

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

Originating Officer(s)	Steve Hill - Head of Benefits Services
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Community Plan Theme	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
Total expenditure			£166,346

- 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 31st 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

Project:	Collective Conscience Project (funded £15,200)	Organisation:	The Rooted Forum
Project description	<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>		
Achievements	<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>		
Comment	<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)
Project description	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.		
Achievements	<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"> • Increased access to a sports facility in the park for local youth • Some volunteers gaining a Level-2 training course on First aid at work qualification • Developed relationships between WBA and other local groups and services • Increased engagement with all sections of the community including volunteers involved coming from a wider range of ethnicities. • 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. • Participants supported to successfully negotiate with a housing association against a decision to increase their water bills inappropriately. 		
Comment	<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>		

Project:	East London Leadership Programme (funded £14,256)	Organisation:	UpRising
Project description	<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>		
Achievements	<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>		
Comment	<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>		

Project:	Equal Voices (funded £15,073)	Organisation:	East London Advance Technology Training (ELATT)
Project description	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.		
Achievements	<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>		
Comment	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.		

Project:	Get Involved(funded £15,551)	Organisation:	Dorset Community Association
Project description	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.		
Achievements	<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>		
Comment	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
Project description	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.		
Achievements	<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>		
Comment	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.		

Project:	Residents and Neighbours (funded £14,936)	Organisation:	Stifford Centre Limited
Project description	<p>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.</p>		
Achievements	<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>		
Comment	<p>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.</p>		

Project:	Somali Women Engagement Forum (funded £16,000)	Organisation	Somali Parents and Children's Play Association
Project description	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.		
Achievements	<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>		
Comment	<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>		

Project:	We are Tower Hamlets Residents too! (funded £15,020)	Organisation:	London Gypsy and Traveller Unit
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.		
Achievements	<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>		
Comment	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.		

Project:	Women's Project (funded £13,239)	Organisation:	Newark Youth London
Project description	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.		
Achievements	<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"> • Women asking questions in public • Key speakers reported as being motivational and inspiring • Women accessing other local provision <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>		
Comment	<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>		

Project:	Women's Voice (funded £16,000)	Organisation	City Gateway
Project description	<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>		
Achievement	<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 & 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>		
Comment	<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>		