

Comment	Action	Responsibility	Date	Progress Update - September 2016
Recommendation 1: Develop a vision for each town centre that identifies the unique selling point and retail offer it needs to attract its target market				
Each commercial district will be explored to identify key indicators and any potential USP that can inform the development of a local vision, working with resident/community groups, businesses and ward councillors. Resource implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets Team	Recruit staff resources to develop and deliver programme of work	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q3 2015/16	Good progress is being made in terms of meeting the Council's Strategic Plan objectives for this area of work. However, the NHB project 'Thriving High Streets' is providing the funding for this recommendation. While the funding for the project was agreed in 2014, the final agreement for signature was not received by LBTH until 13th June 2016. This delay has impacted on the delivery with the risk attached to commencing ahead of the funding agreement being finalised. In the meantime, however, appointments have been made to the Town Centre and High Streets Manager and the High Streets Manager on short term contracts all commencing in June 2016. This has enabled the development of a highly experienced team in a relatively short timeframe. These new posts join the existing Roman Road Town Centre Manager and Project Officer posts to complete the Town Centre team. Work has now commenced on pulling together the existing research, audits, information on District Centres to commence work on area profiles demonstrating commercial concentrations as destinations. Key indicators are being developed to underpin these area profiles. The requirements for procurement of the Strategy have been established - <i>and the Strategy is out for procurement to ensure that the key deadlines are met.</i> The pilot area/s for the pilot project are being analysed and proposal are being developed for further consideration. <i>Work is underway to link up with the Chripl Street redevelopment led by Poplar HARCA and the Retail Capacity Study undertaken in Whitechapel. There is also active involvement in the refresh of the Local Plan to ensure that there is synergy between the Town Centre Strategy and the emerging Local Plan.</i>
	Overview research of local geographic town area including demographics and business make up.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16	
	Develop offer for local resident/community groups to support development of town centre visions	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 15/16	
	Initiate development of town centre visions in agreed priority locations	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Mar-16	

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Recommendation 2: Promote the opportunity for local town teams to be formed by residents and businesses and put in place a toolkit to support this. Encourage these town teams to be engaged in the development of the local vision				
Local Town Teams can be in a varying degree of size and complexity. It is essential that local businesses form a key part of the discussions and proposals going forward to ensure that any business partnership is relevant to the area it represents. Resource implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets Team	Develop a Toolkit package that local resident and business collectives can use to develop their business partnership.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16	This work will be taken forward by the newly established Town Centre and High Streets team. Actions will be completed in Q3 and Q4 2016. <i>Work is currently underway to establish a Town Centre Manager position for Brick Lane. Networks are under development in the Brick Lane area and businesses are being consulted about their local issues and needs. Active business engagement is underway. It is proposed that the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Forum will be consulted as the Improvement Plan for the Brick Lane area emerges.</i>
	Introduce the Town Centre partnership work	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q1 2016/17	
	Work with local residents, businesses and ward councillors to develop the work of local partnerships to identify any formal arrangements which may offer 'Town Team' or 'local business partnership' formation.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q3 16/17	
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Recommendation 3: If feasible, develop a range of economic, environmental and social regeneration initiatives to attract footfall and spend, encourage new businesses, and support existing businesses into town centres – examples include: a) Support in initial establishment of websites and business associations/forums for marketing of the town centres to consumers and other enterprises; b) Continuation of the use of art, cultural activities and events to establish town centres as destinations, with a presumption on these being resident-led where possible, with support and technical assistance (ie in securing council licences and approvals) provided by the Council; c) Strategic, focussed grant programmes for shop front improvements which support the agreed vision and objectives of town centres; d) Pop up shops, stalls or kiosks which allow both the council and businesses to 'test the water' e) Explore the potential for ring-fencing future business rate growth from schemes like this to forward fund them				
Developing the geographies will identify specific actions for an area. The generation of unique branding and marketing and advertising strategies will help local networks and partnerships to promote their messages and events. Whilst initiatives can be developed universally, where they are actually targeting will be more specific to the locality. This will be delivered through the High Street policy work and rolled out where appropriate Resource implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team, Enterprise team, Finance & Procurement Service	As part of the Town Centre Pilot Programme, work with the local population to identify any local opportunity for art/cultural activity, events linked to local area or seasonal promotions; and support local partnerships to take ownership of the delivery with support from council officers to minimise bureaucracy.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q1 2016/17	The Roman Road Town Centre Manager has identified local opportunities for art / cultural activities in the Interact Hub and has worked with the Roman Road Trust on the Summer Festival. The outcomes from these pilots will be integrated into the Town Centre Pilot Programme. This work is now underway, delays in this work were due to the service restructure and the delayed contract from the GLA as identified above. Exploring the potential for ring-fencing future business rate growth to forward fund schemes like these will be considered as part of the outcomes based budgeting approach being used to deliver the medium term financial strategy which will ensure that resources are aligned with the council's strategic priorities. This will take place in Q3 2016/17.
	Implement the new entrepreneur training, start-up project and shop-front improvement scheme as part of the ongoing GLA NHB top-slice programme of town centre investment all of which will support the identification of test trade workspace.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2016/17	

	Identify forward requirement and requisite funding mechanism	Neville Murton, Finance & Procurement Service	Q4 2015/16	
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Recommendation 4: Develop a high streets and town centres policy which establishes a local vision, strategy and plan for town centres in the borough, focussed on economic regeneration as the central objective. Ensure that any update of the Town Centre Spatial Strategy, as part of the Local Plan refresh, takes the above into account				
The council is keen to identify and drive the economic growth in local commercial districts as well as the larger more corporate areas. A key part of this work is a defined high street and Town Centre policy which identifies the priorities for such areas and outlines the key actions being taken to promote increased performance. Resource implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team, funding allocation from GLA New Homes Bonus-funded High Streets Policy Pilot Programme	High Street policy developed with consultation across the council and with local businesses and residents.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q1 2016/17	Delays from the GLA in delivering the contracts have meant slippage in the implementation of the NHB programme overall. Input of research and information on town centres and high streets into the data collection and analysis for the revised Local Plan refresh is currently underway. The findings will be used to inform the Town Centre Strategy. Procurement of suitable consultants to undertake preparation of the Town Centre Strategy is now underway. The draft Strategy will be presented to Lead Member and senior leadership in early 2017 and to Cabinet by the end of the financial year.
	Ensure the input of research and information on town centres and high streets into the data collection and analysis for the revised Local Plan refresh	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q2 2016/17	
	Launch High Street /Town Centre Policy highlighting local good news stories and promoting the business partnerships involved and the latest events being planned.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources / Town Centre Coordination, Steering Group	Q2 16/17	
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Recommendation 5: Adopt suitable town centre KPIs, starting with the ATCM model which measure the economic and wider health of our town centres				
As identified in discussion on local commercial areas, a baseline is required to identify where investment can most impact on the economic, social and environmental elements of an area. The Council would look to introduce indicators that can follow over time. Resource implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team	Work with ATCM to adapt the indicator model if necessary for use in LBTH high streets and town centres	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources / Association of Town Centre Managers	Q1 2016/17	Exploration is underway of GLA Specialist Advisor panel funding to align the work that is underway in developing the Area Profiles of District Centres. Work is underway with ATCM to identify the indicator model to be used. The indicator model will be used to benchmark and performance manage the Town Centres going forward.
	Create baseline scorecard/dashboard arrangement for key areas.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q2 2016/17	

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Recommendation 6: Review role and responsibilities of the Roman Road Town Centre Manager post to ensure it is focussed on delivering the targeted interventions identified in the Roman Road Vision, and subject to funding, roll out for other town centres across the borough				
The Roman Road Town Centre manager role was introduced for a small focused project and to facilitate specific events. Town centre management functions will be reviewed following the adoption of the high streets and town centres policy to ensure they ongoing delivery requirements. Resource implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team. Roman Road town centre manager funded through S106 to March 2017.	Develop and recruit to any Town Centre roles within Economic Development as part of the wider delivery of the GLA NHB Town Centres and High Streets programme Review the Job Description and Person Spec of a Town Centre Manager to ensure it meets the delivery requirements of the programme going forward.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q1 2016/17 Q4 2015/16	Appointments have been made to the key Town Centre and High Streets team as identified above. The job description and person specification for a Town Centre Manager post was reviewed as part of the Economic Development restructure. This is now being reviewed as part of developing the job description for the upcoming Brick Lane position.
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Recommendation 7: Review the support available to local businesses in the borough and proactively promote it				
The council will identify and publicise the current support available, including GLA/NHB- funded provision, and promote any new programmes emerging through its work on Town Centres. Resource implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team.	Review the programme of business support both internally available and the wider services available externally and increase promotion of the Council's business enquiries desk. Link marketing and promotion of new programmes to the workspace and town centre delivery and make available to tenants in Council-owned commercial properties to ensure widest coverage possible. Introduce the LBTH entrepreneurship training and the business start up support programme	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16 Q2 2016/17 Q4 16/17	Work is now underway on developing a new strategy around business engagement based around 'Business Friendly Tower Hamlets'. A database of businesses is being developed as part of the #Shoptowerhamlets project and this will be used to develop communications with and from local SME's. The workspace feasibility study has identified workspace providers who can be brought together to identify their offer and potential for future joint working. Promotion of business support through Council's business enquiries desk is ongoing. New business support programmes will deliver in early October 2016.
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Recommendation 8: Provide data analysis that will stimulate potential opportunities in the borough's town centres, including qualitative and quantitative data, demographic analysis of the resident and working populations, outline existing market analysis, and external drivers for change				
Each town centre area will have a basic baseline set of data and indicators that can inform possible idea development and investment. With limited funding there needs to be a comparator to decide where to best invest council resources. Resource Implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team, Enterprise team	Develop basic individual area baseline and research sets Research best practice and external examples of town centre development and change. Develop underserved market ideas, possibilities for full occupancy through test trading, street market expansion and increased footfall	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16 Q1 2016/17 Q4 2016/17	This work is being taken forward by the newly established Town Centre and High Streets team. Development of the Area Profiles has developed evidence base for all District Centres. The team has started to speak to other Boroughs and areas to identify good practice in these areas. Using the ATCM indicators model will enable performance management against these key indicators. The Town Centre Strategy will identify ideas around markets (as has already happened in the Whitechapel Retail Study) which will be pulled together into pilot programmes tailored to each area.

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Recommendation 9: Explore the potential for Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within the borough and, where potential BID areas are identified, work in partnership with the business network to promote the business benefits to local enterprises, including the GLA's programme of support for future BIDs				
The Council is keen to support the development of Business Improvement Districts. There is very limited scope for wholly owned BID areas but early ideas are emerging around Aldgate and Shoreditch. Resource implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team, Enterprise team	Promote the appetite for Business Improvement Districts in the borough by immediately responding to 100% of all enquiries about potential BID's.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16	Responses have been provided to 100% of all enquiries about potential BIDs. No requests for ballots have been received to date. <i>The Aldgate Partnership and Corporation of London is currently considering the potential of a BID for the Aldgate area. The Council is in on-going discussion to understand the process, identify any financial obligations and/or risks for the Council. Regular reports will be provided to the Lead Member to update on progress.</i>
	Discuss with agents and business networks an accurate geography for such districts and work within the legislation to ensure the council supports vote requests.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16	
	Keep under review the latest support available for local businesses to develop BIDS	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Ongoing	
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Recommendation 10: Explore developing a package of inducements that could be offered to targeted businesses identified as essential in town centre visions				
A range of opportunities could be developed and would be determined by a number of factors including geography, outcome, market place, finance, risk. Resource Implications: Existing resources - Town Centres and High Streets Team, Enterprise Team	Develop list of potential proposals	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16	Proposals for incentivised retail uses are being developed in respect of Roman Road. <i>The Town Centre Strategy will pick up on these proposals and identify how they will be delivered in each area. Evaluation of any delivery will form part of future updates and will have a wider roll out to other Town Centres and High Streets.</i>
	Discuss opportunities at the strategic level.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16	
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Recommendation 11: Explore the viability of an approach whereby the Council will consider, in a small number of cases, taking on a short-term lease and grant-funding the fit-out to create a unit to market to specific retail uses identified as essential to the development of a local town centre vision				
Resource Implications: Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team, Enterprise team	Develop a model for a short term lease and processes to identify and fill the property.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16	Potential qualifying property has been identified in Roman Road. A model for short term lease and processes is in development. <i>The wider roll-out of similar aspects will be explored as part of the Town Centre Strategy. The findings of the Retail Capacity Study that underpins the refresh of the Local Plan also provides data on vacant units to enable work to proceed in Town Centres.</i>
	Identify any qualifying property	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4	

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Recommendation 12: Roll out the policy for accepting new traders into our markets to ensure that the retail offer within markets can be more actively curated				
There is already a policy for accepting new traders into the markets. Vendors are tested on their product knowledge, quality of goods, display technique, business plan etc. If successful a pre- allocated temporary license is issued.	Develop and publish a document which: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• outlines the procedure for accepting new traders into markets; and• communicates the rationale for developing the offer within individual markets to ensure they meet shopping habits and demographics.	c/o David Tolley, Head of Trading Standards and Environmental Health	Q3 2015/16	<p>Actions for this recommendation have not been progressed due to lack of staff resources. There will be capacity in the team going forward to resume this work which will be actioned over the course of the 2016/17 financial year.</p> <p>A procedure and interview criterion for accepting new traders into markets will be developed and cover areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sample product produced at interview;• Photographs taken of product to ensure offered for sale at market;• Stall display conforms to Council requirements;• Temporary licence issued for a probationary period to ensure compliance of licence conditions;• Ability to withdraw if set criteria not complied with. <p>Many markets within Tower Hamlets have new traders joining existing sellers, however the goods on offer are a duplication of those presently offered for sale resulting in commodity saturation. Many existing traders have sold the same commodity for many years and display in a very similar way to each other, we want to encourage them to look at alternative ways of selling their product, bringing variety, innovative ideas and change to create vibrant and successful markets attracting larger footfall from local people and visitors.</p> <p>With the introduction of the interview criteria for new traders and with support from Economic Development Service we aim to develop an optional training programme for successful applicants.</p>
At present this policy relates only to fruit and vegetable traders and hot food; these vendors have been prioritised due the nature of the product.	Extend interview selection process to all potential market traders (prioritising those vendors selling food).	c/o David Tolley, Head of Trading Standards and Environmental Health	Q4 2015/16	
There is a risk that a lack of resources in the service will impact the roll out of this policy out to all traders.	With support from the Economic Development Service, develop a mandatory training programme for successful applicants: which includes marketing, display, social media, and business skills, as a condition of being accepted for a temporary licence.	c/o David Tolley, Head of Trading Standards and Environmental Health	Q4 2015/16	
In addition, it should be noted there are currently negotiations with the Government to establish whether Markets are covered by the European Directive which removes the ability to refuse a trader because the intended goods are already represented.	Develop mechanisms for monitoring probation periods including provision to withdraw temporary licenses if set criteria are not delivered.	c/o David Tolley, Head of Trading Standards and Environmental Health	Q3 2015/16	<p>The suggestion is for new traders to attend training sessions to develop areas of business such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of produce;• Image/presentation of stall set-up;• Innovation – selling products different from others;• How to increase takings• Financial Planning;• Managing stock;• Managing accounts;• Social Media;• Adapting to changing demographics <p>Training Sessions cannot be made mandatory, we can only encourage traders to attend training sessions to advise of the benefits they will achieve to their business model. We aim to work with traders to ensure they operate effectively so that we can continue to develop markets as prosperous destinations.</p>
Resource implications: Existing resources – Market Development Team				

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Recommendation 13: Finalise and formalise the Council's approach to proactively establishing and using tools to encourage owners of vacant high street retail premises to bring them back into use				
There are already development management policies (DM1 and 2), which provide further guidance to assist with managing the provision of retail premises and seeking to prevent development resulting in the loss of such units.	Review the existing development management policies based on new evidence base, including assessing town centre retail capacity	Adele Maher Strategic Planning Manager	Q4 2015/16	The first action is complete as schedule. The Second action is also on schedule and the draft Local Plan is anticipated to go out for public consultation in November 2016.
As part of the Local Plan preparation, officers will review the existing policies based on the most up-to-date evidence. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the ownership of vacant premises is not within the planning remit. The planning system cannot force owners to open units they own. Any grants/incentives would need to come from elsewhere.	Resource implications: the cost of implementing	Consult on the revised development management policies (above) during the public consultation on the draft Local Plan in autumn 2016	Adele Maher Strategic Planning Manager	With regard to the final action 'explore wider options for bringing vacant buildings back into suitable town centre use' the preparation of the new Local Plan will provide an opportunity for new policies to encourage vacant shops back into use, however, due to the limits to the planning system, this cannot be made a requirement. The appointment of the new High Street and Town Centres Team provides an exciting opportunity to further develop options for bringing vacant buildings back into use, in addition to existing economic development strategies. <i>Wider options are being developed including the use of CPO and enforcement action and the use of planning processes to bring vacant buildings back into use.</i>
Resource implications: the cost of implementing	Explore wider options for bringing vacant buildings back into suitable town centre use	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q3 16/17	Resource implications: existing resources Economic Development
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Recommendation 14: Identify and engage with absentee landlords to identify current premises use and explore options for alternative uses				
Empty properties are key to the look and feel of a local high street but often this is impacted by properties in use. The council will explore uses and vacancies as part of its wider town centre development work.	Identify, generate and verify a list of properties that are apparently vacant or underused which could be explored and/or utilised.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q4 2015/16	A List of vacant / underused properties has been generated for Roman Road as a key area for commercial vacancies. Freeholders and landlords have been identified and contacted. Further engagement is now on-going.
Existing resources – Town Centres and High Streets team, Enterprise team	Identify freeholders and landlords associated with properties of interest to identify opportunities.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q1 2016/17	Work is now underway on developing a new strategy around business engagement based around 'Business Friendly Tower Hamlets'. A database of businesses is being developed as part of the #Shoptowerhamlets project and this will be used to develop communication.
	Agree shortlist of vacant properties and action plan for bringing back into use.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q2 16/17	

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Recommendation 15: Convene a working group to identify how retail units may be protected through planning measures from unsuitable conversion as part of the Local Plan review				
For the Local Plan, an internal stakeholder group at both officer level and service heads level has been established since June 2015. This arrangement has enabled planning policy officers to work collaboratively with the relevant teams on improving Town Centres related policies and understanding how amendments to the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) have undermined existing policies and impacted town centre uses. There will continue to be engagement internally and with external stakeholders through the Local Plan consultation process.	Identify planning mechanisms and measures to protect retail units through internal and external Local Plan stakeholder groups.	Adele Maher Strategic Planning Manager	Q4 2014/15	The preparation of the new Local Plan has allowed these actions to be considered and actioned. The Draft Local Plan, that will be subject to a public consultation in November 2016 will be supported by this evidence. A programme has also been prepared to taking forward Article 4 Directions to protect retail units in our town centres. it is expected that this will be complete by summer 2017, and in line with nation legislation that this will be in force 12 months later in summer 2018. Evidence gathering as part of the Local Plan perpetration has also identified better ways for information on town centre uses to be better monitoring from summer 2016 onwards.
A more formal 'working group' could be considered, but there is a risk that a lack of resources in the service would have impact on the proposed arrangement.	The groups will be supported by local evidence on the impact of change of use and permitted development rights on our town centres.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources		Officers are currently gathering evidence on the loss of retail units to other uses through the Holistic Data Capture Project, led by colleagues in D&R, and through Retail and Town Centre evidence base that supports the new Local Plan. The initial outputs of this evidence will be known by the end of June 2016. This will allow officers to prepare an informed policy response to the loss of retail units. Options for taking this forward will be presented to the Internal Working Group in summer 2016, and are likely to include a new Local Plan policy and Article 4 Direction.
Resource Implications: The production of the Local Plan, its policies and the evidence base is supported by the input of an Internal Stakeholder Group of Senior Officers and an External Stakeholder group of key Stakeholders. This matter will be tabled for the groups' input to help ensure that the new Local Plan policies effectively address this issue. The work of these groups is supported by e existing Strategic Planning budget.	Officers will also consider the case for Article 4 Directions to be issued to restrict application of permitted development rights.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources		
	Officers to consider how loss of units can be better monitored in the future e.g. through regular town centre use surveys.	Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources		

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Recommendation 16: Develop a retail unit viability study				
The key to the value of a retail property is usually the location. The Plan Making team is not aware of any guidance on what renders a retail unit as viable. The existing policy DM1.7 requires adequate width and depth of floor space for retail use, though this is not specifically defined in the policy. Further discussion can be held to discuss the scope of a retail unit viability study. This is to help plan making officers to understand the purpose and objectives of this study before any undertaking any actions. Resource Implications: this will be delivered through existing budgets	<p>Develop evidence base to establish suitable size, layout and servicing arrangements for different types of retail unit. Planning and Economic Development to draw together local evidence on suitable unit size, layout and viability to recommend best practice advice to support the development of the new Local Plan.</p> <p>Consult on revised planning policies as outlined in the response to recommendation 13 above.</p>	Adele Maher Strategic Planning Manager Chris Holme, Economic Development & Resources	Q3 2016/17	<p>The preparation of the new Local Plan has allowed these actions to be considered and actioned. The Draft Local Plan, that will be subject to a public consultation in November 2016 will be supported by this evidence. A programme has also been prepared to taking forward Article 4 Directions to protect retail units in our town centres. it is expected that this will be complete by summer 2017, and in line with nation legislation that this will be in force 12 months later in summer 2018. Evidence gathering as part of the Local Plan perpetration has also identified better ways for information on town centre uses to be better monitoring from summer 2016 onwards.</p> <p><i>The development of the evidence base is progressing well with the development of the Area Profiles. Relevant officers from Planning and Economic Development are continuing to meet on a regular basis to ensure robust policy development for retail units.</i></p>