

A4D - Justification for Ridley Road Area Extension

London Borough of Hackney

**Evidence to support the Council proposed Article 4 Direction
regarding Permitted Development Rights for Change of Use
from Commercial, Business and Services to Residential in
Ridley Road, Dalston E8**

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Strategic Planning

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1. Executive summary

A new non-immediate Article 4 Direction to remove the PD rights for change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E for a section of Ridley Road, therefore ensuring that the whole of the Dalston Major Town Centre is protected.

Dalston Major Town Centre is one of the key commercial areas for the borough. Ridley Road is home to the street market which is an integral part of the Dalston Major Town Centre, and the permanent commercial units contribute to the vitality and viability of the market and the area. It is also identified as an opportunity site within the Dalston Plan Supplementary Planning Document.

This Article 4 Direction will ensure that proposals to change from commercial to residential will require full planning permission.

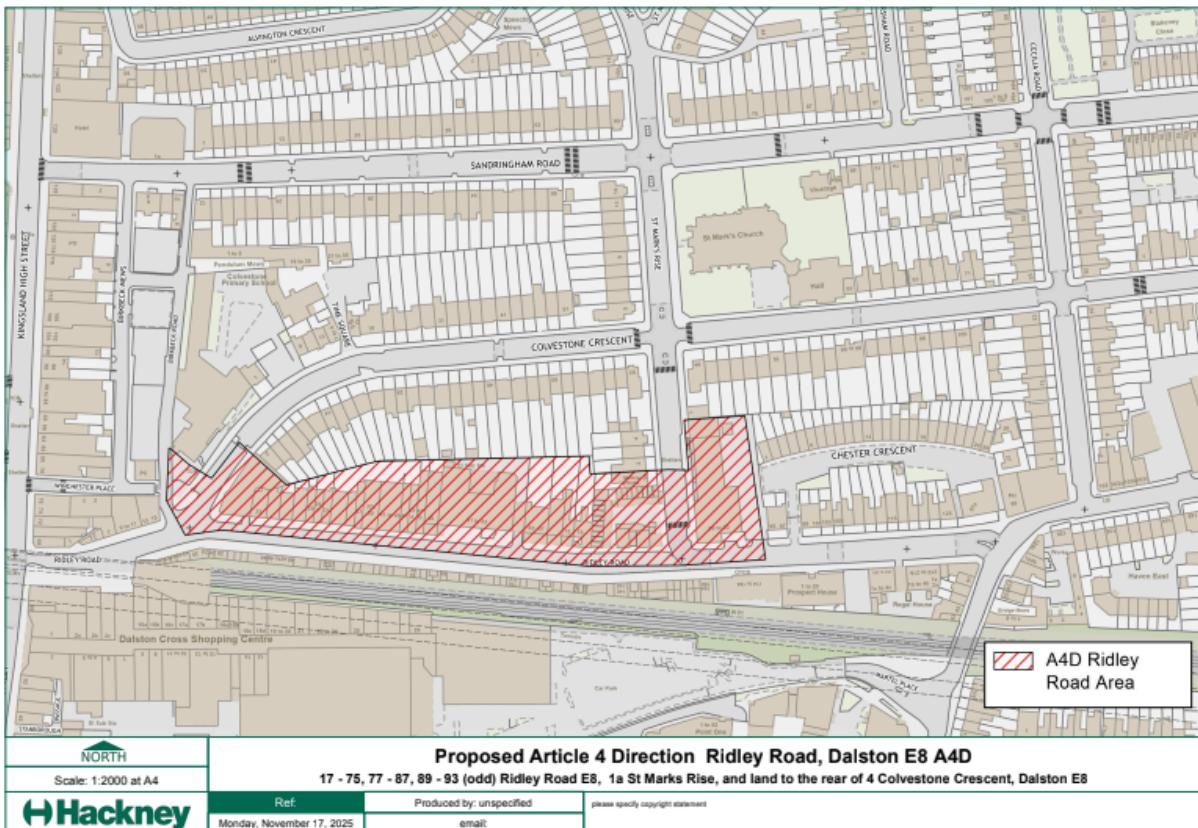
2. Introduction

- 2.1 This report sets out the evidence and justification for a proposed Article 4 Direction (A4D) on Ridley Road within Dalston Major Town Centre. This A4D would remove Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) which enables a change of use between Class E (commercial, business and service) and Class C3 (residential) enforced by the national government on 1 August 2021.
- 2.2 As is the case with other A4Ds in effect in Hackney, the proposed A4D does not mean that in the future there will be no residential permitted on Ridley Road, rather the Council will be enabled to consider and determine planning applications in line with the existing and emerging policies, and manage some of the adverse impacts of the A4D.
- 2.3 The following sections detail the proposed area and boundary (**Section 3**), the justification and supporting evidence (**Section 4**) and lastly recommendations for how the Council should proceed (**Section 5**).

3. Area covered by the Article 4 Direction

3.1 The proposed A4D area is shown in **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1: Proposed Article 4 Direction - Ridley Road area



3.2 The proposed area (outlined in red) covers the northern side of Ridley Road and comprises primary addresses 17-75, 77-87, 89-93 (odd) Ridley Road E8, 1a St Marks Rise, and the land to the rear of 4 Colvestone Crescent, E8. The proposed area represents an extension to the existing A4D boundary for Dalston Major Town Centre which covers the south side of Ridley Road. The A4D ensures that the commercial units on Ridley Road are covered, as was the Council's original intention.

3.3 For the purpose of this document, the area is hereon referred to as 'the proposed A4D area' or 'Ridley Road'.

4. Justification and supporting evidence

Justification for the proposed A4D area

- 4.1 The proposed A4D area lies within Dalston Major Town Centre which is one of the key commercial areas for the borough. The daily Ridley Road street market is an integral part of the town centre, and the permanent commercial units on the road contribute to the vitality and viability of the area. Ridley Road is at the commercial heart of Dalston, and is designated as the *Primary Shopping Area*. There is only one such designation in the borough as identified in Hackney's Local Plan 2033, and it covers Kingsland Shopping Centre and Ridley Road Market. The Local Plan policy resists change of uses away from retail in the Primary Shopping Area, and seeks to maintain a higher retail threshold than the rest of the town centre.
- 4.2 Changes of use from Use Class E (commercial, business and services) to C3 (dwellinghouse) without planning permission constitute a threat to the local economy, jobs and amenities and would be prejudicial to the proper planning of the borough, in particular the Council's ability to prevent the loss of uses which contribute to the wider strategic aims for the area.
- 4.3 The Council's employment and retail planning policies are based on robust evidence which establishes a need to protect employment and commercial uses to ensure the vitality and viability of Hackney's economy. The permitted development rights would undermine the operation of these policies and may impact negatively on the provision of employment spaces, commercial spaces and jobs in the Borough.
- 4.4 The [Dalston Plan SPD \(January 2025\)](#) identifies Ridley Road as a site allocation and seeks to secure commercial uses and frontages on the ground floor, with the focus being the protection of the market. The importance of Ridley Road as part of Dalston are referenced in the plan, which brings together the key issues, challenges and opportunities, and sets the development objectives, themed strategies and site proposals for the managed growth of the town centre as well as a clear delivery plan on how and when any improvements will happen.
- 4.5 Ridley Road Market Improvement Area (Dalston Plan ref D6) along with Kingsland Shopping Centres (Dalston Plan ref D5) are two of the 10 opportunities sites identified in the Hackney Local Plan and developed further in the Dalston Plan. The allocation for Ridley Road Improvement Area advocates the retention of the market, but also recognises infill development opportunities to further enhance the retail offer, cafes and restaurants that focuses on local needs and affordability. The market stalls, and the more permanent retail units are at the heart of the Ridley Road, and the road forms an important social and cultural hub within Dalston. Ridley Road Social Club, and the Alevi Cultural centre & Cemevi are located in this section of Ridley Road.
- 4.6 The majority of the ground floor and some of the upper floors on the northside of Ridley Road (i.e. within the proposed A4D area) are in activity falling within the commercial, business and services use class. This includes the Harmer Ridley Road Shopping Village at 51-63 Ridley Road, which has an indoor market, with offices above.

4.7 Residential is not discouraged, but any design including future residential amenity must ensure that the viability of the market use is not threatened, and does recognise that there is potential for some residential infill.

4.8 In addition there are a number of locations in and around the immediate facilities of Ridley Road, like the junctions of; Winchester Place & Birkbeck Road; Ridley Road & St Mark's Rise; and Ridley Road and Dalston Lane, which are identified areas for public realm improvements. These include improving accessibility, cleanliness, urban greening, better movement around the market and introducing places to sit in line with the Ageing Well Strategy (including WHO Age-friendly Cities Framework) and the Child-Friendly Places SPD. There are also proposals for tree planting and other urban green initiatives along the road itself, and linkage between Ridley Road and Kingsland Shopping Centre, and Dalston Kingsland Station which is opposite the entrance market.

4.9 The [19-1 Hackney Markets, Shop Fronts & Street Trading Strategy 2024-2029](#) details at length the importance and significance of Hackney's markets (including Ridley Road) in terms of (1) social and community function, (2) economic contribution and (3) micro-business development. The strategy specifically recognises Ridley Road as an economic and social asset for Dalston Major Town Centre.

Street markets hold a special place in Hackney and are part of a long tradition of thriving markets in the borough stretching back hundreds of years. To this day they remain key places where people shop and interact with one another, [...] serving as local economic and community hubs.

4.10 The strategy and [Cabinet Report \(22/01/2024\)](#), Item 19, pp 509-630, outline several duties and aims to ensure the continued security, integrity, and future of the markets:

- 4.8.1 *It is the Council's duty to ensure all markets are accessible to the community as a whole and are maintained to preserve their unique characteristics.*
- 4.8.2 *The Council is committed to ensuring the portfolio will retain and enhance its diversity, creativity and innovative spirit.*
- 4.8.3 *The Council aims to retain community value, continue to develop and strengthen commercial performance, and adapt to the post-pandemic environment.*
- 4.8.4 *The Council will ensure the street markets at Ridley Road, Hoxton Street and Broadway Market are supported, working alongside local high street businesses to keep our local economy alive and thriving.*

Justification for the A4D covering Dalston Major Town Centre

4.11 This section summarises the rationale for the existing A4D for Dalston Major Town Centre, which is applicable to the proposed A4D area. Further detail can be found in the [original Justification \(December 2021\)](#).

4.12 Dalston is one of two Major Town Centres in Hackney, as designated in the London Plan (2021) and Hackney's Local Plan LP33. Major Centres are defined in the London Plan as having borough wide catchment areas, with a combination of retail, leisure and service floorspace, and have significant employment leisure services and civic functions. They are of strategic London wide importance with only International and Metropolitan centres higher on the hierarchy, based upon size, offer and the draw of the centres. The London Plan only categorises the West End and Knightbridge as International centres, and there are 14 Metropolitan Centres, with Wood Green (Haringey) and Stratford (Newham) being the nearest to Hackney.

4.13 Dalston is a strategic area for regeneration in the London Plan. It has moderate level of demand for retail, leisure or office floorspace, and has physical and public transport capacity to accommodate it. It is also a centre with the capacity, demand and viability to accommodate new office development, as part of mixed use development including residential.

Conclusion

4.14 The impacts of the proposed A4D area remaining subjected to permitted development rights could be significant for the unique character of Ridley Road and environs, the local businesses and community served by permanent commercial units and street market, without the proposed A4D, the Council has less control over the uses and scale of development in the area, which could affect vitality and viability of the street market and the commercial uses at ground floor level in the surrounding buildings. This could also jeopardize the short and longer term town centre aims of the Council as set out by the Local Plan, the Dalston Plan and the Council's Market Strategy for Dalston in general, and Ridley Road in particular.