

Cabinet	 TOWER HAMLETS
31 October 2018	
Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Acting Corporate Director, Place	Classification: Unrestricted
High Streets & Town Centres Strategy 2017 - 2022	

Lead Member	Councillor Uz-Zaman, Cabinet Member for Work & Economic Growth
Originating Officer(s)	Fiona Crehan, High Streets & Town Centres Manager
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Forward Plan Notice Published	27 th September 2018
Reason for Key Decision	Implementing the strategy will impact on multiple wards and require the commitment of expenditure.
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Priority 1 – People access a range of education, training and employment opportunities (Implement a programme of improvement initiatives to High Streets & Town Centres, including the role out of Wifi)

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval for the adoption of the High Streets & Town Centres Strategy (2017–2022).

The strategy sets out the Council's approach to improving the performance and competitiveness of Tower Hamlets key high streets and town centres.

The strategy summarises characteristics of key local high streets and uses a set of 20 Performance Indicators (PIs), which are ranked, to give a baseline for their performance.

A draft strategy was sent to Cabinet in March 2017 and a consultation process was approved.

At that time the development of a Markets Strategy was planned by the Market Services team, the content of which would cross refer to the Town Centres strategy.

Following the consultation process the High Streets & Town Centres strategy 2017-2022 integrated the profile of local street markets with the profile of each key high street to provide an overall pen portrait of each place.

The completed strategy also has a dedicated section on the approach to improving our street markets and aspects of street market operation are featured in each of the

5 key priorities.

Senior officers, in consultation with Cllr Motin Uz-Zaman Cabinet Member for Work & Economic Growth, reviewed the strategy and agreed that a separate Market Strategy was now no longer required.

A High Streets & Town Centres Working Group has been set-up with officers from a range of services to enable joint working, maximise synergy and make the most of available funds and oversee the implementation of the strategy

The High Streets & Town Centres team (HS&TC) team will carry out an annual review of the PIs for each key high street in order to monitor the impact of improvements and track improvements in the ranking of each indicator.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the final the High Streets & Town Centres Strategy (2017-2022) and the priorities set out in the document.
2. Note the rankings given to performance indicators across key high streets as set out in Appendix 1 of the strategy.
3. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in paragraph 4.1

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Approving the strategy will enable the implementation of priorities to improve the performance of key local high streets and address weaknesses.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The development of a High Streets & Town Centre Strategy is a key objective in the Forward Plan for 2018/19.
- 2.2 No alternative option has therefore been considered.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The purpose of the High Streets & Town Centre Strategy is to set out the Council's approach to improving the competitiveness of key local high streets and town centres aims to create vibrant, dynamic and sustainable places by:
 - attracting investment into the borough;
 - exploiting the success of the borough's street markets;

- supporting enterprise;
 - managing the night time economy; and
 - reducing vacant units.
- 3.2 The High Streets & Town Centres team worked with consultants (ATCM and The Retail group) developed the strategy, drawing on a range of data and information and reviewing characteristics of each key local high street.
- 3.3 Analysis of the characteristics of each key high street highlighted areas of improvement needed to improve their performance.
- 3.4 The draft of the strategy was approved for consultation by Cabinet in March 2017.
- 3.5 Consultation was undertaken with teams across the Council, local stakeholders with an interest in our high streets and with community groups, residents and businesses in their respective town centre or high street.
- 3.6 Using these local networks, the strategy was distributed to 1,339 different businesses, organisations and residents and generated 40 responses.
- 3.7 Responses received were supportive of the direction and approach set out in the strategy and the rankings given to performance indicators.
- 3.8 Responses included suggestions for how different issues on the local high streets could be addressed, including improvements to the management and look of the local street markets.
- 3.9 These comments were used to finalise the strategy and its priorities:
- Priority 1: Improve the retail offer on the high street;
 - Priority 2: Develop and support local partnerships;
 - Priority 3: Improve management of the public realm;
 - Priority 4: Improve the management of street markets and
 - Priority 5: Reduce anti-social behaviour on the high street.
- 3.10 The implementation of the strategy will be led by the High Streets & Town Centres team working with services across the Council and also with local place-based partnerships and local stakeholders.
- 3.11 The High Streets & Town Centres Working Group, with officers from services across the Council with an interest in high streets, will oversee the implementation of the strategy and review the rankings for performance indicators each year to track progress and improvements.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The implementation of priorities set out in the strategy will positively impact on the quality of life of residents living in Tower Hamlets, particularly people living near our key high streets.

4.2 The implementation of the strategy will maximise economic benefits arising from local growth and in general improve outcomes for people from protected groups by supporting our independent businesses many of which are owned by people from BAME backgrounds and by providing low cost opportunities to start businesses, assisting people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

4.3

4.4 An Equalities Analysis has been completed and attached as an Appendix to this report.

5. **OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Crime Reduction**

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Crime are particular challenges for our town centres, with aggressive begging, alcohol and drunkenness issues, drug dealing, drug use and assaults of particular concerns.

There is also a link between ASB concerns and the borough's night-time economy, particularly in the west of the borough.

Reducing ASB is one of the priorities of the strategy and a PI is being monitored as the strategy is implemented. This will involve joint working with services promoting responsible alcohol consumption and responsible management of licensed premises, supporting the implementation of the emerging CCTV Strategy and Waste Strategy and the Council's review of enforcement services.

The HS&TC team will work with the Community Safety team and Crime & ASB Operations Group to help improve reporting of crime on our key high streets and town centres.

5.3 **Environmental (including Air Quality)**

Public realm improvements are a key priority in the strategy and include promoting green travel including: way finding, walking routes and quiet routes between high streets, installing electric vehicle charging points and accommodating cycle storage and car hire/ share solutions.

Implementing the strategy will link with the Council's strategies including: Air Quality, Public Health & Well-being.

5.4 **Risk Management**

The following risks have been identified, and mitigation strategies prepared:

Risk	Mitigation
Stakeholders are not supportive of the proposed strategy / do not sufficiently engage	<p>Consultation undertaken on draft strategy to allow for comment on proposed strategy.</p> <p>Partnerships created in a number of town centres where appropriate (e.g. Brick Lane Regeneration Partnership; Roman Road Regeneration Partnership).</p> <p>Regular communications with stakeholders to continue throughout delivery of the strategy.</p>

Lack of co-operation from key landholders	Initial engagement has taken place with landholders in key areas e.g. QMU in Roman Road / TfL on sites across the borough. Sites with potential issues with key landholders will be flagged in individual programme PIDs and mitigation measures outlined.
Unable to secure necessary consents e.g. planning for shopfront improvements	Pre-engagement with LBTH Planning team regarding shopfront improvement programmes to pre-empt any issues that may arise.
Unable to secure necessary funding	Programmes will seek funding from a wide range of internal and external sources to ensure that as much work as possible outlined in the strategy is able to be funded.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Following the completion of a public consultation process, this report seeks the approval by the Mayor in Cabinet for the Council to adopt the High Streets and Town Centres Strategy (2017-2022).
- 6.2 Along with the appointment of a Town Centre Team (completed in June 2016) and the development of Area Profiles (considered by Cabinet in December 2016), the delivery of a High Streets and Town Centre Strategy is one of the major deliverables within the 'Thriving High Streets' project that was approved by the Greater London Authority (GLA). This project is fully funded from within the £7.021 million that the Council was awarded to finance Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) priorities within the borough. The Strategy has been developed by the Council's Growth and Economic Development service with support from external consultants (see paragraph 3.2) at a cost of approximately £50,000.
- 6.3 In conjunction with other Council strategies, the High Streets and Town Centre Strategy will assist in the prioritisation of activities within programmes which are designed to encourage local enterprise, support local businesses and improve employment opportunities for residents. Included within the GLA funding is a specific allocation for a 'Thriving High Streets' pilot programme which has a total budget allocation of £2.29 million. £1.0 million of this is earmarked for capital projects and is incorporated within the Council's approved capital programme.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to adopt this Strategy. The Strategy does not form part of the Council's policy framework and can thus be agreed by Cabinet.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report - NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - High Streets & Town Centre Strategy
- Appendix 2 - High Streets & Town Centres – Ranking definitions for Performance Indicators
- Appendix 3 - Equalities Analysis

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Fiona Crehan, High Streets & Town Centres Manager