

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031

Adopted January 2020



Managing growth and sharing the benefits

Produced by:

Strategic Planning Team
Planning and Building Control Service
Place Directorate



Ordnance Survey mapping is provided by London Borough of Tower Hamlets under licence from the Ordnance Survey in order to fulfil its public function to act as a Planning Authority.

Maps in this document are based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution and/or civil proceedings. Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. London Borough of Tower Hamlets 100019288 2013

Contents

Setting the scene	9	Delivering sustainable places	197
1. Introduction	10	17. Introduction	198
2. Borough portrait	12	18. Sub-area 1: City Fringe	200
3. Trends	19	19. Sub-area 2: Central	220
Vision and objectives	23	20. Sub-area 3: Lower Lea Valley	232
4. Our vision for Tower Hamlets	24	21. Sub-area 4: Isle of Dogs and South Poplar	246
5. Key objectives and principles	25	Monitoring and delivering	281
Policies	31	22. Managing development	282
6. Introduction	32	23. Partnership working	283
7. Achieving sustainable growth	32	24. Neighbourhood planning	284
8. Creating attractive and distinctive places	44	25. Infrastructure delivery	284
9. Meeting housing needs	73	26. Development viability	285
10. Delivering economic growth	94	27. Monitoring and review	285
11. Revitalising our town centres	108	Appendices	295
12. Supporting community facilities	128	28. Appendix 1: Glossary and acronyms	296
13. Enhancing open spaces and water spaces	135	29. Appendix 2: Links to the Core Strategy and Managing Development Document	309
14. Protecting and managing our environment	151	30. Appendix 3: Parking standards	313
15. Managing our waste	175	32. Appendix 4: Waste collection standards	319
16. Improving connectivity and travel choice	186	33. Appendix 5: Strategic policies in the Local Plan for the purposes of neighbourhood planning	325
		34. Appendix 6: Noise	326
		35. Appendix 7: Housing trajectory	333

This page has been intentionally left blank.

Mayor's Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

John Biggs, Mayor of Tower Hamlets



Policies

Policy S.SG1: Areas of growth and opportunity within Tower Hamlets	33	Policy D.TC6: Short-stay accommodation	124
Policy S.SG2: Delivering sustainable growth in Tower Hamlets	36	Policy D.TC7: Markets	126
Policy D.SG3: Health impact assessments	37	Policy S.CF1: Supporting community facilities	128
Policy D.SG4: Planning and construction of new development	39	Policy D.CF2: Existing community facilities	130
Policy D.SG5: Developer contributions	41	Policy D.CF3: New and enhanced community facilities	131
Policy S.DH1: Delivering high quality design	44	Policy D.CF4: Public houses	133
Policy D.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm	46	Policy S.OWS1: Creating a network of open spaces	138
Policy S.DH3: Heritage and the historic environment	49	Policy S.OWS2: Enhancing the network of water spaces	142
Policy D.DH4: Shaping and managing views	53	Policy D.OWS3: Open space and green grid networks	145
Policy S.DH5: World heritage sites	57	Policy D.OWS4: Water spaces	148
Policy D.DH6: Tall buildings	59	Policy S.ES1: Protecting and enhancing our environment	152
Policy D.DH7: Density	66	Policy D.ES2: Air quality	154
Policy D.DH8: Amenity	67	Policy D.ES3: Urban greening and biodiversity	157
Policy D.DH9: Shopfronts	69	Policy D.ES4: Flood risk	161
Policy D.DH10: Advertisements, hoardings and signage	70	Policy D.ES5: Sustainable drainage	165
Policy D.DH11: Telecommunications	72	Policy D.ES6: Sustainable water and wastewater management	166
Policy S.H1: Meeting housing needs	76	Policy D.ES7: A zero carbon borough	168
Policy D.H2: Affordable housing and housing mix	80	Policy D.ES8: Contaminated land and storage of hazardous substances	171
Policy D.H3: Housing standards and quality	84	Policy D.ES9: Noise and vibration	172
Policy D.H4: Specialist housing	87	Policy D.ES10: Overheating	174
Policy D.H5: Gypsies and travellers accommodation	89	Policy S.MW1: Managing our waste	178
Policy D.H6: Student housing	90	Policy D.MW2: New and enhanced waste facilities	182
Policy D.H7: Housing with shared facilities (houses in multiple occupation)	92	Policy D.MW3: Waste collection facilities in new development	184
Policy S.EMP1: Creating investment and jobs	96	Policy S.TR1: Sustainable travel	187
Policy D.EMP2: New employment space	102	Policy D.TR2: Impacts on the transport network	191
Policy D.EMP3: Loss of employment space	104	Policy D.TR3: Parking and permit-free	193
Policy D.EMP4: Redevelopment within designated employment locations	106	Policy D.TR4: Sustainable delivery and servicing	195
Policy S.TC1: Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres	109		
Policy D.TC2: Protecting retail in our town centres	116		
Policy D.TC3: Retail outside our town centres	119		
Policy D.TC4: Financial and professional services	120		
Policy D.TC5: Food, drink, entertainment and the night-time economy	122		

Figures and tables

Figure 1: Relationship between the Tower Hamlets Local Plan and other relevant documents	11	Figure 32: Vision for Lower Lea Valley	235
Figure 2: Position of Tower Hamlets within the context of London and neighbouring areas	13	Figure 33: Lower Lea Valley site allocations	239
Figure 3: London Borough of Tower Hamlets		Figure 34: Ailsa Street	241
Figure 4: 24 places of Tower Hamlets	18	Figure 35: Leven Road	245
Figure 5: The key diagram	29	Figure 36: Character places in the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar	247
Figure 6: Key views, landmarks and the skyline of strategic importance	56	Figure 37: Vision for Isle of Dogs and South Poplar	249
Figure 7: Tall building zones	63	Figure 38: Isle of Dogs and South Poplar site allocations	253
Figure 8: Principles of tall building clusters	64	Figure 39: Aspen Way	255
Figure 9: Housing distribution across 24 places	75	Figure 40: Billingsgate Market	257
Figure 10: Distribution of employment hubs and locations	100	Figure 41: Crossharbour Town Centre	259
Figure 11: Town centre hierarchy	112	Figure 42: Limeharbour	261
Figure 12: An enhanced network of open spaces and water spaces	137	Figure 43: Marsh Wall East	263
Figure 13: Areas of open space deficiency	141	Figure 44: Marsh Wall West	265
Figure 14: Areas of substandard air quality in Tower Hamlets	155	Figure 45: Millharbour South	267
Figure 15: Flood zones in Tower Hamlets	163	Figure 46: Millharbour	269
Figure 16: Waste hierarchy	177	Figure 47: North Quay	271
Figure 17: Strategic transport connectivity	188	Figure 48: Reuters Ltd	273
Figure 18: Sub-areas and site allocations	199	Figure 49: Riverside South	275
Figure 19: Character places in City Fringe	201	Figure 50: Westferry Printworks	277
Figure 20: Vision for City Fringe	203	Figure 51: Wood Wharf	279
Figure 21: City Fringe site allocations	207		
Figure 22: Bishopsgate Goods Yard	209	Table 1: Minimum number of additional homes across sub-areas (2016 - 2031)	73
Figure 23: London Dock	211	Table 2: Jobs and floorspace (sqm) forecasts: 2015-2030	95
Figure 24: Marian Place Gas Works and The Oval	215	Table 3: Proportion of new retail floorspace required to 2031	114
Figure 25: Whitechapel South	219	Table 4: Housing, commercial and industrial waste requirements	175
Figure 26: Character places in Central	221	Table 5: Waste capacity forecasts and land requirements	176
Figure 27: Vision for Central	223	Table 6: Monitoring and delivery framework	287
Figure 28: Central site allocations	227		
Figure 29: Bow Common Lane	229		
Figure 30: Crisp Street Town Centre	231		
Figure 31: Character places in Lower Lea Valley	233		

This page has been intentionally left blank.



SECTION 1

Setting the scene

1. Introduction

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

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

Context

1.3 The Local Plan has also been prepared in line with the London Plan, relevant acts and regulations and the policies set out in the government's National Planning Policy Framework, with input from local residents, businesses, landowners, neighbouring boroughs, statutory bodies and other interested stakeholders. In particular, it positively responds to the minimum targets for housing and jobs set out in the London Plan¹.

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

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

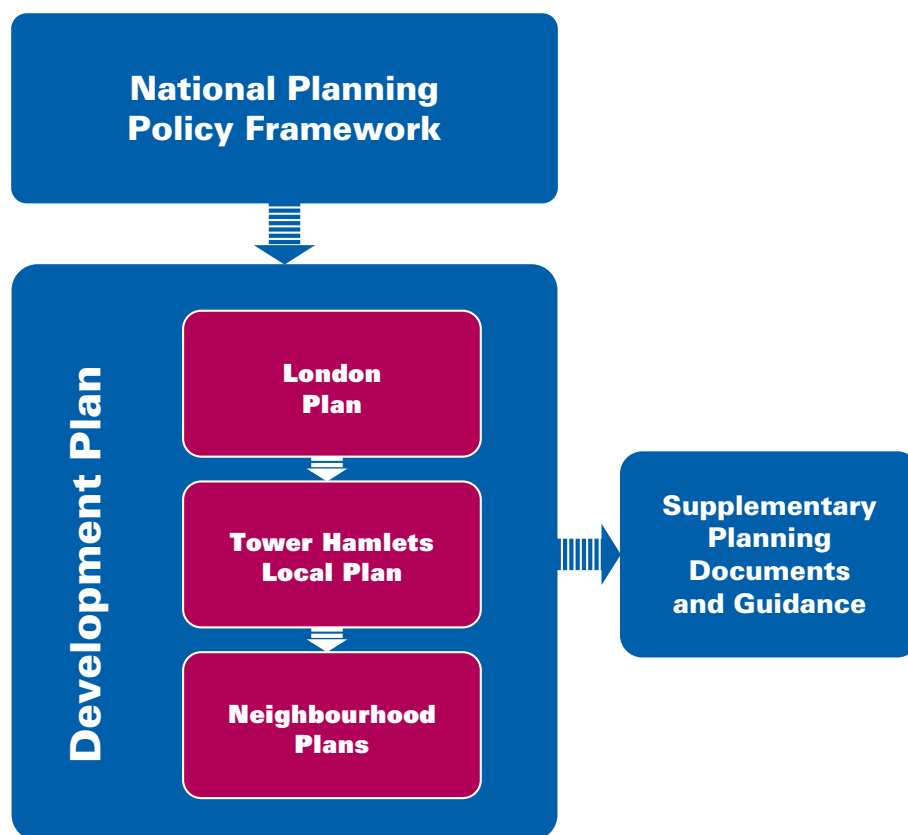
1.6 This plan must be read as a whole. Proposals will be considered against all relevant policies set out in this plan.

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

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

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

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



How the Local Plan fits together

1.9 This document comprises the following elements:

Section 1: Setting the scene

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

Section 2: Vision and objectives

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

Section 3: Policies

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

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

Section 4: Delivering sustainable places

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

Section 5: Delivery and implementation

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

Section 6: Appendices

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

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

2. Borough portrait

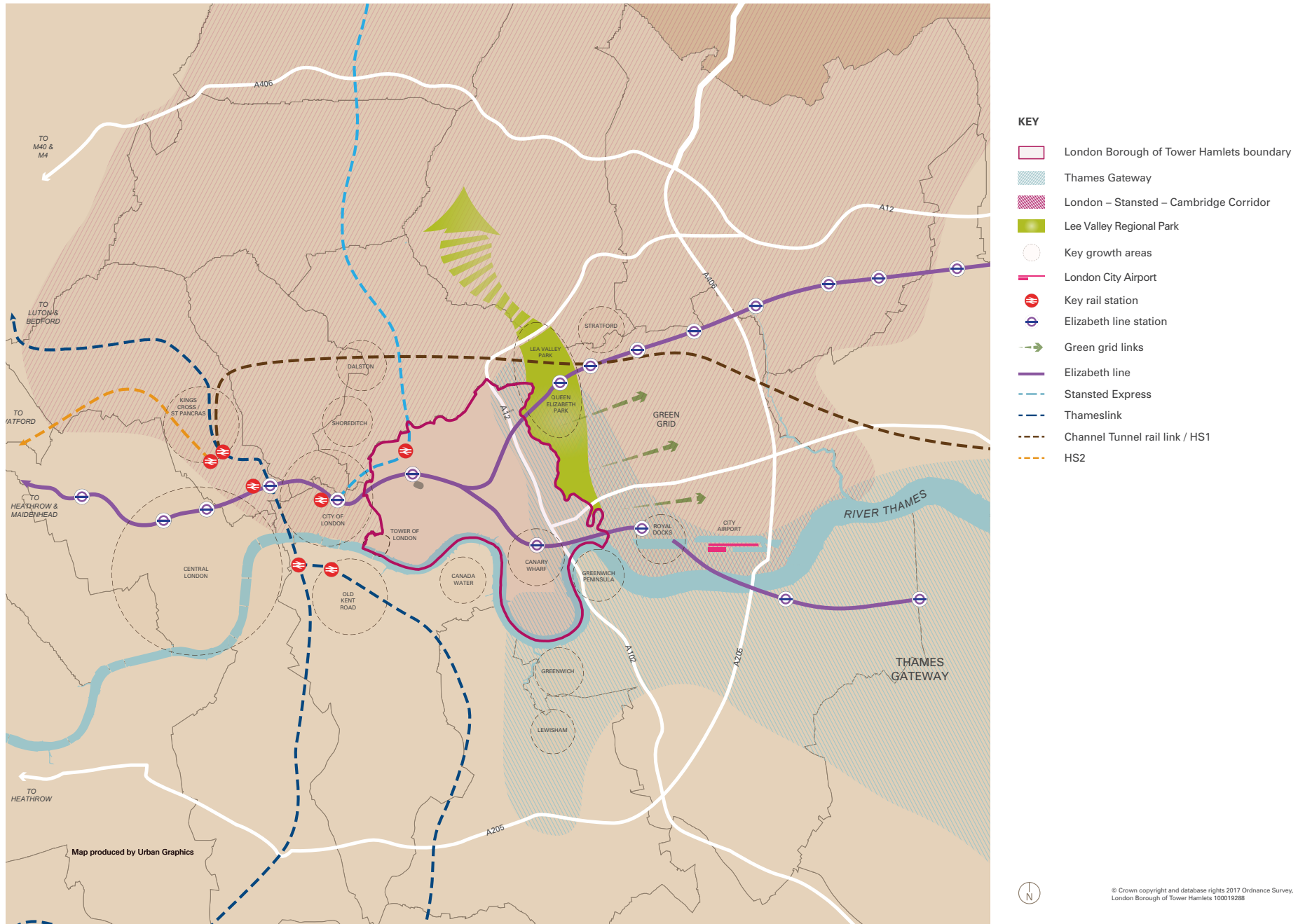
Introduction

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Population

2.7 Tower Hamlets has doubled its population in the past 30 years, from 150,200 in 1986 to 304,900 in 2016². From 2006 to 2016, Tower Hamlets witnessed the fastest population growth of any local authority in England and Wales, particularly among the working-age population, making it one of the densely populated boroughs in the UK.

2.8 One of the borough's defining characteristics is the diversity of its people. Around two-thirds of the borough's population come from a minority ethnic background and more than two-fifths of the population were born outside of the UK³. The borough also has the largest proportion of young people compared to other inner London boroughs.

2.9 The borough's daytime population has also increased significantly in recent years, primarily as a result of workers travelling to and from the City Fringe and Canary Wharf employment areas, and is approximately 42% larger than its residential population⁴.

² www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/borough_statistics/population/MYE_2015

³ www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/wardprofiles/census

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

Figure 3: London Borough of Tower Hamlets



Economy and employment

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

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

2.12 The majority of employment is concentrated within the City Fringe/Whitechapel and Canary Wharf/Isle of Dogs areas of the borough – these are strategically important employment locations of national and international importance and serve as the headquarters for a large number of multinational businesses. Tower Hamlets also has a very high number of small-to-medium enterprises and micro-businesses, which is characteristic of its role as a seedbed for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. However, the benefits of this growth have not been evenly spread across the borough as only 15% of jobs in the borough go to local residents⁵.

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

Housing

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

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

Deprivation and inequality

2.16 Tower Hamlets is a place of extremes and contrasts. While relative poverty in Tower Hamlets has declined, deprivation remains widespread, particularly in central and eastern parts. The borough also has the highest levels of child and pensioner poverty in England⁶. However, there are pockets of affluence within close proximity to the River Thames and former dockland areas. This disparity is reflected in the borough's ratio of low-to-high pay, which is the largest in London⁷.

2.17 The health of people in Tower Hamlets is significantly worse than the London and England averages, with healthy life expectancy at birth being nearly ten years less than the national average⁸. Health inequalities also persist in the borough, with significant differences in life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards. Physical activity is a major contributor to health and well-being, and levels of physical activity in Tower Hamlets are currently lower than both the London and England averages, with those living in the more deprived areas in the east of the

⁵ www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/economyandbusinesses

⁶ www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/boroughstatistics/incomepovertyandwelfare/indicesofdeprivation

⁷ London Poverty Profile (New Policy Institute, 2015)

⁸ www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthlifeexpectanciesatbirth

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

Environment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.24 While carbon emissions are steadily falling, the borough still emits relatively high levels of carbon dioxide relative to other parts of London, primarily due to emissions from industrial and commercial uses¹⁰. In addition, parts of the borough, particularly around major roads and junctions, have some of the poorest air quality levels in London.

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

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

Figure 4: 24 places of Tower Hamlets



3. Trends

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

Our infrastructure



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

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

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

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

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

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

Our local economy



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

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

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

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

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

Our homes



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

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

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

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

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

Our environment



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

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

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

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

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

This page has been intentionally left blank.



SECTION 2

Vision and objectives

4. Our vision for Tower Hamlets

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Key objectives and principles

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

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

Key objective 1: Managing the growth and shaping change

Principles

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

This objective will be implemented through:

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

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

Key objective 2: Sharing the benefits of growth

Principles

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

This objective will be implemented through:

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

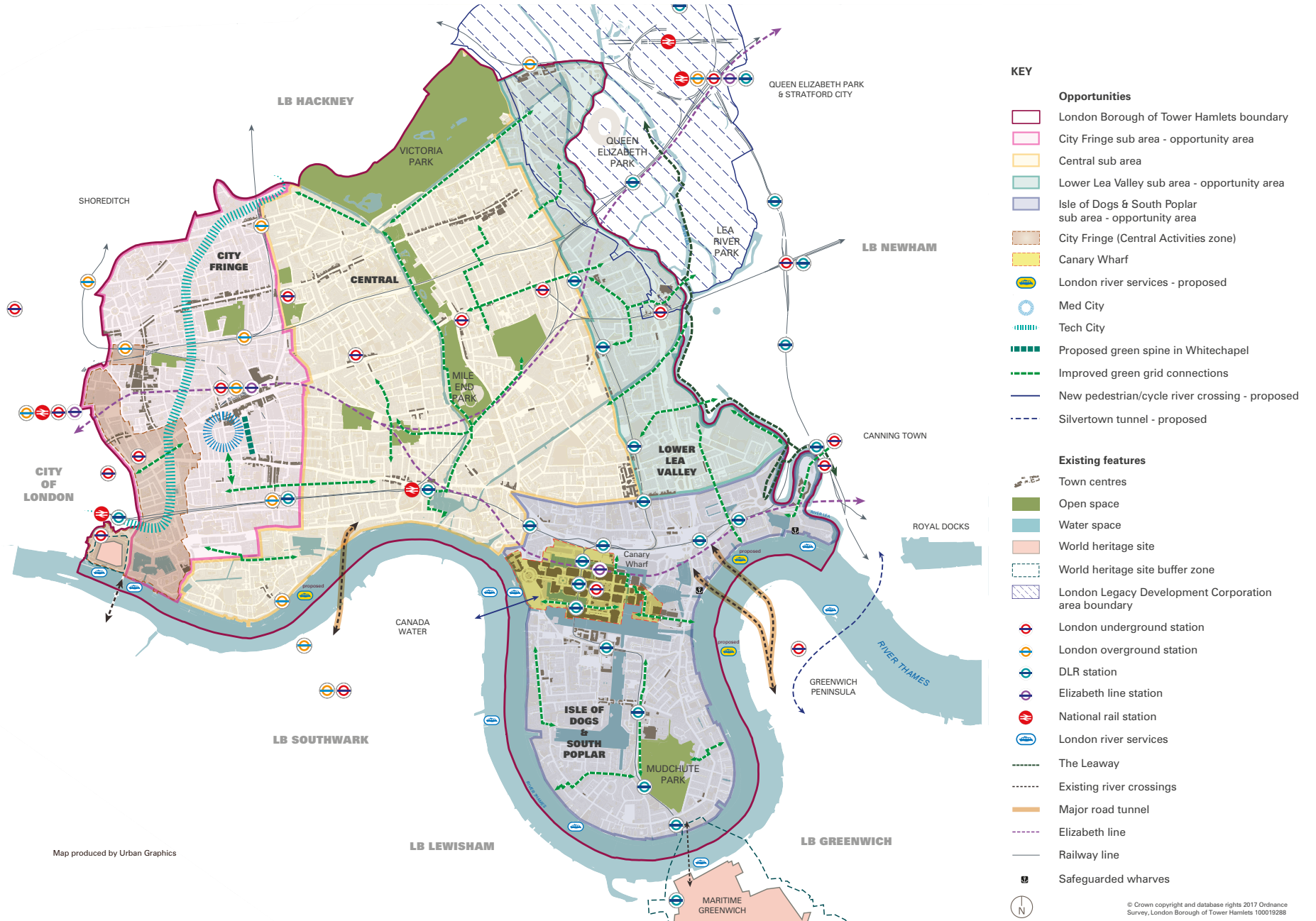
5.2 The vision and objectives are illustrated within the key diagram (see Figure 5). This diagram provides a spatial representation of the overall approach to managing growth and shaping change across the borough.

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

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

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

Figure 5: The key diagram



This page has been intentionally left blank.