

Calling Croydon

Your say on the
future of the North
End Quarter



UNIBAIL-RODAMCO-WESTFIELD



Masterplan Framework consultation

November 2024

The local community want to see positive progress in the town centre, following the previous planning consent which was not delivered. With URW having taken sole ownership of the site and recent consultation by the council on the future of the town centre, there is momentum for change.

Building on that foundation, we're excited to present the next step:
The North End Quarter Masterplan Framework.

01

What is the North End Quarter?

This is the name given by the council to the area of the town centre around North End bordered by:

- Wellesley Road to the East
- George Street to the South
- Frith and Tamworth Road to the West
- Poplar Walk to the North

The area includes the Whitgift and Centrale centres, Allders, the car parks and some office buildings.



Who is URW?

Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) is the major landowner within the North End Quarter. URW previously owned 50% of the land in an agreement with another company but took sole ownership in 2023.

Our experience

URW's commitment to Croydon, and our expertise in developing and managing successful mixed-use destinations, provides a strong foundation for this new masterplan. All our developments follow the URW Better Places plan, which strives to make a positive environmental, social and economic impact in the cities and communities where URW operates.

We operate **71 shopping centres in 12 countries**. These centres attract over **900 million visits annually**.

What is a 'Masterplan Framework'?

This Masterplan Framework has been prepared by URW in collaboration with Croydon Council to establish the fundamentals of the project before the design and planning application is developed.

It responds directly to the policies and the priorities outlined in two council documents:

- The Croydon Local Plan
- The North End Quarter Transformation Area (an area defined by the council)

We are learning from the past and taking a new approach to make the development more sustainable, adaptable and deliverable. The Masterplan Framework allows for a variety of uses that can change with the market demands for homes, shops, and other uses. This adaptable plan will help create a lively and enduring town centre for future generations.

It is intended to be a flexible but ambitious roadmap for the future – it sets out the key principles to unlock the long-term transformation of the town centre.

Once endorsed by Croydon Council, the Masterplan Framework will act as material consideration for future planning applications, alongside the council's emerging Town Centre Strategy (which covers a wider area).

Working with Croydon Council

URW is consulting on our Masterplan Framework – a roadmap for change that sets out the fundamentals for the North End Quarter before the design or a planning application is developed. Croydon Council's Town Centre Regeneration Strategy is a plan for the future regeneration of the wider town centre and includes several areas.

The two documents are intended to be consistent, with Croydon Council's vision for the town centre including the North End Quarter and our Masterplan Framework developing a vision for a specific part of the town centre. URW and Croydon Council are working closely in partnership to ensure a consistent approach.

We're committed to working together to revitalise Croydon town centre. This initial phase of consultation is your chance to explore the Masterplan Framework, share your thoughts, and help shape the future of the North End Quarter.

Complete our survey by scanning the QR code below.



Both the Centrale and Whitgift shopping centres are open and will remain open in the coming years. A planning application means it will likely be years before construction starts.



Croydon today...

02

A place of pride

Croydon is more than just a place; it's a thriving community of **400,000 residents**, making it the most populated borough in London.

It's a place with a strong sense of identity, a rich history, and a vibrant cultural scene. As one resident put it in a recent council consultation:

"Croydon has a real sense of community spirit. It's a diverse and welcoming place."

We know residents are proud of Croydon and want to help create a town centre everyone loves and wants to visit.



A south London powerhouse

Strategically located within South London, Croydon is a transportation hub and economic powerhouse.

Fast train services to London Bridge, Victoria, and Gatwick Airport in 15 minutes with the tram and bus network mean Croydon is exceptionally well connected.

It also boasts a diverse economy, with key strengths in retail, finance, and the arts. Croydon is a town ready to embrace the future.



A rapidly changing context

Croydon is undergoing a transformation.

New developments are bringing new homes, businesses, and public spaces to the town centre. The construction of high-rise residential towers like Ten Degrees and Saffron Square reflects the growing demand for urban living, whilst the regeneration around East Croydon station including Boxpark and Ruskin Square shows that social spaces and workspace can thrive here too.

These changes are creating a dynamic landscape, setting the stage for the ambitious future of the North End Quarter.

Reversing the decline

Despite its strengths, Croydon faces challenges.

The town centre has seen a decline in recent years. Changing retail habits, the rise of online shopping, and the impact of the pandemic have led to vacant storefronts and a need for revitalisation.

As Croydon Council's Inward Investment Plan (2024) highlighted:

"Together, we can unlock Croydon's potential and build a thriving, resilient borough for the future, of which we can all be proud."

This recognition of the need for change emphasises the urgency of the North End Quarter Masterplan Framework.



The momentum for change

03

Local people want to see change

The desire for investment in the town centre is visible. In previous council-led consultations, the community expressed a strong desire for an improved town centre.

They want to see:

- 01. Better public spaces
- 02. A greater diversity of uses
- 03. More opportunities for community engagement

The message is clear: Croydon is ready for positive change, and the North End Quarter Masterplan Framework provides a roadmap to deliver it.

Single ownership, ready to deliver

Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) is the major landowner within the North End Quarter. This provides a unique opportunity to drive the transformation forward.

Significant majority ownership offers significant advantages, including streamlined and efficient decision-making and the ability to deliver a comprehensive vision for the area.

URW's commitment to Croydon and its expertise in developing and managing successful mixed-use destinations provides a strong foundation for the delivery of the masterplan.

Supporting community infrastructure

The teams at URW and in the Centrale and Whitgift Centres are active in the community, driving positive economic and social impact through employment, training and social inclusion.

Croydon Community Grants

In September 2024 we announced our new Croydon Community Grants programme designed to support 15 local small organisations focussing on homelessness and youth activities. Successful applicants will get mentoring sessions with URW as well as their grant.

Legacy Youth Zone

In May we announced a £75,000 investment to work with and support the Legacy Youth Zone, Croydon. Open seven days a week, Legacy provides young people aged 8–19 affordable access to a wide range of programmes, support services and activities in sports, arts, music and employability.

Planning for the future

We know it will be important to invest in community infrastructure as part of any future development. This means looking closely at what's already available and planning thoughtfully for what will be needed.

Right now, there are some great facilities available a short walk from the North End Quarter (NEQ) like the Eagle Community Centre and Tamworth Halls, as well as the Croydon Voluntary Action Resource Centre on London Road.

We need to consider how we can improve existing facilities and ensure any new facilities complement these existing ones to better serve everyone in the existing and future community.



Activating the town centre right now

We're committed to investing in Croydon, now and in the future to restore pride in the town centre and get people visiting.

Costa del Croydon

We've made a start already this summer – turning a rooftop car park in to a brightly coloured beach paradise attracting over 30,000 people!

Costa del Croydon ran for the month of August and transformed the top level of Centrale's multi-storey car park. We built a sandy beach and water feature, hosted street food & drinks and had games for all ages to get involved with.



Allders

In September we started construction work to bring Allders shopping centre back into use whilst preserving the historic building on North End.

Five new shops and two food outlets will start using the Allders shop fronts in 2025, the first step in reopening and celebrating this 150-year-old Croydon landmark.



Public improvements

We're also working with the council on improvements to North End to create a more welcoming and safer environment. This includes opening the Croydon Urban Room inside the Whitgift as a space for everyone to use to discuss the future of the town centre.

The subway at Lansdowne Road will be closed and a level crossing built, improving connectivity and safety. Initiatives to reduce antisocial behaviour and crime will be rolled out.

Finally, activities, pop-ups, installations and performances on North End will continue to improve the experience and shopping in the town centre.

We're actively exploring more temporary uses for empty shops, offices and car parks across the site. We want to bring more new retail spaces, space for arts and performance and play space to bring more life and activity into the town centre – but we need your help too.



Delivering on a complex site

A puzzle of different levels, structures & routes

The North End Quarter is a complex site with a unique structure. It features:

- A mix of different levels
- A legacy of various building structures of different ages
- A network of pedestrian and vehicle routes

The Masterplan Framework recognises these complexities and aims to create a more user-friendly environment. Considering these factors will allow the creation of a well-connected network of routes and spaces working with the existing site.



Supported by planning policy

The North End Quarter Masterplan Framework is more than just a vision; it's a plan rooted in policy framework.

It aligns seamlessly with national planning priorities set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, which emphasises sustainable development and community engagement. It also fits with the GLA's London Plan and Croydon's own Local Plan, recognising Croydon's role as a Metropolitan Centre and Opportunity Area.

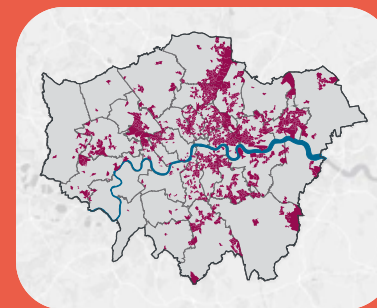
01 National Policy

National planning policy **supports sustainable urban development and efficient land use**, endorsing mixed-use projects like the NEQ.



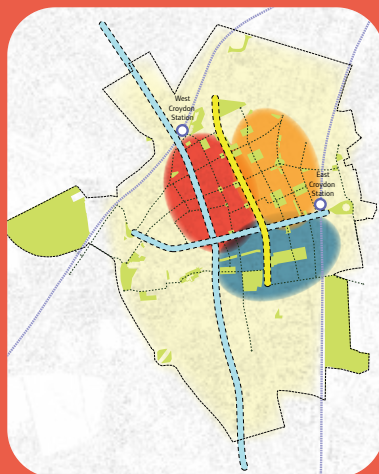
02 GLA London Plan (2021)

The London Plan designates Croydon as a key area for growth, aiming to add 10,500 jobs and 14,500 homes. The NEQ is part of this vision, focusing on **high-density, mixed-use developments**.



03 OAPF (2013)

The Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework supports the NEQ as a **mixed-use destination, emphasising residential units and improved public spaces**.



04 Croydon's Local Plan (Regulation 19)

The Local Plan labels the NEQ as a Transformation Area, **advocating for thousands of new homes and various town centre uses**.

Key points include:

- Utilising the NEQ's historical context for commercial and residential purposes
- Bolstering North End as a primary retail frontage
- Creating active town centre streets
- Encouraging high-density development with tall buildings along Wellesley Road
- Improving public spaces for new residents and visitors
- Incorporating heritage into new designs

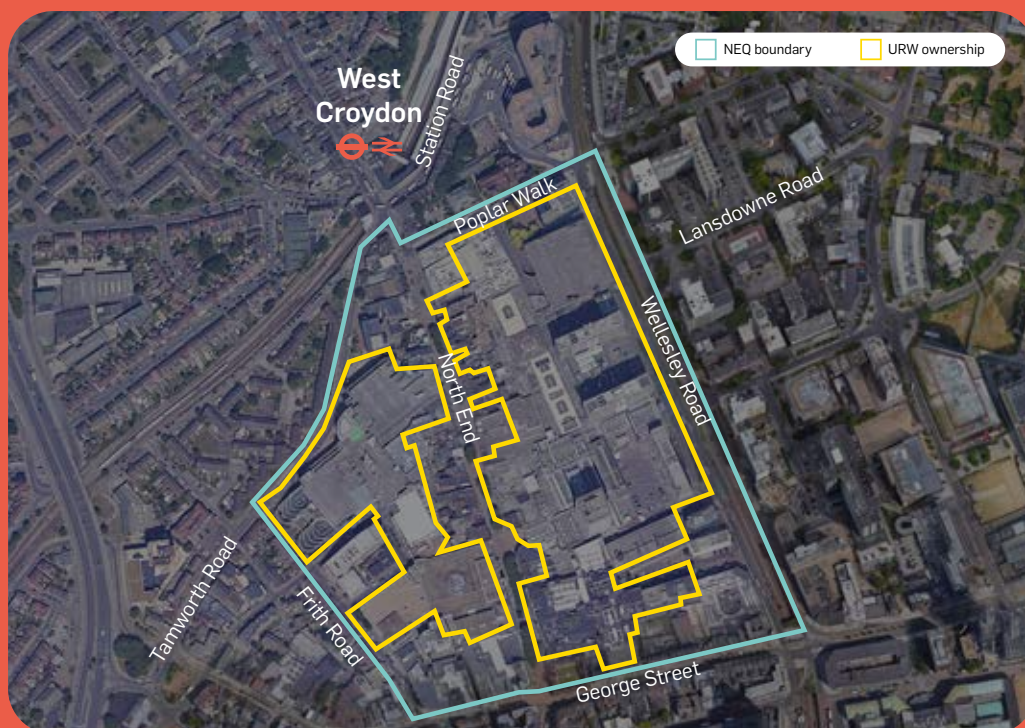
The essential first step

05

URW's ownership

The map below illustrates the extent of URW's ownership within the North End Quarter. A significant portion of this area is the Whitgift Centre, Allders, Centrale and adjoining properties, much of which is the freehold of the John Whitgift Foundation.

The Masterplan Framework is designed to guide the transformation of the entire NEQ area. This complete approach will ensure a consistent vision that benefits the whole community.



Agreeing the Masterplan Framework – a roadmap for change and a futureproof planning application

This Masterplan Framework has been prepared by URW in collaboration with Croydon Council to establish the fundamentals of the project before the design and planning application is developed.

It responds directly to the policy framework and the priorities outlined in the emerging Croydon Local Plan and in the North End Quarter Transformation Area (an area defined by the council). A flexible yet ambitious roadmap for the future, it sets out the key principles for the transformation of Croydon town centre.

Once endorsed by Croydon Council, **the Masterplan Framework will act as material consideration for future planning applications**, alongside the council's emerging Town Centre Strategy (which covers a wider area).

We are learning from the past and taking a new approach to make the development more sustainable, adaptable and deliverable. The Masterplan Framework allows for a variety of uses **that can change with community and market demands** for homes, shops, and other uses. This adaptable plan will help create a lively and enduring town centre.

Ten masterplan principles

The Masterplan Framework outlines ten key aims to direct the development, ensuring it aligns with community needs and makes the most of the huge opportunities presented by the site.

The North End Quarter will aim to...

01



Deliver place-led change to become a destination that we can all be proud of

02



Create a new network of permeable public routes, streets and spaces

03



Curate and deliver an appropriate use of mixes to reinvigorate the town centre

04



Celebrate local identity and heritage

05



Ensure building heights and scale are contextually addressed

06



Explore placemaking by embracing and responding to the NEQ's unique and varied character areas

07



Provide a mix of high-quality homes to address local need

08



Strengthen biodiversity and greening

09

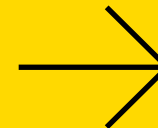


Rationalise vehicle access, public parking, servicing and infrastructure

10



Support a resilient and sustainable Croydon



01

Deliver place-led change to become a destination that we can all be proud of

Our first priority is to transform Croydon into a bustling town centre that puts the borough back on the map and reflect the pride of the community.

This needs to be delivered in a way that is true to Croydon's heritage and culture, whilst giving it the boost **it needs to make it a place people want to spend time**; to live, work or visit.

To do this we need to consider how we give people a reason to visit Croydon in a way that combines shops, restaurants, bars and cafés alongside cultural, leisure and work spaces.

02

Create a new network of permeable public routes, streets and spaces

We want to create a new, open and safe network of routes, streets and spaces that seamlessly connect the town centre with its surrounding areas.

This will significantly enhance:

- 01. Accessibility
- 02. Safety
- 03. Connectivity

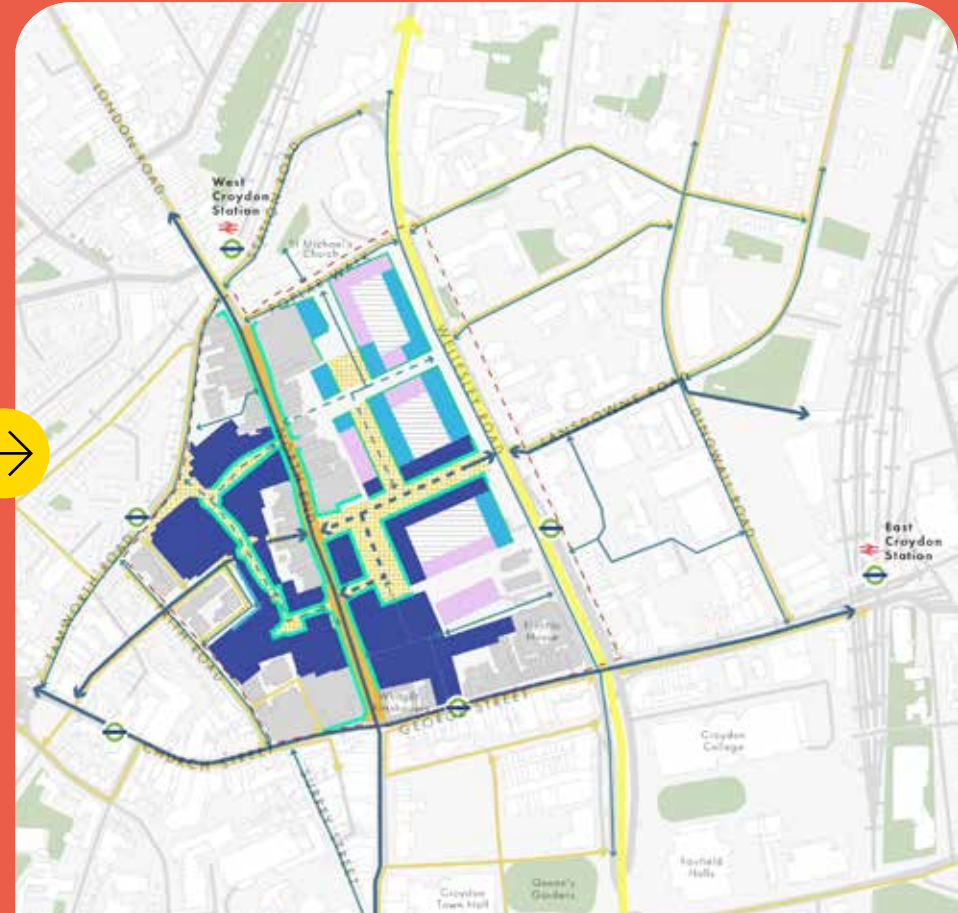
This will be achieved by providing improved walking and cycling links to bus and tram stops, rail stations, and new active travel networks.

Key routes and improvements include:

 A 24-hour public route connecting Lansdowne Road to Drummond Road via North End which connects Old Town, North End and East Croydon Station.

 Enhanced routes between Poplar Walk and a new east-west route and further routes east-west from Wellesley Road near Sydenham Road to North End.

 Potential connections between George Street, Dingwall Avenue, North End, and a new east-west route.



Key

---- NEQ boundary

↔ Primary pedestrian/cycle route

↔ Primary pedestrian-only route

↔ Secondary pedestrian/cycle route

↔ Secondary pedestrian-only route

↔ Possible other pedestrian route

↔ Primary vehicle movement

↔ Secondary vehicle movement

■ New or improved managed public spaces and routes

■ Existing key public spaces and routes

— Primary active frontages

— Secondary active frontages

Potential ground floor uses:

■ Predominantly commercial, leisure, community and other town centre uses at ground level

■ Predominantly mixed uses including community and other non-residential at ground level

■ Predominantly residential-led uses

■ Private amenity

03

Curate and deliver an appropriate use of mixes to reinvigorate the town centre

To restore Croydon as a lively and sustainable town centre, we need to get the balance of different uses right, whilst ensuring it can adapt to future trends and market changes.

We already know that to reduce the amount of vacant space we will need to focus on providing the space needed for a vibrant and sustainable town centre.

To respond to local need, we also know we need to deliver a significant number of new homes across a range of different tenures whilst ensuring there is the right community infrastructure like schools, community spaces and medical centres to respond to the additional demand.



04

Celebrate local identity and heritage

We recognise the importance of preserving Croydon's rich heritage and identity.

The Masterplan Framework prioritises the protection and enhancement of key heritage assets within the NEQ, such as:

- Grade I listed Whitgift Alms houses
- Grade I listed St Michael and All Angels Church
- Grade II listed Electricity Showrooms (LSBU Campus)
- The locally important Allders building

We will carefully balance the impact of any new development on these buildings, ensuring they are respected and celebrated.



05

Ensure building heights and scale are contextually addressed

Tall buildings in central Croydon are mainly around East Croydon station and Wellesley Road, with heights decreasing towards residential areas west of Centrale and the south edge of the NEQ.

Understanding the importance of good design, especially for tall buildings, we will consider several elements including:

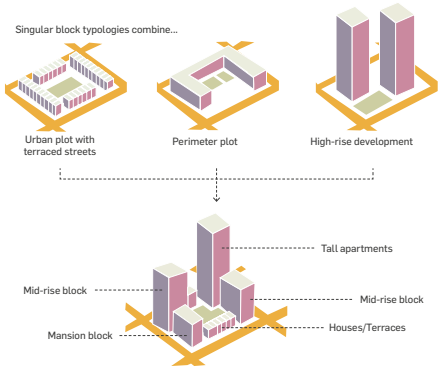
- 01. Visual quality inside and out
- 02. Local and wider views
- 03. Environmental impact
- 04. Quality of residential spaces
- 05. User environment
- 06. Considerations for roofscapes
- 07. Adherence to relevant policies and guidance

Key

- London Borough of Croydon
- Neighbouring boroughs

Building heights in metres based on relhmax

- 0-9.6m
- 9.6-21m
- 21-32m
- 32-200m



06

Explore placemaking by embracing and responding to the NEQ's unique and varied character areas

Croydon's town centre today is a mix of the old and the new – the narrow lanes of Old Town contrast with the more modern design of East Croydon. This forms part of Croydon's identity.

The NEQ straddles both, connecting the old town with the new town. New buildings should be high quality additions.

We are developing three distinct character areas, each accommodating unique uses and scales of development.

Whitgift South:

- 01. A high concentration of retail and leisure activities along North End
- 02. A key new public space
- 03. New, flexible workspaces towards Wellesley Road
- 04. The preservation of the historic North End frontages

Whitgift North:

- 01. A mix of housing types and tenures
- 02. New community spaces near West Croydon bus station
- 03. A linear park to facilitate north-south and east-west connectivity
- 04. Smaller units to enhance retail, leisure and community uses

Centrale:

- 01. Critical high-quality retail
- 02. Leisure space to the town centre



07

Provide a mix of high-quality homes to address local need

To transform Croydon into a vibrant and sustainable town centre, it is vital that we address the urgent need for more housing.

This site can play a significant role in meeting this need with the potential to deliver a significant number of homes. We will be targeting as high a proportion of affordable homes as possible, alongside the significant investment that will be required in local infrastructure.

Here's our approach:



Support a range of housing options, including market sale, build-to-rent, student, co-living, and supported housing to cater to the varied demographics and needs of Croydon.



Designing homes that are safe, spacious, functional, and adaptable, ensuring they meet high standards of quality and sustainability.



Strategic placement and orientation of residential buildings to maximise quality of life, complemented by excellent amenities and communal spaces.

08

Strengthen biodiversity and greening

We aim to create a new network of natural and green spaces within the town centre.

The plan includes many opportunities to bring nature into the heart of the town centre. These areas could incorporate planting and sustainable rain gardens, thereby enhancing both the environment and the visual appeal of public spaces.



09

Rationalise vehicle access, public parking, servicing and infrastructure

As part of our commitment to creating a greener and more sustainable town centre, we are looking to shift the focus away from the needs of cars and towards people.

Shifting to sustainable transport

Currently, the NEQ area contains around 3,000 public parking spaces. Our vision aims to prioritise alternative travel modes over private cars, promoting car-free residential developments and encouraging public transport, cycling, and walking. We anticipate an overall decrease in the number of parking spaces but recognise the need to keep some parking for those who require it.

10

Support a resilient and sustainable Croydon

We are committed to creating a greener and more sustainable town centre.

Our Masterplan Framework includes several key initiatives to achieve this vision:



Targeting net zero carbon emissions: We aim to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of buildings and activities within the town centre.



Building reuse vs. demolition: We will evaluate the environmental impact of demolishing existing buildings against the benefits of creating modern and flexible buildings. This includes the potential to reuse aspects of existing structures, particularly below-ground areas such as basements.



Minimising energy use: Efforts will focus on reusing existing structures, enhancing energy efficiency, and incorporating renewable energy sources.



Promoting high standards of resource management: We will ensure efficient use of energy, water, and materials, while also minimising waste and pollution.



Design flexibility: New buildings will be designed to be flexible and adaptable to different uses and designed for easy maintenance over time.

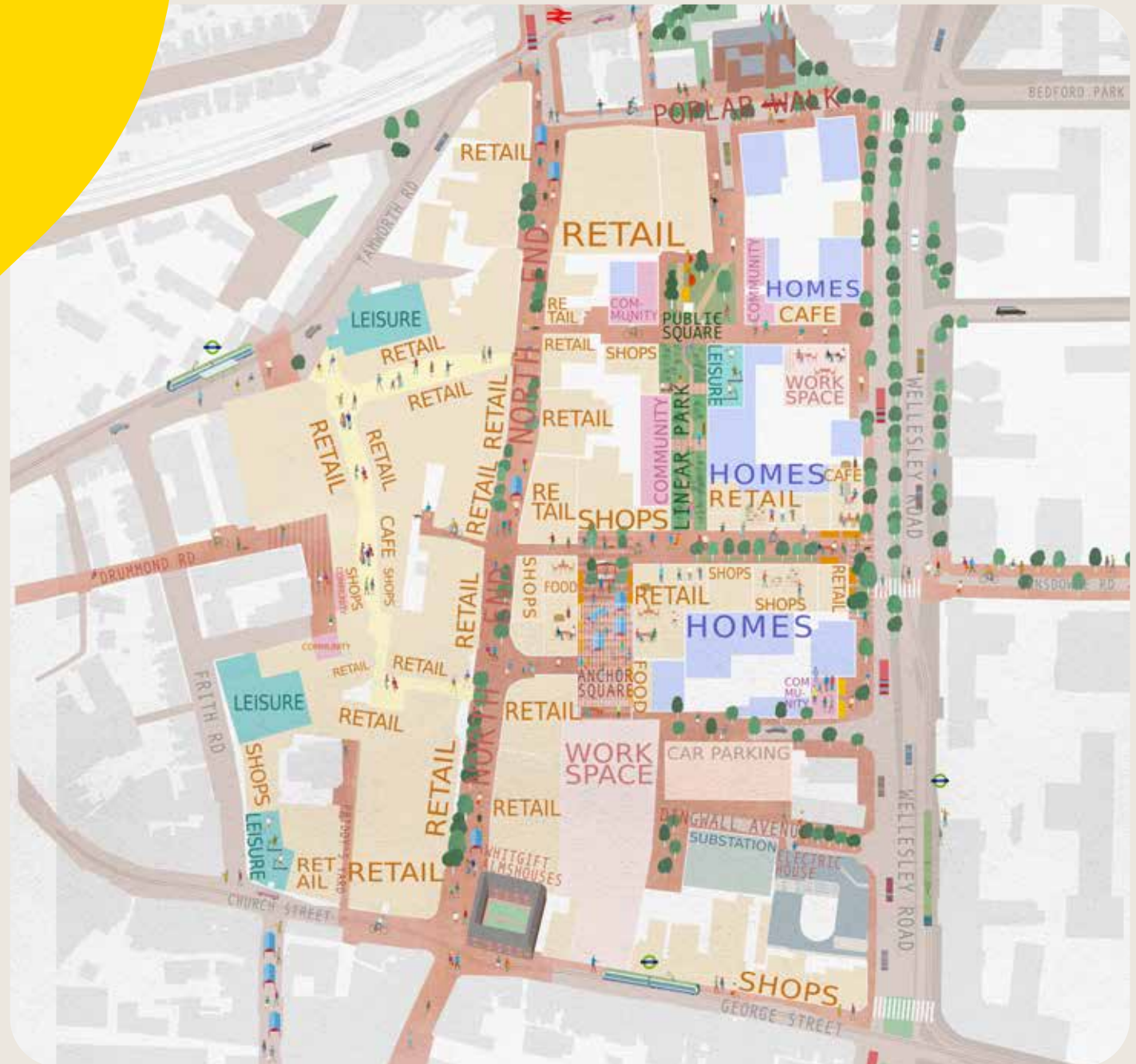


Using durable, low-carbon materials: Our strategy will focus on ensuring that buildings are long-lasting and environmentally friendly.

An early masterplan

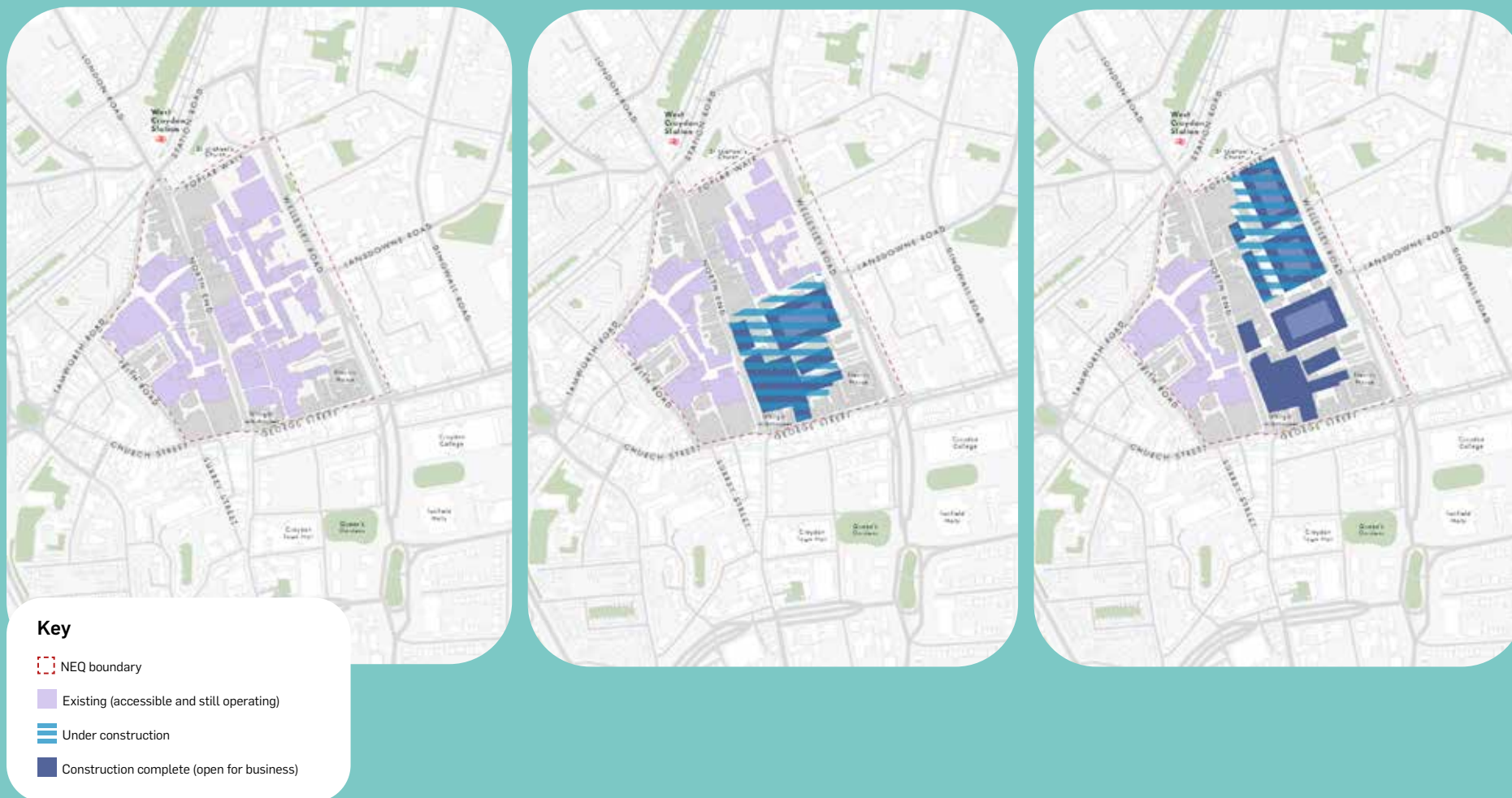
Taking account of the ten guiding aims set out on the previous pages, here is an illustration of what the ground floor uses across the site could potentially be.

This isn't a detailed design – just early thoughts to provoke discussion. This is presented as an interpretation of what the Masterplan Framework could deliver for the NEQ.



Phasing

The transformation of the site will come forward in a phased manner over a number of years. However, each phase will be required to be part of a comprehensive approach to bring benefits to the community early and avoid unconnected developments which would damage the overall vision.



Where we go from here

This is the start of the consultation

To create something different that celebrates Croydon, we need a fresh approach, starting with meaningful engagement and collaboration with the local community.

This is the start of the process to ensure that the Masterplan Framework – our roadmap for future development – aligns with local aspirations before we begin design development for the planning application.

Over the next year, we will work with the council and hold detailed consultations with local people to develop and refine a new masterplan.

07



What we will be doing next

01

We will be refining the Masterplan Framework document in response to community feedback and aim to submit this to the council towards the end of this year.

02

We hope that the broad principles outlined in this document will be supported by the community and endorsed by the council, allowing us to commence more detailed design development.

03

Assuming the Masterplan Framework is endorsed, we will develop more detailed designs, which we plan to present to the community in early 2025.

04

In the meantime we will continue to engage more extensively with the local community with a variety of activities, starting with the launch of the NextGen youth panel and running community workshops.

Calling the Next Generation

The URW Croydon NextGen Panel is looking for young people, aged 16–25, to work with us over the next year as we continue to develop our plans. This is an opportunity to make your mark on the future of your community, bringing your creativity, local knowledge and ideas to life.

Including local voices

Are you ready to influence the next chapter of Croydon? We know that the voices of young people are essential to shaping a vibrant, inclusive Croydon. That's why we're inviting you to be part of our NextGen Panel from day one, so we can understand what's important to you and future generations.

As a NextGen Panel member, you'll meet with the design team and other professionals, to share your ideas and insight and learn more about planning, architecture and design. The first NextGen Panel meeting is planned for early 2025, and we're committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive space that values your unique perspective.

To make sure NextGen represents a wide range of voices, there'll be a selection process led by URW, Croydon Council and local community representatives. So if you're passionate about shaping Croydon's future, we'd love you to apply.

Who can join?

The panel will be welcoming, diverse and inclusive for those aged 16–25 and we encourage all young people to register their interest.

It will be a regular commitment for members of the panel who will attend workshops with the design team and receive training, skills and knowledge of the built environment sector.

Want to find out more?

Sign up to our mailing list at urwcroydon.com or speak to one of the team.

Too old for NextGen?

We'll be hosting open design workshops throughout the consultation process starting in 2025, and all are welcome. Sign up for our mailing list to keep updated on these events.

NextGen

How you can get involved

There are lots of ways to get involved:



Please **complete our online survey**, setting out your thoughts on the Masterplan Framework, your ideas on what we should do next, and what you'd like to see us prioritise.



Register your interest to **take part in the NextGen youth panel**. These will be paid opportunities open to people between the ages of 16–25 to learn more about the development process and help shape the proposals. You can find more details by scanning the QR code.



Register your interest to **participate in other community activities** such as design workshops, site tours, online meetings, or suggest where you'd like to see community pop-up events in the future. You can find more details by scanning the QR code.

**Complete our
survey by
scanning the
QR code below**

