wharf

Hotels/Accommodation/Conference Centres

The increasing importance of the tourism industry in London is driving the need for supporting services and infrastructure, including hotels. A hotel study undertaken by the GLA that has identified a need for new hotels across London. Accordingly, London’s Tourism Strategy seeks to achieve 50,000 gross additional hotel bedrooms by 2026.

In 2005 Tower Hamlets was estimated to contain 2209 hotel bed spaces. The previous five years witnessed a significant increase in the provision of hotel space in the Borough particularly in the business and conference sectors. The growth in the business sector is due to a number of reasons namely the associated hotels proximity to the DLR and the Excel Centre, and the increasing importance of Canary Wharf as a business hub.

Canary Wharf hotels estimate that annually on site corporations book approximately 50,000 nights in their premises. The majority of these rooms are in 4/5 star hotels as they provide meeting rooms for local businesses that are often used by businesses who do not have the conference facilities at their place of work. In addition many self employed, micro and SMEs use the hotels lounges, public meeting spaces and restaurants for meetings with staff and clients. The duration of overnight business stays in hotels in the borough averages at 8 nights compared to 5 nights in central London.

Allied to business tourism is the cultural tourism sector. Whereas many of the hotels associated with business are located near to the DLR many of the cultural tourism hotels are located in the borough’s City Fringe area near to the majority of the established tourist areas such as the Tower of London and Brick Lane.

A number of East London tourism attractions and transport nodes are increasing the need for hotels in Tower Hamlets. These include:

- Eurostar: Scheduled to open at Stratford in 2010 there are currently direct links from the Borough via the DLR to Stratford, thereby creating greater hotel demand.
- London City and Stansted Airports: Their expansion will double the movements through airports increasing the probability that more people are likely to stay in the East End.
- The O2: Existing hotels in the Canary Wharf area have communicated that since its opening there have experienced an increase in customers.

Hotels provide less jobs per amount of floorspace in comparison to large office use but could provide more local jobs. However, there have been problems finding local people with the right skills or
experience to fill these vacancies. This situation is currently being addressed by the Council’s Skillsmatch programme.

Map 20 Cultural Places and Services
LAND USE

Industrial Profile

One of the most notable employment changes experienced in London over the last decade is the shift in manufacturing employment to the service sector. Nevertheless, manufacturing still plays a vital role in London’s economy, with particular strengths in high skill, high value-added activities, including those related to the capital’s creative sector.

The value of maintaining a strong manufacturing base within the Borough is reinforced by Tower Hamlets 2005 Central Property Study which states that manufacturing will remain important for employment numbers, particularly among skilled and semi-skilled manual workers, and these uses should be protected to promote a diversified and integrated local economy.

Although current market feedback shows some demand for more modern industrial premises reflecting the low quality of property available for these uses, economic projections, for example in Tower Hamlets’ central area, point to a significant decline. In the central area’s case this is a result of the industrial business trend to relocate near better distribution networks such as the A13 and M25.

Surveys undertaken for the purposes of the 2006 Industrial Land Study, show that Tower Hamlets had approximately 84 hectares of ‘pure’ industrial land (B2, B8) in 2004. In 2003 Roger Tym & Partners calculated that the total was 457.3 hectares (B1(c), B2, B8. This large variance may be attributed to the difference in time periods of data collection and/or the fact that estimations for Tower Hamlets were based on a London average.

PPS3 identifies the current trend of a reduction in industrial uses, as manufacturing is moved to outer areas or overseas. Where there is excess industrial land it is considered that this should be converted to housing. This should be determined by an accurate understanding of current industrial land requirements. Guidance on reviewing employment land is set out in Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note, ODPM, 2004.

In 2004 the GLA published a study entitled, Industrial & Warehousing Land Demand in London. This study informed the indicative location for the Strategic Industrial Locations, which are defined in the Sub Regional Development Frameworks.

The GLA have also recently released a draft Industrial Capacity SPG. The SPG provides guidance to:

- Ensure that there is an adequate stock of industrial capacity to meet the future needs and functional requirements of different types of industrial and related uses (including waste management, logistics, utilities and transport functions) in different parts of London;

- Plan, monitor and manage the release of surplus industrial land so that it can more effectively contribute to strategic and local planning objectives, especially those to provide more housing (including affordable housing) and social infrastructure.

According to the LBTH Industrial Land Study, industry types are defined as general, light, wholesale, distribution, high technology such as research and development and business/science parks.

Employment Trends

London and its sub-regions have experienced a decrease in manufacturing employment, over the five years leading up to 2003. In the same period, there was an aggregate increase in warehousing employment. A high proportion of manufacturing is established in the eastern sub region, whereby it has consistently made up 28%-31% of the market, while over the same period, the Central sub-region has made the highest contribution to warehousing employment (of between 30%-32%).

Between 1998 and 2003, the total number of people employed in all industries in the City of London and Tower Hamlets made up almost half (44% - 46%) of those employed in the sub-region.

According to Tower Hamlets’ 2006 Industrial Land Report, the Borough has, with the exception of the former Blackwall and Park wards experienced a general decline in manufacturing employment. This is reinforced by the 2005 Central Property Study (Draft) which predicts a general employment increase but a decline in manufacturing employment by 52% from 2005 to 2016.

The employment nature of the former Park ward (better known as Fish Island) reflects the presence of industrial uses while the employment nature of Blackwall reflects the Banking, Finance & Insurance
employment. As noted earlier in the Research Report job numbers in the BFI sector increased dramatically over the last 10 years.

Taken from the 2006 Industrial Land Study, the Table 2 and Figure 2 below shows that between 1998 – 2003 manufacturing employment has decreased while warehouse employment experienced little movement.

| Tower Hamlets Manufacturing and Warehousing Employment numbers and actual change, 1998-2003 |
| 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | '98-'00 |
| Industrial | 9,546 | 13,043 | 9,544 | 8,204 | 7,609 | 7,462 |
| Actual change | - | 3,497 | -3,499 | -1,340 | -595 | -147 | -21.8% |
| % change pa | - | 36.6% | -26.8% | -14.0% | -7.3% | -1.9% | -4.8% pa |
| Warehousing | 10,437 | 10,746 | 10,821 | 8,856 | 8,353 | 9,177 |
| Actual change | - | 309 | 75 | -1,965 | -503 | 824 | -12.1% |
| % change pa | - | 3.0% | 0.7% | -18.2% | -5.7% | 9.9% | -2.5% pa |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in Industrial Employment in Tower Hamlets, 1998-2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source LBTH Industrial Land Study 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Floorspace

Reflecting the national reduction in industrial floorspace the eastern sub-region, which constitutes 36% of total stock in London between 2000-2003, has experienced little pressure on manufacturing floor space. This is reflected in a recorded vacancy rate of 11.6% for 2003 (compared to London’s overall vacancy rate of 8.2%).

Tower Hamlets vacancy rate of 7.9% compares favourably with that of the eastern sub-region average, but does not operate as well as Hackney and Redbridge, with vacancy rate lows of 5.3% and 3.4% respectively.

The eastern sub-region also had the second highest warehouse floor space stock, contributing 29% to London’s total. According to RTP research, inner eastern markets saw the biggest loss of industrial/warehousing floor space overall, with Tower Hamlets and Hackney both losing a relatively significant amount of space.

The 2004 LBTH Industrial Land Use Survey shows the Borough has a relatively low building vacancy level of about 5%. In Bethnal Green North proposed B8 floorspace in 2005 totalled almost 8,000 sqm.
**Existing Land**

Much of the industrial/warehousing land take-up took place in western sub-region (195 ha between 1992 and 2001), which equalled over 40% of London’s total take-up. Most of the total stock of land (built upon and vacant) can be found in the East sub-region however. The East sub-region also showed to have highest vacancy rate at 23% - double the greater London rate of 12.2%.

RTP calculations show that the East London sub-region vacant industrial / warehouse land accounts for around 72% of all vacant industrial / warehousing land in London. Newham and Tower Hamlets are the two largest contributors to this supply, with some 203 ha and 169 ha of vacant land respectively.77

The 2004 industrial land use survey recorded approximately 36 ha of vacant land which translates to a potential surplus of industrial land for the Borough. Much of this land was located in the Leaside area.

The 2007 Interim Planning Guidance Area Action Plans identified this amount of industrial land as suitable for other potential development. The land identified was seen to be in line with the recommendations made by GLA URS study which advised that the release of approximately 40 hectares of industrial land in the plan period would be appropriate.

**Designations**

In response to the London Plan which requires boroughs to identify Strategic Industrial Locations in Development Plan Documents, and develop local policies and criteria to manage Locally Significant and other, smaller industrial sites outside the SILs.

The 2006 LBTH Industrial Land Study has helped to identify industrial land that should be safeguarded through undertaking character assessments against criteria set in the GLA draft SPG Industrial Capacity. It also identifies industrial land that is more suitable for a mix of uses.

The areas assessed viable to remain or be newly designated as industrial are Fish Island, Gillender Street, Empson Street / St Andrews Way and Poplar Business Park. 78
Map 21 Industrial and Commercial uses in the Borough

Map 22 LBTH Strategic and Local Industrial Locations
Overview

Economically banking and finance is the most robust economic sector in Tower Hamlets, with business to business and hospitality sectors benefiting from the City Fringe and Canary Wharf’s knock on effect. Within the 2004 City Fringe area, there was a development pipeline of permitted but not yet constructed schemes of 1.2 million sq.m and a pipeline of development under construction of 1.65 million sq.m. This represented a redevelopment of approximately of 35% of total city office stock.

As of 2004 Canary Wharf had six million sq.ft of office and retail completed with a further 8.1 million sq.ft under construction. Since 2004 development has been focused towards the eastern end of the estate which links into Wood Wharf. Currently an outline planning application for Wood Wharf is being assessed by the Council. It proposes an indicative 450,000 sq m of B1 office space.

The east of the borough is behind the Docklands and City Fringe in terms of regeneration. While Canary Wharf is an established location for offices and the Royal Docks in Newham has been developed for large business service companies that support Canary Wharf, Leaside lies midway between these two centres and is lacking a commercial centre.

The Central Area, while largely residential in character, is located in between the capital’s two major financial sector hubs – the City and Canary Wharf. It is also adjacent to the site for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Lower Lea Valley regeneration area.

While the interest in office and workspace provision in the Central area has been traditionally low, a survey amongst local agents in the Borough shows that a rise in demand for B1 office and workspace is anticipated for this area, largely due to the Olympic development. It was also shown that opportunities for limited but concentrated development or refurbishment of B1 office and workspace would focus around the main transport nodes of Mile End, Bow Road and Bow Church. There were no apparent objections to this space being provided as part of wider development of mixed-use schemes as it was generally accepted that the Central area is predominantly residential in use. It was suggested that small, flexible workspace units of between 50-100 sq m would be the most suitable and effective type of provision in these localities.

Employment Trends

The London Plan, seeks to support the growth for London as a global city, by concentrating employment growth within the Central Activities Zone. Framed within the North East London area, the London Plan identifies two opportunity areas within Tower Hamlets. These Opportunity Areas are the Isle of Dogs and the City Fringe.

Isle of Dogs: the GLA suggest that proposed transport investment in the Isle of Dogs will allow it to accommodate at least 150,000 jobs by 2016, and 200,000 by 2026. These jobs will be focused in and around Canary Wharf and in the area which has particularly good and improving public transport accessibility and capacity. The Mayor is looking to use the AAP as the basis for the Opportunity Area Planning Framework for the area.

City Fringe: This area includes Bishopsgate/ South Shoreditch and Whitechapel/Aldgate. Because of its proximity to the City, the area provides particular scope to support London’s critical mass of financial and business services in ways that can contribute to the Mayor’s sustainability objectives. As part of the general encouragement of growth towards the east of London minor extensions of the CAZ are proposed (see Policies 2A.1iii and 5G.2) to realise development capacity and to maximise good public transport accessibility around Old Street station, the East London Line extension and Crossrail 1 around Aldgate and Bishopsgate. This is identified by the Mayor as a complex area and the development process will be managed sensitively through the City Fringe Development Framework,
coordinating action across four boroughs. This area is also important in supporting London’s creative industries.

Based on the Aldgate Property Study area which is incorporated within the City Fringe area it is estimated that employment in the study area may grow by between 6,783 (low growth) and 8,331 (high growth) additional jobs from 2005 to 2016.

Population and employment growth has three broad implications in the study area, namely, the need for:

- Increased modern office space
- Appropriate measures to ensure that ‘local’ residents have the right skills and qualifications to access new jobs
- Commercial property development to complement residential development - enabling study area to develop as a prosperous mixed use area

Generally, there is greater diversity in the employment space market within the City Fringe areas than in the City of London. If economic growth is strong, there may be also be demand for studio/workshop space. Currently, within the Aldgate area this demand is only met by Truman's Brewery. One recommendation of the Aldgate Property Study was that LBTH monitor and adjust employment numbers against projections to refine policy and inform implementation process.

With regards to general employment trends, Tower Hamlets’ 2005 Central Property Study identifies that new emerging businesses are likely to occupy business space at far higher densities than manufacturing. Thereby allowing the Borough to achieve its twin goals of accommodating employment growth and increasing population through the facilitation of an increased numbers of jobs within a smaller overall floorspace.

Floorspace

The GLA undertook a London Office Policy Review in 2006. This report found that the greatest need for additional floorspace, is in the revised North and North East sub-regions, which correspond broadly to the West End and City/Docklands sub-markets respectively. At a borough level the “Big Six” are (in descending order) Tower Hamlets, Westminster, the City, Camden, Southwark and Islington, which between them account for 56% of potential office employment growth, and hence according to our methodology are likely to require the largest increases in office stock. The GLA’s London Office Policy Review 2007 found that permissions or applications for over 1.5 million sq m, 28% of the central London total, is roughly split between three locations:

- Canary Wharf Estate with just under 500,000 sq m, including the pre-lets to KPMG.
- The Isle of Dogs with 460,000 sq m. The majority of these applications and permissions will be subject to change of use proposals, with potential for some office development in mixed-use schemes, and perhaps a small number of self-contained buildings in the order of 20,000 sq m.
- The eastern City fringe: Some of these office sites have been around since the late-1980s, but there is potential for one or two to be implemented in a strong market.
Designations

Currently there are two preferred office locations in Tower Hamlets, as defined by the Interim Planning Guidance 2007. These are located at City Fringe and at Canary Wharf. The role of the preferred office locations are designed to protect the role and function of the office areas from other uses.

Within the Borough it is the Isle of Dogs in general and Canary Wharf, which are the most significant locations of permitted and proposed office capacity.
OVERVIEW

Housing is the dominant land use in Tower Hamlets and is a topic which has a great deal of extant research. As such this chapter provides both a summary of the associated research and directions to the primary research document.

Tower Hamlets’ housing policy is framed and driven by a number of national, regional and local policies and strategies. Key housing policies and strategies include PPS3, the 2007 Housing Green Paper, the Draft Mayor’s Housing Strategy and the Mayor’s Draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan. In addition Tower Hamlets housing policy needs to sit within the broader policy framework set out in the Tower Hamlets’ Community Plan and the particular focus on making the borough a Great Place to Live.

Key Planning Documents

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing The London Plan (Further Amendments 2008)
Mayor’s Draft Housing Strategy (2007)
Urban Task Force: Towards an Urban Renaissance
Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy
Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy Statement 2005-2008
Tower Hamlets Housing Needs Assessment 2004
LBTH Housing Bulletin (June 2005)
Tower Hamlets’ Private Stock Condition Survey
Tower Hamlets’ Supported Person Strategy
Tower Hamlets’ Homeless Strategy
Tower Hamlets’ Annual Monitoring Report 2007-08
LBTH Housing Strategy Evidence Base 2009-2012

Snapshot

- C.15,703 residential units in the planning pipeline
- London target of 3,150 per annum (to 2017)
- Tower Hamlets contains 98,307 homes
- At 115 people per dwellings per hectare Tower Hamlets is measured as the second most dense London borough next to Kensington and Chelsea
- 37% of housing stock is still socially rented
- Typology: High rise residential units
  - LBTH 35.8% London 21.5%
- There are currently 8,935 overcrowded households on the waiting list for re-housing (1715 are severely overcrowded)
- 22 per cent of social sector households are overcrowded (4 per cent are severely overcrowded)
- The more expensive properties are in the Canary Wharf area and the least expensive is in the Bromley by Bow
- Average household size in the Borough is 2.5 persons
- Housing for the elderly equates to 40% of the supported housing available in Tower Hamlets
- Annual housing shortfall of 3,021 affordable dwellings (64% household incomes under the threshold level of affordability)
In the last 20 years, the number of homes in Tower Hamlets has increased by 50% from 62,000 in 1985 to 98,307 homes in 2008. The scale of this growth is reflected in figures taken from both the 2006-7 GLA’s Annual Monitoring Report and Tower Hamlets 2007-08 Annual Monitoring Report which show that Tower Hamlets is the highest deliverer of housing in London and the Thames Gateway Area with 2353 new units per annum over the last 3 years.

The scale of this growth is expected to continue as Tower Hamlets has the second largest annual housing growth target in London and the highest 20 year target in London. This equates to 3150 new homes annually and 52590 new homes over the period 1997 to 2016/17.

Despite this large housing growth Tower Hamlets still has some of the most significant housing need across the country. Consequently, housing delivery, affordability and design remains one of the most significant challenges to addressing issues related to people’s health and wellbeing in the borough.

The largest proportional areas of housing growth are in Millwall, Blackwall and Bow East. Millwall and Blackwall have experienced significant housing growth as much of the former office land has been converted into residential uses.

As shown in the LDF Core Strategy and the LBTH Housing Trajectory, Tower Hamlets does not seek to exceed its housing target because of the detrimental sustainability impacts this would have for the Borough. These impacts would manifest themselves in the need for additional nursery places and schools entry form as well as open spaces. The impacts of sustainability were also reported in the recent Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal (Feb 2009).
HOUSING ISSUES

While *Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy 2005/07* sought to put into place a long term framework for housing, this strategy is now being reviewed, in line with the *Mayor’s Housing Strategy*. *Tower Hamlets Draft Housing Strategy 2009/12* identifies five key housing provision issues. These provision issues include the following:

**Affordable housing supply**

The need for affordable homes continues to far outpace supply. Low incomes and considerable rises in house prices over the last 10 ten years have exacerbated affordability problems in the Borough and the East London sub-region. The very high requirement for affordable housing is confirmed by Tower Hamlets Housing Needs Survey which found an annual shortfall of 3,021 affordable dwellings across the Borough, coupled with nearly 64% of household incomes being under the threshold level of affordability.

Despite the Council’s adoption of the Mayor’s 50% strategic target for affordable housing and the 35% private development threshold of 10 units or more the affordable housing proportion is decreasing owing to the increase of market housing and the introduction of the right to buy programme. In the 2007-8 AMR it is showed that 29% of the new housing completed in that year was affordable.

In a spatial context data shows that the 4 wards within Tower Hamlets with the least council housing are also the 4 wards with the highest income. This shows that the proportion of council housing within a ward is a clear indication of a wards general wealth. Accordingly, the wards of Millwall, Blackwall and Cubitt Town, and Wapping and Spitalfields, demonstrate the north/south market dominated/ social housing dominated divide that is being experienced in the Borough.

The government is seeking to implement a range of housing products to increase home ownership. Many of the schemes are focused on young and first home buyers or people within existing social rented housing schemes. New housing products include the CLG’s Cash Incentive Scheme and the Government backed Homebuy Scheme.

**Type of affordable housing**

The *East Sub Regional Development Framework* along with the GLA’s Housing SPG identified that there is a major shortage of family housing in London. The East SRDF identifies that there is a significant need for family housing across the Thames Gateway and seeks that 42% of all social rented housing is 4 bedroom or greater across East London. 

Tower Hamlets has a problem with the provision of family housing and housing choice which is reflected in a review of the housing planning pipeline data. This data indicates that there is a much higher proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom developments, rather than family housing.

This situation is a result of the Council’s the former approach to housing mix, which stipulated that affordable housing matched the requirement of the market housing. Therefore when the market shifted and started demanding 1 and 2 bedroom development, the affordable housing sector followed suit.

It has only been through the 2004 Housing Need survey and the subsequent review of planning policy in the Council that has seen the re-emphasis on family housing. However, as a result of past trends, there is a significant shortfall in family housing now, to meet the past and future needs.

It is a key objective of Council’s *Community Plan* to deliver family housing. This is particularly challenging given the high rise flat housing typology which is prevalent across the Borough. In order to address the shortfall in family housing, the Council will attempt to ensure a high level of innovation and intervention to ensure high quality and appropriate family housing can be supplied. This issue is discussed further in housing design section.

More work is needed for the delivery of accessible homes. The Interim Planning Guidance requires that all new homes to meet Lifetime homes standard. This will be monitored through the One Application online monitoring process.

**Market housing**

Nationally housing prices have risen significantly over the last 10 years, outpacing individual wage increases and exacerbating the disjunction between annual salary and mortgage levels. This has led to housing affordability becoming a significant national issue, particularly in the London area where this problem is most acute.
In common with London, Tower Hamlets has experienced a sharp increase in housing prices, particularly in those classified as ‘terrace houses’ (63% Canary Wharf, 34% Bethnal Green) While flat and maisonette price increases are not as marked they have also experienced a significant increase (23% Bromley by Bow, 21% Canary Wharf Qtr 4 2006 -).

Accordingly, the council has reviewed Land Registry records which show all housing transactions from the last quarter in 2006 up to the third quarter in 2007. This information has been broken into the Borough’s postcode sectors and grouped into the same five areas defined in the 2004 Housing Needs Survey. These areas are, Bethnal Green, Bow, Wapping, Bromley and Canary Wharf.

**Overcrowding**

When measured exclusively by social housing tenures, at 20% Tower Hamlets has a higher rate of overcrowding than any other borough. At a local authority level, overcrowding in Newham (15%) and Tower Hamlets (14%) is substantially higher than that in other London boroughs.

The 2001 census records that the percentage of overcrowded households rises sharply when household size reaches 5 people or more (20 per cent rising to 31 per cent in London). In Tower Hamlets the census shows that 22% of households with 5 persons are overcrowded and this rises to 57% when 6 persons or more comprise a household.

Households in unsuitable housing are all those in current accommodation that in some way is unsuitable for their requirements. The 2004 Housing Needs Survey asked all respondents to identify any reason for their home being unsuitable and responses highlighted that 20,035 households (24.85) were in unsuitable housing. The majority, 9,543 households (47.6%) gave overcrowding as their reason for being in unsuitable accommodation.

The table below demonstrates the level of overcrowding by ward. It shows that LAPs 2 and 3 and the northern portion of LAP 4 are most significantly affected by overcrowding while Bow (LAP 5) and the IOD (LAP 8) have some of the lowest levels of overcrowding. The reason for low overcrowding levels in LAP 5 and LAP 8 may correspond with these areas having a high concentration of White British inhabitants, higher land values, low rise buildings and houses and low PTAL levels. LAP 2, 3 and 4 (Shadwell) have a high concentration of British Asian inhabitants.

![Overcrowding chart](chart.png)

**Table 1 Overcrowding as a percentage, by ward (Source Census 2001)**

Overcrowding is also a key driver of homelessness in the Borough, including statutory homelessness acceptances. The Draft Housing Strategy 2009 -2012 therefore proposes a number of overcrowding solutions. These include:

- Knockthroughs of two properties into one (particularly where one of the properties is already overcrowded);
• Cash incentive schemes to encourage under-occupiers to move into the owner occupied sector where possible;
• Cash incentive schemes to encourage under-occupiers to downsize into smaller accommodation;
• Young adult members of severely overcrowded households being prioritised for re-housing independently;
• Development of more large family accommodation;
• Offer cash incentives to encourage council tenants to secure private sector accommodation;

Non-decent homes

According to Communities and Local Government, in 1997 there were 2.1 million houses owned by local authorities and housing associations that did not meet the decent homes standard. In Tower Hamlets this equates to 59% of all local authorities homes. It is estimated that the backlog of repairs and improvements would cost Tower Hamlets £19bn.

Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy Statement identifies that estimated resources to support housing capital investment in the Council’s own stock was just over £35m for 2005/06 and would be in the region of £75m for the period up to and including 2007/08. Despite this level of investment there remains a considerable funding gap between the resources available and the resources needed to carry out all of the major repairs needed. The current estimate of backlog repairs and those newly arising in the period to 2007/08 is approximately £550m in order to provide new homes and repair existing ones to a Decent Homes standard.

The Strategy articulates the Borough’s commitment to provide affordable housing in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to its residents. Consequently, the Housing Corporation awarded £70m to RSLs for building about 2000 homes in 2004/05 while the Council contributed £3m in the same period. The private sector contributes through Section 106 agreements towards the provision and delivery of affordable housing.

The Council’s Choice based Lettings Programme, the Cash Incentives Scheme, the Government backed Homebuy Scheme and the Private Sector Housing Renewal and Properties Policy Framework maximise the number of affordable homes and re-use of empty properties.

The 2004 Housing Needs Survey identified that the main reason for non-decency in Tower Hamlets were, overcrowding, major disrepair or unfitness, children in high rise accommodation, harassment, mobility and or health problems.

The wards within Tower Hamlets with the most local authority non decent housing are Mile End East and Blackwall and Cubitt Town at 90.91% and 83.29% respectively. In order to address this problem the government has encouraged the Housing Choice programme, in which Council housing is transferred to an RSL to manage and undertake works to bring it up to a decent standard, and Arm Length Management Organisations (ALMOs).

The ‘private sector house condition survey’, carried out in Tower Hamlets in 2002, revealed that a disproportionate number of elderly people in Tower Hamlets live in the worst of the private sector housing stock. The Council has created a ‘Private Sector Renewal and Empty Properties Framework 2004-2007’ to try to deal with these problems.

OTHER ISSUES

Specialist Housing

In accordance with PPS3 and London Plan Policy 3A.10 which requires that borough’s provide special needs housing for the vulnerable the Council has produced a Supported housing Strategy and a Homelessness Strategy.

Specialist housing in the Borough comes from a range of places and suppliers. This varies from services for people with specialist needs (elderly, homeless, disabled) to housing which services a specific purpose (ie student, gypsies and travellers and newly created ‘key worker’).

There are 2964 households of specialist housing (not including student housing or gypsies and travellers).

Older people

Housing for older people equates to 40% of the supported housing available in Tower Hamlets - 35% of this number is apportioned to older persons supported housing and 5% of housing for frail elderly people.
Older people housing is scattered throughout the Borough, although there is a concentration of housing in the north western and north eastern corners of the Borough.

**Homeless**

The Mayor’s Housing Strategy expects the Borough homelessness strategies to clearly demonstrate how the targets within the Government’s Housing Green Paper will be achieved and how the number of rough sleepers and people waiting for move on accommodation will be reduced.

About 10 households per thousand were accepted by Tower Hamlets as being homeless and in priority need in 2006/07.

![Pie chart showing ethnicity distribution](chart.png)

- **White**: 27%
- **African Caribbean**: 4%
- **Indian, Pakastani, Bangladeshi**: 48%
- **Other ethnic origin**: 19%
- **Ethnicity not known**: 2%

**Accessible and wheelchair homes**

The London Plan requires that all homes are built to Lifetime Homes Standards and 10% of new homes are built to be wheelchair accessible. In order to assure good design for wheelchair homes, the Mayor has recently published a Best Practice. These guidance includes new categories for accessible homes (these go from A-G).

The implementation and monitoring of the wheelchair and Lifetime Homes Standards could be improved. In order to ameliorate this situation the Mayor is about to introduce a housing accessibility register that will better link those in housing need with the appropriate housing.

A particular need for wheelchair homes around key hospital sites has been identified.

**Student housing**

In accordance with London Plan Policy 3A.22, Tower Hamlets has approximately 20,785 full time students. There are currently 3635 beds while 1975 beds have been recently approved.

There are two major universities within the Borough, these are London Metropolitan University in Aldgate and the Queen Mary University, London in Mile End.

Tower Hamlets in collaboration with the Universities of QMUL and LMU, has estimated that additional student accommodation in and around the Borough will number 4000 beds up to 2013. (including those in planning process/ approved/ under construction since 1 April 2008). Recognising the responsibility of providing student accommodation for students studying in Central London HEIs an additional 25% of the bed spaces, or 1000 additional bed spaces would be acceptable. This equals to 5000 bed spaces in the next five years (2008-2013). Future student accommodation recommendations and conclusions can be found in the emerging *Tower Hamlets Report on Student Accommodation*. 

---

59
Gypsies and travellers

In accordance with Circular 01/06 (2006) and London Plan Policy 3.11 and The Council currently has one official gypsies and travellers site, known as the Eleanor Street Site, in Bow (Mile End and Globe town ward).

This sites has 19 pitches which is safeguarded for Gypsies and Travellers. Currently an assessment of the Gypsies and Travellers need is being undertaken London wide. This will inform the level of need across the Borough. A localised needs study was completed the gypsies and travellers site in 2006, as a part of the Cross Rail development. Owing to cross rail, this site is being redesigned.
**Housing Density**

Prompted by the work done by the Urban Task Force (Towards an Urban Renaissance, Cities for small country) and developed further by the GLA Design for London Team it is considered that over 100 dph is applicable in Central London. These densities allow for a compact urban form and allow for shops, services, shared open spaces and a good public transport network to be close to people. In order to comprehensively understand Tower Hamlets density levels they are assessed in three stages; namely, people per hectare, dwellings per hectare, households per hectare.

Dwellings per hectare and households per hectare generally mirror each other. The highest density ward is Weavers (63dph) located on the western edge of the borough followed closely by Bethnal Green South with 57dph while the least density ward is Blackwall and Cubitt Town (18.8dph). The majority of the least dense wards lie in the eastern part of the Borough, historically the least urbanised. These areas also tend to have the worse transport provision.

With new developments coming forward through the planning pipeline each ward density is set to increase. The largest increase will be seen in Millwall and Blackwall & Cubitt Town, which will experience density increase of around 15 dph. Despite this growth, no ward will achieve densities of 70 dph or above.

The average household size in the Borough is 2.5, higher than the national average. The Borough’s higher than average household sizes relate to issues of overcrowding, dwellings sizes and population density. This density figures need to be understood in the whole, and not as separate stand alone statistics, as they all give a specific picture whether its amount of people in a given area, amount of dwellings or amount of households. There is a considerable amount of contrast between wards, with Bethnal Green South having the most people per hectare at 155. The ward at the lower end of the spectrum is Bow East with a third of the number of people per hectare at 47.

**Available Land**

Under PPS3 local authorities are required to prepare a land availability assessment, to ensure that there is sufficient land to bring forward the required housing provision. The priority is to develop using public and private investment to develop previously occupied land with good transport accessibility, in particular on vacant and derelict sites and buildings.

In 2008 approximately 15,703 were in the housing pipeline.

**Housing design**

Design of family housing at high density

There are a number of publications, including the London Housing Federations Higher Density housing for families (2005), which seeks to address the design issues of family housing at high density.

As demonstrated through the LBTH Housing Bulletin, housing sizes are lower than the London average. The GLA have looked into reviewing house sizes and have published ‘Housing Space Standards’, August 2006. The Council should consider taking on board some of the recommendation in this report, as a part of thinking of the overall well-being of people within the Borough.
Planning Policy Statement 6 requires that councils articulate a town centre’s contribution to an area’s overall spatial vision. Accordingly, the contribution that town centres make to Tower Hamlets’ identity is reinforced by the Council’s 2020 Vision and Tower Hamlets Community Plan.

The Community Plan underlines the significant role that town centres play in Tower Hamlets by communicating that local people ‘want prosperous town centres which provide first-class and well managed centres where people come together for business, shopping, leisure and recreation’. As a result the Council has undertaken a Town Centre Spatial Strategy whose emerging vision is that “by 2025 all town centres in Tower Hamlets will be vibrant, attractive and inclusive serving all members of the community, business and visitors”. This vision is underpinned by four strategic objectives which are to:

- **Proactively plan town centres** - Town centres should be proactively planned in a way that a clear and compelling vision for each town centre is established based on sound evidence, effective consultation and establishes appropriate hierarchy and boundaries to deliver this along with a distinctive balance of uses in each town centre.

- **Design high quality town centres** - Town centres should be designed in such a way that ensures high quality public realm and urban design, (re)introduces safe and secure street patterns and maximises the use of public assets.

- **Manage town centres** - Town centres should be managed in such a way that enables them to attract investment, exploit the presence of successful street markets, enables thriving independent enterprises and actively manages the evening economy.

- **Connect town centres** - Town centres should be developed in a way that maximises local accessibility and exploits their role as strategic transport interchanges.

The spatial strategy is founded on an evidence base consisting of three studies: the spatial portrait sets the strategic context for town centres, a retail capacity study looks at retail and leisure patterns, trends and projections, and a spatial baseline report that provides an analysis of multi-scale accessibility, urban design and land use.

From this evidence base a spatial vision and strategic aims for town centres across the borough, along with individual visions and priorities for each of the key town centres in the borough, were developed. The vision and aims were closely aligned with both iterations of the Core Strategy.

The Town Centre Spatial Strategy’s overarching vision, strategic aims, revised hierarchy and designations provides a framework for setting priorities and designing policy to manage change within individual centres. Within this strategy certain town centres have tailor made action plans. These centres are Canary Wharf, Whitechapel, Bethnal Green, Roman Road East, Roman West, ChriSp St, Watney Market, Crossharbour and Brick Lane. Conversely neighbourhood centres and ‘local shopping areas’ are discussed jointly.
In the section Hierarchy and Designation is the revised town centre hierarchy. This hierarchy is related to each town centre’s scale and is broadly based on transport accessibility and the population they serve. A more detailed designation criteria is contained in Appendix 3.

**VITALITY & VIABILITY**

Tower Hamlets has a historic and culturally rich network of major and local town centres. While all of these town centres provide important services to the community in some cases their function does not meet local need.

Generally speaking however Tower Hamlets town centres are in reasonable health. They have benefited from the sustained growth of London in the last fifteen years with more footfall, greater consumer expenditure and improvements in the public realm.

However this growth has also brought significant challenges. To the west of the borough the City Fringe area has come under significant pressure from the City of London with opportunities for new leisure and cultural uses and office development placing further strain on the existing urban form and the communities living there.

The regeneration of Docklands is well documented and has contributed significantly to the economic and social transformation of the borough over the last 10 years. However how this growth can make an even greater contribution to the well being of local people is of critical concern.

Finally, the central and eastern areas of the borough contain many smaller town centres, where there is less pressure for growth but where the population is likely to continue to grow and change in make up. Many of these town centres provide very local, but vitally important services to many deprived neighbourhoods how they operate and how they are developed will be critical to delivering some of the aspirations set out in the Community Plan.

The spatial configuration of Tower Hamlets' town centres take on a particular form. Understanding this configuration has led the council to understand each town centre’s strengths and opportunities and how they relate to the surrounding community and environment. The spatial configuration of the town centres is shown in the diagram below.

The Town Centre Spatial Strategy supports previous town centre research which has highlighted that the function and physical form of some of the town centres have deteriorated through the blight of crime, deficient retail provision and access routes, poor amenity and maintenance.

**Typology of Town Centres**

![Diagram of Typology of Town Centres]

This research and the LBTH 2006/07 LDF Annual Monitoring Report has also identified that a high degree of new retail provision is currently occurring outside of designated town centres. Although this in part could be attributed to Tower Hamlets' high density, mixed use, inner city nature.
Neighbouring boroughs such as Newham compete with Tower Hamlets’ town centres. Although it is significant that centres such as Lewisham, Surrey Quays and Elephant and Castle are not centres currently visited by Borough residents to any material degree.

Due to borough wide lack of provision, there is a high level of bulky goods shopping in competing town centres and retail parks, such as Beckton. Food store expenditure leakage is also occurring in facilities outside of the Borough, such at Sainsburys in the at Greenwich Peninsula. At present ASDA is Tower Hamlets dominant food store.

Proposals for new retail capacity in main competing centres such as Stratford City/Stratford Rail Lands, Canning Town, Lewisham Gateway, Surrey Quays/Canada Water are expected to alter the pattern of external expenditure. Customers are predicted to switch from shopping in comparison shopping centres such as the West End, Lakeside and Bluewater.

**Hierarchy / Designations**

Previously the 2007 Interim Planning Guidance identified that Tower Hamlets had 25 town centres, comprising of one major centre, seven district centres; 16 neighbourhood centres and one CAZ Frontage (Wentworth Street). The table below identifies each town centre and its broad location. The general assessment is made against certain criteria. These criteria are based on a town centre’s vitality, the fulfilment of its role/function, its general environmental quality, occupancy and tenancies.

The new TCSS has identified 1 major centre, 8 district centres and 14 neighbourhood centres within Tower Hamlets. In addition they have identified two activity areas within the City Fringe and the Isle of Dogs. Designating two activity areas is a new policy mechanism designed to promote a distinctive policy response in each of the activity areas. This is based on the designation criteria included in Appendix 3 of this report.

In concord with PPS6, the London Plan regards retail as playing a vital role in London’s economic vitality. At present there are 40,000 shops in the capital, employing 400,000 people. Accordingly, the appropriate location of retail provision is identified as a key element in improving the experience of London residents.

The London Plan supports healthy town centres rather than out of centre shopping developments as they are identified as a more sustainable form of development.
Markets

PPS6 states that street and covered markets (including farmers’ markets) can make a valuable contribution to local choice and diversity in shopping as well as the vitality of town centres. As an integral part of the vision for their town centres, local authorities should seek to retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new markets. Local authorities should ensure that their markets remain attractive and competitive by investing in their improvement.

The Mayor’s Food Strategy demonstrates how the social and ethnic composition of London make street and farmers’ markets important in meeting dietary requirements, as well as enhancing choice in, and vitality of, town centres.

While there are waste and air quality implications associated with street markets, their presence positively contributes to a centre’s vitality and viability through increasing local choice, fostering communication and local identity.

There are 10 street markets and 1 wholesale market in the Borough. A list of the markets and their locations can be found in Appendix 3.

Evening and Night-time Economy

Planning Policy Statement 6 requires local authorities to assess its evening and night time economy as a part of an overall analysis of retail needs.

Tower Hamlets Retail Capacity Assessment considers that the main centres of Canary Wharf and Brick Lane have developed strong and vibrant night time’ economies. Canary Wharf contains a wide variety of restaurants, café, and pubs, while Brick Lane specialises in Indian cuisine.\(^{105}\)
With regards to A3 and A5 uses, the Retail Capacity Assessment considers that while sufficient disposable income exists and the economy is performing well pressure for additional A3 floorspace will exist. As a result the Council should monitor pressures for changes of use to A3 uses.

Through the planning process it was identified that evening and night-time activities should be supported in Canary Wharf, West India Quay, Canary Riverside, Brick Lane, Whitechapel District Centre, Tobacco Dock and St Katharine Docks.

With regards to Brick Lane internal consultation and partnership working have revealed the tension of supporting further A3 uses. As a result there is a discussion as to whether to implement a ‘saturation’ policy for the area.

**The Olympics and High Street 2012**

Tower Hamlets is one of the five host boroughs of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and will have an important role to play in terms of hosting the men’s and women’s marathon and the associated cultural events.

The Council is seeking to capitalise on the opportunities afforded by the Olympics and have identified the opportunity for a proposed ‘High Street 2012’ and ‘Playground for the Olympics’. In addition the council is exploring the possibility of using Victoria Park as a location for events during the Olympics period. This vision is articulated in the council’s London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Strategy.

A significant legacy of the Olympics will be the associated transport improvements. One such project is the Prescott Lock development which will improve the navigability of the River Lea. An associated project is the Lea River Park which will create a linear network of public parks stretching from the River Thames to the Olympic Park and beyond. Much of this park will be rooted in Tower Hamlets and will affect town centres such as Crisp Street, Roman Road, the Aberfeldy Estate shopping parade and the area around Bromley by Bow. As such there is realistic opportunity to link the opportunities of the Olympics with town centres and places of interest which are located close to the High Street.

**Mixed use developments**

Planning Policy Statement 1, Planning Policy Statement 3 and Planning Policy Statement 6 all cite mixed use developments as an opportunity for improving sustainable development and creating a more vibrant place.

The Mayor also strongly encourages mixed used development throughout the capital. London Plan Policy 3B.4 relating to mixed use development. states that within the Central Activities Zone and to the north of the Isle of Dogs Opportunity Area if increases in office floorspace are proposed they should provide for a mix of uses including housing, unless such a mix would demonstrably conflict with other plan policies

Tower Hamlets is a mixed use area. This claim is reinforced by the findings relating to the provision of retail uses outside town centres and the existing fabric of retail and other commercial uses.

The present mixed use form of the Borough can be beneficial and detrimental to town centres. Although organic in its development, reflecting an active economy, the diversification and dispersal of retail and town centre uses can weaken existing town centre and detract from their sense of place and location.

The Mayor’s policy on mixed use could be at odds with the principle of preferred office locations, as set out in the LBTH’s Interim Planning Guidance. This may potentially be detrimental for the Borough and for the development of office areas.
OVERVIEW

Tower Hamlets aims to improve the health and well-being of all its communities. The adequate provision of social and community infrastructure is particularly important in major areas of growth and regeneration. Consequently local policies should ensure that appropriate facilities are provided within easy reach of the local population through walking and public transport modes.

It is noted that social infrastructure in the Borough is delivered by a large number of different departments, organisations and groups. Below is a map indicatively showing where the likely growth points in the borough will be. New infrastructure provision will need to correspond to the places undergoing the highest quantum of housing and employment growth.
Education and the acquisition of skills are linked with access into the labour market. Although Tower Hamlets’ 2007 GCSE results (59.5%) were directly comparable with the overall level of achievement in London (60%) \(^{10}\), employment within the borough is well below the London average. As a result an, intrinsic part of the council’s approach to education is the effect it has on economic development and worklessness.

A crucial element in addressing economic development and worklessness is the creation of the opportunity for all of Tower Hamlets’ residents to have lifelong learning opportunities. This is a vital element if Tower Hamlets residents are to have the right qualifications and skills to access the borough’s available jobs. The council’s primary document with regards to education is The Primary Strategy for Change.

The Council has a Children’s Service Directorate providing and commissioning a range of services for young people in partnership with other agencies including the Primary Care Trust. Those services are managed and delivered from a range of operational facilities as well as primary schools, secondary schools, specialist schools and children’s centres. Schools can be managed by a wider range of different service providers. The council does provide lifelong learning services, again in partnership with other organisations including the Learning and Skills Council, Tower Hamlets College and universities.

### National programmes

In the form of policy, structure and initiatives, Education and Health provision is more centralised and unitary than topics such as Housing and Transport. As a result a number of governmental initiatives and projects are listed below.

Important national programmes and policies relevant to Tower Hamlets include:

- **Every Child Matters: Change for Children** is a governmental approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The geographic implications of this approach primarily relate to the co-location of health and education facilities for children and families. This is facilitated by new delivery mechanisms known as children’s trusts, which broadly speaking involve children and young people, find out what works best for them in its area.

- **Building Schools for the Future Programme** was launched by the Government in 2003, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is a 15 year programme that aims to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school in England. The first schools in the Borough to be redeveloped through BSF will be:
  - Bethnal Green Technology College (BGTC)
  - George Green’s
  - Ian Mikardo
  - Raines Foundation
  - St Paul’s Way Community School
  - Wessex Centre

The second wave of delivery for BSF in Tower Hamlets comes through Tower Hamlets being Awarded BSF funding in ‘wave 5’. A list of the schools that will be regenerated through the funding programme is listed in Appendix 4.
**Nursery Schools**

There are 6 nursery schools provided by the Council in the Borough. Tower Hamlets Capacity Assessment 2006 states by 2016, under both scenarios a additional capacity would be required in the period 2011 to 2015. Sites for new nurseries have not previously been designated due to their small scale and the desire to co-locate facilities where appropriate with other, larger social and community facilities such as schools.

**Primary Schools**

There are 71 primary schools in the Borough. According to national guidance a population of between 2,500 to 4,000 is required to support a primary school. Tower Hamlets has one primary school per 2939 persons. Under this measurement it shows that Tower Hamlets has very good primary school coverage. Nevertheless many of Tower Hamlets’ existing schools are scattered, are low rise in design and are land inefficient. A list of the Borough wide primary school distribution is contained in Appendix 4.

Primary schools have localised catchment areas relating to the distance children and parents are able to travel (preferably walk). The extended schools programme recognises the important role schools play in communities and neighbourhoods, particularly since the role that schools play in evening and weekend activities is set to increase.

Tower Hamlets Capacity Assessment 2006 states that under both density scenarios additional capacity would be required in the period 2011 to 2015. In order to deal with population and housing growth six school sites on the Borough’s eastern edge have been identified for expansion and new build in Cubitt Town, Millwall, Blackwall, Poplar Riverside, Bromley by Bow and Fish Island.

**Secondary Schools**

There are 25 secondary and special schools in Tower Hamlets which equates roughly to 1 secondary school per 9378 persons. A list of borough wide secondary school distribution is contained in Appendix 4.

Secondary schools are recognised as an important community facility beyond their primary function for education. This is recognised by the large scale regeneration programmes including the extended schools programme, and the new Building Schools for the Future Programme.

The multi function use of secondary schools is reflected in London Plan Policy 3A.21. This policy states that Borough should provide a criteria based approach to the provision of different types of educational facilities and the expansion of existing facilities, taking into account, the need for new facilities, expansion of existing facilities, inter-borough provision, safe and convenient access etc.

The Tower Hamlets Capacity Assessment 2006 states that by 2016 we will need more capacity for additional students. In working with Children’s Services it is considered that this growth can be accommodated within existing facilities or improvements to existing facilities. Consequently no sites have been identified for new secondary schools to date. In the spirit of ‘plan-monitor-manage’, this may need to be revised when a more up-to-date capacity study is undertaken, based on revised dwelling numbers.

**Higher and further education**

Relevant London Plan Policy 3A.22 Higher and further education n states that boroughs should ensure that the needs of the education sectors are addressed. This includes promoting policies aimed at supporting the role of higher education, taking account of future development needs of this sector, recognising their need for key location close to public transport access, recognising the distinctive location and access needs of further education establishments and supporting the provision of student accommodation.

**Colleges**

Tower Hamlets College is the only Further Education college in the borough. It is located on Poplar High Street adjacent to the DLR station and provides a range of services.

**Universities & Research Facilities**

Tower Hamlets two universities and research facility have a significant intake of pupils and offer courses ranging from arts to science. These institutions are:

- London Metropolitan University has part of its London City campus in and around Aldgate. It is the largest unitary university in the UK with some 37,000 students. Their recently developed estate management strategy seeks to consolidate teaching, reach and accommodation associated with the university within Aldgate.
• Queen Mary University, London is part of the University of London has approximately 13,000 students. They have invested £200 million in facilities. Their campus is exclusively in Mile End.

• Royal London Research and Teaching Facility: The Royal London Hospital Campus hosts an internationally important medical research and teaching facility. Part of this network of facilities is The Cell and an award winning research incubator.

Linking these universities with local enterprise is an opportunity which needs to be explored as these institutions have become increasingly global enterprises which need to compete for students and push research work in order to gain funding.
Map 30 Tower Hamlets’ Schools & Health Facilities

Map 31 Community Facilities
Health as defined by the World Health Organisation as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.

From Dahlgren and Whitehead’s diagram below it is clear that wider determinants have a critical impact on health:

In relation to health this diagram shows the interaction of the environment with a number of other factors. It suggests that a person’s environment can influence health both directly and indirectly, the former through the condition of housing and air quality and the latter in its ability to influence what are often termed lifestyle factors such as the encouragement of active travel. In Tower Hamlets two local key indicators for contributors to ill health and early death are the rates of smoking in the community (37%) and rising levels of obesity (14.7% of children in reception year—the third highest in the country). It is also of note that levels of use of alcohol are a significant problem.\textsuperscript{118}

The key strategy in addressing obesity in the borough is entitled the Healthy weight Healthy Lives in Tower Hamlets 2008 2012 document.

**Health Facilities**

As part of the council’s overarching spatial strategy Tower Hamlets Partnership’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2006 seeks to improve the provision of capital assets related to healthcare services. The preferred approach (which is now reflected in London-wide policy recommendations) is to co-locate multiple GP services, nurses, dentistry and pharmacies in a network of facilities. This will reduce the number of single GP practices and increase the number of outpatient (including some other types of care previously

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snapshot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obesity:</strong> (14.7% of children in reception year are obese—the third highest in the country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life expectancy:</strong> Men 72.2 in Bethnal Green rising to 80.7 in Millwall ward; for females 77.9 in Bow East to 82.2 in Millwall (77.3 and 81.5 nationally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smoking</strong> (37%) – Nationally .27%.- one of the highest in the country (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of our population, predicts that about 20% of adults in Tower Hamlets are likely to be obese (synthetic assessment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
provided in a central hospital) provided for in community based health facilities. This approach accords with London Plan Policy 3A.17 which promotes a partnership based approach to providing health care services.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out a clear geography of new facilities based on Tower Hamlets Capacity Model 2006. The model shows a rapid growth in population as a result of residential development and commercial office development. The high level of commercial development is significant as new models of healthcare provision will result in people increasingly accessing health services close to their place of work (although facilities close to people's homes are still thought to be the main point of access). This approach relates to London Plan Policy 3A.18 which states that health care facilities should be accessible.

Prompted by an increased demand in health care facilities from Tower Hamlets residential and working population there is a need to increase the capacity of health facilities, remodel the network, and improve existing facilities. Consequently, it is considered a range of public and private funding sources are needed for new health facilities.

**Hospitals**

There are 5 hospitals currently in the Borough managed by a range of hospital trusts. They are currently located in; Bethnal Green North, Whitechapel, Bromley-by-Bow and with two hospitals Mile End & Globe Town.

Due to the regeneration and expansion of Royal London Hospital into a new 'superhospital' all the services and functions of the other four hospitals are in the process of being consolidated into this site. Adhering to London Plan Policy 3A.19 which promotes medical excellence, this facility is intended to provide the Borough and the East London sub region with an internationally recognised medical institution.

The new hospital is expected to have a local regenerative impact through increased employment opportunity and local spending, while encapsulated in London Plan Policy 3A.20 the surrounding environment will be improved. Although the new super hospital is likely to put increased strain on the public transport network, the Crossrail project is predicted to accommodate increased visitor numbers.

**Health centres/surgeries**

There are 39 health centres in the Borough with approximately 94 GPs. This equates to one health centre per 4783 persons. There is approximately one GP for every 2000 persons. Seven of these health centres are undergoing or will undergo improvements in the coming years. Eighteen new health centres have been proposed in LBTH Health and Well Being Strategy. Around East India Dock Road no health centres exist or are proposed despite predicted population growth (see Map 31).

**Dental Practices**

There are 29 dental practices within the Borough, which equates to one dental practice per 6726 persons (see Map31 and Appendix 4)

**Social Care for Adults**

Mental health and adult care is a crucial element of the Tower Hamlets Community Plan. Social care for adults is the responsibility of a range of trusts and public agencies and is coordinated by Tower Hamlets Council Adult Service, the Primary Care Trust and key agencies such as the local Mental Health Trust. Many of the services that fall under this remit are community based or delivered directly to people’s homes.

The spatial implications of delivering social care are influenced for example by the provision of operation bases for service and carers and the provision of supported housing.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**Libraries and Idea Stores**

There are ten libraries/Idea Stores in the Borough (see Appendix 4). This service provision equates approximately to one library/idea store for every 19,610 persons. The four Idea Stores in Whitechapel, Bow, Canary Wharf and Chrisp Street offer traditional library services as well as a wide range of adult education classes, career support, training, a creche, meeting areas, cafes, arts and leisure pursuits.

Responding to London Plan Policy 3A.15 which seeks to ensure the provision appropriate social infrastructure and community facilities, there are proposals to provide more Idea stores across the Borough.
in Cubitt Town, Wapping, Mile End, Bethnal Green and Shoreditch. This would provide 9 idea stores across the Borough.

In contrast to much of the Council services which are dispersed and often within housing estates, Idea Stores have begun to concentrate local services back to local centres which generally have wider transport provision. This is the beginning of good spatial planning as a greater number of people can obtain better access to services and shops concentrated around local centres.

The council’s primary document in this area is the Idea Store Strategy.

**Leisure centres/sports**

There are 7 public leisure centres in the Borough. This equates to 1 sports leisure for every 24,513 persons in the Borough (see Appendix 4). From a spatial perspective there is a big gap in the north-east corner of the Borough and on the northern part of the Isle of Dogs and Poplar.119

In accordance with the stipulations outlined in London Plan Policy 3D.5, data from “Active Places” suggests that there is a sports opportunity within approximately 1 mile of every borough postcode. This raises questions about awareness of young people on where, when and what to play, particularly since children and youth inactivity is linked to Health problems such as obesity.

In May 2004, Tower Hamlets Council and GLL (Greenwich Leisure Limited) entered into a long-term partnership to manage, develop and promote the leisure facilities in the Borough. This partnership is informed by *Tower Hamlets’ Sports Strategy* which looks ahead to 2025.

**Youth centres**

Led by the Council’s Youth Services team, there is wide network of youth service provision across the Borough which is too complex and locally specific to be included in a strategic plan. Much of the provision is mobile, plugged-in services into various community facilities which often changes depending on success and need.

In order to give a broad strategic picture of on ground provision, the Borough’s main youth centres and their accessibility are shown on Map 32. Key issues in youth centre and hall provision entails better use of existing facilities, improving their location and broadening their catchment population.

**Places of Worship**

Places of worship have been recognised as important elements in the identity of many communities. Visually they have provided definition to a public place, for example in the form of a church spire or a minaret next to a mosque and have functioned as a catalyst for worshipers to migrate to the area.

Although Tower Hamlets is home to many diverse religious, numbering 59 places and 15 places respectively the two dominant places of worship in Tower Hamlets are Christian churches and Islamic mosques,

**Burial grounds**

London Plan *Policy 3D.15 Burial space* states that DPD policies should ensure that provision is made for London’s burial needs, including the special needs of certain religious or cultural groups for whom burial is the only option. The London Plan also identifies that several boroughs have run out of burial space, and reserves in other boroughs will be exhausted over the next few years.

Provision should be based on the principle of proximity to local communities. The Mayor will promote the policies for sustainable cemeteries published by London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) in 1997.

As a result in central and inner London boroughs provision is often made in outer London, which can cause serious problems of access and exceptional costs. This has a disproportionate effect on people in London’s poorest boroughs and poorest communities, such as the Bangladeshi community in east London. To ensure burial is retained as a choice for Londoners, and to meet the special needs of various communities, boroughs should continue to make provision in this area. In order to meet this need the burial law was reformed in 2007 allowing the sustainable reuse of graves.

Tower Hamlets has a large cemetery at Tower Hamlet Cemetery Park, in Mile End East. There is also a Jewish Burial Ground off Adenney Rd in Mile End and Globe Town.
Currently there is a debate in Tower Hamlets about the provision of an multi-faith burial ground. In Tower Hamlets there is a significant demand for Muslim burial space close to communities. However, given the general need for burial space across the Borough, the Council will focus on interfaith burial places. There are two options relating to burial spaces. These are:

- Option 1: Find another location for a burial ground within the Borough
- Option 2: Find a site outside of borough

In order to discuss these options, a Cabinet report concerning burial grounds went to LBTH Council in January 2008. In the short and medium term a solution has been found by using sites outside of the Borough at the Gardens of Peace and the City of London Cemetery.
OVERVIEW

Infrastructure has a broad definition which can be subdivided into ‘hard infrastructure’ and ‘social infrastructure’. Hard infrastructure is often cross borough in nature and includes linear includes utilities such as water, electricity and roads and public transport.

Despite the importance of infrastructure, there has been very little national guidance. In response, the 2007 Planning White Paper raised the importance of coordinated infrastructure planning to support and speed up the development process while indicating Infrastructure planning would be a key Test of Soundness in revision to PPS12.

At present PPS12: talks in general about infrastructure stating that Core Strategies should “be supported by evidence of what physical and social infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area. This evidence should cover when and who will provide the infrastructure.

The only specific nation guidance in utilities is Planning Policy Guidance 8 (Telecommunications) which promotes and facilitates growth of new and existing telecommunications systems while keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.

Traditionally the approach adopted by all councils and utilities companies towards new developments has been that the developer, or their nominated representative, would undertake a capacity assessment and approach the utilities companies requesting additional supply. The utility provider would then evaluate the request and provide the appropriate solution. However the scale of change in Tower Hamlets means a more strategic approach is required.

One strategic approach to maintaining adequate energy supplies within Tower Hamlets is to develop network of renewable generating facilities throughout the borough, with a focus on areas of significant development.

As utility companies generally have five year development plans, any request to upgrade their network or increase the supply capacity cannot be assessed beyond this timeframe. This reinforces the develop of fostering dialogues with the utility companies in order that existing spare capacity, potential future demand, shortfall and capacity requirements can be estimated.

MONITORING

The utilities report developed by EDAW for the Council does not provide information relating to the central area. Where information has been supplied there is no indication of its sources. Ideally this information needs to be updated annually.

Annual updates would be a short and simple exercise involving very few resources. Ideally the utilities report would be compiled internally, thereby establishing relationships across with industry members. This
would facilitate the exchange of information on service provision issues, infrastructure projects, projected growth and major projects across the Borough.

**GAS**

The London Thames Gateway Development and Investment Framework states that current gas infrastructure north of the river should be able to cope with the level of proposed developments without significant distribution network expansion.

A significant issue however concerns the future role of London’s gas holders. Conversations with National Grid Gas indicate that by 2016 the original use of all gas holders maybe obsolete as they are to be replaced by high pressure subterranean pipes which will regulate the pressure of gas. This process is only restrained by the cost of works involved in the project.

In order to facilitate the timely release of this land, National Grid Gas suggests that the land is redesignated as high density residential. It is argued that this redesignation will increase the value of the land, stimulate redevelopment and help to pay for the remediation works that need to take place on site. Of the four major hazardous sites that exist in London all are occupied by gas holders with one located in Poplar. Seven hazardous site installations are located in major London Plan regeneration areas. As a result the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) land use policies clearly have an impact upon these regeneration objectives and aspirations.

The HSE recently extended its consultation zone around hazardous installations from a maximum of 60 metres to a maximum of 350m. If the HSE considers gas holders in the area are likely to cause unnecessary risk this could have a negative impact on the availability of new residential and employment areas. A concern exists that recent alterations to the guidelines and policy used by the HSE to review planning applications for hazardous consent, would result in an increase in the number of developments to which the Health and Safety Executive object. Consequently, this would have implications on the ability of the Mayor to deliver strategic land use policies with particular relevance to Housing and Strategic Employment Locations as required by the London Plan. Development proposal sites that may be affected by the modified HSE consultation boundary are contained in Appendix 121.

With the exception of those that are historically listed, National Grid is currently in the process of decommissioning all gas holder sites across London. The retention of a number of gas holders is important as they are emblematic of London and Tower Hamlets’ industrial past. A functional use for a number of gas holders has been found in the proposed Lea River Park. Complimenting the natural landscape they would be used as viewing ports, arboretums and hot houses for botanical collections.

**SEWERAGE**

The sewerage treatment plants that service the Tower Hamlets area are located at Beckon in the London Borough of Newham, near the north shore of the River Thames.

Beckton Sewage Treatment Works is owned and managed by Thames Water Utilities. The Works receives sewage from North and East London and arrives through the Northern outfall sewer (The Greenway) 123. This sewage has the solid matter removed as sludge, which is incinerated on-site. The effluent is then cleaned before being discharged into the River Thames - both of these activities are monitored and regulated by the Environment Agency.

The sewer outfalls and treatment facilities that service Tower Hamlets are close to capacity. Raw sewage is entering local watercourses during significant storm events due to the design of the combined storm overflow (CSO) infrastructure 124. Accordingly, Thames Water has identified sewer flooding as one of the key improvement areas for the period up to 2010. Precipitated by the limited capacity of it sewers sewer flooding can presently occur through to heavy rainfall, hydraulic overload and blockages.
The recently approved Thames Tideway Tunnel project will combat this problem when it is completed in 2020. The project will result in the construction of a 32.2km long tunnel leading from Hammersmith in west London to Beckton Sewage Treatment Works in east London. An additional spur tunnel from Abbey Mills pumping station in Stratford to Beckton Sewage Treatment Works is also planned.

Essential to the maintenance and operation this tunnel, the exact location of Tower Hamlets’ North Eastern Storm Relief Shaft has not yet been determined.

By products of wastewater treatment, sewage sludge and biogas are being used by Thames Water to generate renewable energy. Thames Water is looking to install CHP technology where possible on operational sites.

**WATER**

Thames Water are facing major challenges around the availability and rising demand of water supplies. Consequently it is important that Tower Hamlets implements innovative policy solutions to reduce the impacts of this shortage.

In 2005 a £3.1 billion programme of investment to improve water and sewerage services was unveiled by Thames Water. The planned improvements which will take place over the next five years will focus on modernising Victorian water mains and sewers.

The key priorities for Thames Water for 2005-1010 are:

- To address the critical issues of leakage, the balance between water supply and demand, and the long term security of water supplies
- To reduce the problems of sewer flooding and of odours arising from our sewage treatment works
- To increase the availability of water resources and enhance our treatment capacity for both water and wastewater, so that continuity of service is maintained in future years
- To carry out maintenance and replacement of key assets, whose performance and condition presents a risk to maintaining future service levels.
- To implement specific, legally required quality and environmental improvements, and those where the benefit has been clearly demonstrated to justify the cost by the quality regulators, as confirmed by Ministers.

Thames Water has also put forward plans for a new water treatment plant to serve London which was approved in mid 2007. Using a process of desalination the new treatment plant would be the first facility in London to take water from the tidal stretch of the Thames. Subsequently, the treated water would then be pumped through a new North East London.

The plant would be used mainly during times of drought, and would be able to supply 140 million litres of water a day – enough to supply 400,000 homes.

**ELECTRICITY**

Local authorities are required to assist in the reduction of CO2 emissions. As such Tower Hamlets’ Sustainable Energy and Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities document has looked at different options for implementing various sustainable energy measures. These options include Combined Heat and Power
CHP) facilities, the designation of energy action zones under the emerging Community Energy Saving Programme and the decentralisation of electricity and heat sources.

In order to save energy the council will seek to build a network of CHP plants. The first stage in the process entails implementing a heat main running across the borough and facilitating the construction of CHP facilities in Poplar Riverside which is identified as a high growth area.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

The only specific national guidance on telecommunications is Planning Policy Guidance 8 which promotes facilitating growth of new and existing telecommunications systems while keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.

The guidance notes that the operators will have a point of contact within each LA to provide information annually regarding the plans for the foreseeable future. The LA in turn provides information such as the planning constraints, preferred sites for infrastructure, large events requiring additional service.

Mindful of the probability that the next generation of mobile communications technology will require additional masts consideration needs to be given to the siting and possible preclusion of telecommunication and electricity masts and pylons. This consideration is required in order to ensure minimal impact on health while also giving the best possible network benefits.

**WASTE**

The waste hierarchy is strongly emphasised in PPS10 and now acts as the guiding principle of waste management locally and nationally. It identifies that waste prevention is the most desirable situation, followed by reducing, and reusing before they are disposed of by recycling resources.
Waste Prevention - The most effective environmental solution is to reduce the generation of waste;
Re-use - Products and materials can sometimes be used again, for the same or a different purpose;
Recycling and composting - Resources can often be recovered from waste;
Energy recovery - Value can also be recovered by generating energy from waste; and
Disposal - Only if none of the above offer an appropriate solution should waste be disposed.

Framed by the role which waste production plays in climate change, PPS10 requires that communities take more responsibility for their own waste. The sources of waste can be divided into a number of streams; these are municipal solid waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste, agricultural waste and waste from mines or quarries. With regards to waste Tower Hamlets’ primary reference document is the emerging Waste Evidence Base Report.
OVERVIEW

It is noted that London is prone to flooding from five sources: tidal, fluvial, groundwater, surface and sewer flooding. The management of flood is seen as critical to London’s future. The relative rise in sea level, in addition to an increase in the height and frequency of tidal surges, means that the standard of London’s tidal defence such as the Thames Barrier and the Thames walls will, without intervention, decline throughout the century.

Historic development patterns have resulted in the development of important infrastructure such as public transport, waste management facilities, and social infrastructure in flood risk areas. Despite their location within a flood risk area, the Isle of Dogs and Lower Lea Valley have been identified as Opportunity Areas in the London Plan.

Although flooding cannot be wholly prevented, its impacts can be avoided and reduced through good planning and management. Similarly, the Mayor acknowledges that there is a need to take a risk based precautionary approach to flood management and this will affect the form, layout and design of many sites and not just those adjacent to the river.

PPS25 is the primary national document with regards to flooding and its overriding policy principles can be summarised as follows:

Appraising risk
- Identifying land at risk and the degree of risk of flooding from river, sea and other sources in their areas through preparing Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) at a local authority level.

Managing risk
- Framing strategies and policies for the location of development which avoid flood risk to people and property where possible, and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change;
- Only permitting development in areas of flood risk when there are no reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk and benefits of the development outweigh the risks from flooding;

Reducing risk
- Safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management eg conveyance and storage of flood water, and flood defences
- Reducing flood risk to and from new development through location, layout and design, incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SUDS);
- Using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding eg surface water management plans; making the most of the benefits of green infrastructure for flood storage, conveyance and SUDS; re-creating functional floodplain; and setting back defences;

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

In August 2008 the council completed its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, incorporating the overriding policy principles above.

The fundamental concepts that underpin the Tower Hamlets’ SFRA are outlined in PPS25. The guidance provided in the SFRA requires that local authorities and those responsible for development decisions to demonstrate that they have applied a risk based, sequential approach in preparing development plans and consideration of flooding through the application of a sequential test.

The underlying objective of the risk based sequential allocation of land is to reduce the exposure of new development to flooding and reduce the reliance on long-term maintenance of built flood defences. Within areas at risk from flooding, it is expected that development proposals will contribute to a reduction in the magnitude of the flood risk.
The SFRA takes into account that future development in Tower Hamlets is concentrated in the east of the borough the Isle of Dogs and the City Fringe, which correspond with the Mayor’s Opportunity Areas. It is noted that areas in the east of the borough and entirety of the Isle of Dogs is in Flood Risk 3 and as such proposes recommendations.

As part of the SFRA process a table was compiled applying the sequential test to the area based approach of the Core Strategy Options and Alternatives for Places.

Emergency Planning
In terms of flood risk, emergency planning is considered as an important.

The Mayor has seized the opportunity to bridge the communication and implementation gaps between land use planning and emergency planning with the publication of the London Strategic Flood Plan. This plan seeks to co-ordinate emergency services and emergency planners across London. In preparing a SFRA to conformity with PPS25, the Borough intends to produce a document that be utilised as an implementation tool assisting emergency planning in Tower Hamlets. Overall a more spatial approach is being adopted across all the service areas.

The Council is preparing a more up to date Emergency Plan (2008) which will incorporate a number of the more recent national and regional recognition of the effects of climate change and the likelihood of unexpected incidents.

There are now 27 schools and a number of leisure centres identified and strategically located to serve the Borough's emergency planning infrastructure needs in the event of an incident.

This will be reviewed regularly to ensure spatial adequacy and environmental appropriateness.
The historic hamlets of Tower Hamlets grew along a number of east, west transport thoroughfares. These thoroughfares, Bethnal Green Road, Whitechapel Road, Commercial Road and the Highway have significantly determined and reflected the borough’s industrial, social and cultural development. The importance, influence and impact of Tower Hamlets arterial routes upon its own centres continues into the present day.

These older transport routes have their modern counterparts in the form of the A13 (Aspen Way), the A102 and Docklands Light Railway. These major transport infrastructure projects, while reinforcing Tower Hamlets’ traditional gateway role, have helped to create a number of significant barriers between the borough’s neighbourhoods and places.

The impact produced by these major transport projects and the effect they have had on the local community have been explored in a number of council documents. These include the Local Implementation Plan (2005/6-2010/11), the emerging Urban Structure and Characterisation Study and the Making Connections: towards a climate friendly transport future 2008-2028 document.

The Making Connections document articulates how the Council is working together with other organisations to shape the transport policy agenda to be greener and more climate-friendly. The aim is to encourage local people, workers and visitors to walk, cycle and use public transport to improve quality of life and foster more sustainable, healthier lifestyles.

At present the Borough is well serviced by non-road based public transport including the Underground, DLR and several rail routes. This provision includes 12 underground stations, 7 tube lines and 18 DLR stations. In regards to employment areas such as Canary Wharf these modes of transport are the key transport links and have substantially improved access to the east end.

In addition the Borough has good access to road networks for private and public transport usage with 38 bus services covering the entire Borough, including 10 night bus services.

Although Tower Hamlets has a generally good transport infrastructure, traffic on all networks causes extended peak hour congestion which impacts on local access and the environment. In order to create a truly sustainable transport network the Council aims to undertake new infrastructure projects. This includes investment in soft modes of transport (such as cycle routes) which are balanced by securing improvements in existing resources (such as improving pedestrian access across the A12 as part of Poplar Riverside’s redevelopment). In order to achieve this Tower Hamlet’s council has established strong transport and land use policies towards public transport, walking and cycling.
Map 35 Strategic Transport Infrastructure
As noted above a number of key transportation issues and aspirations within Tower Hamlets have been identified through the council’s primary transport research documents:

**WALKING AND CYCLING NETWORK**

The importance of providing a good walking and cycling network supported by a series of interconnected open spaces in Tower Hamlets is heightened by a number of factors. These factors include a very low vehicle uptake rate, a high proportion of population walking to work, poor open space provision, poor health and a high growth and housing target (see interrelated sections).

These factors are in turn exacerbated by a number of physical provision issues including the quantum of traffic and associated congestion experienced on the heavy trafficked routes of Whitechapel Road/Mile End Road (A11), Blackwall Tunnel Northern Approach (A12), Commercial Road (A13), The Highway and Aspen Way. In addition, early transport capacity assessments identify that some areas within the Borough, particularly around the Isle of Dogs, are likely to be affected by the inadequate transport system capacity.

Whilst recognising that Tower Hamlets transport infrastructure improvements promote movement it is also recognised that roads, railway and DLR lines can also form barriers between places and neighbourhoods. As a result these areas can become very hostile and disused environments.

Consequently, factors that discourage people from walking, are being tackled with investments at Blackwall ‘Bridging the Divide’ (Blackwall/Cubitt) and Addington Road (Bow East/West) and through the ‘Riverside Route’ initiative.

The state of Tower Hamlets’ walking and cycling network, and in general movement across the borough can in many ways be improved by building upon existing physical resources such as the national canal circuit. Tower Hamlets has four sections of the national canal passing through the Borough; these are Lea Navigation, Limehouse Cut, Regents and Hertford Union. Other waterspaces include the docks at West India, East India, Millwall, Poplar, St. Katherine’s East Docks and Blackwall, Limehouse and Shadwell.

In addition the fragmented Thames Path along Blackwall, Millwall, Shadwell, Limehouse, Wapping can be improved. At present these routes along with the identified Strategic Walkway, are undergoing further improvements to facilitate safe and convenient access for all residents and visitors. Another example of a project which has the potential to interconnect communities and areas with different forms of open space is the Lea River Park which will provide a continuous 26-mile area of parkland from the Thames into Hertfordshire.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK**

Much of Tower Hamlets public transport such as the tube and certain bus services are at capacity or over-capacity which is a situation which is likely to worsen as the steady growth of housing and employment is likely to continue.

Despite the borough being fairly accessible in terms of east-west public transport routes it is noted that north south bus links are poor which is reflected by the low PTAL rating, in Fish Island, Bow, and Victoria Park, Mile End, Wapping, Limehouse and East India. As a way of addressing this problem the Local Transport Bill 2007 gives local authorities powers to improve the quality of bus services and develop proposals for local road priority schemes.

The concept of PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Level) is defined to be the extent and ease of access by public transport, or where it can reasonably be used as a proxy, as the degree of access to the public transport network. Transport for London (TfL) adopted this form of measurement to produce a consistent London wide public transport access mapping facility in order to assist boroughs with locational planning, and assessment of appropriate parking provision by measuring broad public transport accessibility levels. Within Tower Hamlet this concept should be used to ensure growth and development is responsive to the level of public transport access. The emphasis on public transport accessibility should help to determine that where brownfield land is available for regeneration, opportunities for transport improvements should shape the nature and scale of development.
To assess the level of transport provision needed for borough’s areas and places the Council has undertaken preliminary special research into the capacity and movement study at key transport nodes. This work is represented in the form of eight maps, which show the quantum of passengers entering and leaving Tower Hamlets underground stations and bus stops during peak time, that indicate local and regional transport interchanges, along with key destination points during the weekend.

By identifying the quantum of passengers entering and leaving a bus or underground node the primary function of a place is shown. For example, showing that egress is most prevalent at Canary Wharf during peak hours signifies that it is a commercial and employment destination whereas the dominance of ingress at Wapping shows it is primarily a residential area. Ultimately the state of the capacity at these locations can be measured against predicted growth and will allow Transport for London to incorporate these transport nodes in its business plan. Ultimately, this work will underpin and reinforce the place shaping element of the Core Strategy.
The Maps on the following pages include:

**Bus Capacity**

This map shows bus capacity at bus stops. The blue bar represents the number of busses servicing the stop in the peak our. The red bar represents the number of buses required to service that stop to meet the current demand based on the number of passengers approaching it in the peak hour. These stops are served by different routes with different sized buses and therefore will be impacted differently from major development.

**Interchanges**

Spatial representation of interchanges in the borough.

**DLR Capacity**

This map shows the number of passengers on trains represented by the red bars against total capacity which is represented by the blue bars. The capacity level is determined by 3 car train capacity on trains which are heading towards Canary Wharf in the AM peak.

**Underground**

This map shows the proportion of people boarding and alighting trains at Underground stations in the borough. This is a good indicator of where the major origins and destinations are in the borough.

**Underground (weekend use)**

Same as above but for weekend use.

In order to address DLR over capacity improvements to the DLR are being initiated through the 3 car project. Phase 1 & 2 of the DLR 3-car upgrade will result in a 50% increase in passenger carrying capacity. This is due for completion in 2009.

In addition to land based transport infrastructure there are also many water routes in the Borough that sustain the use of waterways for transporting goods and people. Two routes that operate on the River Thames depart to and from Woolwich and Central London and stops at the borough stops of Canary Wharf Pier and the Masterhouse Terrace Pier. This service operates with a peak hour capacity of approximately 400 passengers. In addition safeguarded Wharves in Blackwall (Northumberland) and Orchard Wharf in Leamouth remain the two facilities serving the Borough waste and aggregates.
Map 41 & 42 Underground Station ingress, egress
Map 43 & 44 DLR Capacity
STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS

Docklands Light Railway

The Strategic Transport are investigating the feasibility of a new DLR station at the junction of Christian Street/Cable Street. This station will be located between the Tower Gateway & Shadwell DLR stations.

East London Extension (London Overground)

TfL have funded the Shadwell stations (DLR & East London Extension) interchange improvement programme works for 2008-09. In addition the new Shoreditch High Street station is due to open in summer 2010. This will open at the same time as the extended ELR (Dalston Junction-West Croydon-Crystal Palace and Dalston-Highbury & Islington from 2011).

Cycle links

The cycle links and priority network improvements on the Tom Thumb’s Arch scheme in Bow East complements the London Cycle Network in Tower Hamlets and the upgrade of Cable Street into a two-way segregated facility. A section 106 contribution on the Berkeley Homes’ 180 residential units scheme has provided funds for improvements to the Tom Thumb project.

Sustrans walking & cycling bridge project between Westferry and Rotherhithe is a joint project between the Council, Sustrans, Southwark Council, CWG & TfL.

Olympic Transport Provision & Crossrail

Seen as essential to improving access to the Olympic Park, Phase 1 of the East London Line extension has been included in Transport for London’s 5 year investment programme. The Council has proactively lobbied for the construction of this line for more than 10 years in partnership with other Boroughs and businesses along the route. Shoreditch Station (on the existing East London Line) only operates at peak hours but will be closed with the extension of the East London and relocated to Shoreditch High Street. Phase 1 of the extension is due to be delivered by 2010.

Crossrail (a major East to West London transport project, serving Whitechapel and Isle of Dogs) is currently the subject of a Hybrid Bill in Parliament and could be implemented by 2015. The Council recognises the importance of these new stations to improving accessibility.

Other projects include:

- An enhanced vehicular bridge at Bromley-By–Bow and improvements to the pedestrian crossing facilities at Bow Roundabout (A11/A12).
- Proposals to maintain and enhance the navigation functions of Old Ford Locks.
• The potential to link Canning Town Station to Orchard Place North and capacity improvement at Blackwall and East India DLR stations and pedestrian improvements in the area around Blackwall station.

• An improved pedestrian and cycle link along the west bank of the Lee Navigation/Lea River to connect north and south towpaths.

• Enhanced public transport in the A12 corridor including a potential new dedicated public transport route parallel to A12, using Gillender Street and linking to Ailsa Street.
OVERVIEW
Climate change is rapidly climbing the political agenda, being acknowledged as an urgent and serious global issue which must be addressed now.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1 provides guidance on how this should be done. This document sets out how spatial planning should contribute to reducing emissions, stabilising climate change (mitigation) while taking into account unavoidable consequences (adaptation). The document forms part of a wider package of action to help deliver the Government's ambition of achieving zero carbon development. Other documents include the Code for Sustainable Homes (CLG, 2006) and a consultation document, Building a Greener Future (CLG, 2006), which set out how planning, building regulations can drive change, innovation and deliver improvements to the environment. PPS1 Supplement states that a council's core strategy should both inform and by informed by the approach to climate change in the sustainable community strategy.

Policies and priorities for action, both in the UK and internationally, are set out in the Climate Change Programme and the report of the Energy White Paper, 2007.

In conjunction with these documents Tower Hamlets’ primary research document is the forthcoming Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Evidence Base Report.

CARBON EMISSIONS
Greenhouse gas emissions have been identified as a key contributor to climate change, in particular carbon emissions, from residential, transport, industry and other uses and activities.

On the basis of new evidence a 30 per cent reduction in emissions by 2025 will not be sufficient to prevent severe climate change. Consequently the Mayor’s new target for London, is to stabilise CO2 emissions in 2025 at 60 per cent below 1990 levels, with steady progress towards this over the next 20 years. This target is considerably more ambitious than the UK government’s current aspiration of a 60 per cent reduction from 2000 levels by 2050.

The single biggest barrier to reducing London’s carbon emissions is the way in which energy supplied to homes and offices is produced and distributed. Centralised electricity generation, whether through coal, oil, gas or nuclear power stations, is inherently inefficient and wastes two thirds or more of its original energy input in the form of expelled heat.
The Mayor’s top priority for reducing carbon emissions is to move as much of London as possible away from reliance on the national grid and on to local, lower-carbon energy supply (decentralised energy, including combined cooling heat and power (CCHP), energy from waste, and onsite renewable energy - such as solar panels). In Tower Hamlets a CCHP has been constructed at the Barkantine Estate in Millwall which has proved to be very successful. Consequently other opportunities are being investigated through major developments coming forward.

It is also of note that rapidly developing and delivering mechanisms to produce energy from waste (without incineration and energy from waste through new non-incineration technologies (such as anaerobic digestion, mechanical biological treatment, pyrolysis and gasification) offers a carbon-savings potential nearly as large as that of Combined Cooling Heat and Power.

**HOUSING AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

As part of the the Mayor of London’s Climate Change Action Plan a number of housing mechanisms to tackle climate change were introduced. Some of these mechanisms are outside the remit of traditional land-use planning, but could potentially be incorporated into a spatial plan. These mechanisms are:

- A programme of improving the energy efficiency of London’s social housing stock, as part of the broader Green Homes Programme being established as part of the Climate Change Action Plan

- Establishing the Better Buildings Partnership, which is working with and incentivising commercial landlords to upgrade their buildings, particularly during routine refurbishments – there may be an opportunity to identify areas where this is a priority and look at local implementation mechanisms to encourage these upgrades

In conjunction the Mayor’s new Housing Strategy makes energy efficiency a key priority. This includes, including achieving the government’s recently announced target of 100 per cent new homes as zero-carbon by 2016.

Housing is the dominant land use in Tower Hamlets with 39% of its existing housing stock socially rented. Therefore, there is a significant opportunity for the Council to continue to find opportunities to make existing homes more energy efficient. This would also help to ameliorate the issue of fuel poverty which disproportionately affects those in social rented homes. Unfortunately nearly half of London’s housing stock are flats in multiple-occupancy buildings. Consequently, there is a reduced opportunity for loft insulation compared to the national average.

As part of the new Green Homes Programme announced in the Mayor’s Climate Change Action Plan, the LDA, EST and a private provider are piloting a service to take the hassle factor out of implementing energy savings improvements.

In conjunction the Code for Sustainable Homes requires the new developments to adhere to reductions in carbon emissions as per the following time-table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code level</th>
<th>Year by</th>
<th>Reductions in CO2 levels by</th>
<th>Water consumption l/p/d</th>
<th>BRE eco Home standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Excellent with high water &amp; energy efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Zero Carbon</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Zero carbon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Sustainable Homes Code required Reduction in Carbon emissions
While the IPG acknowledges eco-homes, the Code for Sustainable Homes has not yet been addressed within the planning framework. It is recognised that the Core Strategy will not be able to achieve the aim of energy efficiency in isolation. A range of strategies, including the Council's Housing Strategy and Energy Strategy need to consider what opportunities exist to increase energy efficient of new and existing homes in LBTH.
Appendix 1 - Environment

Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Parnell Road bridge
- Bonner Hall bridge, Regent's Canal
- Three Colt Bridge, Gunmakers Lane
- Priory and Hospital of St Mary
- Tower of London
- London Wall
- Tower Hill West

Buildings at Risk Register
- 415 Mile End Road
- Wilton's Music Hall, Grace's Alley
- Tobacco Dock, Pennington Street
- Poplar Baths, East India Dock Road
- Sailmakers and Chandlers, 11 West India Dock Road
- 795 Commercial Road
- Former Caird & Rayner Ltd warehouse, 777 Commercial Road
- Limehouse Town Hall, Commercial Road
- Shadwell Dock Stairs, The Highway
- 126, Cannon Street Road
- Mortuary chapel, churchyard of St George in the East
- Fire Station Cottages, West Ferry Road
- 2 Wilkes Street
- 11 Princelet Street
- 19 Princelet Street
- Former Whitechapel Library, High Street, Whitechapel
- St Botolph's Hall (Central Foundation School for Girls)
- Braithwaite Viaduct, Bishopsgate Goodsayrd
- Arnold Circus Bandstand and Railings
- Well and Bucket Public House, 143, Bethnal Green Road
- Wool Warehouse, 74 Back Church Lane
- 24 and 26, New Road
- 4-16 (even), Walden Street
- Bonner Hall Bridge, Regents Canal
- Bethnal Green Town Hall, Cambridge Heath Road
- Dowgate Wharf, Gillender Street
- Trinity Methodist Church, East India Dock Road
- Bromley Hall
- Tower Hamlets Cemetery, Southern Grove
- St John on Bethnal Green, Cambridge Heath Road
- Tablet in the North Wall of the Portuguese Jewish
- Holy Trinity Church, Morgan Street

Local Landmarks
Identified under the UDP (saved policy DEV8) the 9 local landmarks within the Borough:
- St Anne’s Church, Limehouse
- Tower of London
- Tower Bridge and elevated walkway
- All Saints Church, Poplar
• St Paul’s Church, Shadwell
• St George in the East
• Christchurch, Spitalfields
• St Dunstan’s Church, Stepney
• Truman’s Brewery Chimney, Brick Lane

Identified for protection through internal consultation with the Design and Conservation Team in the development of the LDF submission policies:
• Keeling House, Bethnal Green
• St John’s Church, Bethnal Green
• Bow Church, Bow

Landmarks outside the Borough whose views the Council will seek to protect:
• National Westminster Tower in the City of London
• St Paul’s Church Deptford in Southwark
• St Mary’s Church, Rotherhithe in Southwark
• Royal Naval College in Greenwich

Biodiversity Enhancement Zone Descriptions
• Zone 1: Allen Gardens and surrounds
• Zone 2: Weavers Field to Victoria Park
• Zone 3: Whitechapel
• Zone 4: North of Stepney Park Green
• Zone 5: Limehouse Basin to Swedenborg Gardens
• Zone 6: Limehouse
• Zone 7: Isle of Dogs
• Zone 8: Poplar Recreation Ground, All Saints churchyard and surrounds
• Zone 9: Bromley-By-Bow to the River Thames
• Zone 10: North of the Limehouse Cut
• Zone 11: St. Clements
• Zone 12: Bow

Appendix 2 Economy & Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>All Person Claimant count rate (%)</th>
<th>Average from Sept 06/07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackwall &amp; Cubitt Town</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millwall</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Katherine’s &amp; Wapping</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mile End &amp; Globe Town</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow East</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow West</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limehouse</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethnal Green North</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethnal Green South</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitechapel</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadwell</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weavers</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mile End East</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bromley-by-Bow</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Dunstan’s &amp; Stepney Green</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spitalfields &amp; Banglatown</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East India &amp; Lansbury</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3 - Town Centres & Retail

Designation

Major Centre
Serves a borough-wide catchment and is normally the principal centre in the authority’s catchment area. 800 metre catchment contains a combined present or future residential and employment density in excess of 40,000 persons.
Contains a mix of comparison and convenience retailing and some leisure & entertainment functions.
Has over 50,000 sqm of retail floorspace and is of sufficient scale for there to be distinct parts to the centre.
Is within walking distance to a transport node and major bus routes, with a very high level of accessibility and located upon or close to the strategic road network.

District Centre
Serves local communities within a 1200 metre catchment
800 metre catchment contains a combined present or future residential and employment density in excess of 10,000 persons but below 30,000
Contains at least one supermarket and a range of non-retail services such as a bank, café and restaurants
Contain civic functions, such as a post-office, health facility, library or community centre
Is within walking distance to a transport node and major bus routes, with a high level of accessibility, and located upon or close to the strategic road network

Neighbourhood Centre
Serves a very local catchment within 800 m or a ten minute walk
400 metre catchment contains a combined present or future residential density in excess of 5,000 but below 10,000 persons
Contains a range of small shops such as a local supermarket, pharmacy, sub-post office or a launderette
Is within walking distance to a transport node or on a major bus route/s

Activity Area
Scale and intensity of development is above average levels and closely associated with major areas of change as designated in the London Plan.
Contains a number of centres of specific uses that are very closely linked. The urban design and public realm should be consisted across the centres and activity area

Appendix 4 Social & Community Infrastructure

Markets

- Columbia Road Flower Market
- Petticoat Lane
- Brick Lane Market
- (Up) Market at the Old Truman Brewery
- Spitalfields Market
- Bethnal Green Road
- Chrisp Street
- Roman Road
- Watney Street
- Whitechapel Road
- Billingsgate Fish Market

Borough wide Secondary School Distribution

The secondary schools are located in the following wards;
- Bethnal Green North (4)
- 3 secondary schools in Shadwell and Bow West;
- 2 secondary schools St Dunstan’s and Mile End and Globe Town;
• 1 secondary school in each of Weavers, Bethnal Green South, Bow East, Mile End East and Bromley-by-Bow; and
• Millwall, Limehouse, Wapping, Whitechapel, Spitalfields contain no secondary schools.

BSF Programme – Schools to be regenerated through second phase funding are:
• Central Foundation
• Langdon Park
• Stepney Green
• Oaklands
• Tower Hamlets PRU
• Sir John Cass
• Morpeth
• Phoenix
• Swanlea
• Beatrice Tate
• Bow Boys
• Bowden House

Borough wide Provision of Dental Practices

• Whitechapel (5)
• Bethnal Green North, Spitalfields and Limehouse (3 each)
• Mile End & Globe Town, Bethnal Green South and East India & Lansbury (2 each)
• Weavers, Wapping, Bow West, Bow East, Mile End East and Millwall (1 each)
• The other wards have no practices,

Borough wide Primary School Distribution

• East India & Lansbury (6)
• Limehouse, Whitechapel, St Dunstan’s, Weavers (5 each)
• Millwall, Bromley-by-Bow, Mile End East, Bow West, Wapping, Spitalfields, Bethnal Green South and Bethnal Green North (4 each)
• Shadwell and Blackwall & Cubitt Town (3 each)
• Mile End & Globe Town (2) and Bow East (1.)
• The four proposed Primary Schools are in Bow East, Millwall, Bromley-by-Bow and East India & Lansbury. These locations have been selected due to the population and housing growth in the eastern edge of the Borough, which until recently has been mainly industrial.

Borough wide Leisure Centre Provision

There are 8 TH leisure centres in the Borough, they are:-
• John Orwell Sports Centre
• Langdon Park Leisure Centre
• Mile End Park Leisure Centre
• Mile End Park Stadium
• St George’s Pools
• Tiller Leisure Centre
• Whitechapel Sports Centre
• York Hall Leisure Centre

Places of worship:

• Baha’i 1
• Buddhism 1
• Christianity 59
• Hinduism 2
Appendix 5- Infrastructure

Stakeholders

Regional
- Olympic Delivery Authority – Lower Lea Valley
- London Development Agency
- Government Office for London
- Thames Gateway London Partnership
- Great London Authority
- Local Area Partnership
- Canary Wharf Group PLC

Neighbouring Boroughs:
- Hackney
- Newham
- City of London

Water and Sewerage Network:
- Environment Agency
- Thames Water Utilities
- British Waterways Board

Electricity and Gas Supply:
- National Grid: Transco (gas) and electricity
- British Gas

Telecommunications (Television, Telephone, Broadband and Radio Services):
- National Grid Wireless: Macquarie UK Broadcast Ventures
- Mobile telephone communications providers
- Ofcom

Emergency Services:
- Central London Area: Local Resilience Forum
- London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority LFEPA
- London Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA)

Internal Stakeholders:
- Asset Management
- Building Control
- Development Control
- Development Schemes (S106)
- GIS
- Emergency Planning
- Energy Services
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Strategic Transport Development
- Information and Equalities (population and employment data)

Development sites affected by HSE gaswork proximity modifications

Bromley by Bow
LS7 Imperial Street, Tesco Site and Hancock road South
LS9 Twelve Trees Crescent
LS11 Bow Lock

Bethnal Green Gas Works
Development sites that may be affected include: C5, C22, C6, C1, C4
Poplar Gas Works (Leven Road)
LS14 Ailsa Street
LS15 Nairn Street and Hays Depot, Leven Road
LS17 Leven Road Gasworks
LS18 Blackwall Trading Estate
LS19 Lanrick Road
LS20 Currie/ Dunkeld Site
LS21 Leamouth Road

Bow Common Lane Gas Works
Development sites that may be affected include: C29, C34

Endnotes

1 Source: paraphrased from LBTH’s 2020 Vision Community Plan
3 Source: 2001 Census
   Healthy weight Healthy Lives in Tower Hamlets 2008 2012(see Health section)Hsessssssth
5 All figures are taken from Tower Hamlets’ Primary Care Trust
6 Character Area Assessment document November 2006
7 Please note the Stage 2 Core Strategy Options and Alternatives for Places consultation document distinguishes between tall buildings and high density development
9 Comments: LDF Submission DPD Consultation 2006-07
10 Local Development Framework Consultation – July 2007
11 Ibid
12 Local Development Framework Consultation – July 2007
13 Circular 01/2007 para 6.41
14 English Heritage have listed Boundary Gardens as Arnold Circus
15 Four of the Borough’s designated views are ‘Protected Vistas.’ For the type of methodology used to define Protected Vistas see the London View Management Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance (July 2007)
16 Metropolitan Police statistics show Personal Robbery – Down 28.6%; Residential Burglary – Down 3.2% (after a 22% reduction the year before; Vehicle Crime – Down 2.1% (Thefts from slightly increased by 1.3%, thefts of down 9.9%) Assaults - Down by 9.1%; Gun enabled crime – Down 30.2%)
18 Resident’s Panel Consultation March 2008.
19 The London Plan. Page A71
20 See Appendix 1 for London Plan Open Space Standards
21 Sources: Greater London Authority, Tower Hamlet’s Open Space Strategy, Tower Hamlet’s Annual Monitoring Report 2006/7
22 Due to changes in the way publicly accessible open space is maintained, it has become increasingly difficult to monitor this loss and gain as the Council only keeps records of publicly maintained open space and does not monitor publicly accessible open space gains that remain privately maintained.
23 Open Space Strategy 2006
24 LBTH Residential Space Supplementary Planning Guidance (p3). Balcony space provision is not included in this SPG but is incorporated into the Interim Planning Guidance
25 Tower Hamlets Core Strategy & Development Control Submission Document Nov 2006 (p220)
26 Thorough justification for each one of the SINCs is available in http://www.digl.org.uk.
104


37 A list of those sites that are currently protected and those proposed for protection is available in ‘Safeguarded Wharves on the River Thames’, GLA, 2003.

38 Planning Policy Statement 23 (Planning and Pollution Control is the key document for managing pollution resulting from development.

39 The Mayor’s Air Quality Strategy 2002 (p.5)

40 LBTH Air Quality Review 2000

41 LIP


43 See December 2008 LBTH Economic and Labour Marketing Bulletin

44 Over the last ten years LBTH 61.4%, London 8.4% - LBTH Employment Strategy

45 Source: LBTH Economic and Labour Bulletin (December 2008)

46 Source: Nomis 2008. This compares with a working age population of 139,000 and an economic active figure of 84,000

47 Employment growth within the Borough outpaced estimated 2% projections from the GLA to 2016.

48 LBTH Economic and Labour Bulletin (December 2008)

49 This figure includes the 5,602 job growth recorded in 2006. Source: LBTH Annual Business Inquiry 2006

50 Ibid

51 D&R Labour Market Bulletin, (p5) : figures based on the 2007 ONS Annual Business Inquiry

52 Ibid

53 LBTH Economic and Labour Bulletin (December 2008)

54 GLA Claimant Count 2008/Annual Population Survey 2008

55 LBTH Economic and Labour Bulletin (December 2008)

56 Ibid

57 Ibid

58 Ibid

59 The Central Area incorporates Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Stepney Green, Bow, Shadwell, Limehouse and Poplar.

60 DCMS 2001: 5.

61 All statistics from www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/media_releases webpage

62 LBTH Cultural and Creative Industries Report 2006 p12

63 Source GLA.:, The Leisure and Tourism Organisation, Hotel Demand in London, 2006

64 Source: Visit London, London Hotel Development Monitor

65 Source: GLA Hotel Demand Study (p.3)

66 Industrial Land Report 2006 (p. 55)

67 Industrial & Warehousing Land Demand in London, August 2004 (GLA, RTP, King Sturge, C2g)

68 Industrial Land Study, 2006, (p38)

69 Blackwall has become the ward of Blackwall & Cubitt Town while Park is the equivalent to the northern area of Bow West and Bow East

70 Industrial Land Study, 2006 (p.57)

71 Ibid (p38)

72 Ibid (p.46)

73 Ibid (p38)

74 Roger Tym & Partners

75 Ibid (p.46)
The CLG state that in order for a home to be classified as 'decent' a home should be warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities.

The Savills Report 2007

Draft Report on Student Accommodation in Tower Hamlets 2008

Source: Census 2001. Since 2001 the Borough has seen substantial housing growth, however the dwellings per hectare ratio still remains lower than the suggested level.

The Savills Report 2007

Further primary school facilities are required in Poplar, Bromley-by-Bow and in the vicinity of the Olympic park site in the north eastern part of the Borough

Split 21 & 4

Tower Hamlets Public Health Report 2008

LBTH Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008

Healthy weight Healthy Lives in Tower Hamlets 2008

The consultation zone around gas holders varies according to the specific property: HSE, Sept 07


Sewage from 3.4m Londoners is treated at Beckton Sewage Treatment Works every day

LBTH Transport and Utilities Baseline Review 2006 (p35)

The Thames Gateway Water Treatment Plant would be constructed on the north bank of the Thames in the London Borough of Newham.

Tower Hamlets Local Implementation Plan 2005/6/2010/11

These tube lines are (with particular regard to employment areas) the Central; Hammersmith and City; District; East London Line; Jubilee Line; Circle Line and Metropolitan Lines.

Tower Hamlets Local Implementation Plan 2005/6/2010/11

Ibid

Ibid

Ibid. LBTH walking to work 26%

2006 Public Transport Capacity Assessment

A significant barrier to movement is Aspen Way as it physically separates the poorer communities to the north in Poplar from the more affluent business and residential communities to the south in Canary Wharf and its surrounds

Urban Structure and Characterisation Study

2006 Public Transport Capacity Assessment


Source: Tower Hamlet’s Public Transport Capacity Assessment 2006

DCLG 2007.

Ibid

Key policies in achieving this aim include London Plan Policy 4A - multi-agency approach, which promotes retrofitting existing buildings, Policy 4A.15 requires LA’s to make the fullest contribution to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, Policy 4A.21: Sustainable Design and Construction, Policy 4A.5i Decentralised Energy: all new developments to evaluate combined cooling, heat, and power (CCHP) and combined heat and power (CHP) systems and where a new CCHP/CHP system Policy 4A.7 Renewable Energy

Source: Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy (p3) 2008

Source: Survey of English Housing 2006/2007