



Commission told it must deliver

SOUTH London could be in recession for years if the mayor's new Outer London Commission proves to be little more than a "talking shop", according to business leaders.

The commission, which met for the first time last week, is tasked with ensuring the views of outer London are fully taken into account when London Mayor Boris Johnson is developing policy and making planning decisions, including the regenerating of suburban areas. It covers Bromley and Bexley boroughs.

Its chairman William McKee says there are currently more than 160,000 businesses in outer London employing more than 1.6 million people.

Mr McKee said: "The mayor has rightly placed realising the economic potential of outer London at the heart of the commission's work.



"In support of this, we will be examining other key planning considerations including transport infrastructure and factors affecting the quality of life in outer London."

However Peter Pledger, chief executive of South London Business, which represents businesses south of the Thames, says while south London welcomed the new commission, it was vital it delivered on its remit.

Following a meeting with the heads of chamber of commerce organisations in south London, he said: "We need the

commission to be more than a talking shop.

"It has a great chance to listen to south London businesses and help them through the toughest trading conditions many have ever seen.

"If it doesn't deliver we could be in recession for many years."

The commission will hold four meetings in outer London areas before submitting a preliminary report to the mayor in June.

Mr Johnson wants to expand the number of businesses in outer London through extended business programmes and the £600m skills training budget.

Will the commission work? Let us know your thoughts on this and other ways Mr Johnson can help south London businesses. Log on to newsshopper.co.uk/news/business/ where you can read about the campaign, post a comment, or find contact details for our business reporter.