

freshthinking

An opportunity in Docklands

Fresh perspective

Planners at London Borough of Tower Hamlets are preparing to bring forward an entirely new AAP (Area Action Plan).

The last few opportunities for major developments can influence the whole Millwall Dock area.

The changes in the Island means that there are opportunities for redevelopment and regeneration not clear when the initial Masterplan was drawn up.

Independently, extensive discussions have taken place between local residents and local landowners about the way they see how Millwall Dock and its surroundings could benefit from;

A bright new vision

Deliverable improvements to housing, shops & amenities

The latest proven “green” technologies

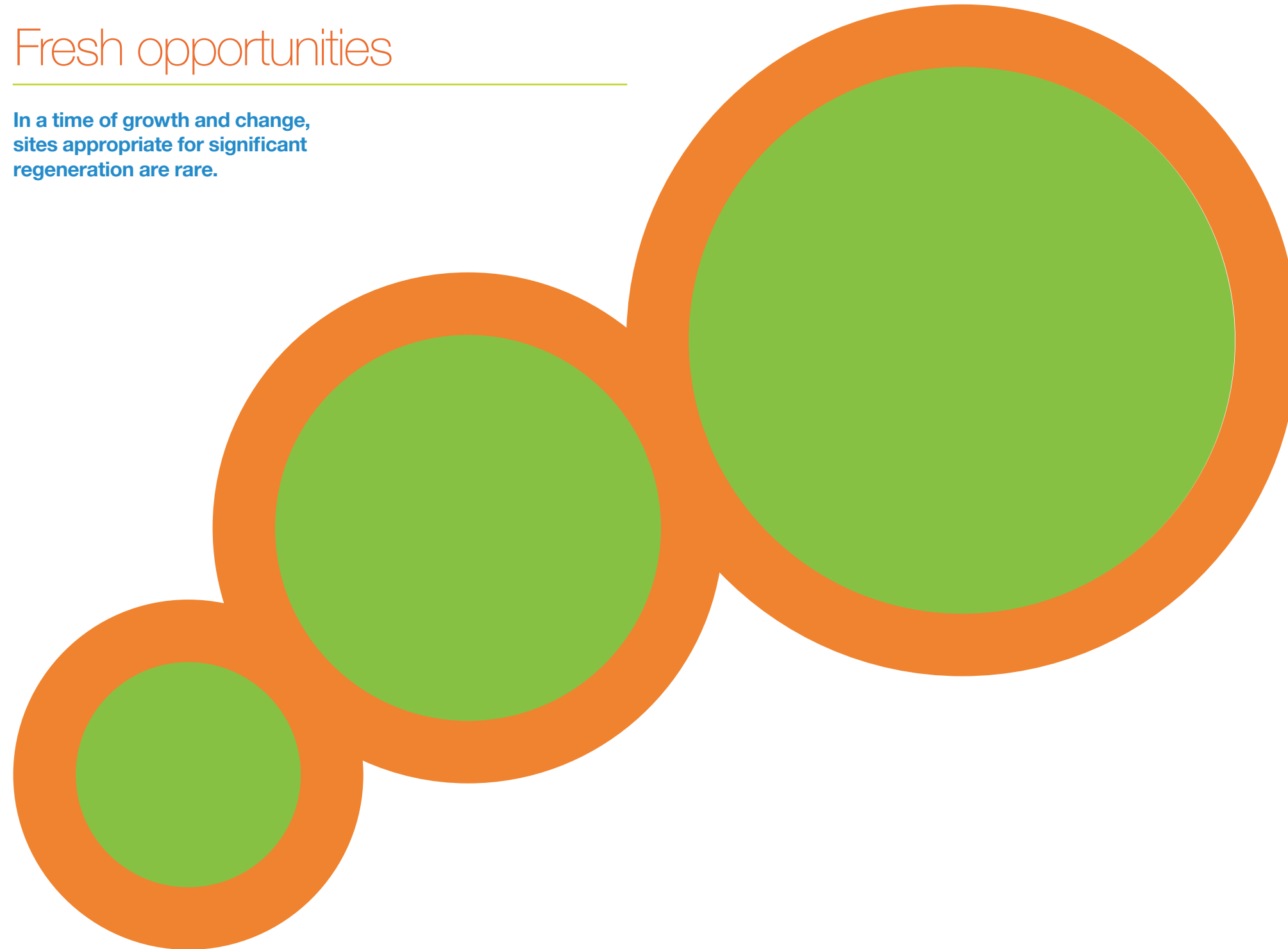
Intelligent, brave & responsible architecture

Such a chance - to enhance the lives of E14 residents – only comes rarely.

Will the opportunity be taken?

Fresh opportunities

In a time of growth and change, sites appropriate for significant regeneration are rare.



The Mayor of London has identified the IoD as a designated Opportunity Area.

Sensitive, consensual redevelopment at Glengall Bridge can provide:

- high quality housing
- more, and better, public open space
- easier pedestrian and public transport connections beyond Millwall Dock, not least to Mudchute Park
- capital funding for improvements the local community wants – such as training.

A new identity for Millwall Dock and its surroundings has begun to emerge, to

- provide general guidelines
- pointing towards new planning frameworks.

Ultimately it has become clear:

Can a new invigorated development at the heart of the dock be brought forward?

Fresh communities

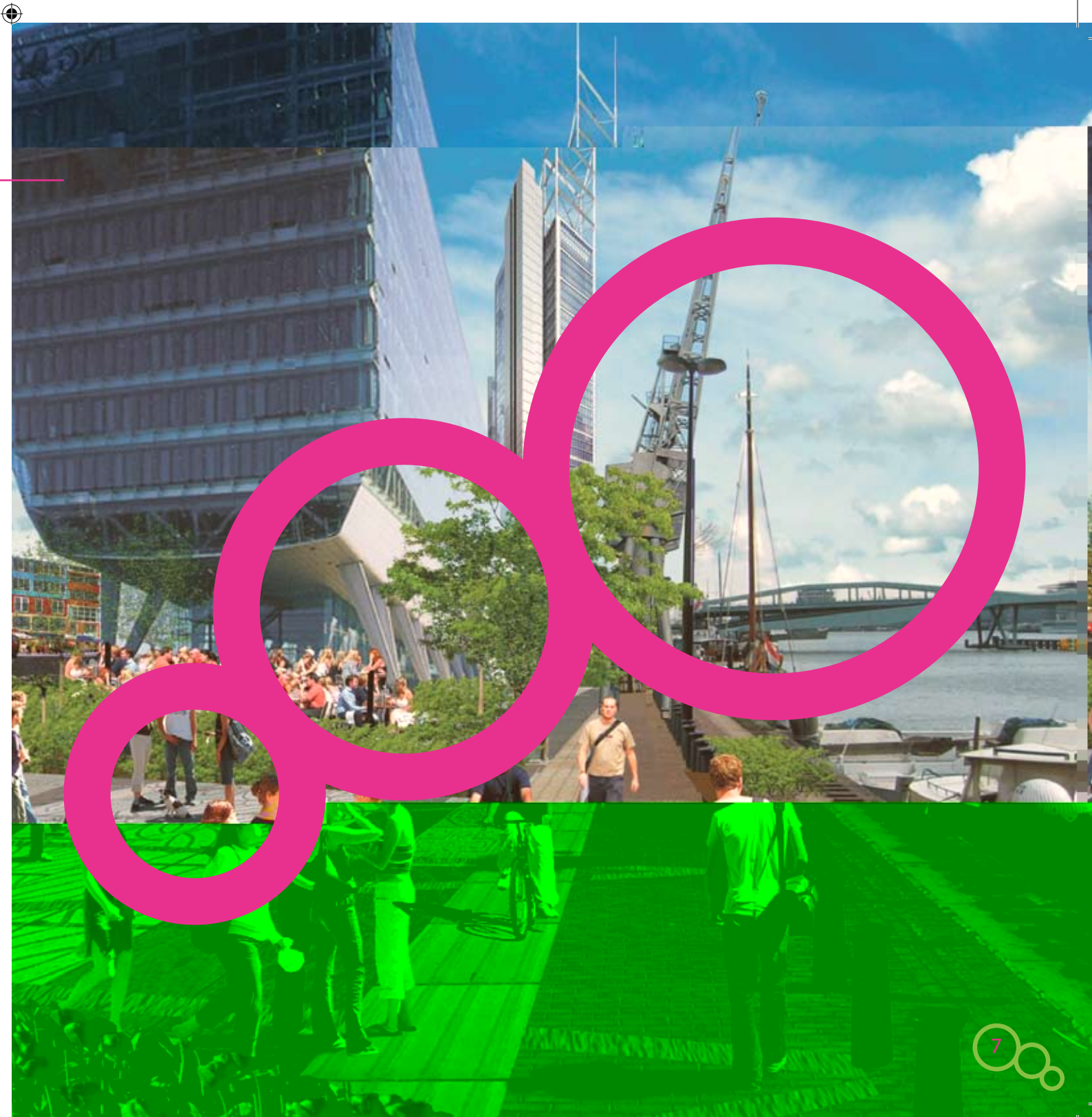
An exceptional residential development should be at the core of any new development near Millwall Dock

It must cater for all residents on the Island including; single occupants, keyworkers, families.

It must be open and have focussed leisure and retail space.

It must have waters edge amenities and shops which will bring new vibrancy and 'breathing space'.

It must listen to the expertise and knowledge of the local community.



Fresh opinions

Can a newly invigorated Glengall Bridge, right at the heart of the area, next to Millwall Dock, be brought forward?

Right from the start, Rowan wanted to consult community groups about its plans to bring its innovative new buildings to Glengall Bridge, London E14.

Its architect, urban planners and team of specialists have taken early steps towards realising their plans, Rowan contacted community groups.

Discussions have been candid. "We have learned a lot!"

Open discourse on plans to invigorate this established community - allowing influence on elements of the plans and strategy - has been positive.

Discussions allow

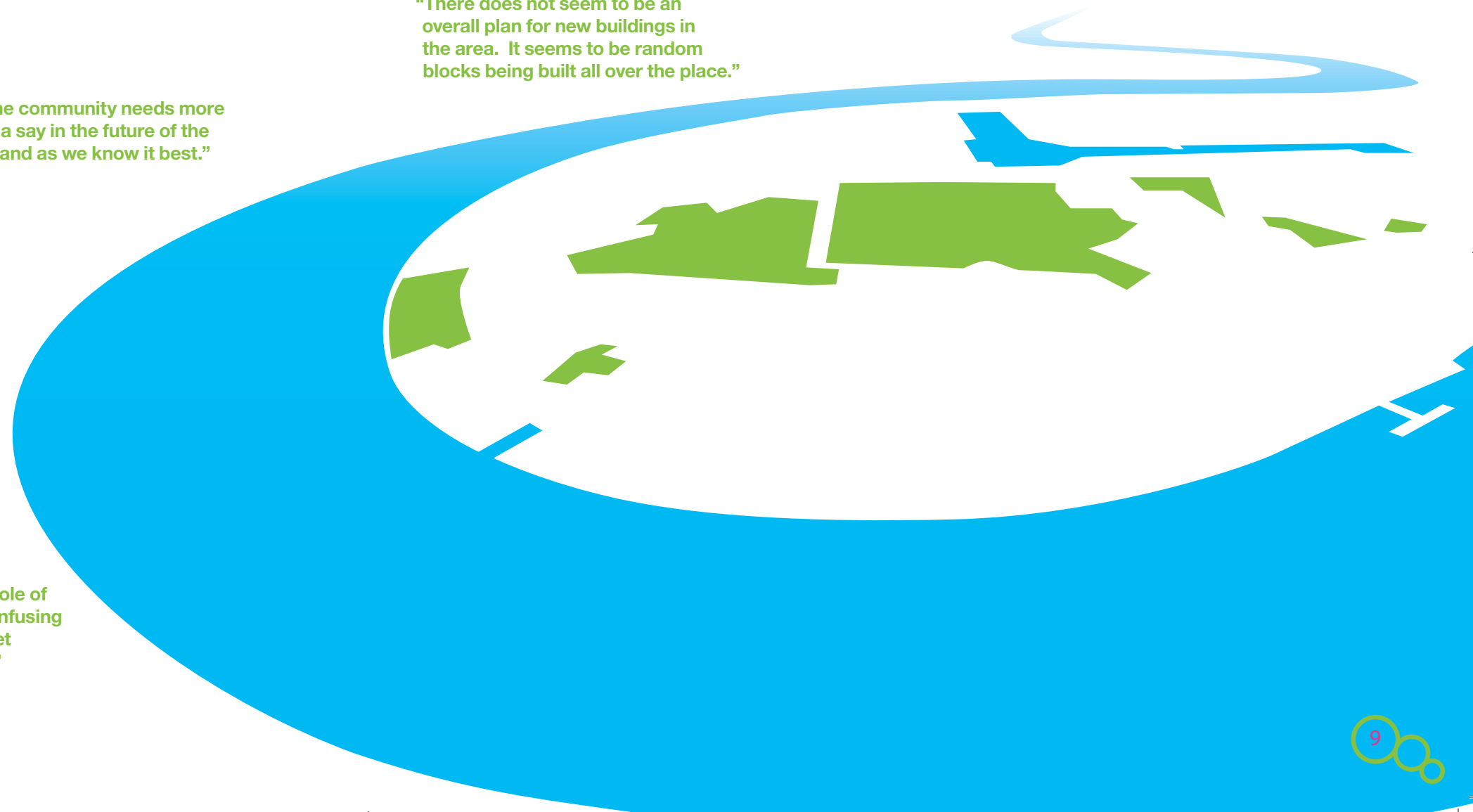
- a chance for residents and groups to influence plans
- stakeholders to tap into their expertise and knowledge.
- an inclusive approach.

"The community needs more of a say in the future of the Island as we know it best."

"There does not seem to be an overall plan for new buildings in the area. It seems to be random blocks being built all over the place."

"We need to take a fresh look at development on the whole of the Island."

"Planning policy in the whole of Tower Hamlets is very confusing and we do not seem to get a say in what's going on."



Fresh connections

Rowan sees the regeneration of Millwall Dock aiding the creation of a central park, extending its area of influence from Millharbour Road to its west to Limeharbour Road to its east.

The Island's new flexibility provides extra capacity for new, vibrant living area to be created.

Millwall Dock - with its existing amenities, and potential - is the key to further Isle of Dogs regeneration. Sites close to the Dock, sensitively enhanced, will contribute positively to construction of high quality urban space and connectivity.

There is scope to reinforce a number of routes to link the Dock to surrounding neighbourhoods and the Thames, improving integration.

It is an important element of the overall vision to protect and enhance open spaces, not least Mudchute Park.

Additionally, local services – some of them currently under pressure – can be enhanced by new commercial vigour in the area.



Fresh development

Higher density developments in tall buildings can open-up views, create linked public spaces and public realm with retail and leisure facilities incorporated.

The traditional idea of a tall building as an exclusive space filled with offices, clearly, has moved on.

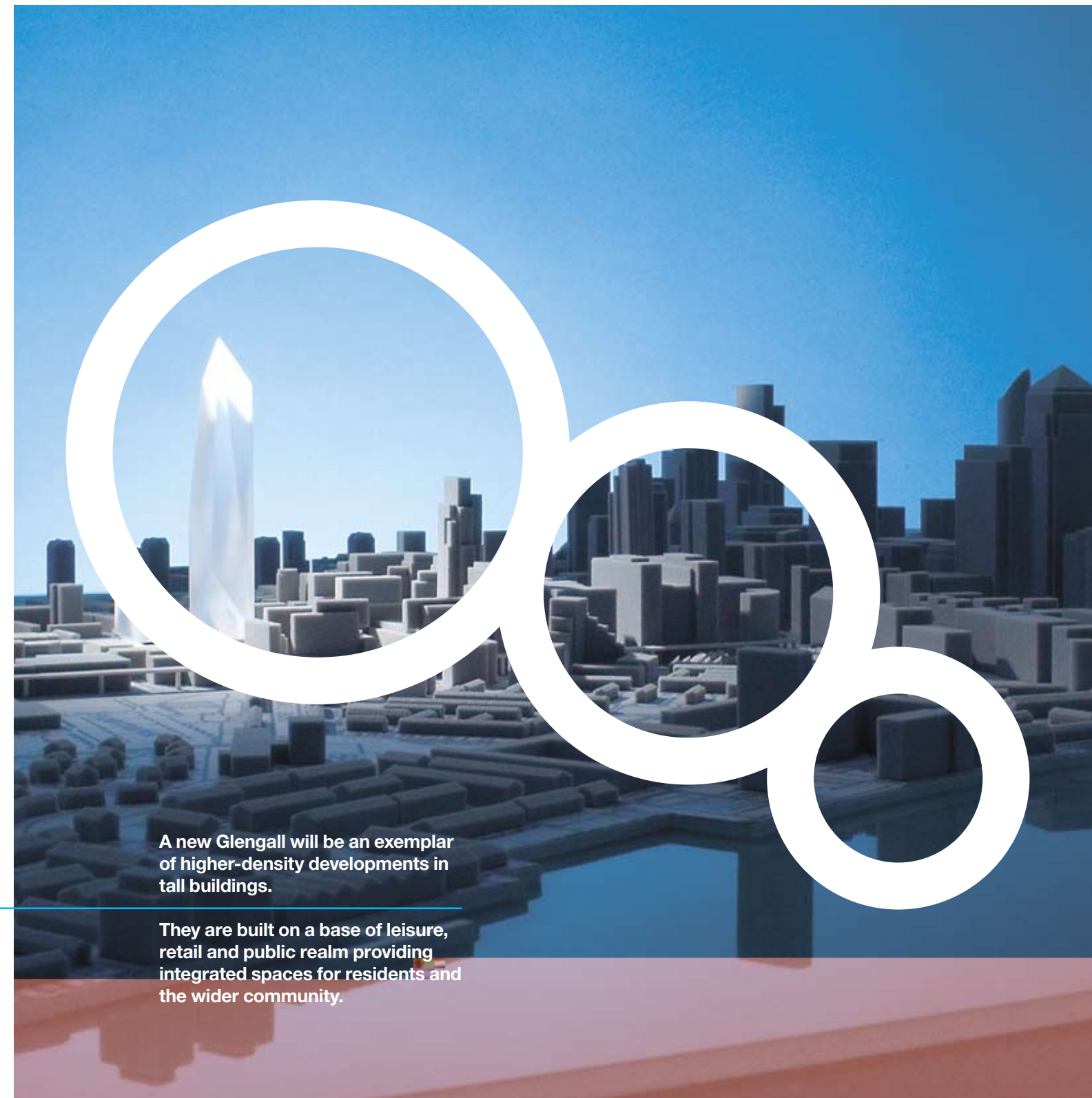
The Rowan proposal is for higher density structures that focus on housing and serving communities. New retail at Glengall Bridge will exist beside leisure facilities, private and social residential accommodation.



Residential-led developments will accommodate a cross-section of the community, from families to single occupants.

The density in structure - with taller buildings with smaller floorplates - will allow the development of more public space and a greater sense of community for all who live and work in the Isle of Dogs.

Rather than spread any regeneration extensively right up to the very edge of the Dock, there is an opportunity to provide better urban space and new amenities 'upwards', in the process creating good open public space.



A new Glengall will be an exemplar of higher-density developments in tall buildings.

They are built on a base of leisure, retail and public realm providing integrated spaces for residents and the wider community.



Background

The Isle of Dogs is a growing success. As Canary Wharf continues to expand, the second regeneration of the island continues to gather momentum. Recent developments and the numerous development applications currently being approved attest to a significant pent up demand for housing, commercial office and other uses.

This has largely been driven by efforts since the 1980's to bring the commercial life back to the island. The area has successfully been reinvented as one of the world's key financial centres. Today, over 100,000 people commute into E14.

Changes in circumstances during the last 20 years point to a fresh approach as the Island plans to cater for continued growth. These changes include:

- The London Plan, approved in 2004 to provide strategic guidance for the capital. The Plan encourages high density, mixed use development fostering sustainable development principles;
- The Isle of Dogs designation as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan which means that the area is capable of accommodating substantial new jobs and homes;
- The Mayor's Initial Alterations to the London Plan which seek to provide 31,500 new dwellings in Tower Hamlets over the period to 2016;
- Recognition at the local level that the unique characteristics of the Isle of Dogs means that it is fast becoming a compact city within a city;
- Tower Hamlets' endorsement that the area is suited to further growth and proposals that a third of the additional housing sought in the London Plan alterations is provided within the Isle of Dogs;
- The Isle of Dogs' strategic position forming part of the Thames Gateway (earmarked nationally for growth) and benefit to be derived from the 2012 Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games.

Tower Hamlets' emerging Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Isle of Dogs provides the opportunity to embrace and respond positively to these factors. To this end, the November 2006 Submission Document acknowledges that the Millennium Quarter Master Plan (MQMP) has run its course.

This is a welcome alteration to the Preferred Options for the Plan (November 2005) which retained the development parameters set out in the MQMP as the basis for considering future planning application.

The MQMP is outdated and many of its guidelines have been breached by a number of development proposals that have been granted planning permission and in some instances, are now under construction.

The Submission Document for the AAP puts forward a 7 point vision for the Island, so that by 2016 the Isle of Dogs:

- Has harnessed its unique qualities to create a distinctive part of London that is compact, cohesive and vibrant;
- Is bound together by a high quality environment maximising to everyone's advantage its many historic waterside attractions;
- Is fully-linked to the rest of the Borough and London by a world-class transport system;
- Contains an attractive and safe pedestrian and cycle network;
- Contains vibrant, diverse neighbourhoods with a good choice of residential accommodation – ranging from family homes with gardens to high-rise apartment style living, with a range of tenures;
- Provides a full range of employment opportunities for all residents;
- Provides a popular visitor location.

Background

The potential interest in Millwall Dock and surrounding development sites is key to achieving this vision for the Central Sub-Area of the Island. In commenting on the Preferred Options for the AAP, Rowan and its team of consultants put forward a Framework Study that demonstrated a stimulating and sustainable approach to steer future development in this area.

Key aspects of the Framework are:

- Focus on the Dock: the Framework reinforces the Dock as a Central Park, by extending its area of active influence from Millharbour on its west to Limeharbour Road on its east. Proposals for new developments should work around the constraints of existing developments and combat the wall-like presence of the DLR, to provide the most permeable and coherent setting for the Dock;
- Extend green spines: the Framework identifies a number of existing and new vehicular and pedestrian spines which, significantly greened, link the Dock to surrounding neighbourhoods and the River Thames;
- Every opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the water and land uses of the Central Sub-Area should be explored with methods such as discreet introduction of marshes, bio-swales along streets, and pervious footways;
- Refine the pattern of streets and blocks. In order to promote a more active and mixed use community, the Framework provides for an interconnected pattern of streets which defines new parcels for neighbourhood growth;
- A weather-protected pedestrian spine is proposed along the western edge of Millharbour connecting to the Jubilee Line;
- Garden City: the Central Park provides a unique setting for new slender towers along this north-south axis. In the long term this would provide a compatible transition towards Canary Wharf with the added benefit of minimising adverse shadow impacts. Due to differing conditions east and west of the Dock, the architectural approach to tall buildings would vary. On the west side, slender buildings within a green setting. On the east side, slender buildings on perimeter blocks reinforcing connections under the DLR viaduct;
- Tall buildings provide the necessary density to provide activity at street level, whilst minimising the building footprint. This allows views and routes through to the Dock and creates an opportunity for large areas of landscaped public amenity space.

The key tenets of this Framework resonated with Tower Hamlets' aspirations for the Island which are also carried forward in the Submission Document. In particular,

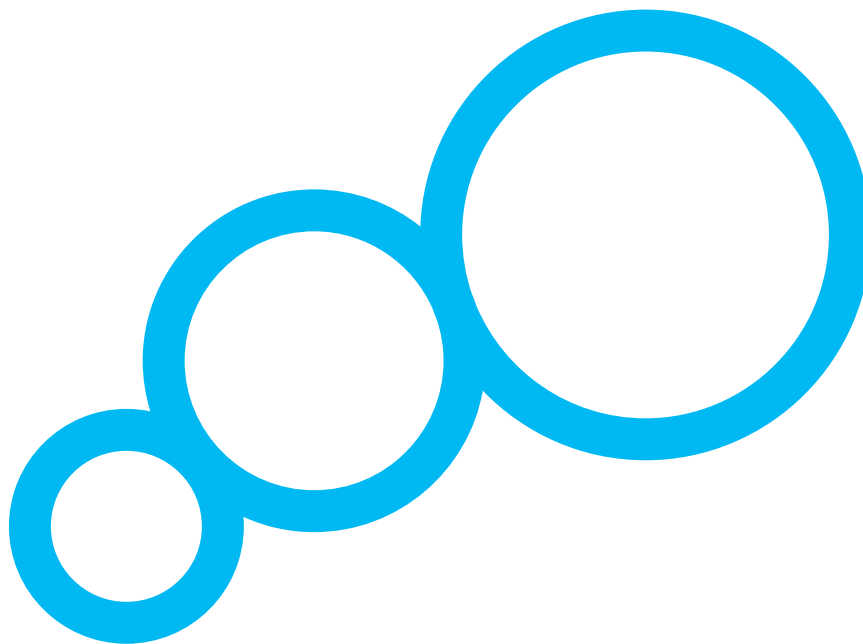
- Improved connectivity and integration;
- Protection and enhancement of existing green spaces;
- Promotion of the Dock and riverside areas for leisure, recreation and activity;
- Promotion of streetscape and public realm improvements.

Rowan's land holding at Glengall Bridge is one of the most prominent dockside development opportunities, strategically located at its only crossing point and at a node for east-west movement across the Island.

Redevelopment of the site in line with the suggested Framework provides the opportunity to create a new hub, focused on the existing and future communities.

Over the last 18 months, Rowan has been actively and regularly engaging with local groups, as well as the authorities, and listening to their comments.

Future proposals for Glengall Bridge will be pivotal to the ongoing changes in this part of the Island. To this end, it is essential that the AAP and possible future policy documents provide a robust yet flexible framework within which future planning applications will be assessed, so that opportunities will not be missed.



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