


Grants Determination Sub Committee	 TOWER HAMLETS
11 September 2019	
Report of: Will Tuckley, Chief Executive	Classification: Unrestricted
ESF Community Employment programme update	

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 wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	12 August 2019
Reason for Key Decision	Not a key decision
Community Plan Theme	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 was launched with grants totalling £302,088 awarded to 17 organisations as reported to the 1 August 2018 GDSC. The final position for Round 1 was 16 organisations delivering their projects with a total spend of 235,905.43. A closure report from London Councils for Round 1 is attached as Appendix 1.

Round 2 was launched with grants totalling £180,000 provisionally awarded to 9 organisations as reported to the 16 January 2019 GDSC. A progress update report from London Councils for Round 2 is attached as Appendix 2.

Round 3 was launched with grants totalling £279,325 provisionally awarded to 14 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 3 of the ESF Community Grants Programme as detailed in 3.8 and 3.9.
2. Note the update on the outcome of Round 1 as detailed in 3.4 and 3.5 and Appendix 1.
3. Note the progress of projects funded in Round 2 as detailed in 3.6 and 3.7 and Appendix 2.

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

- 3.4 London Councils has produced a closure report for Round 1 which is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The report includes information on achievement of the round (see table below) and provides context and lessons learned that are being applied in future rounds.

	Round 1 Profile	Actual to Date	Achievement against Profile to Date (%)
Participant Starts	331	110	33
long-term unemployed participants	116	45	39
Economically inactive participants	215	63	29
Women	198	83	42
Older people (50 years and over)	60	29	48
Ethnic minorities	292	103	35
Disabled (Self-declared)	40	3	7.5
Lone Parents	39	18	46

ESF Round 2 progress

- 3.6 London Councils has produced a report giving an update on progress for the Round 2 projects which is attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.7 A total of seven projects were funded. The projects signed their funding agreements between April and June. London Councils ensured that projects funded under round 1 (Tower Hamlets Community Employment Programme) were only able to have their round 2 funding agreements issued for signature after their round 1 projects were completed. The completion date for round 1 projects was 31 March 2019. Enrolment began shortly after this, with 95 participants currently enrolled, against a target enrolment figure of 125.

Projects are continuing to deliver outputs, with 45 participants gaining a level 2 or below qualification. These qualifications have enabled participants to gain level 2 qualifications in First Aid at Work, Customer Service, and Food Hygiene. Level 2 qualifications have also been gained by participants in Early Years Care Education, SIA Door Supervision (for security work) and Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Examination. These qualifications will enable participants, including the most vulnerable with no formal skills and training, to gain employment opportunities, with formal qualifications.

ESF Round 3 update

- 3.8 In Round 3 of the programme, 17 applications were received from local VCS organisations. Applications were assessed by LBTH and London Councils' staff. A panel comprising of LBTH officers and colleagues from London Councils was involved with moderating applications with a final report being devised with recommendations for the decision making panel – comprising of senior officers from LBTH, London Councils and the GLA.
- 3.9 As a result, 14 organisations have provisionally secured funding depending on the Pre-Agreement meetings. The organisations are listed below:

Organisation	Grant Amount
Cressy IT Solutions CIC	£20,000
Wapping Bangladesh Association	£19,924
Udichi Shilpi Gosthi	£20,000
CEN Business & Training Services	£20,000
Dorset Community Association	£20,000
Boundary Community School	£19,999
City Steps Guided Tours	£19,921
WISE Youth Trust	£20,000
Bangladesh Youth Movement	£19,481
Bongobir Osmany Trust	£20,000
Somali Parent and Children Play Association	£20,000
The Rooted Forum	£20,000
Taqwa Needy Trust	£20,000
Wise Age Ltd	£20,000
Total Round 3 Grant Value	£279,325.00

- 3.10 Appendix 3 has some background information on these organisations including the charitable objects where applicable.

Next Steps

- 3.11 Although Round 2 and 3 will continue delivery with Round 3 going in to 2020 another round is not scheduled.
- 3.12 A report will be taken to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee when Round 2 is closed with a final report taken with the closure of Round 3.

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 and that the evidencing of project achievements and expenditure is accurately recorded and reported. For the ESF Community Grants Programme, this will be administered by London Councils.

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 £302,088 to 17 organisations. The final position for Round 1 was 16 organisations delivering their projects with a total spend of 235,905.43.
- 6.3 Round two of the programme delivered total grants allocations of £180,000 to 9 organisations.
- 6.4 The report provides details of the third of three rounds which includes the provisional release of £279,325 in awards to 14 organisations.
- 6.5 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. Total allocation to date is £761,413. The remaining £588,587 of which £294k relates to the Council's contribution will be available if further rounds are agreed.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – ESF Round 1 Project Closure report
- Appendix 2 – ESF Round 2 progress report

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

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