

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 17 September 2021	<b>Decision Taker:</b> Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Town Centres
<b>Report title:</b>		High Street Recovery Fund (Part 1)	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Head of Chief Executive's Office	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Town Centres allocates £238,124 of grant funding from The High Street Recovery Fund. The projects recommended for award are set out in Appendix 1.
2. That the Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Town Centres notes the applicants listed in Appendix 2, who are being recommended for support from council officers in order to develop their applications further. An additional report for funding considerations with regards to these projects will be presented once the development is complete.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The aim of the High Street Recovery Fund is to support high street renewal and recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, aligned with Southwark's Economic Renewal Plan.
4. The COVID-19 crisis has threatened to exacerbate pre-existing challenges faced by our town centres and high streets. The council has therefore made their protection and revitalisation a priority. As part of this work it was agreed to rebrand and refocus the previously known High Street Challenge as the High Street Recovery Fund.
5. In its previous form, The High Street Challenge, round one launched in February 2014, followed by another six rounds between September 2014 and September 2018. To date, fifty-six projects have been awarded funding to a total value of £1,062,835.
6. In January 2018, an evaluation of The High Street Challenge was carried out in order to understand its successes and highlight opportunities to improve its impact. This evaluation combined with an assessment of the needs our high streets and town centres in the current economic climate informed the development of this latest iteration of the programme.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. This report deals with the allocation of grants to successful projects for this round of the high street recovery fund. A total of £238,124 is being awarded through this IDM report.
8. 11 projects are being recommended for funding from the High Street Recovery Fund, further details of which are included in Appendix 1.
9. One project is being recommended for further development, which is included in Appendix 2. They will receive detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement before being reconsidered for funding opportunities at a later date.
10. Applicants were asked to consider a number of specific key objectives, including:
  - Supporting town centre recovery following the pandemic
  - Producing sustainable benefits to the local economy beyond the funding period
  - Introducing new or creative approaches to improving Southwark's high streets and town centres
  - Adding to and aligning with existing initiatives in the proposed area
  - Building the capacity of local businesses or groups
  - Making our high streets and town centres more inclusive, particularly for low income and Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
  - Benefiting a significant number of local businesses and not disproportionately benefit a few
  - Attracting match funding from other organisations or crowd funding
11. Under these objectives, a set of six broad themes were identified to define the scope of the activities that can be commissioned through the fund. Applicants were advised to ensure that projects align with two or more of these themes - with one of the two being Southwark Stands Together:
  - **Healthy and Safe High Street:** Activities that support the safe reopening of high streets, and make them safe and welcoming places to visit.
  - **Cultural / Community Events:** Activities that will celebrate and acknowledge diversity and the unique identity and heritage of our town centres, help to foster a sense of social cohesion and promote town centres as the heart of our diverse communities.
  - **Vibrant, Resilient and Connected High Streets:** Activities that will 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:** Activities that will support inclusive, greener economic growth in our town centres and high streets.
  - **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.
  - **Southwark Stands Together:** All applicants will be required to demonstrate how their project will incorporate the ambitions of Southwark Stands Together; increasing diversity, reducing inequalities and tackling racism.
12. The successful projects will help to bring people back to our high streets, support local businesses, safeguard jobs and stimulate activity in our town centres. Furthermore, the activities of successful projects will act as a catalyst for economic growth by attracting and leveraging funding from other sources for future activities that will continue to redefine Southwark's high street offer to local residents and visitors.
  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's town centres, and an assessment of the likely impact of the project on local economic renewal and growth.

## Consultation

14. A range of internal and external stakeholders were consulted on the purpose and scope of the High Street Recovery Fund, leading to agreement on the themes listed above. Internal stakeholders included Environment, Public Health, Culture, Regeneration and Planning Policy.
15. To ensure we have a consistent, cross-council approach to our overarching town centres and high streets work, including the development of the High Street Recovery Fund, we have worked with officers across the council. Governance arrangements are in place, through which the work is reported to the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Business and Town Centres.
16. Chaired by the Director for Strategy & Economy, a cross council Senior Officer Group meets on a monthly basis to discuss key issues, monitor activities and oversee the development and implementation of action plans for individual town centres.
17. In addition, we are working with nominated Town Centre Lead Officers in the development of these action plans. The action plans will track current activity, include current challenges and opportunities, as well as noting resourcing implications. Furthermore, the plans are being developed in partnership with ward members and key local stakeholders through local Task Forces.

18. The evaluation of rounds one to seven of the High Street Challenge carried out in 2018 also captured feedback from funding recipients and council officers across departments, which also informed the development of the High Street Recovery Fund.
19. At the assessment stage, the evaluation panel consulted relevant colleagues such as those responsible for Markets, Highways, Licensing, Culture and Events, Regeneration, and Public Health.

### **Policy implications**

20. The refreshed Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2017-22 was adopted in December 2016 having secured council-wide endorsements. Support to businesses is central to two of its strategic objectives:
  - **Business:** A growth borough, where business thrives and prospers.
  - **Thriving town centres and high streets:** Dynamic, diverse, digital centres that are great places to visit, spend time and enjoy.
21. The High Street Recovery Fund will support the delivery of the Economic Wellbeing Strategy through the opportunities presented by the fund to harness the energy of businesses and other imaginative and enterprising people or groups, in order to breathe new life into our town centres and use innovative approaches to stimulate footfall and customer spend.
22. The Southwark Economic Renewal Plan was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and it captured all council activities aimed at reducing and mitigating the economic impacts of the crisis. The activities are set out under four key themes – employment & skills, business, wellbeing, and high streets and town centres. The High Street Recovery Fund falls primarily under the last of the four themes, forming part of a cross-council approach to supporting our town centres and high streets in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, but it was designed in such a way that its outcomes will cut across all the themes of the plan.
23. The High Street Recovery Fund has been designed to support the ambitions of the council's Southwark Stands Together Programme, with Southwark Stands Together included as one of the fund's six key themes and the only theme for which alignment was a mandatory requirement for applicants.
24. In line with the council's emerging Climate Change Strategy, all applications were also required to ensure that their proposal would not have any detrimental impact on the environment.

### **Community impact statement**

25. 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).

26. 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 Recovery Fund, as the programme intends to improve and develop participation from all sections of the community 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, linking directly to the council's Southwark Stands Together initiative. 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.
27. Care has also been taken in development of the prospectus to ensure the accessibility of the fund for Southwark-based businesses, community groups, educational establishments and voluntary sector organisations.
28. 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.

### **Financial Implications**

29. The full cost of the funding recommendation for this project will be met by £84,124 High Streets Funding secured as part of the New Homes Bonus plus surplus of £154,000 Additional Restrictions Grant funds. All other costs will be met within existing resources.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

#### **Director of Law and Governance**

30. The cabinet member is empowered to allocate funding from the High Street Recovery Fund under the delegation set out in Part 3D of Southwark's constitution. This delegates budgetary decisions about the agreement of significant programmes to individual cabinet members in relation to their areas of responsibility.
31. The Localism Act 2011 gives councils a general power of competence whereby they have power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This power can be used even if legislation already exists that allows a local

authority to do the same thing. This includes the power to give financial assistance to any person. The allocation of funding under the HSRF is therefore permitted by the 2011 Act.

32. The cabinet member should consider the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The council must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The report author has demonstrated how those duties are relevant to this decision at paragraphs 24 to 27 above. The cabinet member is advised to consider these paragraphs and the council's duties.
33. The decision has been identified as a key decision and can be treated as such on the basis that it has a significant impact on Southwark's communities.

#### **Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (CE18/011)**

34. This report is requesting the Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Town Centres to allocate £238,124 of grant funding from The High Street Recovery Fund. The projects recommended for award are set out in Appendix 1.
35. This report is requesting the Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Town Centres to note the applicants listed in Appendix 2, who are being recommended for support from council officers in order to develop their applications further. An additional report for funding considerations with regards to these projects will be presented once the development is complete.
36. The Strategic director of finance and governance notes the financial implications and understands that the cost implications of this report will be funded from the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) approved by Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and High Streets Funding secured as part of the New Homes Bonus.
37. Staffing and any other costs connected with this report will be contained within existing divisional revenue budgets.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
<a href="#">Economic Wellbeing Strategy</a>	Strategy and Partnerships, Local Economy Team, 160 Tooley Street	Laura Ahern 0207 525 3233

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	High Street Recovery Fund – Projects recommended for funding.
Appendix 2	High Street Recovery Fund – Projects recommended for further development.

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Stephen Gaskell, Head of Chief Executive's Office	
<b>Report Author</b>	Laura Ahern, Strategy Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	10 September 2021	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	15 September 2021	

## APPENDIX 1

### High Street Recovery Fund – Projects recommended for funding

Organisation	Description	Value of the grant award rec'd	Area
Peddle My Wheels	<i>“A new scheme called ‘OurBike’ which is the UK’s first e-cargo bike share scheme using smart technology - think Zipcars but for e-cargo bikes. The funding will help set up the project and run it for two years upon which time it becomes self-financing.”</i>	£21,080	Lordship Lane, East Dulwich
Elephant and Castle Business Forum – Urban Elephant	<i>“Urban Elephant is a cross-cultural festival of contemporary street culture. Using creative interventions to connect the old and new high streets of East Street, Walworth Road, Sayer Street, Elephant Park, Castle Square and London Road. Animating and place making the Elephant and Walworth as vibrant high streets for the future.”</i>	£24,994	Walworth/Elephant & Castle
SE5 Forum for Camberwell	<i>“Building on the success of delivering the Camberwell.Life love local campaign, the Camberwell Identity Group application proposes a programme that supports Camberwell Town Centre businesses, attracts residents and visitors to visit the town centre, and enables local enterprises to support COVID-19 recovery and keep our economy going.”</i>	£19,000	Camberwell
Tree Shepherd	<i>“Our project seeks to create four market-style events for small black and women-owned businesses within Canada Water to drive revenue and attract people to return to the high street and town centre.”</i>	£22,128	Canada Water
Better Bankside	<i>“Borough High Street: Inns and Yards This project will creatively transform two historic inns and yards, improving access to Borough High Street by:</i>	£25,000	Bankside

Organisation	Description	Value of the grant award rec'd	Area
	<i>Creating a new public space on Mermaid Court, through implementing pedestrianisation and delivering greening, supporting increased footfall and dwell time. Implementing wayfinding and heritage interpretation within White Hart Yard &amp; Mermaid Court."</i>		
Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST)	<i>"A free one-day community street festival featuring live performance, street games, sports and arts workshops and community, business and food stalls. It will reunite local residents, contribute to and strengthen local resilience and recovery by championing our local area and encouraging renewed and lasting engagement with communal spaces, local facilities, businesses and organisations."</i>	£7,747	Bankside
Peckham Platform Ltd.	<i>"Waum Fi Dem is a creative project designed to re-connect Peckham's community to its public realm and revitalise our high streets post-Covid. In Summer 2022, a festival centred on Peckham Square will collaborate with communities to celebrate Peckham's unique identity, engage communities in creativity, and safely drive footfall to our area."</i>	£24,825	Peckham
University of the Arts London	<i>"A business support project, aimed at improving digital marketing among businesses in Southwark, by providing access to innovative techniques designed to promote consumer reach and increase customer conversion, through the mediums of sustainable thinking, knowledge exchange and intergenerational relationship building in the E&amp;C community among businesses, residents, students and employees."</i>	£18,350	Walworth/Elephant & Castle

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Value of the grant award rec'd</b>	<b>Area</b>
Rice Marketing	<i>“Work with a network of 40 food convenience retailers in High Streets in the most deprived areas of the borough to recover and grow their sales by improving the store offer, range and environment to better meet the needs of the local community and to ensure a diverse and healthier food offer.”</i>	£25,000	Camberwell Green/South Bermondsey/Peckham and Nunhead/Faraday/Old Kent Road
Deft.Space and London South Bank University	<i>“Our project combines cultural experience with support to become more sustainable for small businesses along Rye Lane. It will celebrate Rye Lane’s unique identity, its entrepreneurship and history through the stories of its communities, whilst also looking to its future through research and support provided by London South Bank University.”</i>	£25,000	Peckham
The Blue Bermondsey	<i>“Blue Bermondsey - New Town Centre Business Hub - Building on the success of our HSC 7 project, we unearthed a pool of talented local entrepreneurs who are desperate for affordable workspace to grow their business and sell and promote their products and services. We want to offer these spaces in a railway arch and offer support to trade on the Blue Market.”</i>	£25,000	Bermondsey
<b>Total funding</b>		<b>£238,124</b>	

**Appendix 2 – High Street Recovery Fund – Projects recommended for further development**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Area</b>
Brandon 1 Tenants & Residents Association	<i>“We want to improve the Maddock Way shopping parade on the landmark post-war Brandon Estate - develop a weekend farmers market, install plants &amp; street furniture &amp; public art, improve existing retail, increase footfall, and make the parade more functional for residents, by re-engineering the use of space.”</i>	Brandon Estate (Walworth)