Old Street Iconic Gateway
Open Call for Design Ideas

December 2017
1 Introduction

1.01 Islington Council, in partnership with the Greater London Authority (GLA), Transport for London (TfL) and Hackney Council, are issuing an ‘Open Call for Design Ideas’ for the Old Street Iconic Gateway.

1.02 Old Street Roundabout will undergo significant change in the coming years as part of the planned highway changes that will see the removal of the Old Street gyratory. As a result of the works, the north-western arm of the roundabout will be closed to traffic and a peninsula will form around the upgraded Old Street Roundabout Station entrance. The Old Street Iconic Gateway is a fundamental part of the Old Street transformation project. For further background information on the project, please see Appendix A.

1.03 We are seeking innovative design ideas for the Old Street Iconic Gateway, from multi-disciplinary design teams and partnerships.

1.04 Following the ‘Open Call for Design Ideas’ submission period, a public exhibition of the longlisted entries will be held in February 2018. In conjunction with the community feedback received during the public exhibition, a judging panel will shortlist the best design ideas. Entrants who respond to the ‘Open Call for Design Ideas’ may or may not be issued an Invitation to Quote (ITQ) for design services (up to and including RIBA Stage 3).

2 Design brief

2.01 An exciting opportunity exists to create an iconic gateway at Old Street as part of the proposal to transform the Old Street Roundabout area. This design brief invites a vision and design concept idea for the Old Street Iconic Gateway, to complement the improvements for pedestrians, public transport users and cyclists resulting from the wider transformation scheme.

2.02 In order to receive the best possible ideas, we are issuing an ‘Open Call for Design Ideas’ seeking creative responses from multi-disciplinary design teams with innovative partnerships and collaborations. The multi-disciplinary team may include architects, landscape architects, urban designers, urban planners, transport planners, public art specialists, lighting designers, wayfinding experts, smart cities experts, technology and software companies / SMEs, civil and structural engineers, mechanical and electrical engineers, etc.

2.03 This brief strongly encourages partnerships for the purposes of exploring public art and technology and design innovation.

2.04 The design ideas must be deliverable within a budget of circa £1 million, which would cover the cost of the subsequent design commission up to and
including construction. However, design teams are welcome to submit proposals exceeding this budget, provided they have identified plausible external funding sources to supplement the core project budget.

3 Project objectives

3.01 Establish the Old Street Iconic Gateway as a landmark embracing public art and Smart City innovation, to complement the improvements for pedestrians, public transport users and cyclists resulting from the wider transformation scheme.

3.02 The objectives for the design of the Old Street Iconic Gateway are as follows:

- To meet the objectives set out under the Mayor’s ‘Healthy Streets for London’ for walking, cycling and public transport

- To create an iconic gateway encompassing public art and embracing the concept of Tech City

- To create a public space that extends the look and feel of the allée of trees from Bath Street (i.e. ‘Promenade of Light’) and makes the peninsula feel ‘greener’

- To create an environment that mitigates the impacts of air and noise pollution, without creating a barrier to access and appreciation of the space from the east

- To integrate the ‘fixed’ elements such as the proposed Old Street Station entrance, the clerestory roof, the advertising screens and London Underground ventilation shafts into the design

- To develop an innovative, high-quality design for the Old Street Iconic Gateway, connecting the peninsula to its context in all directions

- To design a public space that is interesting for local residents, the local community, workers in the area, commuters and visitors; and which is inclusive and fair for all ages

- To provide a space where local residents can engage with digital media and technology

- To develop a flexible environment that allows for a range of different uses, as well as free activities, events and programming

- To support the local economy and advocate for inclusive economic growth, as well as generate income where possible, without compromising existing businesses
• To secure **partnerships** and additional funding for the Old Street Iconic Gateway.

## 4 Scope

### 4.01
A plan outlining the scope of works is provided in **Appendix B**. The design response should consider the wider Old Street transformation project in detail.

### 4.02
There are a number of ‘fixed’ elements within the peninsula that must be integrated into the design, including a planned new Old Street Station entrance, the clerestory roof, the advertising screens, the benches within the ‘Station Plaza,’ and the London Underground ventilation shafts. The ‘fixed’ elements are highlighted in **Appendix B**. Furthermore, the ‘Promenade of Light’ extending from Bath Street to the peninsula area should be considered (although not necessarily changed) as part of the scope of works to deliver one cohesive design approach. The planned new highway layout and proposed new pedestrian crossings (consulted on in 2014/15) are also ‘fixed’ elements of the Old Street Iconic Gateway.

### Design considerations and constraints

### 4.03
The design response should take into account the following considerations and constraints:

- **The planned new highway layout:** Integrate the design into the wider transformation scheme, considering the physical re-arrangement of the gyratory, new much improved pedestrian crossings, servicing, cycle parking, and the future accessibility of the site.

- **Circulation:** Articulate clear circulation routes through the space to the station, nearby bus stops, surrounding businesses and residential areas, and key destinations, such as schools (e.g. the Central Foundation Boys’ School), Moorfields Eye Hospital and Whitecross Street market.

- **Environ/traffic:** Respond to the high-traffic environment that will continue to exist at Old Street and provide a comfortable micro-environment and separation from the surrounding car-dominated environment.

- **‘Promenade of Light’:** Present a design proposal which considers how the ‘Promenade of Light’ from Bath Street and its allée of trees relate and lead into the Old Street Iconic Gateway site.

- **Connecting neighbourhoods:** Ensure that an enhanced public interface is created for people approaching the space from all directions, particularly from Shoreditch and Hackney, including potential improvements for all corners of the junction.
- **Security and safety:** Provide an environment that considers the security and safety of the space and its users, with attention given to safety mechanisms surrounding the perimeter of the space to prevent vehicle entry into the public space (i.e. Hostile Vehicle Mitigation measures). Measures used should enhance the public realm and should be in keeping with the proposed look and feel of the location. Examples include the use of cycle stands, planters, public art and bodies of water as deterrents.

- **Fixed elements:** Integrate the ‘fixed’ elements such as the new Old Street Station entrance, the clerestory roof, the advertising screens, the benches within the ‘Station Plaza,’ and London Underground ventilation shafts into the design. The clerestory roof currently can only support ‘light touch’ interventions/installations. However, we strongly encourage design teams to explore options for incorporating the clerestory roof into the proposal, provided the structural integrity of the roof is not compromised. Proposals for non-light weight structures on the roof will also be considered, although it must be noted that this is expected to lead to an additional estimated cost of £2m to strengthen the roof structure, for which funding must be identified.

- **Digital advertising:** Any redesign must maintain digital advertising within the site. Any proposal involving changes to the current digital advertising provision must not reduce overall advertising revenue. However, different means of displaying the advertising may be proposed (i.e. replacement of the arches with an alternative structure).

- **Deliverability:** Although the purpose of the ‘Open Call for Design Ideas’ is to receive the best possible ideas for the site, they must also be resilient and deliverable. So as not to limit the creativity of potential designs, we strongly encourage design teams to identify potential funding sources and partnerships for the designs proposed.

- **Operational management:** Consider and accommodate the operational management of the space, its servicing and access requirements.

### Available information and data

**4.04** The following existing information is available:

- **a.** 2D Site CAD Plan of existing conditions and proposed peninsula. See Section 6 for further details.

- **b.** 3D visualisations of TfL’s Old Street Roundabout transformation (previous design proposal). See Appendix C.
5 Submission Requirements

5.01 The submission requirements for the ‘Open Call for Design Ideas’ are as follows:

- **No more than 2 x A1 boards** showcasing:
  
  a. A vision for the Old Street Iconic Gateway that aligns with the objectives, set out under Section 3.
  
  b. An innovative design concept idea that responds to the objectives (Section 3), the scope, and design considerations and constraints (Section 4).
  
  c. Analysis of the issues and opportunities of the site and how the design concept addresses these. Analysis should include (but not be limited to): urban design, built form and character, land use, transport, landscape, community and placemaking, historical perspective, local / regional transport / planning policy, and the social / economic / environmental context.
  
  d. At minimum, the design concept idea must consider all areas set out within the scope and integrate the ‘fixed’ elements into the design.

- **No more than 500 words** describing the proposal (separate one-page document).

5.02 The design concept can be articulated through: plans, diagrams, perspectives, sections, elevations, sketches, 3D visualisation, descriptive text etc.

5.03 The A1 boards must be submitted as PDFs, and sent to oldstreet@islington.gov.uk, with the subject heading “Open Call 12-2017-01 – [insert your team / submission name]”. Please provide your entrant details within the body of the email, including your team members / company / organisation / group / partners, and relevant contact details.

5.04 Clarification questions are to be addressed to Sinéad Holmes and submitted to the same project email address (oldstreet@islington.gov.uk), with the subject heading “Question – Open Call 12-2017-01”.

5.05 Longlisted entrants will be requested to deliver printed A1 mounted boards, in advance of the exhibition. Further detail of the mounting requirements will be provided to longlisted teams.

5.06 The judging panel determining the shortlist will comprise of elected Members from Islington Council and Hackney Council, and include a representative from the GLA and from the community, as well as design and technology representatives.
6 Timeframes and deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key event</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Open Call for Design Ideas’ launch and brief issued</td>
<td>4 December 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of clarification questions and registration</td>
<td>4 December – 5 January 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Open Call for Design Ideas’ submission closes</td>
<td>29 January 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successful longlisted teams notified for public exhibition; A1 boards requested</td>
<td>5 February 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public exhibition and public consultation feedback period</td>
<td>12 February – 4 March 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortlisting process with judging panel</td>
<td>5 March – 16 March 2018</td>
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<td>Announcement of best design ideas</td>
<td>19 March 2018</td>
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6.01 The closing date for responding to the ‘Open Call’ is **12.00pm, Monday 29 January 2018**.

6.02 The deadline for submitting any clarification questions is **12.00pm, Friday 5 January 2018**. Organisations are reminded that non-commercially sensitive clarifications will be shared openly throughout the open call process.

6.03 Please register your interest via email to oldstreet@islington.gov.uk by **Friday 5 January 2018**. We will accept submissions without prior registration, however by registering, entrants will be provided with a technical base plan (CAD format), which is not available for download from the website.
7 Background documents

Project documents

7.01 Old Street Roundabout transformation project information and previous consultation by TfL:


https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/old-street-roundabout/

Policy documents

7.02 Finsbury Local Plan (2013):

Appendix A: Background

Old Street Roundabout is located at the intersection of two historic roads Old Street (A5201) and City Road (A501) - which forms part of the Inner City Ring Road. It is the gateway for travelling north to Angel and the A1, east towards the heart of Shoreditch and Canary Wharf, south to the City and London Bridge, and west to Clerkenwell and the West End. Underneath Old Street Station lies the Northern Line and National Rail Line (Great Northern). The underground walkways accommodate a retail mix known as ‘St. Agnes Well.’

The north-west, south-west, and south-east corners of the Old Street Roundabout are in the London Borough of Islington’s Bunhill Ward. The north-east corner is under the London Borough of Hackney's Hoxton Ward.

Notable landmarks within close proximity to Old Street Roundabout include the Moorfields Eye Hospital, Leysian Mission building (a Grade II listed building), St Luke’s Estate, Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, Finsbury Square, Whitecross Street Market, Shoreditch High Street and, Moorgate and Liverpool Street Stations.

The area is characterised by socio-economic polarisation. There are significant levels of social disadvantage within the community. As stated within the Finsbury Local Plan, a large number of households’ experience considerable poverty, which affects children and the elderly in particular. The Council aims to address these socio-economic issues of social polarisation, health inequalities, and low employment rates among disadvantaged residents. A key objective for this ‘Open Call’ is to provide a space that is welcoming and inclusive of all user groups.

Old Street Roundabout history

The roundabout was developed in 1968 and has since become a landmark within Shoreditch, having been coined as ‘Silicon Roundabout,’ and in more recent times has formed the apex to ‘Tech City.’ The broader area has seen the increase of the tech and start-up community clustered around Old Street.

It has been a long time aspiration to transform Old Street Roundabout. Under Mayor Ken Livingstone, the Roundabout was listed under the Mayor of London’s ‘100 Public Spaces for Public Realm Improvements.’

In May 2004, a competition brief was launched for the northern streetscape between the north-western arm of the roundabout and Bath Street. The Architecture Foundation ran the competition “Any Old Street?” on behalf of EC1 New Deal for Communities and Islington Council. The successful entry ‘Promenade of Light’ by Tonkin Liu was constructed in 2006.
Old Street Roundabout transformation

The Old Street Iconic Gateway is an integral part of the wider Old Street Roundabout transformation project, delivered by TfL and Islington Council. An overview of this project is detailed below.

The purpose of the overall Old Street Roundabout transformation project is to deliver the following:

- Enhance the quality of the public realm on the peninsula and the wider area
- Provide segregated cycle facilities within the majority of the project area
- Enhance permeability and level of service for pedestrians through improved footways and crossings
- Provide a benefit to public transport accessibility and interchange by providing northbound bus services to access Old Street and improving pedestrian connections to the underground and national rail networks
- Improve conditions for walking and cycling in support of the Mayor’s Vision for Healthy Streets strategy
- Ensure that the streets continue to function for local residents and businesses by maintaining sufficient capacity for servicing, taxi operations and parking
- Improve travel distances and reduce emissions by improving accessibility and directness for local access traffic and strategic movements
- Provide a safer environment
- Maintain traffic network capacity and resilience at a level where no unacceptable increases in traffic congestion occur
- Provide improvements in journey time reliability for all modes where possible; and where not possible, incur no unacceptable increases in journey time

It is proposed to close the north-western ‘arm’ of the roundabout, creating a two-way road system and peninsula pedestrian space. The peninsula would be formed by merging the existing central island with the north-western corner of Old Street, as an extension of the ‘Promenade of Light’ (a high quality pedestrian area and allée of trees).

Currently, there are four stepped and ramped access points on each of the four sides of the roundabout. The proposal seeks to remove two access points and build a new north-west entrance fronting the ‘Promenade of Light’ and south-eastern entrance at Cowper Street.
The Old Street Roundabout transformation project aims to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety through the rerouting of traffic into a two-way road system, providing surface level pedestrian crossings to a new station entrance, as well as new segregated cycle lanes, cycle crossings and cycle-only signals. As a result of the new road system, a public space is created within the peninsula.

Between 11 November 2014 and 11 January 2015, consultation on the Old Street Roundabout transformation project took place, receiving over 1,300 responses. Positively, 87% of respondents believed the proposals would improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Following this consultation, a decision was made to proceed with the scheme.

**Strategic policy context**

**London Plan**

Within the London Plan (March 2016), Old Street is listed under the ‘Re-imagined streets and places’ scheme. It is referred to as the Gateway to ‘Tech City,’ extending from Old Street’s ‘Silicon Roundabout.’

The London Plan has earmarked several suitable areas to accommodate large scale development, which comprise 38 Opportunity Areas and seven Intensification Areas. ‘City Fringe/Tech City’ (encompassing Old Street) is named as one of the 38 Opportunity Areas. Specifically, it states:

> At Old Street there is significant scope to improve the station and its environs, to become a more successful and attractive gateway to Tech City and encourage investment.

An enhancement of Old Street Roundabout is specified in the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) as an opportunity area for economic growth. This document recognises Old Street Roundabout as a key strategic interchange, which if replaced with a peninsula layout, could contribute towards significant development opportunities and the Gateway to 'Tech City' as well as supporting growth in East London.

**Draft Mayor’s Transport Strategy 2017**

The scheme forms part of the draft Mayor’s Transport Strategy for Healthy Streets which aims to make London a city where people choose to walk and cycle more often by improving street environments, making it easier for everyone to get around on foot and by bike, and promoting the benefits of active travel.

The Draft Mayor’s Transport Strategy seeks to improve and manage London’s streets to create a high quality public realm that encourages all Londoners to walk and cycle by:

- Creating streets and routes that encourage walking, cycling and public transport use to reduce car dependency and the health problems it creates.
Appendix A

- Building Healthy Streets to enable all Londoners to do at least the recommended 20 minutes of active travel a day.

- Prioritising walking on London’s streets, including around schools, so this convenient means of getting around becomes even easier and more appealing.

- Making streets more accessible for disabled people, with wider, clutter-free pavements and crossings that are easier to access and use.

- Delivering a new London-wide network of strategic cycling routes – which will also be good environments for walking – to improve the convenience and the experience of cycling for all types of trips.

- Creating more traffic-free areas, starting with the transformation of Oxford Street, and including trial closures of streets to motor traffic to help people see their streets differently.

- Reducing road danger to make people feel safer and more comfortable walking and cycling. The Mayor’s aim is that no one is killed in, or by, a London bus by 2030, and for deaths and serious injuries from road collisions to be eliminated by 2041.

- Bringing forward the introduction and expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone so that London meets legal pollution limits as soon as possible.

- Reducing congestion by shifting trips away from cars and reducing freight traffic.

The Old Street transformation project and this Old Street Iconic Gateway project together would contribute towards all of the Healthy Streets Indicators, which are:

a. People choose to walk, cycle and use public transport
b. Pedestrians from all walks of life
c. Easy to cross
d. People feel safe
e. Things to see and do
f. Places to stop and rest
g. People feel relaxed
h. Not too noisy
i. Clean air
j. Shade and shelter.
Local policy context

Local Plan

The area is referred to in the Finsbury Local Plan (2013), under policy BC 3. The policy seeks to substantially improve the public realm around the roundabout whilst improving pedestrian and cyclist movement and safety. The framework plan, under BC 4, specifically shows the removal of the gyratory in favour of a peninsula with an attractive and functional public space, at or near the current roundabout, providing at-grade access from surrounding streets.

The Old Street transformation scheme aligns with the policy objectives set out under BC 3.

Islington’s Transport Strategy

Islington’s Transport Strategy clearly recognises the challenges for the area, and highlights Islington’s way forward for Old Street. The strategy advocates for the removal of the gyratory, improving the urban environment surrounding the station and integrating with the ‘Promenade of Light.’ It is outlined that these changes would improve pedestrian and cycling routes and rationalise bus stops in the area.

Islington’s Smart Cities Agenda

The Council has brought together a Smart Cities Advisory Board to secure advice from external experts (local not-for-profit, academia, smart cities/industry experts, leading thinkers/partners) on how we can put people at the heart of everything we do. The Old Street Iconic Gateway provides an opportunity to see how smart city technology can be incorporated into the public realm and highways transformation project.
Scope
Fixed elements
Previous design proposals

The images below were used in the original public consultation to show how the new public space could look following the wider Old Street Roundabout transformation project. They are included here to provide design teams with a clearer understanding of how the highway transformation works will affect the space.

Some of the elements included in these visualisations are fixed, such as the new entrance stairway to the station. Other elements are not fixed and could be considered to fall within the scope of proposals submitted through this open call. Please revisit Section 4 (Scope) for the details.

It is worth specifically noting that the café/restaurant previously proposed for the clerestory roof (and depicted in these images) would not be feasible without significant investment. This is why this open call has restricted proposals for the clerestory roof to lightweight structures.
Appendix C

Old Street Iconic Gateway
Open Call for Design Ideas
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Open Call for Design Ideas

Source: Transport for London (TfL)
https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/old-street-roundabout/