

Merton Regeneration, Eastfields

Socio-economic Analysis

On behalf of **Circle Housing**



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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

1.1.1 This document has been prepared to support the socio-economic case for regeneration of Eastfields, in the London Borough of Merton (LBM). It gathers relevant quantitative and qualitative information to provide an outline of:

- The strategic context in which the Eastfields's regeneration is set; and
- The socio-economic case for regeneration.

1.2 Structure of Report

1.2.1 The report comprises of the following sections:

- Section 2 sets out the strategic context for regeneration, with reference to regional and local policy;
- Section 3 comprises of a baseline study in order to establish the nature of the local economy (outlined through a review of socio-economic conditions);
- Section 4 sets out the socio-economic benefits associated with regenerating the Eastfields and
- Section 5 provides a summary of Section 2-4.

2 Strategic Context

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section provides a high level review of the planning policy and economic development context in which Eastfields's regeneration is set. A detailed discussion of the planning context can be found in the policy documents that have been referred to in this section.

2.2 National Planning Policy (2012)

2.2.1 National planning policy in England is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published in March 2012. The specific policies of the NPPF that relate to socio-economic issues are set out below.

2.2.2 **Paragraph 6** confirms that *'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'*. **Paragraph 7** defines sustainable development as three-dimensional, requiring the planning system to perform a number of roles in order to balance the economic, social and environmental development goals for growth. These include contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation, and supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities.

2.2.3 **Paragraph 8** confirms that to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. Sustainable development involves seeking improvements in quality of life, including making it easier for jobs to be created and improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure (**Paragraph 9**).

2.2.4 **Paragraph 17** sets out the core principle that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. **Paragraph 19** states that "planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system".

2.2.5 **Paragraph 49** makes clear that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. **Paragraph 50** goes on to state that local planning authorities should deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership, and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

2.2.6 To this end, **paragraph 159** underlines that local planning authorities are expected to plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as older people and people with disabilities), and identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand.

2.2.7 The National Planning Policy Practice Guidance (NPPG), updated in March 2014, identifies factors that should be considered when assessing the suitability of locations for development. In the context of this report, these include:

- Appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;
- Contribution to regeneration priority areas; and
- Environmental/amenity impacts experienced by would be occupiers and neighbouring areas.

2.3 The London Plan (2011) and Draft Further Alterations (2014)

- 2.3.1 The London Plan (2011) sets out the spatial development strategy for London. The core objectives of the London Plan focus on: improving health; learning and skills; community safety; jobs; accessibility; infrastructure and housing.
- 2.3.2 **Policy 2.14** of the London Plan states that Boroughs should identify areas for regeneration and set out integrated spatial policies that bring together regeneration. These plans should resist loss of housing, including affordable housing, in individual regeneration areas unless it is replaced by better quality accommodation of similar scale.
- 2.3.3 The London Plan also sets a minimum target for housing provision of 3,200 additional homes in LBM from 2011 to 2021. For new housing the London Plan highlights the Mayor's strategic target of at least 13,200 affordable homes per year across London, with a 60:40 split between social housing and intermediate housing. However, the London Plan recognises that this target should be applied flexibly, taking account of individual site costs, scheme requirements and circumstances.
- 2.3.4 More recently, evidence suggests that London's population is likely to grow more significantly than anticipated at the time of the London Plan, increasing the housing requirements. The draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP), published in January 2014, revised LBM's target to a minimum of 4,107 additional homes between 2015 and 2025.

2.4 Local Planning Policy

LBM Core Planning Strategy (2011)

- 2.4.1 LBM's Core Planning Strategy 2011 ('Core Strategy') is the key document in the Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF), setting out the development plan and the spatial vision for the area. The Core Strategy is in general conformity with the adopted London Plan.
- 2.4.2 The Core Strategy identifies Mitcham as a key area in determining LBM's future economic growth and prosperity.
- 2.4.3 **Paragraph 4.23** of the Core Strategy notes that the Eastern half of the Borough including the surrounds of the Eastfields is an area characterised by poor economic prospects, and relatively low levels of educational attainment and income.
- 2.4.4 **Paragraph 4.24** also notes particular inequalities in the quality of shopping and leisure facilities and access to the social infrastructure in the eastern parts of LBM compared with Western Wards.
- 2.4.5 **Paragraphs 4.25-4.26** of the Core Strategy recognise that regeneration is required to address these pockets of deprivation; improve the poor public realm; improve access to jobs and services; housing choices; healthy life styles; and learning opportunities.

LBM Sites and Policies Plan (2014)

- 2.4.6 The LBM Sites and Policies Plan was adopted in July 2014, also forms part of the LDF. This sets out detailed planning policies to help assess planning application in LBM and site allocations for development between 2014 and 2024.
- 2.4.7 The Sites and Policies Plan prepared by LBM Council following local research, detailed public consultation, giving residents, landowners, community groups and other interested parties the opportunity to comment on the councils prepared options for 20 detailed planning policies, approximately 40 sites and land designations.

- 2.4.8 In the context of the relevant policies in the Sites and Policies Plan include:
- 2.4.9 **Policy DM H2 (Housing mix)** of the Sites and Policies Plan links to Policy CS 8 (Housing Choice) of the Core Strategy. This aims to create socially mixed communities (families with children, single people, older people etc for all sectors of the community by providing a choice of housing with respect dwelling size and type in LBM.
- 2.4.10 The Sites and Policies **Policy DM C2** states that large development sites which will result in a “substantial increased need” for school places (children over 5) will need to incorporate provision for a new school on the proposal site.
- 2.4.11 **Paragraph 3.18 and 3.19** states that “Where large development proposals are likely to generate a substantial increase in the need for additional school places, the proposals will be expected to incorporate an appropriately sited and sized area for the provision of a new school, or demonstrate why the site cannot accommodate a new school.

2.5 Merton Regeneration Project

- 2.5.1 The management of Eastfields was transferred from LBM Council to Circle Housing Merton Priority Homes (CHMP), as part of the transfer of LBM’s entire housing stock in March 2010.
- 2.5.2 As part of the process of assessing the housing stock in Merton for investment in improvements to meet and exceed the Decent Homes Standards, CHMP identified High Path, Eastfields, and Ravensbury (collectively referred to as the “Merton Regeneration Project”) as having a potentially limited life, justifying larger scale regeneration to ensure long-term sustainability.
- 2.5.3 LBM Council Cabinet members received a report in November 2013 which provided an update to on-going discussions between LBM Planning Officers and CHMP on the development of their regeneration plans for, High Path, Eastfields and Ravensbury.
- 2.5.4 In July 2014, in response to proposals from CHMP, LBM Council resolved to start preparing an Estates Plan DPD. LBM Planning Officers and CHMP explored a number of matters including identifying occupants for decant and housing nominations; the masterplanning outline and process; and devising of an agreed baseline position aimed at achieving deliverable schemes.
- 2.5.5 The proposed Merton Regeneration Project is one of the largest regeneration programmes underway in the UK. Circle Housing is working with LBM and other stakeholders including the Greater London Authority (GLA) to deliver this project and improve its financial viability.
- 2.5.6 A consultation exercise with local residents is currently underway to see whether a detailed regeneration solution can be found, as a means of delivering longer term sustainable decent homes standards; having regard to the state and condition of the existing properties.
- 2.5.7 There are also wider benefits beyond the sites in supporting regeneration and growth. This is aligned with LBM’s Core Planning Strategy (2011) which seeks to improve the quality of the built environment; create more sustainable communities; and focus regeneration and housing growth broadly in South Wimbledon, Morden and Mitcham adjacent to transport hubs.
- 2.5.8 Should regeneration go ahead, there is potential to secure approximately a quarter of the LBM Council’s ten year housing target of 4,107 homes, as set out in the FALP.

- 2.5.9 The Merton Regeneration Project shows a clear commitment to delivering high quality homes across the Borough, through:
- Increasing the supply of housing and the quality of existing homes to meet acceptable current standards;
 - Improving access and the quality of the local environment through improvements to the public realm; promoting low energy consumption; and environmental efficiencies; and
 - Promoting mixed and sustainable communities which provide a high quality of life for people of all ages, backgrounds, in safe, cohesive and healthy neighbourhoods, supported by high quality and excellent community buildings.
- 2.5.10 The next section provides a profile of the socio-economic conditions of Eastfields in the context of the rest of the Borough and surrounding areas.

3 Socio-economic Conditions

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 A baseline study was prepared to establish the profile of the local economy, labour force, journey to work patterns, housing availability and the quality and the effect on labour supply using the following data and published documents:

- Preliminary results from the UK Census (2011);
- Annual Population Survey 2013, Office for National Statistics, (APS, 2013);
- Nomis/Labour Market Statistics (2014);
- Greater London Authority 2013 population and household projections (GLA,2013);
- End Poverty Child Poverty Statistics (End Poverty);
- Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) Deprivation Mapper;
- Department for Education School Capacity Statistics (DfE); and
- Experian Micromarketer Generation3 mapping and data (Experian MMG3).

3.1.2 The socio-economic characteristics of LBM are summarised and compared with local area statistics as at the following spatial levels, where available:

- Local level information is outlined at ward level (i.e. the ward of Figge's Marsh) as shown in Figure 3.1;
- Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level (i.e. LSOA 014B) as shown in Figure 3.2; and
- Estate level data for Eastfields ('Eastfields' or 'the site'), as provided by Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion Community Insight (OSCI, Community Insight, 2014). This is largely based on Census information. This provides a distinct profile of Eastfields in the context of the wider area to inform the regeneration case.

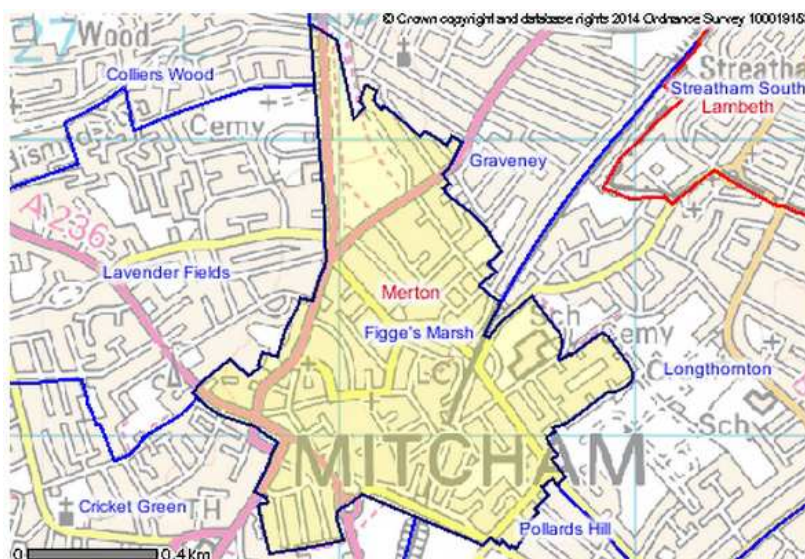


Figure 3.1: Figge's Marsh
Source: Ordnance Survey, 2014

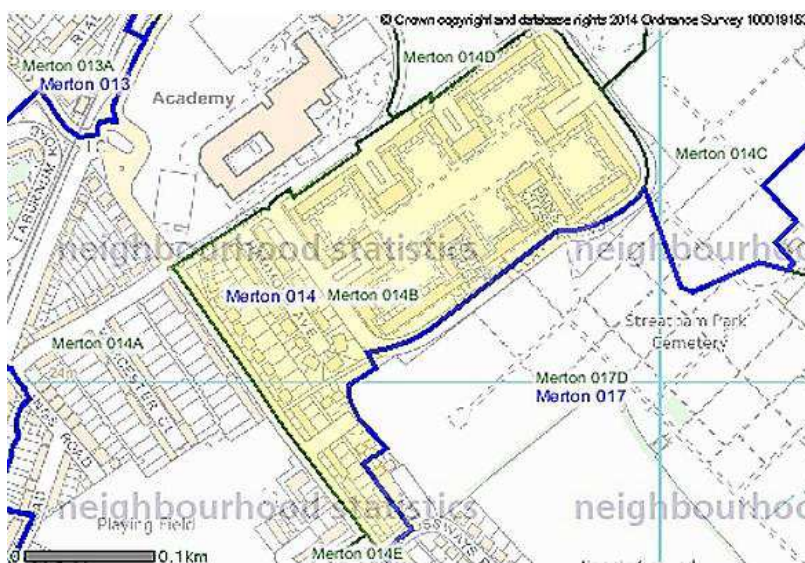


Figure 3.2: LSOA 014B
Source: Ordnance Survey 2014

3.1.3 The baseline analysis also considers social infrastructure close to Eastfields, informed by desk research and published information from the above sources on: school infrastructure; retail facilities; leisure facilities; community facilities; and healthcare. This establishes the current provision of local facilities and the social infrastructure needs of the area.

3.2 Economic Conditions

Population

3.2.1 According to GLA (2013) estimates, the population of LBM was reported to be around 205,400 people, making it one of the least densely populated Boroughs in London (see Figure 3.3).

3.2.2 In terms of age structure, LBM's population is largely in line with the London average. An estimated 20% of the population are children aged 0-15. This is the same as the Greater London average and slightly above the national average of 19%.

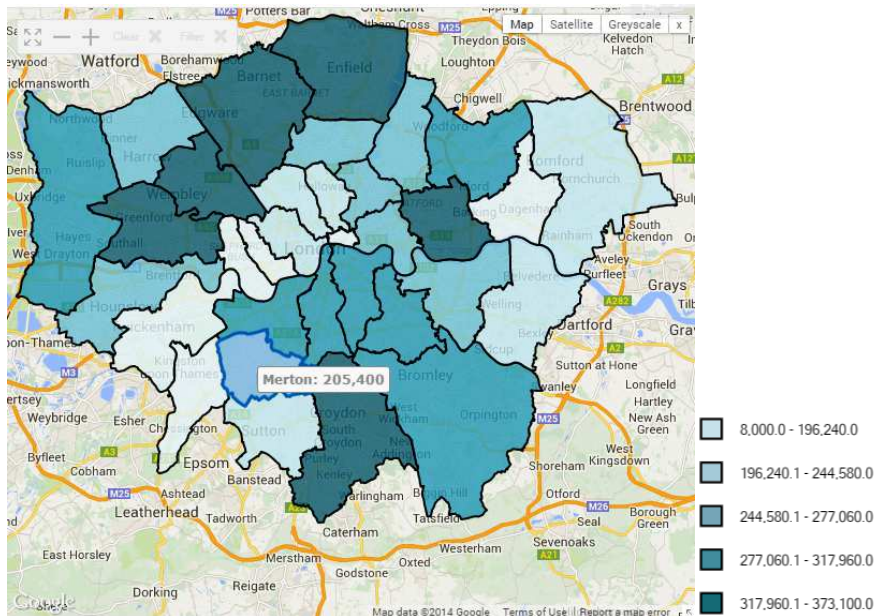


Figure 3.3: Borough Level Population Estimates

Source: GLA, 2013

3.2.3 LBM's population is largely in the top two approximated social grades. These grades are AB (Higher and intermediate managerial and professional occupations) and C1 (Supervisory, junior managerial and administrative). This represents about 67% of the resident population which is in line with the London average but below more affluent neighbouring Boroughs such as the London Borough of Wandsworth (LBW) (75%). Detailed information on social grades is not available at local area level.

3.2.4 The OSCI estimates that Eastfields has a relatively high percentage of children aged 0-15. The site has some 364 children in this age group. These make up over a quarter of the population in the area, well above the LBM and national averages.

Economic Activity

3.2.5 The economic activity rate measures the proportion of people of working age (16-64) who are either in employment or unemployed but seeking work.

3.2.6 Economic activity rates in LBM are higher than Greater London and national averages. According to the Annual Population Survey (APS), in 2013 an estimated 81% of LBM's working age population were either in employment or seeking work, which is above the national average of around 77%.

3.2.7 The OSCI estimates that economic activity in Eastfields is only 66% - which is significantly lower than the average across the ward of Figge's Marsh of 74%.

Earnings

3.2.8 Net weekly household income (after housing expenses) on Eastfields is estimated at around £400. This is well below the national average of about £423.

Qualifications

- 3.2.9 According to the UK Census the number of people of working age in the LSOA with no qualifications is estimated at just over 22% (as shown in Figure 3.4). This is well above the Borough average of 6%.
- 3.2.10 In comparison to LBM as whole, the eastern part of the Borough, including Eastfields has a high concentration of people with no qualifications and high percentage of school leavers. Conversely the proportion of people of working age with NVQ Level 4 or above qualifications is highly concentrated in the west of the Borough.

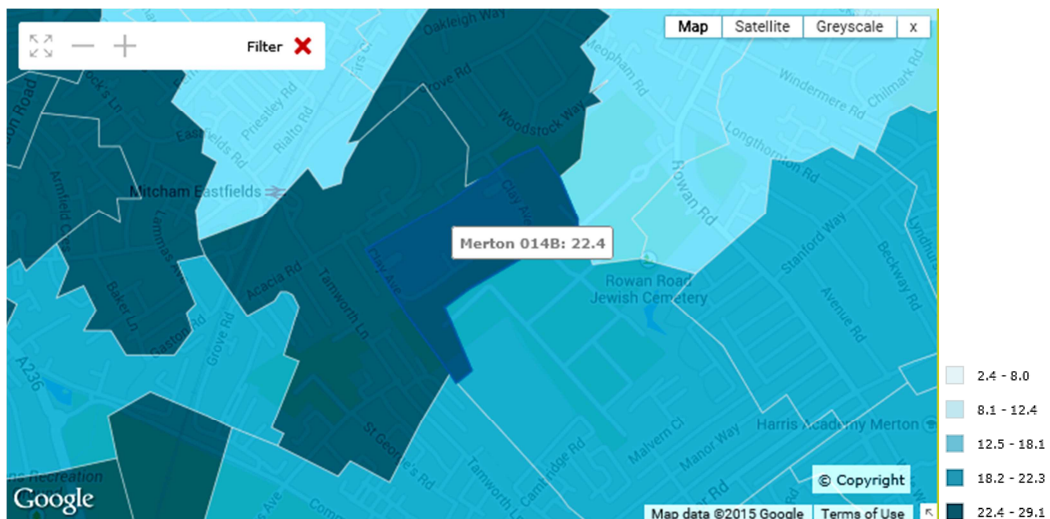


Figure 3.4: Percentage of residents with no qualifications by LSOA

Source: GLA, 2013

- 3.2.1 On Eastfields, only 245 (or 25%) residents of working age hold a degree level qualification. The latter is well below the average for LBM and Greater London of around 50% degree qualified, indicating a low skills profile of the local population

Unemployment

- 3.2.2 Overall LBM has a relatively low percentage of benefit claimants. Nomis data shows this amounted to 7% of the resident population which is below the national average of 10%.
- 3.2.3 According to the APS, the proportion of economically active residents aged 16+ that are unemployed in LBM is just under 6%. This is below that for Greater London as a whole and the national rate (of 8% and 7% respectively).
- 3.2.4 At the LSOA level, the proportion of economically active residents who are unemployed is just over 8%, which is above the LBM average.
- 3.2.5 Youth unemployment is defined as the proportion of people aged 18-24 years old that are claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), expressed as a percentage of all 18-24 year olds. Figure 3.5 shows the youth unemployment is relatively higher in the Eastfields than in the surrounding area.
- 3.2.6 An estimated 7% of the youth on Eastfields are unemployed, compared to just under 4% of 18-24 year olds nationally. Relatively high levels of youth unemployment are also apparent in neighbouring areas.

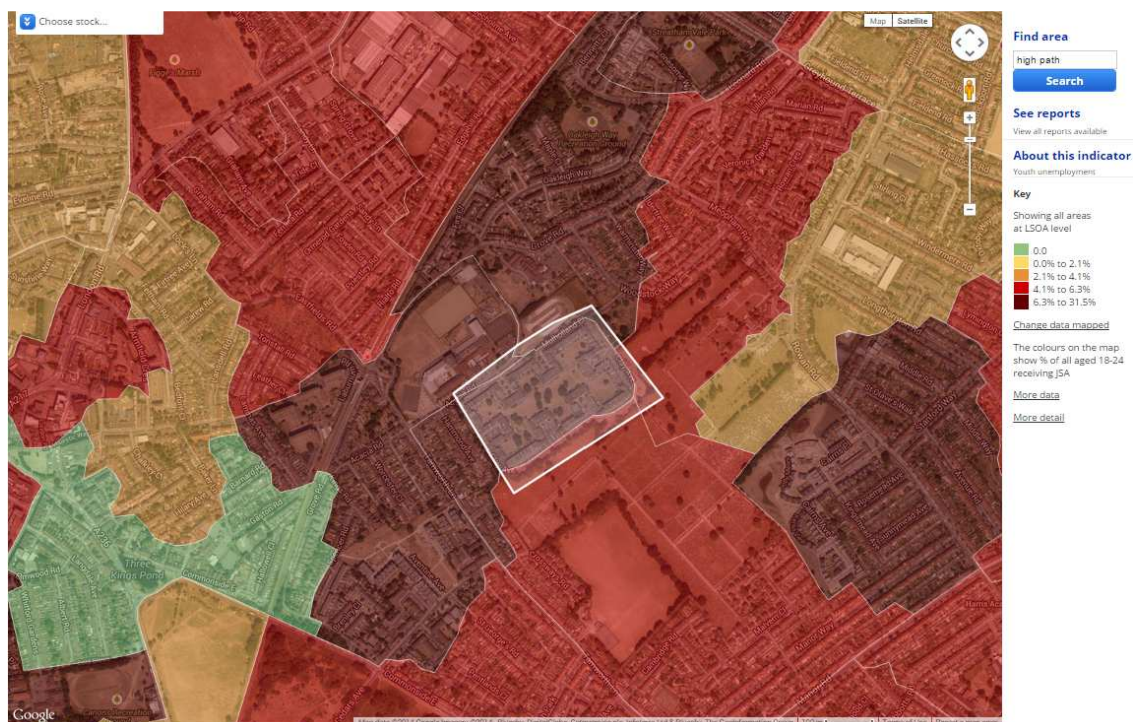


Figure 3.5: Youth Unemployment on Eastfields

Source: OSCI Community Insight, 2014

Other Benefits

- 3.2.7 Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) data shows LBM has one of the lowest rates of income support claimants. The Borough also performs well in terms of a relatively low percentage of children living in out-of-work families. Only 16% of children in LBM fall under this category which is below the Greater London average of 22%.
- 3.2.8 Figures HM Revenue and Customs (HRMC) show that in February 2014 the proportion of children living in poverty¹ in the Figge's Marsh ward was estimated at 28% (after housing costs), amounting to 870 children in the ward. This is significantly higher than the LBM average of 25%.

Deprivation

- 3.2.9 According to CLG Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), LBM is one of the least deprived Boroughs in London and nationally. The IMD data shows that the Borough ranks at 208 out of the 326 Local Authorities in England. In London it is within the top five least deprived Boroughs.
- 3.2.10 At LSOA level, the local area is one of the top 20% most deprived across all domains². It is ranked 6,053 out of the 32,482 LSOAs nationally in terms of deprivation.

¹ Defined as the proportion of children living in families in the receipt of out of work benefits or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60 per cent of median income.

² The quality of the living environment; income; employment; health and disability; barriers to housing and services; crime; and education and training.

Housing Stock and Market

- 3.2.11 Figures from the Land Registry show that in July 2014, median house prices in LBM and Greater London are 55% higher than those in Eastfields. The median house price on Eastfields is £207,700. This is well below the figure for LBM and Greater London as a whole of around £322,000.
- 3.2.12 Low residential property values are an indication of weak demand for housing, which can be attributed to low incomes in the area and poor perceptions of Eastfields and the surrounding area as a place to live.
- 3.2.13 According to Census information the LSOA is characterised by a high percentage of social housing (32%), well above the national average (18%). At the site, a high percentage of households in Eastfields were also identified as 'overcrowded'. An estimated 37% of houses have at least one room fewer than needed for their household requirement. The national average is 9%.
- 3.2.14 Eastfields also has a high proportion of dwellings with fewer than two rooms. These make up around 22% of all dwellings on the site, the LBM average of 6%.

Housing Quality

- 3.2.15 The physical appearance of Eastfields comprises of clad in metal enamelled panels that are in need of repair. Much like other low rise social housing sites that were built in the 1970s, these panels have now weathered and are showing signs of deterioration. Eastfields is in need of renewal in order to meet the Decent Homes Standard.
- 3.2.16 LBM Council's analysis of the neighbourhood profile of Eastfields³ noted that there is also scope to improve the relationship between public and private spaces in Eastfields. This is particularly the case for the public realm around the edges of the site.

Transport and Accessibility

- 3.2.17 Mitcham Eastfields Railway Station, which is on the Thameslink Sutton branch, is approximately 300m (about 6 minutes walking distance) from the site. Vehicular access to Eastfields is gained via Acacia Road to the north-west and Woodstock Way to the north-east (via Clay Avenue).
- 3.2.18 WYG Group has been commissioned by Circle Housing to provide traffic, transport and highways consultancy advice⁴ in connection with emerging masterplan proposals for Eastfields. It was noted that:
- Access for vehicles around the perimeter of the site is broken along both the northern and southern sides of the site; on the southern part of the Site, there is a gate for use by emergency vehicles;
 - There are bus stops between 150m (or 2 minutes walking distance) of the site. The local bus services are bus numbers 152 (Pollards Hill – New Malden) and 463 (Coulson – Pollards Hill) which run every 10-20 minutes on weekdays and Saturdays and every 20-30 minutes on Sundays;
 - All streets surrounding Eastfields are generally well lit with good quality footways;

³ Merton Borough Character Study: Mitcham Sub Area Neighbourhoods, LBM Council
https://www.merton.gov.uk/cabinet_borough_character_study_part_2_eastfields.pdf

⁴ Merton Regeneration – Eastfields: Baseline Conditions and On-site Parking, WYG, December 2014

- Eastfields and the immediate area is also served well by a variety of on-road/off-road cycle routes including busy roads such as Croydon Road and Grove Road and several quieter routes through Acacia Road, Mulholland Close, Woodcote Way and Oakleigh Way; and
- The local area has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of '2' (or 'Poor'). PTALs are a theoretical measure of the accessibility of a given point to the public transport network, taking into account walk access time and service availability.

3.2.19 As part of the WYG report, parking surveys were carried out on-site (at Eastfields) and off-site (i.e. in the immediate surrounding streets of Eastfields) during different times of the day in November 2014. These showed that:

- Parking stress⁵ on-site goes down during the day, from approximately 53% at 04.15 to approximately 32% at 14:00 on the weekday – indicate that parking spaces within the site are primarily used by residents.
- Off-site parking stress goes up during the day from about 48% at 4.15am to 67% at 08:00 and approximately 65% at 14:00 on the weekday surveys. Parking stress remains around 50% on Saturdays – indicating a level of commuter parking in the streets surrounding the site however this is not considered to be a high level and should not affect future development at the site.

3.3 Social infrastructure

Schools

3.3.1 LBM is served by a number of education facilities including nurseries, primary and secondary schools and colleges. These are shown in the Figure 3.6 alongside the facilities in neighbouring LBW.

3.3.2 According to a report by the Department for Education (DfE), the average class size for LBM's state-funded primary schools was about 28.5 pupils per teacher which is in line with the national average, and slightly below the London average. For secondary schools this ratio of 24 pupils per teacher is largely in line with the London and national average.

3.3.3 The nearest education facilities, by age group, to Eastfields are:

- Cherubs at St Thomas', ages 0-5 (1.5 km, south);
- Lonesome Primary School, ages 3-11, (adjacent to Eastfields); and
- St Mark's C of E Academy, ages 12-16, (adjacent to Eastfields).

3.3.4 According to information from Ofsted reports, Early Years education provision at Cherubs was considered as Grade 1 (or 'Outstanding'). St Mark's Primary School and Children's Centre achieved a Grade 2 (or 'good' rating). The report recommended that St Mark's Primary School promote better community cohesion by ensuring that pupils engage fully with the wider community beyond the school.

3.3.5 Lonesome Primary School was found to 'Require Improvement' during its 2013 Ofsted report, particularly with regards to standards of attainment of school Years 2 to 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, and the level of teaching quality.

⁵ A measure of the number of occupied parking spaces and free available spaces were used. The total number of parking spaces available within the site and its immediate surrounding highway network (Clay Avenue, Mulholland Close and Acacia Road from Clay Avenue) is approximately 380. It is generally perceived within the highway industry that when a parking study area has a parking stress of 90% or above it is deemed to be 'heavily parked'.

- 3.3.6 St Mark's C of E Academy also achieved a 'good' rating in its Ofsted Report. Improvements in students' "behaviours and attitudes" towards learning and "preparing activities that are sufficiently demanding and tailored to meet the needs of all students" were mentioned as possible areas of improvement. In addition the report recommended increasing the skills of middle leaders so they can support staff towards consistently outstanding teaching.

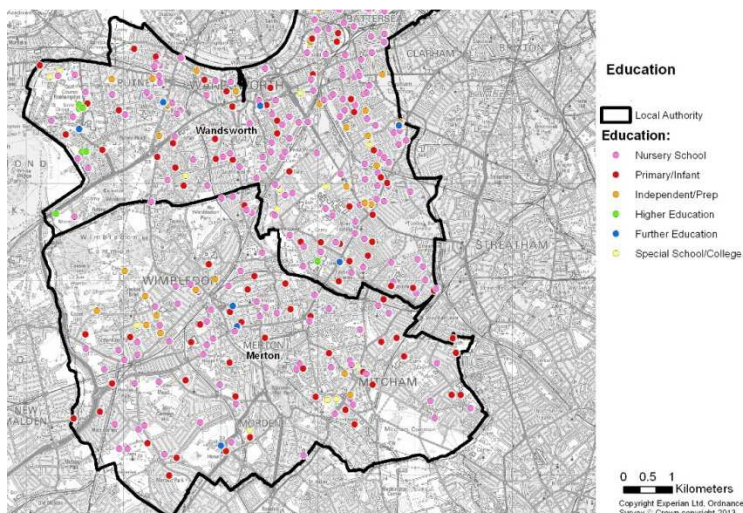


Figure 3.6: School Facilities in LBM and LBW

Source: Experian MMG3, 2013

- 3.3.7 In accordance with LBM Sites and Polices, policy DM C2 (described in section 1), Circle Housing commissioned Savills to assess⁶ the impact of on child yield (and school places) arising from the master plan options for Eastfields based on the proposed accommodation schedule and the GLA's Supplementary Planning Guidance's (SPG) Child Yield Calculator⁷.
- 3.3.8 The existing accommodation schedule at Eastfields provides for 142 primary school children and 28 secondary school children at the site. Savills considered two alternative accommodation schedules based on the masterplan proposals. The results from the Child Yield Calculator show estimate an uplift of some 20-22 primary school children, and some 10-11 secondary school children.
- 3.3.9 The calculations undertaken confirm that the masterplan options for the Eastfields will not generate "substantial increased need for school places" to require a new school in accordance with policy DM C2.

Retail

- 3.3.10 Retail facilities in LBM and LBW are shown in Figure 3.7. Wimbledon and Colliers Wood are the main shopping centres (in terms of turnover) in the Borough, followed by Morden and Mitcham. The nearest shopping centre to Eastfields is Mitcham, some 800m, west of the site.
- 3.3.11 In terms of the mix of comparison shops, in LBM, Wimbledon is the only centre with a good provision of clothing/footwear shops compared with the national average. Comparison provision in Mitcham is focussed on lower order goods bought on day to day basis e.g. pharmaceutical goods.

⁶ High Path, Eastfields and Ravensbury site Regeneration Proposals – School Places, Savills, 2014

⁷ The SPG provides updated child yield figures for boroughs and developers to assess child occupancy and play space requirements (<https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/publications/shaping-neighbourhoods-play-and-informal-recreation-spg>)

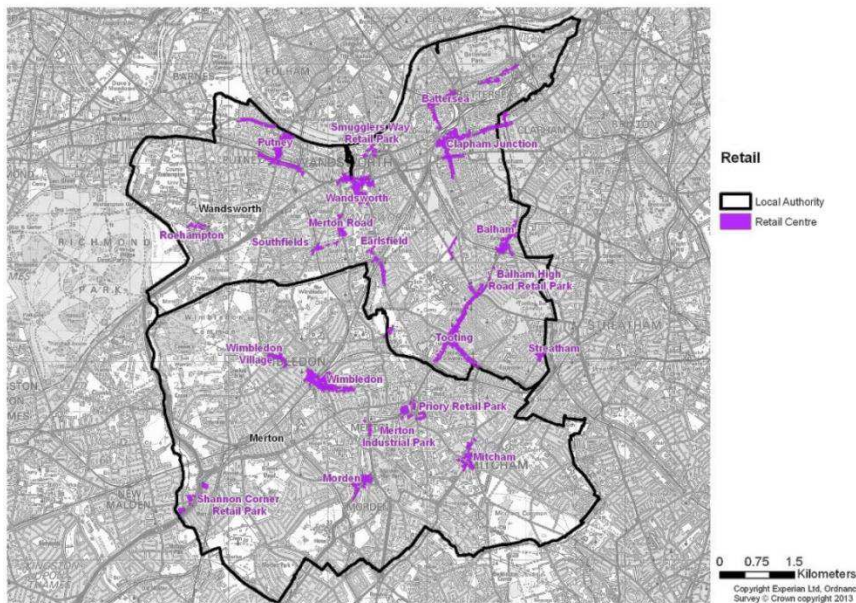


Figure 3.7: Retail Centres in LBM and LBW

Source: Experian MMG3. 2013

- 3.3.12 The LBM Retail and Town Centre Capacity Study⁸ noted that Mitcham is generally well served by public transport links to surrounding residential areas such as Eastfields. It is also noted that the other shopping destinations of Eastfields' residents, such as facilities in North Mitcham, are experiencing vacancy rates higher than the national average. This suggests relatively low levels of retail and related investment in the area.
- 3.3.13 The Retail Capacity Study also considered local needs in small retail centres⁹ within walking distance of the local area. It is noted that the local centre at Eastfields Road, has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 2 (where, 6 = excellent, 1 = poor).

Leisure and Community Facilities

- 3.3.14 LBM is served by a number of leisure and community facilities. These are shown in Figures 3.8 and 3.9.

⁸ Retail and Town Capacity Study, Merton Council, 2011

⁹⁹ Small retail centres are local facilities with 15 commercial units or less

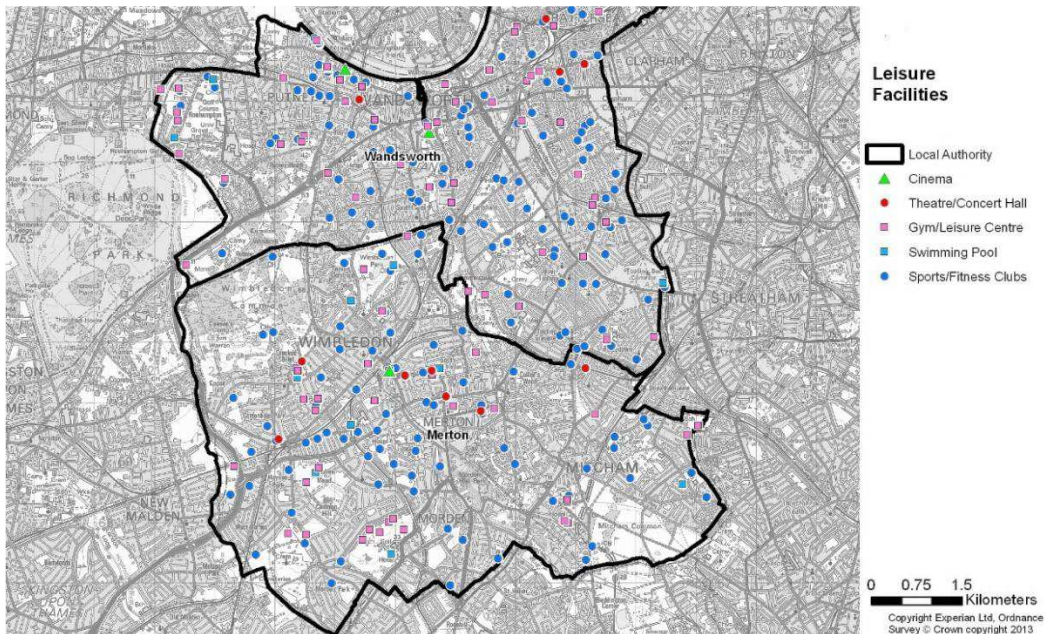


Figure 3.8: Leisure Facilities in LBM and LBW

Source: Experia MMG3. 2013

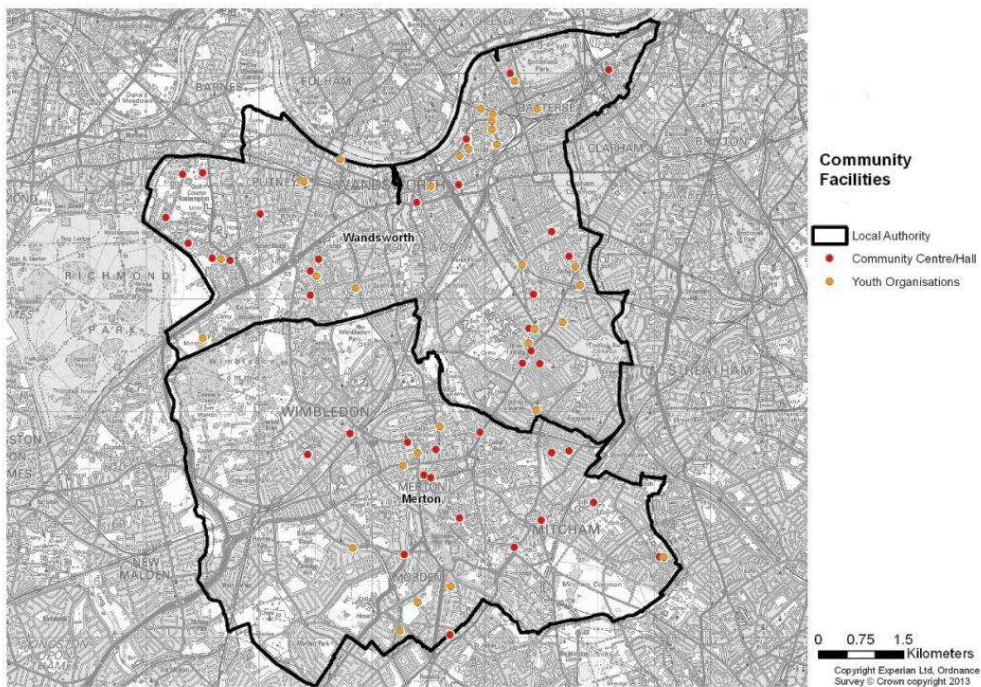


Figure 3.9: Community Facilities in LBM and LBW

Source: Experia MMG3. 2013

3.3.15 There are various leisure facilities within 2km of Eastfields, including:

- Twogyms, sports halls and leisure centres;
- One swimming pool;
- Eight halls and community centres; and
- One youth organisation.

3.3.16 There are also 15 National Health Service General Practitioner (NHS GP) surgeries within 2km of the site.. The majority are currently accepting new patients. The area is also served by 16 dental surgeries. There are three hospitals and health clinics. These offer a variety of services for patients and people with special needs, such as mental health.

4 The Case for Regeneration

- 4.1.1 The regeneration of Eastfields is likely to help address socio-economic inequalities relative to other parts of LBM – a key objective of the Core Strategy and overall vision of the Borough. The Core Strategy also identified the eastern part of the Borough as a particular concentration of deprivation.
- 4.1.2 The draft proposals include the provision of modern energy efficient homes. This is likely to bring the area, much needed renewal, and quality improvements to meet Decent Homes Standards. An improved living environment can help address issues such as overcrowding and ease concerns over deprivation and child poverty.
- 4.1.3 The proposed regeneration and associated improvements in the housing quality and public realm is likely to help increase the attractiveness and urban feel of the area. The improved urban environment and associated dwelling mix could attract the most economically active and key worker sectors of the population, as well enable improvements to the skill set, health and well-being of existing residents.
- 4.1.4 In particular, it could prove attractive to the following socio-economic groups:
- Young professional singles/couples in the premium price band who are looking for different, stylish, high value, well-appointed accommodation, within close proximity to central London;
 - Young professionals singles/couples in medium price bands who have similar aspirations to the above group but would need to settle for more modest size specification for financial reasons;
 - People with special needs looking for specialist accommodation within close proximity to their place of work, health care and social amenities;
 - Retired people who have always lived in LBM and would like the opportunity to downsize and/or apartments designed for the elderly; and
 - Less affluent singles and couples working in LBM wanting compact and convenient accommodation within the Borough (e.g. nursing, teaching support staff).
- 4.1.5 This increase in population in Eastfields may also enable an enhancement in the range of local facilities and amenities in the area. For instance, increasing the population above the thresholds necessary to trigger demand for such amenities. Existing cafes, restaurants and other leisure facilities near the site are likely to benefit from a larger customer base, and increased consumer expenditure.
- 4.1.6 The proposed regeneration could also help enable/unlock further renewal of the wider area around Mitcham, improving employment prospects and revitalising the local economy. The LSOAs immediately around Eastfields experience similar socio-economic issues. Therefore, the renewal of Eastfields could provide a catalyst to future development.
- 4.1.7 The proposals also provide for improved private outdoor space for every property, in the form of gardens and balconies. This is likely to improve the public realm around the edge of the state. It is also likely to provide a more urban feel to the area, better connecting Eastfields to the surrounding area, local facilities, and public open space.
- 4.1.8 The proposals also promote greater levels of health and well-being benefits for residents, arising from a safer living environment. The provision of better insulated and more energy efficient housing will help alleviate fuel poverty.

4.1.9 Other potential benefits include:

- Employment during the construction phase, positively impacting a variety of residents in the local area (for instance, apprenticeships for young people; managerial and supervisory construction jobs for more experienced members of the workforce);
- New Homes Bonus, enabling LBM to retain a greater proportion of the council tax revenue to be made available to spend in borough; and
- Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other off-site contributions which will also be available for LBM to fund new facilities or enhance existing social infrastructure in the area.

5 Summary

5.1 Socio-economic Conditions

5.1.1 Compared with Greater London, LBM ranks highly against indicators including economic activity, education and employment prospects. The Borough generally has a good provision of social infrastructure. It has a number of retail and leisure facilities with good accessibility to social amenities, schools and health facilities.

5.1.2 Examination of similar indicators for Eastfields provides a stark contrast with LB Merton. The baseline analysis identifies:

- A younger population/age profile;
- High levels of child poverty affecting over a quarter of children in Eastfields and the immediate surrounding area;
- Relatively low levels of economic activity;
- Low levels of educational attainment and income;
- High youth unemployment;
- Low quality housing and residential environments; and
- Depressed demand for housing due to poor perceptions of the area.

5.2 Implications for Eastfields

5.2.1 If current trends continue then there are particular implications:

- The projected increase in population of children, the low earnings profile, and a poor quality living environment is likely to heighten concerns over child poverty;
- High levels of youth unemployment constrains the skills and occupational profile, and long-term employability of the local population; and
- This low residential property values are likely to remain due to the low spending power of residents, low quality of housing and poor perceptions of the area contributing to weak demand for housing. This will negatively impact the viability of businesses and the vibrancy of the local economy.

5.3 The Case for Regeneration

5.3.1 The regeneration of Eastfields is likely to result in the following socio-economic changes:

- Reduce the social-economic inequalities of the area compared to other parts of LBM;
- Improved the living environment to address issues such as overcrowding and ease concerns over deprivation and child poverty;
- The improved urban environment and associated dwelling mix could attract the most economically active and key worker sectors of the population to Eastfields, raising the skills profile of the local labour market and the average spending in the area, to the benefit of local businesses;

- The increase in population in Eastfields may also enable an increased and greater range of local facilities and amenities by increasing the population above the thresholds necessary to trigger such amenities;
- The proposed regeneration could also help enable/unlock further renewal of the wider area around Mitcham, further improving employment prospects and revitalising the local economy. The LSOAs near Eastfields experience similar socio-economic issues, and (in some cases, more severe) and therefore, the renewal of Eastfields could provide a catalyst to future development; and
- The proposals also provide for improved private outdoor space for every property, in the form of gardens and balconies and better insulated and energy efficient housing. This will promote health and well-being and help mitigate fuel poverty.
- The S106, CIL and other developer contributions could also be used by LBM to enhance local facilities to improve the attractiveness of the area and vibrancy of the local economy. This will increase the incentives for businesses to invest in the area.