


Grants Determination Cabinet Sub-Committee 4 th March 2020	
Report of: Sharon Godman, Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance	Classification: Unrestricted
VCS Funding Awarded Under Delegated Authority	

Lead Member	John Biggs, the Mayor Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources
Originating Officer(s)	David Freeman, VCS Strategy Manager Awo Ahmed, Programme Assessment & Monitoring Officer & Brenda Doku, Programme Assessment & Monitoring Officer
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	All

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on funding awarded to voluntary and community sector organisations under delegated authority since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee awards have been made from the Contingency Fund. These are set out in the appendix to this report.

No awards have been made in the other funding streams but the current position for each is set out under separate headings in the report.

Recommendations:

The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the update on funding awarded to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations under delegated authority since their last meeting.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 There are a number of council funding programmes to support voluntary and community sector organisations where decisions are made under delegated authority either by officers or, in the case of the Small Grants Programme, the East End Community Foundation. These decisions are presented to the Sub-Committee for noting.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The council could decide not to provide funding to VCS organisations through its various programmes. However, to do this would be contrary to the agreed policy to support VCS activities in the borough set out in the VCS Strategy 2016-19.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Small Grants Programme

- 3.1 No new awards have been made in the Small Grants Programme since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 3.2 The Small Grants Programme was established to ensure that local people and community groups will continue to be able to get funding from the council to support community initiatives – people getting together to get things done. The programme is intended to make funds available to support grass roots activity in local communities that will help make life better in Tower Hamlets and achieve the changes set out in the Tower Hamlets Plan and the council's Strategic Plan. By establishing a single grants programme with different themes or activities to be funded, the council is trying to make sure local groups seeking funds will have a one stop shop to get to the funds best suited to their needs.
- 3.3 The programme has seven themes. Five have been open for projects commencing from 1st October 2019 and two are for projects commencing from 1st April 2020.

Initial themes

1. **Innovation** - to encourage innovation or pilot something new, especially where there is a gap;
2. **Prevention** - to promote grass roots activity to reduce the need for statutory services;
3. **Neighbourhood action** - to promote local neighbourhood initiatives
4. **Community cohesion** - to develop community resilience, promote cultural opportunities and reduce social isolation, and
5. **Partnership working** - making the sector more effective through closer partnership working within the sector and across sectors.

New Themes

6. **Community Support Services for Older People** – to combat social isolation of older people through the provision of community based support services.
7. **Access and Participation** – to establishing access and participation schemes to provide referral gateways for people from BAME communities.
8. **Loneliness** - reducing the Impact of loneliness and isolation

3.4 The Small Grants programme is administered for the council by the East End Community Foundation.

3.5 The budget and expenditure across all the themes to date is set out below.

Theme	2019/20 budget £,000s	2019/20 expenditure £,000s	2020/21 budget £,000s
Innovation Prevention Neighbourhood action Community Cohesion Partnership working	90	90	180
Community Support Services for Older People	0	0	100
Access and Participation	0	0	50
Loneliness	0	0	50
Totals	90	90	380

Innovation Fund

3.6 No new pledges of funding have been made from the Innovation Fund since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee.

- 3.7 The council is keen to encourage and support innovation in the sector and acknowledged that this would require some funding to enable the sector to pilot new initiatives and approaches to service delivery and support.
- 3.8 The Innovation Fund supports VCS organisations to "test and learn" new ways of working, new initiatives and new delivery models that if successful could be scaled up and commissioned more formally.
- 3.9 VCS organisations that crowdfund through the Our Tower Hamlets page of the Spacehive portal will have an opportunity to pitch for up to £10,000 (or a maximum of 50 per cent of an organisations crowdfunding target) in match funding for their projects.
- 3.10 Further details can be found on the [Space Hive Tower Hamlets](#) and the [Innovation Fund](#) pages with more information available in the [factsheet](#).
- 3.11 Decisions are made by the Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance in consultation with the Chair of this Sub-Committee based on recommendations of an advisory panel which consists of the Chief Executive of the East End Community Foundation, the Head of Corporate Strategy and Policy and officers from the VCS Team.

3.12 Budget summary

Original Budget	£120,000.00
Pledged to organisations that met target	<u>£77,292.50</u>
Remaining Balance	£42,707.50
Released to date	£46,961.50

Contingency Fund

- 3.13 The Contingency Fund was set up by the Sub-Committee to extend the existing Emergency Fund from being purely a fund to support organisations facing 'life and limb' emergencies to a fund that may also support organisations facing the impact of a significant loss of council funding.
- 3.14 VCS organisations that meet criteria set out in the Contingency Fund agreed by the Sub Committee at its meeting on 6th November 2019 may apply to the council for funding to meet 'life and limb' emergencies, normally significant financial liabilities that might not have been reasonably foreseen.
- 3.15 Where an organisation has recently lost significant funding from the council the Contingency Fund may also be used to support an ongoing service if an organisation can demonstrate that there is a reasonable chance of alternative funding being secured, normally within six months of the end of council funding.

- 3.16 Awards are made from the Contingency Fund by the Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance in consultation with the Chair of this Sub-Committee. Details of awards made by officers under delegated authority from the Contingency Fund since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee are set out at Appendix A

Community Benefit Rent Reduction

- 3.17 No decisions to award CBRR have been made since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 3.18 The Community Benefit Rent Reduction (CBRR) scheme was set up by the council to acknowledge the value of the work carried out by voluntary and community organisations leasing its premises through a reduction in the rent payable. The council charges an appropriate ‘market’ level rent for its premises and organisations can apply for up to 80% of this as a rent reduction.
- 3.19 CBRR is only available for short leases of three to five years. To qualify, organisations need to meet a number of criteria relating to governance, management and quality standards. Full details of the scheme are set out on the council’s website at [CBRR page](#).
- 3.20 Decisions are made by the Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee based on recommendations of an advisory panel which consists of the Head of Revenues (Chair), Head of Corporate Strategy and Policy and the Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service.
- 3.21 Summary of CBRR Awarded

Total lease value per annum	CBRR (80%) Grant per annum	Organisation contribution per annum
£249,292	£207,034	£51,758

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The new Small Grants Programme themes set out in this report have been developed in response to the Equality Analysis of the report to Cabinet on 31st July 2019 ‘Local Community Fund’. All grants awarded will need to demonstrate how they meet they need of our diverse communities and support the council’s Public Sector Equality Duty.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

5.2 Risk Management

- a. There is a risk that, by not publishing details of funding awarded to VCS organisations, the council could leave itself open to challenge that it is not fulfilling previous commitments to openness and transparency. This report is one of a series that will provide updates on funding decisions made under delegated authority and the VCS Annual Report will provide more detailed analysis.

5.3 Crime Reduction

There are no specific crime reduction considerations arising from this report.

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 Small 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 notes the update on funding awarded to voluntary and community (VCS) organisations under delegated authority. Additional grants of £43,381 have been awarded from the Contingency Fund which brings the total awarded to date to £235,495 from an available budget of £250,000.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 *There are no legal implications directly arising out of this report.*

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

NONE

Appendices

Appendix A Contingency Fund

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

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COMMUNITY BENEFIT RENT REDUCTION

Emergency Awards

EMERGENCY FUNDING BUDGET FINANCIAL SUMMARY				
Original Budget £250,000				
No	Grant Phase	Previous awards:	Amount Awarded (£)	Amount Not accepted (£)
1	1	Tower Hamlets Law Centre	20,000	
2	1	Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets	19,936	
3	1	Senrab FC	5,330	
4	2	Jagonari	20,000	
5	2	Triratna Arts	15,000	
6	2	Weavers Adventure Playground	8,800	
7	2	Account3	19,400	
8	3	Bethnal Green Sharks Swimming Club	4,325	
9	3	Black Women's Health and Family Support		2,733
10	3	East London Asian Family Counselling	12,250	
11	3	Grand Union Music (Loan)		1,600
12	3	Women's Health and Family Service	9,782	
13	4	Rainbow Pre-School (Loan) - organisation deemed no longer eligible		12,600
14	5	Island Advice	12,000	
15	5	Brick Lane Women's and Girls Project	4,200	
16	5	SSBA Community Trust - Heba Women's Project	3,000	
17	6	Praxis Community Projects		3,120
18	7	Women's Environmental Network (Loan)		12,358
19	8	The Rooted Forum	6,130.01	

COMMUNITY BENEFIT RENT REDUCTION

EMERGENCY FUNDING BUDGET FINANCIAL SUMMARY				
Original Budget £250,000				
No	Grant Phase	Previous awards:	Amount Awarded (£)	Amount Not accepted (£)
20	12	Betar Bangla	10,000.00	
21	13	Home Start Tower Hamlets	13,658.60	
22	19	Beside Community Mental Health Project	2,060.00	
23	22	Black Women's Health & Family Support	6,241.89	
		Awarded to date	192,113.50	32,411

Transitional Awards

No.	Organisation Name	Summary of Request	Comments	Amount awarded
1	Green Candle Dance Company	Bridge funding for organisation's core costs needed to support projects and fundraising		7,725.00
2	Rooted Forum	Bridge funding for MSG projects		19,096.45
3	Udichi Shilpi Gosthi	Bridge funding for MSG projects		3,750.00
4	Vallance	Bridge funding for MSG projects		12,810.00
			TOTAL	43,381.45

In addition, three proposals have been declined as they do not meet the Contingency Fund criteria.