Mayor of London approves plans for Walthamstow Mall to boost jobs and regenerate the area

The regeneration of Walthamstow Town Centre is moving forward with big improvements completed or planned that will bring benefits for residents and businesses.

The plans to redevelop Walthamstow Mall, approved by Waltham Forest Council planning committee in December and now approved by the Mayor, will bring 200 million pounds of private investment, provide 8,000sq meters of new retail space, 350 new permanent retail jobs, 500 new homes, a new children's play area and re-landscaped town square.

The plans will give a significant boost to the local economy by creating jobs and homes while attracting major retailers and retail start-ups alike, continuing the regeneration of Walthamstow.

This will build on the success of the £3 million improvement scheme at St James' Street which is now complete and included shop front improvements and upgrading pavements and other public areas as well as providing business support for local retailers. The work on the gyratory system, which will improve transport links at the heart of our borough, is continuing with the first phase now completed.

In this newsletter we bring you up to date on some of the main improvements which are taking place including the plans to purchase the iconic Granada Cinema in Hoe Street. If you want to keep in touch between newsletters you can check out details on the scheme's web page or follow us on social media using the relevant hash tag.

As always we welcome views of residents on the proposals so do let us have your comments, using the contact on the relevant web page for each site.

More information: walthamforest.gov.uk/regeneration

New workspace for local entrepreneurs

- The green light has been given to turn a Council-owned car park in St James Street, that hasn't been used for more than three years, into new workspace for small and growing local businesses and start-ups with shared areas for meeting clients and other businesses in the building.

A company called CRATE has been selected as the preferred operator and plans to transform the site into an entrepreneurial hub of activity for creatives, retailers, food outlets and service businesses.

CRATE is working closely with the Council, St James St Big Local, local businesses and the community to achieve a target opening towards the end of the year.

CRATE founder, Adam Walker said: “We are delighted to be coming to Walthamstow to support the many local entrepreneurs that need the perfect platform to grow their business.

“We are looking to create a diverse culture working hand-in-hand with the wider business community to enhance the vibrant local area and attract more visitors to the St James Quarter.

“CRATE combines flexible workspace with easy-in/ easy-out all-inclusive terms, plus a range of on-site support and marketing services. We know this package delivers the competitive edge businesses need to survive and thrive.”

For more information and to register interest: stjamesst.crateuk.com

Pictured above: some of the new shop fronts in St James Street. Pictured below: public areas in St James street were improved.
Historic venue to be bought by Council

A historic Grade II* listed venue, which hosted The Beatles and The Who, is due to be purchased by Waltham Forest Council.

The decision to buy the former Granada cinema, also known as the EMD, on Hoe Street, Walthamstow came just two weeks after Waltham Forest was named the first ever London Borough of Culture, ensuring an important cultural and heritage venue is returned to its former glory.

The site is due to be purchased for £2.6 million from the current owners, EMD Walthamstow LLP and it will then be renovated back to its former glory to create a destination venue.

Renovation of the site is estimated to take around three years to complete. Waltham Forest Council will now be looking for options to part finance the renovation of the building including external heritage, arts and regeneration funders.

Local links

The council is in discussions with Soho Theatre, which would operate the 1000 seat venue with a programme featuring the biggest names in UK and international comedy as well as an annual pantomime alongside screenings, theatre and community education work.

Soho Theatre is a registered charity and social enterprise, which has established itself as London’s most vibrant venue for new theatre, comedy and cabaret.

Soho Theatre has roots in the community, having worked with hundreds of young people in Waltham Forest in primary and secondary schools since 2013, and presented a major parks festival in the borough during 2017.

Waltham Forest Council Leader, Clare Coghill said: “As the first ever London Borough of Culture we see restoring this iconic site as a major boost to the long-term economy making the area a magnet across London to visit and enjoy. This is fantastic news for Waltham Forest and is an investment in our borough’s increasingly cultural economy which has doubled in the last 5 years.”

Artistic Director Soho Theatre, Steve Marmion, said: “Having worked in Waltham Forest’s schools, communities and even its parks, over the last five years we are thrilled with the news that Waltham Forest Council is making this much needed move to create a thriving theatre for the borough.”

Mayor approves plans for £200 million investment for the Mall

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, underlined his commitment to working with Waltham Forest Council as he approved the redevelopment of Walthamstow Mall.

The plans to redevelop Walthamstow Mall, approved by Waltham Forest Council planning committee in December and now approved by the Mayor, will bring 200 million pounds of private investment, provide 8,000 sq meters of new retail space, 350 new permanent retail jobs, 500 new homes, a new children’s play area and re-landscaped town square.

The scheme has substantial costs due to complex foundation works aimed at avoiding damaging the nearby tube line and station coupled with the need to keep the Shopping Centre open during construction. Despite this an increase in the level of affordable housing from 20% to 30% has been achieved following negotiations between the GLA, the Council and the developer Capital and Regional. An additional £7.3 million contribution from the development will be used to build new homes for affordable rent in Walthamstow, ensuring we deliver the Council’s priority of delivering affordable homes. 47% of new homes between 2013-16 are affordable, against a London average of 26%.

Waltham Forest Council has around a thousand new council homes already built or planned to be built over the next five years.

The Council is looking at the potential for its housing development company Sixty Bricks to support delivery of the additional affordable rent homes linked to the Mall.

As part of the agreement to redevelop the Mall, Transport for London have also agreed to spend £15m to improve Walthamstow Central Station by creating a new entrance that will increase accessibility and reduce overcrowding.

The number of trees on the site will increase under the plans and Waltham Forest Council have agreed that for every tree removed from the site we will plant five more elsewhere in the Borough which will help us reach our target of 50,000 trees in Waltham Forest.

Waltham Forest Council Leader, Clare Coghill said “The Mayor’s decision to approve the redevelopment of the Mall in Walthamstow will radically improve the town centre, replacing the existing town square and shopping centre which is tired, underused and not good enough for our residents.

The proposed development will:

• bring 8,000 sq metres of new retail space suitable for major retailers as well as smaller local independent stores
• include up to 500 new homes with 20% of them being affordable
• see more trees in the Town Square than are currently present
• provide a Town Square better suited for outdoor events
• create a new children’s play area, with the Kids Committee, made up of local families, involved in the design
• see the shopping centre continue trading throughout the building work
• include a significant contribution to support a potential upgrade of Walthamstow Centre Station to improve accessibility and ease congestion

More information: walthamforest.gov.uk/TheMall
Bridge work completed

Since November 2016 if you have traveled through Walthamstow Town Centre you may have noticed roadworks at the junction of Hoe Street and Selborne Road. These were to make the area safer and less congested and also to build a bridge over the new railway line. The first stage of work to install a new bridge has been completed. It will replace the Victorian-era structure, which was not able to cope with current traffic demand.

Waltham Forest Council, working with Transport for London (TfL) and Network Rail, has started the work needed to allow traffic to start using the bridge. When the scheme is finished it should mean easier journeys, especially for buses and cyclists, through the very busy junction.

Work on the bridge started in January and is expected to last until summer 2018. On the west side of Hoe Street these will include:

- Setting up a workers’ compound in First Avenue for the contractors who will carry out the highway works
- Installation of new traffic islands and signals
- Road resurfacing
- Footway, kerb and highway drainage alterations
- Construction of northbound separated cycle lanes
- Traffic starting to use the new bridge
- Temporary traffic management including barriers, cones and temporary traffic lights will be put in place to help keep vehicles moving safely.

When the main highway works on the western side of Hoe Street are completed similar work will start on the eastern side of Hoe Street and the whole scheme is due to be completed by September 2019.

Public Areas

The town centre transport improvements will improve journey times and overall reliability, increase access for pedestrians and cyclists, and create public green spaces to boost air quality.

Later this year we will be asking local residents, businesses and road users to help decide on the final look and feel of the public areas.

More information:
walthamforest.gov.uk/gyratory

“Council’s support has helped us improve our business”

Jameela, who was born and has grown up in Walthamstow, said: “My Dad came to the UK from Pakistan and started Apollo Dry Cleaners 26 years ago and I took over the business in 1996. “We’ve always prided ourselves on giving good customer service but we also know that there’s always more to learn so when Waltham Forest Council offered some free business support to shops in St James Street we decided to get involved.

“The experts we were linked with spent an hour or more a week with us for quite a few weeks and the help they gave was excellent.

“They helped us further improve our customer service and also helped with our marketing, including a new frontage for the shop, new logo and wording on the windows and counter so people know the range of services we offer.

“Like many businesses in St James Street we were being given a new frontage as part of the Council’s improvements to the area and when they found out we were having a new dry cleaning machine installed they even timed the work so that we could take out the old machine and bring in the new one through the window area and on the same day they installed the new window.

“Council’s support has helped us improve our business”

Jameela Mahmood, Owner, Apollo Dry Cleaners.

“Council’s support has helped us improve our business”

Apollo Dry Cleaners:

- employs five staff
- has two shops:
  - 4 St James Street shop is open 8am to 7pm
  - Wood Street shop is open 8.30am to 6.30pm

Last year the Council spent around £3 million, including £1.46 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, improving St James Street to make it an attractive place for shoppers to visit, including new pavements, seating signs and shop fronts.

Jameela added: “With the changes we’ve made I feel we’ve achieved some big improvements and am so pleased to see our new shop.

“Our customers are local people and many of them have become friends who give us a wave through the window as they go past.”

So next time you’re in St James Street do give Jameela and her team a wave or pop in with some repairs or dry cleaning.

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Enjoy Waltham Forest

**Off to the shops? Hire a free cargo bike**

The Council has a fleet of bikes available to hire for free – cargo bikes and cycle bikes for adults and children.

Cargo, or ‘freight’ bikes, are designed and constructed specifically for transporting loads. They are great alternatives to the car and can be used for any journey to carry the kids from the school run to carrying groceries from shopping trips, and are perfect for local goods deliveries too.

Our bikes can be hired for up to three weeks at a time, to give you a taste of how quickly and convenient your commute, or journey to the shops can be.

We also have helmets, lights, locks, and maps, so you’ll be good to go.

More information:
enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/cargo-bike

Check availability:
cargobikehire@walthamforest.gov.uk

**Use ZED for your deliveries - £100 of deliveries for free**

ZED, a new Zero Emission Delivery service has arrived in the borough thanks to funding from the Mayor of London’s Air Quality Fund.

Local businesses are eligible to use this service and, provided your items can fit on the ZED vehicles, the first £100 worth of deliveries could be free of charge.

The scheme, the first of its kind to be run by a Council in London, lets local businesses, organisations and charities have their goods delivered using environmentally friendly means.

Outspoken! Delivery, the service operator, is already making deliveries for many businesses in the borough including Perky Blenders and Organiclea using cargo bikes and an electric van.

The scheme follows the success of the 2016 ‘Christmas Courier’ service which saw over 1,000 parcels delivered for 20 businesses.

More information:
zedwalthamforest.co.uk

**Free cycle training**

Whether you are an experienced cyclist or complete beginner, brushing up on or learning new skills is always a good thing.

The Council offers free cycle training, through our training partner Cycle Confident, to anybody who lives, works or studies in the borough of Waltham Forest, giving you the skills you need to cycle.

Sign up:
cycleconfident.com/sponsors/waltham-forest

**Plan your walks and cycling…**

The Waltham Forest digital map highlights walking and cycling routes around the borough, cycle parking locations and live public transport information, along with details of local services such as GP opening hours.

More data and information will be added to the map over the coming months, so if you have any suggestions please send them over to us.

More information:
https://walthamforest.livingmap.com/

**Historic parade safeguarded for the future**

Walthamstow’s Central Parade, in an important location at the junction of Hoe Street and the High Street, received Grade II listed status from Historic England in October 2017.

Designed and built by the local authority in 1958, Central Parade’s unique Festival of Britain façade has local support. Its wavy canopy is a highly distinctive feature; and the mosaic work and patterned tiles give a striking facade. While there are other buildings of this period with this architectural style, Central Parade is one of the most interesting examples nationally.

With funding support from the GLA’s High Street Fund, and working in partnership with Meanwhile Space CIC, the interior of the building was redesigned by Gort Scott Architects to transform it into the borough’s first mixed-use creative space.

Central Parade creative hub provides a community events space along with workspace for Walthamstow-based creatives and self-employed people with studios and co-working spaces as well as Today Bread, a popular on-site café and sourdough bakery which is open to the public.

The Council will continue to work to restore Central Parade to its former glory, and improving the area to the rear including the garages, ensuring an icon of our past will prove to be a cornerstone of our future.

More information:
walthamforest.gov.uk/CentralParade
centralparade.com

Follow on social media using #CentralParade

**CONTACT US**

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