

DRAFT

# HOLBORN VISION

DRAFT  
FEBRUARY 2024

**CONTENTS**



---

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>VISION AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREAS</b>	<b>14</b>
MUSEUM QUARTER	
RED LION AND QUEEN SQUARES	
GREAT QUEEN STREET	
LINCOLN'S INN AND GRAY'S INN	
HATTON GARDEN	
TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD	
HIGH HOLBORN, SOUTHAMPTON ROW AND KINGSWAY	
<b>DELIVERY</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: CHANGES SINCE THE LAST DOCUMENT</b>	<b>44</b>

# INTRODUCTION



## BACKGROUND

In 2019, we consulted on a draft Holborn Vision. Its aim was to build on Holborn's strengths as a gateway for business and create a more vibrant and well connected neighbourhood. Most people agreed or strongly agreed with the overall approach. You told us that your priorities for the area were clean air, sustainability, safe routes, housing, greener spaces, social and community uses and improved public realm. You also want the vision and objectives to focus more on the existing communities.

However, due to the impact of the pandemic, we had to pause the process. We think that now is the right time to focus on Holborn again.

This document responds to what we were told in 2019 and also reflects the changes that have taken place since. Changes in working patterns have had a greater impact in Holborn than other parts of the Borough. The opening of the Elizabeth Line with stations at Tottenham Court Road and Farringdon, along with significant new development around Tottenham Court Road Station including Centre Point, The Outernet and The Earnshaw as well as the new pedestrian spaces at Princes Circus, means that parts of the area have changed considerably while much of the area remains relatively unchanged. This illustrates that increased accessibility by public transport is attracting development. It also emphasises the need for the Holborn Vision to understand pressures coming from development and ensure a holistic strategic approach across the Holborn Area to harness the benefits of new development. This could also enable the delivery of our ambitions set out in We Make Camden.

The role of this updated Holborn Vision remains to improve places and spaces in the Holborn area by guiding development and investment to enhance the experience of living, working, visiting and moving around Holborn. However, with the impact of new development and the strong view from residents that the original approach was too focussed on business and commerce, this document aims to balance these competing needs by looking at the different character areas within Holborn and indicating the priorities for each.

It is the intention that the final version of the Holborn Vision will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, to support Camden's Development Plan and will be a material consideration when determining planning applications. By delivering the objectives of the Holborn Vision in partnership, we think we can make the best and most efficient use of local skills, expertise, knowledge and resources.

We want to use this document to connect Holborn together and celebrate its diversity in character so that everyone who lives, works and visits Holborn will benefit from all it has to offer.

### What you told us...



#### Overall approach

There was significant support for the overall approach set out in the draft Holborn Vision and Urban Strategy.



#### Vision and objectives

Your priorities for the area are clean air, sustainability, safe routes, housing, greener spaces, social and community uses and improved public realm. You want the vision and objectives to focus more on existing communities.



#### Museum Quarter

You support the key actions to improve the Museum Quarter area.

Your suggestions for the future of the area were varied. You feel the document could be clearer in what it sets out to achieve.

Some of you were concerned about road access being restricted for essential vehicles and taxis and would like these vehicles to access outside Great Russell Street and the British Museum.

You want a reduction of noise pollution, clearer street signage and wayfinding.



#### Holborn Gateway

You support the key actions to improve the Holborn Gateway area.

Your suggestions for the future of this area were varied. You would like vehicular access through the area and feel that blocked roads will create congestion elsewhere. There was support for the removal of the gyratory.

You want safe cycle lanes to prevent accidents with other vehicle users.



#### Holborn to the City

You support the key actions to improve the Holborn to the City area.

You want the issues of crime, noise and anti-social behaviour particularly on Leather Lane and Brook's market to be addressed.

You want Leather Lane market to provide more for local people and feel it focusses on lunchtime trade.

Findings from the Holborn consultation 2019

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/holborn-vision-and-urban-strategy>



We Make Camden front cover



We Make Camden ambitions

## CAMDEN CONTEXT

Camden is almost 22 square kilometres with a resident population of 218,000 (2021 census). It is divided into 20 wards and the Holborn Vision area is located mainly in Holborn and Covent Garden ward and includes some of the Bloomsbury ward too, and is home to 4.9% of Camden's residents.

There are a number of important Camden wide documents that have informed the Vision. Below is a summary and what they mean for Holborn.

### WE MAKE CAMDEN

We Make Camden has helped shape this document. This is Camden's overarching vision to make Camden a better borough. Developed with Camden's community, it aims to make Camden a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where nobody gets left behind — a place that works for everyone. It includes six ambitions, four missions and six challenges.

We Make Camden ambitions are:

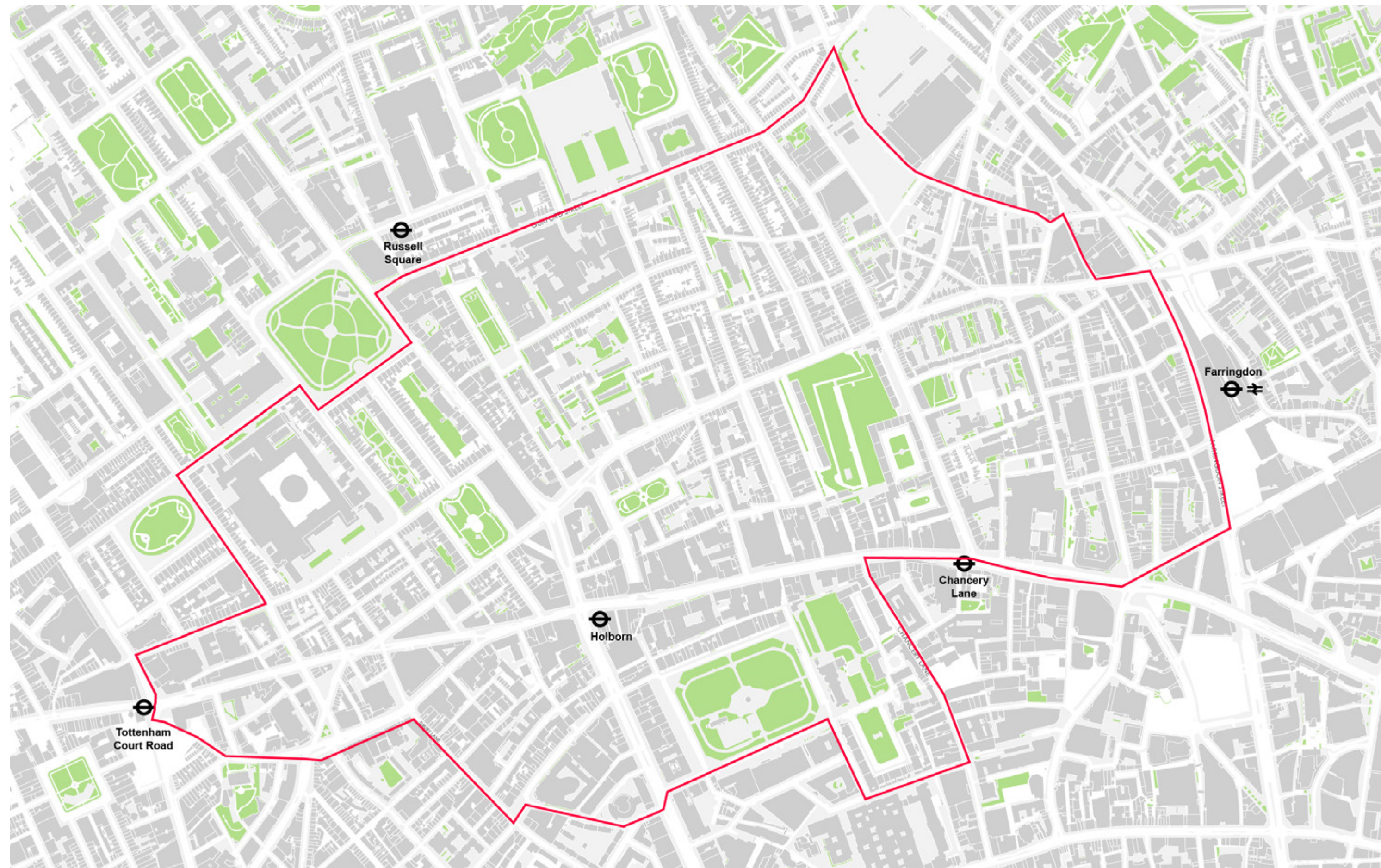
- Camden is a borough where every child has the best start in life;
- Camden's local economy should be strong, sustainable, and inclusive - everyone should have a secure livelihood to support them to live a prosperous life;
- Camden actively tackles injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong and open communities where everyone can contribute;
- Camden communities support good health, wellbeing and connection for everyone so that they can start well, live well, and age well;
- Everyone in Camden should have a place they call home
- Camden should be a green, clean, vibrant, accessible and sustainable place with everyone empowered to contribute to tackling the climate emergency

### CAMDEN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Camden's Development plan is a suite of documents that set out planning policies and supports the delivery of Camden's vision for the borough. The council has begun to prepare a new Local Plan which will include site allocations to guide future site development and is anticipated to be adopted in 2026. The Holborn Vision complies with the adopted Development Plan (2017) whilst reflecting the direction of the draft new Local plan and amplifies the policies in Camden's local plan to respond to the Holborn area, shown in the map below. The delivery of homes and particularly genuinely affordable homes is the priority land use of the Camden Local Plan. Given the longer timescales for the New Local plan, the Holborn Vision consultation and engagement programme will take account of this whilst ensuring the timely adoption of the Vision to guide development in the area.



New Camden Local Plan timeline



Holborn Vision area boundary

## CHANGES SINCE THE LAST DOCUMENT

### HOLBORN OVERVIEW

The Holborn Vision area covers 120 hectares of Camden at the southern end of the borough. It includes the Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area and the Holborn Growth area as designated in the current local plan. It has a wealth of nationally and internationally important buildings such as the British Museum, Great Ormond Street Hospital and Inn's of Court. The whole area is included in the Central Activities Zone, Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ), Air Quality Focus Area and much of it by Conservation areas. Many of the buildings are also covered by an Article 4 Directive introduced in 2023 which requires planning permission for a change of use from use Class E (offices and retail) to residential.

The Holborn Vision area has 10,500 residents. The key data from the census 2021 indicates that there are fewer families living in the area than in Camden more generally with less under 14's in Holborn (11%) than Camden (14.4%) and 45% single households in comparison to 39% in Camden. 74% of residents live in blocks of flats, 18% more than the Camden average. 45% live in socially rented homes, 11% more than the Camden average. 47% of residents are from Black, Asian and minority groups compared with 40% in Camden of which 13% are Bangladeshi whilst the figure for Camden is 6.7%. In relation to religion, there are 1.1% Jewish residents with a Camden average 4.8% and 19.8% Muslim residents in comparison to 16.1% in Camden as a whole. 78% of residents have no cars compared with a Camden average 64%.

### POLICY AND STRATEGY

Over the last 5 years there have been a number of new policies and strategies as well as changes to existing ones. These have informed this draft and focus on the following key themes:

#### Heritage and Character

Holborn is an area of historic importance which is reflected in the fact that most of it is covered by conservation areas. New developments and the opening of the Elizabeth Line has changed the character of some parts of Holborn. By focussing on the rich and varied character of Holborn, the Vision will be able to respond to these changes and ensure that development builds on its distinctive character.

#### Commercial and Economic

Holborn has an excellent reputation for a thriving diverse economy ranging from headquarters of global companies to SME's, startups and Leather Lane market. But footfall levels have not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. The demand for Grade A office space, particularly in the areas around the new Tottenham Court Road and Farringdon stations, remains very strong. Recent evidence suggests however, that up to 91% of office properties could be impacted by tighter Energy Performance Certificate regulations by 2030.

Many residents are not benefitting from the economic success of the area. Securing affordable workspace can support local entrepreneurship and local communities to be involved in growth creation.

#### Movement and Connectivity

Holborn has excellent public transport links with most of the area scoring 6b on Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) scale. However it is traffic dominated with a high number of traffic accidents and casualties. Encouraging and enabling people to travel safely and sustainably; creating radically less polluted places; and

upgrading the transport network to are key drivers for Holborn Vision. The Holborn Liveable Neighbourhood programme (HLN), sponsored by TfL, is being developed to deliver these outcomes and is the highest priority infrastructure project within the Holborn Vision area.

#### Public Realm

Holborn's public realm is mixed in character and quality and has a significant impact on the experience of people living, working, visiting, and using the area. Delivering high quality public realm schemes that provide places for movement as well as places to socialise and relax is a priority for the Vision. Camden commissioned LDA Design to develop a public realm strategy which sets out a framework to guide the design of future schemes as they come forward. It has been used to inform the content of the Holborn Vision and will be published alongside this document on the Council's website.

#### Equality and Equity

The design of the built environment affects how and who uses it. Holborn's public realm and buildings often do not reflect the diversity of its history or communities. It should enable people to feel safe and have a sense of belonging, yet the design of buildings and the public realm does not always give due consideration to the diversity of people who want to use it, including those with physical and sensory issues and those with dementia. This reduces access and makes spaces less equitable, perpetuating the lack of inclusivity.

In Holborn there is an opportunity to address this imbalance through inclusive design to tackle injustice and inequality, creating safe strong and open spaces and places where everyone can contribute.

#### Evening and Night-time Economy (ENTE)

New development around Tottenham Court Road station has helped grow the ENTE in this part

of the Vision area. The rest of Holborn remains an important ENTE location, but there has been an impact of the changing work patterns and some areas have not recovered fully since the pandemic. This is coupled with a reduction in venues that support diversity and inclusion. The vision provides guidance to support uses that contribute to the diversity of ENTE uses and to promote and grow the culture and night time economy in the Holborn area.

#### Air Quality and Sustainability

Industrial and commercial sectors accounted for 60% of all CO2 emissions in Camden of which Holborn contributed significantly. Its air quality is also poor particularly along its main roads. Some parts of the area are at risk of surface water flooding too. Some communities are at higher risk to the impacts of climate change. In Holborn this is mainly in areas of social housing. Supporting a climate resilient Holborn through design and mitigation measures that demonstrate climate resilience is a key focus of the Vision.

#### Open Space and Green Infrastructure

Holborn has some of London's greatest and most beautiful squares and open spaces that underpin its character. Open spaces are not evenly distributed across the vision area with particularly poor provision for residents in the east. Given the built-up nature of the Holborn area, there are limited opportunities to increase the amount of open space. Improving access to existing open space and introducing greening measures such as pocket parks and more trees will be key.

Appendix 1 has more details on the changes since the 2019 Holborn Vision draft document.

# VISION

Holborn's varied and distinctive character will be celebrated and enhanced through its thriving commerce, flourishing neighbourhoods, its culture and diversity. Its public realm will be transformed to create a connected, safer, greener and climate resilient environment for residents, workers and visitors.

# OBJECTIVES



## HV1 - A PLACE OF INNOVATION THAT CONTINUES TO FOSTER BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

*That will sustain and build on Holborn's reputation for a diverse economy that brings together investment, prosperity, and employment to Camden.*

- Where businesses of all sizes want to locate, stay, and grow
- Build on Holborn's success as a place for entrepreneurship where startups and SME's can thrive
- Support local entrepreneurship providing local people access to jobs and training
- Maximise the benefit of the Elizabeth Line to the west and east of the Holborn area
- Supports and protect the specialist areas of business including Hatton Garden and the legal quarters of Gray's Inn and Lincoln Inn
- Where the Council will collaborate with landowners, landlords and Business Improvement District's and local business to bring forward proposals that contribute to the objectives set out in the Holborn Vision

## HV2 - A GENUINELY MIXED-USE NEIGHBOURHOOD THAT BRINGS TOGETHER WORKERS, RESIDENTS, AND VISITORS

*Holborn's diversity of uses and functions encourage a mixture of uses that benefit residents, workers, and visitors.*

- Support an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial, and cultural to reflect Holborn's character areas (see HV6) and promote sustainable communities
- Through mixed use, make efficient use of limited land available to deliver successful places with a range of uses which encourages active travel
- Encourage retail frontages on Holborn's high streets including the provision of affordable workspace
- Support the thriving cultural sector and a vibrant and inclusive evening and night-time economy (ENTE), including the wide range of historic pubs, that balances the needs of visitors, businesses, and local people
- Support uses that activate buildings at ground floor level and corner sites to increase footfall and contribute to the feeling of safety
- Ensure buildings and public spaces are designed to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and make people feel safe

## OBJECTIVES



### HV3 - A PLACE WHERE THE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES ARE STRENGTHENED AND ENHANCED

*Holborn has a relatively small but vital and well-established residential community that needs to be enhanced through the provision of a wide range of new homes, including affordable homes, and the services that sustain them.*

- Increase the provision of much needed housing including affordable housing particularly where they contribute to the character of an area and strengthen existing residential communities
- Where offices have become redundant and aren't suitable for use by SME support change of use to housing and affordable housing in accordance with character area guidance and the draft Camden Local Plan (2024)
- Ensure development supports Camden's estate mission to make estates and neighbourhoods healthy and sustainable
- Strengthen social infrastructure that supports the residential communities (to benefit more fully from what Holborn has to offer)
- Encourage planning contributions that support measures to improve the climate resilience of homes, particularly those in areas of climate risk

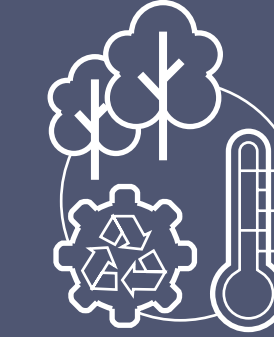


### HV4 - A PLACE CONNECTED BY EXCELLENT PUBLIC REALM WHERE EVERYONE FEELS SAFE AND ENCOURAGES WALKING AND CYCLING

*There is a limited opportunity to increase the amount of public open space in Holborn so increasing the amount of high quality and accessible public realm is important to support the functioning of the neighbourhood and maximise the benefit of its accessibility by public transport.*

- Deliver high quality public realm with a clear hierarchy, role and identity to bring Holborn's streets and places together, reinforce a sense of place and connect its residents, visitors, and workers
- Design open, accessible, green, biodiverse, and safe public realm that encourages people to walk and cycle, sit, and socialise so it increases equity and equality of the use of public spaces throughout the day and night
- Improve accessibility across the area making wayfinding easier, increasing permeability and encouraging active travel
- Facilitate the delivery of the Holborn Liveable Neighbourhood to bring about attractive, healthy, and safe neighbourhoods through the prioritisation of public transport and sustainable transport modes

## OBJECTIVES



### HV5 - A CLIMATE RESILIENT PLACE THAT IS ABLE TO ADAPT AND THRIVE AND READY TO FACE THE FUTURE

*For Holborn to continue to prosper responding to the climate emergency is essential through building and public realm design, use and re-use and demonstrating its commitment to net zero.*

- Require all new development to be net zero and flexible to adapt to changing circumstances, and all major developments in Holborn to calculate whole life carbon emissions to include all operational and embodied carbon
- Support the retrofit of buildings to make better use of resources, more energy efficient buildings
- Support the re-use of buildings including where they are unable to meet the Energy performance certificates standards by 2030
- Promote a climate-resilient public realm through flood and overheating mitigation measures, particularly through green infrastructure
- Support development that protects and promotes biodiversity, particularly through enhancing ecological connectivity
- Support measures that encourage greener delivery options such as the decarbonisation of last mile delivery of goods
- Maximise the opportunity for heat networks which contribute to the decarbonisation of heating



### HV6- A PLACE WHERE THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER AREAS OF HOLBORN ARE CELEBRATED AND ENRICHED

*Holborn has a very varied townscape, developed over its long history in response to the needs of its communities and function within Central London. These have led to areas distinct in character.*

- Ensure new development builds on and enhances the distinctive characters within Holborn's Conservation Areas by promoting the highest quality architecture to complement Holborn's historic form, function, and context
- Ensure new development also enhances and improves the character of the areas outside of Conservation Areas
- Connect, improve, make public and, where possible, reinstate historic lanes, alleyways, and passages in and around Holborn
- Ensure that public realm is informed by local history, heritage and culture and reinforce Holborn's sense of place
- As set out in the character areas and in accordance with emerging planning policy, consider changes of use to residential from office

# CHARACTER AREAS



## HOLBORN'S CHARACTER AREAS

Responding to local context is a fundamental principal of good design. Holborn is a mix of diverse neighbourhoods and by looking at these in more detail we can guide development that responds to local character and ensure high quality buildings and spaces and make Holborn a better place for people to live, work and visit into the future.

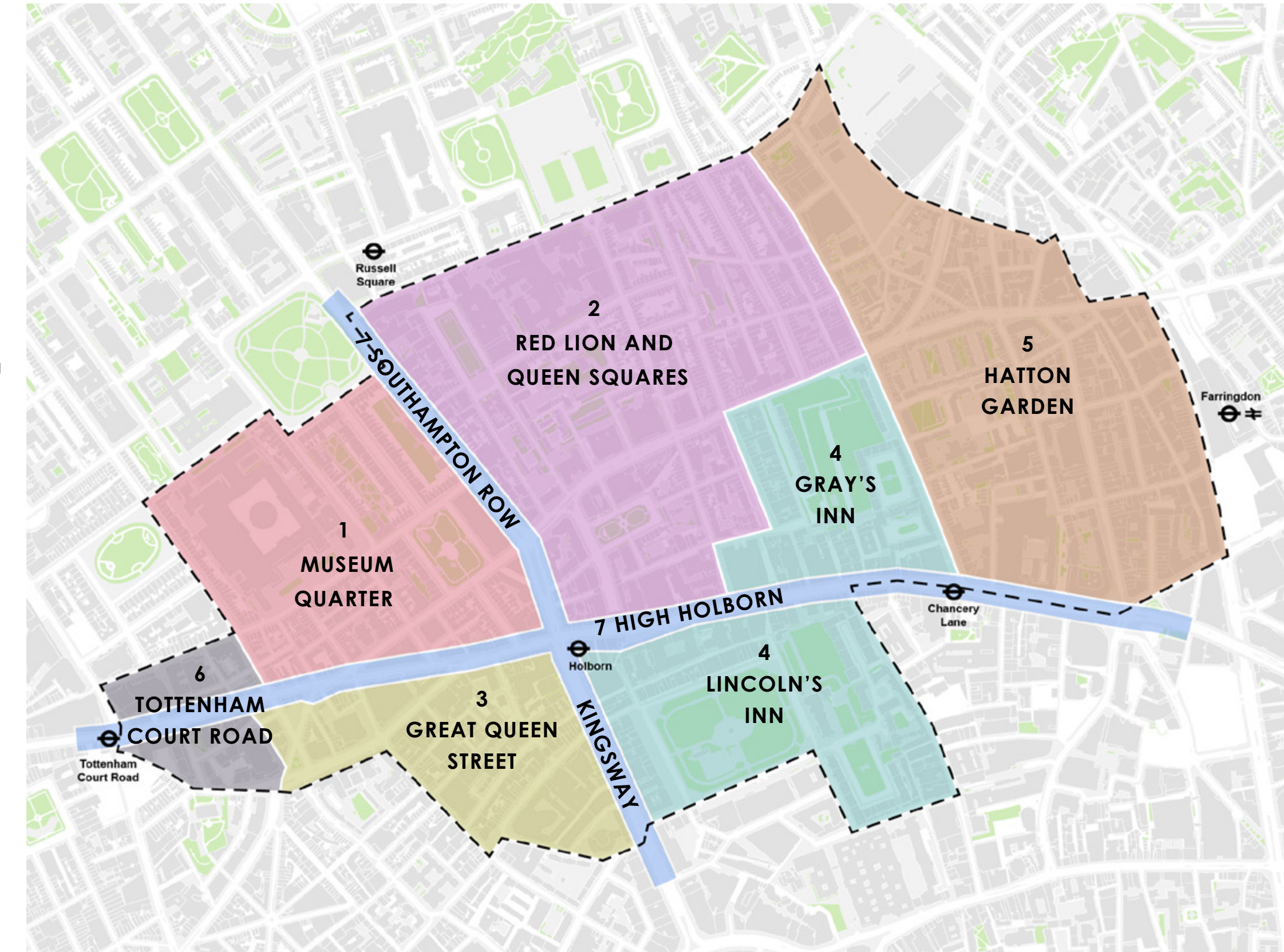
High quality design approaches to the re-use and retrofitting of buildings can not only help to preserve the existing character of an area, but also contribute to achieving higher environmental standards.

By taking a character area approach, there is an opportunity to address the balance of needs between residents and businesses whilst ensuring the vitality of the Vision area.

Each area sets out the relevant characteristics and contributing factors that makes the area what it is. It sets out improvements we would like to see including making neighbourhoods better connected and accessible, legible, safe and sustainable and how we will work with partners - residents, businesses and land owners to deliver these changes. To illustrate these, indicative images are included for each area. Visualisations produced by LDA Design as part of the evidence base for this document, unless otherwise stated.

### CHARACTER AREAS

- 1 – Museum Quarter
- 2 – Red Lion and Queen Squares
- 3 – Great Queen Street
- 4 – Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn
- 5 – Hatton Garden
- 6 – Tottenham Court Road
- 7 – High Holborn, Southampton Row/Kingsway





# MUSEUM QUARTER

The Museum Quarter is an enclave of independent shops, cafes, offices, homes, hotels and educational uses, with the British Museum the focal point. Today, it is a designated specialist shopping area and has retained its arts and literary uses, antiquarian book shops, galleries, offices, mainly aimed at the tourist trade with a number of publishers and language schools too. It also has a strong and well established residential community to the south of the British Museum and is all within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The urban morphology to the south of The British Museum typically comprises a grid pattern of historic streets, enclosed mainly by three to four-storey buildings and houses a strong residential community. In accordance with the Bloomsbury tradition, these streets open out onto more formal landscaped spaces, as depicted at Bloomsbury Square Gardens. The area includes some courtyards, and alleyways, providing intimate spaces with a particular charm and sense of history. Notably Sicilian Avenue lies to the east and forms part of the Links Estate, this was London's first purpose-built pedestrian street, with beautiful stone facades and ornate wooden shopfronts.

Over 6 million people visit the British Museum a year. In the specialist shopping area, footfall has bounced back well although not quite to pre-pandemic levels but vacancy levels are at the highest level for a decade having increased significantly since 2019, particularly on Bury Place. Poor pedestrian and cycle connectivity in the area contributes to pedestrian congestion to and from the British Museum from Holborn Tottenham Court Road Stations and Covent Garden area. Arterial routes and large busy junctions, such as Kingsway, Bloomsbury Way, New Oxford Street and High Holborn dominate the street scene. Connectivity has however improved in recent years, through small scale interventions on the streets to the south of The British Museum, such as the streatory, however, the balance of 'movement' and 'place' remains out of kilter.

## AREA GUIDANCE

### HV1 - Business and commerce

- Support the continued delivery of grade A office space to the south of the character area close to Elizabeth Line station at Tottenham Court Road.
- Ensure high quality office development with active uses that have public access on the ground floors and where active ground floor uses can maintain and enhance the vibrancy of the area.
- Support the provision of affordable workspace locally particularly where it will grow business ventures that support the vitality of the local area and benefit Camden's local community.

### HV2 – mixed-use

- Support a range of uses to ensure successful and vibrant retail frontages that meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors
- Whilst managing the needs of residents, support those ENTE uses that complement the existing character and encourage people to spend more time in the area.
- Support improvements to the Holborn Links Estate that contribute to the vitality of the area.

### HV3 – Supporting residential communities

- The council will protect the amenity of existing residents, in line with emerging policy support the change of use to residential where offices are redundant in accordance with emerging policy.
- Explore opportunities to improve public access to Montague Gardens for local residents.

## HV4 – Public Realm

- Improve wayfinding to, from and around the area.
- Prioritise the pedestrianisation and greening of key streets to improve routes to and from the British Museum and provide a more pedestrian friendly environment.
- Explore closing Great Russell Street to traffic to enhance the setting of the British Museum and encourage people to stay.
- Explore the potential pedestrianisation and greening of Southampton Place to improve the connection to Bloomsbury Gardens.
- Explore improvements for pedestrians and greening for Bedford Place, also improving the connection between Bloomsbury Square Gardens and Russell Square.
- Improve the experience of visitors to the British Museum so that people can stay longer, do more and enjoy walking and cycling away from the main busy transport routes to Theatreland, the west end and beyond.

## HV5 - Climate resilience

- Support SuDS and other surface level flood risk mitigation measures that are designed to support use of the street. This is particularly relevant for Great Russell Street as it has a higher flood risk.
- Consider opportunities for more tree planting and greening.



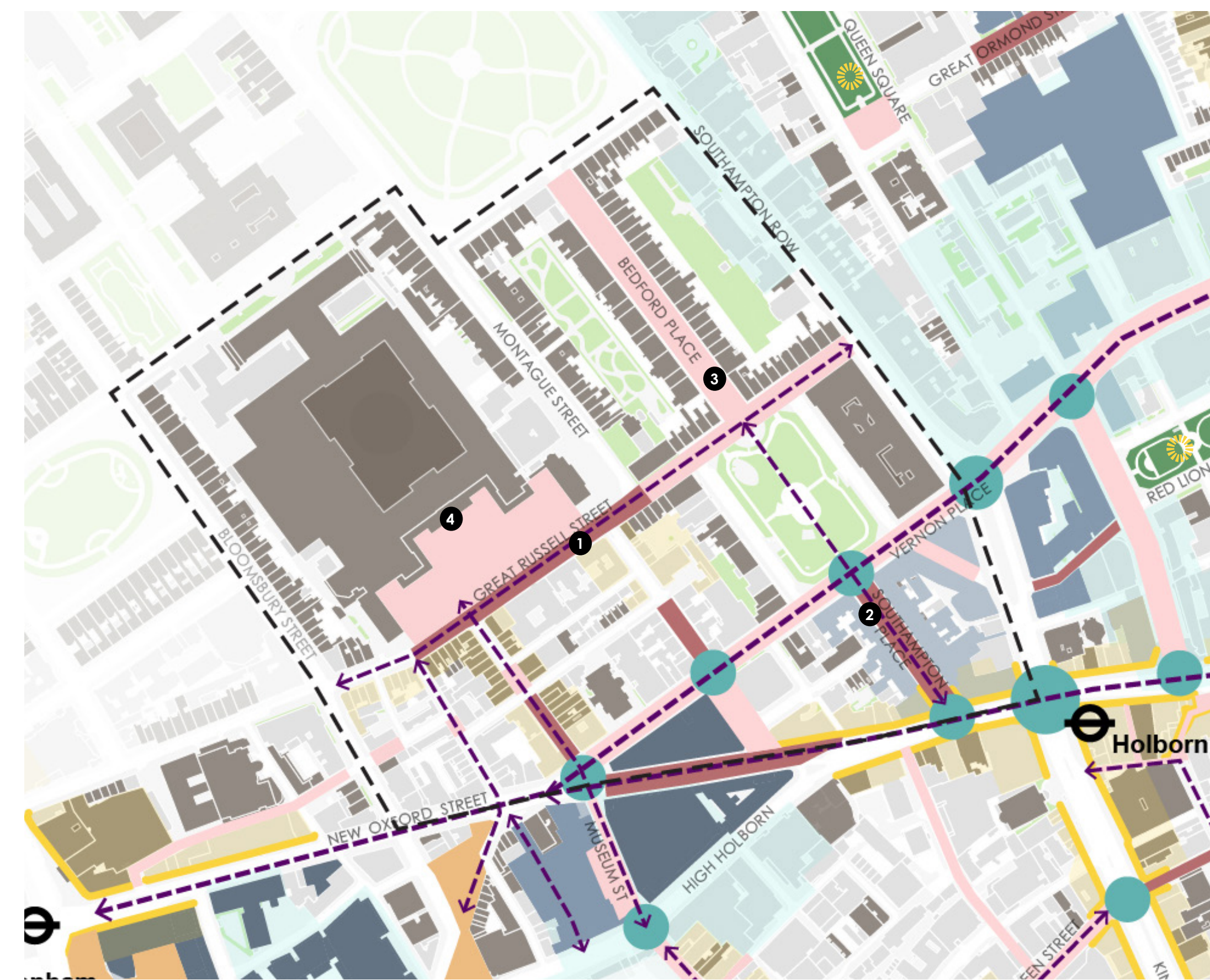
British Museum is one of the country's most visited landmarks.



Museum Street has a mix of uses, including specialist retail



The pedestrian Sicilian Avenue (image from LDA report)



**KEY**

- Recently completed redevelopment
- Development with planning permission
- Potential future development opportunity
- Recently completed public realm
- New public realm or enhancement of existing public realm
- Potential street closure with public realm improvements
- Enhancement of existing green space
- New/enhanced pedestrian routes
- Improved pedestrian crossing/junction
- Listed building
- Local centre / retail frontage
- Primary frontage
- Area not in Conservation Area
- Character area boundary

**KEY PROJECTS**

- 1 Great Russell Street
- 2 Southampton Place
- 3 Bedford Place
- 4 British Museum



**Great Russell Street**

Great Russell Street could be closed to through traffic, providing a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a befitting setting to The British Museum and a new public space for London. A simple, elegant and uncluttered new square could accommodate large numbers of people visiting the museum and create a lively and sociable place. Proposals could include: natural stone paving, new seating and removal of clutter such as unnecessary signage, the introduction of planting at the boundary wall, opportunities to explore the sensitive removal of the existing railings.



**Southampton Place**

Opportunity to create a high-quality street that infers pedestrian and cycle priority and creates a beautiful setting to the Georgian buildings. With improved connectivity to Bloomsbury Square Gardens. Proposals could include: reducing parking numbers, new rain gardens, new street tree planting and surface treatment to the carriageway.



**Bedford Place (image credit: Bedford Estates/LDA Design)**

Opportunity to reassign space from highway and parking to create a greener and welcoming place, improving the connection between Bloomsbury Square Gardens and Russell Square and providing a generous walking route from Holborn Station to the British Museum. Interventions could include: reducing car parking, wider pavements, planting, seating, improved crossings and materials responding to the historic context.

# RED LION AND QUEEN SQUARES

Lying to the west of Gray's Inn, the character area is enclosed by High Holborn, Southampton Row and Guildford Street. And whilst the area is architecturally diverse with some larger scale 20th century development, there are several unifying elements. The historic building form consists of terraces of townhouses opening out into squares. These create a fine urban grain with predominantly small footprints, and narrow frontages.

The area is connected by the north south routes of Red Lion Street and Lamb's Conduit Street which act as a high street and place for people to socialise. Although the character of each street is different, both contribute significantly and provide important services to the area.

This area has large residential community which sits alongside these streets including Tybalds estate, which is undergoing a programme of regeneration to deliver 56 new homes, including 50% affordable homes, Millman Street to the east and Red Lion Estate to the south. It also has a large number of housing association properties. This area, predominately to the east of lambs Conduit Street is ranked as high risk for the impact of climate change

The majority of this character area is covered by the Bloomsbury Conservation Area but the Western end of Theobald's Road is an exception. Here the impact of the bombing in the second world war has left a lasting effect, with infill developments of inconsistent quality affecting the sense of place. Although providing an important east west link, Theobalds Road acts as a barrier to north south pedestrian movement. It has poor air quality and a very poor safety record yet it is within the top 20% of roads in London for current and potential cycle demand.

There is a particular concentration of specialist hospital uses to the north at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH). Short, narrow passageways and alleys which are mostly pedestrianised run throughout the area, this includes Lambs Conduit Passageway which provides a crucial link to High Holborn.

The area is characterised by two larger squares – Queen Square in the north and Red Lion Square in the south which provide well used public open space and a vital amenity particularly to those who live and work in the area. Away from the busy main roads, the surrounding streets are relatively narrow and have a strong sense of enclosure, emphasising the scale of the built environment and the transition from space to space.

## AREA GUIDANCE

### HV1 - Business and commerce

- Improvements to offices along Theobalds Road sits alongside these streets including Tybalds estate, which is undergoing a programme of regeneration to deliver 56 new homes, including 50% affordable homes, Millman Street to the east and Red Lion Estate to the south. It also has a large number of housing association properties. This area, predominately to the east of lambs Conduit Street is ranked as high risk for the impact of climate change
- Encourage an improved active ground floor in the late Twentieth Century offices on Theobalds Road, with more high street uses and less office lobbies, alongside affordable workspace and housing.

### HV2 – Mixed-use

- Support the provision of affordable workspace locally particularly where it will grow business ventures that benefit Camden's communities.
- Support the vibrancy of Lamb's Conduit Street through Food & Beverage uses that extend opening hours into the evening whilst balancing the needs of residents and businesses.
- Support approaches to the Holborn Library site that provide mixed uses, including employment, housing and library.

### HV3 – Supporting residential communities

- Support developments that provide more homes, particularly affordable homes in the area which strengthen the existing residential communities, as are currently being delivered at Tybalds Estate.
- Support the change of use of redundant offices to residential in accordance with emerging policy in the draft Camden Local Plan (2024), particularly affordable housing around Queens square (where retrofitting is demonstrated to be unviable or infeasible)
- Improve routes through, to and from the residential estates to the services provided on the main streets.

### HV4 – Public Realm

- Support improvements to turn Theobalds Road into an attractive and more climate resilient environment, prioritising public transport and cycles whilst creating good north-south pedestrian and cycle connections.
- Create safer and more attractive crossing points to connect Red Lion and Lambs Conduit Streets and reduce the impact of general traffic.
- Lamb's Conduit Street and Red Lion Street form historic high streets that have been severed by Theobalds Road. Build on the opportunity to repair this through public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian connection between the two streets.
- Maximise the use of space of the closed section of Red Lion Street to enhance the community character of the street.
- Create a new pedestrian route along the historic alignment that led diagonally north-westwards from Red Lion Square, to improve permeability.
- Create a link between Southampton Row and Red Lion Square.

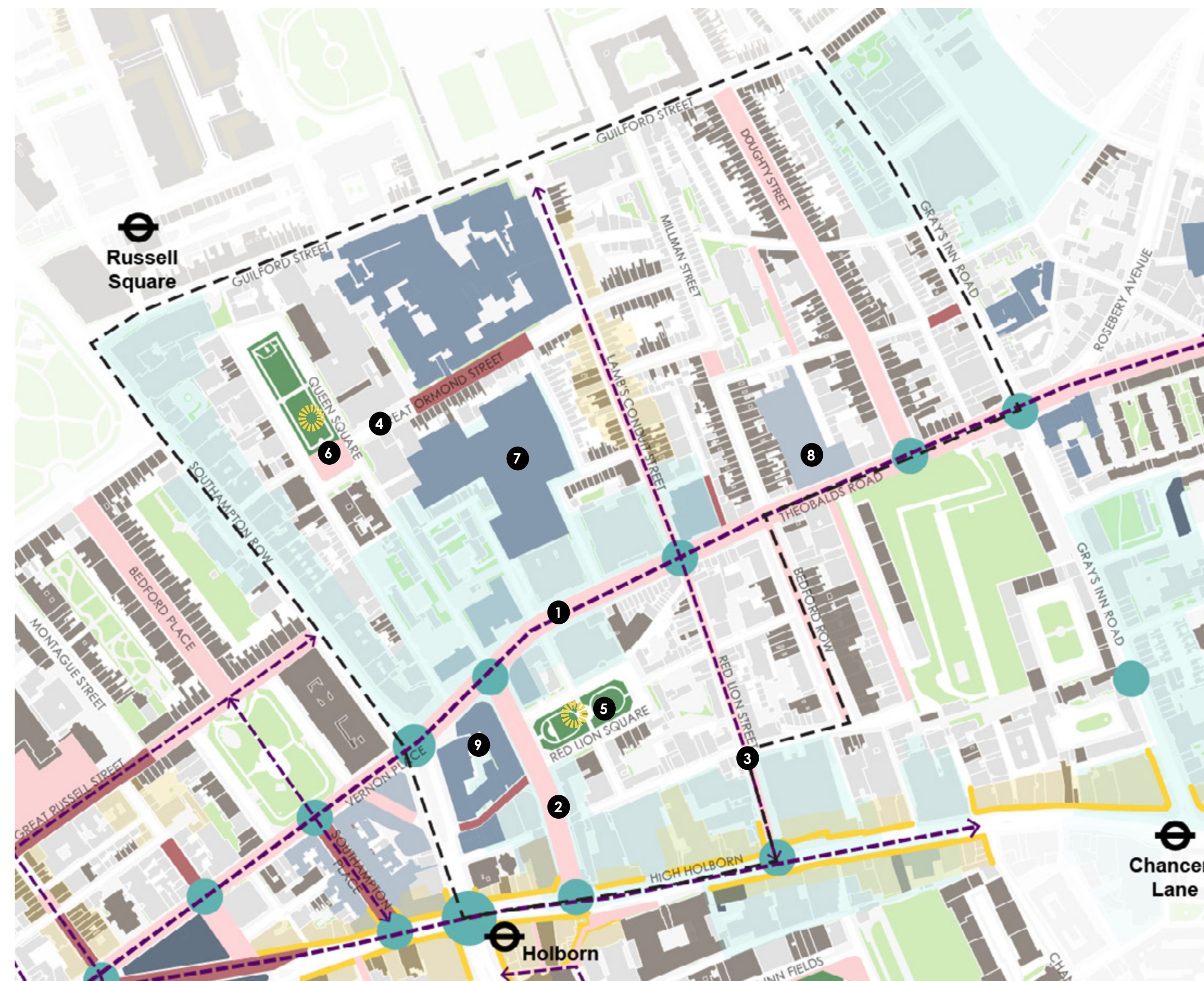
- Improve access to Red Lion Square and contribute to the health and well being of those that use it and consider further enhancements.
- Promote safer, healthier and greener streets particularly around key waking routes such as to GOSH and along cycling routes.
- Improve Great Ormond Street by increasing space for pedestrians, greening and play.
- Improve Queen Square to provide a welcoming and calm space for use by the local community and hospital users.

### HV5 - Climate resilience

- Investigate flood mitigation measures around Millman Street and towards the junction of Roger Street and Gray's Inn Road and around Red Lion Street.
- Explore opportunities for greening along Red Lion Street by providing new trees and planting.
- Introduce flood mitigation measures in the public realm at Great James Street which will improve the space particularly for local residents and users of Millman Street Community Centre
- Secure S106 contributions to improve the climate resilience of neighbourhoods, particularly in the areas identified as high climate risk.
- Consider opportunities for more tree planting and greening.

### HV6 - Character area

- The character of parts of this area have been negatively impacted by post war redevelopment - any new development needs to respond to historic character and restore it where necessary e.g. offices on Theobalds.
- Assess the impact of additional building heights on the functioning and character of Red Lion Square.



**KEY**

- Recently completed redevelopment
- Development with planning permission
- Potential future development opportunity
- Recently completed public realm
- New public realm or enhancement of existing public realm
- Potential street closure with public realm improvements
- Enhancement of existing green space
- New/enhanced pedestrian routes
- Improved pedestrian crossing/junction
- Listed building
- Local centre / retail frontage
- Primary frontage
- Area not in Conservation Area
- Character area boundary

**KEY PROJECTS**

- 1 Theobalds Road
- 2 Procter Street
- 3 Red Lion Street
- 4 Great Ormond Street (GOSH)
- 5 Red Lion Square
- 6 Queen Square
- 7 Tybalds Estate
- 8 Holborn Library
- 9 Lethaby Building (CSM)



**Great Ormond Street (image credit: Great Ormond Street Hospital Trust/LDA Design)**  
 Opportunity for a pedestrian friendly, green, playful and social space for all of the local community to use. Features could include: new mature trees to the northern edge of the street, rain gardens along the edge of the carriageway, social spaces for relaxation, contemplation, or informal play to provide mini breaks along the street, accessible routes with new lighting features, space for spill out from adjacent retail, and coffee shops along the southern edge.



**Theobalds Road**  
 Opportunity for a new identity, reducing vehicular lanes, with segregated cycle lanes, floating bus stops. In the high streets areas, the public realm can support local uses, introducing spill-out space, incidental seating and planting, as appropriate. North south pedestrian connections across the street can be reinforced, through measures such as raised tables, wayfinding, de-cluttering, art and material changes.



**Lamb's Conduit Street**  
 Opportunity to simplify the street to provide an attractive and uncluttered setting and allow the shops and cafes to spill out, where appropriate. Features could include: removal and rationalising of clutter (bollards, barriers and signposts) to provide a high quality street for pedestrians and cyclists, a simple material palette and a simple organisation of trees and furniture.



**Red Lion Street (image credit: Central District Alliance/BDP)**  
 Opportunities for a greener and more comfortable Red Lion Street. Potential opportunities could include: more trees and plants, seats, and livelier spaces to meet or play. Blank gables ends to buildings could incorporate street murals, as part of a contextual driven arts programme. Trees and rain gardens would also help the street adapt to a changing climate and stay comfortable for everyone.

# GREAT QUEEN STREET

The Great Queen Street character area lies to the south of New Oxford Street, between Kingsway and Drury Lane and provides a key gateway to Covent Garden. As well as Great Queen Street itself, the area comprises the area around High Holborn and the network of typically narrow streets, pedestrianised laneways and courtyards to the south, including Stukeley, Macklin, Parker and Newman Streets. It is all within the Seven Dials Conservation Area, apart from a small area around the Selkirk House site.

The area around High Holborn is characterised by large-scale, late 19th and early 20th century blocks fronting a busy three lane thoroughfare. The predominant use is commercial, with a range of shops, banks, offices, theatres and hotels. Piecemeal modern development of a ubiquitous and poor quality has eroded the areas character. Four to nine storey buildings with limited interaction at street level create a canyoning effect. And except for the former Holborn Town Hall, with its Belle Époque flourishes and a cluster of buildings around Drury Lane, there are no buildings of architectural or heritage significance.

The smaller streets to the south of High Holborn are often framed by buildings of good townscape quality, although there are some notable detractors. Several streets are closed off or dominated by parked vehicles, inhibiting pedestrian movement and compromising legibility. There is also a notable lack of street trees and greening.

Great Queen Street itself was laid out around the time of construction of Covent Garden and Lincoln's Inn Fields. It has great importance in the development of street design. Sir John Summerson in 'Georgian London' said that it "put an end to gabled individualism, and provided a discipline for London's streets which was accepted for more than two hundred years

Today the street comprises a mix of offices, pubs, shops and restaurants. The character of the street is greatly influenced by the imposing Freemasons Hall, the central headquarters of English freemasonry. The Hall is Grade II\* listed and is

recognised as one of the finest Art Deco buildings in England. The building contrasts heavily with the domestic scale of the 17th century terraced buildings on the north side, dominating the view eastwards along Long Acre by virtue of its scale and bulk in relation to its surroundings.

Running north to south is Drury Lane, one of the oldest streets in Covent Garden. The street has a colourful history, once a rowdy thoroughfare and the focus of Hogarth's 'The Harlot's Progress' and comprising notorious slum housing before being cleared in the early 20th Century.

The street provides an important walking route, connecting The British Museum southwards to Strand-Aldwych and the river. Here, Drury Lane comprises predominantly two to four storey terraced buildings, originally domestic, now with a fine grain of independent shops at ground floor. There are some noteworthy 19th century buildings. On Drury Lane pedestrians are typically confined to narrow pavements, adjacent to parked cars, and alfresco uses are often perched beside the road.

The area feels transitory, a place to move through rather than having a recognised identity and pedestrian movement is often compromised by poor street design and dominance of parked cars. However, it is home to one of the oldest established residential communities within the Holborn Vision area. This enclave makes an important contribution to the character of the Great Queen Street area.

The small square at Great Queen Street and Drury Lane has the potential as a place to stop and relax with the introduction of green measures to soften the space. There is also the opportunity to introduce Suds and other climate mitigation measures on the surrounding quieter streets as alternative routes to move through the area.

## AREA GUIDANCE

### HV1 - Business and commerce

- Support the provision of Grade A office space and affordable workspace as part of the development opportunity at Selkirk House.

### HV2 – Mixed-use

- Mixed use development at Selkirk House should provide activation of the ground floor uses including retail uses at Museum Street, New Oxford Street and West Central Street.

### HV3 – Supporting residential communities

- The development of Selkirk house should provide new housing, including affordable homes.
- Acknowledge and support the needs of the existing residential community.

### HV4 – Public Realm

- Work closely with Westminster to improve Great Queen Street Square as a greener space that encourages people to sit, relax and socialise and to provide a clear identity to the area.
- Explore opportunities to enhance the experience for pedestrians in the area particularly along Drury Lane.
- Provide a new route connecting New Oxford Street to High Holborn via West Central Street as part of the Selkirk House development opportunity site.

### HV5 - Climate resilience

- Introduce flood mitigation measures in Parker Street, Wild Street and Keeley street that make the streets more attractive, cleaner alternative routes to Great Queen Street and Theatreland to the south and Lincolns Inn to the east.

- Consider opportunities for more tree planting and greening.

### HV6 - Character area

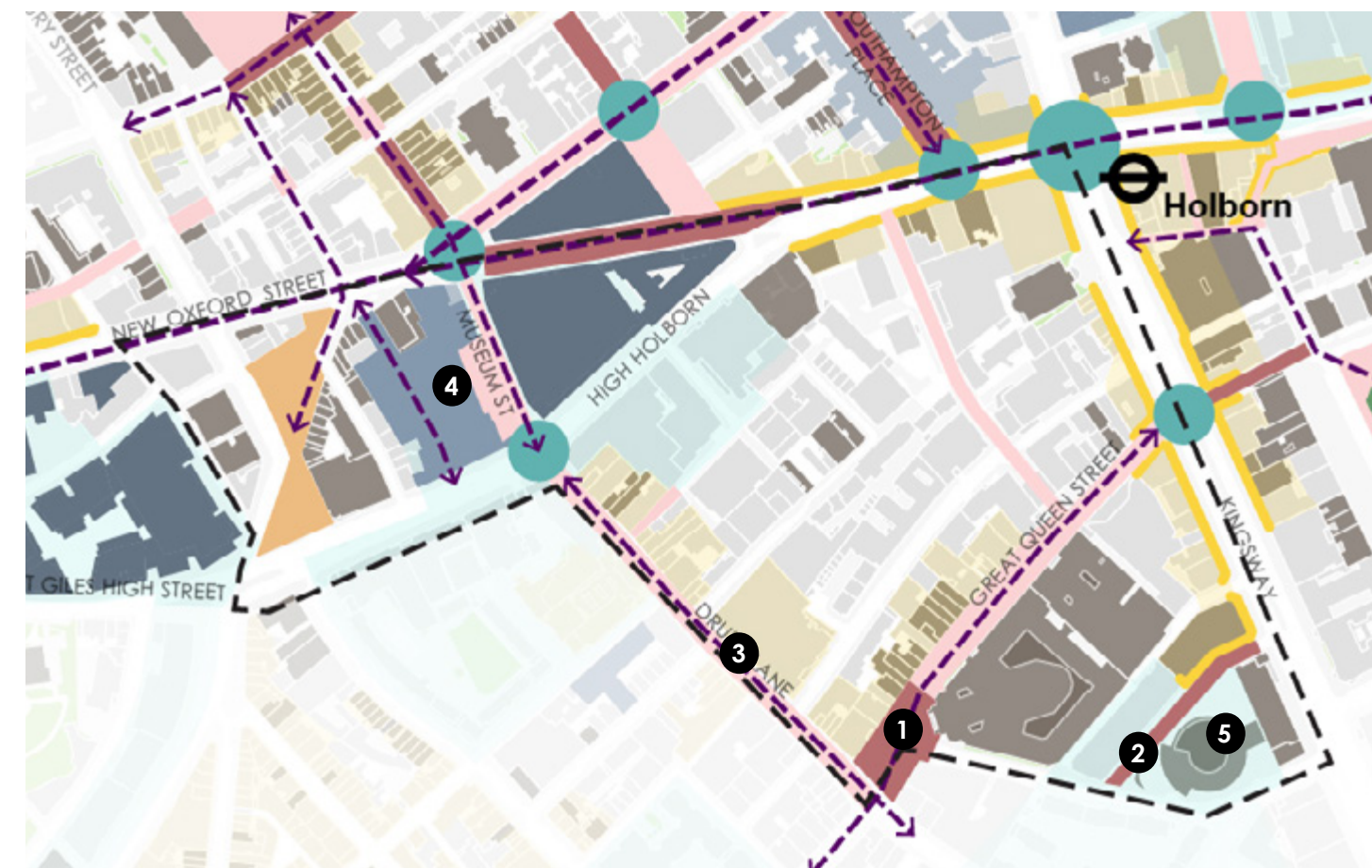
- Development outside of the Conservation Area should contribute to repairing the character of the area through active frontage, mixed use, high-quality contemporary architecture that responds to surrounding historic context.



Proposals for the Space House development (image credit: Seaforth/ Squire and Partners)



Proposals for the Selkirk House redevelopment (image credit: DSDHA)



**KEY**

- Recently completed redevelopment
- Development with planning permission
- Potential future development opportunity
- Recently completed public realm
- New public realm or enhancement of existing public realm
- Potential street closure with public realm improvements
- Enhancement of existing green space
- New/enhanced pedestrian routes
- Improved pedestrian crossing/junction
- Listed building
- Local centre / retail frontage
- Primary frontage
- Area not in Conservation Area
- Character area boundary

## KEY PROJECTS

- Great Queen Street
- Keeley Street
- Drury Lane
- Selkirk House
- Space House



Great Queen Street (image credit: Great Queen Street Properties and the Masonic Charitable Foundation/LDA Design)

Opportunity to transform the street into a beautiful, green and sociable street, creating a fitting setting, celebrating the history of the area. Highway space will be re-assigned through the creation of a one-way route, and the potential removal of a short section of road between Wild Street and Drury Lane. Features could include: widened and uncluttered pavements, high quality outdoor dining, trees and biodiverse planting, pockets of seating, flexibility for events and celebrations.

# LINCOLN'S INN / GRAY'S INN

Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn form a character area that straddles to north and south of High Holborn. Established in the 14th century within medieval manor houses, the Inns of Court of Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn have a unique character in the context of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

They have been major centres for the legal profession for over five hundred years. Their unique character is derived from the marked contrast and transition in scale and sense of enclosure experienced by lawyer's chambers buildings arranged in terraced or courtyard forms. Mature trees, planting and large areas of lawn play a significant role in the character of the areas.

Two larger open spaces at Lincoln's Inn Field and Gray's Inn Gardens are complimented by a network of smaller courtyards and gardens - New Square, South Square, Gray's Inn Square, The Walks and Old Buildings. Glimpsed views along narrow passageways and to adjacent courtyards and gardens add to the character. And despite the sometimes quite imposing terraces and limited interaction at ground floor, the Georgian buildings typically provide good passive surveillance, and the collegiate feel provides a secluded and peaceful ambience. This is in complete contrast to the adjacent busy streets at High Holborn and Gray's Inn Road.

Lincoln's Inn open space is the largest open space in the Vision area and was made a public square in 1894. It is a hugely valuable and valued resource to resident and visitors. Although it provides facilities for sport and recreation it also a place to relax. However wayfinding to it is not clear.

## AREA GUIDANCE

### HV1 - Business and commerce

- Protect the legal quarter uses to support the functioning of the legal quarter. We will continue to work with the legal chambers to understand the impact of changing work patterns on the functioning of the quarter.

### HV4 - Public Realm

- Improve wayfinding to Lincoln Inns Fields, as the largest area of public open space
- Improve the historic alleyways including the public realm at New Turnstile and Gate Street as an attractive and alternative route to Lincoln's Inn.
- Work with landowners to improve access to private open spaces including Gray's Inn fields, Lincoln's Inn Gardens, Gray's Inn, New Square gardens, Old Buildings and Old square
- Work with Landowners to encourage access to the green spaces particularly for residents who live to the east including residents of the Bourne estate.

### HV5 - Climate resilience

- Consider the removal of car parking where not needed and the replacement with green infrastructure.
- Support measures that address the flood risk from surface water at the southern end of Gray's Inn Road adjacent to no. 5.
- Consider opportunities for more tree planting and greening.



Lincoln's Inn Fields (from LDA report)

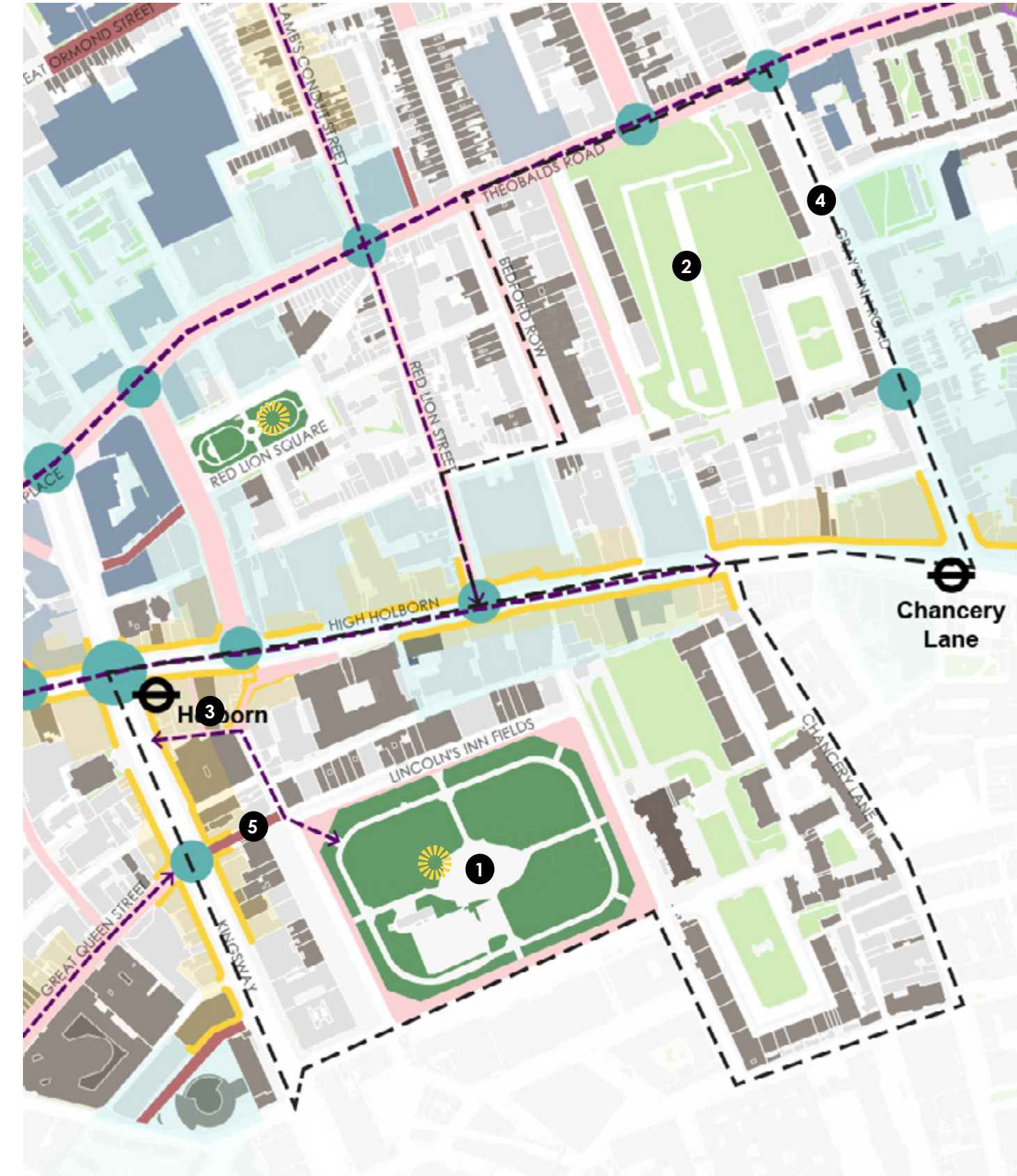


Parking areas around Lincoln's Inn Fields



New Turnstile

Opportunity to enhance the public realm to create a safe and attractive walking route. New paving, catenary lighting and active frontage could provide a welcome alternative for pedestrians on High Holborn.



## KEY

- Recently completed redevelopment
- Development with planning permission
- Potential future development opportunity
- Recently completed public realm
- New public realm or enhancement of existing public realm
- Potential street closure with public realm improvements
- Enhancement of existing green space
- New/enhanced pedestrian routes
- Improved pedestrian crossing/junction
- Listed building
- Local centre / retail frontage
- Primary frontage
- Area not in Conservation Area
- Character area boundary

## KEY PROJECTS

- 1 Lincoln's Inn Fields
- 2 Gray's Inn
- 3 New Turnstile
- 4 Gray's Inn Road
- 5 Remnant Street

# HATTON GARDEN

This character area includes the area to the north of High Holborn, west of Farringdon Road, east of Gray's Inn Road and south-west of Warner Street. Much of the area is covered by the Hatton Garden Conservation Area. Hatton Garden itself is also designated a specialist shopping area founded on the jewellery industry and of national significance. The area also benefits from the new Elizabeth Line station at Farringdon with high demand for grade A office to the east of the area.

In broad terms this area derives much of its character from its robustly detailed industrial, commercial, and residential buildings of the late nineteenth to mid twentieth centuries, laid out on a loose urban grid. Hatton Garden developed on the estate of Ely Palace and became a focus for the jewellery trade, and this influence remains today. The neighbourhood comprises around 70 shops and a further 300 allied trades and jewellery related businesses. Over recent years, it has also become home to a growing range of creative and media industries.

Streets are of human-scale, however typically compromised by degraded public realm, parked cars and motorbikes. Larger footprint commercial buildings are prevalent to the east at Farringdon Road - a hostile, traffic dominated street with a notable lack of trees.

The character area includes Leather Lane market. Historically it was a bric-a-brac market and is now a successful food market that caters for a thriving lunchtime trade. The area also includes the imposing Grade II\* listed Waterhouse building and Brookes Market, one of the few urban squares in the area. Yet the quality of the public realm is poor particularly in Leather Lane and on Hatton garden itself, and in Brookes Market. This can make it feel unwelcoming when dark.

The area to the west of Leather Lane is largely residential, including the Arts & Crafts Bourne Estate and Holborn Mosque. Some of this housing is highly characterful and includes delightful communal gardens with mature trees. This also ranked in the top 10 % of most deprived wards in England and most at risk to the impacts of

climate change. Between the housing, an informal east-west route provides an important connection through back alleyways towards Gray's Inn. To the northeast, the character changes. Denoted by the redevelopment of the old Royal Mail sorting office at Mount Pleasant, partially complete. This major mixed-use development comprises around 650 new homes which includes 53% affordable homes and over 20,000 sq. ft of commercial and retail space. The six to fifteen storeys buildings are brick, reminiscent of London stock and ground floor frontages comprise cafes and vacant retail units awaiting occupants.

In the specialist area, footfall has struggled to recover since the pandemic having fallen by 52%. It retains a traditional pattern of very high footfall during the day with little at night. However vacancy levels are at their lowest since 2013 – just four vacant units. Demand from other commercial sectors, rising rental costs and the loss of jewellery workspace has represented significant threats to sector. Affordable jewellery workspace is therefore the priority use within Hatton Garden.

## AREA GUIDANCE

### HV1 - Business and commerce

- Support additional office space, particularly affordable workspace, where it protects and enhances the character of the Conservation Area.
- Support new office space close to the Elizabeth Line station at Farringdon.
- Protect and support jewellery quarter uses as set out in the Local Plan, particularly affordable workspaces.
- Support the provision of affordable workspace along Gray's Inn Road and Chancery Lane particularly to benefit from the success of creative industries here and support local innovation.

- Support measures that improve the functioning of the Leather Lane including storage and food preparation areas.
- Support programmes that encourage local people to become more involved in the market.
- Investigate ways to improve the affordable workspace offer on Leather Lane market particularly where it provide employment for local residents.

### HV3 – Supporting residential communities

- Support the delivery of energy efficiency improvements to Camden's Housing stock including at Brooks Court.
- Support development that provides more homes in the area and particularly affordable homes.

### HV4 – Public Realm

- Consider the reduction in visitor car parking given the excellent public transport connections in this area.
- Improve Hatton Garden public realm to reflect and sustain the functioning of the jewellery Quarter.
- Enhance Leather Lane and the market through improvements to the public realm.
- Support public realm improvements to the Clerkenwell Road gateway to Leather Lane.
- Support west-east access for Bourne estate and Cavendish Mansions residents to improve the experience of walking to where they want to go.
- Improve Brookes Market to create a greener oasis of calm for residents and workers to relax.
- Improve wayfinding through Waterhouse Square to provide pleasant and safe north south routes.
- Consider the impact of extensions to existing buildings on the functioning of Brookes market open space.

### HV5 - Climate resilience

- Support measures that address the flood risk from surface water particularly along Hatton Garden and towards Farringdon.
- Consider opportunities for more tree planting and greening.

### HV6 - Character area

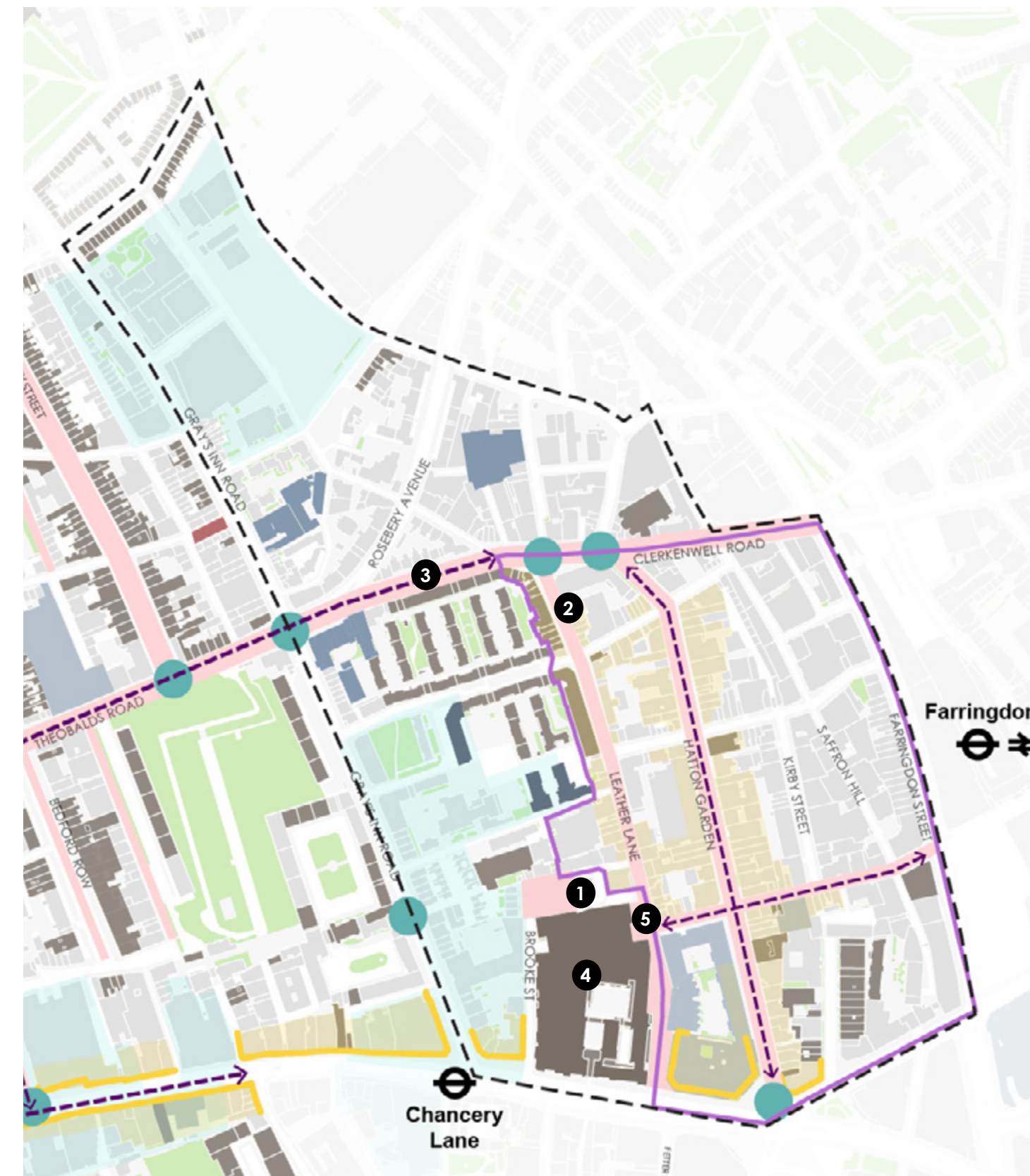
- Support office refurbishment, retrofit and extensions that respond to the historic character of the area and provides affordable workspace and homes.



28 Greville Street, office refurbishment in Hatton Garden



Fleet Valley Pocket Park, completed in 2023



**KEY**

- Recently completed redevelopment
- Development with planning permission
- Potential future development opportunity
- Recently completed public realm
- New public realm or enhancement of existing public realm
- Potential street closure with public realm improvements
- Enhancement of existing green space
- New/enhanced pedestrian routes
- Improved pedestrian crossing/junction
- Listed building
- Local centre / retail frontage
- Primary frontage
- Area not in Conservation Area
- Designated Hatton Garden Area
- Character area boundary

### KEY PROJECTS

- 1 Brookes Market
- 2 Leather Lane
- 3 Clerkenwell Road corridor
- 4 Waterhouse Square
- 5 Leather Lane South



**Brookes Market**  
The vision is to create an oasis of calm in contrast to the hubbub of Leather Lane, Gray's Inn Road and Holborn. The design could exploit the existing qualities of the space such as the mature plane trees and surrounding architecture. Features could include: biodiverse rain gardens and low level planting, tree pruning to allow more light to penetrate into the square, festoon lighting, rationalised bin storage, pedestrian priority surrounding streets.



**Junction Leather Lane/Clerkenwell Road**  
Potential for a new public square at this key gateway. The design removes the existing clutter and provides a high-quality setting to surrounding buildings of architectural quality. Features could include: reference to Italian heritage of area through specific design features, high quality natural stone paving surface, raised table for easier crossing and accommodate multiple desire lines, seating.



**Hatton Garden**  
Potential for a new 'Diamond Route' – beautiful and unified streets that provide a collective identity and reflect the areas association with jewellery and craftsmanship. The re-designed streets would help to create a destination shopping experience to support visitors meandering from shop to shop looking for that special jewellery purchase.



**Leather Lane South (image credit: Central District Alliance/BDP)**  
Potential to provide a greener and more comfortable street, catering for all. Features could include: retention of existing trees, 'local marker' identifying Leather Lane, cycle and E-scooter parking, biodiverse planting, opportunities for space to meet, sit and rest, retention of spill out space, tables and chairs to the north for market visitors, decluttering to improve circulation.



# TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

This character area is the Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area and has seen considerable change over the past decade with Central St Giles in the early 2000s followed by Centre Point, The Post Building, The Outernet and The Earnshaw along with new development across the borough Boundary in Westminster. The Elizabeth Line opened in 2022 and has seen a significant increase in station users who have benefitted from the improved public realm and new public square at St Giles which was delivered as part of Camden's West End Project. While most of the development is office, there are music and entertainment uses around Denmark Street and The Outernet that have ensured this area continues to be the heart of the central London music scene with two new live venues and been opened since the pandemic.

Its footfall has recovered well and nearly back to pre-pandemic levels with a greater reliance on workers. Vacancy rates remain low on Tottenham Court Road but with a high turnover reflecting the dynamism of the area. Denmark street, a specialist shopping area associated with the music industry, has seen lower footfall levels (a reduction in footfall of over 60% and vacancy rate of 22%) due to the temporary impacts of construction of the Outernet. However this mixed use development is predicted to increase footfall in the area, being music focused, with two live venues including the largest in central London, music related boutique hotel, restaurants, music retail and residential including affordable.

Tottenham Court Road has long been associated with the Evening and Night time economy which has been enhanced through the delivery of St Giles. There is an opportunity to promote and grow this area further as a destination for culture particularly by working with cultural organisations such as theatres and music venues.

## AREA GUIDANCE

### HV1 - Business and commerce

- Support the delivery of high grade office that continues to contribute to and support the functioning of the CAZ.
- Maximise the contribution to affordable workspaces either on-site or as off site contributions to be delivered in Hatton Garden and Red Lion and Queen Street areas.

### HV2 – Mixed-use

- Promote and grow the cultural offer in the area that builds on recent development at St Giles Square and Denmark Street.

### HV4 – Public Realm

- Ensure approaches that encourage inclusivity and diversity of the public realm particularly in Central St Giles.
- Explore opportunity for public realm improvements at Bainbridge Street.
- Work with Westminster Council to improve the quality of the public realm.

### HV5 - Climate resilience

- Consider opportunities for more tree planting and greening.

### HV6 - Character area

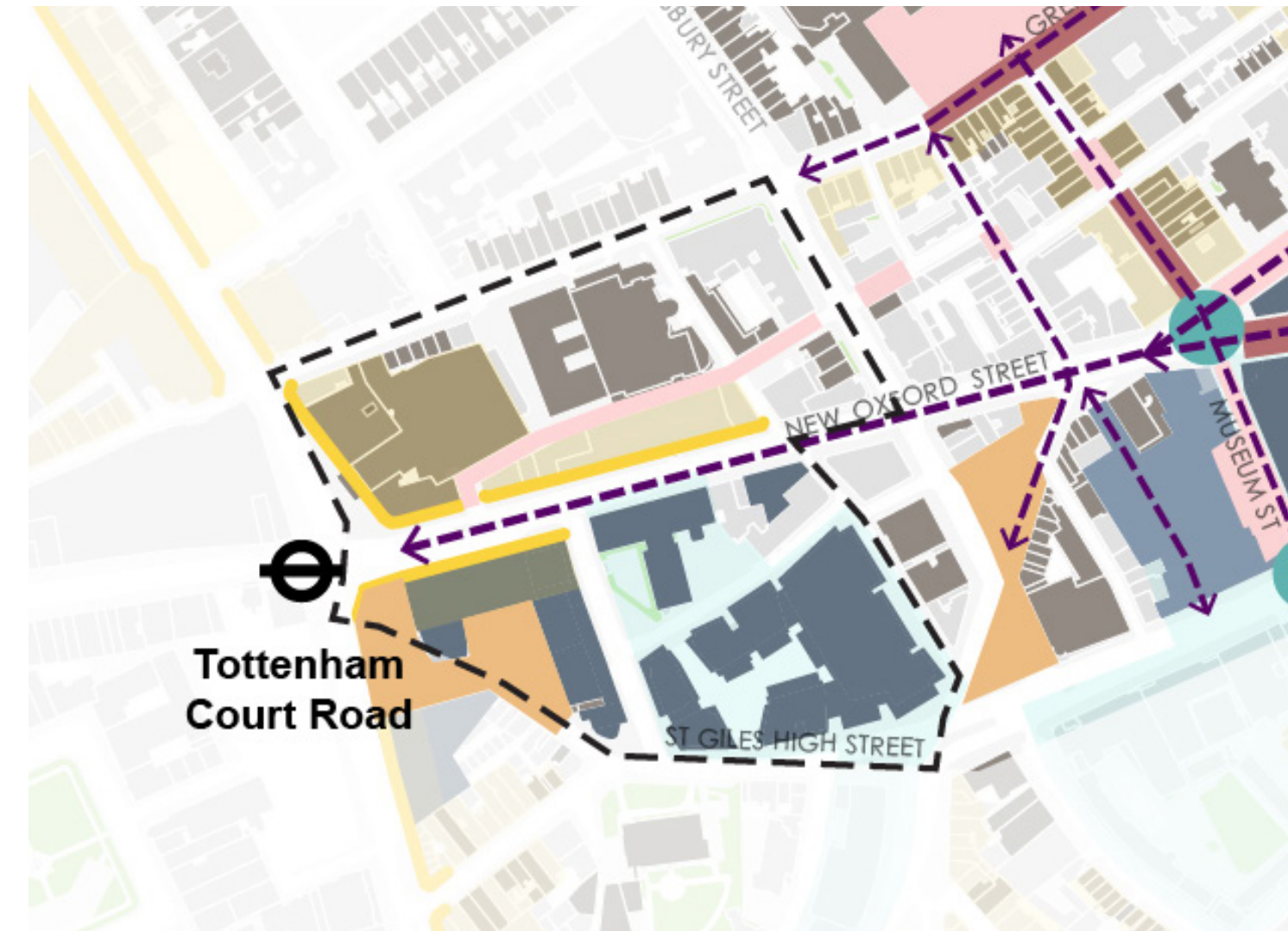
- Protect and enhance the historic fabric and character of the area particularly on Denmark Street



Centre Point and St Giles Square, recently completed



The Outernet in St Giles



**KEY**

- Recently completed redevelopment
- Development with planning permission
- Potential future development opportunity
- Recently completed public realm
- New public realm or enhancement of existing public realm
- Potential street closure with public realm improvements
- Enhancement of existing green space
- New/enhanced pedestrian routes
- Improved pedestrian crossing/junction
- Listed building
- Local centre / retail frontage
- Primary frontage
- Area not in Conservation Area
- Character area boundary



Tottenham Court Road - Residents footfall by hour

# HIGH HOLBORN, SOUTHAMPTON ROW AND KINGSWAY

Southampton Row and Kingsway (A4200) form a strategic north/south connection between Russell Square and Strand-Aldwych. Kingsway was built as part of major highway changes in the 1900s, triggered by a desire to remedy overcrowding, poverty, ill-health, and crime associated with the slums at that time. The street is one of the broadest in London, averaging 24m wide in Southampton Row and extending to 30m wide at Kingsway. The street has a grandiose feel, comprising prestigious commercial buildings in neo-classical style, generally uniform in materials, scale and massing and following a consistent building line. It provides a complete example of large-scale Edwardian architecture. The street comprises wide pavements and includes an avenue of mature London-plane trees, contributing significantly to the overall boulevard character, reminiscent of many Parisian streets.

The High Holborn Corridor comprises New Oxford Street in the west at the junction with Shaftesbury Avenue and runs past Kingsway and Southampton Row, becoming Holborn at its eastern junction with Gray's Inn Road, as it runs towards Farringdon Road.

On High Holborn, the buildings are typically of a greater architectural and historic quality. There is a diversity of materials - red brick and stone, together with yellow stock brick and stucco characterise older buildings, whereas buildings from the 1960s insertions tend to be concrete or glass. Notwithstanding this, the dominance of vehicles, narrow pavements and clutter at the junction, compromises the overall pedestrian experience. Heading towards the city and Chancery Lane the street broadens out, and the large concrete Holborn Gate building responds accordingly, stepping back to meet the building line at the grade II listed Staple Inn. The generous width of the street creates an airier character, however this is again compromised by the large proportion of space dedicated to vehicles, with a noticeable lack of trees, planting and opportunities for rest and spend time.

Due to the high volumes of traffic these road feel noisy, cluttered, unclean and have very high

air pollution. The exit from Holborn tube station can feel disconcerting and unwelcoming due to the impacts of street clutter and the kiosks. The Central London Frontage is centred around the station, extends along High Holborn, Kingsway, and part of New Oxford Street, with primary retail frontages along the whole length of High Holborn and at the northern end of Kingsway. Further south along Kingsway, the frontages are defined as secondary.

Retail uses are characterised by High Street multiple outlets and convenience stores with food, drink office and entertainment uses interspersed. There is a concentration of F&B uses close to Holborn Station, with restaurants dominating the southern part of the secondary frontages on Kingsway.

High Holborn / Kingsway is designated as a CAZ Retail Cluster in the London Plan 2021 with high potential for commercial growth and potential for incremental residential growth.

Footfall levels dropped drastically at the beginning of the pandemic period with some gradual growth as 2020 progressed, but then dropping back again in early 2021. From late 2021 onwards, footfall seems to have stabilised, but it is considerably lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Trade from Camden residents only represents about 15% of total sale. The reliance on the working population means the area experiences significantly reduced footfall at weekends. This area is the second worst performing major retail centre in Camden in terms of net absorption and it should be noted that vacancy in the area has dramatically increased since 2017 to reach 15.73% in 2022. This suggests a decline of the area as a retail destination and a lack of demand from potential occupiers.

The Holborn Tunnels projects, a proposal to turn London's Kingsway Exchange Tunnels into a subterranean tourist attraction, has recently been submitted to planning. It is predicted to draw in up to 2 million visitors a year.

## AREA GUIDANCE

### HV1 - Business and commerce

- Support the retail functioning of the area in the protected retail frontages along High Holborn and Kingsway.
- Enhance the public realm to improve the experience working and visiting and shopping in the area.
- Expand the offer to meet broader customer base and widen ENTE offer in local plan areas.
- Support the Kingsway Exchange Tunnels as a tourist attraction.

### HV2 – Mixed-use

- Protect retail frontages from change of use to residential in accordance with the Article 4 direction.
- Outside of the retail frontages, support active ground-floor uses that contribute to the diversity of the offer and encourage footfall.

### HV4 – Public Realm

- Tackle the predominance of traffic by improving the pedestrian and wayfinding experience to make the area more attractive to visit.
- Remove street clutter along key pedestrian routes and in areas particularly busy during rush hour such as around Holborn tube station.
- For streets with retail frontage eg. High Holborn ensure any changes to the public realm enhance space for pedestrians.
- Support the pedestrianisation of the eastern section of New Oxford Street and introduce public realm interventions such as greening, new places to meet and spend time, opportunities for street activity.

### HV5 - Climate resilience

- Explore opportunities to introduce climate mitigation measures such as Sustainable urban Drainage Systems and greening.



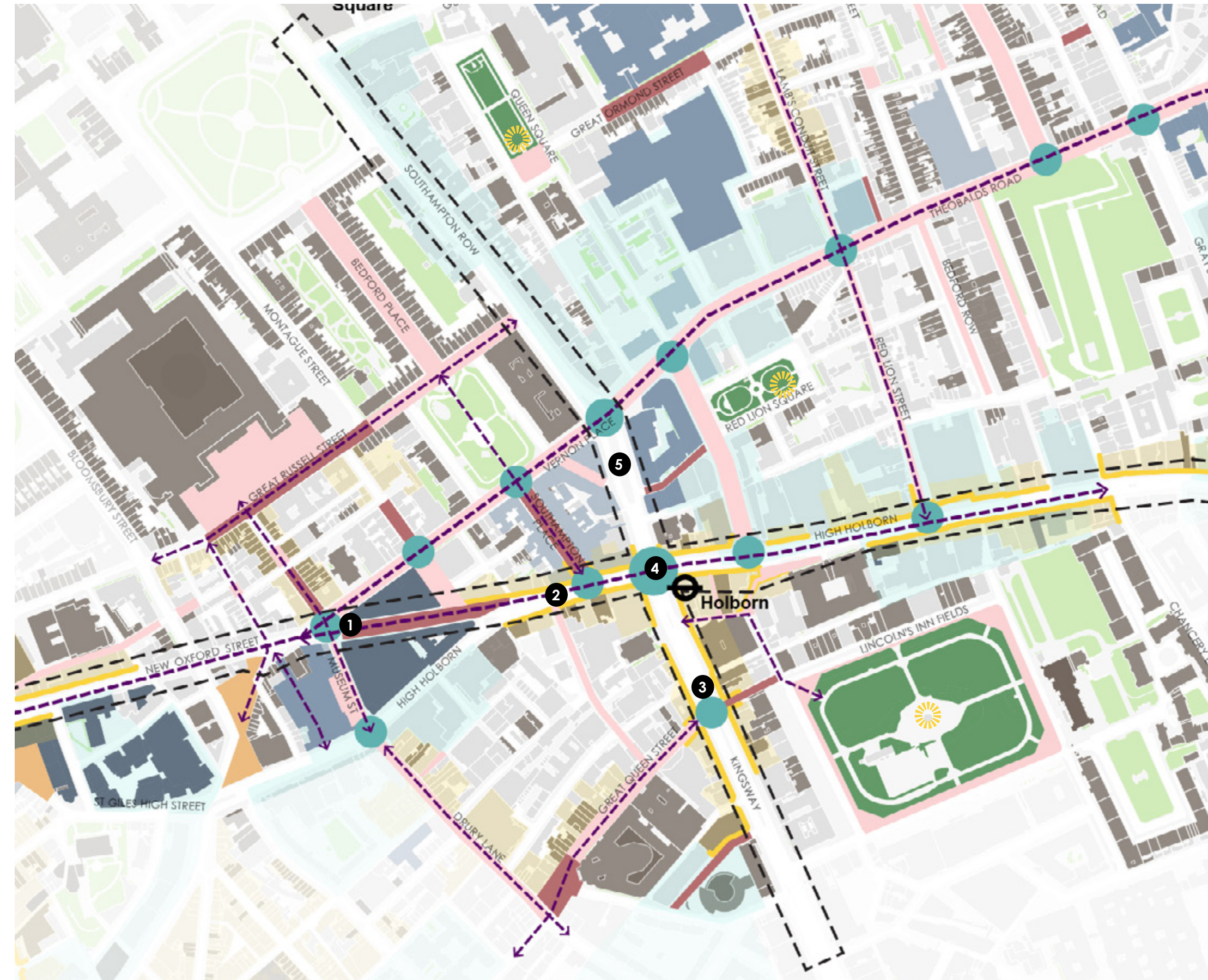
Holborn tube station from the junction (from LDA report)



Kingsway (from LDA report)



Proposals for the Kingsway Exchange Tunnels project (image credit: DBox)



## KEY

- Recently completed redevelopment
- Development with planning permission
- Potential future development opportunity
- Recently completed public realm
- New public realm or enhancement of existing public realm
- Potential street closure with public realm improvements
- Enhancement of existing green space
- New/enhanced pedestrian routes
- Improved pedestrian crossing/junction
- Listed building
- Local centre / retail frontage
- Primary frontage
- Area not in Conservation Area
- Character area boundary

## KEY PROJECTS

- New Oxford Street
- High Holborn
- Kingsway
- High Holborn/Kingsway junction
- Kingsway Exchange Tunnels

# HIGH HOLBORN, SOUTHAMPTON ROW AND KINGSWAY



**High Holborn Junction**  
The vision for the area is to create a new welcoming and uncluttered arrival space. This will relocate the existing kiosks and remove any unnecessary street clutter. It will improve paving and introduce new wayfinding to key destinations, such as The British Museum.



**New Oxford Street/High Holborn**  
Potential street closure to create a new safe pedestrian and cycle connection, providing an opportunity to create a new type of public space for London. Potential for improvements to the gateway coming from the east (Holborn Station) and to the setting of the Holborn Town Hall building.



**New Oxford Street**  
Potential street closure to create a new safe pedestrian and cycle connection, providing an opportunity to create a new type of public space for London. The vision is to create a street with a unique sense of place within Holborn, whilst providing opportunity for activation throughout the day and at night. Features might include: vertical gardens, biodiverse rainwater planting and signature trees, incidental play and seating, as well as new kiosks with alfresco seating.

# PRIORITIES FOR DELIVERY



## APPROACH TO DELIVERY

Holborn is in a unique position to be able to deliver the objectives of the Vision. By developing partnerships that manage investment and deliver responsive and relevant interventions that make Holborn a better place to live, work and visit.

The 2019 draft focussed on the commercial and business sectors. This revised document, whilst continuing to provide an environment that encourages business to thrive ensures that by investing back into Holborn in terms of exceptional public realm with a climate resilience, the benefits can be shared.

Achieving net Zero by 2030 has cost implications but the investment by the private sector in Holborn particularly, is a great opportunity to meet that target.

All developments and investments, large and small will be expected to play their part in delivery. In combination these have the potential to be transformational. Through the Vision, the Council will foster partnerships with developers, landowners and Holborn communities to coordinate regeneration and investment towards the shared goals.

## HOLBORN LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Holborn Vision has been produced alongside work on the TfL sponsored Holborn Liveable Neighbourhoods (HLN) Project and engagement on HLN is taking place in parallel with consultation on the draft Holborn Vision. HLN is an extremely ambitious project that seeks to transform the public realm across the Holborn area and is a high priority for TfL and Business LDN as well as being Camden's largest and highest priority public realm scheme. The project is likely to be delivered over a number of years and in different phases as funding becomes available. It is also likely to be delivered through a number of different funding sources including TfL, Camden Capital

Programme, Business Improvement Districts, Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy, direct contributions from landowners and funding bids to the Mayor and central Government. More detail on the funding of this project will be contained in a subsequent report to Camden's Cabinet but as a draft supplementary planning document the Vision is clear that HLN is the highest priority infrastructure project within its boundary and that all development proposals will be expected to contribute funding to this project via Section 106. HLN is also a priority investment project in the Camden Transport Strategy (CTS), being defined as an 'Investment Priority Area' (IP1b in CTS).

## DEVELOPMENT SITES

There are a number of potential development sites in the area that will play a direct role in delivery and included in Camden's site allocations. All development sites, large and small will be expected to play a proportional role in delivering on the vision and objectives. This will be through direct delivery on-site and through financial contributions (where appropriate).

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) AND SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS

Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Contributions will be sought from qualifying developments in accordance with the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. These will be utilised to deliver on the priorities outlined in the Vision and to reflect the approaches set out in the character areas.

We will also explore the use of section 278 agreements to maximise the delivery of public realm improvements on the highway.

Local CIL is a potential source of funds and we will work with ward members and local communities to establish priorities to make the best use of the contributions. There is expected to be a particular

focus on delivering climate resilience and public realm infrastructure and supporting the provision of affordable workspace.

## WORKING WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The diverse business community of Holborn and Hatton Garden are represented by two BIDs; CDA and the Hatton Garden BID. The BIDs and the business community are key partners in delivering this vision. We will work with them to investigate ways in which we can maximise the benefit of their contributions to the Holborn area.

## CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Continued engagement with local residents and community groups will be essential to the delivery of the Vision. We will use Good Life Camden framework to support better outcomes for Camden's residents.

## CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Construction management is a key issue for Holborn. The Vision area is within the Central London Impact Area and the Air Quality Management Area which seeks to manage construction activities and their potential impacts. With a high level of development activity at multiple sites and construction traffic sometimes in proximity to residential areas, all development sites are required to submit a Construction Management Plan (CMP) or Demolition Management Plan (DMP). These need to take account of cumulative impacts generated by other nearby construction sites. More information can be found on the CMP page on the Council's website.



**St-Giles-in-the-Fields Churchyard Renovation Project**  
(Photo credit: Wynne-Williams Associates Ltd)

The churchyard is maintained as a public park by Camden Council. Section 106 monies and the Mayor of London's Pocket Parks Fund funded the renovation in 2014.

# SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES

## PLANS, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

### National

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning practice guidance

### London

London Plan (2021)

London Plan Guidance and Supplementary Planning Guidance

### Camden

We Make Camden We-Make-Camden-Vision.pdf

Camden Local Plan (2015) and draft new Local Plan (2024)

Camden Planning Guidance

Conservation area appraisals

Affordable workspace strategy

Camden Climate Action Plan Camden Climate Action Plan

Diversity in the Public Realm Strategy 2023

Parks for Health Strategy 2022-2030

Camden Transport Strategy 2019-2041

Camden Flood Risk Management Strategy 2022-2027

Camden Clean Air Strategy 2019-2034 Camden Clean Air Strategy

Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026

Camden's Biodiversity Strategy

Green Space Investment Programme

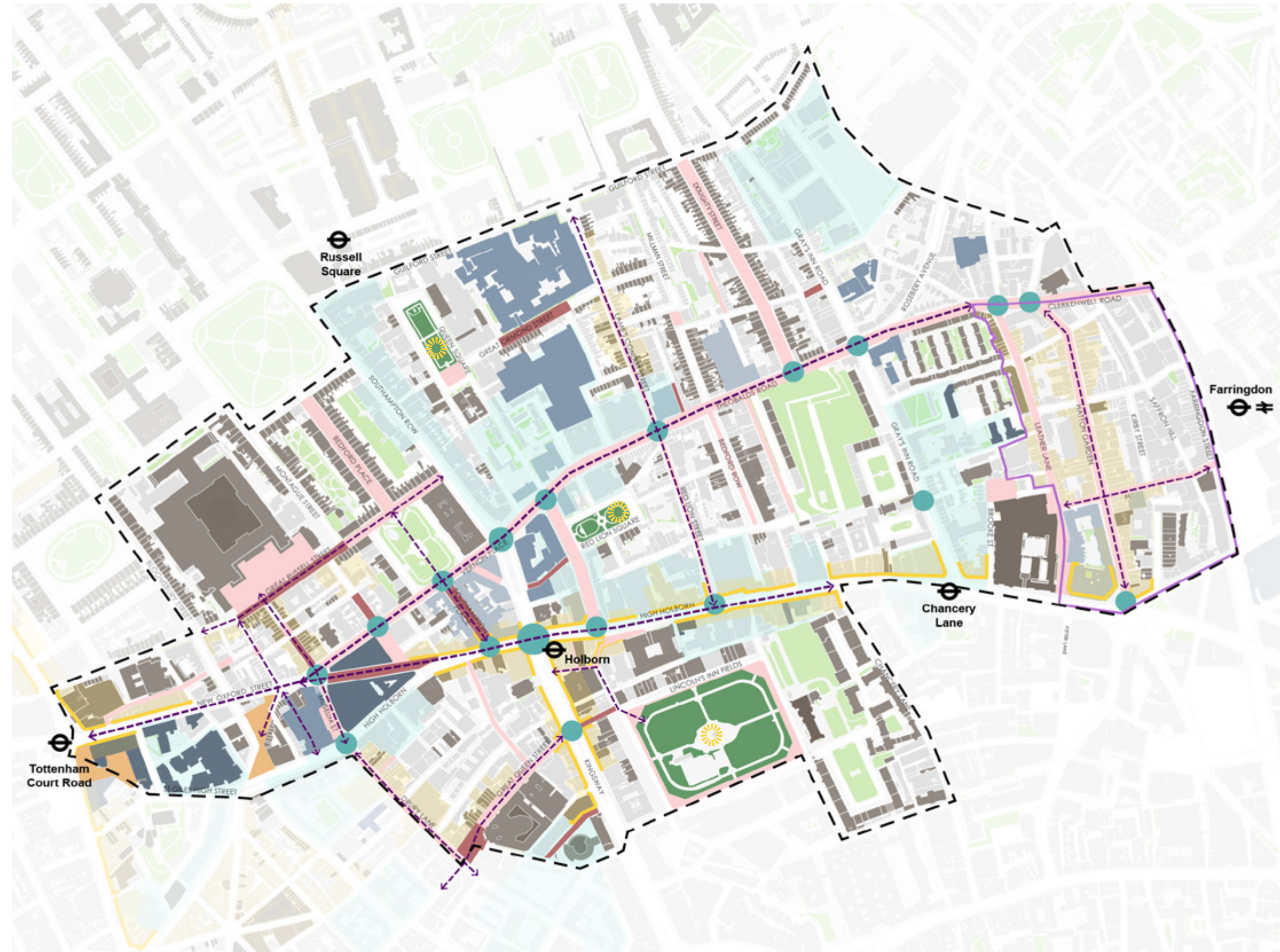
Camden Business Charter

## OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

London Borough of Camden Economic Needs assessment (2023)

The Economic Future of the Central Activities Zone Phase 1 and 2 reports (GLA 2021)

Securing the Future of London's Theatres (Publica 2022)



**KEY**

- Recently completed redevelopment
- Development with planning permission
- Potential future development opportunity
- Recently completed public realm
- New public realm or enhancement of existing public realm
- Potential street closure with public realm improvements
- Enhancement of existing green space
- New/enhanced pedestrian routes
- Improved pedestrian crossing/junction
- Listed building
- Local centre / retail frontage
- Primary frontage
- Area not in Conservation Area
- Designated Hatton Garden Area
- Character area boundary

# APPENDIX 1 - CHANGES SINCE THE LAST DOCUMENT

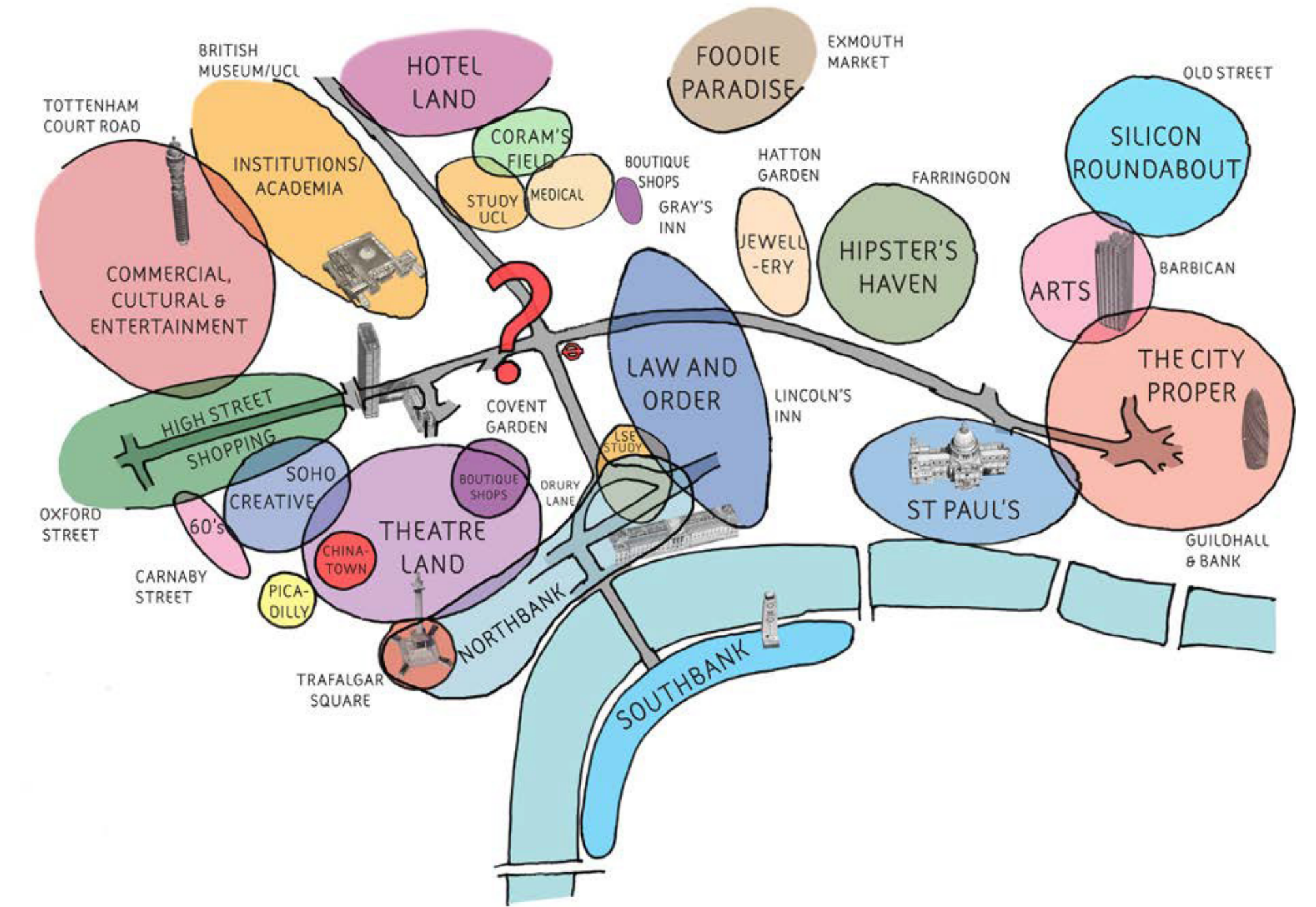
## HOLBORN CONTEXT

The next pages focus on themes that are particular relevant for Holborn and which have been updated since the 2019 version, including a summary of key new policies and strategies that the Holborn Vision should build on.

The Holborn Vision area covers 120 hectares of Camden at the southern end of the borough. It includes the Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area and the Holborn Growth area as designated in the current local plan. It has a wealth nationally and internationally important buildings such as the British Museum and Great Ormond Street Hospital. The whole area is included in the Central Activities Zone, ULEZ, Air Quality Focus Area and much of it by Conservation areas. Many of the buildings are also covered by an Article 4 Directive introduced in 2023 which requires planning permission for a change of use from use Class E (offices and retail) to residential.

The Holborn Vision area has 10,500 permanent residents. The key data from the census 2021 indicates that there are fewer families living in the area than in Camden more generally with less under 14's in Holborn (11%) than Camden (14.4%) and 45% single households in comparison to 39% in Camden. 74% of residents live in blocks of flats, 18% less than the Camden average. 28% live in socially rented homes, 5% more than the Camden average. 47% of residents are from Black, Asian and minority groups compared with 40% in Camden of which 13% are Bangladeshi whilst the figure for Camden is 6.7%. 78% of residents have no cars compared with a Camden average 64%.

In relation to religion, there are 4.8% Jewish residents with a Camden average 1.1% and 19.8% Muslim residents in comparison to 16.1% in Camden as a whole.



City identity diagram (from LDA report)

## HERITAGE AND CHARACTER

Holborn is an area of historic importance and of rich and varied character, defined by its townscape, land uses and communities. In the past five years, the opening of the Elizabeth Line in 2022 and new developments have changed the character of parts of Holborn. This section highlights some of these changes and also responds to feedback from consultation (that highlighted there wasn't much focus on residential in the 2019 version) by focusing on the mixed and varied character and uses in Holborn.

### SUMMARY OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Holborn is a historic place with some of London's most important listed buildings and conservation areas, as well as historic garden squares

- Areas within Holborn are of distinct character, exemplified by the varied townscape and diverse mix of land uses

- Some of the more modern buildings have unsuccessfully related to Holborn's rich architectural and historic surroundings

- More recent development has been of higher design quality, responding better and enhancing Holborn's special character

### RELEVANT POLICIES

#### CAMDEN DESIGN GUIDANCE

The following guidance is relevant to future development within the Holborn area:

**High quality contemporary design:** New buildings should achieve the highest standards of contemporary design whilst acknowledging the prevailing scale, mass, form and rhythm created by the historic pattern of development

**A fine grain:** Development should restore or maintain a fine grained street, resisting plot amalgamation

**Draw on historic context:** Development should reflect the materiality, detailing, texture and colour of the historic context

**Consider views:** Development proposals should consider the effect on strategic, local and townscape views

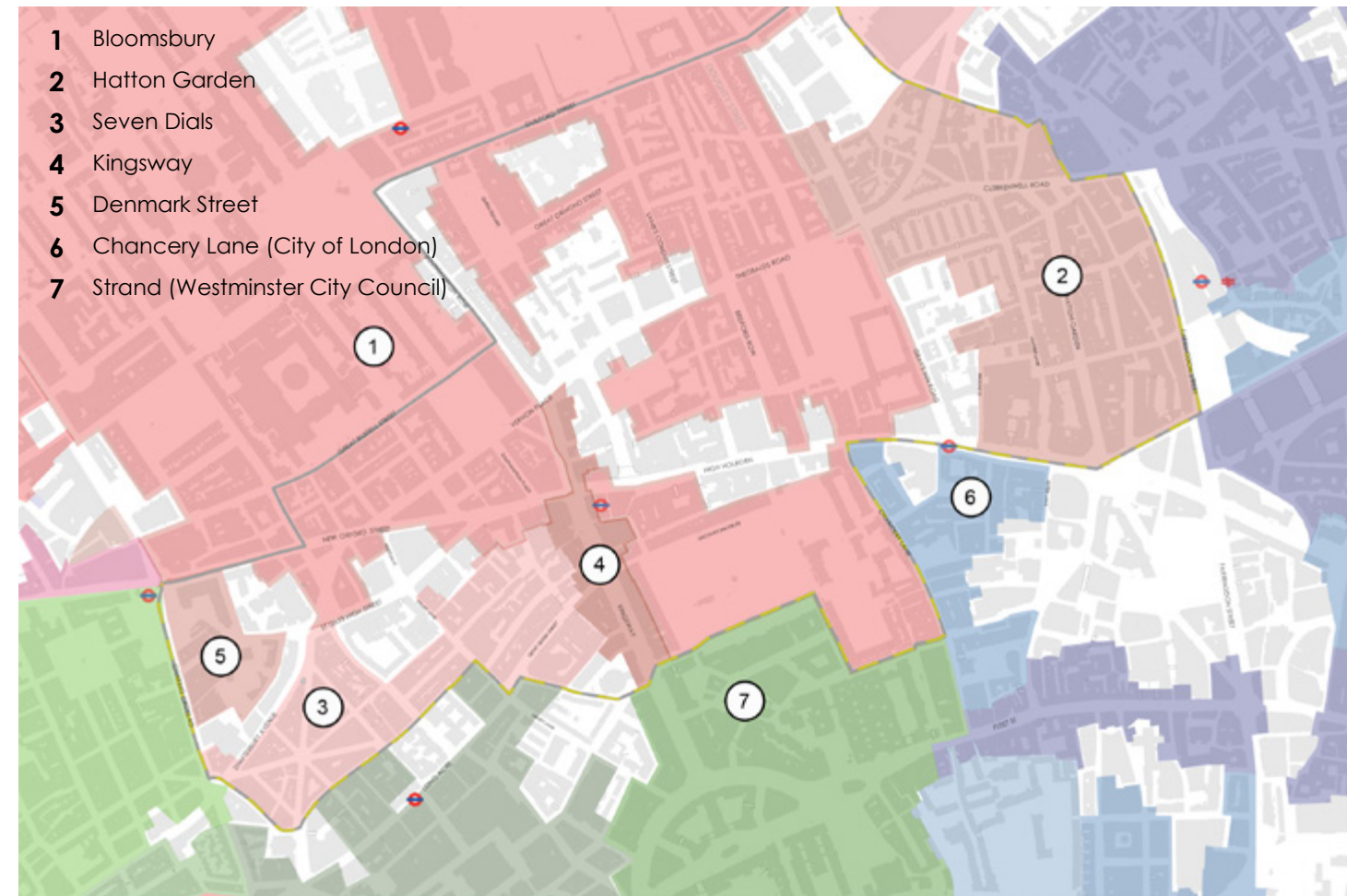
**Activate ground floors:** Development should prioritise ground floor retail uses over office lobbies on designated frontages and other appropriate locations and smaller units are preferred.

**Celebrate heritage:** Heritage assets should be maintained as the foundation of the street's character

### CONSERVATION AREAS

Most of Holborn is covered by Conservation Areas (CA's) and associated appraisals. CA's are areas of land that have been designated or labelled as being of special architectural or historic interest and recognises the importance of the area as a whole. They also protect individual buildings and trees which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Conservation areas are not created to stop future development but to ensure that new buildings fit in with the existing special character of the area.

The most extensive is Bloomsbury Conservation Area (2011) with Hatton Garden Conservation area (2017) to the east. Kingsway Conservation Area (2001) covers Kingsway south from Theobalds Road. Denmark Street Conservation area (2010) is centred on the area to the south of New Oxford Street. Part of the Seven Dials Conservation Area (1998) around Great Queen Street is also included.



Conservation Areas in the Holborn Vision area

- Camden Conservation Areas
- City of London Conservation Areas
- Westminster Conservation Areas

### HOLBORN'S HISTORY

Holborn's fascinating history can be seen in the streetscape, land uses and communities of today. This has informed the approach to celebrating the unique character areas in Holborn which the vision seeks to enhance.

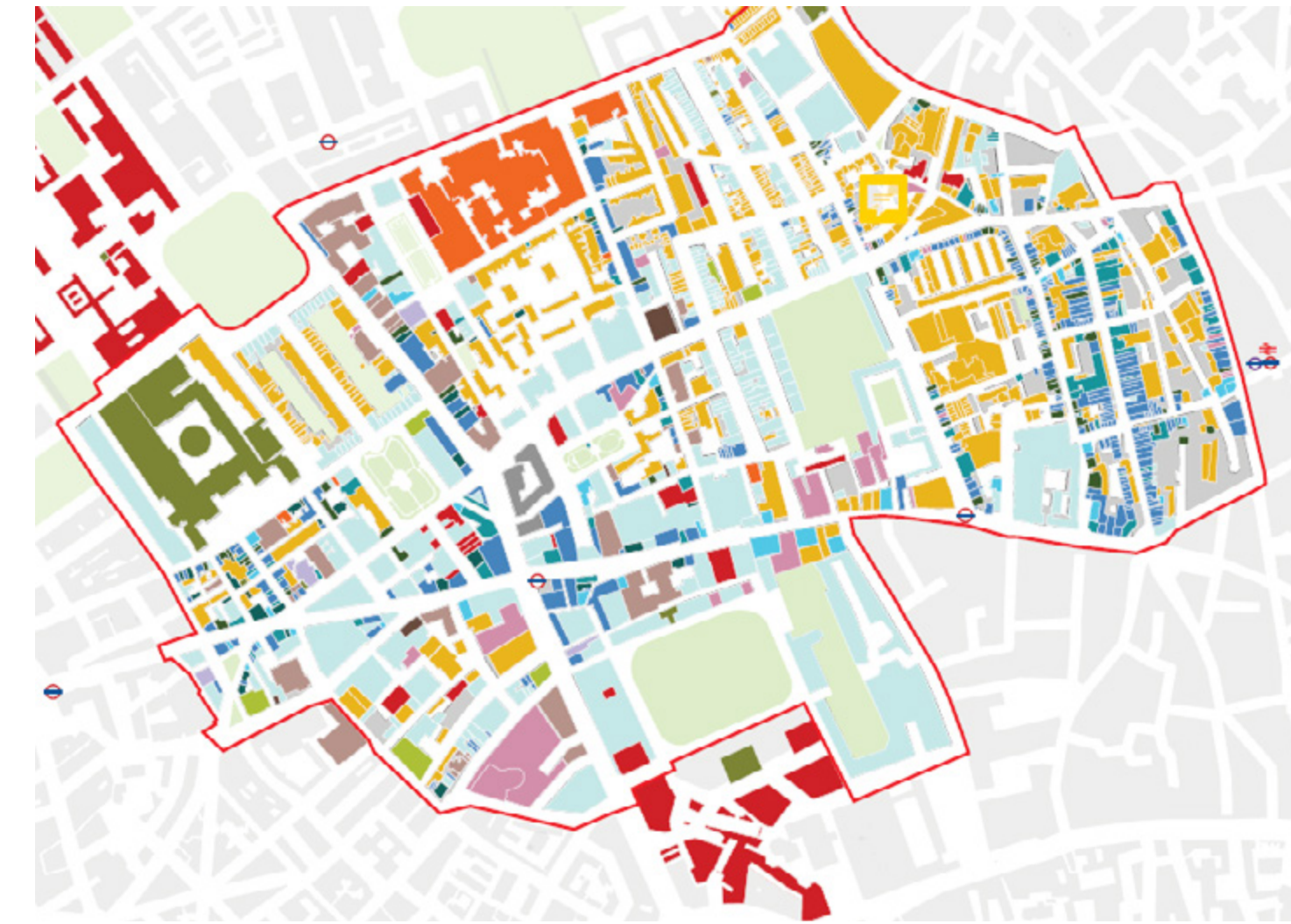
Although invisible today, the River Fleet has shaped the landscape today. Holborn's origins date back to when The Roman Road led westward crossing the river at today's Holborn Viaduct, along what is now High Holborn and Drury Lane. Ely Palace, west of the River Fleet near the Holborn Bridge was the London residence of the Bishop of Ely from 1292 to the late 18th century.

Migration has shaped the development of business and commerce in the area. Two waves of Italian immigration in the 19th century led to the area being called Little Italy. The first wave of Italians were skilled makers of mirrors, barometers, and thermometers but the second wave were poor, surviving on street trading. In 1851 a third of the population were street musicians while by 1900 there were some 900 ice cream makers and vendors based in the area. What followed has made Hatton Garden internationally famous. Particularly with many Jewish refugees escaping Europe and it became renowned for the jewellery making and gem selling.

At the same time, the British Museum and Great Ormond Street hospital were built. The area became known for writers and anti-establishment activists. At the same time much of the area has some of the worst slums in Europe. Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist located Fagin's den of thieves in the vicinity of Saffron Hill. The arrival of New Oxford Street attempted to impose order including with the slum clearance of the notoriously squalid St Giles Rookery.

By the early 20th century, the new roads including Theobalds Road, Southampton Row and Kingsway starts to sever the area into enclaves. The opening of Kingsway, London's only grand north-south avenue after Regent Street, served not to reunite Holborn's various districts but to help divide the area into quadrants.

This was further exacerbated as areas of Holborn were extensively damaged in the Second World War and extensive re-development continued to break up pedestrian connections and reduce permeability. This is acutely apparent in areas to the east of Gray's Inn Road, around Theobalds Road and at Red Lion Square that led to the creation of the Procter Street gyratory.



Ground floor land use map (from LDA report) - A variety of landuses define the character areas in Holborn: mixed use around the Museum Quarter, residential to the east, commercial along key routes and south.



Poor quality piecemeal development leading to erosion of historic character and identity



New development within Holborn's historic context - the Bourne Estate (photo credit: Benedict Luxmoore)



## COMMERCIAL/ECONOMIC

Holborn and Covent Garden has the highest employment density in the country which reflects its importance to the Camden and Greater London economies. In certain parts of Holborn the competition for grade A office space and is fierce leading it to be the home for the headquarters of national and international business. For example, GSK will open its new Global Headquarters at the Earnshaw in 2024. This is also the location of choice for SME's, startups and coworking spaces too. Since 2019, a number of commercial developments have been completed in the Holborn area and more are on the pipeline (see opposite page for list).

### SUMMARY OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Central Business Alliance (CDA), the local Business Improvement District, are an excellent and innovative partner that support the thriving business and commercial sectors in Holborn.
- There is huge local potential in people who live in the area and could benefit from living in Holborn.
- The significant amount of office floor space and the culture of innovation should allow the business sector to flex to support measures that tackle the climate emergency.
- Holborn has the thriving Leather Lane Market that can provide jobs and training for local people.

· Given the commercial prowess of Holborn businesses, there is a real opportunity that Commercial development can contribute to a flexible and adaptable public realm across the area.

· There is a strong pressure for high quality office space around the two new Elizabeth Line stations, but less so further away from these stations, and therefore there is a need to carefully consider the future of each of these areas.

## RELEVANT POLICIES

### CAMDEN'S ECONOMIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2023

Camden commissioned an economic needs assessment as evidence to support the draft new Local Plan. It provides a detailed assessment and analysis of Camden's future approach to the provision, protection, release and enhancement of employment land and premises. Camden specialises in highly skilled, high value parts of the economy with the main employment sector office related with information & communication, financial & insurance, and professional, scientific & technical sectors (36.8% and 30.6% respectively).

It concludes positively about Camden's future and highlights the overall need for office space in the Borough. Grade A offices close to public transport such as in the prime locations around Tottenham Court Road and Farringdon stations are the highest performing, with strong demand for refurbished older buildings and the continued popularity of shared and coworking spaces. The creative sector, which has experienced a higher growth than the London average, with a locational preference for The Vision area.

However, it highlights that 16% of offices property do currently comply with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) but by 2030, up to 91% of office properties could be impacted by tighter Energy Performance Certificate(EPC) regulations with heritage buildings often the most challenging to improve. The Study suggests allowing greater flexibility for the change of use of premises where retrofitting is demonstrated to be unviable or unfeasible, such as townhouse conversions or premises located in more marginal employment locations.

75% of London workers now identify with hybrid working up from 37% pre-pandemic levels. These changes in work practices has led to some

downsizing of office space and lower space requirements per full time equivalent office job. Across the vision area, with the exception of the part of Covent Garden, footfall levels have not recovered to pre pandemic levels – see graph.

### AFFORDABLE WORKSPACE

Whilst Camden's economy is strong, too many local residents are not benefiting from the growth that they see around them, which is reflected in the Holborn Vision area. Growth in Camden should be more inclusive so that Camden communities are involved in creating growth and securing affordable workspace and market space is important to support new and diverse entrepreneurship. The article 4 declaration has helped to reduce further loss of commercial space in the areas it covers.

In Holborn, affordable workspace takes a number of forms from working with developers to secure space in new developments and financial contributions to protecting existing affordable workspace in places like Hatton Garden and supporting affordable workspace offers at Leather Lane market.

Lower demand for secondary office space in the Vision area can provide the opportunities for local entrepreneurial SME's and local people seeking good local quality space for networking adding to the vibrancy of local areas.



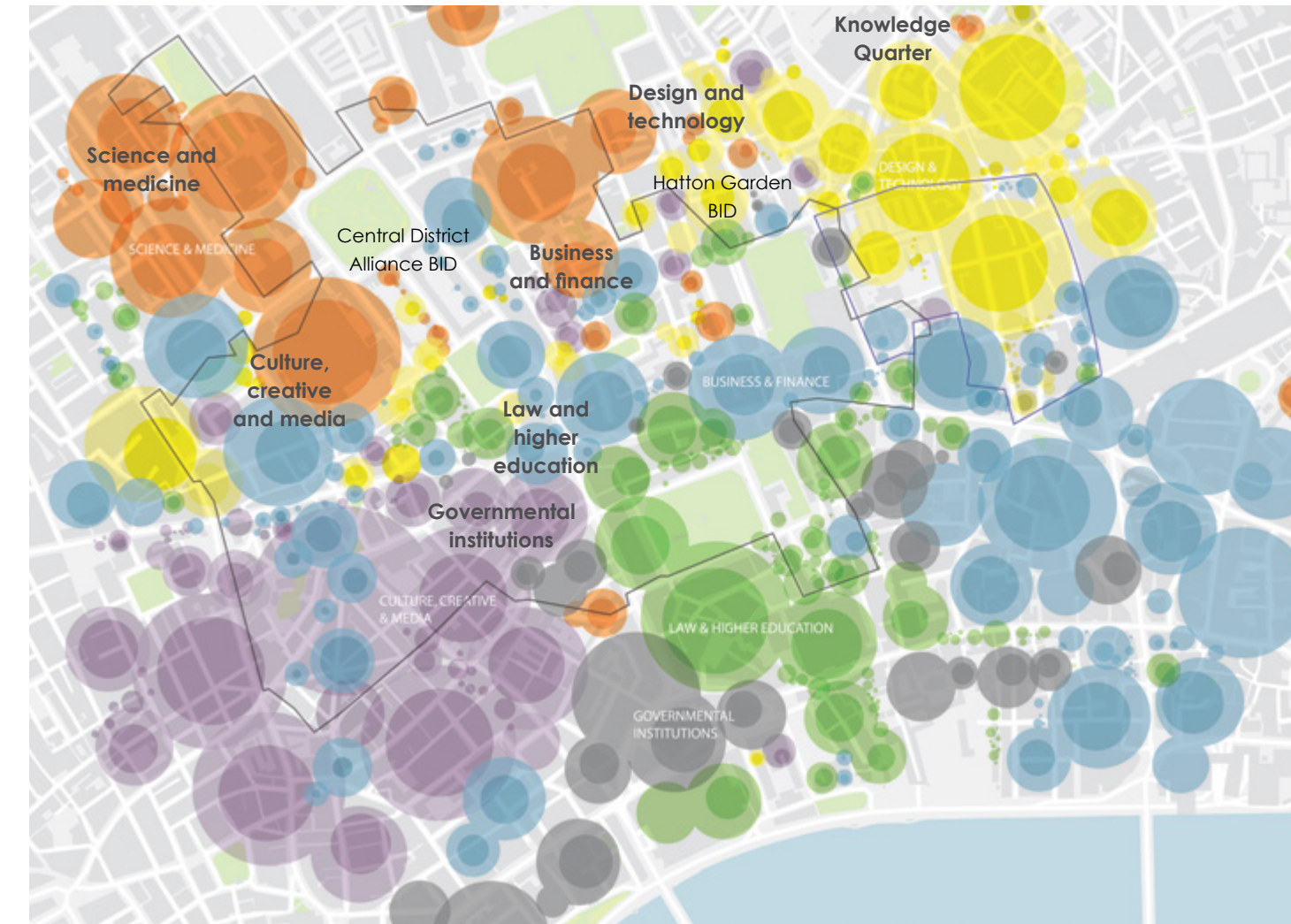
The Post Building was vacant for a number of years before its recent redevelopment for office space



The British Museum was the third most visited attraction in Britain with 4.1m visitors in 2022. This is amongst a wealth of other visitor attractions in the area



Holborn's thriving employment industries have historically been attributed to the higher education and legal industries



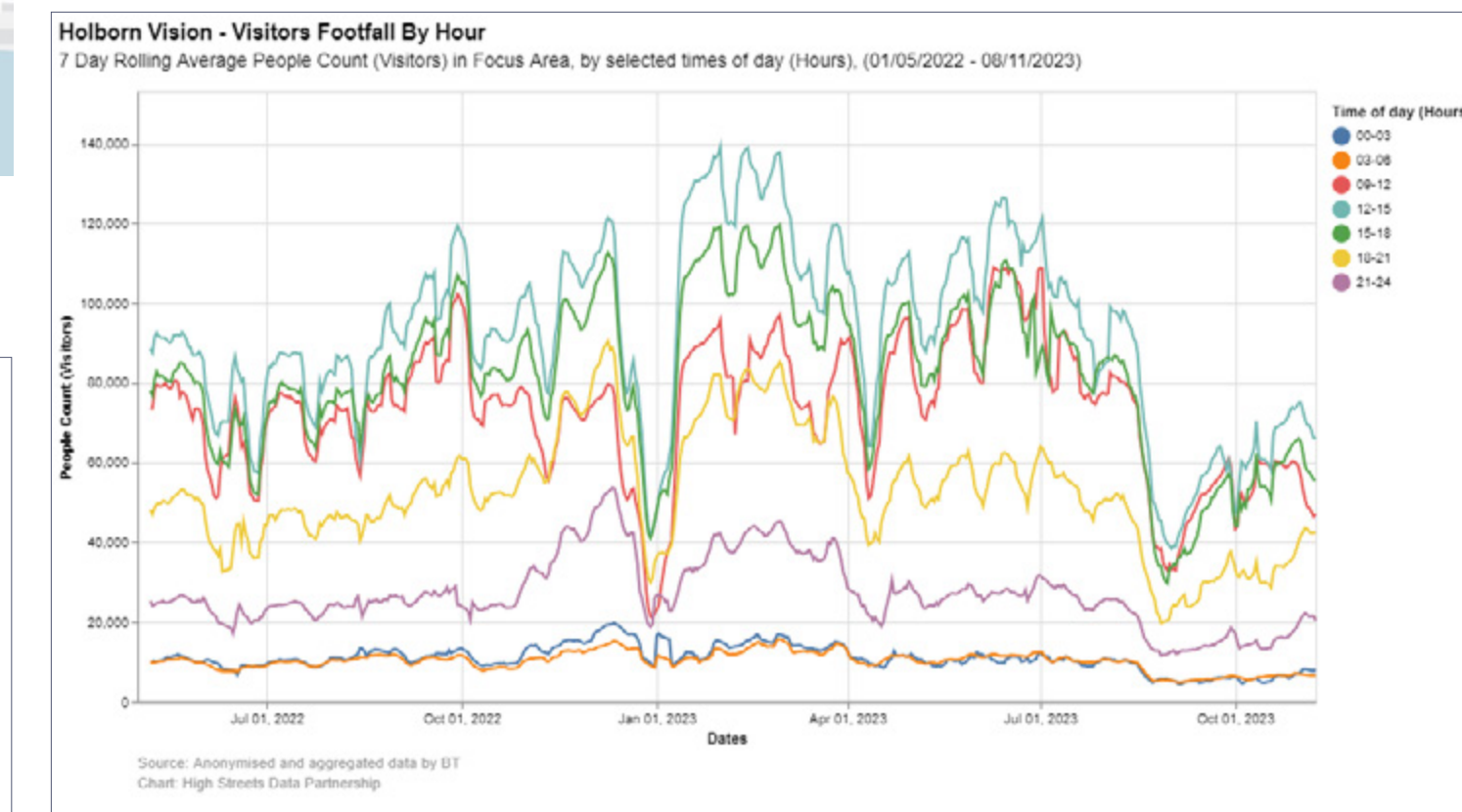
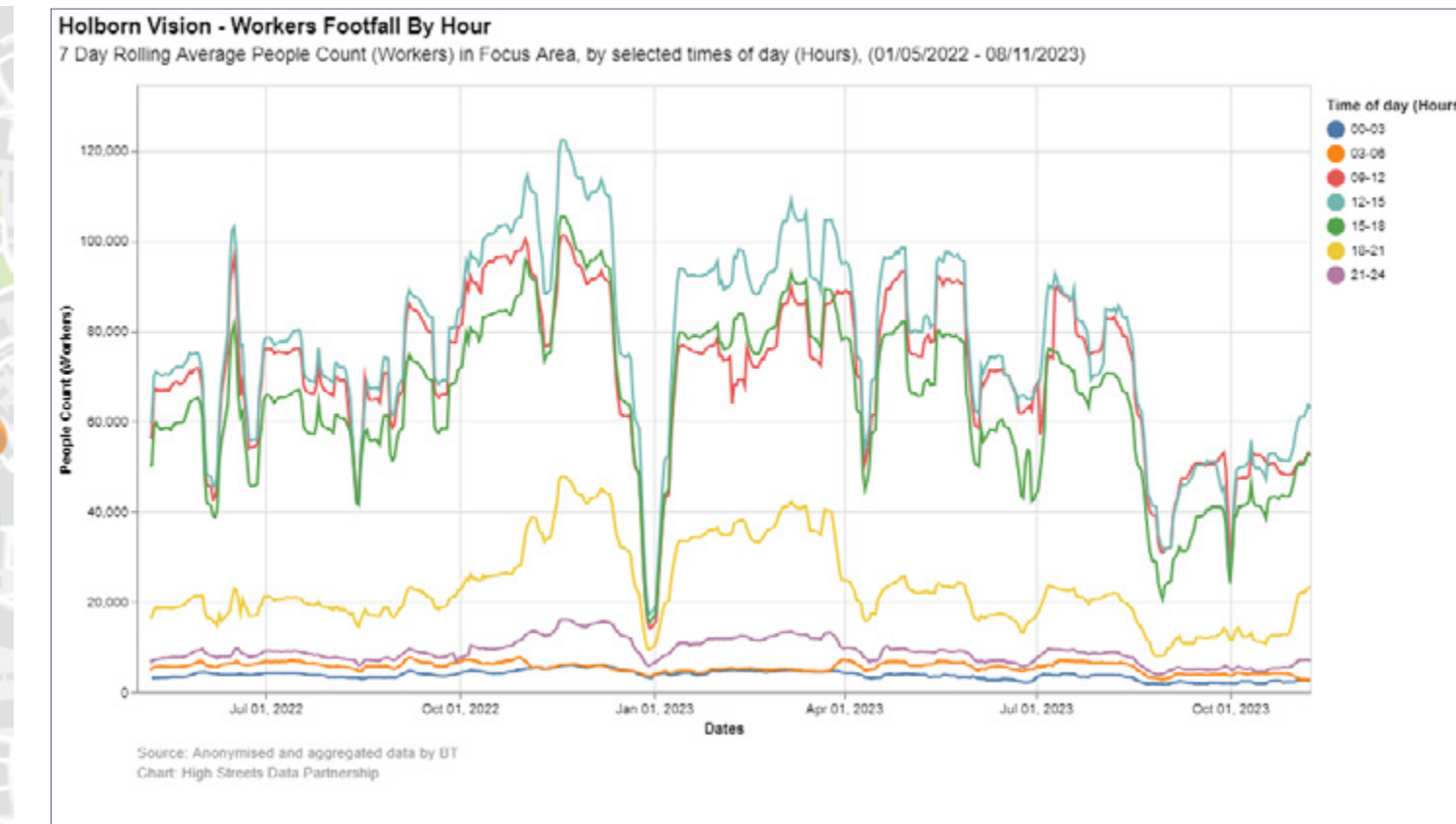
Business clusters and BID boundaries (Source: Arup)



The shift in industry sectors has seen the rise of IT services and small space office providers are catering for the growing micro business market

- Office delivery in the area through buildings/developments completed since 2019:
- Centre Point
  - The Outernet
  - The Earnshaw
  - Post Building
  - Commonwealth House
  - 150 Holborn
  - 17 Charterhouse
  - 28 Greville Street
  - Templar House

New commercial-led development in the Holborn area since 2019



Footfall levels graphs. Source: The Camden Retail study 2023

## MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

Holborn is located in Central London and connected by excellent public transport links. However, traffic dominance is an important issue in the area, with a high number of cycle casualties. Since 2019, a number of transport schemes are being delivered to improve transport conditions in Holborn. The Holborn Liveable Neighbourhoods programme aims to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists in the area. The Procter Street scheme is currently being delivered on site to improve the cycling environment. Additionally, the opening of the Elizabeth Line in 2022 at Tottenham Court Road and Farringdon Stations have increased their passenger numbers at those stations. Although the upgrade of Holborn tube has been paused, it remains a priority for the council who will continue to support it.

### SUMMARY OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Holborn is well connected with excellent public transport links, and with the highest possible score for Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL)
- Traffic-dominated area, particularly due to busy one-way system and wide multi-lane roads, making it difficult for pedestrians to move around
- High number of traffic accidents and casualties
- Area near Holborn tube station entrance is highly congested at peak commuter times
- Holborn Liveable Neighbourhood is an opportunity for wider change and for improvements to pedestrian/cycling movement and safety in the area
- Capacity upgrade at Holborn underground station is important, although the project has been paused

### RELEVANT POLICIES

#### HEALTHY STREETS, HEALTHY TRAVEL, HEALTHY LIVES: CAMDEN TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2019-2041

Holborn is a very accessible location. Nearly all of Holborn is 6b on the PTAL scale and includes Holborn, Chancery Lane and Tottenham Court Road tube stations and new Elizabeth Line stations Tottenham Court Road and Farringdon which carry around 600,000 passengers a day. Approximately 10million people travelling through the area each year by bus. This strategy is one of the key documents that sets out how Camden wants to improve how people live, travel and work. Its aim is to work alongside residents and partners in transforming transport and mobility in Camden, enabling, and encouraging people to travel sustainably and safely; nurturing healthier lifestyles; creating radically less polluted places; and upgrading the transport network to meets Camden's needs and those of London as a growing capital city.

This will be achieved by the delivery of transformational, areawide transport and public realm improvements that prioritise and enable active travel modes through the provision of high-quality alternatives to private motor vehicle use.

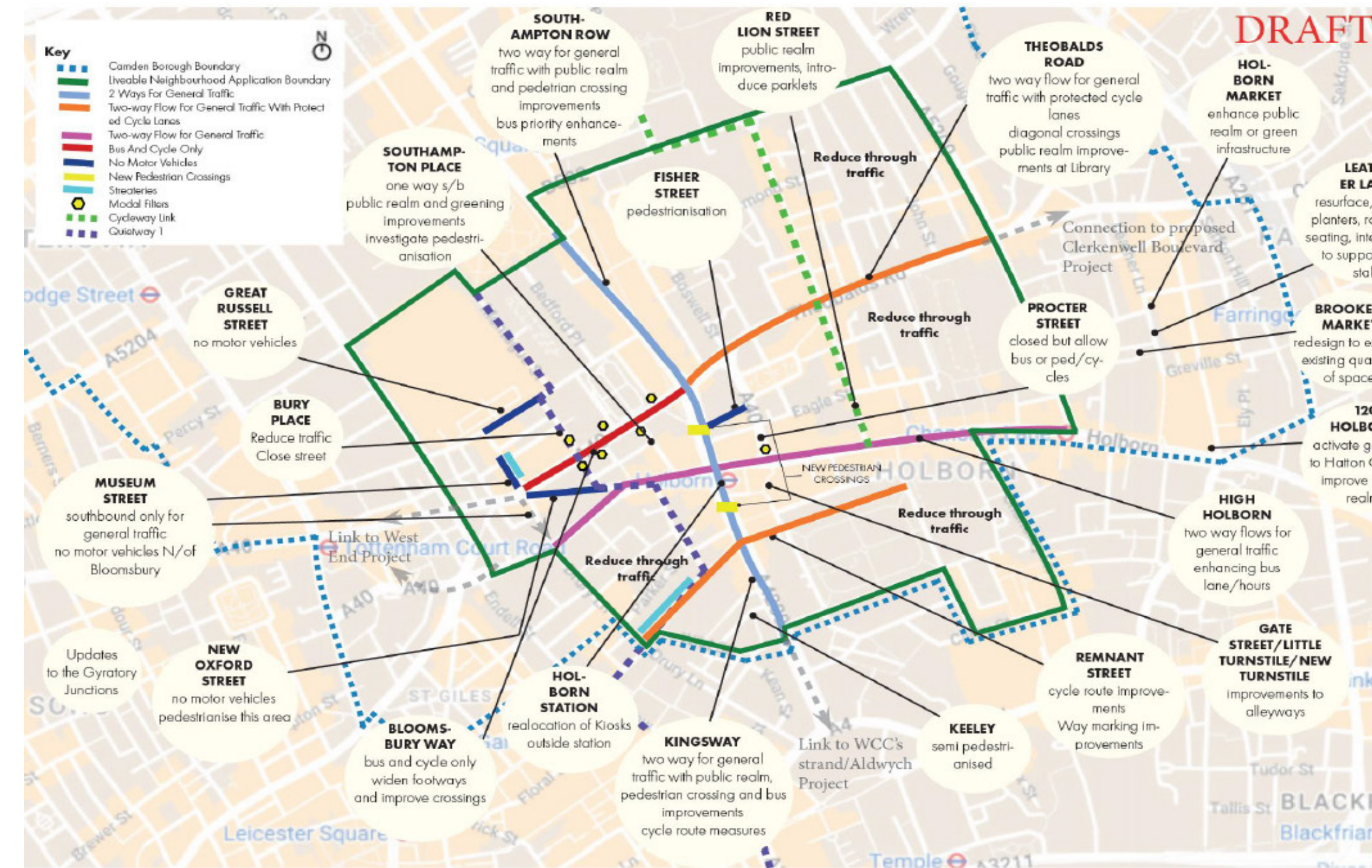
The TfL funded Holborn Liveable Neighbourhood will be developed through consultation with people who live, work and visit Holborn. Its aims to be a transformational scheme that makes more safe space to walk and cycle, for children to get to and from school safely and healthily, for businesses to be able to flourish, to reduce carbon emissions from vehicles and to improve air quality



High Holborn, Drake Street & Procter Street Safe and Healthy Streets (images from consultation)  
Visualisations showing improvements to the cycling and pedestrian environment



Pedestrian movement in Holborn (from LDA report)



### Map of Holborn Liveable Neighbourhoods (HLN)

Camden Council secured funding from Transport for London's Liveable Neighbourhoods programme to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists in the Holborn area, as well as access to public transport. The project seeks to remove the gyratory, reduce severance, improve the public realm and introduce protected cycle lanes.

This project is important for the delivery of key actions within Camden's Climate Action Plan and Clean Air Action Plan, especially around actions of 'car-free days/zones', 'more segregated cycle lanes' and 'urban greening', which all came out of the Citizens Assembly on climate.

Engagement on HLN is running in parallel with engagement on the Holborn Vision to ensure a holistic and consistent approach for the area.



Overcrowding and congestion within the station and on surrounding pavements at peak times



Roads form major barriers to pedestrian movement and offer a poor environment for cycling



High number of traffic accidents/casualties

## PUBLIC REALM

Holborn's public realm is mixed in character and quality. Large roads and generally poor quality public realm has an impact on the experience of people living, working, visiting and passing through the area. Since 2019, there has been an increasing interest in improving public spaces evidenced by the growing number of schemes and strategies across London. In Holborn, new public realm schemes such as Princes Circus and planned ones are making the area more green, accessible and welcoming, and one to spend time in.

### SUMMARY OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Poor legibility and permeability
- Disruption due to large roads
- Street clutter
- Quality of public realm
- Inactive and blank frontages
- A number of recently completed schemes in the area have improved the public realm and are positive examples of what can be achieved across Holborn

### RELEVANT POLICIES

#### HOLBORN'S PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY 2023

Camden commissioned LDA to develop a public realm strategy for the area (excluding Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area). It sets a public realm framework and potential interventions for the Holborn area. It has been developed to help inform, guide and direct future schemes as they come forward to create a public realm that is safe attractive and connected.

The report includes a detailed analysis of the built environment, its strengths and weaknesses and public realm in the area including assessments of the character of Holborn, its green infrastructure and open spaces, uses and how people move around and through it.



A number of recently completed public realm projects in the Holborn area, such as Princes Circus (photo credit: Mickey Lee/Central District Alliance BID)



Poor legibility due to bridges and severance caused by wide roads



Unnecessary street clutter and public realm generally low in quality



Inactive frontages and a lack of permeability

## EQUALITY AND EQUITY

The built environment, how it is designed and managed directly affects how people live their lives. It should enable people to do what they want to do and live full lives where everyone feels safe and has a sense of belonging. This is reflected in part by the historic impact of slavery and the slave trade and its impact on the streets and buildings today. By acknowledging this, we can begin to respond to its legacy.

### SUMMARY OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Holborn public realm isn't designed for all those who want to use it
- We need to celebrate the diversity in the public realm and in buildings, venues and public art
- Not enough focus has been placed on developing cultural regeneration
- Much of the public realm is not designed for use today but just as routes to move through and only by those feel safe enough to do so
- The public realm improvements are a real opportunity to tackle injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong and open spaces and places where everyone can contribute
- Employ Good Life Camden framework to help understand what matters to local people and make the public realm work for them too.

### RELEVANT POLICIES

#### STRATEGY FOR DIVERSITY IN THE PUBLIC REALM 2023-2028 AND THE WOMEN'S SAFETY CHARTER

There are well over 140 languages and dialects spoken in Camden which demonstrates its rich and diverse cultural heritage and lived experiences, yet the public realm does not fully encompass or reflect the diversity of its residents and visitors. The council agreed this strategy in February 2023 which sets out how to use the design of public realm and public spaces to increase equity, equality, diversity, and representation. Through this, it can empower underrepresented people to increase their use of the public realm, to walk, go where they want to go, exercise, socialise and enjoy it. And by doing so improve it for everyone. Camden has also signed up to the Women's safety charter which includes the design of public spaces and work places to make them safer for women at night. The Vision highlights the opportunities for high quality public realm, designed with local people to connect Holborn together, improve the experience of living, working, and visiting Holborn and the economic, social, and environmental benefits that will result.

#### CAMDEN EVENING AND NIGHT-TIME STRATEGY (ENTE) 2024-2029

The council is developing an ENTE strategy which will work to preserve a dynamic evening and night-time economy that promotes Camden's economic and cultural assets between 6pm and 6am. It seeks to address the reduction in venues that support diversity and inclusion defining the evening offer beyond alcohol-led activity, promoting cultural production, and contending with cost-of-living and cost-of-doing-business pressures. As a central London location, in recent years the way in which people use the ENTE in Holborn has altered in response to the changing work patterns. Footfall is not consistent across the vision area at night. Most areas have not recovered to pre-pandemic levels apart from some parts, such as Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area which has performed much better. The Vision provides guidance supporting ENTE uses that contribute to the vitality and diversity of Holborn, not only for the worker and visitor community but those that live here too.

Crime and anti-social behaviour is often associated with the ENTE. However, some parts of the Vision area experience more crime than others with Tottenham Court Road and High Holborn/Kingsway accounting for 6% and 5.4% of all crimes Camden with more at weekends and night-time. Hatton Garden, on the other hand has a comparatively lower crime rate of 1.9% which is focussed mainly during the day.

Working in partnership with the police, businesses and residents is imperative to bring crime rates down. How we approach the design of buildings, open spaces and the public realm can make a significant contribution to this too.



Holborn and Covent Garden ward ranks 11th amongst Camden wards in terms of household income, whilst it has the 6th highest proportion of those that socially rent their homes (image from LDA report)



Barriers to movement and lack of accessibility in some parts of Holborn (image from LDA report)



The Council is developing a ENTE to support the night-time economy in Camden, including Holborn (photo credit: Michael Grubb Studio)

## OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Holborn is home to some of London's greatest squares and open spaces, however access to nature is not evenly distributed across the wider area. Whilst this has not changed since 2019, the COVID pandemic has highlighted the importance of green and open space for health, wellbeing and biodiversity and the need for more green infrastructure in cities.

### SUMMARY OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Holborn is home to some of London's great squares that epitomise Georgian urban design
- There are significant tracts of public realm which are currently underused and unpleasant.
- There isn't sufficient open space in the area to meet demand and what is present, isn't spread equally across the area (and a very low access to nature for residents, particularly to the east)
- There is inequality in access to open space which has led to generational lack of use in some areas.
- Lowest tree canopy cover in the borough
- New pocket parks and greening measures are increasing green infrastructure provision in the wider area
- With the vision there is a real opportunity to be innovative about how to connect people to nature and open space, by improving access.
- Make the public realm work harder to deliver green infrastructure and improve biodiversity.

### RELEVANT POLICIES

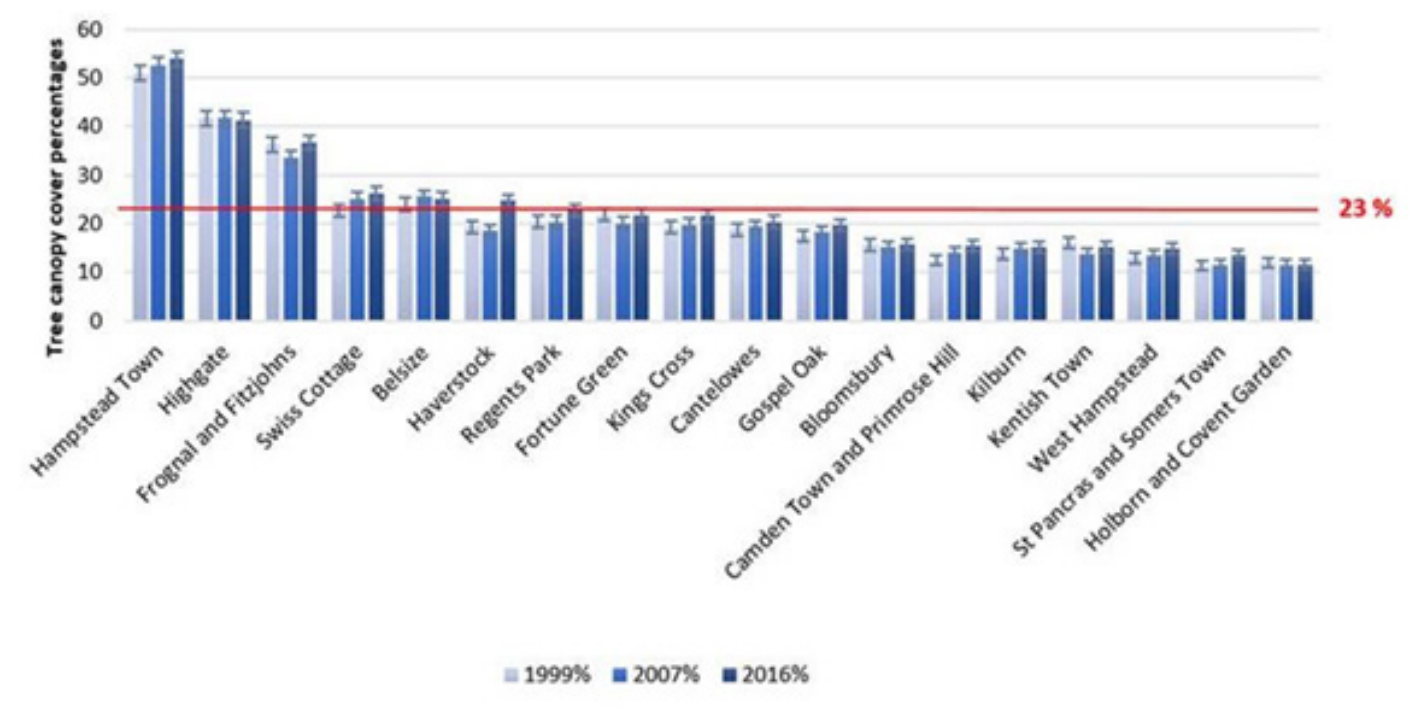
#### GREEN SPACE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Camden's Green Space Investment Programme (GSIP) ensures capital investment in its parks and green spaces best meets the needs of local communities and supports the vision of We Make Camden. The GSIP identifies the areas of Camden in greatest need. Holborn is located within Central London and, whilst it has some important green and open spaces, it is densely built and has limited opportunity to increase open spaces.

Focus on improvements include: enhanced landscaping, play equipment, sport and fitness facilities, wildlife friendly & climate resilient planting.

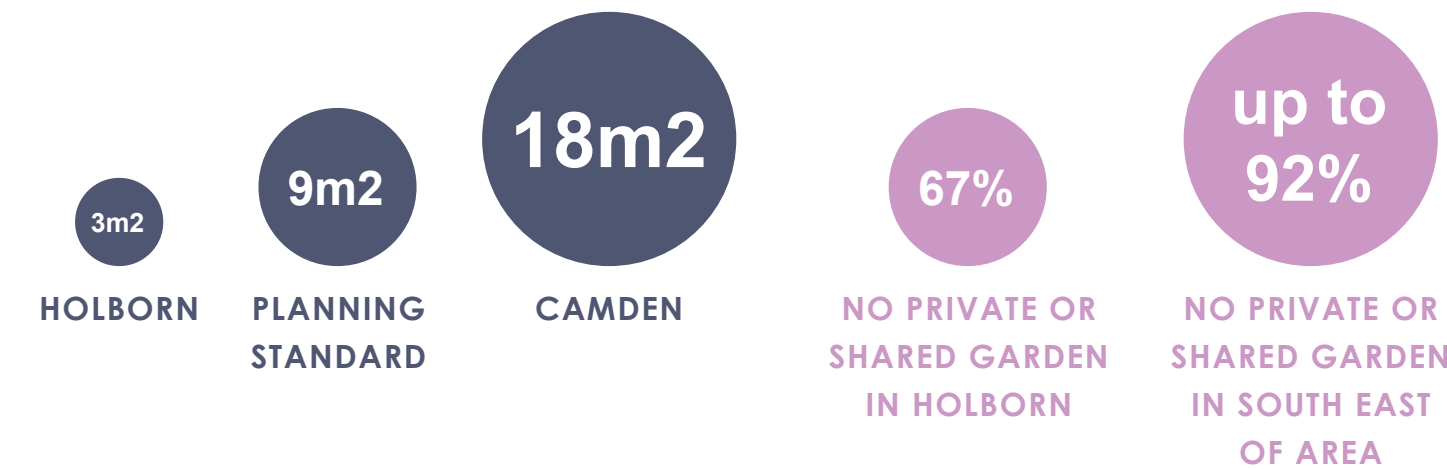
#### PARKS FOR HEALTH STRATEGY 2022-2030

Camden and Islington have developed a shared vision in which parks and green spaces are used, enjoyed, and maintained as health assets for the whole community. Improving access and equality of access to green spaces in Camden underpins the strategy. These spaces can help tackle climate change and strengthen community cohesion and resilience to climate change. In Holborn, as the opportunity to increase the amount of public open space is limited, the existing parks and open spaces and access to them play an even more important role in the health and wellbeing of



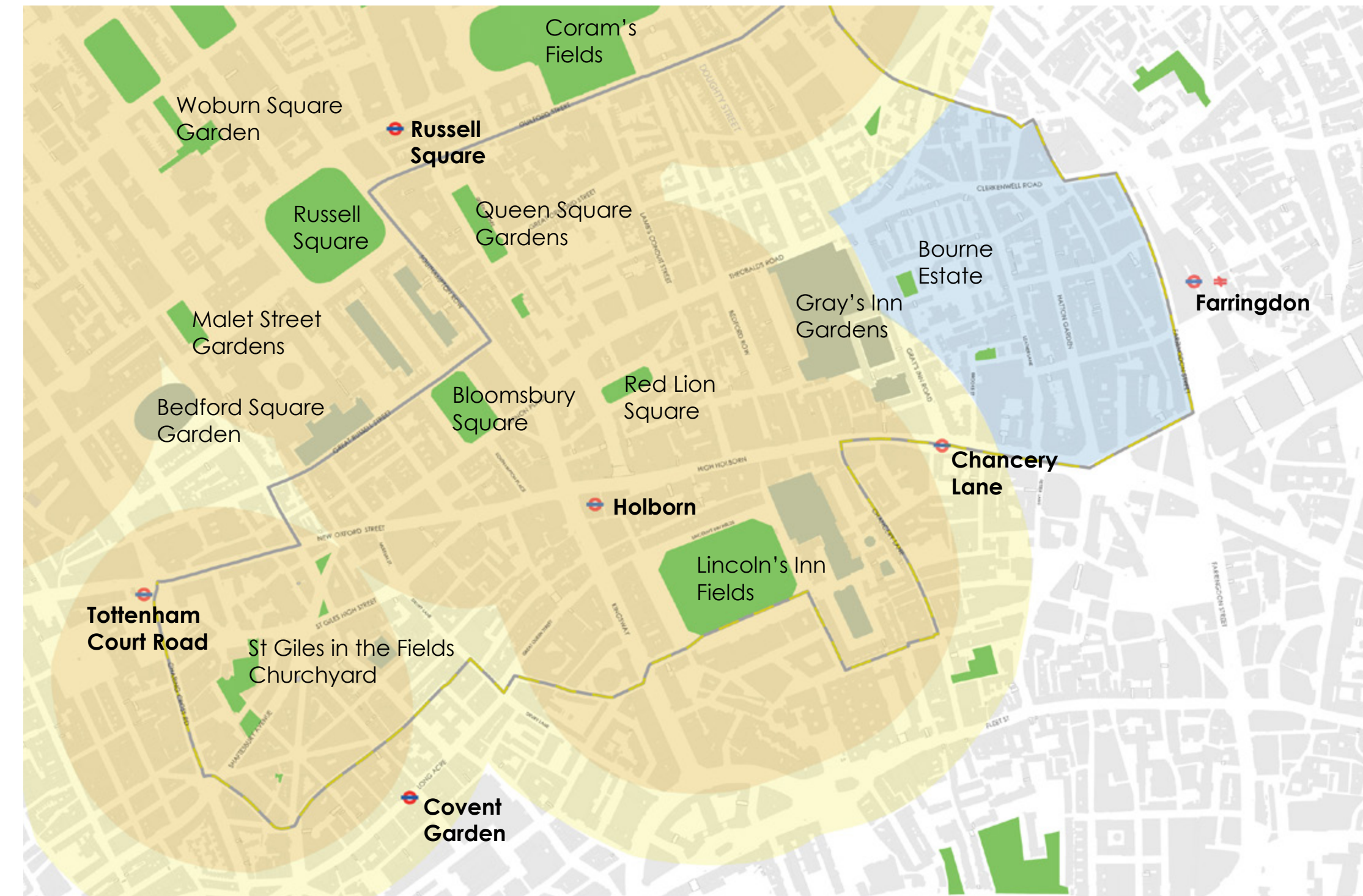
#### Camden Tree Canopy Cover (Tree and Woodland)

Holborn and Covent Garden has the lowest in the borough.



Public Open Space per capita (based on 2014 Open Space Study and existing Camden Local Plan)

Percentage of private and shared gardens in Holborn



#### Green space in Holborn

Public green space  
Private green space

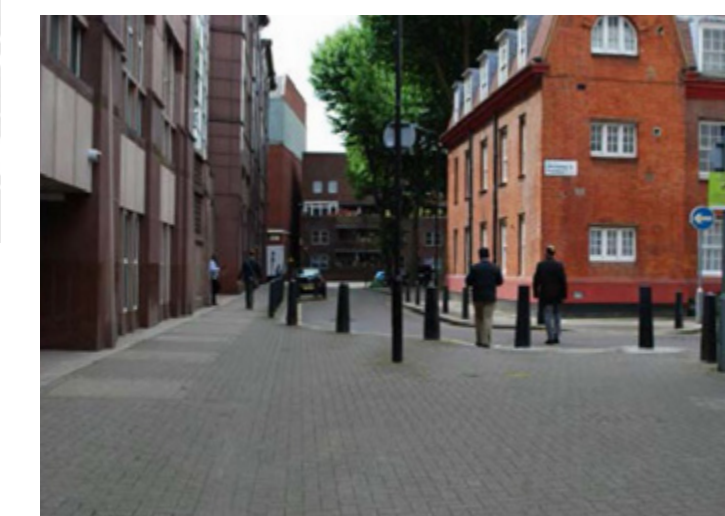
Open space deficiency  
Public open space  
400m buffer  
280m buffer  
More than 400m from a larger accessible open space



Garden squares form the majority of green space in the area and are well-used by residents, workers and visitors



Some improvements are underway in public spaces in the area, such as at Red Lion Square



But there are under used areas of public open space that could benefit from investment

## AIR QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Since 2019, responding to the climate emergency has become a priority and has resulted in more ambitious sustainability and air quality requirements. The built environment, how we design and use buildings and the public realm can play an important role in delivering the councils ambition to deliver net zero by 2030.

### SUMMARY OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Poor air quality resulting from the traffic-dominated environment (as well as buildings)

- Holborn falls within the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)

- A low number of commercial buildings are currently grade A office space. It is anticipated that a significant number of buildings will be impacted by the change in EPC standards by 2030.

- Challenge of historic building stock meeting sustainability standards in the future

- Climate risk varies across the Holborn area, with higher risk being focused to the east (GLA Climate Risk map)

### RELEVANT POLICIES

#### CAMDEN CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and produced the Climate Action Plan. Camden is one of the most important business locations in the country and Holborn is a significant contributor to the £31.4bn that Camden added to the national economy. Yet, industrial and commercial sectors accounted for 60% of all CO2 emissions in Camden to which Holborn businesses also contributed considerably and so has a significant role in tackling the climate emergency. Buildings, streets, parks and public realm have a key part to play in mitigating the

impacts of climate change and by demonstrating climate resilience, so maintaining its economic health.

Making better use of buildings, including Camden's own estate through retrofitting, can make important contributions to mitigate against climate change and also support resilient communities in the process.

The GLA has produced a series of climate risk maps (include map) which show the vulnerability to climate risk which includes things like flooding and heatwaves but also social factors that impact on resilience to cope with extreme events. In Holborn there are some areas that perform badly and often where Camden's housing estates are located.

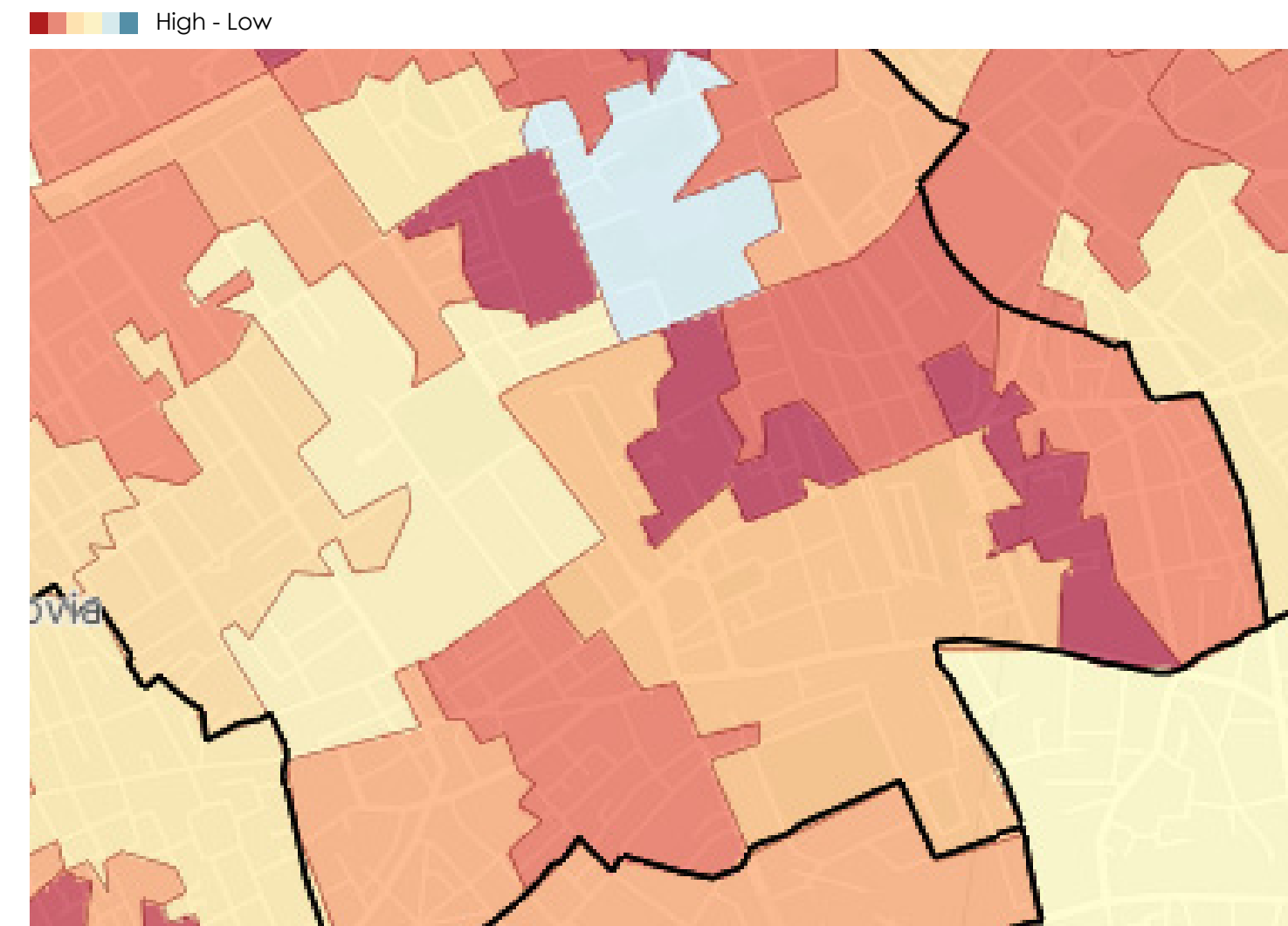
#### CAMDEN CLEAN AIR ACTION PLAN 2023- 2026

This sets out the vision for a borough with clean air with a deadline of achieving WHO limits by 2034 (for nitrogen dioxide (NO2; 10µg/m3) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5; 5µg/m3 ), and 2030 for coarse particulate matter (PM10; 15µg/m3 ). This will be done by delivering policies changes and projects which will reduce air pollution and exposure. 7% of all deaths in Camden are attributed to pm25. Holborn's air quality is poor particularly on its main roads including High Holborn, Kingsway, Bloomsbury Way, Theobalds Road and Procter Street which disproportionately affects some communities. Yet it one of the best-connected locations for public transport in London, the Holborn Vision sets out the framework for the delivery of ambitious transport schemes that will contribute cleaner air, encouraging active travel and improving the health and wellbeing for people who live work and visit Holborn.

### FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-2027

This sets out the council's shared vision for managing and reducing flood risk in a way that benefits people, property and the environment. Although flooding is rare in Camden the Holborn vision area, measures are supported that will contribute to the greening of the public realm and a sense of place whilst incorporating features like Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems(SuDS) which will help manage flooding events should they arise.

As part of Camden's Safe & Healthy Streets programme, we will seek to identify opportunities to introduce trees, urban greening and sustainable drainage systems as part of every road improvement scheme. Interventions would range from small scale sustainable drainage with tree pits alongside cycle hangars and electric vehicle charging points whenever new infrastructure is introduced, through to large scale interventions, such as extensive green infrastructure along the length of new segregated cycle schemes or at planned major public realm improvement schemes such as those at Holborn or around the Bloomsbury university campus.



Holborn Area overall climate risk by LSOA (from GLA climate risk map)



Traffic dominated environment with high levels of air pollution



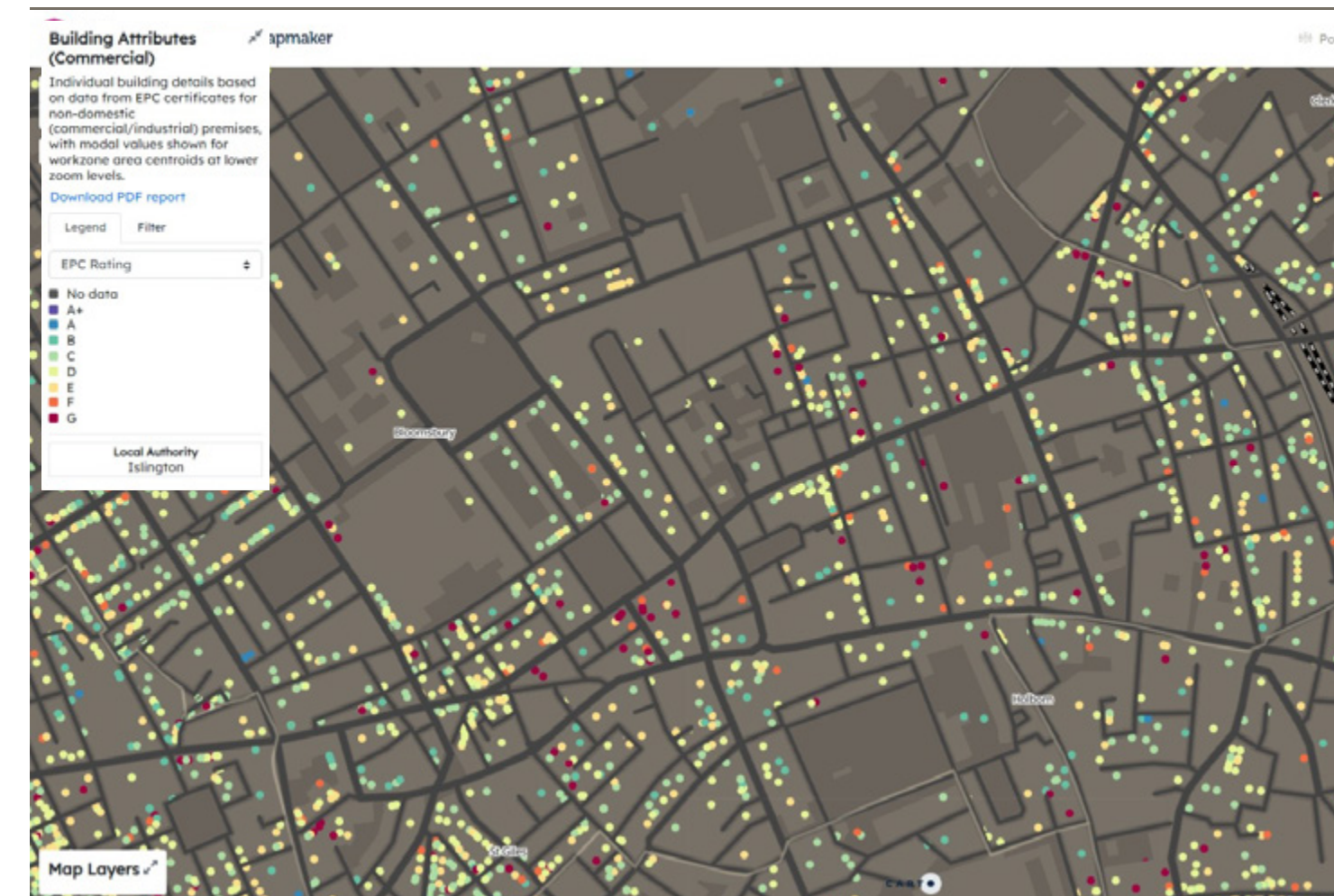
Traffic dominated environment



Older building stock has lower EPC scoring - Lincoln's Inn Fields example (image from LDA report)



New development with EPC A rating - Saffron House in the Hatton Garden area (image credit: M&G)



EPC ratings for commercial buildings in the Holborn area

The map above shows that very few buildings have high EPC ratings.



Holborn Surface Water Flood Risk

The map above shows that water flood risk is not spread evenly across the wider Holborn area (areas shown in various shades of blue and size, depending on level of risk)