


Commissioner Decision Report 2 nd December 2015	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Aman Dalvi, Corporate Director	Classification: [Unrestricted]
Ocean Regeneration Trust grant funding 2014/2015, 2015/2016 and 2016/2017	

Originating Officer(s)	John Coker
Wards affected	St Dunstons
Key Decision?	No
Community Plan Theme	A Great Place to Live

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report updates the Commissioners on the need for ongoing socio-economic improvements and investment into the Ocean Estate through agreed funding structures administered by the Ocean Regeneration Trust (ORT). The ORT has been set up in accordance with New Deal for Communities (NDC) succession and legacy requirements as a vehicle for ongoing local regeneration. Cabinet agreed the "Ocean NDC Succession Strategy, 2010 and Beyond" in November 2009. This report seeks to fund the ORT in line with the decision of the 2009 report.

This grant will derive from Housing Revenue Account funding specifically generated from the rental income derived from the retail revenues from the south side of Ben Jonson Road.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Development & Renewal to pay the Ocean Regeneration Trust a total of £210,000 being payments for 2014/2015 of £50,000, the current financial year 2015/2016 of £80,000 and the next year 2016/2017 also of £80,000.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 To address the need for ongoing socio-economic improvements and investment into the Ocean Estate for the benefit of residents and groups, particularly those who are more vulnerable in the community.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Cease the socio-economic programme. To discontinue with the ongoing programme which the ORT has started would be at high risk of reputational damage to the council. The council has made investment through the NDC legacy funds to continue to provide essential community services in an area which still has high levels of deprivation after the physical works of new build, refurbishment and environmental improvements completed.
- 2.2 Establish the programme in-house (council). The expertise to continue with the programme within the council does not exist in one place; fragmented delivery of such a programme often leads to inefficient delivery and wastage. The Trust also has the wider remit of fund raising for the community through private sources, such as benefactors, banks, etc which the council could not achieve. Set up another organisation. This option would seem the least likely as significant investment has gone into the setting up and retaining the Trust's board and staff. The council's reputation would be at risk; community perception may be of a loss of community investment and not enough support to ensure the success of ORT.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

Background

- 3.1 The ORT was set up in 2009 as a legacy vehicle to the Ocean NDC. It has begun to deliver on its objectives in line with the Cabinet decision of 2007. The ORT has since been registered as a Charity, has a functioning board, and is developing projects in line with the Council's agreed NDC Succession Strategy. It has become a key stakeholder in the community.

4. ORT FUNDING STRUCTURES 2011 – PRESENT

4.1 New Deal for Communities

At its inception as part of the Ocean NDC legacy, a set up fund of £300,000 was agreed with the Department for Communities and Local Government to be transferred to ORT. The funding split of £100,000 was transferred each year from 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14. This enabled salary costs, office set up, stationery etc. and some small project costs for local organisations.

4.2 Ground Rents

The ORT receives the ground rents from the private homes for sale. The provision of ground rents was part of the council's mechanism to fund the ongoing community and legacy funding strategy for the Ocean. The annual sum collected once the

private homes for sale are complete is £105,000 plus RPI p.a. This has been collected each year, proportionately, as the new homes were complete.

4.3 Retail Rental Income

The rental income to date derives from the south side of Ben Jonson Road retail units. The south side income which started in 2011 has been proportionately transferred for the last three years. The sum of £80,000 was identified to support the Trust as income from the south side retail units. This is a temporary solution pending a permanent arrangement of rental income from the north side of Ben Jonson Rd once these units are complete and leased.

5. DETAIL OF THE REPORT

5.1 Grant payment 2014/2015

5.1.1 The ORT is due grant funds from the last financial year, 2014/15, and timely invoices were submitted by ORT. The amount due totals £50,000. Whilst payments have been made in the past, 2014/15 saw significant delays and following the Secretary of States direction, payments were halted. Payment of these monies will restore the organisations financial position to the position intended in the NDC Succession Strategy agreed with the council as ORT have paid in advance for services.

5.1.2 Appendix 1 shows the range of activities for which ORT incurred expenditure during 2014/2015. The Trust formalised a partnership with City Gateway to deliver women's services from the Harford St Multi Centre. This has been previously reported to the commissioners with a report agreed in April 2015 seeking permission to grant a licence to occupy the first floor of the centre at market rent which totals £42,000 p.a. The partnership is looking to deliver up to a £185,000's worth of services to the community.

5.1.3 ORT primarily incurred expenditure during 2014/2015 through the second round of its Community Grants programme. The total cost of awards made to groups and organisations were £36,000. A total of 14 organisations received grant awards.

The grants focused on:

- Further education, skill building, training and entrepreneurship
- Engaging young people in positive activities
- Promoting wellbeing and inclusion
- Improving the environment.

5.1.4 The Ocean Bursary - ORT is working with the Canary Wharf Further Education Trust to identify and support young people from the estate to the scheme – Appendix 1.

5.2 Current grant payment 2015/2016

5.2.1 The work that is currently being delivered in line with the agreed succession strategy is seeking full grant payment for 2015/2016 of £80,000 to carry on with their partnership services with City Gateway and independent projects such as small grants programme.

- 5.2.2 Appendix 2 outlines the plan for partnership delivery of ORT and City Gateway. The contribution to the partnership from the Trust is the annual rent of £42k to the council for 2015/2016.
- 5.2.3 The current year has seen the development of a training and employment project through a partnership of ORT, the council and Tower Project. Tower Project is a community based voluntary sector organisation and a leading service provider for children and adults with a learning disability, sensory disability, autism, physical disability or health related issue in the borough. The council and the Trust have helped support this project as a pilot scheme in the area. The aim of the project is to have 12 months recruitment, training and placement on the estate. The project aims to support young people and adults with health and safety and food safety qualifications in addition to actual work experience in the café.
- 5.2.4 In addition the council and ORT work closely on the Supported Internship Programme. The programme is a supported work placement six week scheme that runs during certain terms of the year with local schools. ORT and the council are currently mid-way through a term with a local young person at the Harford St Multicentre where they gain experience for eight hours each week.
- 5.2.5 A retail study is currently being carried out in partnership with the economic development team in LBTH in order to support retailers on the south side of Ben Jonson Road. The project aim is to maximise footfall and business in the Ben Jonson Rd area much like town centres improvement project that helped the Roman Road improve its offer to the local community. The project budget allocated is £35,000; an initial £5,000 to consult retailers and community, research and compile feedback, with the remaining £30,000 to support the retailers in business planning, marketing strategies, etc. with their ideas of individual and collective improvements for the area.

5.3 Future grant payment 2016/2017

- 5.3.1 2015/2016 has seen a significant broadening of ORT's reach in the community. The partnership with City Gateway and to a lesser extent Tower Project has strengthened the identity of the Trust. In addition the Trust aims to continue with their small Community Grants programme.
- 5.3.2 It is the intention of ORT to continue the partnership with City Gateway building on their current successful delivery of women's services on the first floor of the Harford St centre.
- 5.3.3 Similarly as the relationship with Tower Project develops ORT would look to offer wider support for their clients with the ongoing support of work placement opportunities across the estate.
- 5.3.4 2016/2017 will see the opening of the new shops on the north side of Ben Jonson Road. The investment into the south side is to support the retailers with their plans and strategies and to assist them in their offer as new shops start to open. The improvements and additional shops into the area will support a 'town centre' for the Ocean estate and improve the retail offer with increased opportunity for training and employment for Ocean residents.
- 5.3.5 There have been two rounds of Ocean Regeneration Community grants programme which has proved popular with local groups and organisations who apply for funds to deliver smaller projects. At the end of each round a networking event is held to

capture feedback on what the projects achieved. The Trust wants to continue with the programme in future years.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report seeks the approval of the Commissioners to release funding of £210,000 to the Ocean Regeneration Trust (ORT). Under agreements previously entered into as part of the Ocean NDC succession plan, the Trust receives funding from the Council, being an element of the income received from the retail units on the south side of Ben Jonson Road. These receipts are earmarked for the ORT in existing Housing Revenue Account budgets.
- 6.2 Following the Government Directions of 17 December 2014, payments to the ORT were suspended, pending Commissioner approval. This report seeks approval to pay £50,000 for the 2014/2015 financial year and £80,000 for 2015/2016. It is also seeking advance approval for funding of £80,000 for next year (2016-17). If approved, the 2016-17 payment will not be made until it falls due.
- 6.3 The retail units are held within the Housing Revenue Account, and therefore the HRA received the rental income. Although the Ocean Estate has been transferred to East Thames Housing Group, the activities of the ORT cover a range of services available to both Council HRA tenancies (managed by Tower Hamlets Homes) and social housing managed by Registered Providers (mainly East Thames in this case). The Housing Revenue Account contributes towards these activities through this funding stream.
- 6.4 The ORT occupies Council premises at Harford Street under the terms of a licence that was approved by the Commissioners on 29 April 2015. The Trust pays a market rent for the property from its own resources.

7. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 7.1 Whilst there is no strict legal definition of grant, a grant is in the nature of a gift and is based in trust law. However, grants are often given for a purpose so it is sometimes unclear whether a grant has been made or the arrangement is a contract for services. A contract for services is not a grant and therefore, an arrangement which is classified as a contract for services would be outside the remit of the power conferred upon the commissioners to approve.
- 7.2 There will be many grants which are made by the Council for the purpose of discharging one of its statutory duties. However, as a grant is in the nature of a gift, it is considered there must be some element of discretion on the part of the Council as grantor as to whom a grant is made to and whether this is made. If the Council is under a legal duty to provide a payment to a specific individual or organisation, and cannot lawfully elect not to make such a payment, then that should not amount to a grant.
- 7.3 One of the key distinguishing features between a grant and a contract for services is that with a contract for services the recipient of the money has a pecuniary interest beyond that in the receipt of the money itself. This is often in the form of taking a profit from the received.

- 7.4 In this case, the Council is not under a legal duty to provide payment to the Ocean Regeneration Trust (ORT). The payments are discretionary and therefore considered to be a grant.
- 7.5 The power of the commissioners to make decisions in relation to grants arises from directions made by the Secretary of State on 17 December 2014 pursuant to powers under sections 15(5) and 15(6) of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Directions). Paragraph 4(ii) and Annex B of the Directions together provide that, until 31 March 2017, the Council's functions in relation to grants will be exercised by appointed Commissioners, acting jointly or severally. This is subject to an exception in relation to grants made under section 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, for the purposes of section 23 of that Act (disabled facilities grant).
- 7.6 To the extent that the Commissioners are exercising powers which would otherwise have been the Council's, there is a need to ensure that the Council has the power to make the grant in question.
- 7.7 The proposed grant is supported by others of the Council's statutory powers, such as its general power of competence. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to specified restrictions and limitations imposed by other statutes. This general power of competence supports the grants to the ORT.
- 7.8 The Council has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This is referred to as the Council's best value duty. Best Value considerations have also been addressed in paragraph 9 of the report.
- 7.9 The Council must operate a fair and open application procedure to process a request to obtain funding. Requests for grant funding should ordinarily be measured against a predetermined set of criteria and the criteria themselves must be fair and transparent.
- 7.10 The grant agreement should include a clear monitoring process against defined parameters in order for the Council to demonstrate either: that delivery is in line with the application and, therefore, the grant achieved its purpose; or provide clear delineation where outcomes were not achieved and the reasons for such failure are apparent. Monitoring should therefore include measuring performance against the expected outcomes.
- 7.11 When implementing the scheme, the Council must ensure that no part of the funds issued represents a profit element to any of the recipients. The inclusion of profit or the opportunity of making a profit from the grant or third parties indicates that the grant is really procurement activity and would otherwise be subject to the Council's Procurement Procedures and other appropriate domestic and European law. This would mean therefore, that the Council would have failed to abide by the appropriate internal procedures and external law applicable to such purchases.
- 7.12 The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides that certain government activities may be prohibited because they give an advantage in a selective way to certain entities, which might affect competition within the internal market. Those advantages may amount to prohibited state aid, or may be state aid which is either expressly allowed by the Treaty, or which may be allowed, dependent

on the circumstances. Certain activities are considered to be compatible with EU law however and which includes “aid having a social character” (see Article 107(2)(a) of TFEU. In this case, the grant is for the provision of social and community facilities and services and is therefore not prohibited.

- 7.13 When making grants decisions, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty). A proportionate level of equality analysis is required to discharge the duty and information relevant to this is contained in the One Tower Hamlets section of the report.

8. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The funding request for the ORT contributes to the council’s equality of opportunity aim. The proposed services enhance local residents’ chances to broaden their role in society and the workplace.
- 8.2 Activities by the Trust will help promote good relations within the community as local people see the Trust for the benefit of residents and groups, particularly those who are more vulnerable in the community.
- 8.3 The ORT proposals aim to target all residents an equal opportunity to access the services that will potentially be provided.

9 BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The economic value of the ORT can be measured in the work to date e.g. community grants and the relationships they have built up within the Ocean community. To replace the Trust with another body in order to continue the socio-economic work started four years ago would need time and investment to restart the programme.
- 9.2 The ORT can deliver programmes efficiently through its partnership with City Gateway delivering programmes to support women in the community. In addition the Trust actively looks for community partnerships when assessing their small grant applications.
- 9.3 The council is committed to the effectiveness of a local organisation such as ORT to deliver the ongoing socio-economic programme for the community with a focus that the council could not deliver on.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 10.1 None

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The ORT has been in involved with community life on the Ocean for a number of years through the small grants programme, involvement with local organisations and through its development of the partnership with City Gateway. If the council grant was

not awarded it could be perceived as the local authority not willing to support the local community and risk reputational damage to the council.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Trust has a remit to engage with wider projects and organisations in the community. They actively link with the local Safer Neighbourhood teams and the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team within Tower Hamlets Homes to look at support for their efforts to reduce ASB in the community.

13. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Trust will support organisations who work with the most vulnerable in the community. It will actively promote engagement with excluded individuals and community development within the area.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- List any appendices
 1. **SLA Milestone (1st April 2014 – 31st March 2016)**
 2. **ORT/Citygateway Proposal Overview**
 3. **ORT Business Plan (draft)**

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

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

Or state N/A

SLA MILESTONES

(1 April 2014 – 31 March 2016)

1. Supporting Education

Ocean Bursary Scheme

The Ocean Bursary Scheme has been set up with Tower Hamlets and 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. In partnership with TH&CW Trust, ORT will publicize the Ocean Bursary Scheme and recruit suitable candidates. Publicity and recruitment will begin in April for the following academic year. The bursaries will be advertised in East End Life and information about the scheme will be sent to Queen Mary University of London, Tower Hamlets secondary schools and FE colleges attended by Ocean residents, local youth projects, local housing and other service providers, St Dunstan's ward councillors, local community groups, etc. During the period covered by the SLA it is intended that ORT will take sole responsibility for administering the scheme.

2014/15 Academic Year	Seven bursaries awarded
2015/16 Academic Year	Target: 12 bursaries awarded
2016/17 Academic Year	Target: 15 bursaries awarded

ESOL, literacy and numeracy

In partnership with City Gateway, from April 2015 deliver weekly ESOL, literacy and numeracy sessions from the Harford Street Multicentre targeting the most disadvantaged women and families from the Ocean Estate and surrounding areas.

2015/16	Target: 50 women
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Apprenticeships

In partnership with City Gateway, from April 2015 offer high-quality Business Administration and Childcare apprenticeship placements to local women. The apprenticeships will be based at the Harford Street Multicentre and will equip participants with on-the-job experience and robust qualifications, provide a progression route into sustainable employment.

2015/16	Target: 15 women
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Tower Project

In partnership with Tower Project, support for young people and adults with learning and physical disabilities in health and safety, and food hygiene to enable them to move into more advanced training or employment.

2015/2016	Target: 40 young people and adults
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Continuing with the Supported Internship programme in the work place.

2015/2016	Target: two young people
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2. Supporting Local Businesses

Supporting Ben Jonson Road Retailers

In partnership with LBTH Economic Development Services, give practical support to existing retailers on the south side of Ben Jonson Road and any new businesses that may be attracted to the area in the near future. The first stage will be a survey to assess the viewpoints of the retailers. This will be followed by surveys of local community customers and current users of the shopping centre. These surveys will provide an improved picture of what lines of business provided by existing and new retailers are likely to succeed, and how these lines of business can best be organized to meet consumer requirements. The second phase will offer more active support: support for individual retailers to enhance their marketing capability; advocacy of public realm improvements in transport, parking, signage and obtaining funding to implement such improvements; a publicity programme for the shopping centre as a whole; and consideration of special events to support the retail offer.

2014/15 Survey existing Ben Jonson Road retailers, local community customers and current users of the shopping centre.

Target: Provide up-to-date information on the types of businesses that are likely to succeed and how these businesses can best meet consumer requirements.

2015/16 Support retailers to enhance their marketing capabilities through training and 1-2-1 individual consultancy sessions.

Target: 15 retailers

Publicity programme for the shopping centre as a whole.

Target: To produce a Ben Jonson Road Special Offers guide or to organize a special event to support the retail offer and highlight the opening of the new retail units on the north side.

3. Supporting the Local Community

Ocean Regeneration Community Grants

ORT wishes to stimulate and encourage community groups and individuals to contribute to community life and the ongoing regeneration of the Ocean area. To strengthen links with local community and resident groups, ORT will offer Community Grants to support local community projects.

2014/15 Community Grants totalling £38,725 awarded to support 13 local projects.

2015/16 Target: Community Grants totalling £35K awarded to support 12 local projects.

Target: Assist five local groups to seek alternative funding sources and, where necessary, advise on structure and development, to lessen their dependence on local funding streams for support.

4. Developing Partnerships

Ocean Stakeholders' Workshops

ORT is aware that other organizations working in the Ocean area share many of its objectives and to avoid duplication and build on existing work, the Trust will continue to facilitate meetings for key stakeholders. The objectives going forward will be:

- Steering local activity stimulated by information sharing
- Leveraging money into the neighbourhood
- Mapping local provision by activity and beneficiary group
- Identifying gaps and duplication in local provision
- Coordinating and enabling joint bidding for funding.

2014/15 Target: In partnership with LBTH, organize a half-day workshop for Ocean stakeholders to learn about and contribute to the Council's Ocean Review.

2015/16 Target: Organize a half-day workshop for Ocean stakeholders to discuss the implications of the Ocean Review recommendations.

Target: Organize a half-day workshop for Ocean stakeholders to start mapping local provision by activity and beneficiary group; identify gaps and duplication; and explore the opportunities for coordinating and enabling joint bidding for funding.

Encouraging Ocean Housing Providers Joint Working

There are five housing providers with properties on the Ocean Estate offering tremendous potential for collaboration both on community development activities and wider estate management and maintenance issues. Informal discussions with two of the major housing providers have been positive and interest has been expressed in exploring the feasibility of working together to harmonize maintenance and management regimes and pooling resources to deliver employability programmes to help local people into work or training or to return to education. ORT will work with Ocean housing providers to facilitate further discussion of collaborative working and to support any resulting initiatives.

2014/15 Target: Organize a meeting for the major Ocean Estate housing providers (East Thames, Tower Hamlets Homes, Gateway Housing Association and LBTH) to explore the potential for collaboration.

2015/16 Target: Facilitate further discussion of collaborative working and support any resulting initiatives.

ORT/City Gateway Partnership Proposal Overview

The ORT will continue their ongoing projects as described above. The partnership work is described below. This work started on the 1st April 2015. ORT/City Gateway propose a £185k a year project that engages the most disadvantaged from the Ocean Estate and surrounding area, aiming to improve their economic and social wellbeing whilst increasing community cohesion. Key elements of the proposal are:

- Services primarily aimed at the most disadvantaged women and families in Ocean Estate and the surrounding area;
- Engage, mentor and train the most excluded individuals;
- Bring together different groups and cultures, and work against conflict and division;
- ESOL, literacy, numeracy, and apprenticeship sessions every week
- Innovative community development programmes – Advice Champions, Health Café and Advice Cafe
- Employment development workshops, including CV writing and Apprenticeships
- Promote local economic growth through the development of sustainable social enterprises
- A structured plan in place to look at longer term fundraising for potential multi-year partnership.



OCEAN REGENERATION TRUST

BUSINESS PLAN

2015/16 – 2017/18

A great place for families nestled around the green spine of Stepney Green, Regent's Canal and Mile End Park Leisure Centre: Stepney will remain largely residential and will offer high-quality new housing alongside regenerated housing estates. The improvement in retail and commercial provision and environment will be reflected at Ben Jonson Road and around a new town centre at Stepney Green tube station. Enhancements to the extensive network of green spaces such as Stepney Green and Trafalgar Gardens will draw people from one green space to another, and bring residents and visitors into the area. The central green spine will act as a wildlife haven and a lung for the area. This will support the area's suitability for family housing, its conservation areas, rows of terrace housing and network of streets.
Tower Hamlets Adopted Core Strategy (2010)

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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 would take on 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 surplus revenue from the new build Council-owned retail units completed under the main regeneration scheme on the north side of Ben Jonson Road;
 - The transfer of surplus revenue from the Council-owned retail units on the south side of Ben Jonson Road;
 - The granting of a long lease from the Council on the HS Multicentre community space.
- 1.4 Negotiations about the level and duration of funding the Council will guarantee to the Trust and the transfer of the Harford Street Multicentre lease have been in progress since ORT's inception and are still continuing. It is hoped that recent changes within the Council will assist in bringing these discussions to a successful conclusion and allow ORT to move forward with confidence.
- 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 fundraising from other sources will enable the Trust 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 three years and the activities and initiatives it will undertake to meet its objectives.
- 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 £80K associated with the retail units on the south side of Ben Jonson Road and ground rents amounting to £105K.

2. THE OCEAN REGENERATION SCHEME

2.1 The Ocean Estate is situated in Central Stepney within the 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 east.

2.2 Regeneration of the Ocean Estate has been one of LB Tower Hamlets' top priorities. Investment of more than £220 million over the last five years has seen the transformation of what was a predominantly 1950s built social housing estate consisting of mainly medium rise residential blocks owned and managed by LB Tower Hamlets. The main components of the redevelopment scheme have been:

- Demolition of 338 homes in Urban Blocks E (Aden, Flores, Taranto, Riga, Darien, Bengal and Caspian Houses) and F (Andaman, Atlantic and Marmora Houses and eight retail units)
- More than 800 new homes built across five sites
 - 296 affordable rented
 - 100 intermediate (shared ownership)
 - 420 private sale
- External refurbishment of 1,109 properties and internal refurbishment to Decent Homes Standard of 700 social rented properties
- Creation of 1,300 m² new retail and community facilities
- Estate environmental improvements.

As the estate has been redeveloped its ownership has diversified to Housing Associations, owner-occupiers and private renters.

2.3 The final phase of redevelopment began in August 2015 with the demolition of three residential towers in Urban Block H (Allonby, Channel and Studland Houses – comprising 120 properties). They will be replaced by 225 new homes – 92 affordable rented, 29 intermediate and 104 for private sale, and improved publicly accessible amenity space. Construction is due to be completed in January 2018.

2.4 In addition, the Council is redeveloping the Dame Colet House and Haileybury Youth Centre sites in partnership with Guildmore Ltd. Forty apartments for affordable rent will replace Dame Colet House and the Haileybury Youth Centre is being rebuilt as a state of the art facility for young people in the area, with a multi-purpose rooftop games pitch, arts and music facilities, IT suite, sports hall and café. Building works are expected to be completed in December 2015.

2.5 There were 2,574 households living in the Ocean area at the time of the 2011 Census. Regeneration will see the number of households rise to 3,157.

3. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 LB Tower Hamlets' Community Plan is a key document setting out the Council's vision for Tower Hamlets to 2020. The Council is now planning its priorities for the next four years and, having sought input from local residents and other stakeholders, has drafted a new Community Plan to take the borough through to 2019. The Plan will be finalised and agreed by the Council by the end of 2015.

3.2 In developing a Community Plan for 2015 onwards, 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.

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 numbers 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 development until a confirmed funding package and associated SLA have been agreed with the Council. These are:

- Improving education 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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

- 5.2 ORT and City Gateway have invested more than £210,000 in a partnership to deliver women's services for one year to the most disadvantaged women from the Ocean Estate and surrounding area from the HS Multicentre under the Stepney Life Centre banner. The partnership is ensuring that the needs of local residents are catered for and that sustainable, high quality and consistent services are maintained. The intention is to build on this foundation to grow and improve services in Years 2 and 3 and beyond.
- 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 150 women from diverse sections of the community signed up for courses.
- 5.4 Courses include Childcare, Volunteering and Customer Services, Keep Fit, Healthy Living and Confidence Building, ESOL, Functional Skills English and Maths, Apprenticeships, ICT and Business Administration. All courses are free of charge and crèche facilities are available to all users.
- 5.5 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, libraries, markets and at school gates.
- 5.6 In the medium term we will recruit a Detached and Outreach Worker to the Stepney Life Centre team to engage local young people, assess their needs and place them on the right programmes. This means we will be providing signposting, IAG and safeguarding services to young people, as well as their families. This holistic focus on addressing whole family issues will enable even the most entrenched barriers to progression to be tackled.
- 5.7 Social enterprise forms a key part of the service offer to create work experience placements, apprenticeships and jobs for local people, on the job training and learning space, and affordable local community services that also help build community networks and cohesion.
- 5.8 Gateway Tots, City Gateway's childcare social enterprise, offers free childcare to local women, increasing their access to training opportunities. The aim is for the Stepney Life Centre crèche to be Ofsted approved so, as well as offering childcare so women can participate and more easily access services, mothers and fathers can leave their children on site while they access employment opportunities. Gateway Tots also provides high quality childcare placements for

women on the Childcare Apprenticeships, providing a progression route into sustainable employment within Gateway Tots or other local childcare organisations. City Gateway's aim is for their Childcare Apprenticeships to become the benchmark of high quality childcare training in the borough.

5.9 In partnership with Flavour Gateway, City Gateway's catering enterprise, we plan to run a thriving 'Connect Café' for local residents. As well as providing café style food and drink, the Connect Café would run Literacy Lunch workshops (informal language sessions for women who cannot access ESOL), numeracy sessions, all family learning sessions and a New Mums Club. Services in the café would be geared to actively promote healthy eating and lifestyles. The welcoming café space would help to put new service users immediately at ease and show them how they can make new friends and learn in a social environment.

5.10 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.

5.11 ORT and the City Gateway fundraising team are working together to raise finance to expand and improve the services available at the Stepney Life Centre.

Limehouse Project Welfare Benefit Advice and Guidance and Employment Support

5.12 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.

5.13 Limehouse Project has secured funding from LB Tower Hamlets (MSG funding programme) to deliver advice services covering the LAP 3 area for the next three years. 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.

5.14 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.

Working with key stakeholders and housing providers

5.15 Other organisations working in the area share many of ORT's aims and to avoid duplication and build on existing work the Trust will continue to facilitate

meetings for key stakeholders to share what they are doing with others and to explore the potential for collaboration.

5.16 These meetings are currently on hold pending the outcome of the Ocean Review (see below) but prior to this there was substantial support for continuing the meetings and the following objectives going forward were agreed:

- Steering local activity stimulated by information sharing
- Leveraging money into the neighbourhood
- Mapping local provision by activity and beneficiary group
- Identifying gaps and duplication in local provision
- Enabling and coordinating joint bidding for funding.

5.17 Evolving from information sharing and identification of gaps and duplication in local provision could be the development of joint strategies to tackle specific issues, for example employability and work preparation training, 14-19 provision or addressing poverty.

5.18 There are three major housing providers with properties on the Ocean Estate (Tower Hamlets Homes, East Thames Group and Gateway Housing Association) offering tremendous potential for collaboration both on community development activities and wider estate management and maintenance issues. Informal conversations with two of the organisations have been positive but further discussions are on hold pending the outcome of the Ocean Review.

Community grants

5.19 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.

5.20 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.

5.21 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

5.22 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.

5.23 There are two stages to the project, designed to give practical support to the existing retailers on the south side of Ben Jonson Road and any new businesses which may be created in the shopping centre in the near future.

- **Stage One**

The first stage will concentrate on analysis of currently available information, engagement with existing retailers and consultation with local residents and current users of the shopping centre. At the end of this investigative stage there will be an improved picture of which lines of business provided by existing and new businesses are likely to succeed and how these can best be organised to meet consumer requirements.

- **Stage Two**

The second stage of the project will focus on active support to increase turnover and investment. Possible interventions could include support for individual local retailers to enhance their marketing capability, a publicity programme for the shopping centre as a whole, special events to increase footfall and draw new customers to the area, advocacy of public realm improvements in transport, parking and/or signage, improvement in the way goods and services are provided, for example collaboration between businesses in meeting online delivery requests and click-and-collect facilities.

Ocean Estate bursary scheme

5.24 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.

5.25 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.

5.26 Seven grants were awarded for the 2014/15 academic year but administrative difficulties and personnel changes within the Council led to delay in the payment process and it was not until September 2015 that a way forward was agreed with the Commissioners. Unfortunately this means that it has not possible to offer grants for the 2015/16 academic year.

5.27 In the 2016/17 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

5.28 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.

5.29 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.

5.30 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 partnership with LB Tower Hamlets to deliver news to people who do not have access to the internet and rely on other methods for their information needs.

5.31 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.

5.32 As part of the Ocean Review (see below), ORT will work with LB Tower Hamlets and other partners to collect residents' views on the community facilities and services available in the Ocean and Limehouse Fields area and their ideas on how to make the neighbourhood a better place to live and work. Data will be gathered via questionnaires and at residents' 'Come and Tell Us What You Think' sessions and targeted events for young people and older residents.

Research

5.33 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 reach to provide a robust picture of the Ocean area and how it has changed in the decade 2001 to 2011, and where statistics are available beyond. This work will be regularly updated to keep the information current.

- 5.34 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 REVIEW

- 6.1 The Ocean Review was initiated by Councillor Alibor Choudhury with direction from the Mayor's office in September 2014 in order to establish a coherent and sustainable community plan / legacy support programme for the Ocean and Limehouse Fields area. The aim was for the final report and recommendations to be completed by July 2015, including recommendations on the future of the HS Multicentre.
- 6.2 The review was slow to get off the ground and the first meeting of the Steering Group, set up to steer the work and monitor progress, did not take place until April 2015. Further delay followed the departure of Councillor Choudhury and the then Mayor. The future of the review and the direction it should take is currently under discussion.
- 6.3 Work to date has been restricted to reviewing what community facilities and services are available in the Ocean and Limehouse area and highlighting any gaps in provision, and opportunities to strengthen partnership arrangements. This stage of the review is expected to be completed by the end of December 2015.
- 6.4 The second stage of the review will be informed by the outcomes of the first stage but it is still the intention that it will include development of a community plan / legacy support plan for the area. ORT will play a key role in this.

7. RESOURCES

Income

- 7.1 As stated above, ORT's principal sources of funding will be through the rental streams received from existing and new residential and retail assets created by the regeneration scheme. For the three years covered by this Business Plan the projected annual income is a LB Tower Hamlets grant of £80K associated with the retail units on the south side of Ben Jonson Road and £105K in ground rents from the new build residential units for market sale completed under the regeneration scheme (£250 x 420 units + annual RPI uplift). An assumption is also made on an initial target for attracting additional income through fundraising.
- 7.2 In time, ORT will also receive a grant associated with the surplus revenue from the new build Council-owned retail units completed under the main regeneration scheme on the north side of Ben Jonson Road. Marketing has been delayed by a

decision made after completion to split the eight originally planned units into 16 smaller ones and discussion about whether or not to complete a full fit-out prior to letting. The earliest the new retail units could begin opening for business is in April 2016. However, retailers could be offered a rent-free period so it is impossible at this stage to say when ORT might receive an income from this source.

ORT INCOME	FINANCIAL YEAR		
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Ground rents	£105,000.00	£107,100.00	£109,242.00
South side BJR	£80,000.00	£80,000.00	£80,000.00
North side BJR	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Fundraising	£5,000.00	£20,000.00	£30,000.00
TOTAL	£190,000.00	£207,100.00	£219,242.00

Expenditure

7.3 The expenditure profile assumes that the emphasis on spend is on a proactive programme of fundraising and project development and spend coupled with a core role around stakeholder/community engagement.

7.4 The funding provides for two posts (Director and Community Development Officer), each employed for three days a week from 2016/17. Operating costs cover IT, office supplies, insurance, membership subscriptions, recruitment, audit and other professional fees, governance, some publicity and marketing materials, including a newsletter, and miscellaneous expenses for organising meetings and events associated with community and stakeholder engagement.

ORT SPEND	FINANCIAL YEAR		
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Staffing	£50,000.00	£53,140.00	£53,140.00
Operating costs	£20,000.00	£22,500.00	£25,000.00
Research	£5,500.00	£5,500.00	£5,500.00
Stepney Life Centre	£110,000.00	£110,000.00	£110,000.00
Projects	£10,000.00	£20,000.00	£25,000.00
Community grants	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00
TOTAL	£235,500.00	£251,140.00	£258,640.00

Surplus/deficit	(£45,500.00)	(£44,040.00)	(£39,398.00)
Unrestricted reserves	£129,000.00	£83,500.00	£39,460.00