6 Designing a high-quality city

Making connected places

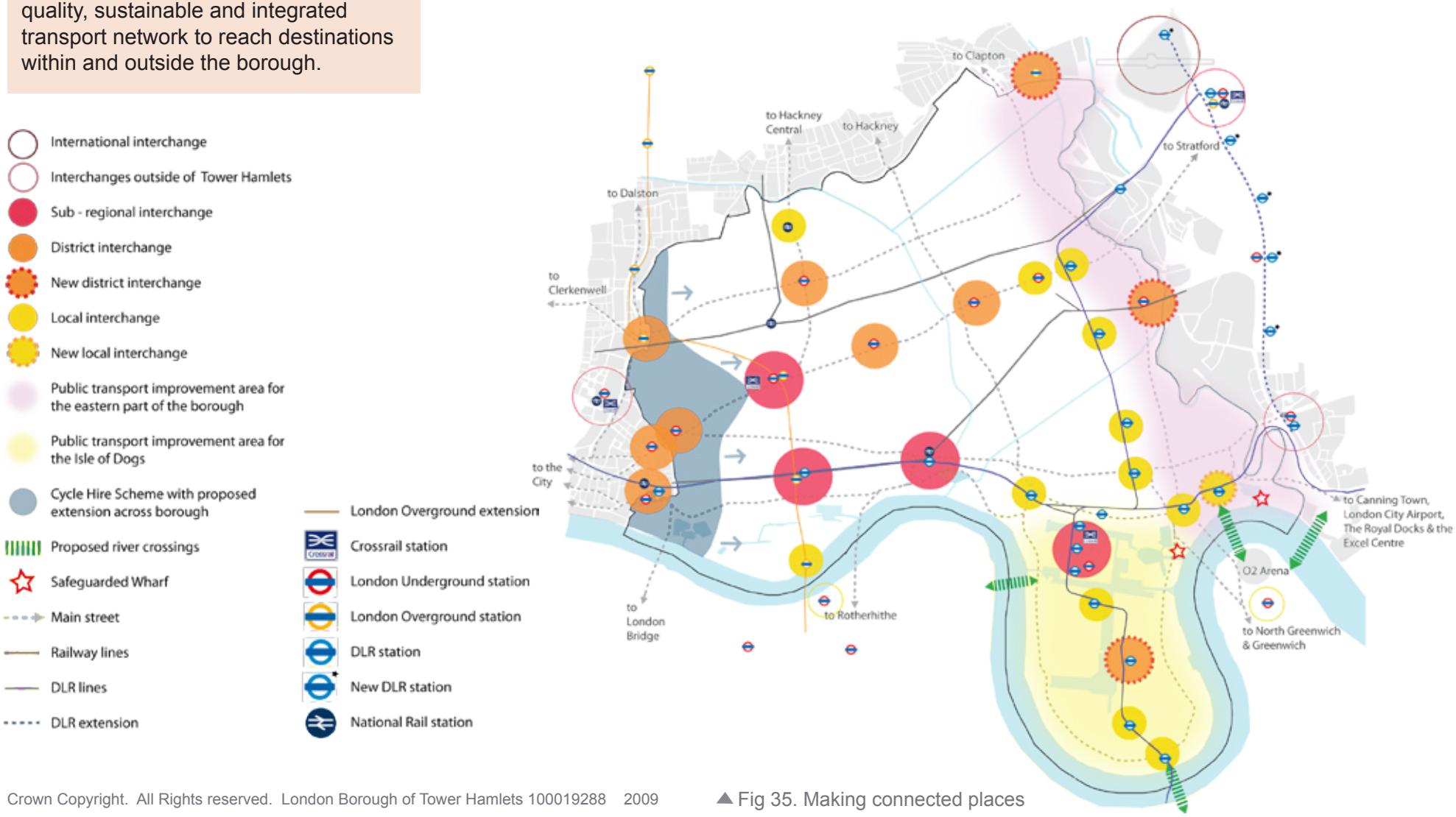
Where we want to be

SO19

Deliver an accessible, efficient, high quality, sustainable and integrated transport network to reach destinations within and outside the borough.

What it will look like

The spatial strategy sets out a framework to deliver a connected, high-quality and efficient public-transport network for the borough that promotes local and strategic accessibility, supports the population and assists in creating sustainable communities.



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▲ Fig 35. Making connected places

How we are going to get there

SP08

1. Provide for a hierarchy of integrated transport interchanges that offer access to a range of public transport modes across the borough. This will be achieved by:

International interchange

a. Improving and maximising accessibility to Stratford International station from Tower Hamlets, principally through improving the strategic and local connectivity to, and through, Fish Island and High Street 2012.

Sub-regional interchanges

b. Seeking to improve the capacity, quality and accessibility of existing sub-regional interchanges, particularly at:
   - Whitechapel and Canary Wharf with the delivery of Crossrail
   - Improve accessibility to interchanges outside of Tower Hamlets, including, Canning Town and Stratford interchanges.

District interchanges

c. Seeking to improve the capacity, quality and accessibility of existing district interchanges and the creation of new district interchanges at:
   - Hackney Wick and Bromley-by-Bow, in order to support regeneration and population growth in the eastern part of the borough.
   - Crossharbour, to support the growth and enhancement of the District Centre and surrounding population.

Local interchanges

d. Seeking to improve the capacity, quality and accessibility of existing local interchanges and creating a new local interchange at East India DLR Station.

e. Locating transport interchanges in town centres that are appropriate in scale to the town centre hierarchy and surrounding population density.

f. Promoting the good design of public transport interchanges to ensure they are integrated with the surrounding urban fabric, offer inclusive access for all members of the community, and provide a high-quality, safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.

SP08

2. Work with Transport for London to ensure the capacity of the public transport network meets the demands of current population needs and future growth. This will be achieved by the delivery of strategic transport projects including:
   - Crossrail.
   - London Overground extension with new/improved stations at
   - Shoreditch, Whitechapel, Shadwell and Wapping.
   - Interchange improvements at Bromley-by-Bow and Hackney Wick.
   - Extension of the London Cycle Hire Scheme across the borough in the longer-term, alongside delivery of Cycle Superhighways.
   - Tfl Crossing projects across the River Thames.
   - Capacity, design and junction improvements to the A12 road network.

SP08

3. Improve public transport in, and accessibility to, identified growth areas. This will be achieved by:
   a. Supporting growth in the east of the borough by providing improved bus connections, bridges, and pedestrian and cycling routes to existing surrounding public transport interchanges, including:
      - Hackney Wick / Fish Island
      - Bromley-by-Bow
      - Langdon Park
      - All Saints
      - East India
      - Blackwall
      - Canning Town (in Newham)
      - West Ham (in Newham)

   b. Supporting growth on the Isle of Dogs by working in partnership to deliver Crossrail, improve bus connections to, and through, the area and improve pedestrian and cycling routes to existing public transport interchanges, which include:
      - Heron Quays
      - Canary Wharf
      - South Quay
      - Crossharbour
      - Mudchute
      - Island Gardens
   c. Continuing to work with neighbouring boroughs and TfL to explore and deliver cross-boundary public transport projects.

4. Promote the sustainable transportation of freight (including waste). This will be achieved by:
   a. Promoting and maximising the movement of freight by water and rail to take the load off the strategic road network.

SP08

   b. Safeguarding the following identified wharfs for cargo handling and to enable the future transportation of waste through water freight:
      - Orchard Wharf in Leamouth
      - Northumberland Wharf in Blackwall
   c. Safeguarding Bow West Rail Depot.

Programme of Delivery

This strategy will be implemented through a number of key projects including:

Whitechapel Masterplan
Bishopsgate Goodsyard Masterplan
Bromley-by-Bow Masterplan
Legacy Masterplan Framework
Fish Island Area Action Plan & Poplar Area Area Action Plan
A12 Study

Major transport improvements including Crossrail, 3 Car DLR, London Overground
Bridges and crossings

Sites and Placemaking DPD
Development Management DPD
Proposals Map
Making Connections: Towards a Climate Friendly Transport Future
Local Implementation Plan
GLA Transport Strategy

Please refer to the Programme of Delivery (Appendix two) for full implementation and delivery details and the Monitoring Framework (Appendix three) for full plan, monitor and manage details.

Why we have taken this approach

6.1 This strategy brings forward the Mayor's Transport Strategy priorities to address the issues facing London's transport system. It gives spatial representation to the priorities set out in the Council's Local Implementation Plan[131] and the "Making Connections" strategy[132], which seek to improve local public transport provision and pedestrian and cycling networks.

6.2 A number of issues are affecting transport within the borough. Primarily these arise from the need to provide and maintain public transport to serve a growing population, in the right locations while helping to mitigate climate change and improve the health and well-being of local people by enabling less use of private vehicular transport.

6.3 The previous two decades have seen a growth in the population of London and the borough, which is set to continue[133]. This growth needs to be accommodated by improvements to the local and regional transport networks. Enhancements will need to provide an increase in the capacity of existing transport infrastructure and provide new local and regional transport infrastructure[134].

6.4 The borough is well positioned to take advantage of regional transport improvements with two new Crossrail stations at Whitechapel and Canary Wharf, the incorporation of the East London Line into the London Overground network, the three-car Docklands Light Railway upgrade, and the London Cycle Hire Scheme. Tower Hamlets also has good linkages with national and international transport networks through rail routes to Stansted Airport, Stratford International railway station and London City Airport.

6.5 These improvements will be delivered to, and accessed by, local people by enhancing and creating transport interchanges in appropriate town centres. The hierarchy of transport interchanges broadly correlates to the hierarchy of town centres[135]. The focus for capacity improvements will need to be located in areas of major housing growth: in the east of the borough and the Isle of Dogs[136].

6.6 Through the provision of improved public transport and pedestrian and cycling networks there will be positive impacts on local people's health and well-being, as well as social cohesion, through increased activity and social interaction[137]. The use of sustainable transport modes also helps to lower resource use and in turn, the borough's carbon emissions[138].

Key supporting evidence base

- The Future of Transport White Paper, 2004
- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005
- PPG13: Transport, 2001
- GLA London Plan, 2008
- GLA Transport Strategy, 2001
- LBTH Local Implementation Plan, 2005
- LBTH Making Connections: Towards a Climate Friendly Transport Future, 2008
- LBTH Town Centre Spatial Strategy Spatial Baseline, 2009
- LBTH Planning for Population Change and Growth – Baseline Report 2009
- LBTH Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Report, 2009
- HUDU Watch Out for Health, 2009

Creating attractive and safe streets and spaces

Where we want to be

SO20
Deliver a safe, attractive, accessible and well designed network of streets and spaces that make it easy and enjoyable for people to move around on foot and bicycle.

SO21
Create streets, spaces and places which promote social interaction and inclusion, and where people value, enjoy and feel safe and comfortable.

What it will look like

The spatial strategy sets a framework to deliver a high-quality public realm consisting of streets and spaces that are safe, attractive and integrated with buildings that respond and overlook public spaces.

Fig 36. Creating attractive and safe streets and spaces ▶

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How we are going to get there

SP09

1. Implement a street hierarchy that puts pedestrians first and promotes streets, both as links for movement and places in their own right, to ensure a strategic, accessible and safe street network across the borough. This will be done through:

Main Streets

a. Working with Transport for London to ensure that main streets' primary function of distributing vehicle traffic (particularly their importance for providing bus routes) is maintained and protected. Also working with TfL to design and promote these streets as important places for pedestrians and cyclists. Main streets include:
   - Commercial Street;
   - Mansell Street / Leman Street / Cambridge Heath Road;
   - Tower Hill Approach, East Smithfield, The Highway;
   - Limehouse Link / Aspen Way;
   - A11 Whitechapel Road / Mile End Road / Bow Road;
   - Burdett Road;
   - A12 Blackwall Tunnel Approach;
   - A13 Commercial Road / East India Dock Road; and
   - Butcher Road and Branch Road / Rotherhithe Tunnel

Secondary Streets

b. Protecting, enhancing secondary streets that function as important distribution routes for vehicles (including buses), cyclists and pedestrians, as well as places to gather, and which provide key links between the borough's town centres.

Local Streets

c. Protecting and enhancing the place and social gathering function that local residential streets provide, by, promoting them as places to gather and socialise in, alongside their function of providing safe and convenient access to individual properties.

SP09

2. Protect, promote and ensure a well connected, joined-up street network that integrates street types and users by:
   a. Improving connectivity between Tower Hamlets and neighbouring boroughs in order to improve strategic accessibility through:
      i. Ensuring the provision of bridges and connections across and along the River Lea to Newham.
      ii. Improving connections to Hackney through the regeneration of Fish Island.
      iii. Improving the quality of existing streets and spaces between Tower Hamlets and City of London.
      iv. Improving connectivity to Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark through new and enhanced crossings.
   b. Improving the connectivity of identified areas that suffer from poor permeability through:
      i. Creating new routes through identified development sites.
      ii. Working in partnership with Housing Associations to improve connectivity through housing estates which suffer from poor integration and accessibility.
      iii. Improve accessibility between the parts of the borough that suffer from barriers to movement including Aspen Way, and the A12 and A13 corridors.
   c. Not supporting developments that create gated communities which restrict pedestrian movement.

3. Ensure new development has no adverse impact on the safety and capacity of the road network.

4. Promoting car free developments and those schemes which minimise on-site and off-site car parking provision, particularly in areas with good access to public transport.

SP09

5. Create a high-quality public realm network which, provides a range of sizes of public space that can function as places for social gathering.

6. Primarily focussing public realm improvements and investment in areas identified by the Public Realm Strategy, including:
   - town centres;
   - main streets; and
   - public transport nodes

Programme of Delivery

This strategy will be implemented through a number of key projects including:

Masterplans and Area Action Plans (All)
St Pauls Way Transformation Project
High Street 2012
Town Centre Implementation Plans

Adopting identified new streets
Bridges and crossings
Cycling routes and cycle hire hubs

Estate regeneration projects

LBTH Public Realm Strategy
Local Implementation Plan
Development Management DPD
Sites and Placemaking DPD

Green corridors and spaces

Please refer to the Programme of Delivery (Appendix two) for full implementation and delivery details and the Monitoring Framework (Appendix three) for full plan, monitor and manage details.

Why we have taken this approach

6.7 Ensuring high-quality design of public streets and spaces is central to delivering sustainable communities[139].

6.8 The quality of the public realm in the borough varies[140], and the Community Plan views good urban form as a key component in achieving the vision of One Tower Hamlets. A high-quality urban environment and layout can help deliver social benefits, including civic pride, increased connectivity, social cohesion, reduced fear and levels of crime and improved health and well-being[141], while a poor quality public realm can have severe negative effects on communities. To understand how to address poor quality public realm, it needs to be assessed within a spatial framework.

6.9 Accessibility and movement networks are crucial in creating a high-quality urban environment[142] and can affect the uses, activities, density and security of an area. As Tower Hamlets has some of the highest housing densities in London, the quality of streets and spaces is important to maintain and create a high quality of life. As is designing the urban environment so that it follows Secured by Design principles and ensures secure, safe and quality places.

6.10 Identified "grot-spots" (areas of very low-quality public realm) need to be addressed to reduce the negative perception of the area and impact on surrounding areas. Given that the borough's town centres are also its transport interchanges, the public realm of town centres needs to be high quality to support and promote movement[143].

6.11 Barriers to movement within, and to areas outside of, the borough restrict and alter the movement network, resulting in a loss in permeability, legibility and mobility[144]. Significant barriers within Tower Hamlets include road corridors and post-war development, which have isolated communities adjacent to them.

6.12 To improve accessibility and increase movement, the hierarchy of streets and spaces needs to be restored. This will support movement networks within the borough and between Tower Hamlets and neighbouring boroughs[145].

6.13 Restricting parking levels, and promoting car free developments, is one way in which the Council will manage demand and encourage more sustainable travel to achieve sustainable development objectives and tackle climate change. Promoting car free lifestyles can also add to the safety and also to the vibrancy of an area, making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Key supporting evidence base

- DETR By Design, 2000
- English Heritage Streets For All, 2004
- Building for Life, 2008
- TfL Streetscape Guidance, 2009
- Link & Place: A Guide to Street Planning and Design, 2007
- DfT Manual for Streets, 2007
- Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2, 2007
- Secured by Design Guidance
- LBTH Town Centre Spatial Strategy, 2009
- LBTH Town Centre Spatial Strategy Spatial Baseline, 2009
- LBTH Urban Structure and Characterisation Study, 2009

Creating distinct and durable places

Where we want to be

SO22

Protect, celebrate and improve access to our historical and heritage assets by placing these at the heart of reinventing the hamlets to enhance local distinctiveness, character and townscape views.

SO23

Promote a borough of well designed, high quality, sustainable and robust buildings that enrich the local environment and contribute to quality of life.

What it will look like

The spatial strategy sets out a framework to deliver buildings and neighbourhoods that are well-designed, high-quality and durable, in order to promote locally distinct places that are positively shaped by their history and heritage.

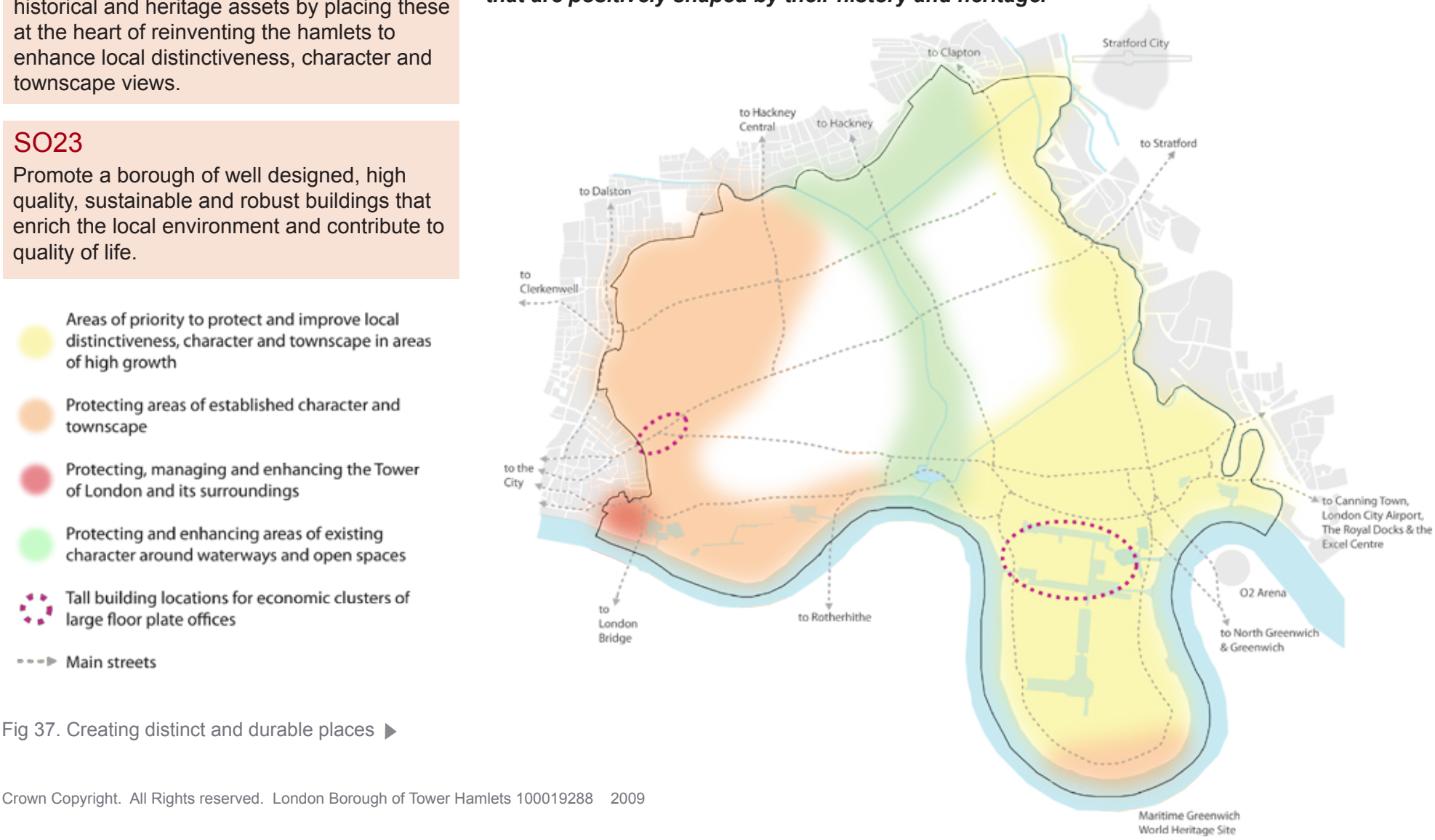

Fig 37. Creating distinct and durable places ▶

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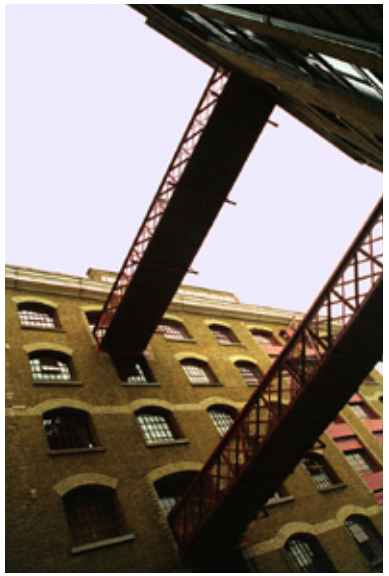
How we are going to get there

SP10

1. Protect, manage and enhance the Tower of London World Heritage Site, its setting, and surrounding area, as well as the buffer zone and setting of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site through:
   a. The respective World Heritage Site Management Plans and associated documents.

2. Protect and enhance the following heritage assets and their settings:
   - World Heritage Sites
   - Statutory Listed Buildings
   - Conservation Areas
   - London Squares
   - Historic Parks and Gardens
   - Scheduled Ancient Monuments
   - Archaeological Remains
   - Archaeological Priority Areas
   - Locally Listed Buildings
   - Local Landmarks
   - Other buildings and areas that are identified through the Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Guidelines

3. Preserve or enhance the wider built heritage and historic environment of the borough, enabling the creation of locally distinctive neighbourhoods, through:
   a. Promoting and implementing placemaking across the borough to ensure that the locally distinctive character and context of each place is acknowledged and enhanced.
   b. Protecting, conserving, and promoting the beneficial reuse of, old buildings that provide suitable locations for employment uses, including small and medium enterprises.
   c. Encouraging and supporting development that preserves and enhances the heritage value of the immediate and surrounding environment and the wider setting.
   d. Working to reduce Heritage at Risk.



SP10

4. Ensure that buildings and neighbourhoods promote good design principles to create buildings, spaces and places that are high-quality, sustainable, accessible, attractive, durable and well-integrated with their surrounds. This will be achieved through ensuring development:
   a. Protects amenity, and promotes well-being (including preventing loss of privacy and access to daylight and sunlight);
   b. Uses design and construction techniques to reduce the impact of noise and air pollution;
   c. Respects strategic and local views and their role in creating local identity and assisting in wayfinding;
   d. Respects its local context and townscape, including the character, bulk and scale of the surrounding area;
   e. Contributes to the enhancement or creation of local distinctiveness;
   f. Is flexible and adaptable to change;
   g. Uses high quality architecture, urban and landscape design;
   h. Assists in creating a well-connected public realm that is easy and safe to navigate.

5. The following locations are where tall buildings will be acceptable:
   - Canary Wharf
   - Aldgate

   a. The above locations are identified as they meet the following criteria:
      i. Be part of an existing economic cluster and respond to existing built character of the area.
      ii. Have a large floor-plate office building typology.
      iii. Be in areas of high accessibility.
   b. Appropriate sites for tall buildings will be identified within the Sites and Placemaking DPD. All tall buildings including those outside of the above locations will be assessed against criteria set out in the Development Management DPD.

▶ For a definition of tall buildings please refer to glossary of terms

Programme of Delivery

This strategy will be implemented through a number of key projects including:

Area Action Plans (All)
Aldgate Masterplan
Aspen Way Masterplan
Millennium Quarter Masterplan
Wood Wharf Masterplan

Housing estate regeneration projects

Conservation Areas Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines
LBTH Conservation Strategy
Development Management DPD
Sites and Placemaking DPD
Proposals Map
Building for Life
Code for Sustainable Homes: Setting the standard in sustainability for new homes
GLA guidance on housing design standards

Why we have taken this approach

6.14 The built environment of Tower Hamlets is strongly influenced by the borough's history and heritage[146]. As the borough faces development pressure generated by housing and employment targets, it is critical that building design and the wider built environment is sustainable[147], of a high-quality, and able to be adapted to the effects of climate change[148]. To achieve this the Council will use development management policies and the available tools of the Code for Sustainable Homes and 'Buildings for Life'; and will look to utilise appropriate forthcoming guidance as it emerges.

6.15 A critical component to achieving a high-quality built environment is to ensure that the borough's historic environment is sustainably managed, enhanced and protected, while supporting appropriate development[149]. This includes the beneficial reuse of built heritage to bring many social, cultural and economic benefits to communities and help in the wider regeneration of the borough. These areas will be identified and detailed policies stated in the Development Management DPD and the Site and Placemaking DPD. Figure 34 identifies broad areas of different townscapes currently existing in the borough. These areas require different responses when managing growth and change.

6.16 Some development within Tower Hamlets has led to negative impacts on the borough's heritage, which needs to be addressed[150]. This is specifically relevant to the borough's World Heritage Site, the Tower of London, and its wider setting. The Tower of London has been isolated from adjacent areas by the road network, and careful consideration needs to be given to any development that will impact on the site and setting.

6.17 The above tools are especially relevant for defining the preferred locations for tall buildings. Tall buildings can have a significant impact on the built environment and the activities of local people[151]. As such, tall buildings are best suited to established economic clusters at Canary Wharf and Aldgate, where they complement the existing context.

6.18 Strategic views guidance is provided within the London Plan (2008) with local views to be set out in the forthcoming Development Management DPD and Proposals Map.

Key supporting evidence base

- PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, 1994
- PPG16: Archaeology and Planning, 1990
- DETR By Design, 2000
- English Heritage, Heritage Counts, 2008
- GLA London Plan, 2008
- Building for life, 2008
- LBTH Urban Structure and Characterisation Study, 2009
- LBTH Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Report, 2009
- Urban Design Compendium 1 & 2, 2007
- English Heritage Enabling Development and the Conservation of
- Significant Places, 2008
- English Heritage Moving Towards Excellence in Urban Design, 2003
- English Heritage and CABE Guidance on Tall Buildings, 2007

Working towards a zero-carbon borough

Where we want to be

SO24

Achieve a zero carbon borough in the 21st century, with a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025.

What it will look like

The spatial strategy sets a framework to realise a zero-carbon borough through the designation of low-carbon areas and de-centralised energy-facilities that will assist in delivering a sustainable and energy-secure borough.

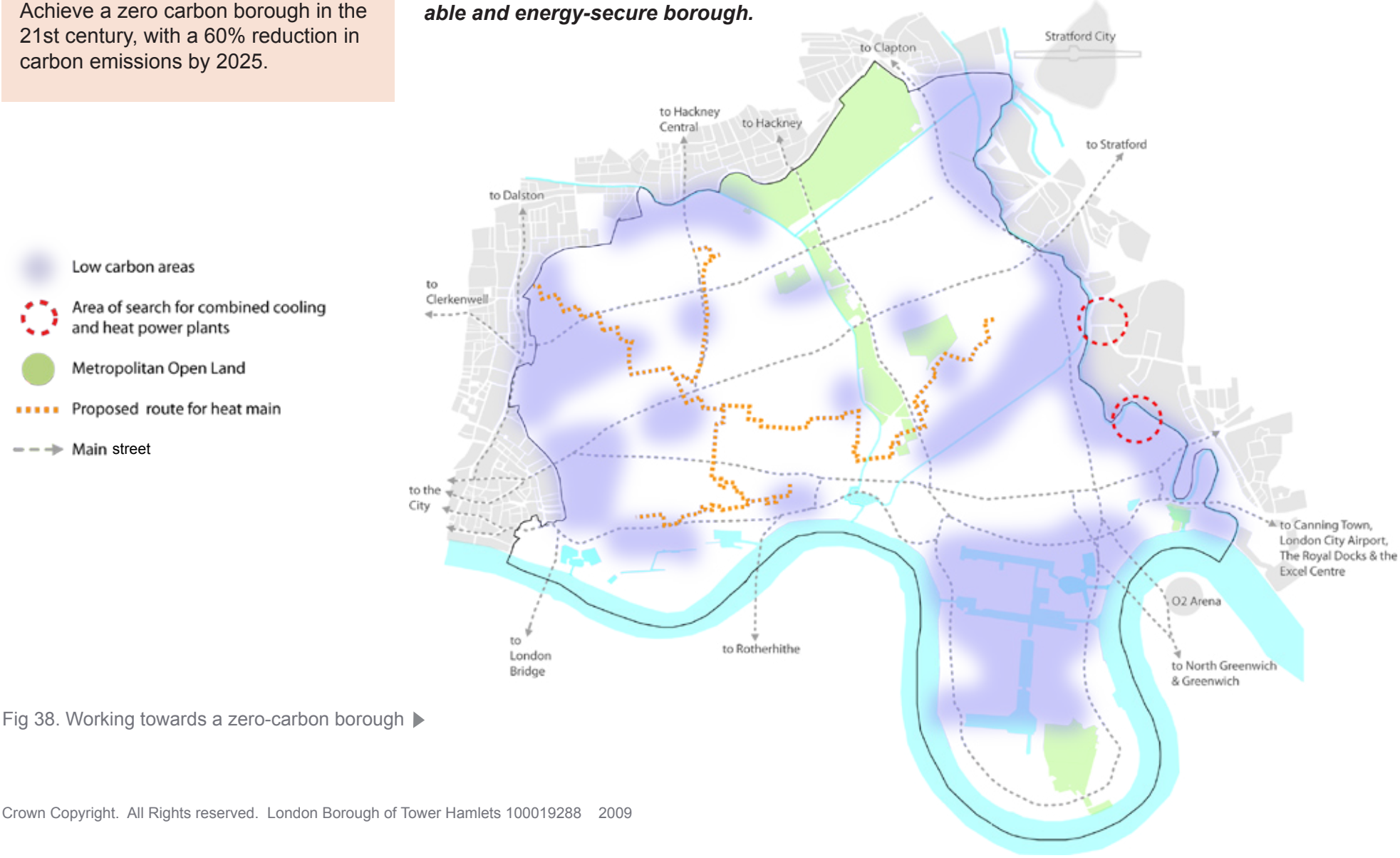


Fig 38. Working towards a zero-carbon borough ▶

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How we are going to get there

SP11

1. Implement a borough-wide carbon emission reduction target of 60% below 1990 levels by 2025.

2. Ensure that all new homes are built in-line with government guidance to reach zero carbon by 2016, and that all new non-domestic development reaches zero-carbon by 2019.

3. Promote low- and zero-carbon energy generation through:
   a. Safeguarding existing renewable energy decentralised energy systems.
   b. Implementing a network of decentralised heat and energy facilities that connect into a heat and power network, including working with the LDA to link with the Olympic Park Energy Centre and the wider East London Heat Network.
   c. Promoting the development of new decentralised energy facilities that have the potential to link into a wider sub-regional network.
   d. Exploring the use of waste-to-energy facilities, particularly in the east of the borough, to support the borough's waste management and recycling targets.
   e. Working with partners inside and outside the borough to explore ways of implementing decentralised energy systems.
   f. Supporting development that uses intelligent design to make use of renewable-energy technologies.

4. Reducing carbon emissions in non-domestic buildings by:
   a. Working with partners to implement ways to reduce carbon emissions particularly large businesses in the borough
   b. Supporting non-domestic developments that promote the use of renewable energy technologies
   c. Reducing the carbon emissions of all public buildings in the borough

SP11

5. Implement an area-based approach in which new development should achieve higher levels of carbon reductions than elsewhere in the borough.

6. Maximising the energy efficiency of existing housing stock by:
   a. Working with housing providers to ensure regeneration of existing housing stock and redevelopment promotes carbon emissions reductions and is adapted for climate change.
   b. Seeking to establish Energy Opportunity Areas in places likely to be affected by fuel poverty.

7. Require all new developments to provide 20% reduction of carbon dioxide emissions through on-site renewable energy generation where feasible.

8. Ensure the built environment adapts to the effects of climate change. Please refer to SP04 and the Development Management DPD for more detail.

▶ See Opportunities for Sustainable Energy and Biodiversity Enhancement 2008 and the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Report 2009

Programme of Delivery

This strategy will be implemented through a number of key projects including:

- Masterplans and Area Action Plans (All)
- Heat and Power Network
  Renewable Energy infrastructure
- Housing estate regeneration projects
- Development Management DPD
  Sites and Placemaking DPD
  Carbon Management Programme
- LBTH Green Grid Projects (All)

Please refer to the Programme of Delivery (Appendix two) for full implementation and delivery details and the Monitoring Framework (Appendix three) for full plan, monitor and manage details.

Why we have taken this approach

6.19 Climate change is rapidly being acknowledged as an urgent and serious global issue that needs to be addressed to mitigate and adapt to its effects on the borough and local people[152].

6.20 A significant contributor to climate change is the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. These levels are rapidly increasing and, if left unchecked, will continue to contribute to climate change[153]. Of the 33 Local Authorities in Greater London, Tower Hamlets produces the second highest level of total carbon emissions (2,348 $ktCO_2$) after the City of Westminster[154].

6.21 This strategy provides a responsive spatial framework to take forward the GLA Climate Change Action Plan (with a target to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2025 against a 1990 baseline) and the Community Plan's aspirations to address climate change to reduce the borough's carbon emissions.

6.22 To mitigate contributing to the effects of climate change and achieve the above targets, the Council will implement a range of interventions and actions that have been informed by a number of key pieces of evidence[155]. These interventions look at reducing carbon dioxide emissions from existing and new, domestic and non-domestic, buildings through design, renewable energy generation and identifying areas suitable for higher levels of carbon emissions reduction. Further information on mitigating the effects of climate change will be provided in the council's emerging climate change strategy.

6.23 Buildings, with their need for energy, make up a significant proportion of carbon emissions. Therefore, a key element of this strategy for reducing carbon emissions[156] is to minimise the need for energy in both new and existing buildings. This will have a positive impact on addressing fuel poverty[157].

6.24 Adapting to the effects of climate change is necessary in a changing climate. Climate change will affect the borough in a number of ways including an increased risk in flooding, disruption to water supplies and an increased "Urban Heat Island Effect"[158]. Adaptations required to address these effects include providing new green open spaces, greening of the built environment, improved efficiency of water usage and the appropriate location, orientation and design of new development[159].

6.25 Supplying energy via the national grid is an inefficient method, with more than half of the energy lost as waste heat[160]. The efficiency of energy supply can be improved by capturing waste heat for use, and by generating energy closer to the point of use, which minimises the amount of energy lost through transmission[161]. A move towards decentralised energy generation at higher efficiencies, as well as using available renewable energy sources, will simultaneously lower carbon emissions and improve the overall security of supply[162].

6.26 Focusing higher proportions of carbon emissions reduction measures in specific areas will help to capture and maximise the cumulative benefits[163]. The most appropriate areas are those with larger concentrations of identified development sites. Current identified clusters correspond with the low carbon areas on Fig 35.

6.27 The Government is in the process of reviewing building regulations and the Code for Sustainable Homes to meet its commitment to delivering zero-carbon development. This strategy will likely need adjusting following this review.

Key supporting evidence base

- UK Government Climate Change Act 2008
- PPS1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change
- PPS22: Renewable Energy
- GLA London Plan, 2008
- GLA Climate Change Action Plan, 2007
- GLA London Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, 2008
- LBTH Opportunities for Sustainable Energy and Biodiversity Enhancement, 2008
- LBTH Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Report, 2009