

VESTRY HOUSE MUSEUM

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT MEETING 16TH FEBRUARY 2023



Waltham Forest



WELCOME FROM CLLR ROS DORÉ

Cabinet Commissioner for Culture,

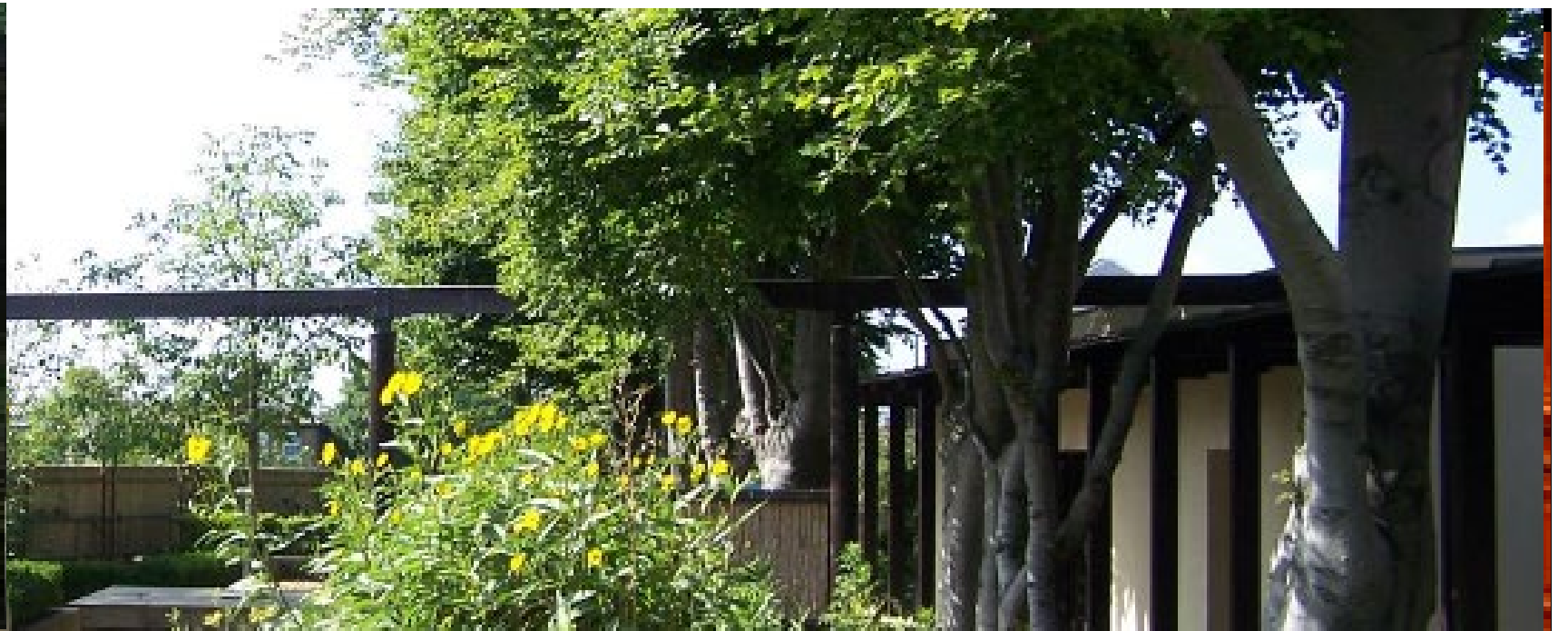
Waltham Forest Council

- Introduction
Cllr Ros Dore, Cabinet Commissioner for Culture
- Levelling Up Fund
James Leay, Corporate Director of Destinations
- Vestry House Museum: A New Approach
Lorna Lee, Asst Director, Destinations
Hadrian Garrard, Head of Creative Engagement

- How to get involved

- Questions





LEVELLING UP FUND

JAMES LEAY

Corporate Director, Destinations



Walthamstow Culture for All

Walthamstow (Waltham Forest) Levelling Up Fund 2022

– Delivery Plan

Programme Area

WALTHAMSTOW TOWN CENTRE

Bid Area

Walthamstow Town Centre - Bid Area

Other Strategic Areas

Blackhorse Lane CEZ

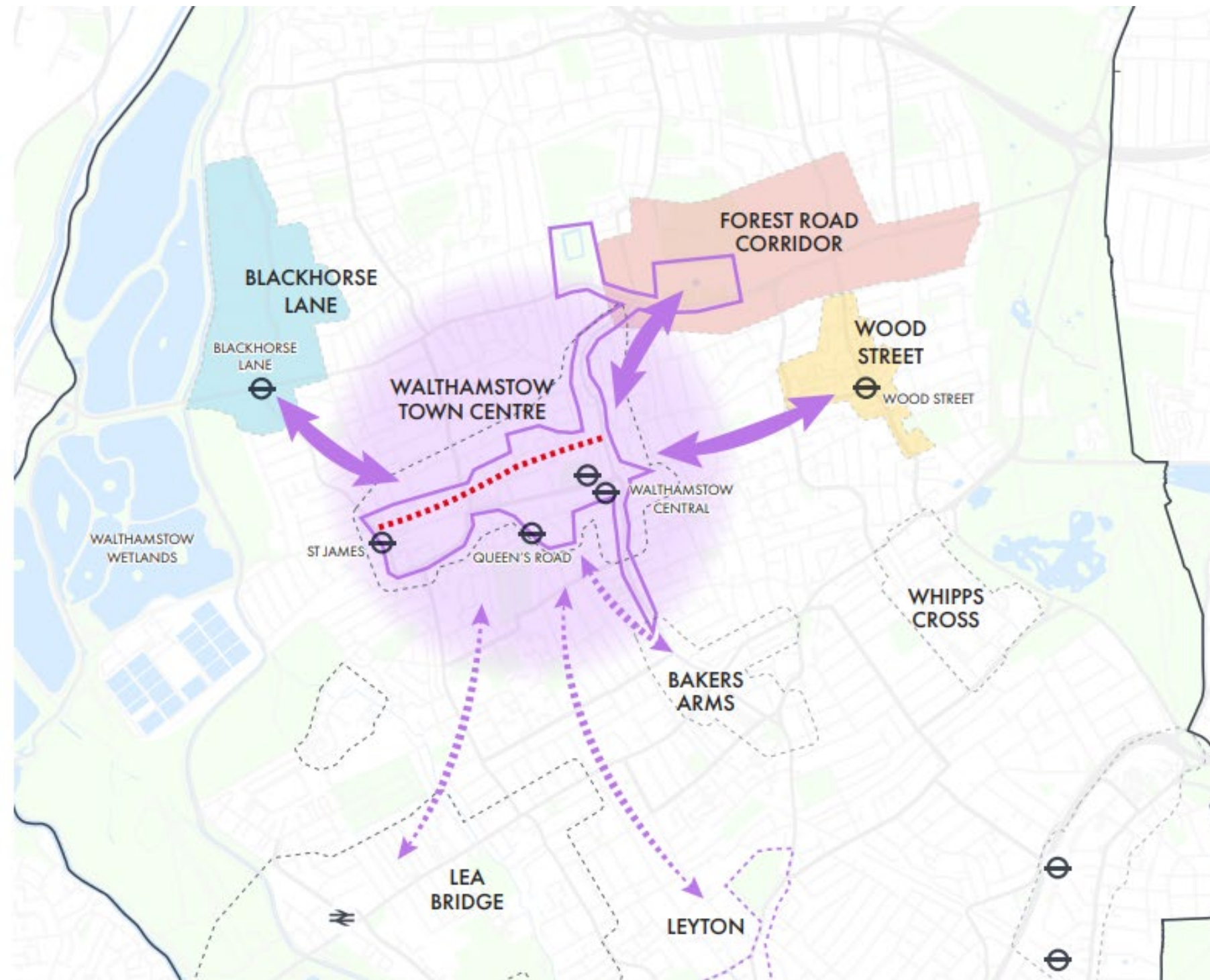
Forest Road Corridor

Wood Street

Local Plan:
Strategic Locations

Borough boundary

High Street Market



Challenges:

- Community safety, with pockets of high crime
- Inequality in access to employment and education opportunities, particularly for underrepresented people from ethnic minority backgrounds and most deprived communities
- Significantly reduced footfall and dwell time over last five years
- Poor quality and inaccessible public space
- Entrenched inequalities and deprivation from long-standing economic issues
- Cost-of-living crisis emerging as a barrier to cultural engagement and inclusivity

Opportunities:

- Active and diverse local community
- Existing investment in cultural infrastructure and growing creative sector
- High number of local independent businesses

Investment will:

- Drive footfall, support local businesses and employment. Create economic opportunities for community, including young people from diverse backgrounds
- Restore iconic at-risk heritage assets
- Enhance civic pride and sense of belonging in Walthamstow
- Address issues with crime/ ASB, particularly in the evening, encouraging growth of the town centre's evening offer
- Increase cultural activity and participation with free high-quality offer

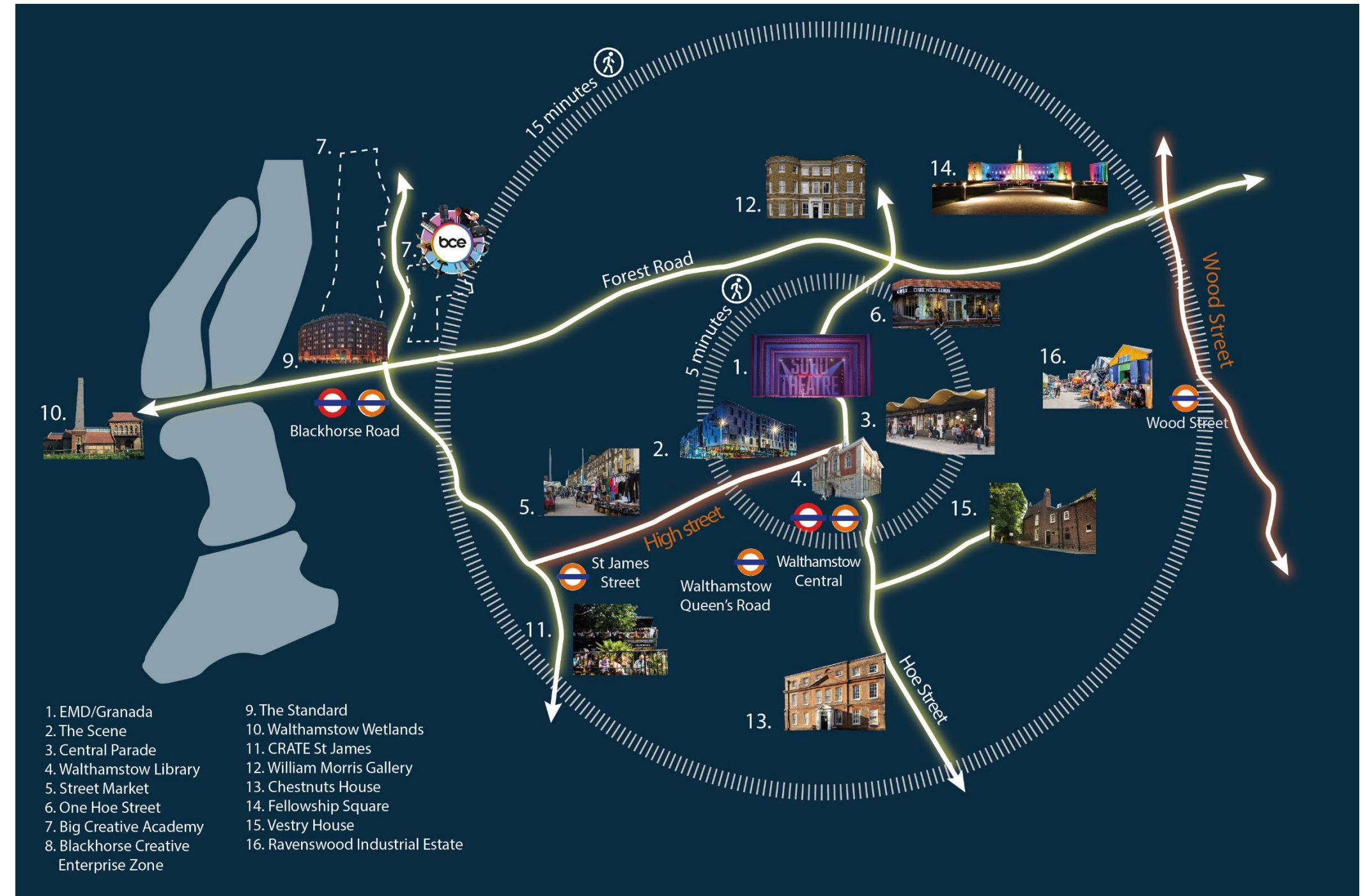
Neighbourhood Snapshot: Current Wider Cultural Offer

Walthamstow presents the highest concentration of arts and cultural consumption infrastructure in Waltham Forest ¹.

Key locations in and around the Town Centre include:

- **Soho Theatre Walthamstow**, Grade II* listed former EMD Granada, currently under major restoration to re-open as a 950-seater performance venue operated by Soho Theatre
- **Creative Industries Jobs Academy**, Waltham Forest's employment and skills programme across the creative sector
- **Walthamstow High Street and Market** is the bustling heart of the town centre
- **Crate St James** creative enterprise hub on a former car park site, due to expand with a new food court in The Mall development in 2023
- **The Scene**, a complex with Empire cinema, bars and restaurants
- **Central Parade** with Today Bread café, on-site bakery and business start-up incubator units
- **Big Creative Academy** providing training and employment opportunities from the creative sector
- **Fellowship Square** is a new neighbourhood and cultural centre in the heart of the borough

This project will help maximise the benefits of existing cultural activity in Walthamstow, ensuring access to culture for all, improving inclusivity, social cohesion and mental wellbeing.



Waltham Forest was 2019 London Borough of Culture and has positioned culture-led regeneration at the heart of the borough's identity. However, challenges persist in maintaining cultural/heritage assets and the town centre faces significant physical constraints and social and economic challenges, with a limited night-time economy negatively impacted by concerns about crime and ASB.

Walthamstow's 15-minute cultural neighbourhood

The investment will build on the Council's track record of delivering high-impact culture-led regeneration and contribute to our **15-minute cultural neighbourhood for Walthamstow** resulting in:

- Increased visitor numbers to Walthamstow as a cultural destination.
- Increased value of Walthamstow's evening and cultural economy.
- Increased and diversified participation in cultural activity.
- Unlocking latent creative entrepreneurial demand.
- Creating pathways into the creative sectors for local people, particularly young and diverse communities.

Investment will unlock and deliver the interrelated **Cultural Hubs** and **Cultural Spaces** projects.

Cultural Hubs Project, investing in the imaginative restoration and innovative reuse of iconic Council-owned heritage buildings:

- Chestnuts House
- Hatherley Mews
- Vestry House Museum

Cultural Spaces Project, transformational programme of phased investment in Walthamstow's public spaces, integrating the Cultural Hubs by completing missing connections to key destinations through delivery of new lighting, improved surfacing, urban greening, coherent wayfinding, public art and cultural celebration. Three phases of public realm investment are planned:

- Hoe Street
- St James Quarter
- Walthamstow High Street

CULTURAL HUBS



Hatherley Mews

Creation of cultural workspace independent local businesses



Vestry House Museum

Reimagination of local heritage museum for community benefit



Chestnuts House

Investment in a centre for innovation and creative enterprise

CULTURAL SPACES



Hoe Street

Opportunities for accessible culture and increased footfall



St James Quarter

Safe, welcoming public spaces for day and night



Walthamstow High Street

Investment in Walthamstow Market and High Street

Project 1: Cultural Hubs – Phase 03 Vestry House Museum

Phase 03 - Vestry House

Vestry House is a local museum and the only historic archive in the borough occupying a **significantly constrained Grade II listed site**.



The Council's objective is to redefine VHM as an asset which has benefits for the whole community, reflecting the rich diversity of the borough's population more closely through its collection and programme of activities, with the development of a relevant and free programme that ensures it is a welcoming destination, integrated with Walthamstow's wider cultural offer.





VESTRY HOUSE MUSEUM: A NEW APPROACH

LORNA LEE

Asst Director, Destinations

HADRIAN GARRARD

Head of Creative Engagement



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

Vestry House Museum is a much-loved but under-utilised asset, that has needed improvement for many years



Representative & Inclusive

- 48% visitors <55yr, compared to 70% locally.
- 13% visitors from global majority, compared to 53% locally



Cost Effective

- c£400K cost to council per annum
- 22,000 visitors pa
- £18 per visitor cost to council



More space

- Much of the building inaccessible
- 30%+ of building used for collection storage



Greater Impact

- Social impact created mainly through ancillary use (school bookings, use of gardens)

Exploring Opportunities

Assemble led a multi-disciplinary team to explore opportunities for Vestry House Museum including:

- A review of the building and capital needs
- Local engagement- 40 121 interviews, 443 attendees at Open Day
- Models for revitalisation developed
- Business planning for potential models
- 17 expressions of interest from potential partners

Key Themes

Through engagement, the following key themes were identified:

- Well-loved building and garden
- Archive and local studies service valued
- Museum collection not clear or representative of local communities
- Resources at Vestry are inaccessible, physically & logistically
- Need for more outreach with schools & community groups
- An open working approach with Vestry's revitalisation needed

ASSEMBLE IDENTIFIED 3 MODELS
which have shaped the
recommended approach

IMPACT

- Inclusive access to culture and local heritage for all residents from across the borough
- Focus on opportunities for young people and schools
- Support for local creative enterprises
- Improved heritage assets as part of the Culture Quarter
- Increased financial sustainability

LEVELLING UP FUNDING
Provides the opportunity to invest
in realising the potential of Vestry
House Museum

Heritage
Building

Collection

Archives

Grade II listed building
with garden & cafe

The listed building
needs upgrading to:

- Make it accessible
- Enhance the heritage asset
- Optimise available space
- Improve environmental performance

Museum displays,
collections and stores

The museum collection:

- Requires review and development
- Should be made more widely available across the borough
- Digitisation presents an opportunity for an additional 'virtual' collection

Archives, searchroom
and stores

The archives/ Local Studies
service:

- Needs a full catalogue & digitisation programme to make it accessible & fit for purpose
- Would benefit from a more accessible location with suitable facilities

THREE MODELS

(ASSEMBLE RESEARCH)



MODEL 1: A NEW MUSEUM

A re-imagined and fully upgraded social history museum and archive

Vestry House Museum is a place where the living history of Waltham Forest is visible and active.

With a local history centre, improved displays & activities, development of collection & accessible archive service

Core delivery: Council Run

Capital Investment: £4.98M

Running costs: Significantly increased

IMPACTS: 60k visits, 114 School gps, 14 jobs, 14 SME, 100 community gps



MODEL 2: A VIBRANT HERITAGE & MAKERS SITE

New cultural partners at Vestry House

Vestry House Museum holds one foot in the rich & diverse heritage of WF, with an accessible, high quality archive service and one foot in its future with tenants that encourage public access, participation and learning.

Core delivery: Partner run activation, Council Run Archive.

Capital Investment: £1.4M-£3.3M

Running costs: Potential for partner income to offset some running costs

IMPACTS: 35k visits, 76 School gps, 8 jobs, 21 SME, 100 community gps



MODEL 3: A PLACE FOR CRAFT & INNOVATION

A new approach to craft and heritage

Vestry House is an active place, where creativity and making is inspired by the borough's rich history of manufacturing, design & invention. Led by one of London's leading maker spaces, with public access and activities

Core delivery: Partner run site, Relocated archive & search function led by WF Council

Capital Investment: £50K-£3.3M

Running costs: maximum opportunity for income to offset running costs

IMPACTS: to be agreed with delivery partner

NEW APPROACH FOR VESTRY HOUSE MUSEUM

WHERE HERITAGE MEETS INNOVATION

- The museum is brought to life with new onsite cultural partners across food, making, craft, workspace, garden & innovation, inspired by the museum and its collections.
- Events & workshop activation delivered by partners & tenants
- Diversified offer & audience-Community Advisory Panel
- Focus on schools' activities
- Opportunities for young people's participation & skills development
- Capital - £3.68M (LU Fund)
- Match fund of £800K by Waltham Forest Council
- Total - £4.48M
- Opportunities to generate income and offset some running costs



LUF CAPITAL INVESTMENT (Indicative)

- £2.8M: Building upgrade, energy efficiencies and lift
- £500K: Fit out
- £750K: Collections development & digitisation etc
- £430K: Fees, contingency
- £4.48M Total



IMPACT: 80K visits, 60 school groups, 150 free events, 60 training ops, 641sqm public space, 1320 sqm outdoor space

NEW APPROACH FOR VESTRY HOUSE MUSEUM

ARCHIVES AND LOCAL STUDIES FUNCTION MODERNISED & INCLUSIVE

- Archives service digitised
- Improved online access
- Better in-person access, with modern & inclusive service through relocation of searchroom, library and store
- Democratising the offer & diversifying audiences and users
- Opportunities for schools & students
- Volunteer opportunities in partnership with local history & heritage groups



MUSEUM COLLECTION DEVELOPED AND BETTER USED

- Museum collections developed
- Displayed in Vestry House Museum and across borough (e.g. Pump House Museum; Chingford Hub, Libraries, New Civic centre)
- Meets 15 min neighbourhood strategy with distributed collections
- Optimising space and access
- Opportunity for digital innovation
- Diversified offer & audiences
- Volunteering developed in partnership with local history & heritage groups



IMPACT: 80K visits, 60 school groups, 150 free events, 60 training ops, 641sqm public space, 1320 sqm outdoor space

NEXT STEPS

1

June 22 - Jan 23

Engagement
Options appraisal
Capital Costs
Business Models

2

Feb 23

Assemble research published

Public engagement on preferred option
Young people focus group
WMG advisory panel

3

Apr - May 23

Cabinet decision

Scope archive & museum collection development project

4

June 23

Commission archive and museum collection development project (6-24 months)

Tender for project partners (3 months)

5

Sept 23

Capital works project (12-32 months)

6

Sept 24 - May 26

Vestry House Museum & archives project complete

(dependent on capital works)



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

1. Community Advisory Panel
2. Volunteer opportunities for the archives and collections
3. Co-curation of displays across the borough
4. Please fill in the online form



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Cllr Doré