

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Waterloo and South Bank is experiencing significant development and economic growth. With this growth come both benefits and challenges for the area, including increased pressure on infrastructure and the public realm. The Waterloo and South Bank Public Realm Framework has been developed in response to this dynamic context. It provides an assessment of existing public realm and identifies opportunities for public realm improvement across the area of Bishop's Ward, Lambeth.**



The Public Realm Framework is founded on a rigorous baseline study of local streets and spaces. It is principle-led, establishing six guiding principles to support better placemaking and a long-term approach to investment. Drawing on these six principles, 18 spatial briefs have been developed for sites across the area, outlining potential public realm improvements to be considered in each location. These spatial briefs are set out in a summary table, or matrix, that highlights the priority projects, identifies key stakeholders and suggests potential approaches to delivery.

Five priority projects have been identified that meet the guiding principles and will have an immediate major impact on the quality and experience of public realm in the area. These priority projects are: Victory Arch Square, Waterloo Bridge Undercroft, Concert Hall Approach, Sandell Street and Emma Cons Gardens. Of these, the last three have been further developed within the framework as illustrative concept designs, alongside an aspirational project for Coral Street.

The Public Realm Framework is objective and evidence-based. It is not a delivery plan, being directive rather than prescriptive. It is intended to inform the Lambeth Local Plan and other strategic documents, provide guidance to both the public and private sector, help to secure support and funding from a variety of public and private sources, and act as a catalyst for the improvement and investment necessary to support growth, resilience, independence and improved public realm.

### THE OPPORTUNITY

The economy of Waterloo and South Bank accounts for a third of all of Lambeth's employment and contributes around 40% of the Borough's business rates income. It has experienced strong growth in recent years, adding 600 businesses and 5,400 jobs since 2011.<sup>1</sup> Waterloo Station accommodates 99.4 million passengers every year, making it the UK's busiest.<sup>2</sup> As a global arts and culture destination, the South Bank draws visitors from around the world, including to the Southbank Centre, one of the most visited tourist attractions in the UK.<sup>3</sup> In addition to its pre-eminent cultural cluster and burgeoning business centre, the area is home to world-class health and educational institutions and a large, established residential community.<sup>4</sup> With 30 million visitors to the wider Waterloo and South Bank area annually, the public realm is heavily used by residents, students, commuters, workers and visitors alike.<sup>5</sup>

This level of demand is projected to increase, as economic growth is propelled by a pipeline of developments and expanding business and cultural activities across the creative and digital sectors. Alongside this trend towards development and growth, key challenges remain for the public realm across the area. Funding constraints, construction and general wear and tear all contribute to the need for strategic investment in and management of the public realm, unified by an overarching strategy. Safety and resilience of public spaces also requires careful consideration, with due regard to perception and inclusivity. These challenges in the public realm also constitute an opportunity—the chance to renew and reinvent the area's public spaces with a level of ambition, quality and coordination consistent with its local, national and international status.

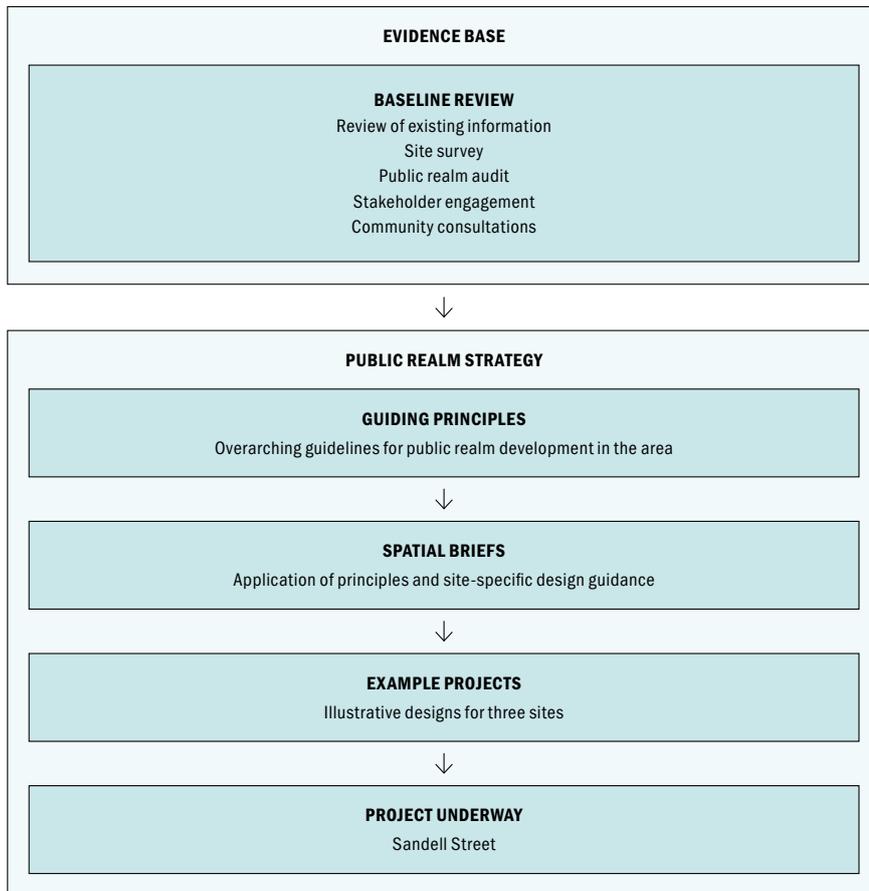
Developed through a close collaboration between Lambeth and Publica, this Public Realm Framework aims to encourage, inform and shape investment in the area's public realm, promoting continued dialogue and an integrated vision for the future of public realm in the area.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

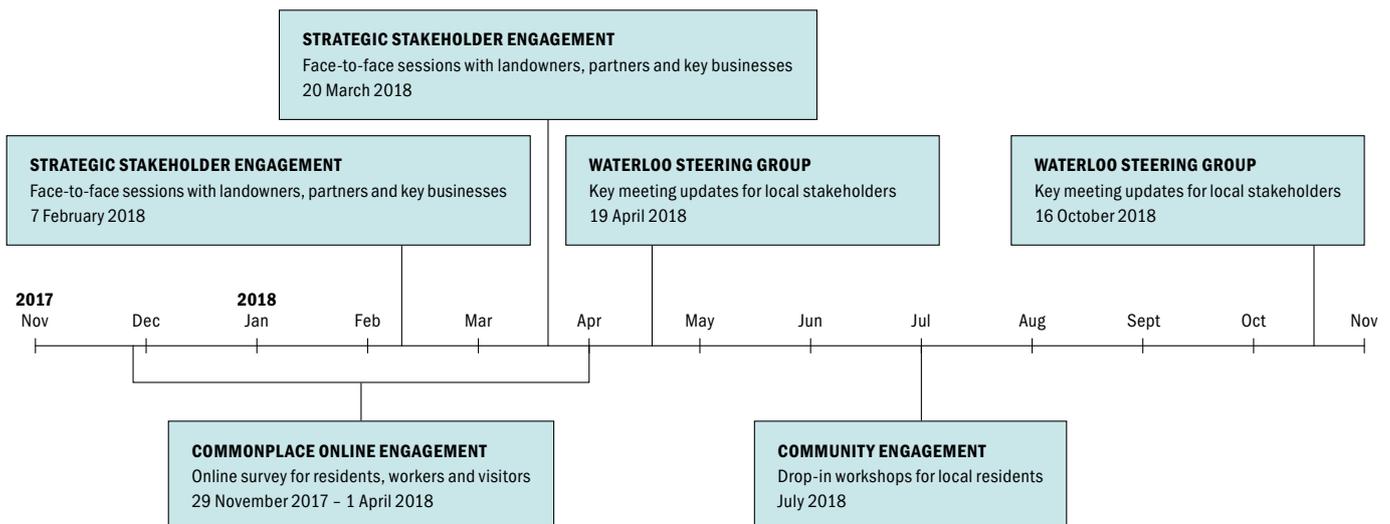
This Public Realm Framework is structured around six guiding principles for improving the public spaces of Waterloo and South Bank. These six principles emerged from an extensive process of research, local area studies and consultation, and provide guidance for all stakeholders concerned with the public realm.

The principles are:

- 1 Encourage the provision of civic amenity and green infrastructure, supporting accessibility, health and wellbeing for all
- 2 Celebrate and protect culture, heritage, and design excellence
- 3 Address the real and perceived barriers to movement, accessibility and legibility across the area
- 4 Integrate security features early in the design process to create coherent, safe streets and spaces
- 5 Maximise the positive impacts of development and minimise disruption
- 6 Design and plan for an environment with the capacity to support future growth



Project structure: from research to recommendations



Timeline of consultation and engagement from 2017 to 2018

## CONTEXT

The character of Waterloo and South Bank is shaped both by the varied physical environment of the area and by its notable diversity of users and complex patterns of use. The South Bank has a unique and unmistakeable urban setting where the powerful presence of the River Thames is complemented by bold architecture and a variety of open spaces. Elsewhere in the area, the character changes to quieter back streets and a mix of architectural scales, styles, and uses, while Jubilee Gardens, Bernie Spain Gardens, Waterloo Millennium Green, and the larger Archbishop's Park form the area's green spaces.

Culture, heritage, and design are all central to the character of Waterloo and the South Bank. Building on its significant history as an area of industry and commerce, a destination for theatre and performance and on the legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain, the area has an extraordinary architectural heritage, which includes many celebrated twentieth-century buildings including the National Theatre and the Southbank Centre.

James Robb Scott's Waterloo Station, which opened in 1848, is the most dominant element of the built environment, providing both a gateway to London from the south and south west and a focal point within the city itself. The area's elevated physical infrastructure, including Waterloo station and the viaducts, is a result of its historic development over marshland. It is an integral part of the area's character and identity, however, this infrastructure also subdivides the area, resulting in severance between neighbourhoods and a disjointed public realm. Improvement of legibility, ease of movement and wayfinding across the area have been identified as key issues throughout the development of the Framework and are recognised as priorities for the future of the area within the overarching principles.

The area's recent and ongoing growth has had a significant impact on its character, with additional development sites continuing to come forward, such as Royal Street and Elizabeth House. There are many positive examples in the area of meanwhile and temporary uses activating development sites, as well as new public spaces delivered alongside development that make the most of investment and partnership opportunities.

A critical issue often raised by stakeholders is the importance of future-proofing Waterloo and South Bank's public realm by integrating maintenance and management of streets and spaces into public realm improvement plans from the outset and then ensuring that these strategies are delivered alongside physical interventions. This issue has also been recognised within the overarching principles, as one aspect of the broader need to maximise the positive impacts of development.

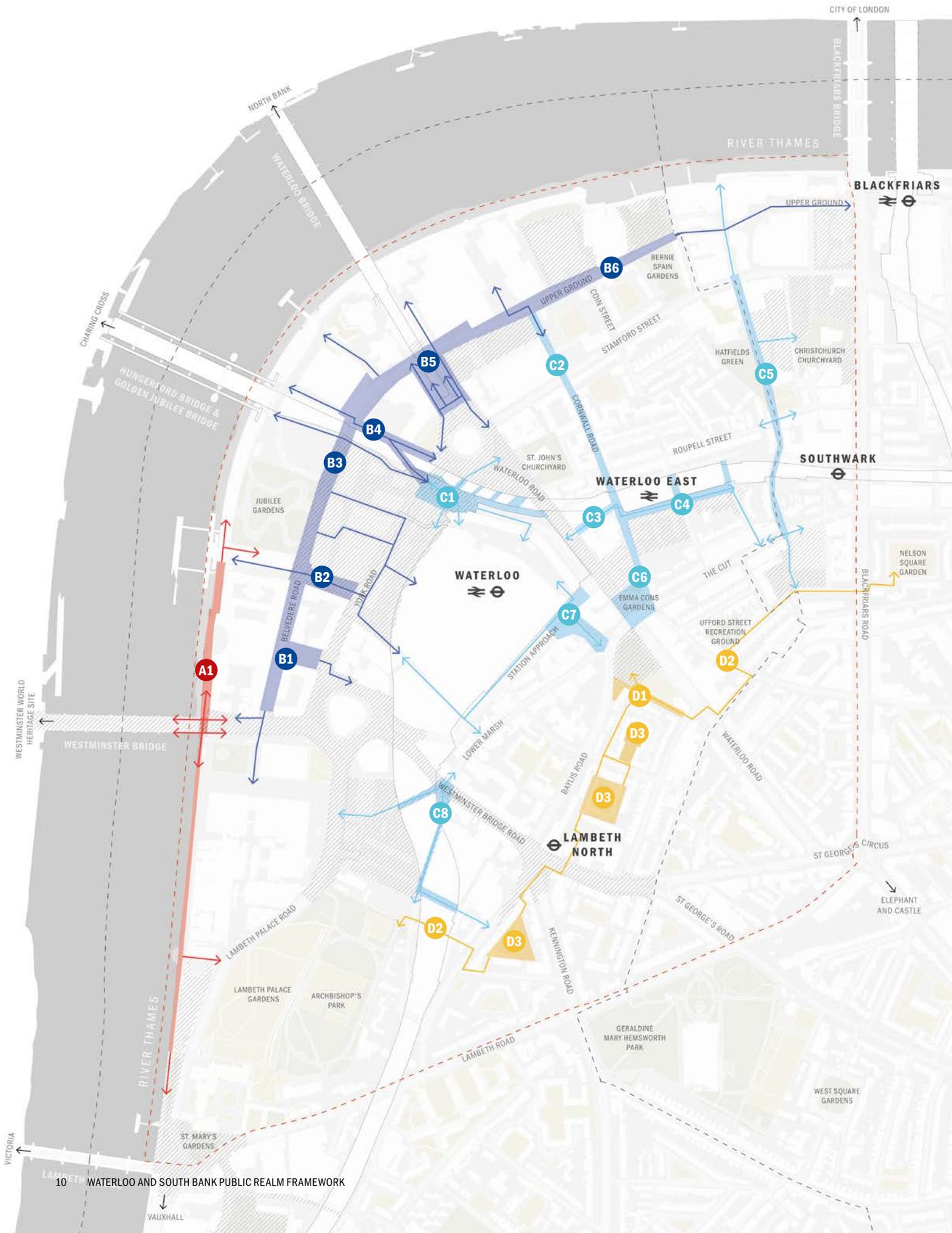
With Waterloo station at its centre and a wide range of cultural and entertainment uses throughout, Waterloo and South Bank remains busy throughout the day and into the night. While the cultural institutions are currently the main attractors in the evenings and at night, bars and restaurants also generate considerable activity. Creative cultural uses are increasingly making use of the railway arches and viaducts, staying open into the late evening, and the area's popularity as a tourist destination has brought a number of recently opened hotels. Significant night time activity is also generated by the presence of St Thomas' Hospital and by a range of uses relating to King's College London.

## METHODOLOGY

The Public Realm Framework has been developed in two stages, beginning with the production of the evidence base, which in turn provides the foundation for the strategic component of the Framework.

The evidence base for the Framework was established through comprehensive fieldwork and research, including on-site public realm surveys and data collection, mapping and analysis, photography, and research, as well as a public realm audit of key sites identified through the survey process. Engagement with the local community and stakeholders was central to the process. Stakeholder engagement has taken place in a variety of ways over the course of the project, including individual meetings, drop-in sessions, workshops and through the Commonplace online mapping tool.

FIG. 1 SPATIAL BRIEFS



## THE STRATEGY

The six overarching principles around which this Framework is organised provide guidance for the planning, design and delivery of public realm improvements across the Waterloo and South Bank area. Each principle incorporates a range of 'tactics' to support its application, and is accompanied by a precedent project, showing how the principle has been successfully realised elsewhere through an existing, built public realm scheme.

The six principles have, in turn, been applied at various scales to the Waterloo and South Bank area, resulting in the identification of a series of 18 proposed future projects, grouped strategically within four project 'families':

### A RIVER WALK

A1 Thames Path and the Queen's Walk

### B BELVEDERE ROAD AND UPPER GROUND

B1 Belvedere Road at County Hall

B2 Chicheley Street

B3 Belvedere Road at Jubilee Gardens

B4 Concert Hall Approach

B5 Waterloo Bridge Undercroft

B6 Upper Ground at Coin Street

### C STATION APPROACHES

C1 Victory Arch Square and Mepham Street

C2 Cornwall Road

C3 Sandell Street

C4 Southwark Station connection

C5 Hatfields

C6 Emma Cons Gardens

C7 Cab Road and Spur Road

C8 Upper Marsh and Carlisle Lane

### D ROUTES BETWEEN LOCAL GREEN SPACES

D1 Coral Street

D2 Route between Archbishop's Park and Ufford Street

D3 Green and open spaces within estates

Each of these project families has been defined based on common themes and issues, whether improving connections between the stations or enhancing the river promenade, for example. Among the project families, a committed priority for Lambeth will be to bring forward key projects within the family covering Belvedere Road and Upper Ground, often referred to as the 'Spine Route'.

Within each of these project families, a selection of projects have been identified for specific streets and spaces, summarised within a 'project matrix' that sits at the centre of the Framework. This table summarises key information about each project, including which of the strategic principles are most central to its realisation, as well as key stakeholders, its priority level for the area, its likely delivery approach and nearby or related developments. The matrix is followed by a compilation of spatial briefs for each of the projects listed. These written briefs are not designs, but rather sets of criteria that future public realm proposals for these locations should consider.

## PRIORITY PROJECTS

The spaces shown on the following page have been identified as priority projects within the matrix of spatial briefs. These projects are Emma Cons Gardens, Concert Hall Approach, Waterloo Bridge Undercroft, Victory Arch Square and Sandell Street. Priority projects have been selected based on the following criteria:

- They evidence the need for improvement and investment
- Their proposals align strongly with the six guiding principles
- They reflect local and/or strategic stakeholder aspirations and priorities
- The sites are strategic spaces with a broader impact across Waterloo and South Bank

FIG.1 SPATIAL BRIEFS

	River walk
	Belvedere Road and Upper Ground
	Station approaches
	Routes between local green spaces
	Ongoing or proposed developments

	Green open space - public
	Green open space - private
	Raised platform or viaduct
	River Thames

	Study area boundary
	Borough boundary



#### **C6 EMMA CONS GARDENS**

Family of projects: Station Approaches · Partnership-led

Emma Cons Gardens is a key gateway into Waterloo. It has a strategic location near the entrance to Waterloo Station and at the midpoint of the Central Activities Zone Frontage that joins Lower Marsh and The Cut. It is a pivotal space within the Public Realm Framework as it has the potential to draw together the local and metropolitan areas of Waterloo through a bold civic redesign, celebrating and amplifying existing cultural uses and planting.



#### **B4 CONCERT HALL APPROACH**

Family of projects: Belvedere Road and Upper Ground · Lambeth Council-led

Concert Hall Approach forms a strategic pedestrian link between Waterloo Station, South Bank and proposed public realm improvements at Waterloo City Hub. Already a popular walking route, it has the potential to become an active, pedestrian-friendly public space consistent with the international status of the destinations it connects.



#### **B5 WATERLOO BRIDGE UNDERCROFT**

Family of projects: Belvedere Road And Upper Ground · Development-Led

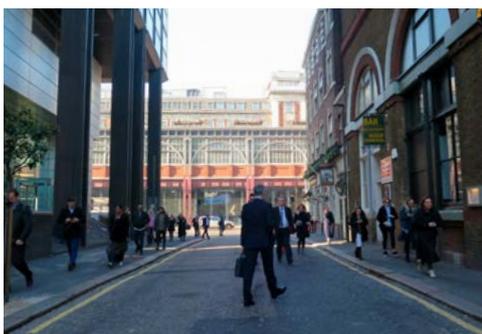
At the point where Belvedere Road turns into Upper Ground it intersects with several upcoming developments, including Waterloo City Hub. Here, there is the opportunity to connect this transformative scheme with the river, prioritising accessibility and intuitive wayfinding and enhancing the unique character of this multi-level space.



#### **C1 VICTORY ARCH SQUARE**

Family of Projects: Station Approaches · Development-Led

Victory Arch is one of the key entrances to Waterloo Station – the busiest terminus in the UK – yet its confusing public realm provides an inadequate gateway. As part of transformative neighbouring developments, there is the potential to create a civic arrival square that celebrates the railway architecture and utilises the adjacent arches and routes through Mephram Street to improve onward connections.



#### **C3 SANDELL STREET**

Family of Projects: Station Approaches · Lambeth Council-led

Sandell Street has a mix of characters and functions that change throughout the day. At peak hours it provides a key walking route between Waterloo East Station and Waterloo Station as well as onward connections to South Bank, The Cut and the new Southwark Station entrance proposed by TfL. During evenings and weekends, the restaurant, café and pub open out into the street, making it an active public space. Accommodating these functions can make Sandell Street a pleasant and dynamic space.

## CONCEPT DESIGNS

Of the 18 spatial briefs, four have been selected for further design development as illustrative concept designs, including more detailed recommendations, options and precedents. These projects have been selected to illustrate a variety of local, metropolitan and global spaces that would require different approaches to delivery.

The four illustrative concept designs include:

- two priority projects to be taken forward immediately, for Concert Hall Approach and Emma Cons Gardens;
- an aspirational project, for Coral Street;
- and a priority project already underway, for Sandell Street.

## CONCLUSION

Lambeth view this Framework as a tool to catalyse and build momentum for the delivery of improvements to key streets and spaces within Waterloo and South Bank. The enhancement of Sandell Street will feature as the first project for delivery within this Framework, taken forward by Lambeth Council. The Council are committed to supporting and encouraging other schemes to be brought forward and anticipate that a variety of delivery mechanisms will be required to realise these. Drawing on future plans, strategies and aspirations at a local, metropolitan and global level, this Framework aims to provide guidance and a useful tool towards ensuring design excellence while future-proofing the public realm of Waterloo and South Bank as the area evolves.



## ENDNOTES

- 1 Regeneris, Waterloo and Southbank Economic and Cultural Vision, October 2017, page 4
- 2 Network Rail, *10 things you didn't know about Waterloo Station* [accessed 20.03.19] Available from: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/10-things-you-didnt-know-about-waterloo-station>
- 3 Regeneris, Waterloo and Southbank Economic and Cultural Vision, October 2017, page 26
- 4 Ibid, page 39
- 5 Ibid, page 4