

# St. James Street Big Local

## The Plan

---

**March 2016**

[www.stjamesbiglocal.co.uk](http://www.stjamesbiglocal.co.uk)



LOTTERY FUNDED

Local Trust | Big Local

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. St James Street Big Local</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Consultation</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Themes</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. People</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. Places</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>7. Businesses</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>8. Charities</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>9. Support</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>10. Budget</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>11. Impact &amp; Assessment</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>12. What Happens Next</b>	<b>31</b>

# 1. Introduction

## Let's make St James Street the best it can be

The St James Street area of Walthamstow is an amazing and unique place. We have a close-knit community, diverse shopping opportunities, beautiful buildings, excellent access to green spaces and wonderful transport connections.

But together we can make it even better. Right now, too many people struggle to afford to live here or run a businesses in the area. People worry about the safety and wellbeing of themselves and their loved ones. Our local charities struggle to get by. The streets don't reflect the full potential the area has to offer. And our close-knit community doesn't come together to celebrate the area the way it should.

Now, we as local residents have been given a chance to make real and lasting change. The St James Street area was fortunate enough to receive £1 million in funding as part of the Big Local programme to spend over the next ten years, to enable residents and businesses to shape their community for the future. This plan represents the start of that journey – a rare opportunity for locals to directly improve the area in which they live.

Over the last three years, the community has provided its thoughts on what should change. In this report, those opinions, needs and desires are developed into four core themes – people, places, businesses and charities – on which the £1 million will be spent.

Along the way, our neighbourhood will change for the better. We'll see our community become more able to identify local needs and take action; residents acquire confidence and skills; our collective priorities turned into real initiatives that make a difference to the area.

Some of the community's desires are ambitious. This plan describes how they will be put into motion over the coming years, allowing us to create a more cohesive community, renovated public space, thriving local businesses and successful charities. It will create a St James Street that we can continue to improve for years to come.

Of course, now comes the hard part, because we all, as a community, have to do it. So if you're interested in helping out, get in touch – and together we'll ensure St James Street reaches its full potential and becomes a better place in which to live.

**Olly Price**

**Chair, St James Street Big Local**

# 2. St James Street Big Local

## Who we are and what we do

### Background

In 2011, the Local Trust charity was established by the Big Lottery Fund with a National Lottery grant of £196 million. In turn it established Big Local, a programme to enable residents of 150 carefully selected areas around England to “make their communities and their areas even better places in which to live.”

In December 2012 the St James Street area of Walthamstow was fortunate enough to be awarded a £1 million grant as part of the nationwide Big Local initiative. The funding is intended to be used for resident-led regeneration and community development – to help local people shape the area in the way they think would benefit the area most.

The St James Street Big Local area is bounded by: Courtenay, Chewton and Northcote Roads in the North; Palmerston and Gosport Roads in the East; Bude Close, Markhouse Avenue and Grange Road in the South; and St Stephens and Edwards Roads in the West.



### St James Street Big Local

In early 2013, local residents began working together to develop a Getting Started plan, which culminated in the formation of a Steering Group in June 2013. From then through to the end of 2015, the Steering Group was responsible for consulting the St James Street community to collect information and agree a vision for future investment. This consultation is described in detail in the Consultation section.

Each Big Local area is required to establish a Partnership to guide the overall direction of the local investment – in fact, it's required for the funds to be released. In late 2015, the Steering Group advertised online and in local printed media for volunteers who were willing

to sit on the Partnership. Concurrently, the Steering Group developed a Way Of Working to formalise the process and the define how the Partnership should operate. The Way of Working stipulates, among other things, that the Partnership should be made up of at least 8 and no more than 20 members, with the majority living within the St James Street Big Local area.

You can read the the documents in full at: [stjamesbiglocal.co.uk/the-partnership](http://stjamesbiglocal.co.uk/the-partnership).

At each stage, the St James Street Big Local Steering Group and Partnership has received guidance from a Big Local representative, Trevor Mbatha. Since the summer of 2013, the local charity Crest Waltham Forest has been the Local Trusted Organisation for St James Street Big Local. Amongst other responsibilities, Crest holds funds for the St James Big Local. At the time of writing, the Partnership is made up of:

- Olly Price (Chair) – Resident
- Mark Meharry (Programme Manager) – Resident
- Tomasz Fiszer – Resident
- Linda Sansum – Resident
- Libbi Lee – Resident
- Richard Vials – Business Operator
- Tom McVeigh – Resident
- Jamie Condliffe – Resident

Together, the Partnerships agrees to provide overall direction of St James Street Big Local and to meet the area's long term vision and outcomes. That means that, among other things, it agrees to develop a shared vision in consultation with the local community, creates and carry out a Big Local plan to spend the £1 million and assesses and reports on the impact of the work.

Throughout the process, it will aim to: engage with a diverse range of people in the area; engage with voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations, public and private organisations; and regularly report to the local community its activities, progress and funding situation.

In the pages that follow you can read about the work the Partnership has done so far, the themes of work for the coming three years, and examine the proposed budget.

# 3. Consultation

## Seeking local opinions, needs and desires

During the first phase of the consultation, from 2012-14, the Steering Group gathered opinions from local people via physical and online methods. Care was taken to ensure that all sections of the local community were involved in the process. Our approaches included:

### 1. Public Events

We ran stalls at events including: Stoneydown Park summer folk festival, Coppermill Park fete, Christmas Carols at the St James Christmas tree and annual Jumble Trails. At each event, members of the Steering Group explained to other residents what Big Local was, asked them to explain their hopes for the area and collected contact details to maintain communication. Wishes were recorded on Wishing Tags and Big Local postcards.

### 2. Meetings & Visits

We met with eight schools in the area – both primary and secondary – and our worker Neesha Badhan addressed pupils at several school assemblies to gain their views and to explain Big Local to them. We also: consulted residents of the Longfield older people's home and the luncheon club for older people at Blackhorse Road Baptist Church; met homeless people at the Christmas lunch event held at the Baptist church; spoke to commuters and passers by outside St James Street station; and visited local churches and mosques. We created detailed notes and gathered contact details at these events.

### 3. Leafleting

To ensure we reached as many residents as possible we leafleted the local area to inform people about St James Street Big Local, encouraging them to contact us with their wishes and inviting them to Big Local events and meetings.

### 4 Online Survey

Throughout the first stage of the consultation we ran a survey on the St James Street Big Local website, which we encouraged residents to fill in at public events, meetings and via our leafleting campaign. Contact details were collected.

Via public events, meetings, visits, wishing tags and our online survey, we gathered 498 individual written responses.

# 4. Themes

## Focussing in on key local trends

### Data Analysis

St James Street Big Local commissioned Dr Dan Carney, a data analyst, to review the responses to our consultation. From this, nine key themes were identified.

Figure 1, below, shows how these themes featured across all questions. The highest percentage of response was coded as belonging to the category Communal Spaces, Facilities & Activities (35%). Other significant themes were Environmental Improvement (16%), Local Business Demography (18%), and Aesthetic Improvement (14%). The remaining categories were not as prominent: Safety & Security (8%), Skills Development (4%), Political Engagement & Involvement (3%), Wellbeing & Support (1%) and Accessibility (1%).

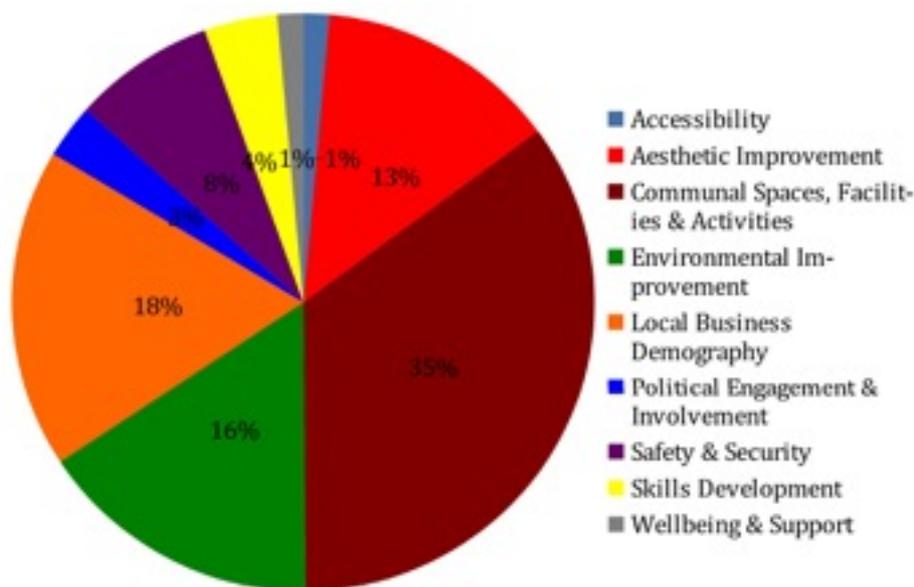


Figure 1: Breakdown of nine core themes

Following Dr Carney’s analysis of the survey results, the Steering Group voted on the ‘long list’ of good ideas extracted from the survey. Of the full list, 29 were seeded into an online Wikisurvey to help prioritise the ideas and form the basis for our ten year plan. The 29 ideas are listed on the next page.

## **Communal Spaces, Facilities & Activities**

- Work with the rail operators to improve the accessibility, appearance and lighting of St James Street station.
- Work to promote links with Walthamstow Marshes – both physical and visual
- Support the work of The Mill
- Support Youth work and activities
- Support Activities for over 65s
- Work with partners, including Groundwork London, to support “friends of parks” groups and support their community building activities.
- Small grants programme to support community building activities
- Larger scale community events eg. Jumble Trail, Festival, funfair etc

## **Environmental Improvement**

- Work with LBWF on the Mini Holland proposals for traffic calming, street planting and cycle facilities
- Greening of Streets
- Promote a front gardens initiative (like that in Finsbury Park)
- Work with partners to promote energy efficiency and investigate the potential for community wide regeneration schemes.
- Work with the St James Street Health Centre User Group to resolve the lease
- Promote civic pride through activities and education

## **Local Business Demography**

- Support a Community Café with an ethos of access for all and sustainable living (possibly incorporating food recycling from The High Street Market)
- Support for local businesses – promoting support groups, help to get online and joint promotion of the local area
- Support for entrepreneurs and business start ups

## **Aesthetic Improvement**

- Work with LBWF on the Heritage Lottery Bid to improve the shop fronts and St James Street streetscape
- Public art

## **Safety & Security**

- Work with the community and other partners to improve the safety and security of the area via “soft” methods

## **Skills Development**

- Work with partners to promote volunteering, skills sharing and mentoring
- Big Local Youth Panel

## **Political Engagement & Involvement**

- Create information points – through community noticeboards and online resources
- Promote a strong community voice via a “planning lobby group” or similar?

## **Wellbeing & Support**

- Support a programme working with families and local schools to help local children achieve their full potential
- Work with partners, including the Credit Union, to provide financial education and promote alternatives to expensive High Street lenders.
- Support and activities for vulnerable elderly people eg. Befriending, shopping service etc.
- Support for the work of local charity (and key supporter of Big Local) Crest

## **Accessibility**

- Work to make Big Local more transparent and inclusive

To help us understand what was most important to our community, the public had a year to rank the 29 themes via the online Wikisurvey. We chose this as a method of understanding the ranking because the software offered a possibility of 400 matches, ranking the themes one over the other. This, therefore, decreased the possibility of the same match occurring more than once, which made the process more robust.

A tablet was taken to local events so that members of the community without internet access could also complete the survey.

## **The Themes**

Once the wiki-survey closed, the Partnership Working Group grouped the wishes into four themes: People, Places, Businesses and Charities.

This decision was made to streamline the process of planning local initiatives and developments. As with any community scheme there is natural overlap between these themes, which it's hoped can be capitalised upon by developing cross-cutting projects that will make it possible to deliver maximum impact to the area whilst maintaining a manageable number of concurrent activities.

To ensure residents have plenty of time to get involved with the biggest and most transformative projects, some of the largest-scale suggestions have been prioritised in this plan. In the following four sections, you'll find a detailed breakdown of the projects planned for the next three years.

# 5. People

## Creating a more inclusive space for local residents

During the consultation members of the community explained that they were interested in improving not just their own lives but also those of others – a welcome sign that community is a key area of focus. We understand that people are the lifeblood of the community and hope to contribute to make St James Street a thriving, supportive and cohesive area. We all want to celebrate our diversity and champion neighbourliness.

The People section of the plan accounts for 9 of the 29 wishes identified during the consultation period. In order to put the 9 wishes into action more easily, we've consolidated them into five core categories of: Everyone, Older people, Adults, Younger people and Children.

We've identified six schemes that cut across these categories and we plan to work on them over the next three years.

### 1. Healthy HerO's

Healthy HerO's is an innovative education programme aimed at improving the confidence, self-esteem, motivation and overall health and well-being of school children. This is delivered through active learning, physical engagement and achievement mentoring activities. Designed with the ongoing help of Ofsted inspectors and head teachers, it's hoped the programme will improve pupil's attendance, behaviour and attainment as a by-product of the activities delivered. The scheme is delivered in primary schools by specially trained Healthy HerO's Staff: Active, sporty role models, capable of engaging hard-to-reach and vulnerable children. Healthy HerO's has been endorsed by London Health Schools Network and is currently delivered by Leyton Orient Trust. It's intended that this project will be working on the structure based on the impact report of Chase Lane Primary School.

**Timeline:** September 2016 – July 2019

**Outcomes:** The scheme will increase self esteem, physical, aspiration, motivation to learn and understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle of individual children.

**Stakeholders:** Leyton Orient Trust, Head Teachers and Teachers of Chase Lane Primary School.

## 2. St James Neighbourhood Forum

We will support residents who have formed a Neighbourhood Forum for local planning decisions and help it become a Designated Group. The forum has over 100 local residents interested in planning issues and will have a boundary covering the St James Street area. It has within its scope the plan to signpost local residents interested in wider local issues to St James Street Big Local, as well as to facilitate and encourage residents to take collective action on issues of concern where no existing campaign or lobby group exists.

**Timeline:** May 2016 – May 2019.

**Outcomes:** To have created a new website; increase their membership; actively take part in planning consultations and represent the local community's view.

**Stakeholders:** St James Neighbourhood Forum, New developers to the area, The Council.

## 3. Large Scale Community Events

We aim to run or help support up to four large-scale community events per year that have an emphasis on working with the whole community and will engage more volunteers to become involved with St James Street Big Local. Examples of the events we would like to coordinate include, but are not limited to:

- St James's Selling and Sharing event – example St James Jumble Trail 2015
- St James 'Market' event – example food festival [www.westnorwoodfeast.com](http://www.westnorwoodfeast.com)
- Winter event ie. festival of light/Christmas Carols – [www.b-arts.org.uk](http://www.b-arts.org.uk)
- Big Lunch - [www.thebiglunch.com](http://www.thebiglunch.com)

This is not an exhaustive list. It is indicative of the events we would like to see happening in our local area. The council contributed to the Christmas Carol event at the St James end of the High street and we plan to apply each year to the council for funding to support this and other events.

**Timeline:** May 2016 – May 2019

**Outcomes:** Skills development areas for locals; performance opportunities for residents; volunteering opportunities; chance to create a better sense of community.

**Stakeholders:** Public, Council, Businesses, The Eden Project, Local self employed makers and sellers.

## 4. National Citizen Service

We hope to engage with local youths via the National Citizen Service (NCS) – a national project which supports the idea of citizenship, meeting new members of the community

and learning about the benefit of volunteering. We plan to encourage them to start a project with other youths from the St James Street Big Local area using their own initiative.

Examples of projects include:

- NCS Personal Challenge – Get Active: Participants face their fears, develop confidence and bond with teammates on an action-packed residential.
- NCS Team Challenge – Get Involved: Teammates work together to learn a new skill in sport, media, photography, music, drama or enterprise in a university setting.
- NCS Social Action – Make Your Mark: Using their newly-acquired skills, teams design a social action project in their local area and pitch their project to win funding to make it happen. Here the Team will engage with St James Street Big Local, find out more about the organisation and plan a Social Action Project with a Big Local member.

We will match fund National Citizen Service with £100 per initiative. Over the next 3 years we hope to engage with at least 10 initiatives starting in July 2016. We intend to run bi-annual events at which people pitch their ideas to a small panel of local residents, who will select the initiatives they think deserve to secure match funding.

**Timeline:** July 2016 - September 2019

**Outcomes:** Improve young people's life chances by giving them a better sense of worth and community spirit; encourage young people to use their initiative; engage with NEETs.

**Stakeholders:** Council Youth Team, Police, Outset Centre.

## 5. Designing Out Crime

To try and sustainably reduce the antisocial behaviour in the St James area we would like to engage a crime reduction consultant, in collaboration with Design Against Crime, to work with various stakeholders in the area to develop a plan of action.

Design Against Crime (DAC) is a socially responsive, practice-based research initiative, which uses the processes and products of design to reduce crime and promote community safety whilst improving quality-of-life. Working with the design reduction consultant and local stakeholders, DAC aims to reduce the incidence and consequences of crime. Alongside this it works with local businesses to prove and promote the social and commercial benefits of designing out crime.

DAC has suggested engaging Dr Theo Gavrielides, CEO of the IARS International Institute, a company which has had success with a number of community and youth-led crime prevention projects across London, including;

- The gang and restorative justice strategy and implementation project for GMPT (<http://iars.org.uk/content/RJGMPT> )
- The youth safety on public transport project for TFL and MPS (<http://iars.org.uk/content/youth-safety-public-transport>)
- The London Serious Youth Violence Board project (<http://iars.org.uk/content/youth-advisory-board-yab-london-serious-youth-violence-board>)
- The restorative justice, street group violence and riots project ([http://www.rj4all.info/content/RJ\\_Riots](http://www.rj4all.info/content/RJ_Riots))
- Building Bridges Project focusing on male gangs (<http://www.rota.org.uk/content/building-bridges-project>)

We will apply for match funding from the Safer Neighbourhoods panel for this project.

**Timeline:** May 2016 – May 2019

**Outcomes:** A sustained reduction in anti social behaviour in the St James Street area.

**Stakeholders:** Council Youth Services, Police, Businesses, Community.

## 6. Supporting Activities for Older Adults

In response to requests regarding older people in the area we would like to offer a variety of supporting activities to improve well-being – both mentally and physically – for older people. We're looking for local people to deliver these kinds of activities with and will distribute small grants in order to ensure that there is a continuous programme of activity.

We would welcome projects such as:

- Physical activities for older people
- Gardening, arts and crafts
- Reading and writing groups
- Healthy eating lunch club as an extension of the Big Lunch
- Comedy and cabaret shows, community singing
- Befriending afternoons

This list is by no means exhaustive and we will continue to consult with the local community about the best ways in which we can improve the lives of older people.

**Timeline:** May 2016 to May 2019

**Outcomes:** To help older residents feel more included and less isolated.

**Stakeholders:** Older people, care homes, community groups, council.

**TOTAL PEOPLE BUDGET: £84,800**

# 6. Places

## Transforming the urban realm

Residents of the St James Street Big Local area appreciate the importance of the built environment and the public realm in their lives. Out of the six broad areas covered in the survey, the “Environment: Streets, Spaces & Places” gained most responses – over 57% of respondents commented on this part of the survey.

St James Street Big Local has identified areas where the improvement requested by the respondents of the survey was to take place as a part of projects already being developed and run by other bodies, including the Local Council. Where possible, St James Street Big Local representatives were involved in commenting on the proposals. St James Street Big Local was also involved in supporting and objecting to planning applications submitted in the area, responding to the quality of the proposed built environment and the associated public realm. We’ve identified six schemes which we can contribute to in the area that we plan to work on over the next three years.

### 1. Micro- library in the telephone kiosk

St James Street Big Local will acquire a restored “red phone box” and install it adjacent to St James Street Station or at the end of High Street, on the site of one of the existing unused and vandalised kiosks which are scheduled for removal. The kiosk, equipped with permanent shelving and internal lighting, will be used by the community as a micro-library where anyone can leave a book for others or pick one up to read. The local Council was approached and initial consent was given to the project. Two potential locations are being considered. Planning application issues, power supply, consent from the current kiosk operator, consent for closing part of the highway for the delivery and installation of the kiosk and other required consents will be discussed with the Council.

**Timeline:** The project is planned to be implemented as soon as the complete agreement is reached with the Council, ideally before October 2016 when works to the pavements and street furniture within the Heritage Lottery fund area are scheduled to start.

**Outcomes:** Meeting and exchange place for all age groups; a place dedicated to free book exchange; reinforcement of literacy; provide entertainment, culture and knowledge for people who can’t afford to buy books.

**Stakeholders:** Local Council, The Mill

## **2. Ghost signs trail around St James Street Station**

During the consultation it was established that five ghost signs – wall-painted heritage adverts dating from 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century – scattered around the railway station are part of the community's memory and pride. Members of the community suggested diverse enhancements to the adverts, from restoration to incorporation into the newly painted murals. It was decided with a heritage signs specialist that a trail around the St James Street station ghost signs should be created. Plaques will be installed adjacent to each historical advertisement, providing information, historical photographs and a QR code that allows the visitor to consult the St James Street Big Local website to find more information about the sign. The now-faded heritage advert located on the wall facing the exit from the train station, which has suffered bad damage from mould, will be fully repainted. It will be provided with an information plaque relating to the whole trail, becoming an "anchor" for the whole project. The St James Street ghost signs trail will also be incorporated into the London-wide heritage adverts application for smartphones, currently in preparation. The local Council was approached and support was declared for the project. St James Street Big Local will seek advice from the Council on how to negotiate the installation of the information plaques with the property owners.

**Timeline:** September 2016 – April 2017

**Outcomes:** Increased local pride, strengthened interest in local history, opportunity for community engagement.

**Stakeholders:** Local Schools from within and around the St James Street Big Local area, property owners, local Council.

## **3. "The Place Open for Everyone"**

St James Street Big Local investigated potential options for creating "The Place Open for Everyone" – a new public place that could become a focus for the local community and a stopping point for pedestrians and cyclists on their way to and from the marshes. It could provide seating, resting and play areas, potentially partially protected with a roof and including temporary or permanent retail and food and beverage outlets. This new public place could be adaptable so that different uses – including outdoor exhibition, film screening, group meeting and so on – are possible.

An 'options appraisal' document was produced for one of the proposed sites at the crossing of High Street and St James Street and submitted to the Council for comments. This location was chosen as one of the most prominent locations within the St James Street Big Local area: at the entrance to St James Conservation Area and Leucha Road Conservation Area, at the beginning of High Street, adjacent to the busy local thoroughfare, and on the pedestrian and cyclist north-east route to the marshes. We will continue investigating this and other

potential locations over the coming months and years, enlisting a quantity surveyor and designer to formalise the plans.

**Timeline:** July 2016 onwards

**Outcomes:** Provision of the new public space where the community can meet and socialise.

**Stakeholders:** Local Council, The Mill, another local charity organisations and the wider community.

#### **4. Supplementing St James Street Heritage Lottery Fund Regeneration**

The St James Street Heritage Lottery Fund, being led by Waltham Forest council, will restore the historic environment of the the local Conservation Area. Work will include the renewal of architecturally valuable facades, repair of shop fronts, and new signage in original designs and colour palette. Improvements to the public space will also be made, including new crossings, paving and street furniture. From the survey it was clear that one of the main priorities for residents is for St James Street Big Local to improve the street-scape and the Chair of the Partnership has been working with Councillor Coghill (ward Councillor and Cabinet member for Economic Growth and High Streets) to supplement the project and deliver extra benefits for the local area, including:

- Planting. The Council plans to plant 6 Fascination trees at the bottom end of the High Street. We are proposing to 'upgrade' these trees to something more special for the area and will continue to work the the Council and locals to develop ideas. Work to the public realm is planned to start in the autumn, therefore St James Street Big Local would need to have confirmed planting plans in place by June 2016.
- Seating. The Heritage Lottery Fund team has budgeted for 6 basic seats under the trees. St James Street Big Local would like to engage a designer to work to create six bespoke seats that local people would take pride in. Final ideas must be in place by June 2016.
- Artwork. The community wishes to promote links to the marshes. In collaboration with the regeneration team, we would like to engage local artists to develop bespoke public pieces that would compliment the HLF work and promote the uniqueness of the area. Alongside the bespoke commissions, public workshops would allow as many residents as possible to engage with the process along the way.
- Living wall. One of the key wishes of the local community is greening, and as part of the HLF project we have the opportunity to help create a living wall at the bottom of the International Supermarket which would be maintained by Council contractors. By working in synergy with the council and Wetlands Trust, which has just received a

large grant to open up and promote the Walthamstow marshes, we hope to deliver an engagement programme with schools and local organisations to highlight the importance of our impressive local natural haven.

**Timeline:** April 2016 – December 2016

**Outcomes:** A more attractive place to live and work.

**Stakeholders:** Waltham Forest Council, the community.

## 5. Greening

In response to the most common request from the local community, two main ways of introducing more greenery in the area were considered: tree planting by specialist contractors and community gardening. We note that on the London map of the street trees prepared for the Mayor's Street Tree Initiative, the St James Street area was qualified as having "low tree coverage." St James Street Big Local will work with the Council to prepare a map identifying all the streets where rows of trees or single trees can be planted. Tree locations will be subject to the width of the pavement and the location of the ground services beneath. The tree planting map will be used as a base for tree planting. St James Street Big Local funds will be used, but other funding will be sought, including from the Mayor's Street Tree Initiative.

**Timeline:** 2016 – 2018

**Outcomes:** Greener streets – healthier and more beautiful environment.

**Stakeholders:** Local Council.

## 6. Community Gardening

St James Street Big Local will work with the local community to organise communal events around gardening, in order to green the area and simultaneously build community cohesion. Initiatives will include:

- "Community Public Space Gardening Days" to plant the street tree pits across the area, beds at the end wall of the terraced houses, and another unmaintained areas of soft landscaping.
- "Front Garden Initiative" where the residents from the same street will be encouraged to help each other with their gardening.
- "Adopt-a-Garden" scheme, where residents who would like to do gardening but do not own a garden will be paired with residents who own a garden but are not interested in or are unable to garden.
- "Front Garden Competition" to promote gardening in the area.

A communal gardening tools library will be established to facilitate planting and gardening among larger groups of residents.

**Timeline:** 2016 – 2018

**Outcomes:** We believe that all the gardening initiatives are equally valuable from both the perspective of improving the quality of the public space and the appearance of the streets and building the strong community through shared effort and work.

**Stakeholders:** Wider community, local schools, local Council.

**TOTAL PLACES BUDGET: £145,000**

# 7. Business

## Growing the local economy and encouraging entrepreneurship

Consultation with residents and businesses revealed a sense of despondency about the performance of businesses: Staff and managers report that they are disappointed with the number of customers entering their businesses and local residents say that they don't feel enticed by the offer of local businesses.

The business demography of St James St is characterised by a diverse array of small, independent businesses interspersed with a small number of larger retail outlets owned by national companies. Support for businesses in the area constitutes a major component of St James Street Big Local's vision for the area. A multi-faceted, sustainable approach to increasing the quality of the business offer in the area will be necessary to transform the area from a neglected tail-end of the High Street to a vibrant destination in its own right. Key areas for improvement of the business environment in the area over the next 10 years include:

- business coaching
- a schedule of events to increase footfall
- reduction in antisocial and threatening behaviour and crime
- better connections between businesses (networking)
- better connections between businesses and local residents (encouraging loyalty)
- cleanliness and environmental improvements

Prospects for improvement of the business environment have been greatly increased by the award of a £3 million Townscape Heritage grant from Waltham Forest Council and Heritage Lottery Fund which will improve the fabric of local business premises, as well as educating educating businesses in heritage management and other relevant skills throughout 2016-2017.

But there's more that can be done. St James Street Big Local hopes to address the most pressing needs of local business first, via three main schemes of work.

### 1. Retail re-fit grant programme

To complement the HLF business support programme, a business consultant specialist will be hired to provide tailored, individual coaching to the 32 businesses participating in the HLF shopfront scheme, covering a variety of business skills – including merchandising,

layout, social media marketing, customer service and product sourcing. This will ensure that businesses are able to capitalise on the opportunity opened up by the reworking of shop frontages, creating an offer which matches the new appearance of the shop exteriors.

In partnership with the consultancy, businesses will develop a budgeted business plan to improve the visual appearance of their stores and increase trade. 32 businesses will be given a grant (to be administered and monitored by the business consultancy), to allow them to make necessary changes in their shops (e.g. purchasing new fittings, fixtures, lighting etc.).

**Timescale:** Mid-2016 onwards.

**Outcomes:** Businesses are more confident in their ability to provide an offer attractive to a variety of local residents; Businesses are experiencing an increase in footfall and revenue as a consequence of changes in their appearance and marketing strategy; Owners and managers feel encouraged to make further investments in their business to improve the quality of their offer and the breadth of their customer base.

**Stakeholders:** Waltham Forest Council, business consultancy specialists, 32 businesses with HLF grant, St James St business forum.

## **2. Digital business skills training**

To address the issue of poor online presence of businesses in St James St area, 30 businesses will be provided with a grant to cover the full cost of enrolling on an online remote learning course in Digital Business Skills, delivered by People 1st Training. The course covers 1½ days worth of content, and will be completed by business owners over a period of 3 months.

The course will cover skills including developing an online marketing plan, website design and effective use of social media channels. Monthly business forum meetings will be used to provide structure and a monitoring framework, giving an opportunity for course participants to discuss the course, share best practice and monitor progress.

As the number of businesses operating in the area exceeds the number of funded spaces, applications for the course grant will be competitive. Applications will be assessed on the basis of most urgent need by the business representative of the Big Local Partnership.

**Timescale:** 3 modules of course content covered over 3 business forum meetings (3 months total) from mid-2016.

**Outcomes:** Businesses have a more visible online presence – either running their own website or making use of an established social media platform (e.g. Facebook, Twitter);

Businesses are more confident in their ability to make use of digital marketing strategies to reach new customers and increase revenue.

**Stakeholders:** St James St business forum, People 1st Training (course provider).

### **3. Business ESOL training**

Some business owners in the area are limited by their ability to communicate in English, leading to poor relations with suppliers and customers. To address this issue, 10 businesses will be provided with a grant to cover the full cost of enrolling on an ESOL Level 1 course, delivered by Waltham Forest College. The course will be completed by business owners over a period of 10 months. Monthly business forum meetings will be used to provide structure, giving an opportunity for course participants to discuss the course and monitor progress. As the number of businesses operating in the area exceeds the number of funded spaces, applications for the course grant will be competitive. Applications will be assessed on the basis of learning need by the business representative of the Big Local Partnership.

**Timeline:** 120 guided learning hours for each business over 10 month, starting mid-2016.

**Outcomes:** Businesses are more fluent in English and more able to engage with partners, suppliers and customers both verbally and through their in-store marketing.

**Stakeholders:** St James St business forum, Waltham Forest College.

**TOTAL BUSINESS BUDGET: £100,000**

# 8. Charities

## Supporting local community and charitable initiatives

During the consultation, many residents made wishes to support our local charities and volunteers. St James Street is home to a wide range of charitable endeavours that benefit people living in and around the area. These range from the large – our flagship charities, The Mill and Crest, as well as an Oxfam shop with a large pool of volunteers – to the small, such as the service-led user groups, working with and led by local people, (e.g., offering peer support on particular health issues). Our area is also home to the Waltham Forest Echo, an independent community newspaper and information resource for volunteers around the borough, which operates from The Mill.

For the purposes of this plan, we have defined the following:

- ‘flagship charities’ are registered charities, community interest companies, or social enterprises that are recognised legally and may have some professional leadership;
- ‘charitable endeavours’ is a broad category of non-profit making activities that rely largely on volunteers and are of benefit to the community, including service-user led groups; and
- ‘volunteers’ who are people that give their time for free to organise and support local activities that benefit the community (i.e., not necessarily associated with a registered charity)

St James Street Big Local will only support activities that benefit residents of the St James Street Big Local area, though charities may themselves operate outside the area. In these instances, it must be clear that the people supported by the activity include a substantial number of residents from the St James Street Big Local area.

Based on local wishes, we have designed three ways in which we will support local charities and volunteers with resources from St James Street Big Local.

### 1. Strengthening Our Flagship Charities

We will set up a programme through which flagship charities in the area can apply for funding to support substantial work that will improve the impact and sustainability of the organisation. Charities will be able to apply for grants of £5,000 or more based on clear business plans that demonstrate the activities will contribute to the intended outcomes of the St James Street Big Local plan. These applications will be screened by a panel of St

James Street Big Local volunteers with the required skills to decide on investments. All decisions will be clear and transparent, with feedback provided to successful and unsuccessful applicants. Each funding cycle will last one year, with two application points through the year. Applicants can apply for multiple grants from the fund, and successful and unsuccessful applicants can reapply in consecutive rounds. This funding can be awarded for a range of activities, including capital expenditure and organisational support, where the application satisfies St James Street Big Local investment criteria as applied by the decision panel.

**Timeline:** Fund management process will be drafted within the first month of the planning period, funding announced around May 2016, application deadline in June, and the first grants made in August–September.

**Outcomes:** Funding will be focused on improving quality and reach of existing activities, developing infrastructure, supporting innovations and strengthening the financial position of the charities.

**Stakeholders:** Registered charities, community interest companies and social enterprises in the St James Street Big Local area (or very nearby, supporting our residents), including The Mill and Crest.

## 2. Supporting Charitable Endeavours

We are all aware of great ideas that would make a real charitable contribution to the local area, with a little support. With this in mind we will set up a small grants fund for charitable endeavours that need support to get up and running, maintain their activities or grow as an organisation. Groups will be able to apply for grants of £100 to £1,000 based on applications that demonstrate the activities will contribute to the intended outcomes of the St James Street Big Local 3 year plan. These applications will be screened by a panel of St James Street Big Local volunteers. All decisions will be clear and transparent, with feedback provided to successful and unsuccessful applicants. Each funding cycle will last one year, with two application points through the year. Applicants can apply for multiple grants from the fund to a defined ceiling and successful and unsuccessful applicants can reapply in consecutive rounds.

**Timeline:** Small grants management process will be drafted within the first 3 months of the planning period, funding announced around September 2016, application deadline in October, and the first grants made in November or December.

**Outcomes:** Funding will be focused on improving quality and reach of existing activities and supporting innovations in local volunteer-led activities.

**Stakeholders:** All established and new charitable endeavours in the St James Street Big Local area, including service-user led groups, volunteer-led activities (not necessarily in groups), and other endeavours that may or may not be linked to flagship charities.

### **3. Engaging Local Volunteers**

We have many inspiring volunteers in the St James Street Big Local area, but the consultation revealed a local desire to give them a helping hand. In particular, residents want local volunteers to receive better and more frequent training and feel better connected to the community. The consultation also revealed that locals would like to learn more about the volunteering opportunities open to them. With these points in mind, we shall support training and networking of volunteers as well as helping to publicise local voluntary opportunities.

**Timeline:** Scoping within first 3 months, a networking event every six months, training timeline to be defined based on volunteer inputs.

**Outcome:** Volunteers that feel better connected in the community; More active volunteers in the local area; Volunteers that feel better equipped to undertake their activities with confidence.

**Stakeholders:** Volunteers, Charitable groups, and flagship charities operating in the St James Street Big Local area. All residents or potential volunteers.

**TOTAL CHARITIES BUDGET: £123,300**

# 9. Support

## Administration and communication to make it happen

The residents of the St James Street Big Local area have ambitious aims across these four themes. We'll require administrative support, a comprehensive communication strategy and a formalised work structure if we're all to succeed.

### 1. Budget for Support

In addition to programme deliverables there will be recurring support and communication costs for us to include in our total budget. These will include, but not be limited to: paying for our worker, office and meeting space, website overheads and printed materials. We envisage this costing £72,000 over the next three years.

### 2. Communication Strategy

Our communications approach is based on the need to identify those people, organisations and communications vehicles and pathways that can help us reach our goals. We aim to:

- Tell and inform residents and organisations about St James Street Big Local
- Listen and respond to what residents are telling us
- Share success and build community ownership and capacity

Our key local stakeholders with regard to a communications strategy are:

- Residents
- Businesses and those working in the area
- Voluntary and community groups
- Schools and Colleges
- Waltham Forest Council
- Police and Neighbourhood wardens
- Health professionals
- Local Trust

We will communicate to them using the following means.

What	When	Who
Email Newsletter	As required, but at least 1 every 8 weeks	Worker
Twitter	Daily retweeting and push marketing as required	Worker
Website	Updated weekly	Worker / Programme Manager / Chairman
Facebook	As required, but at least once a week	Worker
Leaflets and flyers	At least twice a year	Worker
Public Meetings	At least once a year	Worker / Partnership

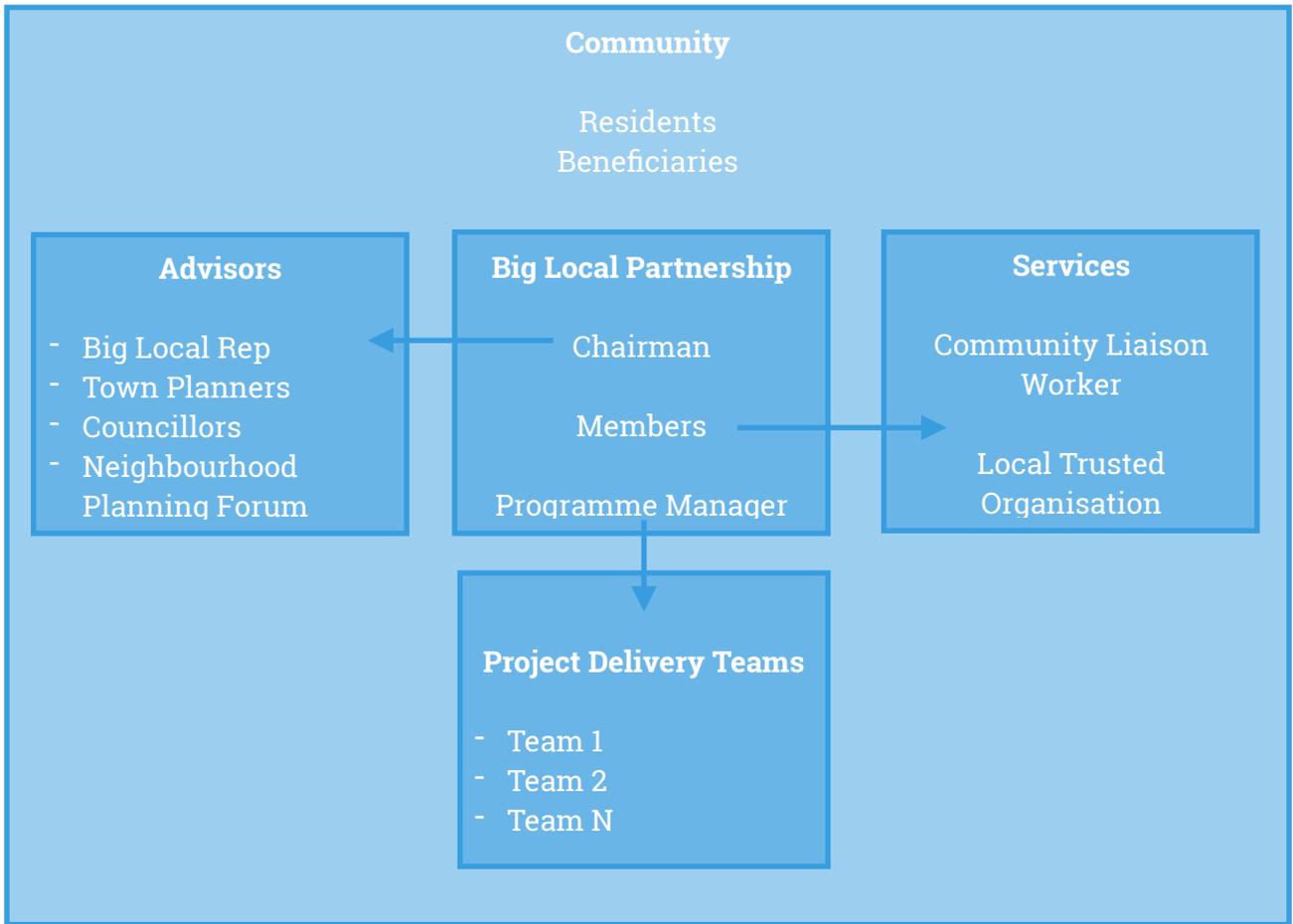
### 3. Organisational Structure

The Big Local Partnership is made up of at least 8 and no more than 20 members, with the majority living within the St James Street Big Local area. But, crucially, it is embedded in the local community and can only function properly with the help and input of those around it.

The partnership will work closely with its Community Liaison Worker and Local Trusted Organisation to ensure that the needs of local residents continue to be taken into account.

The partnership, and particularly the Chair, will work closely with local advisors, including the Big Local representative, town planners, councillors, and the Neighbourhood Planning Forum, to ensure the projects continue to be relevant and synergistic.

The partnership, and particularly the Programme Manager, will work with project delivery teams of volunteers, created to undertake the work for sub-components of each theme. Each Project Delivery team will have a mentor that sits on the Partnership.



# 10. Budget

## Projected spending for the next three years

People	Project	Forecast
	Healthy HerO's	
	St James Neighbourhood Forum	
	Large Scale Community Events	
	Teenager Interventions	
	Designing Out Crime	
	Supporting Activities for Older Adults	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£84,800</b>
Places	Project	Forecast
	Micro Library Telephone Kiosk	
	Ghost Signs	
	The Place Open for Everyone	
	HLF Regeneration	
	Greening	
	Community Gardening	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£145,000</b>
Business	Project	Forecast
	Retail Re-fit Grant Programme	
	Digital Business Skills Training	
	Business ESOL Training	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£100,000</b>
Charities	Project	Forecast
	Strengthening Our Flagship Charities	
	Supporting Charitable Endeavours	
	Engaging Local Volunteers	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£123,300</b>

<b>Support</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
	Worker	
	Office Space	
	Other	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£72,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£525,100</b>

# 11. Monitoring & Evaluation

## How we'll measure the success of our spending

St James Street Big Local will ensure that all activities contribute towards the long term goal of making St James Street a better place to live. During the planning phase, in 2013, 498 residents were asked "Do you enjoy living in the St James St Area?" Our goal is for positive responses to this question to double over the next 10 years. The same question will be asked for evaluation purposes at the end of the initial 3 year period covered by this plan, to understand whether St James Street Big Local is on track to achieve its intended impact.

The intended medium term outcomes of the St James Street Big Local three-year plan are based on the objectives of the overall Big Local effort: to improve the community's ability to identify local needs and take action; to increase skills and confidence of residents; to make a difference to the needs the community prioritises; and to help people feel the area is a better places in which to live.

During the first year of implementation, 2016-17, the Partnership will develop an approach to monitor these outcomes in an accurate, fair and sustainable way over the full 10 years. This could include surveys, focus groups, secondary data (e.g., data collected by the council) and other quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is important to understand the views of a diverse population, and so support will be commissioned to do this in a meaningful way.

When projects launch over the next 3 years, a brief monitoring and evaluation plan will be required before funds are release. In this monitoring and evaluation plan, 2-5 outputs – things that you can touch, feel, hold, or take a photograph of – will be identified to act as evidence of the project being achieved. The outputs should be tangible things that contribute to achieving at least one of the outcomes listed above.

Each quarter, the St James Street Big Local Partnership will review monitoring from each of the projects that is underway. This will generally be in the form of a short report written by the project lead, usually focused on activities, to ensure that implementation is going to plan. In Q3 2018 the Partnership will commission a review of this plan, and use this to inform development of the next plan. This should be completed by mid-Q4 and presented to the Partnership by the end of 2018.

The St James Street Big Local commits to having evaluation reports made available to the public.

# 12. What Happens Next

## Getting to work and looking towards St James Street in 2019

This plan lays out an ambitious series of events, initiatives and supporting schemes that it's hoped will make a huge difference to the local community in St James Street – but it is just the start.

The plan represents the first set of projects that St James Street Big Local will work on over the next three years. As such it prioritises some of the larger and more complex projects that the community wants to see tackled. In future plans – the next of which will be written in 2019 – we can all focus on making the most of a more cohesive community, renovated public space, thriving local businesses and successful charities to do even greater things.

But for now, we all have to work together to help shape our community. So if you have ideas about how we can all continue to transform the St James Street area or simply want to lend a hand, you should get in touch, join us at meeting, become a member of the Partnership, come to our events, volunteer on a project or even just follow us on Twitter. Here's how.

### **Visit our website:**

<http://www.stjamesbiglocal.co.uk/>

### **Like us on Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/stjamesbiglocal/>

### **Follow us on Twitter:**

<https://twitter.com/stjamesbiglocal>

### **Send us a note via Crest:**

St James Street Big Local c/o Crest Waltham Forest  
Peterhouse Centre, 122 Forest Rise, Walthamstow, E17 3PW