



 @lb_southwark

 facebook.com/southwarkcouncil

 @southwarkcouncil



UK Government

SUPPORTED BY

MAYOR OF LONDON

Southwark
Council



You are invited to support Southwark's high streets through a series of inspiring, innovative projects.

- 3 Getting started**
- 4 Objectives**
- 5 Who can apply?**
- 5 Location**
- 6 Your idea**
- 7 Outputs and outcomes**
- 8 How will the full application form be assessed?**
- 9 Next steps**
- 10 Past Thriving High Streets Projects**

Getting started

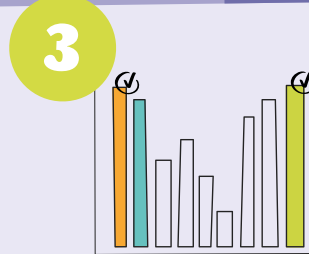
Closing date for expression of interest 29 June 2025



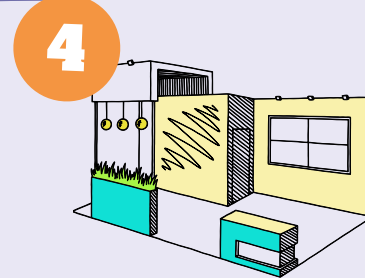
You come to us with a great idea to revitalise our high streets



We invite the best ideas to complete a full application form



We select the highest scoring entries



We help you turn your winning ideas into reality: a real time project, anywhere in one of our town centres or high streets



You help us to shape things to come on Southwark's high streets

High streets and town centres are an essential part of our 5-year borough plan, Southwark 2030. They are essential to delivering our goal of a strong and fair economy where everyone benefits from the borough's economic growth.

The **Thriving High Streets Fund** seeks to support pioneering projects in Southwark's high streets and town centres. This Fund has been designed to help our high streets to thrive despite the ongoing economic challenges they face, such as the cost-of-living crisis. It follows the success of the 'Thriving High Streets Fund' rounds one and two, seven rounds of the 'High Street Challenge' as well as the 'High Street Recovery Fund' in 2021. It is open to business networks, community groups and voluntary sector groups in the borough. You can apply for funding from £1,000 up to £15,000.

This prospectus provides guidance on the Fund and how to apply. We expect successful projects to be rolled out from October 2025 and must be delivered by March 2026.

We are inviting applications for funding under four themes:

1. Healthy and safe high streets

2. A greener Southwark

3. Cost of living crisis

4. Cultural / Community Events

If you have a creative and innovative idea that fits one of these themes, then we want to hear from you. **All applications must also demonstrate how they align with Southwark Stands Together, our commitment to tackling racism and inequality and being welcoming and inclusive to all.**

The council has recently published [Town Centre Action Plans](#) that aim to improve town centres in Bermondsey, Camberwell, Canada Water, Elephant and Castle and Walworth, and Peckham. We welcome applications that support the action plans, although this is not a requirement.

This prospectus tells you all you need to know about The Thriving High Streets Fund and how we wish to deliver real, tangible benefits for the borough's town centres.

Please read the following pages thoroughly before you submit your idea so that you are fully aware of our vision and what is expected of you if you are selected.

[Complete the online Expression of Interest here.](#)

Objectives

High streets and town centres across Southwark are unique in character and essential pillars of our community. Southwark's high streets are busy, diverse, and exciting places where people come to meet, shop and do businesses, work and relax. Whether you're visiting the Blue Market, exploring the heritage of Walworth, or spending time in Peckham, one of London's most diverse and vibrant areas, there's something for everyone.

Development is transforming some of our major town centres, including Peckham, Canada Water and Elephant and Castle, which presents various opportunities. But high streets and town centres continue to face considerable challenges including the cost-of-living crisis and the rise of online shopping which threaten small and independent businesses. Tough economic times and changes to retail habits mean small businesses may need support to adapt. And we know that local people and networks often

have great ideas to help make our high streets successful places that are good for everyone. The Thriving High Streets Fund is about empowering those that have the skills and knowledge to come forward and make a positive difference to our high streets.

The Fund aims to support our high streets to become greener, cleaner, safer and more vibrant places to visit and shop, and places where businesses can rely on sufficient footfall to be successful. The council encourages a place-based approach to town centres and high streets which means tailoring projects to the specific needs and strengths of the town centre and working in partnership to address complex challenges found in a specific area.

Projects must address **two of the following themes**, including **Southwark Stands Together**, to be successful:



Healthy and safe high streets

Activities that target health inequalities such as increasing the availability of healthy food, increasing access to health-promoting services, creating green recreational spaces, or supporting safety measures combatting violence against women and girls (VAWG).

A greener Southwark

Activities that target the climate crisis, such as by reducing emissions, improve green spaces in the borough, or contribute towards Southwark's ability to achieve net zero by 2030.

Cost of living crisis

Activities that reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on businesses and residents, for example assisting businesses in lowering energy costs, sourcing local supplies or supporting alternative community uses of existing spaces on our high streets.

Cultural / Community Events

Activities that celebrate and acknowledge the diversity and heritage of our town centres and help to foster a sense of social cohesion.

Southwark Stands Together

All applicants will be required to demonstrate how their project will incorporate the ambitions of Southwark Stands Together; our work to increase diversity, reduce inequalities and tackle racism. Activities that address racial injustice and promote equality and diversity can include inclusive business support, and supporting town centres and high streets become more inclusive for all.

Who can apply?

Partnerships that bring together diverse skills and expertise are especially welcome. We encourage applications that are community-led, designed and owned.

If you are a...

Business network

Group from the arts or creative sectors

Educational establishment such as a school, college or university

Voluntary sector, community or resident group

Individual business (if representative and supported by other local businesses)

...then we want to hear from you.

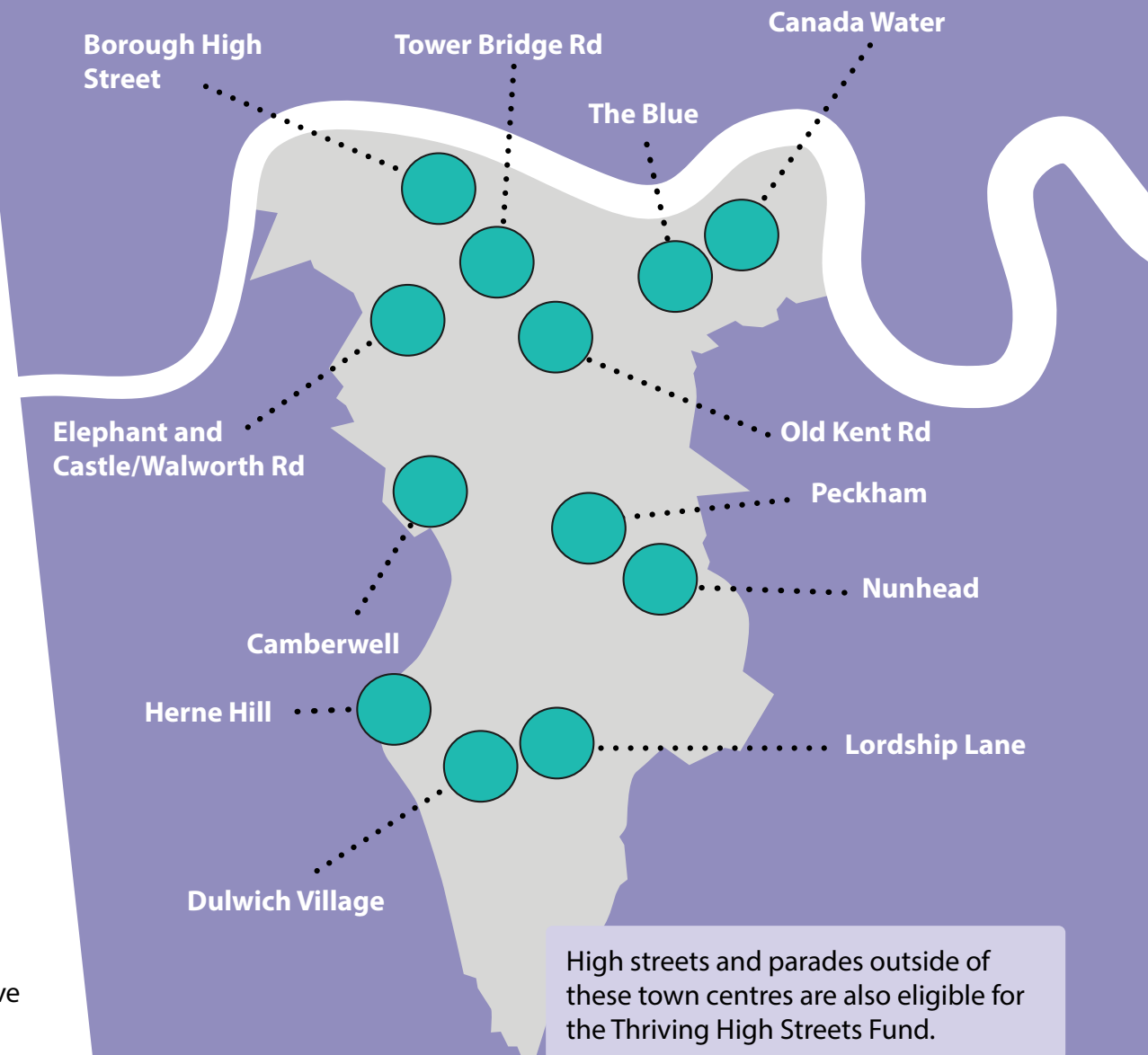
You must demonstrate that your approach is supported by local businesses in the town centre or high street that is expected to benefit from the activity.

We will not be able to fund proposals from individuals who do not have a business or constituted organisation that can act as an accountable body for the funding.

Organisations who have applied for our previous round of Thriving High Streets Fund, High Street Challenge or High Street Recovery Fund funding are welcome to apply. The application should be for a different idea, take on board previous feedback or build upon previous successful projects. We particularly welcome new, innovative and transformational ideas that will support our high streets.

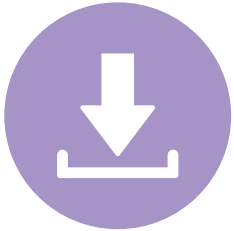
Location

Your idea should be located in one of our town centres or high streets. Southwark's town centres include...



Your idea

Submit your ideas for The Thriving High Streets Fund:



[Complete the online Expression of Interest form here](#)

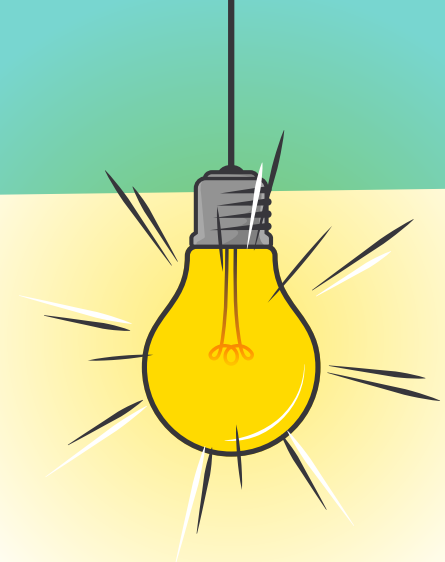
The first stage of the application will be to submit an online Expression of Interest form, briefly outlining your project idea in no more than 500 words.

You should clearly portray what it is you intend to do, where in the borough you propose to do it, why it will deliver economic benefits to Southwark and, if relevant, details of land and/or building(s) that will be required for the duration of the project (and what will be required to secure these). Some examples of previous projects can be found on page 10.



Your idea should support one or more of the themes of The Thriving High Streets Fund and aim to do the following:

- Produce sustainable benefits to the local economy beyond the funding period
- Add to and align with existing initiatives in the proposed area
- Build the capacity of local businesses or groups
- Make our high streets and town centres more inclusive, particularly for low income and Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Benefit a significant number of local businesses and not disproportionately benefit a few
- Require no further funding or resources (e.g. staff time) from the council beyond the initial offer of grant funding



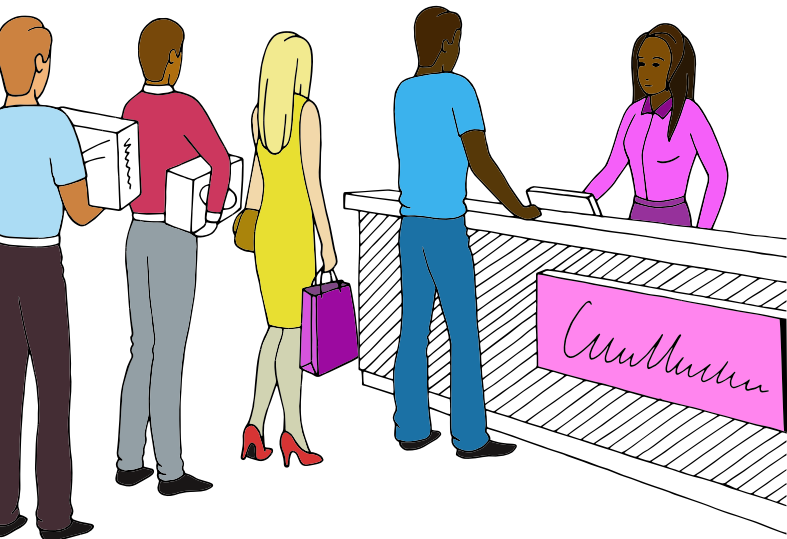
- Attract match funding from other organisations or crowdfunding (which can include in kind contributions such as time, equipment or space provided free or at reduced cost)
- Have no negative impact on the environment

After submitting the online expression of interest form, a panel will assess your project idea and your eligibility and invite viable project ideas to submit full applications. **The following pages set out the process for the full application form which will need to be followed if you are successful.** You should therefore read this before submitting the full prospectus to understand what will be expected from you if you are invited to submit a full application form.

We will be hosting a pre-application webinar on 18 June 2025 at 2pm. If you are interested in applying for the Fund and want to find out more about the application process, please [register here](#).

Outputs and outcomes

If you are invited to complete the full application form, you should choose appropriate outputs and outcomes from the list opposite and quantify the level of impact your project will have. Not all of these will be relevant to your idea, but your project will probably deliver some of them. The outputs and outcomes you include in your application will be used to assess the expected impact of the project on your chosen high street or town centre. If your project will deliver additional outputs or outcomes to those listed, you should propose those that will best demonstrate the impact of your idea.



Outputs

- Number of local events/markets delivered
- Number of people attracted to events/markets
- Visitor spend at events/markets
- Number of people reached through campaigns
- Number of people participating/volunteering in and/or benefiting from the project
- Number of businesses participating in and/or benefiting from the project
- Number of businesses receiving training or direct support
- Public spaces created or improved
- Under-used or empty space brought back into use
- New partnerships or networks created
- Survey/study/business cases produced
- Crowdfunding/match funding secured (cash or in kind)

Outcomes

- Small businesses in high streets and town centres are more able to access support to become sustainable
- Residents and visitors across communities are more able and willing to use high streets and town centres
- Residents and organisations feel more able to use public spaces in high streets and town centres to support social action and health and wellbeing activities
- Residents and visitors across communities have access to a broad range of cultural activities in high streets and town centres
- High streets and town centres attract a higher number of visitors with small businesses seeing increased footfall
- Businesses more able to access support options to provide healthy food options

If you are successful, you will need to carry out an evaluation of your project at the end of the activity, which assesses its impact under these measures and provides learning for future activity. You will receive further information and support for monitoring and evaluation as your project progresses.

How will the full application form be assessed?

If you are invited to complete a full application form, we will notify you by 4 July 2025. An evaluation panel will assess your proposal for quality and value for money. The answers to the questions in the application form, along with any supporting information provided, will be scored and weighted as below.

Project description

What will the project do and how?

25%

Project viability

How can we be confident the project will be a success?

30%

Value for money

What will the impact be and why is it worth the funding?

30%

Diversity

How will you ensure your project is inclusive and welcoming to all?

15%

Each question will be scored as follows:

Excellent 5

Outstanding response, exceeds expectations, adds value, full confidence

Good 4

Good response, which meets all requirements and gives some confidence

Acceptable 3

A satisfactory response, which meets the basic requirements

Poor 2

Only some of the requirements met

Very poor 1

Unacceptable, an unsatisfactory response

No submission 0

No information is provided

If you score 1 or 0 on any question, your application will not be considered for funding at this time.

The final score will be used by the panel to assist their decision on which projects are to be recommended for funding.



Next steps

Post-application clarifications

The assessment will be based on the information provided in your application form and supporting material, but the panel may choose to seek further clarification from you before making a decision.

How we will support your project

If you are successful, you will receive guidance from council staff throughout the project's delivery to help ensure its success. However it is important that your delivery model does not depend on any council resources, including staff time, being provided in addition to Thriving High Streets funding.



1
Complete EO1 by 29 June 2025



2
If successful we'll send you the application form by 4 July 2025



3
Submit your full application by 1 August 2025



4
We'll let you know if you've been successful by 19 September 2025



5
Deliver your project October 2025 – March 2026

Please contact us well in advance to let us know if you have any issues with the online form.

Late or incomplete applications may not be accepted.

Need more information?

If you have any further queries about the Southwark Thriving High Streets Fund email towncentres@southwark.gov.uk

Check back on the [Thriving High Streets Fund pages](#) for the latest information.



Past Thriving High Streets Projects

Previous rounds of the Thriving High Street Fund have successfully contributed to supporting our high streets and town centres. Below are some examples of past projects to give you an idea of the kinds of things we have funded in the past. [The full list of past projects is available on our website.](#)



Urban Elephant Festival

The Urban Elephant Festival is a 2-day cultural festival that benefitted from the Thriving High Street Fund. Taking place in Elephant and Castle, including Castle Square, Elephant Park, Sayer Street and Walworth Square, the festival had a programme of activity that celebrated arts, culture, and community. Open to local people, visitors and tourists, the festival successfully attracted 9,000 people. From street parties to art exhibitions, and from cultural performances to food, there was something for everyone to enjoy. The festival promoted local businesses, aiming to increase the number of customers and boost local spending. The Urban Elephant Festival is a good example of how the Thriving High Street Fund can be used to attract visitors to a town centre, support local businesses and celebrate culture and diversity.



Big Local Works

Big Local Works is a community organisation aiming to build local people's economic resilience, reduce poverty and its effects, and support people to become more financially independent. Based in Bermondsey, Big Local Works received funding to provide a support programme for 24 entrepreneurs and start-up businesses at the Blue Market. The programme supported local entrepreneurs wanting to start a small business with reduced market fees, social media support, training in marketing and PR and other essential business skills. Big Local Works was also able to develop the Young Traders Market which gave young people aged 16 to 30 an opportunity to test their ideas and products whilst also contributing to a more diverse and cultural business offering. The increase in traders and activities aimed to attract more people to The Blue and raise its profile as a start-up centre in Southwark.



Peckham Business Forum

The recently established Peckham Business Forum, run by businesses, is a united voice, championing change and transformation for the businesses in Peckham's Rye Lane and its surrounding areas. The Thriving High Street Fund provided funding to a local business-support charity, Tree Shepherd, to help strengthen the forum by offering essential business skills training, mentoring and networking opportunities. It aimed to strengthen connections among local businesses, reinforcing a collaborative ecosystem that fostered peer support and resource sharing. Central to this, was the delivery of the Peckham Festive Market which offered over 20 local businesses a platform to promote their products, gain market insights and build brand visibility. The market was a great success, attracting over 1000 people and celebrating the diversity of Peckham. This project shows how the Thriving High Streets Fund can be used to empower a local business community to form a collective voice and advocate for the changes to the high street that they want and need.

