

# Draft Hackney Central and Surrounds Masterplan - Planning and Design Guidance

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# Part A Introduction and Context

## 1.1 The Role and Status of the Masterplan

The role of the Hackney Central and Surrounds Masterplan is to facilitate the delivery of significant regeneration in and around the District Town Centre of Hackney Central. There are a number of key objectives for this area, which if achieved, will strengthen the role of the town centre, and lead to the creation of an improved public realm, and better transport facilities. The objective of the Masterplan is to bring together the aspirations of a number of key policy documents and set out ways which individual sites may come forward for refurbishment or redevelopment, and through strategic consideration, deliver significant regeneration.

The Masterplan demonstrates ways in which the aspirations of the existing policy framework can be realised within its current context. Through establishing design principles for the refurbishment or redevelopment of a number of key opportunity sites, the Masterplan ensures a well-balanced offer of services and opportunities for expanding the economy of the town centre, strengthens local distinctiveness and character, and facilitates the refurbishment or redevelopment of specific sites. In terms of land uses, the Masterplan sets out that either ‘commercial’ or residential uses may be appropriate in certain locations. ‘Commercial’ uses in this document generally refers to retail and workspace, however, reference to ‘commercial’ uses does not preclude other uses, such as café / restaurants, education, and community uses, from coming forward. Looking beyond the town centre boundary, the Masterplan also considers opportunities that will strengthen Hackney’s public realm network, and deliver new and improved employment, retail and housing.

This coordinated approach to improving the Town Centre and beyond will attract investment and give public and private sector bodies the certainty and confidence to deliver development and infrastructure within the confines of the Council’s adopted Development Plan. The combined proposals will form part of an adopted Masterplan that will serve as evidence base, and form a material consideration in the determination of any planning applications that may be submitted for the sites in the future. This more detailed guidance will improve the consistency, quality and speed of decisions for emerging pre-application discussions and subsequent planning applications. The final Masterplan will be adopted by the Council as a Planning and Design Guidance.

The Masterplan has a strong focus on delivery and comprises proposals which can be delivered in the short (within the next 5 years) to medium (from 6 to 11 years) term. A detailed Phasing Strategy and Implementation Plan will be produced following public consultation and engagement, and will be included within the Masterplan.

This document has been produced as a Draft Masterplan, and its content will be developed further as part of the masterplanning process and following public consultation.

## 1.2 The Purpose and Structure of this Document

This document summarises the strategic context of the Masterplan Area and should be read in conjunction with the existing policy framework. It addresses both the area as a whole and as a series of Masterplan Clusters. The Masterplan Clusters introduce Masterplan Opportunity Sites, which are locations where new development / refurbishment can be delivered.

This document establishes an overarching vision for the Masterplan Area and in order to facilitate the delivery of the Masterplan Vision, a series of Strategic Priorities have been highlighted in this document. Some of these Strategic Priorities are applicable to the Masterplan Area as a whole, whilst others are specific to certain Masterplan Clusters or Masterplan Opportunity Sites. The Strategic Priorities form the basis of the Masterplan and are carried through to each of the different ‘layers’ of guidance.

The hierarchy of the different ‘layers’ of guidance comprise of the following:

- Masterplan Urban Design Principles - focus on improvements to the urban structure, movement and connectivity and the open space network.
- Masterplan Cluster Strategic Objectives - set out the objectives for the cluster, drawing on the Strategic Priorities.
- Masterplan Cluster Urban Design Principles – provide urban design guidance for each of the clusters as a whole.
- Site Specific Urban Design Principles – provide site specific urban design guidance for each of the Masterplan Opportunity Sites.

The application of the above guidance will facilitate the delivery of significant regeneration within the Masterplan Area.

The document is structured around five parts, as described below.

**Part A - Introduction and Context:** Introduces the Masterplan and explains its role and purpose, as well as describes the area today and summarises the existing policy framework.

**Part B - Masterplan Vision, Objectives and Principles:** Establishes the Masterplan Vision, overarching Strategic Priorities, the Masterplan Urban Design Objectives and the Masterplan Urban Design Principles.

**Part C – Masterplan Clusters and Opportunity Site Development Briefs:** Introduces the Masterplan Clusters and provides an overview of their characteristics and opportunities. Within each cluster, Masterplan Opportunity Sites are identified and are the subject of ‘Opportunity Site Development Briefs’, which set out Site Specific Urban Design Principles in relation to height, massing, use and public realm improvements. The Opportunity Site Development Briefs also include an indicative proposed site massing, which demonstrates how potential development / refurbishment of the sites, could come forward for delivery, in line with the Masterplan Urban Design Principles. Case Studies for public realm improvements are also illustrated in this section.

**Part D – Delivery Strategy:** Considers how the Masterplan can be implemented and sets out an indicative phasing strategy as well as an accommodation schedule. It is envisaged that this section will be produced following public consultation and engagement, and will include an Implementation Plan and Phasing Strategy.



## 1.3 The Area Today

Hackney Central is the civic and cultural hub of the Borough, stretching along Mare Street as its main urban spine. The civic town square, framed by Hackney Town Hall, the Hackney Empire theatre, the library, museum and Picturehouse cinema, testifies of the long-standing history and status of the District Town Centre. It is an unusually concentrated node of cultural institutions that form frequent and regular destinations for Hackney's residents and visitors.

In contrast to this formal grandeur, the intimate scale of the Narrow Way, flanked by St John at Hackney Church and Churchyard, the Old Town Hall and the railway arches of Bohemia Place, is bursting with potential for improved retail, local business and enterprise. The area currently offers good convenience retail, although outlet retail and associated workspace is emerging, particularly around Morning Lane. This cluster of outlet retail and associated workspace has quickly risen to be one of Hackney's biggest attractions, drawing visitors from across the city, as well as foreign tourists.

The influence of nearby major employment centres, such as the City of London, TechCity and Shoreditch, is evident in the extension of employment and creative industry clusters northwards along Mare Street. Hackney Central is recognised as a strategic development location in the City Fringe Opportunity Area (OA) which forms part of the London Plan. Designated as the Commercial Core of the City Fringe, Hackney Central and Surrounds contains significant development capacity in relatively central areas and there is particular scope to support and grow the diverse cluster of digital-creative businesses in an expanding "Tech City". The expansion of Tech City and continued business growth in the City Fringe OA are recognised by both the Mayor and the Prime Minister as strategically important to the economy of London and the UK.

Hackney Central's strategic role within the City Fringe and the Borough is based on the presence of creative industries and workspace, as well as the availability of potential development sites. The Mare Street Priority Employment Area (PEA) contains several sites where existing buildings can be, and have been adapted to provide workspace for a variety of enterprises; from start-ups through to more established businesses. The Mare Street PEA has been influenced by nearby Shoreditch and this is evident in the number of galleries, co-working spaces and business start-up centres such as Netil House, Space Studios and The Laundry Building. While there are no universities in Hackney Central, the London College of Fashion continues to generate young creative talent in the area.

The area benefits from excellent public transport connectivity, with three Overground stations within easy walking distance of the Town Centre, and a number of bus routes serving the wider city. Hackney Central, Hackney Downs and London Fields Overground stations are currently all accessed via narrow walkways or entrances under railway bridges that are not directly visible from the area's main centres of activity. There is potential for a Crossrail 2 station in the future which would further strengthen Hackney Central's accessibility and attract development interest and investment.

Whilst there are many positive attributes to the Masterplan Area, there is also significant potential for improvement. There are large, underperforming sites, see Figure 1, within the Masterplan Area which do not positively contribute to the

townscape and character of the area, for example, Clapton Bus Garage, which is operated by Arriva and located in the heart of the Town Centre, and the Hackney Housing depot located within the Florfield Road Cluster. The relocation of these non-typical town centre uses will free up these strategically important Town Centre sites for redevelopment. Other underperforming key strategic sites include the Tesco site and associated car park on Morning Lane, which has significant development and regeneration potential. Improvements to the public realm and existing transport facilities are also required to support new development. Key areas for improvement include upgrading facilities at Hackney Central Overground Station, in order to meet increased station demand, as well as addressing the overall low quality of the public realm in the Masterplan Area.

### Key

1. Hackney Central Overground Station
2. 333-337 Mare Street (Iceland)
3. 339-357 Mare Street, 6-18 Amhurst Road (Marks and Spencer)
4. Clapton Bus Garage
5. 55 Morning Lane (Tesco)
6. Florfield Road (Hackney Housing Depot)
7. 182 Mare Street (London College of Fashion)
8. 27-37 Well Street (Lidl)
9. 51-61 Mare Street (HSS Tool Hire)
10. 40-43 Andrews Road (Car Pound)

- Development Sites
- Key Open Space
- Centres of Activity

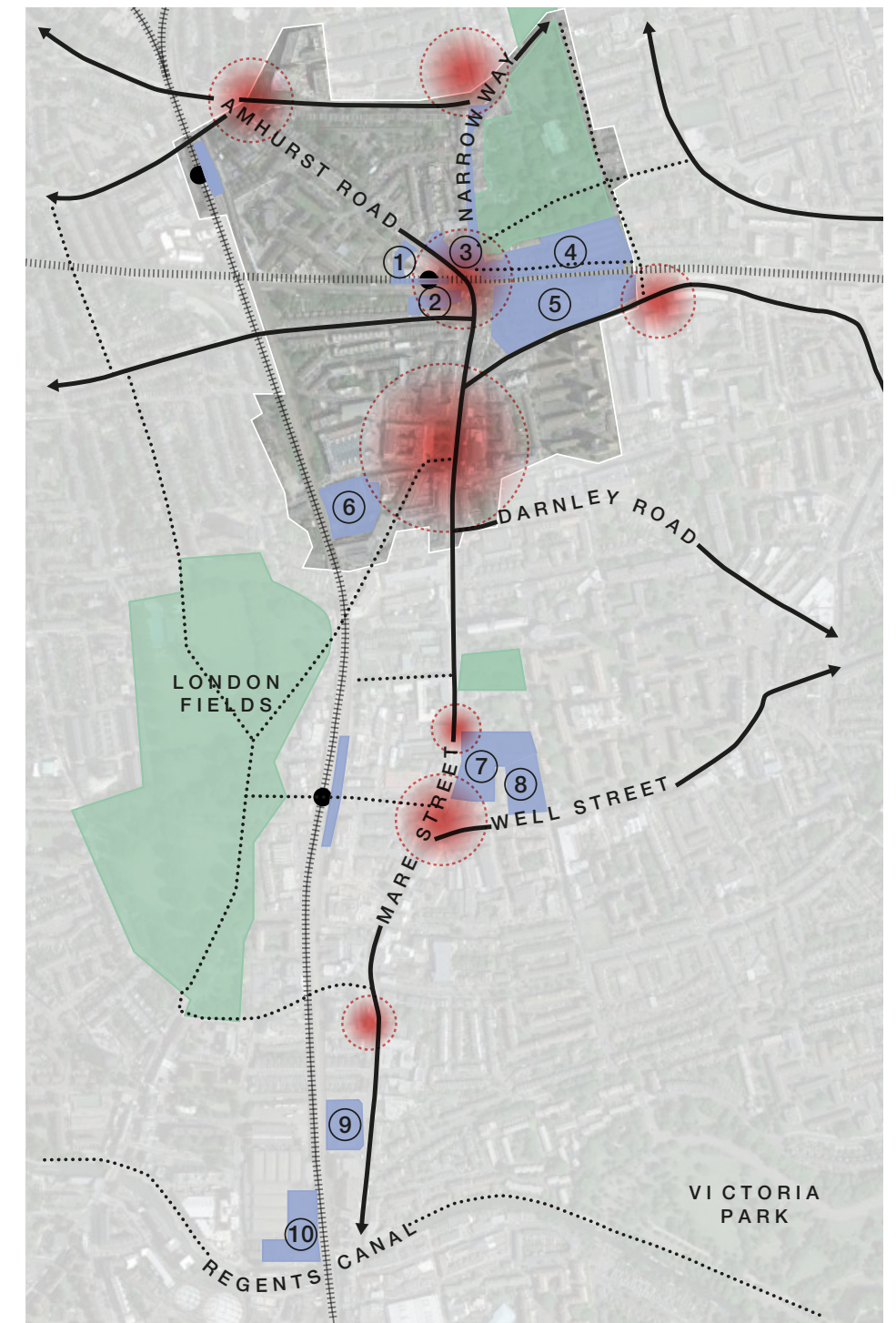


Figure 1. Masterplan Opportunity Sites



## 1.4 Policy Context

The Hackney Central and Surrounds Masterplan matures the aspirations of a number of key policy documents into Masterplan Principles which inform the 'Opportunity Site Development Briefs', that set out how the sites may come forward for refurbishment or redevelopment, in line with the Masterplan Urban Design Principles, in order to deliver significant regeneration for the area.

The Development Plan for Hackney Central, currently comprises the London Plan and Hackney's Local Plan.

The London Plan identifies Hackney Central's status as a District Town Centre and its strategic importance as the civic and cultural heart of the Borough.

Hackney's Local Plan is made up of a suite of policy documents including the Core Strategy (2010), which sets out the overarching spatial objectives for the Borough; the Development Management Local Plan (2015), which sets out generally criteria based policies to assist in the determination of planning applications; the Site Allocations Local Plan (2016) which identifies key strategic sites for redevelopment, as well as a range of Area Action Plans (including for Hackney Central) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

Whilst the Core Strategy aims to further develop Hackney Central as the civic, cultural and administrative hub of the Borough, the Hackney Central Area Action Plan (AAP), adopted in 2012, establishes the spatial strategy for coordinated development of the area. It highlights historical features to be preserved, key public spaces and gateways into the Town Centre, centres of activity and opportunity sites for improvement, refurbishment and development.

Beyond the boundary of the Hackney Central AAP (2012), the Site Allocations Local Plan (2016) identifies key strategic sites in the Borough and allocates particular uses for those sites. See Figure 2 for the existing Policy Designations.

Some of the key and relevant sites identified in the Hackney Central AAP and the Site Allocations Local Plan have been identified as opportunity sites in this Masterplan.

Whilst the content of this Masterplan has been prepared in accordance with and is consistent with Hackney's Development Plan set out above, it is considered that this Masterplan identifies development and delivery potential in the current context, which may be taken forward further in the Local Plan Review, which is currently being undertaken and is envisaged to be complete by 2018.

- District Town Centre
- Opportunity sites
- Hackney Central AAP
- Priority Employment Area
- Conservation Area

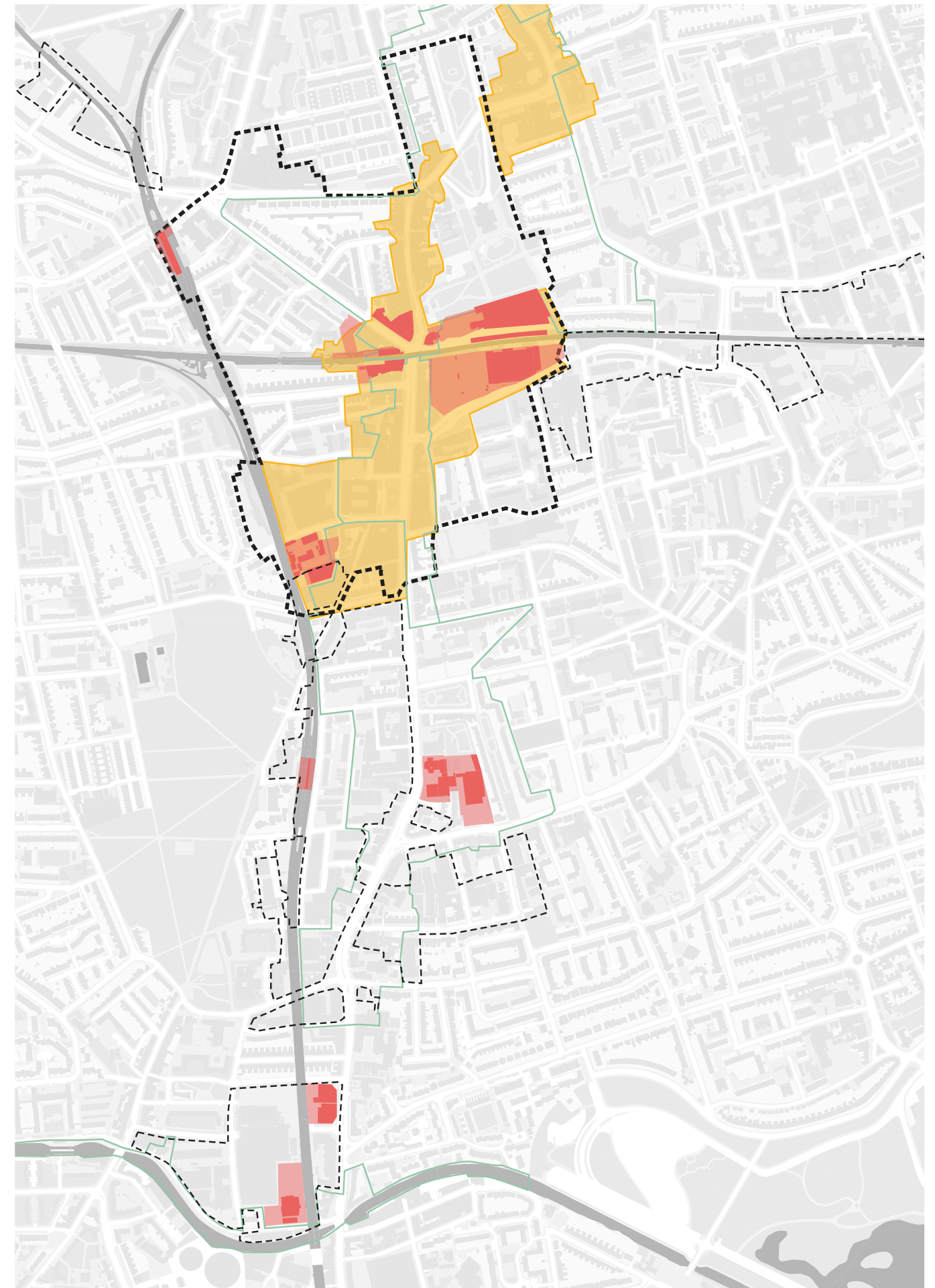


Figure 2. Key Policy Designations

# Part B Masterplan Vision, Objectives and Principles

## 2.1 Introduction

Hackney Central and Surrounds is a complex urban neighbourhood, shaped by multiple economic, social, cultural and physical forces. The following section establishes the Masterplan Vision, introduces the Masterplan Strategic Priorities, and sets out overarching urban design principles, the Masterplan Principles, which will guide development and assist in delivering the Masterplan Strategic Priorities. The aim of the Masterplan is to reinforce these principles in every physical intervention, be they development, transport investments or public realm improvements.

## 2.2 Vision

The Masterplan Vision is as follows:

Hackney Central and Surrounds hosts a thriving town centre, a civic and cultural hub and a strategically important employment area. The area meets the needs of its residents, visitors and workers through its diverse range of shops, workspaces, cultural and leisure facilities, and public spaces. Hackney Central and Surrounds is a safe place to walk and cycle and is well connected to key destinations within its locality, and outside of the Borough. Its high quality public realm is complimented by the provision of new, high quality retail, workspace and housing, which is appropriate in terms of density, mix, scale and appearance.

## 2.3 Masterplan Strategic Priorities

In order to realise the Masterplan Vision, the following Strategic Priorities have been highlighted. These Strategic Priorities are carried through the Masterplan and help inform the Masterplan Urban Design Principles and Site Specific Urban Design Principles.

**Masterplan Strategic Priorities**

To achieve the Masterplan vision, the following Strategic Priorities have been developed:

1. Strengthen the role of the Town Centre and the expanding economy through introducing new commercial floorspace on Amhurst road, Graham Road, Bohemia Place, Morning Lane and Reading Lane, and increase development capacity for commercial (retail / workspace / leisure / community) and residential uses across the Masterplan Area.
2. Implement a variety of public realm improvements, including the proposed improvements on the Narrow Way, which will improve the legibility, permeability and character of the area, and create places which are linked, well connected and provide a safe and pleasant environment to work, shop, live and spend time.
3. Relocate Clapton Bus Garage to an alternative location, potentially Ash Grove Bus Garage / 40-43 Andrews Road, freeing up this key Town Centre site to be developed for the provision of new commercial floorspace and housing and to improve permeability through the Town Centre, making a much improved contribution to this key Town Centre location.
4. Encourage the redevelopment of 55 Morning Lane (Tesco Site) for the provision of new commercial floorspace and housing and improve permeability through the Town Centre, and include taller building elements to facilitate legibility and wayfinding.
5. Utilise Bohemia Place as a pedestrian route and open up railway arches to improve movement through the Town Centre, and to stitch the emerging development proposals for the Tesco Site and Hackney Walk ('Fashion Hub') to the Town Centre and Hackney Central Overground and beyond.
6. Improve transport infrastructure at Hackney Central, Hackney Downs and London Fields Overground Stations to ensure stations adequately accommodate increased passenger capacity and through public realm improvements facilitating connectivity and wayfinding.
7. Relocate and rationalise several Hackney Housing depots to 51-61 Mare Street, including the Florfield Road depot, freeing up this key Town Centre site for high quality mixed use redevelopment, for the provision of new workspace and homes, within a building with a taller building element.

## 2.4 Masterplan Urban Design Objectives and Principles

The Masterplan Urban Design Objectives and Principles set out urban design guidelines which, once applied, will help realise the Masterplan Vision set out earlier in this document. The overarching Masterplan Urban Design Objectives are set out below. The Masterplan Urban Design Principles can be categorised in relation to urban structure, movement and connections and open space and directly relate to the Masterplan Urban Design Objectives.

To achieve the Masterplan vision, the following Masterplan Urban Design Objectives have been developed:

1. To reinforce the character of the Masterplan Area by considering the existing urban grain and heritage, in the approach to new development.
2. To reinforce prominent views and locate taller buildings in locations which encourage intuitive wayfinding.
3. To promote accessibility and permeability through improving the network of pedestrian and cycle routes.
4. To make places which connect with each other, are easy to move through, and provide recognisable routes to promote legibility and wayfinding.
5. To encourage the use of public spaces, squares and green spaces within the Masterplan Area.
6. To ensure that any development contributes to the enhancement of safe and attractive public realm and open spaces












# 2.4.1 Urban Structure

The urban structure, as set out in Figure 3, describes the hierarchy, arrangement and relationship between different elements of Hackney’s built environment, such as buildings, streets and open space. The existing urban structure of the Masterplan Area is positively characterised by local landmarks such as Hackney Town Hall, St Augustine’s Tower, Old Town Hall, Hackney Picturehouse and Hackney Empire. The occurrence of these recognisable buildings has strengthened the local identity of the Town Centre, whilst creating a sense of place.

However, issues of severance caused by railway barriers and a congested road network, particularly around Amhurst Road and Mare Street, have contributed to a poor urban structure and to some extent, led to a seemingly disconnected urban structure.

- Masterplan Urban Design Objectives:**
- 1. To reinforce the character of the Masterplan Area by considering the existing urban grain and heritage in the approach to new development. To reinforce prominent views and locate taller buildings in locations which encourage intuitive wayfinding.
- Masterplan Urban Design Principles:**
- Future development should seek to:
- a. Provide continuous, active building frontages, in locations highlighted in Figure 3.
  - b. Locate taller buildings near clusters of existing taller buildings, where indicated on Figure 3, and ensure that they act as local landmarks to aid wayfinding, and act a visual guide for orientation in the area.
  - c. Enhance key views, as set out in Figure 3, through careful articulation of building elements that make particular street corners, facades or space instantly recognisable and aid orientation.

-  Hackney Central town centre boundary
-  Opportunity sites
-  Key frontages
-  Opportunities for improved frontage
-  Opportunities for taller buildings
-  Key views
-  Buildings of townscape character
-  Gateways and key nodes
-  Stopping Up of Bush Road

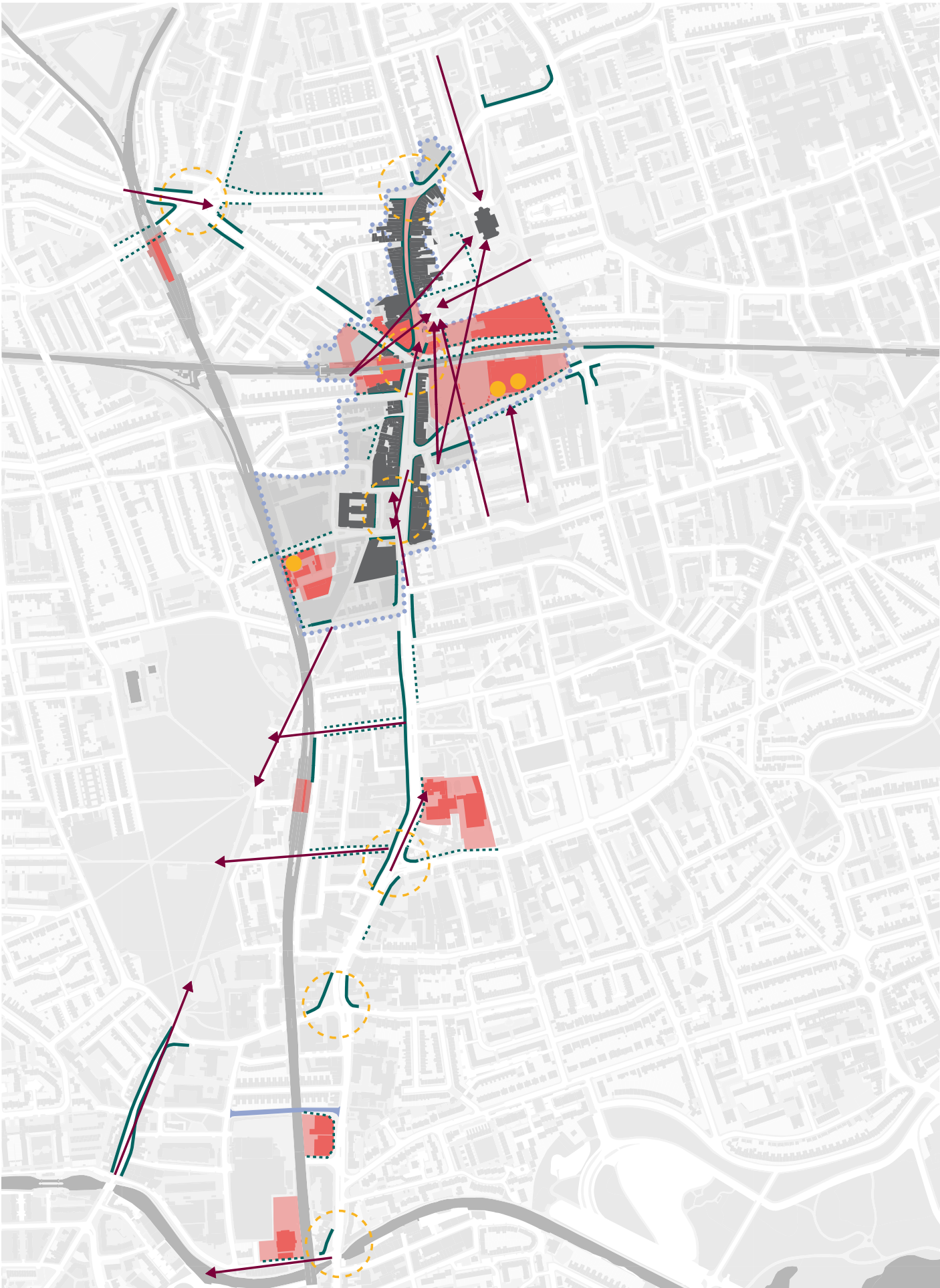


Figure 3. Urban Structure

# 2.4 .2 Movement and Connectivity

Hackney Central and Surrounds relies on the primary artery of Mare Street that forms the backbone of vehicular movement and bus routes. The Masterplan movement strategy, as set out in Figure 4, highlights the network of existing connections. The existing movement structure comprises key public transport routes running north-south (Mare Street and London Overground line to Liverpool Street) and east-west (London Overground line to Stratford and Dalston) and walking and cycling routes with a predominant east-west direction. This directionality creates crossing points between railway infrastructure, main roads and pedestrian/cycle paths.

The impact of traffic and the low quality pedestrian experience along Mare Street have caused pedestrians and cyclists to find alternative routes east and west of Mare Street. Furthermore, with the direction of travel to central London destinations being towards the west and south-west of Hackney Central, the pedestrian and cycle desire lines run primarily in an east-west direction.

**Masterplan Urban Design Objectives:**

- 3. To promote accessibility and permeability through improving the network of pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 4. To make places which connect with each other, are easy to move through, and provide recognisable routes to promote legibility and wayfinding.

**Masterplan Urban Design Principles:**

The Council, TfL, Network Rail, developers and other partners will work in partnership to achieve the following improvements (as illustrated in Figure 4):

- d. Establish new and improved pedestrian routes, and connect these to existing pedestrian and cycle routes which link major destinations in the area, such as the route from the Town Hall Square and Broadway Market. The opening up of railway arches will be encouraged to decrease barriers to permeability.
- e. Improve crossing points for pedestrian and cycle priority by introducing pedestrian priority or shared surface streets, and other traffic calming measures in locations.
- f. Link Overground stations and bus stops in to a network of pedestrian and cycle routes.

- Opportunity Sites
- Existing Main Pedestrian Route
- Potential New/Improved Pedestrian Route
- Improved Pedestrian Junction
- Existing Main Cycle Route
- Existing Minor Cycle Route
- Cycle Quietways
- Potential New/Improved Cycle Route
- Main Bus Route
- Minor Bus Route
- Bus Stop
- Overground Station
- Link between stations

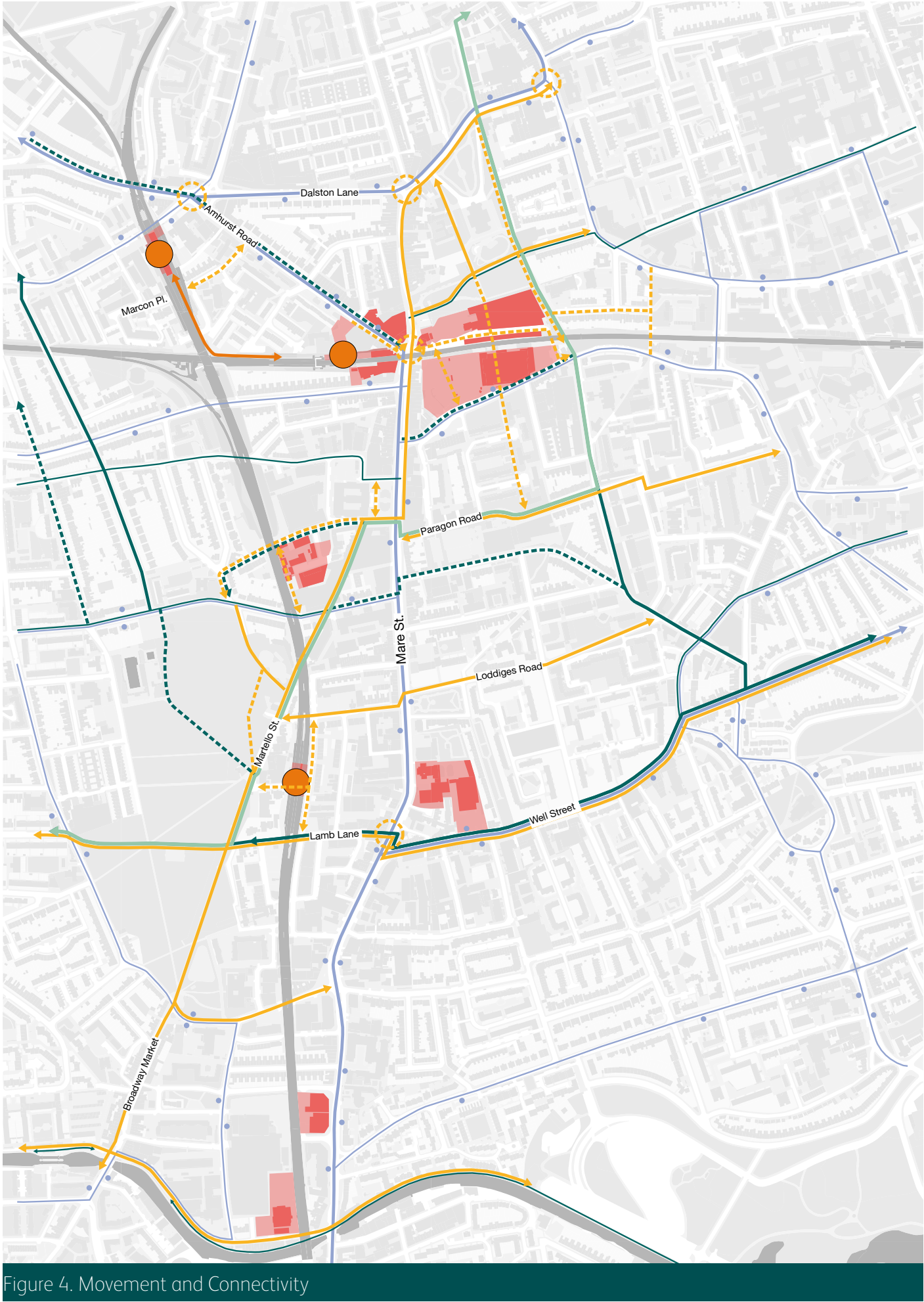


Figure 4. Movement and Connectivity