



TITLE OF REPORT A Place for Everyone Hackney Voluntary and Community Sector Small Grants 2020/21 (First Round)

Key Decision No. CE Q28

CABINET MEETING DATE (2019/20)

24th February 2020

CLASSIFICATION:

Open

If exempt, the reason will be listed in the main body of this report.

WARD(S) AFFECTED

All Wards

CABINET MEMBER

Cllr Selman

Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector

KEY DECISION

Yes

REASON

Affects Two or More Wards

GROUP DIRECTOR

Tim Shields Chief Executive

1. CABINET MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report outlines the recommendations for the first of two rounds of small grants awarded through the 2020/21 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Grants Programme.
- 1.2 Hackney's VCS is part of the fabric of the borough and has helped define what the borough is like today. Activities like culture, sport, play and food growing animate spaces. As part of our community, the VCS can reach out and support those that need it most, empower and promote personal resilience of people of all ages and help build connections and bonds between people through community events and volunteering.
- 1.3 The Council recognises the contribution that the VCS makes to community life and to the role they play in achieving our priorities of a safer, fairer more sustainable Hackney. One of the ways we demonstrate this is through our VCS Grants Programme. Small Grants were introduced in 2013/14 as part of that grants programme with the aim of being more inclusive and accessible for newer, smaller or more community based groups. These grants provide funding of between £1,000 and £5,000 for projects contributing the programmes priorities of promoting social inclusion, encouraging independence, developing personal resilience and community cohesion and equalities objective of bridging the gap in outcomes within the community,
- 1.4 Recommendations were submitted to Cabinet in January 2020 to allocate £2,164,785 from the total VCS Grants Programme budget of £2,512,786 for Voluntary Sector Specialist, Advice and Main scheme grants to be delivered in 2020/21. Recommendations were also submitted to Cabinet to agree that £170,000 should be ring-fenced specifically for small grants, play schemes and community chest grants, and that this should be awarded via grant rounds during the year. The recommendations in this report cover the first round allocation of this small grants budget. Applications for the first round of community chest grants will open on 18th March 2020.
- 1.5 I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers from across Hackney Council along with colleagues from the Voluntary and Community Sector for their volunteered contribution to the assessment process. They are required to assess a number of high quality applications to reach these recommendations, and I am grateful for their hard work.

2. GROUP DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In 2015 officers were asked to review the grants programme which was last reviewed in 2011. Given the scale of the financial challenge we face we need to ensure that the programme remains fit for purpose, maximises our investment and offers the best approach to supporting the sector and its beneficiaries.
- 2.2 As a result of the review both the design of the programme and its priorities were updated for 2016 onwards. Following consultation the programme was reshaped to

deliver against the new Compact principles and to reflect the unique strengths of the sector and its contribution to Hackney.

- 2.3 Small grants enable the VCS to deliver a range of projects at a very local level, to target residents that may have particular needs which the voluntary sector can help to meet.
- 2.4 This report is seeking approval for the disbursement of £86,919 from the Voluntary and Community Sector grants budget of £2,512,786 for 2020/21. This includes £34,988 for seven holiday playschemes. An additional two grants totalling £9,543 are being funded by the LHC Community Benefit Fund (see 4.4).
- 2.5 It should be noted that the Council received 62 applications for this round of the Small Grants, of which 22 have been recommended for funding. The total amount requested was £273,555. Due to the number of applications received, the quality of applications and the range of services and activities proposed, assessors continue to be faced with difficult deliberations when agreeing the final recommendations.
- 2.6 A full list of small grant applications and recommendations is attached in Appendix 1.

3. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To approve the small grant awards recommended as listed in Appendix One.**
- 3.2 To note the £9,543 contribution from London Housing Consortium (LHC) towards the Small Grant budget which enables two additional projects to be funded.**

4. REASONS FOR DECISION

4.1 A Place for Everyone open grants programme

4.2 Small grants are one of the grant streams within the 2020/21 Voluntary and Community Sector grants programme, and recommendations are being made for activities that will be delivered during 2020/21.

4.1 Each application has been scored by an assessor from the Council or a partner organisation from the VCS. The application scores were then reviewed to ensure parity and consistency of scoring across assessors and objectives.

4.2 The applications were then considered by the same assessors at a panel meeting and recommendations agreed. The panel considered how the applications scored overall, how they met the grant programme priorities and identified local community needs.

4.3 This year LHC made a one-off contribution of £9,543 towards LB Hackney's Small Grants Round One budget 2020/21. The funding enabled us to award two additional small grants.

- 4.4 LHC is a not-for-profit procurement consortium of which London Borough of Hackney is a member. Any surplus from their activity is ploughed back into community projects through their Community Benefit Fund. LHC and LB Hackney have worked with Locality, the national network supporting community organisations to thrive, to make the funding recommendation.
- 4.5 All applications were automatically considered for the LHC funding after they were assessed through the standard assessment process. A representative from the organisation Locality attended the Grants Panel meeting and reviewed the assessed applications against LHC and Locality's additional criteria for projects which demonstrate innovation or specific added value, the potential to bring in match funding and investment in physical or organisational one-off improvements that will help make organisations more sustainable in the future.
- 4.6 The panel was also asked to consider the following for LHC grants in relation to the recommendations:
1. The uniqueness of the proposed project activity (one or small number of services of this nature in the borough).
 2. Services for residents who have protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act; or meet the needs of a particular community.
- 4.7 The Small Grants awarded through the LHC funding will be managed and monitored by LB Hackney and will follow the standard Small Grant contract management process. Information about the grant will be shared with Locality such as the grantees' organisational policy documents and monitoring reports. The organisations funded through the LHC contribution will also receive an introductory 6 month Locality membership, a monitoring visit and social impact guidance from Locality.
- 4.8 Applicants were informed of LHC funding in the application form and the accompanying guidance notes. This included information on how the application would be assessed, LHC and Locality's additional criteria for projects and how the funding relationships would be managed.

5. DETAILS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 The process for reaching the recommendations is outlined above, and a full list of recommended and non-recommended applications is appended to this report.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1 Policy Context

- 6.1.1 Applicants for grant funding had to meet the criteria set out within the grants guidance for small grants.

6.1.2 Out of the 22 recommended applications, seven are holiday playschemes and eight are from organisations which have not previously been funded through the Hackney VCS grants programme or have not received funding in the last three years.

6.2 Equality Impact Assessment

6.2.1 The Council's support for the voluntary and community sector is one of the ways that the Council continues to express its commitment to making social inclusion and community cohesion a reality. This is demonstrated by the diversity of organisations recommended for funding and the inclusion of ring-fenced small grant funding to support local project activity.

6.2.2 Each application has demonstrated its contribution to meeting at least three of the grant programme's equality aims and this is to ensure that the grant investment is focused on improving life chances, and increasing prosperity and equality for all.

6.2.3 The grants review for 2016/17 onwards considered how a new grants programme can continue to promote equality and mitigate against negative impacts. This included consideration of the role of the small grants programme

6.2.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out on the process and the recommendations and this is attached to this report. The main recommendations of the EIA are:

- Organisations are to provide information on how they are using the investment to contribute to the Council's equality objectives.
- HCVS is funded through their funding agreement to deliver funding advice and organisational support.
- There will be a further round of community chest grants.
- Outcomes for the Grants Programme will be analysed each year by equality groups to ensure spread of investment.

The grants review for 2016/17 onwards has considered how the new grants programme can continue to promote equality and mitigate against negative impacts. This included consideration of the role of a small grants programme.

6.3 Sustainability

6.3.1 The Council will continue to administer the programme electronically through the use of the GIFTS grant software, which eliminates the need for paper applications, thus contributing to the Council's commitment to reducing carbon.

6.3.2 The VCS in Hackney plays an important role in the local economy, supporting both individuals and groups and makes a significant contribution to the community and civil life. Continuing to nurture and support the sector is fundamental to achieving sustainable communities in the borough

6.4 Consultations

6.4.1 Consultation was undertaken in 2015 to ensure that the views of the VCS and residents shaped the proposals that emerged as a result of the review. Consultation was also undertaken to inform the new Compact and this in turn influenced the design of the new programme. Engagement across the Council was also completed to ensure that services have been able to inform the shape of the programme

6.5 Risk Assessment

6.5.1 The grants process is an open competition between local VCS organisations for a set amount of funding. Due to the competitive nature of the grants programme a large number of projects will not be funded and this risk will always exist for organisations applying to the programme. This is why the Council continues to encourage voluntary sector partners to apply for funding from a range of sources, which many of the organisations already do.

7. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES.

- 7.1 A report is due to go to Cabinet on 20th January 2020 requesting approval for £170k of the of the draft 2020/21 budget for the VCS grants programme to be ringfenced for small grants.
- 7.2 This report seeks to approve the award of the small grants listed in appendix one totalling £86,919. This is part of the £170k allocation ringfenced in the January cabinet report and there are no additional budgetary implications.
- 7.3 The allocation is subject to the draft budget for 20/21 being approved.
- 7.4 A further 2 grants totalling £9,543 are proposed to be awarded using funds contributed by the London Housing Consortium (LHC). These are also detailed in Appendix 1.

8. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE SERVICES

- 8.1 The recommendations in this Report concern the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Programme for 2020/2021. Agreeing the award of grant aid from the voluntary sector grants programme is reserved to the Mayor and Cabinet under the Mayor's Scheme of Delegation (January 2017). It is proposed that Cabinet award the Small Grants in this Report.
- 8.2 The award of a grant is a discretionary function. In determining the scope and award of the programme the Council has considered the Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA) undertaken which helps to ensure the Council has complied with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.

APPENDICES

Appendix One – Recommended projects

Appendix Two – Not recommended projects

Appendix Three – Equalities Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND PAPERS

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) England Regulations 2012 publication of Background Papers used in the preparation of reports is required

Description of document (or None)

None

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