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# Maintaining momentum

Plan for  
Thamesmead  
2023–28

## About Peabody

Peabody is committed to improving, growing and looking after Thamesmead for the long term. We're taking a 'whole place approach' to the regeneration of the town. This means investing in Thamesmead's buildings and landscape. It also means working with local people and partners to create new opportunities and shape great places.

## About our Plan

Our Plan for Thamesmead 2023-28 is our core governing document for guiding our work across the town. It is supported by a range of strategies and plans, including Living in the Landscape and the Cultural Infrastructure Plan.



# Peabody in Thamesmead

The assets we own and manage.

Thamesmead Festival, Southmere Park

**65%**  
of land in Thamesmead

**5,600+**  
homes

**5**  
lakes

**15**  
community buildings

**107,000 m<sup>2</sup>**  
of lettable commercial/  
industrial space

**240ha**  
of green space

**5**  
public parks

**7km**  
of canals and waterways

**53,000**  
trees

**5km**  
of river frontage

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Public realm  
improvements,  
South Thamesmead

# Foreword

Thamesmead has all the makings of a thriving place: its unique balance of urban and natural spaces, proximity to central London and the Thames, and strong local communities.

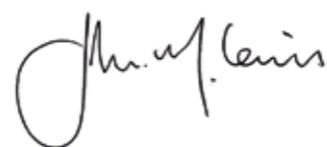
Our ongoing mission is to improve, grow and look after the town for the long term. This starts with us understanding people's needs and aspirations, and then working with communities to create outstanding places and new opportunities for people to thrive.

We've achieved a great deal in Thamesmead since we launched our first plan in 2018, as our highlights show. We have listened to, worked with and learned from local people and partners along the way.

Our plan for 2023 to 2028 is all about maintaining momentum, building on the many social, economic and environmental improvements we've collectively made. We're continuing to listen to residents' priorities and collaborate with them to improve their neighbourhoods, making sure growth and regeneration in the town is inclusive and benefits everyone.

Of course, there are still some significant challenges in Thamesmead, many of which stem from how it was originally designed and then managed. There is a pressing need for more shops and spaces to meet, within walking distance from people's homes, for instance, and for far better transport links into and around the town. This plan sets out the work we will be doing to help get this vital community infrastructure in place, along with other priorities.

We look forward to making the most of the growing energy, confidence and optimism in the town, forging new partnership, and continuing our work to fulfil Thamesmead's potential.



**John Lewis**  
Executive Director  
Thamesmead



Residents shaping the future of Claridge Way, The Moorings



# Highlights

Our key achievements between 2018 and 2023.



**1,866**  
people taking part in community activities or events led by residents

  
New civic square created in South Thamesmead

  
**£10m**  
invested in improving shared outdoor spaces

  
**12,000**  
people taking part in health and wellbeing activities

**£230,000**  
awarded to  
**114**  
local projects through the Thamesmead Community Fund

**£58,700**  
invested in **33** community-led nature-based projects through the Making Space for Nature fund (since 2021)

**1,000+**  
creative people paid to work on local projects

New cultural organisation  
**TACO!**  
established


  
**1,200**  
volunteer hours spent improving biodiversity

**600**  
new homes built

  
**£2.5m**  
invested in Southmere Lake improvements

  
**700+**  
businesses supported


**£10m**  
invested in improvements to Harrow Manorway


  
**300+**  
people supported into work

  
**300+**  
culture events held in the town


**6**  
community and cultural buildings created

  
**7,000+**  
visitors to Thamesmead Festival in 2022

  
Windows replaced in  
**19**  
tower blocks

  
**2,274**  
people referred to support services

  
**11,899**  
children and young people engaged in programmes and activities

  
Community library opened

**35+**  
artists working and living in Thamesmead through a partnership with Bow Arts and renovation of Lakeside Centre

Online environmental service  
**Fix My Street**  
launched

# Our approach

## Our vision

To see Thamesmead's potential realised

## Our mission

To improve, grow and look after the town for the long term

## Our aim

To work together with Thamesmead's communities to make life better

# Thamesmead in 2050

**100,000+**

people will be proud to call Thamesmead home



Growth will be inclusive, benefiting the existing community and newcomers

Residents will enjoy good quality homes and services

Improvements across neighbourhoods will be led by the community, with new opportunities provided for everyone

The town will be better connected, with new and improved transport links

All our homes for rent will be net zero carbon

The creative community will produce and curate exciting cultural spaces and events

New neighbourhoods in South and West Thamesmead, and along the Waterfront will offer quality spaces that make the town livelier

Thamesmead's remarkable landscapes will offer spaces where people and nature can thrive



Local people and groups will be flourishing thanks to strong community investment programmes



A stage at the Thamesmead Festival

## Looking after Thamesmead

We take a 'whole place' approach to the regeneration, investment and management of Thamesmead. This is shaped around key placemaking principles we've learnt along the way.

- **Places are complex.** There are many inseparable factors that shape the quality and character of a place. All of these are particular to individual local neighbourhoods. Everything should be guided by the local context, rather than being taken in isolation.
- **Every place has its own assets and strengths.** Most places work well in some respects and not so well in others, but generally have most of the right ingredients to be effective.
- **Improving places is a collective effort that needs to be directed and driven by people who use the place.** They know best about the area, so it's essential to respect their experience and expertise.
- **The process matters.** Good placemaking helps bring people together. As well as creating better outcomes for the area, it generates social value.
- **Making change happen takes long-term, dedicated effort.** While projects and programmes might formally end, places continually evolve. We should always consider long-term stewardship when thinking about the planning, design and management of places.



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# Strategic priorities

To guide this next phase of our work in Thamesmead, we've set four overarching strategic priorities.

## Maintain momentum

Build on the growing energy, confidence and optimism in Thamesmead's future

## Work well

Support Peabody's new model of delivering local services and make sure we deliver on what matters most to our customers

## Collaborate

Respect local people as experts in their own place, listen to their ideas and co-create solutions

## Secure the future

Move toward a stewardship approach to look after Thamesmead's unique landscape and assets



# Delivery plan

We organise our work into five placemaking themes. This section sets out our main objectives and how we will achieve them over the next five years.

## Town management

### Objective:

To ensure Thamesmead feels well managed and cared for, and that people have comfortable homes and access to outstanding shared spaces. This starts by getting the basics right for Thamesmead and providing what matters most to local people.

To achieve this we will:

- Bring our teams together through a new Thamesmead Operations Group, to improve the way we work.
- Create a new investment fund to maintain, restore and repair public spaces and continue to support our environmental services team in Thamesmead.
- Invest in customers' homes to make sure they are safe, good quality and well maintained, focusing on improving the energy performance of the properties we own.
- Bring partners together to address any safety and security concerns.



Basketball at  
The Cage, South  
Thamesmead

## Growth and regeneration

### Objective:

**Grow the town in a way that benefits the established community in Thamesmead and newcomers to the area, providing better quality homes and improved local amenities.**

To achieve this we will:

### Progress the South Thamesmead regeneration strategy

- Work with our partners and new businesses to activate Cygnet Square, supporting a programme of events and activities for everyone to enjoy.
- Complete the next phase of redevelopment. By 2028, we aim to complete phase 2, delivering at least 329 new homes and new public spaces around Southmere Lake; start phase 3, delivering around 400 homes; and have a delivery strategy in place for phases 4 to 7 to deliver over 1,500 homes with improved public spaces.
- Prioritise support for residents in the Lesnes Estate as the neighbourhood is gradually prepared for demolition and rebuilding. This includes managing the neighbourhood to a good standard, and helping residents move into their new homes in phase 2 of South Thamesmead or elsewhere if they prefer.
- Prepare a new improvement strategy for the Parkview neighbourhood.
- Explore concepts and options for restoring the Southmere neighbourhood, learning from the ideas generated in Parkview.

An edible garden in South Thamesmead ▼



Cygnet Square,  
South Thamesmead





The Thamesmead Waterfront site

**Progress the Thamesmead Waterfront project and continue to support the Joint Venture Partnership between Peabody and Lendlease**

- Continue to work with partners to build the case to bring the Docklands Light Railway to Thamesmead, with an aspiration that construction will be close to starting at the end of this five-year plan.
- Progress plans for the first stage of development on the Waterfront, agreeing the planning strategy and preparing for construction to start.
- Keep the current town centre active, exploring engaging and interesting uses to make sure it serves the local area well during this five-year period.

- Complete the closure, capping and landscaping of the landfill site, supporting the future use of the area within the Thamesmead Waterfront project.

**Support the development of the new neighbourhood at Plumstead West Thamesmead**

- Work with Berkeley Homes to progress the development, which will provide over 1,950 new homes as well as open green space and new commercial premises.
- Prepare for the new community to move in, with the first new residents expected to move in midway through this five-year plan and the development to be close to completion by the end of the plan.

**Prepare strategies for future growth and supporting infrastructure**

- Explore options for our undeveloped sites, including the Reach Phase 2 (encompassing the former Princess Alice Pub), Broadwater Dock, 500 Abbey Road and Crossquarter.
- Explore the feasibility of a Thamesmead-wide heat network to decarbonise the heat supply in Thamesmead.
- Explore options for solar photovoltaic panels on roofs and in underused spaces, and other sustainable infrastructure such as electric car charging points.

**Continue to manage our commercial and industrial portfolio**

- Prepare a strategy for the West Thamesmead industrial area.
- Refresh neighbourhood retail hubs at Lime Row, Winchat, Parkview and Charlesmere Gardens, which provide essential amenities for local residents.

# Landscape

**Objective:**

**Harness the power of Thamesmead’s unique landscape to benefit people and nature. Fulfil the ambitions set out in our green infrastructure framework, Living in the Landscape.**

To achieve this we will:

**Realise the full potential of Thamesmead’s lakes and canals (the ‘big blue’)**

- Look to integrate sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) into relevant projects, developing expertise and learning across Peabody, and collecting evidence to demonstrate their value.
- Look for opportunities to trial canal restoration and naturalisation, alongside new management techniques to improve the quality of all waterways.

**Maintain and create habitat for wildlife (a ‘wilder Thamesmead’)**

- Progress the Thamesmead Biodiversity Action Plan and net gain strategy. Work with partners to develop the baseline and monitoring plan.
- Seek new opportunities to protect, enhance and restore biodiversity, working with our environmental services team in Thamesmead and external partners to create and develop new habitats.

Crossness Marshes



- Continue to increase wildflower meadows and plans for the grasslands, developing expertise and skills within Peabody’s team.
- Develop a plan for creating Thamesmead’s Urban Forest, including a 5 to 10-year succession plan to diversify tree species.
- Ensure all projects integrate biodiversity measures, building expertise within Peabody on the best ways to do this.

**Facilitate growing, enterprise and education projects (a ‘productive landscape’)**

- Test and develop our social gardening programme, to create a network of community-led gardening and growing in Thamesmead that answers local need and demand for growing space.
- Continue to develop Tump 53 as a centre of excellence for outdoor education and landscape skills. Consider opportunities to reconnect people with the remaining tumps.

An outdoor learning session





### Develop the right infrastructure in our open spaces for sports, activities and play (an 'active Thamesmead')

- Establish a seasonal water sports programme, including support for the new Southmere Watersports Club and open water swimming at Birchmere Lake.
- Work with partners, including the Moorings Neighbourhood Forum, to increase opportunities for people to be active and get closer to nature in Birchmere Park. This includes restoring the unused changing rooms.
- Develop a resident and play expert panel to refurbish and reimagine play areas across Thamesmead, including established play areas and new ones, exploring options for community members to consider how to spend the budget.
- Help create routes and remove physical barriers to enable a range of sports and leisure pursuits in the parks and open spaces, including the Thamesmead parkrun, triathlon routes and BMX adventure routes.

### Make it easier to get around Thamesmead (a 'connected Thamesmead')

- Prepare new routes, signage and wayfinding, and a delivery plan to improve cycling and walking routes across the town.
- Bring together partners to work on active travel and connections across the area.
- Connect the River Thames to Southmere Lake through the former golf course, with a welcoming, safe and accessible pathway, co-produced with the community.

### Move to stewardship – long-term planning, partnerships and community building

- Produce a new Thamesmead Stewardship Plan, which embeds the principles of Living in the Landscape into our estate management work.
- Continue to develop the Making Space for Nature programme, increasing volunteering and skills development opportunities to connect people with nature.





▲ Street dance group Dynamix performing in Southmere Square



The Black Culture Collective

## Culture

**Objective:**

Ensure Thamesmead is a prime example of sustainable, unique and ambitious community-led cultural activity. Support the community to create culture that will flourish in the long term, provide different spaces to bring people together to experience exciting cultural activities, and grow Thamesmead's reputation as a unique cultural destination.

To achieve this we will:

**Improve access to spaces so that culture can thrive throughout the town**

- Establish Southmere as a new cultural district, working with current cultural partners and new organisations coming to the neighbourhood to develop a vision and marketing plan for the area.
- Support Bow Arts to develop long-term artist residences at the Lakeside Centre.
- Develop cultural activity for the new neighbourhood at Plumstead West Thamesmead in collaboration with Berkeley Homes.
- Embed long-term cultural infrastructure into the Thamesmead Waterfront, starting with creating spaces for culture in the existing town centre.
- Find new ways to host cultural activities in our community buildings, including evening and weekend events to start a night-time economy.
- Activate existing empty spaces across Thamesmead, such as garages or vacant commercial units.
- Encourage the use of our open and green spaces by small-scale community and cultural groups, making it easier to host activities and events.



Thamesmead Culture Guide and Directory



Thamesmead Festival fun



Thamesmead Codex by Bob and Roberta Smith

**Enable locally-led cultural activity, building community capacity, skills and planning for the long term**

- Create the Thamesmead Ministry of Culture by recruiting a new community leadership group to establish ways of creating culture that is meaningful and relevant to local communities.
- Develop a skills and training programme for local creatives, including fundraising and business development.
- Progress the Thamesmead Open competition with an aim to establish a new creative organisation or enterprise.
- Develop a paid internship model with local cultural organisations.
- Support the Thamesmead Festival Production Group to develop and ensure this community-led event is self-sustaining into the future.
- Support local artists and residents to develop more murals, leading to a Thamesmead-wide street art festival.
- Continue to host the Three Rivers programme, which is empowering local people to make culture across Bexley, and look for opportunities to extend the programme after 2024.

**Building our cultural profile by keeping Thamesmead’s culture ‘weird and wonderful’ with a range of large scale and unique events**

- Keep growing the Thamesmead Festival year on year as a unique flagship event in South London, supporting the community-led model.
- Continue the annual partnership with Greenwich+Docklands International Festival to bring relevant and thought-provoking outdoor performances into Thamesmead.
- Develop the next Thamesmead Light Festival as a way to connect with communities through the winter months.
- Attract high profile cultural partners to host events in Thamesmead, ensuring it’s simple and straightforward for them to access our spaces, inside and out.
- Explore national and international partnerships, learning from others, and sharing our Thamesmead models and experiences.
- Showcase the variety of Thamesmead’s rich cultural offer, through revitalised communications and signage.

Light The Way, our winter light festival



Fields of Everywhen, Thamesmead’s flying artwork



## People and community

### Objective:

**To build communities which are healthier, wealthier and happier.**

**To do this through Peabody's community investment strategy which focuses on four areas of work: tackling inequality and poverty; embedding wellbeing; customer co-creation; and community activities and programmes.**

To achieve this we will:

- Create a thriving, inclusive economy. To do this by providing residents with access to skills, qualifications, apprenticeships and employment support; and by providing businesses with access to training programmes and networks to help them start, scale and grow.
- Support families, children and young people, working with partners to create opportunities to bring communities together. This includes supporting strategic and integrated services – such as the family hub pilot, holiday and food programmes and advice hub – and creating ways for young people to lead and benefit from the regeneration.
- Encourage an active and healthy Thamesmead, working with community members and partners to support health and wellbeing priorities across the town. This includes developing infrastructure, training and support for activities such as cycling, as well as delivering partnership projects such as the Connecting Thamesmead programme with Bexley and Greenwich councils, and the Positive Steps programme.
- Offering spaces and support for community groups, including managing and programming our community spaces in Thamesmead, and empowering grassroots organisations to develop through support and community grants.
- Work with local people to co-create a range of activities and events to benefit communities.
- Establish a network around sustainability, finding interested residents to create a programme of community-led initiatives and education around sustainable lifestyles and choices.



Multi-sports  
programme  
for young  
people



Digital Support Sessions at  
The Moorings Sociable Club

# Sustainable placemaking

This section outlines several themes and activities underpinning all our work.

## Sustainability

We are taking urgent action to mitigate the effects of climate change, meet the UK's net zero targets for 2050, and address the biodiversity crisis. The scale of Peabody's land and assets

in Thamesmead provides a unique opportunity for us to find innovative solutions to sustainable living. In 2022, we developed our long-term sustainability action plan.

### Decarbonisation

Working towards our net-zero carbon targets for all homes

### Nature-based solutions

Increasing biodiversity and the climate resilience of open spaces

### Sustainable travel

Increasing active travel and reducing the need for people to travel so far

### Culture change

Having the right things in place so we and residents can lead sustainable, healthy lives



Planting the Tiny Forest in South Thamesmead

## Communications

We want to make sure people know about the positive changes taking place across Thamesmead, the many opportunities on offer and how they can get involved.

We'll continue to keep in touch with people in many ways, including

- The Talk of Thamesmead newspaper which goes out to 17,000 residents
- The Thamesmead Now website
- Regular e-newsletters

We want to make sure these publications reflect local voices, with residents encouraged to submit relevant content and given opportunities to co-produce Talk of Thamesmead.



## Community engagement and co-creation

We want improvements across Thamesmead to be community-led wherever possible. This means working shoulder to shoulder with the community, listening to their priorities and co-creating solutions.

There is a rich network of community groups, forums and volunteers bringing like-minded people together to deliver excellent work across Thamesmead. Supporting these groups is key.

Over the last few years, we've trialled different ways to co-design and co-produce projects. This work involves plenty of resource, but the rewards are significant. We'll continue to build on our learning and test new approaches over the next five-year period.

As well as formal co-creation routes within projects, we also want people to know where to go if they have a question or feedback for us about the changes happening in Thamesmead.

Over the next year, we will review and refresh our approach to community engagement and co-creation, analysing what's been learnt so far and exploring ways to do more. This will be aligned to the Group's new Customer Experience and Culture strategies.

Summer in Southmere Park



## Equality, diversity and inclusion

Peabody is committed to building a truly diverse and inclusive organisation, where our colleagues and customers have a sense of belonging, are valued, respected for who they are, and supported to be the best they can.

For us, equality means ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. Diversity is about celebrating the rich diversity of everyone, recognising and valuing our differences. Inclusion is actively working to meet the needs of different people taking action, remove any barriers to participation and creating an environment where everyone feels valued and respected, and able to be themselves.

We celebrate that London – and Thamesmead – are among the most diverse places in the country. Thamesmead has strong communities, one of the youngest populations in London, and the largest West African population in the UK.

We want to make sure our work is inclusive for all residents and community members and meets their needs. We recognise the effects of inequality, discrimination and stigma are far-reaching and can have a huge impact on individuals and communities. It's our responsibility to look within our organisation and beyond it to deliver change.

We will actively create a new working group for equality, diversity and inclusion in Thamesmead. We will listen to local people and commission research if necessary to understand inequalities and how we can address them. As part of a new inclusive community engagement and co-creation strategy, we will set out how to ensure our work remains inclusive, shaped by community needs.

The Camouflage Cafe in The Moorings Sociable Club



# Social value, ESG and impact

We have been at the forefront of establishing best practice reporting on ESG across the organisation, and our work in Thamesmead is central to this. We look to maximise social value through our procurement and partners. This will be tracked and reported annually.

In 2018, we commissioned a longitudinal study of the work we are doing in Thamesmead, which will complete at the end of 2023. We will use the findings to inform our ongoing work, helping us to deal with issues and take advantage of new opportunities, in response to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

Meeting at The Moorings Sociable Club



Active Well Thamesmead Programme

**THAMESMEAD** 



**thamesmeadnow.org.uk**



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