

Skills, Economy and Growth Scrutiny Commission- 6th January 2020

Hackney Walk

1. Background

The railway arches in Morning Lane are owned by the Arch Co (previously Network Rail). Network Rail first approached the Council in 2006 with plans to refurbish the railway arches in Morning Lane however this did not progress at the time.

Following the 2011 riots, the Greater London Authority launched the Mayor's Regeneration Fund, which was designed to provide grants to deliver physical, social and economic regeneration. Hackney Council, with the written support of local businesses, faith groups, and public sector partners, submitted a bid to the fund in December 2011, for grant funding to support projects to:

- Pedestrianise the Narrow Way
- Build a walkway between Hackney Downs and Hackney Central station
- Refurbish and fit out Network Rail's railway arches
- Improve public spaces on Morning Lane
- Refurbish shop fronts on the Narrow Way, Mare Street and Clarence Road for businesses whose premises were damaged during the riots
- Install new facilities at Ridley Road Market.

The Council was awarded £5.3m from the GLA fund in January 2012 and £1.5m of this was allocated to the railway arches and public spaces on Morning Lane. In 2015, Hackney Walk opened with 10 of the 12 refurbished railway arches occupied alongside one of the infill buildings.

At the time the site was being developed, Hackney Walk Limited took a lease from Network Rail for the railway arches. The two buildings currently occupied by Nike and the unit opposite were owned by Hackney Walk Limited. Since then the ownership of Hackney Walk has now transferred to a different company with Network Rail (now the Arch Co) remaining the freeholder. The Council is in contact with the new owner to encourage them to develop an alternative plan for the site which would see the vacant units occupied.

2. What are the Council's plans for Hackney Walk

As the Council doesn't own the land at Hackney Walk our role is to continue to engage and encourage the owners of the site to progress with a scheme to diversify the uses on the site and ensure that the vacant units are occupied as soon as possible with a mix of uses that better serves the local community and adds to the town centre offer in Hackney Central. Area Regeneration are leading on these discussions with the site owner.

3. How does this fit in with the other regeneration plans in Hackney Central

If the intention of the site owner is to diversify the uses on the site then, subject to securing planning permission, the Council would support this and ensure the mix of uses provided at Hackney Walk adds to and supports the other uses and plans underway in the town centre as well as delivering wider social and economic benefits for local residents and businesses.