



March 2026

Dear business leaders

It is the time of year when we reach out to our local business community to discuss our plans for the coming year and let you know about the Council's work supporting the local economy.

We recognise the makers, growers and traders in our business community that make Lewisham a fantastic place to live, work and visit. Our Inclusive Economy Lewisham strategy guides our work to strengthen our local economy by supporting businesses to establish and grow in Lewisham. We have prioritised improving high streets growing the local business base and investing in the skills and employment support for our residents.

To improve our high streets, we have pressed ahead with the £24million regeneration of Lewisham town centre. Having completed our improvements to the high street, transformation of Lewisham Library is underway and construction of the market canopy will soon begin. The significant improvements to infrastructure, pedestrian access and public spaces will revitalise the high street and create new opportunities for business. In Catford we are bringing forward new workspace, to sit alongside the newly refurbished community venue, the Catford House. We also recently announced that Goldsmiths, University of London will be established a new campus in Catford and we are excited for the positive impact that this will have on the town centre.

To grow the local business base we have invested significantly in unlocking affordable workspace and supporting local businesses with grants to take on empty high street properties. This £1 million investment since 2023 has supported over 40 projects and delivered 9,870m² of affordable workspace – equivalent to 38 tennis courts. Affordable workspace is also incorporated in our recently adopted Lewisham Local Plan, which outlines our long term planning strategy. This means we are protecting commercial workspace and the authentic character of our local economy.

We have supported businesses by providing grants to help them become more sustainable and have provided several free business support programmes across the borough. To date, over 300 Lewisham businesses have accessed the free programmes, improving local job security and business growth.

We continue to celebrate our local businesses. The 2025 Mayor of Lewisham Business Awards were the biggest yet. We received over 2,000 nominations and nearly 9,000 public votes. Our Discover Lewisham campaign continues this celebration with an expanded reach, showcasing Lewisham's excellent businesses to local and wider London audiences.

To invest in our resident's employment and skills Lewisham Works has now reached nearly 2,000 residents since it was launched in summer 2022. It remains one of

the top performing employment services in London, and we have expanded it with the launch of our new programme Connect to Work that will span until 2030. This programme will allow us to support thousands more residents facing health and employment challenges.

Lewisham Works is a great resource for local businesses looking to recruit skilled local talent. Our Adult Learning Lewisham service continues to enrol over 4,000 learners a year with over a thousand courses. The service achieved a 'Good' Ofsted rating and retained its Matrix accreditation, a testament to the quality learning and support this service provides.

In the past year, we have awarded small business rates relief to 2,295 local businesses, totalling £7.7 million. We also awarded an additional 40 per cent discount to over 1,060 retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, putting almost £4.3 million back into their pockets. **If you think you may be eligible for business rates relief, please get in touch.**

These achievements demonstrate our ongoing commitment to create conditions for businesses like yours to thrive. We know this is a challenging time and are committed to standing alongside you all the way.

We offer a single-front-door for business advice and guidance. If you want to discuss anything further regarding business support, please directly contact our Business Partnerships and Engagement team on business@lewisham.gov.uk

For information about all business support available, including funding opportunities, affordable workspace, and employment services, visit lewisham.gov.uk/business.

To stay informed, you can also sign up for our fortnightly business newsletter at lewisham.gov.uk/emailupdates.

On behalf of the Council, thank you for your contributions to Lewisham and our local economy. Together, we will continue building a future for our borough that is brighter and open to all.

Yours sincerely



Brenda Dacres OBE
Mayor of Lewisham



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