

3. Traffic and transport

Traffic congestion

Traffic congestion was identified as a significant issue by all groups, but most strongly at the residents' workshops. According to these groups, congestion is worst along Evelyn Street and Grove Street, caused to a large extent by road works and bottlenecks in the wider area, but also simply reflecting high volumes of traffic in the area. At the estate meetings, Triangle Traders' and public and voluntary sector workshops, concerns centred around the poor pedestrian environment it creates along Evelyn Street, Grove Street and Rainsborough Avenue through noise and pollution, as well as adverse health impacts. For the Cannon Wharf Business Centre group, traffic flow was seen as more of an issue. There was concern that the current situation will be made worse should the employment sites in the area be redeveloped for mixed use.

At the youth workshop, nearly all of those present identified themselves as public transport users.

Congestion was specifically mentioned as a priority issue, as it frustrates their movements to surrounding centres and destinations such as Surrey Quays.

At the deliberative event, participants were asked to rate the importance of traffic congestion as a priority, as suggested by the Local Assembly. Most agreed with the specific points made by the Local Assembly priority (apart from motorised scooters which most did not perceive as a problem); however, only few saw it as a principal priority for change. There are two key reasons for this; firstly when compared to the other priorities which reflected the main areas which residents wished to discuss (crime, housing, youth facilities), improving traffic was not seen as something that would have a large implication for their quality of life (particularly for the non-drivers).

Secondly it was difficult to identify actionable solutions that would not potentially cause great expense and further disruption to their lives – for example, when one resident suggested making Evelyn Street double-laned; this was quickly dismissed by the rest of the group for the sheer size of the job.

Ways to address traffic congestion

Residents suggested a number of ways to address traffic congestion, including better traffic management such as traffic calming, speed limits and shared surfacing on Grove Street, potentially following the example of High Street Kensington. Another suggestion was that Grove Street should be closed to heavy traffic.

Public transport

Public transport received a mixed response from residents. Some were happy with local bus services for their frequency and 24hr operation. Others felt that bus services in the area were too limited in general, and that the 199 in particular is not frequent enough. Public transport was perceived to be at full capacity, and there was concern that current capacity would not be able to meet demand from new residential development in the area. At the deliberative event, residents reacted very positively to the proposals for Deptford Station.

There were many requests for new bus routes locally, particularly one along Grove Street (to serve existing surgeries) and a new route to New Cross, which was

considered inaccessible from the Pepys Estate. Shuttle busses and hoppers had been discussed as possible new links to nearby centres such as Greenwich, New Cross and Peckham, and were felt to be worth further consideration. This would help connect local people to the full range of community services available locally and would also provide important links to the centres as potential places of work. Within the wider area, better orbital routes were desired towards Brixton and direct routes to the centre of London and in general, residents wanted better reliability with electronic boards to present real time information.

Car parking

More car parking was desired for the area in general at all of the estates meetings, reflecting local concern about residents' parking. However, there was also broad support at the estates meetings for measures to lessen car use and encourage more sustainable transport. This could include improved pavements and pedestrian routes to promote walking, and improved cycle routes and secure cycle storage to encourage cycling.



4. Physical environment and public space

Discussion at the estates workshops aimed to ascertain how residents and stakeholders move around in the North Deptford area and to find out if there are any improvements which would make movement and access easier. The opportunity to improve the local physical environment through Section 106 funds from the sale of Aragon Tower was discussed as part of this, and landscape proposals currently being put together by BDP were reviewed.

By targeting different groups of residents in this research we were able to witness really quite different uses of the same public space. It was truly fascinating to see how different user groups are able to clearly articulate both how they are restricted in their use of public space, and in some cases recognise how they're actually restricting others.

An illuminating example of this was raised at the deliberative event, where many residents felt uneasy about groups of youths congregating in parts of the estate. On the one hand, they did not feel that they were in personal danger, or that these youths would cause them any harm. However, at the same time they were careful to walk on the other side of the road or avoid the area altogether because of this feeling of

unease and the potential risk. In this way, their use of public space was clearly restricted.

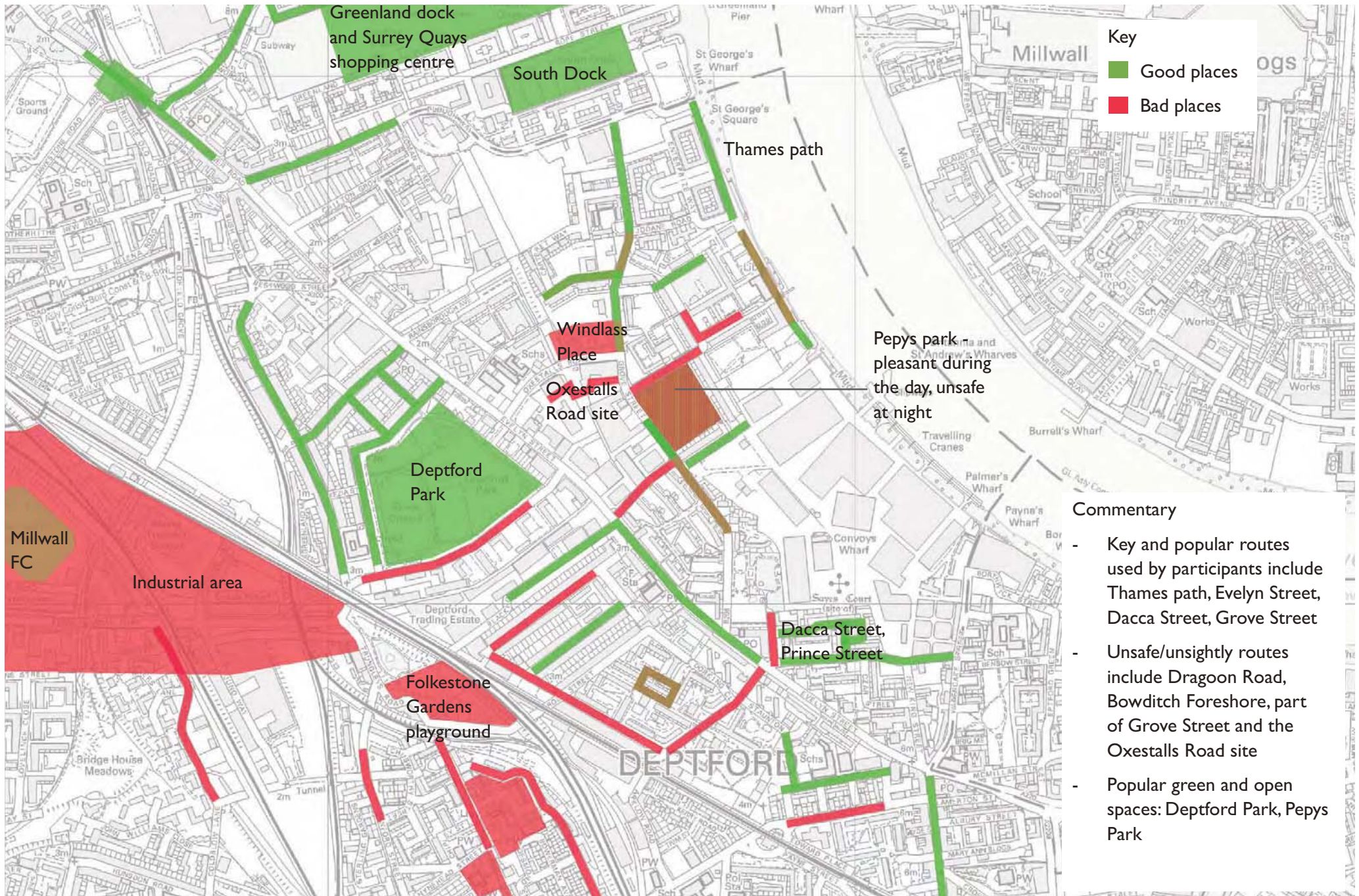
The youth research and ethnography allow us to see this from the other side, where groups of youths are very aware of the image they present when they congregate in public spaces and that it can appear threatening to local residents. At the same time they're very conscious that their intentions are perfectly innocent and they have no wish to cause any harm, or even any perception of danger. While they're aware that they're restricting others' use of public space, they felt that this was out of their control because they in turn were restricted by the lack of alternative space available to them.

This example highlights how restrictions on certain user groups have a knock-on effect for other groups, which creates perceived conflict. This should be borne in mind when exploring opportunities and development for the area. A comprehensive view of the needs of different user groups should be taken from the onset. At the same time, an objective should be to explore methods for overcoming these perceptions of conflicting needs between different groups of users and creating an environment where older residents do not

need to feel intimidated by younger residents who wish them no harm.

New connections

Residents suggested a number of new connections in North Deptford, the most popular being a pedestrian and cycle route along the River Thames linking Surrey Quays with Greenwich. Residents also wanted to see more paths linking North Deptford and Evelyn Street in with the Thames Path, and the redevelopment of industrial sites was considered an opportunity to do this. The Oxestalls Road and the Cannon Wharf sites in particular were seen to have potential for new, high quality pedestrian links from Deptford Park to the Pepys Estate, and then on to Surrey Quays. These new routes would allow pedestrians to avoid Evelyn Street, which was disliked for its poor quality environment, despite its current role as the main pedestrian route up to Surrey Quays. Zebra crossings were requested by Deptford Park School to improve safety for children, and on Grove Street to allow safer access to parks there. Connectivity could also be improved with better



Deliberative event - places participants liked and disliked (composite of individuals' plans)

signage – more visible street name panels, particularly in areas where frontages are set back from the street, marked cycle lanes, better signage to the Thames Path. Residents and public and voluntary stakeholders were both keen to stress the importance of effectively linking redeveloped sites in with the existing fabric to encourage cohesion between old and new communities.

Public realm improvements

Residents were keen to see improvements to the public realm. This would make North Deptford a more attractive place to walk around as well as encouraging community interaction and sustainable movement. Maintenance and repair to street lighting was one of the most common requests for the safety improvements this would bring. Improvements to surfacing were requested, uneven pavements and potholes presenting safety issues and reinforcing negative perceptions of the area, most noticeably on Evelyn Street and Grove Street. Decluttering was suggested, particularly at Grove Street and Oxestalls Road, as well as more regular and thorough cleaning regimes to remove rubbish and dog mess, and provision

of public benches on the river front. Heavy industrial uses at Oxestalls Road were disliked for their adverse impacts on the local public environment, bringing high levels of noise and pollution into a residential area. The Cannon Wharf businesses group felt that control of the public physical environment by Lewisham Housing had hampered change and improvement in the past.

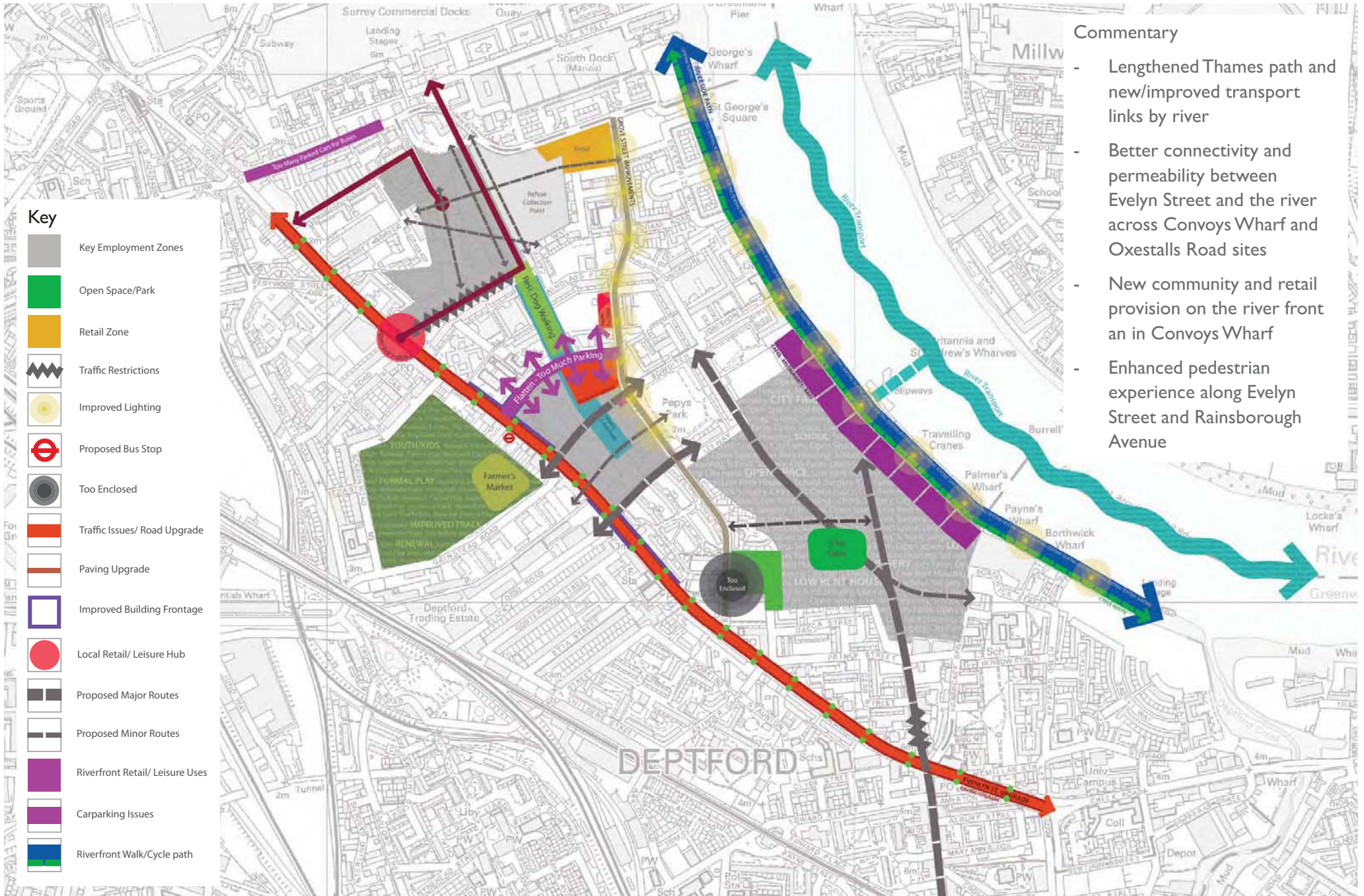
At the deliberative event, fly-tipping and rubbish dumping was discussed as one of the Local Assembly's priorities. Although this was not spontaneously seen by many to be a major problem, once prompted many agreed that this should be a priority for change (note that the terminology 'fly tipping' was not always understood, which meant some did not make the immediate link that this referred to issues they had spoken about previously):

“Oh you mean those guys who drive past in their cars and dump all that junk?”

(Deliberative workshop participant)

The main underlying issue relating to the environment

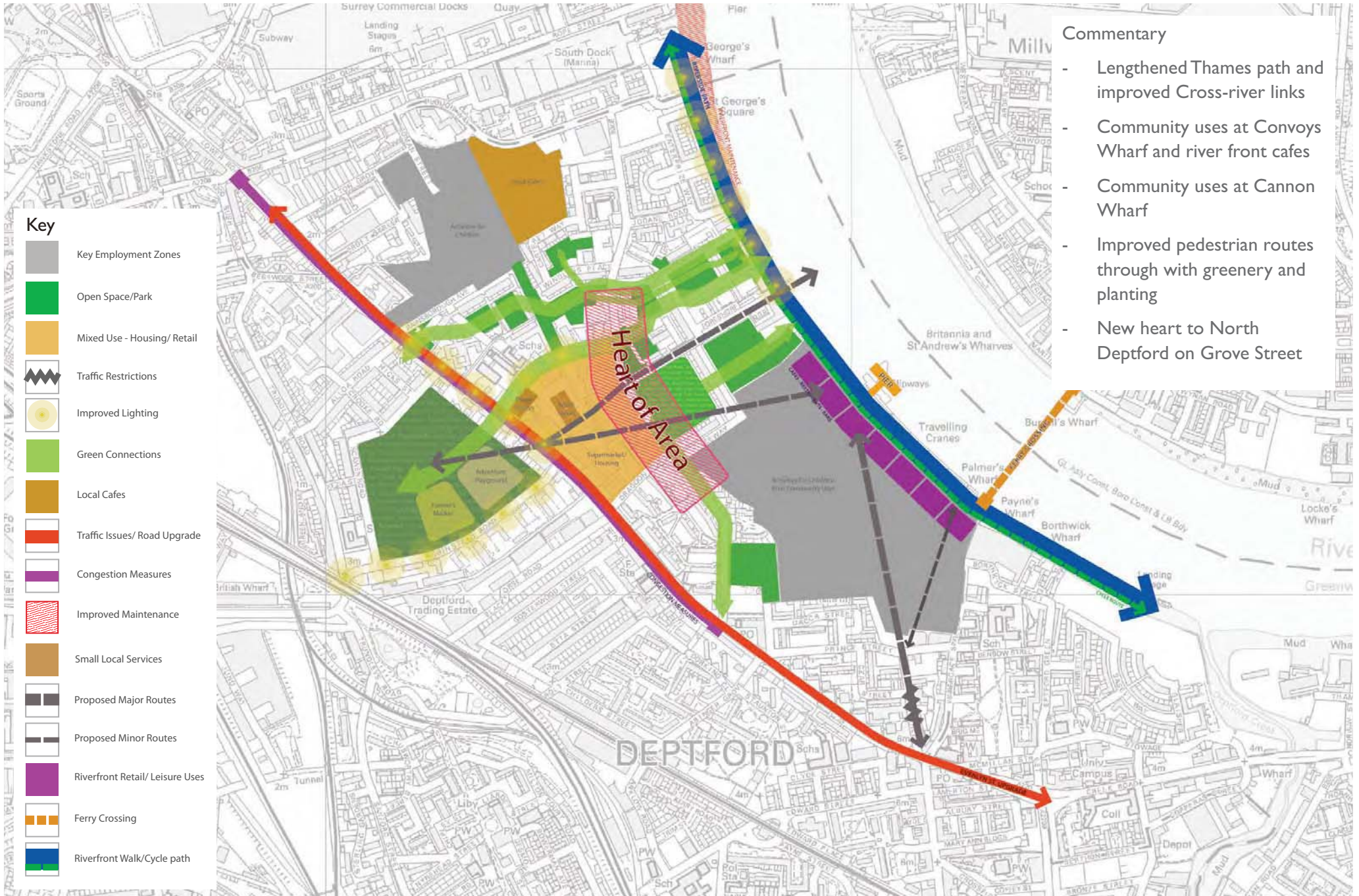




Commentary

- Lengthened Thames path and new/improved transport links by river
- Better connectivity and permeability between Evelyn Street and the river across Convoys Wharf and Oxestalls Road sites
- New community and retail provision on the river front in Convoys Wharf
- Enhanced pedestrian experience along Evelyn Street and Rainsborough Avenue

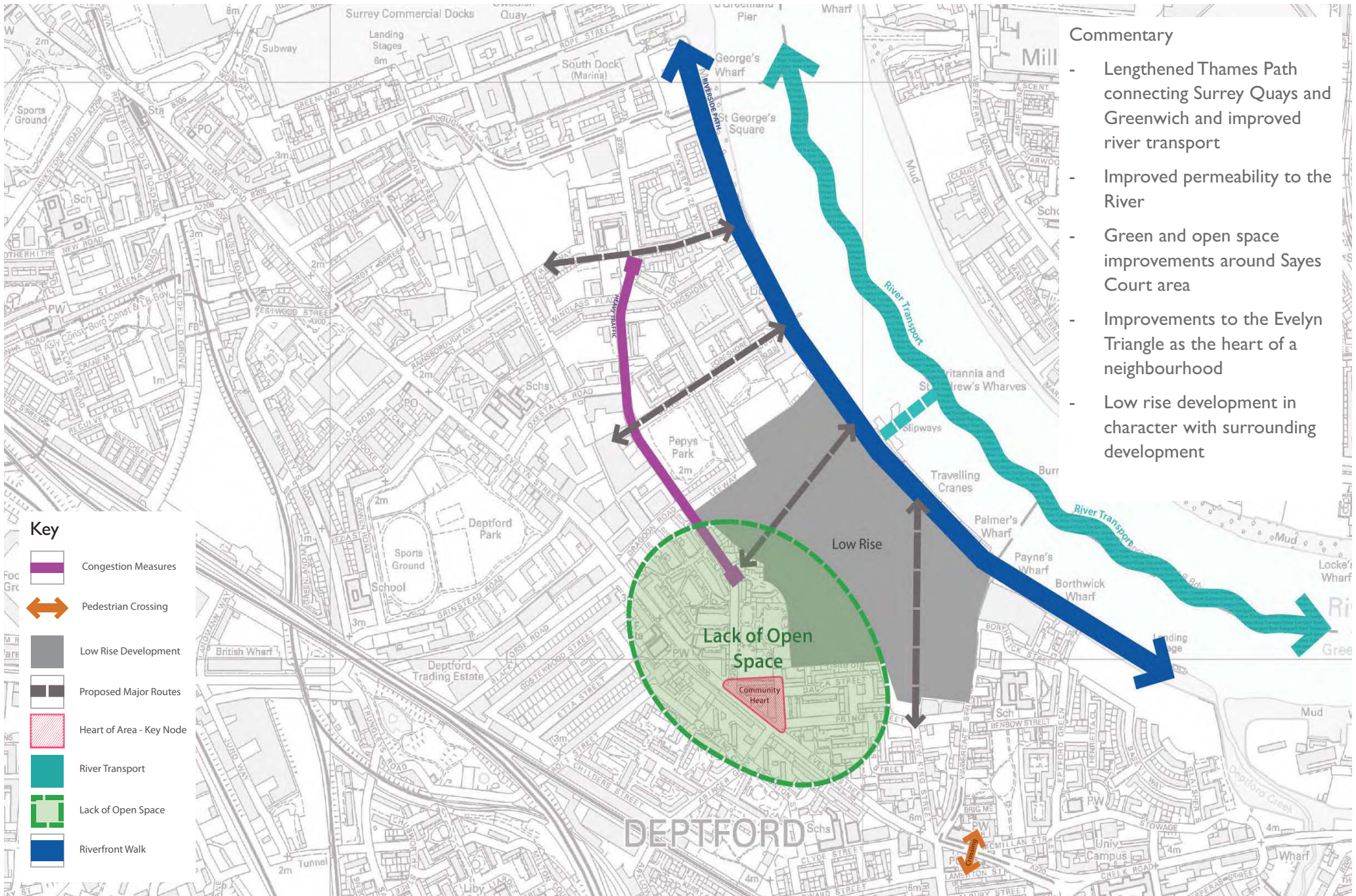
Estates workshop 18 November - key routes and connections (composite of individuals' plans)



Commentary

- Lengthened Thames path and improved Cross-river links
- Community uses at Convoys Wharf and river front cafes
- Community uses at Cannon Wharf
- Improved pedestrian routes through with greenery and planting
- New heart to North Deptford on Grove Street

Estates workshop 20 November - key routes and connections (composite of individuals' plans)



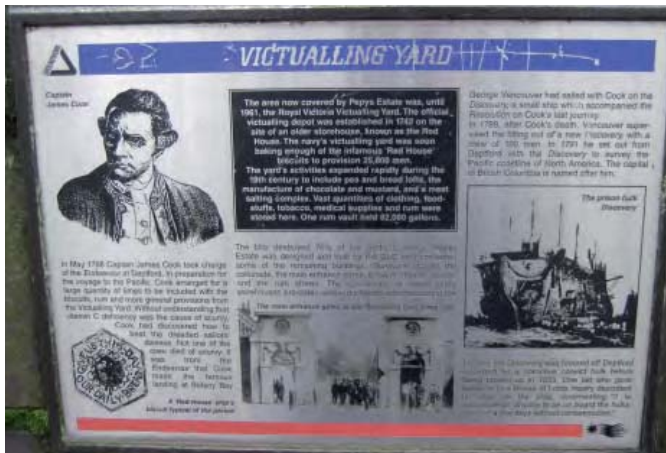
Commentary

- Lengthened Thames Path connecting Surrey Quays and Greenwich and improved river transport
- Improved permeability to the River
- Green and open space improvements around Sayes Court area
- Improvements to the Evelyn Triangle as the heart of a neighbourhood
- Low rise development in character with surrounding development

Key

- Congestion Measures
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Low Rise Development
- Proposed Major Routes
- Heart of Area - Key Node
- River Transport
- Lack of Open Space
- Riverfront Walk

Estates workshop 24 November - key routes and connections (composite of individuals' plans)



was the perceived lack of pride in the area that led some residents to dump rubbish in a haphazard manner. Many believed that changing this would have important repercussions for instilling pride for all residents:

“You need to make people proud of where they live, then they won’t do it. At the moment it’s so dirty anyway, and once one person does it so do other people-”

“Yeah, if it’s clean then people will be embarrassed to dump their rubbish and people will stop them doing it.”

(Deliberative workshop participants)

Some residents relayed stories of individual tenants who “don’t like using bins” and simply throw their rubbish out of the window. Residents complained about a lack of ability to complain or chastise people for acting in this manner. Some mentioned that they were afraid that they would be victimised if they approached the individuals themselves. Finding an

appropriate channel of communication for residents to inform on these ‘rubbish culprits’ was one way which residents thought that local authorities could improve the problem. This was often proposed in the form of a warden – although some residents questioned the confidential nature of this, preferring a method which in no way could identify themselves as the “snitch”.

Reaction to Local Assembly Priority: Dumping of Rubbish

The Local Assembly-identified priority to clear rubbish was welcomed. The main feeling was that this would make the area ‘look nicer’. Residents broadly agreed that keeping the place tidy is important but were unsure of how the Council plan to enact this. Improving CCTV and lighting were seen as top priorities as these would help to tackle the ASB problems as well. Across the groups, there was a feeling that when it came to the fly tipping of furniture, stopping the enforced payment for collection would be the best way to reduce this problem:

“You never used to have to pay. I’m not surprised people dump it now.”

(Deliberative workshop participant)

A few residents took a more ‘hard-line’ approach. For example, some thought that a zero tolerance campaign with £100 fines and community service would be good possible punishments for dumping rubbish. The reinstatement of block handymen or concierges came up in discussions again as a solution to rubbish dumping – they could be on site to hand out punishments or look after rubbish better so that rats and other animals do not get into the bins:

“Yeah, we’ve got a bit of a rat problem here - it’s all the rubbish.”

(Deliberative workshop participant)

Local distinctiveness and history

Both residents and businesses felt that improvements to the public realm should also be used to enhance North Deptford’s local distinctiveness, to restore civic pride and to promote North Deptford’s identity and legitimacy as a place to live, work and shop. One important aspect of this was reasserting local historical value through renewed signage, highlighting North Deptford’s connections with historical figures such as Francis Drake and Grinling Gibbons and imaginatively drawing on this for educational and tourist purposes. There was concern that development at Convoys Wharf should be preceded by thorough archaeological exploration.

Some residents at the estate workshops in particular, such as those who are already fairly active in pushing for improvements in the area, were particularly impassioned by this aspect of their area’s local distinctiveness. The Council should explore options that will engage the passion and enthusiasm of very well informed local residents as a significant local resource that could help with local engagement and empowerment (for example competitions or

commissioning local talent).

Green space

At the Pepys and Trinity Estate workshops, residents were presented with a plan of BDP’s proposed landscaping works to green spaces around North Deptford and asked to comment.

Green spaces were highly valued by residents, but it was felt that they were generally in a poor state of repair and underused by the community. Residents wanted to build on their potential to provide spaces for community interaction and leisure by tidying and renovating the existing parks, and, most importantly, through effective maintenance thereafter. Residents wanted their parks to be better lit, with many currently too unsafe to use after dark, and to be better signposted and promoted. Many residents were thought to be unaware of the existence of neighbouring parks, and therefore only likely to use their own. This could be helped with improved green walkways between the parks to encourage movement between them.



- Space A** River side area good for café, also for formal exercises/equipment
Interpretation/local history info- walks
Formal gardens should be incorporated
Plant flowers
- Space B** Good for football pitches, opening times to be managed
Children's park in one area, one where people can sit, with flowers
Underused children's play area
- Space D** Not used – could do a lot more
- Space L** To be left alone (Crandley Ct residents do not want it changed ‘ a peaceful oasis in a concrete jungle’)
To be left as it is (Evelyn community garden project and allotments)
Lighting desperately needed
Cut back trees
Plant flowers
- Space M** To be left alone (Same children's play facilities already there – residents don't want any more)
Lighting desperately needed
- Space O** Remove parking and create pocket park with kids' facilities

The public sector stakeholders pointed out the importance of public green spaces as places for people to meet, and the need to promote them; the existing community garden next to the Grove Medical Centre, which performs this function, is not generally well known, and plans for a community café there lack funding.

Residents wanted to see the parks used for a wider range of functions and leisure activities in general – new playgrounds, a graffiti wall, football pitches, astro turfs and public events such as fetes, school fairs and sporting days. Facilities for youth were considered very important, and tellingly, some considered the parks at present to be too ‘boring’. At the same time, however, others wanted spaces set aside for more formal leisure and a more peaceful environment. The parks were also seen as a good place to enhance local distinctiveness by promoting local heritage in a creative and engaging way

Comments made regarding individual spaces, are presented in the table and plan on page 37.

As a result of the estates workshops, a joint workshop was conducted where young people from North Deptford could have the opportunity to give direct

input into the proposals by BDP.

Green spaces were the subject of a dedicated workshop at the youth event, but they were also specifically mentioned as a priority for improvement in the voting session which followed.

Parks and open spaces

At the deliberative event, open spaces and parks were seen as an important driver of quality of life. Across the groups, residents complained about the lack of space for children to play or young people to hang out in. This is mainly because they were not currently deemed safe or attractive places to spend time. For example, Sayes Park was known for high levels of drug dealing, which made this very much a no-go area.

One young person explained how he did not want to take his younger siblings to the park because he did not want to expose them to the “junkies.” Another young person claimed that some of the local drunks had stolen pieces of equipment from the playground to sell:

“There’s no point putting in new



equipment, it gets stolen after a day!”

(Deliberative workshop participant)

Despite the current broadly negative portrayal of open spaces, residents were enthusiastic about the impact that more user-friendly parks could have. It was felt that safer open spaces with more opportunities for activity would encourage more people to use them, which would have the following positive outcomes:

- Improvements to health: the group discussed the psychological impact green spaces, making people feel healthier;
- The opportunity to get out, especially with young children:

“We wouldn’t be stuck in the blocks all day long.”

“We’d be more likely to take the kids to the park if there was something safe for them to enjoy”.

(Deliberative workshop participants)

- Community spirit: utilising public spaces would offer people more opportunities to socialise outside of their homes – amongst young people there was a call for more organised activities (e.g. football training).

Making the parks safe and accessible was a key need of residents. Complaints mainly focused upon poor lighting which made certain areas and pathways scary and not places where people wish to spend time. Improvements to Pepys Park were seen by some to be an important way forward (as discussed above). However those on Trinity estate felt that they also needed their own space and that Pepys Park was for Pepys’ estate:

“What about us? We can’t use Sayes Park because of all the drug dealers. Where are we supposed to go?”

(Deliberative workshop participant)

Overall, residents were positive about the need for usable open spaces and parks as discussed in the section above. Especially among the mothers of young

children, having an area where they could safely take them to play was seen to be very important. However, it was not only young children that were seen to benefit from a suitable park – it was expected to be a major area for enacting the aspirations for young people in the community.

When discussion turned directly to the proposed investment in Pepys Park, many residents were initially negative about £3 million being spent in this way. Some, especially those from the Trinity Estate, were not happy that money was always siphoned towards Pepys (although, they admitted that the Pepys Estate was in greater need of refurbishment than their own). These residents did not see the park and the potential changes as being for them. The Council was seen to be exacerbating their frustrations about the delayed improvements to their own block by publicising the money that they are going to spend on Pepys. A key challenge the Council faces in the plans for Pepys Park is finding a way for the area to be acknowledged as a space for residents from all three estates rather than “just another thing for Pepys.” However, it is clear that despite the knee-jerk reactions to the amount of money being spent and the concentration on Pepys,

residents would welcome a well-kept and safe open space. The ideal is for this to be a more comprehensive view of all local open spaces (which was explored in the evening workshops), rather than the perceived focus on just one area.

Despite some of the spontaneously negative responses to the plans, some residents offered proactive ways in which they thought the money should be spent. This was especially seen within the two groups of younger people where there were many ideas of how the investment in the Park can be used to kick-start the changes that they had been discussing; the most important of these being giving young people something to do and develop young talent in the area. A key aspect of this was that it needed to be something that was unique to their area; something to install pride. There could be football pitches, and organised activities such as a 'Deptford FC' and a graffiti wall that all the local kids are allowed to graffiti. Other specific ideas included:

- Dance/music schemes and 'Camp America' style projects in the summer;
- Other organised events;

- A small community centre in the park where these things could happen which were just for the young people from the surrounding estates;
- Have football coaches and other teachers; and
- Have a football pen like the one in Eddyston Tower.

The design of the park was seen as a good way to give young people in the area the responsibility and pride which they had acknowledged was lacking in earlier discussions. Residents wanted the youngsters to design it so they feel that it belongs to them, they respect it and do not "want to trash it". They also wanted kids to be the wardens so they are protecting what is for them. Effective advertising so that the community know what is available was deemed to be very important. This was especially said for changing the overall views of the older residents about the younger generation – again, this related to wanting to encourage pride in the area.

Architecture and design

Residents had several concerns regarding the design of new development. Scale was the principal worry, with

many considering additional tall buildings inappropriate to North Deptford's character. Residents wanted to ensure that new buildings were built to a high quality design standards, using vernacular styles and materials which would enhance local distinctiveness.

New and improved public spaces

Grove Street was seen by residents to be the natural centre of the study area, with potential to take on additional community and retail uses, potentially as part of new active frontage through redevelopment of the Oxestalls Road site. There was also support for improvements to the existing public environment there, as well as closure to traffic along Grove Street and other measures to discourage its use as a rat-run.

Convoys Wharf was also thought to be a suitable site for a new central public space which could act as a destination for the area and with landmark community buildings.

5. Crime and safety

Perception of crime

According to the Wardens at the public sector stakeholders' workshop, statistically speaking, North Deptford is not a high crime area, with much criminal activity being in the form of pre-report stage crime and petty disputes. Despite this, crime was perceived to be a significant issue for North Deptford by residents. Criminal activity was perceived to be giving the area a bad name and discouraging visits to the area by friends and some residents said they were prevented from going outside at night through fear. When asked about major issues affecting the North Deptford area, participants in the deliberative workshop spontaneously mentioned crime; when asked to vote about what are seen as the main issues in the area, crime came out on top.

Different aspects of crime and safety were recurrent themes throughout the day, often mentioned in relation to other issues affecting the area. For example, discussions about parks and open spaces turned to the groups of drug dealers who were seen to hang out in Deptford and Sayes Court (making this a no-go area for local residents); and a primary concern relating to housing was a lack of decent front door security. This indicates that perceptions of not being safe and the fear of crime are impacting the quality of life of the residents of North Deptford and acting upon this should be a priority for the Council.

Although there was some personal experience of violent crime, such as muggings and thefts, discussion tended to focus on petty crime. Anti-social behaviour, such as groups of teenagers hanging around and urination in block stairwells, was mentioned frequently. Residents were quick to admit that such behaviour was not simply traceable to young people and that local groups of drug-users or alcoholics were equally to blame. One group of Trinity Estate residents explained that there is a group of drinkers who sit outside the shop all day getting progressively drunk. However, the residents did not feel that there was a personal threat



to their safety despite this behaviour being not very nice and slightly intimidating. It was apparent that as these were locals they represented less of a perceived risk to residents. This contrasts with the perception that drug dealers were coming into the estate from outside of the area.

For one of the younger groups who lived primarily on the Pepys Estate the perception of crime rather than the real threat of it was deemed one of the key drivers of dissatisfaction in the area. They understood that groups of teenagers could be intimidating because there were a lot of them and acted like 'they owned the place' but they had no personal experience of teenagers actually being rude or aggressive:

“It’s not so much what they actually do, but more what they might do. I’ll cross over and walk on the other side of the road to be on the safe side.”

(Deliberative workshop participant)

Whether driven by macro issues, such as media portrayals of gun and knife crime, or personal

experience, it was clear that for some residents fear of crime impacts their life significantly. For example, some older residents (and others as young as late twenties) did not feel safe leaving their homes after dark.

Ways to address crime

The importance of the crime issue to the residents of the North Deptford area suggests that crime is an area that the local authorities will want to prioritise in the future. At the deliberative event, there was debate amongst residents about the best way to tackle the problem of crime, and focusing on the cause of the problems (more youth facilities and better alcohol and drug rehabilitation centres) was mentioned as frequently as law enforcement. Possible solutions that were offered to tackle crime (or the perception of crime) included:

- Stronger police presence, especially after dark – there was some feeling that many drug dealers were not from the estates themselves, but were coming into the area from elsewhere. There was strong feeling that these should be dealt with using punitive measures;



- Better use of – and increased authority for - Wardens or PCSOs (NB community support officers currently disregarded as not having enough legitimate authority);
- Improved and extended youth facilities;
- Better rehabilitation centres for alcohol and drug users; and
- CCTV that functions and is not hidden by trees or buildings.

Improved crime prevention was thought to be equally crucial for the area and the residents' workshops. There were complaints at the state of CCTV cameras, many broken, lacking film or poorly located. Inadequate lighting was also blamed for safety issues, with particularly dangerous pedestrian routes identified at Grove Street; in front of Pendennis House and Clements House; Carteret Way and Windlass Place.

Residents suggested that improvements to public spaces could have a significant impact in reducing crime by removing the conditions which make it easy to target a victim. The Wardens support measures to improve openness and connectivity throughout the

area, for example lighting and more active frontages on Grove Street. They specifically requested that this consultation feedback should directly inform anti-social behaviour, housing and safety strategies at Lewisham Council. As at the deliberative event, residents at these workshops also wanted to see a greater police presence in the surrounding area, particularly during the evening period when people feel the least safe.

Response to Local Assembly Priority 3: Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

Residents were keen that ASB be curbed and felt that a number of the proposed aspects for change were encouraging. CCTV and warden presence were welcomed, although some responded to CCTV with a certain degree of dubiousness:

“Those things – they don’t even have any film in them. What good are they going to do?”

(Deliberative workshop participant)



Linking in with crime research conducted in other areas, it is therefore equally important that where measures are successful they are effectively communicated back to residents.

Driven by a fear of abuse or attack, many residents said that they did not feel comfortable confronting people who undertook low level crime and so actions which increased vigilance in the area were seen as positive. Fly tipping was seen as problem (this is discussed further below), however only a few groups perceived noise control to be a priority.

Response to Local Assembly Priority 4: Drug problems

There was a consensus that there is a drug problem in the area. However, for many it was a problem that was restricted to certain parts of the estates. Often the feeling amongst the participants was that “it happens on other blocks but not mine”, reinforcing the idea that the perception and fear of crime is more prevalent than the direct experience of crime amongst many residents. A key finding is that residents felt that the drug

problems may not have necessarily worsened in the last few years but that they had become more visible. Most people knew the areas where alcoholics spent their time or where drug users hung around. They also claimed that they had become more aware of dealing and told stories of people overhearing or seeing drug sales in the local shop or in the street.

Increased counselling services which are near-by and accessible were seen to be a priority by participants. In addition participants felt that there should be more for young people in the area to do, and that there should be more funding for facilities to keep them away from anti-social behaviour and crime.

At the residents’ workshops a strong link was made between a lack of youth activities in the area and criminal activity. Residents reported that children who might otherwise be constructively engaged at school, at youth clubs or in training, were instead playing on the street and causing anti-social behaviour. It was said that playing on the street was encouraged by parents who wanted to keep them in sight close to home. New youth facilities were therefore considered key to safety improvements in the area by engaging youth more constructively and ensuring supervised playing.

During discussions at the youth group workshop it was suggested that a zero tolerance approach to graffiti was needed, as graffiti tends to spread quickly if it is not addressed immediately. Supervised street art has successfully been used at the Riverside Youth Centre to deter graffiti and ensure greater individual ownership of and respect for communal space.

None of the local business groups mentioned crime as a significant issue, although some residents reported that anti-social activity outside of shops deterred them as customers.

6. Community and youth facilities

The estates and stakeholder workshops aimed to find out local levels of satisfaction with youth provision in the area and identify what improvements might be made. Youth provision was possibly the most discussed and talked about issue at the events, and, as with the deliberative event, youth provision was associated closely with a number of other issues, including crime levels, lack of aspirations and poor levels of job attainment in the area.

Many wanted to see greater youth provision in the area, particularly of sports facilities. Residents suggested tennis courts, play facilities and a football pitch in Pepys Park, an all-weather pitch, a boxing club, and other sports facilities, or any activities which would be attractive to the young and ensure that people could meet and socialise.

For many, the issue was not provision of new facilities, but the need to properly finance existing ones. The Riverside Youth Centre, for example, was agreed to be an excellent, but underfunded resource. Residents wanted to see the Riverside Youth Centre open seven nights a week and at weekends, and to extend existing school facilities to cater for evening computer classes and homework clubs. It was agreed that, in order to

fund existing and new services, a trust fund should be set up to provide revenue, rather than capital.

Lack of facilities for young people

At the deliberative event, a lack of facilities for young people was seen as a major priority for improving the area and was strongly related to antisocial behaviour. In discussion, a strong sense community within blocks came out, with many perceiving that the youths drinking and urinating in the stairwells had come in from other blocks on the estate:

“I don’t know who lets them in, but I don’t recognise any of them -”

“Yeah, they get in through the trade entrance. They don’t actually live here.”

(Deliberative workshop participants)

When it came to offering solutions and ways forward, conversations often focused upon improving facilities

and support networks for young people. Therefore in contrast to the call for punitive measures in dealing with drug dealers in the area, when it came to young people there was a much stronger feeling that it was down to their community to provide youths with greater opportunities:

“You can’t blame the kids – there’s nothing for them to do.”

(Deliberative workshop participant)

This indicates not only that this should be an area for local authorities to prioritise but that this is a main way in which the local community can be engaged to drive some of the change. This was especially noted in the younger tables where there were a number of participants who wanted to be involved in taking the improvement of youth facilities forward and ensuring that it was the sort of offering that would have a real impact on teenagers in the area.

The two key reasons why this was seen as important were:

- The knock-on effect that this would have for the

other issues under discussion, such as especially crime and employment; and

- The opportunity it would offer for young people in Deptford to 'showcase their talents' and encourage pride in the community.

Particularly among the younger groups, there was a sense that the negative perception of young people in the area was unfair and that improved youth facilities would play an important role in offering the chance for youth talent to be shown off. Some residents commented, especially, on the potential musical talent as shown in this clip of the Pepys Estate – YMP:

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=gMmeaoZ5F5E>

Ideas of the sort of youth facilities that would achieve this were:

- Local football club with youth teams; a focal point for the community to support their youth rather than being afraid of them;
- Community centres with a creative offering; ideas included dance, producing music and art work such as graffiti.

Residents were keen for there to be more to occupy

young people. There was a strong feeling that the younger generation "have too much free time on their hands," which directly causes the drug and ASB problems discussed above. However, this was extended to children, as young as five, with the feeling that building inspiration and enthusiasm should begin at an early age. One interesting idea was that there should be mini-libraries around the estates so that children have places to read.

Awareness levels varied about what was currently on offer for young people. One group commented on the Youth Club on Pepys:

“But it’s only open on a Tuesday.”

(Deliberative workshop participant)

Another group felt that the Deptford Adventure Playground on New King Street was “too small.”

In taking this forward, it is evident that residents want younger people to have a main role in deciding the facilities they want and to be the main drivers

of change. Additionally there is a clear cry for motivational role models; people who are on the same level as young people (slightly older, but accessible as peers), who can inspire them in developing skills. This is exemplified in the proposed changes to Pepys Park as discussed below.

Response to Local Authority Priority: Improving Youth facilities

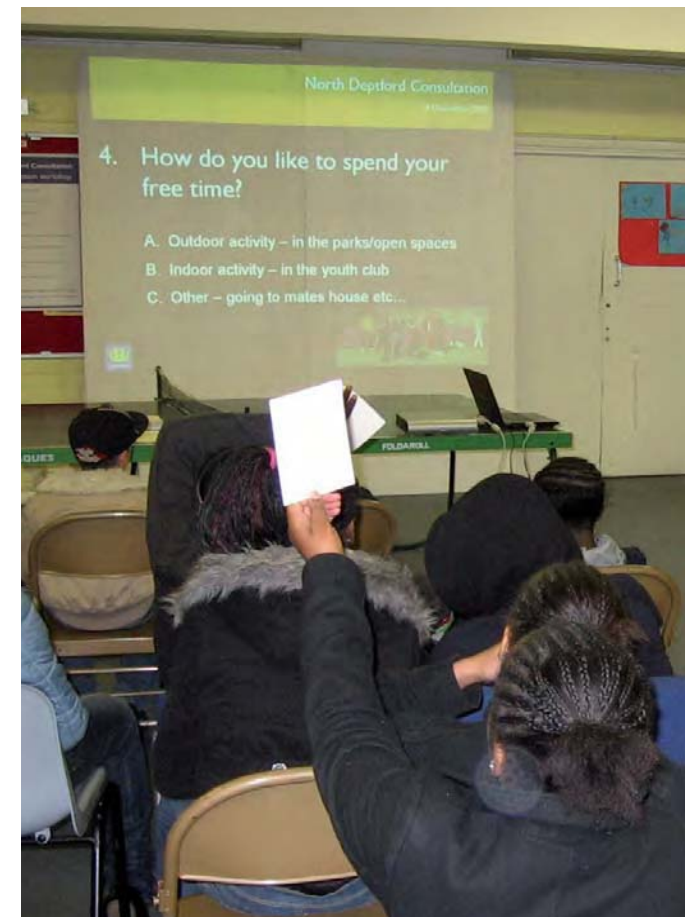
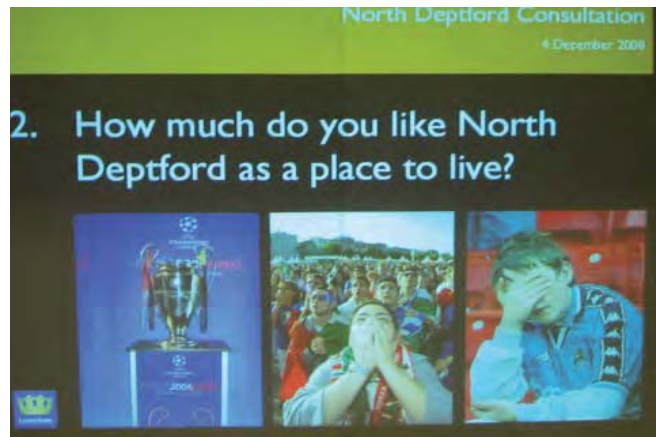
Residents were pleased that improving youth facilities had been identified as a main Local Assembly priority. Although crime was seen by most residents to be the main issue in the area, improving facilities was recognised as the action that would precipitate change with regard to crime and other pertinent issues.

Youth facilities came up in discussions with residents time and again. In addition, youth apprenticeships were seen as a key way to improve attitudes to employment - this for many was a more important need for change than the number of job opportunities available.

The suggestion of photography workshops and a play area in Pepys directly reflected the views of some

residents, as discussed above. During the deliberative workshop, on one of the younger people's tables the prospect of photography was particularly appealing. However, one of the suggestions for addressing this priority that residents did not engage with was the idea of police-funded summer schemes because of a lack of understanding about what this would entail. In addition, it was seen as a 'top-down' approach rather than one driven by the desires of the young people in the area.

Although crime was seen as the biggest issue in the area, the local authority priority for improving youth facilities was seen as the most important of the five priorities discussed. This reflects a common theme seen in Britain as a whole and it is not unusual for residents to feel that greater opportunities for youths will be key to driving improvements in the local area.



Youth Event

The youth workshop aimed to find out how North Deptford was viewed by young people themselves, and what their priorities might be for improvement to the area. To do this, the young people were asked to give a positive, ambivalent or negative response to various questions.

While the majority thought that North Deptford was a nice place to live, a significant minority were ambivalent and a significant number thought that the area had got worse over the last three years. The young people were supportive of Local Assembly priorities, which prioritised youth provision above all else. However, in addition, the young people were most interested in seeing improvements to shops and parks. They wanted to see fast-food shops and comparison shops with an offer suited to their needs and lifestyles, for example, sports shops – their most important destination was Surrey Quays, and they identified traffic congestion to the most important traffic issue, frustrating their movement to surrounding locations as public transport users.



Leisure facilities for older groups

Entertainment and leisure facilities were also suggested for older people. For example, the Riverside Youth Centre could be opened to offer a different activity each night, including activities for older residents, such as bingo. People felt that, given the opportunities for change in the area, North Deptford could become an attractive destination by offering social activities, music, film, events, sports, culture, and history.

Youth and community facilities were thought to be crucial to improved community cohesion; there were concerns that North Deptford's community is too divided by ethnicity and culture, and that new development would only exacerbate this if it is not properly integrated into the existing community. Aragon Tower was seen to be case-in-point. This could be addressed with more community events aimed at promoting integration – farmers markets and festivals. Within North Deptford, residents said that public spaces are used separately by the different estates, rather than being considered as common public spaces.

Community facilities recommended for adults included – a library, art gallery and fitness club. There was a

feeling that local services had been cut back over recent decades, and residents wanted to see developers investing in the local community by providing venues and services.

Community infrastructure

Health provision was considered by some to be inadequate, with more GP surgeries/ well woman clinics and hospitals, and that this should be a priority if new homes were delivered. The public sector stakeholders also identified potential impacts of new homes on local health statistics and therefore funding streams, and the health impact of extra people and traffic on the local populace.

Residents and the public sector groups were both keen to stress that public space provision should be seen as integral to youth provision, with public green spaces offering places where young people could congregate safely.

Retail provision

Participants were generally keen to see a wider retail offer in the area, particularly of local convenience goods. Residents felt that North Deptford needs a supermarket as there is nowhere to buy basic food products such as bread and milk after working hours. Local business representatives felt that additional food shops could increase vibrancy in the area and make it a more attractive place to work, particularly cafes and sandwich shops where employees could buy lunch. A wider comparison offer was a clear priority for the young people at the youth workshop.

Residents at the estates workshops felt that all of the development sites would be suitable for new shops and community facilities, particularly Convoys Wharf due to its size, as well as the Grove Street frontage to the Oxestalls Road site as this would enhance vibrancy there.

The Triangle Traders were very concerned about the impact of new retail at Convoys Wharf on their ability to compete and survive.