

Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Wednesday 29 September 2021

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1
2QH

Supplemental Agenda No. 1

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Contact: Amit Alva on email: amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk

Date: 27 September 2021

Item No. 17.	Classification: Open	Date: 14 September 2021	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Response to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Review of Approach to Equality And Adoption of The Equality Framework	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Alice Macdonald, Equalities, Neighbourhoods and Leisure	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR ALICE MACDONALD, CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE

I'd like to thank Councillor Babudu and the members of the education and local economy scrutiny commission for their report and recommendations. Embedding equalities into everything we do is a huge priority for the council and must be the responsibility of everyone.

I welcome the recommendations put forward by the commission. Many of these will be taken forward through the new equalities framework agreed by cabinet in July from improving equalities data to improving transparency around the assessment of our equalities impact. I also thank Cllr Babudu for his input into the equalities framework – a specific recommendation made by the commission.

This report also references the work carried out under the Southwark Stands Together programme to tackle racism and the recently published annual report. Whilst we have made progress there still remains a huge amount to do and we are committed to continuing to work with communities across Southwark to tackle racism and discrimination in all its forms.

I look forward to continue to engage with the commission to ensure continued scrutiny of our work to advance equalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That cabinet notes the recommendations made by the education and local economy scrutiny commission and agrees the response set out in this report.
2. That officers act upon the response agreed by cabinet as part of the implementation of the Southwark Equality Framework.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The overview and scrutiny committee delegated the matter of Equalities to the education and local economy scrutiny commission for the 2020-21 municipal year.
4. The education and local economy scrutiny commission interviewed the cabinet member for communities, equalities and neighbourhoods at its meeting on the 22 February 2021 in respect of equalities issues and sought an overview from the cabinet member on the main council equalities initiatives, plans for better understanding racial disparities in the Council and beyond and how the council is addressing the many equalities related issues arising due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. A detailed response was provided by the cabinet member in advance of the meeting. The cabinet member also responded to questions at the commission meeting.
6. At the subsequent meeting of the commission, the education and local economy scrutiny commission drafted recommendations arising from the information and responses provided by the cabinet member.
7. The commission's recommendations were reported to cabinet in June 2021 and are set out below.
8. On 13 July 2021 cabinet agreed the Southwark Equality Framework and an action plan for implementing it.
9. The framework:
 - Sets out eight equalities objectives, which demonstrate specific areas where we are tackling inequality and promoting equality which will enable our communities to hold us better to account.
 - Strengthens our equality governance to enable effective leadership and organisational wide sharing of good practice and consistency. This includes the establishment of a new equalities advisory group, an internal senior level officer-working group and a commitment to strengthening external networks.
 - Reaffirms our commitment to put communities at the heart of all our decision making ensuring that equality analysis is informing all of our work and that the voices of everyone including the most vulnerable and marginalised are heard.
 - Sets out a clear pathway to enable us to strengthen our data, evidence and research on inequalities and the needs of our communities so we are making the best decisions with the best information and delivering appropriate and relevant services able to meet the diverse needs of local communities.

- Develops a more robust process for equality impact and needs analysis, equality proofing procurement and commissioning to find out about and respond to the needs of diverse service users so our services work for our communities. This will include undertaking a full 360 equality audit which will be scrutinised by elected members, staff and community/voluntary sector stakeholders.
10. At the same meeting cabinet also agreed the annual report on Southwark Stands Together (SST). SST was set up in July 2020 in the midst of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the Black Lives Matter movement. SST is our local call to unity, support and action. It is about how we take positive action as a council to work with Southwark's communities and the council's staff to tackle racism, injustice and inequality.
 11. The annual report sets out progress and achievement of the SST over the last year, including good practice and learning from the programme and next steps planning.
 12. In noting the annual report cabinet considered this in tandem with the Southwark equality framework using it as an opportunity to assess progress against borough plan commitments and SST priority recommendations.
 13. The SST annual report set out the listening and learning that we have undertaken over the past year to inform how we remodel how we engage with communities and improve our approach in reporting back on progress on our work to tackle and address inequalities. Following agreement of this report, alongside the equality framework (elsewhere on the agenda), officers are taking forward next steps to develop a plan for regular reporting to the community on work to tackle inequalities. This includes building on good practice underway such as progress in collecting more lived experience examples across the council, for example through the health theme where we have reached out through our Community Health Ambassadors. Our 'Breaking the Glass Ceiling' project will also hear and learn more about the lived experience of our community in Peckham Square.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

14. Set out below are the recommendations of the education and local economy scrutiny commission in respect of equalities issues together with a proposed response. As noted above the work of the Scrutiny Commission informed the development of the Southwark Equality Framework alongside input from other stakeholders. The commission will continue to play an active part as the Framework is delivered.

Recommendation 1 - Data

15. The Commission supports the council's intention to consolidate all equalities data and recommends that it is ultimately provided to the public in an accessible fashion (i.e. as open data).

Proposed Response

16. This recommendation is agreed and included in the Action Plan that commits the council to developing a communications plan to update our information on equality, diversity and inclusion including as an initial stage ensuring data on our population is accessible and shared on our website. Our Southwark Stands Together programme also commits us to sharing data with community and voluntary sector partners. The Action Plan commits to producing the communications plan by the end of September 2021.
17. The Framework and Action Plan also includes conducting a council wide mapping of equality data by December 2021.
18. We will work with our voluntary and community sector partners on developing our knowledge and understanding of areas where data is not readily available, tapping into their knowledge or particular protected characteristics or communities.
19. Southwark Stands Together commits us to collecting ethnicity data for all people using council services and we have set a target to achieve 70% completion (the minimum threshold for reporting and interpretation of self-declared diversity information advised by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission) by 2022-23. By capturing more ethnicity data, we can make sure that we are better able to identify problems and target services based on people's needs. Capturing more ethnicity data will also help us to do more to make sure that everyone in our community has equal access to services and will help to expose and tackle any inequalities that may exist in the quality of services received.

Recommendation 2 - Reporting

20. The Commission supports the council's intention to conduct a benchmarking exercise comparing the council's proposed equalities framework model to that of other boroughs.

Proposed Response

21. An initial benchmarking exercise was conducted as part of the production of the Framework and informed its development.
22. The Equality Audit will also use the Equality Framework for Local Government benchmark of good practice for local government as a self-assessment framework and tool to assess what currently LBS has in

place, areas of good practice and identify further gaps to address these.

Recommendation 3 - Reporting

23. The Commission recommends the draft equalities framework is submitted to the Education and Local Economy Commission for comment once it is substantially drafted.

Proposed Response

24. Comments were received and incorporated in the final version of the Framework.

Recommendation 4 - Reporting

25. The Commission supports the council's intention to conduct an equalities audit once the equalities framework is complete and recommends that the Council develops a transparent mechanism for assessing progress annually for performance across the equalities framework, which incorporates clear metrics.

Proposed Response

26. The Framework and action plan includes implementation of the equality audit. The audit will consist of an initial self-assessment completed in December 2021 with a 360 degree appraisal completed in June 2022 including external input.
27. The Framework strengthens our approach in four key ways:
- Embedding it into the council's performance management framework – setting out clear equality objectives against which progress can be measured
 - Establishing a member led equality advisory group that also includes external representation to oversee implementation
 - Strengthening officer governance through a senior level officer group to provide officer oversight
 - Strengthened external networks for scrutiny, consultation and engagement forming the core of a multiagency partnership that will meet annually to review an annual partnership equality report and input to the next year.
28. The equality framework commits us to annual reporting on progress to the community and we will deliver an annual conference with the community, where we will report back on delivery, showcase success and challenge ourselves and each other on where we need to go further together in delivering our commitments.

Recommendation 5 - Capacity-building and capacity-identifying

29. Building on existing work as part of the Southwark Stands Together initiative, the Commission recommends the Council requires departments to look at data currently held on stakeholder groups and interested parties that are regularly consulted with – including but not limited to statutory consultees – as part of an “Equal Voices” audit. Where there are gaps in representation, across all the protected characteristics, this should be recorded and a plan developed to increase participation. Particular attention should be paid to Black, Asian and minority ethnic participation, along with disability status, sex and age

Proposed Response

30. The Southwark Equality Framework and Action Plan includes conducting a council wide mapping of equality data by December 2021.
31. In terms of proactive work in this area Southwark Stands Together commits us to strengthening how we engage, working in partnership with a range of organisations including the Consultation Institute. We will be working on making better use of Equality Impact and Needs Analysis throughout engagement processes and developing a more consistent approach to data collection to ensure our consultation and engagement extends its reach. Through this work there has already been progress for example collecting data on over 1,000 businesses that identify as minority ethnic so we can involve and consult with them and in producing a toolkit with the community to broaden the reach of our engagement and the establishment of A Culture, Health and Wellbeing Partnership to capture diverse and seldom heard voices.

Recommendation 6 - Capacity-building and capacity-identifying

32. The Commission recommends that the Cabinet member for Equalities establishes closer links with business improvement districts (BIDs) and business groups in Southwark to help strengthen engagement and connection between business and residential communities, and improve coordination and expertise sharing on equalities matters.

Proposed Response

33. Agreed the Cabinet member has met representatives of the Business Improvement Districts. The Cabinet Member for Jobs, Business and Town Centres currently has regular meetings with all Southwark BIDs every two weeks. These meetings have led to enhanced dialogue with the council on a range of issues including economic renewal, town centres and high streets and other key areas of joint interest e.g. carbon reduction and equalities issues.
34. As noted above the local economy team are working with existing community and business networks to understand and tackle whatever

barriers to collecting ethnicity data that people in our community may have. We will also explore new networks highlighted in the Equinox review of grants and funding to help us understand people's views. For example, we will make sure that people understand that ethnicity information is confidential and non-attributable to individuals.

35. With the leadership of the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Business and Town Centres, town centre task forces are being established to develop action plans for our town centres and high streets in partnership with a wide range of local businesses and residents groups.
36. The Local Economy Team are currently engaging with a representative sample of our communities to help design our business support services. For example, 56% of businesses responding to a survey informing the design of the business resilience support service self-identified as a minority ethnic business. This gave us a better understanding of the demographics of our business communities, their needs and the challenges they face. These findings directly informed the development of the Southwark Pioneers Fund, a £2m programme of support for businesses and entrepreneurs.
37. The Local Economy Team are also collecting data to further increase the diversity of communities with which we engage. One example of this is Equalities monitoring information collected via the covid business grants application forms that has enabled data collection on the demographics of Minority Ethnic Businesses. The council is now able to contact over 1000 businesses which identify as Black, Asian or minority ethnic-led, which significantly increases our ability to engage with these groups.

Community impact statement

38. The Southwark Equality Framework replaces the Council's Approach to Equality and explains how the Council is working towards a Southwark that is tolerant, diverse and fair for all. It sets out what the public can expect from the Council, what the legislation requires of us and what the Council is committed to doing. It explains our approach to advance and promote equality of opportunity in the borough by making equality part of our day-to-day business – including how the Council will use equality analysis to generate insight and understand the effects of its decisions on different groups.
39. The Framework is a visible commitment to equality in Southwark and sets out how we will consider the impact our services, policies and decisions have on the protected characteristics (race, sex, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy & maternity, gender reassignment and marriage & civil partnership as well as socioeconomic status) into our processes.

Climate Change Implications

40. There is significant evidence of the link between climate change and inequality. While everyone is affected by climate change, the extent of that impact is not equal. As set out in the Council's Climate Change Strategy, climate change has the biggest impact on those who are poorer or have underlying health conditions. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents are disproportionately affected. Social justice is central to the strategy including maximising the co-benefits of action and ensuring that climate change policy reduces inequality and promotes fairness.
41. The equality framework is one element of the council's work in tackling social inequality and injustice. The response to combat climate and tackling inequality and injustice through initiatives like the Equality Framework go hand in hand.

Resource implications

42. Recommendations supported in this paper will be taken into account as part of the ongoing implementation of the Southwark Equality Framework. There are therefore no further resource implications from this paper.

Legal implications

43. There are no significant legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Financial implications

44. There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Report of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Review of Approach to Equality and Adoption of the Equality Framework	Constitutional Team, Southwark Council	Everton Roberts 0207 525 7221
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s98983/Report%20Equality%20Framework%20-%20Recommendations%20of%20Ed%20and%20Loc%20SC.pdf		
The Southwark Equality Framework	Constitutional Team, Southwark Council	Everton Roberts 0207 525 7221
Links (please copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99894/Report%20Southwark%20Equality%20Framework.pdf https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99895/Appendix%201%20Southwark%20Equality%20Framework%20Final.pdf		
Southwark Stands Together Annual Report	Constitutional Team, Southwark Council	Everton Roberts 0207 525 7221
Links (please copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99892/Southwark%20Stands%20Together%20Annual%20report.pdf https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99893/Appendix%201%20Annual%20report.pdf		

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Alice Macdonald, Equalities, Neighbourhoods and Leisure	
Lead Officer	Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities	
Report Author	Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities	
Version	Final	
Dated	2 September 2021	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		2 September 2021

Item No. 19.	Classification: Open	Date: 14 September 2021	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Response to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Local Economy: Revitalising Southwark's High Streets and Town Centres	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Jason Ochere, Jobs, Business and Town Centres	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR JASON OCHERE, CABINET MEMBER FOR JOBS, BUSINESS AND TOWN CENTRES

I would like to thank the education and local economy scrutiny commission for their hard work during the last municipal year, in ensuring our efforts to revitalise Southwark's high streets and town centres are rooted in good evidence.

As we know, our high streets and town centres have been hugely impacted by the pandemic, with less footfall resulting in lower sales and activity. Our response to boost our local economy requires an innovative approach, which also acknowledges the differences between the high streets and town centres within our borough.

The commission highlights a number of key recommendations to assist Southwark's high streets and town centres. I am committed to building on these key initiatives that have been highlighted within the report including: exploring community ownership structures; finding creative new uses for the high street; and supporting young people into high quality apprenticeships to strengthen our local economy.

All of the recommendations in this report will aid our response to economic renewal and I look forward to working with the commission to deliver these priorities for the people and businesses in Southwark.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the following response to recommendations set out in the Report of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission (June 2021) is considered by Cabinet.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This report responds to the Commission's investigation into the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses and the future of our high streets and town centres.
3. The report by the Scrutiny Commission identified a set of recommendations to assist in the delivery of the Council's aim of revitalising high streets and town centres as part of the council's Economic Renewal Plan. These recommendations are welcomed and this report provides a response to each of these.
4. High streets and town centres have seen significant reduction in footfall for a number of years with an increased trend towards online shopping, which has accelerated due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.
5. The Covid-19 crisis has threatened to exacerbate these challenges and the council has therefore made their protection a priority. It is vital that we ensure our town centres and high streets remain vibrant, thriving, accessible spaces, safe for all, which contribute to the prosperity and cohesion of our local communities.
6. Town Centres and High Streets are one of the four central themes of Southwark's Economic Renewal Plan, through which we have outlined the actions we are taking in response to the economic challenges brought by the pandemic.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. **Recommendation 1: The Commission recommends the Council maps Southwark's various local economies as part of the implementation of its economic renewal plan.**
8. A framework is now in place to guide our cross-council approach to the revitalisation our high streets and town centres, including a set of overarching themes, which encapsulate the council's vision for its town centres together with objectives, policies and proposals to guide future delivery, development and change. It will help to ensure a more comprehensive and consistent approach across the borough, whilst also acknowledging that each town centre has a unique identity and may require a more targeted neighbourhood level approach in particular areas.
9. Aligned to our "Southwark Stands Together" programme, this approach will highlight the diversity of each town centre and the local communities within them, and ensure that we celebrate and enhance the distinctive identity of each locality within our borough.
10. Through this strategic approach the council will deliver its Borough Plan commitment to *"Help Southwark's high streets to be thriving and vibrant, seeking to achieve full occupancy and encourage residents to shop local"*.

11. This approach will enable us to reimagine these spaces so that they are fit for the future, balancing retail, business, development and inclusive economic growth, with health and wellbeing, sustainable transport, culture and leisure. The approach will be structured around five key themes and will align with all other council plans and strategies with relevance to town centres, high streets and neighbourhoods, and ensure that vital lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic help to shape future approaches.
12. The five themes guiding our approach to Town Centres and High Streets are:
 - Sustainable, accessible places – A 15-minute borough
 - An inclusive, greener local economy
 - Vibrant, resilient and connected high streets
 - The heart of our communities
 - Healthy and safe high streets.
13. To ensure we have a consistent, cross council approach to our town centres and high streets, we have worked with officers across the council including those from Public Health, Planning, Regeneration, Communities, and Culture. In addition, governance arrangements have been put in place reporting to the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Business and Town Centres.
14. Chaired by the Director for Response & Renewal, a cross council Senior Officer Group meets on a monthly basis to oversee the development and implementation of an activity log and set of action plans for the four priority town centres and high streets, identified as Camberwell, East Dulwich, Peckham and Walworth Road.
15. In addition, we are working with nominated town centre lead officers to develop action plans for each of the priority town centre areas. These will include current challenges, opportunities and resourcing, while activity logs track all current activity. It is intended that these action plans will be developed in partnership with ward members and key local stakeholders through established Task Forces.
16. In order to successfully establish task forces in the four priority areas, we have been developing a template engagement plan. This will ensure consistency in our approach to the work in each town centre, set out clear steps for establishing taskforces with the aim of delivering task and finish groups, and ensure successful engagement with key stakeholders internally and externally.
17. Officers in the Regeneration team have developed baselines to capture current activity and investment in each of the priority areas in order to gain a clear picture of the current state of the area. This will help to illustrate the starting point when developing the action plans for each of the areas.

18. In addition, the council has signed up to the GLA's High Street Data Service and Partnership. A hub that brings together important information about the economic and social health of High Streets and Town Centres. We will have access to new, regularly updated data showing footfall and spend, which will inform the development of the town centre action plans.
19. As the overarching framework for this work, the Economic Renewal Plan (ERP) is updated and monitored each quarter, with input sought from officers across the council to ensure that progress is tracked against the commitments set out in the plan.
20. **Recommendation 2: The Commission recommends that the Council actively explores supporting new community ownership structures. To practically support this, the Commission recommends the Council reviews its existing asset portfolio with a focus on identifying which assets present the strongest case for going into community ownership.**
21. The council is currently reviewing its approach to premises for the Voluntary and Community sector and plans to report its recommendations to Cabinet this autumn. This is a complex proposition for both communities and the priorities the council seeks to support through the use of its assets.
22. Nevertheless, we will be looking carefully at the options, and how they support and interact with the high streets workstream. We will look also to the overarching principles of the council's newly adopted Corporate Asset Management Plan, agreed by Cabinet in January, in formulating the strategy.
23. **Recommendation 3: The Commission recommends that the Council explore early involvement with the GLA's nascent Landlords' Charter as a means of getting private developers and landowners to support more community-led activity.**
24. The development of the GLA Landlord Charter will be monitored and explored by the Director of Planning and Growth, as a means of stimulating community led activity amongst private developers and landowners. A separate workstream is underway to look at the future strategy for voluntary and community sector use of council owned buildings. Any new opportunities or complimentary activities should also be considered and made known in the context of this work.
25. Southwark Council recognises regeneration is about improving the lives of people in the borough, including bringing about improvements to the buildings and environment around us. It is important that everyone has a voice and is able to influence change and our approach to the way we invest in the borough. The Development Consultation Charter is our promise to the community to deliver 'Regeneration that works for all'.

26. This way of working together requires providing the community with:
- Clear guidelines for consultation and a better understanding of the planning process
 - More timely and accessible information online
 - Accessible, online information on how the engagement and feedback has shaped discussions and proposals
27. This will help developers to present a proposal influenced by working closely with the community. We can then make informed, open decisions on development.
28. **Recommendation 4: The Commission recommends the Council take a more active role in finding creative new uses for the high street, with an explicit focus on place making that creates community wellbeing spaces and a greater health focus for high streets and town centres.**
29. The High Street Recovery Fund has launched with a specific theme, requesting project ideas that support “Healthy and Safe High Streets”. Projects for this theme should be activities that support the safe reopening of high streets, and make them safe and welcoming places to visit. As well as interventions in mobility, connectivity of high streets, social interaction and cohesion, reduction of health inequalities and promotion of access to health-promoting goods and services.
30. We are working closely with the public health team to deliver the HSRF. We will also refer to public health colleagues for input as part of the evaluation of the HSRF, relying on their expertise to ensure we award projects that compliment and add value to the work public health colleagues are currently delivering and set out to achieve clear objectives that link with safe and healthy high streets. We will continue to ensure there is a joined up approach and make links with public health work and initiatives where appropriate.
31. We are also working to establish taskforces for each of the priority town centre areas that will support us in identifying new opportunities to support the vitality of our high streets. The taskforces will allow us to do this with the input from key stakeholders including residents and business owners, as well as relevant officers and members.
32. **Recommendation 5: The Commission recommends that the Council ensures that the funding from Arts Council England has been used effectively and restarts work on a “Cultural Compact”, creating a strategic partnership between the borough’s cultural and creative industries, education providers and the health sector to drive forward the Council’s recovery plans.**
33. In 2019, £20,000 funding was secured from Arts Council England to support the research, development and launch of a Southwark Cultural

Compact via a three stage process:

Stage 1 - Research and engagement

Stage 2 - Development of the Compact model

Stage 3 - Support the strategic direction of the Compact

34. This was as part of a national programme that was already underway in towns and cities around the country; London had not previously been within the scope of Arts Council's Compact project, so Southwark's research into the potential of a borough Cultural Compact has always been at a later stage of development than other nationwide examples.
35. Cultural partnership specialists The Revels Office were appointed via an open process and had begun the Stage 1 research and development activity at the point that work on this project was paused due to the pandemic. A Cultural Compact Conference had been due to take place at Mountview Academy on 22 April 2020, with capacity for 100 delegates, at which initial options for the Compact model would have been tested as Stage 2.
36. Before recommencing activity on the Compact in 2021, it was thought to be appropriate to re-engage with the cultural and business sectors locally to ascertain their views about the continuing relevance of developing the Compact in the light of COVID and as we progress plans for borough-wide recovery and renewal. This consultation activity was conducted during May-June 2021 by The Revels and sought to understand how the Council could best support the borough's cultural recovery.
37. However, as engagement with the survey was not fully representative of the cultural sector and did not gain a response from the business sector (despite their previous participation in the Compact research), officers are now seeking to elicit more diverse perspectives on the relevance of a Compact framework for culture in the borough, aligned either with the implementation of Southwark's Cultural Recovery Plan or, in the longer term, with the development of a new Southwark Cultural Strategy for 2023 onwards.
38. **Recommendation 6: The Commission notes the immense impact that measures related to the pandemic are having on young people and supports the Council's commitment to maximising apprenticeship opportunities and using initiatives like the Southwark Pioneers Fund to support young entrepreneurs.**
39. Work continues to supporting our young people into quality apprenticeship opportunities and we will continue to integrate our apprenticeship programme into the broader Youth New Deal offer. For the refreshed Southwark Pioneers Fund (SPF) we plan to have specific 'start-up' enterprise support, which will be able to support young entrepreneurs who are seeking to start, or have recently started an enterprise that can add social value to the local economy. Grants will be made available to eligible

enterprises in order to support their growth journey, with priority for those who are committed to taking on young local interns and providing suitable training / development / match funding etc. We expect the SPF to launch in March 2022.

40. The council has also launched a Young People's Opportunities campaign; the regular email bulletin for which is reaching over 1,000 subscribers with news of training and employment opportunities.
41. **Recommendation 7: The Commission recommends that the Council also explores:**
 - **Creating incubator hubs on high streets to showcase and support new and diverse economic uses such as social enterprises**
 - **Making targeted funds available to support high streets in lieu of funds such as the High Street Challenge. These funds should be explicitly focused on helping businesses reconfigure and test new innovations in response to shifting trends in high streets and town centres.**
42. The council's emerging Policy P30 obligates developers to set aside 10% of upcoming workspace as affordable for an overall lease of 30 years. Our section 106 negotiations also put boundaries on usage on this space to encourage and obligate such usage as incubator and accelerator space for micro businesses, and those with green and social aims.
43. The relaunched Southwark Pioneers Fund will take into account the emerging and fundamental changes to the local economy that have been experienced in recent years (e.g. COVID-19), and reflect the priorities of the council, which includes support for social and community enterprises and start-ups and residents exploring routes to self-employment. Grants will support growth in a variety of ways, including provision of affordable workspace, i.e. via a subsidised rent scheme or equivalent in high street and town centre locations where existing subsidised space may become increasingly scarce.
44. The High Street Recovery Fund (HSRF), which launched 15 June 2021, is part of our approach to supporting town centre recovery. This has been based upon the previous High Street Challenge programme, which generated numerous ideas for revitalising our town centres and high streets. The application window was open for 6 weeks and closed on the 28th July 2021. Work is underway on next steps, including agreeing any successful proposals.
45. Applicants were required to demonstrate how their project proposal met one or more of the following themes:

- *Healthy and safe high streets* - This theme opens up the opportunity to support projects that make our high streets safe and welcoming places to visit. This theme welcomes projects that can intervene in mobility, connectivity of high streets, social interaction and cohesion, reduction of health inequalities and promote access to health-promoting goods and services
 - *Cultural / community events* – This theme welcomes culturally themed projects that will celebrate and acknowledge diversity and the unique identity and heritage of our town centres, helping to foster a sense of social cohesion and promoting town centres as the heart of our diverse communities.
 - *Vibrant, resilient and connected high streets* - This theme will welcome applications that support the improvement of digital connectivity in our town centres, encouraging the development and delivery of connected services for people and businesses.
 - *An inclusive, greener local economy* – This theme will welcome projects that will support inclusive, greener economic growth in our Town Centres and High Streets, in particular within key local business sectors, including retail, hospitality, tech, biomedical, health, construction, green and creative industries, and projects that will enhance opportunities for carbon reduction.
 - *Sustainable, accessible places* – This theme aligns to the council’s vision for a 15-minute borough and welcomes projects that aim to make localities more accessible, better connected and sustainable, for instance promoting sustainable modes of transport, reducing pollution and carbon emissions.
 - *Southwark Stands Together* – applicants will be required to demonstrate how their project will incorporate the ambitions of Southwark Stands Together; increasing diversity, reducing inequalities and tackling racism.
46. The fund encourages partnership working that brings together diverse skills and expertise across our town centres and high streets. Applicants were asked to demonstrate that their approach is supported by local businesses in the town centre or high street that is expected to benefit from the activity. Projects from the HSRF are expected to begin delivery in October 2021.

Policy implications

Economic Renewal Plan

47. The Economic Renewal Plan sets out our priorities for renewing our local economy.
48. The plan is designed to capture all cross-council activities aimed at

reducing and mitigating the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to support future inclusive economic growth in the face of these new economic challenges. It aligns with the council's wider recovery and renewal planning, links into our Southwark Stands Together commitments, and takes into account the inevitable economic impact of the pandemic on the council itself.

Town Centre and High Streets themes

49. As part of a cross-council approach to revitalising our high streets and town centres, a set of overarching themes were developed, encapsulating the council's vision for its town centres together with objectives, policies and proposals to guide future delivery, development and change. They will help to deliver a comprehensive and consistent approach across the borough.

Southwark Stands Together

50. The town centres work has been designed to acknowledge that each town centre has a unique identity and diverse communities within it, and may require a more targeted and distinct neighbourhood level approach. It supports inclusive growth in the face of new economic challenges and aligns with our Southwark Stands Together commitments.

Economic Wellbeing Strategy

51. In December 2016, Cabinet approved a refresh of the council's Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2017 to 2022, which reinforced our commitment to supporting local people into employment and apprenticeships, improving skills through access to work related training, and promoting financial wellbeing and independence.
52. The refresh outlined our strategy to build a strong local economy for all, working in partnership with residents, businesses and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
53. The strategy promotes and encourages economic wellbeing by seeking to make Southwark a place where businesses thrive and prosper, a place with thriving town centres, as well as dynamic digital centres that are great to visit and can be enjoyed by everyone.
54. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as part of the council and borough wide approach to recovery and renewal.

Resource implications

55. There are no immediate resource implications identified as part of this report.

Consultation

56. The cross-council approach to town centres and high streets ensures a coordinated and joined up effort. To date, we have worked with officers across various teams, and will continue to do so to ensure we are working together to coordinate and manage the ongoing delivery of council priorities.
57. In addition, we are in the process of initiating town centre task forces as part of our engagement with ward councilors, local businesses, residents and other key stakeholders, as well as relevant officers and members with a view to identify key opportunities and challenges in each of the priority town centres and develop action plans for implementation.
58. This engagement is an ongoing effort and will continue as we move forward with the delivery of the town centres and high streets work.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

59. This report is requesting cabinet to consider the recommendations set out in the Report of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission (June 2021).
60. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that there are no new immediate financial implications arising from this report.
61. Staffing and any other costs connected with this report to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Link: High Street and Town Centres – Themes	Local Economy Team, Chief Executive's Department	Laura Ahern
Link: Economic Renewal Plan	Local Economy Team, Chief Executive's Department	Patrick Doherty
Link: Economic Wellbeing Strategy	Local Economy Team, Chief Executive's Department	Laura Ahern

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Jason Ochere, Jobs, Business and Town Centres	
Lead Officer	Stephen Gaskell, Director of Strategy and Economy	
Report Author	Laura Ahern, Senior Strategy Officer	
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Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	N/a
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	3 September 2021	

