

Léa Ayoub
Yoichiro Hayashi
Lucrecia Montemayor
Shib Roy

GEOGRAPHIES

B&D: Geographies

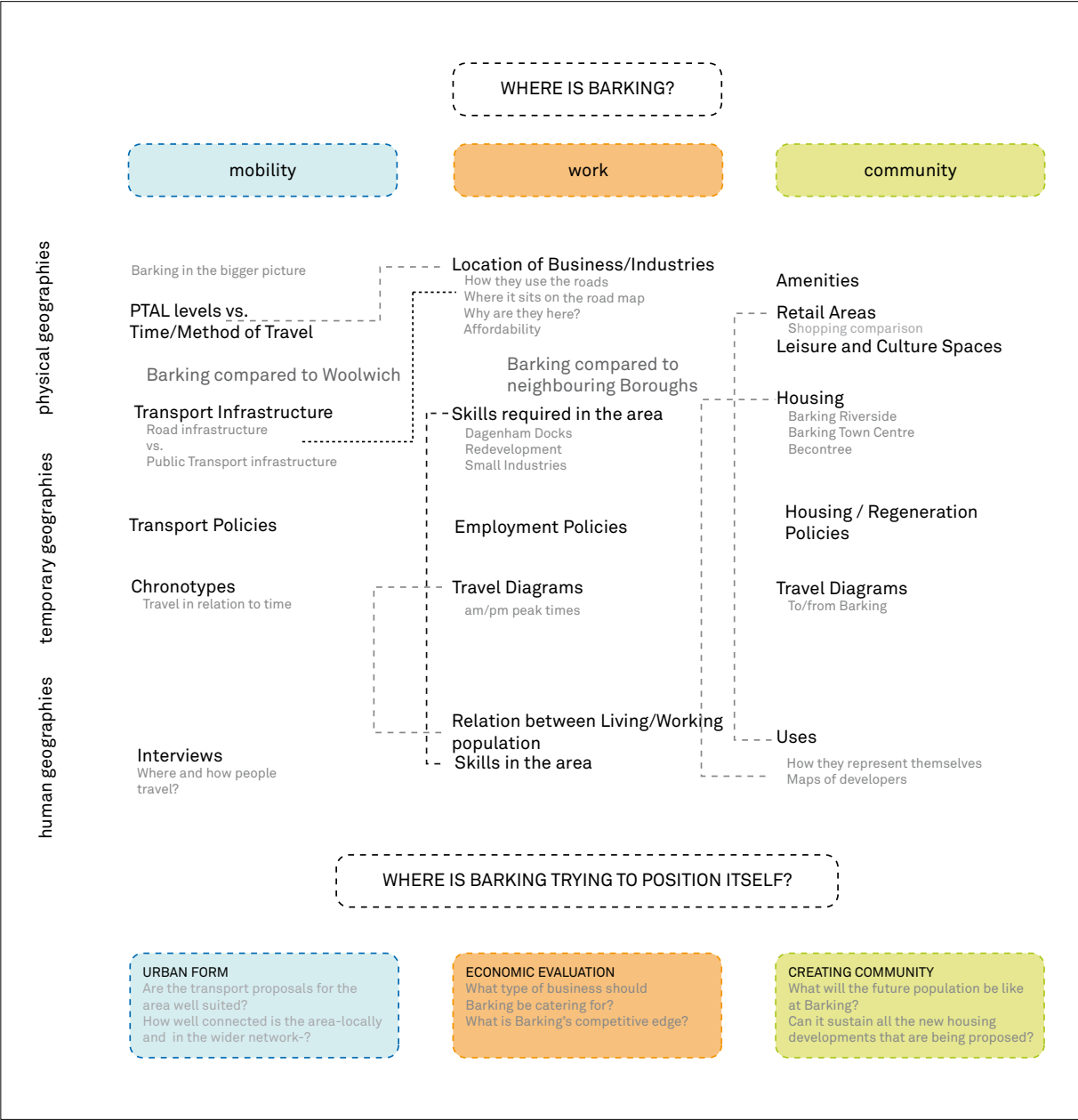
Barking and Dagenham, an Edwardian suburb in the 1920s, a Garden City in the 1930s, a dormitory suburb housing Ford in the 50s and 60s, has now become part of the 'new geography of post metropolitan urbanism' (Soja 2000: 249). It is part – and victim – of the globalising forces acting on almost every world-city, a product of 'decentering and recentering, deterritorialization and reterritorialization, continuing sprawl and intensified urban nucleation, increasing homogeneity and heterogeneity, socio-spatial integration and disintegration.' It stands on a fine line between being inside the city – but not quite – and being outside – but not that far. This situation, which causes evident conflicting policies, is visible in the transport networks, work forces and complex community patterns existing in the Borough and through the policies and projects proposed for its regeneration and future development.

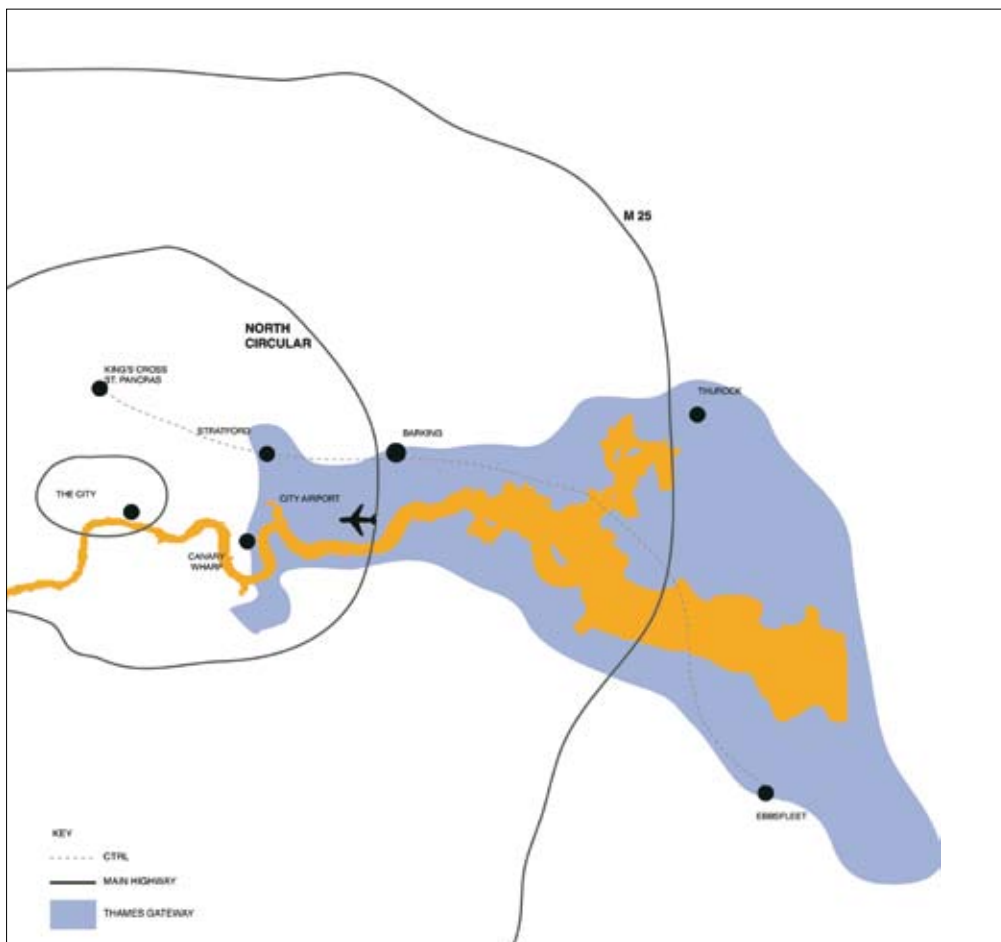
The paradoxical patterns of intense connection and disconnection in terms of mobility, work and community inform the internal and contextual geography of Barking and Dagenham. From both the spatial and the temporal perspectives, the Borough stands at a crossroad. The Council's transport, infrastructure and employment policies, as well as housing and regeneration policies and their socio-economic implications, are creating an imbalanced relationship between the Borough's own interests and its role within Greater London and the wider South-East region.

This chapter analyses these mobility, work and community patterns and addresses the following questions (Figure 1): What are the connections between the transport infrastructure network of rail and roads, the location of upcoming industries and the retail and housing projects? Will the regeneration projects and schemes promoted by the Council encourage a new lease of life for the Borough? Will future plans for mobility networks, promoted by the GLA, enhance the effectiveness of the place as an industrial belt, and will regeneration projects like Dagenham Docks or events such as the 2012 Olympic Games support the creation of a sustainable glocal community?

1 Geographies Diagram

This diagram shows the approach and methodology used throughout the chapter. Divided into three main topics – mobility, work and community – this chapter aims to find the correlation between these three aspects and how they interact. The integrated understanding of these three themes tries to respond to the question: where is Barking and Dagenham trying to position itself?





2 Where is Barking?

Locates the position of Barking and Dagenham emphasising the characteristic of being neither IN nor OUT

3 Distance/Time Comparison

This table shows the time it takes to go from one place to another, by different means of transport. It is important to stress the difficulty implied in travelling from Becontree to Woolwich, the two geographically closest points, which takes 54 mins, two tubes, walking and two buses to get there.

To / From	Angel	Earl's Court	Holborn	Canary Wharf	Becontree	Woolwich
Angel	—	124 min	18 min	21 min	44 min	67 min
Earl's Court		—	15 min	29 min	55 min	80 min
Holborn			—	21 min	34 min	74 min
Canary Wharf				—	29 min	54 min
Becontree					—	84 min
Woolwich						—

Geographies: Transport

‘Contemporary urban life is revealed as a ceaseless and mobile interplay between many different scales, from the body to the globe.’

(Graham and Marvin 2001: 8)

Between Fragmentation and Connectivity: Transport Networks

Transportation and geography are dependent on each other, constantly shaping one another. As we learn from Colin Clark’s fundamental principle, ‘cities through their internal structure determine their transport systems, but in turn these shape the way they then grow’ (Hall 1999: 227). Transportation networks, urban infrastructure and the mobility patterns they encourage and support have ‘traditionally hardly been considered the most exciting focus of the debate in urban studies and policy making’ (Graham and Marvin 2001: 16). In the instance of Barking and Dagenham it is essential to analyse these movement patterns, how they create boundaries or expand connections through space, and how they complement the Borough’s current urban and development agenda.

On Mobility: Creating Patterns

An analysis of mobility within Barking and Dagenham reveals that there is a strong connection with Central London and an evident disconnect with nearby places and areas in the neighbouring boroughs (Figure 3 and Figure 4). A study of the time needed to reach various places through the four main types of transport – car, public transport, cycling and walking – led to two conclusions. First, the Borough has a well-established road infrastructure. Second, its isolation within its immediate surroundings is distinctive.



4 Chronographs

Shows the distance traveled in 1 hour via different modes of transport – car, public transport, cycling and walking from starting point: Barking Town Centre.

The existing road infrastructure (Figure 5) suggests a strong dependency on travelling by privately owned cars, facilitating mobility within the Borough and in a wider network. There is a strong radial structure centred on London which was later reinforced by several annular structures, locating Barking to the north of the A3, following an east-west axis, and in-between the annular North Circular and the M25, both annular structures. Whilst this may have an advantage, elaborated below, it does reinforce the development of Barking and Dagenham as a dormitory suburb. In conjunction with other factors, this fragments the place from within by encouraging the use of private cars, instead of integrating it through better public transport and walking networks. If we were to add to this structure the proximity of the Thames, we can immediately identify the Borough's potential for industrial economies, as goods can be either transported by trucks or by boat.

By contrast, public transportation presents a different morphology. Taking into account the Borough's history as a dormitory suburb later shaped by an industrial boom, the existing public transport infrastructure has a strong radial structure (Figure 5). This demonstrates the Borough's need for a reliable connection with the city centre. In an era where polycentric metropolises are emerging around the world, London should be helping its small centres surrounding the metropolitan area to find a balance between their own production and their dependency on the centre. Barking and Dagenham focuses its efforts on its accessibility and the capacity to reach London easily and quickly (Figure 5). The Underground network has an evident east-west axis – which is characteristic and determinant of London's urban growth – and all transport proposals follow this structure. As for the existing bus networks, whilst they undoubtedly serve the local communities, they operate locally and at a low capacity.

Boundaries and connections

'[T]he construction of spaces of mobility and flow for some ... always involves the construction of barriers for others.'

(Graham and Marvin 2001: 11)

As Anthony Hoete has argued, '[m]obility is an indicator of quality of life and thus links [to] a broader concept of social theory' (Hoete and Hadid 2003: GO.20). Historically important, the link with central London is again a cornerstone of current regeneration and housing projects. However, it is equally important to emphasise connectivity within the Borough itself. This is vital to create a community and a sense of place, in addition to its practical importance in integrating the Borough spatially and economically.

The extent to which the central city influences, maintains and supports the Borough shapes the decision-making process and planning strategy in Barking and Dagenham. Through local housing developments and economic restructuring policies, Barking and Dagenham is trying to position itself as an urban centre, which may run counter to its geography and demographic profile (see Chapter 2 on Population). In adopting such policies, the local authorities risk overlooking their existing assets and strengths and bypassing ways of capitalising on them. Whilst the industrial sector in the Borough historically has produced negative environmental impact (see Chapter 4 on Urban Environment), integrated transport policies and 'ecological industrial' proposals could help promote a more sustainable industrial future for the local economy.

5 Mobility Networks

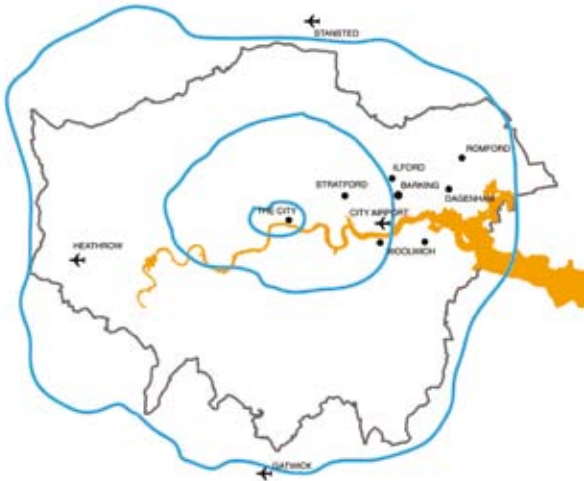
Here a series of 5 images demonstrates the difference between road infrastructure and public transport networks.

The first column shows the existing annular road structure and the radial road structure.

The second column shows the public transport infrastructure: radial underground networks, the proposed DLR and Crossrail linear structures and the proposed ELT bus scheme.



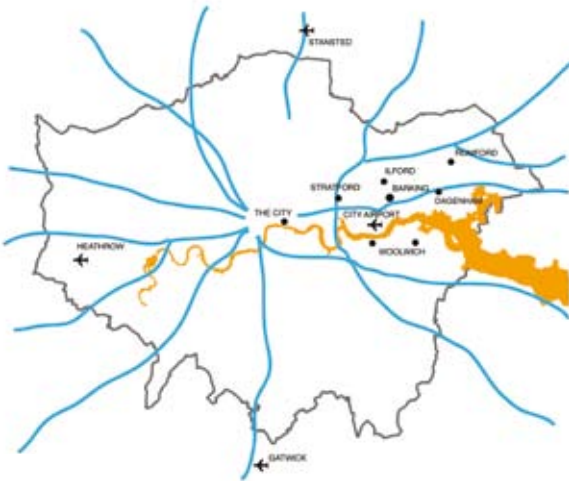
RADIAL TUBE NETWORK



ANNUAL ROAD STRUCTURE



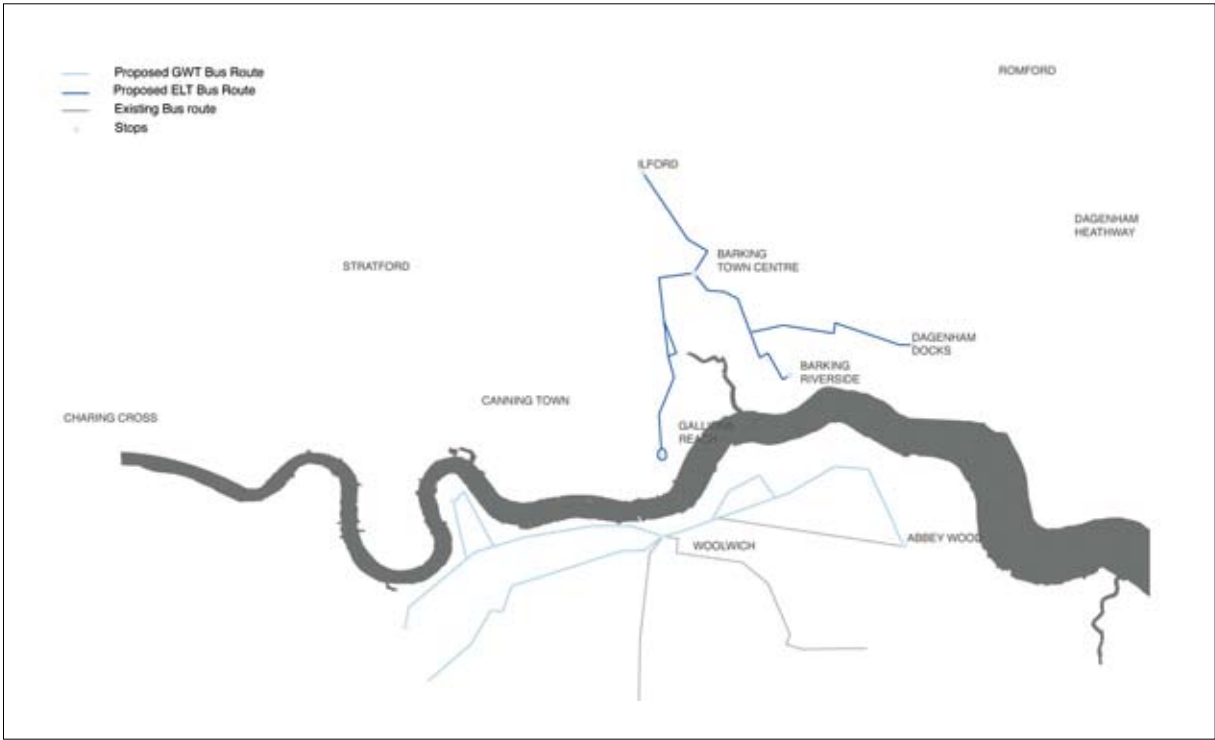
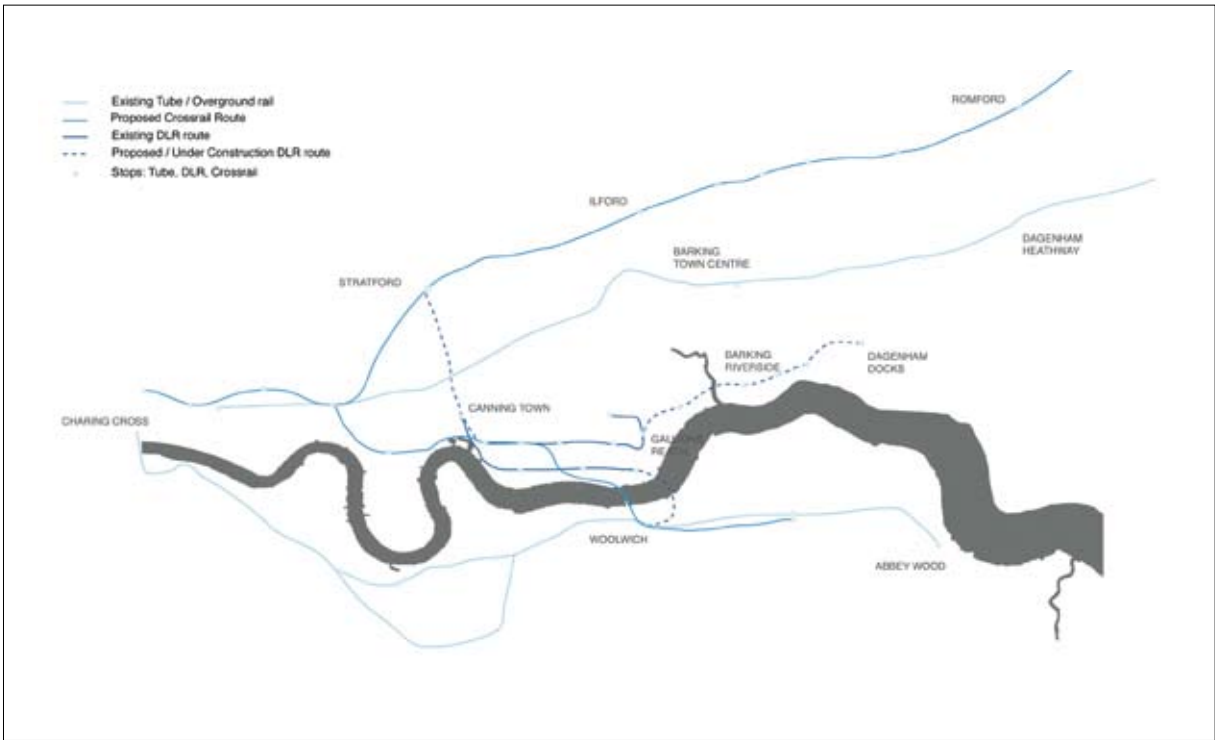
LINEAR CROSSRAIL + DLR ROUTES



RADIAL ROAD STRUCTURE



LINEAR BUS ROUTES



6 Barking / Woolwich Comparison

The first image shows the existing public transport network juxtaposed with current proposals, emphasising the by-passing of Barking Town Centre. Compare this to the case of Woolwich Station where all lines pass through the station and then diversify.

The second image shows the bus schemes north and south of the river and how, in the south part all routes go through Woolwich Station, whereas on the north side it consists of independent linear structures.

On Infrastructure

As Herbert Muschamp – public official with the City of New York – asserts in relation to urban infrastructure: ‘infrastructure networks [are] nothing less than ‘the connective tissue that knits people, places, social institutions and the natural environment into coherent urban relations’ (cited in Graham and Marvin 2001: 43).

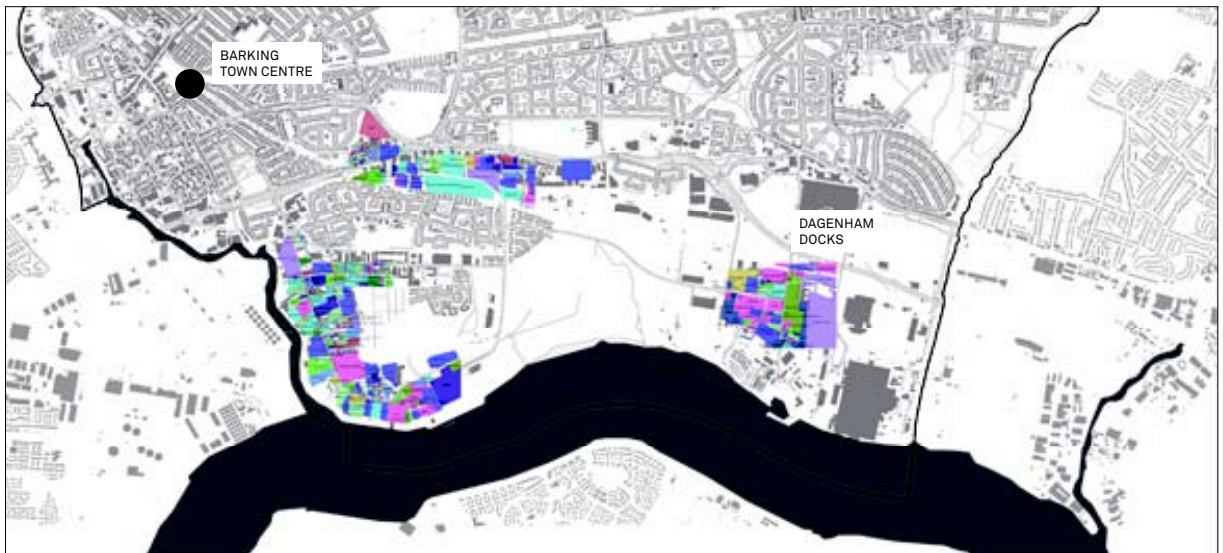
In order to create a sense of place, a space with character, which appeals to a community, a location that has an identity, one must be aware of the correlation between the space and the transport infrastructure, in particular the links and the ruptures that are being created. In the case of the transport proposals for Barking and Dagenham, there is an issue with the scale of the projects and the potential for the Borough to be better integrated internally. Given the situation of the Borough, neither ‘in’ nor ‘out’, the way in which infrastructure networks and their connection is addressed should be a reflection of this position.

Two of the main regional proposals are the eastward extension of the DLR and the building of Crossrail. While they fulfil a particular purpose at the macro-scale, once examined through local lenses they appear as two independent projects, creating an even more fragmented urban scenario. They consist of two linear proposals (Figure 6), which will bypass Barking Town Centre, creating or reinforcing connections between other areas – Ilford, Romford and Barking Riverside – and ‘the city’ and making the internal and local mobility more disconnected and fragmented.

In order to compensate for this fragmentation, the ELT (East London Transit) bus scheme, is being proposed to connect these points – Ilford, Barking Town Centre, Romford, Barking Riverside, Dagenham Heathway – with one another. Although this might seem an appropriate measure, several elements can be questioned. First, if it is easier for a resident of the future Barking Riverside to go grocery shopping to Canary Wharf than it is to go to the Barking Town Centre, then out of convenience he or she might continue to follow this pattern. Second, the frequency and quality of this bus scheme might not necessarily be sufficient for the capacity and the needs of future redevelopment projects. Finally, working with the idea of balancing the Borough’s focus between its links to central London and promoting its own industries and communities, it would then seem logical to create a more encompassing and balanced transport scheme, which reinforces the need to be near enough to the centre but which also promotes inner Borough connectivity.

7 Industries in Barking

This diagram shows the industrial belt near the River Thames in Barking and Dagenham



Geographies: Work

'The bigger cities and towns are now centres of administration rather than production. The smaller ones are centres for a whole set of unrelated production activities...The 'local economy' is now a thing of fragments' (Lovering 1988: 150 cited in Graham and Marvin 2001: 305). The local economy of Barking and Dagenham is aptly described as a 'thing of fragments'. The Borough now mainly supports small-scale industries and contains ample vacant former industrial land.

Employment in Barking and Dagenham has gone through a series of cycles. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the locality, particularly the area by the Thames, was the site of an industrial boom. Due to spiralling rent prices, many industries chose to relocate outside Central London and in the 1930s Ford built a very large manufacturing complex at Dagenham Docks to boost its production and exports towards the Continent (Porter 2000: 403). At its peak, Ford employed 30,000 people, most living on the Becontree Estate, and produced 250,000 vehicles per year. However, this golden age was short-lived as the 1960s marked the start of de-industrialisation, severely affecting industrial hubs such as Barking and Dagenham. Today the main employment sectors in the Borough are wholesale/retail/distribution (29.8%), IT and finance services (21%), and construction (15.4%); manufacturing accounts for only 10.9% of employed people. Ford still operates in Dagenham but at a much reduced capacity (7,000 employees in 2002). Unemployment was around 8.5% in the Borough, against 7.3% for London and about 5.5% for the UK, in 2006.

Imbalance of Flows and Skills

Current local policy capitalises on the Thames Gateway development, on the forthcoming Olympic Games, on the regeneration of Barking Town Centre and on large housing developments to regenerate the Borough socially and economically. All of these strategies are geared to the Borough's external links to large scale development initiatives and to central London. This produces an imbalance relative to the local economy. The potentialities of the Borough's internal assets and geography are downplayed.

The imbalance of the current situation is reflected in three main elements. First is the fact that the Borough is strongly oriented towards central London in terms of employment. The statistics on Underground users reveal that during the weekday AM peak, there is a disproportionate flow of people heading from Barking and Dagenham's stations (Barking, Upney, Becontree and Dagenham Heathway) to various destinations in central London (Figure 8). Although these figures do not take account of bus and car users, they represent a daily average of 10,023 people commuting westward from the tube stations of this Borough in 2005 (TfL data 2006). By contrast, an average of 729 persons commutes eastwards (Figure 9). This westward flow is further reinforced by the number of Underground users exiting at Barking at the AM peak. That is, people who live in Barking generally work in central London and people who work in Barking tend to live further east.

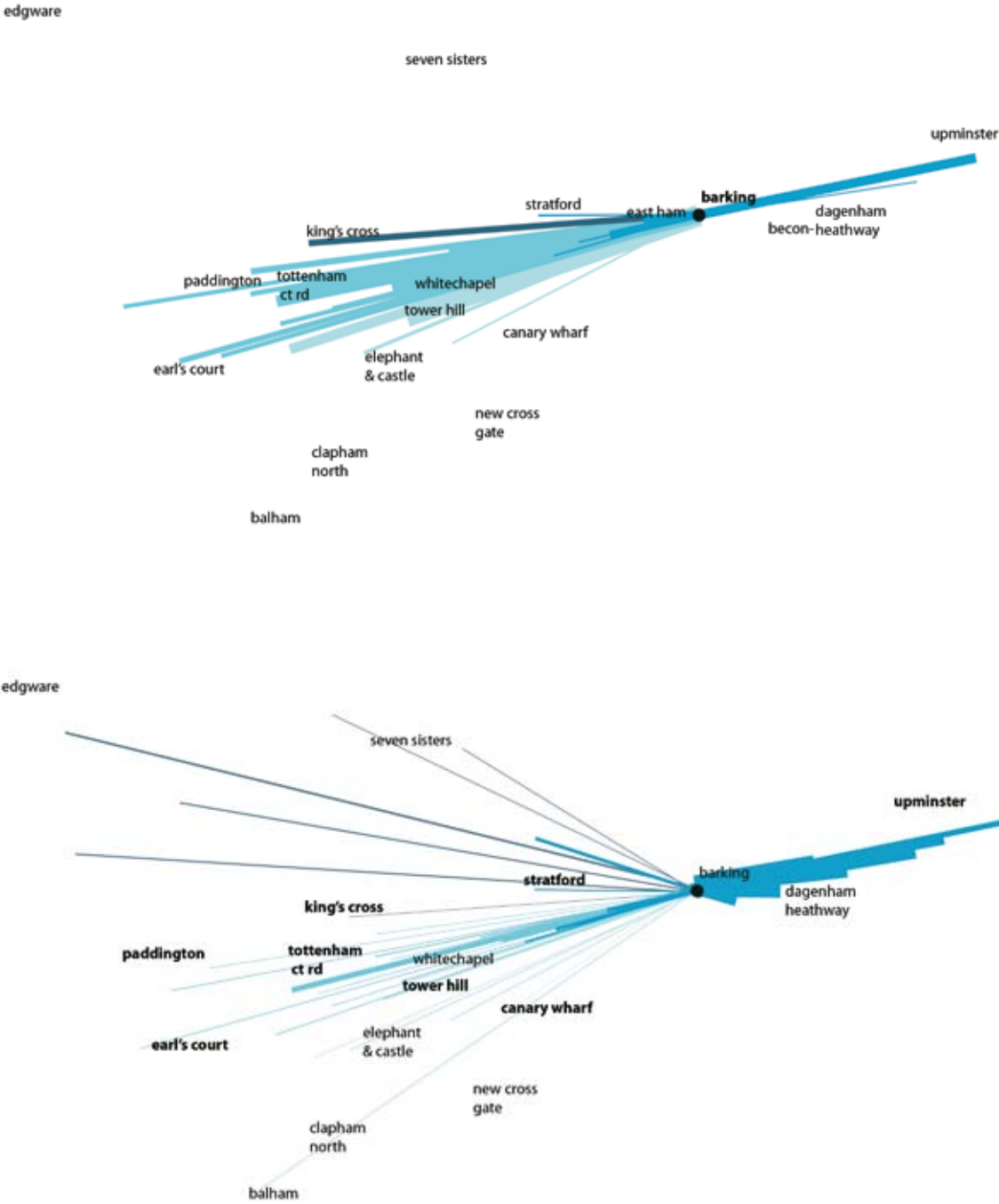
8 Mobility Patterns 01

Shows the flow of people from Barking in the morning peak during weekdays. This represents the travel done by people who work elsewhere. The main flow of people is to the City.

9 Mobility Patterns 02

Shows the flow of people to Barking in the weekday morning peak, showing the amount of people that go to work near or around Barking Town Centre.

source: Origin and Destination information
TFL 2005

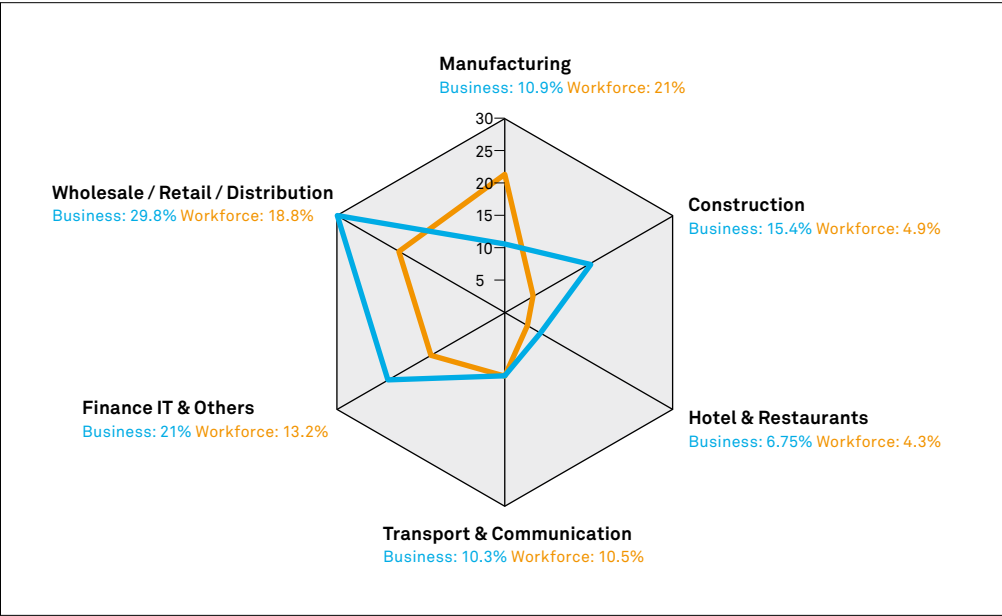


Secondly, Figure 10 shows that there is generally a mismatch between the existing business activities in the Borough and the employment profile of the local population. This may in turn partly account for the commuting movements described above. Of the six main employment sectors – Transport & Communication; Finance, IT and others; Wholesale, Retail, Distribution; Manufacturing; Construction; and Hotels & Restaurants – there are three in which the sectoral share in the Borough is markedly disproportionate to the numbers of local people employed in that sector. The sole sector where there is a larger local employment share than proportion of businesses is in manufacturing. This suggests the enduring importance of the industrial profile and heritage of the Borough, the resilience of this work-force despite deep economic restructuring, and the continuing existence of an important local skills base.

The third major imbalance is concerned with the contrasts between local and regional policies regarding the development of the Borough. The Local Development Framework centres on several major housing schemes such as Barking Riverside and the regeneration of Barking Town Centre. In terms of jobs, there is less clarity as to the Borough’s priorities. The creation of a cultural industries quarter and the improvement of night life and retail in Barking Town Centre appear as one axis of job creation. There are several references to the Environmental Technology Resource Centre at Dagenham Dock, to the Centre for Manufacturing and Engineering Excellence (CEME), and employment opportunities in the Thames Gateway. However, there is no robust strategy on job creation within the Borough, where there are only 19.7 businesses per 1,000 inhabitants, in comparison to 46.2 in London and 29.6 in the Thames Gateway. Places to develop office buildings are identified but there is little mention of what sector(s) may possibly develop in the area.

By contrast, the Consolidated London Plan (2008) has different ambitions for this part of North-East London. No longer seen as an opportunity area (as was the case in the 2004 version), it is singled out as an important locus for industrial facilities, including freight, within Greater London. Policy 5C.1 outlines the ‘strategic priorities’ for the North-East sub-region in relation to the needs of Central London and in particular its Central Activity Zone, concentrating London’s finance and business activities. The means towards this end are ‘strategic logistics provision, particularly intermodal facilities’ (London Plan 2008: 309) and the ‘varied industrial offer of the Strategic Industrial Locations (SILs – Policy 2A.10: 55) ... as London’s strategic reservoir of industrial capacity’ (Ibid, Policy 3B.4: 112). The Borough is consequently torn between contradictory development ambitions.

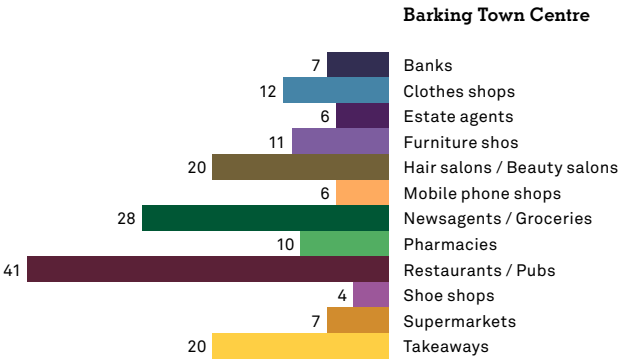
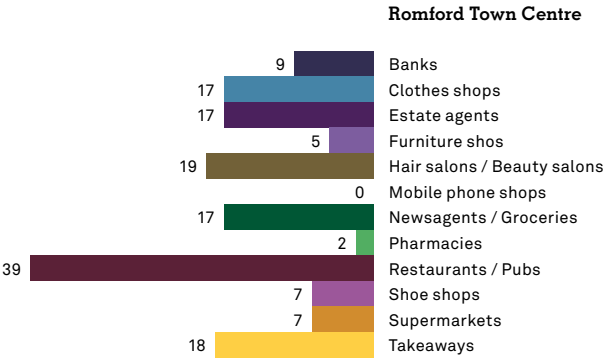
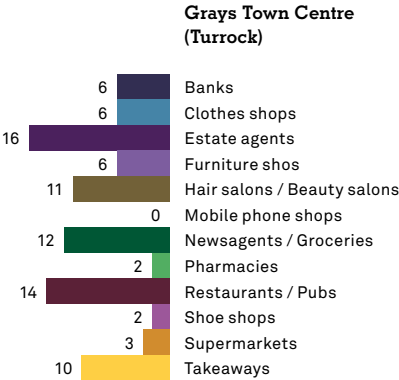
10 Business / Work Force comparison
The comparison of different kind of businesses and work force existing in Barking and Dagenham.





Geography & Community

The quality of life in the city, including open space, leisure and cultural facilities and the liveability and manageability of the urban environment, is now seen by many city governments as a key element to attract new residential populations (Atkinson 2005: 5). Barking and Dagenham’s regeneration strategy, An Urban Renaissance in East London, states as one of its aims the development of an active aspirational housing market to attract or retain households on higher incomes. Whilst this housing-led regeneration can create positive effects, there is a risk that incoming residents are less likely to work, shop and socialise in the local area, particularly given these new housing developments are premised on transport connections to major employment and financial centres in inner London and Docklands. Local quality of life, however, is highly dependent on local amenities, especially for existing and long established residents.



12 This diagram shows the diversity and number of retails in three different areas.

The role of Barking Town Centre: Retail

Barking Town Centre is the largest and most important retail centre in the Borough and is defined as a Major Centre in the London Plan shopping hierarchy. The Council has a vision to make it an urban mixed-use town centre. As least in terms of proximity, Barking Town Centre should be the primary shopping centre for Barking Riverside, one of the biggest urban development areas in London. However, the current role of Barking Town Centre as a retail centre is relatively limited. Vicarage Field, Barking's main shopping centre opened in 1991, is much smaller than shopping centres in Romford, Canary Wharf and West Thurrock (featuring Lakeside Shopping Centre, one of the largest shopping centres within Europe – see Figure 13). Although Vicarage Field is comparable in floor size to the shopping centres in Ilford and Gallions Reach, it falls far behind in number of shoppers.

Barking Town Centre has about 260 shops totalling nearly 530,000 square feet. Shops are located on East Street, Station Parade, Ripple Road, London Road and Longbridge Road. Comparing it with Romford Town Centre and Grays Town Centre close to Lakeside Shopping Centre (Figure 12), Barking Town Centre ranks similarly in terms of both number and diversity of shops, stacking up with Romford, which is designated as a Metropolitan Centre in the London Plan. It has a particular local distinctiveness; there are many local non-chain stores including ethnic minority businesses (Figure 11). Barking Town Centre also has a lot of restaurants and food takeaways, but fewer nationally recognised chain shops and shops selling items such as clothes and furniture.

It will be important to ensure that the expansion of the shopping role of Barking Town Centre does not destroy the diversity of local shops and the community. Although it is necessary to encourage additional shopping facilities in the town centre to meet the expected demand that will stem from population growth in the town centre and Barking Riverside, Barking Town Centre should retain its local distinctiveness and not be transformed into a place solely for middle-class consumption. In particular, the extension of the shopping mall, often regarded as a 'pseudo-public space' (Davis 2006: 226) where the fundamental function of public space is eroded, should be avoided.

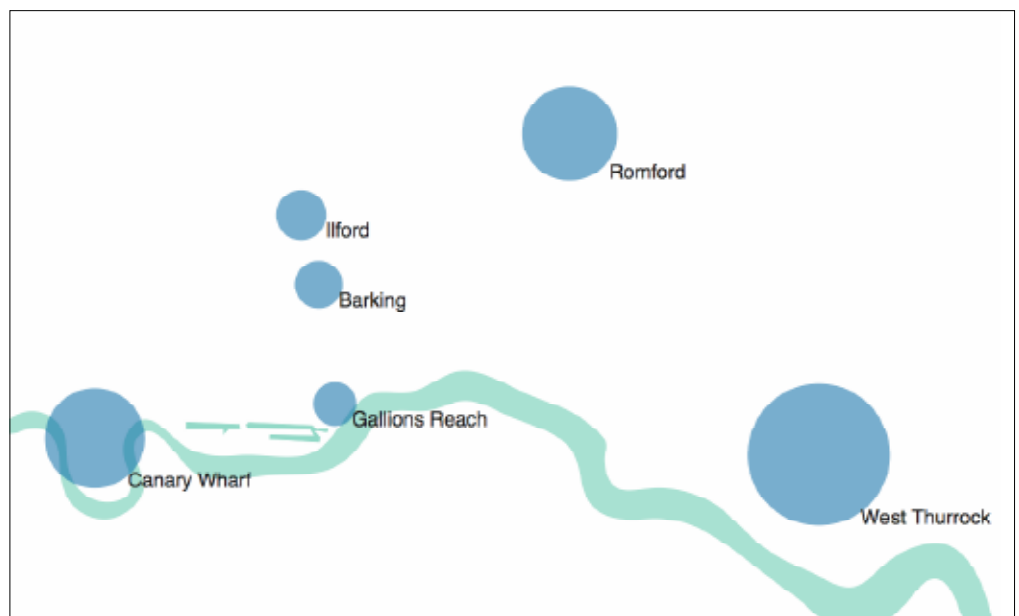
Cultural and entertainment amenities

Although there is the successful Barking Broadway Theatre in the town centre and the Showcase Cinemas in Beckton, the cultural and entertainment amenities in Barking and Dagenham, particularly in Barking Town Centre, are poor. With the closure of the cinema in the town centre in 2000, cinemas are located only outside the town centre. Cultural development should be encouraged but it is important that it should retain diversity: it should be programmed to appeal to a wide range of social groups including not only visitors and new residents but also the existing local population.

While strategic clusters of night-time activity in London are centred in the West End and Metropolitan Centres, the night-time economy of Barking is limited. Although Barking Town Centre has a number of restaurants and pubs, it lacks cinemas and nightclubs. (Legends Night Club was closed in 2006.) The growth of the night-time economy should be fostered so as to have a positive impact on the town centre's image and contribute to reducing anti-social behaviour and crime.

13 Retail

Shows prominent retail centres in Barking and Dagenham and nearby areas.



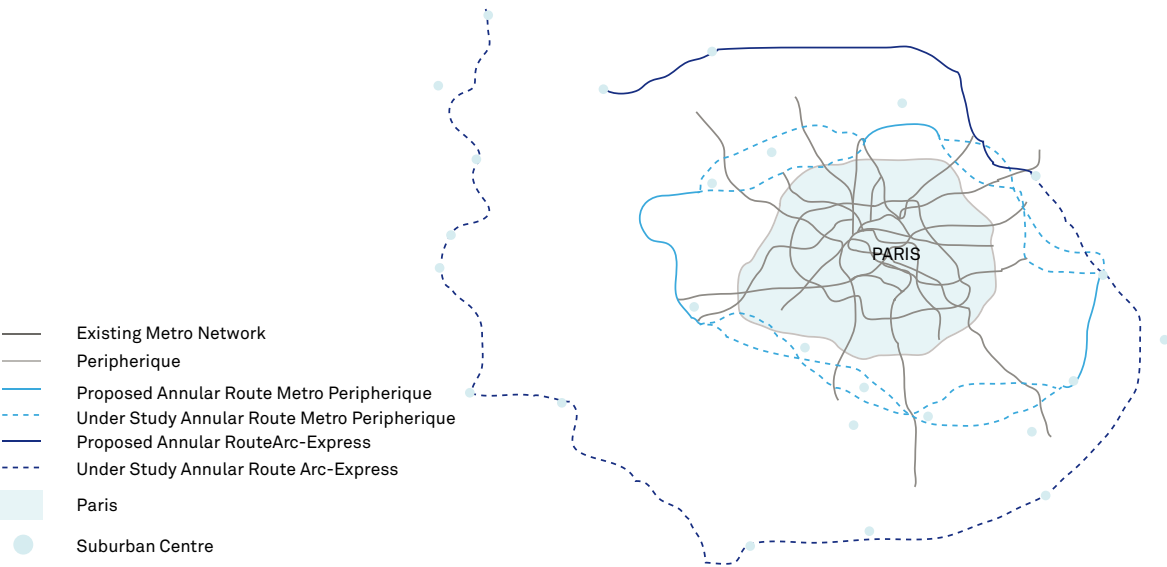
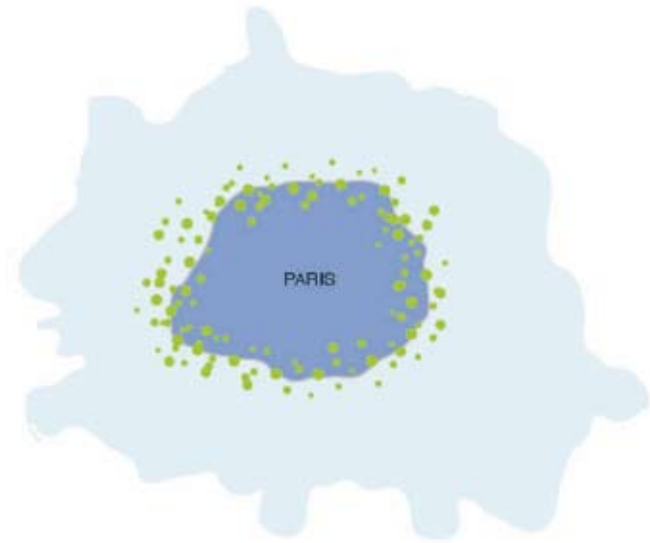
Proposition

Barking and Dagenham has many assets along with current and future opportunities in its favour. Local authorities acknowledge them but do not sufficiently capitalise on them within current regeneration plans. These strengths stem mainly from the geography, good connections towards both central and outer London, emphasising the Borough's 'in-betweenness'. A set of guidelines is elaborated below in order to maximise the Borough's potential to mutate from a London dormitory suburb into an autonomous suburb serving both the capital and its outer region, capable of providing infrastructure and jobs for its local population, and becoming a locus of innovation in its historical sector of activity.

14 Périphérique
Shows the geography of Paris and the small satellite centres in the périphérique.

15 Transport Network Paris
Shows two different proposals of annular structures to be integrated in the Paris public transport system. This network integrates the different satellite centres to Paris, strengthening the Paris Region.

16 Transport Network London
Shows a Proposal of Annular Train Networks in London



1. Rebalancing and Refocusing Mobility

The radial structure of trains and the annular+radial configurations of motorways connect the Borough very well to the capital but rather poorly to neighbouring centres. Our first proposal therefore emulates an initiative that is under study in Paris (Figure 14 and 15) and similar to what Sir Peter Hall proposed in a comment on the London Plan (Hall 2006: 24): connecting the various suburbs to each other through an annular train public transport system (Figure 16). Without diminishing the important links with Central London, this would significantly alleviate congestion on existing radial and linear networks (i.e. Underground and DLR) and would reduce the use of private cars by connecting nearby suburban centres – Ilford, Romford and Woolwich. Evaluating the funds invested in proposals such as the Cross Rail, the DLR extension or the Thames Gateway Bridge, an alternative transport scheme could be achieved; one which enriches the Borough's connectivity. This in turn would revive the area, creating a strong infrastructure for everyday use and encouraging a sense of community. The construction of the Thamesmead Bridge would reinforce these connections and no doubt create business opportunities, but a public transport link crossing the Thames would improve links between the north-east and south-east significantly.

2. Catering for the right economic activity

Second, instead of betting on the creation of a cultural industries quarter in Barking Town Centre to revitalise the Borough, we suggest that efforts be concentrated on boosting the Borough's industrial capacity through a focus on the creation of local jobs that match local skills and attract more incoming businesses. Barking and Dagenham benefits from a small but significant business community that is quite successful. It also has a positive image amongst businesses outside the Borough which is worth capitalising on by investing in a very good marketing campaign to attract businesses, such as those needing to relocate from future Olympics sites.

The availability of land fronting the River at a relatively close distance to central London is a strong advantage for Barking and Dagenham. This offers real opportunities to promote activities such as logistics, storage and distribution, and freight arriving by land, sea and rail from outer regions including the Port at Tilbury or, indeed, the Continent.

3. Going Green

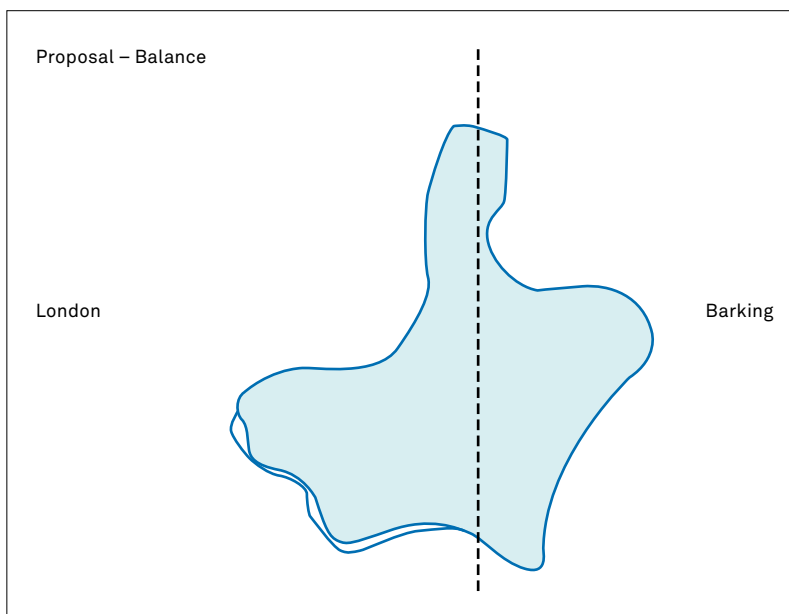
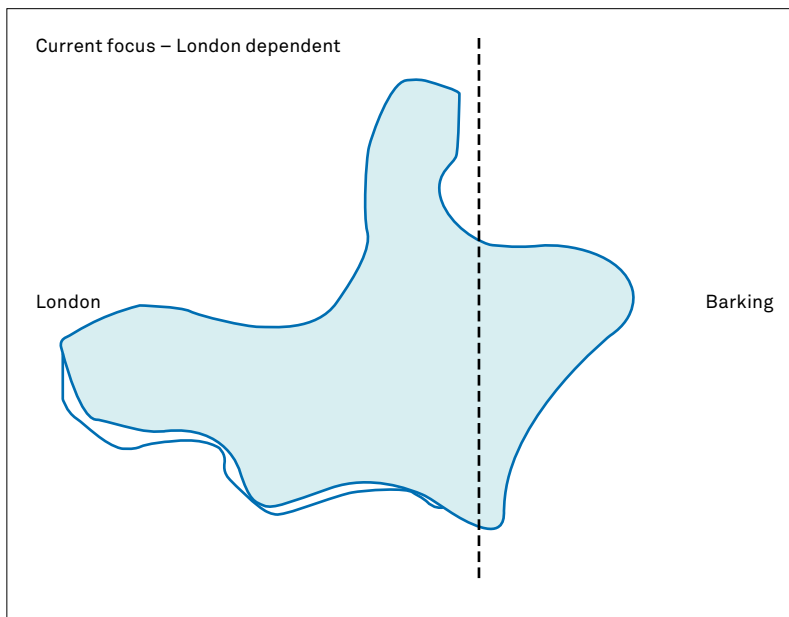
If the revitalisation of the industrial-service sector is to succeed, the Council should ensure that the errors of the past are not repeated and are corrected, e.g. industrial contamination still affects the lives of many people locally (see chapter 4 on Urban Environment). Only businesses with the best environmental standards and, preferably, clean industries should be encouraged to settle in, and the regeneration of previous industrial sites should be encouraged, opening up new public spaces. Progress is being made on 'ecological industries' which aim to recreate the way ecosystems function and reproduce themselves through such clean energies as solar energy. In synergy with the green manufacturing initiative at Dagenham Docks and the CEME and other training centres, green industrial innovation could become a specialty within Barking and Dagenham, making the Borough a demonstration site for sustainable industries.

Conclusion

The current regeneration paradigm in Barking and Dagenham is contradictory: it rests on objectives that are adapted to more urban areas whilst recreating the old dormitory function of Becontree in the new development at Barking Riverside. Combining a balanced transport scheme with the provision of large premises for clean industries and businesses requiring large space, and a skilled local population, could result in the Borough achieving more autonomy vis-à-vis central London. By employing a large portion of its people locally, diversifying its economic base, participating in an encompassing transport scheme and reversing the dependency situation, the Borough might secure a rounded plan of socio-economic and physical regeneration, well-linked to the centre and its region but resting on a robust local economy and an integrated local geography.

17 Rebalance

This diagram shows the different forces acting in the Borough, and how this has created an unbalanced situation; at the moment there is a strong pull and dependency towards Central London. Our proposal tries to rebalance these actors into creating a balanced Borough, where economic re-focus and diversity acts in favour of the Borough, while the transport networks reinforce and strengthen the outer east region of London.



References

Atkinson, R. and Bridge, G. (ed.) 2005. *Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism*. London: Routledge.

Davis, M. 2006. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New York: Verso.

GLA. 2004. *The London Plan*. London: Greater London Authority.

GLA. 2008. *The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (Consolidated with Alterations since 2004)*. London: Greater London Authority.

Graham, S. and Marvin, S. 2001. *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London: Routledge.

Hall, P. 1999. Book Reviews. *Journal of Transport Geography* 7: 225–233.

Hall, P. 2006. London Plan Further Alterations. *Planning in London* 59: 24.

Hoete, A. and Hadid, Z. 2003. *Reader on the Aesthetics of Mobility*. London: Black Dog Publishing.

Joignot, F. 2008. *L'Ecologie Industrielle*. *Le Monde* 2, 4 April.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. 2001. *An Urban Renaissance in East London*. <http://www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk/5-work/regeneration/riverside/southdag/pdf/regen-s-dag-rennaissance.pdf>.

Porter, R. 1994. *London: A Social History*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Soja, E. 1999. *Postmetropolis*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Transport for London database: Origin and Destination Information 2005.

Transport for London website: www.tfl.gov.uk