

ROMAN ROAD BOW NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

2021 - 2031

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Green streets that encourage walking and cycling

Policy GS1: Improving safe walking and cycling routes

Beautiful public spaces

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New life for our local heritage

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LIST OF NON-POLICY ACTIONS

The following table summarises issues referred to in the neighbourhood plan which aren't directly related to land use. Tackling them has the potential to contribute to sustainable economic, social and environmental development in the neighbourhood area.

Non-land use issues to be addressed Thriving high street and local economy

Site specific action LE2: Bow House Business Centre, 153-159 Bow Road E3 2SE

Action LE3: Sustained support for job seekers and local businesses

Action LE4: Local cross-sector collaboration

Green streets that encourage walking and cycling

Action GS2: to improve safe walking

and cycling

New life for our local heritage

Action HE3: Opportunities for new types of Public House

Action HE4: Wayfinding and Bow Heritage Trail

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Action CF3: Improving existing community centres

Action CF4: Forming a consortium of community groups

Action CF5: Community Asset Transfer and Assets of Community Value

Action CF6: Improving access to health and social care facilities

Welcome from the Chair of Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum

In February 2016 when Roman Road Trust first tabled the idea for preparing a neighbourhood plan at a public meeting, it wasn't the threat of large scale development that brought us together, but the opportunities that we all saw for engaging in a neighbourhood planning process that would create the means to bring new life to our high street and green spaces; to raise awareness about what is valuable about the community we live in - its ethnic diversity, its history of championing social change and the heritage of some of its architecture - public buildings, bridges, houses and pubs. We also recognised that the neighbourhood has some challenges: the impacts of traffic on air quality are making walking and cycling less appealing; a shortage of genuinely affordable and good quality homes; a narrow range of shops, empty retail units and a struggling market. A neighbourhood plan could help to direct funding to address some of these challenges.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on fissures that were already present in our neighbourhood's fabric - more retail units are under threat, there is less funding available to improve open spaces and community facilities, at a time when these have become more valued. At the same time, wider issues of climate change create local consequences that the plan can help to address.

This final draft of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity to test with the community whether the policies and actions proposed here can withstand the added pressures facing our neighbourhood, and still shape and safeguard its physical fabric. We welcome your comments and feedback on the policies and actions we have set out, that are drawn from what you have told us is important over the last three years.

Thank you for your support and engagement so far.

Alex Holmes

**Chair Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood
Forum Committee**

The Forum would like to give special thanks to the following people who have given their time, support and expertise towards the development of the plan: Local residents - Sarah Allan, Eddie Blake, Sarah Bland, Gavin Cambridge, Janita Han, Patricia Hernandez, Alex Holmes, Tom Martin, Margaret McGinley, Mike Mitchell,, Natalya Palit, Lee Sargent, Tabitha Stapely, Rosie Vincent, John White, Nadia Wilkinson, Marco Zed. Chris Bowden (Navigus Planning), Ellie Kuper-Thomas, Steven Heywood (LBTH Plan Making Team), Daniella Ricci and Torange Khonsari (Public Works), Elena Besussi, Tse Wing Lam, David Maguire, Hui Yam (Bartlett School of Planning UCL); Gabriella Cara, Mihir Kataria, Adriana Neamtu, Wahida Omar, Aman Rathour (QConsult team Queen Mary College).

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the plan

This is the Neighbourhood Plan for the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Area over the period from 2021 to 2031. The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA) and provide guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development in the NPA. The plan defines a vision for the NPA focussing on the local economy, connectivity, open space, heritage, housing and community infrastructure, and sets out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period.

The Covid-19 pandemic has seriously impacted Bow and the local economy, whilst also demonstrating the resilience and cohesion of our local community. We believe the neighbourhood plan offers a framework that will help shape a sustainable future for Bow, whilst respecting our rich heritage.

1.2 Structure of the plan

The Plan comprises a vision for the area, and a set of objectives in thematic chapters. Each of the objectives presents a summary of issues followed by the different policies, actions and aspirations. These are respectively accompanied by their conformity with other policies and a justification.

The planning policies are in green boxes. Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific. In considering proposals for development, Tower Hamlets Council will apply all relevant policies in the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.

The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of aspirations and actions which have not been included in the policies' sections. This is because these are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore sit outside the jurisdiction of a Neighbourhood Plan. These aspirations and actions will be addressed outside the Neighbourhood Plan process and are shown in yellow boxes.

Green box = Planning policies

Yellow box = aspirations and actions

1.3 Preparation of the plan

The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum (RRBNF) Committee, formed in February 2016 after the first Neighbourhood Forum meeting, where the proposal to prepare a neighbourhood plan was put forward and discussed.

Tower Hamlets Council, as the local planning authority, designated the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Planning Area (NPA) in February 2017 and amended this in June 2021. The revised boundary excludes small areas of land adjacent to the A12 Blackwall Tunnel Road that lie within the London Legacy Development Corporation's

planning area.

The Council designated the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Planning Forum, (the body responsible for developing the plan), in August 2017.

The different topic areas in the Plan reflect matters that are important to the NPA's residents, businesses and community groups. The Forum Committee has sought to engage the local community at each stage of the preparation of the plan. See the accompanying Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan Engagement Report ¹, prepared by Public Works, that forms part of the evidence base supporting the Plan's proposals and policies.



Fig. 1: General Meeting 2017 in The Common Room

INTRODUCTION

1.4 Wider policy context

This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).

The Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, will represent one part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area over the period 2021 to 2031, the other parts being the Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031 and The London Plan 2020. The National Planning Policy Framework, representing national planning policy, is also a material consideration.

1.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy and provides general guidance on a wide range of planning matters. It includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, meaning that the development plan should seek to meet the needs of the borough for housing and other uses, and that planning proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved. Where there are no policies relevant to the application, either within the Neighbourhood Plan or other relevant and up-to-date plans for the area, then Tower Hamlets

Council should grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF outlines the purpose of neighbourhood planning: “[it] gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development...” (p10, para. 29, NPPF 2019). The NPPF establishes the framework for developing local plans and neighbourhood plans. It states that “Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.” (p5, para. 9, NPPF 2019).

1.4.2 The London Plan 2020

A neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with The London Plan. The London Plan contains detailed planning policy which must be applied, where relevant, to proposals in the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan Area unless there are very good reasons for not doing so.

The Roman Road Bow NPA falls within the London Plan’s Strategic Areas for Regeneration. Roman Road (East) has been classified as a district centre, with low commercial growth potential and incremental residential growth potential (p547, Table A1.1, The London Plan).

1.4.3 Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031 (p198, para 17.9) concerning sustainable places acknowledges the contribution of neighbourhood plans: “Neighbourhood plans may also shape the future planning of these areas at a neighbourhood level and developers and other relevant parties will need to consult with neighbourhood forums to inform development proposals in the neighbourhood planning areas.”

The Roman Road Bow NPA falls within the Central sub-area (p199, Tower Hamlets Local Plan). The NPA sits within Bow, one of nine character areas within the Central sub-area. There are no site allocations within the NPA or in close proximity.

There are 20 wards in Tower Hamlets local authority boundary. The NPA sits within two wards - Bow East and Bow West.

Central Area Good Growth Supplementary Planning Document, Tower Hamlets Council August 2021

The Central Area, which includes Bow, is only one of four sub-areas in the borough that is not an Opportunity Area of high growth. However; “in order to meet future needs, the Central Area needs to accommodate 7,597 new homes, or 14% of the borough’s total, during the plan period.”¹

The Central Area Good Growth SPD

provides guidance to help the council deliver this housing growth, focusing specifically on design guidance to ensure that new developments respect and enhance the well-established character of this part of the borough. In addition to helping the council deliver its vision for the Central Area, the SPD also supports Priority 2 of **Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan 2020-23:** “People live in a borough that is clean and green; People live in good quality affordable homes and well-designed neighbourhoods; People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled; People feel they are part of a cohesive and vibrant community.”²

1.5 Monitoring the Plan

Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum, as the responsible body for the Neighbourhood Plan, will maintain and periodically revisit the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

LOCAL CONTEXT

1.6 Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary



Fig. 2: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary

The NPA is located between Globe Town to the west, Victoria Park to the north, Mile End to the south and Fish Island and the Olympic Park to the East. The A12 Blackwall Tunnel Road cuts through Bow north to south. Fish Island to the East is in a separate planning authority, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), formed in April 2012 to secure the

legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games. All LLDC land is excluded from the plan area.

The NPA is similar in boundary to the area identified as "Bow" in the Tower Hamlets Local Plan Sub Area 2: Central.

2.1 History of Bow

2.1.1 Economic character

London's docks had driven employment in Bow until their decline after the second world war and closure in the late 1960's. The docks represented east London's connection with trade and industry (The Bryant and May match factory, which closed in 1979, became one of East London's first urban renewal projects in 1988). For over 100 years, the economy of Roman Road Bow has been shaped by The Roman Road Market, which has been an important employer in

the area, sustaining local retail and businesses. The market once attracted visitors from across London, but has been in decline in recent years.

2.1.2 Urban character

The Central Area Good Growth SPD characterises the Bow area as a location which: "...generally has a finer grain to the west and a coarser grain to the east, with poorer permeability and legibility in and around post-war estates and more recent developments, and easier movement where Victorian and Georgian terraces are prevalent."³



Fig. 3: Bow's mixed urban fabric

LOCAL CONTEXT

The varied character of street patterns, open spaces and homes in the NPA reflect Bow's rapid growth and change over 200 years. Georgian houses on Coburn Road and Tredegar Square are examples of the prosperity in Bow during the 1700's. The Victorian period saw rapid industrial growth with new road, rail and waterway infrastructure that today are assets as well as barriers to connectivity. Victoria Park, built in 1845 as a lung for the local population to escape the polluted east end air, is still a popular

and cherished green space. Post-war slum clearances saw the development of housing estates such as the Ranwell Estate and the Malmesbury Estate. Their layouts created new open spaces, many of them now under-used. Nearly 1,700 homes were built in the wider Bow area, including the NPA, between 2010-15. With little available land, the Council has focused on infill sites, demolishing Council owned buildings which no longer serve their original purpose, and re-building on these sites. Between

2015-19 planning approval was granted to almost 170 new homes, including 106 age-restricted flats,^{4,5} four townhouses⁶ and 32 dwellings for market sale to cross-subsidise some of the age-restricted developments.

2.1.3 Social and cultural identity
Bow has a rich history exemplifying the East End spirit of determination and resilience. It has been home to social reform movements such as the Suffragettes, and for centuries immigrants have settled here, shaping the area's local character and identity.



Fig. 5: Suffragette Mural , Lord Morpeth

Artists have established themselves in Bow since the East London Group in the 1920's, and continue to find a place here, producing and exhibiting their work. In Hackney Wick there is still a thriving community of artists, with 610 studios and up to five artists per studio. The LLDC, in preparing its plans for building new homes in Hackney Wick and Fish Island, realised they needed to accommodate growth without displacing the area's existing

working and creative community. There are concerns however; that rising rental costs are driving some artists away. In writing the neighbourhood plan for Bow, we have sought to ensure we value and conserve our rich and diverse heritage, whilst supporting high quality, sustainable development.

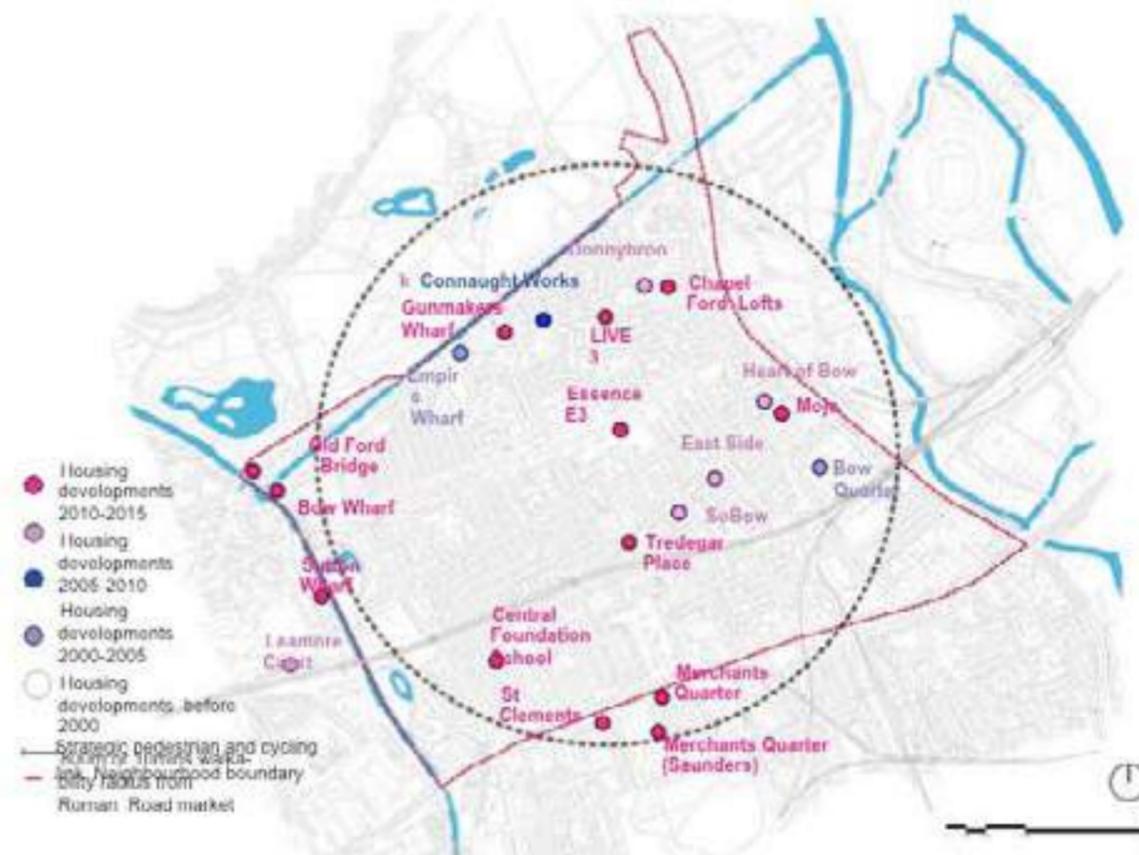


Fig. 4: Housing developments in Bow 2000 – 2015
(<https://romanroadlondon.com/residential-housing-developments-bow/>)

LOCAL CONTEXT

2.2 Profile of the community today

2011 Census data shows the population of Bow East and Bow West wards was 27,720. Projected growth for 2018-2028 for part of Bow East, which includes Fish Island, is over 51%, with a slight fall predicted for most of Bow West. This is because there is little housing development planned in Bow West, while at the same time the average household size of the existing population is expected to fall as the population ages.

2.2.1 Bow West Ward⁷

41% of residents were Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). This proportion was lower than the borough average of 54%

Residents of Bangladeshi origin accounted for 21% of the population, also a lower proportion than the borough average

The population aged 65 and over was almost 2% higher than the borough average, at 8%, with the under 16's forming 19% of the local population 33% of the ward's households were owner occupied. As a result, there were a correspondingly lower proportion of households who lived in socially rented accommodation (39%) or privately rented accommodation (28%)

Renters as a whole account for 66% compared to the borough average of

2.2.2 Bow East Ward⁸

40% of residents in the ward were BME, 14% lower than the borough average of 54%

Residents of Bangladeshi origin accounted for 17% of the population, a lower proportion than the borough average

The population aged 65 and over was almost 1.5% higher than the borough average, at 7.4%, with the under 16's forming 17.5% of the local population, 2% lower than the borough average There was a higher than average proportion of socially rented properties and a higher than average proportion of private rented properties in this ward accounting for 73% of all properties in the ward



Fig. 6: Welcome banner outside Chisenhale School

LOCAL CONTEXT

2.3 Opportunities and challenges in Roman Road Bow

A series of public engagement events run by the Forum Committee in 2018 and presented in more detail in the supporting evidence material, highlighted serious challenges that are described below.

Comments gathered from a consultation with local communities conducted by the Forum in 2018. Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan; report by UCL MSc Spatial Planning students (2019)

"Playground is uninspiring. How about improving the playground for the very little ones? Not much for toddlers to play here."

"There is inadequate visitor cycle parking along Roman Road. Adding additional sheffield stands would encourage sustainable transport."

"Protecting current and more green spaces. Planting trees and fruit trees can be helpful."

"Width of pavement adjacent to bus stop on eastern side of Grove Road is far too narrow, when there are many passengers waiting."

"Hostile and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists with no pedestrian crossing."

"Mile End Park - neglected, unwelcoming."

"Poor streetscape and need more trees on Roman Road.."

"I love the pretty oversized iris on pedestrianised Eden Way. There are other flowers dotted around Bow but this is a favourite. More please!"

"Significant barrier for pedestrian and cyclist movement to the: green space of the Olympic Park and all of its health and leisure facilities."

LOCAL CONTEXT

2.3.1 The local economy

Opportunities:

The Roman Road has an historic street market and a number of long established family businesses, shops and eating places. There are also a number of popular pubs such as Eleanor Arms, Lord Tredegar, Morgan Arms, The Coburn and the Palm Tree in Mile End Park.

Challenge:

There are a substantial number of empty retail units, particularly on Roman Road. Residents have commented on the narrow range of shops, lack of restaurants and almost no evening economy. The historic street market, while popular with some residents, no longer has the wider draw that it used to. Heavy traffic along St Stephen's Road and Tredegar Road discourages people from visiting the area. There are other underused local shopping parades, such as on Malmesbury Road.

2.3.2 Transport and connectivity

Opportunities:

The area has good transport connections, with Mile End and Bow Road tube stations and Bow Church DLR stations on its southern boundary, and is well served by bus routes.

Challenges:

There are limited cycle routes and cycle parking through the neighbourhood plan area. Many residents highlighted the poor pedestrian and cycle connections, such as Tredegar Road/A12 junction, as barriers to accessing the facilities of the Olympic Park.



Fig. 7: Former Co-op funeral care



Fig. 8: Crown Close pedestrian bridge

LOCAL CONTEXT

The pedestrian environment is considered poor by many residents, who highlighted speeding commuter traffic, pollution and congestion as issues across the area. The market section of Roman Road is a one-way street on non-market days, making it less attractive for pedestrians.

Mile End and Bow Road underground stations lack step-free access. Fish Island has its own Area Action Plan, which highlights poor connectivity with the surrounding area: *“Enhancing connectivity between Fish Island and its surroundings to make a genuinely joined up place in East London will be essential to secure sustainable development and ensure that the communities in Tower Hamlets can enjoy the benefits flowing from the Olympic Legacy and Stratford City developments.”*⁹



Fig. 9: Traffic congestion on Roman Rd

2.3.3 Public realm and green spaces

Opportunities:

The Neighbourhood Plan Area is bounded by excellent large parks including Victoria Park to the north, Mile End Park to the West and The Olympic Park to the East. The Hertford Union canal runs along the edge of Victoria Park, which links with the Regent's canal that runs along the edge of Mile End Park. All of these provide much appreciated amenity spaces.

Bow is privileged to have Growing Concerns garden centre locally, which can assist with the design and planting of gardening projects.

Challenge:

The maintenance of Mile End Park is under-resourced. There is anti-social behaviour along the canal towpath and in the park. Green spaces in housing estates are often under-used and unloved. Some parts of the area lack any green spaces or trees.

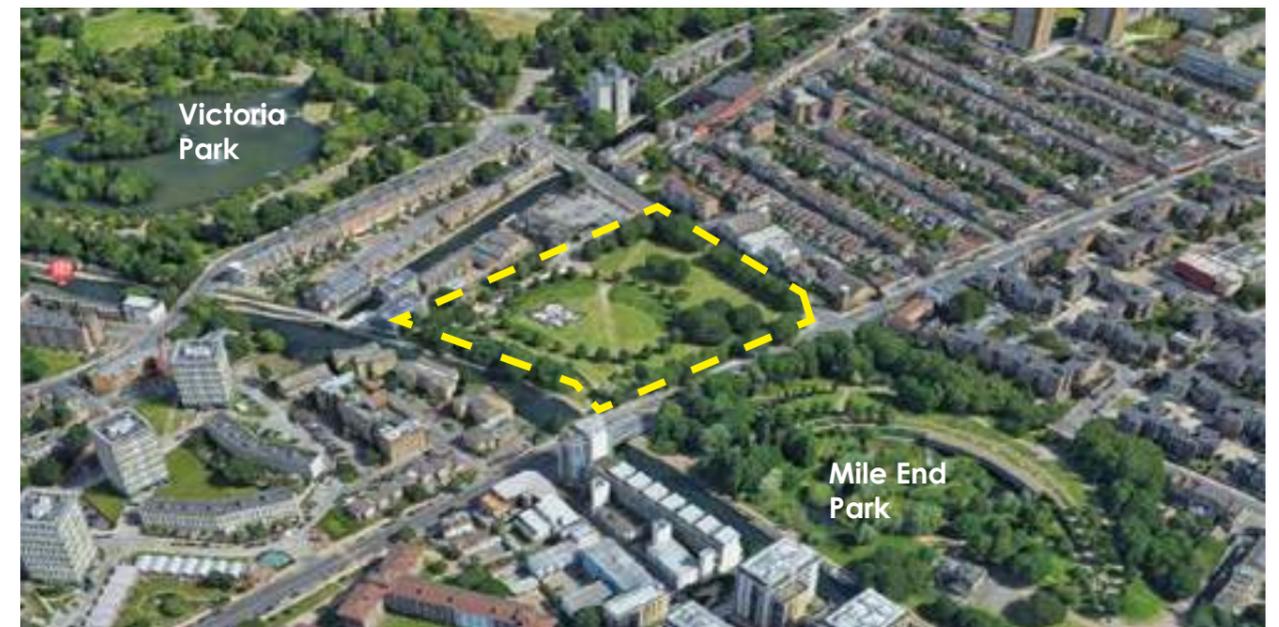


Fig. 10: Wennington Green

LOCAL CONTEXT

2.3.4 Heritage

Opportunities:

Bow has a wealth of history, including its industrial and suffragette past.

Challenges:

The fragile character of Roman Road has been eroded in the past by unsympathetic alterations and re-building. Conservation areas sometimes lack detailed guidance over where extensions may be appropriate, including guidance on

form, colour, texture, profile, materials, massing, fenestration, buildings lines, street frontages, scale, proportion and architectural detail. Heritage assets, such as historic canal bridges, are often poorly maintained with a lack of clarity over who is responsible for them. At the Former Coborn Station on Coborn Road, buddleia overhangs the entrance, and the blue plaque that was above the main entrance, is no longer there.



Fig. 11: The Former Coborn Station, Coborn Road.

2.3.6 Housing

Opportunities:

The fine grain and low-rise character of the area is appreciated by residents, who wish this to be maintained. There is an opportunity for well-designed, small-scale, affordable housing schemes, including community-led developments. These opportunities are more clearly defined below:

To identify and allocate appropriate small sites for well designed, residential developments, and encourage intensification of under-developed and brownfield sites.

To encourage creative design in small-scale housing developments, and to promote a greater variety of housing types which foster community cohesion.

To promote affordable housing suitable for people of all ages and circumstances, helping to build long-term communities, and reducing the transient population.

To promote and prioritise Community-Led Housing, through organisations like the Roman Road Community Land Trust, as a preferred delivery mechanism for affordable housing.

To support low carbon housing.

Challenges:

There is a lack of genuinely affordable housing, alongside a piecemeal approach to development, including infills. This is due, in part, to the lack of available development sites, and the existing dense urban grain of the area.

Increasing house prices are prohibitive for many, and there is a need for more housing for people on modest incomes and for larger families.

A Housing Needs Assessment for Bow, conducted in March 2020, concluded:

“Unless there is an increase in the vacancy rate from the existing affordable housing stock, the flow of unmet affordable need is an average of 86 dwellings per annum in Bow East and an average of 97 dwellings per annum in Bow West over the 5-year period to 2024, a total of 183 per annum. The capacity of affordable housing in the wards would need to double in approximate terms to generate sufficient supply on an annual basis to meet this requirement. Nearly half of this requirement would need to be in the form of 1-bedroom flats and apartments. 3 and 4-bedroom affordable homes should also be built in smaller quantities. Building of 2-bedroom homes should be resisted as the existing capacity of 2-bedroom homes in the wards is significantly higher than the requirement.”¹⁰

LOCAL CONTEXT

2.3.5 Community infrastructure

Opportunity:

There are several well-loved cultural facilities such as Chisenhale Studios and Bow Arts Trust, and a variety of places of worship, including Bow Church, commissioned in 1311.



Fig. 12: Chisenhale Studios

Challenges:

Some community facilities are underused, such as the Ecology and Arts Pavilions in Mile End Park. The number of general community spaces and halls is falling due to increasing rents. Out of school children's and youth provision in the area is sparse and patchy. A survey of 54 students at Morpeth School concluded:
*"Regarding the desire for new facilities, youth clubs were mentioned by 22% of students, contrasting with only 6% saying they attend one. The fact that 65% of students mentioned leisure facilities of some kind demonstrates a clear desire for more or better youth leisure provision."*¹¹



Fig. 13: Art Pavilion in Mile End Park

VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR ROMAN ROAD

Our vision is for step-by-step improvements led by the community, to protect and enhance a neighbourhood where everyone feels they belong.

We believe that the implementation of the policies and actions in this plan will bring:

- greater flexibility of commercial spaces for different business uses, halting the decline of our high street whilst retaining and diversifying local employment opportunities;
- improvements to walking and cycling routes, creating safer streets and benefitting the health of the local community;
- a friendlier outdoor environment with spaces that are loved by local people, by removing unnecessary street furniture and improving specific open spaces across the neighbourhood;
- new life to the Bow Heritage Trail and protect our public houses and waterway infrastructure, placing the rich history of the area at the heart of future changes
- new homes built by and for the local community, giving residents an affordable choice of continuing to live in the neighbourhood; and
- greater control to the network of community groups who support a wide range of activities in the area allowing them to ensure these activities can flourish and benefit the local community into the future.

Our vision is underpinned by the following six objectives that support the plan policies:

Objective 1: Thriving high street and local economy

Bow neighbourhood offers a wider variety of shops and other amenities. There are fewer vacant units, Roman Road having adapted its offer to reflect the range of different needs of the population, providing a more lively and safe local centre throughout the day and into the evening. Overall, retail is a smaller part in the local economy, the district centre having a broader range of uses and activities, including, the charitable sector, leisure, arts and culture, health and social care services. Modern local landmarks such as Bow House Business Centre are fully occupied, and provide much needed space for businesses and other local groups.

Policy encouraging flexible use of premises	Policy LE1
Site specific action: Bow House Business Centre businesses	Action LE2
Action for support to job seekers and local businesses	Action LE3

Objective 2: Green streets that encourage walking and cycling

By 2031, we have a high quality network of pedestrian and cycle connections and supporting infrastructure such as secure short-term cycle parking. The area is more accessible to get to and move around in. Liveable Neighbourhoods funding has delivered a network of attractive green routes that are safe to use. Instead of driving, people choose to walk and cycle, reducing local traffic volumes, associated air pollution and parking issues.

Policy for improving safe walking and cycling routes	Policy GS1
Actions to improve walking and cycling	Action GS2

Objective 3: Beautiful public spaces

By 2031, investment has transformed the public realm by creating green and de-cluttered local streets. Popular play areas designed to encourage free play and a love of nature now replace previously neglected spaces. The former car park on the corner of Roman Road and St Stephens Road plays a valuable role as a community space. The improved public realm has helped to reduce anti-social behaviour. Residents and businesses are proud of their high quality, litter-free environment - fly-tipping is no longer tolerated following vigorous campaigning and local action by the community.

Policy to enhance public realm spaces	Policy PS1
Policy to designate local green spaces	Action PS2

VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR ROMAN ROAD

Objective 4: New life for our local heritage

By 2031, an updated Bow Heritage Trail links historic buildings, parks, galleries, pubs and restaurants, street market and shops along pedestrian friendly routes. Undervalued heritage assets such as the Three Colts and Parnell Road bridges over the Hertford Canal are better conserved. Our precious heritage resource is protected and enhanced to ensure that it continues to be appreciated and enjoyed by future generations.

Policy for Bow Wharf waterway infrastructure conservation and enhancement	Policy HE1
Policy for public houses to become locally designated heritage assets	Policy HE2
Action supporting opportunities for new types of public house	Action HE3
Action for an updated Bow Heritage Trail	Action HE4

Objective 5: High Quality, affordable housing

By 2031, new developments over the last decade are well integrated with existing communities, retaining the character of local neighbourhoods without destroying locally listed assets. A majority of the homes are low carbon homes. Roman Road CLT has pioneered a few affordable and well designed community-led housing schemes around Bow. Incremental, small scale residential projects over time have created a greater variety of housing types. These projects reflect the local housing need and area and successfully promote community cohesion.

Policy on site allocations	Policy H1
Policy supporting community-led housing	Policy H2
Policy on low carbon homes	Policy H3

Objective 6: Resilient and well-networked community infrastructure

By 2031 funding from new developments has enabled the creation of new places for young people to meet and there is an established and financially stable network of community groups running activities and facilities supporting the diverse population in the area. Grassroots organisations, child and youth groups, arts and performance organisations and places of worship are part of a community consortium, working together identifying and agreeing funding opportunities for provision of new or expansion of existing facilities or activities across the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Policy to develop new and improved sports and play facilities	Policy CF1
Policy to develop new and improved youth facilities and support	Policy CF2
Action to form a consortium of community groups	Action CF4
Action to improve existing community centres	Policy CF3
Action to encourage Community Asset Transfer	Action CF5
Action to improve accessibility to health and social care facilities	Action CF6

OBJECTIVE 1: THRIVING HIGH STREET AND LOCAL ECONOMY

By 2031, Bow neighbourhood offers a wider variety of shops and other amenities. There are fewer vacant units, Roman Road having adapted its offer to reflect the range of different needs of the population, providing a more lively and safe local centre throughout the day and into the evening. Overall, retail is a smaller part in the local economy, the district centre having a broader range of uses and activities, including, the charitable sector, leisure, arts and culture, health and social care services. Modern local landmarks such as Bow House Business Centre, are fully occupied, and provide much needed space for businesses and other local groups.

4.1 Summary of current issues

Shop units on Roman Road are under-occupied, and many are in poor condition. On 1st November 2019, before the Covid 19 pandemic, 10% of shops (12) in the street market area and 17% (19) of shops between St. Stephen's Road and Grove Road were not in use.¹² High rent and rates make viability for many small businesses difficult. Residents have commented on the narrow range of shops, lack of restaurants and small evening economy.

4.2 Policy encouraging flexible use of premises

4.2.1 Key issue

High rent and business rates, combined with an over-reliance on retail, duplication of a narrow range of businesses and rigidity in how premises are used, has led to many vacant premises.

4.2.2 Policy

Policy LE1: Encouraging flexible use of premises

In order to support the Bow economy, proposals to deliver class E uses that are capable of supporting maker spaces, cultural or leisure activities and social enterprises will be strongly supported. Such proposals must ensure that they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of surrounding occupiers, particularly residential occupiers.

4.2.3 Conformity with other policies

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) [...] Regulations 2000; clause 7 Buildings and land previously classed as shops, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes or businesses will be treated as being used for the single class E, "commercial business and service". When new buildings are built for a use under Use Class E, they need to be constructed with adaptability (in terms of use) in mind.

The London Plan 2020, Policy E3: Affordable Workspace

This states that "In defined circumstances...,planning obligations may be used to secure affordable workspace (in the B Use Class) at rents maintained below the market rate for that space for a specific social, cultural or economic development purpose..." (page 271)

The London Plan 2020, Policy HC6: Promoting the night-time economy The London Plan actively promotes local night-time economies. (page 343)

The London Plan 2020, Policy SD6: Town centres and high streets The vitality and viability of London's varied town centres should be promoted and enhanced by: encouraging strong, resilient, accessible and inclusive hubs with a diverse range of uses that meet the needs of Londoners, including main town centre uses, night-time economy, civic, community, social and residential uses.

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, Section 4: Delivering Sustainable Places - 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." (page 222)

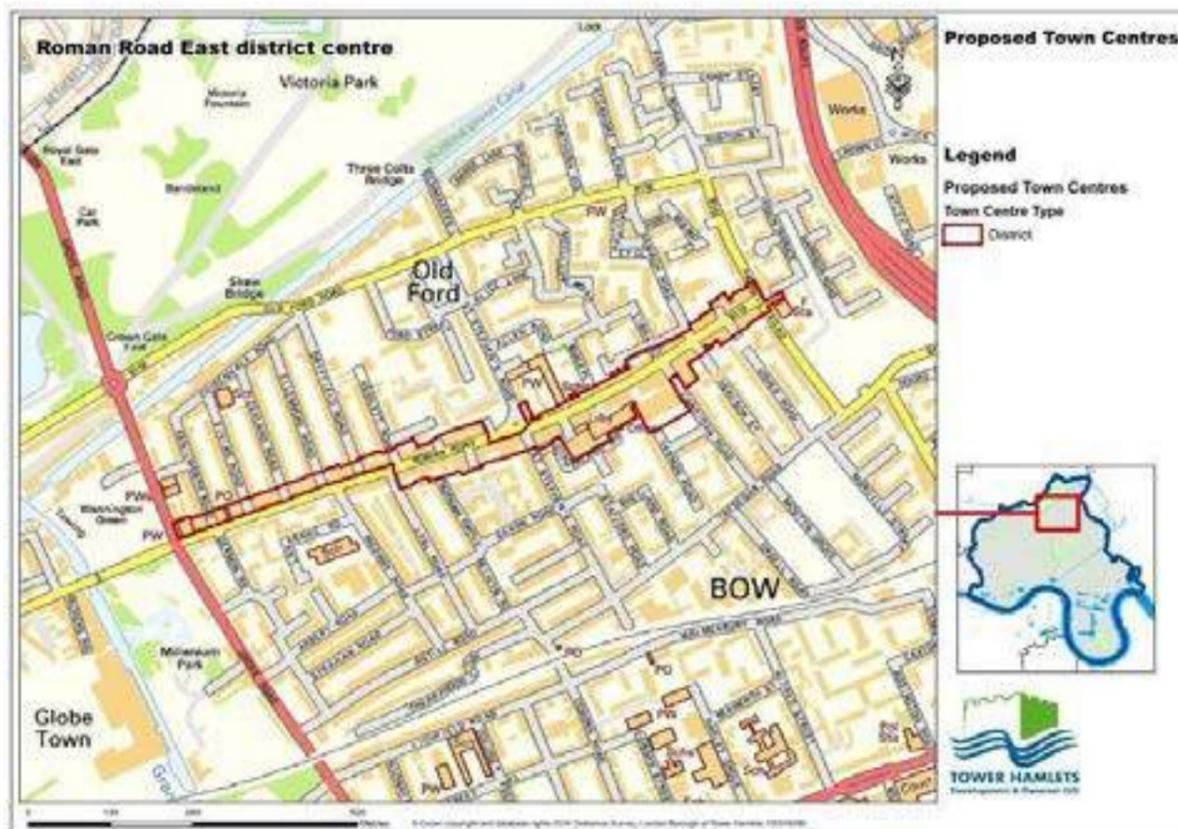


Fig. 14: Roman Road East District Centre

OBJECTIVE 1: THRIVING HIGH STREET AND LOCAL ECONOMY

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, Policy S.EMP1

"District Centres and larger Neighbourhood Centres also provide opportunities for purpose-built office buildings with ground-floor retail and leisure uses." (page 98)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, Policy S.TC1, Supporting the network and hierarchy of centres

District Centres, including Roman Road East: "Promote as vibrant hubs containing a wide range of shops, services and employment." Neighbourhood Parades, including Bow Road: "Ensure that Neighbourhood Parades meet the needs of their local catchments and complement the role of other centres further up the hierarchy." (page 110)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, Policy D.TC7 Markets

"1. Development proposals impacting existing markets will only be supported where:
a. they demonstrate that the overall quality of the market and public realm will be improved;
b. the capacity for existing numbers of pitches is maintained, and
c. they protect or re-provide appropriate storage and servicing facilities.
2. Proposals for new markets, including farmers' markets and 'streetfood' markets, will be encouraged. They will be directed to Major, District or Neighbourhood

Centres and should enhance the centre's existing offer and contribute to vitality and cohesion." (page 126)

New local planning guidance emphasises the importance of flexible and shared workspaces and affordable workspaces being provided by specialist providers:

Planning Obligations: SPD March 2021

"Workspace can take a range of forms, such as flexible or shared workspace where tenants have a flexible agreement through a workspace provider. It can also include discounted floorspace for one or more SMEs, or shared industrial workspace for businesses or artists. The Council's preference is for developers to deliver the Affordable Workspace, via a specialist workplace provider...." (page 29, paragraph 5.59)

4.2.4 Justification

The need for local, flexible and affordable workspace is demonstrated by the Mainyard Studios 2020 application to construct music studios and creative workspace in the garden of 35-37 Bow Road, E3 2AD.¹³ The Leaside Area Action Plan (AAP) Policy LS6 states that within the AAP area major developments with workspace should provide 10% of that floorspace as smaller, flexible units of between 25-50sqm that can be aimed at makers, micro-businesses, start-ups, and creative enterprises. The idea of these units is to provide a small, affordable space for local

businesses to be started and to grow, and to encourage quick occupation and ease of access they should be fully fitted out as 'plug and play' units, rather than requiring occupiers to finish the fit-out. This policy will not apply to E-class office uses,....'

House of Commons; High Streets and Town Centres in 2030 (2019)

This national report identifies major trends that have made it harder for local high streets to thrive, including the growth of online shopping. Four structural issues were identified:

- Too much retail space, with retail acting as the main anchor for many high streets.
- Fragmented ownership, which makes working collectively with local businesses very hard.
- Retailers' high fixed costs: business rates and rents. The retail sector accounts for 5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and pays 25% of business rates.
- Business taxation. Government action is needed to level the playing field between online and high street retailers.

"Achieving the large-scale structural change needed will require an intervention led by the local authority, using all its powers and backed by cross-sector collaboration. However, given the financial pressure faced by local authorities, central government funding will be needed for this, as well as significant private sector investment." (page 25, paragraph 54)

The **Future High Streets Fund** launched by Central Government in December 2018, is an example of the sort of intervention needed at a national level. The Covid-19 pandemic only

strengthens the case for such National Government intervention, supported by committed, consistent local authority action.

Q Consult Business Survey; Queen Mary College students; December 2019

A recommendation in the Q Consult report into multiple use-classes was to offer more information to the local community. "The idea of use-classes and multiple use-classes may be new to many businesses on the high street, including those that have operated for a longer period of time. An increase of awareness, as well as an explanation of the benefits of dual use-classes may encourage owners to reconsider. Therefore, raising awareness and giving more information through leaflets, mailing subscriptions, or local meetings should be continued." ¹⁴

4.3 Site specific action: Bow House Business Centre

4.3.1 Key issue

Tower Hamlets is a popular location for entrepreneurs to establish and grow their businesses. A common factor that restricts local enterprise development is the lack of suitable, affordable workspace and business premises.

OBJECTIVE 1: THRIVING HIGH STREET AND LOCAL ECONOMY

4.3.2 Action

Action LE2: Bow House Business Centre, 153-159 Bow Road E3 2SE

Planning applications will be encouraged that support Bow House Business Centre as a provider of affordable workspace for local businesses, social enterprises and other organisations.



Fig. 15: Bow House Business Centre

4.3.3 Conformity with other policies

The London Plan 2020, Policy E3: Affordable Workspace

"In defined circumstances, planning obligations may be used to secure affordable workspace at rents maintained below the market rate for that space for a specific social, cultural or economic development purpose. Such circumstances include workspace that is:

- 1. dedicated for specific sectors that have social value such as charities or social enterprises*
- 2. dedicated for specific sectors that*

have cultural value such as artists' studios and designer-maker spaces
3. dedicated for disadvantaged groups starting up in any sector
4. providing educational outcomes through connections to schools, colleges or higher education
5. supporting start-up businesses or regeneration." (para. A; page 271)

4.3.4 Justification

Tower Hamlets Affordable Workspace Evidence Base – policy review, February 2018

"Based on the above review of existing evidence-base documents, there is demand for affordable workspace throughout the borough and the proposed 10% reduction of market rent on 10% of office floorspace is viable." (page 18, paragraph 3.7)

Bow House Business Centre planning history: The 1930s former Poplar Town Hall was granted Listed Building Status (grade II) in 2009. The site also falls within a Conservation Area. It has over 40,000 square feet of space over four floors.

The London Plan E3 policy states particular consideration should be given to the need for affordable workspace in several circumstances, including 'in locations where the provision of affordable workspace would be necessary or desirable to sustain a mix of business or cultural uses which contribute to the character of an area.' (E3 paragraph B)

'It can be provided directly by a public, charitable or other

supporting body; through grant and management arrangements (for example through land trusts); and/or secured permanently by planning or other agreements.' (6.3.1)

4.4 Action for support to job seekers and local businesses

4.4.1 Key issue

Trust for London data on poverty and inequality in Tower Hamlets, reported that in October 2020 figures showed an unemployment rate of 6%, and that "The child poverty rate is the highest of all the London boroughs, with 57% of children judged to be living in households in poverty, compared to 38% in the typical London borough."¹⁶

Tower Hamlets Growth and Economic Development Plan 2018-2023

Priority 3 describes the challenge of creating the conditions for business growth: "Tower Hamlets has a strong economy but it is very much polarised between very large firms and small businesses. Providing the support and opportunity for small firms to grow can create more skilled and semi-skilled roles that allow hard working people with a variety of talents to earn a living wage." (Page 24)

4.4.2 Action

Action LE3: Sustained support for job seekers and local businesses

The Neighbourhood Forum supports the continued funding of programmes such as WorkPath, Young WorkPath and the Education Business Partnership to help local residents get work-ready and find jobs, and the Enterprise team's Ready programme to help businesses start, grow and reach new markets. Targeted support is needed for charities, voluntary and

community organisations and social enterprises.

The Forum supports the strengthening of links between local employers and secondary schools, such as:

- Mulberry UTC, which has established partnerships with larger employers,
- Bow School, which encourages enterprise learning,
- Central Foundation Girls' School, which actively support all students to plan for their futures after leaving school.

There are opportunities for work experience and employment to be developed, especially for students wanting to stay local and pursue more practical training and employment. Apprenticeship schemes need to be expanded, enabling small businesses to offer these. Training is largely government funded, with businesses contributing 5% of the overall training costs. New City College in Tower Hamlets and Hackney offer a wide range of apprenticeship training opportunities.

4.4.3 Conformity with local policy

Planning Obligations: SPD March 2021

"Tower Hamlets has an above average unemployment level within Greater London, with a very low proportion of Tower Hamlets' residents finding employment within the borough. Employment opportunities from new developments must be accompanied by training to upskill residents so that they can compete for the jobs." (paragraph 5.43)

"The Council will seek to ensure that jobs are provided for local people, both in the construction phase of development and by the

OBJECTIVE 1: THRIVING HIGH STREET AND LOCAL ECONOMY

end users / tenants (in commercial developments). To enable local people to benefit from development growth the Council has introduced a number of programmes, working with partners to support job brokerage, employer-led training, construction skills training, apprenticeships, and job opportunities. The Council will support and encourage London Living Wage to be paid where possible for employment, skills, training and enterprise obligations." (paragraph 5.44)

Tower Hamlets Growth and Economic Development Plan 2018-2023

"We will ensure all working age residents in the borough get the best possible outcomes in terms of their jobs and careers – by looking where we can complement and strengthen existing ongoing projects such as WorkPath." (page 5)

4.4.4 Justification

Tower Hamlets Council website, business and enterprise page

"Tower Hamlets has a thriving economy worth £6bn per annum that provides almost 1.4 jobs for every working-age resident of the borough. The enterprise economy is one of the most significant contributors to this growth and performance. The borough has experienced enormous economic growth over the last few

decades, increasing employment levels by 60 per cent and giving Tower Hamlets the fifth highest job density in London."¹⁷

Many businesses have been hit hard by the pandemic, and the work of the Tower Hamlets Council Enterprise team and other sources of help to local businesses and social enterprises are needed more than ever.

Tower Hamlets Work Path is a unique employment service for all Tower Hamlets residents, providing support for people at all levels of work, skill or experience.

Council initiatives such as Workpath and Young Workpath will continue to be vital to ensure the potential of local people is nurtured and people are equipped for new opportunities that will arise as the economy recovers.

4.5 Action for local cross-sector collaboration

4.5.1 Key issue

Many people lack the knowledge and skills to enter or move on in employment, and face challenging personal circumstances. A comprehensive, integrated network of support is vital to enable people to take advantage of the many opportunities for training and employment.

4.5.2 Action

Action LE4: Local cross-sector collaboration

The Neighbourhood Forum supports a sustained cross-departmental approach by the Council, linking economic development, regeneration and environmental improvements, and partnerships in Bow across public, private and voluntary sectors. This is aimed at facilitating inclusive growth and economic and community development.

4.5.3 Conformity with local policy Tower Hamlets Growth and Economic Development Plan 2018-2023

"We believe that 'inclusive growth' is the way forward to address the challenges and opportunities ahead. It is an absolute necessity to achieve greater prosperity, independence and access to opportunities for all our residents." (Page 4)

"This plan is being developed in parallel with the Tower Hamlets Regeneration Strategy, which will take an overview of the borough's development as a place to live and work. Complementing the Regeneration Strategy's focus on place, this Growth plan looks at thematic interventions to help people and businesses across the borough succeed." (Page 5)

"It goes without saying the council cannot deliver inclusive growth alone. We will therefore involve, engage and seek views from our communities, to ensure that residents can take advantage of opportunities and investments whilst working with our partners to make this a reality." (Page 6)

4.5.4 Justification

House of Commons; High Streets and Town Centres in 2030 (2019)

The report identifies major trends that have made it harder for local high streets to thrive. Its recommendations included: "Achieving the large-scale structural change needed will require an intervention led by the local authority, using all its powers and backed by cross-sector collaboration. However, given the financial pressure faced by local authorities, central government funding will be needed for this, as well as significant private sector investment." (page 3)

OBJECTIVE 2: GREEN STREETS THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING AND CYCLING

By 2031, we have a high quality network of pedestrian and cycle connections and supporting infrastructure such as secure short-term cycle parking. The area is more accessible to get to and move around in. Liveable Neighbourhoods funding has delivered a network of attractive green routes that are safe to use. Instead of driving, people choose to walk and cycle, reducing local traffic volumes, associated air pollution and parking issues.

5.1 Summary of current issues

People are discouraged from walking and cycling in the area because most routes are along busy main roads that are dangerous, and with high levels of air pollution. It is likely that more people would walk and cycle if there were attractive routes through green areas away from main routes.

5.2 Policy for improving safe walking and cycling routes

5.2.1 Key issue

The high volume of commuter and local traffic produces air pollution and discourages walking and cycling. There is a lack of connected safe cycling and walking routes and infrastructure.

5.2.2 Policy

Policy GS1: Improving safe walking and cycling routes

Development is required to enhance the pedestrian and cyclist experience

by improving pavements, cycle routes, cycle storage, access through public spaces and wayfinding, particularly along routes away from busy main roads and key routes in support of School Streets. This shall be achieved, where appropriate, by:

1. Contributions to the improvement of existing cycle lanes and paths.
2. Contributions to the provision of safe and well designated cycle routes, including Grove Road, Tredegar Road, Old Ford Road, Parnell Road and Roman Road.
3. Contributions to the provision of new cycle lanes and paths within and across the development site
4. Contributions to the provision of new public cycle stands across Roman Road Bow, including for non-standard cycles and cargo bikes along Roman Road.
5. The provision of appropriate cycle storage in residential and commercial development.
6. The provision of convenient, safe and well-signed footways designed to appropriate widths - a minimum of 1.5m. This might require frontages of developments to be set back from the plot edge where existing pavement widths are appropriate.
7. Other features associated with pedestrian access, to the development where needed, including seating for pedestrians and signage
8. The provision of safe road crossings where needed
9. The provision of bus stops, shelters, passenger seating and waiting areas, signage and timetable information where needed

2. Increasing accessibility

Developments are to reduce street clutter, and show consideration for accessibility, including dropped kerbs and tactile paving, and clear routes through the public realm. This is particularly important along key routes to and from Roman Road, including from Grove Road and St Stephen's Road.

3. Blue badge parking. Developments should ensure Blue Badge parking provision is maintained. Loss of Blue Badge parking or changes to the highway that remove black taxi access will not be supported.



Fig. 16: Proposed improvements to new and existing cycle network in Bow.

5.2.3 Conformity with other policies

Mayor's Transport Strategy, March 2018; Chapter 2: The vision - policy 1

This Neighbourhood Plan is in line with the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy and approach to Healthy Streets. This framework aims to improve air quality, reduce congestion and help make London's diverse communities greener, healthier and more attractive places to live, work, play and do business. These have a central aim "...for 80 per cent of all trips in London to be made on foot,

by cycle or using public transport by 2041." (page 21)

Mayor's Transport Strategy, March 2018; Chapter 3: Healthy Streets and healthy people - policy 2

The best way to get more people out walking and cycling is to improve the quality of the experience of being on our streets, including for disabled residents, and to discourage car use, in order that "...by 2041, all Londoners do at least the 20 minutes of active travel they need to stay healthy each day." (page 49)

OBJECTIVE 2: GREEN STREETS THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING AND CYCLING

Tower Hamlets - A Cycling Borough; chapter 2, paragraph 2.1

"We want Tower Hamlets to be one of the easiest and safest places to cycle in London and to make cycling the natural choice of transport for most people. A Cycling Borough means:

- *a healthier population;*
- *a less congested road network;*
- *and a more prosperous place."* (page 3)

Spatial Planning and Health - Tower Hamlets Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, November 2016

Recommendation six states that: *"Pedestrians, cyclists, and users of other transport that involve physical activity need the highest priority when developing or maintaining streets and roads. This can mean reallocating road space to support walking and cycling, restricting motor vehicle access, introducing road-user charging and traffic-calming schemes, and creating safe routes to schools and childcare settings."* (page 1)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, Policy S.DH1, Delivering high quality design

"Development must [...] create well-connected, inclusive and integrated spaces and buildings which can be easily adaptable to different uses and the changing needs of users." (page 44, para f)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, policy D.TR3 Parking and permit-free

'3. Development is required to prioritise sustainable approaches to any parking through ensuring:
a. Priority is given to space for cycle parking

e. Where suitable, publicly-accessible shared cycle hire scheme docking station(s) are provided as part of the development (or through a financial contribution).'

Central Area Good Growth SPD August 2021

Design principle 8: Developments should integrate bin and bike storage into the layout and design of the building.

Liveable Streets Bow, results booklet; Tower Hamlets Council

More than 2,100 people responded to the 18 months of community engagement on proposals for improving road safety and air quality. 70% of respondents in Bow backed plans for timed restrictions for motor vehicles around Roman Road Market, schools and residential roads to reduce the 16,000 vehicles cutting through the area each day without stopping.

Liveable Streets Bow, Consultation outcome report; Tower Hamlets Council; 25 Nov 2020

In November 2020 the Council cabinet approved the final scheme design, whilst requesting an additional report on the details of the proposed bus gates, and the devising of a scheme to exempt blue badge holders: *"The objectives are to be achieved through a combination of footway improvements, road closures, improvement of shared public spaces, greening and safety improvements."*¹⁸ The implementation of these improvements will go some

way to making it easier to walk and cycle around the neighbourhood, by creating improved walking routes, public space and reducing rat-running traffic. They will also reduce local pollution levels, supporting the overarching London strategy of encouraging more trips to be taken on foot or by bike.

High Density Living Supplementary Planning Document; Tower Hamlets Council Dec 2020 Design guideline AB.5

"Public realm, including streets, should be designed to prioritise the pedestrians and, where appropriate, cyclists. The public realm should also encourage incidental play." (page 68)

5.2.4 Justification

Air Pollution

A number of news articles in The Guardian from 2018 and 2019 provided evidence of the negative impacts of air pollution on our mental and physical health. As well as discouraging visitors and healthy activity, air pollution from vehicles¹⁹ has significant adverse effects on local residents in the form of nitrogen dioxide, which is known to shorten lives and reduce the quality of life for tens of thousands of people. In recent studies it has also been linked to health problems from dementia²⁰ to heart disease²¹ and miscarriage²². Children are most at risk: exposure to air pollution when young can have lifelong effects as it can stunt the lungs and affect intelligence²³.

Dangerous levels of air pollution "made a material contribution" to the death of nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah in London in 2013, a coroner ruled in December 2020, following a second inquest into the child's death.²⁴

Monitoring Air Quality in Tower Hamlets, 2018, Final project report

Local monitoring as shown in Figure 9 on page 15, and on the map in appendix 1, page 25, highlights high levels of air pollution along Grove Road, Roman Road and Tredegar Road (as well as at the edges of the planning area on Mile End Road and near the A12). Spot monitoring (Station ID 45) has shown that the junction of Tredegar Road and St Stephen's Road has consistently been above the annual mean safe limit of 40ug/m³ of Nitrogen Dioxide since 2016.

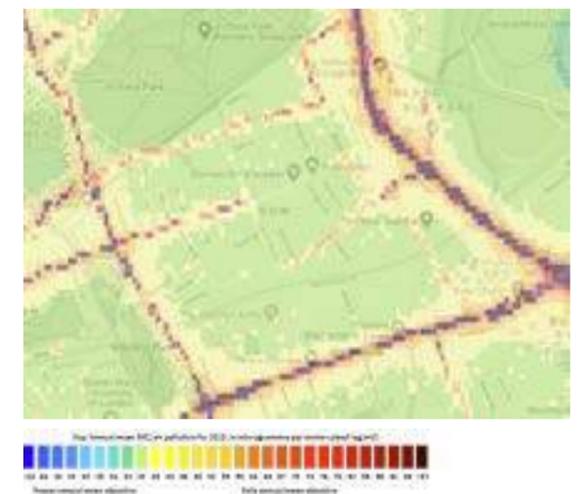


Fig. 17: Annual mean NO₂ concentrations for Tower Hamlets

OBJECTIVE 2: GREEN STREETS THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING AND CYCLING

Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy: Update 2017; Section 3 - Opportunities to enhance the Green Grid

"There is a lack of connectivity to a number of community facilities, including schools, transport hubs and open spaces." (page 20, para 3.5)

Three schools in the NPA and all three tube/DLR stations that serve the area are not connected.

Local children at Malmesbury, Olga and Chisenhale schools have produced a banner asking to lower pollution levels around their schools.



Fig. 18: Low Pollution Banner produced by local primary schools

Busy and Dangerous Roads

Currently, people are discouraged from walking and cycling in the NPA because most routes are along busy main roads that are dangerous and with high levels of air pollution. 66% of local residents want less traffic and 51% want better footways. It is likely that more people would walk and cycle if there were attractive routes through green areas away from main

routes. This could also bring more people into the area to visit local businesses.

Liveable Streets Bow, results booklet; Tower Hamlets Council

Approximately 49% of traffic in the neighbourhood between 6am and 8pm on weekdays is rat-running - the equivalent of over 13,000 non-resident vehicle journeys a day.

Transport for London, London Collision Map

TfL data²⁵ shows that in the last three years there have been over 100 collisions involving pedestrians or cyclists (nearly all caused by cars) in Tower Hamlets. This has included multiple fatalities. As well as the A11, accident black spots include Grove Road, Roman Road and Tredegar Road. All these roads in the NPA are also used for rat running.



Fig. 19: Transport for London, London Collision Map

Bike Life 2019, Tower Hamlets; Sustrans study

The study found 48% of residents don't cycle (or cycle less) because they are concerned about safety. (page 12)

Accessibility

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods; Transport for London; September 2020

London's streets need to be welcoming to ensure that our communities prosper. According

to the Mayor's Low Traffic Neighbourhoods study, 65% of disabled Londoners consider the condition of pavements to be a barrier to walking (page 9).

OBJECTIVE 2: GREEN STREETS THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING AND CYCLING

Difficulty of walking and cycling around the area

Bike Life 2019, Tower Hamlets; Sustrans study

The study found security is an issue with 1,536 reported cycle thefts in 2018/19, which is one theft per 47 owners. There is also only one cycle parking space per nine resident cycle owners. This is particularly an issue in the neighbourhood with large numbers of people living in flats. (page 13)

76% of people overall think space should be increased for people socialising, cycling and walking on their local high street and 47% think more cycling would make their area a better place to live and work. (page 5)

According to Transport For All, 81% of disabled people polled felt concerned that the 'new normal' would be inaccessible to them. Barriers such as the lack of dropped kerbs, inconsistent tactile paving, uneven or steep pavements, potholes and tree roots, street clutter and bollards, make the streets difficult to traverse for disabled individuals.

Concern for personal safety is highlighted by a local petition to stop mopeds and motorised scooters riding through the pedestrian walkway at Tom Thumb's Arch.²⁶

5.3 Actions to improve walking and cycling

Action GS2: To improve safe walking and cycling

The following are considered to be

priority actions to improve safe walking and cycling:

- **Improving safe walking and cycling routes:**

a. Improvement of public routes to Roman Road and Victoria Park, in line with the UCL MSc Spatial Planning student study, including on Wennington Green and through Tom Thumb's Arch.

b. Provision of quiet cycle routes connecting to the strategic London network, including a high quality route along Grove Road.

c. Improved connection to Fish Island and the Olympic Park to give Bow residents better access to the East Bank and the new buildings of the UCL campus, V&A, Sadler's Wells Theatre, BBC music studios, and London College of Fashion.

- **Making streets safer for children:**

a. Support applications for School Streets for all schools in the area, where these restrict motorised vehicle access at drop-off and pick-up times.

b. Work with developers and the highway authority to ensure accessible footways of an appropriate width outside of new developments.

- **Step-free access at Mile End:**
Encourage LBTH and Transport for London to work together to ensure step-free access at Mile End underground is included in TFL's step-free programme.

5.3.1 Conformity with other policies

The action is consistent with policies cited above: the Mayor of London's



Fig. 20: Proposed School Streets

OBJECTIVE 2: GREEN STREETS THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING AND CYCLING

Transport Strategy March 2018, Tower Hamlets - A Cycling Borough; chapter 2, paragraph 2.1 and High Density Living Supplementary Planning Document; Tower Hamlets Council Design guideline AB.5

London Underground, Making rail accessible: helping older and disabled passengers

'Policy summary. London Underground is committed to helping all our customers travel more easily. This includes: Improving physical access to and within our stations and trains, including making more stations step-free.' (page 4)

5.3.2 Justification

Green Spaces and Connectivity: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan; report by UCL MSc Spatial Planning students (2019)²⁷

The students drafted policy proposals and proposed an implementation plan for open spaces and improved walking and cycle routes in the NPA, based on a detailed study of the spatial characteristics of the open spaces and movement networks. The students highlighted current priority pedestrian and cycle routes through the NPA.

The most used pedestrian routes connect the transport hubs of Mile End and Bow Road stations into the NPA, through to Roman Road and Victoria Park using bottlenecks under the railway such as Tom Thumb's Arch.

For cyclists the key routes are off CS2 (particularly along Grove Road) and east-west along Roman Road and Tredegar Road. These also correlate to dangerous routes. Mile End Park and the Regent's Canal towpath were also identified as important cycle routes.

Fish Island Area Action Plan; Tower Hamlets Council; September 2012; chapter 3 - Connecting Fish Island

The proposals to improve connectivity to Fish Island and the Olympic Park, addressing the current challenges highlighted in the AAP on page 32, para 3.3, could give Bow residents better access to the East Bank, the emerging cultural and educational district where major institutions such as UCL, the V&A and Sadler's Wells Theatre are building new facilities.

Towards child friendly local high street - developing an analytical framework; MSc Dissertation by Gargi Roy²⁸

In 2018/19, MSc Spatial Planning students studied the Roman Road Bow NPA and some used the evidence they gathered as the basis for their dissertations. Gargi Roy's MSc Dissertation found that many footways were overly narrow and there was often unnecessary street furniture and buildup of litter.

Mile End is a strategic central location in the borough, and is served by the Central, District, and Hammersmith and City tube lines. The lack of step-free access is a major barrier for the less

mobile. Transport for London's plans²⁹ up to 2024 do not include step-free access for Mile End underground station.

In 2016, the issue was raised by a student who is a wheelchair user from nearby Queen Mary College. She gained 1,500 signatures for a petition in support of step-free access.³⁰

In 2019, a local campaign for lift access³¹ was started by a Tower Hamlets local ward councillor. Stuart Wilson, marketing and communications coordinator for Ability Bow, a local inclusive community gym, said: "Acceptable access for vulnerable people is obviously really important." A lift in the busy interchange station "could really help somebody with severe complexities, disabilities or long-term health conditions." He warned that without the lift, climbing Mile End tube station's 45 steps would leave someone with a heart condition seriously out of breath, and would be dangerous for someone with limited sight or hearing.

OBJECTIVE 3: BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SPACES

By 2031, investment has transformed the public realm by creating green and de-cluttered local streets. Popular play areas designed to encourage free play and a love of nature now replace former neglected spaces. The former car park on the corner of Roman Road and St Stephens Road plays a valuable role as a community space. The improved public realm has helped to reduce anti-social behaviour. Residents and businesses are proud of their high quality, litter-free environment - fly-tipping is no longer tolerated following vigorous campaigning and local action by the community.

6.1 Summary of current Issues

Existing public spaces are often dirty, cluttered and of poor quality. The borough's rising population and demand for housing mean there are limited opportunities to create new open spaces. Cuts in Council budgets makes maintaining public spaces challenging.

6.2 Policy to enhance public realm spaces

6.2.1 Key Issue

Inadequate provision for recreation and play on local housing estates, and the unattractiveness of open spaces along the Roman Road, Mile End Road and Bow Road.

6.2.2 Policy

Policy PS1: Enhancing public realm spaces

Proposals to enhance existing public spaces will be supported where they address the following specific needs :

Improved provision for recreation and play on housing estates at;

- Lawrence Close E3 2AS
- Heylyn Square E32DW
- Rectangular paved area with hedges at foot of Wilmer House, Daling Way E3 5NW
- Tarmac square outside Forth House E3 2HQ
- Sutherland Road football court (to become a multi-use court) and adjacent children's play space to be re-designed. E35HG

All proposals will be expected to accompany such provision with high quality landscaping.

Public realm improvements through parklets or similar environmental measures at:

- Pavement at entrance to Lanfranc Estate on Roman Road, E3 5QP
- Ford Close off Roman Road E3 5LX
- Ford Road off Roman Road E3 5JN (outside Common Room)
- Pavement outside Territorial Army base at Mile End E3 4PD
- Corner of Bow Road and Alfred Street E3 2AD



Fig. 21: Public realm spaces map



OBJECTIVE 3: BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SPACES

6.2.3 Conformity with other policies

Potential sites for improved spaces for play and recreation; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum³²

This supporting document lists Council owned open spaces in the NPA, showing photos of proposed sites for parklets, and includes proposed tree types.

Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy: Update 2017; Appendices Adapted opportunities from 2010 Green Grid Strategy

Section 6, Roman Road: "There is some unused space on the wider pavements, which could be used to create additional seating and associated landscaping including planters, street trees and pocket parks, as well as better signposting the rest of the Borough and city from here, so it does not feel so isolated. The area has a rich history particularly as the Suffragette heartland, which could be better celebrated through public realm interventions including art and community events." (page 20)

Roman Road Market Conservation Area, Tower Hamlets Council, 2009

"Despite recent improvements, there is still potential for the general quality of the landscaping in the street to be improved, and the area could benefit from a public realm strategy to coordinate physical features with management procedures. The fragile character of Roman Road has been eroded in the past by unsympathetic

alterations and re-building, and further attrition of this character must be prevented." (page 11)

6.2.4 Justification

Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Planning, Engagement Report, April 2018

In the consultation, one person identified 'parklets'³³ as a good idea for improving public spaces.

"New developments along the canal do not have much green space - new developments that come forward should have a certain specified minimum amount of green space, especially if they create new walking routes through."

Green Spaces and Connectivity: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan; report by UCL MSc Spatial Planning students (2019)³⁴

The neighbourhood plan project by Spatial Planning students at University College London summarised the Forum's community engagement findings as: "A desire to protect and enhance the built environment, improve green spaces and under-used public spaces and strengthen community-led initiatives... are part of this consensus. These are themes that we can build upon as we develop policies and projects for our neighbourhood plan." (Page 25)

"A review conducted by 'Tower Hamlets Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee' and 'Tower Hamlets

Homes Residents Panel' demonstrated that the open spaces in areas of social housing across Tower Hamlets are currently underused. Both Malmesbury estate and the areas of social housing to the east of St Stephen's Road currently have small green spaces that are underused. Furthermore, the consultations held by the forum highlighted the need for additional play spaces across both these areas. Therefore, there is a need to encourage social landlords to better utilise these green spaces through small scale interventions." (page 38, para 6.2.1)

"Smaller play areas for younger children offer another method to revitalise the existing green spaces. Additionally, the football court on Sutherland Road is limited and currently requires improvements. This should be replaced with a multi-use court to facilitate a variety of sports for both children and adults. These initiatives will provide additional play space for children of different age groups; encouraging social interaction and achieving health and wellbeing benefits." (page 38, para 6.2.1)

6.3 Policy to designate Local Green Spaces

6.3.1 Key Issue

There is a need to protect and preserve small green spaces for enjoyment by both people and wildlife that otherwise could be encroached on by development.

6.3.2 Policy

Policy PS2: Designating Local Green Spaces

The following are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- Daling Way, E3 5NB;
- Holy Trinity Churchyard, Morgan St. E3 5AT.
- Lockton Green, Ruston St. E3 2LP
- Matilda Gardens E3 2GS,
- Trellis Square E3 2DR 39
- Brodick House E3 5HH
- Roman Road Adventure Playground, 48 Hewlett Road, Bow, London, E3 5NA.
- Wennington Green, Junction of Roman Rd and Grove Rd E3 5TG

Managing development on a Local Green Space should be consistent with national planning policy for Green Belts. Proposals for built development on Local Green Spaces will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of that Local Green Space or that very special circumstances exist, for example where it is essential to meet specific necessary utility infrastructure and no feasible alternative site is available.

OBJECTIVE 3: BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SPACES



Fig. 22: Publicly accessible open spaces map

LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Spaces listed in Tower Hamlets' Parks and Open Space Strategy 2017-27

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Four Seasons Green
Caxton Grove E3 2AX | 5. Grove Hall Park
E3 2QA | 10. Roman Road Market
E3 5JL |
| 2. Garrison Road Legion Terrace
(Lefevre Park) E3 2EY | 6. Harley Grove
E3 2AH | 11. Selwyn Green
E3 5EA |
| 3. Gladstone Place
E3 5EU | 7. Harley Square
E3 2AT | 12. St Stephen's Road
(St. Stephen's Green) E3 5JU |
| 4. Grand Union Canal
(Regent's Canal) E3 5BE | 8. Hertford Union Canal
E3 5SB | 13. St. Mary Bow
E3 3AH |
| | 9. Mile End Park
E3 4QY | 14. Tredegar Square
E3 5EA |

15. **Daling Way**
E3 5NB



17. **Lockton Green**
Ruston St, E3 2LP



16. **Holy Trinity Churchyard**
Morgan St, E3 5AT



18. **Matilda Gardens**
E3 2GS



19. **Trellis Square**
E3 2DR



21. **Roman Rd Adventure Playground**
48 Hewlett Road, Bow, London, E3 5NA



20. **Brodick House**
E3 5HH



22. **Wennington Green**
Junction of Roman Rd and Grove Rd, E3 5TG



OBJECTIVE 3: BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SPACES

Fig. 22a: Conservation areas in Bow

6.3.3 Conformity with other policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

"The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period." (page 31, para 99)
"The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;

b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land." (page 31, para 100)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, Policy D.DH2: Attractive streets, spaces and public realm

"Development is required to contribute to improving and enhancing connectivity, permeability and legibility across the borough, ensuring a well-connected, joined-up and easily accessible street network and wider network of public spaces through:
a) improving connectivity to public transport hubs, town centres, open spaces, water spaces, social and community facilities and surrounding areas

b) maintaining existing public routes or appropriately re-providing access routes during the construction phases of new development, and
c) incorporating the principles of 'secured by design' to improve safety and perception of safety for pedestrians and other users." (page 46, para 1)

Tower Hamlets' Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2017-27

Bow West is forecast to have a 'moderate' deficiency of open space in 2031. The strategy states that: "It is expected that new publicly accessible open space will be owned and maintained by the respective land owners, with public access to the space secured through legal agreements as part of the planning process. Such an approach will secure new publicly accessible open space whilst recognising the council's financial position in years to come. Legal agreements will be required to secure the widest possible access to these new spaces." (page 82)

Green Spaces and Connectivity: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan; report by UCL MSc Spatial Planning students (2019)

The study identified the following objectives to protect, enhance and create green spaces through site-specific interventions:

- To improve the health and well-being of residents and the environment.
- To revitalise green spaces which are currently underused.
- To increase the number of green spaces in the neighbourhood by adding green infrastructure where desirable and feasible.
- To protect the existing green spaces from damage or loss through development and to grasp development opportunities and funding to enhance the quality of green spaces.

The study highlighted the opportunity for revitalising Wennington Green, stating: "The site lacks permeability and maintenance but has potential to attract visitors due to its location on the high street and its proximity to Victoria Park." (page 40, para 6.2.2)

A planting intervention is proposed as a means to improve this open space.

6.3.4 Justification

All the designated Local Green Spaces are near to those who benefit from them, special to local residents and small in size, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. Detailed evidence for each space is provided in **Potential sites for improved spaces for play and recreation; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum**³⁵

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By 2031, an updated Bow Heritage Trail links historic buildings, parks, galleries, pubs and restaurants, street market and shops along pedestrian friendly routes. Undervalued heritage assets such Bow Wharf, and the scheduled monuments of the Three Colts and Parnell Road bridges over the Hertford Canal are better conserved. Our precious heritage resource is protected and enhanced to ensure that it continues to be appreciated and enjoyed by future generations.

7.1 Summary of current Issues

Many of the heritage assets in the NPA are under-valued and in need

of improvement and better care, particularly public houses and the historic infrastructure associated with the canals and waterways. There are 9 conservation areas in Bow, 7 of them in the plan area: Clinton Road, Driffield Road, Fairfield Road, Medway, Roman Road Market, Tredegar Square, Victoria Park (which includes Cadogan Terrace). Each one has an adopted character appraisal and management guidelines document. Their character and appearance contribute positively to the quality of life and can often be enhanced to generate greater benefits. The appraisal and management documents need to be reviewed and updated regularly.



HERITAGE Conservation Areas in Bow

- 1. Roman Road Conservation
- 2. Fairfield Road Conservation
- 3. Tredegar Square Conservation and Buildings
- 4. Tower Hamlets Conservation
- 5. Carlton Square Conservation and Buildings
- 6. Carlton Square Conservation and Buildings
- 7. Medway Conservation Area
- 8. Tomlins Grove Conservation
- 9. Victoria Park
- Conservation Area

There is also much older local heritage. Some evidence of prehistoric activity has been found within the Old Ford Archaeological Priority Area (APA) during archaeological investigations at Lefevre Walk and Parnell Road. The Old Ford APA encompasses the known extent of a Roman settlement and the likely location of the Roman river crossing of the Lea. The Bow APA covers the historic settlement and surrounds of Bromley-by-Bow. This centres on Bow Road and St. Mary's Bow, the former Lady Chapel of the Benedictine nuns of St. Leonard's Priory, destroyed in the

dissolution of 1536³⁶

This rich heritage offers potential sources of themes to feed into public realm works, cultural events and a heritage trail.

7.2 Policy for Bow Wharf waterway infrastructure conservation and enhancement

7.2.1 Key Issue

Bow Wharf is a major heritage asset at the junction of the Regent's and Hertford Union canals. its historic, low-density setting has been eroded

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by piecemeal development and the absence of a comprehensive heritage plan. Planning consent was granted in 2014 for 34 residential units and a small commercial space. The Canal and River Trust worked with H2O Urban LLP, a national joint venture company owned 50% by the Trust and 50% by private developer, Bloc Ltd. H2O is working on a series of urban regeneration and redevelopment projects across the UK with the Canal and River Trust. The scheme flanks the canal path and has resulted in the loss of the wharf cottages and has weakened the visual link between Victoria Park and Mile End Park.

7.2.2 Policy

Policy HE1: Bow Wharf waterway infrastructure conservation and enhancement

Development proposals at Bow Wharf must demonstrate how they reflect the historic character of the area and how they will enhance both its heritage significance and cultural vibrancy. Proposed development must therefore submit a comprehensive statement of historic significance clearly demonstrating how proposals positively reflect and are informed by the existing historic context and how the proposals will enhance the historic character of the area. Developers are advised to ensure plans are developed in consultation with the Council's conservation team, Neighbourhood

Forum and the Canal and River Trust. Proposals must demonstrate widespread consultation with local businesses, residents and community groups. Development proposals must provide for an appropriate mix of uses that include leisure and recreational activities and affordable workspaces for small businesses. Recreational provision that improves connectivity with the Green Grid and better links Victoria and Mile End parks and/or Hackney Village with the Roman Road, will be strongly supported.



Fig. 23: Bow Wharf

7.2.3 Conformity with other policies Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy 2026

"Proposals that are regarded as improving the borough's historic environment will be positively supported, whereas proposals which could cause permanent harm to

historic assets will be opposed unless there are considerable public benefits that would outweigh the harm. The council will use its influence and local planning authority powers in partnership with local communities, property owners and other interested stakeholders to achieve this aim." (page6)

7.2.4 Justification

The Forum consulted with Historic England and the Canal & River Trust. Historic England proposed the above policy wording, and the Canal and River Trust have expressed their support for this.

Tower Hamlets Water Space Study, September 2017 Engaging Stakeholders: "Due to the varied land ownership and because many opportunities relate to site allocations for future development, the Council will need to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations and developers to effectively deliver the water space opportunities" (page 62, para 4.13)

Poor design of development: "With regards to the heritage value of water spaces, developments have also been designed out of keeping with the historic scale and form of waterside development, and without consideration of the canal and towpath edges." (page30, para 3.9)

Bow Wharf: The character of the conservation area in the vicinity of the proposed development; Friends of Regents Canal, October 2013

"In addition to the junction's intrinsic geographical and historical significance, it retains within a small area several historic structures of types now rare on London's canals (cast-iron-girder bridge, stop lock, stone-way, remains of wharf cottages, chimney from sawmill, canal carrier's warehouse.) Their setting retains a relatively low density of built

development that was characteristic of the canals of this area until recent years. It also has a fair number of trees, which combine with the small scale of the buildings to produce a calm and pleasant environment, and which also form a link both visual and ecological between the public parks to the north and south. The canals of inner London are rapidly becoming dominated by modern waterside developments of a new scale, mostly residential, but of high activity where commercial, so that Bow Wharf provides a now scarce enclave of calm and historic character that it is necessary to protect and sustain." (page1)

The wharf cottages were demolished and were replaced as part of a development, completed in 2018, with three taller blocks of 34 residential units and a small commercial space. See pages 5-6 of **Local Heritage; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum**³⁷ regarding ownership of canal bridges.

7.3 Policy for public houses to become locally designated heritage assets

7.3.1 Key Issue

An evidence-based study titled "Pubs in Tower Hamlets" prepared for the council, highlighted that, of 275 public houses open on 1st January 2000, well over half (161 pubs, 58.1%) had closed by 2017 (page 13). The Covid 19 pandemic has hit the hospitality sector especially hard, and remaining pubs are at risk of closure and loss to the community.

7.3.2 Policy

Policy HE2: Public houses to become locally designated heritage assets

The following are identified as locally designated heritage assets:
a. The Albert, 74 St. Stephen's Road E3 5JL

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b. The Coborn Arms, 8 Coborn Road E3 2DA
c. The Crown, 223 Grove Road E3 5SN
c. Green Goose, 112 Anglo Road, Bow London E3 5HD

d. Morgan Arms, 43 Morgan Street E3 5AA
e. Young Prince, 448 Roman Rd, London E3 5LU



Fig. 24: Policy HE1 Locations map

Pubs: Nationally Listed Grade II

Pubs on the Tower Hamlets Local List

Pubs proposed to be added to the Tower Hamlets Local List

- 1. **The Crown**
223 Grove Road, E3 5SN
- 2. **Palm Tree**
127 Grove Road, E3 5BH
- 3. **Lord Tredegar**
50 Lichfield Road, E3 5AL

- 4. **The Cherry**
359 Mile End Road, E3 4QS
- 5. **Eleanor Arms**
460 Old Ford Road, E3 5JP
- 6. **Greedy Cow**
2 Grove Rd, London E3 5AX

- 7. **Little Driver**
125 Bow Rd, E3 2AN
- 8. **Lord Morpeth**
402 Old Ford Road, E3 5NR
- 9. **The Victoria**
110 Grove Road, E3 5TH

- 10. **The Albert**
74 St Stephen's Rd, London E3 5JL
- 11. **Coborn Arms**
8 Coborn Road, E3 2DA
- 12. **Green Goose**
112 Anglo Road, E3 5HD

- 13. **Morgan Arms**
43 Morgan Street, E3 5AA
- 14. **Young Prince**
448 Roman Rd, E3 5LU

- 10. **The Albert**
74 St Stephen's Rd, London E3 5JL



- 11. **Coborn Arms**
8 Coborn Road, E3 2DA



- 12. **Green Goose**
112 Anglo Road, E3 5HD



- 13. **Morgan Arms**
43 Morgan Street, E3 5AA



- 14. **Young Prince**
448 Roman Rd, E3 5LU



OBJECTIVE 4: NEW LIFE FOR OUR LOCAL HERITAGE

7.3.3 Conformity with other policies

Public Houses in Bow Neighbourhood Plan Area; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum;³⁸

This document details the locally designated pubs' ages, characters and distinctiveness, as well as their architectural, historical and social significance.

Historic England, Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment, Advice Note 11

"It is for the local community to decide on the scope and content of a neighbourhood plan. They may wish to set out a specific historic environment section within the plan, drawing on the evidence gathered. There are benefits from consolidating related information in a clear, focused way." (page 18)

The National Planning Policy Framework 2019

"Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic

environment can bring;

- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place." (page 54, para 185)

Local planning authorities should "plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments" (page 27, para 92)

Debate in Houses Parliament, 12 February 2015

CAMRA have lobbied the government for pubs to be removed from the A4 use class and placed into the 'Sui Generis' category. This would require a planning application with opportunity for public representations before any change of use. A debate on this issue was held in Parliament on 12th February 2015. A concession required pubs designated as Assets of Community Value (ACV) to be subject to full applications for any change of use.

Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 (Consolidated)

Applicants are required to submit written notice to local planning authorities giving notice (fifty-six days)

before implementing change of use under permitted development. This allows time for ACV nominations to be received.

The London Plan 2020, Policy HC7: Protecting public houses

"Boroughs should:

1. protect public houses where they have a heritage, economic, social or cultural value to local communities, and where they contribute to wider policy objectives for town centres, night-time economy areas and Creative Enterprise Zones.
2. support proposals for new public houses to stimulate town centre regeneration, cultural quarters, the night-time economy and mixed-use development, where appropriate. Applications that propose the loss of public houses with heritage, cultural, economic or social value should be refused unless there is authoritative marketing evidence that demonstrates that there is no realistic prospect of the building being used as a pub in the foreseeable future. Development proposals for redevelopment of associated accommodation, facilities or development within the curtilage of the public house that would compromise the operation or viability of the public house use should be resisted." (page 344, paragraph A)

Tower Hamlets Council, Assets of Community Value, Nomination form guidance notes

This document gives detailed guidance to local groups wishing to nominate an Asset of Community Value.

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, Section 12, Policy D.CF4 Public houses Policy requires the provision of specific evidence where the loss of a public house is proposed (page 133).

7.3.4 Justification

Pubs are often located in attractive, prominent locations in the heart of the community and operate from buildings distinguished by the quality of their architectural design and detail. They tend to occupy reasonably large plots, sometimes with a beer garden or yard, and there is often capacity to convert or redevelop a pub to provide several new dwellings.

Tower Hamlets Local List, New Additions, 2019

In 2019 Tower Hamlets made new additions of local pubs to its local list of buildings and structures that, whilst not statutorily listed for their national importance, are considered to be of local importance. These included the Eleanor Arms and the adjacent building No.458, as together they form a single development (in the setting of Victoria Park Conservation Area), the Lord Morpeth (in the setting of Victoria Park Conservation Area) and the Victoria.

Existing pubs in the plan area also include the nationally Grade II listed The Crown, 223 Grove Rd, E3 5SN, the Palm Tree, 127 Grove Road E3 5BH, and the Lord Tredegar, 50 Lichfield Road E3 5AL.

The Cherry (formerly the Globe), The Greedy Cow (formerly the Prince of Wales) and Little Driver are locally listed buildings.

Pubs and restaurants have suffered greatly during the pandemic and struggle to survive. They represent not only some fine local buildings but are community meeting places for people who value socialising over drink and food.

OBJECTIVE 4: NEW LIFE FOR OUR LOCAL HERITAGE

7.4 Action supporting opportunities for new types of Public House

7.4.1 Key Issue

Current planning policies discourage innovation in new forms of public house and are restrictive of locations where they might be sited.

7.4.2 Action

Action HE3: Opportunities for new types of Public House

Tower Hamlets Council to facilitate new models of pubs coming forward, and broaden the locations in which proposals might be acceptable.

7.4.3 Conformity with other policies

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031, policy D.TC5

Drinking establishments outside the town centre hierarchy are permitted "Where they are local in nature and scale" (page 122). Paragraph 12.2, Supporting Community Facilities, states "Specific need gaps and priorities include the provision of public houses.." (page128).

7.4.4 Justification

activities such as live music, comedy nights, pool and darts leagues, parties and celebrations, political debate, community meetings and quizzes. Some have the potential to become assets of community value.

Tower Hamlets Council; Pubs in Tower Hamlets – An Evidence Base Study 2017

"It is recommended that the Council amends its planning policies to better facilitate new models of pubs coming forward and to broaden the locations in which proposals might be acceptable. For example, the growing movement of 'micro-pubs' is conducive to being delivered outside of main town centres without harming surrounding residential amenity, so policies could be drafted or amended to facilitate such uses in such locations as appropriate." (page30)

7.5 Action for an updated Bow Heritage Trail

7.5.1 Key Issue

The area's heritage assets are poorly promoted, and the 1990 heritage trail is outdated and not easily accessible in digital format. Way marking through the area is generally poor, which discourages visitors from exploring lesser-known places, and results in local businesses missing out on potential trade.

7.5.2 Action

Action HE4: Wayfinding and Bow Heritage Trail

Implementation of the Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy, Updated 2017, to include better wayfinding and integration with TfL's Legible London signage. It will link the Roman Road shops and market with community facilities, cultural and historic places of interest, and surrounding Olympic Park, Mile End Park and Victoria Park through an updated digital Bow Heritage Trail.

7.5.3 Conformity with other policies

Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy 2026

One of the stated outcomes for Aim 2: 'Conserving and protecting the borough's historic environment, and capitalising on opportunities for attracting investment, conservation-led regeneration and positive place shaping' is: "Up-to-date information and guidance about the historic environment that is easily accessible." (page7).

The strategy goes on to say: "There is very limited interpretation or directional signage relating to the heritage resource onsite in the borough, and it would therefore be easy for a casual visitor to remain unaware of the breadth and diversity of the heritage that can be found here. There is also limited information on the heritage resource on the Council's website, no borough map made available to visitors or residents, and no central Tourist Office or other resource where visitors can access information about the borough's heritage." (page16, section 3.2.12)

7.5.4 Justification

Tower Hamlets Green Grid Strategy: Update 2017; Appendices Adapted opportunities from 2010 Green Grid Strategy

Section 6, Roman Road: "There is some unused space on the wider pavements, which could be used to create additional seating and associated landscaping including planters, street trees and pocket parks, as well as better signposting the rest of the Borough and city from here, so it does not feel so isolated. The area has a rich history particularly as the Suffragette heartland, which could be better celebrated through public realm interventions including art and community events." (page 20)

Transport for London, Legible London

"We work with the London Development Agency, and in partnership with London boroughs, to develop a way of providing coordinated walking information across the Capital, offering benefits for our transport system, for public health, the economy, tourism and the environment."³⁹

Bow Heritage Trail

The signposted trail through Bow with plaques giving information about places of historic interest is now defunct. The Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives at 277 Bancroft Road, London E1 4DQ with its close proximity to Queen Mary College,⁴⁰ provides an exciting opportunity for updating the trail using digital technology.

⁶⁶ Local pubs provide valuable space to support recreation and leisure

OBJECTIVE 5: HIGH QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

By 2031, new developments over the last decade are well integrated with existing communities, retaining the character of local neighbourhoods without destroying locally listed assets. A majority of the homes are low carbon homes. Roman Road CLT has pioneered a few affordable and well-designed community-led housing schemes around Bow. Incremental, small scale residential projects over time have created a greater variety of housing types. These projects reflect the local housing need and area and successfully promote community cohesion.

8.1 Summary of key issues

High property prices, unaffordable private rents, and the scarcity of land for housing make it difficult for people who have grown up in Bow to stay, and people on modest incomes to move in. This contributes to short-term stays and works against building mixed and balanced communities.

8.2 Policy on site allocations

8.2.1 Key issue

There are no large sites for significant new housing developments within the plan area NPA that might deliver much needed affordable housing for the area. The Central Area identified in the Tower Hamlets Local Plan (page 220), has there are only two allocated sites - at Bow Common Lane and Chrisp Street Town Centre. These both fall outside the plan area NPA. A pipeline of small sites will be required in order to build local affordable homes.

A 2020 technical support package through Locality enabled an initial assessment of potential sites to be made by AECOM. 8 sites were assessed, a mix of publicly and privately owned land, but 7 of these were not available for a variety of reasons. This demonstrated the challenges involved in finding suitable sites that are also available.

8.2.2 Policy

The policy identifies one sites suitable for housing development. This is land at the rear of 81-147 Candy Street E3 2LH. A slightly larger site was originally assessed, and information for the site, including location, site area, relevant planning history and development constraints, is in the **Roman Road Bow Housing Need and Deliverability Assessment document** (site 4, Wendon St.)⁴¹

A narrow strip of land on the edge of the A12 was subsequently excluded from the site as it lay within the area of the London Legacy Development Corporation. The site proposed is that contained in a joint planning application by London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Place Ltd. (PA/21/01162) of June 2021 for 16 pre-constructed modular apartments to be used as temporary accommodation for a period of 10 years. A site location plan is shown below. Site details are in the 2020 report '**Roman Road Site Options and Assessments 2020 by AECOM**'⁴²



Fig. 25: Candy Street location map

OBJECTIVE 5: HIGH QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Policy H1: Site allocation and housing development

1. The following site is allocated for housing:
Land at rear of 81-147 Candy St. E3 2LH contained in planning application PA/21/01162.

8.2.3 Conformity with other policies

The London Plan 2020, Chapter 4, Policy H2

Although larger sites are scarce, smaller sites with the potential for housing delivery are dotted throughout the area. Policy H2 in the London Plan supports the development of small sites stating that they “should play a much greater role in housing delivery and boroughs should proactively support well-designed new homes on small sites.” (page180)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031

Policy S.SG1 on Areas of Growth and Opportunity Within Tower Hamlets “The remaining part of the borough is defined as the Central sub-area. Whilst not having the status of an opportunity area, this area has the potential to absorb additional growth, primarily through infill and land use intensification which respects the character of the surrounding streetscape.” (page34, para 7.7) “While the majority of the borough’s future housing and employment supply is expected to come forward on allocated sites, significant

opportunities exist to bring forward development within other locations, such as small-scale infill sites within existing neighbourhoods and the intensification of existing brownfield sites. These sites (known as windfalls) have the potential to make a significant contribution to the supply of housing and employment land in the borough.” (page34, para 7.11)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031: Policy S.H1 Meeting housing need

“Development will be expected to contribute towards the creation of mixed and balanced communities that respond to local and strategic need. This will be achieved through:
a. setting an overall target for 50% of all new homes to be affordable, to be achieved through:
i. securing affordable homes from a range of council-led initiatives
ii. requiring the provision of affordable housing contributions on sites providing 2 to 9 new residential units against a sliding-scale target (subject to viability).” (page76, para 2)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031: Policy D.H2 Affordable housing and housing mix

“1. Development is required to maximise the provision of affordable housing in accordance with a 70% rented and 30% intermediate tenure split.
2. Development is required to maximise the delivery of affordable housing on-site.” (page80, para 1.2)

Planning Obligations SPD March 2021

Major applications are defined as “10 units or more, or with a combined gross floorspace of 1,000 sqm (gross internal area) or more.” (page14)

“Affordable Housing is being delivered through negotiations as a part of major residential schemes, as well as through a range of public initiatives and the effective use of grant funding. In line with Local Plan Policies S.H1 and D.H2, a target of 50% Affordable Housing has been set for major residential schemes. These schemes are expected to deliver a minimum of 35% Affordable Housing with a mix of tenures and unit sizes, subject to viability. The Development Viability SPD sets out the detail around securing on-site Affordable Housing provision, in line with the Mayor of London’s Affordable Housing and Viability SPG.” (page15)

High Density Living SPD; Tower Hamlets Council; December 2020

“In particular, the SPD provides detailed guidance to help the council deliver its vision to support 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.” (page10, policy context)

Central Area Good Growth SPD; Tower Hamlets Council August 2021

This document contains a character appraisal for Bow and descriptions of typical building types (pages 31-35). Future challenges and opportunities are identified: Regarding 21st century urban housing growth it states: “The variety provided through the range of building types sometimes leads to an unclear and fragmented character and there is an opportunity to improve the connection between developments and also to the

wider street environment. There is a risk that new developments may reinforce fragmentary character and lack of cohesion by following these precedents.” (page133)

Principles based on the character of different areas are then set out in the SPD out to guide future development. The guidance contains a design toolkit for small sites up to 0.25 hectares. “Each type of site and associated context is analysed, and design guidelines are provided. These are based on best practice architecture and urban design considerations that reflect the council’s aspirations.” (page151)

Design principles are also set out for residential developments: “As the emphasis of the SPD is on small-scale developments, the principles have a particular focus on overcoming usual constraints associated with this type of development in order to achieve high quality developments for existing and future residents.” (page197)

Thames Water

Thames Water responded to the Regulation 14 consultation saying: ““Developers need to consider the net increase in water and waste water demand to serve their developments and also any impact the development may have off site further down the network if no/low water pressure and internal/external sewage flooding of property is to be avoided. Thames Water encourages developers to use their free pre-planning service.”

8.2.4 Justification

A review of Evidence into Local Need for Affordable Housing, March 2020 ⁴³

A 2020 Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) carried out for the Roman Road Neighbourhood Forum by Arc4 indicates the area is mostly

OBJECTIVE 5: HIGH QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

populated by younger, single people, or households formed as cohabiting couples with no children. Consequently, there is a greater proportion of one bedroom and two-bedroom dwellings in the area. The population projections show that the older population is set to more than double by 2041, most of whom require the ability to downsize to one-bedroom homes.

The HNA indicates that more than 75% of households are unable to afford market housing of any kind, whether private rent or private home ownership, due to the high cost of housing in the area. This has led to owner occupation becoming one of the lowest in the country and indicates a latent demand for intermediate affordable housing products such as shared ownership, discount market, or affordable starter homes. Furthermore, it has led to a high turnover of residents who are living in temporary or short-term accommodation.

This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to establish sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities that encourage longer term residents to stay and provide opportunities for new residents to stay longer term.

The HNA concluded that 'unless there is an increase in the vacancy rate, the flow of unmet affordable need is an average of 86 dwellings per annum in Bow East and an average of 97 dwellings per annum in Bow

West. This gives a total of 183 dwellings per annum across the 2 wards.' (paragraph 5.27)

Well designed homes

Good quality housing design and layout are described in the Tower Hamlets Local Plan (Policy S.D1, page 44). The importance of good design in the NPA is to enhance community interaction within new housing developments. This can be supported through the design of mixed-tenure blocks and shared semi-private communal spaces or gardens, which would provide a place for social interaction and create a sense of community.

8.3 Policy supporting community-led housing

8.3.1 Key Issue

Many new housing developments do not provide the types of housing that are needed by the community, and the local community is not given priority when units become available. Community led housing is a growing movement of people taking action and managing housing projects that build the decent and affordable homes that the country so desperately needs. Open and meaningful community participation and consent takes place throughout the process.

The community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes in whichever way they decide to, but needs to be a registered affordable

housing provider.

The housing development is of true benefit for the local community, a specific group of people (an intentional community), or both. These benefits should also be legally protected in perpetuity

8.3.2 Policy

Policy H2: Community-led housing

In order to ensure the provision of community-led housing that meets community need:

- a.** Where intermediate housing is proposed, developers are encouraged to work with community led housing groups, such as the Roman Road Community Land Trust, to provide affordable housing
- b.** New residential developments where intermediate housing is proposed, are to submit an offer for these homes to local community-led housing organisations before opening the developments to the market
- c.** The provision of community-led housing that meets community need is strongly encouraged

8.3.3 Conformity with other policies

The London Plan 2020, Policy H2 Small sites

"Boroughs should pro-actively support well-designed new homes on small sites (below 0.25 hectares in size) through both planning decisions and plan-making in order to:

- 1) significantly increase the contribution of small sites to meeting London's housing needs*
- 2) diversify the sources, locations, type and mix of housing supply*
- 3) support small and medium-sized housebuilder*
- 4) support those wishing to bring forward custom, self-build and*

community-led housing

5) achieve the minimum targets for small sites set out in Table 4.2 as a component of the overall housing targets..." (chapter 4, page 180)

"Boroughs should:

- 1) recognise in their Development Plans that local character evolves over time and will need to change in appropriate locations to accommodate additional housing on small sites*
- 2) Where appropriate, prepare site-specific briefs, masterplans and housing design codes for small sites*
- 3) identify and allocate appropriate small sites for residential development*
- 4) list these small sites on their brownfield registers*
- 5) grant permission in principle on specific sites or prepare local development orders."* (chapter 4, page 180)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031

In order to support a variety of housing products in the market and affordable tenures which meet local need under policy S.H1, *"Developments are expected to maximise the provision of affordable housing, having regard to availability of public subsidy, implications of phased development (including provision for re-appraising scheme viability at different stages of development) as well as financial viability which should, in particular, take account of prevailing local and regional viability guidance."* (page 78 para 9.19)

"Over the plan period, developments on small sites have the potential to contribute over 3,000 new homes and could make a significant contribution towards meeting local affordable housing need." (page 78, para 9.21)

8.3.4 Justification

Community-led housing has been

OBJECTIVE 5: HIGH QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

actively promoted and funded by Central Government since 2016, to give communities control over delivering the homes that are best suited to their local needs. Whilst the movement of Community Land Trusts and community-led housing groups has only really taken hold in England since the early 2000's, they play an important role in stewarding land for building affordable homes. Roman Road Community Land Trust (RRCLT) was formed in 2019 to champion community-led housing and to work with developers and landowners to build genuinely affordable, good quality homes in Bow.

The level of housing need in Tower Hamlets as a whole far outstrips supply. *"There are more than 19,000 households on the housing register in need of an affordable home and over 2,000 households living in temporary accommodation. But each year, only 1,800 homes become available to let to applicants on the housing register.*

*More new homes were built in Tower Hamlets in 2018 than anywhere else in the UK, but with the average house price now 22 times the average salary, our residents can't afford to buy them."*⁴⁴

There are currently very few affordable housing developments underway in the area. One solution to meet the needs of the local community is to support community-led housing developments to reduce the unmet demand.

Right to Contest, Jan 2021
*"The government believes that reforming the Right to Contest and relaunching it as a new 'Right to Regenerate' could provide a quicker and easier route for individuals, businesses and organisations to identify, purchase and redevelop underused or empty land in their area. In turn, a strengthened right would support greater regeneration of brownfield land, boost housing supply and empower people to turn blights and empty spaces in their areas into more beautiful developments."*⁴⁵

Roman Road Bow Housing Need and Deliverability Assessment document⁴¹ describes in more detail the proposed local response to the HNA, including community led housing.

8.4 Policy on low carbon housing

8.4.1 Key issue

Climate change is having an impact on our lives, and urgent action is needed to slow it down. The mayor declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and the council has committed to become a net zero carbon council by 2025 and a net zero carbon borough by 2050 or sooner.

8.4.2 Policy: Low carbon housing

8.4.2 Policy

Policy H3: Low carbon housing

Proposals for significant renovation of residential properties are strongly encouraged to achieve the Tower

Hamlets Local Plan Policy D.ES7 (A zero carbon borough) requirement for new residential developments to reduce on-site carbon dioxide emissions by at least 45% beyond 2013 Building Regulations.

This includes the sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures in historic buildings - including the retrofitting of listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas - provided that it safeguards the historic characteristics of these heritage assets.

8.4.3 Conformity with other policies

A new Planning Act and Environment Act are expected that will require development to be zero-carbon ready by 2025 (the Government's new Future Homes Standard).

Local Plan 2031 Policy D.ES7 A zero carbon borough

1. Development is required to meet the carbon dioxide emission reduction standards as follows: Both residential and non-residential developments are required to improve on the building regulations 2013 standards:

Development is required to meet the carbon dioxide emission reduction standards - Zero carbon (to be achieved through a minimum 45% reduction in regulated carbon dioxide emissions on-site and the remaining regulated carbon dioxide emissions to 100% - to be offset through a cash in lieu contribution)

2. Development is required to maximise energy efficiency, and as a minimum, all self-contained residential proposals will be strongly encouraged to meet the Home Quality Mark.

3. Major residential and major non-residential development will be required to submit an energy assessment. Minor non-residential development will be strongly

encouraged to prepare an assessment.

4. The energy assessment should demonstrate how the development has been designed in accordance with the energy hierarchy.

5. The sustainable retrofitting of existing development with provisions for the reduction of carbon emissions will be supported.

8.4.4 Justification

There is currently a gap between local policy and the practical measures needed to deliver carbon reduction to target levels. The executive summary of the 2020 'Net Zero Carbon Plan' produced for the Council by Etude, says in order to achieve a net zero carbon council by 2025 'it will require decisive action starting now to reduce direct emissions by 75%. The residual emissions will have to be offset.' The report continues – 'This report also recommends that Tower Hamlets Council uses its powers, influence and leadership to put the Borough on the right track to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2050 (or earlier if possible).' (page2)

The report emphasises the key role of policy in addressing climate change – 'Policy is critical to deliver Net Zero Carbon. The potential for policy to cause significant change within the borough cannot be understated. New policies should be bold and reflect the urgency of the changes that we need to see to avert catastrophic climate change' (page 31).

The neighbourhood plan is limited in what it can do, but it can support national, London and local policies. To help meet climate change targets we wish to encourage a wider range of developments, including proposals for significant renovation of residential properties, to achieve the Tower Hamlets local plan requirement for new developments in policy D.ES7.

OBJECTIVE 6: RESILIENT AND WELL-NETWORKED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

By 2031 funding from new developments has enabled the creation of new places for young people to meet and there is an established and financially stable network of community groups running activities and facilities supporting the diverse population in the area. Grassroots organisations, children's and youth groups, arts and performance organisations and places of worship are part of a community consortium, working together identifying and agreeing funding opportunities for provision of new or expansion of existing facilities or activities across the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

9.1 Summary of current issues

Community facilities are facing reduced access to public funding and increased pressure from higher land value uses, as well as competing with demand for housing and employment use. Some existing facilities, such as Chisenhale Gallery and Holy Trinity Church need major capital investment, others like the Arts Pavilion are under-used. There are insufficient facilities for young people, particularly teenagers, across the neighbourhood plan area.



76 Fig. 25: Chisenhale Gallery



Fig. 26: Arts Pavilion

Grassroots community organisations play an important role supporting local residents and businesses. Many of these groups have been active in the area for a number of years identifying and solving local problems, but also face challenges of competing for limited funding.

A mapping exercise was carried out to identify all the local grassroots groups and community facilities, by sector, that fall within the neighbourhood plan boundary. See **Community groups mapping and analysis; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum.**⁴⁶

9.2 Policy to develop new and improved sports and play facilities

9.2.1 Key issue

The Local Plan 2031 Section 12, Supporting Community Facilities acknowledges the borough has specific gaps and priorities, including youth centres and indoor sport facilities and community halls (page 128). The policy in the Local Plan is reliant on developer contributions to ensure these additional or improved facilities

will be provided.

9.2.2 Policy

Policy CF1: developing new and improved sports and play facilities

In order to meet the needs of the growing population of children and young adults in the neighbourhood plan area, space should be found for additional sports and play facilities, either as part of new development or from CIL funding allocated in the area. Planning applications that propose the provision of sports and play facilities for children and young people will be viewed favourably. New residential developments will be expected to demonstrate that they have assessed the likely needs of the new resident under-16 population, and have sought, where possible, to address these needs.

Proposals to improve the quality of existing sports and play facilities at Mile End Climbing Wall, Roman Road Adventure Playground and other existing facilities will be strongly supported. Where appropriate, developer contributions will be used to address these needs.

9.2.3 Conformity with other policies

See photos of proposed sites for improvement for play and recreation in **Potential sites for improved spaces for play and recreation; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum document.**⁴⁷

Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031; Policy D.CF3 New and enhanced community facilities

“Proposals involving the provision of community facilities located outside the borough's town centres will be permitted where an up-to-

date and robust local need can be demonstrated.” (page131)

Indoor Sports Facilities for the Future 2017-2027 Appendix 3, Action plan

“Investigate any opportunities to develop indoor sports provision as a joint venture with partners, including neighbouring councils. (page78)

Tower Hamlets Planning Obligations SPD March 2021

‘It was agreed by Cabinet on 6 December 2016 to allocate 25% of received CIL funds in all circumstances to the ‘neighbourhood portion’. In LBTH this ‘neighbourhood portion’ goes into the Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF) which residents are then consulted on to determine how this fund should be used to improve the local area.’ (paragraph 1.16)

9.2.4 Justification

Indoor Sports Facilities for the Future 2017-2027; Section 4.3.1 Current and future needs for sports halls

“Geographical distribution of public and dual use sports halls across the borough is relatively good, with only small areas of the borough outside the catchment distance of 1,200 metres. One such area is in the north of the borough and broadly covers the northern parts of Bethnal Green, Bow West and Bow East wards.” (page24)

Morpeth School pupil survey findings; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum; July 201649

The under-provision of sports and play facilities is reflected in the survey carried out with Morpeth pupils aged between 12 and 15 in 2016, where respondents highlighted a desire for more or better youth leisure provision and 65% of surveyed students mentioned leisure facilities as important.

OBJECTIVE 6: RESILIENT AND WELL-NETWORKED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Community groups mapping and analysis; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum ⁴⁶

Only two out of the 40 mapped facilities in the area were for sports and play - Mile End climbing wall and Roman Road adventure playground.

Health and Social Care in the North East Locality Research Briefing, 2019 ⁴⁸

This document identified one of the challenges as “*Unequal availability of leisure centres and exercising facilities, with Bow East and some parts of Mile End being further away from a leisure centre than other parts of the locality.*” (Page 2)

In 1999 a planning application (PA/99/00968) was permitted for “*New sports hall, incorporating changing rooms, offices and incorporates Caxton Green and the disused railway cutting as part of a Fitness Trail leading to new all-weather 5-7-A-side football pitch to the south of Four Seasons Green.*” This facility was never built.

For a neighbourhood adjacent to the Olympic Park, it is a poor legacy that the plan area has no widely available sports hall for community use throughout the week. Future developments in adjacent areas of the London Legacy Development Corporation will provide opportunities for partnership working by Tower Hamlets Council through contributions to new sports facilities for the Bow community.

9.3 Action to develop new and improved youth facilities and

support

9.3.1 Key Issue

Whilst there are good youth services and facilities across the borough, there is a deficit within the NPA with a strong perception that more facilities should be provided: 22% of pupils who took part in the Morpeth School survey stated they wanted more youth provision in the area.

Council funded youth services have suffered from a series of reorganisations over the past 20 years, with a consequential lack of consistency in services and frequent changes of senior personnel. The updated youth service delivery model agreed in July 2020 shows only one Council youth work hub in the plan area and relies substantially on the community and voluntary sector to fundraise and enhance the offer. ⁴⁹

9.3.2 Action

Where it is possible for developer contributions to provide new youth facilities, for example, on the Chisenhale Art Place site, and on the Malmesbury and Lockton estates, these will be supported.

Proposals to improve the quality of existing youth facilities at Eastside, Green Light Youth Club and St Paul's Old Ford will be strongly supported. Where appropriate, developer contributions will be used to address these needs.



Fig. 27: Green Light Youth Club



Fig. 28: Eastside Youth Centre

9.3.3 Conformity with other policies

Revised planning obligations supplementary planning document, March 2013; London Borough of Tower Hamlets; Chapter 2: Council's approach to planning obligations and CIL

“Following the introduction of CIL, the intention is that the Council will cease to mitigate the impact of development on the borough's community facilities through S106 Agreements. The following types of community facilities will instead be delivered through CIL receipts; Multi-use community facilities; Youth facilities; Leisure centres; Idea Stores, libraries and archives.” (page8-9, para 2.12)

9.3.4 Justification

Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2016-2019

The provision for youth activity groups in the NPA is under-represented compared to the borough as a whole. (page11)

Community groups mapping and analysis; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum ⁴⁶

The neighbourhood plan area has only three youth focussed facilities out of the 40 mapped facilities: 31 Squadron Air Cadets, Green Light Youth Club and Eastside Youth and Community Centre.

Morpeth School pupil survey findings; Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum; July 2016 ⁵⁰

The Morpeth pupil survey identified only 6% of respondents as using youth clubs; however, 22% said they wanted more youth facilities in their neighbourhood.

Tower Hamlets Cabinet Meeting minutes of 29 July 2020, Youth Service Delivery Model

“*In modelling the new youth service officers are of the opinion that an additional Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings of £100,000 for 2021/22 could be achieved in support of reducing the council's budget pressure. Support for this approach was given by the council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). It is intended that any agreed saving will be achieved through a reduction in the number of targeted workers in the internal Youth Service.*” (page2)

OBJECTIVE 6: RESILIENT AND WELL-NETWORKED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

At a time when there is emerging evidence of the negative impact of the pandemic on some young people's mental health⁵⁰ and wellbeing, funding for the youth service is being cut. At the Young People's Question Time in March 2019, 60 young people from Tower Hamlets were invited to question senior leaders from the community, local government and police. One questioner commented: "Tower Hamlets is a very young borough, but I don't think lots of our services are particularly well designed to suit the needs of young people."⁵¹

Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan 2020-2023; Outcome 2

The Council will "Engage with Schools, the Youth Service and the Voluntary Sector on how to strengthen access to high-quality activities outside of school for children and young people making the best use of our partnership approach." (page14)

To secure new and improved facilities with well qualified, experienced youth workers, a firm commitment to prioritise investment for our young people will be required.

9.4 Action to improve existing community centres

9.4.1 Key Issue

The Local Plan 2031 Section 12, Supporting Community Facilities acknowledges the borough has specific gaps and priorities, including youth centres and indoor sport

facilities and community halls (page 128). Some existing community spaces in the NPA are under-used and poorly maintained.

9.4.2 Action

Action CF3: to improve existing community centres

Purpose-built community centres in housing estates in the neighbourhood plan area (such as the Ranwell Community Centre) are underused and need better maintenance and upkeep.

Proposals to replace the present Caxton Grove community centre with a higher quality building suitable for a wide range of community activities alongside improved play and sports facilities, will be encouraged. In order for these and other facilities, such as the Arts and Ecology Pavilions, to continue to provide useful meeting space for community groups and to sustain themselves into the future, CIL funding should be allocated is needed to support, maintain and improve these facilities.



Fig. 29: Caxton Community Centre

9.4.3 Conformity with other policies Tower Hamlets Local Plan, chapter 7,

S.CF1: Supporting community facilities

- "1. Development which seeks to protect, maintain and enhance existing community facilities will be supported.*
- 2. Development will be required to contribute to the capacity, quality, usability and accessibility of existing community facilities, particularly where development will increase demand.*
- 3. Development should maximise opportunities for the provision of high quality community facilities to serve a wide range of users. Where possible, facilities or services should be accessible to the wider community outside of core hours and co-located or shared to encourage multi-purpose trips and better meet the needs of different groups.*
- 4. New community facilities will be directed towards the borough's centres in accordance with the town centre hierarchy and/or to locations which are accessible to their catchments depending on the nature and scale of the proposal." (p128)*

9.4.4 Justification

Pressure on the Council to reduce expenditure, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, will require imagination and determination to improve existing facilities over the next decade. Communal meeting places are likely to assume greater importance following lifting of restrictions on movement and mixing. Leveraging additional investment

from national government, the private sector and charitable sources to supplement the Council's resources will be needed. Major developments on the outside edge of the plan area, such as on Wick Lane, provide opportunities for contributions to be made to community infrastructure in the nearby plan area in partnership with the London Legacy Development Corporation.

In February 2021 Tower Hamlets Council began a public consultation over proposals for the present Caxton Grove community centre. The proposed development is for a high-quality mixed-use scheme to replace the existing community centre and ball court at the northern end of the site adjacent the railway line. The proposed design is a six-storey building including a new community centre on ground floor level and 24 residential units above, providing a mix of dwellings for affordable rent and private sale homes. The public open space area to the south of the proposed building will be upgraded with new landscaping, including a children's dedicated play space alongside a new ballcourt with an area of the equivalent size of the existing ball court to be replaced.

OBJECTIVE 6: RESILIENT AND WELL-NETWORKED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE



Fig. 1.30: Caxton Grove. Aerial view from the south-east

9.5 Action to form a consortium of community groups

9.5.1 Key issue

Limited public funding for local grassroots groups and community facilities will be further restricted by the pandemic for years to come. This highlights the importance of active local community involvement in the planning and commissioning of community facilities.

9.5.2 Action

Action CF4: Forming a consortium of community groups

The formation of a consortium of groups and organisations in the neighbourhood plan area will enable better use of limited resources, and allow future funding for community infrastructure to be allocated where it is most needed, looking across the range of activities and facilities. The

Council working with Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service and local groups would be one means of facilitating a local consortium.

9.5.3 Conformity with other policies LBTH Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2021

Outcome 1: Communities lead the way in making Tower Hamlets a great place to live

“Co-production [...] offers an approach for sharing power ‘in an equal and mutual relationship, bringing together professionals, service users, their families and neighbours to design and deliver public services’ (see reference 9). This approach has increasingly been adopted by public sector organisations, who recognise that when power is shared, services are more responsive, and any solutions reached better reflect the needs of communities.” (page 11)

Tower Hamlets Local Plan, section 12, S.CF1: Supporting community facilities

1. Development which seeks to protect, maintain and enhance existing community facilities will be supported.
2. Development will be required to contribute to the capacity, quality, usability and accessibility of existing community facilities, particularly where development will increase demand.
3. Development should maximise opportunities for the provision of high quality community facilities to serve a wide range of users. Where possible, facilities or services should be accessible to the wider community outside of core hours and co-located or shared to encourage multi-purpose trips and better meet the needs of different groups.
4. New community facilities will be directed towards the borough's

centres in accordance with the town centre hierarchy and/or to locations which are accessible to their catchments depending on the nature and scale of the proposal.” (p128)

9.5.4 Justification

Building a sense of belonging and identity through local social networks and shared community experiences are important foundations for communities. This is particularly true for areas such as Bow, where there are a diverse mix of new and existing residents of different ages and ethnicities.⁵²

Many places of worship in the neighbourhood plan area provide important outreach to the local community and support the communities' diverse ethnicities. Examples include Holy Trinity Church and its arts programme, St Paul Old Ford with its youth work and Ability Bow gym, the Bow Muslim Community Centre's Arabic and Bengali classes for children and the Gurdwara Sikh Sangat teaching Punjabi and Gatka (an Indian martial art) classes. The Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service could provide the means of facilitating a local consortium.

9.6 Action to encourage Community Asset Transfer

9.6.1 Key issue

Bow Arts Studios and Nunnery Gallery, Chisenhale Gallery and Dance Space, and The Arts and Ecology Pavilions, are all within the Roman Road Bow NPA. They reach beyond the immediate neighbourhood, attracting visitors into the area and upholding Bow's reputation as a neighbourhood that supports the creative arts.

OBJECTIVE 6: RESILIENT AND WELL-NETWORKED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Issues with council funding and historic lease arrangements of buildings owned by the Council but managed by local groups, detract from these some buildings being well maintained or developed for the benefit of the community.

9.6.2 Action

Action CF5: Community Asset Transfer and Assets of Community Value

In order for Chisenhale Art Place Trust, Gallery and Dance Space to continue sustainably and control adaptation and development of existing facilities more directly, means should be sought to transfer ownership of the building from Tower Hamlets Council, using Community Asset Transfer. As a separate matter, the potential benefit of listing more Assets of Community Value in the plan area is recognised. The community is strongly encouraged to nominate facilities that are of value to them as assets of community value.

9.6.3 Conformity with other policies Understanding Community Asset Transfer; Locality

“Community Asset Transfer is the transfer of a publicly owned asset (usually land or buildings) to a community organisation at less than market value, or at nil consideration (no cost).” (page3)

General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, The Consent

Local authorities have the power to dispose of land and buildings at less than market value where they are able to demonstrate that doing so will result in local improvements to social, economic or environmental well-being. Local authorities are permitted to dispose of local authority land valued at up to two million pounds below market value or less without the need to obtain specific consent from the Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State. (page6, para 8)

A plain English guide to the Localism Action, Nov 2011; Community right to bid

“The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value which have been nominated by the local community. When listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Act then gives community groups the time to develop a bid and raise the money to bid to buy the asset when it comes on the open market.” (page9)

London Borough of Tower Hamlets assets of community value – nomination form guidance notes⁵⁴

9.6.4 Justification

Chisenhale is a prime example, where transfer of ownership of land and buildings on the Chisenhale site by Community Asset Transfer at less than market value could be of great

benefit. The purpose of the transfers would be to help secure the industrial heritage of the site, and strengthen its sustainability and long-term use for the arts and other community uses.

Chisenhale Gallery has occupied part of the ground floor of a former veneer factory on Chisenhale Road since 1982. Adjacent to the gallery on the ground floor, as well as on the upper floors of the building above the Gallery, are 38 artists' studios run by Chisenhale Art Place Trust, and next door, Chisenhale Dance Space occupies the top floor of a former brewery building. The three organisations, now run as separate charities, began life together when artists took on a lease to the then derelict site from Tower Hamlets Council in 1980.

Apart from providing revenue to the Council, there seems little rationale for the local authority to retain ownership of this valued community asset. Major repairs are needed to areas such as roofs and windows, and part of the former brewery is derelict. The current ownership structure hampers long-term initiatives to improve and bring back into use large empty, derelict spaces. This is connected with financial restrictions and the complexities associated with raising funds for capital works on a building which they don't own.

London's Cultural Infrastructure Plan calls on local authorities to develop long-term community asset transfer policies. and the GLA Cultural Infrastructure officers support the suggestion to explore the transfer of ownership of the buildings. The GLA's Artist Workspace Data Note said there were 11,500 studios in London,

but only 13% have secure freeholds. Preservation of Chisenhale Artists' Studios would lead to increasing the long-term stability of London's studios. The transfer could include the gallery space, dance space and studios.

9.7 Action to improve accessibility to health and social care facilities

9.7.1 Key Issue

The mapping of community facilities in Community groups mapping and analysis; **Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum**; ⁵⁵ shows that health and social care facilities are not easily accessible for residents in some parts of the neighbourhood plan area, in particular, those living in the eastern part of the Fairfield neighbourhood area are approximately 12 minutes' walk from the nearest doctor's surgery.

A research briefing on health and social care in the north east locality of the borough found that there were “Poorer availability of GP appointments than in the South of the Borough, with 35% of patients saying that they wait for more than a week for an appointment.” (page2)

9.7.2 Action

Action CF6: Improving access to health and social care facilities

Tower Hamlets Council, NHS and other service providers, using the principles of co-design and co-production described on page 17 of the Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-23, *“to ensure the community and local partners have a voice in shaping the design of local services. to work towards more equal*

OBJECTIVE 6: RESILIENT AND WELL-NETWORKED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

access to health and social care services across the neighbourhood area."

9.7.3 Conformity with other policies Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2017

The delivery plan seeks to ensure appropriate policies are in place for creating Healthy Places (page 45), as well as to provide providing new facilities where need is identified (page 47-48). There are no proposals in the current plan to provide additional health facilities in the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-20; chapter 1 Communities driving change

In the first 12 months, the programme aims to *"Implement a 'health creation' programme in which residents: : identify issues impacting on health and wellbeing that matter to local people; recruit other residents who have the energy and passion to make a difference; develop and lead new ways to improve health and wellbeing locally."* (page13)

The programme operates in 12 of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Tower Hamlets, including Bow East/Old Ford Road, selected on health data, and the need to strengthen assets supporting health and wellbeing in those areas.

A new five year Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being developed by the council's Health and Wellbeing board, with the central objective of tackling health inequalities.

9.7.4 Justification Health and Social Care in the North East Locality Research Briefing, 2019

The North East Locality comprises five wards: Bow West, Bow East, Bromley North, Bromley South and Mile End.

"Residents of the North East locality fared consistently worse than all the other localities across all indicators. In particular, they were more likely to find that they are poorly supported to make healthy lifestyle choices, that air quality is poor, that health and social care services don't work well together and that the neighbourhoods they live in are unsafe. They felt significantly more disenfranchised in relation with how their local community was run, and less satisfied with their homes and where they lived." (Page 6)

Dentists: *"According to the Tower Hamlets North East Locality Profile, access to dentists is mixed across the North East locality with the western side of the locality generally having good access (including to dentists with addresses in the North West locality) and the eastern side of the locality having some of the furthest distance to travel to a dentist in the Borough."* (Page 14)

GP surgeries: *"According to the Tower Hamlets North East Locality Profile, access to GP practices is unequal across the North West locality, with parts of Mile End and Bow East having some of the furthest distance to a nearest GP within Tower Hamlets."* (Page 16)

The future of healthcare for the people of north east London, August 2020

The report advocates the 80-20 principle: *"Our basic principle of 80:20 is in recognition of the fact that decisions about health and care will take place as close to local people as possible. Local partnerships will decide how best to use resources in the best interests of patients."* (page8)

In October 2020 the GP members of all seven North East London Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) passed proposals to form a new North East London CCG with strengthened local borough partnerships. This new, enlarged group provides a major opportunity to address the unequal geographical distribution of primary care services in Tower Hamlets and in the neighbourhood plan area.

The Bromley By Bow Centre,⁵⁷ although outside the plan area, provides an excellent model of holistic neighbourhood primary health care, combined with wider community development work. It has pioneered social prescribing, and implemented the Communities Driving Change programme in the Old Ford area. It organised a Community Voting Day

in November 2020 in Old Ford, which gave an opportunity to local people to pitch for small grants to carry out projects to improve public health in the area.

10 Priorities for Community Interest Levy (CIL) funding

The following policies and actions have been identified as suitable for delivery through CIL funding. The order follows that of the plan, and does not signify priority between the different themes.

Green Streets: Policy GS1 and Action GS2 to improve safe cycling and walking

Public Spaces: Policies PS1 to enhance public spaces, and PS2 to designate local green spaces.

Heritage: Action HE4 to improve Wayfinding and develop a new Bow Heritage Trail

Community Infrastructure: Policy CF1 to deliver new and improved sports and play facilities.

Actions CF2 and CF3 to provide new and improved youth facilities, and to improve existing community centres.

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