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Place Making Programme – East Ham Report and Action Plan



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Foreword

Newham Council and the High Streets Task Force (HSTF) began working together following an expert visit in October 2021. Based on discussions with the Council, the subsequent *Unlocking Your Place Potential Report* (UYPP) in September 2021 outlined how the Task Force could provide further support for East Ham. It was agreed that East Ham had:

- ▣ Ambitious Local Authority, with success in redeveloping other parts of the borough (e.g. Stratford) now prioritising East Ham town centre
- ▣ Strategic development of key community sites on the outskirts of town centre (college, library etc) which provide additional footfall and facilities
- ▣ New residential developments within the town centre, which will further increase footfall and introduce a new demographic

The Expert Support, which followed the UYPP Report, recommended introducing animation to transform East Ham, strengthening partnerships and developing a narrative on plans for the future.

The pressing challenge is the need to activate the town centre now. Consequently, HSTF recommended East Ham begin a process of reinvention. This entails developing a programme of placemaking activities intended to increase footfall and spend, through interventions to attract a wider range of residents or encourage existing town centre users to stay longer. This could include events, festivals, pop-up retail, and basic improvements to the appearance of the town centre. New activity might also trial new products or services which begin to diversify the local offer and adapt the centre to meet the needs of future users.

To help places tackle reinvention, HSTF provides a Placemaking Workshop developed and delivered by the Institute of Place Management (IPM). This is designed to bring together key stakeholders to identify the challenges and opportunities for East Ham and to agree short and longer-term priorities which can be the focus of an action plan to ensure its future sustainability. In East Ham, this workshop took place in November 2022 and included shop keepers, residents, police, support group and Council representatives. The Task Force would like to thank all who attended the workshop for their active contributions and to thank Newham Council for organising the session.

This report summarises ideas provided by local stakeholders, but also reveals barriers they identified which they think currently stops activity from happening. Based on the workshop discussion and findings, HSTF has developed a series of short and long-term recommendations to inform a strategy of reinvention for East Ham.

The recommendations outlined in this report form part of the direct support offered through the High Streets Task Force which includes continuing expert support alongside online resources and training available through the [website](#).

Thank you for participating in the High Streets Task Force Programme. With your permission, the High Streets Task Force would like to check in with you after 12 months to evaluate how delivery of your transformation plan is progressing. Please indicate whether this is possible in your response to this report.

About the High Streets Task Force and Report Authors

The High Streets Task Force

The High Streets Task Force is an alliance of placemaking experts working to redefine the high street. We provide guidance, tools, and skills to help communities, partnerships and local government transform their high streets. The programme, funded by HM Government will run in England until 2024.

The report authors

Dr Steve Millington is the Director of the Business Transformations Research Centre, based at Manchester Metropolitan University. His academic career spans over 20 years, he is Senior Fellow, and a director of the Institute of Place Management, where he leads on several projects including the IPM's Vital and Viable programme and designing the placemaking programme for the High Streets Task Force for England.

Philip Cave is a Consultant at Philip Cave Associates, Landscape Architects and Urban Designers, and has been designing public realm and semi-private spaces for 40 years. He is a High Streets Task Force Expert and a member of several Design Review panels, including the Newham DPR for 12 years. He is also on the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities' Expert Panel advising Local Authorities on Design Codes.

Summary of the expert visit

The High Street Task Force experts' evaluation of East Ham's plans for the town centre concluded there needs to be a clear vision in place that can deliver transformative change.

The HSTF's earlier work (in 2021) with East Ham identified place activation as the main barrier to transformation i.e., there needs to be more activity taking place in the town centre. Rather than revisiting previous recommendations and the longer-term plans for the town, the experts instead concluded East Ham should focus on addressing activity in the town centre by developing a placemaking programme which delivers quick wins, but also helps to diversify the offer, increasing the appeal of the town centre to a wider audience, and priming the centre for future adaption.

In preparation for the workshop, the HSTF Experts reviewed previous recommendations and desk-based research, participated in a walking tour of the town centre facilitated by the local council, and gathered evidence from the workshop (summarised in the appendices). The workshop was attended with representation from East Ham stakeholders including shop keepers, residents, police, support group and Council representatives. Useful contributions were made from all participants, and it is clear stakeholders want to create a thriving town centre, one which fulfils its potential, a place to be proud of. However, work still needs to be done locally to construct an effective placemaking partnership to empower local businesses and community groups to reduce the burden of delivery on the council.

In summary, there are many opportunities for East Ham but there needs to be short to medium interventions to start diversifying the town's offer.

It is important for local stakeholders to act quickly. The workshop aimed to galvanise local stakeholders into action and equip them with low resource ideas which could be taken forward in the short-term to activate the town centre.

Developing A Framework for Action

High street revitalisation is complex and challenging. Although they face common challenges, places are unique and there are no easy prescriptive solutions for regenerating high streets and town centres. Whereas the Taskforce can provide expert guidance and frameworks to help, it is incumbent on local stakeholders to use their insights and capacity to create and deliver bespoke programmes of change to ensure their high street or town centre is both attractive and prepared for the future. It is vital stakeholders have a well communicated plan that recognises the tasks which need to occur to manage recovery and longer-term transformation. This is effective place management and is what gets places from a collection of investments and actions onto a path of transformation.

Based on the results of a major research programme The 4 Rs Framework is designed to help places make a town centre action plan. The figure below distinguishes between the processes of analysis and decision making (*repositioning*), effecting change (*reinventing*), communication (*rebranding*) and governance/spatial planning and development (*restructuring*). The High Streets Task Force encourages town centres to use this framework in their recovery and long-term planning.

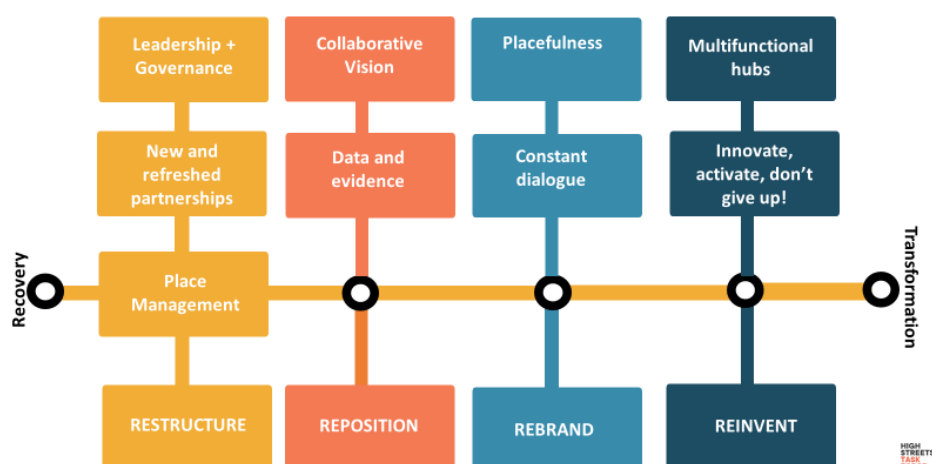


Fig 2: Transformation routemap

It is important to acknowledge the 4Rs are not mutually exclusive but are connected to one another; each is a potential start point on a journey to transformation; and different places will be at different stages on the journey. The Four Rs are one of the centrepieces of the HSTF toolkit for communities.

An editable version of the transformation routemap with instructions can be [downloaded here](#) to help you plan the Action Plan. Depending on where you start, this Route Map will take time to deliver but is a useful tool for planning both short and long-term priorities. Actions under each R may happen simultaneously, consecutively, or repeatedly.

The Need for Reinvention

The *Unlocking Your Place Potential Report* (UYPP) written by Taskforce experts, draws on the IPM's 4 Rs Framework and indicates which of the Four Rs is the correct renewal strategy for the town:



Fig 1: 4 Rs Framework Outline Summary

Reinventing is prescribed when there is a lack of activity in a place, or there is too much reliance on the existing offer to drive footfall. It may be the case local people are having to travel elsewhere to access the products and services they need or want, rather than use their local centre. Although the focus is on developing a programme of short-term priorities, places also need to consider how they can introduce new activities which will begin to adapt the town centre to meet the needs of future users. It is important, therefore, that local stakeholders share a common understanding of broader structural change affecting the high street.

If delivered correctly through effective leadership and collaboration with all key stakeholders, placemaking has the potential to improve the local economy, environment, and society, as well provide cultural benefits. The underlying aim of any placemaking intervention should be to create and promote places that are sustainable, attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy, and friendly. Temporary activation of underutilised or neglected sites can showcase these to potential investors. Reinventing, however, is just one element of the routemap. It is important, therefore, to work through the implications of the recommendations above in terms of the other Rs on the routemap.

Putting plans in action: The IPM's 25 priorities

Whereas the 4Rs local stakeholders with a strategic guide to renewal, the 25 Priorities are a framework for activating a long-term vision (see appendices). Each priority is supported by online learning and resources available through the High Streets Task Force website. It also important to note that behind priority there is a subgroup of factors to consider.

Based on background research, pre-existing expertise, visit to the town centre, and of course information provided by stakeholders during the workshop, we have established what we feel the top priorities are, using the 25 Priorities framework. To help make sense of the recommendations, we have grouped them within five thematic areas:

The recommendations below are organised into quick wins and longer-term actions by the HSTF experts. Each one is linked to supporting resources, good practice case studies, or additional guidance. Ultimately we recommend also benchmarking your long-term strategic plans against the 25 Priorities.



What affects the look and feel of the high street or centre?

4) Experience 5) Appearance 12) Place marketing 20) Crime and Safety 22) Liveability



How does the town centre function?

1) Activity Hours 7) Necessities 14) Accessibility 11) Walkability 24) Functionality



What does the town centre have to offer?

2) Retail Offer 8) Anchors 9) Non-Retail Offer 10) Merchandise 16) Attractiveness 17) Markets 18) Recreational Space



How does the town centre need to change?

15) Diversity 19) Barriers to entry 21) Adaptability 25) Innovation 23) Redevelopment Plans



How is the town centre managed?

3) Vision and strategy 6) Place management 15) Networks and partnership

Recommendations

Improving the look and feel of the town centre

Appearance is ranked #5 in the 25 Priorities. It refers to the quality of public realm and aesthetics. This can be negatively affected by cleanliness, quality of lighting, landscaping, design consistency, and the management of under-used spaces. When not addressed, these can generate poor place perceptions and undermine civic pride. Occasional visitors are less likely to make repeat visits. The atmospheric and visual qualities of the high street will also impact on place experience and can contribute to fear of crime, even though such concerns may remain largely unsubstantiated. Ideally, high streets should be welcoming places, where people feel safe, and are likely to dwell and linger.

Although relatively busy, the overall impression is that High Street North is a highly functional place, with scope for considerable improvement to the overall appearance. A previous redesign of the high street which introduced partial pedestrianisation has new surfacing to reflect different uses, which is still in good order, and building facades are mainly in good condition. We acknowledge Shape Newham is creating new art projects such as improvements to the gateway arches; 'I love it here' permanent posters being installed on blank walls in Pilgrims Way; and the 'Welcome to East Ham' outside of the tube station with new signage, bike racks, colourful crossing and a town clock. These are all highly commended, and future plans might focus on extending this initiative. Workshop participants, for example, suggested links could be established with local schools to create new art projects, such as murals on shop shutters so that they look more cheerful after closing time.

Street trees and planting beds, however, are lacking, and where some trees have been removed, they have not been replaced. Existing planters/pots are mainly planted up with seasonal bedding which makes a marginal contribution to the 'greening' of the street. There are few benches for people to rest. The gateway arches are in good condition but feel dated and not very inspiring, although we recognise these maybe revamped in future plans. General litter and cleanliness is a moderate problem in East Ham. Greater effort might be made to remove commercial waste before the street gets busy during the day. Consequently, although there are several potential areas of intervention that might improve the appearance of High Street North, our main recommendation is that in the short the focus should be on greening, with a consistent approach all the way along, such as robust planters placed at intervals, perhaps integrated with additional seating, along the pedestrianised and non-pedestrianised parts of High Street North. The northern end around the Tube station is a key gateway site, but the experience is compromised by heavy traffic and narrow crowded pavements. The impact barriers compromise pedestrian flow and we wonder if they are needed at all. A long-term plan here might focus on creating a more welcoming environment to East Ham. However, there are several sites along the high street to trial temporary interventions in rebalancing traffic priorities.

We would advise Newham Council establishes a comprehensive list of potential interventions in terms of public and private property, to underpin the development of a costed placemaking action plan. Individual projects should be low cost, low risk and deliverable within less than 12 months. Once established we would advise trialling and experimenting with a few but visible schemes, and then encouraging specific businesses and community groups to lead on delivery and take ownership of others. Private businesses and property owners clearly need to take greater responsibility for their assets within the town centre, facilitated by council support and regulatory powers to encourage/enforce improvements.

#1 Improving the look and feel of the town centre

Quick wins	Longer Term Actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
#1 Complete a comprehensive audit of poor-quality public realm under council ownership and identify specific creative micro projects to improve each site. Consider street trees, planters, seating, art/murals, parklets, street furniture	Create a placemaking action plan which outlines a clear and viable programme of small-scale and iterative improvements, supported with micro-funding (crowd funding, local authority small grants, contributions from key stakeholders).	Revealing Waterloo: A Placemaking Strategy Pride in Place: Tackling Environmental Incivilities Trees in the Townscape
#2 Complete a review of building facades and store fronts in private ownership and review the implementation of your own Shop Front Design Guide .	Establish a clear funding programme for physical improvements to shop fronts. Identify best practice and encourage shop owners to share tips on window display and basic building maintenance.	Street Art and Community in Oxford Green Street (Newham)
#3 Identify a key site or sites and create a temporary but significant creative placemaking interventions e.g., extension to Shape Newham projects using art projects such as murals on shop shutters	Establish a more extensive murals programme as part of Shape Newham, commissioning local arts organisations to brighten the town centre. Important for this to be a collaborative rather than top-down exercise.	Community (local artists and makers) led gateway art project example: Seven Bridges at Lambeth
#4 Review commercial waste disposal practices and collection times	Work with local businesses to reduce the production of commercial waste. Change scheduling of collections time to remove litter before the high street is busy	Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse Green Street: A Planet Friendly Guide for SMEs

Improve the functionality of the town centre

It is useful to think about functionality in terms of both spatial layout of the centre and how activity patterns vary during the day, across a normal week and month. Other considerations include accessibility (to the high street) and walkability (through the high street), necessities (parking, toilets etc.), and the broad role of the centre (is it primarily a shopping or commercial centre, for instance). Wayfinding, for instance, is poor and would help visitors and locals to get to adjacent green spaces, library, town hall, tube station etc. This could easily be installed as part of ongoing public realm improvements. A need for public toilets was aired by some participants, which may be addressed in wider regeneration plans, but short-term measures might include encouraging businesses to open existing toilet facilities to the public and ensuring temporary portaloos are provided at events.

In East Ham, our main concerns are activity patterns and connectivity in the centre. Despite being busy, dwell and linger times are brief. Addressing mismatches between footfall, anchors, and opening hours remains the number one priority. Many businesses in East Ham operate traditional 9-5pm opening hours. Evidence from other towns and the HSTF's national review of footfall, suggests towns review local data and adjust opening hours to suit the needs of their catchment. Clearly, people who work until 5pm will have limited opportunity to shop locally as most shops are closed by then. Workshop participants suggested East Ham's early evening economy suffers as a consequence, with little to do once shops have closed, especially during the week. This is not an uncommon situation, and unquestionably people who work in or close to the town centre will travel elsewhere to access the goods and services they need after 5pm, such as Stratford which also accommodates hospitality and leisure. Trialling of extended shopping hours on a few days in the week (possibly Thursday and Friday) and provision of a differentiated leisure and hospitality offer, could create more vitality on the High Street. A review of opening hours and footfall data might initially inform an event programme to fill quiet times or draw visitors to quieter parts of the high street.

Some workshop participants were concerned about the lack of parking especially for Asian families that sometimes buy in bulk. There was a car park for 100 cars in the East Ham Market Hall but that has now closed. On-street parking for short periods could be trialled on days when the street is quieter and if some streets to the East are closed off. However, whereas parking is a necessity, it is not necessarily the strongest driver of footfall in place like East Ham which is accessible by bus and tube services, and where dense neighbourhoods are within walking distance. Too often, traders vastly over-estimate their dependence on customers arriving by car (by 100% according to Sustrans). The provision of additional parking and encouragement of more car journeys may undermine a relative position of strength. Long-term plans might focus on improving active travel routes and mitigating the impact of traffic on the visitor experience, to drive dwell time and spend.

In the short term, this could be tackled through additional events and activities, particularly focused in the early evening. Workshop participants were keen on specialist markets and cultural events to celebrate the diverse religious festivals such as Eid, Diwali, and Christmas, especially given several religious centres are close to the High Street. A youth pop-up market was suggested. Unfortunately, the High Street lacks open spaces to accommodate a significant market or an event. Because of the structure of the street, it may be possible to create a series of smaller spaces, e.g. both Pilgrims Way and St Johns Road are closed off and accommodate markets and events. Some additional streets to the East could possibly be closed off subject to traffic planning allowing markets and events to take place along the entire pedestrianised part of the high street. This would bring people into shops and help to create community cohesion and a sense of belonging. Temporary road closure of such streets could test the success of such proposals before a permanent scheme is devised with changes to the paving etc and could also incorporate additional short-term parking.

Improve the functionality of the town centre: recommendations		
Quick wins	Longer Team Actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
#1 Analyse insights from your existing footfall data and establish a baseline against which to measure impact of events and to inform future investment plans.	Engage with the HSTF to create an Advanced Dashboard for East Ham This enables places with access to Springboard footfall data the ability to identify their town type, where it sits in an activity hierarchy, plus several other functions, such as monitoring the daytime and night-time economies.	Developing Place Analysts The training is free, designed to support the best use of data within place management strategies for cities, towns, districts, and high streets. To put yourself forward for this training, please complete our online form . See also: London High Streets Data Service
#2 Identify key activity hours and days and compare to modal opening hours of town centre businesses	Use the results of the audit to shape an events programme and develop an approach to the early evening economy e.g., trialling revised opening times.	See: Withington Case Study
#3 Conduct a carparking audit and compare access with is in the right location and access aligns to activity hours (and to include business owner and market trader parking).	Review parking restrictions to extend short term parking. Consider additional short-term parking associated with road closures.	Linking People, Place & Parking in Sleaford Town Centre People, places and parking process
#4 Improve town signage and wayfinding. Complete an audit of existing signage (quality, location, and relevance), and trial new pathfinding routes e.g., using simple planters and basic creative installations to mark potential routes.	Evaluate your trial and construct a longer term a wayfinding action plan, which aligns with wider town centre regeneration plans. Consider community sourced wayfinding suggestions.	Walking – 25 Vital and Viable Priorities Great Public Spaces: Guide and Evaluation Tool

Improving the town centre offer

On first impression High Street North appears vibrant, there are few empty shops, and the centre appears to serve its existing catchment well. Many stores cater for the BAME population, providing a range of produce from all over the world, including food, clothing and jewellery. Other than its functional appearance, there are few visible signs of decline. It is encouraging to see such a large concentration of independent stores with few national multiple retailers. East Ham also has a strong non-retail offer through existing Library, Leisure Centre, Town Hall and College.

Independents can offer great strength to a centre, providing customised experience and place distinction, as well as agility in terms of merchandise and opening times. However, small businesses are less likely to offer support and funds to improve the high street, and workshop participants felt that the offer could be broadened beyond everyday convenience. With substantial investment in new housing, future residents will almost certainly demand a variegated high street in the future. A clear and obvious absence are outdoor eating/drinking areas outside existing restaurants, take-aways or cafes. Elsewhere café culture generates a buzz to high streets and help with natural surveillance, so that visitors feel safer. One potential is to work with existing food outlets to create an afterhours offer especially in the summer months and give people a place to meet friends. Through licencing and information, Newham Council could encourage this. Most of the cafes are national multiples with few independents. Long term plans, however, will need to revisit the use mix on High Street North, where there is perhaps a need to work with developers, commercial agents, and landlords to diversify the leisure, hospitality, and evening offer to align with the needs of new residents.

During the workshop participants discussed how a new offer might be introduced through temporary events which might begin to prime the high street for the future, such as lead to activity that might appeal younger people. There might be a fuller year-round event programme to add reasons to visit and return to the town centre, complimenting the existing offer with temporary use, pop-up and outdoor events. The key challenge for East Ham, however, is other than the council, there is no delivery body in place to co-ordinate event, manage the public realm, or activate vacant units.. This needs to happen first above all.

Markets are one of the [IPM's top 25 Priority Interventions](#) and can significantly drive footfall, but with limited space for stalls, opening hours and range of merchandise, this is not the case in East Ham. The small market selling mainly fruit and vegetables operate in Pilgrims Way and St Johns Road, but rarely has a full set of stalls. More could be done to create a varied market offer. We suggest a trial for a Youth Market, and Ethnic Food Market, possibly linked to religious festivals, and reviewing when and where outdoor markets happen. Markets reduce barriers to entry, enable low risk trials and experiments with new offers, and can be scheduled at different times. However, we acknowledge the lack of a larger public spaces or squares that can be used for larger events and specialist markets. Pilgrims Way by Primark is a potential host and already supports a mixed street market and events. Another small fruit and veg market is by the closed off St Johns Street. The redevelopment of East Ham Market Hall as a mixed scheme of housing and retail, offers potential to introduce new operators, and we would advise working with the developers to explore how they might compensate for the loss of the specialist independents which operated in the former market. Long term physical regeneration plans should consider how the high street could be managed in the future to create additional market and event spaces, and even greenspace, through either permanent or dynamic rebalancing of traffic priorities.

Improving the town centre offer: recommendations		
Quick wins	Longer Term Actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
#1 Create a vacant property action plan, working with property owners and community groups to encourage active usage	<p>Deploy flexible, short-term lets, reduced or rent-free periods for start-ups,</p> <p>Engage community groups to occupy units on a temporary basis for free where there is non-commercial use.</p> <p>Utilise community asset transfers where necessary.</p> <p>Review management of key architectural assets through a BID/Forum and commercial agents, establish protocols to enable rapid response for units at risk of becoming vacant.</p>	<p>A platform for places: Reviving town centres by changing how communities access property</p> <p>Pop-up Retailing Objectives and Activities and Pop-up Shops</p> <p>Case study: Non-retail offer</p> <p>High Streets Taskforce Online Learning: Understanding Futures Users of the High Street</p> <p>Foodie Friday (Stockport)</p> <p>Art Battle (Stockport)</p>
#2 Review how events can be put on, maintained and supported.	Evaluate the potential to add additional activities at different times of the year, and/or extend existing events and festivals	<p>Glaston-Bury – a music festival taking place over one day in Bury town centre with 200 performing artists across 13 indoor venues and six temp outdoor stages.</p> <p>https://rebrand.ly/earlsfield-village</p>
#3 Canvas restaurants, café and take-aways and ascertain why they don't have outdoor eating and drinking space	Council to modify regulations to allow for easier outdoor eating and drinking space	https://rebrand.ly/westminster-guidance
#4 Working with existing business development support and SME champions, especially in relation to online sales and market, create a targeted action plan to support traditional SMEs and market traders in the town centre.	Establish a programme of training and support to upskill traditional SMEs in contemporary business practice e.g., digital skills, collaborative marketing etc.	<p>Help to Grow</p> <p>Retail Innovation</p>
#4 Initiate a traffic planning study to look at creating a series of public spaces suitable for specialist markets, events, and possibly Pocket Parks.	Evaluate the success of the closures, with community engagement. Align long term regeneration plans with need to extend and improve public realm.	<p>Street Space Reallocation in Oslo</p> <p>From temporary arrangements to permanent change: Assessing the transitional capacity of city street experiments</p>

Creating opportunities to change

Low vacancy is a solid indicator of East Ham's commercial viability. There is a good balance of mainstream and independents, where a chain like Primark will drive footfall to the high street to the benefit of others. Independents, in theory, should create diversity and have flexibility to adapt more to market conditions. However, sometimes independents can become trapped into a traditional way of working. With few vacant units, the loss of the indoor markets, and limited public realm, a challenge in the future will be the question of how High Street North can adapt. In addition, workshop participants drew attention to the lack of offer after normal trading hours, with few leisure and hospitality businesses serving the early evening economy. The creation of outdoor spaces and other physical enhancements to the streetscape will provide opportunity for East Ham to change in the long-term. This is beginning with Shape Newham, which in the absence of other place management and making delivery bodies, perhaps represents the best way forward in the short-term to introduce new activities.

It is useful to have a clear action plan for activating vacant units as and when they become available, and to have a rapid response process in place to deal with units which might become vacant soon. Over-time this would allow new entrants onto the high street in alignment with the long-term vision for East Ham. Ideally, this would be subject to market analysis and respond to community needs. However, landlords or letting agents often follow a line of least resistance. More careful creation of new business development can only arise through the gathering of intelligence and a closer working relationship with private owners of property assets, to ensure new tenants contribute strongly to vitality and viability. Normally BID is best placed to lead on this, however, towns like Altrincham in the first instance developed effective strategies based on better working relations with landlords.

If Newham Council own any retail units then they can directly influence to whom they rent or lease. Otherwise, they could buy a unit or enact a CPO process. One of the workshop participant's asked for a Community Café and the Council could make that happen. It could become a focus for the community bringing cohesion, a centre for disseminating information, and meeting place for groups organising activities.

With evidence the UK retail is 40% over-spaced, reactivation of former shops will almost certainly require non-retail uses. Long term plans, therefore, might consider more creative models e.g., community asset transfer, or moving public services back to high street locations. Local councils are reminded they have regulatory and statutory powers to enforce private landlords to act, and CPO always remains an option where resource allow. In the meantime, efforts could be made to open existing vacant units to pop-up or meanwhile use, until investment plans are finalised.

Creating opportunities to change: recommendations		
Quick wins	Longer Term Actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
#1 Identify buildings with vacant units suitable for conversion to alternative use, including residential	Assess residential demand for town centre living Match demand and buildings against Landlord Database to prioritise which buildings are feasible in terms of condition and location.	A New Life for the High Street Levelling up and Regeneration Bill: Recommendations for housing, retail and the high street Homes on Our High Streets Dealing with Empty Shops: A guide for councils Vacant Shops Academy
#2 Reduce barriers to entry for young entrepreneurs and creatives in the town centre e.g., by hosting a Youth/Teenage Market.	Evaluate potential to attract new creative businesses and young entrepreneurs through free/reduced rents/flexible leases, linked to the activation of vacant units.	Creative High Streets Teenage Market National Youth Market Young Enterprise Community Shops
#3 Establish a property register identifying owners of all plots/ buildings in the town centre. This includes any Council owned properties.	Use this information to identify a potential landlords and property group comprising owners and commercial agents which will support gaining permission for artwork on shutters and later activating empty buildings. Also, could facilitate the creation of a Community Cafe	See: Altrincham revitalisation Brixton People's Kitchen
#4 Review council processes and identify obstacles to community access to council owned property and land, such as land in front of retail units for outdoor eating and drinking	Remove barriers such as red-tap, unnecessarily long application processes, and licensing fees and deposits, where they might deter community led non-commercial activity.	Barriers to New Entrants Principles for public space design, planning to do better

Improving place management

Now is the time to galvanise the local community to bring life into the town centre. However, there was acknowledgment the local authority has a small regeneration team with no Manager dedicated to East Ham. The view of the HSTF is the council cannot lead on all projects and others need to deliver certain projects. We also noted the Council needs to create a better working relationship with local stakeholders who are already willing to lead on place activation. Encouraging collaborative working will help to overcome general apathy and negativity about a lack of involvement in Council regeneration plans. Workshop participants raised concerns about the lack of partnership working and expressed they felt unsupported by the council. This situation will continue to be a major obstacle to change and fundamentally needs addressing. In addition, as independent observers we have been a little frustrated by the quality of coordination of communication across council departments, and between the council and key local stakeholders. Consequently, we strongly advise more openness and transparency is required regarding future regeneration plans to overcome the negativity expressed by community representatives about the quality of consultation in East Ham.

An agreed priority is to establish a placemaking partnership, in the form of a BID (Business Improvement District) or High Street/Business Forum to provide further capacity alongside the Council, creating an additional vehicle for community groups to activate the town centre and widen its appeal. Participants at the workshop are perhaps better positioned, meeting face-to-face and outside work hours, to lead on quick wins. This should not necessarily be a formal arrangement, because over time this group will need to adapt and evolve, allowing fresh partners to join and deliver specific outcomes. Ultimately members of the group should act as ambassadors for East Ham and engage in promoting positive messages about the High Street. The council, and other local stakeholders should support the delivery of small projects with micro-funding or help in-kind, bringing in community organisations and volunteers to organised events and support maintenance. We would advise establishing sub-groups to take forward different work streams and tasked to deliver clearly defined actions. A useful first step might be to liaise with BID managers in London, especially Stratford, and ask them to assess the feasibility of an East Ham BID.

It is important the work of the Council is clearly communicated, and activity is co-ordinated. We would advise that a dedicated Manager is appointed for East Ham, who would work alongside a BID or High Street/Business Forum as a group. The group should engage in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions e.g., using footfall analysis, surveys of local traders, and measures of visitor satisfaction. This group should also begin linking activation projects to other strategic policy goals for East Ham working with even wider range of stakeholders e.g., to promote health and wellbeing, safety, business support, skills training/updating etc. to ensure that activation reduces deprivation levels. This group should also provide strategic steer and advise on the adaption of placemaking plans in anticipation of a growing residential population in the town centre e.g., augmenting the retail, leisure, cultural and hospitality offer.

Improving place management: recommendations		
Quick wins	Longer Term Actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
Evaluate the possibility to establish a BID (Business Improvement District). If not possible, then establish a High Street/Business Forum that can co-ordinate events, liaise with the Council and other stakeholders.	Create a dynamic placemaking action plan on annual basis	Saving the High Street – the community takeover Hackney Central London Business Improvement Districts https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/a64c1aeb-159f-4c41-a685-5ee554300250/london-plan-business-improvement-districts
Independent traders to communicate and promote the centre	Advise on additional goods, services or activities might attract people in the future.	We are Withington
Engaging younger people , involving Newham College	Facilitate strengthening the offer for younger people.	How can cities reimagine public space to support children and families?
Property and landlords , comprising agents, landlords and developers	Leads on vacant properties and shop front improvements, now and in the future.	Landlords
Arts , comprising formed art-teaching providers/groups and artists	Leads on shutter art, creating town centre art murals and so forth.	Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda (written IPM evidence)
Markets , including pop-ups, to generate and deliver short-term changes and activities	This should work closely with independent traders to ensure the markets remain continue as a core part of the town centre offer	Markets Matter

Appendix 1: Workshop Findings

The future of East Ham town centre: stakeholder perspectives

In the first interactive session, workshop participants were asked to individually identify one broad change that should happen to attract people to the town centre and to ensure the centre's future sustainability. Each group was then asked to agree what the most important change should be.

The table below details the views of the stakeholders, aligned with the most appropriate of the IPM's 25 Priority Factors for Vital and Viable Towns, with suggested indicative interventions to address each one. The views expressed obviously only represent those who attended but there was quite a diverse range of stakeholders with different perspectives on the town.

The top priority interventions needed to attract people and ensure future sustainability

IPM Priority	Stakeholder comments
VISION & STRATEGY LIVEABILITY	More vibrant with quality public realm Better security
REDEVELOPMENT PLANS LIVEABILITY	More engagement Greener
PLACE MARKETING ATTRACTIVENESS EXPERIENCE	To bring a sense of belonging More greenery, improve paving Vibrant
MARKETS RETAIL OFFER NON-RETAIL OFFER DIVERISTY	A more diverse market offer More events, often associated with religious festivals A town offer to appeal to young people An improved night time offer

The exercise reveals how the views of local stakeholders align with the Task Force's recommendation that Barrow pursues a strategy of reinvention. This involves activating and animating the town centre in the short term, but with the long-term goal to become more multifunctional by diversifying the offer.

Barriers to activation: stakeholder perspectives

For the final exercise workshop participants were asked to consider what barriers need to be removed to enable change to happen. Their views are detailed in the table below.

Main Barriers
No groups or forums for businesses
Lack of any partnership working
Opening hours and lack of an early evening economy
Lack of sharing information and communications across stakeholders
Lack of leadership
Lack of confidence to know where to begin and don't feel supported by the police or local councilors
No dedicated manager for the Town Centre

Further reading

25 Priority Interventions: e-learning <https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/frameworks/25-vital-and-viable-priorities/>

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766844/The_High_Street_Report.pdf

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<https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=48a97424-00b3-4ad9-a7c2-9a544c474082#:~:text=June%2D2020.pdf->

[Building%20on%20the%20Grimsey%201%20and%20Grimsey%20%20reviews%2C%20the,in%20a%20post%2DCovid19%20environment.](https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=48a97424-00b3-4ad9-a7c2-9a544c474082#:~:text=June%2D2020.pdf-)

The Grimsey Review 2. Available at:

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