



Final Evaluation Report – SEE3 Portas Pilot Project
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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report considers the outcomes that have been delivered from the funding (£80,000) received from the second round of the Portas pilot from the Outer London fund, £15,000 from the High Street Innovation fund and matched by £122,000 from LB Lewisham's s.106 monies. SEE3 was the vehicle established to deliver the programme devised to test a series of assumptions about the high streets in the area of Forest Hill, Kirkdale and Sydenham within Lewisham.

1.2 The context for this second and final evaluation report from the Town Team Manager is that it completes the evaluation started in the previous report of 23rd January 2014 where the 3 main projects undertaken during the lifetime of the Portas pilot –Community Hubs, Market Makers and the Shop Revolution – were analysed, together with some general themes relating to the running of the project.

1.3 Just as stated in the previous report, this internal evaluation needs to be seen in the overall context where an external evaluation of the project is currently being tendered by the GLA.

1.4 The aims here are: to set out the original strategic objectives of the pilot project and comment on the degree to which these have been met and then examine the 'Economic uplift outcomes' that formed part of the contract between LB Lewisham and the Greater London Authority. Finally, there is an analysis of the rest of the programme not considered in the first Evaluation report (Wider Regeneration Initiative) as well as other considerations that are called 'Umbrella themes'.

1.4 The Legacy Report that will be delivered will identify and build on the achievements and lessons embedded in this and the previous evaluation report (23rd January 2014 Core group).

1.1 Key Achievements

- 9 new jobs delivering SEE3 initiatives
- 18 jobs secured delivering SEE3 initiatives
- 9 empty premises brought back into use
- 1 Hub converted into a permanent shop
- 14 trial markets in 3 locations
- Skills workshops and training for 37 local businesses
- At least 400 volunteers
- 4 legacy groups from local communities
- Mailing list of nearly 800
- Strong SEE3 brand and website
- Governance structure representing entire geographical area with potential for future opportunities.

1.2 Original Objectives

Objective 1: to test a coherent approach to High Street development in an area of urban sprawl where one neighbourhood merges into another

1.3 This objective has largely been achieved in terms of branding for the SEE3 area as a whole. The brand is visually strong and tends to vary in terms of recognition by both the public and those involved with the individual projects. This is particularly the case when initiatives and/or events are being undertaken. However, it is also not surprising given that tangible impacts organised on local high streets will always have greater impact at that particular time than when there is a gap in the calendar of activities.

1.4 Beyond the physical impact of the brand, the impact of the range of workshops offered to local traders has also contributed to deepening the attachment to the area by traders. A coherent approach to High Street development will continue to require a segmented approach to stakeholders, space and social capital than has been possible throughout the lifetime of the pilot project. This is where the idea of “SEE3” as an umbrella requires further consideration, taking account of the different business characteristics within each of the 3 areas of SEE3. While both the pop up shops and markets have been successful in contributing to raising the profile of the area, there is a need to continue to build on these time limited projects from the pilot project in order to complete the job of building the area’s profile.

1.5 The impact of an improving economic situation and rising property prices will also be important factors. Shared problem solving, exchange of skills and ideas and the replication of successful business ideas – all factors supporting this objective -have already started through the action groups established. These can be adapted and adjusted in the light of lessons learned from the pilot project and existing and future public policy. However, this will necessitate an assessment of capacity and responsibility within SEE3 so as to maintain and accelerate the development of the organisation. This is in the process of being organised and is due to be fed into the final legacy of the success of the pilot project.

Objective 2: to increase the sustainability of the High Street through layering uses. Success markers: space usage maximised, improved affordability through sharing costs, extending activity, greater diversity of offer, start up businesses sustained.

1.6 Layering uses have been applied in the “Jill” hub in Sydenham where local artists and makers gained a location for both displaying and selling their products either free

or at low cost in the 2012 Christmas period while helping SEE3 to maintain the opening hours of the hub. The second example, from the Shop Revolution, showed the need for intensive support for fledgling businesses and the recognition of a need for greater “hand-holding” than actual capacity allowed for. In both examples, the diversity of offer and extension of activity on the high street were positives while the sharing of costs and how to sustain start up businesses require further work. The transition from market trader to shop business is another example that would warrant further work in future as a contribution to the high street. Finally, the link made with GLE through the workshops provided as part of SEE3’s programme, offers an on-going opportunity to address the issue of the need for further business support. The complexity and multi-agency approach needed to sustain the layering of uses on high streets needs to be trialled further. This is equally applicable to the comments for the next objective.

1.7 There is a significant opportunity for local landlords and businesses to work with the local artistic and creative communities to enhance the appearance of the high streets through building on SEE3’s experience of layering uses within the pilot project. It applies mainly to current efforts to build and coordinate an annual series of events but could be extended outside of this framework by working with enthusiastic retailers.

Objective 3: to build on the existing blending of retail and community use to enhance the High Street as a Hub Street and cultural destination. Success markers: perceptions of the High Street improved. Trade turnover and leisure visits increased.

1.8 The evaluation of this objective is similar to the comments made above for Objective 1. The question here is how to quantify the perceptions of the high street. Again, anecdotal evidence supports the view that there is an appetite for a variety of offer in the high streets in food, fashion and a nighttime economy within all parts of SEE3. *Please see the later section/annexe that comments on how SEE3 has met the “Economic uplift outcomes” indicators.*

1.9 There is considerable anecdotal evidence of trade turnover and leisure visits increasing at times of events taking place, not to mention a tangible “buzz” in the perception of the public, traders and SEE3 when this is the case. The examples of the first Forest Hill fashion week, the link with Sydenham Arts Festival and the use of public art are positive in this regard. “The future of the High Streets” by the Artists in Residence was not only a success in contributing to achieving to this objective but was also well received externally during the visit by the National Portas pilot project in July 2013. The legacy from this project is that it can not only contribute to telling SEE3’s story so far but can be used for further work in improving the perceptions of our local high streets by local residents and external bodies.

1.10 Better synergy between future projects would contribute to ensuring the momentum continues. There is also a need to ensure that community non-retail uses are encouraged as part of the offer and presence within high streets. SEE3’s Shop Revolution was one way but there is also a debate to be had about the use of premises, spaces and offices that are not retail but can enhance local commitment by local residents to their high streets. Every opportunity to promote increased footfall, including through increased leisure uses, should be grasped. Some work has already been done to contribute to a SEE3-wide annual programme of events and some examples of this include the recent Halloween initiative

Objective 4: to create a fit, agile High Street that can successfully adapt to

changing needs. Success markers: increased usage, improved user perceptions and satisfaction, vacancies reduced, business skills improved.

1.11 The opening of 9 pop up shops plus the provision of 9 markets over a period of one year are examples of where SEE3 has responded to changing needs through encouraging new uses and products for local communities. 3 shops with long term leases and a further 5 markets over and above the original target figures represent a tangible outcome of SEE3's presence, albeit placing pressure on the budget. This has resulted in perceptions by users and those traders that are engaged that changes are happening. Vacancy levels have reduced in all 3 parts of the area from the assumed base of 11% to about 8/9% while workshops and 1 to 1 sessions provided under the "Support the High Street" project have resulted in 37 individuals participating with a view to improving their business skills. The range of workshops allowed participants to receive support from experienced providers in practical subjects that ranged from general business advice to social media and on-line marketing to shop window displays and merchandising – all practical skills aimed at making the high street more sustainable as well as attractive to shoppers and visitors while driving footfall.

1.12 The challenge remains about how to continue supporting the high street within the current national debate around issues such as technology (on -line shopping), business rates, changes in planning regulations and changing lifestyles.

Objective 5: to harness and build on our strong active citizenship to enhance the High Street Success makers: increased levels and diversity of community use of High Street, good take up of shop local scheme.

1.13 Of all the objectives, this is probably the objective that has succeeded most clearly, because of 2 factors. These are the use of volunteers from across the resident communities within the area to support the SEE3 programme and the persistence in maintaining a governance structure. Externally, more than 400 people have volunteered to support the pilot project throughout its life, with the SEE3 newsletter currently having 769 recipients (as of 1st April 2014). This figure is very crude and does not describe the varied levels of skills, experiences and commitment shown by such an army of individual contributions to SEE3's range of activities. In addition, this does not take account of the number of hours contributed by the directors and leading members of SEE3 themselves. As of the last SEE3 budget meeting (March 27th 2014), this equates to the directors and leading members attending 131 meetings in total. Without considering the considerable work done outside this simple numerical statistic, this equates to 131 meetings x 2 hours each = 262 hours. Please see the later section of the report on value for money for a basic monetised calculation of this contribution.

1.14 The reputation of the project as a positive exemplar of community regeneration is well deserved. Indeed, the original bid for funding was predicated on strong active citizenship and this has manifested itself not only through the contribution made by local residents to the project's programme of events but also in their contribution with high levels of skills and experience as part of this process. For instance, communications, marketing, technology and urban design and planning have been some of the skills, abilities and passion much in evidence within the Action Groups facilitated by SEE3 during the pilot project. Individuals have shown themselves very hungry to contribute their time and skills to improving their local high streets. The intention is to build on this in future and provide leadership in local aspirations for improvements to facilities and quality of life within all parts of SEE3.

1.15 The existing shop local scheme in Forest Hill has worked well as assessed by the traders themselves but has not been translated to other parts of the SEE3 area. The original model has changed as the pilot project progressed with the most obvious example being the different operating methods between the 2 hubs. This was partially as a result of learning from the experience in “Jill” in Sydenham and the availability of premises for “Jack” in Forest Hill. The concept of the hub as informing and influencing SEE3 about the requirements of local communities, provided from a fixed base on the high street, has now led to a mobile hub “Jack” as part of the second phase of this project. This will hopefully improve both the levels and diversity of both the communities themselves and thus their use of existing and future facilities within the high street.

1.16 When speaking to external stakeholders and funders, there is a strong identification of SEE3 with community regeneration and this should be enhanced when proceeding to the next phase of SEE3. This also chimes with the efforts and contribution already made by local communities.

2.0 Background: Detail on the Projects

The previous evaluation report analysed Community Hub, Artists in Residence, The Shop Revolution and Market Makers so this part of the evaluation will be limited to looking at the Wider Regeneration Initiative within the pilot project.

2.1 Wider regeneration impact

2.2 The original outline of this work was as follows: “A series of smaller projects to enhance the wider work of the three main activities listed above (*Community Hubs, Market Makers and The Shop Revolution*) that would include the provision of coherent support and overview of all project elements and delivery of smaller elements of the pilot as well as the development of the town team. The programme also aimed to the future; investigating the sustainability of the three main aspects of the pilot and identify ways to continue the benefits. This included looking to integrate with Neighbourhood Planning activities, Lewishams' Regeneration department and private investment partners to look at the commercial potential of larger vacant or underused sites for development. The brief also included the implementation of place-making initiatives (public realm schemes and public art initiatives etc.) and infrastructure upgrades.”

2.3 There have been a number of developments here that have contributed to the community regeneration nature of the pilot project. First, the legacy groups have made a contribution to SEE3's activities as well as provide a base on which to build social capital in the future, especially in light of the current discussions about the direction of SEE3 and legacy. This is equally the case for the upcoming AGM where it should be possible to give extra impetus to this. The future development of the town team will also be part of this process. As part of this, ambassadors from the local business community to champion local high streets are an initiative currently being considered as part of on-going efforts to develop active trader associations throughout local high streets.

2.4 Returning to the smaller projects within this strand of SEE3's programme, these were:

- **Signage:** working with local business to improve their shop signage as well as improving high street legibility through banners, car parking signs and promotional banners.
- **Shop Local scheme:** to encourage residents to value and use the high street.

This will include support and potentially rolling out the newly formed Totally Locally scheme in Forest Hill.

- **Support the high street:** including workshops for traders to become more media savvy, enabling businesses to get online and use social media as well as encouraging strong inclusive trader associations.”

2.5 The last one of these has been completed and the evaluation is set out below while Signage and Shop Local are at various stages of implementation and will require a plan on where they are and how handover is to be achieved. This is currently being drawn up.

Workshops			
Targets	Outputs	Achievements	Learning Points
1. 3 workshops to be delivered for businesses in SEE3 area	3 sets of workshops delivered Nov. 2013 to March/April 2014 on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Media and on-line marketing - Retail Master class - Visual Merchandising/ Window Displays 	37 attendees engaged with SEE3 programme. Feedback from workshops positive. One-to-one sessions used to supplement workshops	-Take up of workshops was reactive and even a varied approach in promoting such workshops provides no guarantees. - Value can be seen from practical support provided by the workshops -Subject of workshop influenced both how many people attended and level of engagement
2. Social media/ Online marketing	11 businesses benefitted through 2 workshops 4 one-to-one sessions provided by GLE One London	Inexperienced and experienced traders both used workshops and one-to-one sessions Cost saving of £347 on estimate and £775 extra value levered in through LBL.	SEE3 should continue to push for local businesses to exploit the existing LBL/GLE contract
3. Retail Master class	9 businesses participated 2 one-to-one sessions	Talks given by an experienced ex-CEO from the retail sector useful to attendees. Most costs borne by provider and £1300 subsidy on follow-up one-to-one sessions	Any future business support programme should include this element if possible but not at great cost.
4. Visual Merchandising	2 workshops resulted in 17 businesses and 7	Subject attracted attendance by	This workshop attracted most

	one to one sessions	some local traders not previously engaged One to one sessions very popular and of practical help to shops. On-going support to traders.	interest in terms of attendance, although second lowest in preferences from earlier survey carried out by TTM
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3.0 Umbrella Themes

3.1Volunteers:

3.1.1 There have been more than 400 people who have contributed to SEE3's programme over the last 18 months and the final extent of this activity will only be fully quantified once the outcomes are known from the second phase of Community Hubs - "Jack in a Box". This second hub is expected to result in significant numbers of contributors and public participants as a result of the programme currently coming to an end. This has shown the extent to which there is a local willingness to get involved. However, it is equally evident that clarity on the capacity, motivation and purpose of volunteering, both within the core group and externally, need to be resolved as a part of the current debate on SEE3's future. Much has already been achieved and the momentum needs to be maintained. This is so important as the project has demonstrated that external expectations on what SEE3 has achieved and can achieve in future are to a large extent reliant on resolving this. The need to provide leadership, manage and develop the organisation's relationship with volunteers has been constantly illustrated during the pilot project and this has influenced SEE3's ability to respond to the level of public expectations. In the light of the above, SEE3's governance arrangements need to be re-examined to reflect the lessons learned during the pilot project so that there is both transparency as far as is practicable, in addition to adapting to the lessons and experiences from the period of the Portas pilot. Coordinators of the Action Groups have been agreed and internal discussions are taking place on how to embed this further.

3.2 Value for money

3.2.1 Based on a conservative estimate that the 400 volunteers who have contributed to the activities of SEE3 (excluding "Jack in a Box") have each contributed only 1 hour and using the notional fee of £10 per hour as a return on social capital, a monetary value of this contribution would be £4000. However, the likelihood is that many more hours have been contributed by members of local communities so that the final figure could easily be 2 or 3 times this notional figure i.e. between £8/10,000. This excludes the directors' and lead members' contribution of 262 hours at the same rate – simply through calculating their attendance at meetings, where there is an additional £2620 that can be added to the previous figures. Again, this is a serious under-calculation of the number of hours dedicated to the project by the unpaid directors and leading members. A realistic assessment in total would be 3 times this figure with the result that a total notional value for social capital dedicated to the project would be between a minimum of £6620 and about £15,000.

3.2.2 The other factor is a comparison between the assumed daily rate to SEE3 contractors and the use of external providers from the "Support the High Street"

series of workshops This can be quantified where it can be shown that there have been significant savings to SEE3 The other factor is the number of extra days worked by SEE3's contractors over and above their contract. This can again be quantified.

3.3 Finance and budget

3.3.1 It will come as no surprise that there have been consistent pressures within the budget allocated to SEE3. This stems from an initial low bid for Portas pilot funding where the extra £20,000 to reach the £100,000 allocated to other pilots would have alleviated such pressures to some extent. Despite this, the budget is projected to come in on target through constant monitoring, adjustments where necessary and some income generation from local Assemblies and contributions from landlords and organisations as part of the pop up shops activity in the high streets.

The opening of SEE3's bank account at the end of April 2013 had an impact on the delivery of the first community hub as regards the cash flow for the Hub Coordinator and Artist in Residence but a positive response from LB Lewisham and tolerance from the contractors overcame this issue. The second example is the purchase of 20 market stalls which is not only intended as an asset for SEE3 markets but also a community resource in future events, festivals etc.

3.4 SEE3's reputation and external support.

3.4.1 There is evidence that SEE3 is viewed positively both by funders and local communities. Both the GLA and LB Lewisham have commented positively about SEE3's reputation. This ranges from the visit by the National Portas Pilot Task Force in July 2013 to the GLA visit in January 2014 to the relationship both with Regeneration and Community Services within LBL. Other examples include the positive response to SEE3's visit to the national Portas pilot event in Loughborough in February 2013 and the Shop Revolution being asked to participate in a number of London-wide events. This bodes well for the area to consider other bids in future. The positive relationship with the local authority has proved very useful in a number of ways. These include facilitating various SEE3 projects (e.g. Signage, Markets and the Shop Revolution) both in financial terms by supporting SEE3's cash flow, advising on matters such as Highways and Planning and working with Regeneration. There is also a feeling within SEE3 that the positive external reputation enjoyed by the company should have resulted in more tangible benefits to support the pilot project rather than simply being held up as an example of good practice. In particular, corporate support from large multiples would have been beneficial to SEE3.

4.0 Key Performance Indicators in the contract between LB Lewisham and the GLA

4.1 In addition to the analysis of the 5 key objectives at the start of the report, there are 9 key indicators "Economic Uplift Outcomes" to evaluate as part of this report with the following comments on these indicators

1. New jobs = 5

These were estimated on the following:

Town Team Manager – 1 (1 year contract) Shop Revolution Project Manager – 1 (6 month contract) Market Makers Co-ordinator – 1 (8 month contract) Community Hub Coordinator – 1 (8 month contract) Artist in Residence – 1 (8 month contract)

Comment = **9 jobs** have been created in total as changes in how to provide the second hub (Jack in a Box) have resulted in a total of 3 part time consultants for the Community Hubs project as a whole as against the original calculation of 1. Finally, Artist in Residence also provided good value for money in the same way with 2 contributors as consultants. Market Makers also created 1 extra job.

The contracts for Town Team Manager, Shop Revolution Manager and Market Makers Coordinator/Administrator have lasted longer than projected originally - with better value for money for the pilot project – by more than 30 months in total. In addition, a further factor in this indicator is that 6 of the 9 jobs went to Lewisham residents.

2. Jobs secured = 16

Jobs secured: New single trader market businesses – 10

12 vacant units let with half employing someone – 6

Comment = 5 new trader businesses from SEE3 Markets have been directly secured with 2 of these securing a SEE3 pop up shop. Although not part of this required output, 3 of the 9 businesses operating from the pop up shops came via other non - SEE markets. This input also does not take account of directors/owners who benefited from the temporary shops; some 17 in total either separately or in partnerships.




Of the 9 vacant units let for pop up shops, 13 jobs were secured with people being employed at various times over the lifetime of the project.

Therefore, the number of jobs secured = 5 new traders via SEE3 markets and 13 employees = **18 in total**. This represents over-achievement in this indicator.







3. Baseline footfall

Comment = No figures for a baseline on footfall were established, despite sessions with experts to attempt to do so. A tight budgetary position within the context of a pilot project meant that the large cost of obtaining this from a commercial source was considered unaffordable. The default position was the collation of mini-surveys at various times (markets, new pop ups and hub events) to make a limited assessment of both footfall and consumer satisfaction).

However, based on the projections for the Office of the Rail Regulator-National Rail Entry and Exit statistics shown here, it is reasonable to assume that SEE3's activities benefited to some extent from these increases in passenger travel 2011-12 to 2012-13 for the 2 stations within the SEE3 area.

National Rail annual entry and exit	
2008–09	 3.024 million
2009–10	 2.945 million
2010–11	 3.643 million
2011-12	 4.184 million
2012-13	 4.487 million

These figures are for Forest Hill station

National Rail annual entry and exit	
2007–08	 2.317 million
2008–09	 2.222 million
2009–10	 2.162 million
2010–11	 2.582 million
2011-12	 2.993 million
2012-13	 3.191 million

These figures are for Sydenham station

4. % Increase in footfall = 10%

Comment= The same comments apply as above but it should be remembered that there is anecdotal evidence of the impact of the effect of specific events throughout the lifetime of the pilot on an increase in footfall as highlighted earlier in this report on how SEE3 has met its initial objectives.

5. Young people training = 4 volunteers in hubs /4 new traders

Comment = Opportunities for young people have been provided at 3 markets and is still a work in progress that is on-going through SEE3's work with the youth services.

Comment = At least 1 young person as a volunteer from "Jill" secured a permanent job in 1 of the pop up shops. The assessment of "Jack in a Box" needs to be added to see the final situation.

6. Apprenticeships = n/a

7. Vacancy rate baseline =11%

8. % Reduction in vacancy rate

Comment = the current vacancy rate is between 8/9% so that SEE3's activities can be seen to have contributed to this situation through its activities of a sense of momentum in the high street.

9. Retail properties improved = 10

9 pop up shops improved empty units while there has also been more than 1 occupant in 3 of the units throughout the lifetime of the Shop Revolution. In addition, another unit has been converted to a permanent commercial shop premises, at least partly as a result of SEE3 activity. This was the case for the first community hub "Jill" which is now a popular café.

In addition, there is anecdotal evidence that this activity may have contributed to other properties being improved as a result of some increase in business confidence together with the improving economic situation over the last 15 months. Examples could be Calabash at 21 Sydenham Road and the Old Bakery in Dartmouth Road in Forest Hill.

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