

BOROUGH & ME

THE STORY OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM,
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.



**Barking &
Dagenham**



Welcome to the story of Barking and Dagenham: Past, present, and future.

In the pages that follow you will read about the projects and developments that are planned in the borough and in your neighbourhood, from new homes and new industry, to new trains, cycle lanes and everything in between. You will also read about the stories, past and present, that have inspired these changes.

Along with the rest of the world, Barking and Dagenham and our residents are living through what will probably be seen in future as one of the defining periods of the 21st century. Many have lost friends or relatives because of COVID-19. Many others have experienced significant financial or emotional hardship. The council and its partners have done everything possible to keep our residents safe and well, and we will continue to do so in future. But whatever happens we will not let the pandemic distract us from our vision for the borough or its neighbourhoods. Despite the turmoil, huge economic opportunities remain on the horizon for Barking and Dagenham and doing everything we can to grasp them, so that everyone benefits, and no-one is left behind, is our duty.

This document has been written to share our plans for the future, and to demonstrate how these plans build on what has come before. To tell this story, we have separated the neighbourhoods of Barking and Dagenham into seven overall areas, each with a dedicated chapter exploring the past, the present and the possible future. If you are in a rush, then jump straight to the pages that cover your neighbourhood. But if you would like to know more about why these changes are happening in the first place, and what we are doing to make sure that everyone benefits, and no-one is left behind, then please read the introduction. Finally, if you would like to get involved in shaping these plans in the years ahead, then turn straight to chapter eight.

We are at the beginning of a 20-year journey for Barking and Dagenham. A journey we'll take together.

Let's get started.

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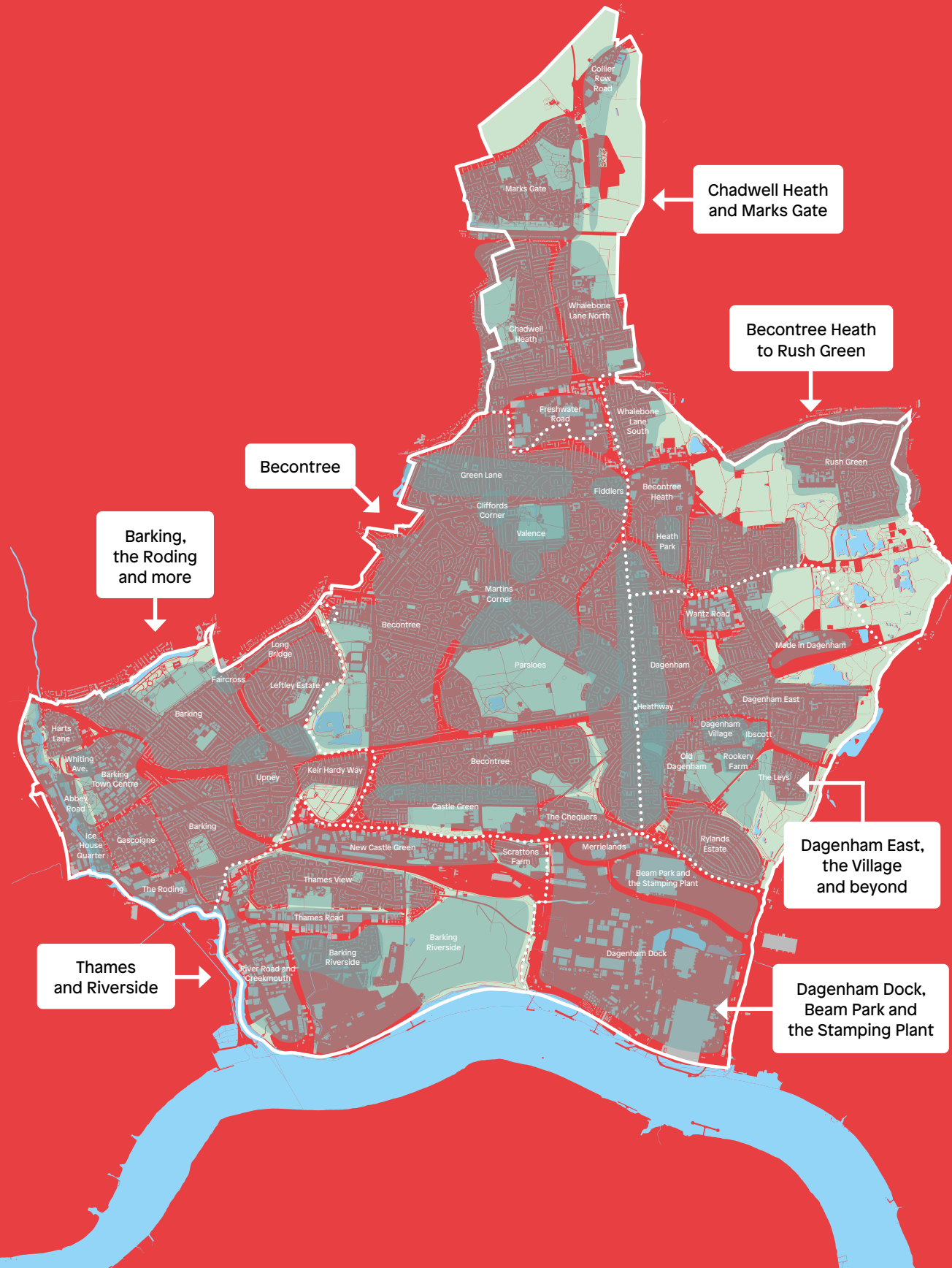
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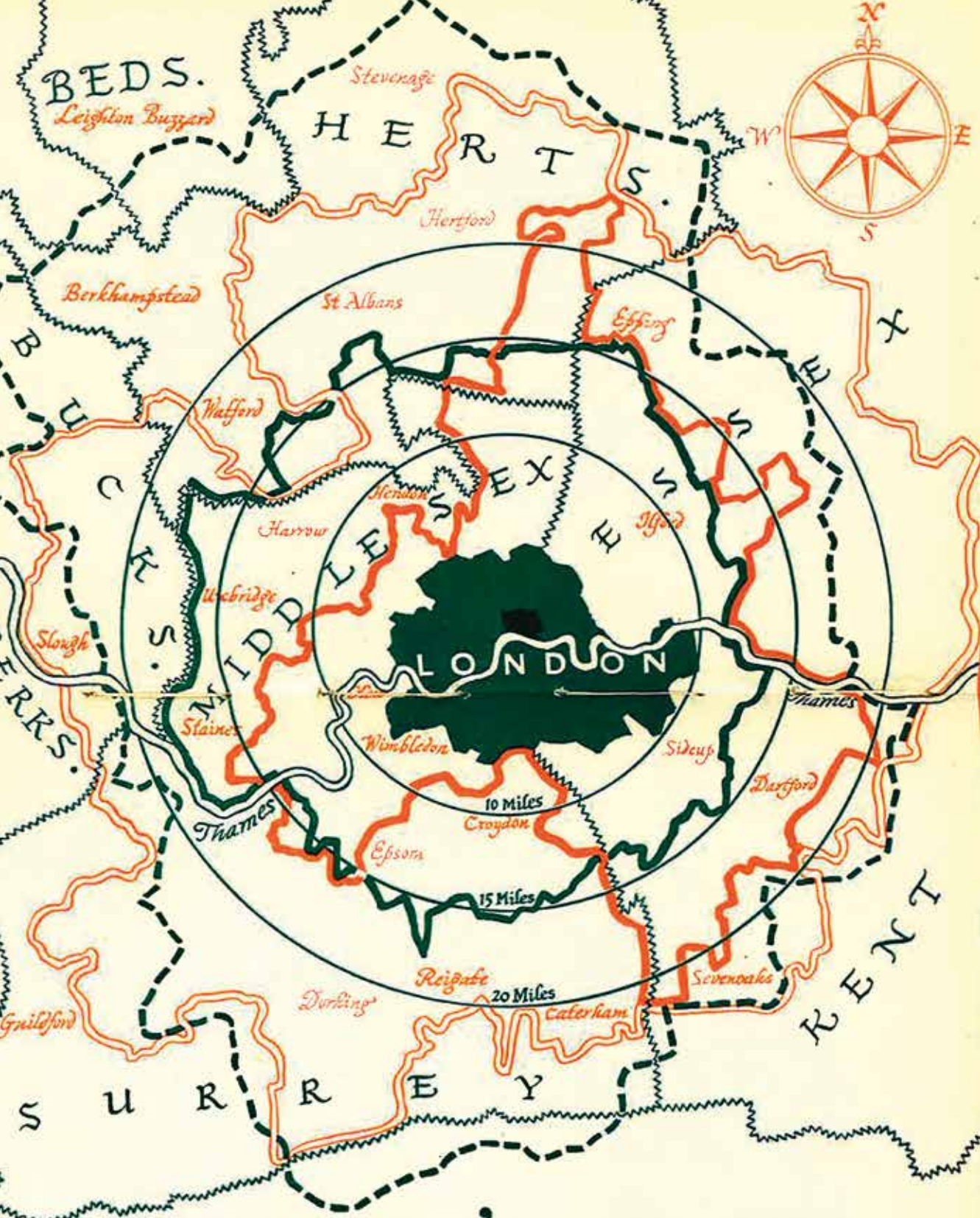
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LONDON'S AREAS

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- London Passenger Transport Area
- Metropolitan Water Board Area
- London Electricity District
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- ★ City of London

No-one left behind

As London grows, all eyes are looking towards its edges. Our city is divided into a rich tapestry of neighbourhoods; local places that all have a certain quality that makes them ever so slightly different to their surrounding areas. These places are not defined by the electoral map, or by postcode, but by relationships, shared experience, memory, history and culture.

Barking and Dagenham is made up of roughly 40 neighbourhoods and counting. These neighbourhoods aren't conclusive, and they aren't fixed. Over time, new neighbourhoods have formed alongside the old, creating new places that contribute to the borough's story. These neighbourhoods provide the lens through which we explore the past, the present and the future of the borough.

One Borough Story

Whilst all the neighbourhoods in Barking and Dagenham are different, they are also bound together by a bigger, borough-wide story. A story of working people coming to Barking and Dagenham from all over the world to build a better future for themselves and their family. A story of rapid industrial development, bringing new wealth and prosperity, alongside the certainty of regular work to thousands, followed just as quickly by industrial decline. And a story of neighbourhoods and communities, showing fierce resilience in the face of this change, pushing back against those that would seek to divide, and sticking up for the values that they care about most: Fairness and inclusion.

This story is not unique to Barking and Dagenham. It ties us to urban communities everywhere; places that have wrestled with the impact of political and economic change, and are now fighting back, carving new positions for themselves in some of the world's biggest cities; from the former powerhouses of European industry along the Rhine River in Germany, to the suburbs of rust belt America. These cities are turning the tide, using their history and their creativity to deliver growth that makes life better for working people.

In Barking and Dagenham, we believe that we can do the same. But the question is how? Let's start at the beginning.

London's Growth Opportunity

Every year, thousands of working Londoners are choosing to relocate to Barking and Dagenham, and they will continue to do so in future, no matter the ongoing impact of the pandemic. You can see why. We are 20 mins from central London, our land and our housing are cheaper than most, and we have a unique story to tell as a post-industrial town in the heart of the capital. Our borough must grow to accommodate these new arrivals. This means new homes, new jobs, new transport options, new schools, new health facilities and much besides.

For much of the 20th century, local authorities like ours would have been at the forefront of efforts to meet this demand, building new homes, creating new jobs and delivering new infrastructure for working Londoners; where do you think the Becontree came from? But the last 30 years has seen a radical shift towards a model of growth that relies more or less exclusively on investors and developers - using private finance - to build new homes and create new industry. Some would argue that this shift has been good for London, bringing new investment into parts of the capital that had been neglected for many years. Places that were once no-go zones; unsafe, untidy and unappealing; are now full of opportunity for leisure and pleasure; safe, clean, vibrant and well-connected.

But for others, neighbourhoods that had long been the beating heart of working-class aspiration, have become the reserve of those with six-figure paychecks. Rich and poor can no longer live side by side. Instead, working people and local businesses are being squeezed and neighbourhoods are losing whatever character there once was; in the buildings, the spaces and the people.

So, what's the truth? Have the last 30 years been good for London, or have they made things harder for working people? Depending on where you live both things are probably true, and to different degrees. Some parts of the capital have improved beyond recognition, and many working people are grateful for it. But many others have indeed become homogenous and sanitized. And you don't have to dig too deep to find evidence that housing and business space in the capital is now unaffordable to all but the wealthiest individuals and the biggest businesses. A mixed bag at best.





Doing things differently. Barking and Dagenham is in the early stages of its modern growth journey. This gives us a significant advantage, but can we learn the lessons of the last 30 years whilst responding to the new circumstances created by the pandemic? We think so. In practice, we think this means being much more involved in promoting and directing growth than we have been for decades. In truth, the uncertainty created by COVID-19 will mean that no-one else can or will. This doesn't mean that we can do exactly what we did in the 1920's, when construction on the Becontree began, or in the fifties when we built Thames View. We can't. Not least because of the new demands placed on regeneration and development by climate change. We need a new approach, fit for the 21st century, and all the challenges it presents, underpinned by three core principles:

Lead and attract investment. We are using our own ability to borrow at cheap rates to invest in our borough; to buy land, build homes, create jobs and to lead the fight against climate change, without having to rely on others. Doing so gives us more control, and more say. For example, it means we can set the standard in

terms of the quality, affordability and sustainability of homes by building significant numbers (3000 over the next five years) that are higher quality, more sustainable and more affordable than anything else. It means we can make sure these homes go to local people, first and foremost. And it means we can build the infrastructure we need to provide clean, green energy to every home, without having to rely on the national grid. At the same time, we will continue to mobilise investment from both the private sector, and from government, but only where this investment is underpinned by shared values and a long-term commitment to our place, its people and the planet. It is the combination of unprecedented council led investment, purposeful and patient private sector investment, and large-scale government investment that we think is key to making sure growth benefits everyone, and that no-one is left behind.

Actively intervene in markets. At the heart of our approach is a commitment to actively intervening in and shaping those markets that have the biggest impact on your day to day life - like the markets for land and housing or the markets for care energy. Local authorities have a variety of powers to influence the behaviour of developers, businesses, and other institutions operating within these markets. Some of these are legal powers, for example planning, building safety, food hygiene or trading standards. Some are based on our status as a large-scale employer of local residents as well as a significant purchaser of goods and services. And some are based on being active players in these markets. All of this gives us the power to set benchmarks and expectations.

Build institutions and alliances. The council cannot do it all alone. Our borough needs a new set of institutions that combine commercial acumen with public service values, as well as a commitment to working with us to shape growth in the years ahead. That's why we are creating our own municipal companies, wholly owned by the council but able to operate in the markets for land, housing and energy. For example, Be First, our regeneration company, which uses the money we are borrowing to buy land and build homes. Or B&D energy, our energy company, which is installing the clean energy infrastructure of the future. At first in the town centre, but in time, all over the borough. Unlike some institutions, the primary mission of these local authority owned companies is to help working people. Where they do generate profits, these profits are reinvested in the borough, rather than going to shareholders. It's also why we are forming new alliances between existing businesses, education providers, charities and public services organisations, that are committed to ensuring everyone benefits from growth, and no-one is left behind.

There is so much more that we are doing to learn the lessons of the last 30 years and to adapt to the new challenges presented by the pandemic - too much to talk about in these pages. If you want to read more about this work, as well as the specific commitments that we are making in relation to the fight against climate change, affordable homes, jobs for local people, the creation of new schools, transport options and health facilities or the protection of local character then please look at the B&D Growing Together Hub on One Borough Voice (more information in chapter 8).



We all have a part to play

“A place that people want to live, work, study and stay. A place to be proud of”.

This is our 20-year vision for the borough, as described in the Borough Manifesto, a document developed on the back of thousands of conversations with residents just like you. This vision will not change on the back of the pandemic. In fact, we are more committed to it than ever. At the same time, we now recognize that the council cannot achieve this vision on its own. We have seen this clear as day during the response to the pandemic. The council has been playing its part by doing everything we can to keep our residents safe and well. But the speed of the local response to COVID-19, not just from other public sector agencies like schools, educational institutions and the NHS, but from the social sector, the business community, and the hundreds of residents in the borough that are volunteering to support their friends and neighbours, has been nothing short of remarkable; everyone is playing their part. We must embrace this spirit of solidarity and collaboration in the way that we grow in future.

This document is the start of the conversation. It has been written to share our vision for Barking and Dagenham and its neighbourhoods. Some of the projects that it describes are long term and aspirational; we can't guarantee that they will happen exactly as described. Others are right around the corner. And there is lots planned that we couldn't fit in these pages.

Once you've read the different 'area' chapters, we'd like you to keep hold of the document; discuss it with your friends or neighbours and share it with your colleagues. Tell us what you think. Give us your feedback. In time, perhaps you will want to get more involved. We hope you do.

Now, over to our neighbourhoods.

THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM





CHAPTER 1

Barking, the Roding and more

Berecingas, Barking – “the settlement by the birch trees”

The North Circular road, or the A406 as some people know it, contains Central London in a fairly neat way. Barking, positioned just outside, where the city turns into the suburban, has a rich and layered history. The wider Barking area is so much more than the Town Centre. Gascoigne Estate, Weavers Quarter, Whiting Avenue, Harts Lane, Faircross, Leftley Estate, Longbridge Road, Roding, Abbey Grounds, the Town Quay, Upney, Keir Hardie Way: All distinct neighbourhoods and places that fall within this area, all under the umbrella of Barking.



PAST: Nuns, Markets, Manors and More...

The Barking area is dripping in history. Much of this is well documented: From Eastbury Manor and St Margaret's Church, to a listing in the Domesday Book, describing Barking folk as being "dwellers among the birch trees". Whilst Barking may feel like it has changed beyond recognition, its past is still visible everywhere, and is so much more than these formal, ancient listings that you and generations before would have been so familiar with.

Barking has always had a centre; a bustling marketplace, a thriving shopping area, a meeting ground; surrounded by Abbey Grounds, Town Halls, Churches, housing. There has always been energy and bustle in the centre. Like most parts of suburban London, the land surrounding the centre was divided into parcels and sold to landowners, who either farmed, leased or lived on it. Barking was no different. A notable landowner, the first Lord Mayor of London no less, Sir Crisp Gascoyne, on his death passed on some land, which was subsequently sold by his wayward grandson to pay for gambling debts. The land was cleared and developed into workers housing, then cleared again to make way for the Gascoigne Estate.

For many years the wider Barking area was a vital cog in the food production industry, from market gardens to the famous short blue fishing fleet. As industry started to relocate away from the river in the early 20th century, the area evolved into an aspirational, prosperous London suburb; a desirable place for people to live. The 1930's brought with it lots of new housing of all different shapes and sizes, followed by larger scale municipal developments in the 1960's to accommodate the swelling local population.

A new, now grade-2 listed, modern train station was built in the 1960's and the high street was packed full of much-loved big brands and cinemas, alongside local favourites Pesci's, Yettas and Warwickers. Football cheers could be heard regularly (or not so regularly depending on the result!) from Vicarage Fields, when Barking FC were playing at home. Barking, the centre and surrounding neighbourhoods, had become quite the destination.

PRESENT: Cranes, Culture, Town Centre

As the train pulls into Barking Station, full of commuters returning home from work, visitors, or school children leaving zone 4 to go east or west, you can almost hear the station canopy groaning, ready to burst. Barking is one of the busiest stations on the network, with the Hammersmith and City, District, London Overground and C2C lines, all moving people to and from the city, to Essex, or just down the road to Dagenham.

There is an energy to the centre. Vicarage Fields Shopping centre sits on top of the former football ground. Buses stop and move on, and an almost constant flow of people filter from the station out into Barking Town Centre. The place is full of life, most great, some not so great. There are concerns about safety. There is no night-time economy to speak of. And there has been a decline in the big-name brands that drew people here in the past. Although the Town Centre works, it is far from perfect. We are committed to making it work better.

If you turn right and walk down East Street, you will come across Barking Market, depending on what day it is. No matter what your opinion of the shops, what there is and isn't, the Town Centre is an asset, with an identity all of its own.

The Town Square and its Folly wall, a monument to the past and present, frame the excellent 1950's Town Hall that still stands proud, surveying the civic space it surrounds. Once neighbours with a public bath house and Fire Station, the Town Hall now has hundreds of residents on its doorstep. The square often hosts events but also provides space to sit and think, or for parents and young people to meet after school or college.

Whilst the retail offer has declined, leisure, culture and creativity has thrived in the wider Barking area. The new Abbey Leisure Centre sits next to The Broadway Theatre, and the creative studios and workspaces of the Ice House Quarter, all within walking distance of Studio 3 Arts and their Black Box Theatre. And as the distinctive tower blocks of the Gascoigne come down, replaced by new homes, the wider Barking area still retains some of the best housing in the borough, much of which has retained its character and the advantages associated with inter-war planning.





FUTURE: Both Home and Destination

A town centre with a new lease of life. A place to live, work, shop and relax. A real destination, day and night. Markets, merchants, makers and more. And the Roding, the new creative and cultural heart of the borough, with new homes and jobs for local people, plus great places to visit.

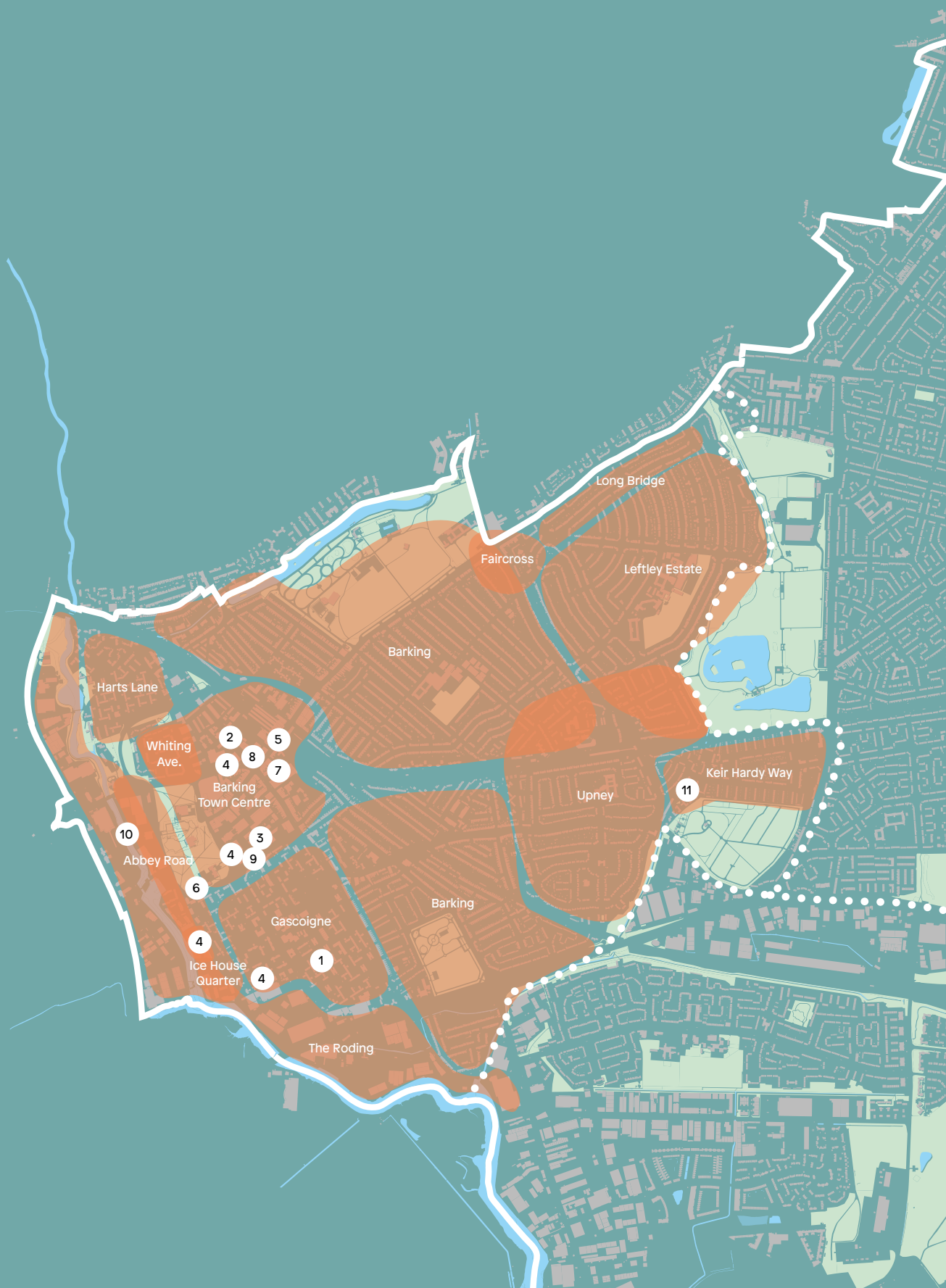
As the trains roll into Barking Station in the future, commuters and visitors will arrive at an upgraded, modern station once again, just as they did in the 1960s, but this time with homes, green spaces and activities a-plenty above and around. Turn right out of the station in the future, and you will happen across East Street and a revived Barking Market, old grandeur restored, with traders selling useful day to day food and goods at affordable prices alongside new craft and design stalls.

The buildings will be taller in the centre, to accommodate the homes that we need in the borough to satisfy our growing population. The station, alongside a brand-new Vicarage Fields, Crown House and Barking 360, all multi-storey developments keeping watch over the communities below, and surveying the city at large. Affordable homes for working Londoners, of all ages and stages; shops, restaurants, and entertainment for all tastes. A destination once again. And a great place to live and work.

And what about the Roding? Not just a river, but the next stop for the arts in London. You can see this already, at Bow Arts and the Black Box theatre; local people, showing off their talents and their wares. Soon to be joined by even more new low-cost space for artists and creative businesses, alongside new homes, bars, and restaurants. Interesting. Different. Independent. And the East End women's museum, telling the story of local girl Mary Wollstonecraft, and the wider East End's role in the fight for suffrage. A new house for artists on Linton Road, an Arthouse cinema on the site of the old Abbey Leisure centre and, of course, the Broadway. This really will become the creative and cultural heart of the borough. A place that you want to explore, on foot, taking in every nook and cranny, and the regular programme of public events.

All of this will sit neatly next to a 21st Century Gascoigne estate, rebuilt once again, but this time to last. Proper, high quality homes that you will be able to afford no matter your income. Plus, a new school, a community centre and a park.

The neighbourhoods surrounding Barking and the Roding will retain their individual identities. But they will no longer sit next to a tired town centre that sleeps at night. Rather, they will become part of a vibrant and creative community, rooted in the past, by the Abbey and East street, but looking boldly towards the future. Critically, all this investment will benefit everyone. Wherever you live in the borough, this is your town centre.



Our vision for the future of Barking, the Roding and more

A town centre with a new lease of life. A place to live, work, shop and relax. A real destination, day and night. Markets, merchants, makers and more. And the Roding, the new creative and cultural heart of the borough, with new homes and jobs for local people, plus great places to visit.

What's changing?

1 Gascoigne estate ●

Better homes for local people to replace the old, most affordable, and many already standing (check out the new Weaver's Quarter). A new primary school, a secondary school and improved public spaces to come.

2 A House for artists ●

A creative hub for the town centre. 12 homes for artists and their families. Studio space, a shared courtyard, and a community hall. Making creativity everyone's business. Construction has already started.

3 Arthouse Cinema ●

A new two screen cinema, showing the best in new and old independent and arthouse films, as part of the development of the old Abbey leisure centre.

4 The borough's existing creative pioneers ●

Broadway theatre, Studio 3 Arts, Bow Arts. Organisations that are already feeding the borough's creative soul. And the BEC, supporting local entrepreneurs to thrive. Soon to be joined by a new and exciting cast

5 Barking station ●

The station renovated, including a new entrance and better access. 1000s of new homes will follow in time, for local people, at least 35% affordable.

6 East End Women's Museum ●

A museum to record and represent the stories of women in London's East End, in the home of the suffrage movement, B&D. An important nod to the borough's past, and its future, driven by women and girls.

7 Vicarage Field ●

Upgrading the shopping centre and retail experience, with plans for a cinema, restaurants, shops and leisure. This one could take time, but it will be worth it.

8 Crown House ●

Crown house and car parks will become 300 new homes for local people, many affordable, alongside new space for shops and restaurants.

9 The Markets by the Roding ●

The City of London markets are headed for Dagenham Dock – and we're pushing hard for a retail market, visitor attraction and educational facility (exact location TBD), linking back to our history as the home of London's historic fishing fleet.

10 The Roding ●

Riverside walks, bars and restaurants, hundreds of new homes for local people and houseboats (with some emerging soon opposite Abbey Green). Opening-up Town Quay. And loads of low-cost space for artists and creative businesses.

11 Sebastian Court ●

Modern day mansion blocks. 90 new homes, all affordable, some available for shared ownership. About to be built.

Project Stage Key

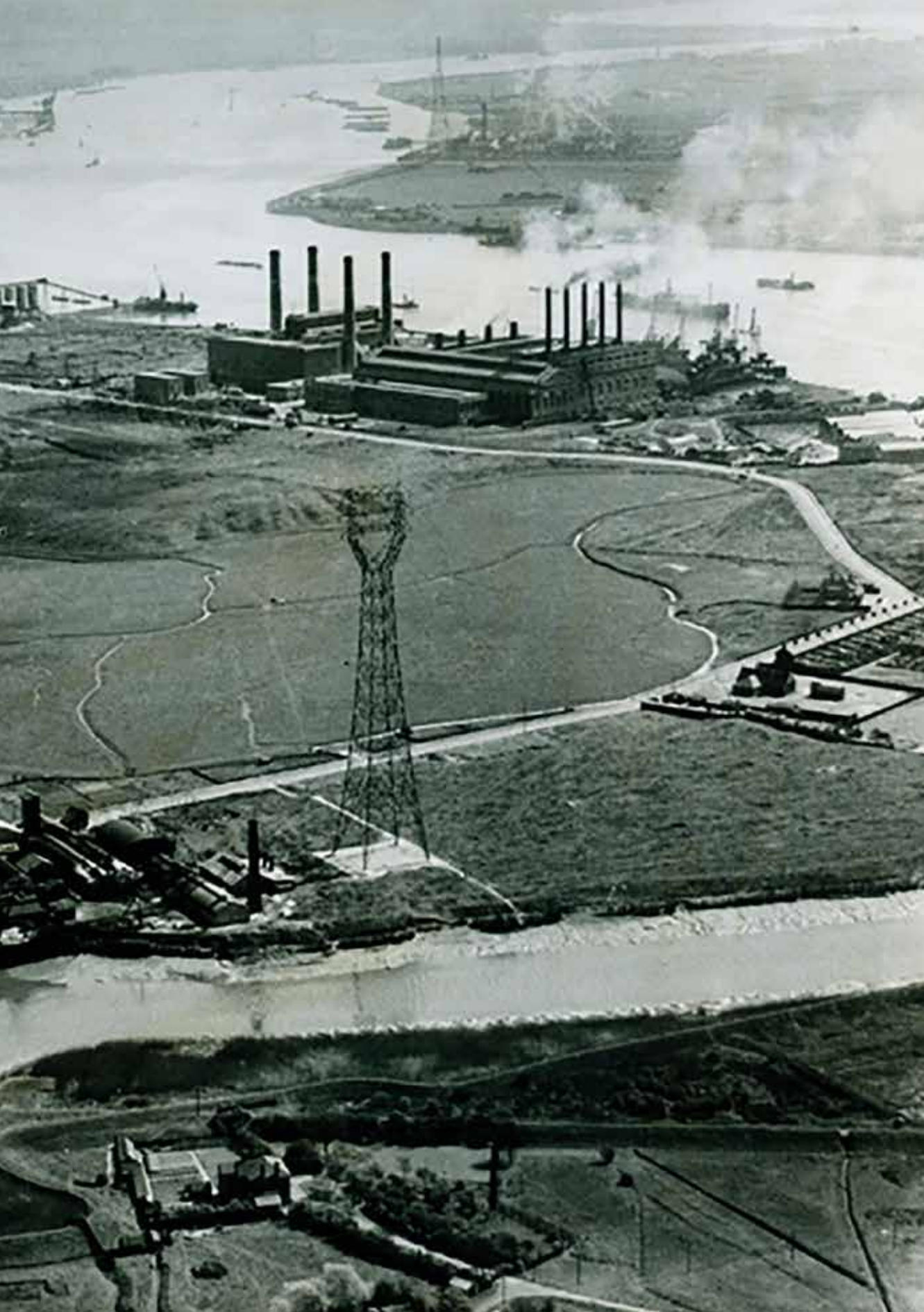
- Already there
- This is happening in the next 2 years
- We expect this to happen in the next five years
- We are working hard to make sure this happens in the future



CHAPTER 2

Thames and Riverside

An area with a unique history, and an exciting future, known by some for its industrial past, and by many for the Dagenham Sunday Market. The area has three boundaries, the Rivers Roding and Thames as well as the A13, two natural and one manmade, as well as train tracks in between. Thames View, Scrattons Farm, Creekmouth, River Road Industrial area, Rippleside, Barking Riverside. A strong line-up of old and new neighbourhoods.



PAST: Power, Industry, and Housing

“This development is the largest housing project ever undertaken by the borough. The estate, which will cover some 160 hectares, lies immediately south of the Barking Bye-pass, to the east of River Road and to the north of the River Thames, hence its name, Thames View”

Thames View estate opening brochure, June 12th 1954.

Flat open farmland, cattle grazing, thick plumes of industry overhead. Where the Roding turns into Barking Creek and joins the Thames. This area's past is dominated by the water. Marshland, used for farming, then for industry; everything from cottage industries skimming fat from the Creek and selling it as lubricant, to the pioneering Handley Page works and its aircraft.

You can't talk about this area's past without talking about Creekmouth; an historic village, built to house workers of the Lawes Chemical factory nearby. Following the great flood of 1953, the village was scheduled for demolition. As one community disappeared, a new large scale one emerged. The largest council estate built by the-then Barking Borough Council, Thames View, was built to the north of the area, out of the marshes and into the borough. Employing cutting-edge engineering, the estate was celebrated nationally, with ribbon cutting and councils visiting from across the country to marvel at its scale. The name itself suggests post-war optimism, when in reality only those living on the top floors of some of the blocks got to View the Thames!

Of much smaller scale, but of no less significance, Scrattons Farm, is a neighbourhood of about 280 houses further along the A13. There's a clue in the name about what the land was used for before. Residents recalled moving on to the estate in the late 1930's and finding cows grazing in the front garden or walking down the street.

Children from all across the borough would come to the area and treat it like a playground, roaming across the marshland, finding scraps of silk parachutes from the Hadley Page factory to take home, cut up and give out to their family and neighbours; big skies and riverside. Recent history has plagued the area, with a series of false starts and promises to bring thousands of new homes to the river. Politicians touring those same big skies by helicopter in the 90's but failing to land the promise of improvement.



PRESENT: Isolated communities, changing industry

Creekmouth is still on the map. The old school building is being used by a scaffolding company and some of its former residents still work to champion its memory via the Creekmouth Preservation Society. One of the borough's most visible structural icons, The Creekmouth Flood Barrier marks the entrance to Barking Creek and can be seen from miles around. Large scale infrastructure, often hosting a nesting kestrel or other birds of prey, surveying the open space and river below.

Traffic thunders around River Road, with priority definitely given to the lorry over the pedestrian. A walk around this area is still only for the intrepid, but so worth it, as through the exhaust fumes and across Creekmouth Open Space is the only public access point to the Thames Foreshore and well worth the visit – just don't tell too many people!

Thames View still stands proud, just looking slightly older. A mile and a half from Barking Station suddenly feels very far. As time has gone by, industry has expanded and surrounded Thames View. With the rise of the car, the A13 has grown to carry motorway volumes of traffic into and out of London, subsequently marooning the estate and neighbouring Scrattons Farm – the latter having only one road in and one road out. This isolation has created strong and tight knit communities.

POWER is visible everywhere, pylons punctuate the landscape and the former Power Station site, comes alive again every Sunday, thanks to Dagenham Sunday Market, a thriving, weekly local institution.

The helicopters might have gone but Phase I of the planned Riverside redevelopment is complete, lived in and enjoyed. New schools have been built and are up and running, new roads are being laid out to make way for the future stages of the development, and plans are afoot to connect these old and new neighbourhoods, not only with each other, but with the rest of the borough. Residents of Thames View, Scrattons Farm, and even of the phase one development could be forgiven for feeling anxious about the scale of future construction. We know that above all, you want your voices heard.



FUTURE: Riverside for everyone

Barking Riverside, Thames View and Scrattons, connected to each other and properly linked with the borough at large. Old and new neighbourhoods brought together in a healthy new town on the Thames. Castle green completely transformed: a new train station, modern industry and good new jobs for local people.

Seals bathe on the foreshore at low tide as cyclists pass by on the ground above. Instead of Handley Page's planes, there are now trains. The neighbourhoods south of the A13 will finally be connected to the rest of the borough. By 2021, the 'orange line' (London Overground) will run from a new station at Barking Riverside to Barking Town Centre and beyond. And what about China! No, really. One train, from Ripple Road to Yiwu, 7,500 miles and 7 countries. A freight train for now, but maybe in time...

When Barking Riverside is complete, a whole new town will have been created, in the same tradition as Thames View. Affordable. High quality. Not too crowded. Not too grand. A place to call home. The new town will bring back, for the first time in a long time, the ancient and vital connection between residents of the borough, and the River Thames. This time not for work, but for leisure and pleasure. Riverside walks and nature trails, a dedicated ecology centre, a new public park, a new town centre and much more, for everyone living south of the A13, and for London as a whole. Arrive by foot, bike, train or even by river; the clipper is coming!

In the long term, we'd love to tunnel the A13, creating walkable routes from all four corners of the borough to the river Thames, and vice versa. When this happens, the land on top of the tunnel can be transformed into a new mixed-use neighbourhood above ground and over Castle Green, creating more than 5000 homes and thousands of new jobs, plus a brand-new train station. We want to see the area's industrial centres - along River Road and Thames Road (the old Creekmouth!) become new neighbourhoods; modern industry next to homes and shops, less dominated by the lorry, connecting the communities at Thames and Riverside with the pleasures of the Roding, and with each other.



Our vision for the future of Thames and Riverside

Barking Riverside, Thames View and Scrattons, connected to each other and properly linked with the borough at large. Old and new neighbourhoods brought together in a healthy new town on the Thames. Castle green completely transformed: a new train station, modern industry and good new jobs for local people.

What's changing?

12 A train line from China to Barking ●

One train, from East London to China! Currently it carries freight, but in time... the far east meets London's rising east.

13 Barking Riverside ○

London's newest riverside town. Schools, a health centre, a leisure centre, a youth zone, parks, shops, restaurants and more. And 10,800 homes for local people, 50% affordable. A true riverside destination. It will grow over the next ten years.

14 Barking Riverside station ●

A brand-new station for Barking Riverside, connecting all the neighbourhoods south of the A13 to Barking station, and on to the rest of London. Ready to roll in 2021!

15 Castle Green ●

Our long term ambition? To send the A13 underground, making room for a brand-new neighbourhood, connecting the Becontree, and the borough, with Scrattons, Thames View and the neighbourhoods beyond. 15,000 homes for local people, and a new train station. Plus space for modern industries and hundreds of new jobs.

16 Thames Road ●

An old industrial centre, converted into a new 'mixed use' neighbourhood. Thousands of homes and modern industrial space, side by side.

Project Stage Key

- Already there
 - This is happening in the next 2 years
 - We expect this to happen in the next five years
 - We are working hard to make sure this happens in the future
-



CHAPTER 3

Dagenham Dock and Beam Park

To the east of Barking Riverside, at what feels like the edge of the City, one of the borough's industrial heartlands can be found, on the river, full to bursting with Industrial Heritage and the heavy weight of Ford. One neighbourhood dominates even though no-one lives there; Dagenham Dock, but this has been joined in recent years by Merrielands, and soon by others, through the development of the Stamping Plant and Beam Park. Change is afoot.



PAST: Leisure, Docks and the auto-industry

“Progress. An Historic Occasion. The ceremony starts one of the most remarkable building feats in the history of this country. Mr Edsel Ford cutting the first sod on the isolated marshland at Dagenham to inaugurate the commencement of building Ford Works.”

May 16th, 1929.

The early wealthy Victorians would flock to Dagenham Reach in search of clean air, solitude, and beauty (I know! Dagenham?!). Cottages lined the lake, with views over the marshland towards the river, an idyllic retreat for those wishing to escape the city, including notable prison reformer Elizabeth Fry. Fishermen would flock to the area in hope of hooking the catch of the day. Even with all of this leisure and pleasure going on, the marshland of Dagenham Reach was prone to flooding, making this both a beautiful and tempestuous landscape.

Its size, riverside location and easy access to the sea, made this area an ideal location for industry. Following several failed attempts, Samuel Williams finally acquired the land in 1887 and transformed it into Dagenham Docks. The reach and marsh was filled with spoil, rubbish and gravel – much of it transported up river from the construction of the London Underground. Williams' visionary work transforming the area dominated this part of the Thames for some time; he really was the talk of the town.

In the late 1920's international visitors to the area were scouting out a site on which they could build a major auto-plant that would rival those in America. They needed land, a connection to the river, and proximity to London. And with that, Ford Dagenham was born.

Ford Dagenham opened in 1931 to much fanfare, with members of the Ford dynasty travelling over from the USA to ceremonially break the earth. The plant, peaking at some 40,000 employees in the mid-1950's, not only dominated this area, but came to dominate the entire borough. Supporting many subsidiary industries in the auto-manufacturing supply chain and employing generation after generation of local and Essex based workers. From the Zephyr to the Cortina to the Fiesta: Millions of cars came off the line and onto the streets at Dagenham.

Thousands of cars and bicycles racing in and out of the area to clock in on time, union reps handing out pamphlets, picket lines, assembly lines, fishing lines: Dagenham Dock could tell some stories!



PRESENT: Land and Industry

Dagenham Breach can still be seen within the grounds of the Ford Works. Much smaller than it was, but still a lake none the less. The area has evolved to become the industrial heart of the borough, growing then shrinking, adapting with time. Where it used to be the sound of cars rolling off the production line that caught the attention, it's now more likely to be the faint smell of bread wafting from Hovis, or staff going into the plastic milk bottle recycling works, Veolia. The Ford Engine Assembly plant is still here. Although vehicle assembly stopped in 2002 and the Stamping Plant closed in 2013, engines are still assembled on site. The future of the plant is uncertain.

The closure of the stamping plant has created empty parcels of land north of the railway line; Beam Park and The Stamping Plant, connected by Dagenham Dock Station.

Dusty roads, empty plots of land and very few pedestrians intrepid enough to explore around here make this area feel fairly deserted. There are plenty of businesses, but there could be more. It's worth going for a walk around this area, where Dagenham Dock turns into Barking Riverside. Natural beauty can still be seen amongst the factories down towards the river. On a sunny day, aim for the Ford wind turbines, or simply take in the view from the top of the footbridge at Dagenham Dock Station – a real overview of what's going on and what's about to happen.

FUTURE: Power, Homes and Markets

Moving beyond the legacy of Ford, Dagenham Dock will become home to the next generation of sustainable industry. First up, London's three wholesale markets bringing huge investment and new jobs to the borough. Next door, Beam Park and the Stamping Plant. New neighbourhoods for thousands of working Londoners.

It's 2030. The view from the footbridge is different. Dagenham Dock station is bigger and works much better - it feels safer. If you look Eastwards down the tracks you can see a new station in the distance, Beam Park. The view north of the A13 is residential. The new neighbourhoods of the Stamping Plant and Beam Park are working well, and mark a new border to the borough, with part of the Beam Park development being in Havering. 50% affordable housing, alongside new primary schools and a secondary school, a special needs school, a health centre, a community centre and a new park.

This area has always been defined by industry. This tradition will be preserved through a brand-new industrial heritage museum in Beam Park, teaching new residents about the history of the land. But the tradition doesn't end here. Dagenham Dock will continue to be a centre for sustainable industries, such as the new ReFood anaerobic digestion plant that converts 160,000 tonnes of food waste per year into renewable energy. But the land will work harder. Much harder, creating new jobs for local residents in the industries of the future. Clean. Green. Sustainable.

Walk further down Chequers Lane to the site of the former Barking Reach Power Station; the future site of the City of London's three wholesale food markets. Billingsgate (fish), Spitalfields (fruit and veg), and Smithfields (meat), right here in B&D. The move is so significant it requires an act of Parliament! Imagine, Barking Power Station in Dagenham as an outpost for the City of London. Re-connecting the borough's ancient tradition of feeding working people, then via its market gardens and its fishing fleet, and in the future via these historic markets. New jobs, and (we hope) a world class food school, that will train the chefs of tomorrow.



Our vision for the future of Dagenham Dock, Beam Park and the Stamping Plant

Moving beyond the legacy of Ford, Dagenham Dock will become home to the next generation of sustainable industry. First up, London's three wholesale markets bringing huge investment and new jobs to the borough. Next door, Beam Park and the Stamping Plan. New neighbourhoods for thousands of working Londoners.

What's changing?

17 Dagenham Dock ●

The London sustainable industries park is already a centre for new cleaner, greener industries that provide essential services for London's economy, while protecting the environment AND creating good jobs for local people. With much more to come. The land will work harder on the Dock.

18 Dagenham Dock Station ●

The station will be upgraded and modernised. The station will be a brighter, safer space for residents and workers going back and forth from Dagenham Dock.

19 Beam Park ●

Once part of the Ford factory, soon to be 3,000 homes for local people (50% of which will be affordable), a new public square, a mainline railway station, and plenty of essential services. Work due to start soon.

20 Industrial Heritage Museum ●

Exact location TBD, the industrial heritage museum will tell the story of the area's industrial past, whilst supporting the next generation of modern industry through educational facilities and workspace.

21 Stamping Plant ●

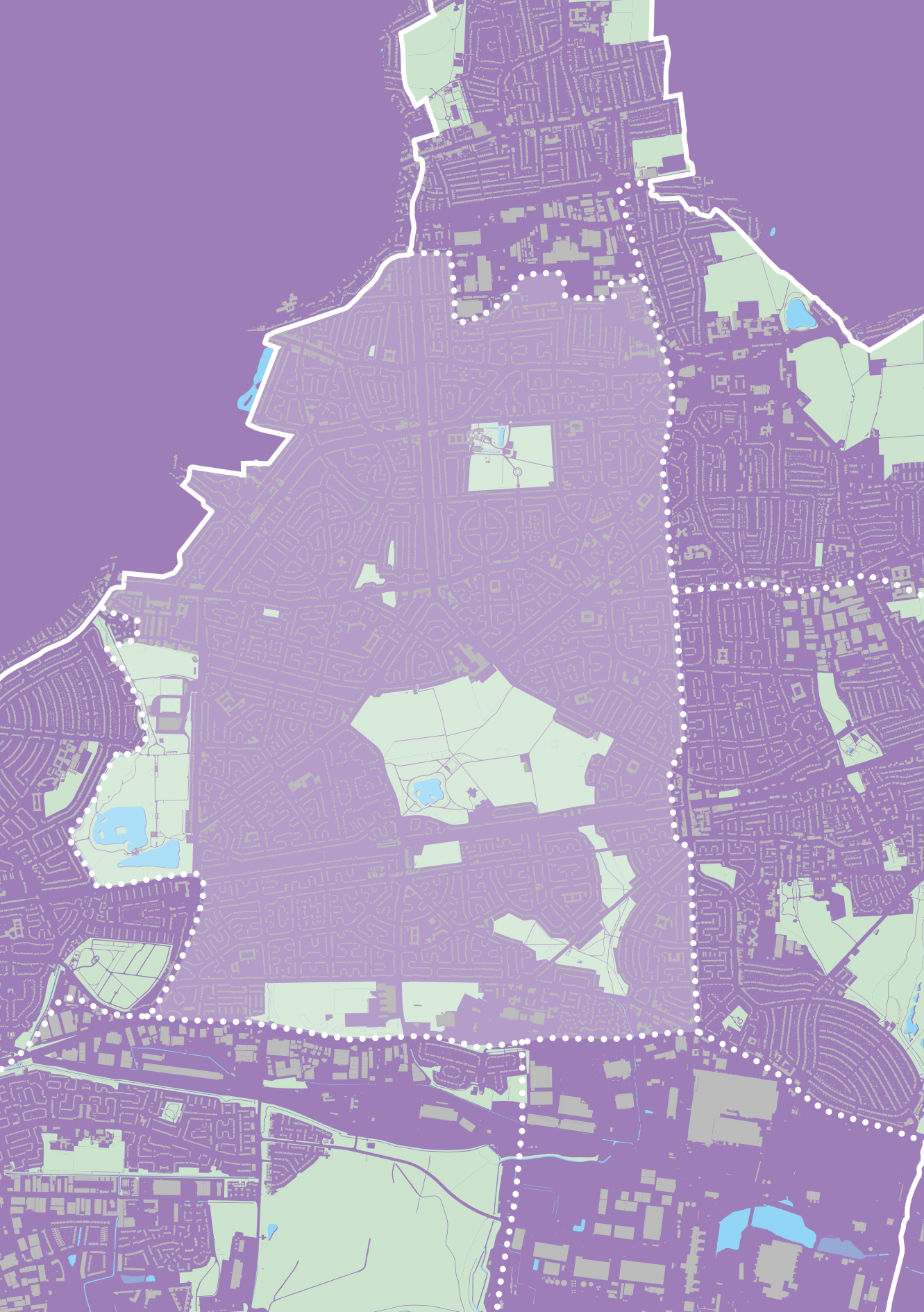
THE stamping plant. Where Cortinas and Fiestas were born. Soon to be a brand new 2000 home neighbourhood. No planning permission yet, but it's on its way.

22 London's wholesale markets ●

We are one step closer. Dagenham is the City of London's preferred destination for the relocation of London's three wholesale food markets! Thousands of jobs in essential industries. It still needs to get through parliament, but its looking good.

Project Stage Key

- Already there
- This is happening in the next 2 years
- We expect this to happen in the next five years
- We are working hard to make sure this happens in the future



CHAPTER 4

Becontree

Becontree: a tube station, a housing estate, a place, an ancient site of gathering and in its day the world's largest and most ambitious municipal housing estate. There is so much more to the area than meets the eye. Local neighbourhoods including Fiddlers, Chequers, Parsloes, Dagenham, Martins Corner, Clifford Corner, Andrew's Corner (that's a lot of corners!), Valence and Green Lane – places named after much loved local landmarks that no longer exist; after pubs, old shops, parks or shopping areas. Many of you reading this will live in the original footprint of the estate, which covers almost a third of the borough!



PAST: Hundreds and Housing

“A tour of Becontree is demanding even for the enthusiast”

Nikolaus Pevsner, Architectural Historian. London: An Architectural Guide: Volume 5: East (1952-1965)

The area takes its name from the ancient site of the Becontree Hundred; a tree, a beacon on the heath which falls just outside of the historical boundary of the Becontree Estate. The history of this area is rural. Many of the neighbourhood names are evident in the old farm settlements that existed before (Parsloes, Valence, Gale Street and many more). On the 31st July 1919, an act of Parliament was passed that would change the landscape of Outer London, and in particular Barking and Dagenham, forever. The Addison Act gave permissions to London County Council to build housing developments beyond the confines of the County of London. Planning was granted for 29,000 new homes to be built on 3000 acres of farmland, market gardens and countryside, on the edges of Barking, Ilford and Dagenham. In 1935 Europe's largest housing estate was completed, with an abundance of green space in gardens and verges and parks: Proper housing for working Londoners, designed to improve quality of life and health in greener surroundings. Thousands of families moved from the East End - Poplar, Bow, and Hackney - to form the beginnings of this new community.

It wasn't all grand ambition and success stories. The Becontree Estate had its problems. For all the homes and new, young residents, it lacked basic social and community provisions. Pubs, social clubs, things to do, schools, shops, jobs: The things that communities need for day to day life just weren't coming fast enough. There are many tales of feral children running free before schools were built, housewives crying because they were homesick for their east end communities, and men bored without work or anything to do. These were rocky times, which eventually ironed out with the rise of industry across the borough, employing many

of the residents: men and women populating production lines, popcorn and paint factories. More schools were built, and Becontree started to settle into the suburban rhythm that has come to define it.

PRESENT: Blurred boundaries and customisation

Individual spirit can be seen EVERYWHERE around Becontree. Owl statues on gates, crazy paved driveways, shared porches boxed in, and extended outwards. If you are living on Parsloes Avenue do you identify as living on an estate or do you live “near Parsloes”, or in “Dagenham”? The formal border of Becontree Estate, drawn by the planners a hundred years ago, is becoming harder and harder to see now, with the borough expanded at each side and every corner; surrounding Becontree left, right and centre.

The way we live, and who we live next to, has changed over the last hundred years. Where the estate still provides homes for many workers, most of these will work out of the borough, further afield, some in low-waged, long hours jobs and with a hefty commute. Owner occupiers, who have purchased their homes via the right to buy or on the open market, private renters and council tenants all live side by side. The rise of the car has seen the decline of the front garden, paving the way for parking. Wheely bins lining the streets, satellite dishes, music wafting from open windows. It's changed, but it is still Becontree.

Reminders of the estate's past can be seen everywhere. It's all still here, you just have to work much harder to find it. Brick arches, banjo's, cat-slide roofs, cottage windows, wooden clapperboard houses, tree line parades and more. The houses are still solid, the road layouts still work and the parks of Mayesbrook, Valence and Parsloes are still generous open spaces for families and individuals to spend time. Valence House is now a Museum, alongside a thriving café and local study centre. Parades of shops still serve local communities.



Becontree, is certainly in need of some TLC. Just as the estate was built to meet the housing needs of 20th century working Londoners, it needs to be reimagined once again for the next 100 years. We know there's a lot to do, but we also know that many residents still value Becontree as a great place to live. Moving forward, we'd like to work with you to think about how we can make this an even better place, for existing, new and future residents, bringing back a bit of the original ambition that was cemented in the bricks and mortar almost a hundred years ago.

FUTURE: Centenary, Civic Pride, Retrofitting

The Becontree estate. 100 years old in 2021 and still going strong. A moment to celebrate, but also to plan for the future. Our wonderful parks and open spaces and the brand-new youth zone point the way – holding on to the best of the Becontree's pioneering past while looking forward to the 21st century. Always the residential heart of the borough.

As we near the 100-year anniversary of the estate, exciting plans are afoot. We want to celebrate Becontree, not just as it was then, but as it is now, and as it could and should be in the future. Architectural enthusiasts from across the world are drawn to the estate by the much-documented original ambition and scale of its early years (can you believe it?!). We want you, the residents of Becontree, to feel the same excitement. This will take time, and work. But together we can celebrate its ground-breaking and radical past, whilst reimagining its future.

At the heart of our approach will be a 'design code' that will act as a guide for all new development on the Becontree, from individual extensions to new homes,

buildings, and public spaces. The code will allow us to steer future development so that - as far as possible - it lives up to the earliest ambitions of the estate, providing beautiful and interesting homes in an environment that promotes health and happiness. We will work with you and other residents of the Becontree in developing this code, which should allow the estate to be sympathetically adapted and retrofitted, bringing homes into the 21st Century, whilst bringing shop fronts, parades, high streets, and public spaces back to life. And we know that there must be better facilities for walking and cycling.

We aren't interested in big new developments on the Becontree. There isn't the space, and anyway we just don't think it would fit. But we could fill in some gaps; small developments that enhance the estate's character and provide for the specific needs of the community. Take the 12 bungalows that have just been completed at Ilchester Road and at Tarling Close, on old east end style, traffic-free closes designed specifically for older residents. Or the modern-day Becontree cottages we are building at 200 Becontree Avenue. 19 in total, all available to local people for shared ownership. These aren't massive numbers, but they are in the spirit of the Becontree. And it's not just homes. Parsloes Park, built to celebrate completion of the estate, home to former trotting grounds and borough parades, now has its very own Youth Zone, opened by HRH the Duke of Suffolk no less, with everything from martial arts, to football pitches and more. A landmark development for London's young people.

For now, we do not have all the answers. Throughout 2021 and beyond we want to work with you to develop our plans, whilst taking the time to celebrate the estate's 100 years of life. Happy Birthday Becontree.



Our vision for the future of Becontree

The Becontree estate. 100 years old in 2021 and still going strong. A moment to celebrate, but also to plan for the future. Our wonderful parks and open spaces and the brand-new youth zone point the way – holding on to the best of the Becontree's pioneering past while looking forward to the 21st century. Always the residential heart of the borough.

What's changing?

23 Becontree Centenary Plan ●

An ambitious, estate-wide programme of physical and cultural interventions and events through 2021 supported by an estate-wide design code, all developed in partnership with residents. These improvements will include:

24 Kingsley Hall ●

A £3.2m three-story extension and refurbishment of Kingsley Hall, allowing the organisation to continue and expand their important work for the borough.

25 Deep Retrofit pilot ●

The 'Energiesprong' approach upgrades old homes with everything they need to be future-proofed, installing measures such as high-spec insulation, renewable heating systems and solar panels. 25 properties on the estate are currently being considered for the pilot.

26 Parsloes Park ●

Alongside the Youth Zone, Parsloes Park will have a new regional football hub with new pitches and a pavilion. There will also be a park hub with a gym, dance studio and meetings rooms. The best equipped park in the borough!

27 Valence Park ●

But it's not just Parsloes! Valence Park has been getting some attention too. A new outdoor gym, games wall, football goals and a new playground, all designed by local people. By the time you read this, it'll be ready!

28 200 Becontree Avenue ●

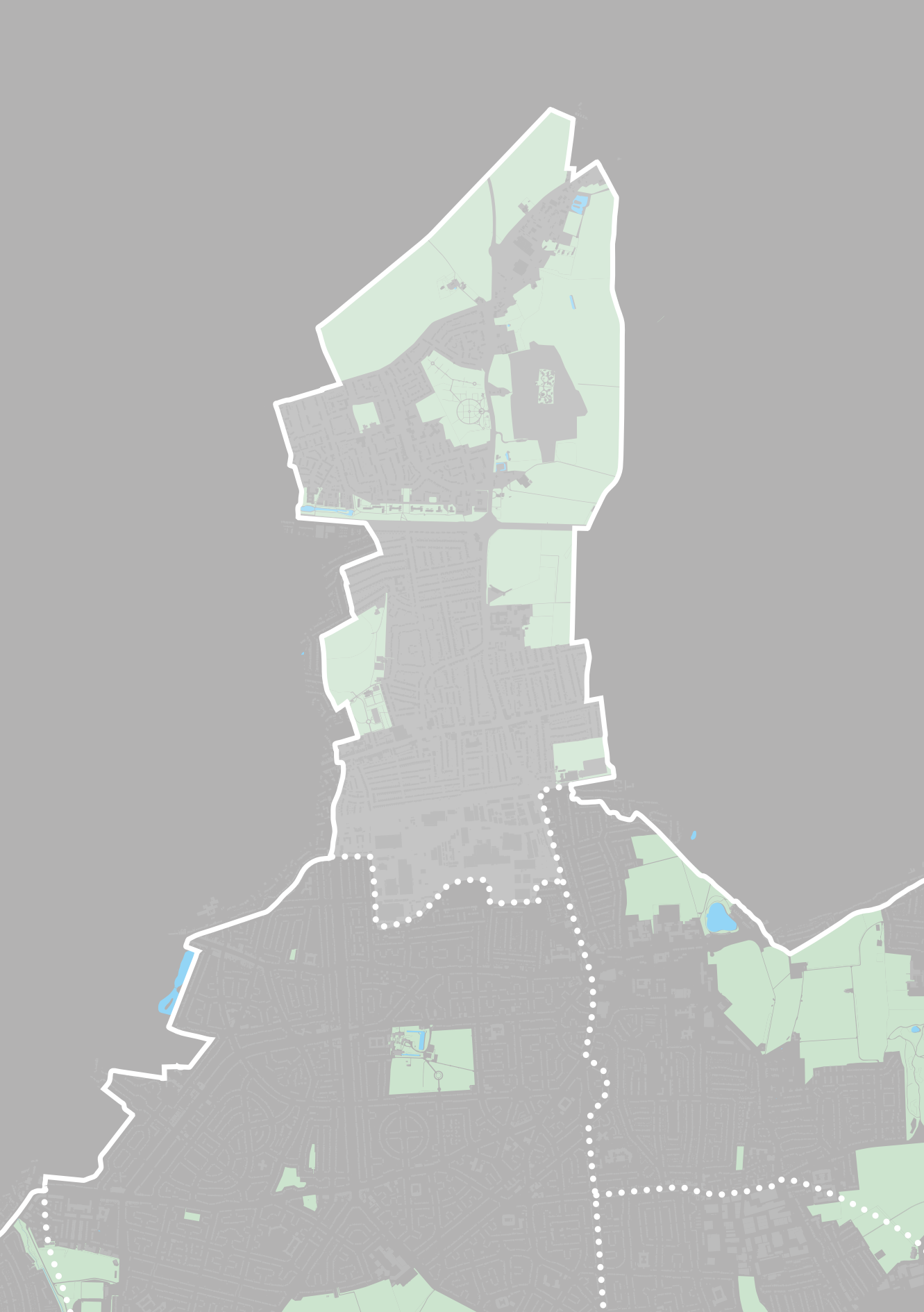
At 200 Becontree Avenue, we're building 19 new homes, all available to local people for shared ownership. Designed to complement the 'Becontree style', the homes will sit alongside new space for the community. Plans have been drawn up.

29 Valence Avenue ●

Valence avenue will become the best equipped street in the borough for walking and cycling, taking residents of the Becontree all the way up to the new Elizabeth line station at Chadwell Heath. Cycle superhighway on the central reservation? It could happen, and in the next few years.

Project Stage Key

- Already there
- This is happening in the next 2 years
- We expect this to happen in the next five years
- We are working hard to make sure this happens in the future



CHAPTER 5

Chadwell Heath and Marks Gate

“Marks: an estate partly in Dagenham, partly in Romford, usually called the “Manor of Marks”, now the Warren Farm, Chadwell Heath. Various explanations have been given for this name, but it probably derives from mearc, “a boundary”, or a family name Merk. Robert Le Merk appears in a Marks document of 1348...”

John Gerard, Dagenham Place Names 1958.

The northern territory. This area is defined by the two neighbourhoods of its namesake: Chadwell Heath and Marks Gate, although they are joined by Freshwater Road and Whalebone Lane South. Nowhere else in the borough feels like these neighbourhoods. Chadwell Heath is its own place, separated by hard boundaries (the railway lines and the A12) from much of the borough.



PAST: Roman Roads, Whalebones and Highwaymen

Chadwell Heath, named after both a former heath on the edges of Hainault Forest, and St Chad's Well (marked by a stone on Billet Lane). The well might be sacred, no one is quite sure. Rumour has it Saint Chad might have visited the well, or that the name comes from Cauld Well, meaning cold spring. Either way, it's a talking point.

The Roman Road from Colchester to London runs through Chadwell Heath, which has had many an interesting character walk down and pass through. From Highwaymen trying their chances at the Whalebone Tollgate, to the Titanic survivor Eva Hart who lived near-by. And how about Shakespeare's friend, the actor William Kempe, who passed through on his nine-day Morris Dance from Mansion House to Norwich in the 1500's? Or Austin Osman Spare, the illustrator and occultist (he believed in the mystic and the magical!) who lived here briefly? An excellent line up of notables who have left a residue of culture across the area.

The arrival of the railway in 1864 offered another connection to London, like the Roman Road before it. This connection, coupled with the large suburban homes that were popping up at an extraordinary rate, made the area an attractive place to live for London based commuters.

Over the A12, which at that time would have been no more than a small road, could be found rolling fields and farmland, alongside a gateway to the ancient Hainault Forest; Marks Gate. The area once hosted Marks Hall, the only remains of which are the listed 17th century brick Warren Barn (now a working farm shop). Dagenham Borough Council, facing the same post war challenges as its neighbour Barking, identified land on this site for a large-scale municipal housing estate: Marks Gate. Ambition was high, farms were cleared, and building commenced in 1954. Surrounded by and filled with green space, this soon became a very desirable place to live.

High View House was added onto an empty patch of land in 1967 and is 17 stories' high. This has now become one of the most prominent features of the estate and offers one of the best views of the borough if you're lucky enough to get on to the top floors. You can see down Whalebone Lane, named after the Dagenham Whalebone that was found in the area. Whales in Dagenham? No one is sure how this happened, but the mystery continues.

PRESENT: Independent spirit, crazy golf and books...

Cars fly past on the A12, potatoes are listed as 'for sale' on the roadside and a giant whale can be seen behind a fence. Seriously. This isn't a dream. It's the landscape of Whalebone Junction at Marks Gate. Nearby, a crazy golf course features a giant whale as one of its holes, and a pub opposite is named the Moby Dick, both acting as eccentric gatekeepers to the area. Very on theme.

Stood at this point you realise how isolated Marks Gate can feel. Just like Thames View to the south, cut off by the A13, Marks Gate is now separated from Chadwell Heath, and the rest of the borough by the A12. A three lane A-Road transporting people from Essex and Suffolk to London and back again. No one could have predicted the rise of the car and the expansion of the roads when the estate was built, but we are where we are.

Further down the road, Whalebone Lane South has become an often-congested route into the borough. But first let's stop at Chadwell Heath. There is a distinct sense of pride and independence in the area. Straddling two boroughs and three wards, it has a complicated political administration, which is visible in the ancient and modern boundary stones and signs dotted around. Residents of the area regularly campaign for and preserve local assets, including the newly listed Embassy cinema.

The industrial neighbourhood of Freshwater Road still acts as an industrial buffer between the area and Becontree, adapting over time and still employing many people. Benefitting from the post-Olympic effect, this area has seen many industries relocate in search of cheaper land prices, more space and good connections – including Central Books. Founded in Covent Garden and finding itself in the area via Hackney Wick, this independent book distributor has radical beginnings, being set up as an outlet for the Communist Party of Great Britain. Fascinating histories invisible behind blank warehouse buildings.



FUTURE: Northern centre

A destination in its own right; full of character, personality and charm. Two neighbourhoods, Chadwell Heath and Marks Gate, brought together around a vibrant and energetic high street, unlike anywhere else. Modern jobs, industry and transport links. More and better homes. Something for everyone, day and night.

Crossrail, The Elizabeth Line – whatever you want to call it, one thing we know for sure is it's coming, despite the delays. The council and Transport for London have been working hard to prepare for this. Improving pavements and installing new crossings to ensure that the improvements aren't just kept within the station building and on the platform. You will still be able to park your car in the station car park in Redbridge, walk up the new steps into Barking and Dagenham and board a train, a reminder of the complexity of the area's administrative boundaries.

We want the promise of Crossrail to benefit the whole borough, and the whole area. Chadwell Heath will be a centre to rival Barking, but in the north of the borough, with a night-time economy that will provide entertainment for residents everywhere, a place to come for leisure and pleasure. The mantra here is human scale. Nothing too big. We want to improve, improve, improve. Building on the existing character of the area. On the High Road this means working with shopkeepers to improve shop fronts, awnings and the upper storeys of buildings, so that you can all walk in the footprints of those notable residents that came before, through YOUR area.

Freshwater Road will become a new neighbourhood, both residential and industrial. Currently tucked away and with poor access to the station, there is potential for this land to be turned into a genuinely vibrant community, with 3000 new homes for local residents and modern business space for light industrial and creative enterprises. This will support the businesses of the High Road and bridge the gap between Chadwell Heath and Becontree. Joining the dots.

And what about Marks Gate? It's all very well us talking about improvements in other parts of the borough if residents of Marks Gate don't feel that their homes are fit for purpose. We are committed to restoring and enhancing the estate, bringing existing homes into the future, building new homes and perhaps most importantly improving access facilities for walking and cycling to nearby stations. Just as Marks Gate was once an ancient gateway to the forest, we want it to become a modern gateway to the borough, where people are happy to live, work, and play.

Our vision for the future of Chadwell Heath and Marks Gate

A destination in its own right; full of character, personality and charm. Two neighbourhoods brought together around a vibrant and energetic high street, unlike anywhere else. Modern jobs, industry and transport links. More and better homes. Something for everyone, day and night.

What's changing?

30 Chadwell Heath Station ●

The Elizabeth Line, Crossrail, direct to London in 20 mins. But more than that. A revived station, improved pavements and new crossings, ready to help local people travel to central London.

31 Freshwater Road ●

State of the art space for business encouraging new industries and jobs, alongside homes, right next to Crossrail and the high street. Bringing life and energy to the area. In the pipeline.

32 Chadwell Heath Plan ●

A plan for the wider area, developed with residents. Refreshing and reviving the high street, improving shop fronts, retail space, public areas.

33 Cycle Link, Chadwell Heath to Marks Gate ●

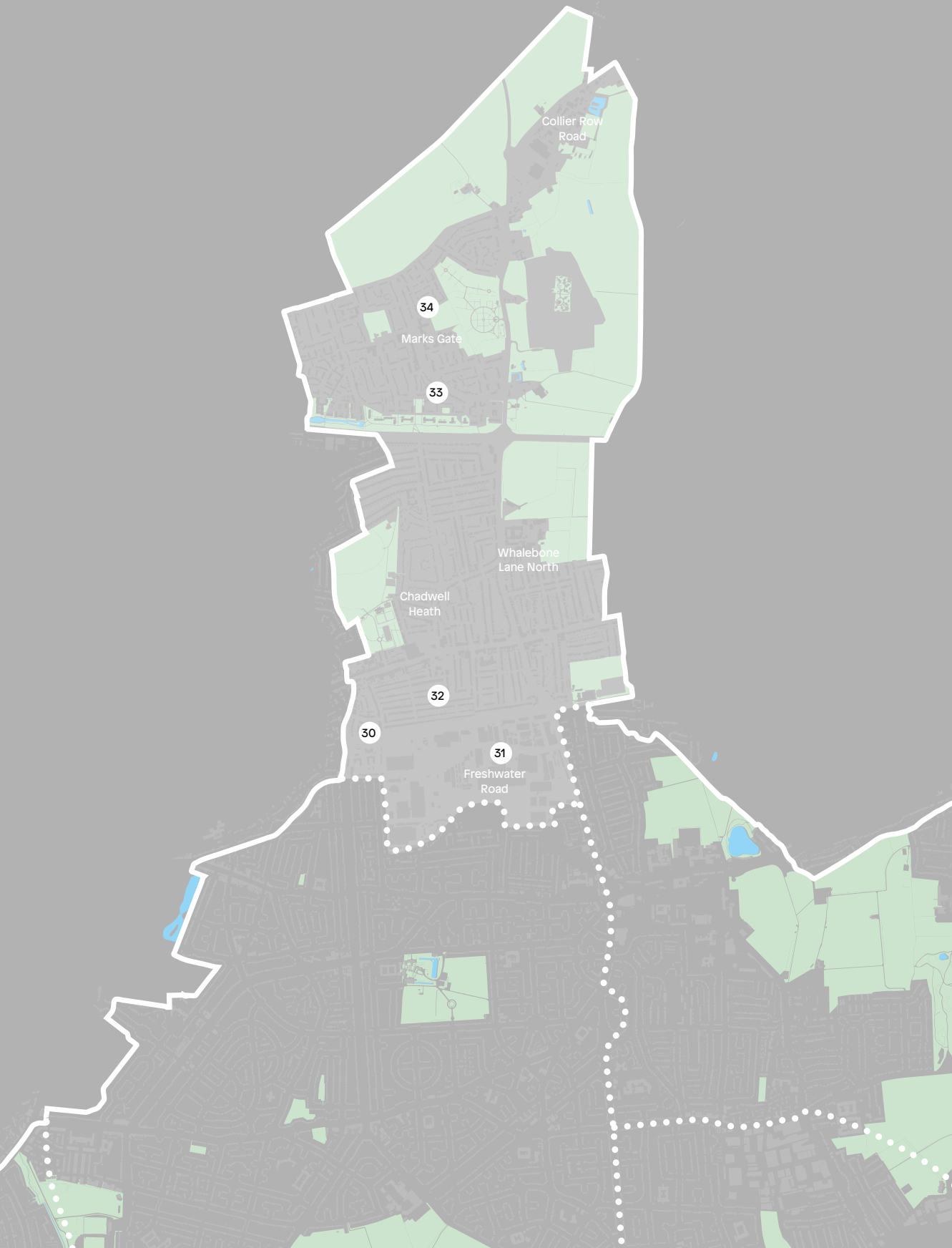
A dedicated cycle route linking the Marks Gate Estate to Chadwell Heath station. Connecting the two neighbourhoods.

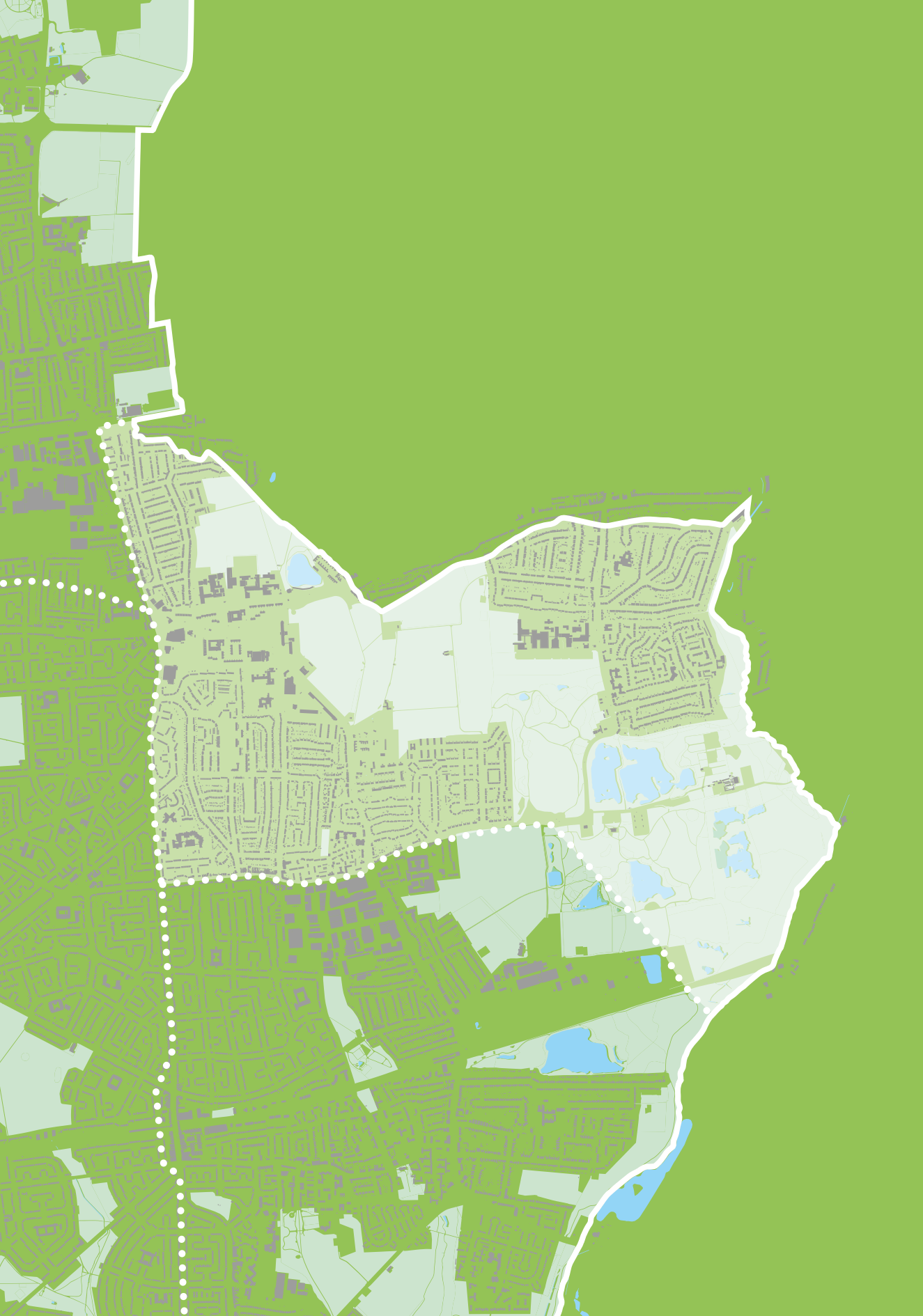
34 Marks Gate ●

In time, the estate will be renewed, with more and better homes and improved public spaces and facilities. Residents will be asked to help shape a plan for the future.

Project Stage Key

- Already there
- This is happening in the next 2 years
- We expect this to happen in the next five years
- We are working hard to make sure this happens in the future





CHAPTER 6

Beacontree Heath to Rush Green

To the eastern borders of the borough, where neighbourhoods blur together and are dissected by roads and rail. Bordered by the river. Neighbourhoods here include Rush Green, Heath Park, Beacontree Heath, Whalebone Lane South, Fiddlers, Wantz and Eastbrook. Almost half of this area is green space, from the formal Central Park to Eastbrookend Country Park, and the Chase, countryside on many doorsteps.



PAST: Meeting ground, Civic Centre, Homes

“The Becontree Hundred, being situated in the vicinity of London, and possessing the advantages of extensive views over the surrounding counties, and beautiful rides through the forest”

The History of Essex: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time, Elizabeth Ogborne

Residue of the area’s past can be seen all over the place, nowhere more so than at Beacontree Heath, distinct from but connected to the estate. Or is it? Variations of Becontree, Bentry, Beuentreu and Beacontree have popped up on maps and official documents over hundreds of years. But what’s in ‘a’ name? Be(a)contree. That phantom “a” has kept the debate raging for almost 100 years now!

There has always been a vibrant community living around the heath. The site was originally identified as a potential Civic Centre for Dagenham and the grand building opened in 1937. Some were suspicious of its cost and its place in the local area, others were intrigued by its large, prominent architecture. Either way, the arrival of the building turned this area into a meeting ground once again. The historic Merry Fiddlers roundabout would lead you to the approach – home to historic pubs and wrestling no less!

It’s not all about the Heath and the Civic Centre, the area boasts the borough’s only Festival of Britain Architecture plaque, which can still be found on the far wall of Henderson House on Heath Park Estate. This small-scale municipal estate was built as an extension to the Becontree Estate, as overflow housing. It doesn’t feel much like an extension, more like its own place.

Central Park, The Three Town Show, Dagenham Town Show, Rush Green, Barking and Dagenham College, boundary stones, eastward facing suburbia, sprawling country parks formed from the blitz rubble.. This area is incredibly layered and remains one of the most interesting in the borough.

PRESENT: Homes, Coventry and Learning

Road upgrades mean that the Merry Fiddler’s is now just a name assigned to the site of this former landmark, embedded into folklore. The junction connects Becontree to the Civic Centre, which since 2017, is now Coventry University in London – meaning prospective students from the city and the borough no longer need to be ‘sent to Coventry’ to access its first-rate education provision!

New housing joins the blocks of Heath Estate, a first-rate leisure centre sits on the site of Seabrook’s Hall, with an Olympic length swimming pool, and the area is still full of life and energy, with residents coming for a swim, a pint at the Three Travellers or to do their shopping at the supermarket behind. Heath Park still drips with civic pride on a sunny day but looks tired.

The green spaces are still, well, very green! Central Park is much loved and used, with model aeroplanes being flown above whilst joggers and dog walkers carry on below. A modern market garden, Growing Concerns produces and trains residents to produce. Rush Green still sits independently in the top corner of the borough, in conversation with Romford, separated from the borough at large by the much-loved green space.



FUTURE: A centre for learning

A place where young people will go to prepare for their futures, and where anyone can learn a new skill or follow their passion. A place for high class education, and a place to call home, right next to a country park AND London's newest film studios. Fantastic new facilities for everyone in the borough to enjoy.

Coventry University and Barking and Dagenham college side by side. Two high class educational institutions helping young people to realise their potential. Where else could you go to learn modern construction techniques, the latest in business and management, advanced animation, and brick laying, all within walking distance! In partnership with the University, the College is one of only 12 in the country to have secured Government funding to open a new Institute of Technology, specialising in construction and infrastructure, advanced engineering and robotics, creative digital and IT. This transformation will only grow, making Becontree Heath and Rush Green a world class educational destination on the edge of the city. Now who would have imagined that twenty years ago?

New homes are planned across the area, for example opposite Coventry University London at Stour Road and Rainham Road. These developments will be sympathetic to the area's character, nothing too expensive, learning the lessons from developments of the past. Many of the homes will be for students; young people at Coventry University and beyond. Others will be for older residents and families. Every generation, living side by side, taking advantage of the large public spaces and country parks.

Not least Central Park. £2.3m will provide a new pavilion, rugby pitches and club house, an amphitheatre, a café, and new play areas for children young and old. And what about Merry Fiddlers? The leisure centre has already become an institution, a place for everyone, to stay well and stay connected. The roundabout itself needs improvement. By 2020 Wood Lane and the roads leading up to Merry Fiddlers will be transformed into healthy streets for local people as opposed to highways for traffic passing through the borough, making it far easier to walk and cycle and with better access to buses. This will allow people, including thousands of school children and students, to move freely through the area enjoying much improved air quality and a greener environment.

Our vision for the future of Beacontree Heath to Rush Green

A place where young people will go to prepare for their futures – and where anyone can learn a new skill or follow their passion. A place for high class education, and a place to call home, right next to a country park AND London's newest film studios. Fantastic new facilities for everyone in the borough to enjoy.

What's changing?

35 Coventry University ●

A University for the borough offering flexible and affordable courses for local people. Relevant degrees without high fees, and with class times that work for our residents.

36 Barking and Dagenham College ●

The College is well established, but the new institute of technology, delivered in partnership with CU London and tech giant Huawei is brand new. Training our young people to become the technologists of the future.

37 Becontree Leisure Centre ●

Despite only being 18 months old, the leisure centre is already an institution. A space for everyone, old and young, to stay well and to stay connected. Plus an Olympic sized pool.

38 Becontree Heath ●

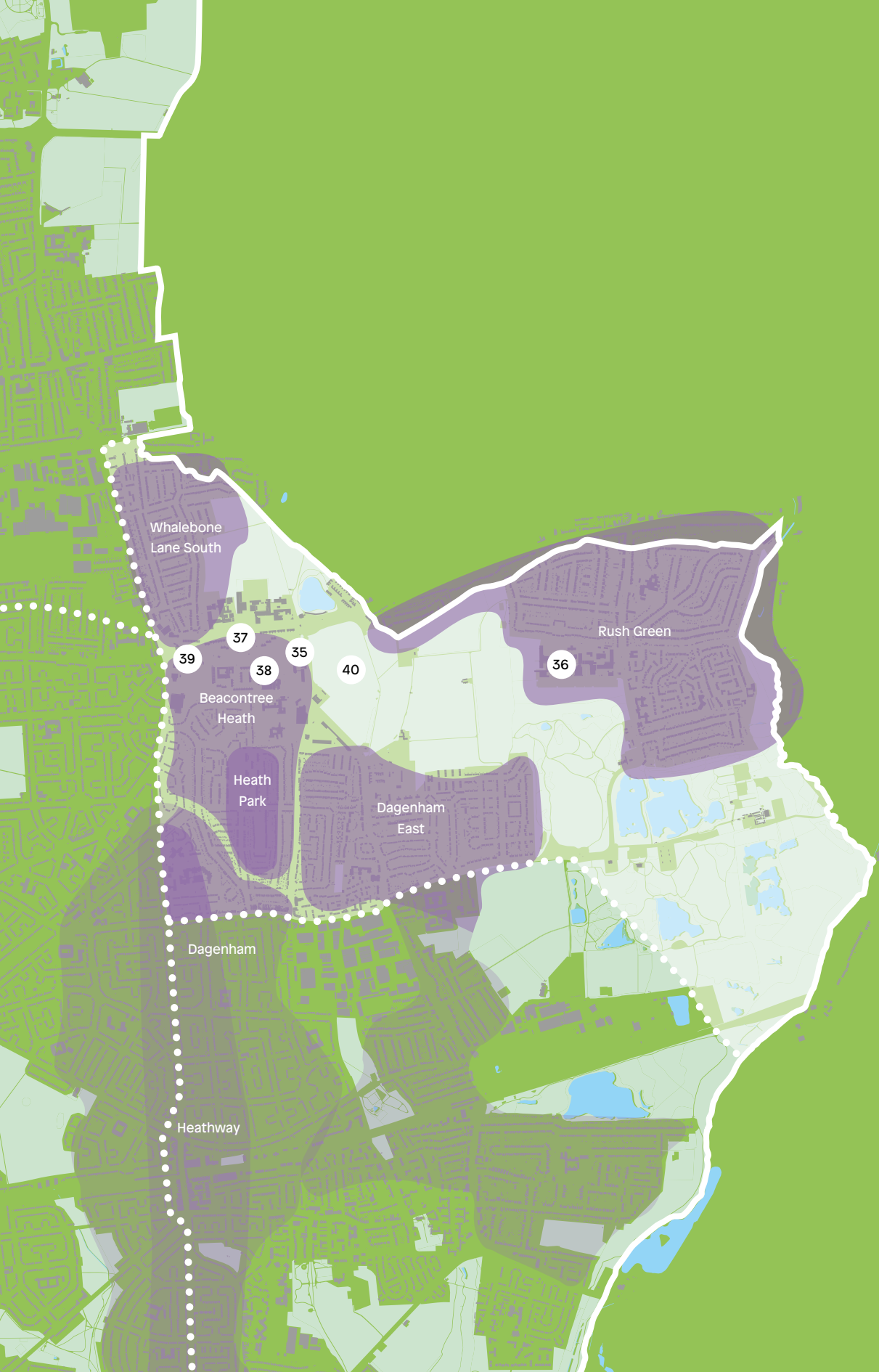
87 new homes, half affordable and half available at shared ownership to local people, connecting the Fiddlers with the University. The Pharmacy has been replaced.

39 Fiddlers Corner and Wood Lane ●

The community have come up with ideas to green the fiddlers, creating a 'Green Corridor' along Whalebone Lane South, and a 'Green Living Room' centred on the Merry Fiddlers shopping parade. They're on their way!

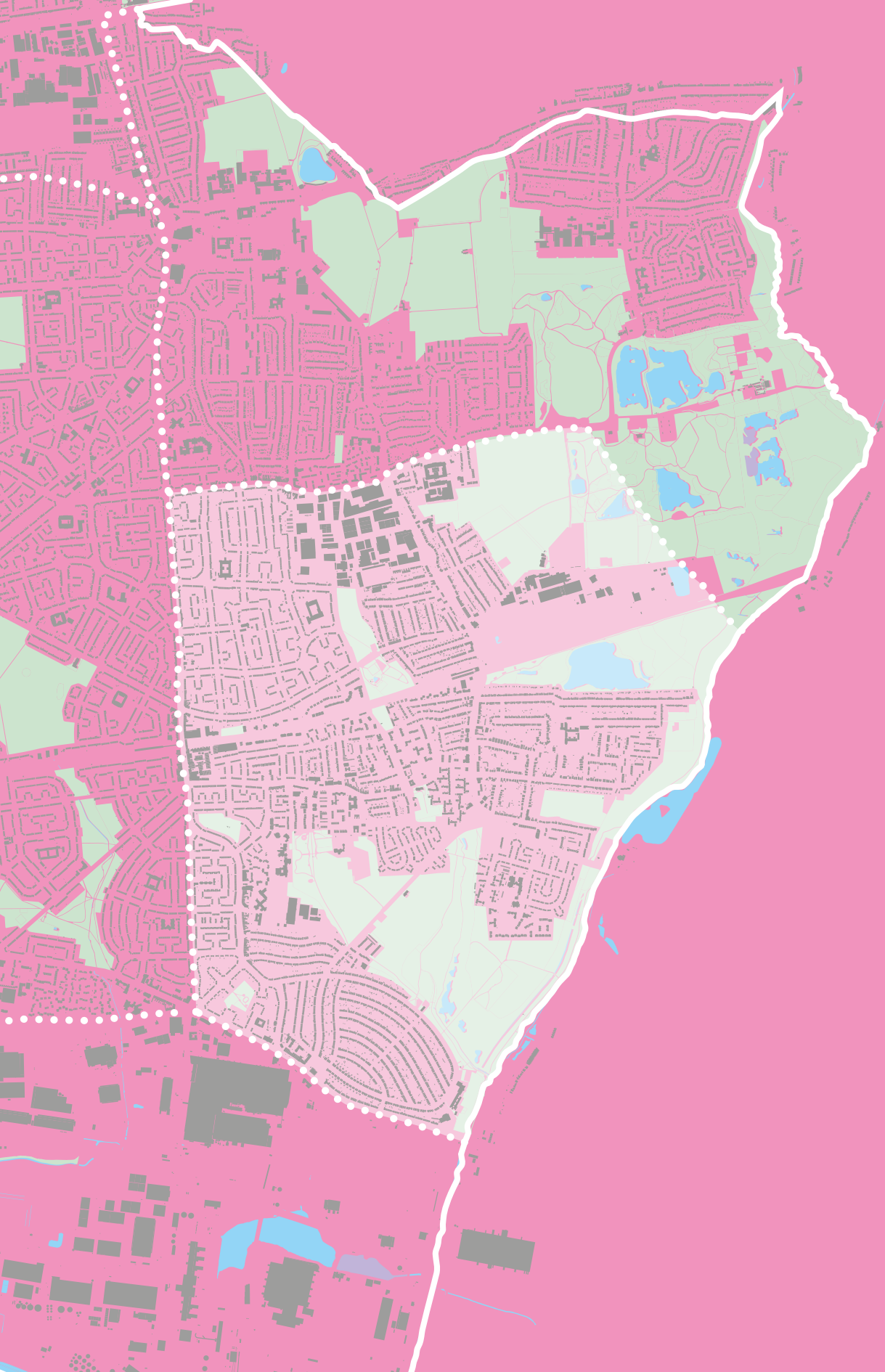
40 Central Park Improvements ●

Central Park will be revived with a new pavilion, rugby pitches, club house and play areas for residents of all ages to enjoy.



Project Stage Key

- Already there
- This is happening in the next 2 years
- We expect this to happen in the next five years
- We are working hard to make sure this happens in the future



CHAPTER 7

Dagenham East, the Village and Beyond

Dagenham East, the Village and Beyond. So much in common with Beacontree Heath and Rush Green, but also so much of its own identity. Dagenham Heathway: home to some, a shopping destination for others and a place to move through. Walking from the Beacontree fringes through the site of historic Dagenham Village and the subsequent Village of the Future, old libraries, former factory sites, pirate radio, the Leys, Rylands, Ford perimeters, Broad Street and more. An area rich with history, and with Dagenham Village firmly rooted at its centre.



PAST: Villages, Popcorn and Isolation

“The Dagenham Council, with an eye for the future, was keen to provide work for some of the thousands of unemployed women they knew there would be when the war ended. They wanted to ensure some occupational variety in an area dominated by Ford’s, Plessey and May and Baker.”

50 Years of House of Clarks popcorn.

The historic centre of Dagenham. Village life, farming, the first school in Dagenham and Ford. Not that Ford, but William Ford. Popular opinion was that he was a miserly sheep farmer, possibly because, although he was wealthy, he was always dressed in scruffy and shabby clothing. Popular opinion is often wrong. On his death he left his fortune to build a “free” school, for both girls and boys, in Dagenham.

Once a more complete village than it is now, planning in the 1970’s – an era known for its lack of sympathy towards heritage - saw much of the village demolished to make way for Ibscott Estate. The clearing of the historic village was not a popular decision at all, and one that still dominates conversations about the area today. As well as the Village and Ibscott, the area includes Rookery Farm (housing which until fairly recently was owned and built by the former West Ham Urban District Council, now Newham), The Leys estate with some tin houses, and the Rylands, privately built for the growing population in the 1930’s. Princess Parade forms the southern border, a parade of shops stood facing the entrance to Ford works.

The distant sound of popping could be heard all around Blackborne Road, and if you were lucky enough to be walking past, you might have been able to grab a handful of this world-famous export. House of Clarks was listed in the Guinness Book of Records, at one-point exporting 6 million packets of the stuff!

Members of local families worked here, or at the mighty May and Baker factory. The pharmaceutical works covered a huge chunk of land, and at one point included dance teams, sports clubs and social clubs to keep workers happy – in work and in leisure time. Dagenham shed a tear when this major employer closed finally in 2013.

PRESENT: Potential

“Digger Dagger, Digger Dagger, Oi! Oi! Oi!” If you find yourself walking anywhere near Victoria Road on match day, chants can be heard all around. Dagenham and Redbridge FC have played here since the club formed in 1992. The ground used to be home to the Sterling Works’ team. The club captures so much that is unique about the borough’s past and present: Connection to industry, with a ground that formerly belonged to a factory team, sited amongst housing, as much of Dagenham is, and resilient, adapting to financial pressures and mergers to form the club that plays here today.

As you leave the back of the Heathway Shopping Centre, you suddenly arrive through the busyness into a quiet edge of Becontree. Ahead, cottage style houses. In the distance, early 21st century infill. And if you turn around and look up, the imposing mass of Millard Terrace. Many layers of past redevelopment and growth right next to each other.

Carry on walking down Church Elm Lane, towards the historic Village Centre, past shopping parades and you come to the beginning of the Village of the Future, which is now looking less futuristic, and more bedded in with its surroundings. The former Rectory Library is down one road, home to the borough’s longest running music circle, now a social club, still a beautiful building surveying the park. Continue and you see the Trade Hall on your left, home to Labour Party meetings and a stone’s throw away from the first home of legendary pirate (now legal) radio station, Rinse Fm.

The Village is such an asset. The much-loved church, where many Dagenham residents would have married, the Cross Keys Pub, a friendly, thriving watering hole. Allotments, green spaces, individual bungalows and housing, the former Bull Pub now being utilised as a shop, and over to the Leys. Those temporary tin houses are looking suspiciously permanent! People's long-term homes. Tired looking 60's blocks have been demolished and replaced by new housing which surrounds the roundabout.

Like other places in the borough, parts of this area are in need of some attention. It will have its moment, sooner than you might think! A new reason to put this area on the map beyond the contentious demolition of a portion of a historic village. If you exit the tube now at Dagenham East you are faced with emptiness. It's easy to forget how busy this station would have been when May & Baker was still open. It's waiting for something to happen.



FUTURE: Lights, camera, action.

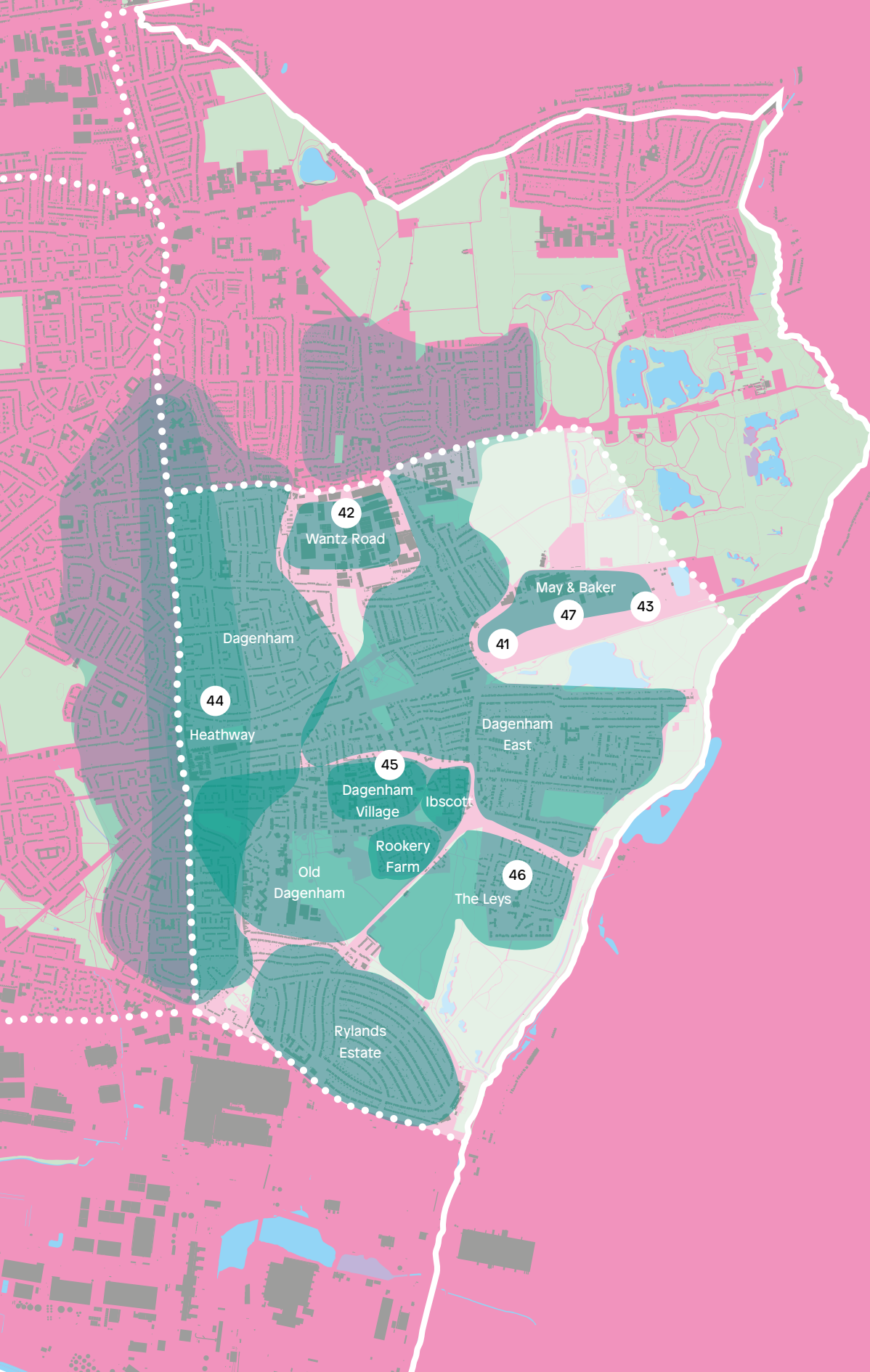
A centre for media, science and technology. The jobs of tomorrow, right next to the historic heart of the borough. From village life to fibreoptics. A place in which stories about the borough's past inspire the storytellers of tomorrow. Films, not Fords!

Made in Dagenham. No really. This is happening. Not the film, but films, lots of them! Plans are well under way for London's newest and largest film studios on the May and Baker site. This is BIG news. Thousands of jobs will be created, owing to the blockbuster scale of the development: from carpenters to camera operatives, cleaners to caterers – the borough won't have seen employment chains stemming from one industry like it since the Ford halcyon days, with new industries populating the existing industrial areas of Wantz and Sterling Industrial Estates.

Whoever runs the new studio will partner with Coventry University and Barking and Dagenham College to provide training and to help local people access these new jobs. Creative Barking and Dagenham and its network of cultural connectors, residents of the borough with a passion for the arts, are working hard to prepare the ground for this cultural revolution. Can you imagine what this might be like? Stepping off the train at an improved Dagenham East station into a real working slice of Hollywood? Nor can we, but we can't wait to make it happen.

But it's not just the film studio. How about London's largest data centres, providing essential infrastructure for the capital's cloud computing and digital media pioneers, as well as improved broadband for you and your neighbours? And don't forget UCL Pearl. This one is harder to get your head around. A cutting-edge warehouse space in which scientists and researchers can run life sized transport experiments, testing everything from new trains running through stations, to planes flying at altitude! Films and media, science and technology, right here in Dagenham.

Whilst this is a huge undertaking, we are still committed to concentrating on the smaller things too. The Village will be an oasis away from the hustle and bustle of Dagenham East. A step back in time, and a reminder of the borough's medieval past. We will look at the housing stock across the village area and think about how this could work harder to complement its original character. And Dagenham Heathway will again be the heart of the residential community. A thriving local high street and retail centre, with more, better quality homes alongside shops and restaurants that all residents will enjoy.



Our vision for the future of Dagenham East, The Village and beyond

A centre for media, science and technology. The jobs of tomorrow, right next to the historic heart of the borough. From village life to fibreoptics. A place in which stories about the borough's past inspire the storytellers of tomorrow. Films, not Fords!

What's changing?

41 Film studios ●

Our new film studios really will be Made in Dagenham! London's newest film studio, making Hollywood scale blockbusters, right here in Dagenham. Thousands of jobs, and many more in associated industries. The biggest thing to hit the borough since Ford.

42 Wantz Road ●

A brand-new neighbourhood. Modern, flexible space for creative industries right next to 100s of homes for working Londoners. A 21st century supply chain for Made in Dagenham, on its doorstep.

43 Digital Dagenham ●

Two of the biggest data centres in London, providing essential cloud-based computing services to millions of Londoners, plenty of jobs for local people, and improved broadband for the borough as a whole. Permission granted. On its way.

44 A plan for Dagenham Heathway ●

Dagenham's town centre, and a gathering place for local people. Residents will help to develop a plan for the Heathway, restoring its position and prestige in the local community. Improved shop fronts, new homes, better quality shops and restaurants. It's all on the table, and soon.

45 A plan for The Village ●

Working with residents and the wider community to protect and preserve its unique history, while sympathetically restoring the surrounding homes and buildings. A plan for the village, developed with the village.

46 The Leys ●

Recently completed, the Leys offers high quality homes at affordable rents and available for shared ownership, right next to Beam County Country Park. An old estate, brought into the 21st century, giving residents different housing choices that work for them.

47 UCL Pearl ●

A cutting-edge warehouse space in which scientists and researchers can run life sized transport experiments, testing everything from new trains running through stations, to planes flying at altitude. Planning permission granted!

Project Stage Key

- Already there
- This is happening in the next 2 years
- We expect this to happen in the next five years
- We are working hard to make sure this happens in the future



CHAPTER 8

How can you get involved?

You might read this and think that all decisions about how the borough is changing have been made, and that it's all done and dusted. This couldn't be further from the truth. Borough & Me sets out our vision for Barking and Dagenham, as well as some of the BIG things that are in the pipeline that we think will help us to deliver it. But there is SO much that we don't yet know, and SO much that is still to be decided. We are in the early stages of a 20-year journey.



We want you to play your part as the borough grows. This means telling us what you think at every opportunity and fighting hard for the things that you believe in. We need to get better at sharing, listening and acting on what we hear, whilst working closely with you to develop projects from the get-go. In practice we think this means sticking to four principles that will underpin everything we do to implement our vision over the next 20 years:

- We must involve you and your neighbours as early as possible in decisions about projects and developments in your neighbourhood, on your street, and in the borough as a whole, so you can help shape what happens and how it happens. Where possible this will mean working with you to codesign the vision for a project or development.
- We must use creative and inclusive methods that allow you and your neighbours to contribute in the ways you feel most comfortable, whether it be face to face (respecting the demands of social distancing), in group settings or online, whilst keeping the process as simple as possible and using plain English wherever we can.
- We must ensure that every conversation delivers meaningful action, whilst being completely honest with you about how much influence you can really have and explaining clearly the rationale when decisions are made that go against your preference.
- We must give you and your neighbours, where possible, the opportunity and the support you need to lead the improvements in your neighbourhood that you would most like to see; giving you the opportunity to take control of growth.

Nice words, but what do they mean in practice? There are loads of very practical opportunities to get involved in, and to take control of, growth in the borough in the years ahead. Here are just a few:

Regular opportunities to get involved:

At a borough wide level, the council's planning officers will be looking at neighbourhoods in which we anticipate lots of development taking place, not least those areas that are currently full of industry that isn't making best use of the land underneath. We will be producing plans for these areas, which set out a high-level vision, as well as specific things we would like to see happening. These plans will set the expectation, in terms of what can be built and how it should look and feel, for any developer operating in that area in future. We'll be asking residents living around these areas, and across the borough more widely, to help shape these plans, by talking to us about what they would like to see.

Through council led developments

We have already introduced you to our council owned regeneration company, Be First. Be First plan and deliver all those projects and schemes in Barking and Dagenham funded by the council, from new homes and new infrastructure to new industry. The extent and quality of engagement with local residents varies between developers, but for council schemes, Be First can do things differently.

Be First will set the example for any developer operating in Barking and Dagenham by living up to the principles of engagement set out above in all of its developments. Ultimately, this means giving residents living close to new development every opportunity to shape what will happen, using creative and inclusive engagement techniques. It also means striking a balance between online and face to face engagement. Be First have their own digital platform, Your Call, which they will use to collect feedback on all individual schemes. But they will also talk to you face to face, in your neighbourhood and on your street, as and when a development is planned.

For more information on the Be First approach to engagement, or about any individual Be First scheme, please go to Your Call or the council's One Borough Voice platform (more information below).

Through neighbourhood plans and community rights

Did you know you and your neighbours could develop your own **Neighbourhood Plan**, and that these are no different to the masterplans described above? Like masterplans, this plan would bind developers into responding to your priorities as well as their own. To develop a neighbourhood plan, you need to be part of a designated 'neighbourhood forum', a new or existing group of at least 21 people who either live or work in the neighbourhood. All your group needs to do is get in touch with us and formally register as a designated neighbourhood forum. We will then help you through the process of developing your neighbourhood plan.

At the same time, any group in your neighbourhood can put forward a **community right to build order**, which would force planners to grant permission for the building of new homes, shops, businesses, community facilities or playgrounds that you want to see (where the necessary funding is in place). In other words, if there is an existing project that you and your group really want to see happen, and you can demonstrate that this would be in the best interests of the community, then permission can be granted.

To learn more about both neighbourhood planning and community right to build orders then go to the 'neighbourhood planning' website hosted by Locality. This has loads of advice, guidance and links to further support. The Government has also allocated over £29m between 2018 - 2022 to support the development of neighbourhood plans, which means you can apply for grant funding and/or technical support if you are eligible.

Through One Borough Voice

One Borough Voice is the place to go if you would like to share your view with the council about any issue, including growth and regeneration, or if you would like to sign up to the Citizens Alliance Network (more information below). The B&D Growing Together Hub on One Borough Voice will be the place to go to find out more about our plans for Inclusive Growth in the borough, as well as well as to keep an eye on any engagement opportunities in relation to growth and regeneration that are coming up.

Through the Citizens Alliance Network

We're working on a brand-new opportunity for you to become more involved in your neighbourhood. Coming soon will be an online network and a series of local, in-person groups, open to all, that will give you a voice and way to make change in your community. This network will provide opportunities to meet your neighbours and to create positive change together. We want the Citizens Alliance Network to be built by the community, for the community. We would love it if you would sign up to hear more in the coming weeks. *To find out more about the Citizens Alliance Network, please go to One Borough Voice.*





Through the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Panel

The community infrastructure levy (CIL) is a charge placed on all development that is reinvested in neighbourhoods and communities, on things that you and your neighbours want to see. We have developed a unique approach to allocating the Neighbourhood element of CIL money in Barking and Dagenham. A panel of residents, selected at random from the population at large, make decisions about how the money should be spent based on Dragon's Den style pitches from people and organisations who have ideas. If you have set up a neighbourhood forum, and need money to implement elements of your plan, you can pitch to the NCIL panel too. *To find out more about the NCIL Panel, please go to One Borough Voice.*

Through community ownership and management of places and spaces

A community asset transfer is when the ownership and/or management of a building or a space is transferred from its public-sector owner to a community group or organisation for less than market value. Community groups often need access to buildings and space from which to operate. At the same time owning or managing a space can help community groups to generate revenues that will help to pay for their activities. To enable this, the council will be developing an approach to community asset transfer that could give you and your neighbours the opportunity to access affordable, flexible and high-quality spaces and places that you could use to make change in your neighbourhoods. Sometimes these will be spaces that are waiting to be redeveloped and would otherwise stand empty for years until development starts (often called 'meanwhile use'). At other times, these spaces could provide a permanent home for your activity. *For more information, or if there are spaces or places that you would like to take ownership of, or to manage, then please contact us through One Borough Voice.*

Other opportunities to look out for:

The small sites programme

There are some plots of land in our borough that are too small to be developed into large numbers of new homes or significant social infrastructure. But with a little creativity, and a lot of energy, they could still be put to much better use. That's why we are designing a programme that will support local individuals or groups to bring forward proposals to develop badly needed new homes for local people on these sites. This kind of development is often called community led housing. It is not straight forward, and can involve loads of time, energy and commitment, but it can be a fantastic way of building new homes that really work for local people. As part of the small plots programme we will work with you to develop proposals. You will need to raise the money to pay for the development, but we will point you in the right direction. Watch this space! *To find out more about the small plots programme, keep an eye on One Borough Voice.*

The Becontree centenary celebrations

If you have read the Becontree chapter of this document, you will know that 2021 is the 100th anniversary of the first home being completed on the Becontree estate. This is big news, and a moment to celebrate. But as well as celebrating the Becontree's unique history, and all the things that make it special today, we want to take this opportunity to develop a design code for the estate that will guide all future development. There will be all kinds of opportunities for you to get involved in both developing and delivering this design code in the years ahead. So, if you live or have ever lived on the Becontree, then again watch this space. *For more information on the Becontree centenary and associated activity please keep an eye on One Borough Voice.*

Summary and more information

We hope you have enjoyed this story, and that you feel excited about the future of Barking and Dagenham. We certainly are! But we also recognise that we might have left you with more questions than answers. That's fine. This is just the start of the conversation. Below are a series of links that might be of further help. Please keep an eye on these links in the months and years ahead for more information on how you can get involved.

- The B&D Growing Together Hub on One Borough Voice will be the place to go to find out more about our plans for Inclusive Growth in the borough, as well as well as to keep an eye on any engagement opportunities that are coming up.

www.oneboroughvoice.lbbd.gov.uk/

- Your Call is a dedicated site, run by our development company Be First, that provides information on specific schemes, allowing you to comment and provide feedback.

www.yourcall.befirst.london/

- The council's planning and building control webpage is where you go to comment on formal planning applications, or to get involved in planning committees.

www.lbbd.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control

- Visit the Locality Neighbourhood Planning website for more information on the development of neighbourhood plans, and community right to buy orders.

Let's keep the conversation going. Our borough's future starts here. It starts now.

And finally, where has this document come from?

Over the last year the Borough & Me programme has involved conversations with hundreds of residents across all seven of the borough's areas identified in this document. Council staff have spent time in children's centres and community centres, libraries and schools, and at every event during the summer of festivals, speaking to residents of all ages and backgrounds.

In addition, we developed and launched the Borough & Me Homework Competition in the Spring of 2019, giving every primary school in the borough the opportunity to take part. The competition asked students between the ages of seven and eleven to build a model, write a poem, or draw a picture that captured their aspirations for the future of the borough. Fifteen schools took part with three winning students from each school bringing their work to a special exhibition at the One Borough Festival in July 2019, where they were judged by a panel of Councillors and local people. Three winners were chosen, but the overall quality of the work was exceptional.

These homework entries, alongside our conversations with residents, have provided the inspiration for this document, helping us to refine our vision for the borough and its neighbourhoods.

And who do we need to thank?

A massive thank you to all the residents who participated in the Borough & Me project, by talking to us about the future of Barking and Dagenham, at the summer of festivals and in many other venues across the borough. To the school council at Dagenham Park, alongside Claire Matthews and her two year seven classes at Barking Abbey, who all gave their time to share their thoughts and ideas. In addition, thank you to everyone, every child, every teacher and every parent, who got involved in the homework competition. And thank you to Benjamin Tunnicliffe and Claire D'Netto from Manor Juniors school, who helped us shape and pilot the competition in the first place. This document is for all of you.

Finally, thanks go to Verity-Jane Keefe, visual artist and public realm specialist who was co-author and spiritual guide for this document, and whose work in the borough spans 15 years and counting. All modern images in the document are from Verity's extensive archive, apart from the archival images which she selected from Valence House Archives' rich collections. Thanks go to Europa, whose design work inspired the look and feel of the document. The maps are thanks to them.

