

St Giles to Holborn: shaping the future



A plan for the wider St Giles to Holborn area

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Foreword

This area, in the heart of busy central London, is a place where people who live, work and do business face a time of enormous change and enormous opportunity. The Council wants to ensure that the large scale investment coming into the area with Crossrail, transport improvements and major construction means that there are real and lasting benefits for the people who live here.

In seeking to shape the future for the St Giles to Holborn area, the range and complexity of local issues and priorities need to be heard and understood in a vision for the area that reflects the interests of those who live in, as well as work in and visit the area. The starting point for this Plan is about reflecting and understanding this wide range of interests.

Development is often seen as being about benefits to developers, landowners and business and something that is done to people not for and with them. We want to see a 'win – win' situation where local people, new residents that will come with the expected new housing, new and existing business alike as well as our many visitors, can all see gains from these changes.

This needs to mean a better quality of place where the dominance of traffic over people is reversed, where world class buildings and open spaces are part of the everyday experience, where there are local jobs and services as well as new housing that meets local needs and where the historic and special character is protected and valued.

This place plan is about helping to make this happen - a task that is achievable only by working with local people and key partners. There are strong voluntary organisations that support the communities that live here as well as a Business Improvement District, other business organisations, developers and landowners. There is a well advanced Neighbourhood Forum, taking forward priorities for a neighbourhood plan for Bloomsbury village, who are crucial partners in this work.

This place plan and action plan has been developed following consultation with the communities and organisations who live and work in the area. The action plan will be monitored and developed over time, and will be a 'living document' that will need to be responsive to the rapid and major changes that are in progress. I would like to thank the many people who have given their time and expertise to help make this a plan that is as much about delivering real actions to make a difference as it is about strategy. With such strong and successful partners active in the area I am confident that there is every chance of delivering this vision for St Giles to Holborn.



Councillor Valerie Leach

Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth,
Camden Council

Summary

This Place Plan has been prepared as part of Camden's Placeshaping approach to understanding and addressing the needs, priorities and opportunities in different parts of the borough.

The St Giles to Holborn area has been chosen as an area of focus because of the extensive changes and investment happening in the area and the need to ensure local people benefit from these changes.



The plan is made up of four main elements which are summarised below:

What the area is like and what the issues are

The first part of the plan describes the area, its people and communities and the issues they face. These have been identified from statistical data, feedback from consultations with local stakeholders including the emerging Bloomsbury Village Neighbourhood Forum, community representatives, landowners, businesses and developers.

Key issues for the area include balancing the area's various roles and wide mix of uses in the area with the residential communities needs. The major investment happening at Tottenham Court Road station and introduction of Crossrail into the area, will mean that the area is well connected to the rest of London and the country. Over 200,000 people per day, including workers, visitors and residents, are expected to be using the station. Improving how these people move around the area and ensuring that Holborn benefits from this investment is vital to enhancing the area.

Vision

Consideration of the area's characteristics and identified issues helped to inform the vision, which will guide the Council's approach to the area and the actions and interventions we will make and encourage our partners to make. The vision is set out in full on page **20** but in summary it envisages an area where:

- Local residents, businesses and visitors benefit from the major developments happening in the area and can help shape this change.
- The historic character, cultural heritage and special identity of individual parts that make up the area will be maintained and enhanced.



- The opportunities to create new distinctive public spaces are seized and the quality of the routes around the area is significantly improved for people on foot and bicycles by reducing the dominance of traffic.
- The local communities needs will be supported through improved housing choices and community facilities.
- Businesses will be supported to benefit from the changes and the specialist retail areas protected.



Delivering the Vision

This section explains how we will go about delivering the vision. It discusses the actions that are already being taken and further actions that can be taken over the short, medium and long terms to achieve the aspirations for the area.

This is done around four themes:

- **Benefits from major developments** covers the importance of major developments in the area delivering community benefits; the relationship of place plans to neighbourhood planning and minimising disruption in the area. Protecting and promoting the special historic character and strengthening the identity of St Giles and the area as a whole is an important objective.
- **Public spaces and movement** covers the importance of creating a new place at St Giles Circus to improve movement around the station and wider area, particularly towards Holborn. It also covers changes to the one way systems in the area to improve traffic movement and enhance safety; potential Holborn Station improvements; and improved cycle routes.

- **Supporting community needs** covers providing improved housing choices in the area; supporting the voluntary and community sector; looking at Council owned property in the area; providing additional open space; and partnership working around community safety.
- **Supporting business** covers supporting local businesses; improving the connection between St Giles to Holborn to draw people up from Oxford Street; and protecting the specialist retail characters of parts of the area and creative industries.



Action plan

The action plan brings together the headline objectives identified in the vision and details the specific actions that will contribute to their delivery. For example, the aim of improving how people move around the area includes a variety of approaches such as looking at measures to improve streets, routes around the areas and junctions; looking at the traffic flows in the gyratory systems; together with drawing up a 'delivery plan' as to how these works can be paid for and the order these need to be delivered; together with improvements for cyclists.

The purpose of the action plan is to set out clear measurable steps to achieve the overall objectives and identify the anticipated timeframes for delivery. The actions will be monitored regularly to ensure that progress is being made and that the plan is responsive to change and new priorities. The action plan will be reviewed and updated when necessary.



The place plan and what it covers

Why a Place Plan?

St Giles to Holborn is an area undergoing significant change. Residential communities are experiencing physical changes to their local environments resulting from the works at Tottenham Court Road Station and in the next few years they will see a large increase in the number of visitors and workers coming into the area, once the Crossrail works are complete. This Plan has been developed to try and ensure that change is as much about opportunities for local communities to benefit as it is about major development, increased travel opportunities or large businesses.

Camden is committed to addressing the needs of the diverse areas and the communities that live in, work in and visit the places that make up the borough, recognising that different places have their own particular needs and priorities that need to be addressed in ways that best suit them.

This 'placeshaping' approach is about taking the opportunity to think and act strategically about how to address these needs through investment decisions, service delivery and physical changes. Understanding local concerns and priorities is at the heart of this approach which is all the more important

against a backdrop of reduced Council resources arising particularly from reductions in central Government funding. Place Plans have been prepared for a

number of areas of focus, like St Giles to Holborn, to agree an overall vision for the area based on the priority issues identified with local communities and stakeholders

Placeshaping areas





and deliver on the objectives of the Camden Plan. A set of actions then forms a part of each Plan to show how the vision can be made into a reality over the short, medium and long term.

The Plans draw together the range of work the Council undertakes in particular areas to encourage and ensure joined up working to address the needs of local people and places.

Place Plans are not statutory planning documents and do not form part of the development plan, which comprises of documents in Camden's Local Development Framework and the Mayor's London Plan, although these are taken into account in their preparation. The scope of Place Plans is wide. They set an overall strategic vision and identify a wide variety of actions for each place which may cover some planning-related issues along with a range of others.

“Places are areas that draw people together to live, work, learn and play. Placeshaping for Camden focuses on places of change and opportunity, to bring strategies and investment together in deciding how best to ‘shape’ such areas.”



What the plan covers

The St Giles to Holborn placeshaping area of focus covers the immediate area around St Giles Circus, where Camden meets Westminster, the corridor of New Oxford Street and High Holborn to the area around Holborn Station.

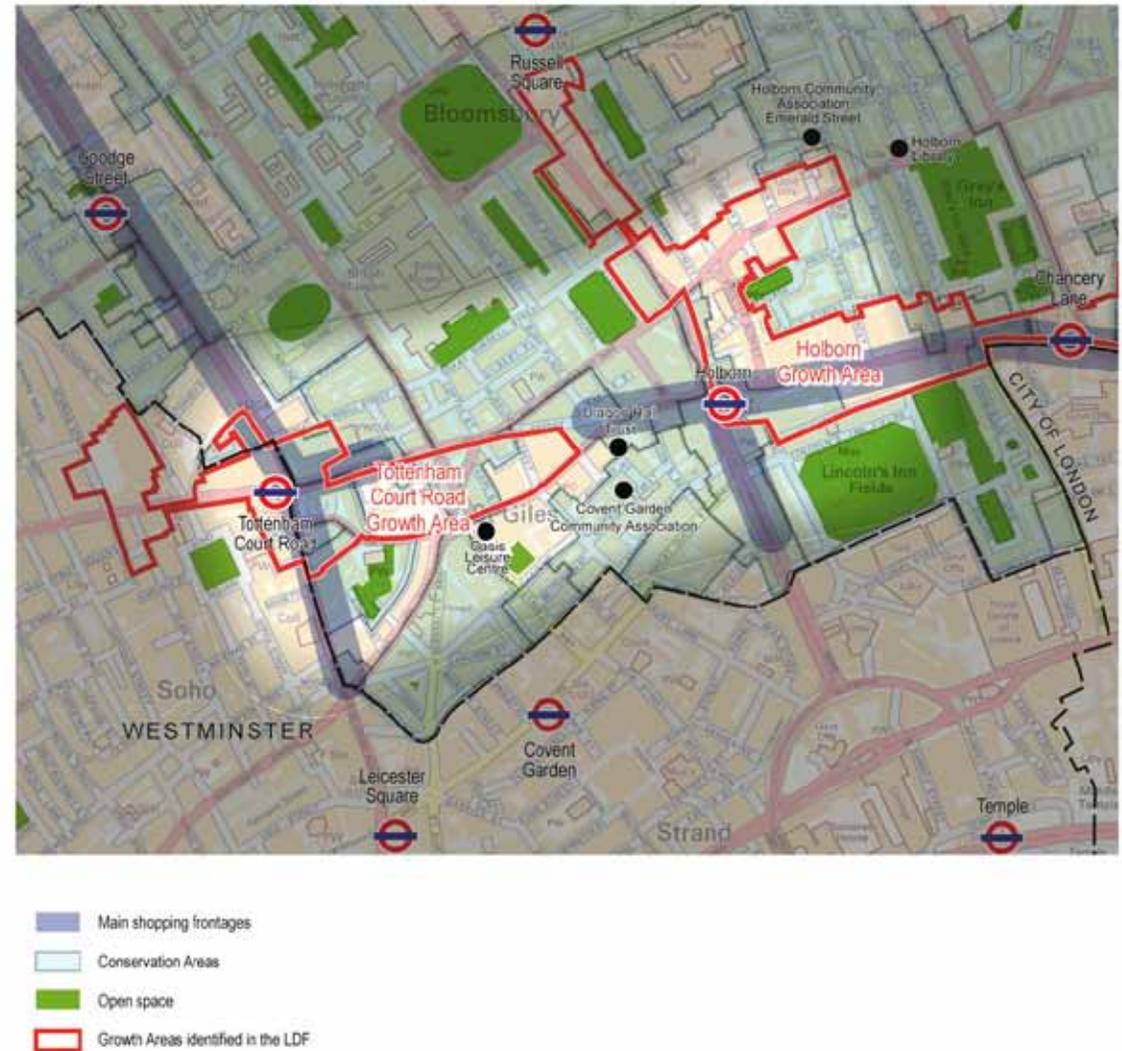
The area does not align with ward, statistical or borough boundaries and has no fixed boundary.

While the Plan is mostly about an area within the borough of Camden, we are committed to working with Westminster Council to ensure that there is consistency with initiatives on the western side of the borough boundary.

The area covered has a range of needs and is rich in opportunities. The Plan addresses issues over which the Council has direct control as well as those where it can influence others including major landowners and partners. The intention is that the Plan is about the aspirations that residents, the Council and its partners have for the kind of place they would like the St Giles to Holborn area to be and covers short, medium and long term actions that can be taken to achieve this vision.

The Plan is intended to be a document that is responsive to change, new opportunities and new priorities and we will therefore monitor progress on its delivery and consider the need for any updates.

St Giles to Holborn area map



Consultation and Engagement

The Place Plan draws on the findings of a number of consultations, the main ones being the Place Plan consultation on key issues for the St Giles to Holborn area in October and November 2011, Bloomsbury Village Neighbourhood Forum – Planning for Real exercise December 2011, Camden’s Social Capital Survey 2008 and the Shaping Services consultation in 2010.

Place Plan consultation workshops were held on key issues and priorities and also on the vision and developing actions. Representatives of local organisations, voluntary groups, residents’ organisations, developers, landowners and other partners, including the Business Improvement District (BID) in midtown, Cross Rail and London Underground were invited.

The Localism Act became law in November 2011 and the regulations to allow communities

to prepare their own neighbourhood plans came into force in April 2012. **Bloomsbury Village Neighbourhood Forum** has been undertaking public consultation specifically around the Bloomsbury Village Neighbourhood Area on their interactive web site. They also held a public event in December 2011. The main issues that were raised at this event related to concerns around crime and safety, including specific ‘hot spots’. The need for environmental improvements was a high priority, including improving the appearance of the paved areas, tree planting and open spaces. Transport concerns included too much traffic in the area, pedestrian safety and cyclist conflicts and also included the need for residents parking. This consultation also endorsed support for improved working links with partners, such as the British Museum, Camden Council, in midtown and developers when major developments are planned in the neighbourhood.

The 2008 **Social Capital Survey** was the third one of its kind and is a survey of individual residents including specific comparative data for all wards in the Borough.

The survey aimed to measure the strength of community networks, and levels of trust and

cooperation between people and different communities, as these qualities are seen as the building blocks of ‘social capital’. The full survey can be seen on the Camden website. This survey shows that local residents have overall high levels of satisfaction with the ward they live in and above the Camden average results for levels of social cohesion. This is when people feel that they can live together without difficulty with people from different cultures and religions.

The **Shaping Services** consultation with representatives of service organisations was set up by the Council to better understand the cumulative impact of the Council savings programmes. The work concluded that better collaboration with local business could maximise the potential for private resources to support services for the community. It also showed that the Council and partners “need to identify opportunities for smarter use of property and assets, to use buildings differently and link up uses. Decisions should involve public, local groups who have most detailed knowledge of area.”

The key themes which emerge from these different consultations, are discussed in more detail below.