

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 7 March 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Innovation
Report title:		The High Street Challenge Round 7 grant awards (Further development group - Part two)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Chief Executive's Office	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet member for jobs, skills and innovation allocates £35,000 of grant funding from The High Street Challenge for Round 7 of this funding. 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 has been achieved through the funding of a series of innovative, spatially-based projects over a four-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 1 of the High Street Challenge launched in February 2014, followed by Round 2 in September 2014, Round 3 in March 2015, Round 4 in January 2016, Round 5 in August 2016 and Round 6 in February 2017. To date, 48 projects have been awarded funding to a total value of £798,835. A call for proposals for Round 7, of the High Street Challenge launched 28 September 2018 and closed on 9 November 2018 with 29 applications received. Three projects were awarded funding initially and eight were given the opportunity to further develop their proposal.
5. From this further development group, one has already been awarded funding and a further three projects are being recommended for funding, further details of which are included at Appendix 1. The total funding recommendation for these projects is £35,000.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. 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. An evaluation of The High Street Challenge from January

2018 was carried out to understand the successes and highlight any opportunities to improve and demonstrate the wider impact of The High Street Challenge. The evaluation has informed the development of this Round 7 of the programme.

7. Applicants were asked to consider a number of key specific objectives. These include:
 - Produce sustainable 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.
 - Require no further funding or resources from the council beyond the initial grant awarded.
 - Attract match funding from other organisations or crowd funding.
8. 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:
 - **Supporting Southwark's Diverse Independent Food Businesses:** activities that promote great diversity of small, local food businesses that reflect the population of the borough.
 - **Digital High Streets:** Activities that help small businesses take advantage of the digital retail revolution and create smarter high streets.
 - **Healthy High Streets:** Activities that help make our high streets and town centres healthier places for all and promote wellbeing.
 - **Cultural and Community Events:** Activities that attract people to town centres to increase footfall and spend in local businesses.
9. 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

10. 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.
11. 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.

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. The evaluation of Rounds 1 to 6 of the High Street Challenge carried out in 2017 also captured feedback from funding recipients and council officers across departments to inform the development of this funding round.
15. At the assessment stage, the evaluation panel also consulted relevant colleagues such as those responsible for markets, events, culture, parks/leisure, community councils, public health, digital and regeneration. Comments were taken into consideration in order to arrive at a final decision.
16. The transport team and Transport for London were also consulted at an early stage during the development process for this project to identify the key project aims and parameters.

Policy implications

17. 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
18. The High Street Challenge will continue to 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.
 19. 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

20. 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).
21. 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 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.
22. 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.
23. 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

24. The full cost of the funding recommendation for this project will be met by the New Homes Bonus. The budget is held in reserve: New Homes Bonus Funded LEP Programme Reserve (reference 407).
25. 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 further grant awards (as noted in Appendix 1) recommended as part of the seventh round of the High Street Challenge initiative. The decision to approve the report recommendation is one which is expressly reserved to the Cabinet Member under Part 3D of the council Constitution.
27. Pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty 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. Paragraphs 22 to 24 of the report demonstrate how the council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty 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 (CE18/014)

30. The report is requesting the cabinet member for jobs, skills and innovation to approve the allocation £35,000 of grant funding from The High Street Challenge for Round 7 of this funding. The projects recommended for award are set out in Appendix 1.
31. The report is also requesting the cabinet member for jobs, skills and innovation 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
32. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that the costs will be contained within the New Home Bonus (High Street Challenge) budget, as mentioned in the financial implications.
33. 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	Laura Ahern 0207 525 3233

APPENDICES

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

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Gaskell, Head of Chief Executive's Office	
Report Author	Laura Ahern, Strategy Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	6 March 2019	
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	6 March 2019	

