

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 25 January 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Innovation
Report title:		The High Street Challenge Round 7 grant awards (Further development group - Part one)	
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 £30,000 of grant funding to a single Round 7 applicant that has received support from the council to develop their application further. The project recommended for award is 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 One of the High Street Challenge launched in February 2014, followed by Round Two in September 2014, Round Three 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.
5. The call for proposals for Round Seven, of the High Street Challenge launched 28 September 2018 and closed on 9 November 2018 with 29 applications received. Three applications were awarded funding and a further eight 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. Eighteen applicants were not awarded funding.
6. Of the eight applicants who were offered further support in Round 7, three applicants (Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, Peckham Festival and Copeland Enterprises) submitted project proposals aimed at supporting the trading environment in Rye Lane during the closure of the road for SGN gas main replacement works throughout 2019. These three applicants have resubmitted a combined application under Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts,

which is recommended for funding.

7. Due to the urgent need to put in place activities to promote the Rye Lane trading environment following the start of the SGN works in January, this application has been considered as a priority and is being put forward for a funding decision at the earliest possible date. The five further applicants continue to receive council support to develop their proposals and have a longer timescale in which to submit their final application. Sufficient funds remain available to the programme to support all remaining applications, should they reach the required standard.

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. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. The evaluation of Rounds One to Six 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.
17. 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.
18. 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

19. 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

20. 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.
21. 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

22. 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).
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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

26. The full cost of the funding recommendation for this project will be met by the New Homes Bonus (High Street Challenge) and any additional funds that are

made available by SGN to the council to support business viability in Peckham during the gas main replacement works. All other costs will be met within existing resources.

27. All other costs will be met within existing departmental revenue budgets.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

28. This report seeks approval of a further grant award which is recommended as part of the seventh round of the High Street Challenge initiative, and which is required to be made as a matter of urgency for the reason explained in paragraph 7. The decision to approve the report recommendation is one which is expressly reserved to the cabinet member under Part 3D of the council constitution.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. Paragraphs 22 to 25 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 (CE18/012)

32. The report is requesting the cabinet member for jobs, skills & innovation to approve the allocation of £30,000 of grant funding from The High Street Challenge and the project recommended for award is set out in Appendix 1.
33. 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.
34. 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 – Projects recommended for funding.

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Gaskell, Head of Chief Executive's Office	
Report Author	Nick Wolff, Principal Strategy Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	24 January 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
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		24 January 2019

APPENDIX 1

High Street Challenge Round Seven – Projects recommended for funding

Organisation	Description	Value of the grant award rec'd	Area
Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts	<p>To deliver a year long programme of events in Peckham to support trade and continued footfall on Rye Lane during SGN works and to promote it as a retail and cultural destination.</p> <p>The programme of events aims to protect and improve spend in Peckham, establish partnership working amongst local businesses and organisations and make a positive contribution to place.</p>	£30,000	Peckham