

Changes to Hackney's Town Centre Network: Hackney Central and Stamford Hill

This paper provides evidence to support the re-designation of Hackney Central from a District to a Major Centre and Stamford Hill from a Local to a District Centre within the town centre network. These changes to the town centre hierarchy are shown in the draft new London Plan (2018) and within LP33.

Hackney Central

Hackney's Town Centre Study (2017) reports on how well Hackney Central is performing as a town centre. Its comparison good turnover is the highest in the borough, commercial rents have been steadily increasing, and people travel from a wide catchment area to visit the town centre. Furthermore, a recent study by Experian (December 2017) shows that the quantum of retail, leisure and floorspace in Hackney Central is over 74,000sqm in total which significantly exceeds the 50,000sqm threshold required for a major centre as outlined in the London Plan. Leisure uses include the 1,275 seat Hackney Empire theatre, library, museum and the four screen Picturehouse cinema which also includes bespoke conference facilities. The presence of these uses, alongside the town hall, demonstrates that Hackney Central already functions as the civic and cultural hub of the borough.

The upgrading of Hackney Central to a major centre is an important next step in helping to deliver the continued regeneration and revival of this centre – which is strategically planned to be one of the key growth areas in the borough through our Local Plan 2033.

Improvements to Hackney Central Overground Station including an interchange between Hackney Central and Hackney Downs has increased capacity and improved transport connectivity within the Town Centre. The Council is lobbying for Crossrail 2 eastern branch to serve the projected increased transport demand in the longer term. Hackney Central has attracted circa £8m TfL funding to deliver the Hackney Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme to improve the built environment through a series of pedestrian and public realm improvements complementing the recent public realm improvements on the Mare Street Narrowway.

The upgrading of Hackney to a Major centre will help support this continued investment into the area which has already seen interest from a variety of multiple retailers such as TK Maxx, Nike, Travelodge, Costa Coffee and some of the branded co-working operators such as We Work. Demand for retail and office space in Hackney Central remains strong, hence low vacancy rates across the town centre.

The influence of nearby major employment centres, such as the City of London, TechCity and Shoreditch is evident in Hackney Central and the surrounding area in the extension of employment and creative industry cluster northwards along Mare Street. Hackney Central is already recognised as a strategic development location in the City Fringe Opportunity Area, and there is significant scope to support the further growth of the digital-creative businesses within the area.

Our vision for Hackney Central, as set out in our 2017 masterplan and the LP33 Place Policy for Hackney Central and Surrounds, is to deliver a thriving town centre, a civic and cultural hub, and a strategically important employment area. The area will meet the needs of residents, visitors and workers through its diverse range of shops, workspaces, cultural and leisure facilities, and public spaces. The strategic priorities identified to deliver the vision include strengthening the role of the town centre and expanding the economy through the delivery of new commercial floorspace, implementing a programme of significant public improvements including the creation of new links between key development sites, and improving public transport infrastructure to accommodate increased passenger capacity.

The upgrading of Hackney Central to a Major centre will help encourage new investment and businesses to the area and help to deliver around 3,000 new homes as well as new employment, retail and community floorspace. We are planning for 34,000sqm of new retail and leisure floorspace by 2033 and the majority of this will be directed towards the two Major town centres. Specifically it will help deliver new commercial floorspace on Amhurst Road, Graham Road, Bohemia Place, the Tesco site on Morning Lane, and on Reading Lane. The 1.4ha Tesco site on Morning Lane along with the 0.8ha Clapton Bus Garage at Bohemia Place could deliver around 560 new residential units and 18,000 sqm of commercial floorspace.

The elevation of Hackney Central to a Major centre alongside other initiatives will provide sector confidence to ensure that new development and supporting infrastructure is delivered in a way that has significant positive impact on socioeconomic opportunities for local people.

The strategic vision for Hackney Central is to coordinate growth in tandem with Dalston, offering a well-balanced offer of services and opportunities. Therefore an opportunity lies to strengthen retail provision in both major centres to mitigate spending power leaking from the borough.

The retail strategy for the Tesco site and Hackney Central more broadly carefully considers both town centres in tandem with future end uses (and any interim uses) for the Kingsland Shopping Centre in Dalston, including as part of any future redevelopment. Developing a complementary approach further signifies the importance of Hackney Central as a major destination in terms of retail, employment, leisure and residential going forward. Officers are guiding development, contributing to site specific retail strategies to curate the right retail mix and ensure both town centres are ready to meet the future demands of town centres.

The table below summarises the points above and sets out how Hackney Central meets the characteristics of the London Plan definition of a major centre.

London Plan definition: Major centre	Hackney's evidence
Typically found in inner and some parts of outer London with a borough-wide catchment.	An in-centre survey undertaken as part of Hackney's Retail and Town Centres Study (2017) found that 32% of visitors arrive in Hackney Central by bus and 13% arrive by rail, indicating that Hackney Central draws visitors from a wide catchment as these visitors will

	<p>have travelled from other areas of the borough and beyond to visit the centre. 41% of visitors walk to the centre.</p> <p>In addition, a household telephone survey undertaken as part of the Retail and Town Centres Study establishes that Hackney Central is the second most popular shopping and leisure destination for residents in the survey area (an area which is slightly wider than the borough boundary) following Dalston, with 26.4% of respondents stating they visit the centre.</p>
<p>They generally contain over 50,000 sqm of retail, leisure and service floorspace with a relatively high proportion of comparison goods relative to convenience goods.</p>	<p>A survey undertaken by Experian in December 2017 (based on a slightly revised town centre boundary, proposed as part of Hackney's Draft Local Plan 2033 (LP33)) establishes that the total quantum of retail, leisure and service floorspace within Hackney Central is 74,790sqm.</p> <p>Hackney Central is performing a strong role as comparison good shopping destination, with a number of large format anchor stores including Primark, Marks and Spencer, TK Maxx and Tesco. The centre has a comparison goods turnover of £72m which is the highest in the borough. Commercial retail rents in Hackney Central have increased steadily over the last 5 years from £18.00 per sq.ft in 2012 to £36.00 per sq.ft in 2016, placing it above rental values in the other town centres in the borough.</p>
<p>They may also have significant employment, leisure, service and civic functions.</p>	<p>In addition to its strong retail performance, Hackney Central offers a significant reservoir of employment land and affordable workspace and a strong community of co-working, artists and SMEs has developed in this area. As the Tech City employment cluster grows, new businesses and those displaced from elsewhere in the City Fringe are moving into Hackney Central and it is expected that this process will continue over time. Hackney Central also has an important civic function, being home to the Town Hall and Council offices. Furthermore, Hackney Central offers a range of commercial leisure venues such as the Hackney Empire theatre which hosts dance, music and comedy shows, the Hackney Picturehouse cinema and St. John at Hackney Church which doubles up as a popular live music venue.</p>

Stamford Hill

Stamford Hill is located on the northern edge of the borough of Hackney and also serves the community in South Tottenham in Haringey. The community in Stamford Hill and South Tottenham is very distinctive with a large Jewish Orthodox community, the Charedi Community, which has a strong influence on the community services and shops available in the area.

Stamford Hill contains a concentration of shops arranged in four groups around a major road junction. Each of the four parades contain their own distinctive function, form and character. These are supported by a range of complementary non-retail facilities and services, which collectively form a coherent district shopping centre. The retail emphasis in Stamford Hill is on food and other convenience goods, although the centre also supports a wide range of comparison goods outlets and other essential services. Two large supermarkets, Sainsbury's and Asda, anchor the centre and there is a range of uses outside Use Class A1 Shops. This includes banks, building societies, hotels, cafés, pubs, launderettes, synagogues and buildings used for leisure and community uses, such as the historic Skinners School. In total, Stamford Hill contains over 19,000sqm of retail, leisure and service floorspace.

The four retail parades in Stamford Hill straddle the junction of the A10 red route and act as a public transport hub for at least five major cross London bus routes, the 254, 243, 76, 67 and 243. These buses are supported and serviced via the Stamford Hill bus garage that lies at the back of the shopping parade. The centre at Stamford Hill is supported by two adjacent local centres in close proximity - Oldhill Street and Dunsmure Road - which cater for the day-to-day needs of the Charedi Community living in Stamford Hill. These Local Centres are also formally designated as such in LP33.

Stamford Hill itself functions as an international destination for the Charedi Jewish Community, catering for visiting Orthodox Jews from across London and the world, with shops and services providing for their specific cultural needs. The Charedi Community in Stamford Hill is the largest in the UK and is growing at a faster rate than the rest of Hackney. Vacancy rates in the shopping centre are very low and a buoyant range of goods and services cater to the needs of the community.

The Council is in the advanced stages of preparing an Area Action Plan for Stamford Hill to provide a framework for future growth and deliver a vision which seeks to create a distinct identity for Stamford Hill as a vibrant diverse community. Central to the Council's future vision of Stamford Hill, as set out in the AAP and the LP33 Place Policy for Stamford Hill is the aspiration create an accessible, distinctive and vibrant town centre at Stamford Hill Broadway – a centre that builds on its distinct character and performs as a cultural destination for visitors, whilst also promoting innovation and employment opportunities, by increasing the range of shops, services and commercial outlets. The elevation of Stamford Hill to a District centre is central to the delivery of the Council's vision for Stamford Hill.

There is potential to deliver around 3,000 new homes across Stamford Hill and Woodberry Down over the next 15 years and the Council has identified and allocated a number of key sites in the Stamford Hill centre to deliver this much needed housing

along with new social infrastructure and commercial floor space. Detail will be included in the forthcoming AAP, but sites include 41-45 Stamford Hill and 151 Stamford Hill Broadway which have potential to deliver a substantial increase in both retail floorspace and new housing. The elevation of Stamford Hill to a District Centre, supported by the Area Action Plan and the work of Hackney's economic regeneration steering group, will help deliver key sites by increasing developer and community confidence and the long term viability and vitality of the centre.

The table below summarises the points above and sets out how Stamford Hill meets the characteristics of the London Plan definition of a District centre.

London Plan definition: District centre	Hackney's evidence
Distributed more widely than Metropolitan and Major centres, providing convenience goods and services for more local communities and accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.	Stamford Hill is currently the largest local centre in the borough, offering around 120 commercial units. It achieves a comparison goods turnover of £30.8m, which compares strongly with other district centres in London. The centre is served by two good-sized supermarkets (Sainsbury's and Asda) which draw trade from a wider catchment than would be expected for a local shopping centre. The centre also contains a sizeable quantum of comparison and services floorspace, and benefits from a good level of accessibility.
Typically, they contain 5,000–50,000 sqm of retail, leisure and service floorspace.	A survey undertaken by Experian in December 2017 establishes that the total quantum of retail, leisure and service floorspace within Stamford Hill is 19,040sqm.
Some District centres have developed specialist shopping functions.	The large Charedi community in the area generates a powerful clustering effect on local shops and businesses that enriches the neighbourhood and draws in visitors from outside, creating a unique competitive advantage within the local economy.