

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 5 May 2016	Meeting Name: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Business, Employment and Culture
Report title:		The High Street Challenge Round Four Grant Awards – Further Development Group	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Strategy and Partnerships	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member for Employment Business & Culture allocates up to £98,263 of grant funding from The High Street Challenge to Round Four applicants that have received support from the council to develop their applications further. The projects recommended for award are set out in Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. 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 three year period. Applications are invited for funds to deliver new approaches to improving town centres as well as embedding and reinforcing more established activities.
3. 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.
4. Round One of the High Street Challenge launched in February 2014, followed by Round Two in September 2014 and Round Three in March 2015. To date, 27 projects have been awarded funding to a total value of £447,709, with a further £65,000 grant award agreements expected from three successful projects in Round 4.
5. The call for proposals for Round Four of the High Street Challenge launched in January 2016 and closed on 19 of February 2016 with 23 applications received. Three applications were awarded funding and a further six applicants who presented strong and innovative ideas were offered officer support to further develop the deliverability of those project ideas prior to final consideration for funding. Fourteen applicants were not awarded funding.
6. Of the six applicants who were offered further support in Round 4, two applicants (Blue Bermondsey and Bermondsey Community Kitchen) have submitted a combined application; meaning that 5 applications in total were re-submitted. All

five projects are being recommended for funding:

- Love West Dulwich have proposed a project that would install banners on Southwark roads to help create a sense of identity
- Walworth Society have proposed a project that, through tours of the area, will demonstrate and showcase the history and future of the area and drive people to local businesses
- Musicity have submitted an application to fund a smart phone app based Autumn festival that would promote Southwark's music history and draw people from outside the borough to local high street performances and information.
- Bermondsey BID and Bermondsey Community Kitchen have proposed a project that will create a strategy for the market, to increase the market's presence, and a demonstration project that will train young people to become market traders and run seven food stalls
- Pempeople have submitted an application to develop a feasibility and viability study of the future of the Ledbury Garages

7. The total funding recommendation for these projects is £98,263.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. The High Street Challenge fund has been designed to respond to the range of challenges as well as the unique attributes of each of the town centres and high streets in Southwark. Applicants were required to demonstrate how their proposals met the following objectives:

- Produce benefits beyond the funding period.
- Introduce new approaches/models that have not previously existed in town centres.
- Add to and align with existing initiatives in the proposed area.
- Build the capacity of the local businesses or groups to accelerate economic growth beyond the funding period.
- Bring together different parts of the local community and promote inclusivity.

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 a total of six rounds for proposals for the High Street Challenge, this 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, though further funding is not guaranteed as applications will be subject to the same evaluation process as any other applicant.
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.

Financial Implications

25. The full cost of the funding recommendation for Love West Dulwich, Walworth Society, Bermondsey BID and Bermondsey Community Kitchen, Musicity and Pempeople will be met by the New Homes Bonus. All other costs will be met within existing resources.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

26. This report seeks approval of grant awards recommended as part of the fourth round of the High Street Challenge initiative.
Under paragraph 5 of Part 3D of the Constitution, a cabinet member may approve grants over £2,500 to voluntary organisations.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. Paragraph 22 of the report demonstrates how the council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in considering applications for funding and recommending grant awards and the cabinet member should satisfy him/herself that this duty as been complied with when considering these recommendations.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (CE16/007)

30. The report is requesting the Cabinet Member for Employment Business & Culture to allocate up to £98,263 of grant funding from The High Street Challenge to Round Four applicants that have received support from the council to develop their application further, details of which are contained within the report and Appendix 1.
31. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that the costs will be contained within the New Home Bonus funding.
32. Staffing and any other costs connected with this recommendation to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	High Street Challenge Round Four Further Development Group – Projects recommended for funding

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Gaskell, Head of Strategy and Partnerships	
Report Author	Liz Gardiner, Senior Strategy Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	5 May 2016	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		5 May 2016

**Appendix 1 – High Street Challenge Round Four Further Development Group –
Projects recommended for funding**

Town Centre/High Street	Organisation	Value of the grant award recommended
West Dulwich	Love West Dulwich	£20,183
Elephant & Castle	Walworth Society	£10,000
Bermondsey	Bermondsey Community Kitchen	£40,880
Old Kent Road	Pempeople	£7,200
Whole borough	Musicity	£20,000