



TOWER HAMLETS

Supporting the Local Economy – Delivery Report 2020-21

October 2021



Introduction

This presentation provides an overview of our activity to support the local economy over the last 18 months. In summary, we have:

- Maintained and where appropriate expanded **our core services**, adapting these where necessary to comply with restrictions.
- Rolled out a **rapid response**, devising local projects as well as delivering central government funding and programmes
- Provided interventions to **support a recovery** once conditions stabilise



Employment, Skills and Training

- **WorkPath:** has continued throughout the pandemic, with 326 residents supported into work in 2020/21.
- **JETS Programme:** support and training provided for 259 local residents who have been unemployed for over 12 weeks.
- **Central London Works Programme:** has supported over 450 to overcome health barriers and get into work.
- **JobCentre Plus Co-location:** co-location of JobCentre Plus and Workpath to deliver 18-24 Hub.



Employment, Skills and Training



- **Creative Enterprise Zone - Skills Programme:** a total of 75 residents have benefited from seminars and employment support.
- **LIFT Employability Incubator:** 263 people have been equipped with tech and digital skills through apprenticeships and work experience opportunities.
- **Digital Inclusion:** over 250 digital devices and broadband connections delivered to primary school children and their families.
- **Idea Store Learning:** in partnership with WorkPath, we delivered 51 courses in English and Maths, with a total of 380 enrolments. In addition, 97% of our ESOL learners passed.



Support for Young People



- **Young WorkPath:** has continued to support young people not in education, employment or training, achieving 95% into EET in 2020/21.
- **Kickstart:** 550 funded placements secured across the borough (one of the highest of any local authority). 33 Living Wage placements within the Council.
- **Expanding Careers Guidance:** Tower Hamlets Careers Leads Network re-established in June 2021.
- **Employability:** partners delivering a rolling programme of employability training and personal development workshops aimed at NEET and Through-Care young people.

Case Study: Kickstart

Announced in summer 2020, colleagues in the Employment & Skills service worked through late 2020 and into 2021 to coordinate placements both externally and within the council.

Oluwaseyi Prince, a Kickstart recruit and Social Media Consultant for Carrington Blake said: “I have increased my skills in leadership during my time in Carrington Blake. I have realised that my true ambition lies in teaching through this company and I am very grateful for that. I am looking forward to see how I can grow as a person professional.”



Support for Local Businesses



- **Grants and reliefs:** Over £200m provided in grants and reliefs to more than 5,000 local businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. Over 3,000 local businesses received a 100% business rate discount.
- **Masterclasses and webinars:** Free, online, expert-led advice and guidance seminars have been offered throughout the pandemic. In all, 598 businesses have accessed these sources of advice to date.
- **PIVOT Project and PIVOT Project 2:** Over 50 small and micro businesses were supported in this project's first wave, which provided the support they need to 'pivot' and survive. A second, expanded wave aimed at 150 more businesses was approved for delivery in 2021.



Support for Local Businesses



- **Creative Freelance Project:** A pivot project geared to the creative sector, it has delivered support to 60 small businesses.
- **WICK Together:** This small commissions project has supported the employment of 20 local freelancers and 70 residents to develop creative skills.
- **Business Adaptations Project:** Funded through the Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund, this project will provide up to £1250 in grant funding for 215 small and micro businesses to help them adapt.

Case Study: Business Support Grants

Close working has been required throughout between the Revenues Service and the Enterprise team to resolve complex cases.

The Breakhouse (E3): In this business' case, discrepancies between different sets of information were preventing the swift distribution of support, putting them at risk of permanent closure.

The Enterprise team worked with Revenues and a new property reference number was created enabling the business to make an application after the closing date, receive the funds, and bounce back.



Focus: PIVOT Project



In October 2020 the Pivot Project was launched to respond to the effects of the pandemic on micro and small businesses allowing them to pivot and adapt their business model.

Local swimwear manufacturer Boardies had suffered many order cancellations following the disruption in 2020. With the help and advice from the programme, Boardies were able to increase their online sales to customers around the world including the USA, Canada, Australia, Asia and the Middle East

Nick Crook, Founder of Boardies said ***“The Tower Hamlets Pivot Project allowed us to work with a local digital agency in Spitalfields and tap into their expertise, so Boardies could navigate around challenges relating to lockdown.”***

The firm went on to win a prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade in 2021



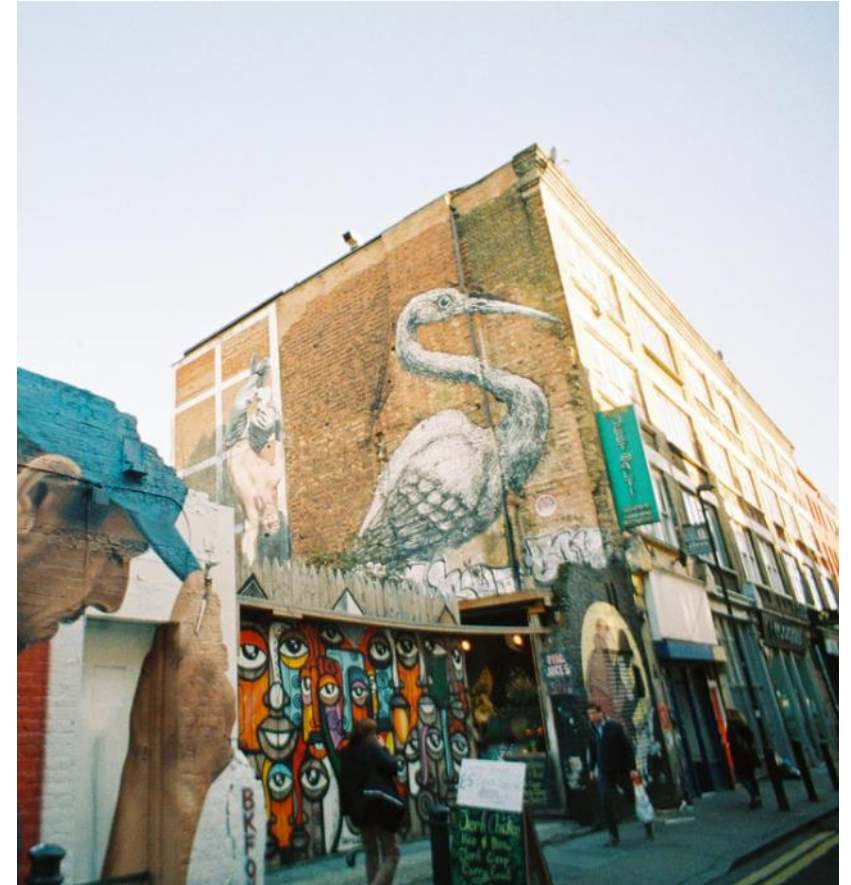
High Streets and Town Centres

- **Outdoor Dining:** Outdoor dining areas developed at Middlesex St, Brick Lane, Whitby St, Brushfield St, Boundary St, Roman Rd East
- **Home Delivery Pilot:** Using a local e-cargo bike delivery scheme, this pilot supported 46 high street retail businesses to develop their delivery services during lockdown.
- **Start-Up Market Traders:** This project has supported over 25 new market traders to test potential trade at a number of different TH street markets.
- **'Moving Markets Online':** Funded through £110k of the Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund, this project will create and maintain an online platform for our designated licensed trading areas.



High Streets and Town Centres

- At **Roman Road West**: shopfront improvements; detailed design for market square, new access route to connect to QMUL; mural on flank of housing block.
- At **Brick Lane**: we have consulted on parklets, architectural lighting, the Banglatown Arch, Pedley St link, and marketing to attract footfall to Osborn St.
- **Advice and materials to businesses**: Working with Environmental Health and Public Health teams, we have provided reopening advice and essential materials (PPE, QR code posters) to businesses throughout the pandemic.



Case Study: The Bakery Room

Pamela Tironi – The Bakery Room, 577 Roman Rd, sells specialised home-made celebration cakes to order & runs a small coffee shop.

Ms Tironi utilised the **Home Delivery pilot** to explore the issues related to delivery of such a fragile product and has enrolled in **Thriving High Streets 3** to develop a marketing plan, online presence, and social media.

Recently, The Bakery Room has been promoted via our **'Welcome Back Campaign'** which is supporting marketing of small local high street businesses.



“The Bakery Room would not be here today without the support from the council and the local network. We are looking forward to partnering with our local authority and piloting new activity together”



Looking Ahead



- Out-of-work benefits claimant count falling
- Town centre footfall increasing
- Job vacancies at a 20-year high
- Work to expand digital inclusion
- Closer working with local universities
- High-skill growth opportunities (e.g. life sciences)
- Green skills agenda
- Delivery of Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund projects

