



TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

7 September 2017

REPORT

Subject Heading:

Romford Market Update

CMT Lead:

Steve Moore, Director of Neighbourhoods

Report Author and contact details:

Lauren Gee, Regeneration Officer,
Development

Lauren.Gee@havering.gov.uk

Lindsay Hondebrink, Interim Business
Development Manager, Development

Lindsay.Hondebrink@havering.gov.uk

Policy Context:

Havering Council Corporate Plan 2016-17:
Using our influence to 'Supporting business
to create jobs'

Havering - Making a Greater London 2017:
Places and Opportunities

SUMMARY

This report provides an update regarding the Romford Market Transformation Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to review and note that alternative proposals for the delivery of the Transformation Programme are being developed.

REPORT DETAIL

The original Cabinet report (November 2015) tasked officers to progress implementation of a Transformation Programme covering four key areas:

- Physical transformation and improved use of space
- Branding, identity and vision
- Business growth and development of market offer
- Operational management

The programme covered a range of activity including rebranding, better control and management of stalls, delivery of public Wi-Fi, increasing and diversifying the number of traders and to physically transform the space.

In progressing implementation, officers focussed initially on the physical transformation by working up proposals for a new Market House, which aimed to deliver a high-quality food offer with public realm space for seating and a play area for children.

In February 2017, planning permission was obtained. It was intended that the other activities in the Transformation Programme, such as rebranding, would be implemented to align with the construction and launch of the building.

However, the final costing for the Market House indicated an additional cost of almost £1m for groundworks, which has made it unviable. This is clearly a major set-back in the delivery of the Transformation Programme. However, it should be stressed that the principle activities in the Programme as set out in the November 2015 Cabinet paper remain and alternative proposals are now being developed.

The technical studies and consumer research completed as part of the original Programme will continue to be utilised to inform the future proposals.

Proposals currently in development and being costed include:

- Creation of a public dwell space, which can be used for seating and events.
- Re-branding and promotion of the market, digitally and traditional media.
- Measures to continue the upward trend of increasing market traders and diversifying the market offer.
- Reconfiguration of stalls, with matching covers and an aligned layout.
- Maximising the opportunity created through delivery of public Wi-Fi in the Market Place, including contactless payments.
- Introduction of additional market events to trial concepts and inform the transformation moving forward.

In addition, proposals are being developed for a masterplan for Romford town centre, accompanied by a delivery strategy, to provide an overarching vision for the regeneration and development of the town.

Romford Market Place is a key and historical asset to the town and a Masterplan will carefully consider how to maximise its potential for the benefit of the town.

Heritage Action Zone Proposal

Romford Market Place is an integral part of Romford Conservation Area, which is currently on the 'At Risk' Register. As such, it is believed that the future of the market is intrinsically linked to the protection, promotion and restoration of the heritage assets which surround it.

On 7th August 2017, a proposal was submitted to Historic England to designate Romford as a Heritage Action Zone. A Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) is an area based partnership programme, aimed at recognising the importance of heritage and history and the impact it can have on economic and social growth. The programme is made up of a number of project objectives, aimed at regenerating and repairing areas of historical importance and building the capacity of local people and visitors to allow them to understand and engage with local heritage.

If successful, it will enable increased investment, particularly in the public realm around the market and build the capacity of local people and visitors to understand and engage with the market's heritage.

Christmas Events 2017

An ice rink is being planned for Christmas 2017, following the successful ice rink at the Eastern End of Market Place last year, which attracted a total of 12,268 skaters.

The annual Christmas Lights Switch On will take place on Thursday 16th November 2017 in the Market Place and it is planned that an ice rink will be opened the following week.

The market will be temporarily expanded to complement this Christmas offer, with bespoke Christmas stalls and products available, a corresponding catering proposition and additional trading days over the Christmas period.

Operational Management

Despite a set back in delivery of the programme, an operational focus has continued on growing trader numbers, expanding the offer and making small changes to refresh the look of the market.

Since May 2017, the following outputs have been achieved:

- 3.5% increase in licenced traders, from 70 to 75
- 21 additional casual traders, total of 48 new casual traders this year to date.
- 10 new casual catering traders, which has improved the food offer and provided a more varied range.
- Footfall has remained steady with a monthly average of approximately 143,000 in May and July, with an increase to approximately 150,000 in June.

The aim is to continue this upward trend, culminating in a market which feels vibrant and busy, with an improved choice of quality products.

Since April 2017, the following operational changes have been achieved:

- Full Health & Safety checks and process/procedure assessment completed.
- A review of operational procedures was completed resulting in several minor changes. The most significant adjusted market staff working hours to provide better cover and improved trader contact from 6am to 7pm on Market days.
- Following discussion with the Police Counter Terrorism Unit, some additional safety measures have been put in place based on their advice.
- A review of Return on Investment for advertising was completed. This has resulted in more a more targeted and effective approach.
- Trader vehicle movements are now managed by Market Staff allowing safer and coordinated access at peak times.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

Financial implications and risks will be considered and consulted on as part of the development of the new proposal for delivery of the Transformation Programme.

This will also be dependent on the outcome of the Heritage Action Zone proposal. Shortlisted proposals are expected to be announced in October/November 2017.

Legal implications and risks:

There are currently no legal implications arising directly as a result of this report.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications arising directly as a result of this report.

Equalities implications and risks:

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed at programme level for the Transformation Programme. This will be fully reviewed in development of the new delivery proposal.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Details of the original Transformation Programme for Romford Market are outlined in the 18th November 2015 Cabinet Report.