

<p><b>Grants Determination (Cabinet)</b></p> <p><b>Sub Committee</b></p> <p>16<sup>th</sup> January 2019</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Neville Murton, Acting Corporate Director Resources</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>ESF Community Employment Programme Updates</b></p>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Steve Hill, Head of Benefits Robert Mee, Programme Analysis & Review Officer
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	27/11/18
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	Impact on Wards
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	All

### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to update the Grants Determination Sub-Committee on grants that have been awarded through the European Social Fund (ESF) Community Employment Programme which is co-financed through the European Union and administered by London Councils.

The first of three rounds has been launched as part of the ESF Community Employment Programme where grants totalling £302,088 were awarded to 17 organisations as reported to the 1 August 2018 GDSC. A progress report from London Councils on Round 1 is attached as Appendix 1.

In addition Round 2 was launched with grants totalling £180,000 provisionally awarded to 9 organisations depending on successful pre-agreement meetings.

### **Recommendations:**

The Grants Determination Sub Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the organisations and projects provisionally funded through Round 2 of the ESF Community Grants Programme as detailed in 3.6 and 3.7.
2. Note the progress of projects funded in Round 1 as detailed in 3.4 and 3.5

and Appendix 1.

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

- 1.1 As part of the ESF Community Grants Programme being delegated to officers, there is a requirement to update the Grants Determination Sub-Committee of grants that have been awarded to local Voluntary and Community organisations.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 As this is a noting report, the Grants Determination Sub-Committee may request additional information on projects and organisations provisionally awarded funding.

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

### **ESF Community Grants Programme**

- 3.1 At the 1st March 2016 Commissioners Decision Making Meeting in Public, Commissioners agreed to match-fund the European Social Fund (ESF) Community Employment Grants Programme 2016-19. The council's financial commitment is £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. It is intended that there will be 3 bidding rounds: one during each year of the programme – Round 1 was launched in December 2017. Voluntary and Community organisations are able to apply for grants of up to £20,000 during each bidding round.
- 3.2 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 was launched in December 2017 and will run until 2020
- 3.3 The 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.

### **ESF Round 1 progress**

- 3.4 London Councils has produced a report giving an update on progress for the Round 1 projects which is attached as Appendix 1 with a list of the Round 1 projects and project descriptions as Appendix 1.1. The report also gives an update on the applicants and process for Round 2.
- 3.5 The report shows that for Round 1 "A total of 18 projects were eligible, but 16 were eventually funded (see Appendix 1.1). The programme end predicted

results, in the main, show that the programme will be successful with 73% (214 participants) gaining a level 2 or below qualification. This is a considerable achievement for Tower Hamlets residents on the programme, many of whom have no qualifications.

### ESF Round 2 update

- 3.6 In Round 2 of the programme, 10 applications were received from local VCS organisations. Applications were assessed by LBTH and London Council's staff. A panel comprising of LBTH officers and colleagues from London Councils were involved with moderating applications with a final report being devised with recommendations for the decision making panel – comprising of senior officers from LBTH, London Council's and the GLA.
- 3.7 As a result, 9 organisations have provisionally secured funding depending on the Pre-Agreement meetings. Organisations listed below:

Organisation	Grant Amount
1 Love Community	£20,000
Al Isharah	£20,000
Boundary Community School	£20,000
Tower Hamlets Somali Organisation Network	£20,000
CEN Business and Training Services	£20,000
Cressy IT Solution CIC	£20,000
Dorset Community Association	£20,000
Wise Youth Trust	£20,000
Bongobir Osmany Trust	£20,000
<b>Total Round 2 Grant Value</b>	<b>£180,000</b>

- 3.8 Appendix 2 has some background information on these organisations including the charitable objects where applicable.

### ESF Round 3

- 3.9 Round 3 of the programme is scheduled to launch February / March 2019. In order to maximise the number of applications from Tower Hamlets VCS group the following actions have been discussed:
- Look at making the application form more user friendly
  - Look at streamlining the Application Prospectus to make it more clear what is being asked for
  - Work with the Tackling Poverty Team and the THCVS to identify groups in the borough who could apply to this programme that haven't already done so
  - Use the new development role of the Third Sector Team to support groups in applying for ESF funding

- Publicise the launch of Round 3 – potentially the last ever ESF funding round - in a more expansive way than Round 2
- Increase the number of workshops prior to the Round 3 deadline

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 London Councils' ESF Community Employment Programme promotes equal opportunities and non-discrimination. All delivery partners are required to adhere to the principles and processes set out in EU and UK equality legislation.
- 4.2 As part of the application process all applicants have to explain how they have embedded equality, diversity and inclusion at all stages within their project. They should include information about how they will ensure equal access to the project and any ways in which their project will celebrate diversity and a commitment to reducing inequality.

#### **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
  - Consultations,
  - Environmental (including air quality),
  - Risk Management,
  - Crime Reduction,
  - Safeguarding.

#### **5.2 Best Value Implications**

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.

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.

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. For the ESF Community Grants Programme, this will be administered by London Council's.

#### **5.3 Environment**

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.

#### **5.4 Risk Management**

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

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.

#### **5.5 Crime Reduction**

The activities, services and outcomes that are being targeted through these grant programmes support the objectives of reducing crime and disorder.

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

#### **5.6 Safeguarding**

As part of the initial application process organisations were required to provide details of their safeguarding policy, if appropriate. The Grant Agreements for both funding streams includes requirements in relation to safeguarding.

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.]

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

- 6.1 This report provides an update on the European Social Fund Community Employment Programme and allows opportunity for greater transparency and scrutiny of the Councils grants processes.

- 6.2 Round one of the programme delivered total grants allocations of £302,888 to 14 organisations.
- 6.3 The report provides details of the second of three rounds which includes the provisional release of £180,000 in awards to 9 organisations.
- 6.4 The Council's financial commitment to the programme is £225,000 per year over three years, with the programme funding attracting an equal commitment from the European Social Fund making up a total £1.350m.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to make the grants referred to in this report.
- 7.2 The evaluation of grant applications and the proposed level of award took into account the quantity and quality of deliverables which assists demonstrating compliance with the Council's Best Value legal duty. Also, the grants are monitored to ensure the money used for the purposes for which the money is given.
- 7.3 Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 has been evaluated as part of the application process and therefore it is likely that these schemes comply with the Council's Equality Duty under that act

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

### **Linked Report**

- None.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – London Councils ESF Progress Report
- Appendix 1.1 – ESF Round 1 Project Descriptions
- Appendix 1.2 – ESF Round 2 Applicants
- Appendix 2 – ESF Round 2 – Organisation Background

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

- None

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

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