

Whitechapel Market Action Plan

London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Markets Improvement Plan



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1.0 Introduction

Whitechapel market is a long-established street market and the largest council market with 116 pitches. It has high occupancy levels (93% at 2020) and is well supported by a local community reliant on the market for everyday low-cost produce. It has the most populated catchment area of all Tower Hamlets' markets, and is very centrally located, just minutes from Aldgate and the City of London. The market stretches for almost a kilometre down Whitechapel Road.

Despite these positive attributes the market has remained the same for many years and has not adapted to the changes in the immediate area.

Whitechapel Road (the A11) and the land on which the market is located is managed by Transport for London (TfL) who also own and manage properties in Whitechapel, in addition to operational land, the station and railway tracks. The complexities around the major stakeholders in the area and TfL's ownership can see changes take longer to implement than they do at other markets.

Additionally, there are multiple stakeholders impacted by the market with the largest one being Barts NHS Trust making it important to balance competing requirements when developing a long-term plan for the market.

The local Idea Store is also adjacent to the market, providing another hub for the community.

Market traders have had significant input from Trading Standards in relation to the selling of safe goods and pricing.

The Council's Regeneration Team is delivering transformational change to a key stretch of footway at the heart of the Whitechapel District Centre between Vallance Road and New Road in the west and Cambridge Heath Road and Sidney Street to the east. In seeking to draw together existing projects there has been an expanded focus on Whitechapel Market as part of the Markets Improvement Plan for the next five years resulting in this action plan.

A public consultation took place between April and June 2021 on the council's Let's Talk consultation platform. It asked shoppers, business owners and market traders for their views on the council's markets in the form of a survey, and via invite-only one-to-one and group interviews with local stakeholders. More detail on the consultation and the results can be seen in section 4.0.

2.0 Historical context

The high street, and the market site specifically, sits within The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area which was designated in June 1997 and extended in October 2008. The Conservation Area lies between Cambridge Heath Road to the East London Mosque and Davenant Centre to the West, Whitechapel Road to the south and Durward Street to the north. Many of the buildings fronting Whitechapel Road are of architectural and historical importance, and Whitechapel Road itself is an important and historically significant movement route within East London. The area includes several heritage assets including several listed buildings, Edward VII Memorial and listed K6 red telephone boxes. There are significant areas of public seating near the market with the nearest park/open space being Vallance Gardens.



However, in the council's own words 'Whitechapel Market is emblematic of the challenges facing the borough's street markets. Despite being one of the longest running and highest profile markets in the borough, there are a myriad of ingrained methods of operation that detract upon its attractiveness and functionality and impact the local community negatively.'¹

The council has commissioned many strategies and proposals for improving Whitechapel and the market e.g., Whitechapel Masterplan, Whitechapel Vision, however, few of these have been delivered in full. The view locally, amongst stakeholders, customers and traders is that the market has stood still as the area has changed contributing to a feeling that it has been 'left behind'.

1 - Whitechapel focussed brief and output instruction from LBTH

2.0 Historical context

Commissions include:

2020 (adopted)	Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031: Managing Growth and Sharing Benefits	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
2019	TfL Streetscape Guidance	TfL and Mayor of London
2019	Whitechapel Road: Market and Public Realm Design Options	TfL Urban Design
2017	High Streets & Town Centres Strategy 2017-2022	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
2016	Whitechapel Active Space Framework	Studio Weave
2016	Whitechapel Market Feasibility Study Report	Greig and Stephenson Architects
2015	Whitechapel Vision Regeneration Prospectus	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
2015	Enterprising Whitechapel: Strategy & Technical Evidence	Regeneris Consulting Ltd
2015	City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework	Mayor of London
2009	Whitechapel Market Conservation Area	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

2.0 Historical context

The High Streets & Town Centres Strategy 2017 – 2022 identified that the market has limited customer facilities, issues with antisocial behaviour and graffiti, waste management and poor cleanliness of the public realm.

The Whitechapel Vision report proposes a 'new and ambitious vision' for Whitechapel and the market which allows the area to 'capitalise on regeneration opportunities'² and look ahead to the new Crossrail/Elizabeth Line station, the redevelopment of the Old Royal London Hospital and the relocation of council services with a new town hall opening, thousands of new homes in the area and the new Life Science campus at Queen Mary University of London.

Despite these proposals and reports, the market has seen limited change leading to traders losing confidence in previously discussed improvements and becoming frustrated that they are still trading in a challenging environment.

There has been limited partnership working in Whitechapel, including local community groups taking part in consultation activities to inform regeneration projects. The Aldgate Connect BID has some members in Whitechapel and along with TfL, Barts Health Trust and market traders they have actively taken part in this consultation.

3.0 The market now

As outlined, many improvements have been proposed for the market and the wider public realm but to date few changes have been made and those that have been implemented have had little impact as the area has changed ahead of these improvements. This has been due to funding delays, changes in leadership in the council and wider issues due to the complex nature of the stakeholders involved, further impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The market is well supported locally however, the produce, particularly fruit and vegetables are low cost and therefore tend to be bought for use that day rather than as part of a bigger shopping trip. The size/floorplan of retail units on the northern footways means that there are no anchor tenants in place for customers to complete a 'big shop' on Whitechapel Road beyond the Sainsbury's store on Cambridge Heath Road.

Customers are primarily from a single demographic and traders have, in some cases, adapted their commodities to suit or undercut their fellow traders (and local shops) to increase sales.

Snapshot

Trading days: Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm

Commodities: General (Fruit and vegetables, clothing, fish, spices, jewellery, luggage)

Customers: Local, low income

Reasons for shopping here: Location and value

Capacity: 116 pitches, 93% full

Household income

17% less than £15,000 | 56% less than £30,000 | 9% higher than £60,000

New developments will see footfall increase substantially with 5,000 passengers per day expected to travel through Whitechapel station when it reopens, and Crossrail/ Elizabeth Line is operational with step-free access.

3.1 Trading patterns and operational review

To build a better understanding of how the market operates, traders were asked a specific set of questions (in the survey) about trading at Whitechapel and multiple trips were made to the market to observe its operation.

Whitechapel Market Day

The market trades six days per week from Monday to Saturday.

Traders set-up from 8am. Many bring their stock with them in a van every day and use the parking bays on Whitechapel Road to unload with most doing so once per day with only four of the traders surveyed dropped off twice a day. Those who have storage use a privately rented unit close to the market however several traders keep their stock inside their van which is then parked overnight near Whitechapel Road. During set-up there are trolleys moving around, vans parked on the pavement in some cases (on a TfL Red Route) and stalls being erected. This can continue until 11am as not all trader's set-up at the same time.

Where traders do not return to their van for stock, the market area is used with fruit and vegetables stored in phone boxes during market hours and these traders are using bins all day for waste. Bin storage is open on the street and used by both commercial businesses (illegally) and market traders. There are two to three waste collections during the day however, waste remains on the street until collected.

Quality of goods is low and the display of stock and set up of stalls makes the market look unappealing. Many commodities are duplicated with many sellers of scarves and fruit and vegetables. Traders undercut each other and local shops when it comes to pricing.

Stalls are, overall, a metal frame with tarpaulins and while they are representative of many market stalls they are far from ideal for trading on a busy thoroughfare in all weather and look to be of poor quality.

In wet weather, rain collects on the tarpaulins covering the top of the stalls and can drop at any point, soaking a customer. The drainage/gullies on the pavement are located in a way that means customers must cross them if they wish to step inside a stall, for example those selling clothes and pavements (within the stalls) can be slippery. When it is windy, those traders using gazebos can find them lifting from the pavement and ending up in the busy main road. In winter when it can be dark at 3pm, the streetlights located in the centre of the pavement provide inadequate lighting for stalls.

3.1 Trading patterns and operational review

There is limited seating on the street and where it exists it is often next to market stalls, smokers or drinkers sometimes congregate with smoke drifting onto clothing stalls.

Stalls remain on trolleys after hours as there is no storage available for them and this accompanied by cyclists using the pavement and vans and stalls blocking sight lines for bus stops and crossings adds to a hazardous environment for pedestrians. Due to staffing levels, inspectors cannot attend the market all day.

Traders start to pack up around 5pm and this sees a repeat of the morning set-up with movement of vans and stock, dismantling of stalls and a lot of activity to the detriment of other users of the road. There have been reports of traders sleeping in vans overnight.

Trader responses revealed that:

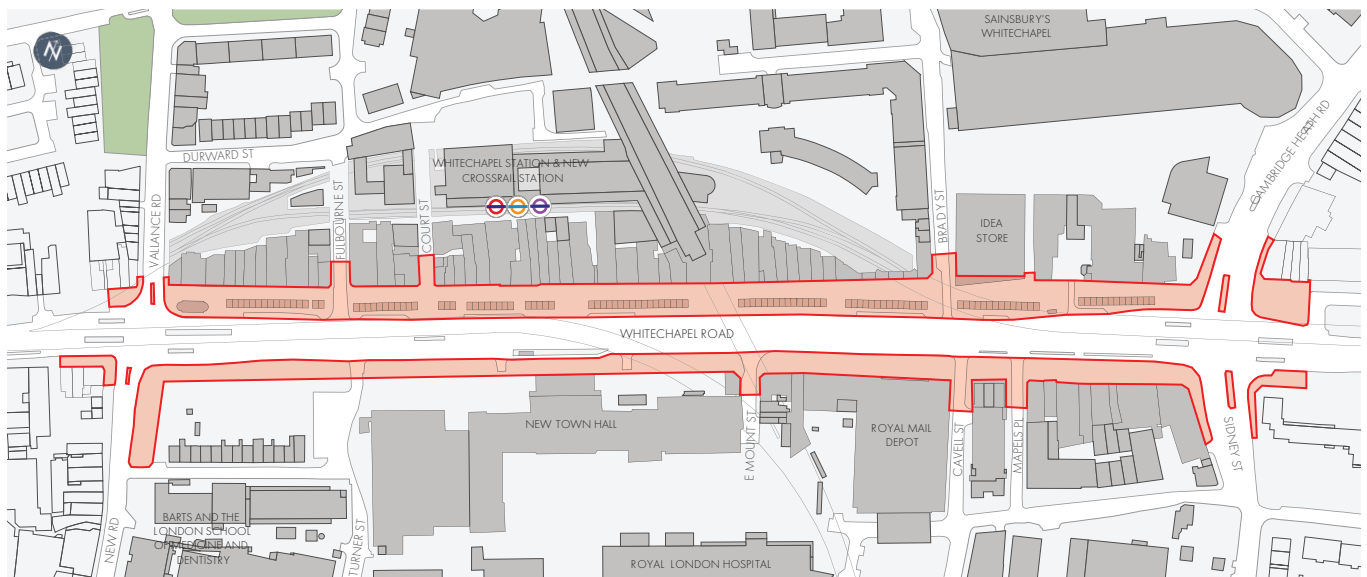
- 83% of respondents trade five days a week with weekdays more popular than a Saturday
- More than a quarter of market traders (26%) that responded only trade at Whitechapel Market
- 41% of traders use the loading bays on Whitechapel Road
- Most traders drop off (goods) once per day (six traders) with four traders dropping off twice per day
- 45.5% of traders rent a storage unit close to the market (privately and not from the council)
- 12.1% of traders store their goods in a van parked overnight near Whitechapel Road

The improvements that traders would like to see and the facilities they require are detailed in section 4.3.

3.2 The Whitechapel Road Improvement Programme (WRIP)

With the planned opening of Crossrail/Elizabeth Line and the relocation of the Council's services to the former Royal London Hospital building planned for 2022, and several developer-led schemes coming forward in the area, Whitechapel Road is a key area of change in the borough.

The Council's Regeneration Team is delivering transformational change to a key stretch of footway at the heart of the Whitechapel District Centre between Vallance Road and New Road in the west and Cambridge Heath Road and Sidney Street to the east under the Whitechapel Road Improvement Programme (WRIP). In seeking to draw together existing projects there has been an expanded focus on Whitechapel Market as part of the Markets Improvement Plan for the next five years resulting in this action plan.



SITE BOUNDARY

3.2 The Whitechapel Road Improvement Programme (WRIP)

The WRIP consists of three strands of work:

- Whitechapel Road Public Realm Improvements Project (PRIP) - Upgrading the street environment so it is befitting of the municipal centre of the Borough
- Whitechapel Market Stalls Project (MSP) - Delivering a consistent stall design to improve the performance of Whitechapel Market
- Whitechapel Market Management & Maintenance Project (MMMP) - Improving the day-to-day function and management of Whitechapel Market

Initial work on the WRIP commenced in winter 2020 with a feasibility report prepared by consultants, Project Centre. The report built on the historic work completed by the council and TfL and established a joint vision for the area.

In Spring 2021 following £1.87m funding confirmation, the council commissioned Project Centre and Greig & Stephenson to develop plans to the end of RIBA Stage 3. This is intended to deliver the first phase of public realm improvements outside the new Town Hall which will include a market stall prototype and development of waste, storage and toilet solutions. The Regeneration Team will continue to work with the Council's Capital Delivery team, which manages the capital programme, to secure the remaining funds for the programme.

3.3 The social, economic and cultural value of the market

Whitechapel is an important district centre within the borough and includes a public transport interchange and major health centre, both of which are expected to increase in significance in the years ahead. However, these assets, along with services such as the Post Office and banking attract people for practical reasons, if they have an appointment or if they are travelling through the area.

The current offer on Whitechapel Road, including the market, does not attract people to the area. It is an area dominated by retail with many smaller businesses and few household names. For those visitors wishing to pause or extend their visit there are few seating options and those that are in place are in areas in which people are unlikely to want to spend time. All these factors contribute to the market being a place that is passed through rather than used for shopping by those visiting the area (as opposed to shoppers visiting the market deliberately).

Retail units at street level and the floors above are in a poor state of repair, further contributing to the negative experience of using the street and the market.

Like much of the borough, Whitechapel is changing quickly and experiencing a large population increase. The area is becoming more attractive for families and young people and there are several residential developments close to the market.

The catchment area is estimated to include a local population of 75,000 (a 23% increase on 2011) and approximately 30,000 households and this is expected to increase further as new housing completes³. It has the most populated catchment area of all the borough's markets. With most of the catchment area's household income below the borough average and the London median household income it is important that the market supports the community.

Currently, this community is characterised by an ethnically diverse population with over 50% being within the Asian and Asian British ethnic group and a young population with over 60% of people aged under 30⁴. While the market has served elements of this population well it has ignored others completely.

The last 10 years have seen improvements to socio economic indicators such as improved educational attainment and reduced unemployment⁵. It is important that the market plays a part in the neighbourhood's offer, adapting to support these improvements long into the future.

3 - Whitechapel 20210318.ppt

4 - Whitechapel Vision Regeneration Prospectus, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2015

5 - Whitechapel Vision Regeneration Prospectus, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2015

3.4 Challenges

The historical challenges of the market were set out in the Whitechapel Market Feasibility Study Report by Greig and Stephenson Architects in 2016⁶ and unfortunately, since then little has changed. The key challenges highlighted were:

- Unattractive and dated market appearance
- Lack of suitable storage for the stalls and/or goods
- Lack of protection from the weather for traders and customers
- Excess waste and market structures left on-site during and after trading hours
- Lack of through-ways between and behind stalls for trader and pedestrian safety
- Inadequate pedestrian and stall lighting
- Congestion in delivery bays preventing efficient stall replenishment process
- Subletting
- Limited access to toilets for traders (these being in the Idea Store)
- Inefficient floor (pavement) and drainage system



6 - Whitechapel Market Feasibility Study Report, Greig and Stephenson Architects (on behalf of London Borough of Tower Hamlets), 2016, pg 2

3.4 Challenges

In reviewing the market in 2021 during this consultation, the following challenges were identified or confirmed.

- Enforcement issues e.g., traders sleeping in vans and using parking bays all day (on a TfL managed red route)
- Oversizing of stalls
- A lot of repetition of goods sold
- Stock and cages litter the pavement. Phone boxes are used for storage during trading hours
- Poor visibility for pedestrians crossing the road and accessing bus stops (two are hidden from view during market hours)
- The location of street lighting is to the detriment of market stalls being in the middle of the pavement and too far away from them
- Competition for use of the pavement from shops, market traders and furniture. Towards the temporary location of the Underground station, access is narrow in places, further compounded by cycling on the pavement
- Lack of a food offer be it street food, lunch or to takeaway
- Poor trader facilities - power (electric power and lighting), storage, drainage on stalls, WiFi (for card payments)
- Limited public seating with the area continuing to suffer from poor air quality and high levels of traffic
- Wider issues include street cleaning, antisocial behaviour and limited CCTV
- Limited offer for staff, patients and visitors to Barts Health Trust
- The opening hours don't serve hospital staff who work 8-8 shift patterns
- Waste with general complaints from stakeholders about waste (perceived to be) generated by the market which has been attributed to open bins on the market encouraging fly tipping and non-market businesses using them for commercial waste
- Cleanliness given traders have limited access to handwashing facilities
- Packing down at the end of the market day is perceived to be unsafe by some pedestrians due to movement of vans, stock and stalls all at the same time

3.4 Challenges

Whitechapel sits within the City Fringe sub-area in The Local Plan bordering the City of London and the borough of Hackney. By 2031 The Plan envisages the City Fringe area becoming a more attractive place to live, work and visit while protecting and enhancing its heritage, supporting a mix of uses and strengthening the role of the town centres within it, Whitechapel being the key one.

Three major developments will shape the area for the future these being the Crossrail/ Elizabeth Line with a refurbished station at Whitechapel offering step-free access for the first time, a world-class life science research hub associated with Med City and a new civic centre with the relocation of the borough's town hall, a new green spine to the south of Whitechapel Road alongside private developments.

As these changes take place and The City continues its expansion into neighbouring areas new opportunities will be created for Whitechapel to develop further and the area is expected to have a more diverse mix of commercial, cultural, leisure, tourism and night-time activities.

Whitechapel Road and the market have remained relatively unchanged over the years and have been slow to adapt to the changing demographics and forthcoming plans. With developments now underway or reaching completion there is an opportunity to update the area to enable it to better serve its residents and workers and to enable market traders and businesses to be more successful.

Whitechapel was the flagship market for the borough and can be once again.

4.0 Consultation overview

Between April and June 2021 traders, shoppers and businesses were offered the opportunity to comment on one or more markets that they shopped at, traded at or had a business nearby via a survey or interview.

4.1 Surveys

In April and May 2021, a public consultation on markets across the borough was live on Let's Talk, the council's engagement platform. There were different routes/questions for three key audiences:

- Traders
- Visitors/ Shoppers
- Businesses on high streets local to the market site

Each group was asked a series of questions about their shopping / trading habits in general and given the chance to feed back on specific markets in their local area. Topics covered when people went to markets, what people bought / sold there, how much they spent, what they'd like to see at their markets in future and how they felt the markets impacted their lives, improved their businesses or contributed to community life.

There were additional questions for the traders of Whitechapel around their ambitions for the market's infrastructure and operations, which gave insight into what facilities might be most used in future.

The consultation was publicised on the website, through the council's mailing lists, social media and other council communications channels. Local stakeholder organisations, large employers, educational institutions, housing associations and faith communities were also directly emailed so they could promote the survey to their respective members/teams.

To ensure traders, who often have little 'desk time' to complete online surveys, were engaged, the Markets and Regeneration Teams handed out blank paper copies at the market and collected completed surveys to add to the data.

There were 153 responses about Whitechapel Market.

4.2 Interviews and observations

Online and in-person meetings were offered to several resident associations, schools, religious organisations and cultural institutions close to the markets in addition to asking these groups to circulate the survey link.

There was limited take-up from these invitations; however meetings were held with Barts Health NHS Trust, TFL, and the council departments of Waste, Parks and High Streets & Town Centres as well as a group of market traders. There is not a constituted group that represents Whitechapel High Street.

The appointed consultants also visited Whitechapel Market four times over the course of the project, observing the market and local focal points and section 3.1.2 provides a snapshot of a day in the life of the market.



4.2 Interviews and observations

Responses were received from:

- 35 Traders (21% of trader responses)
- 18 Businesses (13% of business responses)
- 100 Visitors / Shoppers (14% of visitor responses)

Responses: 153

Whitechapel had the joint highest response rate for market traders (with Roman Road). Of those shopping at Whitechapel, 68% walk to the market and 22% cycle. Whitechapel had the joint second (with Brick Lane) highest levels of cycling to the market after Columbia Road.

While there, 71% buy fresh food and 19% buy clothes. In common with other markets, value for money is the main attractor and quality is the lowest factor at 18%. The quality score is second only to Petticoat Lane weekdays which in comparison had a low response rate. Whitechapel Market, despite serving a very local community doesn't appear to be well thought of in the wider local context. Across all feedback as to reasons why people shop there the scores were low with no clear attractor to pull people to the market. Only 8% of shoppers had a favourite stall, second to Watney with a low score. It had the second lowest score for the market representing community value and the range of goods sold implying that the market is used by those on a low income who live nearby and may be lacking choice in shopping elsewhere.

Traders also recognise a low proportion of their customers when compared with other markets with Whitechapel scoring similar to Bethnal Green Market with 48% of traders recognising more than 51% of their customers. Despite this, Whitechapel traders were the third most optimistic of all markets with 66% feeling hopeful or very hopeful about the future. Many cited the opportunity that they believe the new housing developments represent with new people moving to the area.

In questions about the facilities needed, traders were asked about future storage requirements with responses being that:

- 86.5% of respondents would rent storage with the most common size requirement being 50 sq ft. Overall 83% of respondents would need between 50 and 100 sq ft.
- The greatest demand was for non-refrigerated storage to store non-perishables (mainly clothes)
- They would consider renting these units at a cost of £20-25 per week (for 50 sq ft)
- Access would be needed between 7am and 7pm with a low number of traders requiring access from 6am to 8pm

These responses will support the design of the improvements to be delivered via the WRIP, specifically in relation to storage requirements.

4.2 Interviews and observations

Traders would like:

- **Special events:** 72% felt that special events would generate more income for them. 31% thought that evening markets might have a similar impact.
- **A reduction in similar commodities:** 29% would like to see less scarf sellers and an overall reduction in women's clothes and 14% would like to see less fruit and vegetables sold. There was no clear view on what new commodities should be added with food (17%), cards and stationery (14%) and flowers (15%) being mentioned.
- **Semi-permanent stalls:** Traders recall positively stall structures proposed by Greig & Stephenson in 2016.
- **Operational environment to be improved:** There are well documented, longstanding problems with power, antisocial behaviour, water and drainage. Whilst waste and storage issues are important to users of the public realm in removing clutter they do not feature highly in conversations with traders.
- **A better maintained public realm:** More street cleaning and improved CCTV.
- **WiFi:** This would enable more traders to accept contactless payments
- **Change:** Several reports and consultants have been commissioned and funding promised but this hasn't materialised.
- **A better relationship with the council:** They would like to be aware of what is proposed and when it will happen. There is representation via a market trader group that took part in the consultation.

Shoppers and businesses would like:

- **A wider range of goods:** 49% (the highest across all markets) identified commodities they would like to see at the market with general comments requesting more variety overall and specifically more artisan produce such meat, cheese, deli items and handmade craft products. 6% of shoppers specifically requested a bakery stall, plants/flowers and improved street food offer (from one stall now). Staff at BARTS Health Trust requested food options for lunch (served quickly), food to take home (including a possible farmers' market) and practical items such as tights that staff often need but cannot find locally.
- **Improved quality:** Only 18% of shoppers use the market now based on the quality of goods.

Appendix III provides an overview of shopper and market trader feedback for Whitechapel Market.

5.0 Consultation overview

It was noted in many of the consultation conversations that the borough has to date not had a natural town centre, instead being made up of many small high streets and district centres. There was a strong feeling among officers in the council, traders and other local stakeholders that Whitechapel should step up into this position in the coming years. It has the physical space and transport connections to take on this role and will soon be host to the borough's civic centre.

The area has been home to many different communities over time, partly due to its location on the edge of the City. Originally a Jewish neighbourhood, the area then became home to Bangladeshi families and it is likely to change again as new developments are completed resulting in further changes in the demographic make-up of the area. This range of affordable and expensive housing will bring new people to Whitechapel, an ever more diverse mix of single people and families, lower income and wealthier populations.

The vision for Whitechapel Market needs to address the bringing together of these communities in ways that continues to engage all the demographics. Currently there is a sense that Whitechapel Market mainly serves the Bangladeshi community, but there is the potential and the desire to keep this strong identity while also diversifying to meet the needs of new residents and local workers. There is also a need to ensure that those businesses and market traders who are now struggling have access to support to help them adapt to be more successful in the future and benefit from the changes to the area.

Therefore, in common with the overarching vision for the council's markets, Whitechapel Market should reflect the diversity of the borough through its traders, the products sold and their appeal to wide sections of the community. All the council's markets should offer a range of products or speciality goods that are of high quality and at a range of price points. They should contribute positively to their town centre or high street and build strong relationships with businesses and other stakeholders around them.

The future Whitechapel Market should:

- Offer a wide range of products via an agreed commodities policy that (by reducing duplication) will offer customers a more interesting shopping experience and increase income for traders
- Be aligned to its location celebrating occasions and hosting special events rooted in the communities on its doorstep
- Offer an experience in line with a Civic Centre that represents the best of the borough
- Be fit for purpose with modern, compliant facilities for traders which enable an enjoyable and safe experience for shoppers
- Continue to serve the local community by ensuring that existing traders have support to increase the quality of their goods

6.0 Priorities

Across the surveys, interviews and observations, several themes emerged which frame the plan. These are:

- **Business support and enterprise:** How the council can better support existing traders, start-up businesses and residents in the borough
- **Commodities:** What is sold at the markets and how these goods relate to what shoppers want to buy
- **Enforcement and regulation:** The markets office and trader reps need to work together to raise standards, the market environment and (as a last resort) to enforce
- **Marketing:** How shoppers and other audiences can find out about the markets, the traders and buy goods
- **Operations (trader facilities):** Traders need improved facilities to be more successful which in turn could increase optimism and improve the market environment
- **Partnerships:** In some location's relationships between businesses and the market are far from harmonious. A joint approach is needed to improve the town centre or high streets for all users rather than the market being viewed as a negative contributor.
- **Place:** The markets exist in the context of the high street or town centre in which they are located. There is limited acknowledgment of this in relation to the market layout (pitch plan), interaction with shops and access to other users.
- **Programming:** Special events and occasions featured highly in feedback and some markets need to be treated as more of an event to encourage visitors.
- **Sustainability:** The council was one of the first in the country to declare a climate emergency and is at the forefront of addressing climate change yet many comments about the markets refer to the waste, a lack of bike racks and a desire for less plastic and more eco goods at the markets.
- **Trading Hours and Days:** Hours are broadly unchanged from how they have always been however the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in changes to how people work and shop, meaning now is a good time to review them to see if any change is needed.

7.0 Proposals – what we will do

The major opportunity is the vast regeneration of the area. Crossrail/Elizabeth Line has the potential to transform Whitechapel into a major hub of activity and the area needs to be improved to encourage this regeneration and to better serve its community of residents, workers and visitors.

Actions have been identified and prioritised within the context of the five-year markets improvement plan across three phases. These phases will be subject to change due to funding and resources.

Theme	Action
Phase 1 WRIP	
Business support and enterprise	<p>Support traders with adapting their product offer (where needed) to appeal to new customers using the Market Trader Training funded from the Covid Recovery Fund.</p> <p>Attract new traders that represent the local community targeting local residents, young people and start-ups</p>
Commodities	<p>Introduce food to the market for lunchtime customer base and take-home prepared food for local workers.</p> <p>Create a robust commodities policy that presents a solution for attracting new traders and commodity clash.</p>
Enforcement and regulation	<p>Produce a guide for traders (trader handbook) outlining their commitments to trading to reduce oversizing and noncompliance issues (including legal aspects of trading), using enforcement as a last resort. This should also include TfL's role in the high street and market and provide an introduction to the markets office document that highlights the roles within the team and who to contact for what to build relationships between traders and the market team.</p> <p>Build relationships between the Markets Office and traders via regular updates, engagement at markets and updates on work due to take place as part of the WRIP. This has begun with the creation of a market's newsletter.</p>

7.0 Proposals – what we will do

Theme	Action
Marketing	As part of the Moving Markets Online funding create social media channels and a website for the market which should include updates on the WRIP to show that change is coming.
Trader facilities	<p>The WRIP (phase 1) will develop storage, waste and toilet facilities for traders. It will not fund CCTV and WiFi which should be considered as part of longer-term plans and stall design and third-party funding identified. A solution to be identified for WiFi provision to increase the number of traders taking card payments.</p> <p>Develop an implementation plan for rolling out power, water, WiFi to market with upgraded CCTV and lighting. This is subject to funding. Greig & Stephenson have been appointed to develop their stall design which many stakeholders referred to when discussing the market. As part of Phase 1 of the WRIP a prototype market stall will be delivered for traders to test. Future funding will be required to deliver market stalls.</p> <p>Further investigate storage units for traders via TfL and council properties now that the requirements needed are known. Model costings for a rental model for these units. Storage options may also be available on a temporary basis under Meanwhile use while development takes place under S106.</p>
Phases 1-2 WRIP	
Partnerships	Form a partnership working group to input into the future of Whitechapel Market from stakeholders which could include Barts Health Trust, town hall-based council employees, residents and local businesses to meet informally quarterly (or online). TfL as landowner must be central to this.
Place	<p>Ensure that the market remains at the heart of a new town centre on Whitechapel High Street.</p> <p>Review the market layout to reduce pinch points on the pavement and in respect of the station reopening and access to the town hall and hospital.</p> <p>Review cycle rack provision close to the market to establish if needs are being met.</p>

7.0 Proposals – what we will do

Theme	Action
Sustainability	<p>Carry out a waste audit to collate baseline data for waste collected on and offsite, recycled materials and use of plastic bags to set future reductions/targets.</p> <p>Make improvements to waste management based on the waste audit and WRIP phase 1 design work to reduce fly-tipping and the mixing of commercial and market waste. The aim being to reduce the impact of market waste and to improve the look of the high street.</p>
Phase 2 WRIP	
Commodities	Review the policy created in phase one.
Marketing	Develop a marketing campaign to showcase the market (if changes have been successful).
Place	<p>Crossings to be reviewed by public realm/transport team as part of wider area works to ensure the market stalls are not blocking sight lines.</p> <p>Identify the location of seating and adapt as needed.</p>
Programming	Special events and occasion markets to be introduced as a trial (The Mela in nearby Weavers Fields could be a test event to link to the market).
Sustainability	<p>Monitor waste against waste audit baseline data from phase 1 to track reductions.</p> <p>Introduce waste, packaging and other environmental elements into the trader licence.</p>

7.0 Proposals – what we will do

Theme	Action
Phase 3 WRIP	
Place	<p>Review cycle rack provision close to the market to establish if needs are being met.</p> <p>Review crossing options for pedestrians between the market and the hospital and future town hall to consider sight lines and bus stop access (outside the WRIP project).</p>
Trading hours and days	Consider trialling evening markets and adapting opening hours to better serve hospital staff who work 8-8 shifts.
Commodities	Review the established commodities policy to confirm it is still relevant.
Enforcement and regulation	Carry out a policy review to confirm if any revisions or new policies are needed.

8.0 Funding and support

There are several potential funding opportunities for Whitechapel Road at differing stages of application. These include:

8.1 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

£1.87m of CIL funding was allocated to Phase One of the Whitechapel Improvement Project as part of the Capital Programme following cabinet approval in January 2021. When outputs are confirmed for future phases, these will be brought forward for funding.

8.2 Local Infrastructure Fund

Whitechapel has been allocated funding for resurfacing and power points.

8.3 The High Streets Task Force

Tower Hamlets has been nominated to take part in the government's High Street Task Force programme. The Task Force provides support to local leaders in town centres and high streets in England. This support includes expert advice, training and data delivered directly to local stakeholders in towns and cities and a range of resources online that are available to all.

The council's support will start with an 'Unlocking Your Place Potential' (UYPP) session which via an in-person or virtual visit will identify key barriers to the improvement of an area high street and recommend a strategic response that involves further assistance from the High Streets Task Force.

The council chose Whitechapel Road as the location for this support and the UYPP session took place on 22 July 2021. The session supported the development of the Whitechapel Regeneration programme building on existing and emerging plans and relevant outputs have been incorporated into the Whitechapel Improvement Plan.

8.4 Other funding

The Covid Recovery Fund has awarded markets across the borough funding for moving markets online, training for new traders and a deep clean. Whitechapel will be considered amongst the markets receiving funding.

An application was submitted to the Levelling Up Fund in June 2021 which is awaiting a decision.

Section 106: Securing the construction of market trader facilities i.e., storage within new developments as part of developer's planning obligations.

9.0 Performance and evaluation

The metrics overleaf are a starting point when considering which elements will be measured to track the pace of change at Whitechapel Market.

Participants: market traders, businesses surrounding the markets and shoppers to a maximum of 10 people.

Frequency: A two-year review period with the same people taking part during this period. Metrics should be collated every six months, but timing may be adapted across the indicators suggested and be subject to chance due to funding.

	Description	How to measure	Unit	Further notes
General				
Footfall count	Footfall count repeated on the same day / period of year / occasion or ongoing from cameras	Number / % of users	Number / % of users	Needs to be specific to the market area given that much of the footfall is attributed to the station and hospital. Observation methods need to include range of times of day
New shops opening	Premises coming back into use on Whitechapel Road would support positive change at the market / the public realm programme	Number	Number	TfL, as the main property owner, to update on lettings as their refurbishment programme progresses

	Description	How to measure	Unit	Further notes
Recruiting and retaining traders				
Number of pitches	Number of available pitches and occupancy by market day	Count of available pitches (internal systems)	Number / % occupancy	Base: 116 pitches / 93% occupancy
Types of traders	Monitoring change in types of traders	License applications (new traders) and categorising of existing traders	Number / % category	Monitor local residents, start-ups, new commodities, young people
Traders accessing training	Number of traders accessing training material via video, in person, requesting materials or an appointment	Internal record keeping	Number	To align with Covid Recovery
Commodities	Number of new commodities added quarterly	New traders or change in commodity applications (internal systems)	Number	Funding earmarked for trader training
Sentiment of future trading	To update on feeling towards Whitechapel Market as changes implemented	Via a poll on WhatsApp/Email newsletter link	5 by category	Use the sentiment questions from the survey
Change in income	A change in income would indicate higher prices being charged or sales being made	Using a consistent small group of traders who are willing to provide this information	Scale 1-5 of increase of decrease	

9.0 Performance and evaluation

	Description	How to measure	Unit	Further notes
Change in customers	A change in customers would indicate wider area change, variation in commodities sold, pricing or quality	Using a consistent small group of traders who are willing to provide this information	% by category	Use the customer recognition question from the survey
Operational				
Waste	Increase in recycling levels	Via Waste Services	%	A waste audit is required to establish baseline metrics
Enforcement notices issued	To be tracked after a period of encouragement to comply	Internal systems	Number	
Traders renting storage units	Existing units rented (privately) and transition to council units	Internal systems	Number / %	Track annually
Traders using power, water etc.	Monitor usage when facilities are added	Internal systems	Number / %	Only applicable when services are live
Traders taking contactless payments		Internal systems	Number / %	Establish a baseline
ASB reported	To monitor issues at the market	Internal systems	Number	Establish a baseline

	Description	How to measure	Unit	Further notes
Marketing				
Digital marketing	New channels created and active for those markets which would benefit from them	Baseline metrics on start of Kickstart resource and again at 18-months	Number of accounts set up and managed	Aligned to Moving Markets Online project funded by the Covid Recovery Fund
Shoppers				
If good are higher quality than before	To see if shoppers notice changes when they occur	A poll by social media/market newsletter	1-5 scale	Use the reasons for shopping at the market as from the survey as baseline data
If the range of good on offer is better or worse than before	To see if shoppers notice changes when they occur	A poll by social media/market newsletter	% change	Use the reasons for shopping at the market as from the survey as baseline data
Buying more or less than six months ago	To track changing shopping habits	A poll by social media/market newsletter	1-5 scale	Establish as baseline
How they travel to the market	To track changes in cycling and walking	A poll by social media/market newsletter	% change	Use the travel methods question from the strategy survey as baseline date



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Local History Library
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The Royal London Hospital
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Survey of London



www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/local-history

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