

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 15 July 2015	Decision Taker: Cabinet Member for Employment, Business & Culture
Report title:		The High Street Challenge Round Three Grant Awards	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Strategy and Partnerships	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Employment Business & Culture allocates £31,264 of grant funding from The High Street Challenge. The projects recommended for award are set out in Appendix 1.
2. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Employment, Business & Culture notes the twelve further applicants listed in Appendix 2 which the evaluation panel is recommending for officer support in order to develop their applications further. An additional report with regards to these projects will be presented once the development is complete.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The aim of the High Street Challenge is to increase footfall and consumer spend in Southwark's High Streets and Town Centres as part of the delivery of Southwark's Economic Wellbeing Strategy. This will be achieved through the funding of a series of innovative, spatially-based projects over a two to three year period. Applications will be invited for funds to deliver new approaches to improving town centres as well as embedding and reinforcing more established activities.
4. Lessons learnt from the Community Restoration Fund (CRF) programme – which was established to support Southwark businesses and communities affected by the 2011 London disturbances – and previous rounds of the High Street Challenge, have helped to inform the development of this programme.
5. Round One of the High Street Challenge launched in February 2014, followed by Round Two in September 2014. To date twenty two projects have been funded to a total value of £348,445. Round Three of the High Street Challenge launched in March 2015 and closed on 29 of May 2015 with 26 applications received. The next call is planned for late 2015.
6. Two projects are being recommended for funding at this stage: Camberwell Arts have proposed a project that will link artists with local businesses to create artwork for shop fronts and diversify the offer from Camberwell businesses. The second project will be delivered by Advising London and offer legal advice to high street businesses in parts of Southwark, supporting the sustainability and long

term resilience of businesses and high streets in the borough.

7. Officer support will be on offer for the applicants listed in Appendix 2 who have presented strong and innovative ideas, in order to develop the practicality and management of those ideas before making recommendations for funding. These applicants will not be required to wait until the next round to resubmit their application unless the scope of the project changes. A separate IDM report will be submitted before the next round with funding recommendations for those who have been able to develop their ideas with officer support to the standard required for funding.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. The fund has been designed to respond to the range of challenges as well as the unique attributes of each of the town centres and high streets in Southwark. Applicants were required to demonstrate how their proposals met the following objectives:
 - Produce benefits beyond the funding period.
 - Introduce new approaches/models that have not previously existed in town centres.
 - Add to and align with existing initiatives in the proposed area.
 - Build the capacity of the local businesses or groups to accelerate economic growth beyond the funding period.
 - Bring together different parts of the local community and promote inclusivity.
9. Under these objectives a set of four broad themes have been identified to define the scope of the activities that can be commissioned as part of the fund. It is expected that successful projects will fit with more than one of these themes:
 - **Promotion:** Activities to promote and market the town centre/high street's offer in order to increase footfall and customer spend.
 - **Transformation:** Activities to attract new customers to the high street (or engage them for a longer period) through use of space and design.
 - **Diversification:** Activities to diversify the offer of the town centre / high street in a way that is likely to have an impact on footfall.
 - **Participation:** Activities to create new partnerships/networks or build the capacity of existing networks in a way that will strengthen the ability of the town centre/high street to create growth.
10. The funding allocation process is planned to comprise of three rounds for proposals for the High Street Challenge, which may change subject to funding allocations and other circumstances.
11. The funding allocation process has been designed to enable the staged funding of creative and innovative proposals to support the development of new ideas to be tested so that they can then attract other sources of funding. Applicants that have been awarded funding in this round will have the opportunity to seek additional funding for their projects in subsequent rounds of the High Street Challenge.
12. In arriving at the proposed funding allocations, the evaluation panel has taken

into consideration the scores achieved against the published criteria, the desire for a spread of projects across the borough, and an assessment of the likely impact of the project on local economic growth.

Consultation

13. A range of internal and external stakeholders were consulted on the purpose and scope of the fund. Internal stakeholders included Community Engagement, Health, Markets, Libraries Culture, Crime Prevention, Regeneration, Planning Policy, and Public Realm.
14. Business networks were consulted and asked to identify the main challenges facing their town centres/high streets and to suggest the types of initiatives that they believe would help local businesses to thrive. Additionally, lessons from other local authorities such as Brent, Croydon, Lewisham and Hackney have been incorporated where they have shared innovative approaches to Town Centre support. The consultation responses have also been linked to key recommendations from an extensive policy review.
15. Key themes emerging from consultation included:
 - A need for promotional activities that would drive footfall.
 - Opportunities for creative uses and activities that would diversify the offer on the high street and catch the attention of residents and visitors.
 - A need for smaller scale, local initiatives to build on existing assets and link them to larger scale regeneration processes.
 - The importance of partnership approaches, building capacity and encouraging wide-ranging engagement in town centre initiatives.
16. The information and suggestions gathered through consultation, along with recommendations from the policy review were brought together and used to develop a framework for the fund to address the main challenges being faced by town centres and high streets in Southwark.
17. At the assessment stage, the evaluation panel also consulted relevant colleagues such as those responsible for markets, events, culture, and regeneration. Comments were taken into consideration in order to arrive at a final decision.

Policy implications

18. The Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2012-20 was adopted in November 2012 having secured council-wide endorsements.

Support to businesses is central to two of its strategic objectives:

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

Ambition 3: Thriving town centres and high streets.

19. The High Street Challenge will support the delivery of the Economic Wellbeing Strategy through the opportunities presented by the fund to harness the energy of business and other imaginative and enterprising people or groups in order to breathe new life and ideas into town centres. The desired outputs and outcomes for the High Street Challenge set out in the prospectus are in line with the strategy in that they are focused around the use of innovative approaches to

stimulate footfall and customer spend, support self-sustaining business networks to flourish and engage with their local communities for mutual benefit and deliver activities that will lead to high streets benefitting from fewer shops and a greater mix of uses.

20. Economic growth remains a high priority for the council. The activities of the successful projects are expected to act as a catalyst for economic growth by attracting and leveraging funding from other sources for activities that will continue to redefine Southwark's high street offer to local residents and visitors. This approach will lead to local jobs being safeguarded in the short term and job creation in the long term. Furthermore, it will represent the council's response to the recent decline of the traditional high street model.

Community impact statement

21. 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).
22. Due regard has been paid to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 specifically; to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not. The principles of the PSED are imbedded in the core objectives of the High Street Challenge, as the programme intends to improve and develop participation from all sections of the community (see paragraph 9) in a manner that will positively impact high streets and town centres. As part of the assessment process, applicants were asked to define how their projects would be inclusive and welcoming to all. When considering the response to this question, the panel scored applicants based on how well their proposed project would engage a diverse local community and business groups, and promote inclusivity.
23. Care has also been taken in development of the prospectus to ensure the accessibility of the fund for Southwark-based businesses, community groups, and voluntary sector organisations.
24. 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.

Resource implications

25. The full cost of the funding recommendation for Camberwell Arts and Advising London will be met by the Business Support Fund. All other costs will be met within existing resources.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

26. This report seeks approval of grant awards recommended as part of the third round of the High Street Challenge initiative.
27. Under paragraph 5 of Part 3D of the Constitution, a cabinet member may approve grants over £2,500 to voluntary organisations.
28. Pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 the council must have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
 - (c) Foster good relations between person who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
29. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership are protected in relation to (a) only.
30. Paragraph 22 of the report demonstrates how the council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in this procurement and the decision maker should satisfy him/herself that this duty as been complied with when considering these recommendations.

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services (CED/MD/15/16)

31. The resource implications in paragraph 25 are noted. It is observed that funding for the projects recommended in Appendix 1 is contained within the High Street Challenge and that any other costs will be contained within existing budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Economic Wellbeing Strategy	Strategy and Partnerships, Local Economy Team, 160 Tooley Street	Nazmin Yeahia 0207 525 4474

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	High Street Challenge Round Three – Projects recommended for funding.
Appendix 2	High Street Challenge Round Three – Projects recommended for further development.

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Gaskell, Head of Strategy and Partnerships	
Report Author	Nazmin Yeahia, Senior Strategy Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	15 July 2015	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	20 July 2015	