

High Streets for All Challenge

A high street in East London showing shops, market stalls, pedestrians who are sitting, cycling and walking.

Key information

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1. Foreword by the Mayor and the Chair of London Councils

Addressing the Challenge

London's high streets are some of the most inclusive, vibrant and accessible spaces in London. They are the focus of so much of our city's social and economic activity, and a source of jobs, businesses and prosperity. However, they have faced a host of challenges ranging from major shifts in the economy and consumer behaviour to reduced public sector budgets. These challenges have been amplified and the pace of change

accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our high streets and town centres are where some of the most damaging economic impacts of the pandemic are being felt. The retail, cultural, hospitality and leisure sectors have been – and continue to be – deeply affected. Many jobs have been lost and, sadly, many more are at risk. There are early signs that some high streets will begin to lose the rich mix of businesses, civic organisations and local services that are so integral to our city’s fabric and which help to promote greater social interaction and integration between our communities.

It is also now increasingly clear that the impacts of this pandemic will be felt unevenly. Many of those high streets and town centres in the poorest areas will experience the deepest shocks – heightening existing inequalities. At the same time though, other areas are benefiting from new patterns of living and working which could over time bolster new types of enterprise, a more inclusive, localised economy and community-led regeneration efforts.

Through the London Recovery Board, we have brought together leaders from across London’s government, business and civil society, as well as the health and education sectors, trade unions and the police, to oversee and aid the long-term recovery effort.

Together we are issuing the High Streets for All ‘Challenge’ to support London’s diverse communities, public institutions and businesses to form active partnerships. By working hand-in-hand we can seek and share new ideas to deliver enhanced public spaces and exciting new uses for underused high street buildings. Together we can help to breathe new life into our town centres and high streets, delivering a resilient and thriving mix of shops and services within easy reach of all Londoners and at-all-times of the day and night. Together we will also be able to support local engagement to promote a culture of ideas, experimentation and invention on every high street in London.

This is an open invitation to all Londoners to reimagine our high streets and to respond to the forces impacting upon them in the most local, resourceful and imaginative ways.

As part of a local partnership, your response could include an expanded role for cultural, civic and community uses; support for local and startup businesses and cultural production and new forms of community-owned enterprise; it could transform old buildings into new spaces or develop pioneering ownership models. It also could reconsider the nearby public realm and support walking and cycling to encourage healthier, more active lifestyles and to respond to the climate emergency.

We will provide targeted advice to all, as well as funding to the best partnerships. This will enable them to prepare strategies and proposals, to test their effectiveness, and to showcase and share learnings with others.

The High Streets for All Challenge sets out our clear intent to establish new and productive enterprises across London’s high streets. It is being guided by the firm belief that, given the right support package, every community in London has the capacity and the ingenuity to recover, reinvent and renew their high streets and town centres for the benefit of all Londoners and the UK as a whole.

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London & **Cllr Georgia Gould**, Chair of London Councils

2. The Challenge at a glance

The High Streets for All Challenge is a call for high street partnerships to develop innovative high street strategies and asset-based proposals prepared to boost economic activity, cultural and civic renewal and yield wider public value.

The Challenge will kickstart the London Recovery Board's mission to 'deliver enhanced public spaces and exciting new uses for underused high street buildings in every London Borough'.

It will underpin the formation of high street partnerships, bringing together local authorities, community and business groups, cultural and third sector organisations, anchor institutions such as universities, colleges or hospitals, and commercial interests to join forces and develop much needed capacity to support high street and town centre renewal.

Supported by the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP), the Challenge will provide targeted advice and funds – up to £4 million of strategic enabling funding from June 2021 – to inspire and help form these partnerships, prepare strategies, propose projects and test their effectiveness. It will support local engagement and promote a culture of ideas, experimentation and invention. And it will build a pipeline of schemes for future investment opportunities.

2.1 London's recovery from the coronavirus crisis

As a city we are facing the most challenging period in recent history. The economic, social and health impact of coronavirus cannot be overstated. London's recovery is led by the London Recovery Board, chaired jointly by the Mayor of London and the Chair of London Councils. It brings together leaders from across London's government, business and civil society, as well as the health and education sectors, trade unions and the police, to oversee the long-term recovery effort. The Board has committed to taking a missions-based approach to the Recovery Programme. The High Streets for All mission is one of nine agreed missions, which together will restore confidence in the city, minimise the impact on London's most vulnerable communities and rebuild the city's economy and society. The nine missions are as follows;

- A Green New Deal
- A Robust Safety Net
- High Streets for All
- A New Deal for Young People
- Good Work for All
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Digital Access for All
- Healthy Food, Healthy Weight
- Building Strong Communities

2.2 Why a Challenge?

The Mayor's High Streets & Town Centres: Adaptive Strategies guidance shows that London's high streets are more than retail, they also have significant social, community and cultural value. The guidance advocates a 'mission-orientated' approach to the development of 'adaptive strategies' for high streets diversification and renewal through innovation and experimentation which responds to locally specific concerns.

Only 10 per cent of town centres in London currently have a strategy and even fewer have a night time strategy. Through the on-going work on local regeneration programmes such as the Good Growth Fund, TfL's Liveable Neighbourhoods, Creative Enterprise Zones and plans for the 24-hour economy, it is evident that boroughs and local communities require funding and support to prepare plans and drive innovation. Stakeholders and partners have highlighted that locally derived and responsive high street strategies following COVID-19 are needed now more than ever.



Figure 2.1 -

90 per cent of Londoners live within ten minutes of their local high street.

2.3 How the Challenge works

The GLA will support the development of an exemplary high street, partnership, strategy and related proposals in every London borough with a package of funding, resources and programme support. Challenge exemplars will be identified via the following programme:

2.3.1 Stage 1 'Putting your high street on the map' March – June 2021

Through a simple call-out the GLA and London boroughs will invite partnerships that are interested in developing an idea for their local area to come forward by 17 May, encouraging and supporting the widest participation from London's diverse communities. London boroughs (Local Authorities) with support from the GLA will assess responses to the call to identify their high street exemplar location for the Challenge – one in each borough. Please see 'How to take part in the Challenge' for further details.

2.3.2 Stage 2 'Gathering around the flag' June – October 2021

The Local Authority will be expected to support the partnership and where appropriate act as the lead and/or accountable body. Each selected exemplar location will receive up to £20,000 seed funding to develop and grow their partnership, engage locally, build capacity, and co-design the spatial brief for their high street strategy, including the request for any additional funding. In addition, exemplar partnerships can call on support offered by the GLA and its mission partners via a programme of workshops and the Challenge Expert Panel, which brings together GLA policy leads and advisors from a range of disciplines and sectors.

Stage 2 'Gathering around the flag' June – October 2021

2.3.3 Stage 3 'Making it happen' October 2021 onwards

In October, the GLA will make available between £100,000 and £200,000 additional development funding to 10 to 12 exemplar projects, to provide capacity for the preparation of strategies and proposals that are live, dynamic, experimental and reflect locally determined priorities. A further £100,000 capital funding will be provided to deliver 'proof of concept' activities for up to five exemplar projects to test the effectiveness of proposed strategies and help develop and deliver larger project proposals.

All exemplar projects will share learnings to contribute to a 'community of practice' and will actively build a pipeline of schemes to take advantage of future investment opportunities.

A second round of exemplars will receive funding in 2022, and, subject to funding a third cohort the following year.

Stage 3 'Making it happen' October 2021 onwards

2.4 Identifying local challenges

Local partnerships are invited to identify their own local and specific challenges in line with those that have been identified for London as a whole.

- **Creating a public welcome** – How can we create streets and public spaces that encourage walking, cycling, cultural activity and boost visitor confidence, generating a thriving mix of high street activity within easy reach of all Londoners and at all times of day and night?
- **Innovative places of exchange** – How can we support both existing and new types of business and nurture innovation within local economies, through place-based policy development, targeted business support, planning, licensing and cultural and economic development incentives?

- **Generating social value** – How can we ensure that high street economies generate public value, shared prosperity and benefit from the socially productive use of land and property for the communities they serve?
- **Connected communities** – How can we promote social integration and active citizenship by strengthening local collaboration and securing vital social, civic and cultural infrastructure?
- **Responding to the climate emergency** – How can high streets help tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and poor air quality, whilst creating green jobs, developing skills and supporting a just transition to a low carbon circular economy?

2.5 High Streets for All Conversations

Running in parallel to the Challenge is a city-wide engagement programme to support London's recovery missions. The 'Reimagine' campaign will invite Londoners through Talk London, City Hall's online community, to share their idea on how to improve the places where they live and work.

We are asking partnerships to reflect the perspectives and aspirations of London's diverse communities in the development of their responses to this Challenge. We are keen that local communities are actively involved from the outset and as part of the ongoing development of the challenge exemplars. As part of stage 3, the GLA will be offering the High Streets for All Conversations platform to share exemplars development, support partnerships and enable locally focused yet broadscale engagement.

3. How to take part in the Challenge

The High Streets for All Challenge is an invitation to local partnerships to bring forward and co-design innovative high street recovery strategies and proposals. Each strategy can address common and local challenges and underpin the public re-imagining of high streets and town centres across London. Strategies can support actions across an entire high street or focus on an innovative exemplar high street recovery project.

3.1 Who can take part?

The Challenge is open to a broad range of high street partnerships to be composed of public, private and third-sector participants and to be representative of local communities and businesses.

Partnerships could include London boroughs (including multiple boroughs), town teams and business improvement districts, land interests and developers, workspace providers, community groups, social enterprises, small and medium sized enterprises, cultural organisations, community businesses and charities within London that wish to drive and lead regeneration in their local area. The lead organisation for your project must represent the partnership as a whole and be legally constituted and able to enter into a contract. Community groups or individuals who would like to propose an idea should discuss this with their local council. If you are unsure of the best contact in your local council please contact the GLA on HighStreetsforAll@london.gov.uk and we will

support you in identifying the best point of contact.

The role of Local Authorities is two-fold. At stage 1 they will endorse their preferred partnership and exemplar high street location. From stage 2 onwards they will be expected to actively support the selected partnership and where appropriate act as the lead and or accountable body.

3.2 How the funding and support offer works

The High Streets for All Challenge offers a range of funding and support to suit different partnerships and proposals, and to create a balanced comprehensive programme of recovery exemplars across London.

Recipients will usually be public or third-sector organisations, however we are keen to see close working with landlords, developers and other property interests as integral members of each partnership. There is no reason why, with the backing of a local authority, a private body could not lead the submission. There are no match funding requirements. However, the degree to which partnerships are drawing together resources and ‘exploiting’ local assets – in order to generate revenue and wider public value – will be taken into consideration.

3.2.1 Revenue funding

The Mayor of London will provide £2.5 million revenue funding in the first round of the Challenge.

At the beginning of stage 2, ‘Gathering around the flag’, each preferred partnership and exemplar location as identified by each London borough will receive up to £20,000 seed funding to develop their partnership, engage the local community, build capacity and co-design the spatial brief for their high street strategy. The selected partnerships will work with their borough, the GLA Regeneration team and the Challenge Experts Panel to develop their exemplar project, including their request for additional development funding and/or other forms of support.

At stage 3, ‘Drawing up the strategy’, 10 to 12 of the exemplar projects will receive between £100,000 and £200,000 additional development funding. This funding can be used to develop the place-based strategies, community engagement, feasibility work and proposals for their asset.

Exemplars that intend to integrate a local ownership or management model such as a community business, co-operative structure or raise of alternative finance through community shares (for an asset or enterprise at the centre of a strategy) will be eligible to use the funding for dedicated professional expertise to develop appropriate governance, legal and business planning arrangements.

3.2.2 Capital funding

In addition, up to £0.5 million capital funding will be available to deliver ‘proof of concept’ activities for up to five exemplars in the first round. This funding will be used to test strategies and inform the development of longer term proposals – for instance the temporary closing of a road, a meanwhile or intensified use of a local civic asset or an experimental use of technology.

Funding allocations will be made by the GLA in consultation with The London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP), based on an assessment of proposals against the stated criteria as well as anticipated outcomes and investment readiness.

3.2.3 Alignment with other investment

You should consider how investment in the proposed exemplar project could enhance existing area-based investment streams in the context of recovery from the pandemic. Existing investment programmes could include but are not limited to the GLA's Community-Led Recovery Grants, Make London, Good Growth Fund and Good Growth Fund Accelerator, Creative Enterprise Zones, the London Borough of Culture programme, TfL Liveable Neighbourhoods, the Future High Streets Fund and Historic England's Heritage Action Zones. You should also consider how the Challenge can provide a strategic approach to use Additional Restriction Grants to support local businesses affected by the pandemic.

3.2.4 Future Neighbourhoods 2030

London boroughs that wish to focus their plans largely on the environmental challenge and which have relevant projects requiring funding that can get underway in 2021-22 and deliver tangible outputs in the next 12 months, should also consider applying to the Mayor's [Future Neighbourhoods 2030 programme](#). This £7.5m programme will support the development of two to four exemplar Future Neighbourhoods in two phases over the next three years. £3m will be made available for strategies and projects in the first phase. Future Neighbourhoods will be located in areas most adversely impacted by the pandemic and high streets could form part of these neighbourhoods.

3.2.5 Non-financial support offer

Each selected partnership will be able to access a dedicated non-financial support offer to help projects come together as a community of practice, share transferable learnings and develop robust, deliverable projects that respond to local challenges or opportunities and aspire to the highest standards of design.

A package of measures will range from High Street Network events to thematic workshops. Selected partnerships can also access advice and support offered by the GLA Regeneration team and the Challenge Experts Panel. This panel will comprise GLA policy leads – including Culture and Creative Industries, 24 hour London, Economic Development, Communities and Social Policy, Health, Food, Planning, Environment, Housing & Land, Transport – along with London Councils, Nesta, the High Street Task Force, Mayor's Design Advocates and others, to advise the selected partnerships on request.

The Possibilities Playbook presents innovative responses offered by exemplary partnerships and highlights useful resources and precedents for the development of high street strategies. During the Challenge, the Possibilities Playbook will become a live repository that can grow to showcase the exemplar projects to potential funders and supporters, celebrate successes with London's communities and share transferable learnings with the wider network.

In developing your proposals, we also encourage you to think about a high-quality and inclusive built environment – as set out in the Mayor’s Good Growth by Design programme. We encourage you to draw on the right professional expertise from London’s rich and diverse pool of architecture and urban design talent. The way in which design quality is maintained throughout the development and delivery of a project is an important consideration for projects that the Mayor invests in.

This offer will be developed and delivered by relevant GLA teams and mission partners. Please see the Resources section of this document for further detail.

3.3 Key dates

March – June 2021 Stage 1 ‘Putting your high street on the map’

Local challenge identification

17 May 2021 Deadline for partnerships for stage 1 responses

May– June 2021 Responses assessed by London boroughs with support by City Hall

mid-June 2021 Selected high streets announced and seed funding allocations confirmed

June – October 2021 Stage 2 ‘Gathering around the flag’

Exemplar development

June – July 2021 High Street Network and thematic workshops

mid-September 2021 Deadline for stage 2 additional funding and support requests

September – October 2021 Funding requests assessed by City Hall

mid October 2021 First round of additional funding allocations announced

October 2021 onwards Stage 3 ‘Making it happen’

Local strategy development and testing

3.4 Putting your high street on the map – Stage 1 guidance notes

Interested partnerships should initially prepare a short response to the call for exemplars. Please use [this form](#) to answer the following questions to describe your high street location and idea.

3.4.1 What is your specific place-based challenge and proposition?

You should describe this in the context of one or more of the key questions of the Challenge and how these manifest locally.

Your description should demonstrate an excellent understanding of the place, its social, cultural and economic role, its local challenges and needs, and its possibilities to bring forward experimental and innovative solutions that can also act as pilots for other high streets.

High streets represent their local population and provide the perfect location to pilot participatory activities, innovation and more inclusive practices. Proposals should target areas where local communities have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic or are otherwise excluded from innovation and renewal, calibrating an adaptive strategy to create resilience, boost economic activity and yield wider public value.

There is flexibility about which activities the High Streets for All Challenge can support, as long as they are part of a coherent package focused on partnership formation and development of a locally rooted adaptive strategy; and as long as they aim to deliver the stated mission of delivering enhanced public spaces and exciting new uses for underused high street buildings and spaces – working with London’s diverse communities.

3.4.2 Who is in your partnership?

The High Streets for All Challenge aims to build a ‘coalition of transformation’ at the high street scale with local authorities, local service providers, private enterprise, land and commercial interests, civic and equality led organisations, community groups and anchor institutions such as hospitals, university, colleges or cultural venues. We seek proposals from partnerships which champion collaborative working, building on the strengths of different organisations to deliver a holistic high street recovery strategy.

We want you to engage with a wide range of people and organisations to test ideas and use local knowledge to define the concept and scope of your strategy and more targeted asset-based proposals. We are keen to see local stakeholders convene and coordinate multifaceted proposals with specific strands led by local experts.

You should make sure you can communicate good knowledge of local business and community capabilities and demonstrate that collaboration can move recovery actions forward. The lead organisation must be able to demonstrate that the partnership has the capacity and ability to develop a strategy and it must be willing to take overall responsibility for the delivery and management of project.

Ultimately, high street recovery is something that Londoners and local stakeholders should feel that they are part of. Everyone should have opportunities to contribute to making and remaking their local area by coming together to develop common spaces and shared resources. We know that community and civil society groups as well as local businesses, cultural and third sector organisations are full of great ideas and are well placed to propose sustainable solutions to local challenges or opportunities.

3.4.3 Which available asset/s or priority area of intervention will help to unlock the challenge and act as an anchor for your wider strategy?

Assets that can create public value should be at the centre of locally derived recovery plans: this can be an underused building, a public space or a piece of infrastructure. You should consider which available asset/s and priority areas for intervention can help to catalyse a new and more diverse high street mix of uses that responds to the impact of COVID-19 and to long term restructuring of the high street.

Expanding community or local authority ownership on the high street; enabling the creative reuse of vacant and underused assets with a focus on affordability, flexibility and meanwhile use; and working with anchor institutions that own high street assets is particularly pertinent following the introduction of the commercial, business and service (class E) use class which allows landowners to move between a wider variety of uses without planning permission.

Similarly, there is an urgency to ensure that public spaces on or nearby the high streets – including those which are privately owned – are available as a shared resource for all Londoners in terms of their health and wellbeing and quality of life, reflecting the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown measures on Londoners and the disproportionate reliance on public space by disadvantaged groups lacking access to private amenity space.

3.4.4 How your proposal will be assessed

The questions above form part of the criteria against which proposals will be assessed to determine the preferred partnership and exemplar location in each London borough. We will also consider the wider strategic fit of each proposal to ensure a balanced programme of innovative and inclusive exemplars in areas of high need which address all key Challenge areas.

- Place-based challenge and proposition – **40 per cent**
- Partnership – **20 per cent**
- Asset – **20 per cent**
- Wider strategic fit with programme – **20 per cent**

Stage 1 responses will need to be submitted to the GLA by email to HighStreetsforAll@london.gov.uk no later than 4pm on Monday 17 May 2021.

The GLA will share stage 1 submissions with the relevant London boroughs who will determine one preferred partnership and exemplar location in accordance with the criteria set out above. They can call on the GLA, London Councils, and other mission partners to help make their decision. London boroughs will confirm their preferred partnership and exemplar location by mid-June 2021. These will form the exemplar projects going forward in the Challenge.

4. Setting out the Challenge: Key questions

4.1 Creating a public welcome

How can we create streets and public spaces that encourage walking, cycling, cultural activity and boost visitor confidence, generating a thriving mix of high street activity within easy reach of all Londoners and at all times of day and night?

A public welcome is about more than just the pavement between retail fronts – it includes spaces behind, on top of, adjacent to or within the buildings and shops of the parades. This network of public spaces also provides connections to our nearby green spaces and wider neighbourhoods. As shared spaces they should provide a welcome to the diverse local communities that visit London's high streets as well as meeting the shared demands of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been numerous responses to how these pavements, streets, pocket parks and interior spaces can adapt to create more accessible high streets that can cope with the increased social distances required. They are also adapting to the potential longer-term restructuring of London's economic, social and civic life, with examples of uses spilling out of buildings to animate the street scene and providing space to support the economic resilience of local businesses. Activating the existing public realm, as well as other underused spaces, can provide new opportunities to bring culture to the high street, as well as capitalise on temporary interventions made in response to the public health issues arising from the pandemic to improve accessibility. This requires a partnership approach with businesses and coordination across council services, for example via licencing and highways teams.

Sustainable management, place-based knowledge and design quality are all key to the success of these changes and require inclusive engagement with local communities. Understanding the unique and shared opportunities across London's high street spaces can help the public realm to adapt in both the immediate and long term.

We encourage responses to the challenge which:

- Capitalise on Transport for London / borough programmes of temporary interventions made in response to the public health issues arising from the pandemic to promote walking, cycling and wider accessibility and to reduce car dependence, enhanced public spaces, parks, urban greening and cultural engagement.
- Pilot well designed short term 'tactical urbanism' interventions led by local stakeholders drawing on new temporary licensing powers, experimental traffic orders and activation of under-utilised publicly owned land (e.g. in forecourts, school grounds, car parks) to create civic amenity.
- Establish partnerships with academic institutions to evaluate the performance of proposals to inform long term changes and future investment propositions.
- Take action to promote diversity in the public realm.
- Support cultural institutions and producers to activate streets and spaces safely, promote events to re-activate the public realm and celebrate the diverse cultures of London.
- Expand the high streets public realm over building thresholds into interior spaces to trial new uses to diversify the retail, civic, and social offer on the high street.

4.2 Innovative places of exchange

How can we support new types of business and nurture innovation within local economies through place-based policy development, targeted business support, planning, licensing and cultural and economic development incentives?

Small businesses, markets and other places of exchange play a vital role for employment, business incubation and trade, underpinning local economies and bringing prosperity into the heart of communities. As normal supply chains were stretched through the pandemic, many Londoners relied on their local high street more than ever to access essential goods and services, and there is some optimism that this increased local focus will persist. The pandemic has however accelerated longstanding challenges for businesses, which alongside changing planning regulations, have immediate implications for local economies and the employment and

services they provide.

The ability to innovate will be key to tackling both the challenges and opportunities that emerge. Many businesses and social enterprises have successfully adapted during the pandemic and helped local communities to do the same. They must now be supported to restart and renew through targeted business support and the adoption of new tools that boost resilience, productivity and innovation. In recovery, local government can innovate too, working closely with communities to form partnerships and agree local priorities. Reimagining the use of planning and licensing regimes as tools of economic recovery will, alongside targeted rate relief, help to stimulate local economic recovery and test new ways to curate the high street.

There are already examples of place and sector-based strategies that deliver targeted policy and business support. Creative Enterprise Zones, the Night Time Enterprise Zone pilot and the Good Growth Fund promote area-based strategies as part of place-based investments. ‘High Street Innovation Districts’ could build on this work to test how the shared priorities of local government, businesses, and residents alongside targeted interventions can stimulate cross-sectoral, bottom-up innovation to help the high street to survive and thrive.

We encourage responses to the challenge which:

- Support recovery and resilience of the everyday economy, through the specification and delivery of area-based innovation zones. This could include the piloting of enterprise zone style policies at the local high street scale or the further development of Creative Enterprise Zones and Night Time Enterprise Zones alongside broader, comprehensive strategies for high street renewal.
- Leverage existing local resources, partnerships and networks to agree policy priorities and to develop, targeted business support and incentives that stimulate cross sectoral, bottom-up innovation, to meet social and economic objectives.
- Use planning and licensing regimes as tools to support businesses in their economic recovery and support community use of the high street. Enable and test new approaches to business support, including integrated area or sector- based models. Utilise the London Business Hub and the Culture at Risk Office to align with other available offers.
- Test new and flexible models for workspace provision in collaboration with public or private high street landlords. Support affordable workspaces and other near home working models which nurture start-ups, SMEs and creative enterprises, and support diverse pathways into entrepreneurialism and employment.
- Support street markets in developing targeted plans which could address new forms of market management, trader recruitment and training, renewed trader and business relations, growing local supply chains, supporting local employment and training, and helping to deliver environmental improvements.

4.3 Generating social value

How can we ensure that high street economies generate public value, shared prosperity and the socially productive use of land and property for the communities they serve?

There is a growing consensus that a strong economic recovery could be structured to better secure social impact and locally rooted financial gains. COVID-19 presents immediate challenges, such as rising unemployment and town centre vacancies. It also worsens longstanding issues of fair pay and working conditions. Our collective recovery efforts have the potential to address these issues with new thinking to ensure vibrant local economies have a social purpose, create new opportunities for local ownership and generate community wealth.

Pioneering initiatives across London are supporting the growth of more diverse and inclusive economies such as the International House project in Brixton which uses a council owned asset to generate a broad range of social value outcomes, or the precedents listed in the Resources section. While these initiatives use very different mechanisms, they seek to enable more people to benefit from investment and changes in our neighbourhoods.

We welcome bids that promote community business, social enterprise, and/or community wealth building interventions as a core focus of recovery strategies.

We encourage responses to the challenge which:

- Develop partnerships, networks and resources within an area to support new models of business formation, as well as encouraging standards and ‘give back’ models as part of their economic activities.
- Test new models of local governance to ensure local communities have an active and equal role in the stewardship of their high streets.
- Secure creative new uses for land and property assets that deliver social value or financial gains which are harnessed by the local community. This could include the expansion of local authority ownership directly on high streets; strategic and coordinated use of assets owned by anchor institutions; or new uses for vacant or underused assets including new opportunities for community ownership.
- Leverage procurement, purchasing power and partnerships with local anchor institutions to develop local supply chains of businesses likely to support local employment, the Mayor’s Good Work Standard and help ensure wealth is retained within communities.
- Support the growth of social enterprises and community businesses in their area, especially when linked to regeneration projects.
- Support increased uptake of innovative models of social financing, such as community shares, to help social enterprises and community businesses access alternative finance and introduce forms of inclusive and democratic local business and asset ownership with shared benefit.

4.4 Connected communities

How can we promote social integration and active citizenship by strengthening local collaboration and securing vital social, civic and cultural infrastructure?

High streets are London’s social glue. They are the setting for public life, conviviality and face-to-face contact. They provide cultural footholds and offer opportunities for Londoners to meet and build meaningful and lasting relationships with each other. They also provide access to vital information and support, especially for vulnerable groups.

The dynamism of communities’ collective lives and the social exchanges that high streets support have been vividly revealed in the powerful community response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local organisations have taken on food distribution, high street cafes and restaurants continue to provide meals for people who have lost their incomes, and mutual aid groups have sprung up across the city.

We know that successful community responses are stronger and more effective in areas with established social networks. The crisis has also highlighted a disparity in access to public spaces, facilities and other common goods, illustrating that Londoners are not experiencing the challenges of the pandemic uniformly - some groups have been at the sharp end of change with much of their support network dismantled.

A key focus of the Challenge will be to safeguard existing vital social assets and to create more resilient networks by testing new technologies, design strategies and approaches to the organisation of social infrastructure.

We encourage responses to the challenge which:

- Pilot approaches to the delivery and operation of social and cultural infrastructure that secure and improve social integration outcomes, including innovative partnerships.
- Place local organisations and community groups at the centre of the recovery planning process, as well as in the co-design and governance of new facilities.
- Develop and test design principles to improve social integration outcomes and encourage civic participation.
- Safeguard existing cultural and community assets, in particular those which are valued by underrepresented communities and are important to social integration.
- Understand locally specific social infrastructure needs by developing innovative ways to collect and map information on social integration, working alongside communities and civil society. Use and add to the GLA's Cultural Infrastructure Map which already includes community centres and libraries.
- Include locally specific social integration aims and actions.

4.5 Responding to the climate emergency

How can high streets help tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and poor air quality, whilst creating green jobs, developing skills and supporting a just transition to a low carbon circular economy?

Whilst the climate and ecological emergencies are global challenges, their impacts will be felt acutely on London's many and varied high streets, affecting local microclimates and wider supply chains and consumption patterns. In addition, poor air quality and lack of access to green spaces have already disproportionately affected London's most deprived communities, making them even more vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If unchecked, these environmental challenges will only exacerbate the consequences of a rapidly restructuring economy and further deepen inequalities amongst Londoners. Holistic recovery plans provide the opportunity to tackle these environmental challenges and inequalities head on, whilst making high streets more vibrant, healthier and economically sustainable.

During the pandemic we have seen many early examples of a green recovery on and near the high street, initiated by communities and local businesses. These range from closing off traffic in residential areas to enable children to play to local shops expanding their range of products and services and undertaking home deliveries to serve communities' everyday needs.

London's high streets present a huge opportunity to innovate and bring together environmental policy objectives as part of place-based strategies, including, for a more circular, zero carbon economy, urban greening and better air quality and road safety. In order to deliver both a green recovery and the kinds of neighbourhoods in which we want to live and work, close collaboration between boroughs and local communities and the creation of recovery plans with environmental and social sustainability at their core will be essential.

We encourage responses to the challenge which:

- Create zero carbon and zero emission zones, with energy-efficient buildings and clean transport, transformed by the supply, integration and use of clean and flexible local energy.
 - Provide the highest air quality in the capital, with high numbers of zero emission vehicles and where active travel is the norm.
 - Support the planning and delivery of Healthy Food Neighbourhoods by increasing the attractiveness, availability, affordability and supply of healthy food through the support of businesses and high street retailers.
 - Provide easy access to high quality parks and green spaces, with a leafy and green public realm, trees for shade and shelter and allotments for local food production.
 - Plan for and build a network of green infrastructure to provide green routes to encourage healthy walking and cycling, sustainable drainage to absorb rainwater and wildlife corridors to encourage biodiversity.
 - Boost best practice waste handling, with no biodegradable or recyclable waste being sent to landfill and at least 65 per cent of municipal waste being recycled.
 - Build a community with circular economy principles at its core.
 - Support diverse and inclusive communities and reduce inequalities, such as fuel poverty and the unequal health impacts of air and noise pollution.
 - Create green jobs that pay at least the London Living Wage, and local economic activity contributing to a doubling of the Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services (LCEGS) sector in London, whilst developing skills and providing training opportunities, in order to facilitate a just transition.
-

5. Responding to the Challenge: Case studies

The following selection of case studies illustrate successful ways to address one or more of the challenges facing London's high streets.

5.1 What Walworth Wants

“East Street has played a longstanding role in the history of Southwark and the market has evolved over the decades and continues to support residents’ needs. This project has breathed new life into East Street, drawing people together into the heart and soul of a rejuvenated, thriving local economy.”

Cllr Stephanie Cryan, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Culture and Skills, Southwark Council



Figure 5.1 -

The East Street Library project. Image credit: We Made That

What Walworth Wants is an incremental, locally rooted strategy to support Walworth’s economic and community resilience, celebrate its rich history and connect to major regeneration happening nearby.

5.1.1 Local challenge

Walworth has a cultural and industrial heritage which forms a key part of its identity today. It is located between several regeneration areas including the Old Kent Road, the Aylesbury Estate and Elephant and Castle which together will create around 30,000 new homes. East Street, in Walworth was uninviting, with nowhere to rest and cars running across the street.

A number of shops were boarded up and crowded market pitches were offering a narrow variety of goods on dilapidated market stalls. There was a risk of the area being ‘left behind’ and missing out on the benefits that new and existing residents and activity could bring to the area.

5.1.2 Partnership

In 2015 Southwark Council and the GLA commissioned the What Walworth Wants strategy. The strategy engaged with local people, capturing needs and ambitions for the area, and identifying key areas for investment. The strategy celebrates the identities and qualities of the different locations, aiming to build resilience of existing businesses and local amenities and knitting together gaps between development. It includes a menu of projects to be delivered by a variety of organisations ranging from short, cheap, quick wins through to longer term larger capital.

5.1.3 Strategy

What Walworth Wants sets out a collectively agreed big picture which can be delivered incrementally as and when funds become available. Realistic expectations were set, starting with a focus on the street market with little improvements like branded tote bags, carefully designed canopies and barrows, movable market furniture and bird boxes. This paved the way to a locally agreed and improved market layout which alleviated pedestrian congestion. This was complemented with creative wayfinding to draw people in from further afield. Places for shoppers to relax and chat were introduced, shop fronts refurbished, and East Street Library was extended to provide flexible and affordable meeting spaces and to establish a more open and accessible relationship with the street.

5.1.4 Outcome and successes

What Walworth Wants asserts East Street's function as the local community market and 'go to' place for affordable high-quality fruit and vegetables as well as supporting community life. This has resulted in further inward investment including Peabody Trust refurbishing its properties and providing an affordable co-working space and community activities, the installation of new electric connections for market pitches and traffic calming measures to reduce road danger, stress, noise and air pollution. The work has also helped to improve relationships between shop keepers and market traders strengthening the resilience of the high street during a major period of change and has resulted in engendering a sense of place and pride in the area, where all people feel welcome.

5.2 Waltham Forest Night Time Enterprise Zone Pilot

“There was a lot of foot traffic thanks to the events surrounding the high street and the evening was busy! The buskers had a great crowd and were very well received. Overall I'd say it was a great success and we would be very open to getting involved in future events.”

The Collab



Figure 5.2 -

Night Time Enterprise Zones: Walthamstow Pilot Project report

In 2019 Walthamstow High Street was chosen to run London's first Night Time Enterprise Zone pilot project, a four-month trial to revive the high street, to give Londoners better access to their city after 6pm, and to support good work standards at night. This followed the successful delivery of the first London Borough of Culture programme earlier in the year.

5.2.1 Local challenge

Walthamstow High Street's considerable length and differences in the level of footfall and liveliness from end to end presented a challenge in terms of placemaking and being able to create a collective identity. Through an extensive research and engagement programme, Waltham Forest Council gained a detailed understanding of the challenges faced by residents, businesses and workers at night and identified that more than half of the businesses along the High Street were closed by 7pm. Younger and older residents were concerned about safety in a number of blind spots, and there was a general lack of information on evening venues and activities.

5.2.2 Partnership

The delivery of a Night Time Enterprise Zone Pilot with support from City Hall followed a strategic recommendation by the London Night Time Commission. It allowed the council to strengthen partnerships with local residents and businesses with the aim of scoping experimental approaches to diversify the high street offer, encourage extended opening times, increase awareness of the night time offer and activate the high street at night.

5.2.3 Strategy

The partnership enabled the council to collect valuable economic and social data, to create a robust evidence-based action plan for future growth in the evening. The result was a detailed up-to-date picture of Walthamstow High Street at night which shaped the following pilot activities:

- **High Street ADVENTures:** the high street was successfully reclaimed for night time use through a curated event which encouraged businesses to stay open longer into the evening.
- **Later Opening Hours Fund:** the fund supported cultural activity, events and workshops on the street and inside shops, cafes and bars.
- **Marketing and promotion:** the council worked in partnership with residents, businesses and local arts provider Artillery to compile listings of all existing events and put out an open call to artists to run new activities during extended hours in shops, cafes and community spaces.
- **Stow Exchange:** a council-owned space was turned into an alcohol-free pop-up bar with inclusive events for young people. The same space was also used for engagement, workshops and focus groups, and crime reduction training for local businesses by the Safer Sounds Partnership.
- **Night Time Enterprise Toolkit:** this step-by-step guide aims to encourage more businesses to operate after 6pm. It outlines the key considerations for businesses wanting to operate at night.

5.2.4 Outcome and successes

The pilot has demonstrated a wealth of opportunities to re-imagine and animate high streets later into the evening, and that a night time economy does not need to result in a monoculture based on alcohol consumption.

The high street footfall increased by 22 per cent at night, perceptions of safety have improved, and the programme helped to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment, encouraging families to extend their stay on the high street.

The re-purposed council space has provided a much-needed space for young people to meet and participate in the life of Walthamstow. The success of the pilot suggests that Night Time Enterprise Zones could be a key tool in local strategies to support high street recovery across London.

5.3 International House

“International House has helped us to operate more effectively on all levels because we have a permanent space to work from, accessible meeting rooms to use and workshop spaces to deliver from. The impact of being in the building can be measured in our success rate and growth since we moved in. Our capacity to deliver has grown by 60% in funding terms. We have more than doubled the number of young people we worked with and the benefit to our community is significant.”
Polly Waterworth, Operations Director We Rise



Figure 5.3 -

International House in Brixton. Image credit: Mark A. Phillips

International House – an anchor point of the Brixton Creative Enterprise Zone – is a five year meanwhile use located in a former council office building in Brixton town centre, creating London’s largest affordable workspace with an innovative cross-subsidy model, which supports a diversity of uses and safeguards those at risk of exclusion.

5.3.1 Local challenge

The project focuses on addressing two specific local challenges. The first is to move Brixton's local economy away from an overreliance on food and beverage and retail and introduce new Creative and Digital Industries (CDI) companies to the area. The second challenge is to protect existing vital town centre uses that contribute so valuably to the identity of the area and make it the place that it is. Young people, third sector and cultural organisations are all at risk of being priced out as Brixton changes and rents increase.

5.3.2 Partnership

International House is a collaborative project between affordable workspace operator 3Space and Lambeth Council which is structured around a lease with key social value performance indicators. 3Space have committed to pay the council a guaranteed rent of £1.1 million over five years as well as making significant improvements to the asset with £900,000 invested to date. In addition to the financial commitment there are several social value outputs which are delivered by the tenants and delivery partners.

5.3.3 Strategy

The integrated approach of the project has helped to fulfil the long-term ambitions for Brixton's Creative Enterprise Zone by providing an affordable local testbed for business start-up innovation alongside embedding community use. It has also furthered Lambeth's Creative and Digital Industry Strategy and the Brixton Economic Action Plan by introducing new CDI businesses to the area as well as providing a platform to work and engage with the public in an alternative and informal space.

3Space introduced the 'BuyGiveWork' programme whereby for every desk sold on commercial terms, one is given away rent free to support charities and social purpose organisations. The 70,000 sq ft building is split into five Buy Floors and five Give Floors. The Buy Floors house everything from individual freelancers to a company with 100 employees. The Give Floors accommodate users at risk of displacement due to changing market conditions. It has also hosted other activities such as monthly Vision of Success meetings for children who are recently out of the care system.

5.3.4 Outcome and successes

The project has successfully managed to balance the competing demands of the town centre. International House has acted as both a 'market maker' introducing CDI uses whilst protecting important social, economic and cultural activities. For example, providing a new home through the Give Floor offer for Photofusion, the UK's largest and most comprehensive photography resource centre and longstanding Brixton resident. The two strands of the BuyGiveWork model allow for an integrated offer in which commercial activity not only cross-subsidises social uses, but also provides jobs, apprenticeships through the council's Made Apprentice Scheme and opportunities for local residents and businesses. It is also the first Living Wage Building in the UK, complementing local commitments through the Creative Enterprise Zone to promote inclusive growth, improved working conditions and progression opportunities for employees in the creative sector. It contributes around £16

million GVA to the local economy and generates more than £2.7 million in social value outputs each year, including £0.8 million in rent forgone to civil society. In doing so, International House has set a high standard for other operators moving into the area.

5.4 The Museum of Futures

“The Museum of Futures and our other places has brought life to the saying ‘success has many parents; failure is an orphan’.”

Robin Hutchinson, The Community Brain



Figure 5.4 -

The Museum of Futures in Surbiton.

The Museum of Futures in Surbiton transformed a vacant ship into a sustainable community space which enables local people to engage with community activities, helping to develop a shared vision for the area

and involve a broad cross section of the community in delivering it.

5.4.1 Local challenge

Like in other suburban places where many residents spend much of their time elsewhere, a key challenge was to address the lack of community engagement and investment. The Museum of Futures and subsequent spaces therefore aimed to provide opportunities to create a stronger sense of place with activities and opportunities for coming together. The site for the Museum of Futures is located away from the busier part of the high street, therefore creating a strong presence to draw people in was an important element of the brief.

5.4.2 Partnership

The project was conceived by local organisation The Community Brain. Early support from City Hall's Good Growth Fund helped create confidence amongst members of the group and key partners. Kingston University saw the potential to use the space as a venue for teaching and carrying out activities with residents, including engagement with hard-to-reach communities during the pandemic. One of the most important outcomes has been the partnership that has grown between local people, organisations and businesses.

5.4.3 Strategy

The work was underpinned by two simple principles: 'Everyone is brilliant if they are given the help and support to be brilliant' and 'the Permission to be brilliant'. It was The Community Brain's belief that a flexible, safe and supportive space would allow people to try new ideas or support others in developing theirs. This was achieved by creating an atmosphere and environment that is encouraging, enabling and 'owned' by the people using the space and being always open to new initiatives.

In response to local demand, a community kitchen was fitted to commercial standards to benefit a wide range of start-up businesses to test their concepts and help groups tackling food poverty to offer support, host events and learning.

5.4.4 Outcome and successes

Since the space opened, it has been used by a wide range of individuals, groups, start-up businesses and organisations in range of different ways from workshops and learning to live events.

The demand for such spaces enabled the creation of a second space 'The Farm of Futures', a large local allotment. This has been designed to farm waste out of the community and to farm community ideas, providing a home to four start-up businesses all of which have sustainability at their core. The third space 'Baking Ideas' has also opened at the nearby railway station expanding the opportunities for community interaction seeded by the Museum of Futures.

The greatest success has been the number of other community and business ideas and projects that have sprung up as a result of those initial interventions. This has led to a growth in activity not just in Surbiton and Tolworth but beyond to neighbouring areas such as Old Malden and Chessington encouraging more people and communities to believe they can be the agents of positive change in their local areas.

5.5 The Spark

“Re-configuring our highstreets to deal with changes to the economy will involve building work, which is great for jobs, but we need to find ways of doing it that minimise carbon and pollution. The Ilford market project shows one of the ways this can be achieved.”

Steve Webb, Webb Yates



Figure 5.5 -

The Spark project in Ilford

The Spark project consists of a collection of meanwhile projects using council owned assets to establish a rich mix of arts, creative and food-based enterprises in Ilford, creating an incubator for future growth and development of the area.

5.5.1 Local challenge

Ilford, which ranks amongst the 20 per cent most deprived areas in London, is marked by a low wage economy, low quality and relatively high-cost office accommodation not suited to supporting growing start-up businesses, and a lack of social and cultural infrastructure, providing a very limited evening offer. This has been recognised in Redbridge Council's 'Ilford for All Manifesto' and the 'Regenerating Ilford: Delivery Prospectus' which provides a spatial expression of the manifesto through a series of propositions to transform the town centre. The Delivery Prospectus acknowledges the changing nature of retail and the need to diversify the town centre offer to accommodate the needs of a growing residential community, emphasising the need for a strong cultural core.

5.5.2 Partnership

Early engagement with a range of workspace providers, and local stakeholders helped to shape proposals for the five-year meanwhile projects. Following a competitive process Mercato Metropolitano and SPACE Studios were successful in putting forward their vision and business plans for the Town Hall car park and the Town Hall building.

5.5.3 Strategy

The new Cultural Quarter is envisaged to bring together civic, leisure, education and community uses and boost cultural activity during the day and evening. In advance of longer-term plans, the council is using the opportunity to enhance its existing cultural offer and firmly establish creative and cultural enterprise by re-purposing a part of the Grade II listed Town Hall and the car park to the rear of the building.

At the core of this project, the Town Hall will be adapted to provide a mix of affordable workspace and artist studios, alongside flexible public spaces for art and tech-inspired community activities. The car park will be transformed into a purpose-built covered market, enabling start up and food entrepreneurs to establish and grow. Importantly, this incorporated circular economy principles of lightweight construction and design for disassembly and reuse - significantly reducing environmental impacts.

5.5.4 Outcome and successes

The Town Hall has already been transformed to provide 35 studios that support a wide range of artists, an offer which continued during the pandemic. The presence of the artists and SPACE Ilford has already begun to change the perceptions of the cultural offer in the town centre.

The Ilford Market project will create a food market with a community growing space on the roof and encourage social, community shared activities like growing, cooking and eating. The building itself is largely constructed in timber which, as a low embodied carbon and natural material, makes it sustainable and thus much better for the environment than steel and concrete. Other innovative technologies, such as generating gas from waste with an on-site digester and providing adjustable feet instead of foundations, have allowed this substantial project to be delivered at a fraction of the usual budgets.

Further collaboration between the Spark partners and the local community will continue to support the transformation of Ilford into a hotbed of artistic and entrepreneurial endeavour, growing the local economy both day and night.

6. Supporting the Challenge: Resources

6.1 Supporting partners

Participants in the Challenge will be able to access a support and advice offer by the GLA and partners in the High Streets for All mission.

6.1.1 GLA teams

The **Regeneration team** encourages and shapes growth in London's town centres, economic centres and high streets by supporting project partners such as local authorities, community groups and business groups, collaborating closely on delivering regeneration projects across London.

The Challenge is supported by **GLA's Economic Development, Culture and Creative Industries** and **24hr London teams** as we seek to support recovery and resilience of both the everyday and more emerging aspects of the economy and creative sector. Existing investments and support offers include Night Time Enterprise Zones and Creative Enterprise Zones, the Culture at Risk Office, the Community Spaces at Risk Fund, the London Business Hub and the recently announced Resilience Fund.

Local recovery strategies will need to interface with and can benefit from an understanding of **Transport for London's** ongoing and direct capital investment to improve streets across London making them safer and more welcoming for walking and cycling, which allows equitable access to local high streets (through for example the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, and the programme of temporary interventions made in response to the public health issues arising from the pandemic). TfL also directly contributes to the vitality and viability of high streets through lettings policies that promote affordability and a diversity of businesses.

The **GLA's Planning team** – through the London Plan, Local Plan conformity, planning frameworks, guidance, referable applications and evidence will continue to play a co-ordinating role, ensuring development and policy

is informed by data-driven evidence, guided by the Good Growth approach set out in the London Plan.

The **GLA's Environment team** will support challenge exemplars to pilot low-carbon and circular economy neighbourhoods and to adapt our high streets to a new and changing climate e.g. sustainable drainage, biodiversity, public access to green space, planting more trees. Of particular focus will be the environment team's proposed '2030 Future Neighbourhoods' the integration of Healthy Streets principles (air quality and improving access to and quality of green spaces) and supporting the proposed Healthy Food Neighbourhoods.

Challenge exemplars will also receive the support of **GLA's Communities and Social Policy (CSP)** unit. This includes insight from the Social Integration Design Lab, diversity action planning and thinking on social value creation and community wealth. CSP resources including the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Advisory Group and the social evidence base will support exemplar development and delivery.

6.1.2 Challenge partners

The **High Streets for All Mission Advocates Group** brings together expertise of key partners in the areas of innovation, town centre management, property, culture, heritage, participation and the built environment to help steer the mission to enable the successful restructure of high streets to be able to serve the needs of their communities.

London Councils represents and works on behalf of London's 32 boroughs and the City of London by acting as a catalyst for effective sharing among boroughs.

The **High Streets Task Force** is an alliance of place making experts working to redefine the high street and supports communities and local government to transform their high streets.

The Centre for Collective Intelligence Design at **Nesta** explores how to combine diverse groups of people, novel sources of data and digital technologies (including AI) to solve social problems. It does this through a combination of research, policy and running experiments and programmes with public and third sector partners.

The **Mayor's Design Advocates** is a group of 50 built environment practitioners supporting the Good Growth by Design programme to ensure regeneration projects deliver quality buildings and public spaces that will enrich London's communities now and in the future.

6.2 Useful resources and precedents

6.2.1 General

High Streets and Town Centres - Adaptive

Strategies (GLA 2020)

The Mayor's [High Streets and Town Centres - Adaptive Strategies](#) guidance advocated a 'mission-orientated'

approach to the challenges high streets and town centres face and a related development of local partnerships and 'adaptive strategies' for high street renewal and diversification.

Good Growth by Design Recovery Roundtables (GLA 2020)

As part of the Good Growth by Design programme, we held a series of [Recovery Roundtables](#) to discuss the most pertinent topics facing London's built environment in the wake of the global health crisis and its ensuing social and economic impacts. Mayor's Design Advocates and other external experts have offered their perspectives on the impact of the pandemic, the relevance of existing Good Growth by Design guidance in this new context, and examples of best practice that London could be learning from.

24-Hour London

The Mayor has created the [24-Hour London programme](#) to help London plan for the night (6pm to 6am), in the same way it plans for the day. Useful resources include:

- [Night Time Strategy Guidance](#): Case studies, precedents and a step-by-step process to develop a night time strategy. A special document offers guidance to help the night time economy recover from COVID-19
- [London At Night](#): A major collection of data and insights on London at night – including transport, workforce, economy, culture, safety and wellbeing
- [Night Time Data Observatory](#): A library of various night time data sets designed to help boroughs develop night time strategies
- [From Good Night to Great Night](#): the Mayor's vision for the development of London between 6pm and 6am
- [Think Night: London's Neighbourhoods from 6pm to 6am](#): The final report and ten recommendations of the London Night Time Commission

Creative Enterprise Zones

[Creative Enterprise Zones](#) can play an integral role in supporting an approach to high streets and town centre recovery. Their role is to support artists and creative businesses to access permanent affordable space to work; enable them to start-up and grow; and ensure that local people can learn creative sector skills and find new jobs. They have been in delivery since 2018, developing innovative policies linking affordable creative workspace, business and skills support with community leadership. GLA support for this cohort extends to June 2023.

Culture at Risk Office

The Mayor's [Culture at Risk Office](#) has a remit to safeguard cultural and community infrastructure across London. The office provides bespoke support to operators, businesses, social enterprises, charities, non-profits and community groups to help protect at-risk assets and to support their long-term sustainability.

Cultural Infrastructure Map

The [Cultural Infrastructure Map](#) is an open resource which plots the location of cultural infrastructure and enables the user to view it alongside useful contextual data, like transport networks and population growth.

6.2.2 Community engagement

Useful resources

- [Map of Community Views](#): Insights from BAME and Faith communities disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, presented by the GLA.
- [The Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm](#): The Borough Working Group is an opportunity for borough councils to provide views from across the capital. Get in touch with your council to find out more about their involvement.

Precedents

[Every One Every Day](#) is a programme in Barking and Dagenham led by the Participatory City Foundation to empower local residents to work together on different neighbourhood projects around the borough to make everyday life better for everyone.

[Seen and Heard](#) is a research and engagement project commissioned by the Brent 2020 London Borough of Culture programme where young people have teamed up with LSE Cities to create the Blueprint Charter, a new manifesto for public spaces, and the Seen and Heard petition.

[Making Happy Places](#) is a summer school where 18 to 21-year olds learn about architecture and the environment, gain practical skills and develop a critical eye on how the built environment impacts on the lives of local communities.

[High Street Tweak](#) is a project led and delivered by the Edinburgh Futures Institute and New Practice that explores how residents, businesses and young people can work together to develop ideas for small improvements to help make high streets more successful and liveable places.

6.2.3 Creating a public welcome

Useful resources

- The Mayor's [Expanding London's Public Realm](#) research and design guidance assists commissioners and built environment professionals to ensure the highest levels of access and inclusion in an increasingly dense city.
- The [Safer Streets](#) guidance from IF:DO, Innovate UK and Street Space outlines creative ways the public realm can support both the recovery and resilience of high streets.
- The [TfL Healthy Streets](#) toolkit helps you put the Healthy Streets approach into practice, covering the whole process from initial assessment, through implementation, to evaluation.
- The High Streets Taskforce outlines a ten-point checklist for [Temporary public realm changes](#).
- [Reinventing the High Street for COVID-19 Recovery](#) by Sustrans explores the ways in which redesigning high street spaces can help recovery.

Precedents

The Future High Streets Fund and Heritage Action Zone programme for [Woolwich High Street](#) is a comprehensive plan of works including works to reboot Beresford Square market, deliver cultural events

promoting local history and diversity and make improvements to the public realm.

The [SHEDx](#) project in Kingston reimagines the public realm greening, the development of a community farm, a local food & craft market, a Brazilian Festival, a new community unit and more.

[Her Barking](#) by Street Space and Hanna Benihoud is a women-led co-design movement to test low-cost interventions to make streets and space feel safe.

The [Living Innovation Zones](#) project in San Francisco invites the community to help shape the public realm.

The [Passeig De St Joan Boulevard](#) project in Barcelona transforms a major city road to give priority to pedestrians.

6.2.4 Innovative places of exchange

Useful Resources

- The [London Business Hub](#) is supporting London's businesses to start, sustain and grow.
- [London Councils' summary of borough digital initiatives](#) shows how the London Office of Technology and Innovation can help to solve problems, improve services, and foster community engagement.
- The Local Government Association's [Dealing with Empty Shops](#) guide is for councils faced with challenges around vacancy on their high streets and provides an overview of potential methods to tackle it.
- Deloitte's [What next for the High Street](#) report argues that the high street is ideally placed to reinvent itself in response to the structural shift in working and shopping patterns that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Alternative Camden](#) is a new take on an innovation district, set up to give people the freedom to create a more democratic and inclusive city.
- [Thirty3](#) is a city-wide platform for technology-focussed public sector procurement with the aim of diversifying London's tech infrastructure, improving services for Londoners and helping public bodies save money.
- Commissioned by the GLA and the LEAP following the advice of the Mayor's Workspace Advisory Group, Architecture 00 have produced the [Flexible Workspaces on our High Streets](#) guidance for empty high street premises ranging from large public-sector owned assets and shopping centre units to large retail space in the Central Activities Zone and small high street units. It calls for a reimagination of the relationships between landlords, tenants, operators, and local authorities, with the purpose of reducing the risk profile of vacant units, while ensuring that high street assets create social and economic value by providing space for local business and enterprises of all sizes.

Precedents

The [Night Time Enterprise Zone Report](#) brings together findings, the action plan and case studies from the Walthamstow High Street pilot project.

[Catford DEK studios](#) in Lewisham bring life back into the old town hall in Catford, providing much needed affordable, flexible and creative workspace for artists and designers.

Bracknell Forest Council's [East Hampstead Works](#) combines affordable workspace for businesses, with flexible, adaptable studio and events spaces.

[The Startup Mall](#) in Hammersmith offers formally vacant units within the mall to entrepreneurs, makers and technologists who want to test new ideas.

[First in Tolworth](#) is a new community market and proposed Hybrid Business Improvement District to that enables businesses and residents to work together to improve their local area.

The [Hackney Wick and Fish Island Creative Enterprise Zone](#) has recently delivered a Makers' Market helping makers engage with the local community whilst boosting their profile and driving additional footfall.

6.2.5 Generating social value

Useful resources

- [Saving the High Street: the Community Takeover](#) published by Power to Change and the London School of Economics and Political Science explores how community businesses can help revive the high street's fortunes.
- [Social Value Metrics](#) – this pulls together some of the existing guidance as well as tools and datasets that allow you to monetise social impact. This is particularly important if you are looking to agree KPIs for your own organisation or set up reward mechanisms for partners delivering social value.
- The [Community Improvement District Discussion Paper](#) published by Power to Change explores the emerging concept of Community Improvement Districts and considers the various models, contexts and risk factors.
- Hackney Council has developed the [Business Toolkit](#) to encourage the adoption of social values by all businesses in the borough.
- The [Social Value Portal](#) is an online tool to help organisations measure, manage and report their social impact.
- Common Wealth have pulled together [Democratic by Design: A New Community Wealth Building Vision for the British Economy After Covid-19](#). This sets out core principles, signposts key research and best practice from across the UK.

Precedents

[Sutton Works](#) will transform a former department store into an innovative workspace providing co-working, offices for local SMEs, business support, exhibition space and community facilities.

Newham Council has developed a [Community Wealth Building Strategy](#) that engages with local anchor institutions to increase local spend, as well as providing support to local businesses to tender for contract opportunities.

The [Harlesden High Street Heritage Action Zone](#) includes a project led by the Refugee Support Network, to transform a disused former bank into a focus of support for young people, workspace for small businesses, and a meeting place for community groups.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has launched [England's first Land Commission](#) focussed on community wealth building, to review how public land and assets can better deliver local social value.

6.2.6 Connected Communities

Useful resources

- The Mayor's [Connective Social Infrastructure](#) report presents research into the role of social infrastructure in enabling social integration, while supporting good growth.
- [Social Integration in London: a snapshot of the Mayor's approach](#) shares insights from the Survey of Londoners on issues relating to social integration, equalities and fairness and how the Mayor is tackling these issues.
- [The Value of People Power](#) report by Nesta includes an economic analysis of the value of people power and explores how public services can better value the contribution of citizens.
- The [London Community Response Survey](#) dataset presents results of a weekly questionnaire sent to a cohort of frontline civil society organisations. The results are being used to inform the pan-London response to the coronavirus crisis.
- The [Collective Intelligence Design Playbook](#) by Nesta provides tools, tactics and methods to harness the power of people, data and technology.
- The NHS Confederation's [Health on the High Street](#) report sets out we can seize the opportunity to address health inequalities, offer additional capacity for health service delivery and attract more people into their local high street, while encouraging healthier lifestyles.

Precedents

[Redbridge Council's Community Hubs Programme](#) brings together different services across the borough such as libraries, children's services and GPs, and provides a place where residents can come together and run activities that matter to them.

[The Lions Society](#) are a network of barbers in Croydon who use informal social infrastructure – barbers' shops – to provide mentoring and support to help young people move away from involvement in knife crime.

The [Friendly Families Nursery in Deptford](#) is a parent-led, co-operative model of childcare which actively involves both children and parents in every stage of creating the childcare setting.

As part of the [Bourne Estate](#) redevelopment in Camden, the Tenants and Residents' Community Hall was relocated to a more prominent position, opening to a semi-public play and community space and creating a welcoming facility for all residents to use.

The [Open Doors](#) programme by ukactive and Sported, unlocks school sports facilities outside term time to provide vulnerable children and young people with safe and accessible spaces to engage in sports and physical activity, as well as mentoring and education.

6.2.7 Responding to the climate emergency

Useful resources

- The Mayor's [Design for a Circular Economy Primer](#) helps organisations in the built environment sector understand how they can embed circular economy principles into their projects and design processes.
- [NLA – Zero Carbon London](#) – insight into where the built environment sector is currently in the fight against climate change, and the measures to achieve this goal
- [Climate Action: Race and climate reading list](#) to help understand how race and climate intersect.
- [Friends of the Earth: England's Green Space Gap Report](#) – exposing green space deprivation in relation to ethnicity and location
- [Hawkins\Brown: Emission Reduction Tool](#) – an open source tool to analyse and visualise the embodied carbon emissions of different building components and materials options.
- [Levitt Bernstein: Easi Guide to Passivhaus Design](#) – a guide that graphically sets out ten simple principles that form the foundations of good Passivhaus and zero carbon design.
- [LETI publications: Climate Emergency Design Guide and Embodied Carbon Primer](#) – setting out a net zero carbon future and providing technical support
- Suggested organisations to follow – [Climate Re-frame](#) (amplifying BAME voices in the UK Climate Movement) and [Race and Health](#)

Precedents

The [Arcola Theatre](#) in Dalston is an example of a refurbishment of a run-down building into a community resource and cultural venue that is also zero carbon.

The [Brixton Remakery](#) is a place where people can come together and repair things, rescuing from landfill, saving money and preventing carbon emissions while also creating a social hub.

Croydon Council's [Shaping Thornton Heath: High Street Plan](#) sets out a framework and practical projects, integrating green and blue infrastructure and sustainable development in a holistic vision for the town centre.

[Rework](#) in Wandsworth is a refurbish and reuse project by Groundwork, where repairable white goods are fixed up by trainees who are getting back into the workplace.

[Think & Do Camden](#) is a community space utilising underused buildings and spaces to allow people to reimagine what a circular economy, net-zero economy, and sustainable development goals look like in their area.

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