

<b>Grants Determination Sub Committee</b>	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
9 September 2020	
<b>Report of:</b> Will Tuckley, Chief Executive	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>MSG Project Performance Report – October 19 to March 20</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Robert Mee, Programme Analysis & Review Officer Emily Fieran-Reed, Senior Strategy & Policy Manager
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	Not a key decision
<b>Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome</b>	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.

At the 12th September 2017 Grants Determination Sub-Committee, the programme was extended to 31st March 2019.

A further extension to the programme, to the 30th September 2019, was agreed by the Grants Determination Sub-Committee at its meeting on the 6th June 2018.

At the 31 July Cabinet as part of the transitional arrangements following the move to the Local Community Fund it was agreed to continue to fund some MSG projects in the Community Languages and Lunch Club strands. The projects given this extension were confirmed at the Nov 6th Grants Determination Sub-Committee. This was at the same level of funding under the council's mainstream grants programme (MSG) for a period of six months from 1st October 2019 to 31st March 2020, subject to the same funding conditions as those in place for MSG funding and subject to continued satisfactory performance.

Projects are classified as Red, Amber or Green within the Council's agreed

performance management framework. This report covers the final period of the Mainstream Grant programme.

There were 17 live projects in October 19 to March 20, 10 Community Languages and 7 Lunch Clubs with all projects Green rated.

## **Recommendations:**

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the performance of the Mainstream Grants (MSG) programme as set out in 3.3 – 3.6 and the premises update 3.7 – 3.9.

## **1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 Regular performance updates ensure that the MSG themes and individual projects are on track to achieve the targeted outcomes.
- 1.2 Any issues that raise concerns can be addressed and appropriate remedial actions agreed. Where necessary, this could include the reduction, withdrawal or reallocation of funds to ensure that the overall Programme is making the most effective use of resources and maximising the potential achievement of agreed aims and objectives

## **2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Information relating to various aspects of project and monitoring activity is contained within the report to provide Grants Determination Sub Committee with an overall understanding of how projects and organisations have performed against the key elements of their Grant Agreements.
- 2.2 Grants Determination Sub Committee could request further information or alter the recommendations.

## **3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 For the reporting period October 19 to March 20, the MSG Programme had 17 live projects. The extension from October 2019 for 6 months was for projects from the Community Languages and Lunch Club strands.
- 3.2 At the 3rd July Grants Determination Sub-Committee, it was agreed to extend funding to the organisations delivering lunch clubs and community languages. This was at the same level of funding under the council's mainstream grants programme (MSG) for a period of six months from 1st October 2019 to 31st

March 2020, subject to the same funding conditions as those in place for MSG funding and also subject to continued satisfactory performance.

### **3.3 Theme 1 Children, Young People and Families – Community Languages**

The work of the theme focuses primarily on supporting children to raise attainment and supporting vulnerable and excluded children, young people and families.

The Community Languages strand contributed to the raising attainment element of the fund.

There were 10 live projects in October 19 to March 20 within this theme of which all are RAG rated Green.

The impact of Covid-19 taking effect in March did result in classes ending early. However, this impact was not enough to change the RAG rating classification.

### **3.4 Theme 3 Prevention, Health & Wellbeing – Lunch Clubs**

This theme is intended to achieve a range of targeted outcomes with a primary focus on what were traditionally referred to as adult services.

The Lunch Club strand helped contribute to the following priority:

- Increase the number of vulnerable residents leading healthier lifestyles through, for instance, improved diet, regular exercise and related activities, including attending lunch clubs (for those aged 50+)

There were 7 live projects in October 19 to March 20 within this theme of which all are RAG rated Green.

As part of the mitigation actions following the change from Mainstream Grants to the Local Community Fund a new theme in the Small Grants programme 'Community Support Services for Older People' was created with delivery starting from April. 5 projects funded through MSG up to March 20 were awarded funding through this programme.

The advent of Covid-19 and the impact from March meant that the Small Grants awarded through the 'Community Support Services for Older People' Theme were renegotiated so that resource could be used to support the Boroughs Covid-19 response.

In addition, the two organisations funded through MSG until March that were not able to apply to the Small Grants were commissioned through an RFQ process to provide support to residents from April.

### **Premises**

3.5 At the Grants Determination Sub Committee meeting on the 1st August 2018, it was agreed that subject to completion of an appropriate property agreement, the following organisations would receive a rent subsidy to cover the cost of rent up to the end of the MSG programme (30th September 2019).

- Age UK East London
- Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club
- Black Women's Health and Family Support
- Legal Advice Centre
- Stifford Centre
- Our Base
- Tower Hamlets Community Transport

3.6 Participation in the MSG Rent Subsidy scheme was dependant on an appropriate lease being agreed and only Our Base and Stifford Centre were able to do this before the original September 2019 deadline. Our Base subsequently closed following the end of MSG funding so only Stifford Centre has been part of this scheme. Payments are ongoing to Stifford Centre to fully cover the rent costs up to September 2019 (accruals were made to ensure the funding and expenditure were shown in the 2019/20 accounts).

3.7 The purpose of the MSG Rent Subsidy was to help prepare for the Community Benefit Rent Reduction (CBRR) scheme that would take effect from October 2019. The intention was to avoid organisations suddenly facing a steep increase in rent due to a new lease before the CBRR was in place. For those organisations that were not billed for rent before Sept 19 there was no need for MSG Rent Subsidy payments to be made.

3.8 Updates on these organisations premises position and progress in accessing the CBRR scheme will continue to be reported through the regular 'VCS Funding Awarded through Delegated Authority' reports that go to each GDSC meeting.

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

5.2 There are no other specific statutory implications relevant to consideration of this report.

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

6.1 The Main Stream Grant (MSG) Programme was approved by the Commissioners on the 29 July 2015 and initially covered the period between 1st September 2015 and 31st August 2018. However, subsequent Grants Determination Committees (GDC) revised the end date of the current programme to 30th September 2019; this was decided at a GDC meeting held on the 6th June 2018.

6.2 At the 31 July Cabinet as part of the transitional arrangements following the move to the Local Community Fund it was agreed to continue to fund some MSG projects in the Community Languages and Lunch Club strands. The projects given this extension were confirmed at the Nov 6th Grants Determination Sub-Committee. This will be at the same level of funding under the council's mainstream grants programme (MSG) for a period of six months from 1st October 2019 to 31st March 2020. Appendix 2 lists the organisations.

6.3 The Council's MSG programme is budgeted at approximately £3.049m per annum. Funding exists within individual directorate budgets to fully fund the agreed programme and associated payments until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

6.4 At the conclusion of the MSG programme, there will need to be a full review of expenditure and income to determine the remaining funds available to deliver the post MSG programme from 2019-20 onwards. If at the point of the review it is determined that there is the potential for incurring costs that exceed the current envelope, those additional costs will need to be approved using existing financial procedures and rules before any further commitments can be made.

## **7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 The only legal implication arising from this report is that some organisations are resident in Council buildings without a formal agreement and this should be resolved at the first possible opportunity. This is to align with a determination made previously when the grant function was performed by central government commissioners.
- 7.2 The remainder of the report aligns with previous decisions made by the sub-committee
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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Project Performance October 2019– March 2020

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

- None

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

Or state N/A