

OLD KENT ROAD

LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

Draft Area Action Plan / Opportunity Area Planning Framework

June 2016



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Revitalised neighbourhoods

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Aerial panorama of Old Kent Road and Burgess Park

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Artist's impression of future development along the Old Kent Road

Executive summary:

Figure 1: The Plan

Over the next 20 years the opportunity area will be transformed, becoming increasingly part of central London. These changes will be driven by the expansion of central London south of the Thames and the construction of the Bakerloo line extension. The main proposals for change are set out below:

1. Revitalise the Old Kent Road as high street with shops, cafes, restaurants, leisure and other facilities with residential homes above.
2. Recognise the Old Kent Road's central location by including it within an extension of London's central activities zone.
3. 20,000 new homes, including council homes and private rented homes in mixed use neighbourhoods. Development to help pay for infrastructure through the community infrastructure levy.
4. Employment clusters providing mix of managed workspace, hybrid, light industrial and low cost space, contributing to 5,000 additional jobs.
5. Mixed use office quarter around Mandela Way and Crimscott Street.
6. Potential to build on growing reputation for arts and creative businesses.
7. Social infrastructure including up to 2 new primary schools and potentially one new secondary school by 2025 and additional schools later in the plan period. A new health centre serving the south of the opportunity area will be needed and a new community sports centre on Surrey Canal Road is planned.



The Plan



8. Two new tube stations on the Bakerloo line extension and a new overground station at New Bermondsey. It is anticipated that the Bakerloo Line extension will open around 2030.
9. The Old Kent Road itself will be transformed into a modern boulevard. Improved public realm for pedestrians, protection for cyclists and improved bus infrastructure along its entire length will help accommodate growth prior to the opening of the Bakerloo Line extension.
10. New links stitching together neighbourhoods on both sides of the Old Kent Road
11. Public realm improvements at Bricklayers Arms and on the Old Kent Road with better crossing points, improved public spaces and urban greening. Heritage buildings and parks will be sensitively incorporated into new development enabling the story of the Old Kent Road to be better appreciated.
12. New parks at Mandela Way and the gasworks and green route on the alignment of the former Surrey Canal.
13. Improvements to network of open spaces and green links
14. Environmental sustainability including district heating networks to reduce carbon emissions, measures to tackle poor air quality and sustainable urban drainage systems to reduce flood risk.

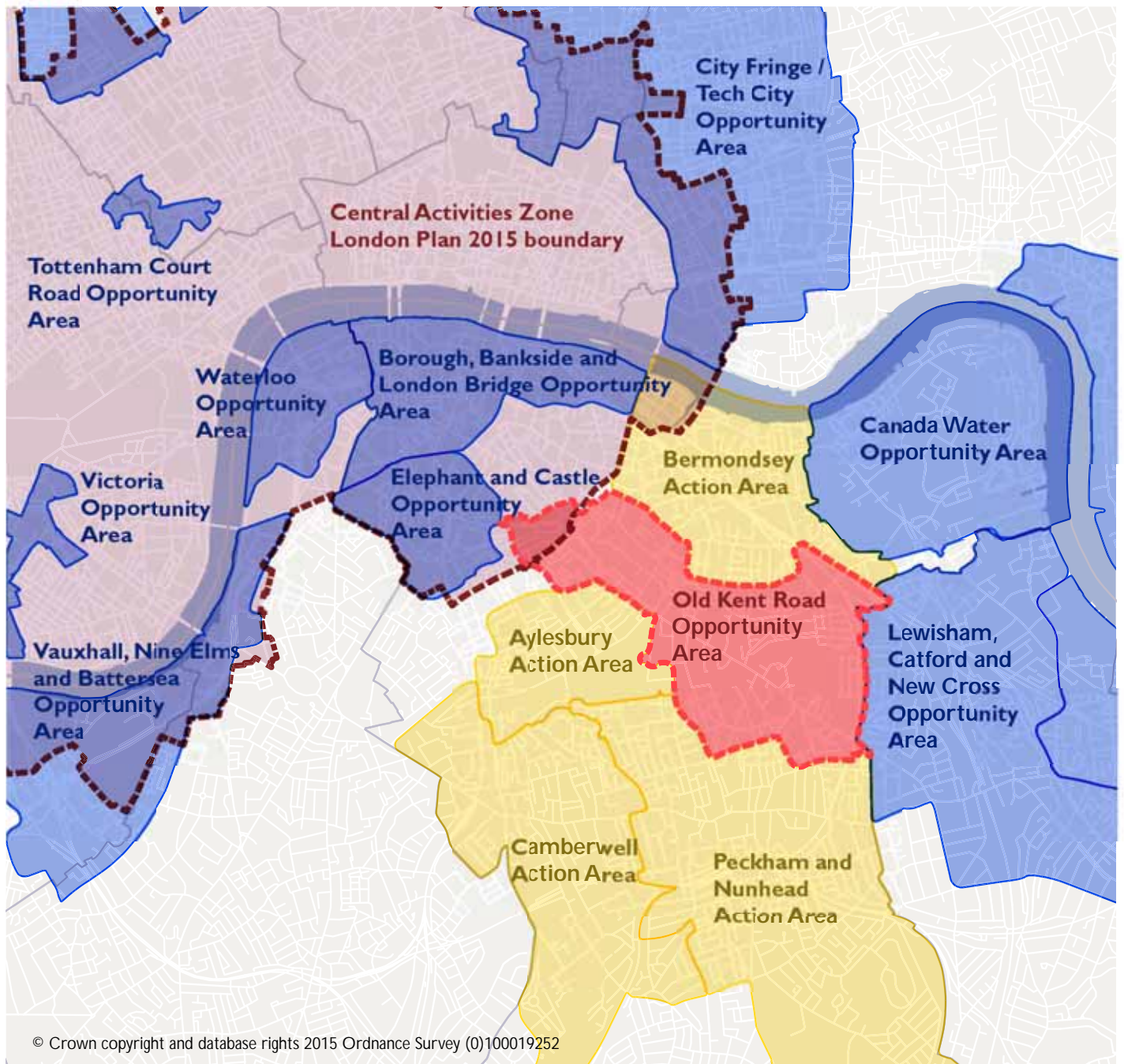
1 Introduction



1.1 What is the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan/ Opportunity Area Planning Framework

- 1.1.1 The Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (AAP) is a plan to regenerate the Old Kent Road and surrounding area. It sets out a vision for how the area will change over the period leading up to 2036. This is supported by a strategy with policies we will put in place to achieve this vision, the reasons we have chosen the policies, and the delivery plan for implementing the vision.
- 1.1.2 The AAP will be part of our framework of planning documents. It will be a material planning consideration in deciding planning applications in the opportunity area. It will help ensure that we make decisions transparently, providing clarity for members of the public and giving more confidence to developers to invest in the area. It will also be an opportunity area planning framework (OAPF) and will be endorsed by the Mayor of London.
- 1.1.3 The document is structured as follows:
- Section 1 of the document introduces the document and the opportunity area.
 - Section sets out the vision and key diagram.
 - Section 3 outlines the area-wide strategy and policies which apply across for the opportunity area.
 - Section 4 applies the area-wide strategies to three smaller character areas as well as proposals sites.
 - Section 5 describes how the plan will be implemented.
 - The appendices provide further information on the policy context, the character and challenges facing the area, the implementation of the plan and the monitoring framework.

Figure 2: Location of the Old Kent Road opportunity area



1.2 Introduction to the opportunity area

- 1.2.1 The Old Kent Road (the A2) is one of London's key arterial routes. Less than a mile from London Bridge it currently sits on the fringe of central London and is surrounded by areas of huge change, including Elephant and Castle and Canada Water to the north and Peckham, New Cross and Deptford to the south (see Figure 2). The opportunity area (see Figure 3) covers an area of 281 hectares extending from the New Kent Road to the north and the borough boundary with Lewisham to the south and covering much of the hinterland on either side of the road.
- 1.2.2 The Old Kent Road has a remarkable past stretching back some 2,000 years. Initially a Roman road, Watling Street, connecting London and the south east, it became renowned in mediaeval times as part of a major pilgrimage route to Canterbury. The construction of the Surrey Canal and the South Eastern Railway in the 1800s brought rapid growth and industrialisation, while in the twentieth century, wartime bombardment and the construction of post-war housing and highways infrastructure saw the area reshaped again. By the end of the twentieth century the Old Kent Road's renowned nightlife and entertainment venues had largely disappeared and industrial development had given way to the construction of retail parks and warehousing. While the Old Kent Road can appear bleak and run down in places, its history is still evident in many of the buildings and pattern of development which characterise the area today.
- 1.2.3 The Old Kent Road is a busy commercial thoroughfare, lined by high street shops, supermarkets, retail parks, industrial uses and residential homes. Much of the land on either side is given over to industry and warehousing. While the area as a whole contains a huge mix of uses and activities, most areas have been developed almost exclusively for one type of use or another with little mixing within blocks. Altogether, there are around 9,500 people working in the opportunity area in some 750 businesses and other organisations.
- 1.2.4 The opportunity area has a population of around 32,000. It is an area of great diversity with 43% of the population being born outside the UK. Located so close to central London, the area's housing stock has become very popular and house prices have risen accordingly. However, levels of deprivation remain high, with several areas being in the 10% most deprived in the country. The opportunity area has lower levels of full time employment than elsewhere in Southwark and a higher proportion in lower skilled occupations.
- 1.2.5 The opportunity area is extremely well served by buses, with 14 routes using the Old Kent Road. South Bermondsey railway station is located in the north of the opportunity area and Queens Road Peckham is to the south. Also, just outside the opportunity area, the soon to be opened New Bermondsey Station on Surrey Canal Road will provide access to the London Overground network. However, the lack of access to the London Underground network and distance to rail stations results in poorer public transport accessibility than other comparable areas in central London. Transport for London (TfL) have recently confirmed their preferred route for the Bakerloo Line extension, from Elephant and Castle to Lewisham and via two stations on the Old Kent Road.

- 1.2.6 Over the next 20 years the opportunity area is expected to change. The two key drivers of change are the expansion of central London and its functions and the construction of the Bakerloo Line extension. As pressure for land intensifies in central London, so it many of its functions, including provision of commercial space, space for cultural activities and institutions such as universities are being pushed outwards. The effects of this are already being felt in the opportunity area as rents for commercial space are rising and demand is growing for office and managed workspace, especially around Bermondsey. The Bakerloo Line extension will bring most of the opportunity area within a 10 minute walk of a tube station, stimulating growth in homes and jobs and driving residential densities which are similar to tube station locations elsewhere in central London.
- 1.2.7 Although the Bakerloo Line extension is not expected to open before 2030, change in the opportunity area is already happening. There are currently some 882 homes and 32,000 square metres of non-residential space either with planning permission or under construction. However, landownership in the core of the opportunity area is very fragmented and many sites are subject to long leases. This makes it likely that development will take place incrementally over a period of 20 years or more. This purpose of this plan will be to guide and manage change, ensuring that it is coordinated and benefits existing and future communities living and working in the area.



Ceramic mural on former Civic Building

Figure 3: Boundary of the Old Kent Road opportunity area

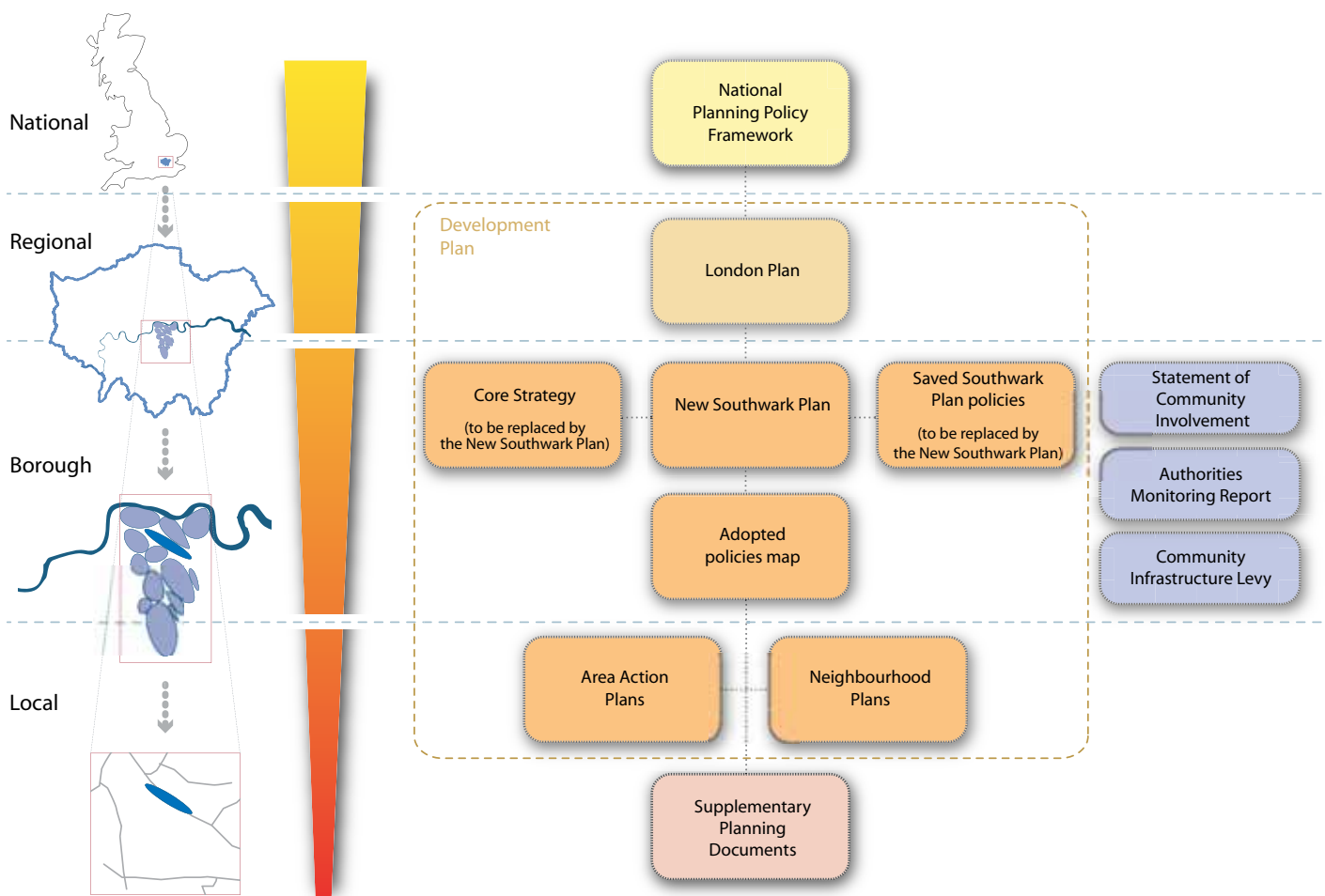


 Old Kent Road opportunity area

1.3 The planning context in Southwark and London

- 1.3.1 The Old Kent Road AAP is one of several planning documents which make up our local plan which we use to make decisions on planning applications. These include the New Southwark Plan. The New Southwark Plan is currently in preparation and provides an overarching vision and strategy for managing growth and change in Southwark over the period leading up to 2033. It is important that the vision and policies in the Old Kent Road AAP are consistent with the strategic policies which are in the New Southwark Plan.
- 1.3.2 The AAP also needs to be consistent with the Mayor's policies in the London Plan, as well as national planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The London Plan identifies the Old Kent Road as an opportunity area with significant potential for growth in homes and jobs and explains that an opportunity area planning framework (this document) should be prepared to help facilitate growth.
- 1.3.3 The relationship between the Old Kent Road AAP policies, regional and Southwark policies is illustrated in Figure 4 and explained in more detail in appendix 4.

Figure 4: The inter-relationships between spatial scale and the local plan



2 Vision



2.1 Vision

2.1.1 The regeneration of the Old Kent Road will be guided by our vision for the opportunity area.

Over the next 20 years the opportunity area will be transformed, becoming increasingly part of central London, providing at least 20,000 new homes and 5,000 new jobs. The making of a new piece of the city will be driven by the expansion of London's central activities zone and the construction of the Bakerloo line extension.

The Old Kent Road is at the core of the vision. It will be revitalised and restored as a thriving high street with shops, business space, leisure, civic, cultural and community uses on either side. Out-of-centre style retail parks and superstores will be replaced by development that provides strong, well-defined street frontages, making a better connected high street linking into neighbourhoods on either side. There will be new stations with excellent interchange with other modes of transport. The Old Kent Road itself will be transformed into a modern boulevard. Improved public realm for pedestrians, protection for cyclists and improved bus infrastructure along its entire length will help accommodate growth prior to the Bakerloo Line extension opening.

Behind the Old Kent Road there will be a transition from single use industrial and warehousing uses to mixed use neighbourhoods. These will be well served by new open spaces and green links. Development will be easy to move around for people walking and cycling with new buildings, clearly defined streets and squares. There will be tall buildings which will be well designed to form appropriate landmarks to mark routes around the area and focussing around new parks and improved public realm, and areas with more intense activity on the Old Kent Road. District heating solutions, sustainable urban drainage systems and measure to improve air quality will help tackle pollution and climate change.

New homes will help foster mixed communities and include a range of sizes and mix of private and affordable homes, including council homes.

The employment offer will build on the area's current diversity and include a new office quarter in the north of the area and a mix including flexible, hybrid, workshop, studio spaces and light industrial premises providing accommodation for businesses servicing central London's economy in the middle and south. New workspace, which includes affordable provision, will also help reinforce the area's growing reputation for arts and cultural activity.

Alongside homes and jobs, development will also provide new schools, health and other facilities which support growth and contribute to creating and reinforcing sustainable and healthy neighbourhoods. The plan sets out a comprehensive place-making approach for this significant part of London and the council is committed to working with the local residential and business community, landowners, developers and other public sector bodies to implement it.

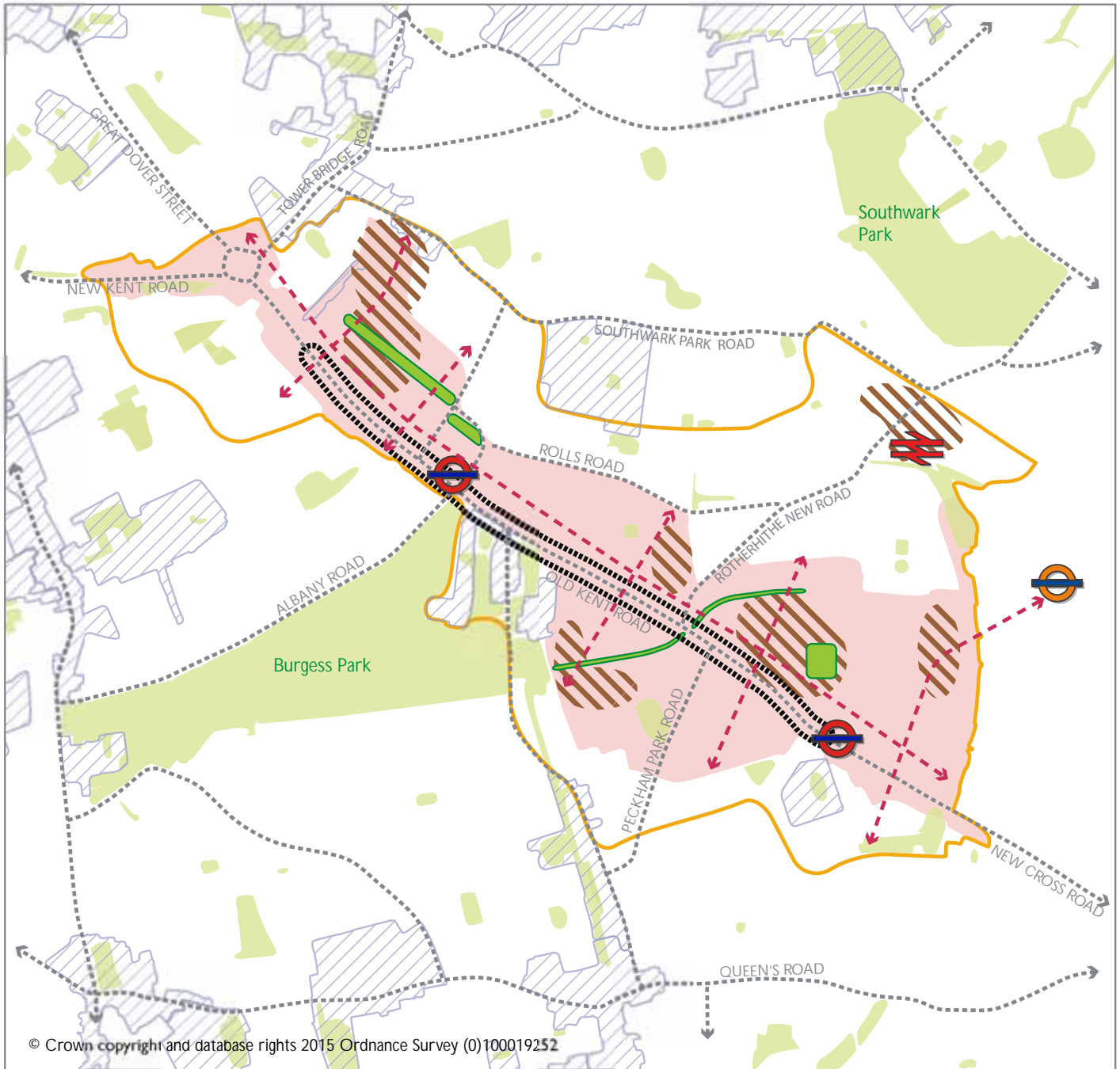
2.2 Key diagram

2.2.1 Our vision for the area is expressed spatially on the key diagram (Figure 5). The key diagram is a graphical representation of the main elements of the vision, such as improvements to transport infrastructure and the revitalisation of the Old Kent Road as a high street.



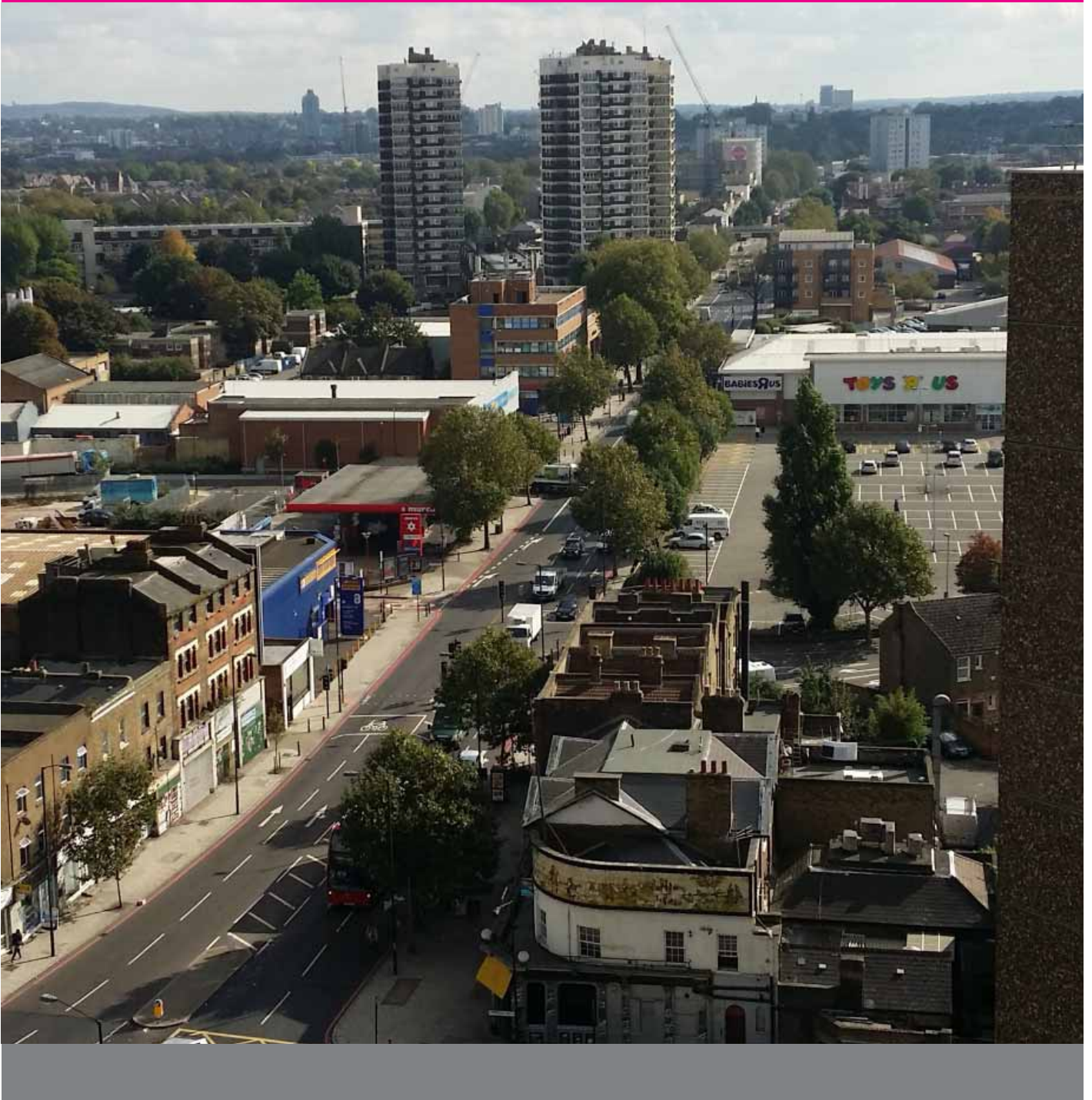
Artist's impression of Old Kent Road looking north from the junction with Cobourg Road

Figure 5: Key diagram



- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Improved connectivity | Main roads | New overground station |
| Core area | Conservation areas | National rail station |
| Revitalised high street | Old Kent Road opportunity area | Existing open space |
| Employment clusters | New tube stations | Main opportunities for new open space |

3 Strategy



3.1 The role of the Old Kent Road

- 3.1.1 The identity of the Old Kent Road and its wider contribution to London's life have been shaped over time and will continue to evolve. Over the next 20 years or so, the expansion of central London and its functions and the construction of the Bakerloo Line extension will drive growth and regeneration in the opportunity area.

AAP 1: The Old Kent Road

Recognising the Old Kent Road opportunity area's role and location, we are including it within an extension of London's central activities zone (CAZ). Development will be expected to strengthen its role in the CAZ through:

- Providing of a rich mix of land uses including residential, employment, retail, cultural, higher education and leisure.
- Bringing forward development which benefits the local residential and business communities while contributing to Southwark and London's need for homes and jobs.
- Reinforcing the role of the Old Kent Road as a high street.
- Supporting the function of the opportunity area in providing a diversity of spaces for office, light industrial, production and cultural activities.
- Improving the green infrastructure network as a resource for Southwark and London.
- Enhancing the area's character, sensitively incorporating heritage assets into high quality development of a scale and density which befits a central London location and improving public transport accessibility.
- Facilitating transport improvements including the Bakerloo Line extension and better links for people walking and cycling.
- Addressing the need to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and reduce the risk of flooding.

Reasons

- 3.1.2 Extending the boundary of London's central activities zone acknowledges that the opportunity area is becoming increasingly part of central London. The influence and role of the opportunity area are evident well beyond its boundaries and should be recognised and enhanced by development and regeneration opportunities.

3.2 Quality affordable housing

- 3.2.1 The opportunity area has huge potential to provide homes that Southwark and London need. A range of market, private rented and affordable homes with a mix of sizes will help meet local needs and also maintain mixed and diverse neighbourhoods. Residential neighbourhoods will feel like central London with high densities which benefit from improved public transport and proximity to local facilities including shops, workplaces and schools.

AAP 2: New homes

Development in the opportunity area will provide at least 20,000 new homes over the period 2015-2036.

Reasons

- 3.2.2 The opportunity area will establish new residential and mixed use neighbourhoods which look and feel like central London. New homes will be serviced by high quality infrastructure including new public open space, improved public transport services, schools and health services.
- 3.2.3 Southwark's Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies a local need to provide between 1,472 and 1,824 homes per year over the period up to 2031. This sits within a London-wide housing need for 49,000 new homes per year across the capital. New homes in the opportunity area will contribute towards meeting this need. To help create sustainable and mixed neighbourhoods, it is important that a mix of housing is provided. In accordance with the New Southwark Plan over 60% of homes will have two or more bedrooms and 20% will have 3 or more.

AAP 3: Affordable homes

Development providing 10 or more new homes will provide a minimum of 35% affordable housing, subject to viability, in accordance with the New Southwark Plan.

Reasons

- 3.2.4 Affordable housing is an essential ingredient of a balanced and sustainable community. Approximately half of our housing need is for new affordable homes. Building 20,000 new homes will significantly contribute towards meeting local affordable housing needs to enable local people on lower incomes to maintain valuable social support networks and undertake some of the essential, but often lower paid, employment which underpins the local and regional economy.

- 3.2.5 New development will provide 35% of homes as affordable housing in line with the New Southwark Plan. In addition to social rented housing, we will encourage a diverse range of intermediate housing products that meet a range of local affordability needs. This will include discounted market rent in addition to shared ownership and shared equity. Shared ownership is often unaffordable for lower middle income households who do not qualify for social housing (or affordable rent) and it is important that an element of the intermediate housing supply meets this need.

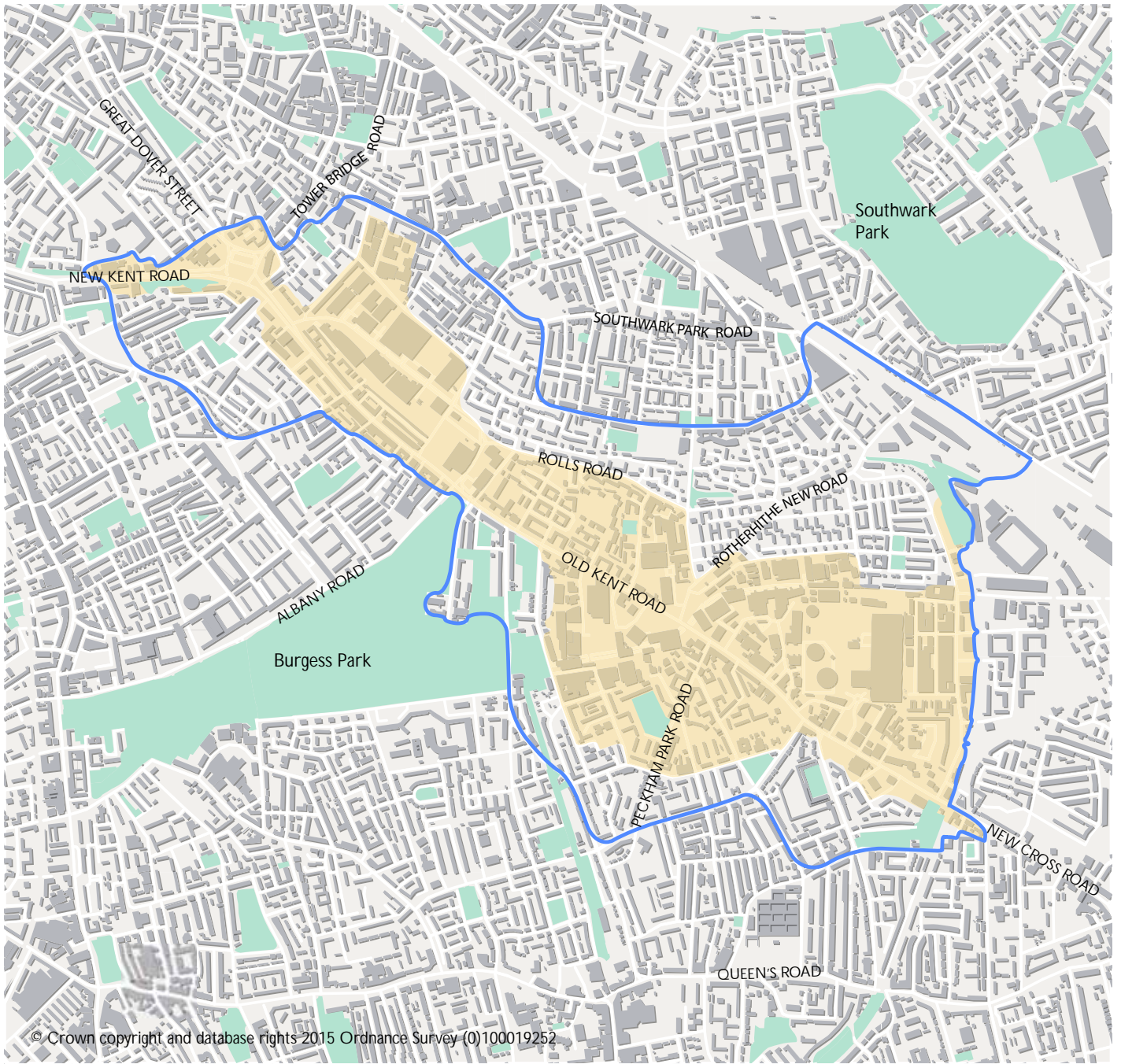
AAP 4: Private rented sector homes



Provision of private rented accommodation in addition to conventional 'for sale' market homes will be encouraged in the core area. Flexibility in the mix of homes provided and in the nature and type of affordable housing provided may be justified where a development proposes covenanted private rented homes.

Reasons

- 3.2.6 Private rented homes account for a growing proportion of market homes in Southwark. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of households who rented privately increased from 15,932 to 29,995 households. New homes built specifically for the rental market to be managed by a single professional landlord (known as 'build to rent') have the opportunity to meet part of the growing need with high quality, secure and well managed homes. Private rented homes also have the potential to accelerate housing delivery because they do not compete with nearby housing developments offering homes for sale.
- 3.2.7 Flexibility in the nature and type of affordable housing provision may be justified where a development proposes private rented homes where justified by the design, property management strategy or viability. For example, discounted market rent may be a more suitable affordable housing intermediate tenure than shared-ownership. Private rented homes meet a wide range of housing needs and are particularly suitable for younger adults without dependants who live alone or share. Private rented homes can also be suitable for older people who prefer not to be responsible for management and maintenance of their home. As such, requirements for a fixed proportion of family homes should be applied flexibly where there is a demonstrated market demand for an alternative housing mix.

Figure 6: Core area



-  Old Kent Road opportunity area
-  Core area

AAP 5: Optimising delivery of new homes

Residential density in the core area should be in the range of 650-1,100 habitable rooms per hectare. Outside the core area, density should be in the range of 200-700 habitable rooms per hectare.

Densities which are higher than these ranges will only be permitted where proposals make an exceptional contribution to the regeneration of the opportunity area through:

- Providing an exemplary standard of design and on-site public realm of the highest quality.
- Contributing towards a significant improvement in transport capacity.
- Contributing towards the area's infrastructure needs.

Reasons

- 3.2.8 Over the next years we envisage that the Old Kent Road will become increasingly like central London. This will be reflected in the scale of development and in the mix of uses in the area. We have identified a core area in which central London densities are appropriate. This area is the main focus of development opportunities and has higher levels of public transport accessibility. The mix of land uses, with more commercial use and residential development which tends to be mainly flatted distinguishes it from surrounding neighbourhoods which are characterised by terraced housing and lower scale residential development.
- 3.2.9 In line with the New Southwark Plan, very high densities which exceed the ranges will need to provide an exemplary standard of design and public realm of the highest quality. To inform the AAP, we prepared a place-making study to test the capacity of the opportunity area and inform place-making principles which should guide development. In order to achieve densities at the higher end or above the ranges, the study demonstrated that some site assembly would be required. Developing at such densities relies on the ability to provide generous public realm, amenity space which exceeds minimum standards, good levels of sunlighting and daylighting and other characteristics which are needed to ensure development of an exemplary quality. In some parts of the core area, the fragmented nature of land ownership and the size and configuration of sites will constrain the potential to develop at the highest densities, without wider land assembly.
- 3.2.10 The Bakerloo Line extension will provide excellent public transport accessibility (the A2 corridor would have a public transport accessibility level of 5 or 6) bringing much of the opportunity area within a 10 minute walk of a tube station. However, the Bakerloo Line extension will open in 2030 at the earliest. Developments built in advance of the Bakerloo Line extension, particularly those at very high densities which exceed the ranges will need to make a significant contribution towards improving transport capacity in the interim period. Similarly, such developments will place an additional burden on infrastructure such as schools, health facilities and green spaces and will need to contribute towards this accordingly.

3.3 Revitalised neighbourhoods

3.3.1 We will need to build new streets, neighbourhoods, public spaces and different types of buildings as part of the transformation of the Old Kent Road. The gaps along the high street will be repaired to revitalise the Old Kent Road as a high street. The layout of new neighbourhoods will allow opportunities for new homes and jobs alongside new walking and cycling routes that cross and better link the area to the rest of Southwark.

AAP 6: Heritage

Proposals should follow a heritage-led regeneration approach which:

- Sustains, enhances and better reveals the significance of heritage assets and their settings.
- Avoids harming buildings of architectural or historic interest, unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve a range of public benefits which outweigh the harm, including securing an optimum alternative use for the building. In the event that demolition is considered to be justified, a detailed record of the building for future generations should be carried out.
- Retains buildings of townscape merit or ensures that the contribution which these buildings make to the townscape is preserved.

Reasons

- 3.3.2 The Old Kent Road has a history stretching back 2,000 years. The changes and events it has experienced, including its role as a medieval pilgrimage route, the coming of the railways and canal, the blitz, the growth of the motor car, the expansion of local authority housing and industry and the evolution of shopping habits have all left their mark on the character of the opportunity area. Some of these changes have been positive and some negative. The widening of the road and construction of the Bricklayers Arms flyover, for example, resulted in the destruction of a number of handsome public buildings and contributed to severing communities on either side of the road.
- 3.3.3 Some of the area's heritage is still very apparent. For example, as well as several listed buildings, there are many buildings which individually have architectural or historic merit and others which are of value due to their part in the composition of the wider townscape. Other aspects, such as the railway sidings and Surrey Canal are less visible, but traces remain.
- 3.3.4 The character of the Old Kent Road has been shaped over time and it will continue to evolve. As it becomes more closely part of central London, it will take on new roles and the look and feel of the area will change. This will also create opportunities to stitch together old and new, incorporating the area's heritage assets into new development and enabling them to be appreciated better by improving their surroundings. It will also be possible to reveal parts of the area's history which have been lost, such as the former Surrey Canal route. A heritage-led regeneration approach will ensure that the story of the Old Kent Road remains strong and indeed can be understood more clearly.



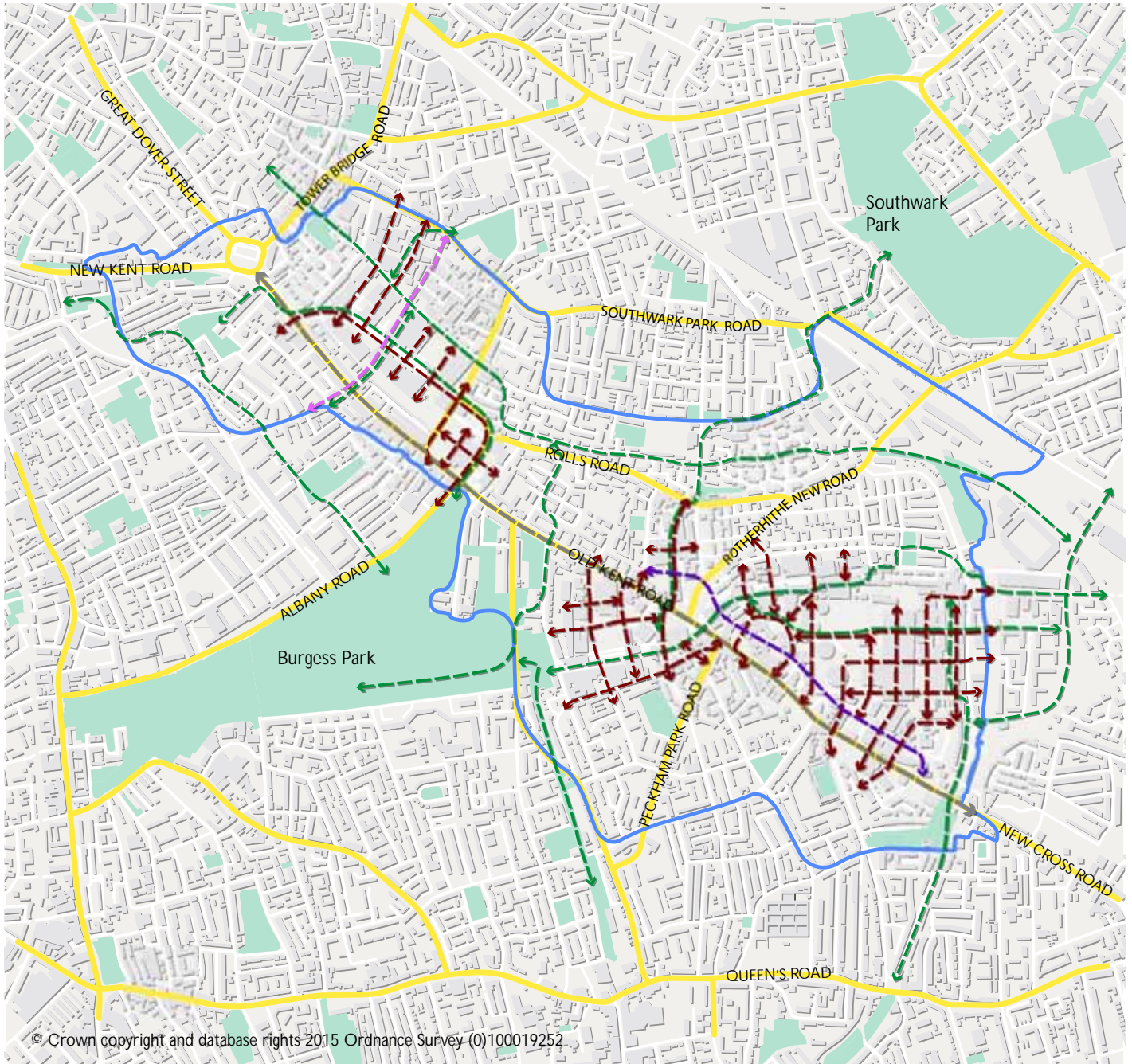
Canal Grove

AAP 7: Streets and public spaces

Proposals should create or reinforce a hierarchy of streets and public spaces, establishing the network of streets shown indicatively in Figure 7. New streets should aim to reinforce east-west routes through the opportunity area, reinforce routes which feed onto the Old Kent Road and deliver routes which run parallel to the Old Kent Road.

- New streets and public spaces should:
- Provide high quality, safe and inclusive public realm.
- Integrate provision of green infrastructure.
- Ensure connection into the surrounding street network.
- Provide convenient, direct, and attractive links for people walking or cycling.
- Enhance the open space network through the introduction of new open and public spaces that act as a focus for activity and draw people through the area.
- Support the function of surrounding uses.

Figure 7: Streets and routes



- Old Kent Road opportunity area
- Old Kent Road
- Indicative alignment of new and improved streets
- Indicative alignment of existing and proposed green links
- Indicative alignment of East Street to Bermondsey route
- Indicative alignment of route parallel to Old Kent Road
- Main roads

AAP 8: Public realm strategy for the Old Kent Road

Proposals should contribute towards the transformation of the Old Kent Road into a modern boulevard, with:

- Strong frontages on either side.
- Ground floor uses which generate activity.
- Sensitive incorporation of heritage assets.
- Improved public spaces which provide opportunities for events, quiet areas, children's play and other uses.
- An improved environment, particularly those walking and cycling, with better crossing facilities, improved wayfinding, and urban greening.

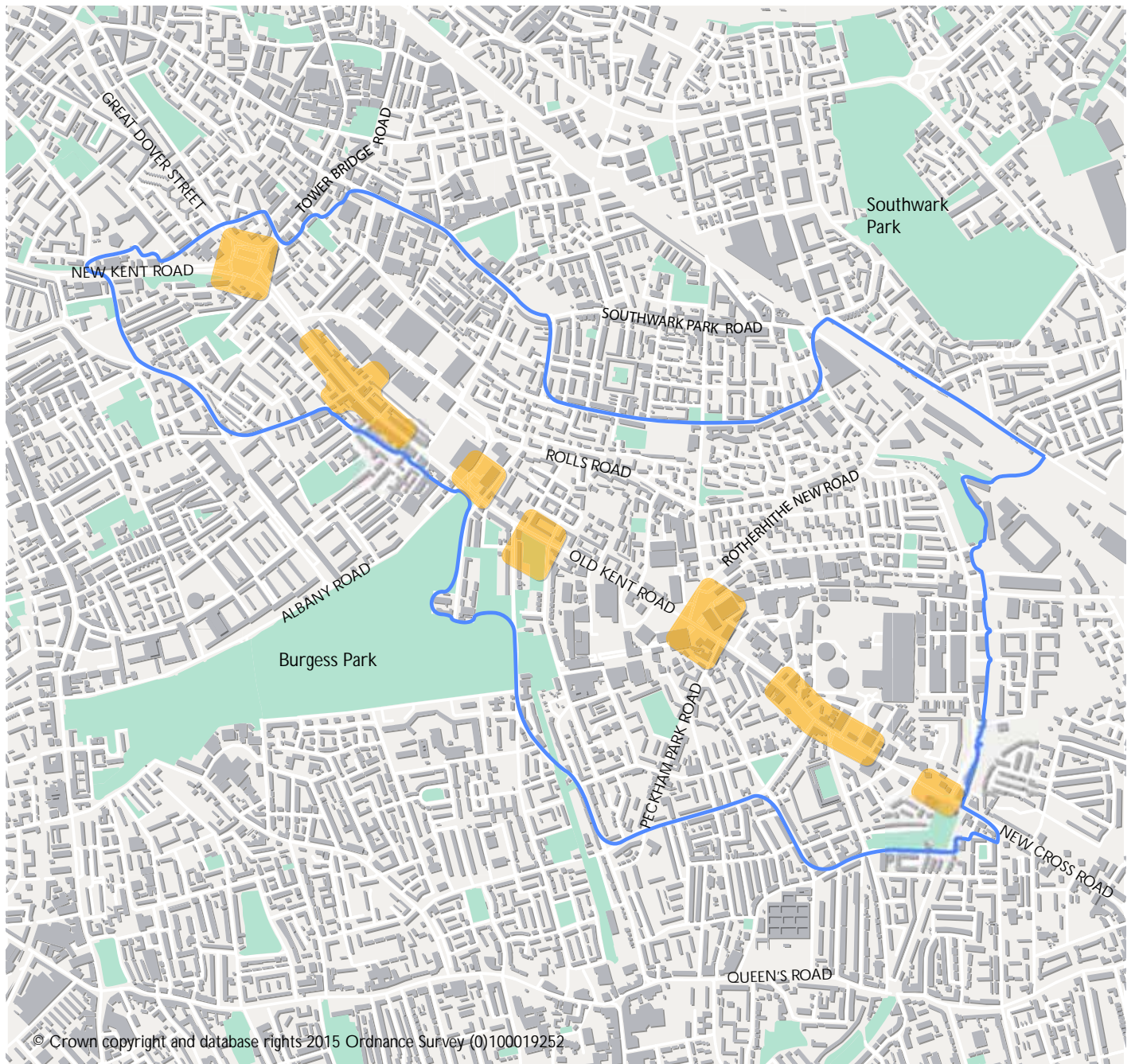
Key public realm improvements on the Old Kent Road are set out below and shown on Figure 8:



- Well integrated transport interchange facilities within new public realm at tube stations.
- Bricklayers Arms: Reconfigure this busy junction, potentially removing the flyover, to enable the introduction of new street frontages, improved public realm and reduced severance caused by the current road layout.
- East Street: Improve pedestrian crossings and the shopping environment and take opportunities to extend East Street/Hendre Road through Mandela Way.
- Burgess Park: Reinforce the role of Burgess Park as a park for London by strengthening its presence on the Old Kent Road through improved road crossings and the opportunity for a new public space on the north side of the Old Kent Road.
- Glengall Road: Improve the park to give it a stronger presence on the Old Kent Road.
- Surrey Canal crossing: Improve crossings to facilitate the delivery of a green route on the alignment of the former Surrey Canal.
- Glengall Road to Ilderton Road: Improve pedestrian crossings and the shopping environment, provide new routes which feed onto the Old Kent road, strengthen street frontages through provision of uses which reinforce the high street character of the Old Kent Road.
- Brimington Park: Public realm improvements including strengthening the presence of Brimington Park on the Old Kent Road and activating or removing the podium around the Tustin estate.

Reasons

- 3.3.5 The core area contains large areas in which the historic street pattern has been lost. Reinforcing and in some cases reintroducing a strong street pattern lies at the heart of creating neighbourhoods which are easy to move around in and which can develop a character and sense of identity. A good street pattern will also be adaptable and resilient to change over time and will be able to accommodate buildings of different types and uses, whether residential, commercial, schools or others. Given that development in the opportunity area is likely to occur incrementally and over a long period it is important that early developments begin to establish a street pattern that later developments can then also respond to.

Figure 8: Key public realm improvements on the Old Kent Road



-  Old Kent Road opportunity area
-  Key public realm improvements

- 3.3.6 The public realm, particularly on the Old Kent Road itself is very poor and dominated by traffic. Transforming the character of the Old Kent Road is an essential part of our vision. The measures we have set out aim to change the character of key locations on the Old Kent Road, reinforcing its function as a high street, making it easier and safer to cross and integrating the open spaces which front on to it more effectively. These improvements are described in more detail in section 4.

AAP 9: Building blocks

Proposals should:

- Ensure that the layout of new blocks have a fine grain, presenting a variety of interesting routes through development; people should find it easy to move around.
- Have an interesting and varied roofline.
- Incorporate frequent shifts in architectural design with a fine grain of buildings or frontages within blocks.
- Contain frequent entrances on to the street.
- Use high quality, durable, robust and sustainable building materials that contribute to a sense of quality and create the impression that development is permanent and built to last.
- Minimise the visual impact of car parking through provision in basements where viable.

Reasons

- 3.3.7 Much of the opportunity area is characterised by large buildings and sites which are impenetrable to pedestrians and cyclists and in many cases without character. Our aim is to create a resilient block structure which provides strong street frontages and which makes it easy to move around. Historically, perimeter blocks which provide street frontages and internal courtyards and gardens have proved adaptable over time and can accommodate varying densities, tall buildings, as well as different uses. While the nature of blocks will need to respond to individual site conditions, smaller block sizes may constrain the potential to provide higher densities or tall buildings and further site assembly will be encouraged.

AAP 10: Building heights strategy

Prevailing building heights

Prevailing building heights for new buildings in the core area will be between 5 and 8 storeys. Development should contain variations in height to add interest and variety to development, help signify places that are more important and to help them relate more effectively to the surrounding environment.

Tall buildings (above 30m in height)

While prevailing heights will be between 5 and 8 storeys, tall buildings will also be appropriate in the core area. The location of tall buildings should help reinforce the hierarchy of streets and spaces. Public space should be provided at ground level which is proportionate to the height of the building. Proposals for tall buildings should demonstrate a considered relationship with other tall buildings and building heights in the immediate context and contribute towards creating a coherent, legible and well articulated townscape. Cumulatively, tall buildings should not coalesce visually to form a single mass.

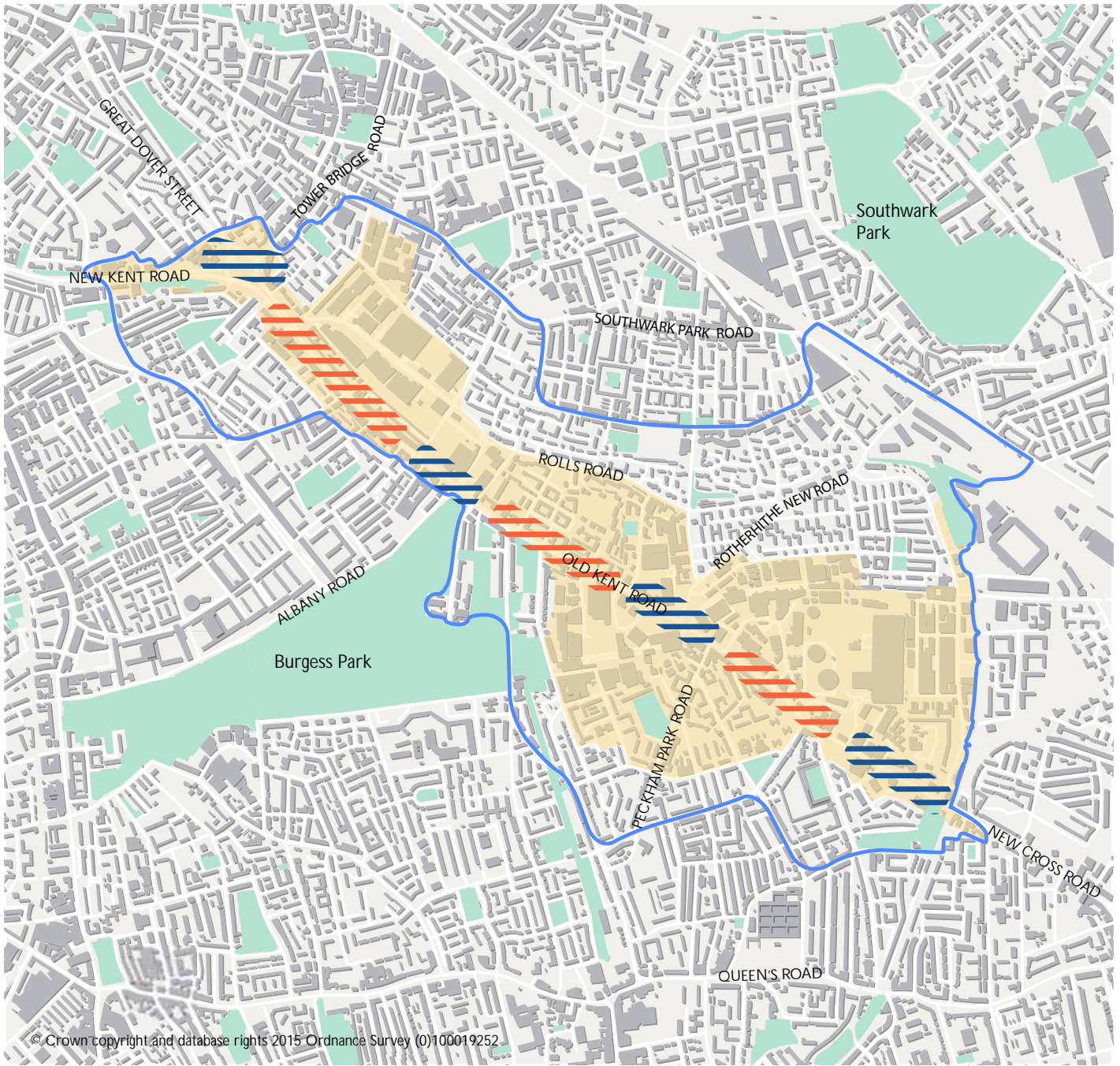
On the Old Kent Road frontages, building heights should contribute to creating a rhythm to the street, with tall buildings helping define the areas of transformation shown on Figure 9. These areas should be separated by building frontages which have generally consistent heights below 30m and which take into account the surrounding context

In addition, buildings which are significantly higher than the existing contextual height of tall buildings (around 20 storeys) must demonstrate that they contribute positively to London's skyline, when viewed locally and in wider views and that they make an exceptional contribution to the regeneration of the area.





Reasons

- 3.3.8 Much of the core area is characterised by developments of one or two storeys. This includes retail parks which have an out-of-centre character, as well as the industrial and warehousing areas. Our vision is to transform the opportunity area over the next 20 years, made possible by public transport improvements, so that it looks and feels like central London. Developments which are predominately 5-8 storeys will have a human scale which feel comfortable to be in. Tall buildings will also be appropriate and help create and mark areas of particular intensity.

Figure 9: Tall buildings strategy



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-  Old Kent Road opportunity area
-  Core area
-  Areas of transformation along Old Kent Road
-  Old Kent Road frontages with generally consistent building heights

- 3.3.9 Our strategy for the Old Kent Road itself is to use tall buildings to help emphasise important locations. The height and distribution of buildings in these areas will reflect the potential to create a new character while taking account of the surrounding context and proximity of existing neighbourhoods of lower scale. Between these locations, the use of more consistent heights which are below 30m will help reinforce a rhythm to heights along the street and avoid creating a linear corridor of tall buildings.
- 3.3.10 Away from the Old Kent Road there are large areas of developable land in which there is an opportunity to create a new character. Tall buildings will be appropriate in the core area where they help define the hierarchy of streets and provide high quality public realm. A real advantage of building high is that it enables more public realm to be provided at ground level. To create an appropriate setting for tall buildings, the amount of public space at the base of the building should relate to its height, ensuring that the space at the base of the building does not appear cramped or unwelcoming. The base of tall buildings should be permeable and should contribute to the creation of streets, avoiding an appearance of extrusions from podia. The two new open spaces on Mandela Way and on the Gasworks/integrated waste management facility (IWMF) in particular have the potential to act as a focal point for tall buildings.
- 3.3.11 Careful consideration should be given to the relationship between tall buildings, ensuring that their distribution does not feel cramped and avoiding buildings coalescing in views. Care must also be taken to ensure that the scale of new development integrates successfully with surrounding neighbourhoods and avoids an overbearing impact on the lower scale of development which exists outside the core area. The testing undertaken in preparing the Old Kent Road place-making study suggested that site assembly would be needed in some parts of the core area to create sites which are large enough to integrate tall buildings satisfactorily into the townscape. The larger the site, the greater the potential to consider the relationship between tall buildings and the surrounding townscape and the greater the opportunity to provide the generous amount of public realm upon which tall buildings rely.
- 3.3.12 There are several clusters of tall buildings in the opportunity area, which have heights of around 20 storeys. Heights which are significantly taller than this existing context may also be appropriate, but must demonstrate an exceptional contribution to the regeneration of the area and be supported by excellent public transport accessibility. All proposals for tall buildings will be expected to comply with the criteria identified in NSP policy DM 12 (Tall buildings), including the need to sustain, enhance and better reveal the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

3.4 Strong local economy

- 3.4.1 The Old Kent Road has distinctive characteristics as an industrial and creative area with a thriving existing business community. We recognise that the needs of businesses are changing, and there is increasing demand for good quality new space in key areas which provide essential services for both the local and central London economy. Many of these businesses hold specialist skills and local employment. The Old Kent Road is an ideal place to support new development to support a strong local economy. Our 2015 employment study found that there were around 9,000 jobs in the opportunity area. Our aim is to increase this by 5,000 additional jobs within new mixed use neighbourhoods. We have identified employment clusters, each with specific roles and functions which will contribute towards this. Although restructuring will be required, nurturing the existing range of businesses is key to enhancing the area's existing vibrancy and building on its unique economy.
- 3.4.2 The Old Kent Road as a linear thoroughfare presents the opportunity to revitalise its role as a high street serving the local community. The new high street offer of mixed uses will benefit the people that live, work and visit Old Kent Road, enhancing and attracting different types of businesses that will thrive and prosper.

AAP 11: Employment clusters

We will support development within the employment clusters where:

- The proposal addresses the role and function of the designated employment clusters outlined in Table 1.
- The proposal will retain or increase the amount of employment floorspace (B class use or sui generis employment generating use).
- The proposal will generate employment and result in an increase in the number of jobs to be provided.
- Major developments which provide over 1,000 sqm employment floorspace deliver workspace managed by a specialist provider to support existing and new business start-ups and small and medium sized enterprises.
- Major developments which provide over 1,000 sqm employment floorspace include an element of low cost or affordable workspace.
- The proposal accommodates existing businesses on site or in the Old Kent Road area or provides a relocation strategy for businesses that may be displaced by development.
- The design and distribution of employment floorspace meets the needs of a range of users. Further guidance is set out in Appendix 2.

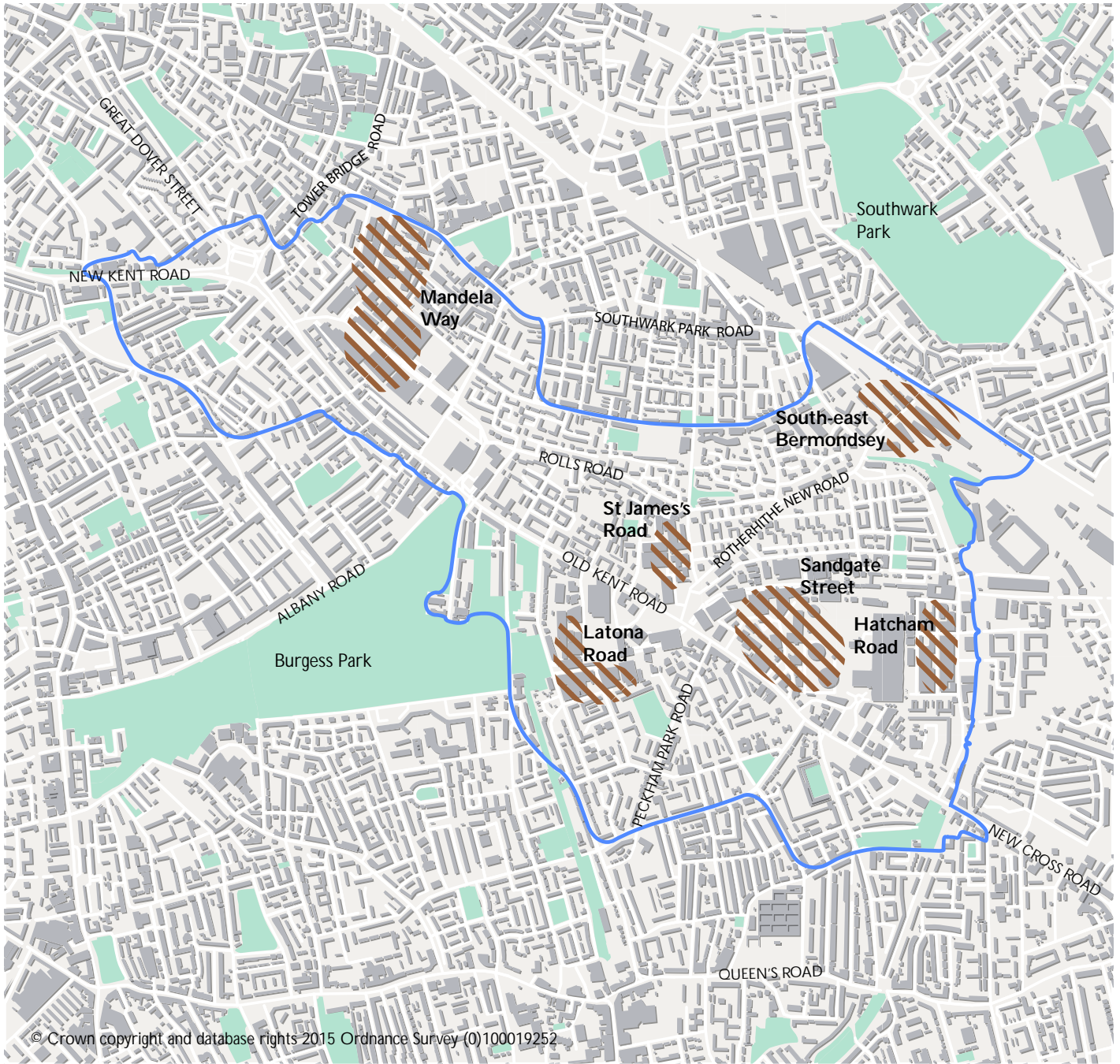
Table 1: Employment clusters



Cluster	Function	Estimated capacity for employment (B class) jobs (gross)
Mandela Way	Employment mix led by office and managed workspace which benefits from the expansion of CAZ functions. The distribution of space should reinforce the emerging cluster. Employment generating uses in the cultural and educational sectors are also appropriate in this cluster. A major educational institution would benefit from being part of the development mix in this area.	At least 4,000 jobs
Hatcham Road	Provision of flexible, managed workspace which can be used for light industrial workspaces, artists studios, and business start-ups. Development should reinforce the growth of creative businesses.	At least 600 jobs
Latona Road		At least 600 jobs
Sandgate Street and St James's Road	Provision of flexible and managed workspace for light industrial units and workshops. An element of town centre office provision would also be appropriate. Employment generating uses in the leisure, entertainment, health, educational and retail sectors should supplement workspace in this location.	At least 800 jobs
South-east Bermondsey	Potential for intensification of employment space including industrial and warehousing uses. Arch space in rail viaduct to be brought back into use post completion of Thameslink.	At least 1,300 jobs

Reasons

- 3.4.3 Over the past decade there has been a ripple effect from the expanding commercial activity of the South Bank and a growing presence of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) to the northern part of Southwark. The Old Kent Road now finds itself as an important servicing location on the fringes of central London; the most important generator of economic activity in the country.
- 3.4.4 The demand for heavy industrial space and large warehousing is gradually declining with economic projections demonstrating a decline in employment in manufacturing and wholesale sectors (GLA Economics 2013). In contrast to this decline, there is significant growth in the technical, professional and digital service economies. There is also growth in the bespoke, craft and artisan manufacturing industries which are present in the area.

Figure 10 : Employment clusters



-  Old Kent Road opportunity area
-  Employment clusters

- 3.4.5 This AAP provides the opportunity to set a policy framework which anticipates these changing requirements of business and working life and plans proactively for the future. Our strategy involves releasing land that is currently designated as preferred industrial location. Notwithstanding long term employment projections, the preferred industrial location accommodates many businesses across a huge range of sectors. Releasing land from the preferred industrial location designation is contingent on securing a range work workspaces in new development and other regenerational benefits such as affordable housing, which are outlined in the AAP.
- 3.4.6 It is anticipated the Old Kent Road could deliver an additional 5,000 jobs in a range of sectors. Table 1 gives an estimated gross capacity of jobs in each cluster which would relate to employment uses in Class B of the Use Classes Order 1987 or sui generis employment generating uses. The types of space required in fringe locations such as the Old Kent Road would differ from the high-specification office space that continues to significantly see increased demand in the north of the borough. Instead, purpose-designed light industrial premises, co-working office space and hybrid space would provide the new jobs in the area. Hybrid space would cater for sectors such as craftwork, printing or graphic design requiring space for making and creating as well as requiring an element of office functions. The Old Kent Road already hosts a number of creative industries as well as a growing community of artists' studios and gallery space.
- 3.4.7 At the present time over 65% of businesses in the Old Kent Road employ less than 10 people. All major development proposals will be encouraged to work with a registered workspace provider to manage specialist space for small and medium enterprises from start-up stages and supporting future growth. We are developing a workspace provider list which will provide more information on the format and business models of these opportunities.

Affordable business space

- 3.4.8 It is important to maintain business space that continues to be affordable for a wide range of users, including those displaced by regeneration elsewhere in the opportunity area or other local small and medium sized enterprises. Affordability differs depending on the specific requirements of each business and is not necessarily restricted to subsidised rents. Some examples of alternative low cost employment space would be the provision of lower specification space which would be more appropriate for certain sectors and by utilising space in railway arches. Affordable space could also be made available by the provision of units suitable for co-working and encouraging joint functions such as reception services. In major schemes providing over 1,000 sqm of employment floorspace, affordable workspace space will be required as part of a planning obligation. This could include a clause to maintain rents which are comparable with existing rents by area or by sector, a percentage discount in rents for a preliminary period, requirements for full fit-out of units or flexible contracts (including flexible terms of lease and break clauses) depending on specific scheme requirements.

Business retention and relocation

3.4.9 In the Old Kent Road there are over 9,500 jobs in a wide range of businesses. The business community is strong and provides key services to the central London economy. The nature of the space businesses require in the future will change, and already there are some external factors such as rising land values and lack of appropriate vehicular access limiting the types of businesses that can continue to thrive in central London.

3.4.10 However many businesses will continue to thrive and will adopt changing and more flexible working practices and requirements for space. New development needs to take account of these changes to help to retain the special characteristics of the Old Kent Road as a creative and productive part of London and maintain the successful business community. In the cases where relocation would be required, railway arches and retained industrial areas should be utilised, particularly in relation to temporary displacement through redevelopment.



Old Kent Road shopfronts

Skills

- 3.4.11 Many new jobs and training opportunities will be generated in the opportunity area, both during the construction phases and in completed developments. It is important that new jobs and training opportunities are targeted towards local people, in line with the approach established in the New Southwark Plan.

AAP 12: High streets

Development should support the revival of the Old Kent Road as a high street. For sites fronting and connecting onto the Old Kent Road an appropriate mix of uses should be provided, such as shops, cafes and restaurants, community uses, leisure uses, cultural uses, business use, residential use and other uses which help strengthen its role as a high street.

Provision of retail uses (Class A uses) will be supported in other locations where it serves to meet the need of the local population.

Reasons

- 3.4.12 Revitalising the Old Kent Road as a high street is the core part of our vision for the opportunity area. This will build on its existing strengths, particularly at the northern end which already functions as a high street and breathe new life into the southern end. It also reflects its historical importance as a high street which was once a destination with shops, civic amenities, cinemas and entertainment venues.
- 3.4.13 A vibrant mix of uses will bring life to the Old Kent Road at different times of the day and naturally meet the needs of a growing population. Over time we expect retail provision on the Old Kent Road to evolve with “big box” retail sheds being replaced by high street type stores.
- 3.4.14 We will designate the entire opportunity area as a district town centre in Southwark’s hierarchy of centres and anticipate that it will serve a local catchment of existing and future residents and workers. While the designation of the town centre is wide, it is important that new shops and town centre facilities reinforce the role of the Old Kent Road and do not divert trade away from it. New Southwark Plan policy DM 27 requires reprovision of retail use in town centres. Any loss of space will need to be justified by factors such as the role and function of the centre and the aspiration to reinforce the Old Kent Road as a high street, likely demand and a need to minimise car parking.