

MAYOR OF LONDON

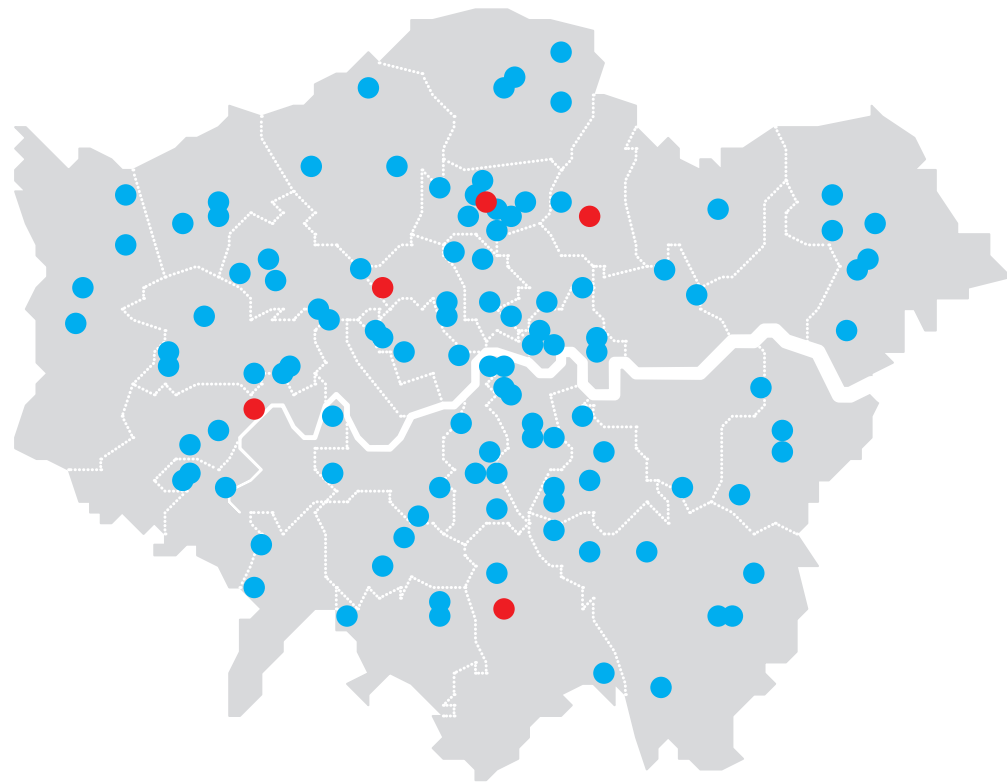


HIGH STREET STORIES

2016

CONTENT

- 3 High Street Stories
- 4 Statistics
- 6 Croydon
- 12 Camden Town
- 18 Blackhorse Lane
- 24 Brentford
- 28 Tottenham
- 34 Funding



- Mayor's High Street Projects
- Highlighted Case Studies

HIGH STREET STORIES

London's 600 high streets are alive with potential. They're home to much of the city's economic and civic life, whether that's testing exciting new ideas or embracing time-honoured traditions. Since 2011, the Mayor of London has invested and committed more than £129 million in London's high streets and town centres, creating jobs and supporting businesses. This improvement is crucial to the economic growth of our high streets, communities and nation.

Over the last five years, the Mayor of London's Regeneration team has worked with organisations and individuals across the capital to nurture a vast array of projects from idea to reality. Our approach is a collaborative one, working with the boroughs, local businesses, high street groups and other entities that know their communities best. Our programmes build on efforts already in place and are sensitive to local strengths and history. Starting with small initial investments, the Mayor's funding helps to test new ideas and grow a culture of stewardship while strengthening community investment in sustainable projects.

The case studies contained in this publication give a flavour of what's happening thanks to local authorities, businesses, communities and individuals across London. From street scene and wayfinding improvements to community education programmes and inspiring events; from supporting makers and shakers to restaurant owners and market stallholders: these initiatives are having a tangible impact on social interactions and economic opportunities on our city's high streets. They are also influencing the physical shape and appearance of these places, changing the way they are designed, built and used.

In this book, you'll find just a few examples of the thousands of stories unfolding across London right now. And you'll see why we're so optimistic about the future of our communities. But there's more work to do. With a new round of funding about to begin, we know that even more of London's high streets can flourish like never before – and, with them, the communities they serve.

1577

JOBS CREATED

955

SHOP FRONTS IMPROVED

183,366m²

PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVED

1054

YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINED

1014

PUBLIC EVENTS ORGANISED

984

JOBS SECURED

21

ASSOCIATIONS CREATED

22

SUPPORTED

2012

BUSINESSES SUPPORTED



REINVIGORATING A SOUTHERN METROPOLIS

After the 2011 disturbances, Croydon's high streets were almost unrecognisable. With Mayoral funding, and building on the Council's ambitious plans, Croydon is undergoing a transformation. Regeneration efforts have had a huge impact across the borough – cited as an area bursting with potential. From the improvement of shop fronts to now-bustling business centres and community amenities, Croydon is rapidly becoming one of the most exciting places to live and work in London.

One major goal of the current funding programme is reinvigorating Croydon as a business centre. The Business Rates Relief Scheme promotes the town centre for new local businesses by offering up to 100 per cent relief for a year as part of the Croydon Business Support Package. Meanwhile, the West Croydon Investment Programme has invested in six schemes across five wards to boost local businesses, improve skills, mentor young people and create jobs.

Physical improvements are another important goal. A new welcome at East Croydon station and a new pedestrian-friendly redesign to the West Croydon transit hub are improving the area's transport options. In Old Town and London Road, the high streets of Croydon saw a substantial programme of improvements, including the renovation of scores of business fronts and the widening and repaving of footpaths. Similar major improvements are affecting the borough's South End restaurant quarter. In 2011, this stretch of high street was waning, with vacant buildings and a degraded appearance. Architecture practice We Made That, experts in regenerating public space, were brought in to work on the South End project with landscape architects Hassell, and immediately saw what the issues were.

'One of the most striking things at the beginning was there was a high vacancy rate,' says We Made That's Holly Lewis. 'It was 16 to

Opposite: Surrey Street Market, Croydon



South End, Croydon



Improvements made to public space, South End, Croydon

17 per cent, so the area was run-down, visibly, in that respect. But it was also very traffic-dominated – a lot of the footways were very narrow, making it difficult to get around.'

The architects proposed swapping road space for pedestrian space on the South End road, widening the pavements and adding public furniture, trees and cycle parking. They also began helping shop and restaurant owners in improving shop fronts – 47 were upgraded – and the expanded pavement space has seen eight restaurants apply for al fresco dining, a very visible change to the landscape. Most importantly, however, vacancy rates are down to just five per cent – a relatively normal and healthy level.

The changes in Croydon have led to a markedly increased confidence in the area – which is key to creating long-term change through job opportunities and new residents. One sector in which it's easy to see the effects of a committed community and their regeneration efforts is Croydon's Restaurant Quarter. Saran Rajendran is the manager of



Saran Rajendran, Manager, Kanavar restaurant

Kanavar, a South End restaurant that opened in 2015. Just in the year his establishment has been open, Rajendran has seen things change – and made his restaurant follow suit.

'When we opened last year, the high street was not shining like it is now,' says Rajendran. 'The pavements have been fixed, the street lights have been fixed – it has totally changed the restaurant quarter. The regeneration's had a huge impact – you feel proud that you're in a good place.'

Importantly, that change has had an impact beyond just the restaurant business. It's being seen as an inspiration across the borough. As Linda Arthur, owner of South End's Bar TXT says, 'The whole of Croydon is inspired by what has happened in the restaurant quarter.'



CAMDEN TOWN

BACKING NEW CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

People around the world think they know Camden High Street. Its packed shops and open-air markets, its destination pubs and notorious rock stars are on many a tourist's checklist. But those associations are only a small part of the story these days: Camden is changing.

There are aspects of this change that will be obvious to any visitor. Physical improvements have begun to transform the less busy southern part of Camden High Street into a more community-oriented space, especially around Mornington Crescent tube station. And then there are aspects that are transforming Camden in more fundamental, if less obvious, ways.

In the first-floor offices and once-vacant shop fronts of the high street, people such as Hasanul Hoque are inventing a new Camden – one where creative start-ups and enterprising freelancers flourish alongside established businesses.

'Camden Collective is an organic project,' says Hasanul Hoque, Projects and Finance Manager for business improvement district Camden Town Unlimited (CTU). 'It grows with opportunities.'

Operated by CTU, Collective is funded by the Mayor of London, Camden Council and other public and business funds (as are the physical high-street improvements). Collective establishes pop-up shops and co-working spaces in disused buildings on and around the high street, as well as offering business accelerator programmes and individual courses. These connected projects are then curated by Collective to complement one another in ways that use temporary spaces and stopgap opportunities to spin off permanent businesses invested in the local community.

One success story is The Camden Watch Company. The brainchild of design duo Anneke Short and Jerome Robert, the CWC makes

Opposite: The Camden Watch Company, Stables Market



Anneke Short and Jerome Robert of The Camden Watch Company

and sells high-quality timepieces inspired by glimpses of Camden's past – such as the pocket watches worn by Victorian train workers.

'We decided to set up our own business, but the thing missing was office space – that's where Camden Collective stepped in,' says Short. 'At the time, they offered free office space to young start-ups – unheard of around the world, let alone London. And there were more than a hundred other businesses in Collective – a community of people for us to work with.'

Short and Robert developed their business with help from Collective's graphic designers, web designers and marketers. Once it was time to start selling their wares, they tried out bricks-and-mortar with one of Collective's pop-up shops on Camden High

Street – which Hoque sees as a vital component of the new Camden scene.

'They took one of our shops on the High Street, and while they didn't have hundreds of people walking in, they had the *right* people,' says Hoque.

Now, Camden Collective is growing: in 2016, they'll open a large, new co-working space in the long-abandoned National Temperance Hospital. After just three years of Mayoral funding, Camden can already boast the second-highest density of creative-industry businesses in London. A big part of that is down to creating opportunities to meet and flourish together.

'When you meet face-to-face, you can do real business – you get more opportunity to connect,' says Hoque. 'Collective is well



Camden Collective co-working space



**‘WE WANT SUSTAINABLE
BUSINESSES, IN IT FOR THE LONG
RUN, WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR
EMPLOYING LOCAL PEOPLE.’**

curated. We want sustainable businesses, with opportunities for employing local people; those in it for the long run. We’re interested in, “how do these businesses strengthen one another?”

‘Our spaces aren’t “swish”, fancy offices. You don’t get swanky coffee machines – you get a community.’

Opposite: Hasanul Hoque – Projects and Finance Manager, Camden Collective

A man in a dark blue t-shirt and dark trousers is working in a workshop. He is wearing large red and black ear protection and safety glasses. He is focused on a wooden project on a workbench, using a tool. The workshop is filled with wood and various tools. The text 'BLACKHORSE LANE' is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

BLACKHORSE LANE

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF MAKERS

The warehouses and industrial estates of Blackhorse Lane in Walthamstow can be intimidating. As one of London's few remaining manufacturing hotspots, these vast spaces are a boon to the local economy, but don't offer much in the way of communal space. Today, with the help of funding from the Mayor, and a lot of hard work by the community, that's changing – fast.

Blackhorse Workshop turns the unwelcoming image of modern industry on its head. Inside a former rubber factory down a small path off Blackhorse Lane, the Workshop houses fully equipped woodworking, metalworking and other studios available on a pay-by-day basis. Another floor is home to permanent studios for emerging creative businesses and, in the café, freelancers share space with Workshop residents and members of the local community.

All told, more than 40 businesses are now based wholly or primarily out of Blackhorse Workshop, only two years since it opened. Add in the more occasional users of the space, plus the people who operate stalls at the Workshop's monthly marketplace, and the numbers begin to really add up. Creative Director Harriet Warden puts that down to Blackhorse Workshop's unique concept.

Blackhorse Workshop was founded by Assemble, the architecture and design practice as a sort of public library for makers. Unlike traditional co-working spaces and *makerspaces*, which concentrate on internet access and digital work, the Workshop focused on providing the kinds of working environment and machinery necessary for start-up manufacturers, hobbyists and artists alike.

'The idea was to create a project that held onto the area's industrial heritage,' says Warden. 'Between housing issues and property prices, London can be a very pressurised environment in which to do manufacturing. The idea was, if we could promote this as a

Opposite: Blackhorse Workshop



Above: Grab & Go food truck, Below: Blackhorse Workshop entrance

destination for manufacturing, people would come and it'd have a knock-on effect – which it is having.'

Alongside the Workshop, Blackhorse Lane received funding from the Mayor and Walthamstow Forest Council to significantly change its appearance. A series of attractive new wayfinding signs and business signage along the road, and community landmarks such as a food truck station and village-like clock all go to making the Lane feel more navigable.

The overall vision is to put a more human face on industry, by transforming some of Blackhorse Lane's forbidding industrial aspects into community assets. Artists Chris Bracey and Thomas Adank were commissioned by project architects We Made That to create pieces doing just that. Bracey's mural, facing Blackhorse Road underground station, welcomes visitors 'To the Home Of People Who Make and Create', illustrated with images of the area's industries. Adank's photographs, meanwhile, created sculptural



Chris Bracey mural, Blackhorse Lane



‘THE IDEA WAS THAT IF WE COULD PROMOTE THIS AS A DESTINATION FOR MANUFACTURING, IT WOULD HAVE A KNOCK-ON EFFECT ON THE AREA.’

tableaux from objects made by local manufacturers to display on billboards around Blackhorse Lane.

For Harriet Warden, visibility and community engagement are the keys. Towards these ends, the Workshop will open a new building in 2016, freeing up space to expand their educational work – teaching maker skills to adults as well as local schoolchildren – while maintaining the same capacity for daily users. They’ll continue holding monthly markets, as well as night markets – an oasis in an area not known for its nightlife.

‘When I arrived here, it felt a bit like a ghost town,’ says Warden. ‘What’s fantastic about the whole Blackhorse Lane project is that you can see it *visibly* changing an area. These days, loads of people say to me, “Oh, I’m moving here” – and you can see that’s in large part down to the project. It’s giving people a reason to be confident in the area.’

Opposite: Harriet Warden – Director, Blackhorse Workshop



BRENTFORD

REKINDLING A TOWN'S HISTORY

Brentford is at a crossroads – in more ways than one. Historically, it's where London meets the west: the confluence of the rivers Thames and Brent, and a hub for the Grand Union Canal. Its high street follows a Roman road, and its centre, a vital marketplace. So, as the town reaches its own crossroads, it's only natural that the area's history should provide a blueprint for Brentford's regeneration.

More than 8,000 people work in the so-called 'Golden Mile' of Great West Road alone, and two new housing developments are scheduled to open along the Canal: opportunities Brentford is making the most of with the help of Mayoral investment in its high street, transportation and pedestrian connections, and in reviving the marketplace.

It all begins with the market. A dominant feature as far back as 1306, Brentford Market disappeared in the 20th century and, with it, the town's central focus. To reconnect Brentford to itself and to London, the market was key. The Brentford High Street Steering Group began operating one-off experiments with Mayoral support – a winter market; French and Italian markets. The next year, in 2013, Brentford relaunched its weekly Sunday market and began a transformation of the marketplace, reaping benefits almost immediately.

'The physical space of the Market Place was just a tarmac car park before the improvements,' says Andrew Dakers, businessman and Brentford native who serves as volunteer Chair of the High Street Steering Group. 'The market regeneration suddenly created a cohesive centre to the town – this amount of footfall probably hadn't been there for 50-plus years.'

The market currently has 15 traders operating market stalls every Sunday. Now, with an increased capacity thanks to the improvements to the site and hiring of a part-time market manager, the High Street

Opposite: Brentford's Sunday Market



Above: Simon Periton barge shed
Below: Andrew Dakers – Chair, High Street Steering Group

Steering Group is raising its ambitions to 25 traders within coming months. The market refurbishment includes new paving and street furniture, and a water feature that evokes the rivers and canal and their central role in Brentford's history and economy.

The town's Making the Connection project furthers this relationship. Funded in part by the Mayor's office and Brent Council, Making the Connection is aimed at improving and highlighting the walking and cycling routes through Brentford – especially those along the Grand Union Canal and those connecting Great West Road with the high street, Market Place and the docks. The renovations include new lighting and public art, making for a more welcoming towpath, as well as some larger projects. One of those projects was an overhaul of a pair of long-derelict barge sheds along the canal, led by Kinneer Landscape Architects. Their collaboration with artist Simon Periton turned these dark and forbidding industrial structures into sculptural pieces lit from within like lanterns, helping to brighten the canal path.

It's all about making a new Brentford, with its roots in the area's history and tradition, and an understanding of what today's population and economy needs. Established local businesses have not been left behind, with shops like Brentford Dry Cleaners and Brent Pharmacy enjoying shop-front improvements thanks to Mayoral funding. Meanwhile new commercial ventures have a temporary home at Brentford Works, a shared business incubator space.

'We brought something different,' says the High Street Steering Group's Dakers. 'There's no point in just recreating what was already there. Brentford's demographic is changing, and we want to fill the needs of that growing community.'



KICK-STARTING A NEW ECONOMY

In 2010, Tottenham was part of one of the 20 most deprived boroughs in the UK and in the following year experienced some of the worst effects of the disturbances. But, since then, the area has experienced something of a rebirth: a wide-ranging programme of activities, created by joint public and private investment, has brought a resurgence of interest in Tottenham as a community in which to live, and a place in which to do business. By 2015, Tottenham no longer featured on the Government's 'most deprived' list. Funding from the Mayor's office has played an important part in Tottenham's regeneration story by helping to seed new kinds of economic activity, developed with and within the community, and with wide-ranging impacts.

One focus for Tottenham's flourishing new business culture is the 639 Enterprise and Community Centre. Owned by the Mayor, it's run by the London Youth Support Trust (LYST): a charity dedicated to helping young people launch new businesses. The Centre offers shared workspace as well as dedicated business units and rooms to hire. LYST also uses the Centre to offer workshops and classes on business skills, and to mentor young entrepreneurs. A separate space next door, Tottenham's Living Room, offers facilities to charities and community groups operating in the area.

A mile down the road from 639, on the Markfield industrial estate, the Mill Co Project is taking a different approach towards the same goal: incubating new businesses and helping people make Tottenham work. This former garment factory was refurbished by The Mill Co Project, a social enterprise scheme that has created co-working spaces across East London. Mill Co located, leased and refitted the 10,000 square-foot building as 22 studio spaces and six recording studios supporting creative businesses. Since then, with help from the Mayor's fund and Haringey Council, Mill Co has been able to further expand the range of creative businesses locating in

Opposite: Chicken Town, Tottenham



Studio Space for makers

Tottenham. Mill Co Project co-founder Nick Hartwright says that it was a project the community needed: all of the studios were let before the refurbishment was even finished, with businesses moving in even as building work continued. But it's about more than just office space – it's about creating a community of like-minded people.

'It's not curated,' says Harwright. 'That's not the right word – it's more making sure that you're building the right networks of people, that they're supporting one another's businesses. Because we find that the people working in the building immediately start collaborating, and other little projects or businesses spin off from that.'

As community-building projects go, London's ubiquitous chicken restaurants probably seem far down on the list. But Tottenham's Chicken Town, created with the help of Mayoral funding, is no ordinary chicken restaurant. It may serve similar food – albeit a

Opposite: Gaunson House workspace



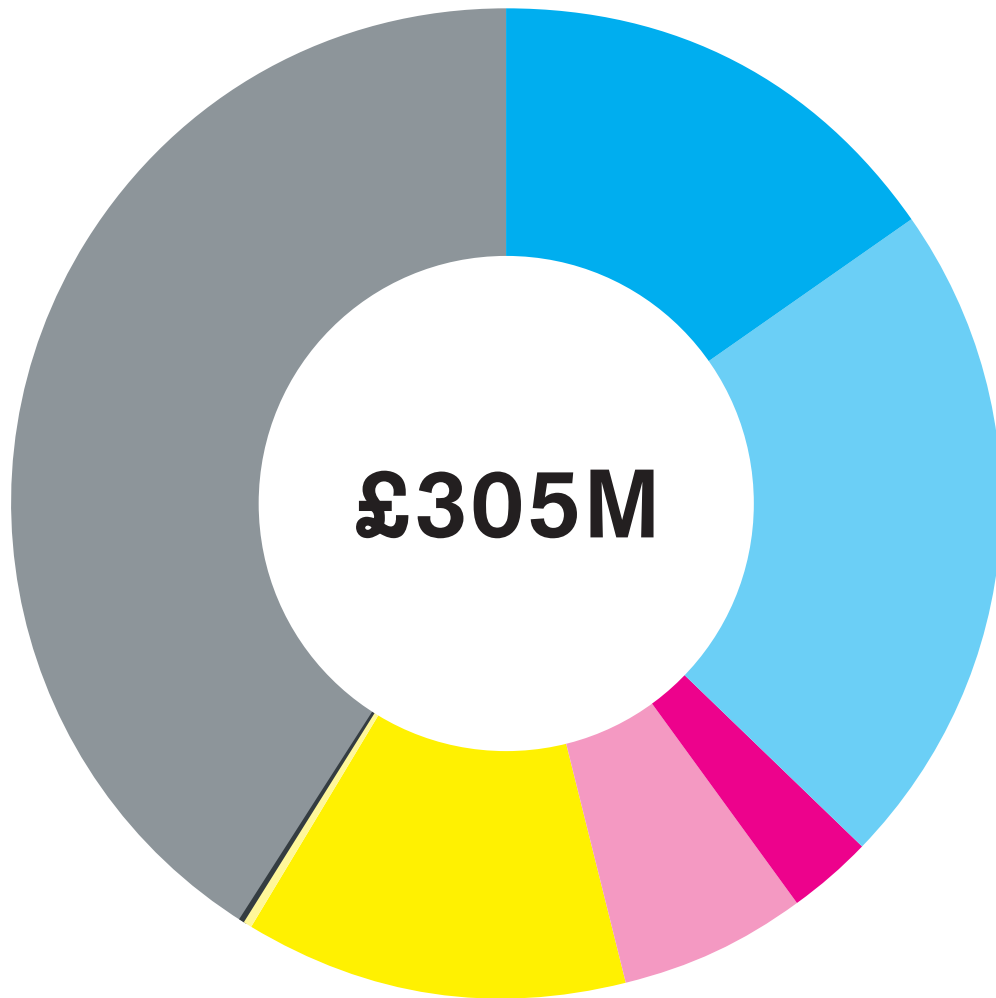


healthier version than most fried chicken, and served by an all-local staff – but there's a twist: this social enterprise uses the profit from the evening restaurant trade to subsidise cheap, healthy meals for local schoolchildren during the day. A project of Create London, Chicken Town occupies a previously unloved space and generates jobs while working towards a healthier North London.

Improvements in the four focus areas of Tottenham – Tottenham Hale, The High Road, High Road West and Northumberland Park – have all included highly visible enhancements to transport links and high street businesses. The stretch between Tottenham Green and Bruce Grove is just one example: thanks to investment in new frontages for shops like Bucky's Newsagent, Black Beauty and New Concept, the west side of the High Road now visibly represents the appealing new face of Tottenham.



Above: Inside Chicken Town, Below: Green Room, Tottenham public space



- Outer London Fund £50M (round 1 –£10M, round 2 –£40M)
- Mayor's Regeneration Fund £70M
- High Street Fund £9M
- London Regeneration Fund £20M
- New Homes Funded Programme £40.4M
- Mayor's Civic Crowdfund £600,000
- Portas Pilots £300,000
- Match Funding Committed £131.5M

Mayor's Regeneration Fund (2011)

A regeneration programme designed to support sustainable economic growth in town centres and high streets in areas worst affected by the 2011 disturbances.

Outer London Fund Round One(2011)

£50million allocated in two rounds, supported by specialist advice on how to improve the character, quality and economic vitality of high streets and town centres.

Portas Pilots (2012)

The Mayor supported the Portas initiative in London, providing funding for three Portas Pilots. The purpose of these pilots was to test the ideas in the Portas Review, and to provide an opportunity for local partnerships to develop.

Outer London Fund Round Two (2013)

Round two made £32 million available to 23 places in 18 boroughs.

High Street Fund (2014)

The High Street Fund has made funding available to any organisation wishing to make a difference to their high street. These include community organisations, business improvement districts, traders associations or town teams.

Mayor's Civic Crowdfund (2015)

Over two rounds in 2015, the Mayor pledged £600,000 across 37 projects, to make a real difference to local communities across London. In the second round alone, more than 2,000 Londoners backed 15 projects with over £350,000 of pledges.

London Regeneration Fund (2015/16)

An investment of £20m to breathe new life into London's high streets and places of work by supporting innovative local projects.

New Home Funded Programme (2015/16)

£40.4million investment with 59 proposals to drive local economic growth by re-vitalising and diversifying London's high streets.

