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**LR. SYDENHAM** & BELL GREEN  
VISION STUDY

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# Introduction

This Vision Study explores the opportunity for Lower Sydenham & Bell Green (LSBG), which has significant growth potential for both new homes and jobs, alongside a need to tackle ingrained issues of inequality.

This study provides early thinking on how the area could change in the future in a way which maximises the opportunity of the planned Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE) and furthers the Council's ambition for Opportunity Area status.

With an increased sense of urgency cause by the current pandemic, the team has been tasked to consider a different type of future for the area with more walking, cycling, home working and an evolving role for town centres. The Lower Sydenham & Bell Green area - currently dominated by large out-of-town retail uses and busy roads - could become a pilot for how such areas can be transformed in the future.

On behalf of



Lewisham

MAYOR OF LONDON



Supported by



# Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE) Opportunity

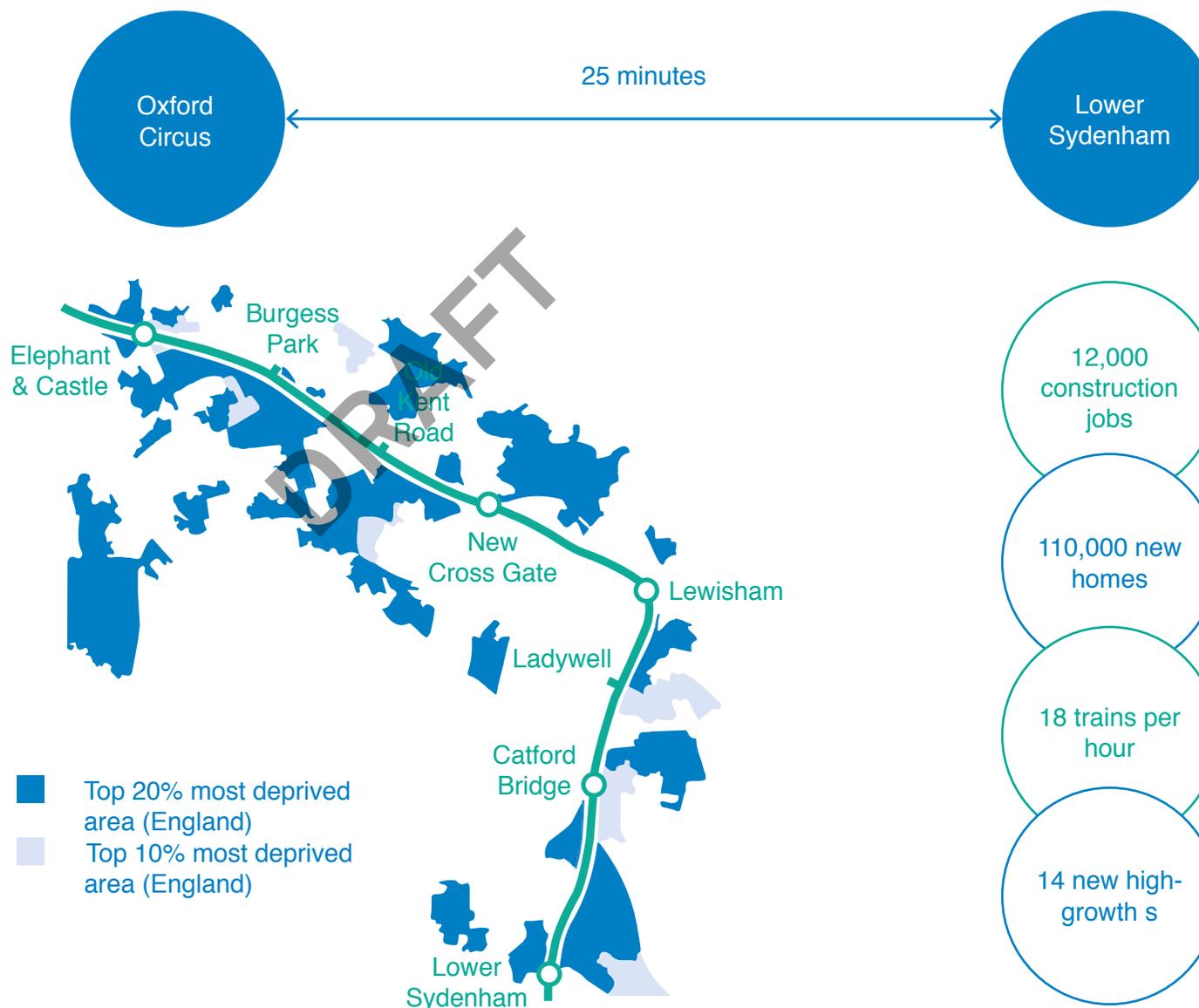
**Lewisham Council is working with TfL and the Mayor of London to extend the Bakerloo Line to Lewisham and beyond along the Hayes line.**

The Bakerloo Line would mean trains every 3-5 minutes direct to the heart of central London.

A journey from Lower Sydenham & Bell Green to Oxford Circus would take 25 minutes, compared to 40 minutes today.

Development of plans are well underway, with three public consultations defining the route, stations and construction sites.

If capital funding can be secured, the first trains could be running by the mid 2030s.



# Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE) Opportunity - Lower Sydenham & Bell Green

## What would the Bakerloo Line Extension mean for Lower Sydenham & Bell Green?

### Improved regeneration potential ↘

Dominated by roads and 'big-box' retail units, Lower Sydenham & Bell Green offers enormous potential for growth and regeneration – but poor connections hold it back. Putting Lower Sydenham & Bell Green on the tube map will make the area more attractive for investment in building new homes (including affordable homes) commercial spaces, and supporting existing and providing new social and community infrastructure.

### A new station and town ↘

A new tube station at Lower Sydenham & Bell Green will provide a focal point and heart for the local community, generating footfall, and vitality to support a new town. Delivery will enable the evolution of a stronger locally focused economy which better reflects the day to day needs of residents from a service, amenity and experiential point of view, creating an exemplar new but 'wired-in' neighborhood.

### New green transport opportunities ↘

The BLE will deliver transformational connectivity benefits for Lower Sydenham & Bell Green residents, as well as the surrounding area. It will result in significant enhancement in the frequency of services and improved journey times, Oxford Circus in 25 minutes, every 3-5 minutes. It will provide a high quality, sustainable alternative to the car for local and cross-London journeys.

### Help tackle deprivation ↘

A new station at Lower Sydenham & Bell Green will connect up areas of high deprivation to jobs and opportunities across London. The associated benefits will enable the evolution of a larger, more diverse and more resilient economy, which provides greater opportunity for Lewisham residents to access employment, or to test and develop their business ideas. Building prosperity from the bottom up to respond to embedded deprivation challenges.

# Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE) Opportunity - Lower Sydenham & Bell Green



New town centre catering to the local economy



New transport hub for the south of the borough, integrated for rail, buses, cycling and walking



Maximise the potential of the Pool River corridor and create a pleasant, green environment



Humanising the highway network and maximise the potential for active travel



Potential for a significant number of new jobs accessible to local people



New training, employment and enterprise centre creating opportunities for people locally



Potential for a significant number of new homes, including affordable homes



New cultural, social and civic facilities, and integration of existing assets

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# Socio-economic character and identity of new area

## Enhancing local access to opportunity and improving the economic resilience of the Borough.

### Building a more diverse and resilient economy ↘

The LSBG economy is arguably overly focused on retail activities, which presents a considerable risk given the current process of structural change currently affecting that sector. In looking towards future growth, it is important that LSBG move away from its reliance on retail and encourages a broader mix of economic activity and enterprise to take root.

Further work is needed to understand the precise demand, however, in the context of the scale of

growth and infrastructure enhancement anticipated, this is likely to comprises a better balance between employment (office and industrial) and non-employment (retail, food and drink and services) spaces than is currently the case.

Cutting across this, the provision of flexible and affordable spaces for enterprise (across a range of office, light industrial and retail typologies) will play an important role in providing low threshold opportunities for local residents and young people to test new ideas and engage economically.

### Building the future community around a strong foundational economy ↘

Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of the foundational economy; the parts of the economy which services the day to day needs of residents. The concept of the 15-minute city is linked closely to this.

Future growth and transformation provides opportunities for Lower Sydenham to be exemplar in demonstrating what a future community should look like; ensuring that the area better caters to

the day-to-day needs of residents in the types of services, amenities, and experiences it provides.

### What does success look like? ↘

A key aim of future growth strategies should, therefore, be to increase the economic density of the Lower Sydenham & Bell Green area, providing an enhanced balance between homes and employment, and in doing so enhancing local access to opportunity and improving the economic balance and resilience of the Borough as a whole.

# Scenario Testing

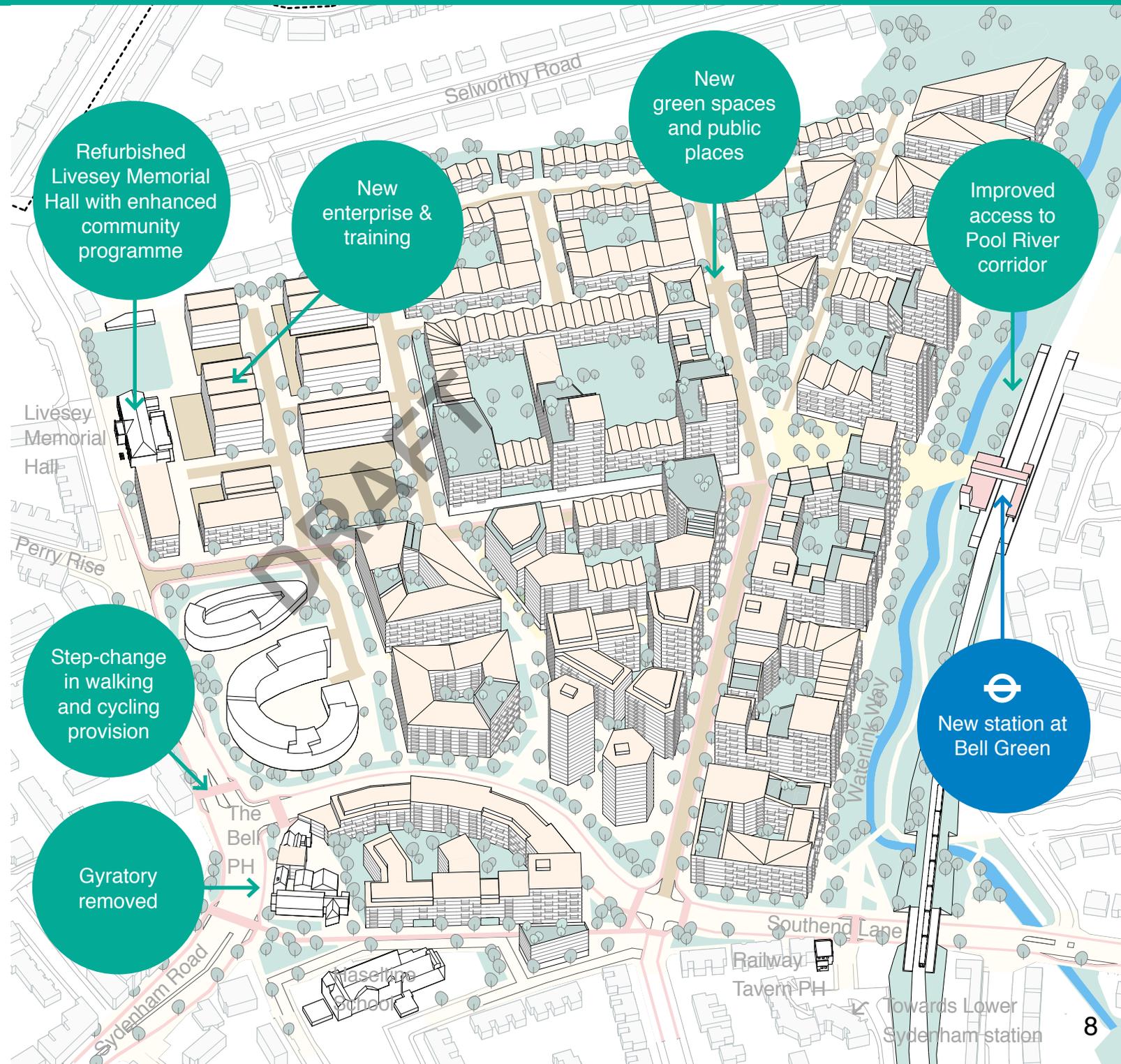


# New Bell Green station scenario

This option retains the existing Lower Sydenham station with an additional station at Bell Green.

## Key Outcomes

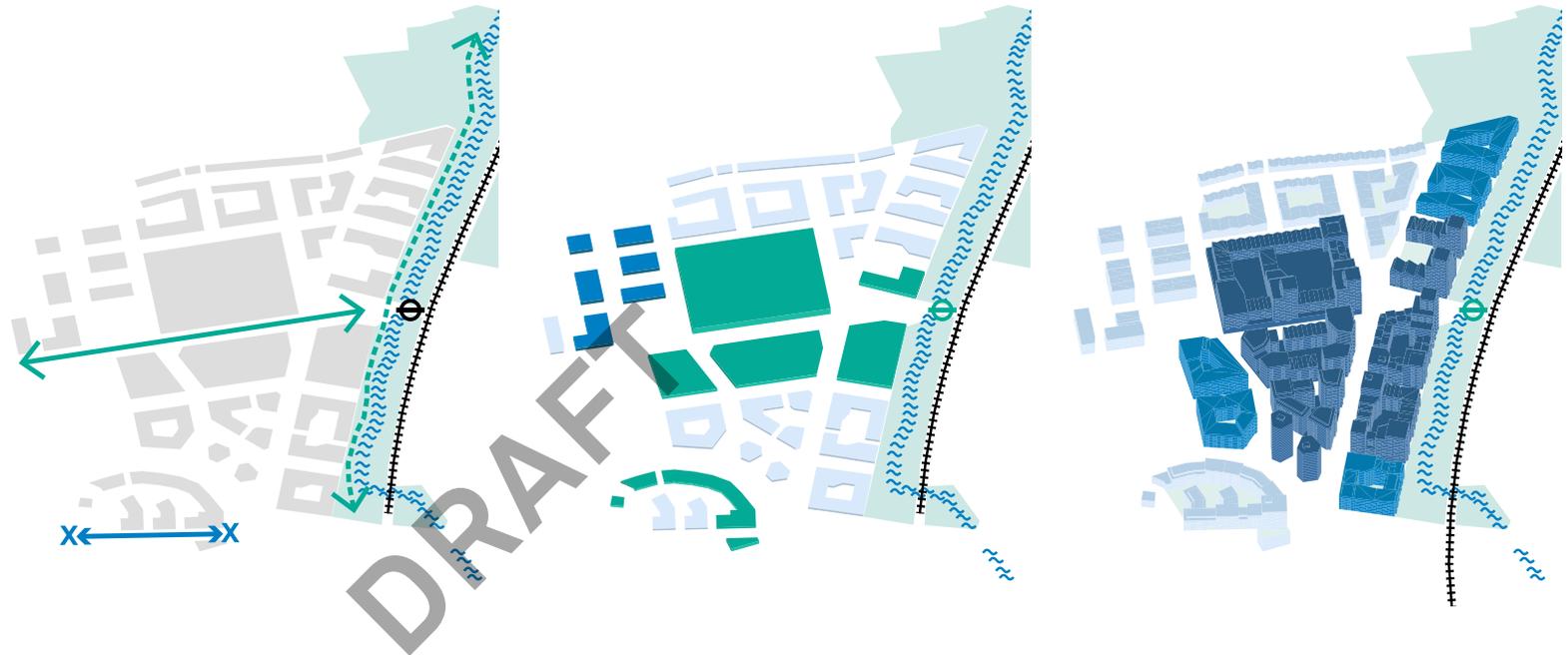
- New rail, bus, cycling and walking transport hub at Bell Green
- New town focus along east-west axis towards station plaza, with relocated Sainsbury's store on the north of the street
- Substantial housing growth and new jobs
- New training, employment and enterprise
- Integrated community assets such as the Livesey Memorial Hall
- New rail bridge at Southend Lane to improve bus access eastwards
- Improved access to Pool River corridor



# New Bell Green station scenario

This page breaks down the proposed option into the following categories:

- Connections
- Ground floor uses
- Building heights



## Key ↘

- New development
- Existing green space
- ~ Pool River
- ⊖ Proposed station

## Connections

- New East-West high street
- New station at Bell Green
- Waterlink Way enhancement along the Pool River
- Existing gyratory is peninsularised to South edge
- Improved conditions for walking and cycling

## Ground floor uses

- Employment uses and new East-West high street focus between Perry Hill and the new station at Bell Green
- Commercial ground floor uses around station plaza
- Housing above to ensure activity at all times

- Commercial uses
- Workspace uses
- Residential uses

## Building heights

- 3 storey town houses to north of the site
- Average heights 8-12 storeys across option
- 22 storeys around new station plaza at Bell Green

- 3-7 storey
- 8-12 storey
- 13 storey +

# New Bell Green station scenario

View east towards proposed new station plaza at Bell Green, with repositioned Sainsbury's store as shown.

1. Station plaza with greening, seating and space for temporary uses/programming
2. Active ground floor commercial uses to station plaza
3. New east-west oriented high street with active uses at ground floor
4. Cycle lanes included along high street with active travel focus
5. Sainsbury's store reprovided with residential above

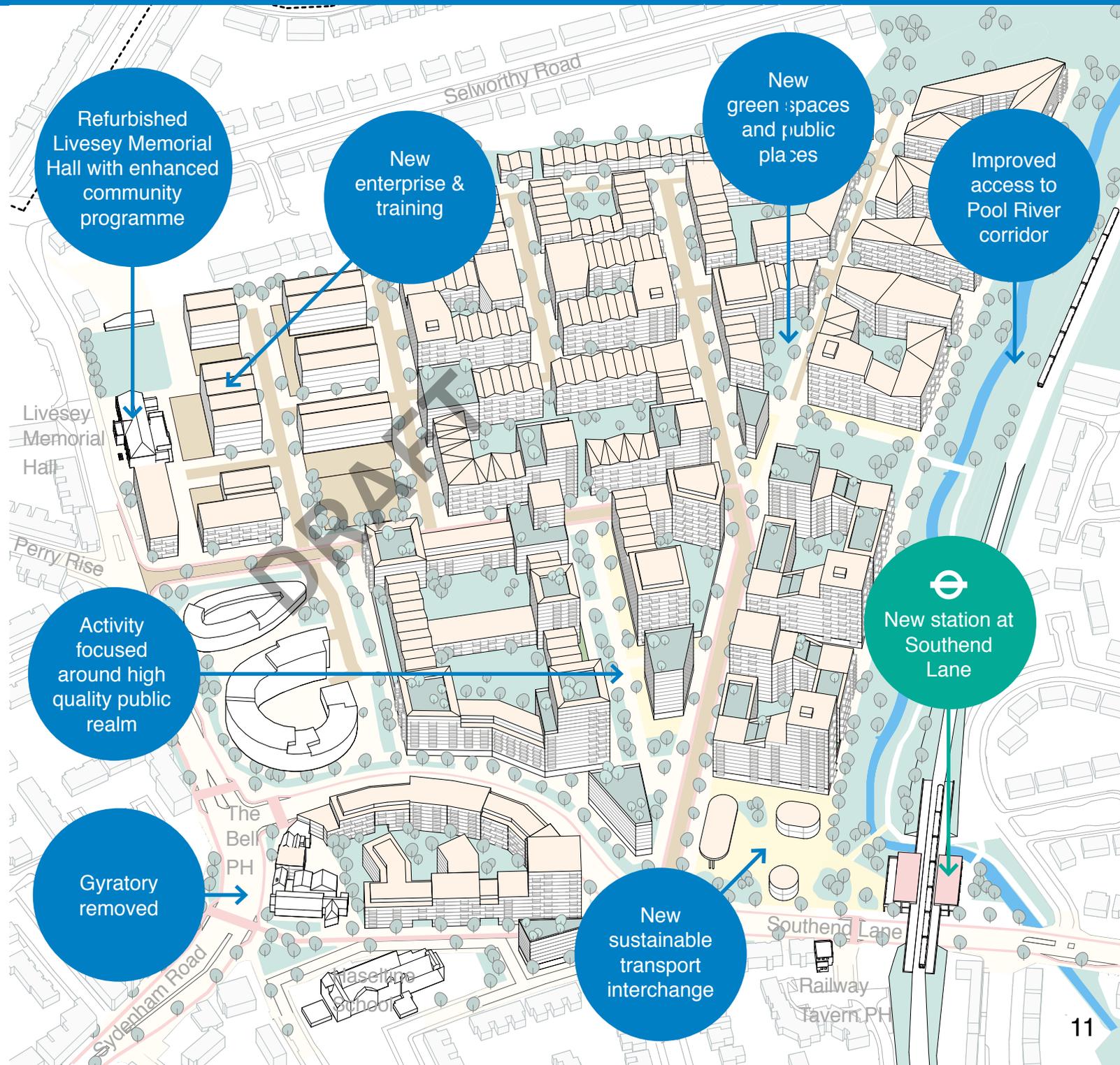


# Relocated station scenario

In this option a new station is provided located at Southend Lane, with the existing Lower Sydenham station removed.

## Key Outcomes

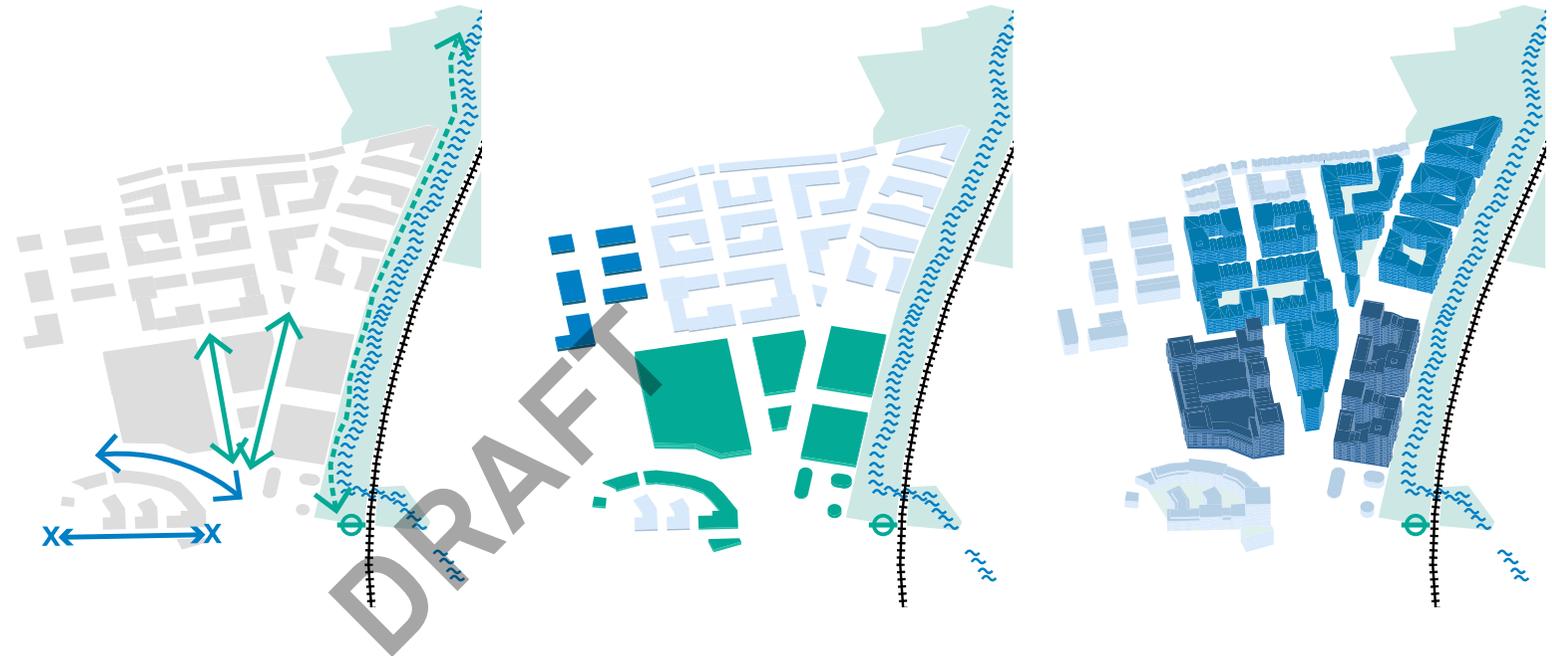
- New rail, bus, cycling and walking transport hub on Southend Lane
- New town focused along Southend Lane, with relocated Sainsbury's store prominent
- Substantial housing growth and new jobs
- New training, employment and enterprise
- Integrated community assets such as the Livesey Memorial Hall
- New rail bridge at Southend Lane to improve bus access eastwards
- Improved access to Pool River corridor



# Relocated station scenario

This page breaks down the proposed option into the following categories:

- Connections
- Ground floor uses
- Building heights



## Key ↘

- New development
- Existing green space
- ~ Pool River
- ⊕ Re-located station

## Connections

- Waterlink Way enhancement along the Pool River
- Existing gyratory is peninsularised to South edge
- Improved conditions for walking and cycling

## Ground floor uses

- New town focus to south of main development site, linking with Southend Lane
- Housing above to ensure activity at all times and encourage passive surveillance

- Commercial uses
- Workspace uses
- Residential uses

## Building heights

- 3 storey town houses adjacent to north of the site
- Average heights 8-12 storeys
- Highest 18 storeys heading north from new station at Southend Lane,

- 3-7 storey
- 8-12 storey
- 13 storey +

## Relocated station scenario

View northwards along the Waterlink Way walking and cycling route crossing Southend Lane, with the proposed new station shown to the right.

1. New station and widened bridge over Southend Lane
2. Station plaza with greening, seating and space for temporary uses/programming
3. Active ground floor commercial uses to station plaza with residential development above
4. Significant housing development
5. New crossings linking the Waterlink Way route
6. New street greening



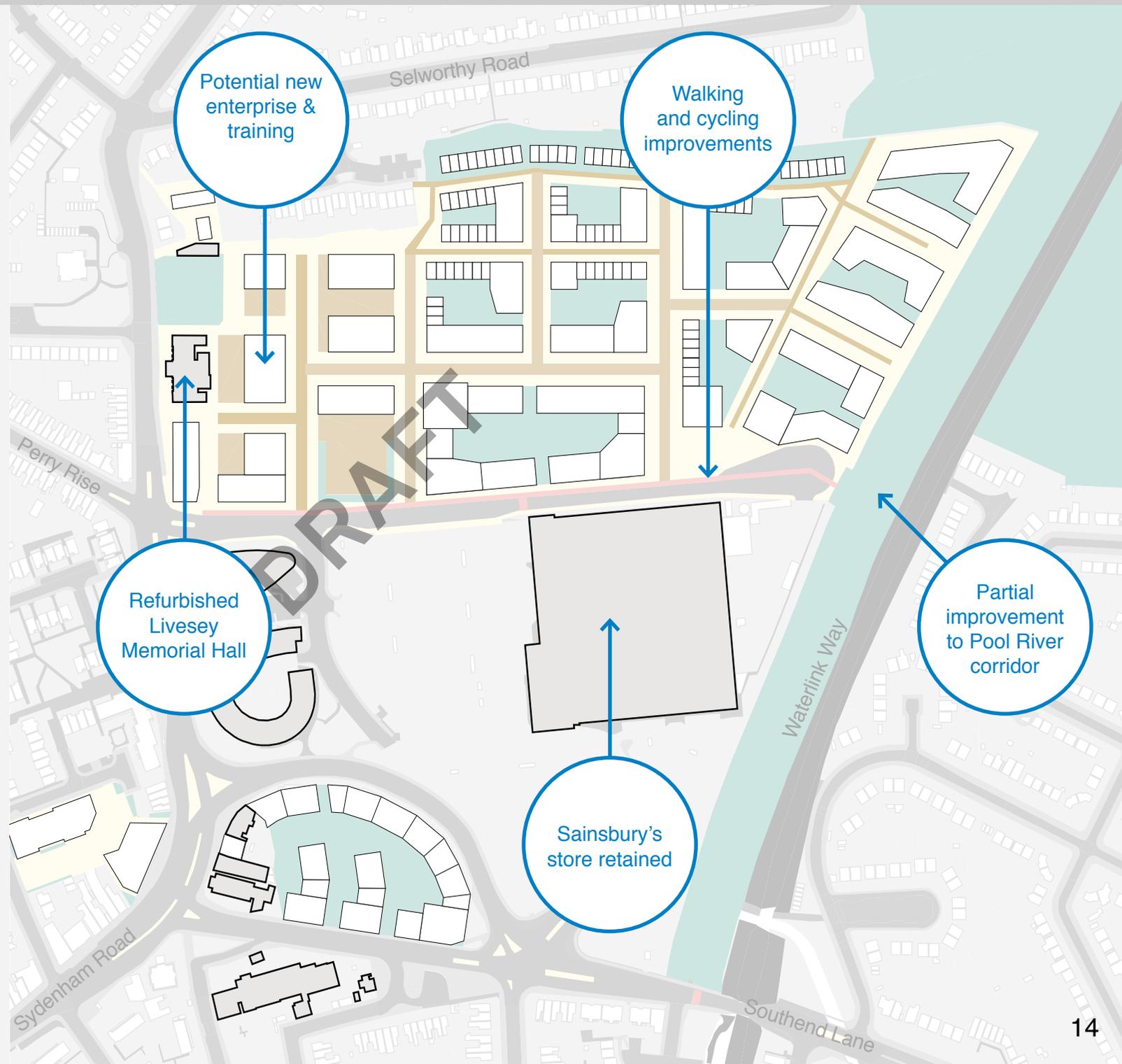
## Existing station scenario

In the option the existing Lower Sydenham station is retained and adapted for BLE use.

Development is limited due to the remaining poor transport accessibility in the wider area as well as lack of investment stimulus, particularly given challenges of required new supporting infrastructure and possible remediation requirements. This will undoubtedly limit associated infrastructure investment.

### Key Outcomes

- Retained Sainsbury's store
- Integrated existing community assets
- Reduced potential for new training
- Partial improvement to Pool River corridor



# Baseline Context



# Location

The area of study is located approximately 4km southwest of Lewisham town and 2km from Catford town. It is dominated by a big box retail park, extensive surface parking and a congested gyratory system. As a result, it has a lack of character and poor sense of place.

The Bell Green Retail Park and Sainsbury's are prominent at the of the site.

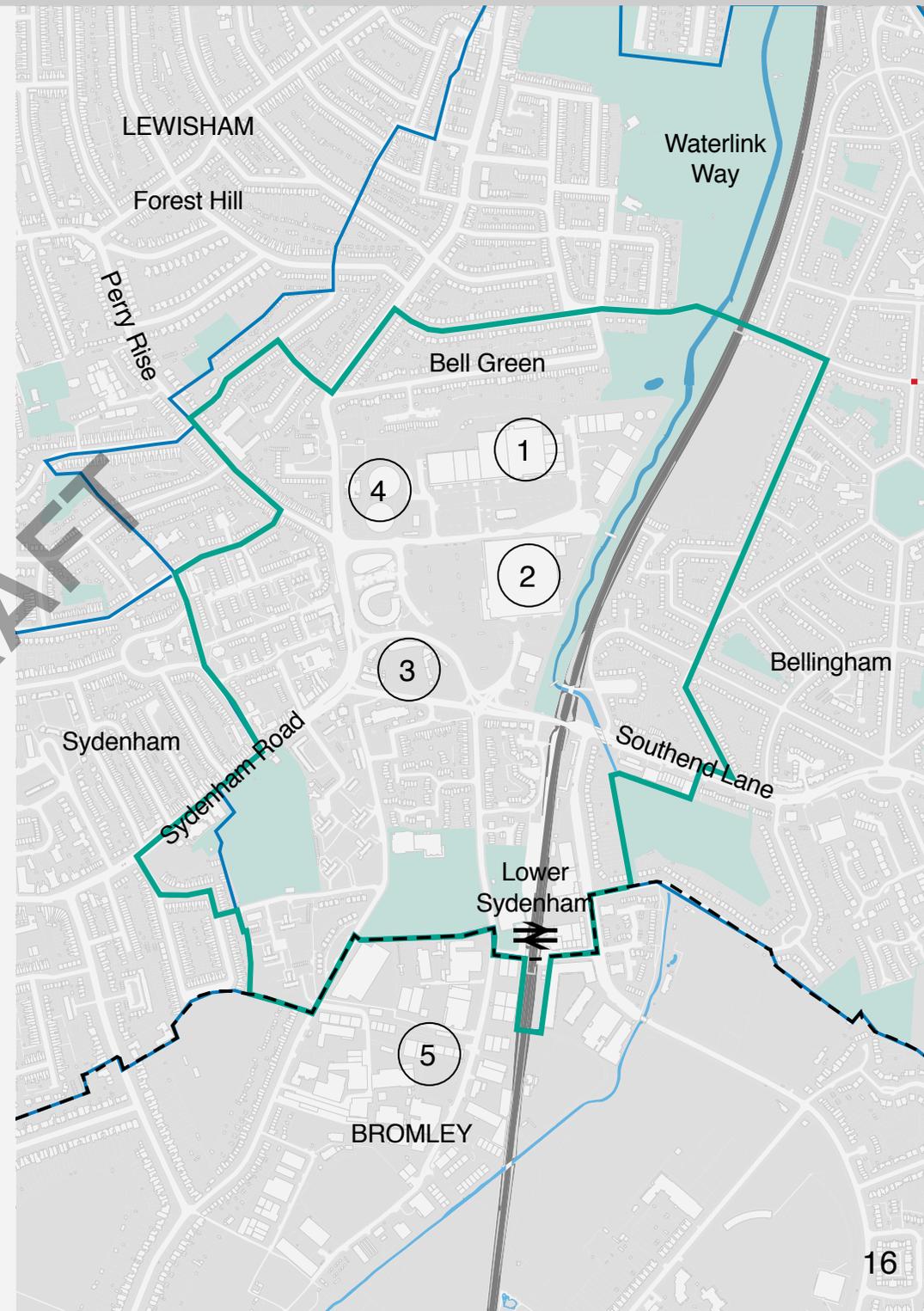
The remaining Core Study Area is predominately residential, with low density housing and large amounts of green space. A large industrial area sits to the south within LB Bromley.

## Key ↘

1. Bell Green Retail Park
2. Sainsbury's retail store
3. Bell Green Gyratory
4. Livesey Memorial Hall and former gasholder site
5. Local Employment Land, LB Bromley

-  Study Area boundary
-  Character Area
-  Borough boundary
-  Green space
-  Pool River

## Borough context ↘



# Place

The delivery of significant regeneration investment into Lower Sydenham and Bell Green will help to transform the quality of the area as a place to live and work.

New and enhanced public realm and local linkages will help to establish a safer, healthier and more attractive environment. Delivery will also enable the evolution of a stronger 'foundational' economy which better reflects the day to day needs of residents from a service, amenity and experiential point of view. The BLE, new town, increased jobs and population will create a new exemplar neighbourhood and focus for the wider area.

↘ Existing Lower Sydenham station, hard to locate with an unwelcoming approach and poor interchange opportunities

↘ Area traffic dominated with significant land given over to highways and big-box retail prevalent built-form, lacks sense of place



# Economy

**The area currently under performs against a number of measures of economic and social vitality and prosperity.**

Economic perspective:  
Lack of critical mass both in terms of the number of businesses located locally, and in terms of the number of jobs available for local residents: there are currently 2.3 residents for every job in the area, compared to an average of 1.8 residents per job across outer London. With around 40% of jobs in retail activities, the economy is also relatively low productivity in nature and lacking in diversity.

Resident population:  
Below average levels of economic activity and skills contributing to

weak income levels and entrenched deprivation. A lack of diversity within the population reflects local constraints in housing supply and availability, alongside wider issues of accessibility, environment and identity.



There is a risk that many of these challenges will be heightened in the context of the pandemic, with more deprived parts of the community get further left behind and further erosion in the scale, strength and diversity of the local economy.

# Movement

**The area presents an uncomfortable and disjointed experience for getting around.**

The gyratory network and the three major roads that feed into it act as a barrier, due to high volumes of traffic, limited crossing and convoluted crossings. The volume of traffic and lack of dedicated cycle facilities is a barrier to cycling. The Waterlink Way is the exception for both walking and cycling, providing an important and attractive route connecting Bell Green to areas north and south.

The area is served by seven bus routes, however bus connections east of Bell Green are restricted by the low rail bridge on Southend Lane, and only

one bus calls at Lower Sydenham station.



Lower Sydenham has seen an increase in the number of passengers in the recent decade of approximately 40%. Despite this it is poorly accessible by foot, bike and bus, and lacks step-free access to both platforms. Its location coupled with a disconnected walking network limits its catchment.

# Wider Opportunities

**Proposals for the Lower Sydenham & Bell Green (LSBG) area are strongly influenced by the concept of a 15-minute city.**

The idea is based on research into how city dwellers' use of time could be reorganised to improve both living conditions and the environment. Daily urban necessities are within a 15-minute reach on foot or by bike. Work, home, shops, entertainment, education and healthcare are located within a series of concentric circles emanating from the central focus of the area. At LSBG, the new town provides this focus and links existing towns to fill gaps in the network. By providing a fast route to

central London, the BLE is a draw for the wider south Lewisham area, and will go some way to evening-out the disproportionate effects of deprivation felt here and including across the borough boundary to LB Bromley.

Key ↘

- 15 minute walk (*disabled, people walking with small children etc.*)
- 15 minute walk (*average able bodied adult*)
- Town /District
- Study Area boundary
- Character Area
- BLE route
- Borough boundary
- Pool River



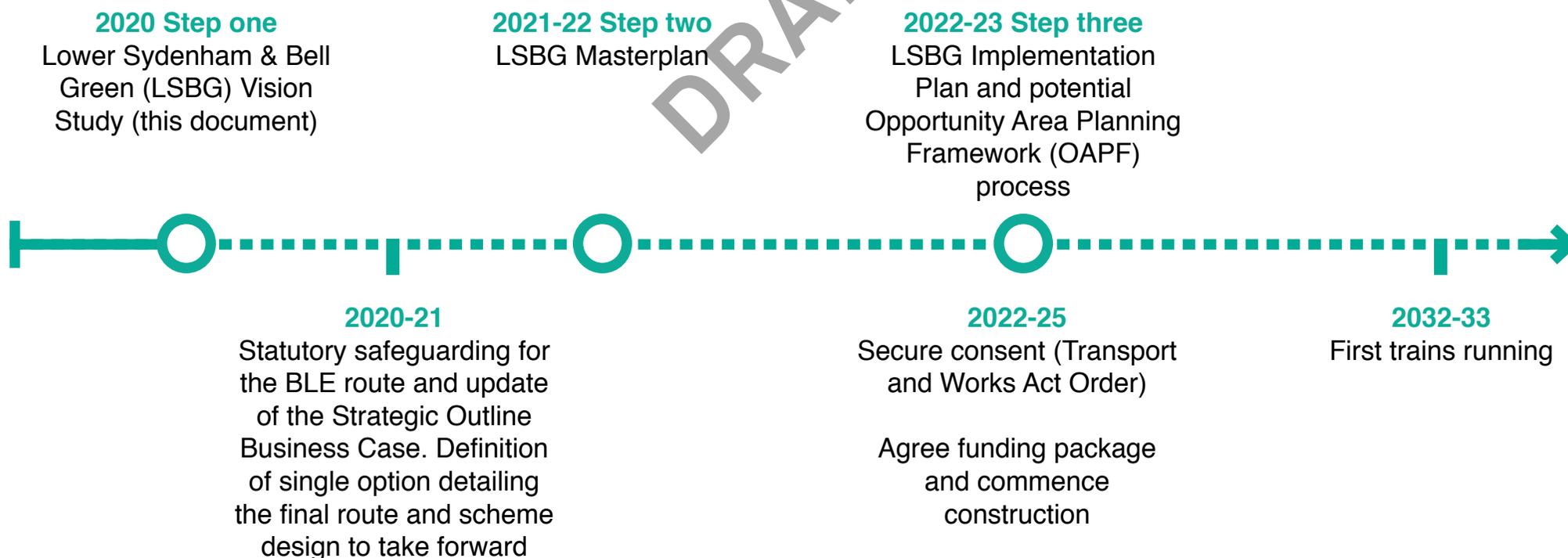
## Next Steps

**The Lower Sydenham & Bell Green Vision Study is intended as the first step of a three step plan towards significant change for the area. We envisage this process stretching over a number of years, linked to the progress of the Bakerloo Line Extension proposals:**

## Getting in touch

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The graphic identity of this document is based on the colours of the former Bell Green Gas Works, historic printed Ordnance Survey Maps of the area and TfL bus route display boards to LR. Sydenham & Bell Green.