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20 January 2026

Dear Mr Fieldhouse,

#### **NEWHAM LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION – MATTER 9 (TOWN CENTRES)**

On behalf of Aberdeen Investments (“Aberdeen” / “the Client”), we submit this letter to aid discussions at the Matter 9 Hearing Session (Town Centre), which is taking place on 22 January 2026. This supplements the Statement of Common Ground (‘SoCG’) that is currently in discussion between the London Borough of Newham (‘LBN’), St William and Aberdeen and will be issued to you on 29<sup>th</sup> January.

#### **BACKGROUND**

A meeting was held on 18 December 2025, with attendees including the LBN, Transport for London (‘TfL’), Aberdeen Investments and their advisors Montagu Evans, and St William and their advisors Quod.

This followed the Matter 4 Hearing Session, which took place on 3 December 2025 which was attended by the same parties.

The principal objective of this meeting was to set out the points that were ‘agreed’ or ‘disagreed’ between the parties in relation to the delivery of the N17.SA1 strategic site, including but not limited to, the delivery of the DLR, the appropriate trigger to allow significant development to come forward and the delivery of the new town centre. Following that meeting a draft Statement of Common Ground is now being discussed between the key stakeholders of the N17.SA1 strategic site.

At that meeting, LBN requested that Aberdeen should provide clarity on how a future town centre would be delivered, including its coexistence with the existing Gallions Reach Shopping Park (‘GRSP’), in order to achieve the ambition to create a cohesive town centre in the northern part of the strategic site. This letter provides that response and is to help inform discussions at the Matter 9 hearing.

It deliberately avoids more detailed points which are the subject of ongoing discussions relating to N17 following LBN’s recent circulation of the SoCG. This is why this letter focuses on current/future catchment and possible town centre boundary.

#### **BECKTON RIVERSIDE TOWN CENTRE’S DUAL FUNCTION AND CATCHMENT**

The delivery of the new town centre in phases is crucial to not only ensure the success of the future town centre, but also to allow the GRSP to continue to play its role serving the needs of the local population and to act as a complementary draw to the town centre.

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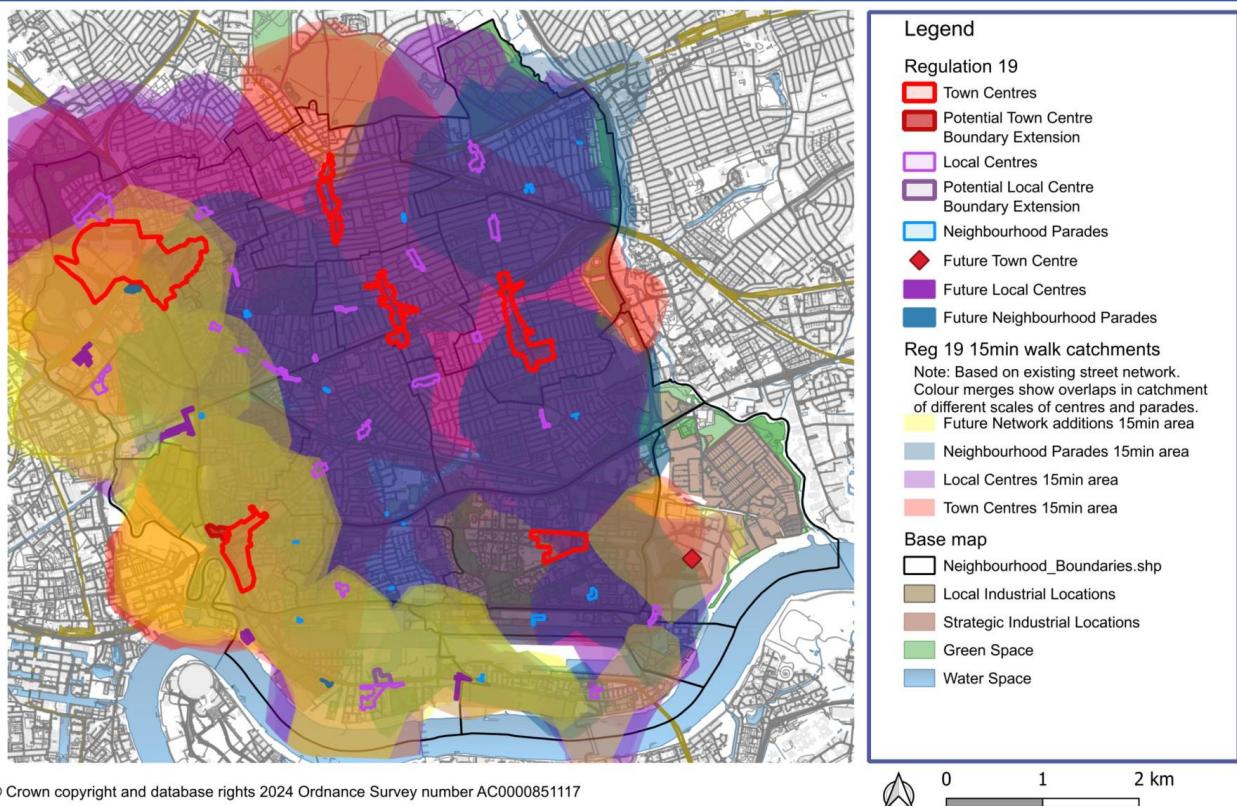
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Aberdeen agrees with the conclusions of the Newham Retail and Leisure Study (EB029) that the current function of GRSP is a proxy for the potential market draw of the future Becton Riverside town centre. This is referred to in para 8.3 of the LBN Matter 9 Written Statement.

GRSP continues to serve the surrounding population as a strategic shopping destination. This is manifested in GRSP having a wide catchment geographically, but with accounts for low levels of available retail expenditure. The pattern of trade draw is dispersed rather than concentrated. This allows the smaller town centres with more concentrated patterns of trade draw to co-exist with GRSP.

With reference to the Town Centre Network Review Methodology Paper (June 2024), Aberdeen agrees with the designation of a future town centre at Beckton Riverside including the associated catchment principles. However, the catchment only captures the future 'walking' need as shown in the plan on page 37 below. It does not capture the role that GRSP already, and will continue, to play as a strategic shopping destination for the community, as the development of the northern part of the strategic site comes forward in phases.

### Newham's Town Centres Network: established/emerging and future 15min walk catchments



Due to the higher quality and better national multiple retailers accommodated in the retail floorspace in GRSP, it has a wider catchment than nearby town centres in the Borough such as East Ham outlined in red above with the exception of Stratford which has a regional catchment overlapping the whole area. GRSP's catchment overlaps with the catchments of those smaller town centres which are only serving a local need. That means that a future town centre at Becton Riverside will serve a new local need but will continue to serve the strategic need met by the GRSP in its current format.

It is Aberdeen's view from an asset management perspective that the wider strategic catchment is unlikely to change in geographical extent. The change will be through the introduction of different types of retail

floorspace, but also other town centre uses including more restaurants, leisure, and services (for example medical facilities). The latter will serve a more local need.

The existing and permitted restaurants at GRSP serve a complementary role to the existing retail warehouses.

It is too early to say whether retailers will relocate within the new town centre from existing retail warehouses to new floorspace as experience over the last 5 years since the pandemic has shown that retailers' occupational requirements continue to change and are unpredictable. Aberdeen's view is that the attraction of GRSP will be essential to the success of the retailers making the first move to the new town centre and substantially reduces the risk of investment compared with establishing a town centre in an entirely new and unproven location.

GRSP would continue to serve this need as the first phases of significant development of the northern part of the strategic site come forward – this provides the certainty that the new communities created would have access to the strategic shopping destination. This will reflect the new homes that will be accommodated above the town centre commercial floorspace. It would also ensure that as part of the ongoing asset management of the asset, existing retailers can also potentially be relocated as plans for the new town centre emerge.

However, in Aberdeen's view it is unrealistic to create a policy link between number of homes and quantum of town centre floorspace not least because the type of floorspace would widen away from the current overwhelmingly retail focus.

#### **LOCATION OF THE NEW TOWN CENTRE AND SCALE**

At the 18 December 2025 meeting, it was suggested that a boundary should clearly be defined confirming the location of the future town centre. Aberdeen is supportive of the principle of doing so as it would provide greater certainty, in planning policy, on the layout of the strategic site to allow development to come forward. This should reflect the agreed Beckton Riverside Strategic Site Masterplan Framework (June 2025) (the '2025 Masterplan Framework'). This is an explanatory document produced in response to the requirements of adopted Policy S1(3) and emerging Policy BFN2 relating to the codesigned masterplanning of Beckton Riverside. It was produced in partnership with the main landowners and stakeholders.

In terms of scale, this should reflect the demand and phased delivery of development at the northern part of the strategic site, as well as the existing and continued role that GRSP plays in meeting the needs of the community.

An extract from the 2025 Masterplan Framework is set out below, marked up in blue hatched lines to include the suggested initial town centre boundary.

Aberdeen proposes that the town centre boundary could in the first instance be in close proximity and to the north of the proposed location of the Beckton Riverside station. This would allow development of the new town centre uses to be closest to the station location on the southern part of the GRSP including the vacant site at the junction with Armada Way. The initial Town Centre in this location is potentially an early phase of delivery as it is largely a vacant site. In this scenario the remainder of GRSP would continue to operate alongside the town centre.

### 3.1 Masterplan Framework



Those elements of the future town centre that would be delivered as ground floor commercial uses with residential uses above would be delivered in early phases, to reflect the practical reality of delivering large-scale strategic sites as well as supply and demand dynamics of retailers' requirements.

Aberdeen's view is that the town centre should be defined by this area at first because oversupply of floorspace would be detrimental to establishing a vibrant town centre. It is too early to define the quantum of floorspace as this would depend upon occupier demand so Aberdeen's view is that the best way forward from a development perspective would be to clarify the area.

Co-existence with the neighbouring GRSP would serve a number of purposes. It would enable the new town centre floorspace to be less car reliant both through the delivery of the DLR but also through joint trips, including those visitors travelling by car to the reduced area of parking due to the development of the town centre on part of the car park. This would aid the leasing strategy because retailers could become established knowing that they would be a short walking distance from the existing park. It is therefore important in Aberdeen's view that the new town centre would be compact to aid walking distances, complemented by legible streets and spaces

This would then allow future phases of development and expansion of the town centre to take place covering the remainder of the retail terraces and parking. This could also include land to the south of the proposed DLR and Armada Way.

Given the scale of the Beckton Riverside strategic site, Aberdeen recommends that there should be caution about potentially identifying an area of land that is too linear to define the town centre. This is unlikely to be



attractive to retailers and does not aid pedestrian circulation and risks development that lacks identity and 'cold' areas that have insufficient attraction to draw visitors.

#### **DELIVERABILITY AND TIMING**

At the 18 December 2025 meeting, TfL confirmed that the Transport and Works Act Order ('TWAO') case, including its chances of successful confirmation, would be materially greater if planning policy wording provided developers with the greatest level of certainty possible to proceed with bringing forward planning applications for the development of the strategic site.

The first phase of residential is now permitted in the St William planning permission. That will be closest to the existing Gallions Reach DLR station in the southern part of the site.

TfL noted that the next phase of new homes (and the associated town centre) in the northern part of the strategic site should be completed by the time the future DLR extension is complete. As such, TfL's preference would be, as a minimum, for planning applications to be submitted whilst the future DLR extension is being designed.

It was agreed at the 18 December 2025 meeting that greater clarity is required on the trigger for allowing significant development at the northern part of the strategic site to come forward. This point will also be discussed at the Matter 10 Hearing Session (Design), and our Hearing Statement relating to Matter 10 clearly sets out the need to provide such a definition. However in light of the TfL comments about delivery of the town centre before the opening of the DLR which Aberdeen suggests that these triggers can be discussed at the Matter 10 hearing on 3<sup>rd</sup> February and through the ongoing discussions about the Statement of Common Ground regarding N17 which will be concluded on 29<sup>th</sup> January.

If you have any queries please contact Dylan Chaplin ([dylan.chaplin@montagu-evans.co.uk](mailto:dylan.chaplin@montagu-evans.co.uk)) or Julian Stephenson ([julian.stephenson@montagu-evans.co.uk](mailto:julian.stephenson@montagu-evans.co.uk)) of this office.

Yours faithfully,

*Montagu Evans*

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