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STRATFORD TOWN CENTRE

PARTIAL POLICY VACUUM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whilst the 2012 Olympics may be the ‘biggest show in town’ from London’s perspective, Westfield’s Stratford City development is more directly connected to and will have a more immediate impact on the existing, local town centre of Stratford – at the eastern edge of the Lea Valley. With the Olympics soon to arrive, Stratford is being transformed from a marginal, suburban centre in London’s outer east end to an important metropolitan centre for Greater London.

Stratford served during Roman rule as a trading post between London and Colchester. A rural village until the mid 19th century, by the turn of the twentieth century it had been integrated into the expanding metropolis of London, bordered the industrialised Lea valley, featured a transit hub for rail services – as well incorporating shops and homes for a growing urban population.

Following the bombings of World War II, and later, the collapse of the docks and industry in the late 1960s/early 70s, Stratford maintained its connection to central London, but began to lose some of its vitality. Small, local retail fabric changed hands or gave way to larger chain retail. With the construction of the Gyratory – the circular road containing the Great Eastern Road Arc and parts of Stratford High Street, Stratford Broadway, and The Grove – the town centre was effectively given over to traffic and remains symbolic of Stratford’s fragmentation. Much of the commercial centre was subsequently internalised in The Stratford Centre which contains a multitude of retail and commercial uses – with scattered residential, institutional, and public facilities radiating from the station. With the railway lines running into and around the Stratford Station at surface level, little pedestrian contact to the north or west of Stratford Station is possible. Meridian Square, situated between Stratford Station and Stratford Centre, exists within this complex web of roads and barriers in a manner that falls short of what we view as its potential. In addition to the physical splintering within Stratford, the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) points to several social, economic and environmental constraints that hinder Stratford’s identity and purpose (DCLG, 2009).

As indicated in the diagram, Stratford is now developing as two substantially bifurcated nodes, connected by a single, narrow pedestrian footbridge. Whereas Stratford Old Town Centre displays its roots as a rural village, adapted through urbanisation over time, Stratford City has been conceived in a completely different social and economic context, with a different constituency in mind. Significant economic and power differentials exist between the two. Without a proper understanding of the consequences of these differences and how to effectively use

them, Stratford Old Town Centre as the less powerful actor could suffer from a crisis of purpose and meaning, becoming lost in the potential ambiguity of the two disjointed nodes.

The London Plan (Mayor of London 2008), with its focus on economic and population growth, provides a strategic context and direction for the development of Stratford, something the London Borough of Newham generally follows in its Core Strategy document (Newham, 2005) and Unitary Development Plan (Newham, 2009). The London Plan calls for Stratford to develop from a local district into one of a few of the metropolitan centres for Greater London. The Plan anticipates that Stratford, predominantly the Stratford City portion of it, will support some 30,000 office-based jobs in a high-rise cluster of office buildings, in addition to the formation of a new yet vaguely defined town centre. Transport connections are also being strengthened, as Stratford International Station establishes a rail link to Europe.

According to Stratford Renaissance Partnership, Stratford City will be around twenty times the size of the existing Stratford core (SRP 2009). The first of seven anticipated development stages is the Westfield development, which will provide 176,500 square metres of retail and leisure space. How will Stratford retain a sense of relevance and identity against this considerably separate and potentially conflicting development emerging alongside?

Our conceptual response aims to nurture and reinforce the less powerful Stratford neighbourhood and additionally, to define and strengthen the connection between the two nodes, fostering good ‘neighbourly’ association. We propose that clarity of the relationship will be enhanced through the enhancement of the experience of the ‘spine’ between the two centres. Simultaneously we propose sustainably strengthening the Stratford neighbourhood through the creation of a partial policy vacuum zone scheme aiming to spark local creativity and energy.





Stratford along Stratford Broadway



Inside Stratford Centre

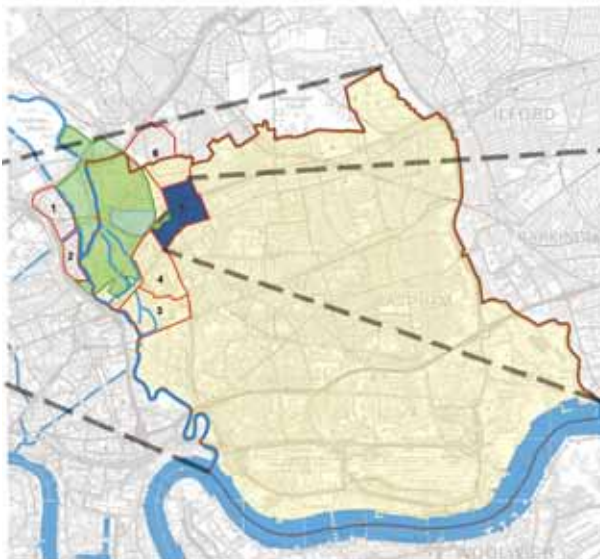


Meridian Square



Small building activity

Locating Stratford at the Greater London, London Borough of Newham and local level



ANALYSIS

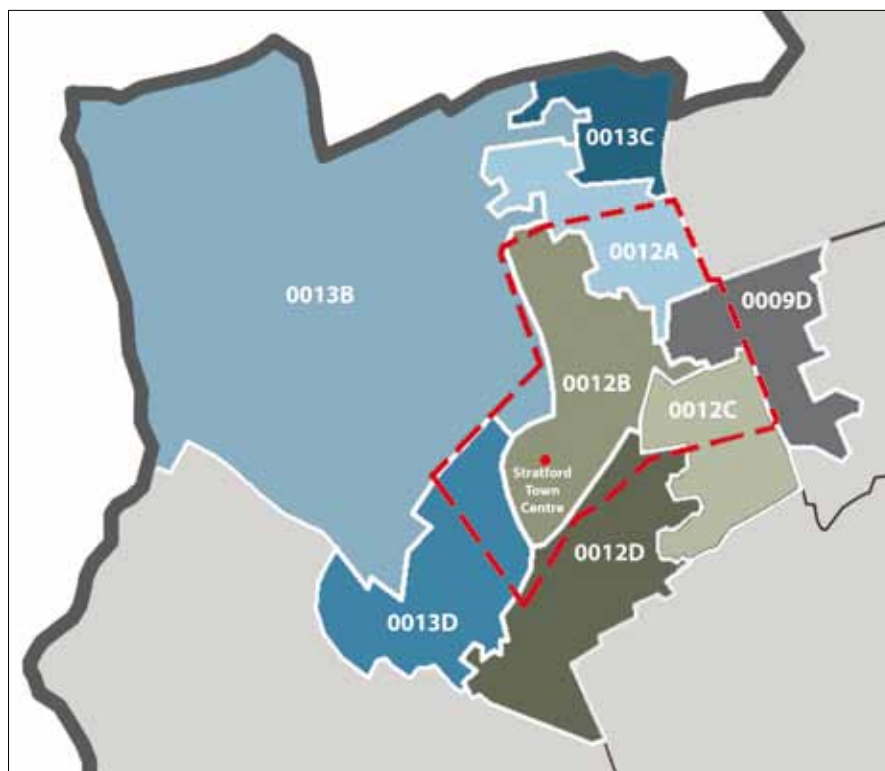
Deprivation

Our project approaches the challenge of raising current levels of deprivation in the broader Olympic area to West London standards. West London standards are defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as comprising the Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2006).

Conducted by the British Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG, 2009), the IMD locates seven domains that are spatially projected into small geographical units. These units, known as “lower layer super output areas” (LSOA) each contain one to three thousand residents. The Stratford site imprecisely covers three LSOAs: Newham 012A, 012B, and 012C. The aggregate deprivation score for Stratford displays considerably more deprivation than West London. This disparity is particularly concentrated in the domains of housing, crime, income and health. LSOA 012B has the greatest deprivation, placing it in the bottom 6th percentile for all LSOAs in the United Kingdom.

In our analysis of deprivation, we had trouble with the notion of utilising the IMD as the sole means for defining it as with the use of West London as a benchmark. In spatial terms, our site was not well configured in relation to the LSOA. The boundaries of our site – Stratford – do not coincide with the three aforementioned LSOAs, resulting in an imperfect geography of data and leading to uncertain

interpretations of the index and its domains. West London is a rather ambiguous and amorphous region, and we feel that the benchmark should be quite clearly defined, so as to better relate to the fine grain of Stratford. A lack of spatial fixity challenges many of the domains within the IMD, and this yields an inability to spatially define certain domains. For example, a significant number of those employed in Stratford are likely to be residing in other communities. Efforts to improve employment will inevitably reach other communities; similarly, this occurs with domains such as income, pollution, and crime. The IMD is over-weighted by 58% for income and employment and under-weighted 35% away from housing, crime, and living environment. This suggests that the DCLG values income and employment more heavily than other domains. These two domains appear to be correlated, and this double-weighting, brought about by their correlation, further diminishes the value of other domains within the IMD. We argue that this emphasis on economic over environmental and spatial measures is significant given the use of the IMDs as evidence for the need for strategic intervention in urban change. Our project focuses on certain environmental and spatial indicators of deprivation. Research suggests that past intervention to improve areas suffering from a low IMD has proven problematic. Andrew Fyfe for example, looking at various programmes and literature from within the UK for the Scottish Government found that “across Britain there is a lack of solid evidence of the overall impact of geographically targeted programmes on multiple deprivation” (Fyfe, 2009).



Lower Layer Super Output Areas for Stratford

The Happiness Survey presents a different story from the IMD for Stratford. Openly Local (OL 2009) conducted the Happiness Survey across the United Kingdom in 2008, examining 152 local councils through 18 national indicators. Overall, people in Newham were almost as happy as West Londoners across several indicators. However, Newham residents had more negative responses than any other borough in London regarding such factors as anti-social behaviour, alcohol consumption, drug use, and drug dealing within their neighbourhoods. In our project, we take anti-social behaviour to be a fundamental indicator of deprivation, and link it with some of the many underused areas – at different times of day and night – that exist in the area.

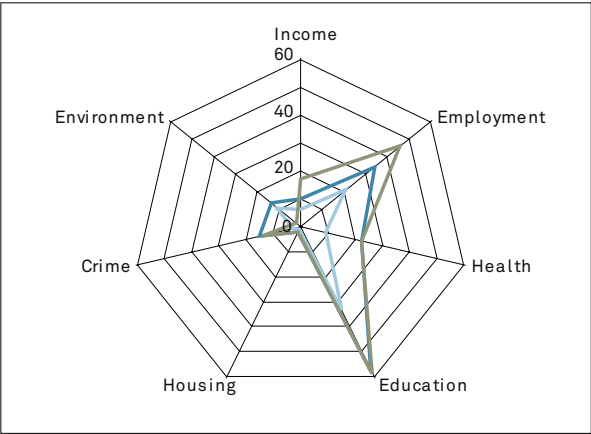
The following sections outline the areas we covered through of our research of Stratford. On the whole, we concentrated our study on LSOA 012B, as it most closely overlays the geographic centre of our site. We focused on existing spatial conditions, including spatial ‘seams’, connections and links, land use and location. We also focused on characteristics of Stratford Old Town Centre that we viewed as either assets or challenges to its cultivation as a local centre.

Stratford LSOAs to West London as a ratio

LSOA:	Overall	Income	Employment	Health	Education	Housing	Crime	Environment
012A	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.4	1	0.1	0.4	0.5
012B	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.05	0.1	0.5
012C	0.5	0.6	1.2	0.4	1.1	0.1	0.4	0.1

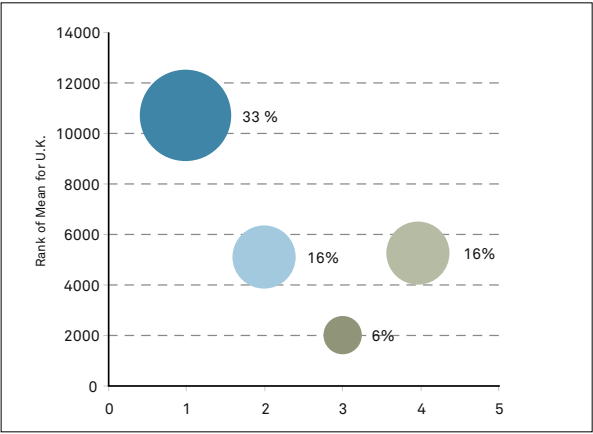
Particularly Bad: 0 to 39 Bad: 0.4 to 0.79 Satisfactory: 0.8 and above

IMD domains for the LSOAs within Stratford as a percentile ranking against all of the UK



- LSOA..3616 – 012A
- LSOA..3617 – 012B
- LSOA..3618 – 012C

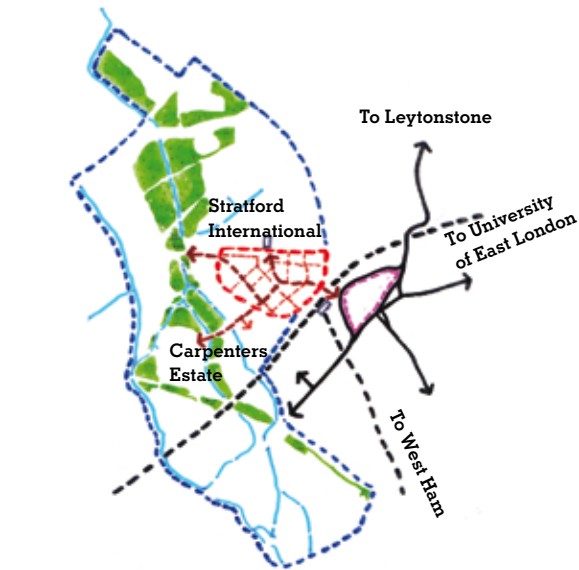
2007 IMD for West London compared to the Stratford LSOAs



- West London
- LSOA..3616 – 012A
- LSOA..3617 – 012B
- LSOA..3618 – 012C

Spatial Seams

Through our spatial analysis of Stratford, we located several major boundaries that fragment the once permeable neighbourhood. The whole site is splintered at its northern and western edges by the immense rail network that runs at surface level. The Gyrator, largely car-oriented, creates a major boundary for pedestrians in Stratford. Only Angel Lane and the more distant The Grove connect Stratford to Leyton to the north. Within the coming year, there will also be one new pedestrian bridge from The Stratford Centre that will connect with Westfield. This limited physical connectivity between Westfield and Stratford City highlights the wider social and economic severances between the two cores. These boundaries and separations in different ways undermine the coherence of Stratford and threaten its historic urban identity.



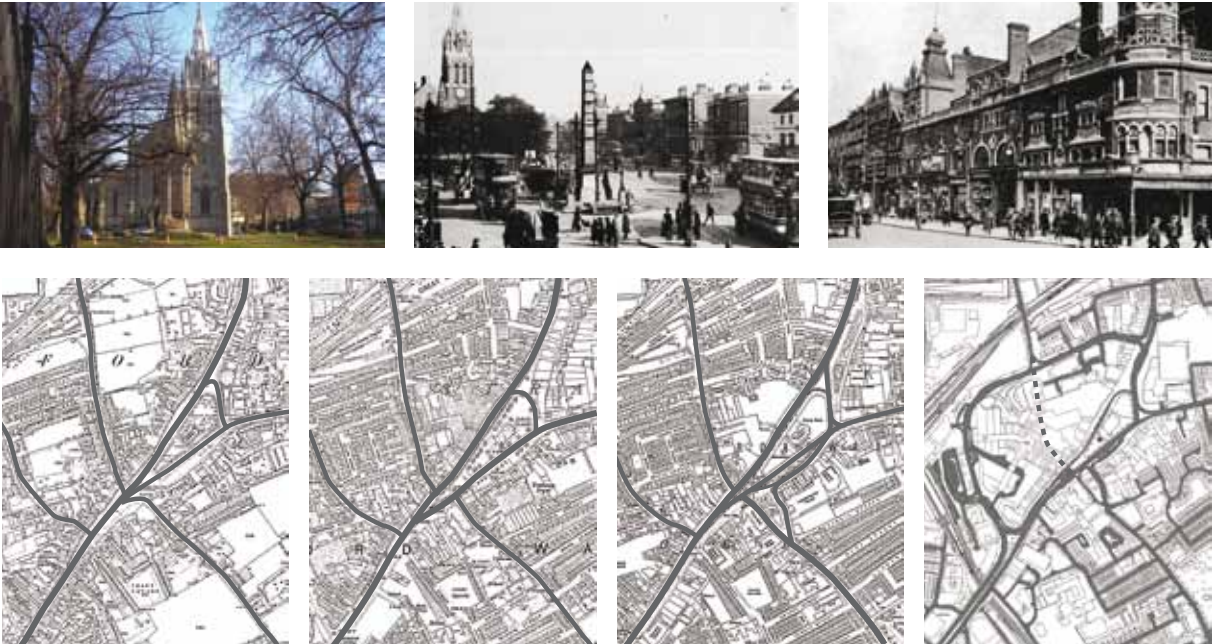
Above Spatial borders, boundaries, and seams in Stratford

Connections and Links

Although multiple severances exist within and alongside Stratford, there are also a number of connections and links that Stratford could utilise to strengthen its relationship to other localities in East London. In particular, Stratford High Street plays a vital role as the main arterial road that extends from the Essex countryside to Oxford Street in Central London via Stratford. This road connects Stratford with inner East and Central London, the Lea Valley Regional Park and the Olympic Park. At a more local level, Stratford High Street serves a critical link between the Carpenter’s Estate and Leyton. Stratford residents will also, after 2012 have improved pedestrian access to a newly renovated network of parks and public spaces in the form of the Lea Valley Regional Park. A number of smaller streets such as West Ham Lane and Romford Road connect into the High Street and Broadway, integrating the residential neighbourhoods into the larger-order local and regional operations of Stratford Centre and Stratford Station. We see the abundance of connections and transport options as opportunities in terms of social and economic revitalisation in Stratford.

- Stratford
- Westfield Stratford City
- Olympic Park Site
- Vehicular Road Connectivity
- Pedestrian Connectivity
- Lower Lea Valley Park
- Water Channel
- Railway Lines

Below from left to right Borough theatre on High Street, circa 1920. Stratford Broadway and Stratford High Street junction in 1925. St. John’s church, one of many historical connections in Stratford



Historical growth of Stratford (1867, 1893, 1914, 2009)

Historical Connections

Historically, Broadway and High Street were crucial arterials for local tram lines and held much of the vibrant street life for the neighbourhood, along with the formerly connected Angel Lane. Angel Lane, which now originates north of Stratford, used to cut through the land where The Stratford Centre currently stands serving as a critical link between Leyton and Stratford and containing mixed retail and residential uses. Although this street has vanished, many fine Victorian and Edwardian buildings line the High Street and Broadway, including St. John's Church and Stratford Town Hall, testifying to the area's former productivity and prosperity. To the south of the neighbourhood, Stratford also housed one of London's largest wholesale produce markets, Stratford Market, until 1991 when it moved to New Spitalfields Market in neighbouring Leyton. In our project, we are interested in bringing back to the surface, albeit in a new guise, both the sense of the important connection formed by Angel Lane as well as of the market.

Predominant Land Uses

In the core of Stratford retail-related uses predominate. Around the Gyrator are situated the major businesses contained within the shopping centre, though only along the High Street do retail units open onto the street. Through sheer scale, the shopping centre is the most prominent building in Stratford Old Town, eight stories high, but with retail only on the first two levels, constructed since the 1980s. The form of the shopping centre is fragmented by entry and exit points to the multi-storey car parks facing Great Eastern Road. At-grade car parking is interspersed around the core. A number of empty sites are fenced off to public access. To the south of the core, there is a large, fifteen storey office tower, which feels quite out of context with the rest of the site. Residential properties spread to the east and north of the core, while non-residential institutions surround the core.



Typical residential fabric in Stratford



Construction of Olympic Stadium and Aquatics Centre as seen from Stratford



Three-dimensional rendering of Westfield Stratford City



- A1 Shops
- A2 Financial / Professional Services
- A3-A4 Restaurants and Cafes / Drinking Establishments / Hot Food Takeaways
- B1 Business
- B2 General Industrial
- B8 Storage and Distribution
- Green Space
- C1 Hotels
- C2 Residential Institutions
- C3 Dwelling Houses
- D1 Non-Residential Institutions
- D3 Assembly and Leisure
- Parking Areas

Olympic Context

By current estimates, some £9.3 billion (DCMS, 2008) will be spent on the Olympics Legacy over a period of time extending significantly after the Olympics. The 2012 Olympics is intended to act as a catalyst to for the regeneration of London’s deprived east, focused on ‘transforming place’, building new communities and creating new prospects for existing residents (DCMS, 2008). The Olympic site is located to the north of Stratford and whilst not directly bordering the commercial centre of Stratford, the new connection via Westfield’s town centre bridge forms a gateway to the Olympic Park. In time, Stratford residents will gain access to legacy facilities including the pool and cycling infrastructure. Conversely, for new communities created as a result of the Legacy housing, Stratford will become their local neighbourhood hub.

Community Asset Map

- Arts and Culture
- Social
- Education
- Environment
- Transport
- Business
- Regeneration



Pedestrian Realm

Our analysis of pedestrian flows in the area indicates that people congregate at specific locations in Stratford. We undertook pedestrian counts throughout the day and discovered that most of the activity occurs in the shopping centre – pedestrians forming a solid path running east and west between Stratford Station and Broadway. Pedestrian congestion occurs at the eastern and western shopping centre entrances. Although heavily concentrated in and around the mall, the intensity appears to spread rather evenly from Broadway as the flows of people primarily connect on major bus routes on Broadway or walk to the north along Broadway, south on High Street, or east through Romford Road or West Ham Lane. 25% of all land in our study area is used as road space, as compared to 12% for Greater London (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2005). There are few public space options, as any significant green spaces are located at least one kilometre east of Stratford Station. The Public Gardens on West Ham Lane are a kilometre away, whilst larger West Ham Park is almost two kilometres away. Only 4% of all land in LSOA 012B is green as opposed to 38% for Greater London.

Community Assets

Stratford has a highly diverse population (ONS, 2001) which is reflected in the variety of places to eat, special interest groups and community centers. Image 33 comprises a local asset map indicating the abundance of amenities within Newham, specifically Stratford, including organizations and centres focused on arts and culture, social needs, education, environment, transportation, business, and neighbourhood regeneration. This diversity provides the neighbourhood with an opportunity to embrace various cultures whilst joining them under a larger notion of Stratford as a neighbourhood.

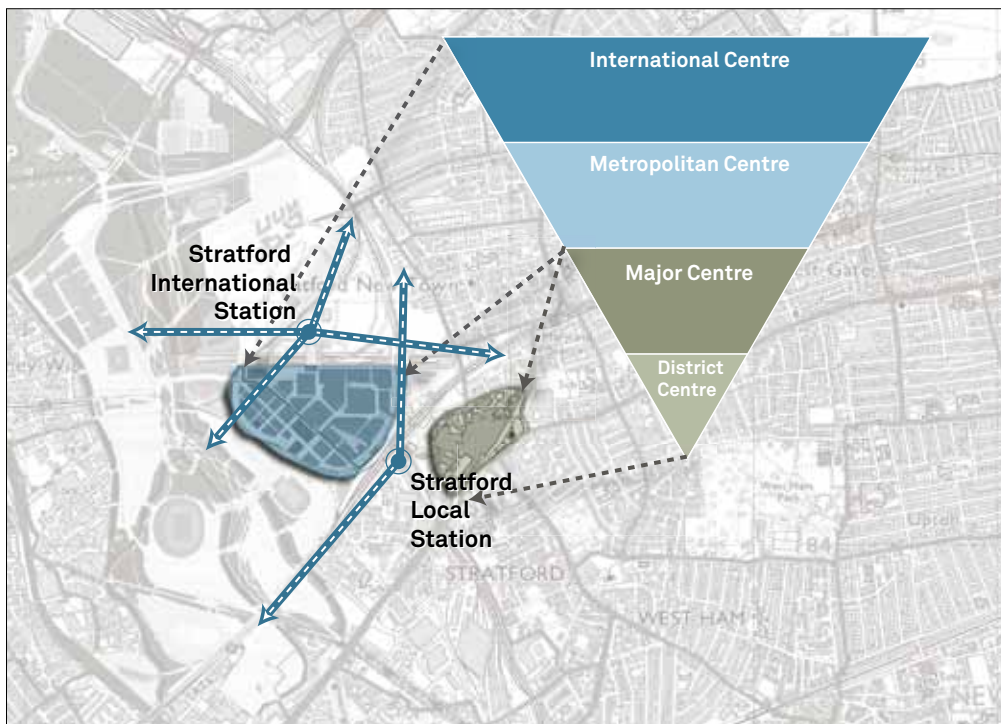
Nodality

The neighbourhood expresses itself as a concentration of many activities and functions within the broader urban fabric of Newham and the surrounding boroughs. At Stratford Station several strands of public transport converge. Roads radiate away from the Gyrator, which in turn directs attention either towards or away from the core. Shopping and business are highly concentrated in the core, as an estimated 50,000 square metres of commercial space exists within and adjacent to the Gyrator, providing several functions that cater to multiple catchment areas.

Stratford represents a thematic concentration of social, cultural and economic functions, providing not only goods and services to the surrounding district but also operating as a symbolic point of reference for proximate neighbourhoods. The London Plan ranks Stratford as one of 31 third-tier major centres for Greater London (Mayor of London, 2008). Over time, the Plan envisions Stratford developing into one of eleven major metropolitan centres (Ibid). With its new international rail links to the European continent, Stratford could potentially grow into an international centre within London.

However, currently, visions for Stratford City and existing forms of Stratford appear as worlds apart in many ways. Stratford City is radically separated from, larger than, and distant to its antecedent. In effect, the new neighbourhood will be a considerably separate major node with an international and greater London focus. Thus, the existing core faces the task of orienting itself and preserving its neighbourhood identity amid these immense changes. It is not well connected to these new developments and provides, arguably, a different order of functions. We argue that Stratford Old Town Centre should avoid becoming confused with the new centre as this could be damaging to the particularity of the local offer that Stratford currently provides and could, potentially provide better. The core should seek to reinforce its local neighbourhood nodality. Both centres should complement one other and not compete for identity or offer.

Emerging binodality in Stratford



CHALLENGES

Resisting Structural Irrelevance

The challenge for Stratford as an existing civic centre will be to integrate and identify itself within the new developments, whilst continuing to identify and cater for specifically local needs based on the varied if evolving local population. In addition, it will need to be able to continue to attract businesses and organisations scaled to the existing building forms and retail frontages of a nineteenth century town centre.

Forming a Complementary Relationship

As the Stratford City development drives the Stratford area to greater levels of regional and global connectivity, we seek a complementary relationship between the local and international scales of Stratford in the coming years. We feel that although this will present challenges to both the new and old elements of Stratford, a strong, symbiotic relationship can connect the various layers together.

Rail barriers as seen from the Central Line platform, Stratford Station



Westfield as seen from the Stratford Centre car park



Reinforcing Neighbourhood Identity

Over its history, Stratford old Town Centre has been the primary focus for the community of wider Stratford. This position could be undermined through the presence, larger catchment and particular offer of Stratford City. Stratford has a number of iconic institutions that play a major role in shaping the neighbourhood's character. The symbolism that these buildings exude can serve to preserve the local granularity in Stratford, strengthening the character of the neighbourhood.

Stratford's role as a neighbourhood centre should be protected, nurtured and reinforced. It is and should be treated as a valuable asset that is worthy of preservation for the region, greater London and the local citizenry.

Legibility

Currently, in its somewhat chaotic form, Stratford is rather difficult to 'read'. This reading will not necessarily be improved in the completion of Stratford City. We argue that Stratford's local legibility needs developing such that its historic, strong urban form is able to re-emerge and reconnect into surrounding residential localities.

At the same time, reinforcing regional and global connectivity is essential. We seek a complementary relationship between the local and international scales of Stratford in the coming years. We feel that although this will present challenges to both the new and old elements of Stratford, the neighbourhood can possess dual cores. These cores can preserve and also create identities for the myriad groups of people who will visit and live in the area.

We believe there should not be a sense of competition between the existing area and the future developments, but rather, a strong, symbiotic relationship that can connect the various layers together.



Multi-storey parking forms a barrier, Great Eastern Road Arc



Non-interactive edges, Great Eastern Road Arc



Obscure connection, Station Street



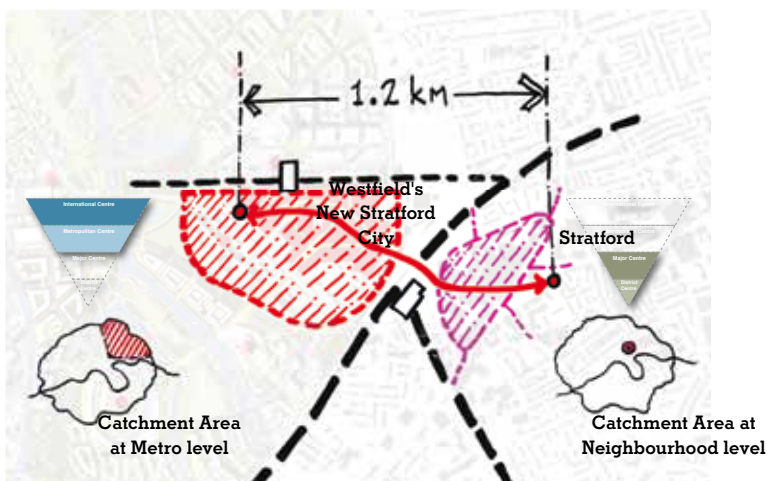
Poor street edges, Great Eastern Road Arc



Surface parking forms a barrier, The Grove



Lost public space adjacent to court building



Different catchments and functions between Stratford and Stratford City

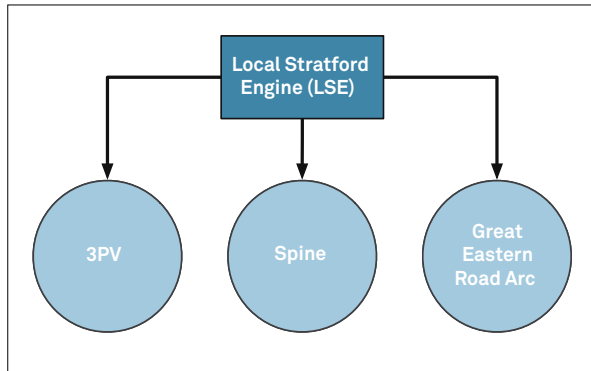
INTERVENTION

Vision: “Neighbourhood Through Nodality, Legibility and Creativity for Social Enrichment”

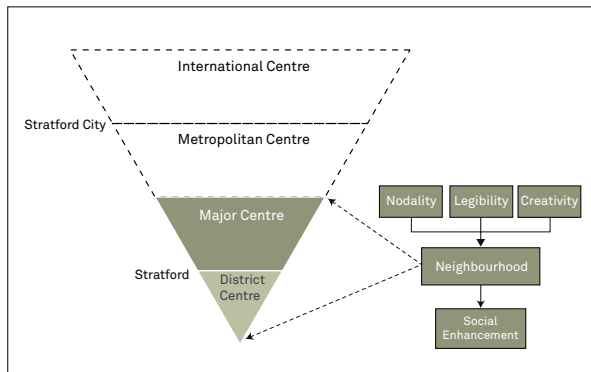
Emerging from the challenges of bi-nodality, bifurcation, limited connection, potential ambiguity and distancing posed to existing Stratford, we have devised a vision of how to better integrate and relationally connect the emerging regional and local neighbourhood nodes. Westfield’s Stratford City is constructing its own regionally based ‘generative’ engine, which in turn, contributes to the construction of meaning and identity for that nodal portion of Stratford. Stratford could also construct its own local ‘generative’ engine with the multiple aims of reinforcing local meaning and identity, creating a well defined relationship with Stratford City and igniting creative entrepreneurial potential.

We propose the creation of the “Local Stratford engine (LSE),” a three component mechanism comprising:

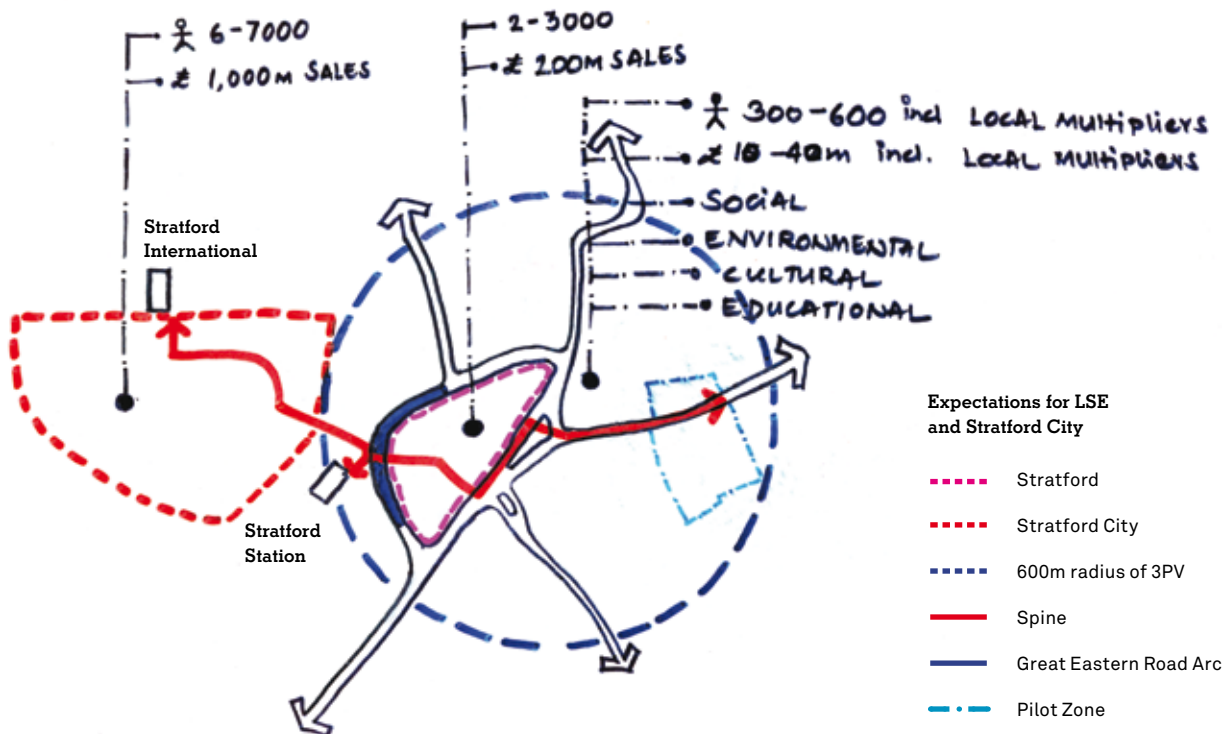
- A partial planning policy vacuum (3PV) covering a clearly defined area to facilitate, seed and nurture creativity
- A well defined ‘spine’ connecting the 3PV, through the heart of existing Stratford and through new Stratford City to Stratford International Station
- Reworking of the Great Eastern Road Arc – providing a defined and active edge as an outlet for the generative efforts of the 3PV.



Components of the LSE



Stratford's local function and framework



These components work in combination and are designed with the aim of reinforcing neighbourhood purpose, meaning and identity, forming a complementary and comprehensible relationship with Westfield’s Stratford City, a new edge between Stratford City and Stratford Old Town Centre and combating major contributors to local deprivation.

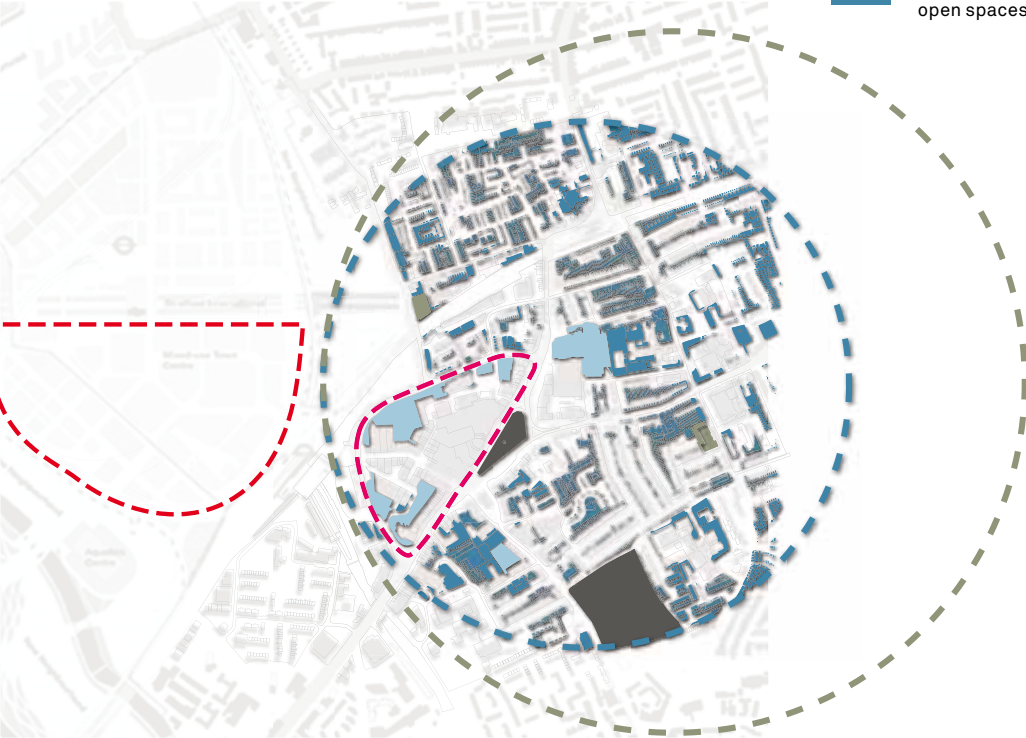
The topic of creative communities has been widely discussed and increasingly promoted by city administrators world-wide. Florida (2005) and Landry and Biachini (1995, 2000), amongst others, outline some of the macro-level factors believed to contribute to creativity and the wide range of benefits that can accrue including economic growth, social and cultural enrichment and increased attractiveness and desirability of creative places. Li, Mangurian and Ray’s (2009) example of Caochangdi, a neighbourhood in Beijing, China, demonstrates the generative potential of a policy vacuum under certain conditions. Creative places tend to be out of the ordinary. They can be challenging, messy and confrontational to the status quo, but can also appear as unique and beautiful. Numerous instances exist of places that have been transformed through creative enterprise into trendy and widely desirable places.

The 3PV, or partial planning policy vacuum, intends to couple the creative potential of local residents with the abundance of underutilised spaces – such as semi-activated land and the built form. It is designed to be truly local, keeping production zones and consumption catchment areas spatially coincident and thus allowing productivity to feed directly into

the neighbourhood to combat income and employment-related deprivation. The 3PV is intended to enable residents to start small-scale businesses and activities from their homes and various open spaces, utilising several underused or dead spaces that currently exist throughout Stratford. The spine, a palimpsest of historical Angel Lane, provides the link that illuminates relationships between the two Stratfords, and spaces such as Meridian Square and the Great Eastern Road Arc. The Great Eastern Road Arc, extending from the spine and at the edge between Stratford City and Stratford could transform to become the welcoming, defining face of Stratford Old Town Centre when viewed from the perspective of the new, regional centre. The Great Eastern Road Arc, integrated with Meridian Square and the spine, could be reclaimed by local people during weekend periods and given over to activities that express the local, for example, a 3PV market. Unlike many of the political structures within neighbourhoods that tend to restrict and control specific activities, we seek to allow a rolling back that will generate a more creative and innovative local economy and governance structure for residents and existing businesses within Stratford.

Available spaces within the 600m radius 3PV, serving an 800m catchment area

- Stratford
- Stratford City
- 600m radius of 3PV
- 800m radius – catchment area
- Public open spaces
- Parking areas
- Underused private open spaces



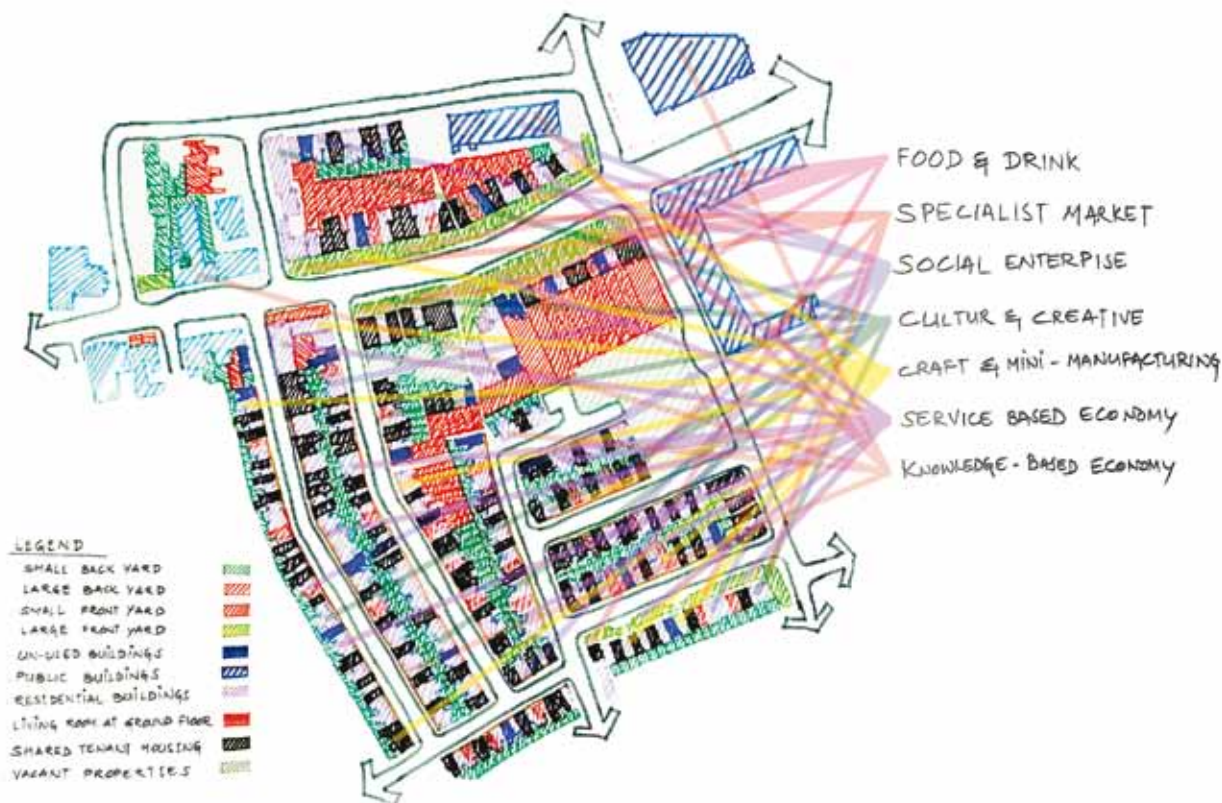
Action/ Implementation

3PV would unfold incrementally and require careful design, testing, pilot programs, canvassing of people's views and the careful guidance and assistance of local and national government and NGOs. A pilot zone is recommended and the more detailed explanation of 3PV following is based on this zone. We propose that the 3PV covers a zone defined by a circle with a 600 metre radius. This zone of rolled-back regulations would in turn relate to a catchment area defined by a concentric circle with an 800 metre radius. The population within the 600 metre radius is estimated to be approximately 8600 people (Office of National Statistics 2001), and we have made our calculations according to an assumed participation rate of only 2.5%. We calculate that, at this rate, the 3PV has the potential to generate local economic activity of between £10 million and £40 million per year and provide employment opportunities to between 300 and 600 people with the potential to export over £10 million per year out of the local area. The 600 metre radius also allows for a concentration of activities in Stratford within a ten to fifteen minute walk related to diverse spatial typologies. We hope this diversity in the pedestrian realm, coupled with Stratford's diverse typologies and population will also stimulate a wide range of activities and enterprises among residents. Spatially, we see the 3PV manifesting itself over

a series of stages, starting with a pilot zone. Within the circle of the 3PV, the pilot zone will be used to test the loosening of planning policy – relating particularly to land use and buildings extensions. These regulatory changes will enable local residents to create a business at their home or within designated, currently under-utilised open spaces in the pilot zone. With larger road sizes (such as larger Romford Road and Water Lane) accompanying smaller residential streets, residents will have numerous types of spaces to establish their own businesses. These economic capabilities will not only be available for homeowners, who can build onto or within their houses, but renters living within the pilot zone will also have the opportunity to operate their businesses in specific, identified vacant spaces and pathways.

If the pilot zone succeeded in attracting significant interest over a trial period of one year, extensions of the 3PV could be made into Stratford. Following the initial trial period, an assessment will take place to determine the successes and failures of the pilot zone, and with feedback and analysis, further iterations will take place in the neighbourhood. Ultimately, provided suitable growth continues, the concept of the 3PV should expand to the entire neighbourhood, and we seek to build on an existing local business climate.

Available spaces within the 3PV pilot zone



3PV: Policy

Whilst intending to create opportunity and flexibility through relaxation of existing policy, the 3PV zone should still retain the feeling of being a good neighbour and not become an area of perceived 'anarchy.' We propose that existing planning and building regulation policies be relaxed by between 20 and 50 percent. Areas that are considered open to reinterpretation of policy, as mentioned earlier, include private front and back yards, inside areas on the ground floor of private residences, footpaths, secondary and minor roads and laneways, vacant and transitional use land and commercial buildings, and other underutilised space that may be identified in the zone.

As allowable uses are increased within the area eased restrictions will be needed on:

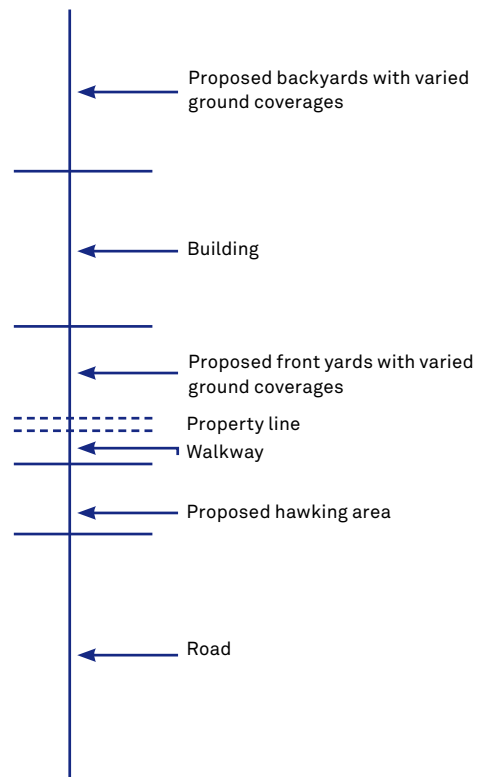
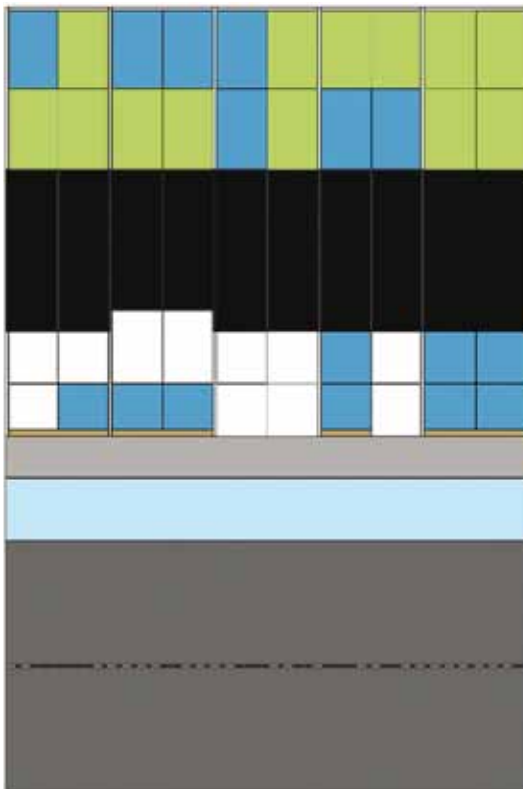
- Noise levels and hours of operation
- Residential building uses, including gardens, sheds, bay windows and front drives
- Street and footpath uses and possible temporary closures.

New constructions should be lightweight and ephemeral, with eased restrictions on:

- Existing building extension limits in terms of height and footprint
- The need to satisfy all aspects of the Building Regulations
- Visual coherence with the surrounding Victorian streetscape.



Proposed policy regulations





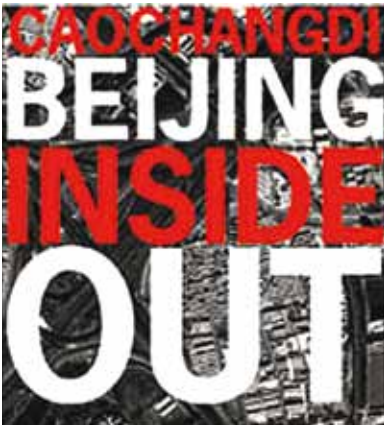
Local sales and pedestrian activity along Whitechapel Road, Whitechapel. Whitechapel has made good use of its wide footpaths to provide an abundance of food, electronics and several other goods to create a thriving and largely Bengali marketplace for Inner East London.



Bellflower Recreation in Motion (BRIM) operates in the Los Angeles suburb of Bellflower, providing youth with recreation equipment, games, and various arts and crafts activities. BRIM enforces partial street closures to allow children to partake in these activities on their own street, in their own neighbourhood. Source City of Bellflower Website www.bellflower.org/docs/brim__project_apple.pdf



Canary Wharf, located within the Docklands of East London, identifies a series of planning and policy precedents that Stratford could potentially follow. In commanding the loosening up of the Docklands area, Canary Wharf was allowed to develop and attract foreign investment. Although we do not envision Stratford to house such tremendous growth within its urban fabric, we see several advantages to rolling back some of the economic and zoning policies that restrict economic creativity.



Caochangdi, a neighbourhood in Beijing, China, has successfully fused local generative capabilities with softened policies and zoning restrictions to allow for Petri-dish like enrichment to occur within the community. Through these loosened policies, the neighbourhood has granted residents the opportunity to build local economic growth whilst establishing a high level of social and cultural creativity, which has, in turn, established Caochangdi into an icon for the city.



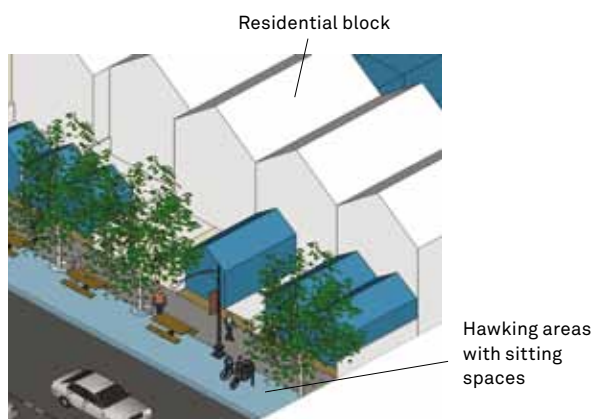
Stratford already has some slight additions that have enabled new activities and uses for residents, which could spread with the help of a loosened policy framework. Although Stratford has started on these kinds of extensions and activities, a considerable amount of opportunities remain, as suggested by the image on the left, taken in Islington.

Stratford City – Stratford Policy:

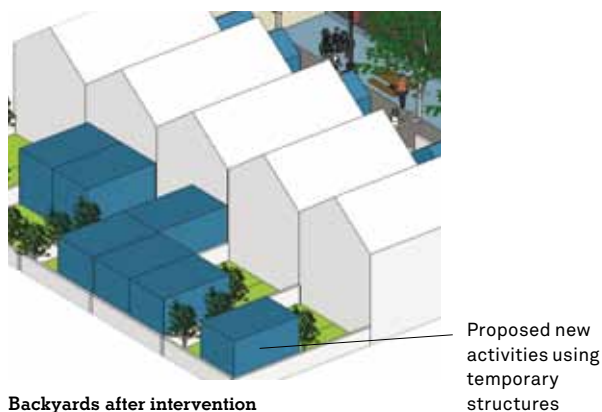
If possible, a policy direction document should be negotiated with Westfield to ensure that the clarity of the relationship between Stratford and Stratford City relating to the types of functions located within each node and the hierarchical relationship remains clear to local residents and visitors. Council facilities and high frequency everyday short commute distance uses should be located in Stratford whilst low frequency, large commute distance uses should be located in Stratford City.

Scaling

The 3PV, as a process, will begin with the pilot, but could easily vary in growth depending on its progress. Following the initial instalment of the pilot zone, measurement and feedback from the community will determine the next stages. Assuming there is adequate growth from the pilot, we hope to spread the concepts of the vacuum to the length of the spine, where we feel a great deal of improvement can occur to encourage a symbolic understanding of the spine for the neighbourhood. We shall define and assess the developments that can occur along the spine in the upcoming spine section. Next, the Great Eastern Road Arc will face several changes in its composition, something we shall similarly describe more concretely in the section covering the Great Eastern Road Arc. Depending on the concentration of people, we envisage several possibilities in density and activity within the pilot zone, which could readily multiply and spread throughout Stratford.



Front yards after intervention



Backyards after intervention

Organisational Structure

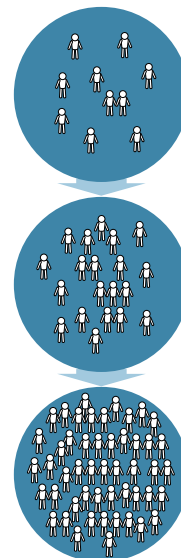
We envision a well organised management structure that enables residents and the community at-large to interact in shaping the activities that occur within the 3PV. The LSE will consist of a two-fold management structure consisting of a committee linked to Newham Borough and a partnership between some local resources and centres we hope to develop. There will be several critical agents and stakeholders that the 3PV must appeal to in order to build up the LSE, which include, but are not limited to the 2012 Olympic Committee, the Greater London Authority, Newham Borough, and various civil society groups. These bodies will come together to make the various changes in policy and decisions for the programme as they unfold.

These groups would then comprise the governance structure for the LSE, and as such they would make the major decisions with regards to which mechanisms could provide Stratford with the support it needs. This governance structure would oversee several major decision-making strategies for the neighbourhood, and as such they would conduct much of the monitoring for the programme, generating feedback among residents, visitors, and other various agents in the 3PV and overall LSE. A system of well integrated checks and balances will better gauge the success or failure that could emerge for the programme and subsequent projects that could follow. Alongside this structure, the growth of the 3PV from its pilot zone would subsequently incorporate the spine and Great Eastern Road Arc.

Spatial scaling of the LSE



Social scaling of the LSE



The Spine

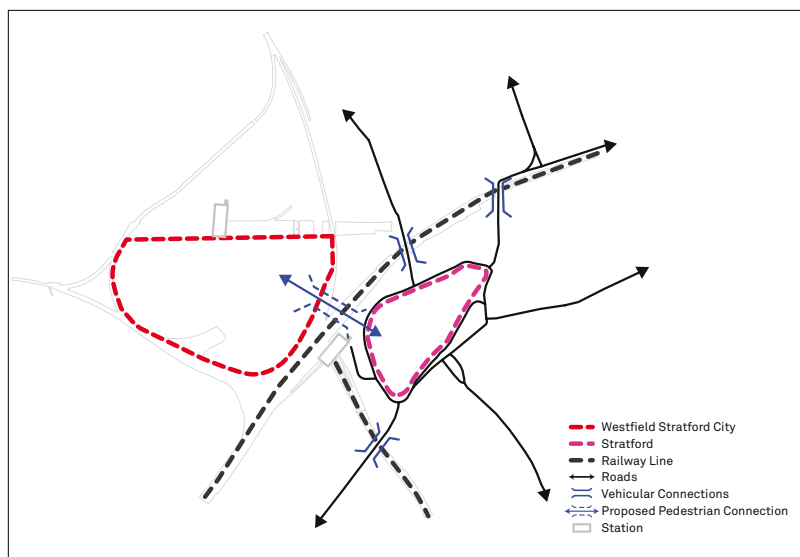
The spine, anchored at the local eastern end by our 3PV zone extends from the Romford Road pilot area to Broadway and Stratford Centre, meanders through the mall, crosses Great Eastern Road and Meridian Square crosses Stratford Station via the pedestrian bridge, then winds its way through the Stratford City development and anchors on the western end at Stratford International and regional station. This 1.5 kilometres of differentiation to the urban fabric becomes the transitional device reinforcing the trajectory between international / regional and the local, the everyday to the spectacular, reinforcing the relationship of neighbours and creating a linear framework of awareness from which other programs such as the Great Eastern Road Arc and Meridian Square can be launched.

Our design concept would involve removal of choke points at the Meridian Square / Mall crossing, reprioritising currently semi-disconnected pedestrian paths and reinforcement of the spine both visually through the use of colour, pattern, street art and overhead shape and aurally via soundscaping. Consistent with the aims of the 3PV component of the LSE, the spine can be a device that both permits and encourages difference and creativity to emerge in the zone along its length.

The Great Eastern Road Arc

Great Eastern Road gyrates clockwise along the western edge of Stratford's core, substantially severing pedestrian flows towards Meridian Square, Stratford Station and the new developments across the pedestrian bridge. This road could be reclaimed for pedestrian use over a 300 metre portion of the arc extending from Angel Lane southward, passing Meridian Square and the mall entrance and ending at the edge of the bus interchange zone.

Our concept for the arc is that it becomes a multi-part, programmatic addition to the spine, a space that can be scaled up for festivals and reduced in size for use as a community market outlet for the creativity and activity of the 3PV initiative. This space can be reclaimed by pedestrians for use on weekends at a minimum. In addition to the arc operating as the market expression of the 3PV initiative and a festival space, it will simultaneously present a new Stratford public face to Stratford City and the two stations. Busses can enter and exit outside the arc and vehicular traffic would be diverted around the eastern edge of the gyrator. Meridian Square can be incorporated into the arc community market. The arc also has potential to be utilised during the 2012 Olympics as a key space for formal public events and more casual income and entertainment oriented activities.



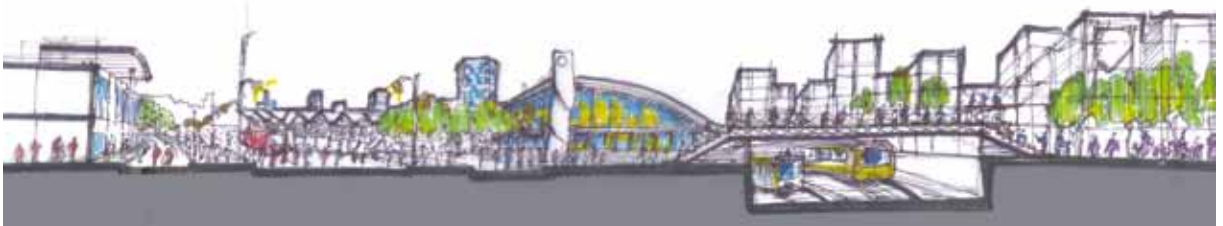
Proposed pedestrian bridge across Central Line and National Rail Lines to connect to Westfield and Stratford City

Timing and Funding

The LSE would be progressively developed and refined relying on information gained during the pilot zone stage to focus the design and management of the initiative. Once the pilot zone had proved successful, the programme could be extended.

The many variables such as participation rates and the popularity of different types of activities would influence timing decisions. Initially, Romford Road in the pilot zone would act as the public community market face of the 3PV initiative. However, when sufficient size is reached, the Great Eastern Road arc would be activated. The spine component of the LSE could commence as early as possible. Whilst various funding sources have been identified, most significantly, the LSE initiative would complement many of the aims and objectives of the Stratford City S106 agreement and could compete in the bidding process for access to these funds.

Activating space along the Great Eastern Road Arc and Meridian Square



CONCLUSION

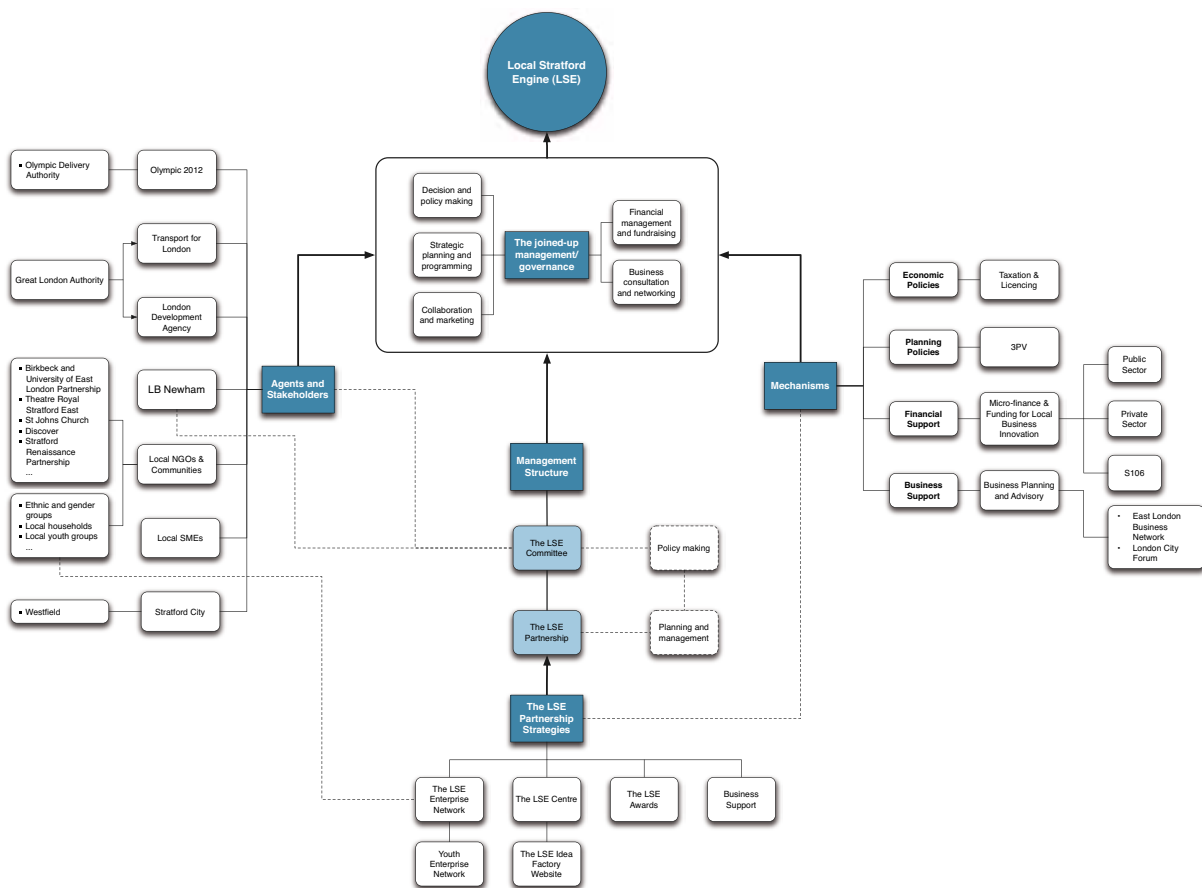
Stratford currently faces significant emerging challenges to its neighbourhood identity. As it stands, much of the neighbourhood is already quite obscured from the unique gyratory core of Stratford Centre, which faces heavy cleavage to the west and north from rail lines, sharp edges that sever relations to the neighbouring communities and open spaces that exist across the lines. This local node lacks significant clarity and meaning, and this will only heighten following the completion of Westfield and the larger Stratford City development.

Stratford already has several key elements socially and economically, and if properly harnessed, a local economic engine could collaborate with greater and higher order Stratford City. We do not think our site boundaries are relevant to Stratford, so we have adopted a broader, less-bounded view of Stratford that modifies the brief focus. Through the lens of the Local Stratford Engine, we present a specific response, but this is not the only option Stratford can utilise. There must be a mutual understanding between Stratford and Stratford City to instil a linkage, providing the nodes with the tools necessary to function at their respective capabilities and revive the local Stratford neighbourhood.

We believe that the 3PV could be used to address a significant number of deprivation challenges that Stratford currently faces. Stratford suffers from lower employment and income – factors that address half of the IMD – which we seek to specifically address through our 3PV proposal. Creating a local economy through the 3PV would also generate a safer environment for residents and visitors alike, through increased “eyes on the street” (Jacobs 1961).

Although the Olympics will have a major impact on East London, the events will be short-lived and will not have as long-term an effect on Stratford as Westfield and the Stratford City project. We feel that the sense of locality is key to Stratford as a neighbourhood, in the face of the transformation of its regional status. If the neighbourhood and its fragile, local economy suffers, we believe that measures to improve deprivation and similar efforts will have limited impacts.

Organisational structure of the LSE



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