

Cabinet 9 March 2022	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place	Classification: Unrestricted
London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022 - 2027	

Lead Member	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Work, Economic Growth and Faith
Originating Officer(s)	Adam Richards, Regeneration Project Manager and Damian Patchell, Market Services Manager
Wards affected	All
Key Decision?	Yes
Reason for Key Decision	Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards
Forward Plan Notice Published	11 January 2022
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	2. A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in

Executive Summary

This report is to support the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022 – 2027 which sets out the Council’s approach to improving the performance and competitiveness of our 10 street markets, with an enhanced focus on Whitechapel Market to support the Whitechapel Road Improvement Programme. The Plan was based upon desk-based research and analysis, internal and external interviews, and a survey of shoppers, businesses and market traders that took place May – June 2021.

The Plan sets the scene for London’s markets, street trading and high streets and how they impact the borough’s markets. It proposes a vision for our markets and priorities for the next five years to ensure they can adapt, where needed, and remain strong into the future.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Adopt the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022-2027.

2. Note the individual action plans for each of our 10 street markets.
3. Note the positive equalities impact as set out in Paragraph 4.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Approving the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022-2027 will enable the implementation of individual action plans to improve the performance of our 10 street markets benefitting market traders, residents and businesses.
- 1.2 Market Services is a traded service and revenue from the Markets funds the service operation, providing Officers to manage and administer the markets along with cleansing and waste activities. The impact of COVID-19 and the reduction in trader number at some locations has meant Market Services is currently operating at a projected deficit around £300k in the 2021/22 financial year. Whilst Fees and Charges are reviewed each year to aim for a balanced account, activities in the Action Plan are designed to increase the number of traders and therefore increase revenue, either by direct recruitment or by making the markets an improved place to trade.
- 1.3 Approving the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022-2027 will improve the performance of our 10 street markets and increase the occupancy levels which will contribute to increasing the income and reducing the operating deficit. Other measures included within the Plan will improve the day-to-day operations of the market and reduce the operating costs, which will also contribute towards reducing Market Services operating deficit.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To do nothing. This is not recommended because the proposed Plan will improve the performance and competitiveness of our 10 street markets.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The LBTH Markets' Improvement Plan 2022 – 2027 sets out the Council's approach to improving the performance and competitiveness of our 10 street markets. The Improvement Plan excludes privately operated markets in the borough, for example Victoria Park Market and Spitalfields Market.
- 3.2 The Plan sets the scene for London's markets, street trading and high streets and how they impact the borough's markets. It proposes a vision for our markets and priorities for the next five years to ensure they can adapt, where needed, and remain strong into the future.

- 3.3 The Plan has been developed with the support of The Assembly Line, a specialist markets consultancy. The Plan was based upon desk-based research and analysis, internal and external interviews, and a survey of shoppers, businesses and market traders.
- 3.4 To inform the Plan two borough-wide surveys were carried out during 2021, an engagement survey, and a consultation survey.
- 3.5 The first engagement survey asked each group (businesses, residents and market traders) a series of questions about participants shopping/trading habits and gave the chance to feedback on specific markets in their local area. Participants were able to answer questions on more than one market if they had several that they use regularly, and this swelled the feedback from 680 individual responses, to a total of 1020 responses on individual markets: 715 from residents, 168 from traders and 137 from businesses
- 3.6 The second consultation survey asked each group (businesses, residents and market traders) whether they agree with the draft vision for the Council's 10 street markets, and the draft themes included in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022 – 2027. Participants were also able to give their view on any additional themes that were not captured, as well as any specific actions plan covering each of the Council's 10 street markets.
- 3.7 The Borough-wide consultation survey received 75 responses: 60 from residents, 6 from traders and 7 from businesses. Further details on the surveys and response rate are included within the Plan and Appendix IV Equalities Impact Analysis. No material changes were made to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets Improvement Plan 2022 – 2027 following the consultation on the draft version because the majority of feedback and comments agreed with the 10 themes set out to achieve the vision of the Plan, described below.
- 3.8 The Plan considers the context in which the council's street markets operate, in relation to high streets and town centres, the Covid-19 pandemic, London-wide initiatives and complementary strategies and policies within the council.
- 3.9 The Plan goes on to identify 10 themes on which participants commented most frequently and will have the biggest impact on the future of the markets. It also references known funding opportunities and performance metrics for how change can be monitored.
- 3.10 The Plan proposes a vision for our market and key priorities for the five years ahead, from 2022 – 2027:

The Council's markets should reflect the diversity of the borough through their traders, the products sold and their appeal to wide sections of the community. The markets should offer a range of products or speciality goods that are of high quality and at a range of price points. They should contribute positively to

their town centre or high street and build strong relationships with businesses and other stakeholders around them.

- 3.11 In tandem with the Plan, individual action plans were developed for each of our 10 street markets and a more focussed action plan covering Whitechapel Market to support the Whitechapel Road Improvement Programme. In creating individual market action plans, each market has a focused plan for improvements, subject to funding and resource, to work towards better serving their customers whilst providing traders with upgraded facilities.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Analysis was carried out ahead of the consultation on the Draft Plan.
- 4.2 The equality profile of the survey responders collected in the two borough-wide surveys (described above) and the Borough Profile act as a useful comparison tool in reviewing the make-up of the general borough community, and thus provides a profile of the likely impact on residents, service users and wider community who use our street markets.
- 4.3 Our street markets are frequented by a diverse range of people from across the borough and beyond, therefore the proposals outlined within the Plan will positively impact residents living and working in Tower Hamlets, particularly people living near our street markets.
- 4.4 There are some markets that currently serve a narrow(er) demographic of the borough, but the 'the equality profile' of the users of our street markets overall reflects the general profile of the borough's community, given that the majority of survey responders use more than one market.
- 4.5 We have not identified any data in the context of the Plan that shows people with particular protected characteristics are negatively impacted. The Plan will ensure the council's markets reflect the diversity of the borough through their traders, the products sold, and their appeal to wide sections of the community, therefore all residents and visitors to the borough will benefit from the 10 themes identified in the Plan.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,

- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.1 **Crime Reduction**

Antisocial behaviour and crime are key challenges for out street markets and town centres. Although beyond the scope of the Plan Market Services will continue to work with the Community Safety team, Town Centres Working Group plus external partners to reduce crime and the perception of crime.

5.2 **Environmental (including air quality)**

Sustainability and Place-themed actions are key priorities in the Plan and include promoting active travel, wayfinding, accommodating cycle storage plus other initiatives that support the delivery of the Council's Air Quality and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

5.2 **Risk Management**

The following risks and mitigation actions identified.

Risk	Mitigation
Stakeholders are not supportive of the proposed Plan	<p>A wide-ranging and well supported survey of stakeholders has informed the development of the Plan</p> <p>The Council has engaged key stakeholders when consulting on the Draft Plan</p> <p>Regular communication with key stakeholders will continue during the delivery of the Plan with impact monitored</p> <p>Sites with potential issues will be flagged in individual programmes and mitigation measures undertaken</p>
Unable to secure necessary funding	<p>The Plan seeks funding from a wide range of internal and external sources to ensure the actions included can be delivered</p> <p>Regular monitoring will be undertaken as part of the Plan</p>
Unable to secure necessary consents for improvements	<p>Pre-engagement with relevant internal teams and external organisations i.e. landowners</p>

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly emanating from this report which seeks approval for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets' Improvement Plan 2022-2027. Costs associated with the development of the plan have been contained within existing budget provision.
- 6.2 There will be financial implications relating to the implementation of each Market's action plan which will be subject of separate reports.
- 6.3 Markets is a traded service and therefore any costs and benefits associated with implementing the Improvement Plan should be contained within the ringfenced account.
- 6.4 The Markets trading account is currently running at a deficit of c£0.3m per annum from its business-as-usual activities. Activities within the Markets Improvement Plan are designed to increase the number of traders and therefore generate additional income to recoup this loss and return the markets trading account at a minimum to a breakeven position.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Markets and Street Trading in London is governed by the London Local Authorities Act 1990 (as amended) and paragraph 4-5 of the improvement plan sets out the details that will need to be considered in due course should the proposals be approved.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets Markets' Improvement Plan 2022-2027
- Appendix I: Legislation comparison (contained within Plan)
- Appendix II: Actions plans by market
- Appendix III: Consultation summary by market (submitted with Draft Plan)
- Appendix IV Equalities Impact Analysis (submitted with Draft Plan)

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Adam Richards, Regeneration Project Manager