

TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY & DELIVERY PLANS – 2016–2020

WOOD STREET



WOOD STREET TOWN CENTRE



Waltham Forest

THE OPPORTUNITY

Wood Street is home to a range of independent and niche retailers, food and drink businesses and a growing arts and crafts scene. It is close to Walthamstow but is clearly a distinct centre with its own unique character. The Marlowe Road estate regeneration will provide a mix of housing in the town centre and could facilitate wider investment, building on the introduction of the Overground service and recent Outer London Fund initiatives. The key to the development of future plans is retaining Wood Street's character and increasing its desirability as a place to live and work.

Wood Street is a unique small town centre which has become a location for small independent businesses, particularly more niche and boutique retailers and places to eat and drink. It is home to a growing arts scene, typified by the work and plans of Wood Street Walls. It sits comfortably as a distinct and separate centre from Walthamstow and Leytonstone, but with clear connections to arts and creative activity that is seen in both of these places, as well as in Blackhorse Lane. The Council developed an Area Action Plan for the town centre and this reached the preferred options stage, indicating local support for some regeneration and growth, most particularly at Marlowe Road and Fulbourne Road.



Since then, schemes have been delivered and the Council's partnership with Countryside Properties will deliver the estate regeneration programme at Marlowe Road. A programme of Council-led investment in the high street, shopfronts and business support has also helped lift the town centre, contributing to it becoming an increasingly desirable place to live. There is now an opportunity for the Council to develop a comprehensive masterplan that builds on this investment to ensure Wood Street retains the unique characteristics that have made it successful.

WHAT LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US ABOUT WOOD STREET

Residents in Wood Street are the most positive about their town centre, but are slightly less satisfied than residents in other town centres about recent regeneration initiatives in their area. (*Shaping Growth research, January 2016*).

CASE STUDY

WOOD STREET

Wood Street has received significant Council investment in recent years, along with funding from Transport for London and the Mayor's Outer London Fund between 2012-14. This has helped transform the area's public spaces and 60 local businesses have been supported through training, creation of a business forum website and the rejuvenation of the Wood Street Indoor Market. Local business grants and a programme of events have resulted, organised with the local business community. The works included:

- improvements to 44 shopfronts
- treatments to the two Woodside School fences
- ongoing business support in the form of training and marketing opportunities
- locally inspired artwork plus events to encourage residents to use and explore their local high street.

In 2016 Wood Street has been shortlisted by the Academy of Urbanism for a 'Great Street' Award, one of three High Streets nationally.



DELIVERY PLAN: WOOD STREET

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	TIMINGS	COUNCIL RESOURCE	PARTNERS
1 Develop clear planning policy for the town centre	To establish what type of development will be permitted, building on a draft Area Action Plan developed in 2014	2016–2017	Planning Policy, Regeneration	Local residents and businesses and developers
2 Develop an exciting creative and cultural programme	To build on existing successful creative and cultural offer, to support growth and employment opportunities	2016 onwards	Culture, Regeneration	Local cultural and creative organisations
3 Enable new spaces for pop-up shops, in or around the indoor market	To offer business support to independent retail and artisan businesses and enable new workspace and artist studios including at the Council-owned Manual Instruction Centre	2017–2019	Business Support, Planning Policy, Regeneration	Local small, creative businesses
4 Develop planning briefs and delivery plans for key sites	To maximise opportunities for appropriate growth through a mix of town centre uses, community and housing development	2017–18	Planning Policy, Regeneration, Property	Landowners, Developers, investors and local businesses and organisations
5 Coordinating provision of local health and community facilities (including at Thorpe Coombe Hospital)	To ensure that growth is accompanied by appropriate level of community facilities to meet local needs	2017–2020	Planning Policy, Regeneration, Education and Highways	NHS, Education, Wood Street First