

**DELEGATED REPORT OF**

**THE HEAD OF POLICY & STRATEGIC DELIVERY**

**Voluntary & Community Sector Grants 2022/23**

**DATE (2022/23)**

**13 May 2022**

**CLASSIFICATION:**

**Open**

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

**WARD(S) AFFECTED**

**All Wards**

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Approval is sought to issue grant funding of £526,413.29 to 50 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations supporting Hackney residents using the scheme of delegation.
- 1.2 The budget for this is from a total of £550,000. This is identified in the finance comments of the [Cabinet report](#) from 24 January 2022 (paragraph 7.1).
- 1.3 The approvals sought in this report relate to 12-month grants under the grants streams Project Grants, Children & Young People's Grants and Community Chest Grants. These are outlined further in 3.2 of the [Cabinet Report](#).
- 1.4 A further three rounds of Community Chest grants will take place this financial year. Any unspent funding will be added to programme reserves.
- 1.5 The [Cabinet Report](#) 3.7 agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Policy, Inclusive Economy and New Homes. Due to a corporate restructure, a [further scheme of delegation](#) 2.3 was agreed by the Chief Executive in February 2022, which outlined that Grants up to the value of £100,000 can be delegated to the Head of Policy & Strategic Delivery.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **The Head of Policy & Strategic Delivery (in consultation with Cabinet leads for the VCS and Children & Young People) is asked to agree to the disbursement of £526,413.29 to 50 organisations working in Hackney in respect of the Project Grants, Children & Young People's Grants and Community Chest grants programmes. The organisations selected from the application process are outlined in the attached appendices. This funding will support up to one year of activity.**

## 3. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 3.1 Cabinet approved a 2022/23 grants programme in January 2022. The grants recommended in this report will support Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to continue their vital work reaching residents that often do not engage with Council services.
- 3.2 Each application has been scored by an assessor from the Council or a partner organisation from the VCS. Assessors reviewed applications independently and then in a pair of assessors to come to a consensus recommendation to fund or not fund. The application recommendations were then reviewed by council officers to ensure parity and consistency of scoring across assessors and objectives.

- 3.3** 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.
- 3.4** Council officers have undertaken due diligence checks of the organisations' policies such as safeguarding and their financial documents.
- 3.5** In total, 138 applications were received. Officers undertook basic eligibility checks on each application to ensure applicants were eligible for the scheme and to check activities were not retrospective. A breakdown of the applications by programme is shown in 3.9 below.
- 3.6** Panels were held for each of the separate schemes on 12 and 13 May 2022. Conflicts of Interest were managed by the removal of voting members when an application was discussed that was a direct conflict. Recommendations were agreed based on overall scores and how the proposals matched the grants programme priorities.
- 3.7** The budget available for these three programmes across the year is up to £550,000. Any underspend shall remain in the VCS Grants Budget reserved to be used in future rounds of funding. Three further rounds of Community Chest grants will take place this financial year.
- 3.8** 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.
- 3.9** A full list of applications and recommendations is attached in Appendix 1. The key headlines are as follows:

Community Chest				
Requested		Funded		Remaining from allocation
Total number of eligible applications	6	Total number Funded	3	£17,000.00
Total Amount Requested from LBH	£6,000.00	Total amount funded	£3,000.00	

Children & Young People's Grant
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Requested		Shortlisted for panel		Funded		Remaining from allocation
Total number of eligible applications	67	Number shortlisted for panel	41	Total number Funded	28	-£350.29
Total Amount Requested from LBH	£599,699.79	Total Amount Requested from LBH	£362,818.29	Total amount funded	£250,350.29	

Project Grant						
Requested		Shortlisted for panel		Funded		Remaining from allocation
Total number of eligible applications	57	Number shortlisted for panel	26	Total number Funded	19	£6,586.71
Total Amount Requested from LBH	£846,679.70	Total Amount Requested from LBH	£393,302.00	Total amount funded	£273,063.00	

#### 4. DETAILS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

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

#### 5. BACKGROUND

##### 5.1 Policy Context

5.1.1 The VCS is unique in its ability to reach and work with some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable residents of the borough and is therefore often best placed to provide a service or to ensure that other services are accessed. All applicants are asked to demonstrate how they meet the need of the Grants Programme aims:

- To promote social inclusion, encourage independence and develop personal resilience.
- To build positive relations between different groups and communities that will maintain the high levels of community cohesion

5.1.2 Hackney's VCS is part of the fabric of the borough and has helped define what the borough is like today and was critical to the pandemic response.

Activities like culture, sport, play and food growing to 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.

**5.1.3** 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 £20,000 for projects contributing the programme's 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.

**5.1.4** This year, these grants form an important part of the pandemic response, supporting recovery over summer, with activity led by grassroots groups. The continued delegation of awards to officers has enabled us to run the programme at a time when we understood the government's roadmap out of the pandemic and also community needs and impacts.

**5.1.5** Community Chest grants up to £1,000 are for one-off or short-term events led by small groups or a structured group of residents with no legal status. The income threshold for Community Chest grants is a maximum of £10,000 per year to ensure this fund reaches small and grassroots groups.

**5.1.6** Grants of this size 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.

**5.1.7** Applicants for grant funding had to meet the criteria set out within the grants guidance for the different schemes.

**5.1.8** Out of the 50 recommended applications, 3 are for Community Chest Grants, 28 are for Children & Young People's Grants, and 19 are for Project Grants. We have been able to fund a range of organisations who we have not worked with before, and are reaching a number of user-led grassroots groups. Further detail on this is outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment.

## **5.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

**5.2.1** 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.

**5.2.2** 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.

**5.2.3** 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

**5.2.4** 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.
- There will be a further three rounds 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.

### **5.3 Sustainability**

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

**5.3.2** 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

### **5.4 Consultations**

**5.4.1** 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. Post-covid changes were agreed by the Lead Councillor in March 2021.

**5.4.2** The approach for this year which was agreed by Cabinet in January 2022 was based on the extensive learning from the VCS during covid, coupled with data analysis from the previous 5 years of grants.

## **5.5 Risk Assessment**

**5.5.1** 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.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES**

**6.1** This report requests approval for grants totalling £526,413.29 to 50 organisations recommended in Appendix 1.

**6.2** The funding is available within the existing VCS grants budget and reserve which is ring-fenced for this purpose.

**6.3** It should be noted that the Council is facing very challenging times due to the continuing impact of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis on income streams, the impact of inflation and the continuing uncertainty surrounding the local government finance system. It cannot be assumed that unspent revenue funding and reserves available in 2022/23 will be carried forward into future years, as is the current arrangement with this particular budget. Carry forward of any unspent funds will be considered by the Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources as part of the annual closing of accounts process and in the context of the Council's medium-term financial plan.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND ELECTORAL SERVICES**

**7.1** On 24th January 2022 Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Inclusive Economy, Policy and New Homes (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health, adult social care, voluntary sector and leisure, and the Portfolio Holder for education, young people and children's social care) to award grants under the Project Grants, Children & Young People's Grants, and Community Chest grants programmes.

**7.2** A Delegated Powers Report of the Group Director, Chief Executive's Directorate dated 22nd February 2022 agreed that "all current delegations related to the award of grants up to and including £100,000 in Corporate

Policy are delegated to the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery." Each of the proposed grants in this Report are valued under £100,000 and therefore the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery can agree to the recommendations in this Report.

## APPENDICES

1. [CC Panel 1 - Recommendations](#)  
[CYP Fund - Recommendations](#)  
[Project Grants Panel - Recommendations](#)
2. [VCS Grants EIA May 2022](#)

## 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

1. [Cabinet Report 24 January 2022](#)
2. [Interim Arrangements for Delegated Authority in Climate, Homes & Economy](#)

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## AUTHORISATION OF THE HEAD OF POLICY & STRATEGIC DELIVERY

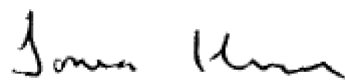
Name: Sonia Khan, Head of Policy & Strategic Delivery



Signature:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Khan'.

Dated: .....24/5/..... 2022