

Skills Economy and Growth Scrutiny Commission**19 January 2026****Item 4 – Hackney’s Business Support – Town Centres and High Street Businesses**

Item No

4**Outline**

The Skills, Economy and Growth (SEG) Scrutiny Commission has reviewed Hackney's business support provision multiple times since its initial examination in 2018, revisiting the topic in 2022 and 2023.

Since the Commission's first review, the landscape for business support funding has undergone significant change. Simultaneously, sole traders and small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have faced considerable economic challenges.

Businesses have contended with a difficult period, encompassing recovery from the pandemic and lockdown, a recession, the cost-of-living crisis, and increased operating costs such as higher National Insurance rates and the energy crisis. These challenges have severely impacted the margins of SMEs.

The most recent allocation of business support funding, made available in 2023, is for an approximately 18–20 month period. This funding, totalling around £440k for supporting local Hackney businesses, is substantially lower than what was previously available under European funding arrangements.

Links to previous scrutiny commission discussions on this topic are provided below for reference.

- [Skills, Economy and Growth - BAME Business Engagement Report 2018](#)
- SEG Dec 2022
<https://hackney.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g5529/Printed%20minutes%20Wednesday%2014-Dec-2022%2019.00%20Skills%20Economy%20and%20Growth%20Scrutiny%20Commission.pdf?T=1>
- SEG Dec 2023
<https://hackney.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g5798/Printed%20minutes%20Wednesday%2013-Dec-2023%2019.00%20Skills%20Economy%20and%20Growth%20Scrutiny%20Commission.pdf?T=1>
- Hackney Economic Development Plan
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fjYzyZIJgjmH5gcB4INXxNCmEyByaZ2c16Ayy2MAucs/edit?tab=t.0>

Purpose of the meeting

Due to significant changes in the funding landscape and the introduction of the GLA's London-wide business support for SMEs, the Commission is set to examine the local impact of the current business support provision.

This discussion serves to build upon the findings of the 2018 scrutiny commission report, *Skills, Economy and Growth - BAME Business Engagement Report*.

The overall goal is to ensure Hackney's local businesses have every opportunity and appropriate support to survive, thrive, and grow. Specifically, the meeting will focus on the following:

1. **Retrospective and Current Programme Assessment:**
 - Review the reach, outcomes, and outputs of Hackney's past business support programme, including the Hackney Business Charter and signposting to funding.
 - Receive an update on the current programme, highlighting the achievements of Hackney Impact.
2. **London-Wide Context and Local Impact:**
 - Receive an update on the broader business support landscape in London.
 - Assess the local impact of these borough and London-wide provisions.
3. **Focus on High Streets and Future Vision:**
 - Given the high proportion of SMEs in Hackney, examine the *Grow London Local* work by London & Partners, particularly as it relates to businesses operating on high streets and in town centres.
 - Explore Hackney's future vision for supporting high street businesses (subject to future funding).

Report in the agenda:

To support this discussion the presentation and reports below has been included in the agenda for background reading.

- LBH Presentation
- London and Partners Presentation

Invited Guest

London and Partners

- **Vanesa Perez Sanchez**, Director – Small Business Service Delivery

Allia (Hackney Impact)

- **Paul Wright**, Programme Manager Hackney Impact

Renaissi

- **Jonathan Price**, Principal Consultant

London Borough of Hackney

- **Cllr Guy Nicholson**, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Regeneration
- **Cllr Sam Pallis**, Deputy Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy
- **Suzanne Johnson**, Director of Regeneration, Economy, and Housing Development
- **Pippa Gueterbock**, Assistant Director of Regeneration and Economic Development
- **Emma Piling**, Economic Development Manager
- **Oliver Pinch**, Senior Economic Development Officer.

Action

The Commission is asked to note the presentation, information from previous discussions and ask questions.