


Grants Determination Sub Committee	 TOWER HAMLETS
3 July 2019	
Report of: Will Tuckley, Chief Executive	Classification: Unrestricted
Mainstream Grants (MSG) 2015-18 Outcomes	

Lead Member	Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector
Originating Officer(s)	Robert Mee, Interim Voluntary & Community Sector Team Manager
Wards affected	All
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	3 June 2019
Reason for Key Decision	Not a key decision
Community Plan Theme	All

Executive Summary

The Mainstream Grant (MSG) 2015/18 Programme was approved by the Commissioners on 29 July 2015 and was initially expected to be delivered from 1st September 2015 through to 31st August 2018.

Although an interim evaluation took place this was primarily to learn lessons as part of the development of the successor funding programme rather than to widely publicise the achievements of the programme.

There is an opportunity to publicise the successful outcomes the programme has achieved along with the beneficial impact on the voluntary and community sector organisations, the residents they have supported and the wider borough.

Actions that are currently being undertaken:

- The MSG Outcomes report – pulling together the information collected through the ongoing monitoring and support into a document that can be used to publicise the achievements of the programme. A draft document is attached as Appendix 1 and further work will be undertaken with Communications to create a visually distinct report
- A short film has been commissioned including interviews with organisation staff and beneficiaries of the projects showing the positive impact the work has had. Communications have been involved and it is planned to take

extracts from the film to publicise through social media.

Actions that are planned:

- Update and revise the Council website Grants page to highlight the positive impact the funding has had including: Case Studies, organisation and beneficiary testimonies, video clips
- An event to celebrate the positive work done over the past few years to be held before the end of the current MSG extension period (September 2019) or the end of the year (December 2019). Current thinking is to include this as part of the planned Cooperate Conference rather than put on a separate event.

Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the planned actions to promote the outcomes and achievements from the Mainstream Grants (MSG) activity including the MSG Outcomes report.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Highlighting the outcomes and achievements from funded programmes gives confidence that funding has been used appropriately and that there has been benefit to the residents and the borough.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

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

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Mainstream Grant (MSG) 2015/18 Programme was approved by the Commissioners on 29 July 2015 and was initially expected to be delivered from 1st September 2015 through to 31st August 2018.
- 3.2 Regular performance reports went to first the Commissioners Decision Making Meeting and then the Grants Determination Sub-Committee but these were focused primarily on whether projects were meeting their quarterly targets and their RAG rating.

- 3.3 Each project had an Offer Letter setting out their targets and conditions up to the original programme end date of 31 August 2018. Many of the outcomes planned would be achieved at the end of this programme period.
- 3.4 There is an opportunity to evaluate the achievements of the programme for that original programme period and publicise the beneficial impact on voluntary & community sector organisations, the residents they have been supporting and the wider borough.

Actions that are being undertaken:

- 3.5 **MSG Outcomes Report** – at Appendix 1 is a draft MSG Outcomes report showing a summary of the programme and highlighting key outcome achievements by Theme and including case study extracts showing the beneficial impact for residents of being supported through the programme. The aim is to work with Communications to turn this information into a visually distinct report that can be hosted on our website or printed for targeted distribution.
- 3.6 **Commission a short film** – work has taken place with the currently funded MSG organisations with both organisation staff and users of the activities interviewed.

Actions that are being planned:

- 3.7 **Update and revise the Council website grants pages** – currently the grants pages on the Council's website feature information on funding that is available such as the Local Community Fund, the Capacity Building & Infrastructure Fund and the ESF Community Employment programme. However, there is very little information on what the projects do and what has been achieved with the funding. An update of the webpages will give a place to hold the Outcomes Report, video clips taken from the short film, case studies and general testimonies from organisations and beneficiaries.
- 3.8 **An event to celebrate the positive work done over the past few years** – the current thinking is for this to be a part of the planned Cooperate Conference likely to be held in September 2019. This would be an opportunity to show through the report and short film the work done through the MSG 2015-18 programme.

Risks

- 3.9 Consideration would need to be given to the impact of the Local Community Fund and what the landscape looks like for the local voluntary & community sector in Tower Hamlets. There is a risk that organisations that delivered MSG funded projects and are featured in the report and short film are not funded through the successor Local Community Fund.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A strategic assessment was undertaken of the proposed MSG programme in April 2015. It focused on identified need (or beneficiaries) and the difference between the MSG Programme 2013-15 and the proposed programme. Looking in particular at the potential impact of;
- Reduction in overall funding;
 - Rationalisation of themes; and
 - Introduction of locality boundaries
- 4.2 The programme continues to deliver against the themes developed to address the identified need.

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.

One Tower Hamlets Considerations

- 5.2 The contribution of VCS organisations helping to deliver One Tower Hamlets objectives and priorities are explicitly recognised and articulated within the Council's agreed Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy.

VCS Organisations 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.

The opportunities offered through the MSG Programme will play a key role in delivering the aims of One Tower Hamlets.

Best Value (BV) Implications

- 5.3 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.

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.

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.

Agreement of the proposed rent subsidies will assist the Council in achieving the Best Value action plan in relation to the regularisation of lease arrangements with VCS organisations which occupy our premises.

Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment

- 5.4 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.

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.

Risk Management Implications

- 5.5 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

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.

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.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Implications

- 5.6 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.

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.

Safeguarding Implications

- 5.7 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.

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 highlights the achievements and outcomes of the Councils Mainstream Grant Programme (MSG) 2015/18.
- 6.2 The delivery of the MSG outcomes has been achieved within the agreed funding approved by the Commissioners on 29th July 2015 of £9.148m or £3.211 per annum.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft MSG Outcomes Report

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

- None

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