

<b>Title of Report</b>	A Place for Everyone Hackney Voluntary and Community Sector Grants		
<b>Key Decision No</b>	CED S195		
<b>For Consideration By</b>	Cabinet		
<b>Meeting Date</b>	24 July 2023		
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Kennedy, Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture		
<b>Classification</b>	Open		
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All wards		
<b>Key Decision &amp; Reason</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Yes</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Yes	Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards		
<b>Implementation Date if Not Called In</b>	2 August, 2023		
<b>Group Director</b>	Ian Williams, Acting Chief Executive		

## 1. **Cabinet Member's introduction**

- 1.1. I am pleased to be introducing this report that sets out recommendations and updates in regards to funding decisions for the 2023/24 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants programme. This includes new Community Infrastructure grants, updates on project grant awards, and proposals for extending advice provision for 2023/24.
- 1.2. In a report to Cabinet in July 2022 we set out how we intended to take forward the review of the grants programme using our learning from the pandemic. We are now able to set out how our learning has translated into some of the changes in the way that we invest in the sector and how this has supported broader Council priorities such as our response to the Cost of Living Crisis and our work on anti-racism.
- 1.3. Learning from the development of the VCS Strategy and the experience of the pandemic helped the Council to think more strategically about our investment in the VCS and the need to work with the sector in a more insightful and supportive way to identify creative and long term solutions for organisations and the residents they serve. These experiences and what

we know about how we need to shape public services going forward informed our approach to the changes we have made so far to the grants programme.

- 1.4. We have built on and extended the collaboration we had nurtured with the sector during the pandemic and have ensured that we have been able to continue to learn and adapt with them to meet the needs of residents during the Cost of Living Crisis. We continue to develop new approaches and ways of working together as a system that transforms residents' experience of support, particularly for those living in poverty and/or with complex needs.
- 1.5. We have also used our learning to develop approaches that will help us move towards being an anti-racist Council. For example, the new ways of working with the VCS are helping to inform a better understanding of how the design of systems and processes such as commissioning may work against the Council being anti-racist and how we need to explore new practices that help us to achieve this.
- 1.6. The Community Infrastructure grants, which were launched last year, have been extended, and these are one of the ways in which we are now applying and investing in our learning. This activity is key to a preventative agenda that seeks to build upon the assets within communities and the expertise and reach that some organisations have in their communities, along with the person-centred ways of working they adopt to meet the presenting need and work with complexity.
- 1.7. Last year there were no successful applications for Community Infrastructure grants from organisations within the Orthodox Jewish Community. This created a gap in the support and learning from partners working within this community. Over the past year we have consulted partners in the community and as a result developed a bespoke information session for Orthodox Jewish organisations. Officers are now able to recommend two new Orthodox Jewish organisations for Community Infrastructure grants
- 1.8. Funding has also been allocated from the programme for project-based activity. In addition to funding from the VCS grants programme, again this year the application and assessment process determined allocations for youth activity resourced by the Children and Families Service and also Public Health Physical Activity grants. This has meant that 45 organisations have received a total of £556,000 for projects designed and planned by VCS organisations.

## **2. Group Director's introduction**

- 2.1 This Council has a strong financial track record but over 12 years of austerity and the cost of keeping people safe during the pandemic much of

which fell to the Council, has taken their toll on public services. More and more people are turning to councils for support, with less and less money available to help them, especially now that we are in a cost of living crisis.

- 2.2 Despite this the Council has again protected the budget for the Voluntary and Community Sector grants programme. However our Council grants are only one of the ways in which the Council continues to provide financial support. The annual subsidy to voluntary sector organisations occupying Council buildings is estimated to be £400,000 based on the difference between market rent and rent payable. This does not include some buildings where long term plans are being established, playgrounds and several short term VCS lettings. A total of £507,942 discretionary rate relief was awarded in respect of 2022/23 with the Council contributing 48% of the rate relief under the rules of the London Business Rates pool. This is in addition to significant levels of commissioning of the VCS to deliver services all of which add up to approximately £20m of investment.
- 2.3 The grants programme continues to enable activities and services defined and designed by the VCS, in line with borough priorities and which complement our own statutory service delivery. This is against a backdrop of great financial constraint and uncertainty. The sector is itself currently operating in a highly constrained financial environment. This is likely to become more difficult, due to the Cost of Living Crisis, which is putting more of a strain on budgets. In light of the financial challenges outlined in this paper, all areas of the Council's budgets nevertheless need to remain under review.
- 2.4 In July 2022 officers asked the Cabinet for approval to provide core funding to twenty local organisations. The aim of this funding has been to enable organisations to continue to develop community support and social networks but also contribute to the development of 'healthy systems' which is seen as increasingly important to the transformation of public services. This report recommends approval of grants for a further four organisations including two from the Orthodox Jewish community.
- 2.5 We have continued funding project-based activity recognising the value that these grants add, often reaching communities furthest from our services and complementing Council and commissioned activity. Grants to 45 organisations were allocated in May 2023, with a further three rounds of Community Chest grants taking place this year for small organisations and grassroots groups. The project grants provide access to resources for some of our smaller and grassroots organisations, acknowledging their reach into our communities but also their vulnerability and the need to protect and grow them.
- 2.6 The ongoing review of the grant programme is helping us to consider how we should invest in the sector in the future to support the transformation of public services so that as a system of support we are able to continue to

meet demand for services, despite the budget pressures we face. We have and will continue to identify opportunities for us to change the way we use resources to support the VCS strategy and a stronger sector in the future.

- 2.8 The impact of the pandemic on residents and the subsequent cost of living crisis has stretched the resources of our advice partners and as a critical service for preventing demand on statutory services we need to ensure that they can provide timely interventions and advice. Recommendations for funding were approved by Cabinet in January 2023. These new grants commenced in April with funding from the grant programme remaining at its current level of just over £1M. An additional £120,000 provides advice in health settings plus this year an additional £35k uplift from Public Health will cover inflationary pressures and some extension to provision.
- 2.9 The partnership amongst advice services is progressing well as are the relationships with Council Officers and the wider Community Partnership Network. This was a consideration in the assessment of the grants along with other contextual analysis of the need in the community. Geographical spread was part of that contextual analysis and a gap in the north of the borough has been identified. In view of this officers are seeking delegation of some of the remaining advice budget to support sufficient coverage in the north of the borough.
- 2.10 The pandemic and subsequent Cost of Living Crisis has put a huge strain on our VCS partners at a time when our communities really need them. Support is being provided to the London Community Credit Union through a three borough partnership including Hackney to ensure that their services continue to be available in East London. Having previously received a Specialist Grant this budget is now being used in conjunction with funding from Newham and Tower Hamlets to ensure their services remain available to residents.
- 2.11 In January 2022 an internal audit of the Council's grant programme was undertaken as part of the 2021/22 Internal Audit Annual Plan, as approved by the Audit Sub-Committee on 21 April 2021. The Plan was developed following an assessment of the key risks facing the Council. The audit found that there is a significant level of assurance across all three areas of the grantmaking process and did not contain any recommendations that need to be brought to Cabinet for consideration.

### **3. Recommendations**

**Cabinet is recommended to :-**

- 3.1 Approve the allocation of Community Infrastructure Grant £79,200 across the four organisations as outlined in Appendix 1.**

- 3.2 Delegate to the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery decisions in regards to £25,000 carried over development funding for capacity building and training for Community Infrastructure organisations.**
- 3.3 Note the awards of project-based grants to organisations, including those funded through a budget that in previous years has been deployed for one-off commissioning of youth activity by the Children and Families Service and Healthier Hackney grants in Appendix 2. Approval of these grants was delegated by Cabinet in January 2023 to the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery.**
- 3.4 Delegate to the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery decisions in regards £20,000 to the development of advice services in the north of the borough and £25,000 for advice services to develop a convening role for the advice system as set out in 4.5 below**
- 3.5 Approve a grant of £40,000 to London Community Credit Union in addition to the £40,000 set aside from last year's grant budget, as part of the package of support established with partner Councils Newham and Tower Hamlets**

**4. Reason(s) for decision**

- 4.1. The recommendation to launch a VCS grants programme was agreed by Cabinet on 23 January 2023 based on the budget for 2023/234. Cabinet is asked to agree the recommended awards for the Community Infrastructure Grants and delegated authority for £20,000 of grant budget for the development of advice provision in the north of the borough. This is a key decision of the Council as it affects two or more wards and is related to Council spend.
- 4.1.2 From our learning so far we know that there are much more effective and impactful ways to invest in the voluntary and community sector than the traditional approaches to grant making and to commissioning. This traditional approach is transactional and arms-length and assumes complex challenges can be addressed through short term, separate projects and measurable outputs.
- 4.1.3 The future of the grants programme is being shaped by the Council's experience of working with the sector during the pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis, the knowledge we have gained from working with our advice providers, and the change and transformation we are trying to achieve as a Council. We do not intend to change the objectives of the grant programme and the two main aims are still relevant, if not more so given the Council's new Strategic Plan:
- promoting prosperity and wellbeing with targeted, positive action when needed

- building strong, cohesive communities that are part of the solution

4.1.4 The Community Infrastructure grants extend our work with those organisations that are rooted in communities and continue to support vulnerable residents in place, enabling us to identify, learn from, enhance and strengthen what is working well for residents, and to deploy any available resources most effectively and sustainably.

4.1.5 The setting aside of some of the remaining grant budget will enable officers to find a solution to the gap in council funded provision in the north of the borough. Partners in the advice system are keen to continue the capacity building and support role previously undertaken by HCVS and some advice budget has also been put aside to enable them to develop a solution.

## **4.2 Community Infrastructure Grants**

4.2.1 Although we stepped down our response to the pandemic our residents and their families continue to face instability in the context of the cost of living crisis, the continued rising inequalities, complexity of need and limited access to preventive help due to scarce resources. The Community Infrastructure grants will enable the continued collaboration and facilitation of relationships between partners across the system in Hackney. This continues to be vital in helping to establish connections between services to support residents and their families to access information and help in communities across the borough.

4.2.2 Last year we awarded funding to 20 organisations for both geographical, place-based activity as well as community focused e.g. black-led community infrastructure. This ensured that the Council protected a group of organisations that can be able players in the system and can help us meet our priorities for Hackney. To ensure that community led organisations can develop and thrive further work will be undertaken with them to meet any development needs that they identify in order to provide the support that their residents need. £25,000 has been set aside for this activity from the grants budget.

4.2.3 This year we are increasing the number of Community Infrastructure organisations to 24 in order to extend provision of holistic, place-based and person-centred, strengths-based approaches to working with empowering residents to take an active role in supporting one another. Over the past year we have been working with our Community Infrastructure partners to proactively strengthen direct relationships with the Council and health services to improve access to the services and support that residents they are working with need.

4.2.4 The two system convenors working in Policy and Strategic Delivery have been out in communities engaging with these partners and key services on

the ground and are able to use their knowledge of direct work with residents to test and learn about new ways of working together with community infrastructure organisations, food banks, advice providers, Resident Participation, Children and Family Hubs, Neighbourhoods, Kings Park Moving Together, Public Health and Adult Social Care. Continuing to build on these relationships and acting in an enabling role to broker relationships and enable shared learning across boundaries is helping to break down barriers between services and communities. This is helping to unlock potential and resources to strengthen preventative and holistic approaches on the ground, particularly for the residents and communities whose lack of trust in the state can alienate them from support until things get worse and interventions are more expensive and less effective.

- 4.2.5 The assessment process had two stages and involved officers from the Policy and Strategic Delivery Team as well as colleagues from Public Health, Children's and Education, Adult Social Care and the VCS. An initial application enabled organisations to articulate if and how they worked with residents to support them in ways that went beyond their core service and mission. The assessment focused on key qualities and characteristics of organisations such as reach and expertise working with marginalised communities and a track record of collaboration and partnership, reflecting what is needed to be a participant in a healthy system. Evidence was presented that showed how irrespective of the organisations' focus and mission they understood the importance of working with the whole person and their families in order to provide the support that was needed.
- 4.2.4 From the 20 organisations that submitted an application, seven organisations were selected by a group of assessors at a panel meeting to be interviewed so that further information on the application and their case studies could be gathered. A second panel then considered all of the information submitted and gathered by interview to make final recommendations for awards.
- 4.2.5 In regards to awards for Community Infrastructure organisations, rather than allocate amounts just according to the merits of each application, the Council brought a collaborative approach to how to distribute the available funding in discussion with the organisations that were successful last year. This has ensured that the funding allocated can respond to the individual circumstances and aspirations of the organisation and their approach to delivery e.g. organisational capacity, their existing networks and partnerships, training needs etc.
- 4.2.6 Over the past year we have been learning how our funding is enabling Community Infrastructure organisations to learn, adapt and grow so that learning becomes part of the core way that we work together. We have learnt that spending time with organisations helps us to gain a more rounded view of what their services do, what their value is and what good looks like. By adopting this 'shared' approach to evaluation we are also

changing the power dynamics that currently inhibit effective partnership working.

4.2.7 This takes time, beyond the time frames of traditional grant making and the Community Infrastructure grants are due to run until 2025. Although the ecosystem of VCS support will not be fully protected by this investment it is helping to provide a range of organisations that can work with and protect some of our most vulnerable residents and build an evidence base to attract further statutory and external funding.

4.2.8 Our partner organisations are helping to shape the funding approach as collaborators in our own learning. Colleagues from across the Council have volunteered to take on the role of a Relational Lead. These officers are actively engaged with these organisations and are helping the Council to learn about strengths based transformation in communities and for community organisations to learn about how the Council works.

### **4.3 Project based grants including Children and Young People's and Healthier Hackney grants**

4.3.1 Applications for project grants opened on 6 February 2023 and closed on 27 March 2023. A total of 155 eligible applications across Project Grants, Children and Young People's Grants, and Community Chest Grants were received. Applicants were supported via information sessions delivered virtually by the Grants Team as well as via HCVS and were also able to access free application support through HCVS and ELBA. All grants were up to 12 months in duration. Community Chest grants were awarded up to the value of £10,000, Project Grants up to the value of £20,000 and Children & Young People's grants up to the value of £10,000.

4.3.2 Applications were screened for eligibility and due diligence checks were undertaken by the Grants Team. They were then assessed by pairs/small groups of assessors composed of LB Hackney officers and volunteers from the VCS. Assessments were all conducted via an online portal on our grants management system, Blackbaud Grant Making. Assessor scores, comments, and recommendations were moderated via an initial meeting with a representative of the Grants Team, before being discussed at a Grants Panel which included all Assessors. Three separate panels were held for the three grant schemes.

4.3.3 A total of 45 grants were awarded. Of these 19 are for the Children and Young People's Grant (including 4 Healthier Hackney), and 19 are for Project Grants (including 9 Healthier Hackney). Seven Community Chest grants were awarded. 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. The recommendations were signed off by the Head of Policy & Strategic Delivery as agreed by Cabinet in January 2023.



#### **4.4 Advice Grants**

- 4.4.1 In January 2023 Cabinet approved the award of advice grants to 19 partners following an open application process. Two of the previously funded advice providers in the north of the borough did not apply for a grant and as there were no other applications from this area of the borough there is subsequently a geographical gap in Council funded provision.
- 4.4.2 Recognising the gap in Council funded advice services it is proposed that some interim annual funding is used to support sufficient coverage in the north of the borough. It is proposed to use up to £20,000 of the remaining £77,826 2023/24 advice budget to achieve this with authority to spend delegated to the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery.
- 4.4.3 As the system of advice is developed by the Council funded partners there is a need to provide additional capacity that enables the partners to create and utilise spaces for learning and problem-solving that build on relationships and ways of working established through the pandemic and further strengthen relationships of trust and shared purpose between advice partners working directly to support residents. The capacity will bring together advice partners and other organisations within the Community Partnerships Network to facilitate conversations and share knowledge and resources to embed ways of working that effectively improve outcomes for residents, helping to develop an approach to prevention and early help across the lifecourse to reduce escalation of harm and need. It is proposed that £25,000 of the advice budget is set aside to achieve this with authority to spend delegated to the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery.

#### **4.5 London Community Credit Union (LCCU)**

- 4.5.1 LCCU has in previous years received a £40,000 Specialist grant from the grants programme. In March 2022, LCCU arranged a meeting with Finance Directors from Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets to discuss their financial pressures caused as a result of the pandemic. During the meeting and in subsequent papers, LCCU presented the emergency financial pressure it faces as a result of the pandemic and the related impact on its loans, interest income and bad debt provisions. The organisation has had significant financial losses, identifying the pandemic as the primary reason for their challenging year, citing the following:
- Not able to increase its membership,
  - Increased loan loss provisions
  - Reduced volume of loan applications,
  - Some technology issues around the Credit Union Current Account (CUCA)

4.5.2 In response to these challenges LCCU has sought support from the three boroughs it operates in, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Hackney. Discussion between the three boroughs concluded that given the role of credit unions, the financial pressures on residents during the Cost of Living Crisis and that no community based alternatives are available, the loss of the LCCU at this time should be avoided. Following lengthy negotiations all three boroughs have now agreed to provide financial assistance to LCCU and in collective agreement are providing financial support totalling £240,000 (£80,000 each). Cabinet is being asked to agree to the release of £80,000 which was set aside from the Specialist grant that was not released to LCCU in 2022/23 and 2023/24, when the financial position and future of the organisation became unclear.

## **5. Details of alternative options considered and rejected**

5.1 Given the budgetary pressures facing the Council the future of the VCS Grants Programme is regularly reviewed. However consideration has been given to the reductions in public spending through welfare cuts and reduced grants to local government which can lead to increased demands upon the VCS. The unique position of the VCS to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents as well as its ability to deliver added value e.g. through inward investment and volunteering necessitates a grant programme that ensures that the sector can continue to thrive and build resilience to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and in the face of further budget reductions.

5.2 Whilst commissioning helps to support the VCS, the investment through the Council's grants programme helps to maintain a thriving third sector and a wide range of suppliers. Funding the sector through grants ensures that it can identify new needs and new ideas and innovate and test new solutions. It enables added value activity that complements direct or procured service delivery and can fund open universal activity. The sector is also able to use grant funding to respond to specific challenges in regards to community cohesion by providing grassroots community based activity that builds cohesion and community action and the support that is needed by our most disadvantaged and vulnerable residents.

## **6. Background**

### Policy Context

6.1. The VCS is well placed 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. Funding for the sector is best deployed to fully realise the sector's potential and play to these strengths. The priorities of the grants programme supports the wider agenda of the Council and our partners with a focus upon intervention and prevention and building resilience within communities.

## Equality impact assessment

- 6.2.1 The Council's support for the VCS is a major expression of Hackney's commitment to making social inclusion and community cohesion a reality. This is demonstrated by the wide diversity of organisations recommended for funding and the requirement for each application to demonstrate its contribution to meeting at least one of the grant priorities and equality aims.
- 6.2.2 In recognition of the potential barriers facing applicants a number of interventions are put in place to ensure that the grant investment is planned and delivered to positively benefit as wide a range of equality groups as possible and to mitigate negative impacts. The programme is advertised widely across the VCS in Hackney using the VCS networks, the Council's website and social media. Workshops and one to one surgeries on the applications process are also run by Hackney CVS and the Council undertakes online information sessions which are videoed and available to view on the Council's website.
- 6.2.3 The increase in funding for advice services will have a positive impact on residents who are financially disadvantaged and experiencing poverty which is often the result of inequalities such as structural racism. However the overall envelope of the grants programme will remain the same which will see a reduction in the open elements of the grants programme.
- 6.2.4 The Community Infrastructure organisation grants will also benefit residents experiencing multiple disadvantage as the funding aims to ensure that local community organisations are more responsive to their needs. In particular the new grants recognise the role of black-led organisations and those with particular expertise and cultural competency and which have reach within communities that are furthest from statutory services. Ten out of the twenty organisations who have been selected for funding are led by people from black, asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority of Community Infrastructure grants are open to beneficiaries of all backgrounds, with 25% of organisations specifically supporting black beneficiaries.
- 6.2.5 The increase in funding for advice services and the allocation of budget for community infrastructure means that less funding has been directed to the project-based grants. This could potentially impact upon those equality groups that benefit from initiatives and projects which have been identified as needed by the sector. These often reach communities furthest from our services or below access thresholds and complement Council and commissioned activity. Considerations outlined in the paragraph above aim to mitigate against this impact.
- 6.2.6 Across the Main and Small Grants since 2016 (excluding crisis funding during the pandemic) the main beneficiaries have been young people under 25 as both recipients of services and as volunteers. Some mitigation for this

is presented through the proposal to grant fund organisations using Young Hackney's Lot 2 budget. The Orthodox Jewish Community submits a significant proportion of applications for project-based grants, the majority of which are for children and young people. The Lot 2 funding being used to allocate grants of up to £10,000 will help to ensure that this part of the community continues to benefit from support through the grants programme.

#### Sustainability and climate change

- 6.3.1 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.
- 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

#### Consultations

- 6.4.1 Extensive engagement was undertaken to inform the VCS Strategy 2019 including a day-long workshop attended by a range of local VCS organisations followed by four open invites focus groups. A series of discussion papers were then developed based on the findings and a series of five further workshops including one focussed upon Council investment in the sector were used to test and develop the papers. The findings were then used to develop the discussion papers into key themes within the strategy.
- 6.4.2 The strategy sets out the shift needed in the way that we invest in the sector that encourages more collaboration, shared learning and enables the sector to be more person centred and responsive to residents. It recognises that the current way that the grant programme funds organisations pushes them into narrower more transactional relationships, creates siloed working and is not funding an approach that fully enables a more preventative approach within communities.
- 6.4.3 The changes that have been proposed by introducing community infrastructure grants also acknowledge the unique ways in which the sector works which was a key message in the consultation and has continued to be a central theme in feedback from the sector. The new funding stream will support organisations whose role extends beyond the service that they deliver and reflect the strategy's focus upon a different approach to investing that funds purpose and longer term outcomes.
- 6.4.4 Whilst all of the above was set out in the VCS Strategy the feedback from VCS organisations on their experience of Covid and working with the Council

suggests that the way that they were funded enabled them to be more effective. By changing the relationships and the ways in which we managed and monitored grants, organisations felt empowered to use their expertise and reach within their communities along with the person-centred ways of working that they could adapt to meet the presenting needs of residents.

- 6.4.5 Through the process of running a new Project Grants programme between February - May 2022 the Grants Team was able to obtain direct feedback from applicants on changes implemented to the programme this year. In addition to this, Renaisi undertook further consultation as part of their reviews of the Project Grants and Specialist Grants.

#### Risk assessment

- 6.5.1 A key risk related to the programme lies with the process of recommending or not recommending grants. The assessment of grants is an open competition between local VCS organisations for a set amount of funding. The risk is that recipients of grant funding may no longer receive funding and guidance on who it is important for the funding to reach and support services that local people depend on may be lost.
- 6.5.2 In seeking to mitigate these risks officers will continue to work with infrastructure organisations HCVS and Interlink to ensure that applicants are encouraged and supported to access funding from other sources and that they have a good understanding of the Council's grants programme. The annual launch of the programme allows VCS organisations that may not currently have a funding relationship with the Council to learn about the programme and to be considered through an application for grant funding.
- 6.5.3 Post allocation, an assessment process identifies and rates key areas of risk relating to the delivery of projects by the successful organisations. This ensures the targeting of the Council's management and monitoring arrangements to mitigate any financial or reputational risks to the Council.

### **7. Comments of the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.**

- 7.1. The recommendations set out in this report align with the decisions of Cabinet in January 2023 relating to the Hackney Voluntary and Community Sector Grants programme for 2023/24.
- 7.2. There is budget available to fund the recommendations for the grant awards to voluntary sector organisations across the borough as set out above.

### **8. VAT implications on land and property transactions**

Not applicable

### **9. Comments of the Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services**

- 9.1. The recommendations in this Report concern the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Programme. 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) so the awards in this Report will need to be approved by Cabinet.

- 9.2. The award of a grant is a discretionary function. The grants proposed in this Report are for Community Infrastructure Grants, Advice Grants and to London Community Credit Union.
- 9.3. Paragraph 2.2 i) of the Cabinet Procedure Rules states that "if the Elected Mayor delegates functions to the Cabinet, unless they direct otherwise, then the Cabinet may delegate further to .....an officer.....". Therefore, subject to the approval of Cabinet, the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery is permitted to award the Grants in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.4 of this Report.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Community Infrastructure grant recommendations

Appendix 2: Project based grants awarded

Appendix 3: Grants EIA

**Background documents**

None

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