Equality Assessment: Third Sector Infrastructure Support Services

Equality Assessment of the potential impact of the recommendations of the Corporate Third Sector Grants Programme Board for 2013-15 Third Sector Infrastructure Support Services mainstream grants funding.

Responsible Directorate: Development & Renewal

Priorities/Objectives

The objective of this funding stream is to provide funding to Tower Hamlets based 'infrastructure' or infrastructure focussed organisations/projects in order that they support locally front-line organisations to better meet the existing and emerging needs of borough residents.

A key strategic objective of the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy is to "ensure that the sector is resilient and financially sustainable". The successful achievement of this objective is heavily reliant on front line organisations being outcome driven, effective, and efficient in their delivery of services.

The investment in infrastructure funding contributes to supporting the development of a healthy voluntary and community sector to achieve a proven record of delivery, fundraising and strong financial management skills. Infrastructure services, of the types set out below, are funded in the knowledge that if organisations are armed with the right tools and skills, they can increase the quality of services provided to people in the borough who may have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The type of activity to be funded is expected to include:

1. Training or one- to-one development support that enables local voluntary and community groups and organisations to provide quality and legally compliant services for the local community.
2. Accredited work related training courses aimed at people working in local voluntary and community sector organisations
3. Specialist services designed to help Tower Hamlets based voluntary and community groups provide accessible services to borough residents.

Fundamentally, there are two types of organisations which make up what we generally term the Third Sector: these are 'infrastructure' (sometimes referred to as second tier) organisations; and 'front-line' organisations. The distinction, is generally made clear within an organisation's governing document by virtue of their 'objects' or primary purpose.

- Where the objects or primary purpose of an organisation are to provide services to individuals within the community (whether specific groups such as women or young people, the unemployed or the community in general) such organisations are deemed to be '**front line**' organisations.

- Where the objects or primary purpose of an organisation are to provide services (whatever they may be) to other voluntary/community sector organisations, these organisations are deemed to be '**infrastructure**' organisations.

MSG Budget 2013-15

	Indicative Annual Budget	Corporate	Programme

		Board Recommended Allocations
2012/13*	£ 56,000	£ 23,778
2013/14	£ 224,000	£ 95,111
2014/15	£ 224,000	£ 95,111
Total Funding	**£ 504,000**	**£214,000**

*2012/13 award only represents 3 months allocation as funding for existing Main Stream Grants projects has been extended until 31st December 2012.

Identified Need

Ideally, funding is to be directed to a number of projects so that the funding stream provides a diverse range of infrastructure support.

As grants from a number of traditional sources continues to reduce, organisations are required to improve their external fundraising skills in order to maximise their long-term sustainability.

Organisations will also need to develop their ability to effectively manage funded projects ensuring the maximum achievement of the targeted outcomes and impacts required by funders. Many of the required skills and abilities needed by front-line organisations are those delivered by infrastructure support organisations/projects.

When considering priorities and identified need, it was taken into account that as part of the council's overall commitment to third sector infrastructure support, the Tower Hamlets CVS are in receipt of a grant of £200,000 per year for the period April 2012 March 2015. This funding is to cover the provision of core organisational costs infrastructure support initiatives.

Taking this into account the total amount being directed into infrastructure support since the last funding round has increased by £284,000, this is more than double the amount of £130,000 awarded in the last round of funding.

Other infrastructure service providers in the borough include:

The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) - A charity which supports women's organisations to be more effective and sustainable.

Lasa - A charity which offers knowledge, support and resources in technology and welfare rights advice to the third sector advice agencies.

Th**e Councils sports and physical activity team** - Ensures that all residents have access to valued, good quality sport and physical activity experiences.

The Council of Somali Organisations – Based in LBTH, this agency provides capacity building support to increase the operational effectiveness of Somali organisations.

Fossbox - Provides Free and Open Source Software (FOSS), Content Management Systems, online collaboration, social networking and FOSS IT training for local groups.

Greater London Volunteering – Provides free training on volunteer management topics, action learning sets – work-based problem solving in a supportive peer group of volunteer managers, a free health check tool for improving groups work with volunteers.

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Type of Provision	Beneficiary target group	Geographic Area	Units of need (based on application)	Need to be met by allocation
Specialist development of Sports Groups in Tower Hamlets	Sports groups and residents	Borough wide	30 Groups 75 Individuals	Subject to negotiation following final decision
Specialist development of Voluntary Sector Childcare Organisations	Small & voluntary and community childcare orgs – women particularly Somali, Bengali, Children under five.	Borough wide	20 Orgs 84 Individuals	Subject to negotiation following final decision
Specialist development of volunteering and volunteer involving organisations.	Organisations that used volunteers	Borough wide	10 Orgs, 17 individuals, 400 groups receive newsletter.	Subject to negotiation following final decision
Community Transport Services in Tower Hamlets	Transports Infrastructure service to Third Sector Orgs	Borough wide	2700 individual vehicle bookings per year, residents particularly children, elderly frail and disabled	Subject to negotiation following final decision
Specialist development of social welfare advice agencies	Social welfare advice to voluntary and community orgs NVQ4 level	Borough wide	10 Agencies	Subject to negotiation following final decision
Development Support – in finance and fundraising	Somali Organisations	Borough wide	50 Orgs 60 Financial Health checks	Subject to negotiation following final decision
Specialist Community Accountancy support	Voluntary Organisations particularly small BAME and women's groups.	Borough wide	60 small community groups	Subject to negotiation following final decision
Development support for 50 Somali Voluntary Sector Organisations	Development support to Somali orgs Step up-sustaining Somali organisations	Borough wide	50 TH Somali Orgs	Subject to negotiation following final decision

Impact Summary

Summarise any overall impact of the recommended allocation on the protected groups.

Seven applications requesting funding from this stream totalled £1,457,455. The average sum requested by those organisations recommended for funding was approximately £133,000.

Funding of £214,000 has been recommended to projects. The average sum of recommended is £36,000.

The outputs to be achieved as a result of the proposed funding award have been estimated on a pro-rata basis, to reflect the percentage of funding recommended level.

A total of six projects have been recommended for funding within this stream. Two of these were previously funded and four are projects not funded in the previous round.

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In terms of the level of funding recommended to projects previously funded by this stream, the level of funding has been maintained with no significant impact anticipated as a result of the funding decision.

The levels of funding for the two projects (TSIS-05, and TSIS-06) that applied to this funding stream which are 'currently funded' projects – are set out below.

1. TSIS-05: (Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets) current funding - £10,000 per annum; recommended 2013/15 - £15,556 per annum
2. TSIS-06: (Tower Hamlets Community Transport) current funding - £20,000 per annum; recommended 2013/15 - £28,888 per annum

The decision to enhance the level of funding provided in the previous round is expected to have a positive impact on those organisations.

It should be noted that in the previous MSG funding programme, Tower Hamlets Community Transport received an additional £10,000 from both Adults Health and Wellbeing and Children's Schools and Families directorates – making a total funding package of £40,000 per year. For the 2013/15 programme period the organisation only applied to the Third Sector Infrastructure funding stream. Whilst the total amount of recommended funding from LBTH is reduced, our records show that part of the funding provided to THCT was used to assist them in developing a revised business model and pricing structure. This was to enable them to operate on a more financially self-sustaining basis as a social enterprise, so that grant support in subsequent years could be reduced.

The continued funding to a volunteering organisation (funded under the last round) is seen as having a positive impact, in that volunteering is beneficial to both the volunteer and the organisation with which they volunteer. Continued support to this volunteering project will ensure that best practice is maintained with regards to the treatment of volunteers.

Voluntary organisations are known to make use of volunteers as one of the ways that charities, voluntary and community organisation are responding to financial cuts. Volunteering gives people exposure to new networks with volunteering often used as a route for progression in work.

Both organisations applied for significantly more funding in this round.

For those projects not funded under the last round, though these projects have also been awarded less funding than requested, the funding overall is viewed as additional funding, allowing new projects to be established which will have a positive impact.

Equality Assessment

This funding stream is directed at 2nd-tier organisations: those that support other organisations/projects. The client groups of the organisations requesting infrastructure support are expected to come from and reflect the profile of the community; however, data is not currently held on the beneficiaries of the organisations requesting support.

Target Groups	Impact ✓ - Positive ✘ - Adverse 0 = Neutral What impact will the proposal have on specific groups of service users or staff?	Reason(s)
		• Add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and, • Describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform decision making

Target Groups	Impact ✓ - Positive ✗ - Adverse 0 = Neutral What impact will the proposal have on specific groups of service users or staff?	Reason(s) • Add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and, • Describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform decision making
Race	✔	Projects recommended for funding will provide infrastructure support services to all sectors of the community. Black, Asian and other minority ethnic organisations make up the highest percentage of projects that use infrastructure services. In recent years support has been targeted at Somali organisations to support their infrastructure to better support this growing community. This group is expected to benefit from newly established sources of support provided by additional funding in this area.
Disability	✔	Organisations led by, employing and providing services to disabled people are expected to benefit from additional funding made available to projects under this funding stream.
Gender	✔	Organisations led by, employing and providing services to all genders are expected to benefit from additional funding made available to projects under this funding stream.
Gender Reassignment	0	Specific data is not available on the number of Organisations - led by, employing people or beneficiaries who classify themselves under this category. However, the decisions made under this funding stream are not anticipated to adversely affect this group of people.
Sexual Orientation	0	Specific data is not available on this characteristic. However the decisions made under this funding stream is not anticipated to have an adversely on people with a specific sexual orientation.
Religion or Belief	0	Specific data is not available on this characteristic. However the decisions made under this funding stream is not anticipated to have an adversely on people with a specific religion or belief.
Age	✔	The additional funding made available to projects not previously funded is expected to benefit people of all ages.

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Target Groups	Impact ✓ - Positive ✗ - Adverse 0 = Neutral What impact will the proposal have on specific groups of service users or staff?	Reason(s) • Add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and, • Describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform decision making
Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	0	Specific data is not available on this characteristic. However the decisions made under this funding stream is not anticipated to have an adversely on people in a specific relationship.
Pregnancy and Maternity	0	Specific data is not available on this characteristic.

Impact Considerations
What are likely to be the "real life" consideration for beneficiaries, in light of the proposed changes/recommendations?

The level of funding to the Tower Hamlets Volunteer Centre (TSIS-05) from this funding stream remains at a similar level to the previous funding round, therefore no negative impact is anticipated.

1.   Overall summary of projects recommended by the programme board (6)

No of Projects	Beneficiary Target Group and service	Geographic Area/s of Proposed Delivery	Proposed Output (based on full grant request)	Outputs based on proportion of funding recommended
1	Development project supporting 30 sports groups. (TSIS 02)	Borough wide	30 Groups 75 Individuals	9 groups 47 individuals
2	Quality standards / development support and information to volunteer involving organisations. (TSIS 05)	Borough wide	8 Individuals, 400 groups	2 individual 96 groups
3	Transports Infrastructure service to Third Sector Orgs (TSIS 06)	Borough wide	2700 individual vehicle bookings	1269 Individual bookings
4	Development and networking of social welfare advice voluntary and community orgs NVQ4 level (TSIS 07)	Borough wide	10 Agencies	3 agencies
5	Development support (TSIS08)	Borough wide	50 organisations	8 organisations
6	Development support to Somali orgs (TSIS 14)	Borough wide	50 Orgs	Not applicable
Projects TSIS 05 & 06 had received funding under the previous round. The transport projects mainly benefits vulnerable residents including elders, children and disabled residents.				

2.   Projects recommended for funding that were not previously funded under this stream (5)

No of Projects	Beneficiary Target Group	Geographic Area/s of Proposed	Proposed Output (based on full	Outputs based on proportion of

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			Delivery	grant request)	funding recommended
1	Development project supporting 30 sports groups. (TSIS 02)		Borough wide	30 Groups 75 Individuals	9 groups 47 individuals
4	Development and networking of social welfare advice voluntary and community orgs NVQ4 level (TSIS 07)		Borough wide	10 Agencies	3 agencies
5	Development support (TSIS08)		Borough wide	50 organisations	8 organisations
6	Development support to Somali orgs (TSIS 14)		Borough wide	50 Orgs	Not applicable

3. Projects not recommended for funding that had received MSG funding in 2011/12

No of Projects	Beneficiary Target Group	Geographic Area/s of Proposed Delivery	Proposed Output (based on full grant request)	Outputs based on proportion of funding recommended
None				

4. Projects not recommended for funding who were not previously funded under this stream where the primary beneficiary are from one of the 9 protected characteristics.

No of Projects	Beneficiary Target Group	Geographic Area/s of Proposed Delivery	Proposed Output (based on full grant request)	Outputs based on proportion of funding recommended
1	Bengali Voluntary Organisations - with management, fund raising, capacity building, research and training	Borough Wide	Not stated	
It is expected the provision for Bengali organisation is met from the generic provision.				

BACKGROUND

Applications received: 14 Application received requesting a total of £1,457,445 over three years.

Number of projects recommended for funding:

A total of 7 projects are commended for funding totalling £214,000

Five (5) of the seven (7) projects were new projects, e.g. not funding in the last round. Between 15% and 57% of the funding requested has been recommended.

Number of projects not recommended:

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The remaining seven (7) projects not recommended for funding. Projects were not funded where the need was either i) better met by another project ii) was not of sufficient priority, given other needs and iii) the bid was not of a satisfactory quality.

Project not funded included I.T., accountancy, sports groups support and bulk purchasing projects.

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