

## 19. Sub-area 2: Central

---

### Location

**19.1** The Central sub-area sits in the heart of the borough, bounded by London Borough of Hackney to the north, the London Legacy Development Corporation and the Lower Lee Valley sub-area to the east, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar sub-area to the south, and the City Fringe sub-area to the west. The sub-area is not a designated opportunity area, but has the capacity to deliver new development.

**19.2** The sub-area is a collection of vibrant and distinctive town centres, transport interchanges and residential areas. The sub-area comprises parts of nine distinct character places (see Figure 26). The Tower Hamlets Urban Structure and Characterisation Study provides further information on the key elements of the local character of each place.

Figure 26: Character places in Central



## Vision for Central

By 2031, the distinct character and identity of the Central sub-area will have been enhanced and strengthened. Growth will be focused around vibrant and revitalised town centres and neighbourhood parades, including Roman Road and Mile End town centres. New development will complement the well-established streetscape and character and the area's many heritage assets, and their settings will be preserved or enhanced through opportunities for new heritage-led development.

Access to and the quality of the area's green open spaces (including Victoria Park and Mile End Park) and network of waterspaces (including Regents Canal and Limehouse Cut) will be enhanced and opportunities for new green links and open spaces will be maximised. New development will reduce the severance resulting from The Highway, Mile End Road and Commercial Road, the waterways and railway lines, and provide public realm improvements. Improved cycling and walking routes will increase local accessibility and access to strategic cycle routes and transport interchanges.

Employment in the area will remain primarily local and small-scale focused in town centres and transport hubs, including Bethnal Green, Mile End and Limehouse. Industrial locations along The Highway and Limehouse Cut will further complement existing employment opportunities and will accommodate an increasing number of flexible workspaces suited to new growth industries, including creative and digital industries.

Queen Mary University of London's role as a knowledge hub will be strengthened, with stronger connections to Mile End Neighbourhood Centre and its public transport interchange. The area will be home to a more diverse range of residential and student communities, with a particular focus on family housing which will benefit from access to varied open spaces.

19.3 To achieve this vision, our objectives are to:

- a. Ensure the strategic north-south spine of Victoria Park and Mile End Park is protected and enhanced with walking and cycling links, whilst maximising opportunities to access the waterways for recreational use
- b. Support a mix of uses in town centres to facilitate community cohesion and strengthen their role, including employment, retail, civic, cultural and leisure uses
- c. Overcome the physical barriers of the road, rail and waterway network to increase connectivity within the area, improve permeability between transport nodes and town centres to strengthen interconnected places
- d. Encourage the regeneration of key historic buildings to preserve the area's diverse heritage assets and character
- e. Deliver a range of housing choice from student accommodation, family housing, infill development and intensification where it contributes to delivering mixed and balanced communities, and
- f. Support the expansion of Queen Mary University of London and associated uses, while ensuring good integration with surrounding areas.

Figure 27: Vision for Central



## Development potential

19.4 By 2031, development within the Central sub-area will be required to accommodate the following uses to meet the future needs of the borough<sup>82</sup>.

### Homes



### Employment floorspace and job numbers



### Retail and leisure floorspace



### Infrastructure



## Delivering sustainable places: Central sub-area development principles

19.5 In line with policy S.SG1, all development in the Central sub-area will seek to deliver the following:

### Creating attractive and distinctive places

1. Create a scale and form of development that provides a consistent and coherent setting for the area it defines and relates to the prevailing townscape.
2. Respond positively to the surrounding context including conservation areas and heritage assets which define the local character.

### Meeting housing needs

3. Provide a range of housing typologies whilst maximising the provision of family housing which can benefit from access to the areas open and water spaces.

### Delivering economic growth

4. Provide small-to-medium enterprises and a range of flexible and affordable workspace opportunities (including supporting facilities such as childcare provision) in and around town centres and transport interchanges, in particular at Bethnal Green and Mile End.
5. Strengthen the role and function of the new Local Industrial Location at Thomas Road, ensuring employment sensitively integrates with the surrounding residential communities.

<sup>82</sup> Development potential figures are indicative and should not represent a ceiling on new development. They are derived from the housing trajectory (see Appendix 7), Employment Land Review and Town Centre Retail Capacity Study which assessed the existing district centres of Roman Road East and Roman Road West).

### Revitalising our town centres

6. Reinforce and complement the local distinctiveness of Crisp Street District Centre, through a range of retail uses and unit sizes, in particular smaller units aimed at existing independent retail providers.
7. Sustain and reinforce a variety and mix of uses in the new neighbourhood centre in Burdett Road South to create a positive sense of place.
8. Contribute to the vitality and mix of uses on key major routes such as Commercial Road and Mile End Road, as well as town centres (Roman Road West, Ben Jonson Road and Limehouse) which have low commercial occupancy rates.

### Protecting and managing our environment

9. Support the provision of innovative waste management and recycling storage and collection systems.
10. Support the expansion of the borough's energy network by exploring the potential of creating a district heating centre in the cluster areas (Stepney, Mile End and Bethnal Green).
11. Improve the ecology of the area and ensure an overall net gain in biodiversity.
12. Improve air quality and reduce exposure to poor air quality.

### Enhancing open spaces and water spaces

13. Direct residential moorings to appropriate locations and ensure they do not result in overconcentration or have an adverse impact on residential amenity.
14. Provide an active edge along the waterway network, and enhance physical and visual access through sites and new or improved routes.
15. Maximise on-site provision of green infrastructure (including open space in areas of open space deficiency) and ensure it is joined up to the green grid network.
16. Improve the unique ecological and historic character of the waterways, Mile End Park and Victoria Park and support their function and role as a recreational focal points for the area and the borough as a whole.
17. Enhance the green corridor between Mile End Park and Victoria Park as well as the area surrounding the Bow Common Gas works site, through improved footways, the greening of facades and incorporating trees and street planters.
18. Improve east-west links through enhancements and expanded green links, particularly at St Paul's Way and along Commercial Road.

### Improving connectivity and travel choice

19. Remove and overcome barriers to walking and cycling movement and ensure existing and new communities across the sub-area are connected to the wider network of new and improved strategic and local connections.
20. Support connectivity and public realm improvements around transport interchanges at Mile End, Bethnal Green, Limehouse and Shadwell.
21. Improve links to the waterways in order to increase access to commuter and leisure-based services.

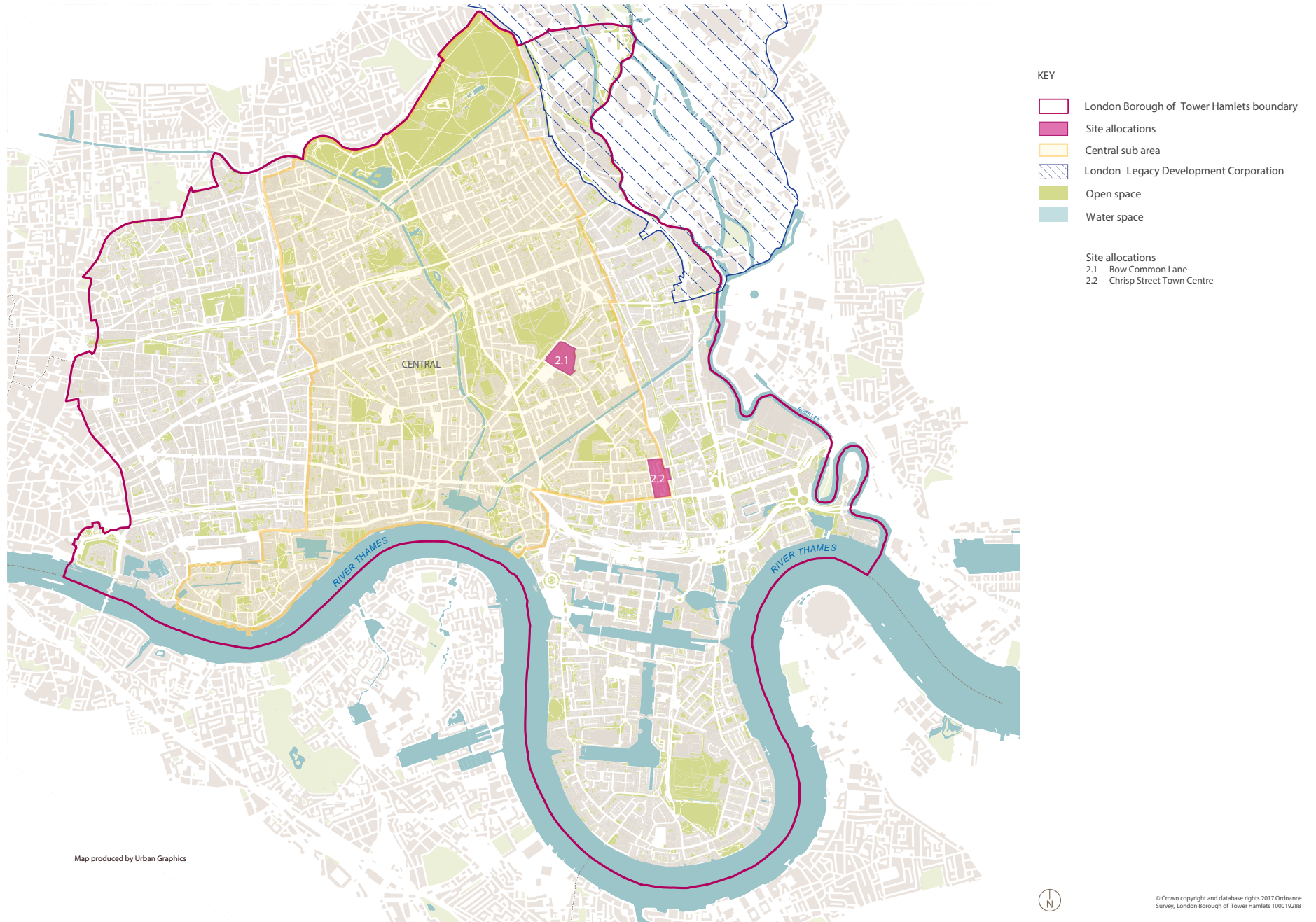
### Site allocations

19.6 The site allocations for the Central sub-area are:

- 2.1: Bow Common Lane
- 2.2: Chrisp Street Town Centre

19.7 The land use, infrastructure and design requirements for each site allocation are set out in the following profiles

Figure 28: Central site allocations





## 2.1: Bow Common Lane

### Design principles

Development will be expected to:

- a. respond positively to the setting of the two conservation areas: Tower Hamlets Cemetery and Swaton Road and the local nature reserve, as well as the scale, height, massing and fine urban grain of the surrounding built environment
- b. integrate the site with Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park through new or improved pedestrian and cycle routes
- c. ensure safe pedestrian and cycling access to the secondary school
- d. locate family housing overlooking the publicly accessible open space
- e. provide new open space with a minimum size of one hectare, which is consolidated and designed to provide multi-functional leisure and recreational uses
- f. integrate the site into the green grid route along Knapp Road and Bow Common Lane
- g. improve biodiversity and ecology within the open space and green infrastructure
- h. improve walking and cycling connections to, from and through the site, specifically to address poor permeability created by the site. These should align with the existing urban grain to support legibility, specifically joining Knapp Road to Bow Common Lane
- i. improve public realm with active site edges, specifically along Bow Common Lane
- j. provide active frontages along the railway to enhance the use and setting of the railway arches as a non-designated heritage asset, and
- k. implement noise screening measures/or a green buffer in areas bordering the railway line.

### Delivery considerations

- a. Development should address the impact of air quality through mitigation measures.
- b. Development should acknowledge the associated costs of decommissioning the gasworks and the relocation of any significant equipment and address any environmental pollution and on site decontamination requirements caused by the gasworks.
- c. Prior to demolition, the gasholders on the site did not accommodate any employment floorspace and therefore this floorspace does not need to be re-provided as part of any new scheme.
- d. Development should accord with any flood mitigation and adaptation measures stated within the borough's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the sequential test.
- e. An assessment should be carried out to understand the potential contamination on site prior to any development taking place.







Address	Bow Common Lane
Size (hectares)	3.94
Public transport accessibility levels	2-5 (2017), 2-5 (2031)
Flood zone(s)	1
Land use requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Housing</li> <li>● Employment: Provision of employment numbers through a range of floor spaces which support small-to-medium enterprises; these can include creative industries and retail</li> </ul>
Infrastructure requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategic open space (minimum of 1 hectare)</li> <li>● Secondary school</li> </ul>

Figure 29: Bow Common Lane



2.1: Bow Common Lane  
(For illustrative purposes)

KEY

-  Site boundary
-  Open space
-  Public square
-  Noise or air screening/green buffer
-  Green grid
-  Rail viaduct



Map produced by Urban Graphics



© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 Ordnance Survey,  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets 100019288

## 2.2: Chrisp Street Town Centre

### Design principles

Development will be expected to:

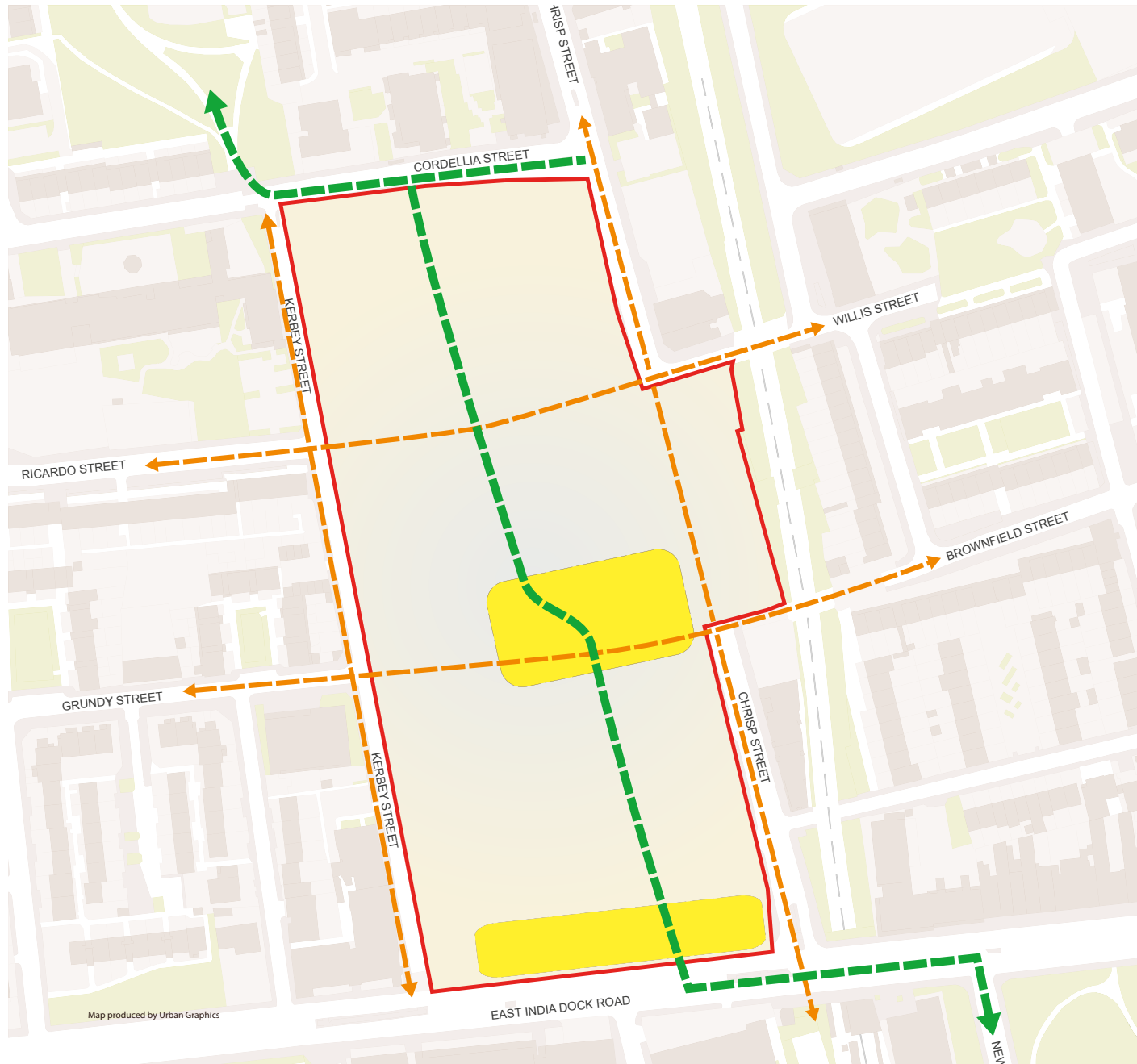
- a. deliver a regenerated town centre for Poplar with a range of unit sizes, (including those suitable for independent and small local retailers), a market square and a re-provided idea store located on East India Dock Road
- b. respond positively to the existing character, scale, height, massing and urban grain of the post-war architecture and surrounding built environment, specifically the Lansbury Estate to the west and Poplar Baths to the south
- c. protect and enhance heritage assets on site and in the surrounding areas, including the grade II listed buildings: Festival Inn, Clocktower and Poplar Baths and the Lansbury Conservation Area
- d. improve walking and cycling connections to, from and within the site - specifically to Langdon Park and All Saints DLR station. These should align with the existing urban form and grain to support east-west connectivity and wider permeability
- e. integrate the site with the green grid route, helping to improve access from East India Dock Road to the north and Bartlett Park
- f. improve the public realm with active site edges, specifically along East India Dock Road and towards all surrounding and internal streets and public spaces, and
- g. reinforce and complement local distinctiveness and create a positive sense of place with improved visual connections to, from and within the site - specifically to Langdon Park and All Saints DLR station and the characteristic clock tower.

### Delivery considerations

- a. Development should re-provide the idea store and ensure it is located within a central position.
- b. Effective engagement between landowners, developers and leaseholders will be needed to facilitate potential land assembly and comprehensive redevelopment. Local residents should also be fully consulted on any future proposals within this area.
- c. Development should ensure sufficient and well-integrated access arrangements for highways and servicing.
- d. Development should accord with any flood mitigation and adaptation measures stated within the borough's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the sequential test.





Address	Chrisp Street/East India Dock Road/Kerbey Street
Size (hectares)	3.62
Public transport accessibility levels	3-5 (2015), 3-6a (by 2031)
Flood zone(s)	2
Land use requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Retail and other compatible commercial uses including leisure uses such as a cinema</li> <li>● Housing</li> </ul>
Infrastructure requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Idea store (re-provision)</li> <li>● Local market (re-provision)</li> </ul>

Figure 30: Crisp Street Town Centre



2.2: Crisp Street Town Centre  
(For illustrative purposes)

KEY

-  Site boundary
-  Public square
-  Strategic pedestrian/cycling routes
-  Green grid



Map produced by Urban Graphics



© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 Ordnance Survey,  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets 100019288