


<b>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee report</b>  9 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director Place	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Public Realm Improvements (Private Land Agreement) – Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman Councillor Asma Islam (Environment &amp; Planning)</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Ross Hughes – Programme Manager High Streets Chris Burr – Head of Growth
<b>Wards affected</b>	Spitalfields & Banglatown
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
<b>Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome</b>	A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to set-up a grant scheme under the Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme to carry out public realm improvements to the unused space on the corner of 13 New Goulston Street, E1 7TF (otherwise referred to as New Goulston Corner) in the Middlesex Street area.
- 1.2 The grant scheme cost is estimated at £300,000 (inc. design fees and contingency). This project will be from the Middlesex Street Regeneration programme which is funded via S106 and CIL.
- 1.3 The project is to be delivered as a grant scheme due to majority of the works will be on private land owned by East End Homes, the delivery of the scheme will commence in April 2022 and completed by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023.
- 1.4 The scope of improvements under the grant scheme includes: resurfacing the open space and providing new York stone paving, removing all the tired bollards, providing a new community garden for the school and local residents, installation of new street furniture including benches and planters, providing trees and planting to soften the area.
- 1.5 The aim of this grant scheme is to provide visitors to the area and Petticoat Lane Market a place to sit and enjoy the market. It will create an area where

people can relax, provide some elements of green to an urban area, protecting and enhancing the appearance of the conservation area and in-turn help promoting footfall and business recovery. The space has also been very vulnerable to fly-tipping and the creation of this seating area will mitigate any opportunity of this in the future.

- 1.6 The owner of this piece of land, East End Homes, has engaged positively with the High Streets team regarding this scheme and other projects within the Middlesex Street Regeneration programme. The piece of land is also in a long lease arrangement with a company called Uniboss, who have also responded positively to the plans and will believe it will help them identify more attractive businesses to the vacant 13 New Goulston Street property.
- 1.7 The Council, East End Homes and Uniboss (the specific parties involved) will be required to sign a formal Agreement setting out the scope of works, cost of the scheme, maintenance plans and committing to manage the upkeep of the space and improvements once work is completed. The long-term responsibility of repair will be with East End Homes and the ongoing cleanliness of the site will be carried out by Uniboss.

## **Recommendations:**

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the public realm improvement grant for the Middlesex Street area.
2. To approve the cost and funding of the project.
3. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.

## **1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme was approved by Cabinet in September 2019, in which one of the agreed schemes in this programme is to improve the public realm, creating spaces that provide seating, clean up untidy areas to make the area more attractive to visitors, provide some greening to soften the hard appearance of the area.
- 1.2 A feasibility study was carried out in January 2021 to provide a public realm analysis of the Middlesex Street area. The study looked at: footway widths, available public space and areas of disrepair and in need of immediate improvements to serve the area. The study concluded that New Goulston Square corner was a high priority as a space that would benefit greatly from physical improvements. The open space is in sightline from Whitechapel Road/Goulston Street junction is, a key gateway to Petticoat Lane Market. The space is surrounded by food market stalls Monday-Friday and then

clothing stalls on Sunday. The works are an opportunity to provide visitors with space to sit and enjoy their food and appreciate the market. It will also help 13 New Goulston Street by attracting high-value commercial tenants to the properties by providing spill space for outdoor dining and creating character for a café/restaurant type.

- 1.3 Wentworth Street Conservation Area is listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register due to loss of historic details and inappropriate change, including lack of maintenance. These factors threaten the special historic character of the conservation and put it at risk of losing its designation. Improving the layout of the area and creating places for people to rest, sit and enjoy will help improve the perception of the area which is that it is unattractive and has a limited offer.
- 1.4 Local businesses have struggled to trade during the last two years due to the outbreak of coronavirus causing lockdowns across the country, this work will be helping key local traders from the famous Petticoat Lane Market who have been acutely impacted during the pandemic. Many City workers visit this area for lunch but there is nowhere for them to sit and eat lunch in a pleasant environment. 13 New Goulston Street has also been vacant for some time and is an ideal location for a café/restaurant type business, improving this space will attract attention from more desired tenants to support the high street.

## **2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Option 1 – Request the Leaseholder or Freeholder makes improvements to the area and provide more greening and cleaner surfacing. This option is unviable due to either having insufficient funding to support the project.
- 2.2 Option 2 – Do not carry out this work. This option is rejected as this area is suffering from lack of investment and the area is vulnerable to fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and is an eyesore for many residents and visitors. Without this investment, it is very likely this area will continue on a downward trajectory and soon become a very unsafe space for visitors or any potential business that would want to take over 13 New Goulston Street.

## **3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

### **Background**

- 3.1 The Middlesex Street area shopfront improvement scheme is part of the Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme and supports the Mayor's commitment to continue to invest in local high streets and town centres and delivery of the High Streets & Town Centres Strategy (2017–2022).

- 3.2 The regeneration programme consists of improvements to the area that will help increase footfall to the area; improve the physical quality of the area; and invest unused assets that will benefit the local community and visitors.
- 3.3 These programme works include: public realm improvements, Leyden Street toilet refurbishment, Petticoat Lane Market improvements and the Shopfront Improvement scheme.
- 3.4 The Middlesex Street area public realm scheme will help to address known weaknesses in the town centre. In particular, the lack of seating and greening in the area and create a feel of unwelcomeness to one of the Council's most famous markets. This work will support the other continued work including the Leyden Street Toilet Refurbishments and Shopfront Improvement Scheme on Wentworth Street. The whole site is also within the conservation area, the Council has a moral responsibility to maintain care of these historic areas.
- 3.5 The contribution to the works will also provide a community garden in the neighbouring premises of the East End Community School [33-35 Goulston Street]. This will be used by the students of the school and local community. We will provide new planters and flower beds, where vegetables, herbs and flowers can be grown. The Community Garden will be managed by the East End Community School staff.

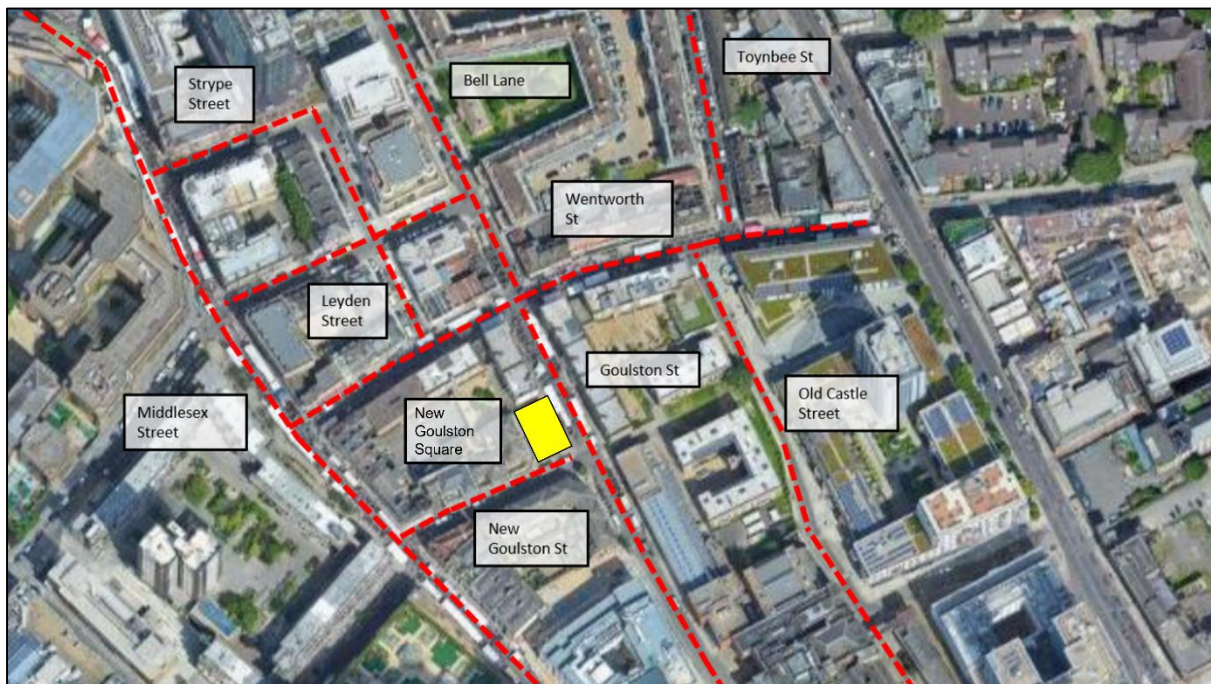


Image 1.0: Map of Middlesex Street Regeneration Area

- 3.6 The Middlesex Street area has mainly independent family-run businesses including a cluster of African fabric shops, vape shops, mobile repair businesses, hairdressers and fashion shops that have had little investment from the landlords to make improvements to their frontages and are unable to

fully fund the improvements themselves. The market has also suffered from lack of investment into the high street and public realm which has made it an undesirable place for visitors to come. The work to help transform these areas of poor public realm will create a place of enjoyment for people.

- 3.7 Other improvements for Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme include the shopfront improvement scheme to key high street businesses and key nodal properties in the Middlesex Street area. This work is being match funded by the High Street Action Zone (HAZ) grant from Historic England, with the purpose of reviving Conservation Areas and reinstating traditional timber shopfronts as well as making improvements to the upper facades of historic properties that have deterred overtime from lack of investment. The Council have also agreed with the landlords of these businesses to contribute 10% towards the works, whereas the 90% will come from the Council. There is also the redevelopment of the Leyden Street Toilets to provide a new space for a commercial tenant and accessible public toilet, wayfinding & signage, banners along Wentworth Street and providing new uniformed market stalls for Petticoat Lane Market traders; this is also being partly funded by the HAZ grant.
- 3.8 Other projects as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) scheme include an updated Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Wentworth Street, a borough-wide shopfront guidance, building maintenance workshops and a community-led cultural programme managed by Toynbee Hall.

### Budget

- 3.9 At the time the Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme was approved, the budget estimate for the public realm scheme was £600,000. There has been no change and £300,000 will be put towards the Leyden Street public realm works and the other £300,000 towards the New Goulston Square public realm works.
- 3.10 Neil Tomlinson Architects and Yomi Bola Associates provided an indicative cost of £300,000 for the public realm improvements, which include redevelopment of the square outside 13 New Goulston Square, new paving, benches, planters and trees; as well as cleaning of 33-35 Goulston Street space, new planters for a community garden that will have restricted access. The team has included contingency within this budget for potential cost increases from Brexit, Covid delays and inflation within the construction sector.
- 3.11 The current view of the space can be seen below:

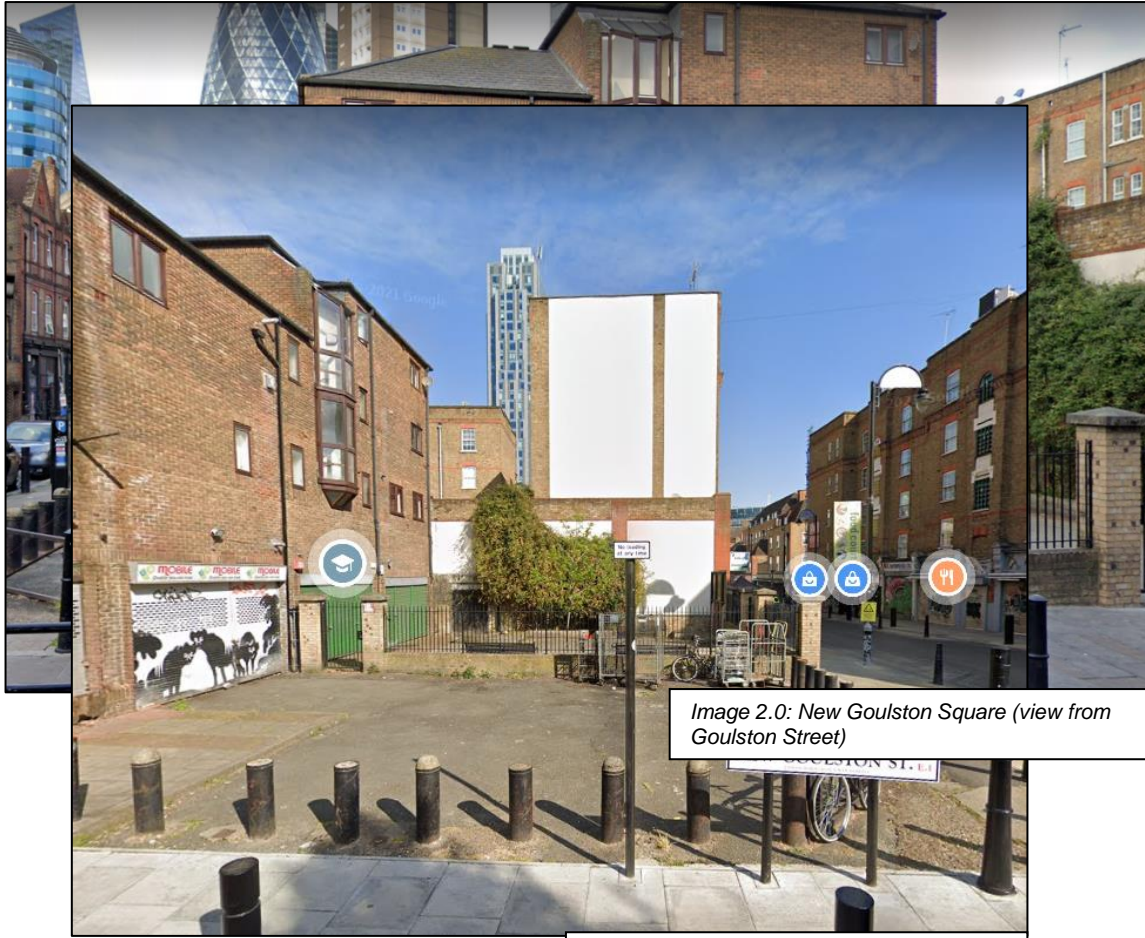


Image 2.0: New Goulston Square (view from Goulston Street)

Image 2.1: New Goulston Square (view from New Goulston Street)

3.12 The proposed views and concepts for the New Goulston Square designs can be seen in the images below:



Image 3.0: New Goulston Square (NT Architects CGI)



Image 3.1: New Goulston Square (NT Architects CGI)



Image 3.2: New Goulston Square Layout (NT Architects CGI)

- 3.13 We are now drafting a legal agreement between the Freeholder (East End Homes), Leaseholder (UNIBOSS & East End Community School) and the Council for the upkeep and maintenance plan of the area.
- 3.14 The freeholder has agreed to maintain and care for the area for the duration of the lifespan expectancy of the street furniture (20 years). Following this amount of time, it is stated in the agreement for all parties to review the current maintenance regime and the future plans of the area from the freeholder and leaseholder.
- 3.15 Following discussion with Legal Services, we have been advised that the decision to spend funding in this way would be considered a discretionary grant and therefore approval to carry out these works on East End Homes land would need to be sought from the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee.
- 3.16 The High Streets Team appointed Neil Tomlinson Architects 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 as the detailed design architects and will have been undertaking surveys work of the area (inc. archaeological, measured, topographical). The specification has been drafted and reviewed by the internal highways, waste, markets and community safety teams also.

#### **4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme Public Realm Improvement Scheme will have no adverse impact upon any of the protected characteristics as identified within the Equality Act 2010.

#### **5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
  - Consultations,
  - Environmental (including air quality),
  - Risk Management,
  - Crime Reduction,
  - Safeguarding.
  - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 Neil Tomlinson Architects have previous experience in the design and analysis of public realm schemes and key high streets across London, including high density market areas such as Borough Market. They are well versed in the current market and have engaged with local institutions in the Spitalfields area to understand the context and historical significance of the area. At the feasibility stage, we undertook a costings exercise with Neil Tomlinson Architects & Yomi Bola Associates to ensure best value for money



as well as setting out the priority public realm areas that would get best value and would benefit most from the improvement works.

- 5.3 As part of their tender submission as detailed design architect, they have appointed a quantity surveyor (Yomi Bola Associates) as part of the project team. They are also experienced in grant-aided Council-led heritage townscape improvement schemes.

## **6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 This report seeks approval to set-up a grant scheme under the Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme to carry out public realm improvements on part public and private land to help support the Petticoat Lane Market and create a cleaner and safer environment in the Middlesex Street area.
- 6.2 Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme is in the council's approved capital programme with a revised budget of £0.8m for 2021/22 and £0.6m for 2022/23 of which the spend to date is £0.5m.
- 6.3 This project delivers public realm improvement that will benefit partially an external body and the funding is considered to be discretionary and a grant.
- 6.4 This project is included as part of the existing council approved capital programme. The funding of the project will be via Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies and S106 funds and all project costs must be contained within the budget.

## **7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to implement the grant scheme described in this report.
- 7.2 The money referred to in this report will effect works that will improve the value of the land owned by East End Homes. Therefore, the value of the improvement of the asset is a grant made from the Council to East End Homes.
- 7.3 The Council will commission the works in accordance with its procurement duties and will also use the process to ensure that the subsequent works represent statutory Best Value. The maintenance agreement will be used to ensure that the up front investment is maximised in terms of area improvement throughout the following 20 year term of maintenance.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None.

### **Appendices**

- Neil Tomlinson: TWR004-Goulston Square-(OP3) (002)
- NTA\_Existing Public Realm Analysis-Document A
- NTA\_Preliminary Public Realm Opportunities

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

- None.

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A