**ELEPHANT AND CASTLE TOWN CENTRE RELOCATION**

**CORRECTING THE MISINFORMATION AND PROVIDING THE FACTS**

**FAQS**

**Who qualified for relocation?**

* 79 independent traders qualified – broken down this equates to 42 Shopping Centre tenants, 35 market traders, 2 railway arches.
* All 79 traders were invited to take part in the relocation process - 64 applications were received, of which 61 were valid.
* It was acknowledged that there were more traders than there were spaces in three identified locations near the shopping centre (Castle Square, Ash Avenue, Elephant Arcade).
* A database of other property and market stall locations (within a 1-mile radius of the shopping centre) was made available. In totality, this provided enough space for all traders to relocate.
* No statement was ever made to claim that all traders could be relocated to affordable retail space within these three locations. That impression has been created by third parties. Only property that is under the Elephant and Castle Town Centre ownership, or owned by Southwark Council, or another property owner that has a specific planning obligation, can provide Affordable property.

**Who is being relocated?**

* Following the 61 valid applications, 40 have now found new premises.
* Broken down, the 40 qualifying traders have been relocated to:
	+ Castle Square, Elephant Road – 19 businesses
	+ Ash Avenue at Castle Square – 6 businesses
	+ Elephant Arcade, recently completed on London Road at Perronet House – 11 businesses
	+ 4 other traders have also moved to a space of their own personal choosing
* In addition, three businesses have made separate arrangements outside of the relocation application process to move to Lend Lease’s Elephant Park

**What about the remaining 18 businesses? (i.e. 61 – 40 – 3 = 18)**

* There are currently eight market traders and two kiosk traders who are, as yet, to be relocated – see further information below about how they are being supported. (18 – 8 – 2 = 8 remaining)
* Two businesses have multiple premises at Elephant, comprising a total of five of the original 61 applications and have both been able to take space for one business unit each. Therefore, three premises of the total of five still seek alternative locations (8 – 3 = 5 remaining).
* The remaining five have either moved on outside of the area or decided that they no longer wish to trade for personal reasons and have closed on their own accord.
* Where a trader has been sharing space with the principal tenant, they did not qualify for the process. However, we understand that there are individuals that are occupying space with a principal tenant and will all be relocating with the principal tenant. There are two businesses/principal tenants that this relates to.

**How are you working with the remaining 10 traders (eight market stalls traders and two kiosks)?**

* Tree Shepherd is still working with these businesses and they all still have access to the database of available properties.
* It is and always has been each trader’s responsibility to assess properties that are suitable for their business. Ultimately only they can decide what can work for their business.
* There is no further property in the immediate vicinity of the shopping centre and despite tours of the area and other London markets there are market traders that are under the belief that they will be offered a property.  This is not correct and has never been a commitment from the Elephant and Castle Town Centre team or the Council.
* Those market traders who have not found space will receive in the order of £8,000 each from the relocation funds made available by Southwark Council and the Elephant and Castle Town Centre relocation fund. This is to assist them with relocating their business or transitioning into some other way of providing an income. Tree Shepherd is also still available to support.

**Relocation criteria – how was it decided and communicated and what is it?**

* We have always sought for the process to be fully transparent and independently chaired. During the process, commercial discussions with individual businesses had to remain confidential. Now that we have reached the point of closure of the shopping centre and traders have had the past 18 months to settle on where they plan to move their businesses, we are able to provide this further information so that everyone may have clarity
* A workshop/ focus group was held by Tree Shepherd in July 2018 which was extensively promoted and 39 traders attended. This workshop was to hear trader’s views on how applications for relocation to the three sites (Castle Square, Ash Avenue, Elephant Arcade) should be assessed.
* The process was discussed extensively for two months at the independently Chaired Trader Panel meetings and all traders were circulated information about the draft proposed criteria.
* In respect of the units available near the shopping centre (Castle Square, Ash Avenue, Elephant Arcade) a transparent process for assessing the traders for those spaces was agreed with all parties in January 2019.
* A further note was then circulated to all traders after the February 2019 Trader Panel to confirm the criteria.
* In order to qualify for the programme, businesses need to be in direct occupation of and trading from their units.
* Local Independent Operators entitled to the relocation fund and other support was specified in the Section 106 agreement as follows:

*“all existing, independently owned retail businesses, traders, kiosk holders, restaurants, and market stall holders and charitable organisations on the East Site who:*

* + *do not trade from more than three locations, and include restaurant operators, café operators and market stall holders;*
	+ *lawfully hold a lease or licence including so that any sub-letting or assignments have been with the approval of the Developer or Network Rail (as appropriate);*
	+ *occupied any part of the East Site at the date of the resolution to grant Planning Permission and continue to occupy any part of the East Site at the date the Planning Permission is granted”*
* Businesses or Individuals that were operating through sub leases or informally sharing trading space with a main tenant did not qualify and were politely requested to work their own process through the main tenant of their unit
* It was clearly and extensively communicated that all traders who did not secure space could approach Tree Shepherd who had information and feedback with reasons why each trader had not been successful.

**Are you prioritising newer tenants over those who have been in the shopping centre for years?**

* No – this is inaccurate. The feedback from this workshop was clear in that traders did not want the longevity of trade at the Elephant to be a key factor in the tenant choice process.
* Only if there was a tie break situation would the length of time trading at the Elephant be used with priority being given to those with a longer history in the centre.
* Traders had full knowledge and had been extensively informed that length of time trading in the centre was not a key criteria and the four below criteria would be used firstly:
	+ Businesses should have robust finance record and a high level or rent payment history.
	+ Businesses should create and sustain employment
	+ New Location should be of a similar size to existing
	+ Business must be suitable to fit the profile of the space and meet the operator requirements on mix and diversity levels

**Trader quotes**

* **Ana Castro, Shopping Centre trader, said:** “I have been selling ladies fashion, shoes and body shapers in the shopping centre for many years and was very grateful to the support given to me in moving my shop to Castle Square. I’m really looking forward to moving in, you can find my shop on the ground floor.”
* **Olajide, from Daddy O’s African Food, said:** “Since the relocation process started, I have been supported in every step of my move, the help received has been very generous and has kept my business going. My African Food restaurant will be moving to unit 16 at Castle Square at the end of September and I can’t wait to see my returning customers there”
* **Claudia, from Nicole’s Alterations, said:** “I’ve been based in the shopping centre for more than 20 years after moving from Colombia 28 years ago. I am moving to unit 10 Ash Avenue at Castle Square when the centre closes and preparing for the move has so far been so easy for me, this is down to the help given by the developers and the council. Thank you!”