


<b>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee</b>  3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2019	
<b>Report of:</b> Sharon Godman, Divisional Director strategy, policy and performance	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Corporate Voluntary Sector Grants Programme (Infrastructure and Capacity Building) Approval of Grants</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	David Freeman VCS Strategy Manager
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	
<b>Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome</b>	<p><b>1. People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities;</b></p> <p><b>2. A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in;</b></p> <p><b>3. A dynamic outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough.</b></p>

### **Executive Summary**

The council invited applications from voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations for funding from the corporate VCS Grants Programme (Infrastructure and Capacity Building Theme). This report presents the assessment of applications received and makes recommendations for allocating grants to VCS organisations under this theme for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

## **Recommendations:**

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

1. Award a grant to Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service of up to £260,000 per annum for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 toward the cost of providing infrastructure support and capacity building activities for the voluntary and community sector in Tower Hamlets as set out in Appendix B to this report;
2. Decline the four applications listed in Appendix B to this report for the reasons stated, and
3. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4

## **1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The Mayor agreed in Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 that the corporate grants programme set out in the council's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Grants Policy should be administered in two ways. Five of the six themes set out in the policy would form a small grants programme to be administered on behalf of the council by an independent and experienced provider. The sixth theme, Infrastructure and Capacity Building, would be retained and administered in house. Responsibility for determining the grants awarded in this theme is retained by the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee.
- 1.2 Applications were invited from suitably experienced VCS organisations. The applications received have been assessed by officers and this report presents recommendations for funding to the Sub-Committee.

## **2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Sub-Committee could decide to award no grants in this programme. However, this would be counter to the council's undertaking in the VCS Strategy to support the infrastructure of the VCS and the decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and 20 March 2019 to establish a specific funding stream to support infrastructure and capacity building in the VCS.

## **3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The priorities and outcomes for the infrastructure support and capacity building theme of the grants programme were agreed by the Mayor in Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. These align with the council's strategic plan and with the Tower Hamlets Plan outcomes. The development of the grants programme through a process of co-production with VCS organisations is

described in detail in previous reports to Cabinet. The budget for the theme was agreed at £260,000 per annum.

- 3.2 A further meeting with representatives of VCS infrastructure organisations was held in December 2018 to finalise the detailed prospectus including eligibility criteria and assessment scoring. The full prospectus for this theme is attached at appendix A.
- 3.3 The prospectus includes the theme priorities and outcomes agreed at Cabinet and set out below:

#### Priorities

1. Skills exchange and accessible training
2. Making organisations ready to respond to new funding opportunities
3. Fundraising support for smaller, volunteer led organisations without staff
4. Developing quality assurance
5. Managing assets for community benefit
6. Developing resilience and supporting organisations through periods of transition

#### Outcomes

1. Broader pool of organisations accessing public service funding
  2. Increased proportion of organisations achieving recognised quality assurance standards
  3. VCS more resilient with more sustainable funding base
  4. Organisations supporting each other
- 3.4 This theme was open for applications for two months. It was promoted through VCS networks, via the council's website and other media. Support was provided in conjunction with the sessions provided by the council to support the Local Community Fund bidding process.
- 3.5 A comparatively small number of applications were received, reflecting the specialist nature of the work. However, one was a consortium bid which included three local infrastructure organisations. All of the applications were made by organisations based in the borough. The number of applications received was comparable with the number made in the last round of the Mainstream Grants Programme for the infrastructure theme.
- 3.6 Of the five applications received, two were considered to be ineligible on first assessment. Neither application included any infrastructure support or capacity building in the proposed activities. One was a duplicate of a bid made to the Local Community Fund which is being considered separately.
- 3.7 The three eligible applications were a consortium bid to provide borough wide activities to meet all of the priorities and outcomes of the theme, an application from an umbrella organisation to develop the capacity of its

member groups across the borough and an application to support a local organisation manage a community centre owned by a housing association.

- 3.8 It is proposed that the application from the consortium led by Tower Hamlets CVS is awarded the amount requested, £260,000 per annum. Awarding the amount requested by the THCVS consortium will commit the full budget to this application.
- 3.9 Officers are recommending the remaining four applications to the fund are declined as set out in appendix B.
- 3.10 The grants policy states that funding through this theme should be for two years with the potential for extension for a further year. In order to provide more security of funding for the applicant organisations the funding recommendations are for three years subject to a review at the end of the second year with authority to agree the third year of funding delegated to the Divisional Director strategy, policy and performance.

#### **4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The equality analysis checklist assessment carried out suggests that the transition from funding under theme 4 of the Mainstream Grants Programme to the Infrastructure and Capacity Building theme of the new corporate grant programme will have no disproportionate negative equality implications.
- 4.2 The continued focus on community cohesion within the programme and the particular priority to support smaller organisations without paid staff will tend to have a positive impact for organisations and community groups whose activities focus on people with protected equalities characteristics as these are often volunteer led and may have limited resources.

#### **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.
  - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

#### **5.2 Best Value**

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.

### 5.3 Crime Reduction

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.

### 5.4 Safeguarding

There are no specific safeguarding implications arising from this report. However, ensuring appropriate consideration is given to safeguarding will be addressed in the development of the VCS Grants Programme, both through governance requirements and in the capacity building programme for the sector proposed.

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

6.1 This report details the methodology of the infrastructure grant allocation to VCS organisation.

6.2 Any grants awarded under this scheme will be funded through the Councils' infrastructure grant budget (£260K Annual Budget). If further resources are required outside the Infrastructure grant budget, officers will be obliged to seek appropriate approval through the council's financial approval process.

## **7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

7.1 The Council has the legal power to make the grant award in line with this report.

7.2 The applications have been assessed in line with the criteria published in the prospectus with the TH CVS scoring highest. This tends to demonstrate that the award of the grant in line with the recommendation satisfies the Council's legal duty to obtain best value.

7.3 The grant will be subject to an appropriate agreement which will set the standard of performance and allow the Council to ensure that the money is used for the intended purposes and that the project delivers against the relevant targets. This will assist the Council to demonstrate that the award represents Best Value

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

### **Linked Reports**

- Cabinet 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 VCS Grants Programme
- Cabinet 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018 VCS Grants Policy Framework

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A Infrastructure and Capacity Building Theme Prospectus
- Appendix B Applications made

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

- NONE

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

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## LB Tower Hamlets VCS Grants Programme

# Infrastructure and Capacity Building

**To enable smaller organisations to become more sustainable and to support infrastructure organisations build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector.**

Projects supported through this theme will focus on building the capacity of local voluntary and community sector organisations. Capacity building could mean programmes of support (for example training and other workforce development activity, volunteer recruitment and support, organisational advice or consultancy) delivered by local infrastructure organisations or support to individual organisations for projects to help them to develop their own capacity.

In this programme the council is seeking to support activities which have a borough wide impact delivered by organisations with a strong track record of developing the capacity of smaller VCS organisations and community groups. The council is also seeking to support activities which bring VCS organisations together through partnerships, networking and other activities both to share resources and strengthen the collective voice of the sector.

The total budget for this theme is £260,000 per annum. Grants will be awarded initially from 1 October 2019 for two years with an extension of up to 12 months.

The council does not require consortium applications to this theme. However, we acknowledge the added value of partnership and consortium working to achieve the best outcomes for local people and expect this to be reflected in applications to this theme.

Applicants are expected to be able to demonstrate existing links with organisations in the borough. This must include detailing how they work with other Tower Hamlets second-tier VCS organisations including, involvement in appropriate local networks.

Where organisations apply as a consortium, all partners must:

- meet the Council' basic grant eligibility criteria;
- have the powers within their governing document to provide infrastructure services for other organisations; and,
- have evidence of an appropriate quality standard.

The council has provided detailed guidance for applicants which should be read alongside the application form. The form and guidance can be found here [VCS Infrastructure and Capacity Building Grants Programme](#)

The closing date for applications is 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019

### Theme priorities

1. Skills exchange and accessible training
2. Making organisations ready to respond to new funding opportunities
3. Fundraising support for smaller, volunteer led organisations without staff
4. Developing quality assurance
5. Managing assets for community benefit
6. Developing resilience and supporting organisations through periods of transition

You will need to show in your application how the activities you are proposing meet one or more of the priorities. Some activities may meet a number of the priorities. Your application will be assessed across all the priorities.

### Theme outcomes

5. Broader pool of organisations accessing public service funding  
*This may be through a wider range of organisations winning public service contracts and other public sector funding opportunities or it may be through making public service funding more accessible to smaller and more specialist organisations through partnerships and consortia.*
6. Increased proportion of organisations achieving recognised quality assurance standards  
*This will include activities which help organisations which have not yet achieved QA standards but may also include activities which will help maintain QA standards where organisations have already achieved them.*
7. VCS more resilient with more sustainable funding base  
*This may be through the development of activities which provide a more sustainable resource base whether this is through funding, volunteering, shared resource, management of assets or other non-financial support for VCS organisations.*
8. Organisations supporting each other  
*This would include the development of partnerships and consortia, peer to peer support schemes and other activities to promote sharing resources, skills and expertise. This could be within the sector or across sectors and may include partnerships representing the sector.*

These are the key higher level outcomes for this theme. You will need to develop more detailed SMART outcomes and indicators to show how your proposed activities will help achieve the high level outcomes and the measures you will use for each indicator.

### Programme Outcomes

All projects funded through the corporate grants programme are expected to contribute towards community cohesion and to equality and diversity. In addition to the theme outcomes you must show how your proposed activities will contribute towards:

1. Community cohesion  
*Developing community resilience, promoting cultural opportunities and reducing social isolation in the context of the theme,*



2. Equality and diversity  
*Demonstrating how people with protected equalities characteristics will be included*

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Section</b>	<b>% score</b>
Organisation structure and governance	5
Organisation management and control	15
Project description	25
Project/service outcomes	15
Experience and track record	5
Quality assurance standards	10
Equalities and diversity	5
Community cohesion and reducing poverty	10
Project finances and value for money	10
<b>Eligibility</b>	
<b>Not for Profit</b>	The grants programme will only support activities run by groups which can demonstrate they are set up as not for profit groups. The types of organisation which the Council considers to be not for profit is set out in the Council's VCS Strategy. Individuals will not be eligible.
<b>Locally based</b>	The grants programme is intended to support the local VCS and community activity. The eligibility criteria for all grant themes reflect this principle. Organisations based outside the borough are not excluded from eligibility but they must show very clear connections to Tower Hamlets either through existing activity or local leadership of the proposed project. Applications will be encouraged from organisations working across the borough.
<b>Good governance</b>	Organisations will be expected to achieve an acceptable level of governance with appropriate policies for the activities they propose to undertake. The acceptable level will be proportionate to the size of organisation and type of activity. The Council will accept applications from organisations in the process of developing appropriate policies but funding will not be paid until they are in place.
<b>Size</b>	This theme is open to all not for profit organisations
<b>Other resources</b>	One of the principal characteristics of grants is that they unlock other resources either in cash or in kind. All grants themes will therefore require that a quantifiable contribution is made to the proposed activity either in cash or in kind. However, prescribed levels of match funding will not be required.

## Application recommended for funding

Organisation/ Project	Project summary (as set out by applicant)	Officer Comment and Assessment	Funding request pa. £
Tower Hamlets CVS  “Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (THVCS) Infrastructure Partnership”	THVCS Infrastructure Partnership brings together the main Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure support agencies in Tower Hamlets to: increase the range and number of VCS organisations that are well-run, resilient and sustainable; and to strengthen the VCS as a key Public Sector Strategic Delivery Partner in Tower Hamlets.	<p>Meets all of the priorities of the funding theme for a borough wide service</p> <p>Outcomes clearly link to the theme outcomes and support the priorities</p> <p>Proposed service covers the whole borough</p> <p>Activities costed and represent good VFM</p> <p>Experienced provider with good track record of delivery of this type of service</p> <p>Highest scoring application for all criteria</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Fund application in full, £260,000 per annum</p>	260,000

## Applications recommended to be declined

Organisation/ Project	Project summary (as set out by applicant)	Officer Comment
Toyhouse Libraries Association of Tower Hamlets  “Infrastructure support for community Toy	Supporting the infrastructure of community Toy Library Projects enabling them to become a more sustainable resource for the local community. Capacity building volunteers to enable them to provide high quality sessions for local families building community cohesion.	Not recommended

## Appendix B

Libraries”		
Leaders in Community “Capacity Building- Teviot Centre”	Undertaking the management of the Teviot Centre, and moving our operations there, represents a step change for LiC in terms of future sustainability and the scale of our impact. To achieve this involves scaling up our Staff Team, undertaking relevant training, and developing more appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools.	Not recommended
Graduate Forum Careers London Ltd	Every year the programme aims to work with 48 unemployed, underemployed and economically inactive people from BAME communities in particular women from Bangladeshi and Somali origins older people and NEET young adults, promoting volunteering opportunities that developed employment and life skills and capacity built voluntary and community sector organisations.	Not recommended
Whitechapel Gallery	Voices that Matter is a new learning and social forum for women from ethnically diverse communities in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Our ambition is to enable local women to experience and enjoy creativity in their daily lives, while reducing isolation, fostering agency and gaining social confidence through art.	Not recommended