



Earlier borough-led investment created new spaces in the area – Philipp Ebeling, 2013

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BARKING TOWN CENTRE HOW LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP HAS ENSURED COORDINATED CHANGE

Borough

Barking and Dagenham

Client/partners

Barking and Dagenham, Mayor of London

Consultants

Creatmosphere, Lucentia Design, muf architecture/art, Patel Taylor, Project Centre, Remarkable Productions

Duration

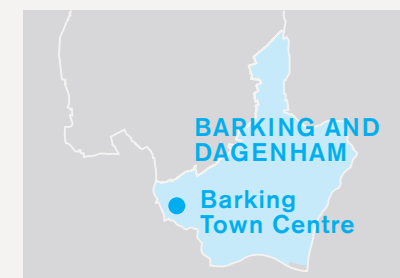
September 2011 – April 2012

Funding

Mayor of London £650,000, TfL £500,000, Barking and Dagenham £418,459

Headline figures

£1,350,000 public space improvements and preparatory work, £125,000 events, £87,000 employment training



With a wide range of businesses, a regular street market, a library, theatre, health centre, technical college, and large public square, Barking town centre has all the ingredients to be full of social, civic and economic life. But putting those ingredients together to make the town centre a destination in its own right takes careful coordination, and a blend of permanent and temporary measures.

The borough's been hard at work to bring significant improvements to the area through a decade of enabling high quality development and investing in new public spaces, underpinned by *The Barking Code for the Public Realm, 2006*. This document sets out principles for design and development shaping the area as it evolves.

The borough was particularly keen to use the Outer London Fund support to create safer and more attractive places for people to shop and socialise, as improved accessibility and visual appeal was identified as fundamental to supporting the area's growth.

1,000
visitors attended
the Molten
Festival

Much of the investment was used to improve Barking station forecourt, a gateway to the town centre, which had become run-down, cluttered and difficult to navigate. In line with *The Barking Code*, the forecourt was pedestrianised by relocating buses and taxis. It was also decluttered, while new paving and 'Barking Benches' were installed. This improved access around the station, creating a more welcoming entrance to the area. The borough also used funding to commission feasibility studies and designs for a new public space off the high street. This preparatory work fed into their successful round two submission.

As well as the station improvements, a complementary events programme helped create a reason to visit. The Molten Festival was held during the festive period, drawing people to the town centre and increasing opportunities for local trade. It featured a week of performances, spectacles, and street entertainment, attracting some 1,000 visitors. The festival focused on the theme of 'light' during the dark winter days, and included community activities like lantern making, plus immersive attractions like a digital forest installation.

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- 1 Spectators enjoying the Molten Festival – Franck Allais, 2011
- 2 Molten Festival performers in Barking Town Square – Franck Allais, 2011



2

The UP!Barking project, run by a local organisation, was a six-week programme that worked with young people aged 16 to 25 to create designs for construction site hoardings, including the Westbury Arms pub (which had been burnt down in the August 2011 disturbances).

At a series of workshops, participants learned a range of design techniques, building knowledge and confidence. The result was a bold and bright set of designs installed throughout Barking. Those who took part were also given practical skills to help them find employment in design-related businesses. Many have since taken up space in the local Enterprise Centre to start testing out their business ideas.



80%

have improved perceptions of area



76%

feel that the investment has made the area more attractive



48%

are more satisfied with the shopping area

Improved user perceptions resulting from town centre improvements
Base: 99 people
Source: Regeneris Consulting

60

young people took part in the UP!Barking project

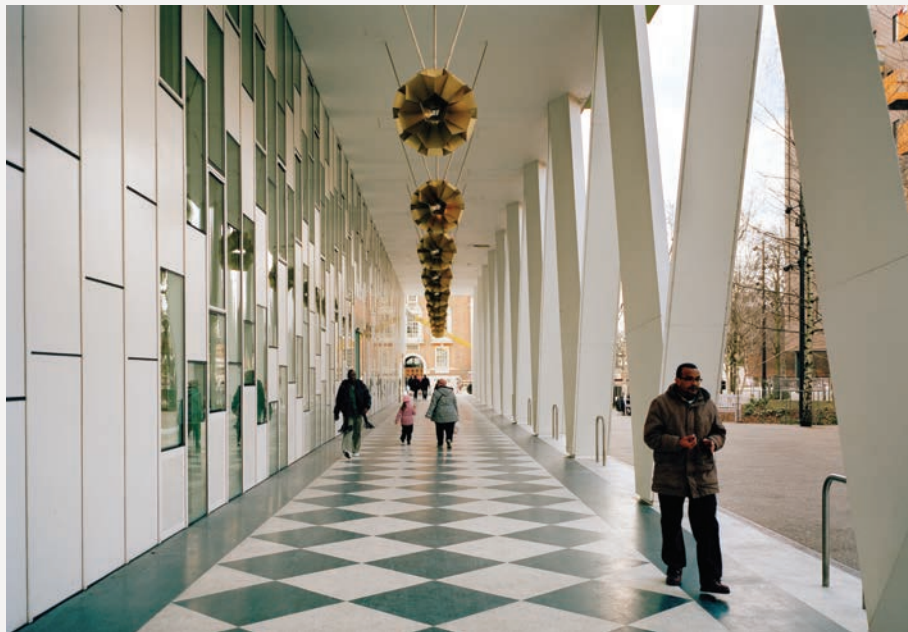
LEARNING FROM BARKING TOWN CENTRE

Long-term and carefully stewarded investment in Barking town centre has improved both public spaces and the health of local businesses. *The Barking Code for the Public Realm*, which outlines project proposals, design guidance and a material and furniture palette, has been instrumental in helping the borough secure funding and make sure that the result of investment is consistent, coordinated and of high quality.

Barking's regeneration team led the Outer London Fund project consulting early and often with colleagues in different departments. This collaborative, interdepartmental approach is a firm framework for delivering a lasting vision for the area.

1 A carefully designed colonnade provides cover in Barking Town Square – Philipp Ebeling, 2013

2 Improving the station forecourt was a major focus of the project – Unknown, 2012



2

Understanding what could be achieved in the tight programme was essential. Up-front agreement of timescales for approvals, permissions and work with third-party companies allowed the borough to plan out what was feasible, and maximise the impact of the funding.

The borough used the first round of funding to commission designs and feasibility studies, so new projects would be ready to start when further funding became available. This is an intelligent way of using small pots of funding to attract further investment and development.



58%

report that the town centre felt more vibrant



50%

feel the area has a better cultural offering



67%

appreciate the town centre more

Improved user perceptions resulting from town centre events
Base: 12 people
Source: Regeneris Consulting