

Meeting Minutes: Roman Road Implementation Group

Location: Room 57, Level 5 Anchorage House

Date: 9am, 8th April 2009

Attendees:		
Cllr Josh Peck	Lead Member for Resources and Performance	JP
Cllr Marc Francis	Lead Member for Housing and Development	MF
Chris Horton	Town Centre Project Coordinator	CH
Andre Burwood	Skillsmatch Manager	LH
David Saunders	Head, Markets Services	DS
Bryan Jones	Service Head, Environmental Control	BJ
Cecilia Clarke	Communications Officer	CC
Marissa Hernandez	Planning Policy Officer	MH
Jonathan Nichols	Development, Design & Conservation Officer	JN
Gavin Dooley	Lap 5 & 6 Director	GD
Sue Hinds	Access to Employment Manager	SH
Juanita Haynes	Information and Equalities Team Leader	JH
Apologies		
Chris Chubb	Group Manager LETs Teams	CCh
Azizul Goni	Senior Environmental Services Officer	AG
Lorna Hughes	Neighbourhood Manager	LH
Toks Osibogun	Head of Corporate Property Services	TO

	Item	Action
1	Introductions/ apologies/matters arising a) JP asked all attendees to introduce themselves and describe their role with the Council b) Previous Meeting Minutes (4 th March, 2009) c) JP asked whether the farmers market would be taking place twice a month. DS confirmed that it would according to the terms of the new agreement. MF stated it was important to move forward with promotion of the market. CC stated that approx £600 would be need to be identified to deliver this. CC agreed to look at possible sources of funding.	CC
2	<u>Town Centre Spatial Strategy Update</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">MH explained that the Strategy Team continued to oversee the drafting of the Town Centre Spatial Strategy and were happy to take into consideration comments from the Roman Road Implementation Group with regard to its evolving content.JP asked MH what the status of the document would be. MH confirmed that the Town Centre Spatial Strategy would inform the Core Strategy/LDF as a baseline and that its comments would be pre-empting strategies that come forward.JP informed MH that <i>Recommendation 165</i> might be revisited with regard to its proposal for de-designation. JP stated that he is concerned about the impact de-designation of the western section of the town centre might have on the town centre as a whole and that he could not find an evidence base demonstrating the need for it. MF supported JP on this point and stated that he would like to see further consideration of the role of the town centre within the strategy.GD stated that, in the main, property interest at Roman Road was	

	<p>largely for residential property and that the strategy had needed to take consideration of this. JP stated that whilst he understood this pressure Roman Road Town Centre needed to retain its integrity as a retail hub. There were, however issues in relation to the vitality of the retail mix.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MH clarified in response from a query from JP that de-designation of any use in policy would not mean a loss of the town centre's district status, rather it would involve consolidation. Roman Road Town Centre would also be protected as a place in the town centre spatial strategy. ▪ MH informed JP that she would be happy to meet up with him outside of the meeting to talk to him about any of the issues he had raised in more detail. ▪ MF stated that wayfinding could be improved and should be identified as a priority within the TCSS. CH agreed and stated this was an area that would be looked at within the forthcoming public realm strategy for Roman Road. ▪ MF also stated that connectivity also had to be a key priority for Roman Road and that he supported the idea of Fish Island as a destination for the DLR. GD also underlined the importance of bringing greater connectivity to Roman Road Town Centre and noted that there had been mention of a new station at Marmesbury in the original LDF. 	MH
3	<p><u>Shop Local</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GD stated that D&R and TH Partnership had seen presentations from a number of consultants and that an organisation called Angel had been appointed to work alongside Tower Hamlets to deliver Shop Local, a project designed to encourage local people to shop locally. ▪ GD showed attendees Angel's response to the project brief and some of the promotional material they had put together to encourage people to shop locally. ▪ CH underlined the importance of the project and the value it would bring to Roman Road. The funding for the project had originated from Section 106 funding from the Ordell Road development. ▪ JP felt that the consultant team had not identified the reasons for shopping locally in their brief. GD stated that officers would be steering content and working closely with them as the project progressed. ▪ JP stated that he didn't feel online content would work as well as ensuring there was a sufficient physical presence at Roman Road, with consultant team actively demonstrating reasons why it was important to shop locally. CH stated that the project brief had specified some on line content but that he would pass JP's comments to the consultants. ▪ GD asked if attendees wanted to attend the consultants commissioning meeting they should contact him directly. 	CH GD
4	<p><u>Iceland Store/ Employment Assistance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MF asked when Iceland would be a presence within Roman Road. 	

	<p>GD stated that of the Iceland stores that were to replace Woolworths sites in the borough the Iceland at Roman Road Town centre would be the last. The projected date at this moment in time was 25th June. AD stated that 24 people had been referred for relevant training and that Iceland had been signed up as a lap employer. Further liaison was taking place through the job club in the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SH stated that community engagement would be strengthened through neighbourhood management fund. MF stated that it was important to maximise the number of people that know about the training/access to work programmes on offer. ▪ MF also felt it was important that local people were aware of the date when the new store would be opened. JP asked whether or not Iceland have an active community engagement programme. GD stated that Iceland were not actively engaged in programmes with local authorities and had outsourced this responsibility for employment. MF reiterated his interest in meeting with representatives of Iceland. GD stated that the organisation nor its providers had responded to him on this request. ▪ BJ stated that there would be issues around the frontage of the store that would require planning input and that the new store would create some disturbances. 	AB/SH
5	<p><u>Empty Properties</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CH stated that Toks Osibogun was not in attendance at the meeting and would be asked to attend the following meeting instead. ▪ CH stated that D&R carried out a town centre audit each year and that they recorded the number of empty properties of this audit. He presented the information that had been recorded as part of this audit to all attendees which demonstrated the number of empty retail properties at Roman Road Town Centre over a three year period. Further information looking at the mix in more detail had been carried out. ▪ There had been not demonstrable rise to date of the number of empty properties due to the current economic situation but this was not to say that it was not anticipated to occur in future. ▪ GD stated that it was important to look at the kind of mix that is required at Roman Road Town Centre and how this might be delivered. CH agreed but stated that, unlike other centres in the borough, the retail properties were owned by private landlords and, whilst support could be provided to these landlords, LBTH could not take a highly interventionist approach. The purchasing of leases for example would be costly and highly time consuming, with no guarantee that the effect would provide the desired outcome. ▪ JP asked whether or not the shop front improvement project would enable the Council to be more interventionist. CH stated that a priority could be placed on empty properties on the proviso that the assisted business took active steps to lease the property thereafter. ▪ CH stated that feedback from Look Properties had been that the size of the properties and often the condition in which they had been left had been a disincentive to investment. 	CH

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MF stated that he felt the figures provided from the town centre audit were not an accurate reflection of the number of empty properties at Roman Road Town Centre. He also asked that someone look at bringing a butchers shop to Roman Road. Further to this he wanted to know whether the option of BIDs had been considered. ▪ CH stated that whilst the council could not intervene in the private market directly to ensure a butcher, a butchers shop had been identified as an absence. Work would be carried out to inform those businesses on the council waiting list that there were vacancies at Roman Road Town Centre, the team would consult with local letting agents and ELSBC on this matter. ▪ CH stated that LBTH had not sought to move forward on BIDs in the past for a number of reasons but that he was keen to explore their role in Tower Hamlets. CH stated he would provide more information on BIDS in line with the recommendations of the Town Centre Spatial Strategy 	CH
6	<p><u>Parking Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BJ informed attendees that a meeting had been held before the Roman Road Implementation Group meeting to look at the issue of market trader/resident parking and this had been very helpful in resolving some of the issues that had arisen. ▪ A note would be provided as a follow up to this meeting detailing the exact locations where spaces would be changed from their market trader only status. 	BJ
9	<p><u>Development Implementation Update</u></p> <p>CH confirmed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The director's sign off report for Shop Front Improvement Project had been drafted and needed to have comments from central finance and the LBTH legal team incorporated before director's sign off. ▪ Comments on the criteria from the previous meeting have been incorporated and discussions with the quantity surveyor have been initiated. ▪ The tender advert for the Roman Road Town Centre Support, Training and Advice Project has been placed in East London Life and Regeneration and Renewal Magazine. 	CH