

## **Freemasons Road Shopkeepers' Charter**

The Council has ambitious plans for Canning Town and Custom House making it an area where new and established residents and businesses choose to live, work and stay. The regeneration will enhance and improve the existing local high street with new homes, an improved environment, retail and leisure facilities, building on the benefits of the arrival of Crossrail services from 2018.

In Custom House, Freemasons Road will be reinvigorated as a local shopping centre making the most of the opportunities offered by the new Crossrail Station. While regeneration will bring many benefits to the area and the local community, there will inevitably be some disruption and existing Freemasons Road businesses will need to be relocated from their current premises in order for new development to progress. The Council acknowledges that many local businesses are longstanding and recognises the valuable contribution local businesses make to the local community and economy, and the significant impact regeneration has on them. The Council will therefore work to enable local businesses to continue to trade in the area. This Charter sets out the Council's commitments to Freemasons Road shopkeepers.

We would like to acknowledge the positive contribution of Freemasons Shopkeepers and PEACH (People's Empowerment Alliance for Custom House) to the development of this Charter.

### **The right to remain**

The Council is keen to see local businesses, who wish to do so, remain in the area and will work with shopkeepers to assist in finding suitable alternative Newham-owned premises to relocate to. The Council will work with businesses to assist in finding suitable properties in the immediate Freemasons Rd area where possible and if not, within the wider Custom House area and Borough.

The terms of new leases will be subject to commercial discussions between the Council and individual shopkeepers. Factors such as current lease terms, rent history and breaches of leases may affect the length and terms of the new lease. Leases will be subject to individual terms on a case-by-case basis.

If suitable alternative Council-owned premises are not available, the Council will work with local businesses to find alternative premises within the Borough, where possible.

### **The right to return**

The Council will work towards ensuring existing businesses have a right to return to premises within the new development, subject to the availability of suitable units, compliance with planning requirements, and subject to agreement of commercial terms. The nature of the units provided by the redevelopment of the area will be affected by a number of factors including the need to ensure the financial viability of the scheme and address planning considerations. Where feasible, within these parameters, the Council will encourage sensitive phasing of development to try to facilitate the availability of potential suitable units within the overall development.

The Council will work with developers to ensure that any incentives offered to incoming businesses taking new units within the completed development are also made available to existing Freemasons Road shopkeepers who have been required to relocate because of the regeneration.

In addition, the Council will work with developers to offer existing local businesses additional incentives, for example rent free periods, above and beyond those offered to any new businesses moving into the development, subject to the overall viability of the scheme and compliance with planning.

### **Compensation and relocation**

Shopkeepers with commercial tenancies with the Council may have a statutory entitlement to compensation, under the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954. The level of any compensation due is prescribed within the Act and is based on the length of tenure and rateable value of the property.

All tenants that are entitled to statutory compensation will receive this, however the Council recognises that, in some instances, this may not meet the cost of relocating the business. In such cases, the Council will ensure that the compensation paid is sufficient to cover the direct, reasonable costs of moving such as removal expenses, re-direction of post and reasonable legal and surveyor fees linked to the relocation of businesses, to be determined and agreed on an individual case-by-case basis.

Shopkeepers will be responsible for fitting out the shop units they relocate to.

The Council will only cover to the costs of one relocation and shopkeepers who move into the new development at a later date will be expected to meet their own relocation and fit-out costs unless there are exceptional circumstances determined on a case-by-case basis.

### **Residents**

The Council's commitments to shopkeepers who are also secure tenants or residential leaseholders within their block are set out within the Canning Town and Custom House Residents' Charter.

Residents of flats that are let as part of commercial leases may be eligible for new Council tenancies, where they can provide evidence of continued employment, subject to registration and bidding process.

### **Business support**

The Council is keen to see local businesses be in a position to benefit from the opportunities resulting from the regeneration of Custom House and advent of Crossrail services.

A range of business support organisations operate in the Borough that offer advice and support services to small and medium-sized businesses e.g. East London Business Place, the East London Small Business Centre, Newham College of Further Education and Community Links.

In addition, PEACH will have a leading role to play in empowering local businesses to potentially capture the benefit from an increased customer base and footfall.

### **Community Involvement**

The Council is committed to involving local stakeholders, businesses, and residents in the regeneration of Canning Town and Custom House.

The Council will liaise with individual shopkeepers regarding their shop unit and the relocation of their business.

The Council will keep the community informed and engaged throughout the regeneration process, for example through newsletters, letters, meetings, public exhibitions, drop-ins and

other events. The Council will liaise with a representative group of shopkeepers as appropriate throughout the process.

The Council will keep the community informed and engaged as appropriate through the key stages of the regeneration process such as:

- decanting and demolition;
- developer selection;
- design and planning; and
- delivery.

The Council will ensure the commitments and provisions established in this Charter are reflected within any development agreement . The Charter will be included as a Schedule accompanying development agreements.

The Shopkeepers Charter will also be referenced within any Developer Brief.