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| Item No. | Classification: Open | Date: 7 December 2016 | Meeting Name: Cabinet Member for Business, Employment and Culture |
| Report title: | | The High Street Challenge Round 5 Grant Awards | |
| Ward(s) or groups affected: | | All | |
| From: | | Chief Executive | |

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet Member for Business, Employment and Culture allocates £67,913 of grant funding from The High Street Challenge for Round 5. The projects recommended for award are set out in Appendix 1.
2. That the Cabinet Member for Business, Employment and Culture allocates a further £5,000 of grant funding to the SE5 Forum for business engagement during the course of highways infrastructure projects in Camberwell.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The aim of the High Street Challenge is to increase footfall and consumer spend in Southwark's High Streets and town centres as part of the delivery of Southwark's Economic Wellbeing Strategy. This has been achieved through the funding of a series of innovative, spatially-based projects over a three year period. Applications are invited for funds to deliver new approaches to improving town centres as well as embedding and reinforcing more established activities.
4. Lessons learnt from the Community Restoration Fund (CRF) programme – which was established to support Southwark businesses and communities affected by the 2011 London disturbances – and previous rounds of the High Street Challenge, have helped to inform the development of this programme.
5. Round One of the High Street Challenge launched in February 2014, followed by Round Two in September 2014, Round Three in March 2015 and Round 4 in January 2016. To date, 35 projects have been awarded funding to a total value of £610,972. A call for proposals for Round Five of the High Street Challenge launched in August 2016 and closed on 26 September 2016 with 11 applications received. The next call is planned for early 2017.
6. Three projects are being recommended for funding at this stage:
 - Better Bankside BID have proposed a project that will improve the public realm of an inn/yard off Borough High Street; bringing the areas back into public use and encouraging new businesses to the area. This will be a demonstration project to seek investment in future yard/inn improvements.
 - Walworth Society have proposed a project that will highlight Walworth as a shopping and leisure destination through creating a Walworth Festival in June 2017.

- East Dulwich Traders have proposed a project that aims to create a locally owned brand for East Dulwich. This includes the installation of 35 lamp post banners and proposals that better brand the area. Subject to the consultation process underway, this activity will link in to promoting the North Cross Road market extension.
7. The total funding recommendation for these projects is £67,913.
 8. Under a separate process, the council has allocated £5,000 from transport planning budgets to support businesses in Camberwell to stay aware of and prepare for potential disruption from forthcoming highways and public realm projects in Camberwell. The Local Economy Team shall manage the use of the fund, as the lead service for business engagement and support within the council. Following a review of potential partners, the SE5 Forum has been selected as the organisation best placed to provide this support while also encouraging business participation in local networks. A recommendation for a grant to the SE5 Forum is therefore being made to enable this project to progress.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

9. The High Street Challenge fund has been designed to respond to the range of challenges as well as the unique attributes of each of the town centres and high streets in Southwark. Applicants were required to demonstrate how their proposals met the following objectives:
 - Produce benefits beyond the funding period.
 - Introduce new approaches/models that have not previously existed in town centres.
 - Add to and align with existing initiatives in the proposed area.
 - Build the capacity of the local businesses or groups to accelerate economic growth beyond the funding period.
 - Bring together different parts of the local community and promote inclusivity.
10. Under these objectives a set of four broad themes have been identified to define the scope of the activities that can be commissioned as part of the fund. It is expected that successful projects will fit with more than one of these themes:
 - **Promotion:** Activities to promote and market the town centre/high street's offer in order to increase footfall and customer spend.
 - **Transformation:** Activities to attract new customers to the high street (or engage them for a longer period) through use of space and design.
 - **Diversification:** Activities to diversify the offer of the town centre/high street in a way that is likely to have an impact on footfall.

- **Participation:** Activities to create new partnerships/networks or build the capacity of existing networks in a way that will strengthen the ability of the town centre/high street to create growth.
11. The funding allocation process is planned to comprise of a total of six rounds for proposals for the High Street Challenge.
 12. The funding allocation process has been designed to enable the staged funding of creative and innovative proposals to support the development of new ideas to be tested so that they can then attract other sources of funding. Applicants that have been awarded funding in this round will have the opportunity to seek additional funding for their projects in subsequent rounds of the High Street Challenge, though further funding is not guaranteed as applications will be subject to the same evaluation process as any other applicant.
 13. In arriving at the proposed funding allocations, the evaluation panel has taken into consideration the scores achieved against the published criteria, the desire for a spread of projects across the borough, and an assessment of the likely impact of the project on local economic growth.
 14. Consultation across relevant service areas identified the SE5 Forum as the single local body with the connections and track record to lead a project with the dual objectives of sharing information about potentially disruptive works with local businesses and to grow business participation in local networks. The SE5 Forum has delivered a number of local projects under grant funding from the council and has a strong track record of community engagement. Further, in 2015 the SE5 Forum initiated and carried out a feasibility study into a Camberwell Business Improvement District, where a key finding was the need to encourage greater business networking and communications locally.
 15. Officers worked with the SE5 Forum to explore proposals for a project that would meet the objectives of the fund, which was then developed and submitted by the SE5 Forum as a proposal in the same format as a High Street Challenge grant application. This proposal then was evaluated by an officer panel under High Street Challenge criteria. The panel assessed that the proposal was viable and should proceed to a grant recommendation.

Consultation

16. A range of internal and external stakeholders were consulted on the purpose and scope of the fund. Internal stakeholders included community engagement, health, markets, libraries culture, crime prevention, regeneration, planning policy, and public realm.
17. Business networks were consulted and asked to identify the main challenges facing their town centres/high streets and to suggest the types of initiatives that they believe would help local businesses to thrive. Additionally, lessons from other local authorities such as Brent, Croydon, Lewisham and Hackney have been incorporated where they have shared innovative approaches to town centre support. The consultation responses have also been linked to key recommendations from an extensive policy review.
18. Key themes emerging from consultation included:
 - A need for promotional activities that would drive footfall.

- Opportunities for creative uses and activities that would diversify the offer on the high street and catch the attention of residents and visitors.
 - A need for smaller scale, local initiatives to build on existing assets and link them to larger scale regeneration processes.
 - The importance of partnership approaches, building capacity and encouraging wide-ranging engagement in town centre initiatives.
19. The information and suggestions gathered through consultation, along with recommendations from the policy review were brought together and used to develop a framework for the fund to address the main challenges being faced by town centres and high streets in Southwark.
 20. At the assessment stage, the evaluation panel also consulted relevant colleagues such as those responsible for markets, events, culture, and regeneration. Comments were taken into consideration in order to arrive at a final decision.
 21. The transport team and Transport for London were also consulted at an early stage during the development process for this project to identify the key project aims and parameters.
 22. As part of the grant application process the SE5 Forum were required to submit an extensive proposal for how they would engage with businesses in the area and ensure communication links between the council, TFL and businesses will remain open and transparent.

Policy implications

23. The Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2012-20 was adopted in November 2012 having secured council-wide endorsements. Support to businesses is central to two of its strategic objectives:

Ambition 2: Southwark – the place of choice to start and grow a business

Ambition 3: Thriving town centres and high streets.
24. The High Street Challenge will support the delivery of the Economic Wellbeing Strategy through the opportunities presented by the fund to harness the energy of business and other imaginative and enterprising people or groups in order to breathe new life and ideas into town centres. The desired outputs and outcomes for the High Street Challenge set out in the prospectus are in line with the strategy in that they are focused around the use of innovative approaches to stimulate footfall and customer spend, support self-sustaining business networks to flourish and engage with their local communities for mutual benefit and deliver activities that will lead to high streets benefitting from fewer shops and a greater mix of uses.
25. Economic growth remains a high priority for the council. The activities of the successful projects are expected to act as a catalyst for economic growth by attracting and leveraging funding from other sources for activities that will continue to redefine Southwark's high street offer to local residents and visitors. This approach will lead to local jobs being safeguarded in the short term and job creation in the long term. Furthermore, it will represent the council's response to the recent decline of the traditional high street model.

26. The grant for the SE5 Forum will support the ambitions set out in the Economic Wellbeing Strategy, by helping to ensure council decision making in Camberwell takes full account of business needs, and supporting the growth of town centre business networks.

Community impact statement

27. Community benefits will accrue through the direct outputs of this project (i.e. increased number of visitors to the high street, increase in customer spend, public spaces created or improved, under used or empty spaces brought back into use, retail spaces improved, young entrepreneurs engaged, match funding secured and new jobs created).
28. Due regard has been paid to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 specifically; to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not. The principles of the PSED are imbedded in the core objectives of the High Street Challenge, as the programme intends to improve and develop participation from all sections of the community (see paragraph 9) in a manner that will positively impact high streets and town centres. As part of the assessment process, applicants were asked to define how their projects would be inclusive and welcoming to all. When considering the response to this question, the panel scored applicants based on how well their proposed project would engage a diverse local community and business groups, and promote inclusivity.
29. Care has also been taken in development of the prospectus to ensure the accessibility of the fund for Southwark-based businesses, community groups, and voluntary sector organisations.
30. As part of the evaluation process, proposals were assessed for their ability to build the capacity of local businesses and residents to support their high street or town centre to thrive beyond the life of the fund. Therefore, it is expected that the projects that have been recommended for funding will have a long term positive impact in their chosen areas.
31. The businesses in Camberwell will be able to easily find information on ongoing works within the area. They will also be able to attend multiple engagement and consultation events. This will ensure they're able to plan ahead for any disruption. The SE5 Forum will look to build a network for businesses which will in turn support local growth.

Financial Implications

32. The full cost of the funding recommendation for this project will be met by the New Homes Bonus. All other costs will be met within existing resources.
33. The full cost of the grant for the SE5 Forum has come from an allocation from the council's transport team; held in the local economy team's budget.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

This report seeks approval of grant awards recommended as part of the fifth round of the High Street Challenge initiative.

Under paragraph 5 of part 3D of the constitution, a cabinet member may approve grants over £2,500 to voluntary organisations.

Pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 the council must have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it
- (c) Foster good relations between person who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership are protected in relation to (a) only.

Paragraphs 28 to 30 of the report demonstrates how the council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in considering applications for funding and recommending grant awards and the cabinet member should satisfy him/herself that this duty has been complied with when considering these recommendations.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

- 34. The report is requesting the Cabinet Member for Business, Employment and Culture to approve the allocation of £67,913 of grant funding from The High Street Challenge and the projects recommended for award are set out in Appendix 1. The report is also requesting that the Cabinet Member for Business, Employment and Culture to approve the allocation of £5,000 of grant funding for the SE5 Forum.
- 35. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that the costs will be contained within the New Home Bonus (High Street Challenge) and the Local Economy Team's (SE5 Forum) budgets.
- 36. Staffing and any other costs connected with this recommendation to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

| Background Papers | Held At | Contact |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Economic Wellbeing Strategy | Strategy and Partnerships, Local Economy Team, 160 Tooley Street | Liz Gardiner 0207 525 0283 |

APPENDICES

| No. | Title |
|------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | High Street Challenge Round Five – Projects recommended for funding |

AUDIT TRAIL

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Lead Officer | Stephen Gaskell, Head of Chief Executive's Office | |
| Report Author | Liz Gardiner, Senior Strategy Officer | |
| Version | Final | |
| Dated | 2 December 2016 | |
| Key Decision? | Yes | |
| CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER | | |
| Officer Title | Comments sought | Comments included |
| Director of Law and Democracy | Yes | Yes |
| Strategic Director of Finance and Governance | Yes | Yes |
| Cabinet Member | Yes | Yes |
| Date final report sent to Constitutional Team | 7 December 2016 | |

APPENDIX 1

High Street Challenge Round Five – Projects recommended for funding

| Town Centre/High Street | Organisation | Value of the grant award recommended |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Borough | Better Bankside | £25,000 |
| Walworth Road | Walworth Society | £21,498 |
| East Dulwich | East Dulwich Traders | £21,415 |