

Waltham Forest's High Streets Action Plan



**Foreword from Cllr Simon Miller
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Housing Development**

Waltham Forest is a special place. But like every part of the UK, our community and our economy have been badly impacted by COVID 19. But in that bad news we have learned one clear lesson: in Waltham Forest there is a real and profound sense of community; a desire to come together, stronger and better, that saw people and businesses unified by a common endeavour not just to survive but thrive during these difficult times.

We are now looking to the future. What is clear is that Waltham Forest will need to come back stronger; and build a vibrant economy that works for our people and businesses in the year to come.

As a Council, we are investing millions of pounds in capital and transport programmes and high streets to directly stimulate the local economy. We are distributing over £47m of business grants to local companies and many retailers to provide immediate support.

This High Streets Action Plan sits with our wider Economic Recovery Action Plan as a key driver of how we as a Council will help to put the damage done to our local economy and to people's personal finances. There will be a period of rebuilding as we reopen our town centres and high streets and help local businesses adapt to be ready to trade. This is our opportunity not just to make things right but to make them better for the future.

We are expecting a changed economy to emerge as a result of COVID-19.

Many businesses have had to refocus their business model and completely change how they operate. A thriving local economy, including bustling town centres and high streets are key to reconnecting local people to their area, creating a sense of belonging and place, and are core to having a good quality of life.

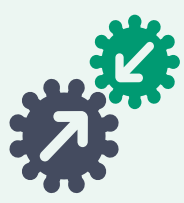
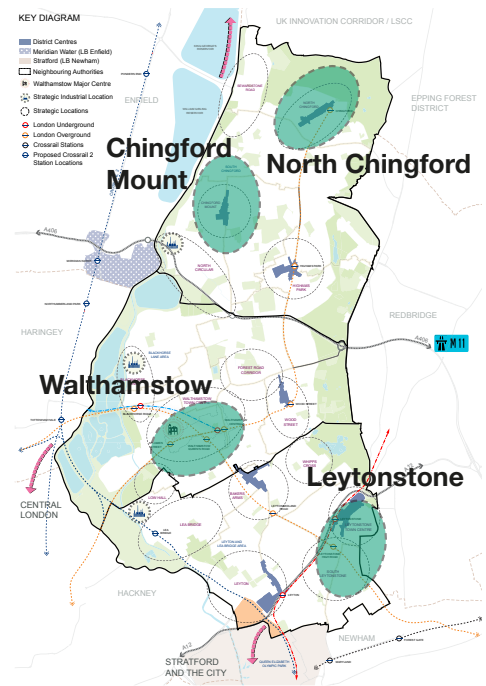
We will support our town centres, high streets, wider business community and entrepreneurs where we can, by redesigning our high streets to create safe spaces for people to shop, to do business and to live. We will begin a process of re-imagining our high streets to ensure they meet changing demands, maximise investment opportunities and are fit for the future.

For Waltham Forest to continue to be a successful place we need to maintain confidence for residents, businesses and investors so both our local economy and the people who live here prosper.

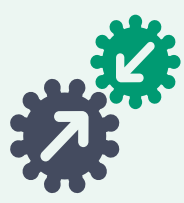
With this challenge also comes opportunities - people will live much more of their lives locally, and we are well placed to be a place to live and work with everything on your doorstep. This Action Plan, with its intervention and support, will create an attractive offer where local people and investors make an active choice to use their spending power locally, motivated by the impact this has on making their area an even better place and supporting local people, many of whom are also local business owners.



Waltham Forest's Town Centres and High Streets



40% of **Waltham Forest** businesses are part of the essential “Everyday Economy”



1,800 **Waltham Forest** businesses are in its Town Centres

Chingford

Two Key District Centres



330 businesses



2,200 jobs

Walthamstow

Major Town Centre



520 businesses



3,500 jobs



350 pitch street market

Leytonstone

Key District Centre



230 businesses



2,400 jobs



Our High Streets Action Plan: **Recovery, Re-open, Re-imagine**

Recovery

We are delivering an all encompassing support package for our businesses and residents:

- Distributing £47m of business grants and £33m rate reliefs to over 3,000 businesses
- Promoting hundreds of local businesses with our [Business Directory](#):
- Linking businesses with local residents through our [Rapid Job Brokerage](#).

Re-open

We are implementing plans so our High Streets and businesses are ready to trade:

- Re-designing public space for businesses to trade, while encouraging visitors to safely walk and cycle to their local High Streets.
- Providing businesses with a Toolkit of Support to help them adapt ready for re-opening
- Promoting our High Street businesses with our high-profile Shop Local Campaign

Re-imagine

We will restore confidence in our High Streets and deliver ambitious plans to re-shape them:

- Reconnect people to their High Streets by curating a programme of culture and animation
- Realise the opportunity, encouraging people to work locally, activating Council property and empty spaces
- Target funding to boost innovative businesses and enable imaginative regeneration projects
- Bring forward transformational investment plans working with ambitious partners



Our High Streets Action Plan: **Recovery, Re-open, Re-imagine**

High Street Recovery

Phase 1:
Full lockdown
(March-May 2020)

We delivered a rapid package of support for local businesses

Already open
(or allowed to open):

- Essential shops and services
- Takeaway food and drink services
- Construction sites
- Manufacturers

High Street Re-Opening

Phase 2:
Lockdown lifting
(June-August 2020)

We are implementing plans so our High Streets and businesses are ready to trade

From June

Phased opening of:

- Primary Schools from Monday 1 June
- Non-essential shops from Monday 15 June

From July

Phased opening of:

- Personal care businesses
- Some hospitality businesses

From August

Phased opening of:

- Other hospitality, culture and leisure businesses

High Streets Re-imagined

Phase 3:
Lockdown widely lifted
(Sept 2020 onwards)

We will work in partnership to deliver ambitious plans to re-connect and re-shape our High Streets

From September

- All schools
- Phased wider return to work
- Phased opening of wider range of higher risk venues and spaces



Recovery: Delivering Our High Street Support Package

We are supporting our businesses through these challenging times by:

- Securing business rate relief for 3,500 businesses, saving them a combined £33m
- Distributing £47m of small business grants to over 3,000 businesses, directly injecting funds into our local economy
- Directly supporting our commercial tenants, including 100 businesses in Council commercial property and 170 traders on Walthamstow Market
- Connecting over 300 businesses with customers and each other through our free Business Directory
- Communicating directly with businesses reaching over 9,000 local businesses through our newsletters and social media



Re-Open: Redesigning our High Streets

We are redesigning public space for businesses to trade and to create safe, welcoming environments for visitors to their local High Streets:

- Re-opening Walthamstow, our major town centre, with a coordinated strategy for its High Street, Market and Mall
- Making space for people including at Church Lane Leytonstone
- Making space for businesses to trade outside along our high streets
- Working with Transport for London to create safe space around our key stations, particularly the busiest at Walthamstow and Leyton
- Bringing art and our **Virtual Culture programme** to life on our high streets

Re-Open: Enabling High Street Businesses to Adapt

We are developing a Toolkit of Support so businesses can adapt and re-open and a campaign to encourage residents to shop local and restore confidence on our High Streets:

- Encouraging our residents to spend locally on their High Streets and support their local business community
- Promoting local examples of businesses adapting and innovating to continue to trade
- Reviewing government guidance to make it locally relevant
- Widening our successful business support programme in Leytonstone introducing online content
- Growing our Business Directory to showcase that Waltham Forest is “Open for Business”
- Expanding our **Zero Emission Delivery** network to support local businesses as part of our Climate Emergency action plan
- Building resilience with Town Teams and Business Partnerships in Leytonstone, Chingford and Walthamstow



Re-Imagine: Realising the Potential of our High Streets

We will work with our diverse, connected communities, reconnecting them to their High Streets and realising the potential of their enterprise and innovation:

- Reconnecting people with their High Street through a programme of culture and animation, building on the legacy from London Borough of Culture 2019
- Realising the opportunity for people to work locally and to capture businesses displaced from central locations, by creating new workspaces in Council buildings such as Leytonstone and Walthamstow libraries, in vacant high street properties and in mixed-use town centre developments
- Creating opportunities for local enterprise including on Walthamstow Market, in CRATE St James Street and use of public spaces for new markets in Leytonstone and Chingford
- Boosting high streets, being flexible with policies and regulations, accelerating opportunities for businesses to adapt and innovative new uses to become established

Re-Imagine: Transforming our Town Centres

We will work in partnership to deliver ambitious plans to re-shape and transform our Town Centres:

- Investing in transformational town centre plans, including at The Mall and St James Quarter as part of our over half a billion pound capital delivery programme approved by Cabinet in April 2020
- Investing in culture and creativity on our high streets, delivering the EMD Cinema in Walthamstow, new Chingford Library and a cultural hub for Leytonstone
- Kick-starting town centre regeneration using our own sites, including Church Lane Car Park in Leytonstone and Hall Lane Car Park in Chingford Mount
- Focusing investment to reuse and reimagine vacant property along our high streets
- Delivering imaginative regeneration projects, like CRATE St James Street and Central Parade in Walthamstow and Market Parade in Bakers Arms, which bring communities together and support business start-ups and innovation



Delivering Waltham Forest's High Streets Action Plan

High Street Recovery

We are delivering our package of support for local businesses

High Street Re-Opening

We are implementing plans so our High Streets and businesses are ready to trade

High Streets Reimagined

We will work in partnership to deliver ambitious plans that re-shape our High Streets, ensuring they realise their full potential