



OCEAN REGENERATION TRUST

BUSINESS PLAN

2017/18 – 2021/22

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Ocean Regeneration Trust (ORT) is committed to making sure that residents living on the Ocean Estate in Tower Hamlets benefit from the regeneration of the area. Local benefits and opportunities are not just new and refurbished homes, schools, community facilities and much improved public and open spaces but also the social and economic changes of regeneration, including employment, education and training, improvements to health and well-being, and a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.

1.2 ORT has been created as the successor body to the Ocean NDC to promote the socio-economic regeneration of the Ocean area and to hold assets, receive income and generate income for the benefit of the local community. It has long been the intention that ORT should take over the lease of the Harford Street (HS) Multicentre community space, sublet parts of it and be responsible for the management of the premises.

1.3 To guarantee ORT's long term sustainability, LB Tower Hamlets agreed to allocate the Trust resources based on:

- The ground rents from the new build residential units for market sale completed under the main regeneration scheme;
- The transfer of revenue from the new build Council-owned retail units completed under the main regeneration scheme on the north side of Ben Jonson Road;
- The granting of a long lease from the Council on the HS Multicentre community space.

ORT has received revenue from the Council-owned retail units on the south side of Ben Jonson Road from 2011/12 to 2016/17 to overcome the shortfall in funding while the ground rents accrued and the north side retail units were completed, marketed and let.

1.4 A report will go to the Commissioners in February 2017 seeking approval to:

- pay ORT a grant of £200K per annum for five years from 2017/18 to 2021/22.

The Council will seek to link payment of the grant to ORT:

- signing a five year lease for the Harford Street Multicentre community space for the period 2017/18 – 2021/22;
- delivering the outcomes of the Ocean and Limehouse Fields Strategic Review.

1.5 The nature of the Trust means that the Council will be a major funder. ORT is aware of the need to diversify revenue streams as much as possible and will fundraise from other sources to secure additional support to develop new projects and to support/enhance the activities of partner organisations working in the area.

1.6 The purpose of this Business Plan is to set out ORT's priorities for the next five years and the activities and initiatives it will undertake to meet its objectives and funding obligations.

- 1.7 The Business Plan is prepared on the assumption that in each financial year the Trust will receive from the Council a grant of £200K associated with the Ben Jonson Road retail units and ground rents amounting to approximately £105K.

2. THE OCEAN ESTATE

PLACE

- 2.1 The Ocean Estate is situated in Central Stepney within the LB Tower Hamlets St Dunstan's ward. The core area covered by ORT, coterminous with the old Ocean NDC core area, is bounded by Mile End Road to the north, the Regent's Canal to the east, Halley Street, Aston Street, Matlock Street and Belgrave Street along the southern edge, and Stepney Green to the west.
- 2.2 It is primarily residential in nature with Ben Jonson Road at its heart. Ben Jonson Road functions as the high street for the neighbourhood, with the Harford Street Multicentre at one end and Stepney City Farm at the other; in between are a variety of shops and community facilities including Stepney Green Maths, Computing & Science College and the Haileybury Youth Centre. Just south of Ben Jonson Road is the church of St Dunstan and All Saints, dating back to the 10th century, around which grew the old medieval village which later expanded to become Stepney.
- 2.3 Shandy Park is the main green space in the neighbourhood and it is situated on the former site of the East London Cemetery or Beaumont Burial Ground (which was founded by Captain J T Barber Beaumont, as part of housing that he built on his land here. The cemetery closed in 1852 and in 1885 it was made into a children's recreation ground, maintained by the LCC who leased the site from the Beaumont family. The park is now owned and managed by LB Tower Hamlets). In addition there are four other smaller parks: Beaumont Square Gardens, Trafalgar Gardens, White Horse Lane Open Space and Whitehorse Road Park. Just outside the eastern boundary of the area is the 79 acre Mile End Park, created on industrial and housing land devastated by intensive bombing during World War II.
- 2.4 The housing redevelopment over the last 16 years has gradually reshaped the landscape, the land uses and the physical character of the area. Whilst some housing development has been of derelict sites like the old Stepney Gas Works on Harford Street, mostly it has taken place on Council housing land through a mixture of refurbishment and redevelopment. Although much of the housing stock has remained social housing (52.9%¹), there has been a diversification of social landlords (24.7% rented from the Council and 28.2% from a variety of other registered housing providers). Increasingly there is a greater mix of housing tenure with a rise in the number of properties rented from a private landlord or letting agency (19.3%) and the proportion of properties being built for private sale. Tenure diversification is having some impact on the local demography.

¹ Unless otherwise stated, figures are taken from the Ocean Profile 2013, Vail & Associates for Ocean Regeneration Trust, February 2014

PEOPLE

2.5 According to the 2013 Ocean Profile, there are 7,459 people (2,574 households) living in the area. The population has grown by 23% since the NDC programme began in 2000, and it continues to rise. While the rate of population growth is below the Tower Hamlets average (29.6%), it is greater than for Central London (16.7%) and all of London (14%). The area has one of the highest population densities in the borough.

Key features:

- The age profile is skewed towards younger and older age groups – aged under 25 (42.1%), aged 25 to 64 (50.7%), aged over 64 (7.2%)
- A relatively high proportion of residents' health is bad or very bad (7.4%) than Tower Hamlets overall (6%) or London (4.9%)
- The proportion of population belonging to black and minority ethnic communities is higher (69.9%) than Tower Hamlets overall (64.2%) or London (40.2%)
- 40.7% of the population does not have English as their main language (and 11% cannot speak English well or at all)
- A lower proportion of the population have a Level 4 plus qualification (31.7%) than Tower Hamlets overall (43.6%) or London (40.5%); and more local people have no formal qualifications (20.3%) than Tower Hamlets overall (15.6%) or London (14.8%)
- A high proportion of the population have never worked or are long-term unemployed (18.5%) than Tower Hamlets overall (13.4%) or London (8.2%)
- A low proportion of people are in managerial and professional occupations (26.8%) than Tower Hamlets overall (36.1%) or London (36.3%)
- Rates of home ownership are lower (24.8%) than Tower Hamlets overall (26.6%) or London (49.5%).

2.6 With population growth, the demographic character of the population has altered but perhaps not as much as had initially been anticipated. The changing demographic has several causes: the longer term effect of the transfer from social to private housing through right-to-buy, recent rises in property values and the impact of housing redevelopment to diversify tenure. The demographic shifts can be summarised as follows:

- Alongside the increase in housing stock (up 26.2%), there has been a diversification of tenure with a small increase in home ownership (up 0.8%) accounted for by right-to-buy, the greater availability of shared ownership (up 6.4%), a rise in private rented properties (up 7.3%) and a decrease in social rented properties (8.1%).
- The age profile of the area has changed with the proportion of 25 to 44 year olds up from 30.2% to 38.2%. The age groups either side also increased: 18 to 24 up 1.2% and 45 to 59 up 1.1%. All other age groups showed a proportional fall, the largest being in 5 to 17 year olds down from 22.1% to 18%.
- There has been a shift in socio-economic groups, the number of residents in higher managerial and professional occupations increased from 291 to 463 (although the relative proportion within the local population has only changed by 1.4%).

- The proportion of White British has declined by 8.7% and Bangladeshi by 1.9% whilst the proportion of White Other has increased by 3.9% and Mixed Ethnicity by 2.4%.

The social statistics depict a depressing scenario of entrenched deprivation. The Ocean Estate is still firmly anchored amongst the worst 20% of neighbourhoods in the country.

RECENT HISTORY

- 2.7 A total of £85 million funding was secured from successive governments for two regeneration programmes: in 1995, from the Single Regeneration Budget for the Central Stepney SRB Programme (£28.4 million) and in 2000, from the New Deal for Communities Programme for the Ocean NDC (£56.6 million). The regeneration funding in turn levered in additional public and private investment. Over the period the estimated total amount of regeneration expenditure has been in excess of £400 million, with an overwhelming proportion directed at physical improvements, predominantly to the housing stock through a mixture of refurbishment and redevelopment, with smaller amounts spent on public and community buildings and on the environment. Spending on social and economic initiatives to benefit local residents and businesses has been less plentiful.
- 2.8 Government funding for the Ocean NDC programme came to an end in 2010. A Transformational Regeneration Strategy was developed to maintain the benefits and achievements of the NDC programme for the longer term and £14 million of funding was earmarked to deliver the strategy. At the same time, the Council embarked upon a five year £200 million housing programme for the Ocean Estate.
- 2.9 The new housing programme contained major refurbishment and redevelopment schemes. The refurbishment aspect consisted of external renewal works to around 1,109 homes and internal works to 700 homes to bring them up to Decent Homes Standard; the redevelopment entailed the demolition of 338 rundown Council properties and their replacement with over 800 newly built homes (296 homes for affordable rental, 100 for shared ownership and 420 for private sale). In addition, 1,300 m² of new retail and community facilities were created alongside extensive environmental improvements. However, the socio-economic programmes delivered by the Ocean NDC were scaled back significantly.
- 2.10 The final phase of the physical regeneration of the Ocean Estate began in August 2015 with the demolition of three residential towers – Allonby House, Channel House and Studland House, comprising 120 properties. They will be replaced by 225 new homes – 92 affordable rented, 29 intermediate and 104 properties for private sale, and improved publicly accessible amenity space. Construction is due to be completed in 2018.
- 2.11 Several arguments can be advanced to explain why high levels of deprivation and disadvantage persist in spite of the substantial investment in the area. The first is simply that the area has improved but so too have other neighbourhoods and its relative position has remained static. Another explanation is the “revolving doors” hypothesis, which suggests that when the life circumstances of deprived residents improve they move out of the area only to be replaced by other more disadvantaged incomers. Finally, there

is an extensive body of research that argues that Area Based Initiatives like the SRB and NDC programmes are powerless to tackle poverty and inequality as they are structural problems inherent in the economic basis of society and need to be addressed at a national level.

2.12 Perhaps this is an unduly pessimistic assessment of the possibility for social and economic change. People do have the capacity individually and collectively to transform the world they live in and communities have shown that they have the resilience and capacity to cope with and bounce back from natural and economic disasters. There are many examples of successful community initiatives on the Ocean Estate and these should be supported and developed. The Council also recognises that it has a key role in using its resources to ensure the positive benefits of growth and that they are used to provide sustainable solutions to deeply ingrained local deprivation.

3. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 LB Tower Hamlets' Community Plan is a key document articulating the Council's vision for Tower Hamlets to 2020. The Community Plan is not set in stone and will evolve as plans develop to achieve the vision for the borough and as other key strategies, like the Community Safety Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Children's and Families Plan, are reviewed.

3.2 In developing the new Community Plan, emphasis has been placed on the need for something that builds on and complements existing partnership work. For this reason, the existing Community Plan themes that partners have organised themselves around for some years have been retained. They are:

- **A Great Place to Live**

Tower Hamlets will be a place where people live in good quality affordable housing, located in clean and safe neighbourhoods served by well-connected and easy to access services and community facilities.

- **A Fair and Prosperous Community**

Tower Hamlets will be a place where everyone, regardless of their background and circumstances, has the aspiration and opportunity to achieve their full potential.

- **A Safe and Cohesive Community**

Tower Hamlets will be a safe place where people feel safer, get on better together and difference is not seen as a threat but a core strength of the borough.

- **A Healthy and Supportive Community**

Tower Hamlets will be a place where people are supported to live healthier, more independent lives and risk of harm and neglect to vulnerable children and adults is reduced.

3.3 In developing the new plan the Council looked at areas of work that don't fit neatly into one of the four community themes and at challenges which have been resistant to

improvement in the past and developed a set of high level and cross-cutting priorities which will be the focus for the lifetime of the plan.

3.4 Four priorities are proposed:

- Empowering residents and building resilience
- Promoting healthier lives
- Increasing employment
- Responding to population growth.

3.5 Although presented as distinct themes and priorities, they are not mutually exclusive but interdependent. Collectively they help support the cross-cutting social, economic and environmental change necessary to improve the lives of local people. For this reason the ORT Business Plan reflects the ambitions, aspirations and priorities of the Community Plan.

3.6 The Community Plan identified that there are some long term and emerging challenges within the borough:

- Persistent low employment levels, particularly for women and some ethnic minorities;
- High levels of child poverty and the impact of welfare benefit changes on an already deprived community;
- Local people priced out by spiralling housing prices and the danger of a polarised community;
- Low levels of health and life expectancy;
- Growth and development impacting on local infrastructure and services;
- The need to be vigilant and tackle the potential for radicalisation and extremism; and
- A further programme of austerity and public sector cuts arising from the Spending Review and a consequent Medium Term Financial Strategy savings target of £59 million over the next three years to 2020.

All of these challenges are pertinent to the Ocean Estate.

4. ORT PRIORITIES

4.1 ORT's vision is to improve the quality of life of all those who live and work on the Ocean Estate and to increase the number of people in the area who contribute actively to making the Ocean and surrounding neighbourhoods a better place.

4.2 The principles underlying the Trust's priorities are focused on a desire to:

- Focus on those tasks that ORT is best placed to undertake
- Build on existing work and avoid duplication
- Draw on the relevant experience of all those connected with the area and concerned to see Ocean residents benefit from the regeneration of the area

- Participate in commissioning other work as necessary to support the wider objectives.

4.3 The Board has agreed a number of objectives to guide the Trust's work. These are:

- Improving education, particularly English language skills, and training levels for adults and children
- Tackling unemployment
- Improving health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy lifestyles
- Supporting local shops and businesses to ensure economic regeneration of the neighbourhood is not side lined
- Monitoring the impact of benefit and welfare changes and helping to leverage additional resources to address poverty on the estate.

4.4 To provide a robust benchmark against which ORT and other local organisations can measure progress, the Trust commissioned research to produce an up-to-date rounded picture of the Ocean area and how it has changed in the decade 2001 to 2011. Based on 40 datasets and key indicators, this work will be updated regularly.

4.5 To help achieve its goals and address social need in the area, ORT will work with partners with successful track records in supporting families, young people and adults of all ages to learn new skills, find employment, improve health and wellbeing and develop confidence.

5. ORT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

5.1 This is not an exhaustive list of programmes and projects ORT will be involved with. Resources permitting, we will support other initiatives where we believe we have a contribution to make and which will help meet our objectives and the needs of the Ocean community.

Stepney Life Centre

"Learners at the (Stepney Life Centre) make exceptional progress in developing their literacy skills through a wide range of relevant courses. Many of these learners progress rapidly through several levels and then into vocational qualifications ... The wider benefits to these learners in relation to building their confidence and self-esteem are outstanding. The contribution that this project makes to local community cohesion is excellent." Ofsted 2015

5.2 Based at the HS Multicentre, the Stepney Life Centre partnership between ORT and City Gateway Women's Programmes continues to provide outstanding outcomes and progression for women living on the Ocean Estate, in local wards and across Tower Hamlets. Demand for courses continues to outstrip available programmes with all courses full to capacity and waiting lists in place. The Stepney Life Centre offers a unique service in Tower Hamlets, being the only women's programme to offer a full training pathway from pre-ESOL, through ESOL, functional skills and vocational courses, to

employment support and into work. To date ORT and City Gateway have invested more than £410,000 in the partnership.

- 5.3 Since the successful launch of the project in May 2015, there has been a good response to outreach work and attendance rates have been excellent with more than 250 women from diverse sections of the community currently signed up for courses.
- 5.4 Programmes include Advice Café and Money Management, Childcare, Women's Voice and Inspiration Women, ESOL Entry Level 1, 2 and 3, English and Maths Functional Skills, Apprenticeships, Employment Support and Work Experience, ICT and Business Administration. All courses are free of charge and crèche facilities are available to those attending on the designated crèche days.
- 5.5 The percentage of women attending from the Ocean Estate is steadily increasing as outreach in the area becomes more focussed and in the past year has risen from 29.5% to 34.7% of the total.
- 5.6 Over the period of this Business Plan, we will grow the Stepney Life Centre to include cohesive programmes that impact as large a section of Ocean Estate society as possible, directed and led by local need. We will expand the outreach strategy to include training local volunteers, partnering with local schools, children's centres and GP surgeries, door knocking, flyers and conversations in the street, in libraries, at markets and at school gates.
- 5.7 A Joint Steering Group has overall responsibility for the strategy, priorities and performance of the Stepney Life Centre. The Steering Group regularly updates the City Gateway and ORT boards on the delivery and success of the programme and reports any divergence from projected expenditure or delivery and fundraising targets.
- 5.8 ORT and the City Gateway fundraising team are working together to raise finance to expand and improve the services available year on year.

Limehouse Project Welfare Benefit Advice and Guidance and Employment Support

- 5.9 ORT will continue to work with Limehouse Project to ensure that local residents are best placed to understand, deal with and take proactive action to improve circumstances both for themselves and their families. This is especially important at this time when the benefits and tax credits system is undergoing significant reform and many Ocean residents have to cope with huge, and at times confusing, change.
- 5.10 Limehouse Project has secured funding from LB Tower Hamlets (MSG funding programme) to deliver advice services covering the LAP 3 area until 2018. ORT is committed to ensuring that the services continue to be delivered to residents of the Ocean Estate from the HS Multicentre, a location that is accessible and well known to them.

5.11 The advice services and employment training programmes delivered from the HS Multicentre are tailored to meet the most pressing needs of the local population, be that helping the most disadvantaged people out of debt, giving health advice, certifying human rights claims or providing support to find the right training or to seek employment. The aim is to provide the knowledge and guidance that will empower people to act for themselves.

Community grants

5.12 To strengthen links with local community and resident groups, ORT will continue to run an annual round of community grants to support local community projects that can demonstrate strong community engagement and are driven by local need. We consider we have an important role to play in stimulating and encouraging community groups and individuals to contribute to community life and the ongoing regeneration of the Ocean area.

5.13 We want to fund projects that help meet our priorities and preference will be given to those that focus on:

- Employment, enterprise, training and education opportunities
- Engaging young people in positive activities
- Promoting wellbeing and inclusion
- Connecting older people
- Healthier finances.

To encourage collaborative working, there will be a limited number of grants of up to £10,000 reserved for projects developed and delivered by partnerships of local organisations.

5.14 Community groups working on the Ocean Estate often say it is hard to find out what other organisations are doing in the area. To encourage information sharing, ORT will organise networking events for successful community grant applicants to enable them to share how they are using their grant and briefly outline their organisation's wider activities, explore opportunities for joint working and discuss priorities for the Ocean Estate and for future rounds of community grants.

Support for Ben Jonson Road retailers

5.15 There is considerable scope to improve the local retail offer to capture a greater share of local disposable income and to improve business competitiveness. To this end ORT is working in partnership with LBTH Economic Development Services to develop initiatives to help the independent shopkeepers to be in a better position to profit from the opportunities resulting from the increase in population and changing customer base arising from the housing redevelopment. The challenge will be to raise the range and quality of the local retail provision without sacrificing those aspects that make it accessible and affordable to the established residents in the area.

Ocean Estate bursary scheme

5.16 The Ocean Bursary Scheme has been set up with the Tower Hamlets & Canary Wharf (TH&CW) Trust using funding secured through the S.106 contribution associated with the development of 438-490 Mile End Road (Scape East) to help Ocean residents achieve their potential through higher education.

5.17 A total of 46 grants of £3,000 will be available and will go to Ocean residents who are starting higher education or studying for a post-graduate qualification. Priority will be given to applicants studying at Queen Mary University of London and account will be taken of the circumstances of each candidate, giving special consideration to those less able to afford higher education. Eight grants were awarded for the 2016/17 academic year.

5.18 In the 2017/18 academic year, TH&CW Trust will administer the scheme and award and monitor payments and ORT will lead on publicising the scheme locally and finding suitable candidates. It is the intention that ORT will take over responsibility for administering the bursaries once the scheme is established.

Information sharing

5.19 ORT is keen to develop a community information hub where people can find the local information they need, whether it is about an ESOL class, a new construction project, the shops in Ben Jonson Road or the nearest Children's Centre.

5.20 The first phase, to develop and launch a website with information about ORT and its activities, local regeneration and development projects, local services and activities, local community and resident groups and local community facilities, is already underway.

5.21 Although the internet is a powerful way of presenting information, it isn't the perfect solution for everyone and a print medium is still a requirement. A newsletter will be produced in collaboration with local partners to deliver news to people who do not have access to the internet and rely on other methods for their information needs.

5.22 ORT will engage with residents, local groups, service providers and other stakeholders to get their input on the type of local information they need and how they would like to receive it.

Research

5.23 In response to a request from local stakeholders for up-to-date statistics and to provide a benchmark against which the Trust and other local organisations can measure progress, ORT commissioned research to provide a robust picture of the Ocean area and how it changed in the decade 2001 to 2011, and where statistics are available beyond. This work will be updated to keep the information current.

5.24 ORT will commission other research as appropriate to support the work of organisations working on the Ocean Estate and to help leverage additional funding into the area.

6. OCEAN COMMUNITY PLAN

6.1 ORT is in the process of developing a local Community Plan which will continue the ongoing regeneration of the area in line with Tower Hamlets Mayoral priorities and complement the aims of the 2015 Tower Hamlets Community Plan (see above).

6.2 The need for a local Community Plan “to successfully complete the regeneration of the Ocean Estate and Limehouse Fields area and set up arrangements to ensure that the community, social and legacy provisions are adequately addressed and in line with Mayoral priorities” was highlighted in the Council’s Strategic Review of the Ocean and Limehouse Fields Area completed in 2016.

6.3 The Strategic Review concluded that whilst regeneration programmes over the past 20 years may have improved the Ocean Estate and Limehouse Fields as a place to live, they have had less impact upon the other three themes of the Tower Hamlets Community Plan (i.e. achieving a fairer and more prosperous community, a safer and more cohesive community, and a healthier and more supportive community). Indeed, the housing redevelopment through its impact on local land values and house prices may have unwittingly widened social equality, deepening social division and weakening community cohesion.

6.4 The key recommendation of the Strategic Review was that ORT “*as the legacy body of the Ocean NDC Programme should be the delivery vehicle for the local community plan. It should be seen as the lead organisation, working in partnership with the local community, LB Tower Hamlets and local community providers, for the development and the delivery of the local community plan.*” The Strategic Review notes that developing the Community Plan would require a significant commitment of time, energy and resources from ORT if it to take on the responsibility of being the lead body and ends by saying that in order for the Trust to fulfil that role and for it to function effectively, it must have sufficient, stable and sustainable funding in place.

6.5 There has already been a considerable amount of local consultation and research undertaken as part of the Strategic Review. The intention is not to repeat that process but to use the Strategic Review and the detailed Profile of the Ocean Estate (based on and updating 2011 Census data) as a foundation on which to build and to reshape our current knowledge base into a draft plan for reactive consultation. The local Community Plan will focus on those aspects of the area’s circumstances over which ORT and its partners realistically have some degree of influence and control over the next five year. In consultation with strategic partners and local service providers, we intend to identify a realistic and manageable set of actions for inclusion in the draft plan over a short (1 year, i.e. “quick wins”), medium (3 year) and longer-term (5 year) time horizon.

6.6 Criteria which we will use to identify and select activities are likely to include the following:

- Ensuring the proposed action is something over which ORT/Ocean community has some degree of control and influence.
- Improving the chances and resilience of those more disadvantaged in the community through capacity building and support.
- Using social action as a means to better connect communities, helping to build social and neighbourhood capital, by identifying ways to bridge newer and traditional communities.
- Empowering local people to take more control and responsibility, whilst ensuring greater visibility of their needs to commissioners and providers of services.
- Maximising investment and funding into the area to respond better to local need and use resources in new ways.

6.7 Producing a local Community Plan will be a two-stage process. The first stage, currently underway, involves meeting with key stakeholders to explore:

- What ORT might realistically ask them to contribute to the Plan from current and future services
- What ORT, working with partners and funders, could enable to happen (i.e. picking up on a distinction between influencing mainstream services and developing complementary projects and investments).

Exploring these separate but mutually reinforcing strands to the delivery of the Community Plan should focus on a few clear, shared outcomes for the community. We will then work with others at a more operational and service-delivery level on the detail of what appropriate action and intervention might look like year-on-year; this will help us to ensure that the plan is practical, and one in which different stakeholders feel they have a vested interest in realising over the next five years.

6.8 Stage One will deliver the following outputs:

- A draft Community Plan and commentary on the extent of buy-in and support for its vision, objectives and proposed activities from key stakeholders;
- A subsequent meeting/workshop with the key stakeholders to confirm their support for the draft Community Plan and agreement to engage in Stage Two, which will involve the re-engagement of the local community to test their reaction and elicit their feedback on the plan.

We anticipate Stage One will be completed by the end of April 2017.

6.9 Stage Two will involve the re-engagement of the local community and finalising the Community Plan. The local Community Plan is by its nature a forward looking document which must clearly capture the vision for the area and incorporate the ideas of local residents, local businesses and local groups. It is envisaged that this stage will begin with three short 'feeler focus group' sessions with small local groups such as tenants associations, local young people and mothers. This will enable direct feedback from some core community stakeholders. Feedback from these short sessions will feed into our proposed "walk-in weekend".

6.10 The “walk-in weekend” will be held in May 2017. It will comprise a combination of facilitated conversations and workshops as well as the opportunity for anyone to walk-in throughout the weekend to add to the ideas/comment wall, give verbal feedback or even record a vox pop. A success weekend event will be one that:

- Establishes a real sense of participation
- Encourages new people to get involved
- Inspires new thinking – by creating an inspirational space and offering practical activities it will raise people’s aspiration of what is possible
- Catalyses partnerships – we will encourage a diverse audience including local businesses, council officials, councillors, developers, community organisations and residents to attend in a neutral space where they can find common ground
- Builds trust between the various parties
- Gives an opportunity to influence
- Imparts information on local issues – enabling all parties to reach a better understanding of the key challenges and needs of the area which could be addressed within the Community Plan
- Removes barriers – it will remove physical, language or social barriers to communities’ getting access to information or voicing their needs or opinions
- Engenders greater community understanding and ownership – it will help the community to understand the progress which has been made on the Community Plan and how local people can remain instrumental in its delivery.

The material garnered from the different consulting methods and sessions over the weekend will be reviewed, analysed and incorporated into the draft plan in order to ensure that the final document very clearly captures the voice and aspirations of the community.

6.11 It is intended to have the final version of the Community Plan completed by June 2017. However, ORT cannot implement a Community Plan alone and if there is insufficient buy-in and support from key stakeholders at the end of Stage One we will not proceed to Stage Two. There has been too much consultation with the local community that has raised hopes but failed to deliver.

7. HARFORD STREET MULTICENTRE

7.1 LB Tower Hamlets purchased a 26 year lease commencing in March 2010 from East Homes Ltd for 780 m² of Class D1 space in the Harford Street Multicentre. It is one of the main purpose built community amenities in the Ocean and Limehouse Fields area and to date has been managed by the Council. Ocean NDC funds were used to purchase the lease and fit out the premises and it was always the intention that ORT should be resourced to take over the lease and manage the property on behalf of the local community.

7.2 The Harford Street Multicentre is situated in the heart of the local community. As such, it has an important role to play in involving residents in community activity, tackling social exclusion, promoting civic engagement and strengthening neighbourhood bonds. ORT will work with LB Tower Hamlets to agree the terms of the lease and work with

local residents to ensure that the activities provided more directly meet their needs and reflect their priorities. However, as the officers currently managing the facility can testify, the Multicentre is an expensive building to operate and if the community centre is to be accessible to local community groups and residents the hire charges would need to be subsidised. ORT will be seeking grant funding support from the Council to assist with the running costs while services and activities are developed.

7.3 ORT's vision for the Multicentre is that it will be a high quality, thriving community centre, used extensively and creatively by local residents. The community space is a valuable local community resource that can and should bring local people together to build a stronger community by:

- Promoting the well-being of local residents
- Providing culturally sensitive and appropriate provision that meets the needs and priorities of all local residents
- Fostering social inclusion
- Encouraging participation in the life of the neighbourhood and building a stronger sense of local identity
- Promoting the provision of accessible social, recreational, educational, health and cultural facilities within the neighbourhood
- Creating opportunities for local employment, volunteering and business creation.

7.4 The active involvement of the local community in the planning of activities and services and in the management of the facility is vital to the future success of the community centre. ORT will undertake a comprehensive programme of local community consultation in order to accurately assess the extent of local usage and the quality of services currently being provided and to identify future need.

7.5 ORT will work in partnership with current and future user groups to ensure that proper monitoring procedures are in place in order to assess the extent of local participation in the different activities, to develop local marketing and communications strategies to increase local usage, and to encourage greater uptake by aligning service provision more closely to the varied needs of a diverse community.

7.6 As services and activities develop, ORT will look at the feasibility of launching a volunteer recruitment initiative to provide opportunities to local people to learn how to manage and run the Multicentre as a community asset and to undertake social and community projects which offer direct benefit to local people and communities. The programme will aim to provide high quality training, supervision and support to volunteers, offer work placements that develop the volunteers' skills, confidence and self-esteem, and develop routes into meaningful and sustainable employment.

FIRST YEAR ACTION PLAN

ORT is committed to working in close and effective partnership with LB Tower Hamlets and all stakeholders to meet local needs and deliver outcomes that support the Trust's priorities, complement the objectives of the 2015 Tower Hamlets Community Plan and benefit the area. ORT is in the process of developing a local Community Plan. In consultation with strategic partners and local service providers, we intend to identify a realistic and manageable set of actions for inclusion in the plan over the short (1 year), medium (3 year) and longer-term (5 year) time horizon. These will be added to the Action Plan as they evolve.

Programme	LBTH Community Plan Theme	Objectives / Targets
Stepney Life Centre	A fair and prosperous community	Local residents engaged through outreach and events – 500 Women participating in programmes of Literacy, Numeracy and/or ESOL – 200 Women taking accredited ESOL / English Functional Skills courses – 60 Women taking Maths Functional Skills courses – 40 Women taking accredited ICT courses – 20 Women participating in Women's Voice and Inspirational Women programmes – 80 Women participating in Advice Café – 60 Women participating in Work Skills, Apprenticeships, Employment Support and Work Experience Programmes – 50 Women into further education or work - 30
LHP Welfare Benefit Advice and Guidance and Employment Support	A fair and prosperous community	Local residents accessing welfare benefit and other advice and guidance – 250 Local residents taking part in money management training workshops and/or accessing 1-2-1 support and assistance with money and debt problems - 60 Local residents referred to LHP or other training and employability services - 50
ORT Community Grants	A fair and prosperous community A safe and cohesive community A healthy and supportive community	Support applications from local community organisations to run projects addressing ORT priority themes: Employment, enterprise, training and education opportunities – 2 projects benefitting 40 participants Engaging young people in positive activities – 4 projects benefitting 200 participants Promoting wellbeing and inclusion – 2 projects benefitting 50 participants Connecting older people – 3 projects benefitting 75 participants Healthier finances – 2 projects benefitting 100 participants
Support for Ben Jonson Road Retailers	A fair and prosperous community	BJR south side retailers engaged in initiatives to assist them in positioning their offer to profit from the opportunities arising from the increase in population and changing customer base – 10
Ocean Estate Bursary Scheme	A fair and prosperous community	Publicise the Ocean Estate Bursary Scheme and increase the number of applications submitted to the Tower Hamlets & Canary Wharf Trust from eligible local

		residents for awards for the 2017/18 academic year – 10 bursaries awarded (the maximum number available)
Information Sharing	A great place to live	In collaboration with local partners, produce a newsletter with information about local activities, local regeneration and development projects, local services, local community and resident groups and local community facilities
Programme	LBTH Community Plan Theme	Objectives / Targets
Ocean Community Plan	A great place to live A fair and prosperous community A safe and cohesive community A healthy and supportive community	Complete the draft Ocean Community Plan and commentary on buy-in and support for its vision, objectives and proposed activities from key stakeholders – April 2017 Hold a workshop for key stakeholders to confirm their support for the draft Community Plan and agreement to engage in Stage Two – April 2017 Organise “feeler focus group” sessions with core community stakeholders to get their feedback on the draft Community Plan – May 2017 Hold a “walk-in weekend” for a diverse audience including local businesses, council officials, councillors, developers, community organisations and residents to get their feedback on the draft Community Plan – May 2017 Review, analysis and incorporate the material garnered from the different consulting methods into the draft Community Plan to ensure the final document captures the voices and aspirations of the community – May 2017 Complete and publish the final version of the Community Plan – June 2017
Harford Street Multicentre	A great place to live	Work with LB Tower Hamlets to agree the terms of the five year lease – April to July 2017 Undertake a comprehensive programme of local community consultation in order to accurately assess the extent of local usage and the quality of services currently being provided and identify future need – June to September 2017 Work in partnership with current and future user groups to ensure that proper monitoring procedures are in place in order to assess the extent of local participation in the different activities, to develop local marketing and communications strategies to increase local usage, and to encourage greater uptake by aligning service provision more closely to the varied needs of a diverse community – September to December 2017