

# Chrisp Street Market Action Plan

London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Markets Improvement Plan



## Overview

### The market

Chrisp Street is located in Poplar in the east of the borough. The market is well organised and has a large canopy stretching across it protecting it from the weather. The market takes place in a square in the town centre which, whilst owned by the council, is in the middle of the estate managed by Poplar HARCA which is undergoing large scale redevelopment. The Market is meters away from the local Ideas Store.

This is a low income area with 66% of households having an income below £30,000. The 2011 census data showed the population to be just over 35,000, and 2019 estimates put the population at just under 50,000. This is a rapid and dramatic increase as new housing developments have been added to the area, perhaps contributing to the 11% of households with an income of over £60,000.

Despite the market being walking distance from Canary Wharf (approximately 15 mins) it is not easily accessible and there are few reasons for workers to visit the area.

Poplar HARCA is taking forward plans to redevelop Chrisp Street, including managing engagement with residents, market traders and businesses. They are also developing a programme of events and other activities to animate and promote the town centre, generate footfall and support local businesses as the development progresses. This includes joint working with the Council on improvements to the street market and activating workspace. Poplar HARCA manage and take rent from all the smaller retail units around the square, though they own only some of them with the rest ultimately owned by the council.

It appears that the market is primarily serving local, loyal customers; there is a high recognition of regular faces amongst traders, with almost 60% recognising 51-76% of their customers, and 71% visiting the market on foot. While there they mainly buy fresh food (73%) and clothes (26%). More than half of the businesses in the area (57%) think that the market brings footfall to their premises.

Established businesses at the market are doing well but they are busier during the week than at the weekend.

Given the relative success of this market and continued investment by developers, it is surprising that only 38% of traders are feeling hopeful about the future of the market, however this may be attributed to the potential impact of the upcoming physical development of the area.

## Snapshot

**Trading days:** Monday to Saturday, 8am to 6pm. The busiest market day is perceived to be Friday although footfall is similar on both Friday (4 June – 6,879) and Saturday (5 June – 6,684)

**Commodities:** Fruit and vegetables, fish, bedding, handbags and clothing

**Customers:** Local, the location does not attract from outside the area.

**Reasons for shopping here:** value for money (56%) and location (72%). Only 21% come for the quality of the goods.

**Pitches:** 80 | 58% full

**Household income:**

19% less than £15,000 | 47% less than £30,000 | 11% higher than £60,000



## Challenges

The Tower Hamlets High Streets & Town Centres Strategy 2017 – 2022 identified the market as having issues with antisocial behaviour and graffiti, waste management, cleanliness, unmaintained public realm and high traffic volumes and many of these issues are still in place in addition to:

**Location:** The market is not well connected to public transport to attract a wider customer base; however, it is situated in the heart of the town centre. With the square being located internally and facing away from the main road it can be easily missed.

**Environment:** It is rather run down and can be a messy space. The market stalls are metal frame structure with poor quality canopies and the general area looks unloved, with vacant shop units. The retail offer in and around Chrisp Street is poor.

**Redevelopment:** There is lots of redevelopment locally with the market surrounded by the Poplar HARCA development. The redevelopment will take approximately eight years to complete, and though the market will operate throughout, it will move around as the programme progresses. There is uncertainty about how successfully the market will operate throughout construction works and then in an entirely new neighbourhood. Within the next two years, the market will be relocated to an adjacent site within the town centre whilst redevelopment work takes place.

**Local competition:** 19% of traders find that competition from the shops and other traders is a problem.

## Consultation feedback

In the consultation, traders, shoppers and businesses were offered the opportunity to comment on one or more markets that they shopped at, traded at or had a business nearby. Responses were received from:

- 21 traders (13% of trader responses)
- 82 shoppers (11% of shopper responses)
- 14 businesses (10% of business response)
- Responses: 117

### Traders would like:

- **More security** as crime is a problem (19%)
- **Toilets** are available but could be **maintained better** (14%)
- **Less duplication** - There is too much of the same thing on the market and in adjacent shops with 29% wanting to see less fruit and vegetable traders and a request to limit commodities
- **New goods** at the market. Approximately a third of traders (33%) suggested household products and flowers/gardening goods could be added
- **Special events and evening markets** which 29% think would generate more income.

### Shoppers and businesses would like:

- **High quality prepared food** - 28% of shoppers would like to see this
- Both **better clothing and street food** were each requested by 15% of shoppers
- 12% of shoppers wanted an overall **increase in the quality of goods**
- Businesses were more preoccupied with seeing **new stores open on the high street** and general concerns about the area rather than specific comments about things to improve at the market.

Appendix III provides an overview of survey feedback for Chrisp Street Market.

## Action plan

Actions have been identified and prioritised within the context of the five-year Markets Improvement Plan.

Theme	Action
Phase 1	
Commodities	<p>Create a robust commodities policy to ensure there is no further duplication of goods sold and identify desirable commodities for empty pitches.</p> <p>Use casual licences to trial new traders during redevelopment works.</p>
Marketing	<p>As part of the Moving Markets Online funding, create social media channels and a website for the market which should include updates to show that change is coming.</p> <p>Initial work here must include a branding exercise to prepare for the arrival of new customers from the development works. It will be crucial to include Poplar HARCA in the marketing and comms plan for the market and ensure that they are including information about the market in their welcoming of new residents to the area.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Encourage the London College of Fashion project to take over the market one day per week, trialling Sundays.</p> <p>Start a dialogue with businesses on Aberfeldy Street as to whether they could be involved with the market.</p>

Theme	Action
Place	Work in partnership with traders and Poplar HARCA to agree new and changing market layouts during construction works.
Programme	Create an events programme with local partners in line with previously successful summer nights organised by Poplar HARCA.
Phase 2	
Commodities	Continue to review the commodities policy ensuring fitness for purpose stands as the development progresses.
Marketing	Maintain the profile of the market and communications to customers throughout the works to ensure visibility.
Phase 3	
Marketing (and programming)	<p>Include a market relaunch in the redevelopment programme plan. This should be both physical and online, with special events and a PR push for the market.</p> <p>Evening markets in the long term may encourage workers from the city to become acquainted with Chrisp Street and so this is the direction in which future events could be taken.</p>

