

# GRANTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

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Wednesday, 6 September 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

MP701, 7th Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent,  
London, E14 2BG.

## SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA 1

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

**Contact for further enquiries:**

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For further information including the Membership of this body and public information,  
see the main agenda.

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<p><b>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee report</b></p> <p>12 September 2017</p>	
<p><b>Report of:</b> Ann Sutcliffe, Interim Corporate Director of Place</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>Formal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church, Bow</b></p>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Strategic Development &amp; Waste</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Michael Ritchie – Place Shaping Team Leader
<b>Wards affected</b>	Bow East
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	A Great Place to Live

### **REASONS FOR URGENCY**

A decision on a formal grant offer is urgent. A condition of the LBTH Historic Buildings Grant states that “the grant may be disqualified if work starts before an offer of grant has been made or without the council’s explicit prior approval in writing.” A start date for works is imminent and scaffolding has already been erected. The LBTH grant contributes to match funding for a larger HLF grant; without the LBTH grant, the church will have a shortfall in funds which could threaten the project.

### **Executive Summary**

This report relates to the awarding of a London Borough of Tower Hamlets Historic Buildings Grant of £20,000 to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church (also known as Bow Church), 230 Bow Road, London E3 3AH for vital repair works to the exterior of the church tower. The building is currently on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk register.

In December 2016, the Commissioners agreed that a letter should be sent to the Rector of St Mary’s stating the Council’s intention to offer a grant of up to £20,000 towards works to the exterior of the church on receipt of necessary additional information including three tender documents, as required by the conditions of the

grant. The necessary additional information as required by the conditions of the grant has been received and therefore the Council is now at a stage to be able to make a formal offer of grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church. The start date of the works is imminent, making the consideration of the formal offer of a grant important at this point in time.

## **Recommendations**

The Mayor is recommended to:

1. Consider and comment on the recommendation to issue a formal offer of grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity, Bow.
2. Approve the grant funding of £20,000 to the church as a contribution to vital repair works to the exterior of the tower.
3. Approve the issue of a formal offer of grant to the church

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 St Mary and Holy Trinity Church (also known as Bow Church) is a prominent Grade II\* Listed Building located in the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. The church is also an important community asset, which is currently used for religious services and volunteer activity. The building suffers from extensive dampness, stone decay and leaking roofs and, as a result is on the Historic England Register of Heritage at Risk. The building has been given a condition rating of 'very bad' (the worst of four categories).
- 1.2 The award of a Historic Building Grant of £20,000 will make an important contribution toward the overall cost of remedial and restoration works to the church. Other funding will be provided by Heritage Lottery Fund, the Grocers' Company, the National Churches Fund, the Heritage of London Trust and from the churches own reserves and fund raising activities.
- 1.3 The restoration project meets the Council's Historic Buildings Grant criteria. All the necessary information required by the conditions of the Historic Buildings Grant, including three tender documents, have been provided by the church and have found to be in order. The project offers significant benefits for the Borough as a whole when complete.

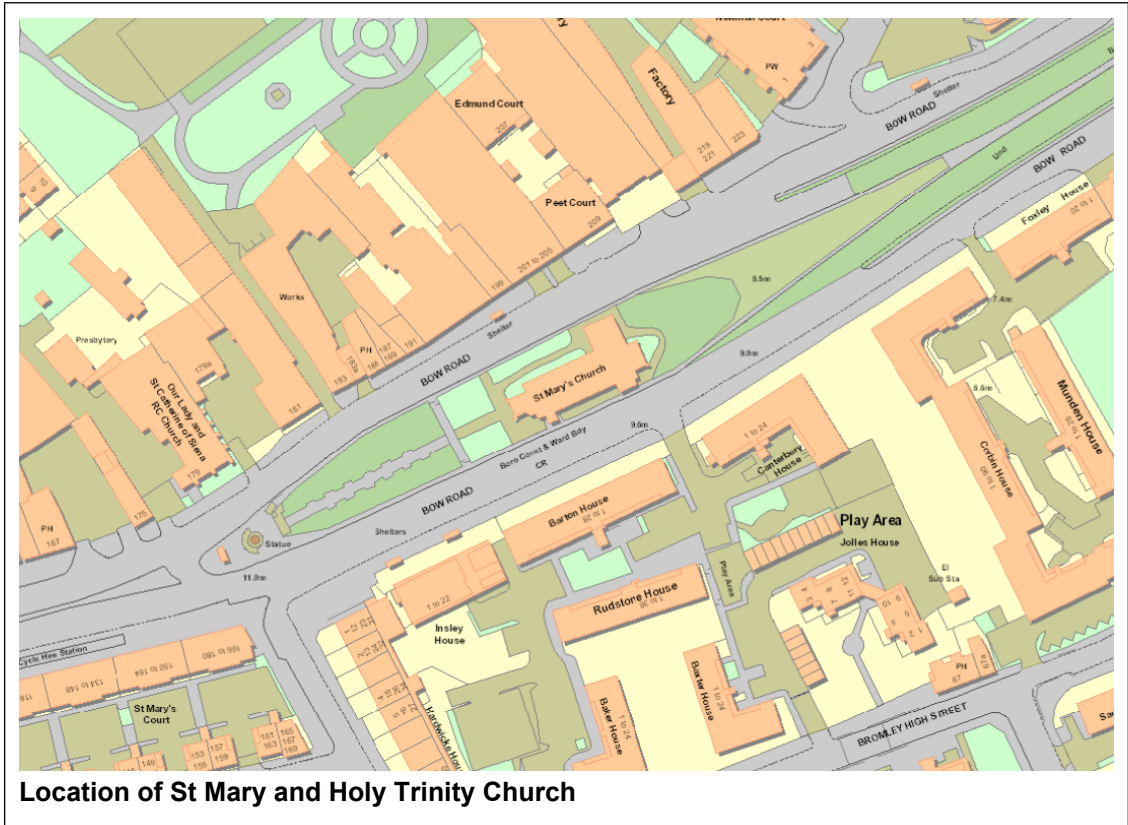
## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The LBTH grant forms an essential contribution towards the overall cost of the

works and allows for the release of grants from other funders, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. Without the LBTH grant the church would have a shortfall in funding for the project which would therefore be at risk of not going ahead. Without repair works the external appearance of the Grade II\* church would continue to deteriorate with the loss of important historic features, in a prominent location within the Borough. Historic England would continue to retain the church on its Heritage at Risk register.

### **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 The Council has in operation a Historic Buildings Grant Scheme to assist owners and occupiers of listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, in meeting their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the irreplaceable cultural asset, which these buildings represent. The provision of this type of grant is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.2 With over 50 conservation areas and approximately 2000 listed buildings, demand in the Borough for grant-aided assistance in meeting the costs of buildings repair is high.
- 3.3 St Mary and Holy Trinity Church (also known as Bow Church) is a prominent Grade II\* Listed Building located in the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. The church is also an important community asset, which is currently used for religious services and volunteer activity. The building suffers from extensive dampness, stone decay and leaking roofs and, as a result is on the Historic England Register of Heritage at Risk (Appendix 1). The building has been given a condition rating of 'very bad' (the worst of four categories).



3.4 A Historic Buildings Grant application (Appendix 2) to fund restoration works the church was made to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets on 22 June 2016.

3.5 The Place Shaping Team Leader and Borough Conservation Officer presented a report to the Commissioners on 20 December 2016, which sought permission to send a letter to the Rector of St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church stating the Council's intentions to offer a grant in principle, with conditions, towards the cost of repair works to the exterior of the church tower. At the meeting the Commissioners agreed that:

- A letter would be sent the Rector of St Mary's stating the Council's intention to offer a grant of up to £20,000 towards works to the exterior of the church on receipt of necessary additional information including three tender documents, as required by the conditions of the grant.
- A further report would be brought to a public Grants Decision Making Meeting to authorise the awarding of the grant, following the receipt of the necessary information.

3.6 A letter (Appendix 3) was sent to Rev. Deborah Frazer at Bow Rectory on 21 December 2016 stating the Council's agreement in principle to the making of an offer of a grant of £20,000 towards the vital repair works to the exterior of the tower.

- 3.7 All necessary additional information as required by the conditions of the grant, including three tender documents, was received from the church by 14 June 2017. They were subsequently checked by the Heritage at Risk Project Officer and found to be in order.
- 3.8 This report to the Grants Sub-Committee has been prepared in order to obtain the permission to issue a formal offer of grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity. It does not seek permission for the payment of the grant at this stage.
- 3.9 Once works are complete and assessed to be carried out to a satisfactory standard, the Heritage at Risk Project Officer will prepare a further report to the Grants Sub-Committee for permission to release the allocated funds.
- 3.10 This report recommends external repair works to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church (also known as Bow Church) for grant assistance. The project meets the criteria laid down by the Council for assistance, and offers significant benefits for the Borough as a whole when complete.
- 3.11 The grant allocated will contribute to the cost of remedial and restoration works to the west end tower, which includes:
- Repairs to deteriorating bell-tower cupola and renewal of weather coatings
  - Repairs and renewals of gutters and rainwater goods
  - Renewal of stone weathering details which will throw rainwater off the surface of the historic stonework
  - Removal of Ordinary Portland Cement from Kentish rag-stone work and repointing in lime mortar to allow the wall to breathe and prevent further deterioration of historic stonework
- 3.12 The grant of £20,000 will contribute to an overall cost of £272,232 (excluding VAT). Remaining funding is from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Grocers' Company, the National Churches Fund, the Heritage of London Trust and a small amount from the church's own reserves and fundraising. The grant is a flat rate grant contribution to the overall cost of the works.
- 3.13 The applicant has made a concerted effort to fund the project from a variety of sources. The LBTH grant makes up a shortfall in funding for the project, the majority of which will be made up by the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme' (£184,300 towards the works).
- 3.14 St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church is a landmark building in a highly visible location on the Bow Road on the eastern edge of the borough. There has

been a place of worship in this location since the fourteenth century, when Bow was a hamlet outside London, and is one of the last remaining medieval buildings in the Borough. The church in this location has survived in spite of the development and modernisation around it and therefore contributes to a sense of place and continuity. The church is a demonstration of change over time with additions, alterations and rebuilding over 700 years. Its persistent survival over this length of time, even following bomb damage during the Second World War, is remarkable.

- 3.15 The LBTH grant will contribute towards the cost of alleviating problems relating mainly to water ingress and damp, resulting in deteriorating external appearance and the risk of loss of important historical features, some of which date back to over 500 years ago. The grant will also contribute towards the cost of works required to remove St Mary's from the Heritage at Risk register. However, there is still further work required to remove the church from the register.
- 3.16 The proposed works to the external appearance of the church is an opportunity for an enhancement of Fairfield Road Conservation Area.
- 3.17 The grant will be conditional on the building participating in London Open House for 5 years to ensure the best possible value for the Council.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 In December 2016, the Commissioners provisionally approved the allocation of funding of £20,000, payable as a Historic Buildings Grant, to St Mary and Holy Trinity Church as a contribution towards the cost of restoration works to the church tower, pending the receipt of various items of supporting information. The required evidence has now been received and reviewed and this further report seeks the approval of the Grants Determination Sub-Committee to now formally approve the grant allocation.
- 4.2 The total works costs are £272,232 (excluding VAT). As set out in paragraphs 3.12 and 3.13, in addition to the Council's fixed contribution, additional funding has been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Grocers' Company, the National Churches Fund, the Heritage of London Trust with the residual element being financed from the church's own reserves and fundraising activities.
- 4.3 The proposed grant allocation will utilise £20,000 of the uncommitted resources of £51,250 that have been earmarked to finance Historic Buildings Grants. No funding should be released until all necessary grant conditions have been met.



## **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The Council has power to make the grants under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which gives the Council the general power of competence. This means that the Council has the power to do anything which an ordinary human being could do, unless statute specifically restricts the Council from acting in the way it wishes. It appears that there is no specific legislation prohibiting the making of the grant itself.
- 5.2 The Council has a duty to achieve Best Value in respect of its expenditures. This is by virtue of Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999. The Council must satisfy itself that the giving of any grant represents Best Value. This means that it will have to ensure that any grant is made under terms that enable the proper monitoring of outcomes to demonstrate that the money achieves the intended results.
- 5.3 To this end the Council should also ensure that it has proper resourcing in place to ensure that the progress of the works is also satisfactory. It is to be presumed that the works themselves will be monitored under the Church's contract with the building contractor. However, the Council should ensure that it has access to such reports as it needs to satisfy itself that the terms of the grant are being followed.
- 5.4 Also, it is intended that the grant is only paid following proper completion of the works. The Council should note that:
- 5.4.1 it should have a mechanism in place to ensure that the works comply with the building contract made between the Church and the building contractor. However, the Council is not a party to this contract so it should be understood by the Building Contractor that part of the payment relies on the satisfaction of the Council and
- 5.4.2 it is likely that stage payments and payment at practical completion may be subject to a retention percentage payable up to one year after completion of the works. Therefore, the grant should reflect these payment terms.
- 5.5 It is noted that the Council has gone to some extent to review the tenders / design of the works. It should be made clear in the terms of the grant offer that the Council is not in any way representing to the Church that the tenders received are appropriate for the intended works; that the Council's review is only for the purposes of satisfying itself that Best Value may be achieved in the expenditure of the grant.
- 5.6 The payment of this grant will not constitute state aid either because of the application of the de minimis block exemption (which provides that state aid is not applicable where Bow Church has not received more than 200,000 Euros in grant funding over a continuous 3 year period) or because Bow Church is not an operator in the economic market place and no cross border interest is generated.

- 5.7 The Council must also ensure that it fully understands the impact on persons with a protected characteristic for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. It may therefore need to undertake a desktop evaluation to determine whether there is any impact on persons with a protected characteristic although it is suggested that this will be unlikely.

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The proposed works would contribute to the preservation of a very significant Grade II\* listed cultural asset and the preservation and enhancement of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area.
- 6.2 The church is currently used for religious services and volunteer activity. Through the project, the intention is to extend local community engagement and to use the building for community purposes. This will see the church once again become a local focal point for residents.
- 6.3 The project thus contributes to the theme 'A Great Place to Live' in the Community Plan to build One Tower Hamlets.

## **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The delivery of this project ensures the Council meets its commitment set out in the Council's Conservation Strategy.
- 7.2 The partial match funding would contribute to securing a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.
- 7.3 The restoration of this listed cultural asset part funded through the grant will benefit the whole community and is considered to offer excellent value for money.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 In line with other beneficiaries of grants from the Council, St Mary and Holy Trinity Church will be encouraged to consider taking appropriate steps to minimise negative impact on the environment when taking up the opportunities offered within the programme and on an ongoing basis.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 If a formal grant offer is made, it will be ensured that no funds will be released until the repair works have been completed and inspections have verified that they have been carried out to an appropriate standard.
- 9.2 There is a risk that, if a formal offer of grant funding is not made, the repair work may be proceed and the benefits described in this report would not be delivered.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Beyond the essential repairs to the church west end tower, the church will run an activity plan as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Project which will encourage visitors to the church promoting positive neighbourhood engagement.

## **11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no safeguarding implications.

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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

None

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Extract from the Heritage at Risk Register

Appendix 2: Historic Buildings Grant application form

Appendix 3: Informal grant offer letter

#### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

None

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A

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## Appendix 1

### Extract from Historic England Register of Heritage at Risk (2016)



© Historic England

SITE NAME:	Church of St Mary Stratford Bow, Bow Road, Poplar E3
DESIGNATION:	Listed Place of Worship grade II*, CA
CONDITION:	Very bad
PRIORITY CATEGORY:	B (A)
OWNER TYPE:	Religious organisation
LIST ENTRY NUMBER:	1065273

St Mary's Bow is shrouded by trees on a traffic island on the A11. The tower and chancel were built circa 1490 onto an early C14 nave. The south aisle was rebuilt in 1794, the upper tower in 1829 and restorations completed in 1848 and 1898-9. The upper tower was rebuilt and railings restored in the 1950s following World War II damage. The church suffers from extensive dampness, stone decay and leaking roofs. The church has been awarded a first round pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund for fabric repairs, a new drainage system and for tree management.

Contact: Ian Harper 020 7973 3786

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**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**HISTORIC BUILDINGS GRANTS**

**Place Shaping Team  
Directorate of Development and Renewal  
Town Hall Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
Poplar, London E14 2BG**

**APPLICATION FOR A GRANT UNDER THE PROVISION  
OF THE PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND  
CONSERVATION AREAS)  
ACT 1990**

Please read the guidance notes carefully. These set out the criteria against which applications are assessed and may prevent unnecessary work.

The grant forms should be completed and returned to the address above. Please answer all questions; an incomplete form can not be assessed.

The form must be accompanied by two estimates broken down into the elements of the work and full details of work proposed and photographs of the building.  
(See Guidance notes at the back)

1.a Full postal address of the building or site for which grant is sought.

St Mary & Holy Trinity church  
230 Bow Road  
London E3 3AH

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1.b Is the building a statutorily Listed Building under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990?

Yes

If so, is it Grade I, II, II\* - Grade II\*

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1.c Is the building within a Conservation Area?

Yes. (Fairfield Road)

1.d Is the building a "Locally Listed" building?

No

2. Name, address and day time telephone number of applicant.

Andrew Sargent  
33 Coborn Street  
London E3 2AB

0208 981 3980

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3. Is the applicant the freehold owner of the building or land concerned, and totally responsible for its upkeep and repair?

Yes (but see below)

If No, please explain (use a separate sheet if required), the applicant's legal interest in the property, and/or who is responsible for upkeep and repair.

The building and the surrounding churchyard is owned by the Church of England Diocese of London, but LBTH are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the churchyard.

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4.a What is the present use of the building or site?

St Mary's church - "Bow Church" - serves the Parish of St Mary's and Holy Trinity. A full range of Sunday and other services is held in the church. The building also hosts a wide variety of community activities (eg concerts, plays, fairs, bell-ringing and open days) and is home to the Bow Foodbank.

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4.b What is the proposed use after repair? (If different from 4a)



The existing uses will continue– but the repairs will also allow the development of an enhanced range of community activities, serving a broader audience.

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5.a Description of proposed works (a copy of the detailed specification and, if alterations are proposed, drawings of the buildings as existing and as proposed, must be enclosed).

St. Mary's church is faced by many urgent repair problems, essentially all stemming from water penetration at both high and low level. This water penetration is damaging the building's historic fabric, leading to incipient structural problems, a deterioration of the building's external appearance and loss of important historical features dating back over 500 years. Because of these threats to the building's significance Historic England recently placed St. Mary's on its Buildings At Risk Register.

All the surveys and investigations required to be undertaken in the development stage of the project have now been completed. Our chartered architects (Thomas Ford and Partners) have recommended, and the St Mary's Building Group supervising the project has now agreed, that the Phase 1 development stage will focus on **the west end tower**, where remedial and restoration work is most critical. Specifically the work will cover:

- repairs of the deteriorating bell-tower cupola in treated softwood and the renewal of its weather coatings
- repair and renewal of gutters and rainwater goods on the tower
- renewal of stone weathering details to throw water off the face of the historic stonework
- removal of Portland cement pointing from the Kentish rag-stone stonework and re-pointing with lime mortar to ensure moisture can leave the stonework at the joints, as originally intended, rather than through the face of the stone, which is currently causing the significant loss of historic fabric.

Access to the site is extremely restricted. We believe that the only feasible solution for the delivery of scaffolding, building materials etc, is to create a pull-in on the south side of the churchyard; urgent consultation will now commence with LBTH Highways Department and Transport for London. There would be a long-term community benefit here, with parking available for disabled and other visitors.

These costs will take up to limit of the HLF Grant Scheme; consequently, Phase 2 would be the subject of a second application to HLF..

Phase 2, for which application would have to be submitted to HLF later in the year, would then tackle drainage and other problems causing damp and water ingress to the remainder of the building in particular by the probable installation of a French drain and other measures to improve surface drainage and prevent moisture from entering the building at low level; removal of soot and other pollutant encrustations from the elevations to promote evaporation of moisture trapped in the fabric; pruning of trees surrounding the church, the leaf-fall from which is causing problems for the church's rainwater dispersal systems, and which impede evaporation by restricting airflow around the building; and repairs and improvements to the church's below-ground drainage.

Our award-winning conservation-accredited architect and other consultants are now completing the plans resulting from assessment of the results of a number of investigations and surveys of the building and its problems, in order to prepare drawings and a detailed specification. We expect these to be available at the end in late July. However, the outline schedule above is quite firm, so the project will be very much focused on making the building watertight and ending its damp problems, while enhancing its external appearance at the same time. NB The works will not require alterations as usually understood, as although the building's appearance will be improved, this will be achieved by the removal of harmful

substances (ie soot and inappropriate cement) and their replacement with more suitable materials (ie lime mortar). Other visible work will be like-for-like repairs.

The current timetable for the Phase 1 work at the west end on the tower, clock and cupola, is to complete the schedule and cost plan in full detail by the end of September, to allow time for HLF to assess by the deadline of 31 October. Preparations would then begin, so that scaffolding can be erected and the building work carried out during March - May 2017.

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- 5.b Please indicate how the proposed work including proposed materials will improve the sustainability quotient of the building (a copy of the material specification impacting buildings sustainability as proposed, must be enclosed).

All the proposed work will improve the sustainability of the building, as the whole schedule of work is designed to reduce water penetration and to encourage water in the building fabric to be able to pass out again causing the minimum of damage. Repairs will essentially be like-for-like and use historically appropriate materials, which in practice entails relatively local sources, minimising the carbon footprint of the project.

A material specification will be available in late July, when our architects have completed the detailed Scope of Works and design plans. As experienced conservation architects, their proposals will ensure that materials used will not impact negatively on the building's sustainability.

In making the building water-tight once more and reducing leaf-fall problems, the project will reduce ongoing maintenance costs, while the dryer, more welcoming building will be more attractive for community uses, thus improving its economic and social sustainability. As one of Tower Hamlets' last surviving mediaeval buildings and a landmark at one of the main entrances to the borough, St. Mary's is a powerful contributor to the sense of place and continuity here, and underpins the social and cultural sustainability of the area. In fact, this project will begin the process of giving this iconic building back to the people as the centre of the hamlet of Bow.

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6. Three quotations for the works must be supplied based on the detailed specification prepared for Question 5 above. Estimated total cost should be provided in each case with the figure for VAT shown separately. Each estimate should include a breakdown showing the cost of individual items such as work on the roof, walls, joinery, etc. The estimates must be directly comparable. Copies of builder's tenders, if already obtained, should be enclosed; and percentage(s) to be charged detailed. If tenders are not yet available, estimates should be submitted.

£ 283,486 (including VAT)  
(= total cost of delivery stage repairs including inflation adjustment, contingency & VAT ie equating to expected tender + contingency + VAT but not including fees or non-repair works)

7. When do you expect work to start?

We expect the works to start on site in March 2017

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**PLEASE NOTE: THIS APPLICATION WILL BE DISQUALIFIED FROM CONSIDERATION FOR A GRANT IF WORK STARTS BEFORE AN OFFER OF GRANT HAS BEEN MADE, OR WITHOUT THE COUNCIL'S EXPLICIT PRIOR APPROVAL IN WRITING.**

8. Have you applied, or do you intend to apply for a grant from any other source?

Yes

If yes, please give details

The majority of the funding for the project has been pledged (subject to conditions) by the Heritage Lottery Fund (with a total grant of £246,100 towards the works themselves as well as professional fees, development stage costs & heritage-related activity and interpretation) Of this total, £175,200 is granted towards the works cost as given above. We have also received a small grant of £4,000 from the Grocers' Company for the project.

We will be applying to the statutory Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme for a non-discretionary grant to cover about 85% of the VAT incurred on the works outlined above (i.e. expecting to receive about £39,200 towards these costs). We will contribute £8,000 from our own reserves (which are also helping to pay for professional fees and heritage-related community activities tied into the project). We therefore have a shortfall of £50,500 or so. To raise this sum we have applied or are in the process of applying to the National Churches Trust, the Allchurches Trust, and the Garfield Weston Foundation and others as well as to your Historic Building grant scheme.

We are delighted that the National Churches Trust has offered a Historic Buildings Grant of £20,000. This will be exceptionally valuable both in itself and in helping to obtain additional funding from charitable trusts.

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9. Can you reclaim VAT on eligible work?

We are not VAT-registered and so are unable to reclaim VAT through the tax system. However, we will be able to reclaim the vast majority of the VAT on the work eligible for historic building grant through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, which should apply to all work to the fabric of the building itself, but unfortunately won't extend to VAT incurred on improvements to surface drainage or works to the surrounding trees.

10. Do you wish to include professional fees? (The resources available for grant aid will not normally permit grant aid towards fees).

No

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And percentage(s) to be charged - N/R

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11. Any additional information you wish to be taken into account when the applications being considered.

St Mary's church has a highly visible location in the east of the borough. The fabric shows its development from its origin as a chapel in 1311 and its extension to a church, with tower and chancel, in 1495, to major restorations in Victorian times and again following extensive damage during the Blitz. It was during this latter restoration that the church gained the clock-tower & cupola which has become an iconic landmark in the borough but which is now in extremely poor condition and needs urgent restoration.

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Community engagement and extending and enhancing the use of the building for community purposes is central to the wider project. We were delighted with the

success of our recent Heritage Day (12 March) which involved many local community groups and attracted a large number of visitors. We are now analysing the many questionnaires completed on the day; the findings will directly shape the development of community engagement strategy for the delivery phase.

We are also very pleased to have been selected by Empowering Design Practices as one of the key participants in their Open University-funded community research programme, and will be working closely with them during the lifetime of our project.

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I declare that I have read the guidance notes on Tower Hamlets Historic Buildings Grants and that the information given above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature      \_\_\_[A J Sargent]\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name      Andrew Sargent

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Address          33 Coborn Street, London E3 2AB

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Date              22 June 2016

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This application form with the supporting information should be sent to:

**London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Development, Design & Conservation  
Mulberry Place (AH), P O Box 55739,  
5 Clove Crescent, Poplar  
London E14 2BY**

**Development & Renewal**

Tower Hamlets Town Hall  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London E14 2BG

Tel: 020 7364 5576  
andrew.hargreaves@towerhamlets.gov.u

**The Rev Deborah Frazer**  
Bow Rectory  
28 Coborn Street  
London  
E3 2AB

21<sup>st</sup> December 2016

Dear Rector

**London Borough of Tower Hamlets Historic Buildings Grant  
The Church of St Mary & the Holy Trinity Bow**

Thank you for submitting an application to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets requesting a Historic Buildings Grant.

St Mary's is listed at Grade II\*, it is one of the Borough's most important historic churches and is a notable landmark within the east of Borough. It is currently included on Historic England's Register of Heritage at Risk.

We acknowledge the hard work and effort put in by the church to raise funds for vital works to the exterior of the tower, including securing a Heritage Lottery Fund Places of Worship grant.

Following the meeting of the Commissioners on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016, I am pleased to inform you that the Council has agreed in principle to the making of an offer of grant of £20,000 for the works upon receipt of three tenders for the works. The offer would be subject to the terms and conditions as set out on the grant application form.

Please do not hesitate to contact Andrew Hargreaves (Borough Conservation Officer) should you require any further information at this stage.

Yours sincerely



Owen Whalley  
Service Head, Planning & Building Control

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grants Determination Cabinet Sub-Committee</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">12 September 2017</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Zena Cooke, Corporate Director of Resources</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>Extension of Mainstream Grants and Corporate Grants Policy</b></p>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>John Biggs, The Mayor</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	David Freeman, Strategy Manager, Voluntary and Community Sector Emily Fieran-Reed, Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	<b>A Great Place to Live</b>

### REASONS FOR URGENCY

This report is scheduled to be considered by the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017. In order to allow the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee the opportunity to take account of the views of this sub-committee in making their decision, it is requested this report is considered by the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee at their meeting on 6 September 2017. If the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee does not have the opportunity to express their views for the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee to consider at their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> September, there is a danger the decision of that sub-committee may be delayed, reducing the time available for the co-production process for the recommissioning of the Council’s Mainstream Grants.”

### **Executive Summary**

The report seeks the Sub Committee’s agreement to extend the Council’s Mainstream Grants (MSG) by seven months to 31 March 2019 for those funded projects which are performing satisfactorily. This will allow sufficient time for the successor funding programme to be developed through a process of co-production with stakeholders and will also bring the programme into line with the financial year.

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy sets out the basis of a new corporate grants policy. This report details, for the Sub Committee to note, proposals for developing this policy through a process of co-production.

The corporate grants policy will be developed alongside and will complement the successor funding programme for MSG and corporate commissioning arrangements as set out in appendix B

## **Recommendations:**

Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree that the current three year MSG is extended by seven months to 31 March 2019 for those projects which receive grants and which are also performing satisfactorily, and
2. Note the proposed arrangements to develop a new corporate grants policy through a process of co-production.

### **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

1.1 The Sub Committee is asked to agree the extension of the current three year MSG for a further seven months to:

- Enable a thorough and high quality application process to take place for any future funding that succeeds MSG;
- Avoid the risk of vulnerable service users being set at a disadvantage by loss of support from current MSG funded projects if the existing grants come to an end on 31 August 2018 and new services are not in place until 1 April 2019, and
- Bring MSG into line with the Council's financial year and planning cycles.

### **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

2.1 The Council could retain the current timetable for MSG and attempt to put in place the successor programme to take effect from 1 September 2018. However, if this option was pursued the Council would not be able to develop the successor programme to MSG through the co-production process as set out in the Council's Voluntary Sector Strategy and would risk losing the potential benefits of this methodology.

2.2 An alternative option would be to allow the current MSG to come to an end at 31 August 2018 as originally anticipated but develop the successor programme through co-production with new services scheduled to commence from 1 April 2019. This would leave a gap in service of seven months and the Council would risk vulnerable service users being set at a disadvantage by loss of support from current MSG funded projects without any alternative provision.

### **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

#### **Mainstream Grants Programme (MSG)**

3.1 The current three year MSG funding is scheduled to end on 31 August 2018. The 2017/18 budget for the programme is £3.1m. One strand of MSG,



Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience, ended before the other four strands, on 31 March 2017. This strand of activity has now been recommissioned to 31 August 2018 to coincide with the end of the rest of the MSG programme. The value of the new cohesion commissioned programme is £105,000pa.

- 3.2 128 projects are funded through MSG with a further 8 contracts now being mobilised in the Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience programme.
- 3.3 The recent experience of recommissioning the cohesion strand of the MSG programme indicates that, in order to ensure full engagement in the co-production process and to allow adequate time for training in methodology currently unfamiliar to both the Council and the VCS, a period of at least 12 months should be allowed from the announcement of recommissioning intentions to the award of contracts, with a further period for contract mobilisation. Recent work evaluating MSG has also highlighted a need for an adequate timescale for a thorough co-production and application process to take place.
- 3.4 It is now proposed that the current three year MSG is extended by seven months to 31 March 2019 for those projects which receive grants and which are also performing satisfactorily, and also for the services recently commissioned in the Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience programme. This would be to enable a thorough and high quality application process to take place for any future funding that succeeds MSG. It would also avoid the risk of vulnerable service users being set at a disadvantage by loss of support from current MSG funded projects if the existing grants came to an end on 31 August 2018 and new services were not in place until 1 April 2019.
- 3.5 This course of action is one which is supported by Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and which would help the Council meet the objectives of the VCS Strategy 2016-19 which sets out a model for designing and commissioning services that focuses on co-production and a collaborative approach with the VCS.
- 3.6 In future commissioning, when experience and expertise of co-production have developed in both the Council and the VCS, it may be possible to reduce the lead in time. However, at present there is a danger that, if the funding is not extended, the VCS may not have the opportunity to become fully engaged in the process and may miss the chance to develop transformational new approaches to meeting community needs through co-production.
- 3.7 Monitoring of the current MSG grants indicates that the majority of organisations are delivering a good service but the extension of individual grants will be subject to the funded projects' continued satisfactory performance. Those projects which are considered to be underperforming may not be extended, may be extended with additional conditions or at a reduced level of funding. Decisions on individual projects will be made through the normal monitoring and reporting process by this Sub Committee.

Making the decision to extend MSG well in advance of the current end date for MSG ensures organisations have good notice of the Council's intentions and can make appropriate plans for their services. It will also allow time to consider any issues which may arise concerning individual projects.

- 3.8 The extension of funding for individual projects would be by mutual consent and there is the possibility that some organisations may choose to decline the Council's offer to extend funding. Where this happens, the Council would have to consider whether to allow the funded project to draw to an end in an orderly way or to seek an alternative provider for the extension period. In the event of this situation arising, a further report will be brought to the Sub Committee.
- 3.9 Extending the current MSG so that its successor programme will commence on 1 April 2019 provides the opportunity to align the commissioning cycle to the financial year. This will help future financial planning both for the organisations funded and the Council and should also make reporting year on year expenditure more transparent and readily understood.

### **Grants Policy**

- 3.10 The Voluntary and Community Strategy 2016-19 sets out ways to redefine and strengthen the Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the borough, including the way the authority provides financial support to the sector. Central to this strategy is a transition from traditional funding relationships to a position where the principal type of activity which the Council funds will be activity that is commissioned activity. However, the strategy recognises that grant funding will continue to have an important role to play in supporting the sector in certain circumstances. The relevant section of the VCS Strategy setting out the basis for a new, outcome focused, approach to grant funding is set out at Appendix A for reference.
- 3.11 Officers are now seeking to establish the policy framework and procedures for the new approach by:
- i. Developing the principles set out in the Strategy to define the criteria for grant funding;
  - ii. Developing a corporate grants policy and procedures that meet the criteria for grant funding;
  - iii. Considering which current grant programmes across the Council should be integrated into the new corporate policy and procedures including those funded by non mainstream general fund sources such as s106 funds, and
  - iv. Considering what arrangements may be needed to ensure a smooth transition from the current funding programmes to the new approach.
- 3.12 The VCS Strategy sets out the important role of the VCS in working with the Council to develop the new approach to grant funding and participating in a Grants Review Group. The close involvement of the VCS in this work is crucial to its success and it is therefore proposed to take the work forward

through a process of co-production with the sector. THCVS has indicated its willingness to engage its members in the process, including smaller community groups which do not already have good links with the Council. Engaging with these groups as well as those which the Council has more established relationships with will help to ensure wide involvement of the sector.

- 3.13 Some possible areas of future grant funding are set out in the VCS Strategy (see appendix A). These are not intended to be exhaustive but give a clear indication of the type of circumstances where grant funding could be more appropriate than commissioning.
- 3.14 The VCS Strategy describes how the Council will move towards an outcome based and commissioned approach to supporting the VCS in the future to ensure that future commitments align to the outcomes set out in the Community Plan and the Council's Strategic Plan. The Strategy anticipates much of the current mainstream grants programme (MSG) will be commissioned in the future rather than grant funded. The new grants policy will sit alongside the VCS funding programme which is being developed to replace the MSG.
- 3.15 Proposals for the new grants policy will be brought to the Grants Determination Sub-committee for decision in early in 2018. It is proposed that co-production activities will take place during the autumn and winter. Implementation will be aligned with and take account of the commissioning or other arrangements that will follow the MSG and the development of co-produced commissioning across the Council. Indicative timetables for these three activities are set out in appendix B.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 This paper proposes a new approach to grant giving and suggests that the Council move towards commissioning approach where payments are made for outcomes delivered rather than giving grants and invites MAB comments on the approach.
- 4.2 It is envisaged that the new approach will be applied to most areas of grant giving from across the Council including the mainstream grants (MSG) programme and therefore services commissioned through this approach would be funded from existing budgets. Further analysis will be carried out to identify areas in scope and identify areas where there would still be a need to award grants.
- 4.3 The report also seeks agreement to extend the existing MSG programme to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 (a further 7 months) once the current contracts expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018. The cost for the additional period will be funded through the annual MSG budgets of £3.1m.

## **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The Tower Hamlets Community Plan sets out the vision and priorities for the borough which have been set by the Council and its partners. Having regard to the Community Plan, the Council has developed an updated VCS Strategy and Action Plan and which were approved by the Mayor in Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016.
- 5.2 The Council has a range of specific statutory powers and duties which provide for partnership and community arrangements. In addition Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the Council to do things (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) calculated to facilitate, or conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to specified restrictions and limitations imposed by other statutes. It may be considered that development of a Grants Policy to support the VCS is something an individual may do and thus also something that the Council may do. The development and delivery of a Grants Policy to sit alongside the VCS commissioning programme is therefore within the powers of the Council.
- 5.3 As stated, a key part of the strategy is a move from grant funding towards an outcome based and commissioned approach to supporting the VCS in the future. The Strategy anticipates much of the current mainstream grants programme (MSG) will be commissioned in the future rather than grant funded. The new grants policy will sit alongside the VCS commissioning programme which is being developed to replace the MSG,
- 5.4 It is recognised however, that grant funding will be appropriate in some cases where there is a clear case for funding to be provided by grant rather than commissioning and a clear benefit to the service being funded. However, the nature of each scheme will need to be reviewed to ensure that it complies with the law in respect of grants. Broadly speaking where an arrangement allows for a pecuniary interest beyond that of the receipt of the funds themselves this can indicate that either procurement activity is being undertaken or that a concession opportunity is being provided by the Council. In either case such schemes cannot be of their nature grants and must be subject to different and appropriate constitutional and legal procedures.
- 5.5 It therefore follows that a scheme may not be able to be a grant because of its nature (notwithstanding the Council's wishes) and will therefore have to be tendered. This is at the centre of the need to review the existing arrangements
- 5.6 There is no strict legal definition of grant. A grant is a gift and is based in trust law as opposed to the law of contract. However, grants are often given for a purpose so on the face of it the grant appears to be a payment in respect of the recipient performing some actions and so it is sometimes unclear whether a grant has been made or the arrangement is a contract for services or

concession. A contract for services or a concession is not a grant and therefore would need to be subject to a competitive tender process in line with the Council's constitution and the prevailing law.

- 5.7 However, it is also clear that the gift (grant) to be properly made must be given to another person or organisation. For the purposes of the Council making grants, this therefore, means that the gift has to be made outside the Council's legal identity for a gift to be made. Therefore, a decision to move money from one department to another is not going to be deemed to be a grant.
- 5.8 A grant need not be made to another organisation. A grant may also be a grant if it is given to an individual.
- 5.9 One of the key distinguishing features between a grant and a contract for services is that with a contract for services the recipient of the money has a pecuniary interest beyond that in the receipt of the money itself. This is often in the form of taking a profit from the received money or using the money to have a further money making opportunity.
- 5.10 It is clear that there is a potential that some of the organisations may use a grant in order to provide growth to their business and or give them an advantage in the commercial market place generally This could, therefore, potentially class such grants as "State Aid" which is prohibited under European Law.
- 5.11 However, there is a general block exemption to state aid. State Aid is not applicable where no individual applicant receives more than 200,000 Euros worth of grant within a 3 year period
- 5.12 Any grant scheme which is created out of the new strategy must have a fair and transparent application process where applications are assessed against pre-published criteria.
- 5.13 To this end, the extension of the existing grants may be an issue as the further funds would not have been subject to such an application procedure. However, it is appreciated that the new strategy requires the extension time to be developed and implemented and that individual users who benefit from the organisations who receive the grant would be set at a significant disadvantage in the event that the funding ceases until such time as the new process may be implemented.
- 5.14 However, it is clear that the Council is required to set out a fair and reasonable decision making process based on objective terms when determining which grants may be extended with those objective terms being applied in the same way to each organisation.
- 5.15 The Council needs to ensure that the purpose of each grant is in the furtherance of its functions and duties as a local authority

- 5.16 In reviewing these grants schemes ,the Council must comply with its obligation as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”.
- 5.17 Also, the Council must ensure that the grant itself achieves best value. Therefore, there must be a robust monitoring system in place against which the performance of an organisation can be measured against the agreed outcomes that form out of the application process. This also means that each grant must be supported by appropriate grant terms allowing for the Council to protect the funds it issues and ensure that appropriate monitoring data is provided
- 5.18 In exercising its functions, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is noted that a full equality analysis will be carried out as proposals for the new funding arrangements are developed

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 A full equality analysis will be carried out alongside the development of the funding programme which will replace MSG.
- 6.2 With regard to the development of a corporate grants policy, it is important in respect of the Council’s equalities duties to ensure there are appropriate funding arrangements in place to avoid a disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics and organisations which represent them. These organisations are often small and do not necessarily feel equipped to compete for funding through formal tendering. The new grants arrangements will help ensure that the council’s funding arrangements do meet equalities duties. A full equality analysis will be carried out as proposals for the new funding arrangements are developed.

## **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Recent legislation, particularly the Localism Act 2010, has emphasised the role of communities working in partnership with local authorities to help achieve more effective and less costly services to local people. The process of co-production of services delivered by local voluntary and community organisations is a tool now widely recognised as a means to achieving this outcome.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 There are no specific implications with regard to sustainability arising from this report.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 As mentioned in paragraph 3 above, the proposed extension of the MSG will reduce the risk of vulnerable service users being set at a disadvantage by loss of support from current MSG funded projects if the existing grants come to an end on 31 August 2018 and new services are not in place until 1 April 2019.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no specific implications for crime and disorder reduction arising from this report. However, it is anticipated that there may be organisations supported by the Council through the new funding programmes whose activities will contribute towards crime and disorder reduction.

## **11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no specific safeguarding implications arising from this report.

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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

None

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2016-19 p22  
Appendix B Timescales

#### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

None

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A

## **Appendix A**

### **Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2016-19 p22**

#### **Take a new approach to grant giving**

With the move to commissioning, grant funding will only remain in a very narrow set of circumstances, for particular purposes, where there is a clear necessity for funding to be provided by way of a grant rather than commissioning and a clear benefit of the service being funded. All council grant funding will be part of a single, streamlined small grants process which will be open and competitive and based on the needs and priorities articulated in the Community Plan and Strategic Plan. We will work with the sector to jointly identify the circumstances in which grant funding will still be required but it is considered that these might be:

- one-off pump-priming/seed-corn funding to encourage innovation or pilot something new, especially where there is a current gap
- capacity building to enable smaller organisations to participate in commissioning.
- small, flexible, grants to encourage community cohesion, resilience and local action
- reducing social isolation and providing events and cultural opportunities
- where delivery needs to be from the VCS specifically

The guiding principles, strategy and overall forward plan for any remaining grants programme will be formulated in order to be transparent. Cross-party decision making on grant allocations will be based on well-defined criteria that support clear outcomes. Grant monitoring will be more robust at defining outputs and outcomes and measuring and evaluating impact. The shape of the programme will be informed by an interim evaluation of the 2015/18 Mainstream Grants Programme, highlighting lessons to inform the new programme. It is likely that, as part of this, some services currently funded by grants - such as employment services, youth services, adult social care and welfare advice – will be commissioned rather than grant funded. In moving to this approach, the council will work closely with the sector to ensure that their particular experience and expertise is recognised.

It is envisaged that a Grants Review Group made up of council Officers together with VCS representatives is set up to develop proposals for new grants programme.



**Commissioning**

**MSG Commissioning**

**Grants policy**

Autumn 2017  
Overview of existing Council grants and contracts

12 Sept 2017 Grants Determination Sub  
Decision on extension of MSG and  
announcement to VCS of intention to commission

Autumn 2017  
Co-production of policy

Winter 2017/18  
Priorities for grants and contracts identified

Autumn 2017  
Co-production of service design

Winter 2017/18  
Decision making process

Spring 2018  
Develop new approach to grants and  
commissioning including transition plan

Winter 2017/18  
Stakeholder events

Spring 2018  
Detailed scheme development

Summer 2018  
Launch new approach

Spring 2018  
Prospectus drafted & signed off

Summer 2018  
New scheme launched

Autumn 2018  
First phase of new commissioning process begins

Summer 2018  
Bidding process (3 months)

Autumn 2018  
Assessment and decision making

Early 2019  
Contract mobilisation process

1 April 2019  
New services commence

Capacity building and training with VCS, supporting consortia and partnerships

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<p><b>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub Committee</b></p> <p>12<sup>th</sup> September 2017</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Zena Cooke, Corporate Director of Resources</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>Outcomes from Theme 5 Community Engagement Cohesion and Resilience Grant Programme</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Steve Hill - Head of Benefits Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	All

### REASONS FOR URGENCY

This report is classified as urgent for Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee due to the need to take account of the evaluation of the theme, project delivery and outcomes.

#### **Summary**

The theme 5 Community Engagement Cohesion and Resilience was a small grant programme to support activities that would bring about the following outcomes, as set out in the grant specification. We specifically wished to fund local organisations which:

- Engaged local community groups and residents in taking ownership of, and collective responsibility in responding to local issues
- Promoted greater involvement of local residents in developing solutions to local issues
- Brought people of different backgrounds together to develop strong and positive relationships through positive interactions;
- Identified and celebrated local identities and culture and engaged wider communities as part of these projects
- Ensured the sustainability of projects through developing new and emerging community leaders who could speak for the interests of their community, recognising the multi-faith, non-faith and different cultural background of the peoples of the borough, articulating shared values and concerns, and being able to calm any emerging tensions.
- Equipped individuals and groups to act positively for the wider benefit of their communities

The priority was to fund projects that had a cohesion and cross-cultural, intergenerational, engagement or capacity building focus.

This report provides the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee with details of

delivery and outcomes following grant funding allocation for theme 5 of the Mainstream Grant programme. Grant funding for theme 5 projects came to an end on 31 March 2017. This work is now to be commissioned rather than grant funded.

## Recommendations:

The Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee is recommended to note achievements and feedback comments as necessary.

### 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 To review the delivery and outcomes of the Mainstream Grants programme for theme 5 Community Cohesion

### 2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 This is a noting report which is not seeking a decision, the alternative option would be to not produce this report but that would not aid transparency.

### 3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 A total of eleven projects were supported. Total funding was £166k. Details of the allocations made are below.

	Organisation	Project	Total allocation over 19 months
1	The Rooted Forum	Collective Conscience Project	£15,200
2	Wapping Bangladesh Association (WBA)	Community Engagement & Citizenship	£15,520
3	UpRising	East London Leadership Programme	£14,256
4	East London Advance Technology Training (ELATT)	Equal Voices	£15,073
5	Dorset Community Association	Get Involved	£15,551
6	Betar Bangla	Positive Citizenship	£15,551
7	Stifford Centre Limited	Residents and Neighbours	£14,936
8	Somali Parents and Children's Play Association	Somali Women Engagement Forum	£16,000
9	London Gypsy and Traveller Unit	We are Tower Hamlets Residents too!	£15,020
10	Newark Youth London	Women's Project	£13,239
11	City Gateway	Women's Voice	£16,000
<b>Total expenditure</b>			<b>£166,346</b>

- 3.2 Theme 5 delivery - what went well

The detailed achievements of each funded project are set out in Appendix 1 of this report. These include the benefits for communities and individuals.

Overall, initiatives funded under this stream accomplished relevant outcome indicators.

The projects ranged from working with marginalised groups to involve them in the community to developing initiatives to cope with environmental issues.

A common theme of feedback from all the projects was strong collaboration and cohesion across the community, an increase in the feeling of belonging within the wider community and contributing in a positive way across the borough.

Every project reported a wide spectrum of attendance from a cross section of the community – across all nationalities, religions, age and sexuality (where these characteristics were recorded). Many participants stated that they had not previously experienced mixing outside their own communities and found it a very positive experience.

The benefits of networking and partnership resulted in positive experiences for residents. Residents appreciated their views being heard and acted upon as a result of the projects. Volunteers involved with the projects gained valuable work skills and many have been encouraged to continue to volunteer in other local initiatives as a result of their experience.

Promoting cohesion remains a Council priority as detailed within the 2016-19 Strategic Plan and the Council's Single Equalities Framework which details the need to 'promote community cohesion, bringing different parts of the community together, tackling divisions and encouraging positive relationships'. The projects funded through theme 5 very much promote this.

The theme 5 projects allowed community organisations to engage and support communities that are hard to reach – including women, migrants and the gypsy and traveller communities. A key aspect of a number of these projects was around confidence building and promoting greater interaction between some of these groups and wider society.

A key indicator for measuring cohesion in the borough is the annual resident's survey. When the theme 5 projects started in September 2015 the 2014/15 annual resident's survey stated that 81% of residents agreed that the local area is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together. By 2017, when the theme 5 projects came to an end this had increased to 92%.

### 3.3 Theme 5 delivery - what did not go as well:

Some projects took a while to get off the ground. There appears to have been a lack of consistency in approach to the projects. This was partly due to the difference in types of project undertaken and partly due to the size and level of experience of the groups facilitating the projects.

Some were over ambitious in what they could achieve and, as a result, went over budget.

### 3.4 Lessons learned

There was a mix of projects using volunteers and paid workers and a disparity in the amount of people engaged in each project. Some were smaller and intensive while others looked to engage larger numbers of the community.

In quite a few of the projects it was difficult to measure clear outcomes. Some concentrated on feedback forms while others were able to provide examples of community engagement and employment gained as a result of the projects.

One project stalled due the illness of one member. In future, there should be deputy or delegated members able to take control and take projects forward to avoid the single point of failure of the project being dependent on one single person.

Budgets were underestimated in some cases. In future a full needs assessment and clear outline of planned expenditure, with a contingency budget for any issues should be part of the submission.

The contingency budget could be held centrally by the council and applied for by organisations as required or a percentage of funding allocated added as contingency. The only issue with the latter proposal is that the money would be used automatically and not be returned back to the pot.

## 4. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 To allow and maintain total transparency this report provides the Grants and Determination (Cabinet) Sub Committee with actual performance figures of Theme 5 Community Engagement Cohesion and Resilience Grant Programme.
- 4.2 Total allocations over 19 months ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 reached £166k. This enabled and equipped 11 local community groups and residents to employ solutions which were driven by local needs and issues.
- 4.3 The move to commissioning specified services will provide an opportunity to secure greater value for money. Also improved financial relationships can potentially yield greater resource maximisation and better outcomes.
- 4.4 At present these changes will not present any additional financial burden to the current total revenue envelope.

## 5. **LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 Where the Council's position is not making a grant this is still a decision for the purposes of administration law, even though the agreements may have lapsed and or there is no continuing obligation on the Council to continue funding.
- 5.2 It follows therefore, as with any decision the Council must have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. In particular the Council must take all reasonable steps to ascertain the impact that such a decision might have on persons who have a protected characteristic when measured with persons who do not. Appropriate measures may include an Equalities Assessment or

possibly consultation. The Council may also need to understand what alternatives are available to persons who have a protected characteristic to ensure that they are not adversely affected by such a decision.

- 5.3 It is notable that where persons with a protected characteristic and those who do not have one are equally impacted this may not constitute a breach of the Equality Duty.

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The contribution of VCS Organisations helping to deliver One Tower Hamlets objectives and priorities are explicitly recognised in the summary of this report; promoting cohesion is a key aspect of One Tower Hamlets.
- 6.2 VCS Organisations that have delivered theme 5 projects play a key role in delivering services that address inequality, improve cohesion and increase community leadership. These services are real examples of 'One Tower Hamlets' in practice.
- 6.3 The opportunities offered through the MSG Programme will play a key role in delivering the aims of One Tower Hamlets.

## **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The level of awards to organisations was determined by the quality of their individual applications as well as the overall demand for the funds available within each Theme.
- 7.2 Additionally, the application appraisal process took into consideration the proposed levels of outputs and outcomes to be delivered as well as the organisation's track record and the bid's overall value for money rating.
- 7.3 There will be ongoing performance management of the approved portfolio of projects to ensure that interventions meet the required standards; that the evidencing of project achievements and expenditure are accurately recorded and reported.
- 7.4 Monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place to ensure that payments to organisations are in line with performance. The agreed Payment By Results process will ensure that grants will not be paid to organisations that either significantly or consistently under-perform, or those that are not able to properly evidence the work/outcomes for which funding has been approved.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 The MSG 2015/18 Programme has a broad focus including developing new skills for local people and organisations that are disadvantaged and perhaps facing multiple barriers to achieving a sustainable future.

8.2 All programme beneficiaries be they individuals or local organisations will be encouraged to consider taking appropriate steps to minimise negative impact on the environment when taking up the opportunities offered within the programme and on an ongoing basis.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 A number of different risks arise from any funding of external organisations. The key risks are:

- The funding may not be fully utilised i.e. allocations remain unspent and outcomes are not maximised
- The funding may be used for purposes that have not been agreed e.g. in the case of fraud
- The organisation may not in the event have the capacity to achieve the contracted outputs/outcomes

9.2 The monitoring being undertaken has identified a small number of projects that have been rated either Red or Amber within the Council's RAG performance rating process. In these circumstances either formal project improvement plans or other appropriate arrangements have been put in place to minimise the risk of further/significant underperformance.

9.3 As part of the ongoing programme management arrangements, support, advice and guidance will be made available projects to ensure that all performance and other risks are minimised.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The activities, services and outcomes that are being targeted through the MSG Programme support the objectives of reducing crime and disorder; this is particularly true of the projects delivering under the Community Engagement Cohesion and Resilience Theme.

10.2 Throughout the programme as a whole however, those people involved in, or at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system will be targeted for support.

## **11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 As part of the initial application process organisations were required to provide details of their safeguarding policy if appropriate. The Grant Agreement that funded organisations have entered into includes requirements in relation to safeguarding.

11.2 Organisations providing services to children or vulnerable adults and employing staff or volunteers in a position whose duties include caring for, training, supervising or being responsible in some way for them, are required to fully comply with all necessary safeguarding requirements.



**Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Summary of individual Theme 5 projects

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)****List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

- None

**Officer contact details for documents:**

- Steve Hill, Head of Benefits

### **Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience projects**

All projects were expected to provide some match funding towards activities. Monitoring demonstrated some effective project work from smaller locally based organisations with limited capacity and limited match funding in place. Each of the projects negotiated and agreed outcomes that aimed to contribute towards the programmes' priority outcomes.

Of the eleven projects, the majority were cross community (six); four were aimed specifically at women and there was one project tailored for the travelling community.

There were common themes in the outcomes:

- Providing equality and inclusiveness in activities and enabling residents to improve their lives
- To have a better understanding of their local community, people and its culture
- To gain better social and religious tolerance based on common values, history and shared culture
- To develop positive relationships and tackle division
- Develop skills in leadership, project management and communication
- Gaining essential citizenship skills including: navigating services available in the local communities; understanding their rights and entitlements and confidently making decisions in accessing these.
- Becoming active in the community

Below are some examples of initiatives implemented to overcome barriers to participation faced by local people. As part of their projects some organisations provided holistic support to enable residents to fully engage. This included literacy and digital inclusion training activities, as well as childcare and access to advice and other relevant services

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Collective Conscience Project</b> (funded £15,200)	<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>The Rooted Forum</b>
<b>Project description</b>	<p>A localised strategic partnership bringing together local service providers, community groups and other stakeholders to address local issues that undermine community cohesion. Forum activities included youth outreach provision in Shadwell and Wapping during Ramadan, developing Watney Market and a Community Fun Day. The project aimed to engage, support and sustain cohesion and resilience amongst local residents and organisations through diversity representation, regional activism and community leadership. The stakeholders agreed a vision 'One community for everyone built on respect and understanding'.</p>		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>The Collective Conscience Project brought together a strategic partnership forming the Shadwell Stakeholders Forum. Benefits of this work were enhanced by there being a good balance of sectors and communities represented. Key was ensuring partners included those representing a range of communities as well as diverse services. These consisted of a range of community groups, voluntary organisations, statutory organisations, local businesses, and faith institutions.</p> <p>Working groups were set up to deliver three key agreed priorities, a summer event, a youth outreach programme during Ramadan and bringing about improvements to Watney Market. Communication was achieved and maintained through partner meetings and social media tools.</p> <p>The Ramadhan Twilight late night diversionary outreach programme 2016 was delivered in partnership with Gosling Gardens Group, St. George in the East Church and Darul Ummah Mosque. The project ran for 29 nights.</p> <p>In the summer of 2016 the forum held a Shadwell Festival bringing together approximately 400 people from across Shadwell.</p> <p>The goals set by the group of improving Watney Market was not fully achieved within the projects time line. This was partly to do with the resources required being outside of the control of the partnership.</p> <p>This project was implemented through the collaboration of separate local organisations. The project successfully achieved planned activities to work on shared priorities, demonstrating the difference a local organisation can make to an area through effective partnership working. The partnership intends to continue this work to address further issues identified in the area as a result of this project.</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>The final 6 months of the project were impacted by the worker becoming ill. This meant the partnership lost the key driver and some momentum. This also resulted in outcome demonstration and evaluation being limited.</p>		

Project:	Community Engagement & Citizenship (funded £15,520)	Organisation	Wapping Bangladesh Association (WBA)
<b>Project description</b>	Working with local residents to build a stronger community where people came together as well as work with the wider community to tackle community issues. This project aimed to bring about integration and partnership work with the focus on a healthier and active community. Activities included supporting volunteers to undertake community activity with local residents, developing residents to participate in community activities and themed workshops for local communities.		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>They doubled the expected number of volunteers for the final six months from five to ten. Volunteers were provided with a training programme that facilitated community engagement. Each one was on placement in a community organisation, working with local people on a community action projects. A themed session on parenting included discussion around raising parents' voice for the well-being of their children. The project supported increased parent participation in a local school, including them in a review of the bullying procedure.</p> <p>The volunteers worked with local charities and also worked with residents on environmental issues including pedestrian safety and issues with street lighting.</p> <p>Outcomes indicators of the intervention demonstrated also included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased access to a sports facility in the park for local youth</li> <li>• Some volunteers gaining a Level-2 training course on First aid at work qualification</li> <li>• Developed relationships between WBA and other local groups and services</li> <li>• Increased engagement with all sections of the community including volunteers involved coming from a wider range of ethnicities.</li> <li>• Raised awareness and increased knowledge of participants of themed presentations including drug awareness, vandalism, causes of anger and depression affecting young people's lives, extremism, policy, procedure and systems.</li> <li>• Participants supported to successfully negotiate with a housing association against a decision to increase their water bills inappropriately.</li> </ul>		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Initially the project was slow to get off the ground. However, participants succeeded in catching up their underperforming outputs.</p> <p>This project focused on supporting independent community action by supporting social action utilising volunteers working with residents to make effective local changes to mitigate local issues. Monitoring revealed it made contributions to broader social outcomes in terms of enhancing community competencies and building community strengths. Positive successes have been proven in making constructive local improvement. WBA is keen to continue the project as they feel the need is demonstrated through this work. They have applied for funds to but have not yet secured any.</p>		

<b>Project:</b>	<b>East London Leadership Programme (funded £14,256)</b>	<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>UpRising</b>
<b>Project description</b>	<p>This nine month programme offered participants a view of the way that political, business, public sector and community organisations work together to shape communities. The programme aimed to give young people the knowledge, networks, skills and confidence to reach their leadership potential and take social action on issues they care about. Activities included Knowledge Sessions, Skills Sessions and Events. There were ten participants, each of which was individually matched with a coach and a mentor who supported them throughout their time on the programme. Most activities took place in the evening so that the programme fitted around work, study and other commitments.</p>		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>The project began in October 2015. A total of 28 sessions alongside other activities provided 193 hours of delivery. Session themes included media and communication, local services, campaigning, public speaking and project management. In addition to the sessions, each participant was offered coaching sessions, with volunteer coaches provided by the International Coaching Federation. All participants completed the programme.</p> <p>The participants designed and delivered social action campaigns on issues that they were passionate about. One group developed a campaign which aimed to raise awareness of the detrimental impact of the excessive usage of plastic on health and the environment. The campaign challenged the community to avoid the use of plastics for a set period of time. The YouCan social action campaign created an online platform documenting and showcasing local inspirational Tower Hamlets residents. The aim was to encourage young people to think more positively about their future, education and employment. Residents were also engaged in additional social action campaigns during the project including a national campaign to encourage more young people to register to vote. The programme was successful in increasing participants' understanding of the local area.</p> <p>Outcomes were demonstrated through case studies: "UpRising really helped me to think about who I am and what I want to be. Through this journey of self-reflection I realised that I want to become a Human Rights Lawyer. UpRising paired me with a human rights lawyer as a mentor and we've had amazing conversations and meetings.."</p> <p>"One of the reasons I joined this programme was that I wanted to help my local community and do something positive, but I didn't know how and where to begin... I think it's wonderful how this programme encourages you and gives you the platform to become a leader."</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Monitoring reports and attachments received were comprehensive about the provision and successfully demonstrated progress of participants towards outcomes. Workers demonstrated a passion about the project and a pride in the projects achievements. As part of the monitoring UpRising provided a true cost calculation of the cost of the Leadership Programme, which showed the original budget was significantly underestimated. However, core costs were higher than we would accept and our grant conditions are that we would only match fund a place. Higher core costs are often necessary for national organisations to support the more substantial infrastructure.</p>		

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Equal Voices</b> (funded £15,073)	<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>East London Advance Technology Training (ELATT)</b>
<b>Project description</b>	This project aimed to create more equal voices in local community life by enabling newly-arrived migrant women to recognise their role and develop skills. Equal Voices provided participatory citizenship sessions, teaching of equality and diversity principles, skills-sharing and community organising that encouraged effective communication between cultural groups. They also incorporated events, where the women met other community members and City workers.		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>Thirty women took part against a target of twenty. All reported that the project had a positive impact on their lives, their families and social networks. The citizenship sessions touched on topics such as the rights and responsibilities of a UK citizen, parliament, the environment, volunteering in the community, current news events; such as the refugee and housing crisis, immigration, domestic violence and how to combat extremism.</p> <p>The women found the sessions interesting and learnt about relevant topics; such as online safety – many of the women have children in school and worry about their children communicating online. Many confirmed that the sessions and community leadership training inspired them to become more active in the community by volunteering or getting to know their neighbours better.</p> <p>26 of the women participated in community volunteering. Beneficiaries took part in raising awareness and funds for the refugee crisis in Syrian. Students said they felt that talking to others about issues like the refugee crisis gave them a voice to express their opinions and inspire others.</p> <p>Additionally, participants were able to practice their English and increase their language skills. All who participated said that they felt much more confident with their speaking and being able to communicate with others. The women in the group formed very good relationships with each other and used online platforms to communicate with each other. The women continue to meet with each other to offer help or support, or to meet up socially. These friendships had a positive influence on their well-being as many felt quite isolated prior to starting with the project.</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	ELATT's adult training work has been rated as outstanding by OFSTED and they have recently won TES awards for their provision. The organisation was effective in improving learners' knowledge and skills in a professional fun way, leading to excellent attendance and engagement. Where learners had personal barriers that affected their ability to successfully engage, ELATT put in place additional provision to support involvement, including childcare and travel costs.		

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Get Involved( funded £15,551)</b>	<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>Dorset Community Association</b>
<b>Project description</b>	The primary objective was to recruit a diverse group of 50 residents to Weavers Community Forum to regularly meet to discuss community issues, agree priorities, engage other groups as appropriate and influence local decisions. The project aimed to develop positive inclusion, cohesion and resilience whilst bringing about positive social impact. Activities included volunteers tackling local issues, training and community events.		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>The Weavers community engagement forum met regularly in order to engage residents to raise their voice about concerns they were facing in day to day life. Dorset reports the activity empowered participants to set the agenda as well as combating social exclusion, whilst promoting greater inter-communal understanding. Outcome measurement included growth of confidence, communications skills and better community relationships.</p> <p>Opportunities were provided for local residents through volunteering. Volunteers contributed towards supporting delivery of activities. The project additionally held workshops that provided training on issues identified. Sessions included protecting children from radicalisation as well as environmental issues. Positive outcomes indicators included some residents deciding to use bike rather than using a car to their work place. There is also a reported increase in the number of parents who check IT usage of their children.</p> <p>Feedback demonstrated that participants had developed stronger positive relationships with people of different backgrounds. Events incorporated working with other local organisations. As part of the project a Christmas party was held on 17 December 2016. Dorset Community Association arranged publicity including meeting with all local groups and distributing leaflets. Approximately 150 people attended, including local residents from different backgrounds, religions and cultures. There was food served and children received a gift. The Tower Hamlets Mayor and local councillors were present at the party. Members from the local church, mosque and groups attended, volunteered and made the event successful.</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	This organisation is one of the smallest and newest funded under this theme. The project relied on a good balance of volunteering as well as professional support. This project highlighted the importance of working with small local voluntary sector organisations providing responsive frontline services for residents. This organisation engaged with participants to overcome barriers that resulted from the perception of the organisation being for a single community and religious base.		

Project	Positive Citizenship (funded £15,551)	Organisation	Betar Bangla
<b>Project description</b>	Betar Bangla through this "Positive Citizenship" project held workshops on citizenship for local residents. It also transmitted radio programmes on citizenship themes with a panel of experts to explain and answer questions from local residents.		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>Betar Bangla completed all expected workshops as part of its Positive Citizenship programme with the aim of increasing knowledge, understanding and activity in local issues as a way of promoting citizenship. The workshops accommodated over 96 different beneficiaries from Asian/Asian British Bangladeshi, White British, Somalian, Indian, Pakistani and other Asian backgrounds. 51% of these were women. Whilst the majority recorded as Muslim, participants also included those with Christian, Hindu, Humanist, and Jewish faith. Workshops ensured participants received relevant information that developed the concept of citizenship. Workshops can be seen to have achieved bringing people of different backgrounds together to develop strong and positive relationships through positive interactions.</p> <p>Twelve radio programmes on citizenship and related issues were broadcasted on Betar Bangla Community Radio Station (overall 80,000+ listeners computed by using the OFCOM system and 200,000+ listeners on their website). All Tower Hamlets residents and especially residents from the Bangladeshi Community were able to phone-in and ask questions of the panel of experts taking part. Participants presented and aired live radio programmes focussing on British History, the constitution, the House of Parliament, and the NHS. Discussions regarding local issues include the importance of voting, street crime, policing and how to report crimes and contribute to society as neighbourhood watch wardens. Radio show speakers included Detective Chief Superintendent Sue Williams.</p> <p>Evaluation of feedback forms and pre-training forms for the attendees demonstrated an increase in awareness of issues regarding citizenship including increased awareness of local provision. Betar Bangla reports that as a direct result of this training, the community has experienced an increase in individuals and groups acting positively for the benefit of all communities with some becoming involved with local charities as volunteers.</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	The facilitator used their extensive knowledge and experience to make the project relevant to participants and the organisations objectives whilst meeting our funding priorities. Sessions were well planned and stimulating with flexibility that allowed ideas and discussion to grow. Learners of mixed abilities were encouraged to be involved in activities that were well-paced and relevant. The diversity of learners' backgrounds and experiences was shared well within lessons.		



<b>Project:</b>	<b>Residents and Neighbours</b> (funded £14,936)	<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>Stifford Centre Limited</b>
<b>Project description</b>	Stifford established a Residents and Neighbours Club (R&NC), to be a platform for residents to come together as a community in the Stepney and St Dunstan's Wards. The first project objective was to recruit a diverse group of 125 residents ensuring that the residents represented the demographic profile of Stepney and St Dunstan's wards. The second objective was for the club was to meet 16 times to discuss community issues, agree priorities, engage other groups as appropriate and influence local decisions. 2 parties were to be held one at Christmas and the other at Eid. Ten volunteers from the club membership were to be engaged and trained to work with participants, acting as mentors in campaigns and providing 10 themed workshops. The project worker was expected to support 8 campaigns to respond to the local issues identified in the meetings working with the participants and volunteers.		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>151 adult residents were engaged, 75% of which were women. The club over achieved the number of meetings. Meeting notes demonstrate discussions took place on religion, community and housing issues. Other issues reported in the evaluation report were: anti-social behaviour; services charges; overcrowding; corner shop closer; bodily waste disposal; and literacy. As a result of the project Stifford started English classes for residents with English as a second language. There was consistent feedback from all participants that it had increased their confidence in speaking in groups.</p> <p>Workshops delivered by experts were on health and wellbeing, domestic violence, IT and changes in legislation. The project evaluation states volunteers felt more part of the community and were able to interact with the different age, gender and background people.</p> <p>Most participants felt really inspired and more involved with the community. The organisation reports that the project helped residents to go through a journey of independence, self-development and gaining access in establishing shared values and building better relationships by bringing people together across cultural divides, no matter a person's age, gender, race, sexual orientation or religion.</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	There was some ambiguity in the recording of the outcomes of this group. Monitoring reports lacked detail. The end of project evaluation report brought about a number of concerns in relation to missing activity details as well as outcome and impact. There were concerns over the high number of participants who were recorded as preferring not to give details in the equalities monitoring categories, particularly as they were supported by trained volunteers to complete them.		


Project:	Somali Women Engagement Forum (funded £16,000)	Organisation	Somali Parents and Children's Play Association
<b>Project description</b>	This project aimed to develop Somali women as leaders who could speak for the interests of their community and to promote community cohesion to help build a strong and resilient community. Proposed activities included weekly sessions for Somali Women, monthly coffee / discussion events for the participants as well as women from other communities, volunteering and supporting the women with wider community engagement.		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>Weekly session topics included leadership, community and identity, understanding families in digital age, family communication and delinquency. Digital inclusion sessions were also provided. It can be demonstrated the Somali Women participants developed confidence and higher self-esteem. Participants also indicated they felt less marginalised and isolated. A case study provided evidence of progress where a single woman who had been socially isolated due to a physical illness received the physical support she required to enable her to engage with the group, gain knowledge of local services, and take part in discussion forums and interact and learn from her peer group. The participant confirmed that the sessions has been a significant aspect of her empowerment process; encouraging her to believe in herself and try new possibilities. In the process she also developed great friendships. Ms S participated in the activities and the events with great enthusiasm and she would like to challenge the passive attitude of Somali women which she said is that “we do not grab our chances as other communities do”.</p> <p>Involvement in the wider community was shown through participants taking an active part in Somali community pan London events to raise funds for the Somali people affected by the famine back home. In addition some of the women joined a social network forum of local women. The participants attended coffee mornings with people from other ethnic backgrounds such as Arab, Nigerian, Eritrean, and Bangladeshi; and hence recognised the importance of integration and being part of the wider community.</p> <p>The organisation measured outcomes by consulting users quarterly to inform how they felt about the project and the activities delivered and what benefits it had on them. They reported that through the chosen topics, users developed understanding around community and the barriers they face as Somali British citizens. They developed knowledge how to overcome those barriers by empowering and encouraging each other.</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>The organisation provides services for the Somali community that is needs-led, has a high level of service user involvement, encourages peer support and focuses on empowerment and independence. Services are provided in Somali within a sensitive framework that enables participants to engage who would otherwise be excluded.</p> <p>Whilst being successful in providing the majority of the work some areas of the provision were limited and not all proposed outcomes demonstrated effectively. The social impact of the women’s provision is not formally valued in terms of contribution and savings to education, health and social care. What is clear is that the Women-only services provided by this and the other similar groups create a ‘safe space’, both physically and emotionally for local women from communities that have measurable need. The organisation would benefit from more general women’s centre funding focusing on appropriate outcomes.</p>		

<b>Project:</b>	<b>We are Tower Hamlets Residents too!</b> (funded £15,020)	<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>London Gypsy and Traveller Unit</b>
Project description	We are Tower Hamlets Residents too! built the capacity of the gypsy and traveller communities in Tower Hamlets. The funding was used to provide a community development worker to work with families living at Old Willow Close and also housed traveller families in the borough. Work included: establishing a residents association; supporting residents to provide a strong voice for gypsies and travellers in Tower Hamlets enabling representation and increasing key strategic links; digital inclusion activities; Gypsy Roma Traveller History month event in June 2016.		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>Throughout the 18 months there was significant progress in the development of the Old Willow Close Residents Association (OWCRA) demonstrated by the increased active involvement from the different family groups on the site. The residents group enabled residents share information with one another, creating a stronger voice on issues that affect them. Residents agreed a constitution for the OWCRA and elected a number of individuals lead. Through this collective voice, they have more effectively represented their issues and concerns to the council officers responsible for the site management as well as in wider forums. This has resulted in them being quicker to respond to news and to changes in policy.</p> <p>Members of the OWCRA achieved some important successes. This included organising and speaking at Gypsy and Traveller London Mayor Electoral Hustings, contributing to the Scrap Metal Act Review, and challenging Tower Hamlets council in their Needs Assessment results. They hosted meetings with government members of the DCLG and lobbied for a transparent hand over from Cross Rail to Tower Hamlets. This ensured their site is better managed. Families have taken part in activism and taking part in a city wide meeting for the organising of the two national protests in 2016. Presentations were delivered by residents in local schools. Residents took part in meetings in the local area about the Housing and Planning Bill, and also took part in the national march. One resident gave a speech outside the Houses of Parliament sharing with the public her culture and history. The same families are now getting involved with London Gypsies and Travellers new campaign launched in May 2017, called 'We are all so many things'.</p> <p>The digital inclusion and literacy elements of the project included managing social media, using emails, developing websites and research. Computer training was tailored to tablets, laptops and smart phones as these are the media used by the community. They are now able to research on the internet the issues that affect them. Due to the very low level of literacy with some residents, one to one sessions were implement that focused on increased literacy and access to employment. This has been demonstrated through increased use of email as a method of communication by residents. Unexpected outcomes include two young people supported into employment and one of the young women is looking into starting a business.</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	This was the first mainstream grant award to provide services for gypsies and travellers in the borough. Significant progress was demonstrated through effective community development work implemented by a specialist organisation. Our funding mainly contributed to the salary of the Community Development worker. This organisation provided appropriate services that led to demonstration of positive outcomes for the individuals involved. The processes used to track work in the organisation provided evidence of intervention and activity. Participants were mainly known individuals and workers had an in-depth knowledge of them. It was evident that participants influenced and shaped service planning and delivery.		

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Women's Project</b> (funded £13,239)	<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>Newark Youth London</b>
<b>Project description</b>	This project organised four borough wide women's events per year with a view to creating a more inclusive and tolerant 'One Tower Hamlets' where disadvantaged and excluded women are made aware of mainstream services and other support services and given information on how to access these services. Events contain speakers, learning opportunities, stalls from other local providers alongside fun activities. A crèche was provided to enable women to fully engage.		
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>Six events with different themes took place resulting in over 300 attendances. The project worker incorporated outreach and networking initiatives to encourage a culturally diverse range of women participants. Each event happened in a different area of the borough with the aim of attracting women in that locality. Partner organisations were also engaged to develop the events, bringing about local opportunities and increased value.</p> <p>Outcome monitoring demonstrated increased aspirations, evidenced by six women taking up referrals to SHEWISE to access their training, resources and networks to support business start-ups. Outcome indicators also included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women asking questions in public</li> <li>• Key speakers reported as being motivational and inspiring</li> <li>• Women accessing other local provision</li> </ul> <p>The organisation worked with volunteers on each event during the quarterly period. All volunteers indicated increase in capability and confidence. One user stated "I was a little nervous about getting involved due to the lack of English I speak and writing. However, Halima encouraged me and ensured I was able to do the stuff I am confident with. Halima explained the outcomes that needed to be achieved for the project and I was given tasks. I took the responsibility to promote the event as I lived in the area already and have lots of contacts through the club and schools... On the day of the event I set up the room and explained to women the purpose of the day. I was very inspired by staff and other volunteers and wish to be more involved in the future delivery of these types of events. By volunteering, I have gained some knowledge in how to facilitate an event and gained more confidence in working with the public and gained knowledge of becoming a councillor/leader".</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Continuous project improvements implemented by Newark Youth to the events was significant. Events were exciting and enjoyed by participants. Movement towards outcomes for volunteers was noteworthy and validated for some through accreditation. Effective networking and partnership work was also a substantial project achievement, bringing additional value to the events and our funding.</p> <p>Despite clear initiatives to recruit from wider communities the project co-ordinator was disappointed at the representation from many communities. Perhaps could have been achieved with a longer project and/or more resources being available for recruitment.</p>		

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Women's Voice</b> (funded £16,000)	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>City Gateway</b>
<b>Project description</b>	<p>Women's Voice was an interactive training course that used public speaking and debating activities to help participants to develop confidence. Women's Voice aimed to empower women to become leaders and spokespersons in their communities, using confidence building activities and speech writing, debating and public speaking training. Additional activities were Inspirational Women sessions, with inspiring female speakers talking about their work and passions, to encourage personal development and career aspirations.</p>		
<b>Achievement</b>	<p>A total of 110 marginalised women were engaged in Women's Voice and/or Inspirational Women workshops. Participants from a range of 25 countries enrolled on the programme. Women's Voice aimed to empower students by giving them the confidence to speak in front of a group and learn to debate before a diverse audience. Each session included confidence building activities, games, public speaking techniques and speech writing sessions. Participants reported they grew in confidence, became more independent and strengthened their communication, public speaking and leadership skills.</p> <p>The Community Advocates group went on to exercise leadership skills in volunteering placements that include opportunities to attend local community forums/ meetings. They displayed leadership skills when attending local community forums/meetings. Examples included Learner Consultations, NHS consultation on GP services and a Consultation led by Tower Hamlets Counsellor &amp; Cabinet Member for Strategic Development Rachel Blake.</p> <p>City Gateway underestimated the popularity in the Inspirational Women workshops. Interest from those wanting to participate was significant, leaving them having to decline some. The speakers for the sessions included Muslim, Jewish and Christian speakers, as well as Bangladeshi, Black-British, Caribbean, Eritrean, Indian, Portuguese, Romanian, Somali, Syrian, and White British speakers. The Met Police Women's and Youth Project Coordinator for Prevent spoke at Inspirational Women courses, equipping participants with the knowledge of how to help keep those in their local community safe from extremism and radicalisation. Speakers fed back that the opportunity to speak fostered community cohesion and gave them the chance to share their expertise with the local community, as well as inspiring vulnerable women to be ambitious.</p> <p>The courses also functioned as a catalyst for community cohesion with participants building cross-cultural friendships, and women from BAME communities empowered as community advocates and local leaders. A number of participants shared that when they first enrolled on the programme they either did not have any friends or family in London, but that through the programme they had formed meaningful friendships with local women from diverse backgrounds, and as a result no longer felt so isolated.</p> <p>Progression statistics showed that Women's Voice was their course from which most women went into paid employment. City Gateway suggests this indicated that work-readiness was correlated to the acquisition of soft skills gained or strengthened through the course, and highlighted the importance of such skills.</p>		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>This project demonstrated engagement of participants in decisions that determined their use of resources and the shape the provision provided. The processes used to track women resulted in the organisation having an in-depth knowledge of participants starting points and personal circumstances, then recorded and supported progress. Monitoring showed that participants were treated as individuals, at the centre of their progress, rather than fitting them into services. A positive approach, which highlighted what women who used services could achieve. There appeared to be importance in the relationships between the women who use services and staff. It was evident that participants enjoyed attending and gained self-esteem and confidence through their achievements.</p>		

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<b>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub Committee</b>  12 <sup>th</sup> September 2017		 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Denise Radley – Corporate Director Health, Adults & Communities.		<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Ageing Well Small Grants fund 2017/18</b>		
<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Rachael Saunders, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services</b>	
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Jamie Bird – Strategic Commissioning Officer	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	A healthy and supportive community	

### REASONS FOR URGENCY

This paper should be considered for an urgent decision, in particular around the award of the small grants to organisations whose grant has been in abeyance due to rent/lease issue. It has taken some while to establish the route through the complexities of these rent/lease issues. This is a small overall amount (£3,435) and further delay could detrimentally affect the recipients of the outstanding grants.

### **Executive Summary**

Social isolation and loneliness are known to be particular problems of older age and are believed to have a negative impact on older people’s quality of life and physical and mental health and wellbeing. Older people living in Tower Hamlets are predicted to be the loneliest in all of England according to a model looking at risk factors for loneliness which quantifies the many factors that can increase the risk of loneliness in older age<sup>1</sup>.

Older people have told us that clubs and activities have an extremely positive impact on ‘not being lonely’<sup>2</sup>. Throughout the borough, there are a number of small groups, often on estates, which go some way to alleviating social isolation. The Ageing Well Small Grants fund 2017/18 aims to provide financial support to these groups.

Analysis of the equality data collected for the 2016/17 fund has flagged up what could be perceived as underrepresentation from certain groups (e.g. LGBT, BME communities and men). Attempts will be made to address these issues by using

<sup>1</sup> [Loneliness and Isolation in Older People – Factsheet \(JSNA\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> Talking About Loneliness – findings from Community Perspectives on Loneliness in Over 50s in Tower Hamlets

established networks to promote the fund to attract applications from these groups.

Due to lease issues, a decision is pending for a number of grant awards from the 2015/16 and 2016/17 Small Grants funds. As negotiations are ongoing with the organisations concerned, a decision is sought to agree to the award of eleven grants totalling £3,435.

### **Recommendations:**

The Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the process for inviting applications for the Ageing Well Small Grants fund 2017/18.
2. Note the availability of funding for the proposal.
3. Agree the process for awarding the grant funding, and subsequent monitoring arrangements.
4. Agree to delegate responsibility for approving the awards of grant to the Corporate Director Health, Adults and Community Services or the Divisional Director Integrated Commissioning.
5. Agree to the award of eleven grants, totalling £3,435, from the 2015/16 and 2016/17 Small Grants funds.

### **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 To promote independence and contribute towards a reduction in social isolation amongst older Tower Hamlets residents by providing grant funding to a range of peer support groups for older Tower Hamlets residents.

### **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 A decision could be made not to support this proposal and to allocate the budget elsewhere, or indeed take it up as a saving proposal. In this event, a number of groups who apply annually – and have told us that this is the only external funding they receive - may be unable to deliver activities to their members or, in the worst case scenario, cease operating.

### **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

#### **Background and purpose**

- 3.1 This is an annual grants fund, previously known as Small Grants for Pensioners' Groups. The specific purpose of this fund is to provide financial support to small



organisations to enable them to deliver social activities for older Tower Hamlets residents in their own neighbourhoods. This aligns with Key Theme 8 (Optimising independence and wellbeing: Reducing isolation and loneliness) of the Ageing Well Strategy, approved by Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017<sup>3</sup>.

- 3.2 In 2016/17, a total of £13,666 was awarded to 33 groups. At the Commissioners Decision Making meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016, it was requested that an annual report be produced for the 2016/17 fund. Grant recipients were requested to provide qualitative feedback and equality data to inform the report, which is attached at appendix A. This was the first time that such information had been requested for this fund.
- 3.3 The qualitative data collected indicates that grant awards are highly valued by those who receive it and, by funding or enabling social activities go some way to providing support and opportunities for social interaction. The equality data has flagged up what could be perceived as underrepresentation from certain groups (e.g. LGBT, BME communities and men). Attempts will be made to address these issues by using established networks to promote the fund to attract applications from these groups. This includes contacting:
- LinkAge Plus who have links with BME and LGBT groups
  - Positive East, who operate a dinner club for older LGBT men
  - Organisations previously in receipt of MSG funding to deliver older people's lunch club services, particularly those run by and for BME communities
  - Somali groups identified as part of recent community cohesion work

### **Review of Small Grants fund**

- 3.1 This Small Grants fund has been largely unchanged for a number of years. Ahead of the proposed 2017/18 programme it was decided to review elements of the processes and priorities in order to ensure that requirements were being met, and to give recipients the opportunity to provide their views on the fund.
- 3.2 Discussions with the Third Sector Team identified a number of requirements that are to be addressed in 2017/18:
- Details of grant funds must be recorded on GIFTS - the Council's Grant administration database;
  - A Grant Offer Letter must be produced for each of the successful recipients detailing the value of award, the activity/ies to be delivered and monitoring requirements;
  - Grant recipients must be made aware of, and agree to, the Council's standard terms and conditions of grant<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.3 In June 2017, a letter was sent to recipients of a 2016/17 award requesting feedback on the Small Grants process with a view to informing the 2017/18 fund. An officer

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<sup>3</sup> [Cabinet decisions 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 – Item 5.1 Ageing Well Strategy](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Tower Hamlets standard terms and conditions of grant agreement](#)

from the Ageing Well Team also met several of the groups throughout July 2017 to discuss the programme. Amongst the issues raised were:

- Importance of keeping the application process simple;
- Be clearer around why we are requesting equalities information, and explain some of the terms used;
- Provide examples of the types of expenditure and activities that could be funded (e.g. exercise classes);
- Costs of coach hire has increased, and is quite often higher than the maximum grant award;
- This is the only funding received by the group, and is considered important as well as being welcomed.

### **2017/18 budget and advertising**

- 3.4 This year, £25,000 will be available for allocation to these small community groups. This excludes the £3,435 recommended for outstanding 2015/16 and 2016/17 awards.
- 3.5 In recent years we have been in a position to award grants to all eligible applicants and the fund has always been underspent. The maximum grant award of £500 has remained the same for over ten years, despite the fact that costs have increased. To address this, it is proposed to increase the maximum grant award to £600.
- 3.4 In order to help meet the requirement to record all Council grants on GIFTs, the application process will be available online. This will incorporate the fields contained in the proposed application form (appendix B) and will use a similar process to that used for recent Mainstream Grants programmes. It is proposed to explore delivering an application workshop to assist with online applications.
- 3.5 During the development of the Ageing Well Strategy, older people told us that the internet is not necessarily the best way to access (or provide) information, so we will still be accepting hard copy application forms. An officer will then input the data onto GIFTs.
- 3.6 The 33 groups who received a Small Grant in 2016/17 will automatically be sent application forms inviting them to apply for this year's programme.
- 3.7 In 2016/17 an advert was placed in East End Advertiser at a cost of £358. This cost was met from the Small Grants budget. However, it did not generate a great deal of interest so it is proposed to not place an advert this year, thus maximising the amount of grant funding available. Instead officers will attempt to exploit networks to promote the grant fund, including through RSLs, Sheltered Housing Schemes and LinkAge Plus. The fund will be advertised on the Council's website.

### **Evaluation and Allocation**

- 3.8 Applications will be assessed by an officer in line with the eligibility criteria included on the application forms. This will include a requirement for those groups operating

from Council-owned buildings to have a formal written rental agreement in place at the time that recommendations are formulated.

3.9 Small Grants awards fall into the following four broad categories, listed in order of priority:

- a) Rent (including room hire)
- b) Running costs (including utilities bills, insurance etc.)
- c) Small equipment (e.g. bingo machines, kitchen equipment, materials)
- d) Social activities (including day-trips, parties, or facilitator/tutor costs)

3.10 To be able to deal with all funding requests in a fair and equitable way:

- a) Budget permitting, all requests for rent and running costs will be met up to the maximum £600 grant award per organisation
- b) Groups requesting assistance with small equipment/materials and social activities are allocated awards based on the number of beneficiaries identified in the group's application, using the following guidelines:

Number of beneficiaries	Maximum award
Up to 19	£400
20 to 29	£450
30 to 39	£500
40 to 70	£550
70 and above	£600

3.11 After assessing the applications, a report will be produced with award recommendations, with a view to obtaining final approval by the Corporate Director Health Adults and Community Services or Divisional Director for Integrated Commissioning. The following indicative timetable shows the various stages.

	STAGES	DATE
1	Send forms to existing recipients	By end September 2017
2	Send application forms to new groups	by end October 2017
3	Closing date for applications	by mid-November 2017
4	Assessment of applications	late November 2017
5	Write report with recommendations	by end November 2017
6	Final approval	by mid-December 2017
7	Write to all applicants on outcomes	by end December 2017
8	Payments processed	January 2018

### Monitoring requirements

3.12 Grant recipients will be required to:

- Submit evidence (e.g. receipts) that the grant has been spent as outlined in their application
- Provide equalities information for beneficiaries

- Submit qualitative feedback to help the Council determine the impact that the grant fund has had on recipients

These requirements will be included on the Grant Offer Letter. An officer will check that organisations have provided the required information. Any organisation not providing this will not be considered for any future Small Grant award and measures may be taken to recover any funds that have not been spent, or have been spent inappropriately.

- 3.13 An annual report will be produced for the 2017/18 Ageing Well Small Grants fund.

### **Pending 2015/16 and 2016/17 awards**

- 3.14 At the Commissioners Decision Making in Public meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Commissioners agreed to delegate responsibility for agreeing awards for the Small Grants 2016/17 fund to the Director of Adults' Services (now Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community). A number of applicants were identified as delivering services from Council owned buildings and a decision was made to defer a decision on these until a paper on the community buildings review had been considered by Cabinet. A decision on these remains outstanding, as does a decision related to several grant awards from the 2015/16 for which a decision was deferred for the same reason.
- 3.15 Given that negotiations are ongoing with the organisations involved, it is recommended to award the following eleven grants totalling £3,435 as a contribution towards social events or small equipment purchases:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Small Grants Fund</b>	<b>Recommended Grant Award</b>
Barley Mow Bingo Club	2016/17	£285
Bentworth Friendship Club	2016/17	£300
Birchfield OAP's Club	2016/17	£400
Collingwood TRA Friendship Club	2016/17	£250
Cranbrook Over 50's Club	2016/17	£300
Locksley TRA	2016/17	£350
Will Crooks TRA	2016/17	£450
Barley Mow Veterans Club	2015/16	£200
Collingwood TRA Friendship Club	2015/16	£250
Cranbrook Over 50's Club	2015/16	£300
Will Crooks TRA	2015/16	£350
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£3,435</b>

## **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 The total annual budget available for Small Grants awarded in 2017/18 is £31,900. Within this amount a provision for potential prior year payments of up to £4,035 has

been made available, in addition to the estimated £25,000 identified for allocation to the small community groups. Marketing of this grant will be through existing Council networks and on-line advertisement on the Council's website which will maximise the fund available for distribution to the organisations and hopefully increase exposure to relevant organisations. This funding has not been fully utilised for the past 3 years.

For 2017-18 the amount of grant awarded is still dependent on the number of registered members for that organisation but priority has been given to the four categories of the claim. There is sufficient funding available to meet the number of prior year claims at the highest level of award and still provide for an increase in the number of organisations eligible to claim. All grants awarded will be within the available 2017-18 budget.

## **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1. The purpose of the Ageing Well Small Grants fund is consistent with the Council's duties under sections 1 through to 7 of the Care Act 2014 ('the 2014 Act'). Section 1 of the Act places a general duty on the Council when exercising its functions, to promote an individual's well-being relating to their physical and mental health, emotional well-being and personal dignity. Further, there is a general duty to prevent needs for care and support from developing. There is a duty under section 6 for the Council to co-operate generally with those it considers appropriate who are engaged in its area relating to adults with needs for care and support. Section 8 provides that those eligible needs may be met in a number of ways, including care and support at home or in the community, and by providing the service itself, arranging another provider to provide the service, or direct payments.
- 5.2. When determining the process for approving grants funding, regard must be given to the public sector equalities duty to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010. The duty is set out at Section 149 of the 2010 Act. It requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination (both direct and indirect discrimination), harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.
- 5.3. The Council has the power under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to "do anything that individuals generally may do" and that extends to doing things "for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area". This power is referred to as the general power of competence and includes the award of grants. The scheme as set down seems to be consistent with the Council's statutory powers.
- 5.4. However, the Council is obliged to allow fair and open access to all its resources. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the application procedure and the award of grants are based upon evaluation criteria that are in themselves open and transparent and non-discriminatory in nature. However, it is notable from the report that reference is made to under – representation for certain groups. Therefore, the Council must also be mindful of the need to address any apparent inequality and advance equality of opportunity in accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act

2010 and in particular where the users of such groups are persons with a protected characteristic.

- 5.5. It is also notable therefore that following the completion of the grants process the Council should perform an equality assessment in respect of all the recipients of the grants and consider whether further action is required in order to ensure that the Council is compliant with its section 149 duty.
- 5.6. The Council is obliged, to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness” as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999. Therefore, the Council must also make provision within the arrangements to monitor the use of the grants to ensure that the anticipated benefits from the use of the money are achieved by the grant recipient. It therefore follows that the grant should only be given upon agreement of an appropriately drafted agreement which allows the Council a sufficient and proportionate level of monitoring of the use of the grant.
- 5.7. It should be noted that where the Council intends to allow the use of its premises for a monetary value which is less than the open market rent the difference between the actual rent charged and the open market rent should be considered to be a grant under the law.
- 5.8. Whilst the Directions under which the Commissioners made the original decision have been fulfilled and therefore are no longer binding on the Council, the decision is still binding on the Council at this stage. However, when the Directions were agreed to be completed with the Secretary Of State that part of the Council’s functions relating to grants became part of the Executive once more. Therefore, the Executive has the discretion to make a new decision in respect of the payment of these grants although it does not necessarily have to.
- 5.9. It should be noted that the payment of the grants cannot be made unless a new decision so to do is made. This is because the delegated authority provided by the Commissioners was subject to agreeing terms for the use of the buildings.
- 5.10. Whilst it may be prudent and in the best interests of all to make the payment of these grants due to the long outstanding nature of the grant funds and the potential effect that it may have on service users, it should be noted that best practice dictates that all Council buildings should be subject to some form of appropriate user agreement.

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 This grant fund supports the following community plan theme: **A healthy and supportive community.**
- 6.2 Small groups such as these contribute to a safe and supportive community by promoting peer support and volunteering, and ensuring that services are safe to use for all service users, as well as providing opportunities for peer led advice around healthy living, exercise activities and health promotion.

- 6.3 As can be demonstrated from the attached annual report for the 2016/17 programme, this fund enables the needs of a wide range of clients - including those with disabilities, long term conditions and from diverse faith and ethnic communities - to be catered for and included.
- 6.4 Due regard continues to be given to encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low through volunteering, and engagement in shaping services and decisions that affect their own lives, such as involvement in user groups.

## **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 By prioritising funding for rent and other running costs, these Small Grants can potentially safeguard the existence of groups that provide our older residents with opportunities to socialise and both provide and receive support from peers, reducing isolation and increasing independence.
- 7.2 Where a grant is used as a contribution towards social activities, the level of funding is determined by the number of beneficiaries identified in the groups' application. This ensures that the available budget is tiered to reach a larger number of beneficiaries.
- 7.3 Applicants who receive other funding from the Council (e.g. Mainstream Grant funding to operate a Lunch Club) will not be eligible to receive a Small Grant, thus reducing the risk of duplication in funding.
- 7.4 Loneliness has a negative impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing. A range of personal circumstances such as poor health, living alone and lack of support network are factors contributing to feelings of loneliness. For such a small outlay this programme will contribute to preventing longer term effects.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 There are no immediate sustainability or environmental issues to consider. The prospective recipients, as organisations within the borough, would be required to comply with all national and local legislation regarding energy conservation, recycling etc. As services will be provided locally, most of their staff/volunteers would also be local, thereby reducing commuting.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 These are small one-off payments for which invoices and evidence are to be provided and monitored.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no immediate Crime and Disorder reduction implications.

## **11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no immediate Safeguarding implications.

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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

- None

#### **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Annual Report for 2016/17 Small Grants programme
- Appendix B – DRAFT 2017/18 Ageing Well Small Grants application form

#### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

- None

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

- N/A



## **Small Grants for Pensioners' Groups 2016/17 – Annual Report**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Social isolation and loneliness are known to be particular problems of older age and have a negative impact on older people's quality of life and physical and mental health and wellbeing. Older people living in Tower Hamlets are predicted to be the loneliest in all of England according to a model looking at risk factors for loneliness which quantifies the many factors that can increase the risk of loneliness in older age<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2 Throughout the borough there are a number of very small groups, often on housing estates, which go some way to alleviating social isolation and reducing loneliness amongst our older residents. In 2016/17 The Adults' Services Directorate (now known as the Health, Adults and Community Services Directorate) ran its annual Small Grants for Pensioners' Groups fund to provide financial support to these groups.
- 1.3 **33 groups were awarded a Small Grant of between £300 and £500 in 2016/17, totalling £13,665.90.**
- 1.4 As well as evidencing how the grant was used, these groups were also asked to provide details of how many people benefitted from its award and feedback on what difference receiving the grant has made. They were also provided with blank equality forms to be completed anonymously by individual users to give the Council a better understanding of who the beneficiaries are.
- 1.5 The data captured from these completed forms, as well as initial application forms, have enabled us to produce this report which presents:
  - How grants were used
  - Who the beneficiaries were
  - The feedback received

### **2. How grants were used**

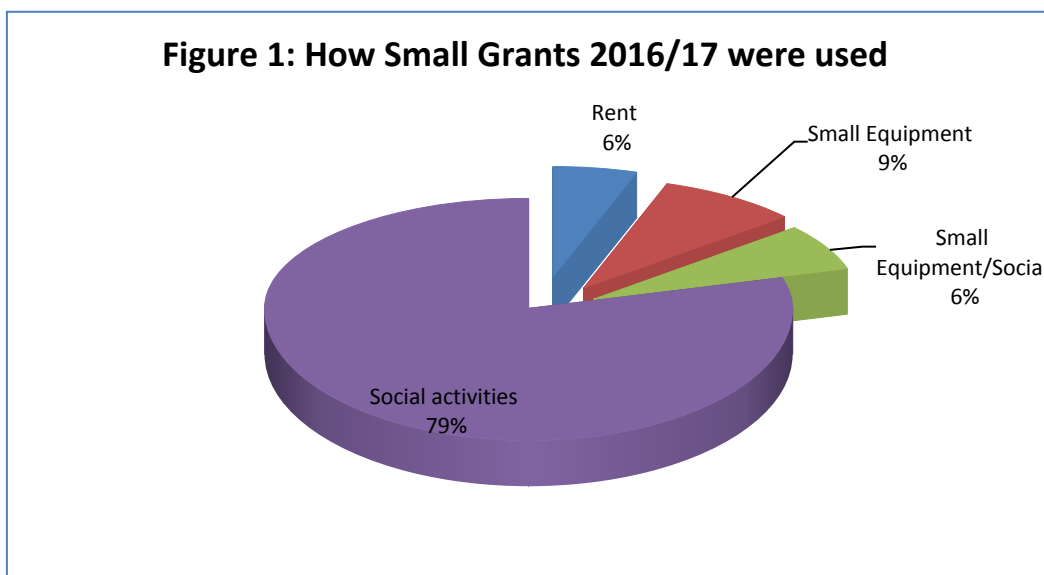
- 2.1 Awards fell into the following four broad categories:
  - Rent (including room hire)
  - Running costs (including utilities bills, insurance etc.)
  - Small equipment (e.g. bingo machines, sewing machines, craft materials)
  - Social Activities (e.g. parties, day trips, includes facilitator costs)

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<sup>1</sup> [Loneliness and Isolation in Older People – Factsheet \(JSNA\)](#)

## 2.2 Of the 33 grants awarded in 2016/17:

- Two were as a contribution towards rent
- Three were used solely to purchase small equipment or materials
- Two were used to purchase equipment/materials and towards social activities (including gardening equipment, and items for a photography exhibition<sup>2</sup> which was viewed by 79 local people)
- 26 were towards social activities (including celebrations for occasions such as Christmas and Eid, and day trips)
- None was used towards running costs



## 3. Who the beneficiaries were

3.1 Over 1,220 older Tower Hamlets residents benefited from the Small Grants 2016/17 fund. Based on over 770 completed equality forms, the breakdown is as follows:

### Age

3.2 The overwhelming majority of beneficiaries were over 65 (70%). 20% were 55-64, the upper level of which would include some individuals who have reached state pension age. Although the Borough's over-65 population (16,700<sup>3</sup>) is less than those aged 50-64 (24,400<sup>4</sup>) the higher percentage of over 65's benefitting from a grant reflects the fact that is predominantly 'pensioners' groups' who have applied.

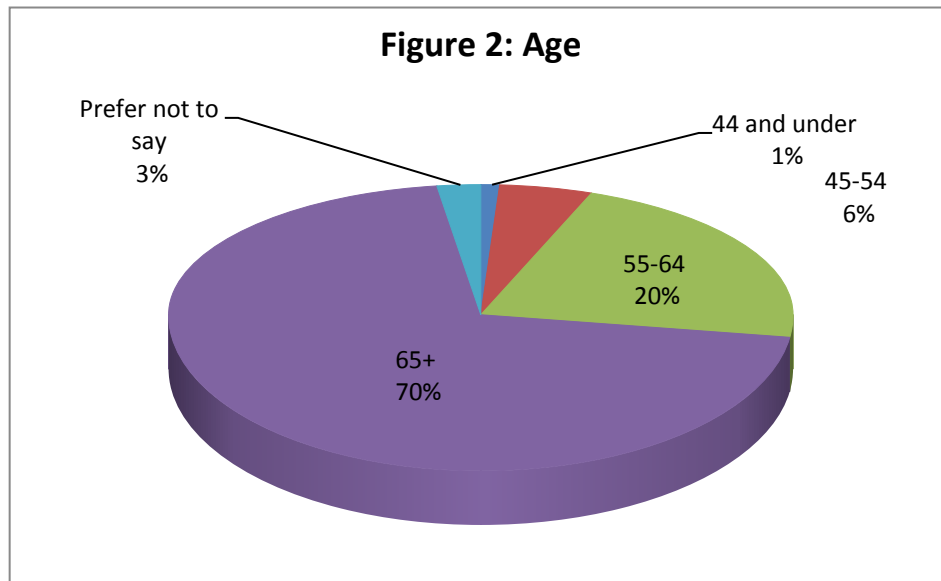
3.3 Several people under 50 also returned forms, although there were typically no more than two younger people per group. Although the fund is for older people (aged 50+) it is recognised that these younger adults would have provided support and companionship to other older

<sup>2</sup> [Poplar Baths and Crisp Street Market – Past, Present and Future](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Older People in Tower Hamlets – JSNA 2016](#)

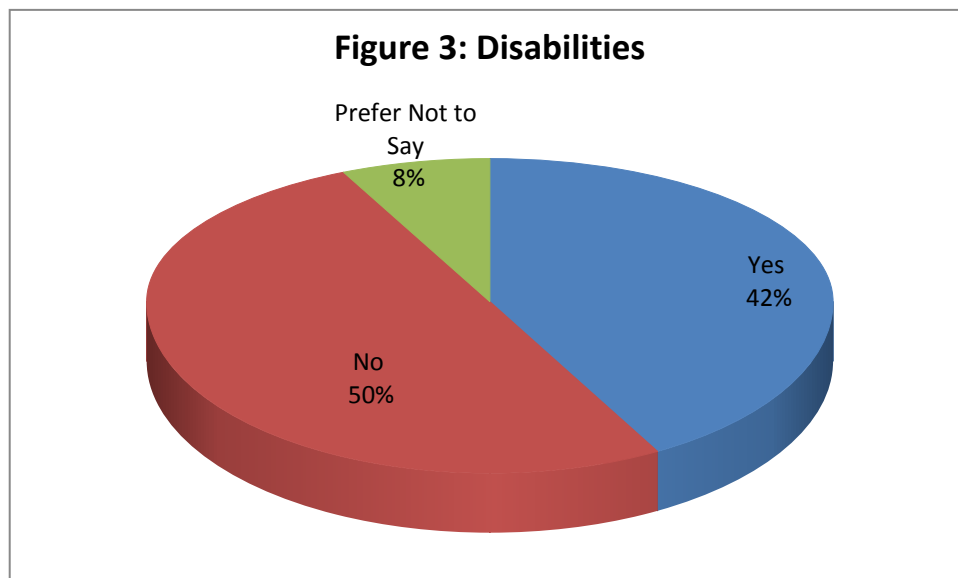
<sup>4</sup> [ONS mid-year population estimates 2016](#)

members of the group, contributing to a reduction in loneliness and isolation. It could also be the case that these were informal carers.



### Disabilities

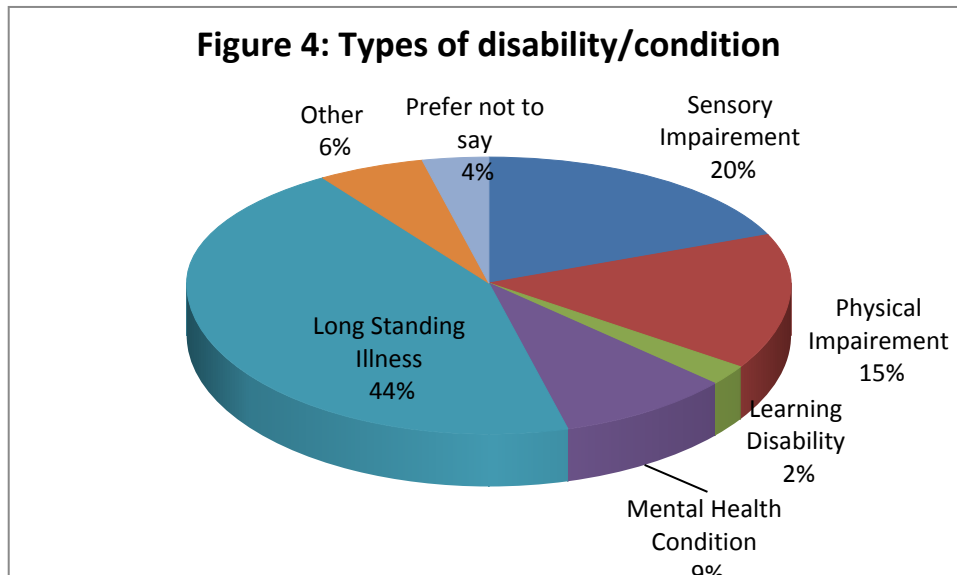
- 3.4 42% of beneficiaries identified as having a disability. 50% said that they were not disabled, although some of these did state that they had a long standing illness (see 3.5). It is known that in Tower Hamlets many residents age earlier than expected, developing long term conditions and disability by their mid-50s<sup>5</sup> and that poor health, immobility, cognitive impairment and sensory impairment were all found to be significantly associated with loneliness<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>5</sup> [Older People in Tower Hamlets – JSNA 2016](#)

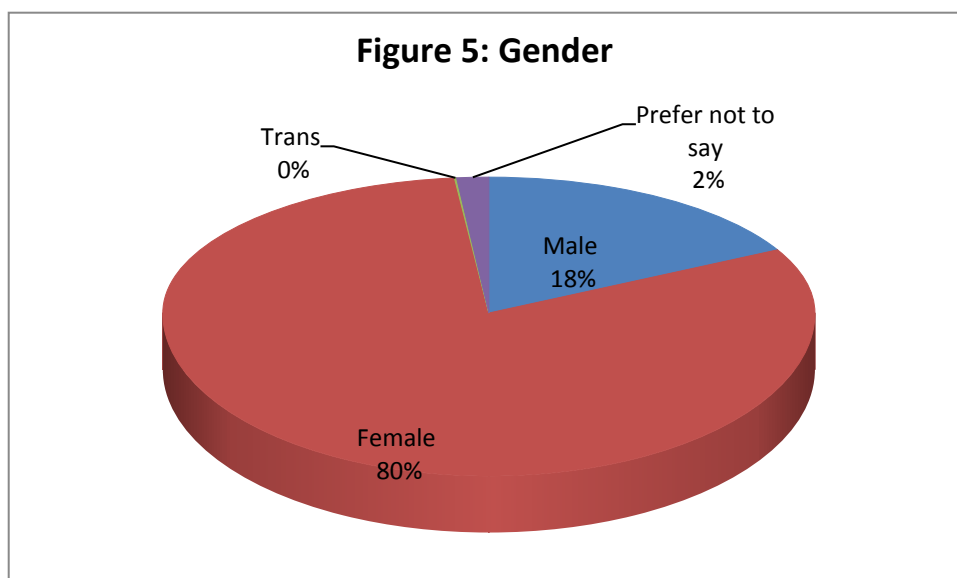
<sup>6</sup> [Loneliness and Isolation in Older People – JSNA 2016](#)

3.5 Of those who identified as having a disability, 44% stated that they had a long standing illness or long term condition. 20% reported having a sensory impairment, 15% had a physical disability or impairment and 9% identified as having a mental health condition. Many identified as having more than one type of disability/condition.



**Gender**

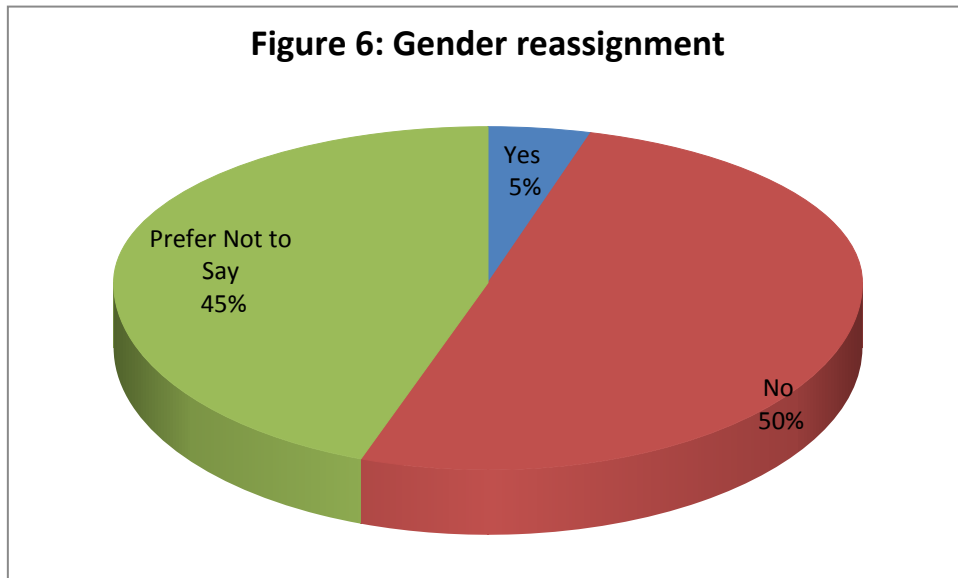
3.6 Significantly more women (80%) than men (18%) benefitted from the award of a Small Grant. The gender split in Tower Hamlets (all ages) is 52.2% male and 47.8% female. However, a greater number of females aged 65+ are predicted to live alone (3,972) than males (1,976)<sup>7</sup>.



<sup>7</sup> [Older People in Tower Hamlets – JSNA 2016](#)

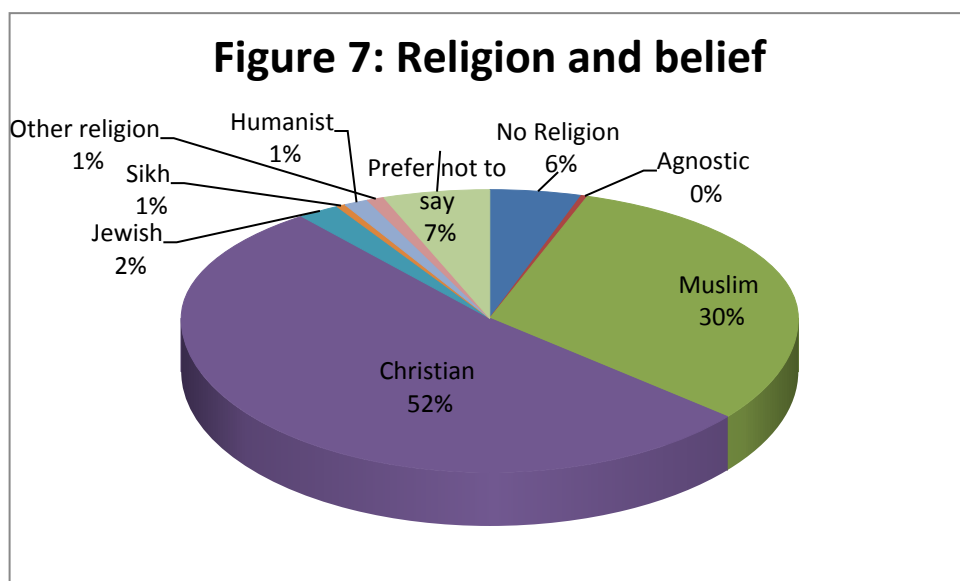
## Gender Reassignment

- 3.7 Whilst there is limited data regarding this protected characteristic in Tower Hamlets, a surprisingly high number of beneficiaries identified as having gender reassignment (5%). More information on equalities will be provided to recipients in future years, including explanations of some of the terms, so as to avoid potential confusion when completing forms.



## Religion and belief

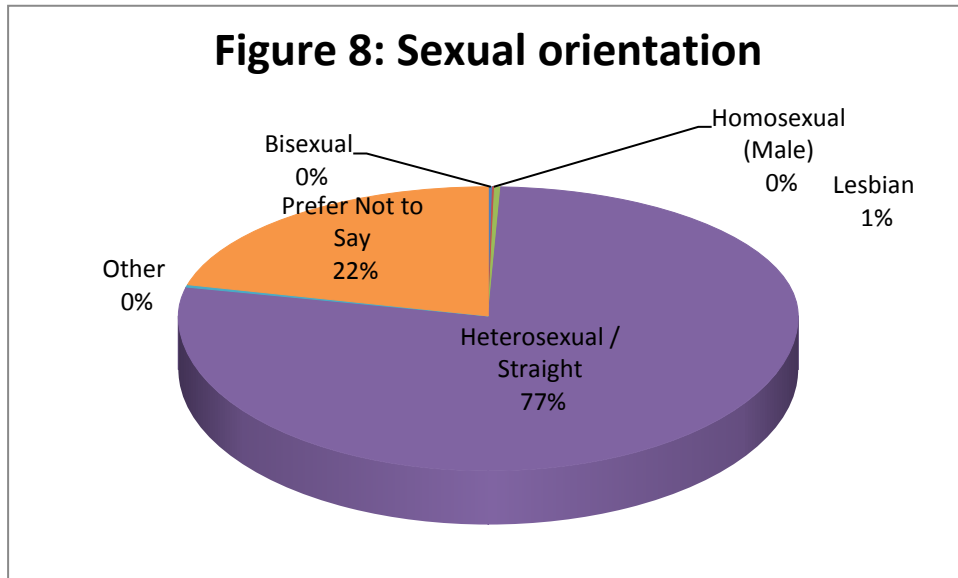
- 3.8 Over half of beneficiaries identified as being Christian (52%), with Islam being the second largest represented faith (30%). At the time of the 2011 Census, 38 per cent of residents (all ages) said they were Muslim and 30 per cent Christian<sup>8</sup>, although this is likely to be a different picture for older people based on what we know about ethnicity (see 3.10).



<sup>8</sup> [Census 2011 – Religion in Tower Hamlets](#)

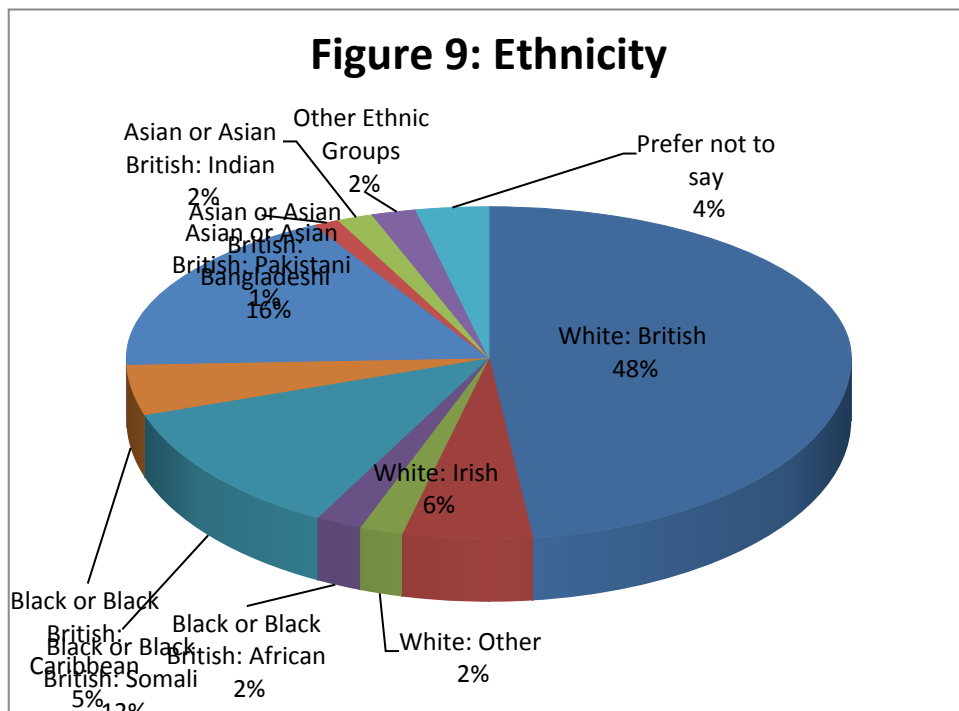
## Sexual Orientation

- 3.9 77% of beneficiaries identified as being heterosexual/straight, whilst those identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual was in single figures. Limited data is available for this protected characteristic in Tower Hamlets as it was not a specific category in the last census.



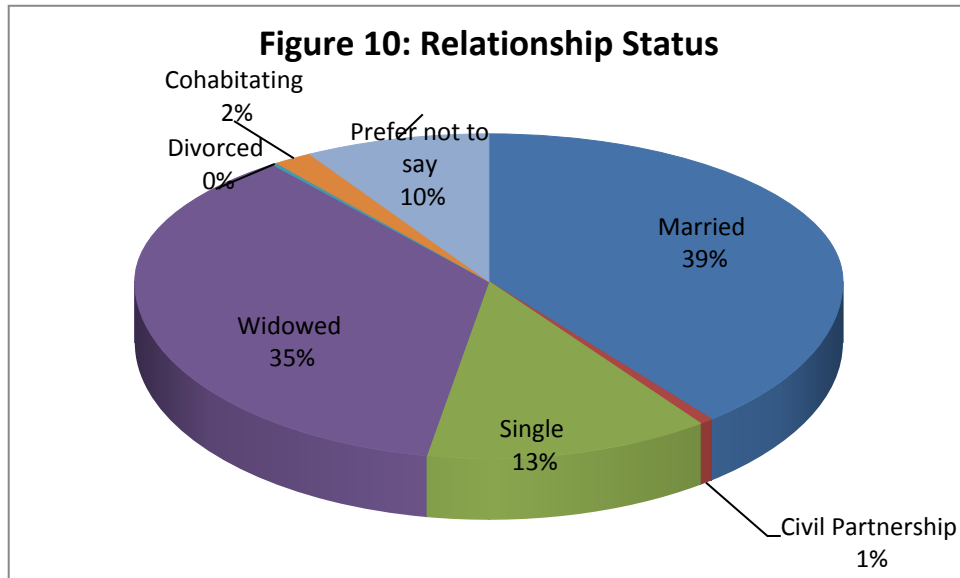
## Ethnicity

- 3.10 Almost half of beneficiaries were white: British (48%), with 16% identifying as Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi. The next largest groups were Black or Black British: Somali (12%), White: Irish (6%) and Black Caribbean (5%). In Tower Hamlets, nearly two thirds of those aged 65+ are white and 25.3% Asian or Asian British.



## Relationship Status

3.11 Just under half (46%) of beneficiaries reported being either widowed (35%), single (13%) or divorced (0.2%) with 39% being married. Limited data is available for this protected characteristic in Tower Hamlets.



## 4. Feedback received

4.1 Organisations awarded a grant in 2016/17 were asked to provide some qualitative feedback to help us understand whether the fund was achieving its objective to contribute towards a reduction in social isolation for older people. A selection of the comments received is shown on the following page. It is clear that the grant awards are valued and, by funding or enabling social activities, go some way to providing support and opportunities for social interaction.

4.2 The majority of groups who were awarded funding rely on volunteers to keep them operating and, more often than not, the leader of the group is an older person themselves. These tireless individuals have made a huge contribution within their local communities which, as can be seen from the equalities data, have helped and supported a large and diverse group of older people across the borough. They deserve an enormous amount of credit.

*We were able to organise coach trips in conjunction with local Sheltered Housing schemes... thus reducing their isolation and brightening their outlook*

*The grant provided an opportunity for a social event that would not usually have taken place. It also makes the members feel valued and introduces people to the sport of bowls*

*This has enabled us to organise regular trips, and has led to a great friendship amongst all of us*

*The grant was used towards a party to celebrate International Women's Day, giving the opportunity to mark the achievements of local women*

*This grant has reduced older people's isolation by helping to provide social activities and therefore it has given people the chance to meet new friends and maintain social networks*

*The grant award has been a great help to our community*

*It provides an opportunity for the elderly to socialise and interact with each other. It is therapeutic and provides companionship. Bingo keeps them mentally alert and provides excitement when they win*

*The Eid party was able to bring the local community together*

*It has enabled older men in Tower Hamlets to be able to meet every week, not only to socialise but to get involved in a lot of projects in our community"*

*These are mainly single elderly people who benefit from the social support of their peers and make acquaintances within the group. Many go on to support each other in their daily lives as neighbours and friends.*

*We want to encourage residents to spend more time outside... enhance their lives by reducing their isolation... this can be achieved through our gardening project*

*We are aware that many older people spend Christmas alone, so we feel that at least they get to have one day that is like Christmas.*

*The grant provided the opportunity to bring in a skilled tutor to teach group members new techniques, which can be passed on... we had such a laugh*

*The difference was knowing the pensioners had a dinner (and a hamper), as a lot of them are on their own at Christmas time and don't bother to cook themselves a Christmas dinner*

*This enabled us to bring the community together to celebrate Christmas. Some of our old people have no family and it is nice to see them getting out and mixing with people*



## London Borough of Tower Hamlets Health, Adults and Community Services Directorate Ageing Well Small Grants (2017/18) Application Form

Completed forms should be returned by no later than TBC to:

Jamie Bird – Strategic Commissioning Officer  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Mulberry Place Town Hall  
5 Clove Crescent  
London E14 2BG  
[jamie.bird@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.bird@towerhamlets.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0207 364 2304

We aim to acknowledge receipt of your completed application form. If you have sent a completed form and have not received an acknowledgement within a reasonable timeframe please contact us (before the deadline above). It is recommended that, where possible, you retain a copy of your completed application form for your own records.

Should you have queries related to the completion of this form, please contact Jamie Bird using the details above

### Eligibility Criteria

- The organisation/project must be engaged in social activities for the benefit of older people who reside in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- The organisation/project must have its own current account or instruct an organisation (such as a Housing Association or landlord) to manage the handling of the grant on its behalf. Grant payments cannot be made to an individual or to a personal bank account, or to a savings account.
- Grants will not be given to organisations/projects already in receipt of funding from the Council for the purposes for which financial assistance is sought.
- Where an organisation/project delivers services from premises owned by the Council, a formal written lease or rental agreement with the Council must be in place at the time that recommendations are formulated.
- Organisations who received a Small Grant in 2106/17 must have provided satisfactory evidence (e.g. receipts) that the grant was used for the purposes outlined in their application (these would have been acknowledged).
- The organisation/project should satisfy the Council that it operates fair and equal practices in employment, and in the provision of services.
- The organisation must be able to comply with the following monitoring requirements:
  - To submit evidence that the grant has been used for the agreed purposes
  - To provide feedback on how the grant has benefitted the group
  - To collect and provide equality information for beneficiaries

Where appropriate, forms will be provided to enable this information to be collected and returned.

**1. Organisation details:**

**a) Organisation name:**

**b) Address:**

**c) Postcode:**

**d) Does your organisation have a constitution or governing document?:**  
(please tick one box)

**Yes - please enclose a copy with your application**

**No - briefly describe its main aim in the space below:**

**e) When was your organisation/project formed or constituted:**

**f) Legal status (e.g. registered charity, unregistered organisation):**

**g) Charity/company number (if applicable):**

**h) How many registered members does your group have?:**

**i) Is your organisation in receipt of LBTH financial support? (e.g: other grant funding, rent subsidy)**

## 2. Contact Details:

a) **Prefix** (e.g. Mr/Mrs/Miss):

b) **First name:**

c) **Surname**

d) **Job title** (Position within organisation):

e) **Telephone no.:**

f) **email address:**

g) **address** (to be used for correspondence)

## 3. Project proposal

a) **Project short description:**

Please provide brief details (no more than 100 words) of how you plan to spend the grant. **Please include how many older Tower Hamlets residents (aged 55+) you anticipate will benefit from your proposal** and, if known, any relevant locations and dates:

b) **Grant value:**

How much are you requesting? **Please note that the maximum grant available is £600.**

#### 4. Payment method

**IMPORTANT:** Payment cannot be made to an individual or personal bank account, or a savings account.

**a) Bank account name:**

*This could be the name of your group (e.g. Bow Pensioners) not the name of your bank (e.g. Santander)*

**Bank account number:**

**Bank sort code:**

**Should you require payment by cheque, who should this be made payable to:**

**IMPORTANT:** If any of the bank details provided above have changed since you last applied (including if any related postal address has changed), please provide the old details below:

**Old bank account name:**

**Old bank account number:**

**Old bank sort code:**

**Old address:**

#### 5. Declaration:

**I declare that the information in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge (if you have an organisational stamp please use it).**

Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

<b>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub Committee</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2017	
<b>Report of:</b> Zena Cooke, Corporate Director Resources	Unrestricted
<b>ESF Community Employment Programme – organisations based in Council buildings</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Steve Hill - Head of Benefits Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	All

### REASONS FOR URGENCY

This report is classified as urgent for Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee due to the proposed ESF Community Employment Programme scheme launch in October 2017 and the need to include the requirement for appropriate property agreements as part of the prospectus terms and eligibility requirements for this fund, at the outset of the programme.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is match-funding the European Social Fund (ESF) Community Employment Grants Programme 2016-19 which is being administered by the Greater London Authority (GLA), although day-to-day management and administration of the programme will be undertaken by London Councils. Due to contractual issues there has been a delay in launching the programme, although the launch is expected to take place in October 2017 with the programme now concluding in March 2020.

Commissioners stated that organisations receiving Council grant funding and are based in or using a Council building, must have an appropriate property agreement in place before funds can be released to them. This report seeks clarity on whether this should also be the case for the ESF Community Employment Programme.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub Committee are recommended to:

1. Agree that organisations funded through the ESF Community Employment Programme and are based in or using a Council building must have an appropriate property agreement in place before payments can be released to them, as is the case with all new grant programmes going forward.

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.2 A decision is required so it can be included as part of the prospectus and eligibility requirements for this fund. In addition so organisations are aware, before they apply that if they are based in or using a Council building that they must have an appropriate property agreement in place before funding can be released to them.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub Committee could request further information or alter the recommendations.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 At the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 Commissioners Decision Making Meeting in Public, Commissioners agreed to match-fund the European Social Fund (ESF) Community Employment Grants Programme 2016-19. London's ESF Programme is administered by the Greater London Authority (GLA). However, the day-to-day management and administration of the programme will be undertaken by London Councils. Due to delays in finalising the contractual agreement between the GLA and London Councils, the programme is due to be launched in October 2017 and will now conclude in 2020.
- 3.2 The new programme falls within Investment Priority 1.4 to address the root causes of poverty which create barriers to work so more people move closer to or into employment. It is intended that there will be 3 bidding rounds: one during each year of the programme. Organisations will be able to apply for a grant of up to £20,000 during each bidding round.
- 3.3 ESF money in London is generally targeted at the economically inactive and those who are long term unemployed, particularly groups facing multiple barriers to entering the labour market and have particularly low levels of employment, including, people with long term health conditions and disabilities, women, BAME groups, older people, lone parents and disadvantaged families or workless households.
- 3.4 Rather than simply treating the symptoms, the new ESF programme will help to address the root causes of poverty that are barriers to work and so help more people move closer or into employment. The nature of and issues faced by the most disadvantaged means that barriers to work have to be tackled in a holistic and integrated way.
- 3.5 Outreach activities will be important to reach many in the target group. The programme will implement integrated packages of support that address gaps in provision to disadvantaged groups and reach those who are not currently receiving support. The aim of this priority is to help tackle inactivity, particularly by helping disadvantaged groups overcome barriers, improve their employability and move towards employment.
- 3.6 The barriers faced by the target group may include:
- caring responsibilities

- debt and money management
- digital exclusion
- drug and alcohol dependency
- educational attainment (particularly lack of basic literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages skills)
- family, parenting and relationship problems
- health problems (including mental health)
- gangs
- homelessness
- learning and or physical disabilities
- life skills
- offending

3.7 An indicative range of activities could include one or more of the following being provided to support individual beneficiaries.

- basic skills and ESOL training;
- money management and advice and financial literacy programmes in order to address deep seated debt issues which make moving from benefit into work more challenging;
- digital and internet literacy courses to aid job searching, access to benefits and progress in work
- first contact engagement activities (for example, arrangement events in places people feel comfortable to visit)
- local networks and groups to support people to get a job or access learning to provide
- people providing a safe environment and peer support
- softer skills development
- volunteering, which is generally recognised in general terms as a good way to re-engage those furthest from the labour market

3.8 The council's financial commitment will be £225,000 per year over 3 years. This funding attracts an equal contribution from the European Social Fund thus making a total scheme budget of £1.350m over the 3-year programme period.

3.9 At the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015 Commissioners Decision Making Meeting in Public, Commissioners stated that:

*"...Organisations based in Council awarded properties be advised that they need to have entered into an appropriate property agreement for their use and occupation of land and buildings, which covered the entire period of grant award.."*

3.10 It was clarified by Commissioners that this included both Council buildings that organisations were based in as well as those that were being used as outreach sites by the organisation. In addition to this an appropriate property agreement includes a lease, license or appropriate booking form for the duration of the property being in use and what within the property is being shared. Moving forward, this will be a criteria for all new grant streams that are developed.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations within this report.

#### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The report recommends that organisations funded through the ESF Community Employment Programme and are based in or using a Council building must have an appropriate property agreement in place before payments can be released to them. This will comply with the Commissioners Decision dated 29 July 2015 referred to in the report. In addition, it will also assist Council in streamlining its processes and policy adopted in respect of terms of use of its buildings ensuring fairness and transparency.
- 5.2 The Council's powers in relation to property disposal is set out in legislation. Having regard to the type of properties held by the council for the purpose of community use, Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 ('LGA') and Section 32 Housing Act 1985 ('HA') are most relevant. The HA applies to land held under the Housing Revenue Account.
- 5.3 The LGA provides that the Council may dispose of land, but that where it does so, it must dispose of real property (other than by way of a lease of under 7 years) for a consideration not less than the best that can reasonably be obtained, failing which it requires the consent of the Secretary of State before disposing. The General Consent Order 2003 provides consent for particular circumstances, such that specific consent is not required for the disposal of any interest in land which the Council considers will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area, subject to the condition that the undervalue does not exceed £2,000,000 (two million pounds).
- 5.4 The HA applies whenever a local authority disposes of land held by it for housing purposes; Section 32 states that a local authority may not dispose of any land ( including by lease) held by them without the consent of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has issued The General Housing Consents 2013 which permit the disposal of land held for housing purposes without the need to obtain express consent in certain circumstances, including disposal of land for a consideration equal to its market value, or where the land is 'vacant' ( as defined in the Order).
- 5.5 In addition to powers to grant leases, the Council also has power to enter into licences or ad hoc use arrangements, either under legislation relating to specific functions ( for example powers in relation to recreation), or under broader powers, including the general power of competence under Section 1 Localism Act 2011.
- 5.6 The Council's policy is that the rent to be applied for use of Council community buildings is the open market rent, which is to be determined having regard to the D1 planning use. Rent discount may apply in certain circumstances and will be linked to the type of organisation seeking to lease the building, and the



service provided by them. Some organisations may be eligible for grant funding and will be responsible for making such application.

- 5.7 The LGA and HA specifically permit a disposal at less than best consideration/market value as outlined above. Whilst the Directions under which the Commissioners made the original decision have been fulfilled and therefore are no longer binding on the Council, the decision itself is still binding on the Council at this stage. However, when the Directions were agreed to be completed with the Secretary Of State that part of the Council's functions relating to grants became part of the Executive once more. Therefore, the Executive has the discretion to make a new decision in respect of the use of its buildings in respect of some of all of the buildings to be used by grant funded organisations.
- 5.8 It should be noted that where the Council intends to allow the use of its premises for a monetary value which is less than the open market rent the difference between the actual rent charged and the open market rent should be considered to be a grant under the law.
- 5.9 For the purposes of the ESF match funding the Council should consider whether such a grant is part of the Council's overall commitment to match fund the grant.
- 5.10 The Council has the power under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to "do anything that individuals generally may do" and that extends to doing things "for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area". This power is referred to as the general power of competence and includes the award of grants. In as far as the use of the building may be a grant as detailed above, the general power of competence allows the Council to do this.
- 5.11 However, the Council is obliged to allow fair and open access to all its resources. It is therefore necessary to ensure that where the Council intends to make buildings available (and in particular where such availability is determined to be not part of the overall match fund commitment) that there is a fair and open process applied to the determination of the allocation of buildings to organisations very much like the application of a cash award procedure.
- 5.12 The body of the report details how such organisations may use the buildings. In particular there appears to be a business context around some of the services. It therefore, may be considered that the provision of a building at an under value constitutes state aid as it may give the organisation an advantage in the market place. However, the de minimis block exemption may apply. The grant will not constitute state aid where the overall value of the grant does not exceed 200,000 Euros cumulatively over a 3 year period. However, the calculation should also include any monetary grant received from the Council over the same period.

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1. The contribution of VCS Organisations helping to deliver One Tower Hamlets objectives and priorities are explicitly recognised and articulated within the Council's emerging VCS Strategy.
- 6.2 VCS Organisations play a key role in delivering services that address inequality, improve cohesion and increase community leadership. the deliveries of these services are real examples of 'One Tower Hamlets' in practice.
- 6.3 The opportunities offered through the Tower Hamlets ESF Community Grants Programme will play a key role in delivering the aims of One Tower Hamlets.

## **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The ESF Community Grants Programme is co-financed by 50% of funding from the European Social Fund and 50% from the LBTH.
- 7.2 90% of the total scheme budget will be available to applicant organisations with only 10% being used to cover Programme Management costs.
- 7.3 There will be a total of 3 bidding rounds – one during each year of the programme. Organisations will be able to apply for up to £20,000 within each bidding round.
- 7.4 The level of awards to organisations will depend on the quality of their individual applications as well as the overall demand for grants during each bidding round. Additionally, the application appraisal process will take into consideration the proposed levels of outputs and outcomes to be delivered, the organisation's track record and the bid's overall value for money rating.
- 7.5 There will also be ongoing performance management of successful projects to ensure that project interventions meet the required standards; that the evidencing of project achievements and expenditure are accurately recorded and reported. This will ensure that payments to organisations are in line with performance.
- 7.6 In addition to the above, to ensure that organisations have an appropriate agreement in place for the use of Council buildings ensures best value consideration of its buildings portfolio.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 This funding scheme has a clear focus of developing employment skills for local people who are disadvantaged and perhaps facing multiple barriers to achieving sustainable employment. All participants will be encouraged to consider taking appropriate steps to minimise negative impact on the environment when taking up the opportunities offered within the programme and on an ongoing basis.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 A number of different risks arise from any funding of external organisations. The key risks are:
- The funding may not be fully utilised i.e. allocations remain unspent and outcomes are not maximised
  - The funding may be used for purposes that have not been agreed e.g. in the case of fraud
  - The organisation may not in the event have the capacity to achieve the contracted outputs/outcomes
- 9.2 As part of the Programme Management arrangements, support will be provided to ensure that all risks are minimised.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The activities, services and outcomes that will be targeted through the programme will support the objectives of reducing crime and disorder. Young people involved in, or at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system will be targeted for support through the ESF Community Grants Programme.

## **11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 As part of the application process organisations will be required to provide details of their safeguarding policy if appropriate. The Grant Agreement that funded organisations will be obliged to comply with has a number of requirements in relation to safeguarding.
- 11.2 Organisations providing services to vulnerable adults and employing staff or volunteers in a position whose duties include caring for, training, supervising or being responsible in some way for them, will be required to fully comply with all necessary safeguarding requirements.

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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report:**

- Tower Hamlets ESF Community Grants Programme 2016/19, Commissioners Decision Making in Public, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016
- Printed Decisions, Commissioners Decision Making Meeting, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015

#### **Appendices:**

- None

#### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

- None

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

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