Leathermarket Gardens Community Hub

Community Project Strategy Report

NOOMAStudio

Southwark Council
southwark.gov.uk

Project Context

What is this scheme about?

Leathermarket Gardens is a much loved park situated between Bermondsey Street and London Bridge. It is well used by residents and those coming into the area for work or entertainment. Ongoing development, especially around St Thomas Steet, will increase local footfall and impact park use. There is a need to improve the quality of the park, specifically its accessibility and how it connects to its surroundings. We want to extend the greening of the park into Tyers Estate and help address the climate emergency with resilient plantings that mitigate impacts associated with the urban environment.

Following walking tours and consultation during the development of the social regeneration charter, the CIL cabinet report, and the formation of a community steering group, the following vision is proposed:

To expand Leathermarket Gardens' offer as a community hub, with improved entrances, routes, amenities and biodiversity to improve the wellbeing and life chances of all local residents (including young people), and prepare for an increase in local population and the climate emergency

This project is seeking to address the impending demands on the gardens by increasing the connectivity and accessibility to the wider area.

We are developing option that will extend the greening of the park into Tyers Estate and help address the climate emergency with resilient plantings that mitigate impacts associated with the urban environment. We will also seek to improve the quality of the park through increased accessibility making existing and new infrastructure work smarter for all users.

What do we want to improve through our engagement with you?

We hope to develop our understanding of the wider communities aspirations and priorities for delivery in this local area to aid the provision of a community hub where residents and visitors love to spend time in a space that it is easy to do so. We also want to reach more people in the community that may not typically contribute to local projects to make sure designs and works are for the whole community.

What do we already know?

Southwark Council have conducted a number of engagement activities with various community groups and drawn on research in the St Thomas St Social Regeneration Charter to help shape the scope of this project.

Through this process the Community Steering Group has explored many of ideas to improve Leathermarket Gardens and surrounding, which could be phased over time. Building on the CIL consultation, cabinet report, and steering group discussions the below priorities were suggested.

We have used these priorities to shape an appropriate response for this project that can be delivered within the current budget that would maximise social value for the whole community.

- Strengthen connections through the area and Tyers Estate
- Improving local greening and biodiversity
- A more accessible & welcoming entrance on Kirby Grove
- Improving the pergola area in rose garden
- A welcoming gateway for Tyers Gate
- Increasing park resilience for the future

Steering Group Agreed Priorities	Commission Response	Priorities Action
Seek to negotiate community access to ball court and acoustic / green screen: Note sub-group to take forward community access to ball court and acoustic/ green screen immediately lead by Southwark Parks Team	The Southwark Parks Team is currently exploring options to secure greater community access to the sports pitch on Leathermarket Gardens. While securing access will not form part of commission, the Parks Team is actively pursuing this.	Outside of this commission scope, but is being pursued.
Strengthen connection and routes between park and Tyers Estate by improving greening and biodiversity within the estate	A priority focus of this commission will be enhancing the relationship between Tyers Estate and Leathermarket Gardens. We will be exploring various methods of greening across the estate to increase biodiversity and improve the landscape for residents	Will be explored in this commission
Expand park into Tyers Gate	We will be exploring opportunities to expand the park and greening into Tyers Gate to better connect the gardens to the wider community and increase the public amenity.	Will be explored in this commission
Re-design entrance to the park at Kirby Grove	We will be exploring opportunities to improve the entrance at Kirby Grove, placing a priority on improving the pedestrian and wayfinding experience to deliver a clearer, more legible gateway from the north.	Will be explored in this commission
Re-design area between village hall and ball court with potential additional sports facility	From our initial investigations we do not believe there is sufficient space to provide an additional ball court between the Village Hall and current ball court. Surveys have suggested that the location is built over rubble, and this would be expensive to rectify, leaving little budget to deliver other improvements on the commission. There is an opportunity to look at upgrading the sports provision at Guys Park as an alternate in the future. We will be exploring options to improve the experience of the space between the Village Hall and ball court and address concerns raised through previous consultation.	Will be explored in this commission
Adjust the design of the mound area to include picnic tables, gabions, additional planting, and a new route with entrance in NW corner to strengthen the connection between Leathermarket Gardens and Guys Park	Through this commission we are seeking to improve and enhance connection across Bermondsey's green spaces, improving access to them and integrating them better with their surroundings. We will be exploring opportunities to increase the provision of seating, picnic spots and rest areas through the park to increase capacity and flexibility for all users.	Will be explored in this commission
Improve pergola area in rose garden	We will be exploring solutions that will seek to address concerns raised around the pergola area to improve visibility and connection to the gardens.	Will be explored in this commission
Work with adjacent building owners to install vertical greening on blank walls	Through the commission we will be working with a number of stakeholders to explore opportunities for increasing greening and biodiversity in a meaningful way. This may take many forms and we plan to engage the community in shaping this direction to ensure it's long term longevity.	Will be explored in this commission
Develop long term plan to improve the Bermondsey Village Hall with highest possible environmental credentials	The current lease on the Village Hall will lasts until at least 2029, and the current funding available for this commission is insufficient to deliver a meaningful project to address a rebuild or refurbishment. While we will not be exploring this through this commission considerations will be made as to how we can improve the parks relationship to the Village Hall.	Will not form part of this commission.

The Current Challenges

The current gardens and surrounding area has a number of challenges that have been identified and will be address through this project.

Unwelcoming Entrances

An untidy and restrictive entrance at Tyer's Gate, with railings, ramps, walls and stairs in disrepair. Plays an important role in allowing access for service vehicles.

Underused Space

The current layout leaves areas underutilised which could be activated by people or biodiversity.

Harsh Landscapes

Tyer's Gate Estate suffers from a lack of outdoor green space and privacy for residents.

Poor Wayfinding

Gateways & entrances to the gardens are not clearly defined making it less welcoming and hard to navigate.

Car Dominance

A cluttered and uninviting entrance on Kirby Grove dominated by cars and bins.

Poor Surveillance

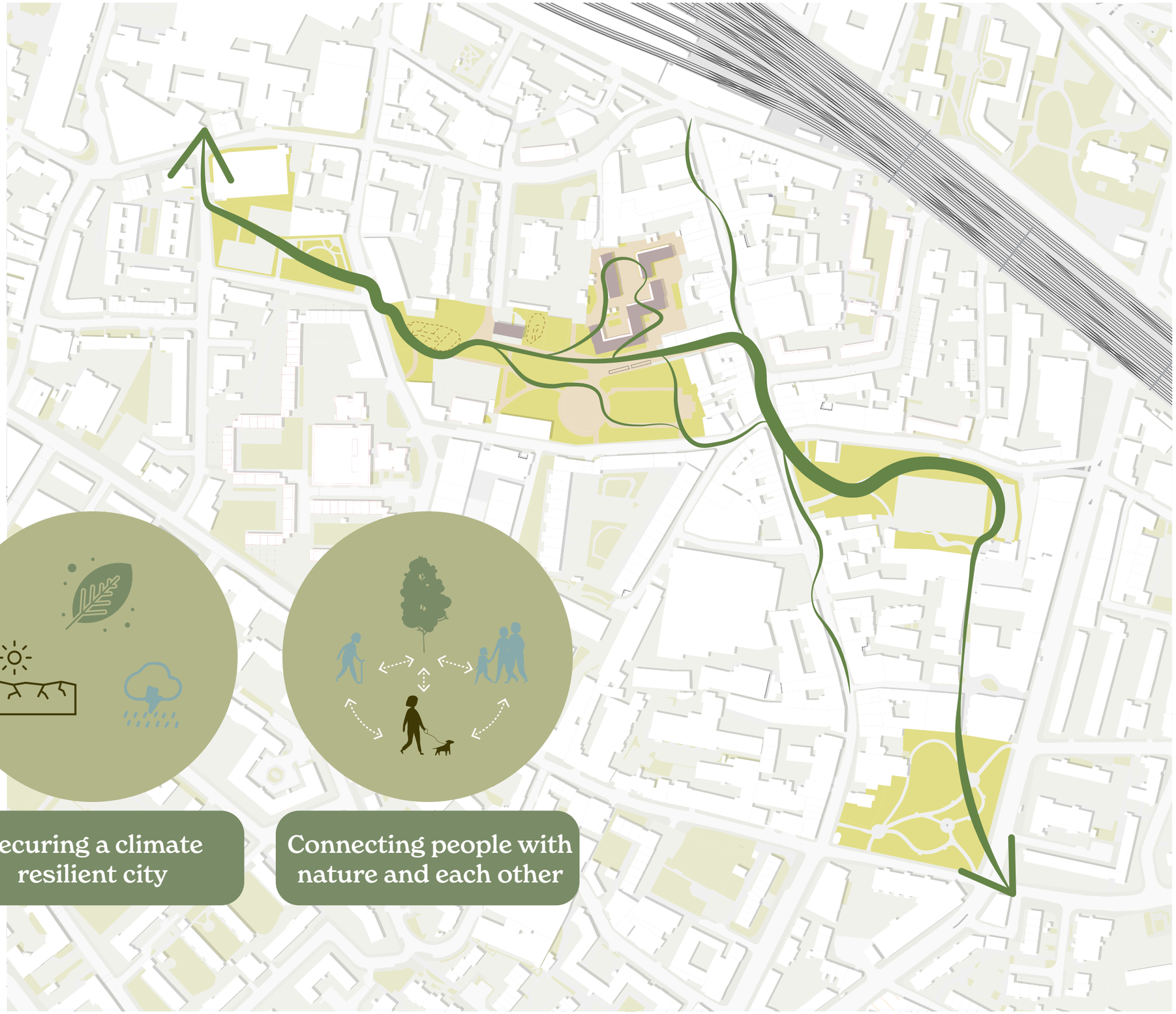
Poor surveillance by the pergola area creates an hidden environment.

Building the Bermondsey Green Ribbon

Leathermarket Gardens forms the heart of the Bermondsey Green Ribbon, a series of parks and public spaces that weave their way through the neighbourhood.

Through this project we are seeking to enhance the connection of these green spaces and set the groundwork for future greening projects on streets, parks, estates and buildings.

Ensuring equal access to green space is essential for our wellbeing, health and helping tackle the challenges of the climate crisis on urban centres.



Establishing biodiversity and ecological connection

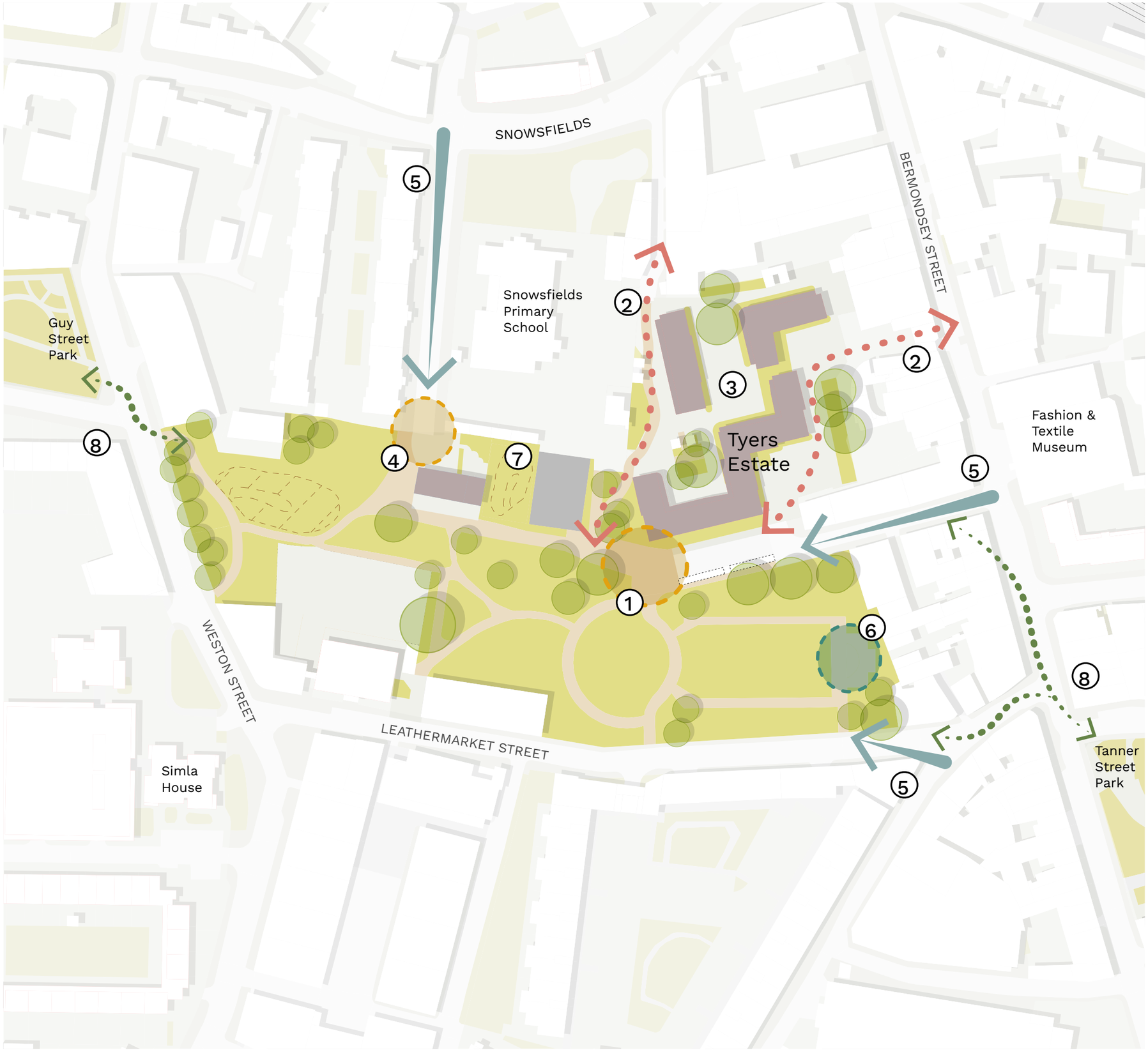
Securing a climate resilient city

Connecting people with nature and each other

Project Key Moves

Building from the priories laid out in the initial engagement activities we have set out the following key moves that will be developed through this project.

1. A new plaza gateway for Tyers Gate providing a meeting space and increasing greening
2. Enhanced routes through Tyers Estate better connecting residents to Leathermarket Gardens
3. Better privacy and defensible space for Tyers Estate residents through greening and space realignment
4. A new clear and welcoming entrance on Kirby Grove to connect to Snowfields and St Thomas Street
5. Improved views of Leathermarket Gardens to invite users into the space
6. A renewed pergola area providing clearer views and a more welcoming space
7. Addressing concerns around visibility in the space between the Village Hall and ball court
8. Strengthen connections across the Bermondsey Green Ribbon through improved connections between Guy Street Park and Tanner Street Park



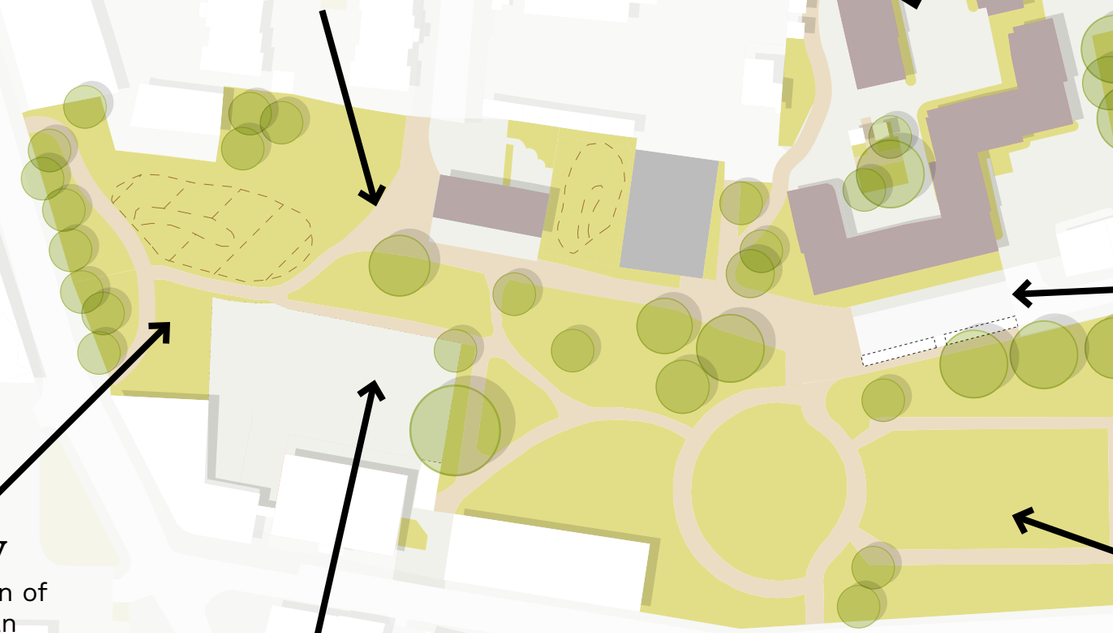
Character Zones for Leathermarket Gardens

Meeting & Seating

Provide space for local people to come together and enjoy open green space in a variety of ways

Greener

Increase greening opportunity to soften the landscape and improve climate resilience



Gateways

Creating legible and attractive entrances to the gardens, extending the green reach into the wider area

Supporting Biodiversity

Opportunity to improve the provision of greening and support essential urban biodiversity

Play

Vital play space for children and creating active landscapes to encourage young people into nature

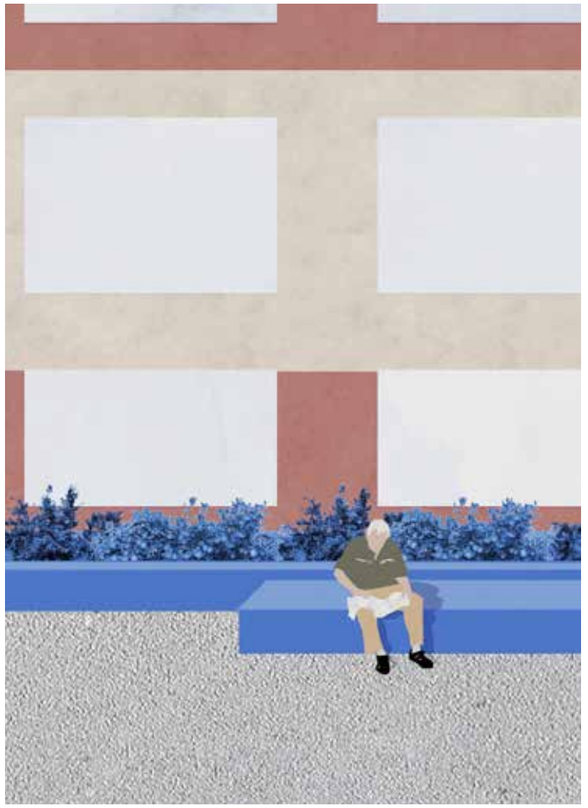
Respite

Safe and calm environments for the community to find a break from the busy city

Design Responses

Responding to the comments and community engagement received so far, NOOMA Studio with Southwark Council has set out some initial design responses to address the site's challenges and create a greener, more connected community park. These initial responses are thematic approaches to the challenges to share an idea of the project's direction with you.

This consultation welcomes your comments and ideas on our approach so far and how you would like them to shape moving forward. As the project develops, there will be further opportunities to engage with the design and delivery of the final proposal.



A New Gateway Plaza for Tyer's Gate

A key focus of this project is to improve the gateway connection between Leathermarket Gardens, the Tyers Estate and Bermondsey Street.

The proposal will investigate delivering a new plaza space for the community to meet and find respite from the city under soft tree canopies and greening.

A new gateway marker could create an inviting and pedestrian accessible entrance to the gardens, bringing greening through to Tyers Estate and towards Bermondsey Street.

This is an opportunity to rejuvenate Leathermarket Gardens for local residents, workers and visitors and unlock currently underutilised space.

Greener Connections through Bermondsey

A new public space for families and friends

Welcoming, accessible & inviting

Unlocking space & improving provisions park users

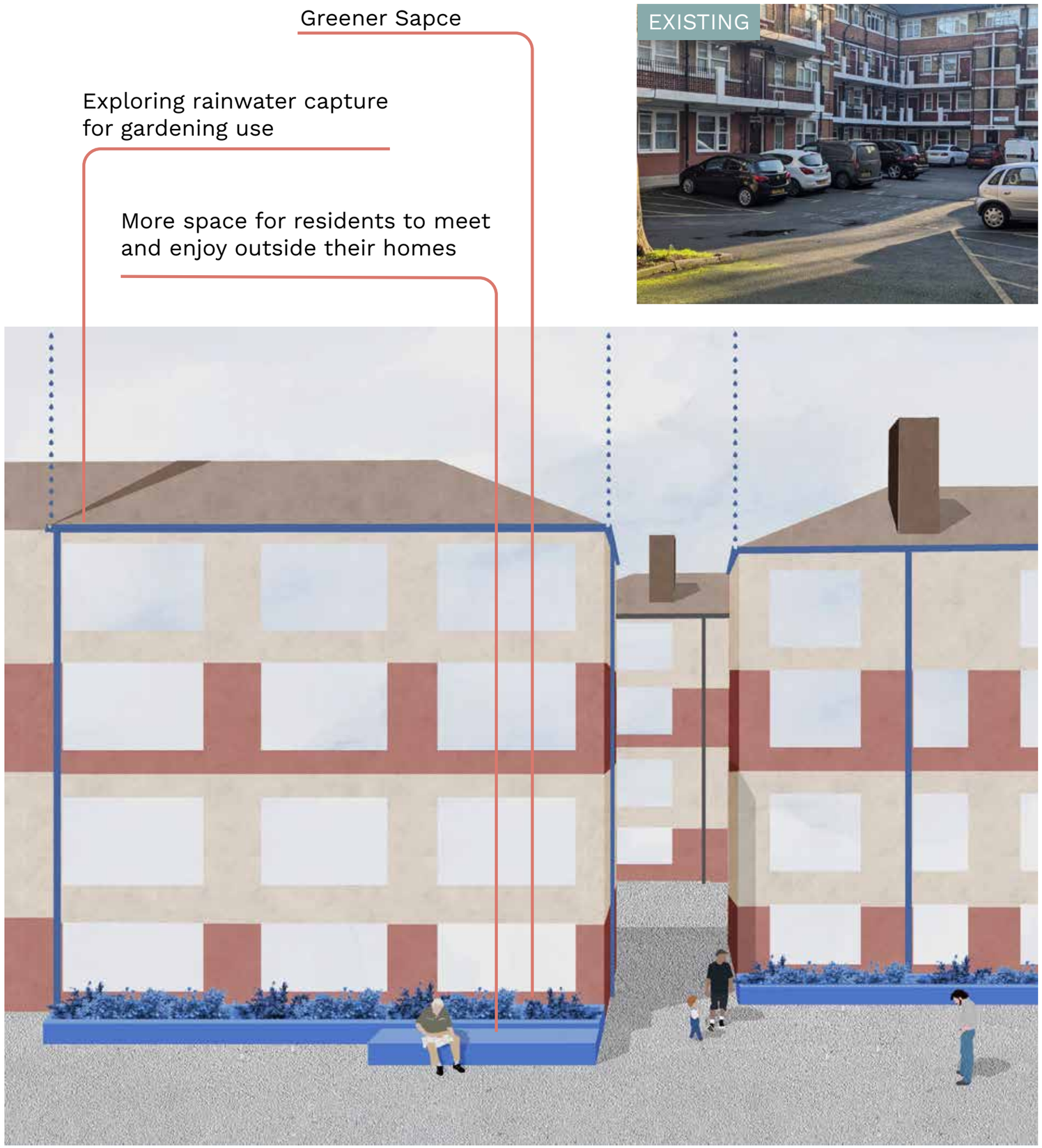
Improving the connection between the estate and the park

New space for the community come together

Improving the Tyers Estate

There are opportunities to improve the links through the Tyers Estate to provide more green space & a stronger connection between Leathermarket Gardens for residents.

The current landscape provisions could be improved to better support residents with green space. We will seek opportunities to soften the landscape through greening and provide a more pleasant environment for residents to enjoy.



Improving the Kirby Grove Gateway

The entrance to Leathermarket Gardens from Kirby Grove is unwelcoming and restrictive for pedestrians. Do you think a new gateway will better connect the gardens for local people, families and visitors through to Snowfields & St Thomas Street?

Placing a priority on pedestrians first

Clear wayfinding & entrances

Decluttering and making space more accessible

EXISTING

A clear, welcoming entrance for park

Bins & street clutter removed or relocated to improve environment

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