

# Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Tuesday 30 January 2024

7.00 pm

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

## Supplementary Agenda No. 1

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4.	<b>Minutes</b> To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023.	1 - 8
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### Contact

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Date: 26 January 2024



## Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission held on Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Chloe Tomlinson (Chair)  
Councillor Rachel Bentley (Vice- Chair)  
Councillor Jason Ochere  
Councillor Joseph Vambe  
Councillor John Batteson  
Councillor Renata Hamvas  
Martin Brecknell (Co-opted member)  
Jonathan Clay (Co-opted member)  
Marcin Jagodzinski (Co-opted member)

**OTHER  
MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

Councillor Jasmine Ali

**OFFICER  
SUPPORT:**

Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Irina Von Wiese who was substituted by Councillor Victor Chamberlain.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Renata Hamvas and Marcin Jagodzinski (co-opted member).

## **2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT**

There were no items of business which the Chair deemed urgent.

The Chair informed the commission about a change in the order of the agenda with item 7. Youth Employment St. Giles trust to be taken first; then item 6. Update on St. Mary Magdalene c of e primary school and Kintore Way nursery school and children's centre; and then item 5. Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) process, demand and timeliness.

## **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS.**

There were no disclosures of interests and dispensations.

## **4. MINUTES**

The Chair suggested an amendment to the minutes of the meeting 19 October 2023 to explicitly add a recommendation on Kintore Way Nursey to be formulated on email with the scrutiny officer after the meeting.

That the council explore all possible options with regards to the restructuring at Kintore Way Nursery including

- i. Early years SEND funding (EHCP) for children under 5 in nurseries
- ii. Pilot programme of Resource Based Provision proposed for 3 posts of staff supporting 20 SEND children in a designated area of the nursery
- iii. Clearly devise a short and long term plan for reducing the budget deficit ensuring long term financial sustainability

This amendment to the minutes of the meeting on 19 October 2023 has now been made.

## **5. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT- ST GILES TRUST**

The commission then received a report and also heard Russ Brummell, Senior Employment Caseworker St. Giles Trust on the following themes

- Southwark Works contract with St. Giles Trust; working with people having learning difficulties, disabilities, autism and also including care leavers, mental health issues, homelessness and substance abuse.
- Helping young people (16-25) education support and training, volunteering, apprenticeships; Dealing with complex cases over a long period of time reaching out to individuals who are overlooked in society due to problematic

issues

- Helping people with applications, preparation for interviews, in-work support, getting organisations to make reasonable adjustments, peer based support.
- Case studies- 90 clients with special needs having dyslexia and autism, progress has been made with a lot of the clients securing jobs as teachers, nurses, bus drivers etc.
- AJ- from a family of 11 siblings all with complex needs, AJ has successfully completed level 3 painting and decorating course, working with St. Giles inspired confidence and helped AJ realise his potential even with household projects such as carpentry and electronics; St Giles supported him in securing Construction Skills Certification Scheme accreditation. AJ has also secured painting and decorating work on short term contracts for Sotheby's. AJ now also works with supporting young people with mental health issues in the area through St. Giles trust.
- Another case study on a young lady referred by the Local Mental Health unit who suffered from mental health issues stemming from a lack of parental care and families confidence in her life choices, such as volunteering to help under 15 girls into football and working with animals. With Russ's support this young individual has now been successful in interviewing securing two voluntary roles at the London Zoo looking after penguins and animals like giraffes and camels respectively.

The commission then asked questions on the following topics

- Budget for the 4 contracts funded by Southwark Council; Processes and working relationship with Southwark Council; Areas of Southwark contracts and St. Giles trust which provide the most fruitful outcomes
- Career development in schools for young people with special needs; process for young people St. Giles and young offenders with special needs looking for employment; employment opportunities and hurdles faced
- Council definition of progression for better work and ring fencing employment and placement opportunities;

With regards to budgets for the 4 lot contracts in the report and working processes of Southwark Works with St. Giles and also areas where it would provide most fruitful results; the commission agreed that these questions be best put to the author of the report, Carleigh Grogan, Camberwell Skills & Employment Manager, St. Giles Trust in an email for a response.

Russ informed the commission that there is always a need for more caseworkers and also that there have been successes in other outreach programmes within St. Giles, however the problematic cases have been heavily reliant on education and training support service as it's the most experienced and critical to its success.

Russ explained to the commission that career development in schools lacks

engagement with young people with special needs on career guidance and aspirations, and also that the focus should be on the immediate future plan for young people rather than long term career goals. Young people with special needs have become dis-enfranchised in society due to lack of social interactions during Covid and unattainable aspirations influenced by the internet.

The commission learned from Russ that there are employment opportunities in the job market, however employer expectations are normally for potential candidates to be able to do the job from day one, which in the case of young people with special needs does not work. St. Giles invests a lot in education and career development training to bring such individuals up to speed to apply for those jobs. St. Giles does not follow a school training format with regards to timings and supports young people throughout their employment, as and when needed.

Russ informed the commission that he is unaware whether any progression for better work and ring-fencing jobs and placements has been explored by senior officers of the council and St. Giles trust. However, St. Giles does refer individual cases to the monitoring officers. St. Giles trust actively track percentage of young people with special need in employment within the contractual relationship with the council.

The Chair then suggested making recommendations around the following points

- Council ring-fencing employment and work placement opportunities for residents
- Better work progression
- Review of the Tri-Borough partnership that existed pre-pandemic.
- Employers to provide more entry level work

## **6. UPDATE ON ST MARY MAGDALENE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL AND KINTORE WAY NURSERY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE.**

The Chair updated the commission on her discussions with St Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School (SMMS) and Kintore Way Nursery School (KW)

- With regards to SMMS, nursery has been advertised and scheduled to start in January 2024 and discussions with the diocese are ongoing with requirements for the nursery
- With regards to KW, meetings took place with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) teachers and officers on 23 November 2023 on SEND strategy; Resource based provisions discussions have taken place and recommendations' produced have been sent to Anna Chiva Head of SEND, Southwark Council.; wider discussions around under 5 SEND provisions have also taken place, however no progress on piloting a resource based provision.

The commission then heard from Councillor Jasmine Ali and Alasdair Smith on St Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School and Kintore Way Nursery School on the

following points

- Consultation on SMMS has been paused to achieve more desirable outcomes
- On KW, meeting Chair of Governors who is committed to balancing the budget, meetings with Unions, Headteachers, staff, children and parents
- Positive feedback from parents on discussions; Impact of falling rolls on funding for high (45%) SEND provisions nursery such as KW; Budget deficit issues-letter written to MP Gillian Keegan
- Cross Party campaign for the issue of falling rolls, budget deficits and funding
- Southwark Council already contributed £550k for funding KW budget deficit also includes a 5 year budget recovery plan
- Government announcement of funding of £0.5m for education and a substantial amount for the benefit of KW nursery, however to be ratified by cabinet in coming weeks
- Letter to Martin Wilkinson, Chief Operating Officer NHS, for children with SEND and for increasing EHCP; subsequent visits to and meetings at KW with Martin, Alasdair and Cllr Ali for discussions on SEND.

The commission then asked questions on the following points

- 15 redundancies at KW would result in a loss of under 5 SEND provision for children at the nursery, incurring a higher cost for parents in early years and even higher costs for schools in late years; exploring the options for a pilot in resource based provision
- Lack of communication with SMMS and clarification on pausing consultation; Chair of governors driving the balancing of budget; loss of SEND skills and expertise with redundancies at KW (low-paid high skilled staff).

Cllr Ali informed the commission that it's not just KW that is facing budget issues, Ann Bernadt Nursery School is another example of a nursery undergoing consultation on amalgamation. Discussions are on-going with regards to resource based provisions in nurseries. Cllr Ali also clarified that KW is not closing but undergoing restructuring and redundancies whilst there are nurseries that are closing or being amalgamated.

Councillor Ali explained to the commission that SMMS consultation has been paused so that the diocese could look at possible amalgamations. The budget deficit for SMMS is £0.5m and this will keep accruing over time, there is a need for a budget recovery plan and efforts are being made to establish this with the Headteachers and the Chair of governors. Currently some of the funding for SMMS is obtained through the town hall.

Alasdair informed the commission that the commission that schools are responsible for their own budget according to the law and also that the funding from Department for Education (DfE) is provided on the basis that it would be

negotiated between the council and the schools. Furthermore, children with special needs fall under protected characteristics and it would be unlawful for them to be refused special needs education and training.

The commission then asked questions on the following themes

- Criteria's that make KW eligible to receive a significant amount within £0.5m of DfE funding when compared to other nurseries
- Learnings from lack of communications with SMMS about closure/amalgamation
- Budgetary considerations for provisions of SEND children Under 5 in nurseries
- Balancing budgets in schools long term and short term; and how they can be replicated throughout the borough

The commission learned from Alasdair that the Council has a responsibility to deal with all nurseries that have a budget deficit not just KW. All schools in a budget deficit will be considered for financial aid and also all budgetary decisions are discussed in the schools forum. The number of schools in budget deficit has gone down from 24 to 12 schools. DfE are paying £20m on the basis that councils invest better in schools with regards to funding in SEND.

Alasdair explained to the commission that maintained nursery schools have economy of scale and injection of funding from DfE. Dulwich School is an example of maintained school who have managed their financial difficulties.

The Chair then suggested recommendations on the following topics

- Overview of nursery budgets and financial issues cross referenced with their SEND provisions
- Councillors and community members who are aware of schools and nurseries not getting support to contact the commission.
- Distribution (criteria) of DfE funding amongst schools; surplus budget schools.
- Following schools that are having funding issues

## **7. EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE PLAN (EHCP) PROCESS, DEMAND AND TIMELINESS.**

The commission then heard from Anna, Michael and Alasdair on the following points of discussion

- Challenges facing the EHCP plans in London; retention in London; IT and database issues; utilising available date for operational issues.
- EHCP backlog issues resolved by May 2024; support to families at an early stage with SEND.
- Updating systems with regards to modern needs of education especially

with SEND and EHCP systems; better data visualisation.

The commission then asked questions on the following themes

- EHCP and SEND-IF funding in nurseries and schools per child with SEND
- Schools need for EHCP funding and councils trying to reduce the number of EHCP's (finite amount of monies)
- £85k spent on tribunal processes (EHCP) in years 2016-2017, and £135k spent on tribunals in 2017-2018 and £265k in 2018-2019
- One year wait for reception schools to get EHCP

Anna informed the commission that SEND pupils are assessed thoroughly and funding is agreed proportionally to the needs and it also goes through an annual review process by the council. The council funds any needs over the £6k dedicated schools grant for high needs pupils. Southwark and other councils are looking to support children with higher needs and discussions; and are taking place to provide pupil with special needs at an earlier stage. Southwark council is working on engaging with pupils, parents, Headteachers and schools to make better provisions for special needs.

Anna explained to the commission that EHCP tribunal cases are related to therapy provision, broader factors like residential provision and disagreements with parents about local provisions. National tribunal EHCP cases have a 93% success rates, however, tribunals have a lot of cases and the issues are diverse. There have also been meetings and mapping exercises with schools and head teachers on timelines for EHCPs' in reception.

The commission then asked questions on the following themes

- Reasons for the rise in tribunals in Southwark since 2021 to significantly lower levels in other boroughs in London since; EHCP copy and paste practices to help speed up EHCPs' in Southwark
- Pathway for early years support with SEND pupils under 5 years

Alasdair agreed with the commission that EHCP provisions need to be a lot better within the borough and officers are working to fix these issues, whilst trying to provide EHCP's to pupils.

Michael explained to the commission that partnership workforce is helping to identify pupil needs early in their life including engaging with parents.

Anna explained to the commission that there are on-going trials to provide EHCP funding in early years, however it need to be targeted approach as needs vary. The councils' are looking at modelling different types of interventions.



## 8. WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

The commissions discussed adding the following points for the work programme

- EHCP update on timelines and processes
- Funding and budget deficit with other nurseries
- East street market renovation
- Update on KW and SMMS amalgamation/closures

Meeting ended at 9:17 pm

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**

<b>Item No.</b> 8	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 30 January 2024	<b>Decision Taker:</b> Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills & Business
<b>Report title:</b>		Report to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Danny Edwards, Head of Economy	

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission note the contents of the report.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This report provides an update on the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills & Business portfolio for the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission meeting on 30 January 2024.

### KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

#### Economic Strategy 2023-2030

3. Our new Economic Strategy 2023-30 was adopted in December 2023. The strategy puts forward a vision for a more inclusive local economy that works for everyone, with a focus on narrowing inequalities and raising prosperity across all parts of the economy and in every neighbourhood, summarised as 'A fairer greener, more resilient economy'. This vision for Southwark's economy in 2030 is developed further under three headline outcomes:
  - A high growth, low emission economy
  - An economy with opportunity for all
  - An economy of good work
4. The vision will be supported through eight delivery themes, under which sit the headline actions the council will work with partners to focus on. These are:
  - Investment and growth
  - A greener economy
  - Thriving high streets
  - Inclusive neighbourhoods
  - Extending local ownership
  - Southwark's Youth Deal
  - Good work for all
  - Skills for now and the future

5. The strategy was developed with the involvement of resident and business communities and strategic partners. We will work with these partners to develop a full delivery plan. This will reflect activity already underway under each delivery theme, programme planned activity yet to commence and identify where additional resources will be required to meet the objectives in full.

### **Southwark Skills Plan**

6. Southwark's Skills Delivery Plan was adopted in October 2023. It sets out a programme for delivering the shared priorities of the Southwark Skills Partnership over the next two years, to 2025. It builds on the ambitions of a fairer, greener and more resilient economy as set out in Southwark's Economic Strategy 2023-30, and supports the council's broader ambitions as articulated in the Council Delivery Plan and Southwark 2030.
7. The Skills Delivery Plan was developed by the Southwark Skills Partnership, formed of skills and employment support providers, large employers, business groups and council teams. The partnership is responsible for the delivery of the actions set out in the delivery plan, and ensuring it continues to respond to emerging skills needs.
8. The Skills Delivery Plan has nine themes that align with broader council ambitions, including a focus on key sectors of our economy. There are six sector-focussed themes:
  - Life sciences
  - Digital
  - Green
  - Health and social care
  - Creative and cultural
  - Hospitality

And three cross-cutting:

- Apprenticeships
  - Careers information, advice and guidance
  - Essential skills
9. Work with partners is now underway to deliver on the priorities identified within the skills plan.

### **Southwark Construction Skills Centre**

10. Since its inception in 2016, the SCSC has proven to be hugely successful in supporting Southwark residents into construction related employment and apprenticeships. Originally based at Elephant Park, the SCSC relocated in July 2021 to Canada Water.
11. The council has a MoU with British Land regarding the ongoing governance on the SCSC. A Board (chaired by the cabinet member for Jobs, Skills and

Business) has oversight of the management and performance of the SCSC.

12. Some notable outputs and achievements from the SCSC to date (Q2 23/24) include:
- 6,475 Southwark residents trained
  - 12,000+ people trained in total
  - 1,800+ jobs and apprenticeships for local residents
  - 2,231 existing Southwark construction workers upskilled
  - 6,000+ local school children engaged

### **Green Jobs and Skills**

13. A Green New Deal for Southwark is a headline commitment of our Climate Change Action Plan and the creation of 2,000 green jobs is a commitment within the Council Delivery Plan 2022-26. We are on track to meet this target with 1,299 green jobs created as at Q2 23/24.
14. Actions supporting green jobs and skills in Southwark are as follows:
- Delivering a Green Skills Hub with London South Bank University under the Mayors Academy Programme, which is creating new qualifications, apprenticeships and job outcomes and raise awareness of training pathways into new low-carbon jobs.
  - In partnership with Lambeth and Lewisham, appointed a shared post to drive local efforts to create green skills and support local people into new green jobs.
  - Researching the feasibility of and business case for additional local training facilities for low-carbon skills.
  - Exploring support for local SMEs and sole traders to gain accreditation that will enable them to secure work on housing retrofit and low-carbon energy projects.
  - Developed a monitoring framework across council services working on carbon reduction programmes to quantify job creation, agree measurement and promote opportunities for Southwark residents.
  - Cross-borough work through Central London Forward to create a shared definition of 'green jobs' and built knowledge of the green growth opportunities and skills gaps across central London.

### **Hospitality**

15. In September 2019, a hospitality skills study was jointly commissioned with the boroughs of Lambeth, Lewisham and Wandsworth. This piece of work, led by Southwark, was identified as a priority within the then Southwark Skills Strategy, which had noted the large skills and recruitment gap in the prominent local hospitality sector and identified an opportunity to better align provision with employers' needs.
16. The skills study was completed in January 2020 and the final report made several recommendations, most notably the development of hospitality skills provision that would better meet employer needs and improved access to good quality job opportunities for local residents.

17. Since then, several locations for a physical Hospitality Skills Centre have been considered. However, due to significant capital costs with a physical site and a lack of appetite from hospitality skills providers to operate a centre in its entirety as intended, including a public facing restaurant for added real-life experience, the solution to address hospitality skills gaps has been reviewed. To this end, a virtual hub and spoke model is being explored to act primarily as a co-ordination role between different stakeholders, relying on existing training infrastructure (spokes) to deliver successful skills interventions. This option seeks to mirror the ambitions of the Mayor's Academies Hospitality Hub programme but with a clear focus on Southwark residents and the capability to provide support in key areas to tackle the hospitality skills gap challenge more effectively.

### **SC1 – Life Sciences**

18. Local health partners together with Lambeth and Southwark Councils have come together to establish SC1, a new health science district for South Central London to deliver high impact innovation, driving improvements in health and wealth both locally and globally. The arrival of new businesses and employers, along with increased employment space through new development, offers a significant opportunity to create a high volume of new jobs for local residents.
19. Founded by King's Health Partners (King's College London, King's College Hospital, South London and the Maudsley, and Guy's and St Thomas'), Lambeth and Southwark councils, and the Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation, SC1 is a place based initiative to support inclusive growth of the life science economy in south central London. Their vision is to *create a Life Science District in the centre of London, dedicated to scientific and medical innovation to improve health for people locally and globally.*
20. SC1 is overseen by a Board and an employment and skills sub-group of the Board has been created to put a strategy in place to pathways are put in place to ensure job, training and enterprise opportunities are available to local residents in Lambeth and Southwark.
21. Research commissioned by the boroughs sets out the potential scale and scope for employment, skills and enterprise delivery within SC1, along with a set of recommendations for securing these opportunities for local residents. The sub-group is in the process of developing an employment and skills action plan informed by the research, and will be taking a draft version of the plan to the SC1 Board in March 2024.

### **Supporting residents into employment**

22. The Council Delivery Plan 2022-2026 includes a target to support 2,500 Southwark residents from priority cohorts into work. As of Q2 23/24 a cumulative total of 1,237 residents from priority cohorts have been supported into jobs thus far during the Council Delivery Plan period.

## Southwark Works

23. Southwark Works is a network of employment support providers targeting a variety of priority cohorts and directly contracted by the council. Formed of specialist providers, the programme seeks to reach and support hard to reach groups into the labour market. Southwark Works was successfully recommissioned in 2023 for another 4 year period to 2027 and is now comprised of three elements:
24. A network co-ordinator directly contracted by the council, responsible for management of the network of employment support providers; service and data quality assurance; operation of the customer facing hub office; developing, managing and delivering service plans; such as a service wide Outreach and Engagement Plan; triage and assessment of clients and referral to a network provider; and skills training.
25. Southwark Works Framework providers who form the Southwark Works Network, delivering employment support to clients based on their underlying needs and barriers to work, across 11 contracts for distinct priority cohorts, and who share the use of a hub office in the borough, managed by the Network Coordinator, from which intensive, in-person support is provided to clients.
26. The Employer Relationship Management contract is a new service co-designed with the network providers to improve the ability of Southwark Works to sustain long-term relationships with Southwark employers. GoodPeople have now been commissioned to facilitate more targeted approaches for employers to connect with residents and put additional mechanisms in place to ensure coherence between what employers need and the skills offer available via Southwark Works.

## Apprenticeships

27. In the Council Delivery Plan we are committed to creating 2,000 new apprenticeships. From April 2022 – Sept 2023 the Council has supported 818 apprenticeships, exceeding our target to date of 574.
28. This achievement is largely due to the growth in the number of Southwark businesses supported to create apprenticeships from our partnership with the Passmore Centre at LSBU. Further work has commenced with LSBU to develop their strategy to engage even greater numbers of Southwark residents.
29. Our apprenticeship portfolio consists of a range of active work-streams cutting across the Council, including:
  - Apprenticeship Levy: we are continuing to partner with Workwhile who offer a free brokerage service linking SME's with Levy payers to make the most of the 25% Levy Transfer. We are also continuing to explore what a Southwark Levy Transfer would look like, bringing together larger organisations from across the Borough to enable greater distribution of funds with LSBU close to being on-board.

- Southwark Council Apprenticeship scheme – we have a successful internal Council scheme supporting 83 people into apprenticeships since April 2022.
  - Construction Skills Centre – the centre is an employer-led, community focused training and apprenticeship provider, and despite challenges within the wider construction industry has supported 122 apprenticeships.
  - Section 106: we routinely monitor our S106 regulations and continue to receive a consistent number of apprenticeships, contributing 90 to our overall target.
30. We are currently on track to deliver our CDP commitments. However, the wider apprenticeship system is facing challenges particularly with starts decreasing over the last few years. We are developing an Action Plan to build upon our apprenticeship portfolio to address these challenges across a range of priority areas:
- Pre-Apprenticeship support
  - Apprenticeships in schools
  - Social value in major council contracts

### **Paid Internships**

31. The council delivery plan 2022-26 contains a renewed commitment to “Create 250 paid internships for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.”
32. In line with the Strategy approved by Cabinet in 2019, the paid internship programme continues to be delivered principally via three schemes:
- schools,
  - undergraduates/graduates,
  - Council.
33. Through a commissioned provider - Career Ready - the schools scheme supports sixth formers from four schools across the borough to access support such as mentoring and masterclasses and ultimately secure paid summer internships at a range of employers.
34. For the undergraduate/graduate scheme, we have partnered with Gradcore Ltd, a social enterprise who provide a programme of personalised career support to help eligible university students and recent graduates to develop key skills to enhance employability and secure paid internships and graduate jobs.
35. The council’s own internship scheme has been in place since 2019 and continues to offer young people opportunities within different teams across the organisation. Recruitment is cohort based and placements generally last 12 weeks with a structured programme of development to support the interns.
36. Since 2022, the paid internship programme has created 142 paid

internships for young people and is on track to deliver the 250 CDP target by 2026.

### **Town Centres and High Streets**

37. Thriving and safe town centres and high streets are a key part of our new Economic Strategy (2023-2030) and are an integral part of the council's wider Neighbourhoods programme.
38. Ambitions for our town centres include:
  - Protecting employment space and attracting new businesses investment.
  - Using planning powers and our role as a landlord to protect the role of markets and town centres, while promoting healthier high streets.
  - Supporting the recovery of the hospitality, night-time and cultural economy while also recognising and addressing health and community safety concerns.
  - Promoting safer high streets and encourage businesses to sign up to good practice such as the Women's Night Safety Charter.
  - Encouraging businesses to switch to zero-pollution delivery vehicles, especially in town centres with poor air quality.
39. Governance arrangements for a whole council approach have been implemented, including a Director level group of officers that meet regularly with strategic oversight of all cross-council services, activities, engagement and other work aimed at supporting and revitalising our high streets and town centres. To help standardise our efforts across the borough, whilst also acknowledging that each town centre has a unique identity and may require a more targeted neighbourhood level approach, individual Town Centre action plans have been co-developed for Peckham, Camberwell, Elephant and Castle/Walworth and Canada Water, with lead officers appointed for each.
40. The Town Centre action plans are currently being adapted so that they are fully accessible to the public and available on our website for engagement and feedback.

### **Thriving High Streets Fund (THSF)**

41. As part of our commitment to support our high streets to adapt and respond to shifting footfall and shopping patterns, the THSF was launched in Spring 2023.
42. Funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, over £240,000 grant funding was awarded in Round One to eleven successful projects aimed at supporting local businesses and increasing footfall in our town centres.
43. Round Two of THSF is set to launch in February 2024 with a remaining budget of c£216k to be used for projects that meet criteria under two or more of the following themes:



- A Greener Southwark
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Healthy and Safe High Streets
- Cultural / Community Events
- Southwark Stands Together

### **Southwark Pioneers Fund**

44. The Southwark Pioneers Fund (SPF) was originally developed in 2019 to generate inclusive growth by supporting the creation or scale-up of micro commercial and social enterprises (including revenue-raising charities). However, just as the SPF was launched, covid-19 struck and the £2m budget was necessarily repurposed into a Business Hardship Fund, helping local businesses in the period before central government grants funds were forthcoming.
45. Subsequent to this, the full SPF fund has now been reinstated with the Business Hardship Fund expenditure covered instead through Covid-19 emergency funding. As a consequence, a refreshed SPF Delivery Strategy was agreed in February 2022.
46. Since its original inception the economic climate has changed significantly (covid-19, Brexit, Climate Emergency, and Southwark Stands Together), making it particularly important that we support local enterprises to build resilience, sustain and grow. To deliver these aims and ambitions, the refreshed SPF has been split into four themes:
  - **Start-up Programme** - Enterprise support for start-ups and aspiring entrepreneurs.
  - **Growth Programme** - Enterprise support for later-stage enterprises focused on growth.
  - **Green Programme** - Support for enterprises to decarbonise and reduce their environmental impact.
  - **Social and Community Programme** - support for social and community enterprises led by women or people from Black or minoritised backgrounds.
47. Both the start-up and growth contracts commenced in July 2022. Trampoline is delivering the Start-up Programme for anyone with a business idea, through to early-stage start-ups. Hatch Enterprise is delivering the Growth Programme for anyone with an established business looking to scale and take it to the next level.
48. To date (Q3 23-24), 162 start-ups and budding entrepreneurs have been supported via the main cohort programme with many more offered tailored IAG to see if starting a business is right for them. In addition, £45k grant funding has been awarded to 18 enterprises to help them to develop their business ideas, products and services.
49. On the growth programme, 49 enterprises have completed an in-depth Accelerator and 12 of these have received combined grant funding of £112k

to help their businesses to grow. Over 100 entrepreneurs have also been support via the Community offer, which includes 1-1 consultations and a range of online workshops and talks.

50. For the Green Programme, ReLondon have been commissioned to support 36 high street businesses to trial circular economy business models to tackle those hard-to-abate consumption-based emissions. Approximately 15 high street businesses will receive grant support to implement a new, circular initiative in their business, either by procuring products/services from circular innovators or by developing products from scratch. The green programme will be delivered from April 2024 to Feb 2025.
51. The Social and Community Programme is being delivered via the **Local Access Programme (LAP)**, which is a partnership of local stakeholders<sup>1</sup> with a shared vision of a *collaborative, sustainable and diverse social economy, which delivers positive social impact and a better future for all Southwark's residents*.
52. The LAP has received £900k grant funding from the Local Access Foundation to support social enterprises in Southwark and the council has match-funded this with £500k to bring the total enterprise support budget to £1.4m. The LAP intends to support Southwark social enterprises and charities at various stages over three years.
53. In addition to enterprise support, the LAP has been provisionally allocated £4.4m (£2.625m repayable capital, £1.85m grant capital) from Big Society Capital to invest in the social economy. Plans are being developed to make best use of this investment, including a Retail Asset Fund, which would aim to provide affordable working and trading spaces for local social organisations through an asset trust that will outlast the funding programme to achieve the legacy that is at the heart of the Southwark Partnership.

### **Southwark's Living Wage Unit**

54. The Council Plan 2022-26 includes a commitment to establish a new Southwark Living Wage Unit, tasked with doubling the number of Southwark employers who pay at least the London Living Wage to all their staff. The target is have 498 Living Wage Employers by March 2026.
55. As at Q2 2023/24 we are making good progress with 320 accredited employers. We have seen good growth in the number of Living Wage Employers in the Borough in recent months, however challenges are posed by the significant rate rise from £11.95 to £13.15 per hour in November 2023.
56. Actions delivered as part of the LWU so far include:
  - A new grant scheme to incentivise new accreditations from Southwark employers.

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<sup>1</sup> Renaisi (accountable body), School of Social Entrepreneurs, Do It Now Now, plus individuals and social entrepreneurs.

- Dedicated officer resource to delivering the programme and support businesses.
- Secured Living Wage Place recognition for the second time. One of only of two London Boroughs to have this status.
- Established a Living Wage Officer group to ensure best practice across the council.
- The Southwark Living Wage Place Action Group continues to be effective and motivated with 18 organisations represented from across the borough and different sectors including developers, trade unions, universities, business improvement districts, charities and employers big and small. The group meets quarterly and collaborates between meetings.
- Successful Living Wage Week (w/c 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023). Increased interest and number of accredited Living Wage Employers.
- Increasing communications activity using resident and business newsletters, social media and partner organisations.
- Commissioned case study film with London College of Communication.

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Danny Edwards, Head of Economy	
<b>Report Author</b>	Danny Edwards, Head of Economy	
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List other officers here		
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