

Barking Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2020-2030



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Working in partnership



**Barking &
Dagenham**

The future of town centres is a topic of national debate with Covid-19 hastening the long term change underway. Barking town centre is central to the Borough's regeneration ambitions and has significant strengths and opportunities which can be harnessed. With a record number of cranes in Barking, the town centre is changing fast and now is the ideal time to set out a clear vision with a strategy and delivery plan to unlock the full potential and achieve a model of inclusive growth.

Footfall in Barking is predominantly from a local catchment area and Covid-19 has further increased the emphasis on local activity. There is a lot of attention being paid to the concept of 'the 15 minute city' where everything needed for a great quality of life - work, learning, culture, retail, food and drink, parks etc - is within 15 minutes walk. The strategy aims to deliver this and ensure Barking town centre becomes the destination for new residents of Barking Riverside and other developments as well as continuing to attract existing residents.

Barking has a fascinating but little known history and a strong sense of place - the strategy aims to enhance this. The River Roding was central to Barking's formation and history but had been neglected for decades - the River will once again be restored to prominence. Abbey Green, Barking Park and Greatfields park are superb green spaces and these will be enhanced and connected with new smaller parks, green links and riverside walkways as part of a wider focus on sustainability and improved quality of life.

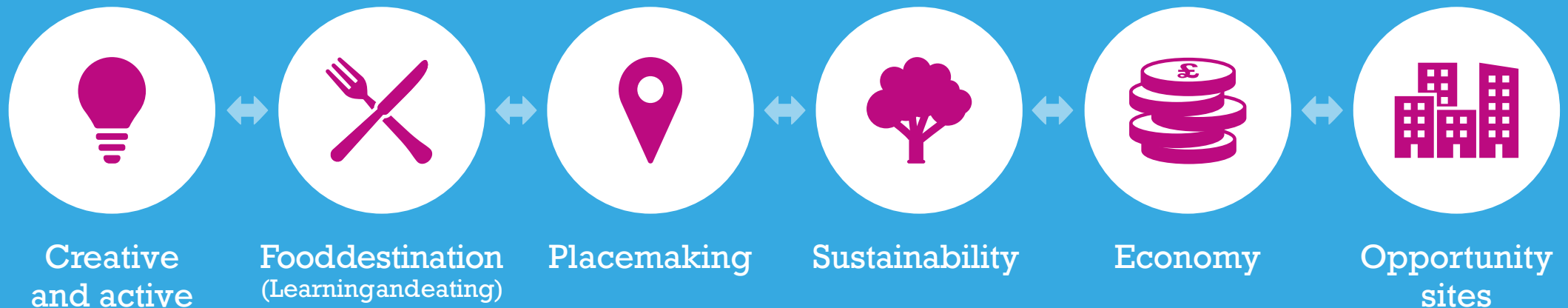
Art and culture are central to the strategy with innovative schemes such as A House for Artists and the Three Sixty space building on the strong foundations of the Ice House Quarter and long standing Barking organisations such as Studio 3 Arts and the Broadway theatre.

The Gascoigne Estate forms a substantial part of the south of the town centre and is undergoing transformation. This strategy aligns to the Gascoigne Place-making Strategy with its ambitious proposals.

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has a strong inclusive growth agenda and through Be First is willing to actively intervene to deliver regeneration. Significant work is already underway and the strategy sets out ambitious plans - inevitably some interventions will require additional funding to be secured and may take longer to deliver but no apologies are given for aiming high.

Barking has a range of well established and newly formed community focused groups, organisations, CICs and Trusts and the strategy aims to enable and facilitate activities by these bodies in line with the shared objectives. One of the challenges of producing a strategy for an area as rich in activity and potential as Barking is ensuring everything is included. We recognise not every great initiative underway or planned may be included however the delivery plan will be a living document, on-line and regularly updated.

The strategy sets out six inter-related objectives which categorise an ambitious package of activities and interventions. The objectives are:



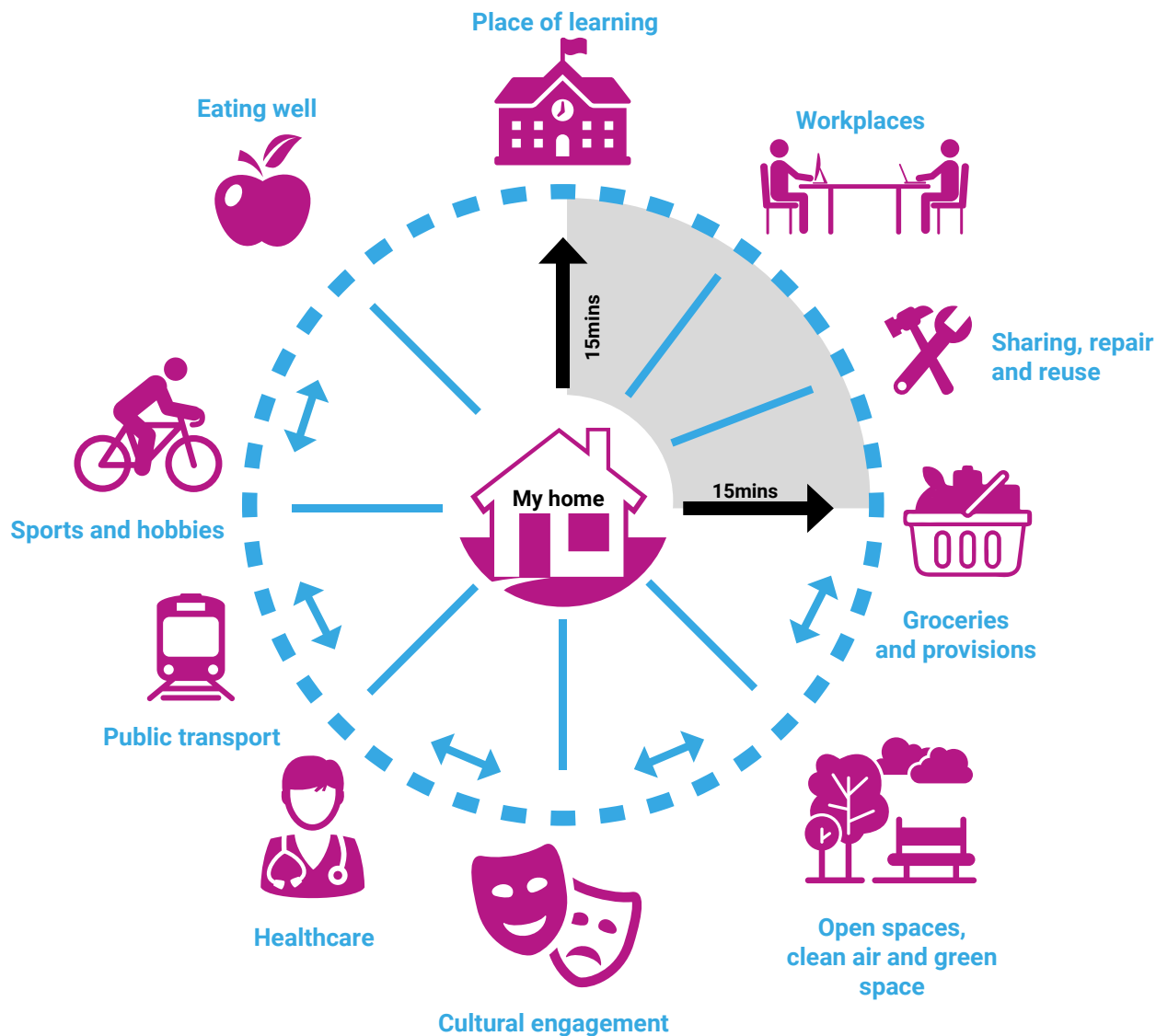
Whilst the strategy identifies a huge range of interventions, and the importance of small community led grassroots level activities should not be underestimated, three key strategic interventions which will have the most significant transformational change are prioritised.

1. A unique and transformational food hub/college linked to the City of London wholesale markets returning Barking to its historic prominence for food and trading
2. Improving the poor first impression the station gives of Barking into a key welcoming gateway
3. Intervening to take forward the first phase of the Vicarage Field redevelopment as a key catalyst for high quality change

Finally, the importance of engaging and involving town centre stakeholders, businesses and residents is recognised alongside addressing day to day issues such as cleanliness, anti-social behaviour and safety. Many town centres have Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to support this activity - the strategy sets out proposals to replicate elements of a BID to ensure these issues are addressed.

Barking town centre has superb potential and we hope you want to work with us to ensure the potential is delivered and that Barking becomes a model of how to achieve inclusive growth.

The 15 minute city



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The Council recognises that town centres play a crucial role in the regeneration of the borough. High streets contribute positively to community cohesion, they ensure access to local services as well as public spaces and facilities, and importantly, they promote business growth and local employment.

The council has therefore developed this Barking Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2020-2030 (the strategy) in response to the changing socio-economic trends and local resident and business communities' aspirations in order to help define what should be the future of Barking town centre to create a successful and resilient place and economy that benefits local people.

The strategy sets out the Council's vision for Barking town centre (BTC), underpinned by key objectives and a delivery plan. The strategy forms part of the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy, and draws on various relevant studies, most notably the Barking Town Centre Panel report (ARUP, 2020) and Barking Civic Centre Masterplan (Peter Bishop, 2019).

The key measures of success, aligning with Borough Manifesto, are:

- better performance of business and growth in investment and jobs
- improvement in health and well-being
- improvement of safety and perception of safety
- improvement in business satisfaction rates
- increased residents' use of town centres and improved satisfaction rates
- improvement in green infrastructure and recycling and waste management







Town centres and high streets provide significant socio-economic value and serve vital functions to local communities. However, town centres currently face many challenges that have threatened their existence and health, which then have knock on impact on local communities. Covid-19 has further intensified the challenges that town centres were already facing.

The changing context facing UK town centres and high streets include:

- changing consumer behaviour and rise of internet retailing (1% in 2000, 20% in 2018 and 30% in 2020)
- loss of chain stores – with those remaining mostly not looking for new locations
- more recent closure of large restaurant chains
- business rate threats to small businesses
- AI and automation affecting employment opportunities
- growth of ‘experiential’ retailing
- changing nature of work
- air pollution and climate emergency
- impact of office to residential Permitted Development rights
- austerity and Brexit impacting economy and businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)

Barking has seen considerable changes since the 60s, yet even bigger change is coming. Its community is an exciting, dynamic, multicultural one that is set to continue to change and become more prosperous over the next two decades (see appendix 1 for a snapshot of the regeneration timeline of Barking town centre so far).

The impact of COVID-19 has significantly damaged and put pressure on our local town centres. Aligning with London Councils’ ‘Restore, Retain, Reinvent’ focus for town centres and Covid-19, the Council has already undertaken a programme of works for the first two elements whilst this strategy will seek to address the third and aims to inspire confidence in Barking’s long-term future.

Whilst the future of town centres and high streets is uncertain there is a strong consensus that future successful high streets will be more compact, with a stronger and broader range of uses, including living, working, shopping, leisure, eating and drinking, culture, learning and local services in an environment and sense of place that makes people want to spend time there. Adaptability and resilience are seen as the keys to the future of town centres.

This strategy is based on substantial research and analysis. Below is a summary of the evidence base documents that together provide a robust basis for the strategy and project interventions.

This strategy also complements the Council's Corporate Plan and emerging Local Plan.

- Working towards a future Barking town centre - Renaisi, 2014
- Regenerating Barking Town Centre - Peter Brett Associates, 2016
- The Future of our Local Economy - GL Herne, 2017
- Future skills in Barking and Dagenham - SQW, 2018
- Roding Made (Creative Enterprise Zone bid) - DK-CM, 2019
- Barking and Dagenham Retail and Town Centre Study – Lichfields, 2019
- Barking Civic Centre Masterplan - Bishop Williams & DaeWha Kang Design, 2019
- Future of Barking Town Centre - Independent Panel report - ARUP, 2020
- High Streets & Town Centres Adaptive Strategies – GLA, 2020

From January to February 2020, the Council consulted local residents on the Inclusive Growth Strategy through thematic (Homes, Jobs, Participation, Places) aspects and the seven areas of the borough, where one of them is Barking town centre and the Roding. More than 1,300 residents visited the online consultation platform and 254 residents were engaged face-to-face through 16 events. While people are generally positive towards the Barking town centre especially the market, they have expressed desire to see more cultural offering, youth provision and a variety of retail offer, in addition to the safety and cleanliness concerns. All the feedback has informed this strategy, to ensure it is grounded in local intelligence and that proposed changes respond to the needs of local people.

This strategy assesses the capacity and opportunities for change and proposes a programme of projects for future delivery. It includes both the hard and soft components: physical place-making (hard) alongside long-term cultural and community programming and activation (soft). Projects and interventions will need to be developed to a more detailed level, as well as assessed for their feasibility. Where we do not have the powers to directly effect change, we will use the powers we do have to influence that change. There will be ongoing discussions and engagement with residents, businesses and other statutory bodies and stakeholders as new projects and initiatives progress to delivery.



The strategy provides a framework to enable everyone invested in Barking & Dagenham to work with us to establish a productive mixed community that will thrive today and for years to come. The delivery plan provides an indication on how the Council look to deliver the vision. We will use the strategy and the accompanying documents to seek funding and resources, and to attract investment to the area. The strategy will be a consideration in planning matters but is non-statutory and therefore does not constitute policy or statutory guidance.

Vision and principles



Wholesale markets

The City of London's famous wholesale markets - Billingsgate (fish), Smithfield (meat) and New Spitalfields (fruit and vegetables) are proposing to co-locate at Dagenham Dock.

We are working with the City on unlocking the full potential of the food sector in the borough including an emphasis on Barking town centre.

The picture shows the Dagenham Dock scheme.

Vision for Barking town centre:

“A town centre where inclusive growth unlocks a new lease of life - a healthy, safe and sustainable place to live, work, learn, socialise, shop, eat and relax with great places to visit. A real destination, day and night with a strong sense of place and identity harnessing its physical assets and rich heritage. Markets, merchants, makers and more. Roding Riverside will restore the river’s importance to Barking, being the creative and cultural heart of Barking town centre, with new homes and jobs for local people.”

Barking town centre will be reinvigorated as a thriving 21st Century town centre, with an intensified range of activities and uses to support existing and new communities. It will reveal and restore existing characteristics and promote what is working well – including the market, the growing creative and making industries, heritage assets and green and open spaces.

Barking has a rich and dramatic history dating back centuries, with its long history of commerce and retail, as a bustling market town and a productive fishing industry serving the London population from 14th century. Barking has also gained an extraordinary mix of cultures with a good focus and balance on family and community life. We aim to build on those strong elements of culture that make Barking distinct, and as the means to actively encourage engagement and pride in the community.

Barking has a rich heritage in food; from its historical fishing industry, to the thriving street market and food and wholesale businesses to the south of the town centre today. Coupled with the potential brought by the planned relocation of the City of London wholesale markets to the borough, Barking town centre will see its evolution as London’s food hub, with its exciting food offer, pioneering industries and renowned quality skills offer, serving East London and the wider London economy.

By 2030, Barking town centre will be known as a place for its healthy, high quality food offer. Residents and visitors will come to Barking town centre to enjoy fresh healthy food as well as learning, experimenting and finding inspirations. It will also be a great place for businesses to thrive and start their businesses.



Crown House

Placemaking principles and concepts

The strategy is grounded in three main principles in order to sustain an authentic evolving place identity for BTC. They will guide a consistent approach across all projects and decisions.

Activation

Diversifying the range of activities beyond retail, celebrating and consolidating the civic and cultural role of Barking town centre

Promote **flexibility and adaptability** to curate a vibrant town centre e.g. through meanwhile uses and pilot projects

Improving **visitor experience** and sense of **safety** that's inclusive for everyone, investing in technologies and integrate play and creativity

Telling Barking's story

Celebrate its diverse culture and to engender **pride and interest** in a place in order to raise the confidence and aspirations of its people

Clear **sense of place** as a connected town centre as well as arrival at Barking Station

Highlighting and showcasing Barking's interesting **heritage**

Continue supporting **culture and creative** sectors, where food plays a key part

Champion borough-wide ambitions for **sustainability** in the town centre

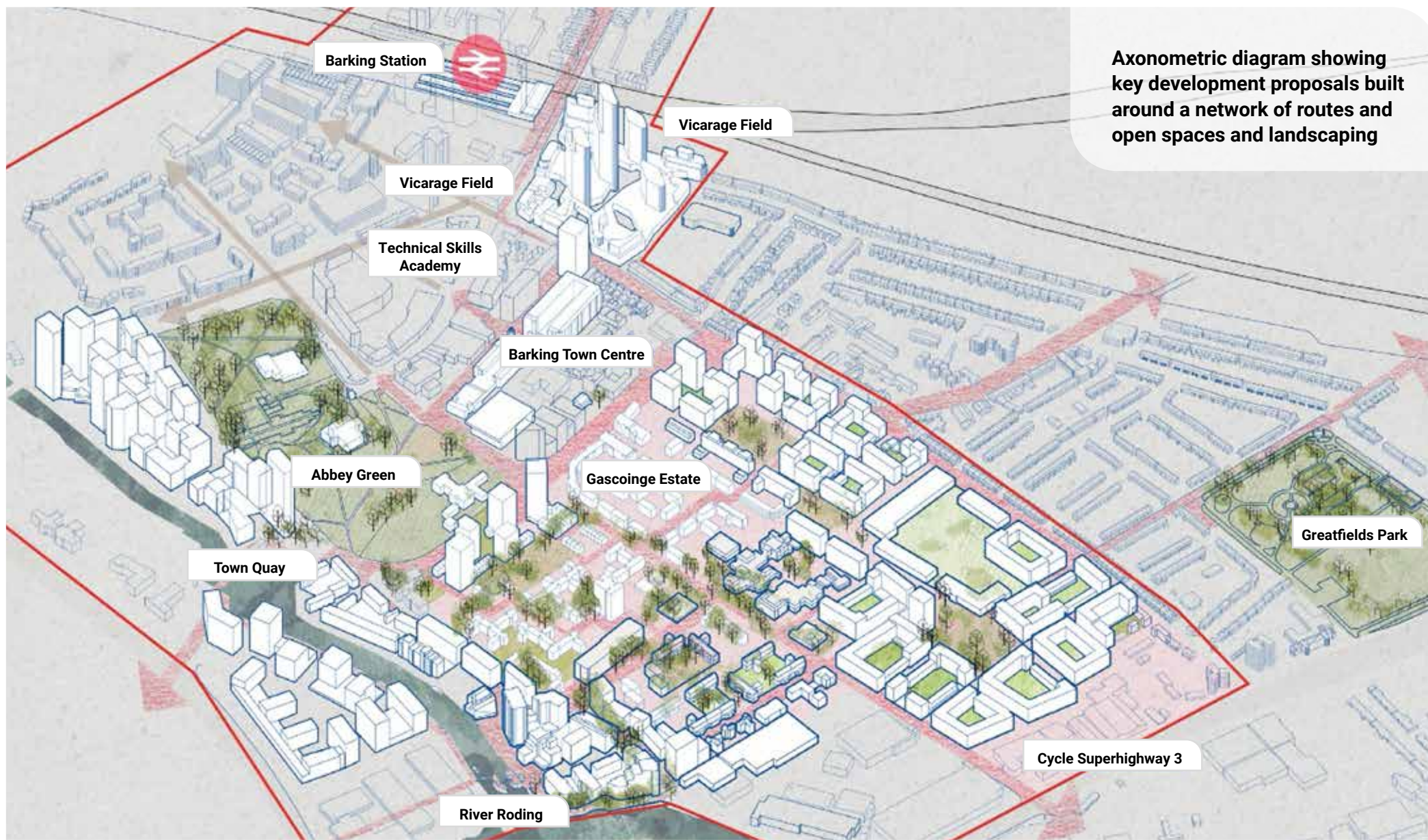
Building partnership

Continue with **strong leadership**, as well as promoting bottom up changes

Promoting **strong partnership** – public, private, businesses and community organisations working together, combining their resources, knowledge and expertise

Effective **community engagement** at every stage, co-production models used where possible

Create the right **policy environment** e.g. planning and licensing



Axonometric diagram showing key development proposals built around a network of routes and open spaces and landscaping

The principles are supported by the three concepts, which look to define the character of BTC and to communicate a vision which shapes them.

The concepts provide a development framework which will underpin how the area operates and the way it is perceived in the future. It defines public space design and layout, layouts of street networks, accessibility and connectivity of open spaces in order to enhance a sense of place and community. All of which should be supported by an innovative and pioneering approach to planning and exemplary architecture and urban design solutions.

They reflect the four principles for design in the Civic Centre masterplan:

- vibrant
- inclusive
- healthy
- inspiring

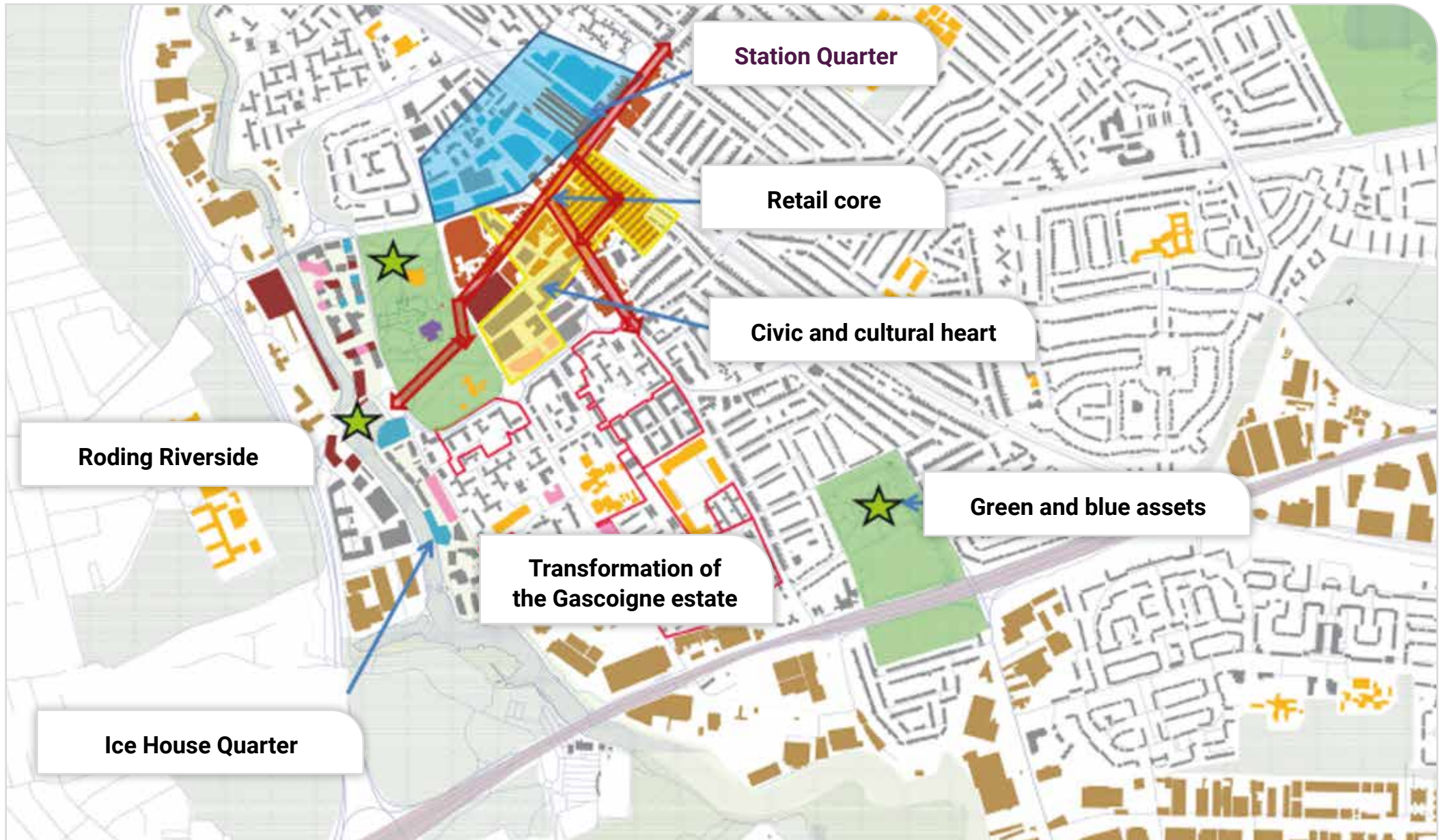


Connectivity gateways

Creating intimate areas with a high degree of enclosure and continuous building frontage.

- Streets should be permeable, so people have a choice of routes between places, including direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists
- All streets must be pedestrian-friendly, providing choices for walking, cycling and dwell time
- A vibrant and multi-functional town centre







Our strategy's vision is underpinned by six objectives which aim to unlock the full potential of Barking town centre.

Objectives | Creative and active

Creative and active

“To make Barking town centre a lively, attractive place for people to enjoy and interact with strong sense of place, identity and history.”

A sense of community is at the heart of good placemaking. The objective aims to help communities share new experiences and to encourage existing and future communities in the area to come together in collective community spirit. It will spur opportunities for participation in inclusive local cultural activities in ways that build skills, employability, opportunities and social capital.

This objective takes a long-term view working with residents, brokering local partnerships with the cultural sector, building a bottom up approach to cultural activation and empowerment. There will be long term community engagement led by skilled artists empowering community members to have a voice and a role in their changing environment and fosters community relations. Developing community cohesion through activities and events can also help to create a stronger sense of place and identity for a local area, nurturing a sense of belonging, enhancing integration with existing communities and reducing social isolation.

BTC will become the place where the borough's diverse ethnic populations can articulate their

identity. There will be balance of early design intervention across the strategy's term: high quality artistic vision that creates benchmarks, which in turn creates the future spaces and time for bottom-up cultural activity led by local artists, residents, workers and visitors.

Based on the experience of other areas in London and globally, a unique identity is critical for any successful place, especially one placing creativity at the heart of their strategy – the importance of a cultural placemaking approach. One key aim in this objective is to change the perceptions of BTC and to cultivate a unique identity, celebrating its culture, heritage and assets. It is also important that creative practitioners are engaged and visible, that their activities help to transform public spaces and engender local buy-in toward this development of identity.

Leading to this is therefore the importance of nurturing its local creative economy. LBB's status as an unusually young borough, among other demographic shifts makes it unusually well-placed to capitalise on the rise of the creative economy, and indeed for that creative economy to activate and elevate the existing town centre's businesses and physical spaces.

The borough's young people have a dynamism and aspiration that will bring a new lease of life to the town centre. This objective aims to grow the local creative network to allow local artists and young people to access and generate creative enterprises

and space to express themselves.

The Council will also explore pop-up 'pod shops', which change regularly offering a range of display and experience for people to visit. Not only will these offer entrepreneurs a chance to start their own business, it will also encourage people to keep returning to the town centre, to see what new local things are available. With the highly entrepreneurial nature – often micro start-up operating in tight space shared space – this will intensify and add serendipity to the retail experience.

This aligns with the coherent identity and civic life objectives in the Gascoigne placemaking strategy.



Barking Bathhouse meanwhile use 2012

Objectives | Creative and active



Placeshapers Barking

A recently established group of local residents and stakeholders established by Street Space interested in ideas to improve places and spaces in the town centre.

Image: St. Awdry's Walk artwork by Julia Forsman for Street Space.



Ice House Quarter

On the banks of the Roding and reflecting Barking's fishing heritage, the Ice House Quarter is now a key focus for creative industry space with the Quarter encompassing The Granary, The Malthouse, Ice House Court and recently completed Rivermill Lofts scheme offering affordable workspace for artists and craftspeople.



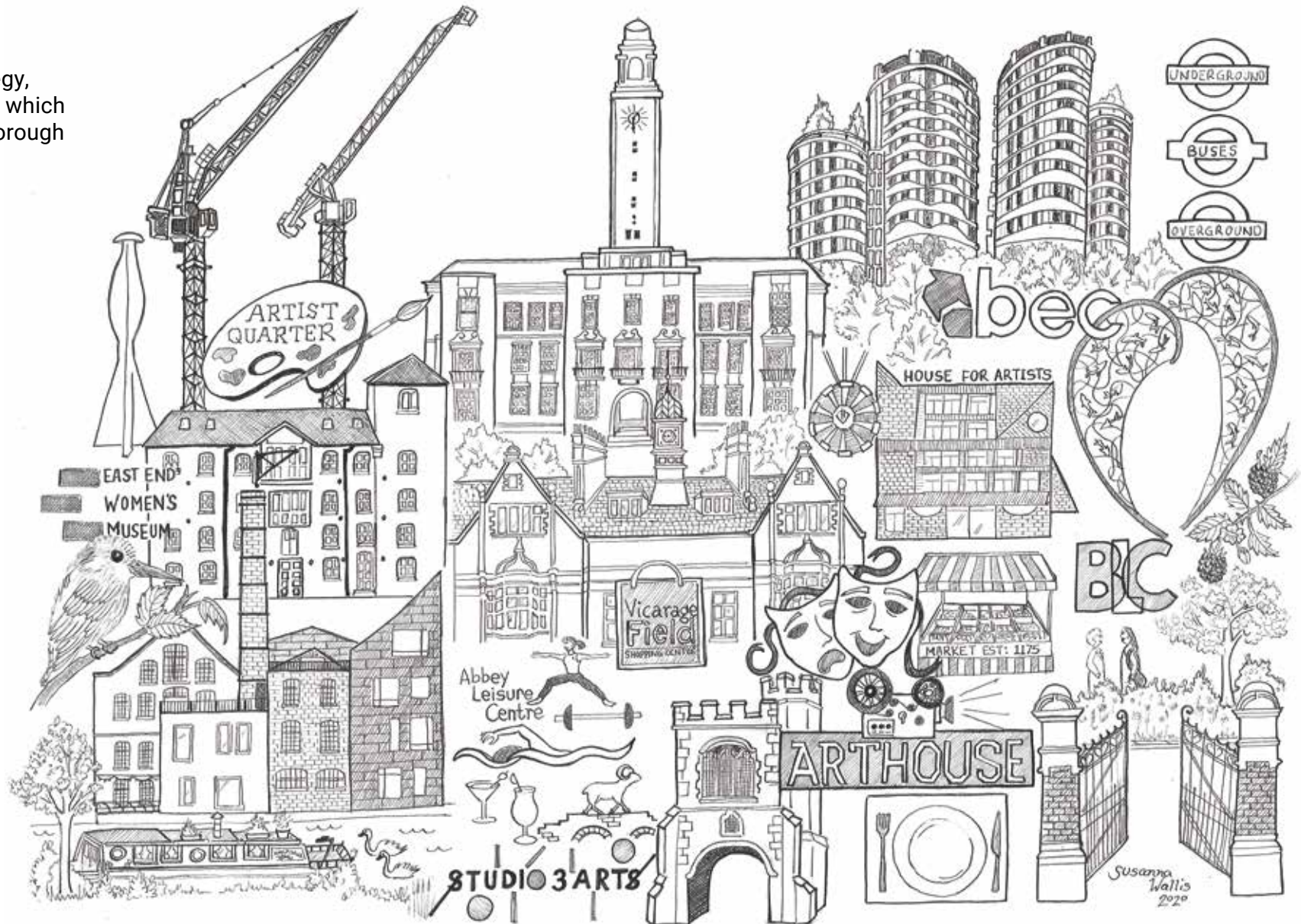
We've used events in the Town Square to bring local residents and visitors together.

Image: Franck Allais

Objectives | Creative and active

Artwork by local artist Susanna Wallis

Commissioned for this strategy, this is an example of artwork which helps generate pride in the borough and showcases local talent.



Objectives | Food destination

Food destination

“Food as a key focus with a new food college and facilities with associated shopping, dining, workspace and entertainment.”

The City of London’s ambition to consolidate and relocate their wholesale markets to Dagenham Dock, presents a great regeneration opportunity for the borough to develop a best-in-class food offer to local residents and visitors in the town centre to complement the new wholesale market.

With this, BTC will become the place for food entrepreneurs to set up businesses – developing and testing their products or experimenting with new ideas in collaboration with other businesses. In turn, this will inspire residents to think more creatively about food, and provide new jobs to people from all backgrounds, as the food sector is one of the most inclusive and accessible sectors. Indeed, Barking and Dagenham encapsulates the inclusive and diverse spirit of London. With two-thirds of the population from ethnic minority backgrounds, the borough already boasts a rich and multi-layered foundation of diverse culture, creative innovation and entrepreneurship.

This is a clear successor to the borough’s rich history in fishing and manufacturing, and one that is framed by creative practices that are already present in the lives and practices of the borough’s residents, such as the participants in Every One

Every Day programme. Food and making, as a form of creative enterprise, inherits the borough’s tradition of skilled manufacturing but transcends to meet the modern and shared economy, as well as attuned to the needs and aspirations of the borough’s young people.

The Council will work closely with CoL and its education providers, such as Barking and Dagenham College, in developing the activities and services that will be needed to connect local residents and food sector with the new wholesale market, and the people and skills they require.

The aspiring new Food Hub in BTC will act as further catalyst in providing world class facilities and hence the strengthening of a creative food cluster and its supporting business community (which supports the wider creative and food economy through wholesale, showcasing and promotional activities).

With poor diet as the biggest avoidable cause of ill health now in the UK, this objective also aims to tackle the challenges of obesity and access to affordable healthy food. Improving the local food environment, including addressing affordability and increasing food growing facilities and skills, is important in enabling more people to access healthier options hence tackling health inequalities and food poverty. Diversifying the food retail offer can also help high streets survive, support business and local economic growth.

Barking Market

The street market in Barking is a strong asset and we want to ensure it becomes a model for delivering inclusive growth. The market will play an integral part for BTC to become a food destination. We will see the evolution of the market through the cultivation of healthy, independent, international food identity.

The Boathouse



Objectives | Placemaking

Placemaking

“BTC will be known by its high quality, distinct physical environment, with new developments being framed by heritage assets and excellent public realm.”

BTC has many wonderful buildings, green and blue assets and vibrant public spaces. By 2030, these will be well cared for and buzzing with people. The public realm will be accessible to all ages and abilities, highly permeable and walkable, and will feel safe and welcoming throughout the day and into the night. Combined with a built environment that provides multiple opportunities for play and leisure with a healthy and diverse programme of community activities, this will aim to facilitate healthier behaviours. It will also contribute to residents, workers and visitors’ positive mental and physical wellbeing, encouraging residents to make informed choices for a healthy active lifestyle and behaviours, which improve their own health and the environment.

A key part of this objective is about the arrival experience in Barking, wayfinding and pride of place. Barking has a rich history and local heroes both past and present. The station, Vicarage Field, the market, Abbey Green and the River Roding will form a spine of activity running through the town centre. Connectivity will be improved aided by the promotion of pedestrian and cyclist mobility throughout BTC and into the wider area. Barking station as the key gateway to the borough will be reconfigured and revitalised with a clear sense of arrival and legibility and become a place that local people are proud of and can identify with.

A range of highway projects will be explored in order to improve the quality of the environment and function of the town centre, as well as movement between and within BTC. Abbey Green will be enhanced, to include more spaces for people to relax and socialise, especially for the young. There will be well-lit paths between the town and the river through Abbey Green, and towards Town Quay as an exemplar public square. The areas beside the River Roding will be active, with safe paths for cyclists and pedestrians, and the green spaces throughout the town will be full of biodiversity. The heart of BTC

where the popular market is held will be well-managed, and free of rubbish and clutter. It will be attractive, and where appropriate enlarged to improve the space for pedestrians and cyclists.

The rich history and heritage of BTC provides authentic material and inspiration with which to create a unique identity and strong sense of place for the BTC, as well as animating the public realm, informing design and branding, and engaging communities through imaginative use of the public realm and the amenities across BTC. By working closely with local people, we will create places so that it has its own unique character, culture and identity. This can be achieved by understanding, protecting and incorporating important or unusual landscape features, historic buildings and references to local history, geography and landmarks into the design of the place. Creating spaces that can act as centres or hubs also provides opportunities for community activity and they should be designed to support a range of functions. It is as equally important to physical improvement as building stewardship and management plans.

This aligns to the public space, health & wellbeing, connected & walkable objectives in Gascoigne placemaking strategy.



Objectives | Placemaking

Barking heritage

A large part of the town centre is covered by the Abbey and Barking Town Centre Conservation area whilst Abbey Green forms part of an Ancient Scheduled monument.

Alongside this strategy a new Conservation Area appraisal has been produced and the National Lottery Heritage Fund project aims to restore historic buildings, improve the public realm in front of the Curfew Tower and raise awareness of the town's history through artwork and engagement of schools and volunteers. We see highlighting the area's history as a key element of the placemaking strategy.

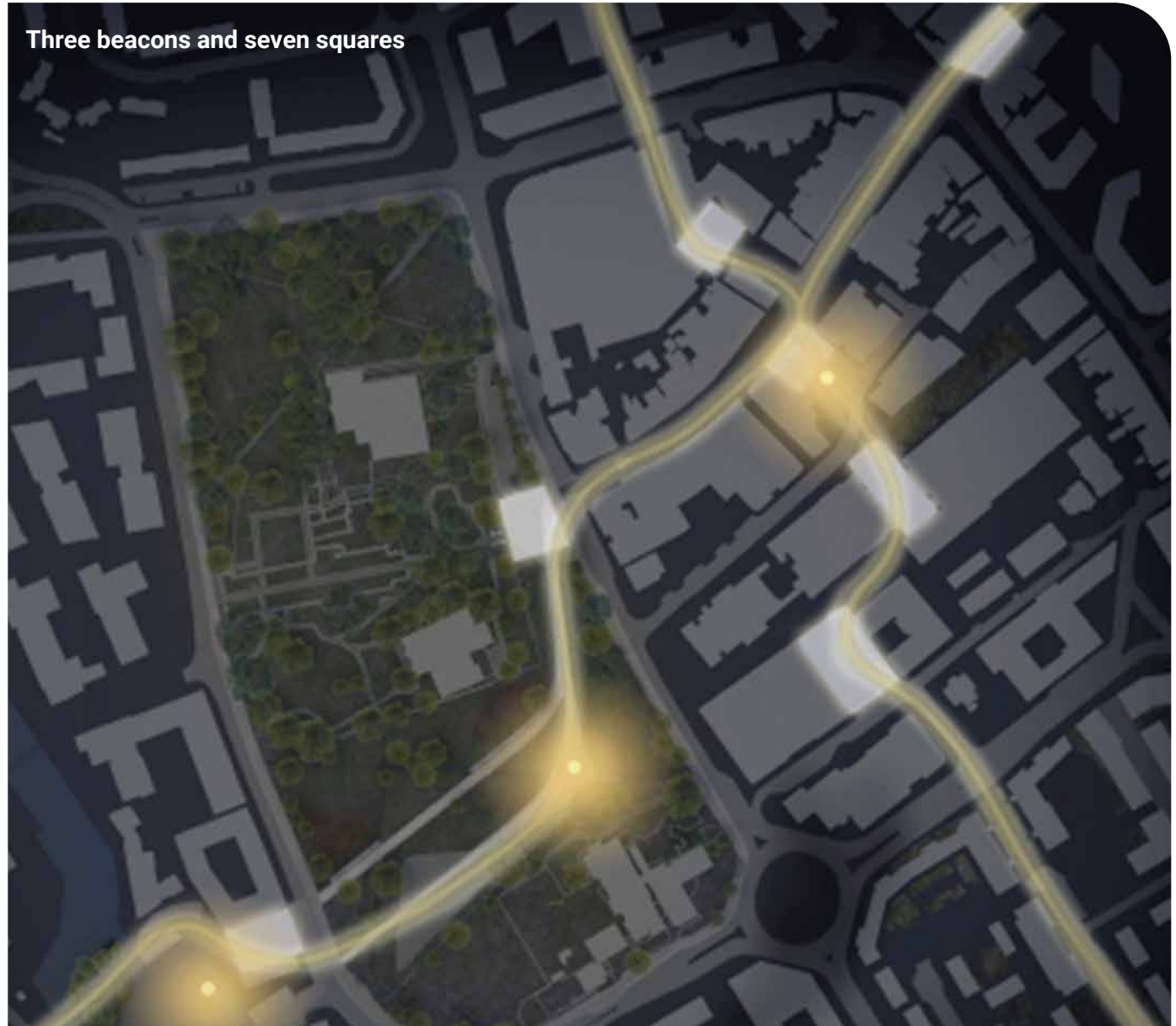
Hidden history?

Barking Town Centre has a fascinating but little known history. For example, it was the place William the Conqueror was based whilst the Tower of London was being built. It used to have the country's biggest fishing fleet. And, it is the burial place of reformer Elizabeth Fry.

Public realm

Our public realm strategy introduces the concept of Three beacons and seven squares identifying pedestrians routes and destinations with good quality public spaces and a clear route to the river.

Three beacons and seven squares



Objectives | Sustainability

Sustainability

“Delivering a socially, environmentally and economically resilient town centre, with a strong focus in achieving ambitious climate change targets.”

Barking and Dagenham Council is amongst the London Boroughs to declare a climate emergency, outlining ambitious plans to become carbon neutral by 2030. Those operating in and managing the town centre must act now to ensure that carbon targets can be met.

By 2030, Barking town centre will be well connected by public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks accessible to all. Local businesses and the market

will be proudly moving towards zero-waste, with strict rules around reducing packaging and recycling. It will offer locally sourced produce, with strong link with the Dagenham Dock wholesale market.

The town centre will have flexible spaces which can be changed and adapted for different uses throughout the day and night to reduce the need to develop new single-purpose buildings.

Green infrastructure will be included wherever possible in the design of public space, including paths and roads, as access to good quality green infrastructure improves people’s mental and physical health and wellbeing.

This aligns with the Climate Emergency objective in the Gascoigne placemaking strategy.

District Energy Network

The Council and its energy company B&D Energy are developing a scheme looking to provide heat to nearly 8,000 homes and around 60,000m² of commercial floor area in Barking town centre. This will create a new low carbon energy network in Barking comparable with those already developed in major cities across the UK such as Birmingham, Southampton, Sheffield and Nottingham. The scheme will be the primary goal of B&D Energy over coming years with the opportunity leading to decarbonisation of Barking and the town centre.

This will be achieved by:

- installing approximately 2km of buried district heating pipework around the town centre
- building a new energy centre in the North West of the Town Centre, linking to the existing low carbon energy centre on the Gascoigne estate

Together this energy generation plant and heat network will allow B&D Energy to deliver supplies of low carbon, fairly priced heat to all connected homes and businesses across Barking town centre.

River Roding Trust

The Trust was set up to preserve, protect and restore the River Roding for public and wildlife benefits with each boat occupier being required to deliver 12 hours a month volunteering to qualify for mooring.



Objectives | Economy

Economy

“It will be seen as place to start and grow a business, providing quality and varied jobs.”

In recent years there has been a structural change in the borough’s economy. This presents an opportunity to create an economic base that will support the borough’s transition from a mainly industrial economy to an economy that operates as much for its local population. Currently, with BTC as the main commercial centre of the borough, the diversity of the commercial activities and offer is limited. The BEC programme has done a lot for local businesses already but there is still more demand that needs to be met, especially with new people moving into the area.

By 2030, BTC will provide the space and conditions needed for growth. In particular, BTC will offer a range of flexible office spaces, catering to different needs and stages of businesses. Local entrepreneurs and businesses will be encouraged to stay and grow in Barking, creating more jobs, vibrancy and opportunities for local people. There will be a specific focus on the night-time economy (NTE) through experimenting and developing the offer with local stakeholders and reviewing licencing policies. As the main location in the borough offering NTE, consideration will also be given to the future workers at the wholesale market and film studios

who may require a fuller night-time offer.

BTC will become home to an exciting, organic and rapidly developing creative sector, including food production and education, digital technology, software and computing. This will support Barking and Dagenham’s ongoing transformation from a place of manufacturing to modern, more resilient economic sectors as well as the opportunity to rejuvenate existing well-established industries. BTC will host and nurture a creative ecosystem and continue to respond to emerging trends and technological advances through experimentation and innovation. Interventions include provision of a wide range of workspace accommodation, venues and facilities to allow sharing of ideas and collaboration, business support on sector-specific expertise, access to skills and training and business network.

Barking and Dagenham has relatively high proportion of micro-businesses compared to London and growth boroughs. The borough also has relatively high start-up rates but weaker survival rates and low productivity. This indicates there are good opportunities to establish new business but these business struggle to grow. Focused support will be given to address barriers to business growth, such as tailored start-up support, access to finance and more general business advice.

Support will also be given to local residents to develop their skills and get the jobs that come with the growing economy coming to the borough.

Care City

Care City CIC is a healthy ageing innovation centre focussed on improving health and the determinants of health. In 2022 its permanent home will be part of the Axe Street development currently under construction.

Barking Enterprise Centres CIC

With 3 locations in the town centre offering affordable workspaces, BEC CIC also offers business support to local businesses and entrepreneurs and forms a key partner in the deliver of the strategy’s Economy objectives.

Barking and Dagenham has a generally low skill level which presents a challenge in transitioning towards higher value added sectors and industries.

For the strategy to work and to achieve its potential for growth in employment, it will require a co-ordinated effort by a range of different stakeholder groups to provide further education and in-work training, jobs that are appropriate to local skills and careers advice (from an early age) linking people to the new jobs available. Specific skills development programmes will be developed closely reflecting and answering the needs of the borough’s businesses and key economic sectors in a mutually beneficial way.

Objectives | Economy

In line with the Inclusive Growth vision, BTC will become the exemplar model of a circular economy where potential of the local community will be unleashed and in return contribute and benefit from the growth and wealth in the borough. Through the building of a more resilient and connected local economy, such as a better-connected supply chain and retaining spend in the local economy, this will also create a stronger sense of local business community.

A new Town Centre Manager will be appointed to establish relationship with local business communities to build a better network and stewardship for BTC. There will also be stronger focus on quality working environment and jobs, providing fair and higher wages.

The active intervention in the workspace provision and innovation in Social Value Lease will seek to protect and enable local talents and prevent displacement of the local community.

BD Collective

BTC benefits from this organisation which brings the Borough's social sector together in partnership with other organisations joining forces to address local challenges, develop initiatives, share good practice and showcase success.



The Ice House Quarter is now a key focus for creative industries

Objectives | Opportunity sites

Opportunity sites

“To deliver a rich mix of high-quality town centre developments, providing a diverse town centre offer and commercial space, new housing, community facilities and the associated visitor experience.”

Town centres are changing, as are working patterns and the way we live and socialise. This objective covers a series of opportunity sites for future enhancement and redevelopment to secure additional regeneration benefits in line with the strategy’s objectives. Each will have its own planned use with the aim to provide a rich mix of town centre activities, increased footfall and dwelling time. By 2030 Barking will have a rich, mixed and independent high-street offer complemented by a new retail and commercial hub at Vicarage Field. BTC will also provide a range of facilities, such as schools, shops, health centres, dentists, leisure centres and youth facilities, as well as promoting the uptake of social prescribing activities that are provided in a range of civic buildings.

The diverse local community will come to BTC to shop, dine, socialise, learn as well as enjoy the cultural, social and entertainment events that will be taking place throughout the day and night, such as events in Abbey Green, artist studio events in the Ice House Quarter, and screenings at the new Art House cinema. This generates activity so centres also become social hubs and meeting places.



Axe Street CGI

As a destination for local resident and visitors, existing retail core in Station Parade, Vicarage Field and East Street will be strengthened, retaining key uses and enhancing the mix of uses and diversity of the town centre. Town centre living and working will also be promoted to support social vitality.

In the emerging Local Plan, there are three transformational areas identified in Barking town centre. They are Town Quay/Abbey Green, Civic centre and Barking Station area. The opportunity sites identified in the strategy also aligns with the emerging Local Plan.

Be First has a range of tools and interventions it can utilise to facilitate development. The Council has shown it is willing to acquire sites

and properties in order to deliver regeneration. Some schemes will be led by Be First, others by private sector partners and in some cases potentially Joint Ventures. Be First will use the most appropriate tools to deliver the strategy’s vision. The strategy sets a long term vision and not every scheme will be an early priority.

Axe Street

The site of the former Abbey Sports Centre is being transformed into a new mixed use development with 170 apartments, a new base for healthy ageing innovation centre Care City and a two screen cinema run by Arthouse. Arthouse is a strong community focussed organisation and together Care City and Arthouse will be a key partners in delivering some of the strategy’s objectives.

Objectives | Opportunity sites





The strategy and delivery plan reflect our genuine desire to ensure all of the borough's communities will benefit. This delivery plan details a directory of projects categorised per the six objectives towards achieving this ambition.

The delivery plan takes the approach to seed activity and engagement in the short term (1-3 years), grow capacity, engagement and infrastructure in the medium term (3-5 years), leading to a legacy of a thriving sustainable town centre for all (5-10 years). We aim to achieve, in the context of a large complex area, both tangible, on-the-ground and highly visible change, working with and supporting existing initiatives including grass-roots projects; but also long-term, carefully coordinated initiatives, with their legacy carefully thought through, that will ensure this initial vision carries through in the long-term lifespan of this strategy.

Please see **Appendix 2** for the delivery plan.

Partnership and governance approach

It is clear that all stakeholders in the town centre need to share the vision and work together to deliver it. This includes at strategic, long term level and at operational, day to day level. As such the governance arrangements seek to ensure relevant people are fully engaged yet decision making is fleet of foot.

The Council will continue to work closely with key London-wide stakeholders such as the

Greater London Authority (GLA) and Transport for London (TfL), local business partnerships, traders associations, development trusts, landowners, developers and investors to co-ordinate and focus growth and ensure that the local community benefits of growth are maximised. It is important that stakeholders – including businesses and property owners – also contribute to maintaining and improving the Barking town centre. The Council and Be First can facilitate this partnership but cannot do it alone.

Funding and resources ask

In the delivery plan where projects have been assessed on its priority, it also identifies required budgets, resources, timescales, outputs and risks. Project identified in the delivery plan will be assessed for their feasibility and viability and thereafter developed in accordance with project specific deliver plans and engagement.

While resources will be the subject of project specific business cases, the strategy and delivery plan will be used to engender a co-operative approach to change, drawing together the numerous different Council departments that are involved in town centre management, including planning, licensing, regeneration, waste and recycling, street maintenance and environmental health, as well as residents, businesses and stakeholders.

The team, once fully resourced, will monitor projects according to the delivery plan programme and relevant indicators aligning to the Council's corporate indicators.

The new governance structure to ensure the strategy is delivered is as follows:

Barking Town Centre Strategy group (new)

- Monthly
- Strategic steering group
- Senior reps from Be First, LBB and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing

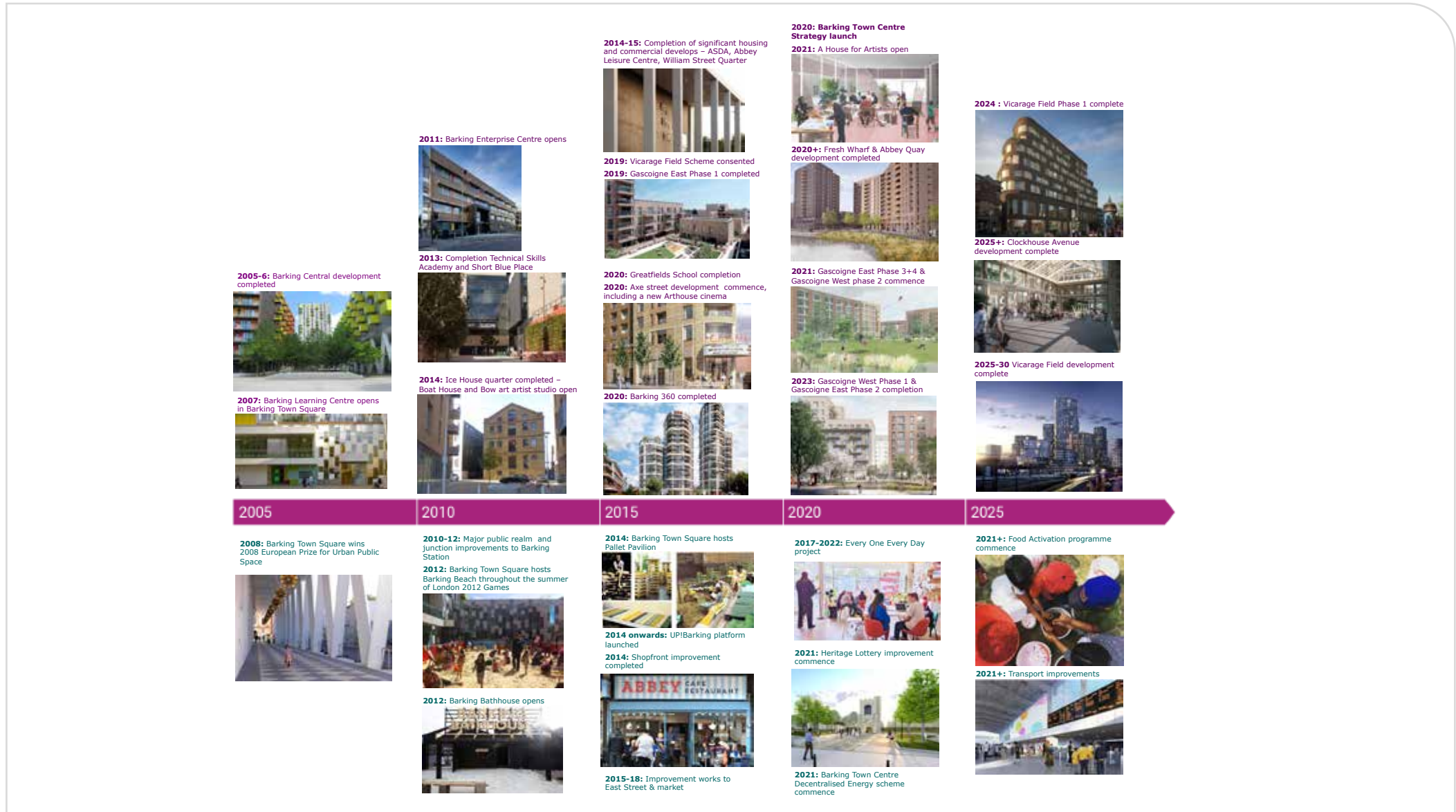
Barking Town Centre stakeholder meeting (new)

- Quarterly
- Promoting collaboration and contributions, information sharing
- Support funding for an ongoing TC manager role

Barking Town Centre team meeting (existing)

- Monthly
- Discuss operational issues and feedbacks from businesses
- Attended by officers from operational teams, police and TC manager

Barking town centre timeline



Appendix 2 | Delivery plan

Ref.	Project	Description	Timescale
1	Creative and active		
1.1	Activation programme	Curate and commission a programme of activities and short-term interventions to improve the offer and experience. Co-production & key engagement project.	2020-2022
1.2	Improving visitor experience	Agree a management and maintenance plan to identify appropriate governance arrangement across council & any resource gap. Also linked to Perceptions of Safety Action Plan.	Operational
1.3	Cultural anchors	Attract exemplar cultural and social enterprises to the town centre incl embedding East London Womens Museum and Arthouse.	2020-2022
1.4	Vicarage Field meanwhile	Deliver the transformation whilst ensuring minimal interruption to the TC and its economic health during construction by maximising meanwhile opportunities.	2020-2025
1.5	Place Identity	A bottom-up exercise, working with key local stakeholder groups to develop/promote the unique identity for BTC, and to build up local pride for the area: 'Telling Barking's story to all'.	2020-2022
1.6	A House for Artists	Delivery of innovative scheme of artist housing whereby artists in residence will deliver a programme of activity in the ground floor space.	2020-2025
1.7	Cinema engagement	Work with Arthouse on developing a programme of activities to engage local residents prior to opening in 2022 as well as defining a programme once open that reflects local aspirations.	2020-2025

Ref.	Project	Description	Timescale
2	Food destination		
2.1	East Street food destination	Cultivate a healthy, independent, international food identity for the TC and the market, including place marketing and capital improvements.	2020-2025
2.2	Food Hub	Working with CoL to deliver a new food college, SME serviced kitchen space & food and drink offer	2020-2025
2.3	Education pathway	Building interest and aspirations in food careers in schools	2020-2022
2.4	Industry & training	Building links and fostering partnerships with industry and local schools/training providers, training for traders & local food sector.	2020-2022
2.5	Sustainable food network	Build a local Sustainable Food network as a bottom-up platform on outreach, food activism and Food & Beverage resilience.	2020-2022
2.6	Growing Barking	Maximising opportunity to embed food growing in the town centre.	2020-2022
2.7	Good Food Campaign	Development of Good Food Plan with the aim to stimulate the local food economy and the future integration of the local economy with the new markets.	2020-2022

Appendix 2 | Delivery plan

Ref.	Project	Description	Timescale
3	Placemaking		
3.1	Masterplans	Produce/finalise masterplans and/or placemaking strategy for Barking station, Gascoigne and Town Quay	2020
3.2	Transport strategy	Transport study (incl. parking) commissioned to inform necessary transport improvement works.	2020
3.3	Playscape	A project focused on youth engagement & empowerment. Mapping and delivery of play facilities and young space especially in Abbey Green.	2021-2023
3.4	East Street Heritage project	NLHF project incl improvements to East St/North St buildings, Curfew Tower public realm, artwork and heritage trail.	2020-2022
3.5	Place Champion	To build a Place Champion team through capacity building and engagement with local communities.	2021-2025
3.6	Town Quay improvement	Short and long term strategy for unlocking Town Quay's potential as an attractive public green space and key 'beacon'.	2021-2025
3.7	Abbey Leisure Centre car park	Explore decommissioning of car park as green public realm	2022-2025
3.8	Maximising use of the river: Mooring Strategy and riverside walks	Strategy to explore moorings for residential, workspace and community-facing use along the Roding and delivering the full extent of the Roding Riverside walk.	2022-2025

Appendix 2 | Delivery plan

Ref.	Project	Description	Timescale
4	Sustainability		
4.1	District Energy Network (DEN)	Deliver the BTC district heat network to serve c.8,000 new homes and businesses	2020-2023
4.2	Active living (next phase of 3.2 Transport Strategy)	Funding bids to deliver safe active travel routes in and around BTC	2021-2025
4.3	Green & open space	To enhance existing spaces at Abbey Green, Quaker Burial ground, Greatfields and Barking Park + deliver new spaces at Fresh Wharf, Gascoigne, Crown House and Roding Riverside walk.	2021-2026
4.4	Waste & recycling (next phase of 1.2 Improving Visitor experience)	Develop a waste and recycling strategy for the town centre, based on circular economy principles	2022-2023
4.5	Wildlife	Creating wildlife engagement projects to encourage local residents to enjoy and engage at the new River Roding walk. Encourage River Roding Trust activities.	2022-2025
4.6	Air quality	Deliver actions from the emerging Air quality action plan with a specific aim to improve BTC's air quality.	2020-2023
4.7	Evaluation	Develop a framework in evaluating TC, economically, socially, and environmentally, hence making the case for continuous investment to our town centres, as well as identifying transferable learning across other centres in the borough.	Operational

Appendix 2 | Delivery plan

Ref.	Project	Description	Timescale
5	Economy		
5.1	Night Time Economy	Produce a NTE strategy and build a NTE partnership. To pilot a NTE programme.	2020-2023
5.2	Asset management model	Develop approach similar to Town Centre Investment Models (TCIM) , explore opportunities to acquire further properties alongside actively managing the council's existing assets.	Ongoing
5.3	Business Voices & forum	Giving local businesses voices and promote partnership working, building bottom-up business stewardship.	2020-2023
5.4	Business support	BEC CIC as key focus on business support including extending its support for creative industries and targeted sectors, together with other existing borough wide initiatives.	Ongoing
5.5	Workspace	Special focus should be given in regard to covid-19 recovery and targeted retail and food sector. Deliver a programme of activities to support the prevalence of workspace in the TC. Existing projects include ThreeSixty @ Barking 360, Ice House Quarter & Rivermill Lofts and A House for Artists.	2020-2023
5.6	Business Rates	Monitoring potential Government changes to minimise the negative impact of business rates on businesses start ups and survival. Any future policy changes should Council's be given more freedom will align to the Council's Social Value Policy.	2020-2022
5.7	Social Value Lease	Next phase to review market opportunities & gaps to make BTC attractive to providers & businesses, including market analysis, BF/council-led delivery and exploration of a preferred operators list.	2021-2023

Appendix 2 | Delivery plan

Ref.	Project	Description	Timescale
6	Opportunity sites - these will subject to more detailed proposals		
6.1	Housing delivery	Delivery of existing Be First schemes and monitoring and supporting progress of third party schemes which meet strategy objectives.	Ongoing
6.2	Promoting Dev Opportunities	Proactively marketing and promoting opportunities to the private sector that will not be taken forward by Be First directly.	Ongoing
6.3	Social infrastructure	Long term planning as Per Infrastructure Delivery plan. Looking at health, education and community facilities needed for BTC.	Ongoing
6.4	Ground floor strategy	Clear strategy for ground floor uses particular on the edge of the town centre to ensure placemaking is achieved without impacting on town centre viability.	2020-2023
6.5	Barking Station	<p>Work proactively with c2c, Network Rail and Transport for London to transform the station and its surrounding environment as well as investigating options for improved rail services from to and from Barking.</p> <p>Encourage c2cto be more ambitious with their design, and investigate what funds might be available to finance works.</p> <p>Masterplan to be commissioned in 2020.</p>	2020-2023

Appendix 2 | Delivery plan

Ref.	Project	Description	Timescale
6	Opportunity sites - these will subject to more detailed proposals		
6.6	Clockhouse Avenue	Mixed use development, potentially delivering the new food hub as part of the development's commercial & retail space.	2020-2025
6.7	Barking Job Centre site	Commercial led mixed use development	2025-2030
6.8	Trocoll House	Residential led mixed use development	2021-2023
6.9	Roding House	Commercial led mixed use development	2021-2023
6.10	London Road	Mixed use development of both residential and commercial on lower floors	2020-2023
6.11	Town Quay	Residential led mixed use development being key food & Beverage focus on Roding Riverside.	2020-2025
6.12	Bamford Road	Mixed use development, with new doctor surgery	2023-2026
6.13	Longbridge Road/Cecil avenue	Scope for intensification and better street frontage	2023-2025
6.14	Roycroft House	Mixed use site, subject to Council staff relocation	2023-2026
6.15	London Road Triangle	Scope for intensification and better street frontage	2023-2026
6.16	Wickes Site	Mixed use development, with the reprovion of commercial floorspace	2020-2025
6.17	Cambridge House	Long/medium term redevelopment opportunity for mixed use	2023-2026
6.18	Vicarage Field	Working closely with the landowner to ensure the timely delivery of the phased redevelopment of Vicarage Field.	2020-2025
6.19	Lidl	Relocation of Lidl and redevelopment of site and gyratory	2024-2028

To find more information, please visit:
www.befirst.london

Or contact:

David Harley

Head of Regeneration - Be First
David.harley@befirst.london

Lily Kwong

Development Manager - Be First
Lily.Kwong@befirst.london

www.befirst.london
www.lbbd.gov.uk

