

From the Regeneration Team, London Borough of Croydon

2020

The Good Growth Fund (GGF): The Mayor of London's regeneration programme to support growth and community development in London.

The Mayor of London's Good Growth funding of £1.16m awarded to South Norwood was matched by Croydon Council totalling £2.3m, to progress some of the ideas from the Community Plan, which followed months of engagement with local residents, businesses and community organisations, providing a framework for future regeneration in South Norwood.

The Good Growth Programme is a three-year high streets regeneration programme which aims to kick-start the revitalisation of the high streets with a combination of physical interventions, business support and capacity building activities for the local community network.

The programme includes:

- Public realm improvements delivering small scale public realm place-making projects, focusing on gateway points, key connecting routes, way finding, signage, public art and greening to reflect the identity of South Norwood, both for residents and visitors.
- Bring back to life empty commercial units to create a range of traditional retail businesses and workspace for the concentration of local freelance businesses, creative enterprises and artists in South Norwood.
- Bring underused spaces in community buildings into use, to provide space for the many community organisations in the area and to generate alternative focal points for the high streets. Improving access to, and the flexibility of, these existing community spaces, including:
 - Samuel Coleridge Taylor Centre
 - The existing South Norwood Library building once the service moves to new premises on Station Road
 - Stanley Halls
 - Socco Cheta
 - Croydon Youth Theatre Organisation (CYTO)
- Business support and development alongside capacity building for local community networks, both for the local community and local business network, to ensure that growth is inclusive and sustainable

The Programmes

The first year of the Good Growth Programme was building the foundations.

- Contacting landlords of the vacant units and starting negotiations.
- Setting out how the Good Growth Hubs programme would work, which is key to the vision of the South Norwood hubs plans outlined in the Community Economic Development Plan

(CEDP). Determining how the spaces will work together as a coherent hub for community activity with the five hubs, and developing outlines for potential improvements and business plans to support the activities they will host. This includes some capital expenditure to the fabric of the buildings as detailed in the GGF bid.

- Procuring a design team for the place making (public realm) and shop front improvements. This needs to incorporate conservation elements following the High Streets Heritage Action Zone status.
- Liaising with Network Rail regarding an agreement for the Portland Road Bridge lighting project and securing permission to clean the bridge. This public realm improvement would include repairs to the Mosaic, cleaning the walls and pavement, painting the railings and pillars. This would involve Traffic Management Order as some of this work would have to be done at night.
- Business support which includes identifying which type of support or engagement is best for each business:
 - Physical improvements
 - Business planning
 - Marketing and social media
 - Visual merchandising
 - Recruitment and HR
 - Affordable finance

High Streets Heritage Action Zone

Historic England's programme to find new ways to champion and revive historic high streets

As part of a £95m pot for 69 high streets across the country, in September 2019, Historic England announced that South Norwood had been selected as one of five new London High Street Heritage Action Zones (HAZ). In late March 2020 the Council received confirmation of the amount of the award.

As part of its award of £1.1m, the council will work on a detailed plan with Historic England, to restore dilapidated Victorian buildings, improve public open spaces, back community education projects and encourage specialist heritage-related apprenticeships. The aims of the programme build on and enhance the Good Growth Programme, and emphasises the importance of the area's heritage to its regeneration.

The objectives of the High Streets HAZ programme are:

- To enhance the understanding of local heritage and put in place robust mechanisms to safeguard it for the future.
- To improve the physical appearance of South Norwood, restoring distinctive and unique historic character and establishing a better sense of place.

- Support the local economy to become resilient and sustainable, creating employment opportunities and establishing South Norwood's reputation as a place for independent business.
- To establish South Norwood as a place for employment, community and creativity, where there is a sense of ownership and stewardship shared across the diverse community.

There will also be a cultural programme on each of the 69 high streets in conjunction with the main High Streets Heritage Action Zones scheme.

This will be led by Historic England and is planned for 2021/22. Details have yet to be shared, however the plan is that Historic England will work with local communities and cultural organisations, and alongside local projects, commission artists and creatives to celebrate what is unique about each place.

The Cultural Programme is a separate pot of funding, from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, supported by Arts Council England, which will have a competitive bidding process.

Further information on *Regenerating Historic High Streets through Heritage Action Zones* can be found from the following links:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/regenerating-historic-high-streets/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/95-million-to-revive-historic-high-streets>

Update on the GGF & HAZ

Progress was being made by engaging with landlords, the community hubs which would include plans and architects for building works to some of the spaces, putting in place the mechanism to secure consultants and contractors, developing working groups from the businesses, community groups, WeLoveSE25 and other stakeholder groups including the Clocktower Market.

The Council who secured the awards and provided matched funding are coordinating the regeneration and liaising with the GLA, Historic England all the other stakeholders and the WeLoveSE25 Town Team for the programmes, agreeing reporting requirements, and involvement at all stages.

The setting up of these foundations to take all the projects forward was being done, and although progress in the planning stages were progressing this may have felt slow, albeit extremely important, and therefore there were not too many visible signs of change within the first six to nine months.

Unfortunately, the COVID 19 pandemic and the lockdown have delayed this year's plans, which has had an impact on progressing the programmes.

However, work has now resumed and we will be issuing a newsletter with further information in the autumn, and plan to hold a virtual meeting to update the community.

We will send out invitations to the meeting to our email distribution list, and show details on social media, but please keep an eye on the WeLoveSE25 website.

The COVID 19 has had a devastating effect on many people in Croydon and we have lost some of our community here in South Norwood. **Our hearts go out to all the friends and family who have lost loved ones this year.**

In Croydon, coming out of COVID 19, we will also be facing an extremely challenging time economically, and South Norwood is no exception. But with the plans and funding we had in place before this pandemic, we are well placed to recover and shape our 'new normal' as best we can.

If you would like to get more involved, or be included in our email distribution list, please email us on info@welovese25.org

Thank you for your patience!