

Grants Determination Cabinet Sub-Committee 23 rd June 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
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)	Awo Ahmed, Programme Assessment & Monitoring Officer Emily Fieran-Reed, Senior Strategy and Policy Manager Robert Mee, Programme Assessment and Review Officer
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	
Reason for Key Decision	
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.

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 funding programmes to support voluntary and community sector organisations in the borough where decisions are made under delegated authority either by officers and, in the case of the Small Grants Programme, with the assistance of 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 the VCS in the borough set out in the VCS Strategy.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Small Grants Programme

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 Since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee there has been no further funding awarded from the Small Grants Programme.
- 3.3 The small grants programme has five themes that constitute the main programme and three that are focussed themes as detailed below.

Main 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.
5. **Partnership working** - making the sector more effective through closer partnership working within the sector and across sectors.

Focussed 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** – 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 Since the start of the pandemic, EECF have been liaising closely with all previously funded programmes and requesting Covid contingency plans detailing how they have re-purposed their small grants award since the pandemic. All contingency plans are sent to officers in Corporate Strategy and Policy for sign off. Further due diligence work is carried out by EECF with organisations that have re-configured delivery in light of Covid ensuring risk assessments and social distancing policies are applied. Approved contingency plans are set out in in **Appendix A**.

3.5 Round one of the small grant's awards closed for applications on the 10th May 2021 and applications are currently being assessed. Successful organisations will be informed w/c 19th July 2021.

3.6 Total budget available and expenditure across all the themes to date is set out below.

Small Grants Financial Summary						
Theme	2019/20 budget £,000s	2019/20 expenditure £,000s	2020/21 budget £,000s	2020/21 expenditure £,000s	2021/22 budget £,000s	2020/21 expenditure £,000s
Innovation Prevention Neighbourhood action Community Cohesion Partnership working	90	90	180	57	180	120
Community Support Services for Older People	0	0	100	100	100	100

Access and Participation	0	0	50	15	50	25
Loneliness	0	0	50	27	0	0
Totals	90	90	380	199	330	245

Innovation Fund

- 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 Details of pledges agreed by officers under delegated authority since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee for the Innovation Fund is set out in **Appendix B**
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 At the Commissioners Decision Making Meeting on the 12th April 2016 the creation of the Innovation Fund was agreed.
- 3.11 The Council has an agreement with the crowdfunding portal, Spacehive, to support local VCS organisations crowdfund for projects and the Innovation Fund budget is £180,000. Total awards to date are £133,479.25 with a remaining balance of £46,520.75
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 Further details can be found on [SpaceHive Tower Hamlets](#) and the [Innovation Fund](#) pages with more information available in the [factsheet](#).

Contingency Fund

- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 At the meeting held on 29 July 2020, Cabinet agreed to close the transition element of the Contingency Fund and extend the Fund further to include support for organisations affected by Covid 19. The Covid Community fund opened for applications on the 5th Nov 2020. For a limited period, Voluntary

and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Tower Hamlets will be able to access funding and organisational support.

- 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. There have been no awards against this fund since the last Sub-Committee meeting.

Covid Community Fund

- 3.17 The Covid Community Fund Budget is £100k, to date three organisations have been awarded funding totalling £13,972. The remaining balance is £86,028.
- 3.18 Since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee there has been no further funding awarded under delegated authority for the Covid Community Fund.

Emergency Funding

- 3.19 The Emergency Funding budget is £50,000 and the remaining balance is £43,153.00 There has been no funding awarded under delegated authority for Emergency Funding for this period.
- 3.20 Since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee there has been no further funding awarded under delegated authority for Emergency Funding.

Community Benefit Rent Reduction

- 3.21 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
- 3.22 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](#).
- 3.23 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.
- 3.24 CBRR awards that have been made by officers under delegated authority since the last Sub-Committee's meeting is detailed...

CBRR Financial Summary			
	Total rent payable pa	CBRR (80%) Grant per annum	Organisation contribution pa
Applications approved	£278,396	£207,037	£55,679
Leases completed and CBRR payable	£54,062	£45,051	£9,010

3.25 Community Benefit Rent Reduction has been approved to 11 Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and the funding is subject to the completion of their leases and an annual review. The following are four active CBRR cases with completed leases:

- Dorset Community Association
- Legal Advice Centre
- SPLASH
- Weavers Community Forum

3.26 Legal Advice Centre has been funded longer than a year. A successful annual monitoring review was carried out in conjunction with its LCF programme.

3.27 Black Women's Health & Family Support is now insolvent. The keys to its premises have been returned to the council. The lease was not completed.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All grants awarded need to demonstrate how they meet they need of our diverse communities and support the council's Public Sector Equality Duty. Equalities data is collected as part of the monitoring process and this will be reported as part of the annual reporting process.

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

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 monitoring of the Small Grants Programme.

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

6.1 This is an update report and therefore there are no direct financial implications from the report.

7. **COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

NONE

Appendices

Appendix A Small Grants Contingency Plans

Appendix B Innovation Funding Award

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents

Appendix A - Small Grants Awards 2020/21

Small Grants Contingency Plans

LBTH Small Grants Fund - Contingency Plans				
Organisation	Round	Initial Project Plan	Theme	Proposed Changes
Spitalfields City Farm	Aug-20	<p>Proposed changes as approved by Tower Hamlets Council (Council approved but requested an update on the project in Feb 2021):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay the start date for delivery until March in hope for better weather to be outdoors • These weekly older generational sessions will be held outdoors, in our large farm gardens to allow for necessary social distancing, numbers will be limited to 10 per session. • Staff will wear PPE; more equipment will be purchased to allow for cleaning and rotation of tools. • We are researching how to allow for intergenerational gardening with social distancing. Currently we are proposing that these sessions will be delivered in school holidays, rather than evenly throughout the project and promoting sessions for grandparents and grandchildren, as a lot of these live together or have formed support bubbles. <p>Overall, our project remains the same but with a delay in start time and the intergenerational sessions held over school holidays not throughout the project. The limitations in numbers will be reviewed monthly with guidelines and changed accordingly.</p>	Community Cohesion	<p>Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the total beneficiary numbers will decrease from 200 to 100 beneficiaries to allow for safe social distancing. This will ultimately make the project better value for money, as the cost of the project will work out to be £50 per beneficiary. EECF has explored the possibility of increasing level of delivery with the organisation, but agree that reducing the beneficiary numbers will enrich the beneficiaries' experience. Updated request is to reduce the beneficiary numbers, and keep the project plan the same.</p>
Associates of Community Trust UK	Aug-20	<p>A 36-week programme of women only coffee mornings for older women from BAME backgrounds living in Bethnal Green and the surrounding areas. The project will aim to reduce the barriers that this group face when participating in the community and will include workshops on local history, people and culture. Sessions will last for 2 hours and will be participant led, refreshments will be provided and socialising will be encouraged. Most participants</p>	Community Cohesion	<p>The organisation would like to extend their end of project date until October 2021. Due to Covid-19, they have purchased food and necessary household items for their beneficiaries, and increased hours for the sessional worker. The total cost of the project remains the same.</p>

		will live in a similar area and activities will be designed to build friendships, increase self-esteem and enhance wellbeing.		
Un-Age	Aug-20	An intergenerational and entrepreneurial mentoring project that matches young people with food business ideas with older people that have skills and experience in the sector. The organisation will approach the council and it's established partners to recruit participants and arrange co-design sessions to ensure the programme best meets the needs of beneficiaries. Activities will then include finding a match, mentoring, business modelling, cooking, networking events and sessions with food start-ups and Un-Age alumni. From September to December sessions will be mostly taking place online and in the new year ideas will be tested in markets and fairs.	Innovation	Due to Covid-19 restrictions, and the ill-health of one of the project's lead mentors, the organisation has not been able to implement the project to date. The request is to adapt the project to implement a similar entrepreneurial mentoring project (minus the intergenerational aspect). Outreach is planned to begin ASAP, and the plan is that they'll run a first cohort that would impact 8 to 12 food start-ups finished on time in line with the end of project date (end of July 2021). This first cohort would then serve as a pilot and as a co-designing experience for the delivery of future cohorts.
The Lower Regents Coalition	May-20	To deliver the East End Canal Festival, celebrating 200 years of the Regent's Canal with workshops, presentations and open days in advance of the event. This will include an art exhibition inspired by the canal, boat trips, guided walks, stalls, children's activities, creative workshops and a floating cinema. The grant requested would cover project management, the costs of providing the boat trips and the production of a film by local filmmaker, gathering memories from Bangladeshi residents about living by water in Bangladesh to illustrate a history in common. This would then be screened at the event and used in the organisations work with schools and other local organisations.	Community Cohesion	Due to Covid-19, and difficulties finding a suitable venue in time, the organisation would like to postpone the 2021 Festival to 16 and 17 July 2022 when they have secured a new booking for the Art Pavilion.

ALL 4 TEENS	May-20	<p>The organisation is proposing to deliver a varied programme of sessions for 40 young BME people, aged 13-19, hosted at Granby Hall. Participants will be recruited through the organisations existing sport sessions, posters and links with other community groups. The project will run for 48 weeks and sessions will take place every Tuesday evening for two hours. Each week the participants will alternate between boys and girls and two qualified volunteer youth workers will support the delivery. The project plan includes the following for each group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 cooking and nutrition sessions • 6 life skills sessions on subjects such as budgeting and planning for the future • 3 workshops delivered by inspirational role models such as the Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets • 3 sessions on community issues such as drug and alcohol awareness and gang culture 	Prevention	<p>Due to Covid-19 and ill health of a lead staff member, the organisation has been unable to deliver the project. Requesting an extension of the project start date to July 2021, and monitoring report due date extended until March 2022.</p>
Shahnaz Rifat	May-20	<p>Funding to deliver a programme of support for 20 expectant and new mothers. The project will provide a safe space for mothers to share their thoughts and feelings and sessions will take place on a fortnightly basis. The activities will alternate between a talking group at which participants will discuss stress management and overcoming isolation and a walking group which will encourage physical activity and healthy behaviours. The group will meet at John Smith Children’s Centre and walks will take place at local parks. Mindful Mums aims to create intentional spaces of safety (both physical and psychological) for expectant and new mothers, to belong, to feel listened to, and valued. Talking group (once a month, 2 hours a session, alternating with walking group), and Walking group (once a month, 2 hour per session, alternating with talking group).</p>	Loneliness	<p>Shahnaz in partnership with Social Action for Health would like to adapt the delivery plan to deliver a Pilates class for expectant mothers and new mothers and birth support meetings. They will deliver these activities in a face-to-face setting in a hall starting in May (after Eid). The funding would be applied to pay for a Pilates tutor and venue hire. 1 x 1 hour antenatal and post-natal pilates class each week – Tuition@ £30 per hour = £30 x 26 weeks = £780. Venue hire - pilates – assuming we will be able to meet in person – 1.5 hours @£25 per hour x 16 weeks = £600. Total = £1,380. Project would support 20 beneficiaries (same as original proposal). Grant award is £1,000 and other costs will be covered by Social Action for Health</p>

Woodwork for Wellbeing	Aug-20	A year-long programme of weekly woodwork for wellbeing sessions for 10 participants at a time. Sessions will last for 2.5 hours and attendees will be encouraged to get to know one another and begin with simple projects that introduce techniques. Much of the sessions will be devoted to engaging with the people whilst working and offering tuition whilst providing respite from daily life. Participants will be referred to the programme through NHS services, particularly a specific local GP, and an established network of local organisations. The start date of this project was delayed - LBTH did not approve contingency plan due to Covid-19 restrictions in Jan/Feb 2021.	Prevention	The organisation would like to extend their end of project date until September 2021 and deliver the sessions - they would like to return to their original numbers (10 beneficiaries per session) - and will take all the necessary precautions regarding social distancing, and wearing face masks. If stricter regulations are in place, they will deliver the project in groups of up to six people. The end of grant report date will need to be extended to match this - recommending extending to September 2022.
Wadajiir Somali Community Centre	Mar-20	The organisation is applying for funding to continue delivering a lunch club for local Somali women aged 55 and over. Sessions will take place between 10am and 2pm Monday to Thursday and will be held at Teviot Community Hall. Approximately 20 women are expected to attend the club on a daily basis and each attendee will contribute £2 towards the cost of a meal. Sessions will also provide a chance to socialise, gain access to support services, learn healthy recipes and take part in traditional Somali dance classes, run by volunteers. Additionally, on Wednesdays and Thursdays an advice worker, already employed at the centre, will be present to give advice on issues such as benefits, rent and utilities. The club already has an existing member base and it is expected that new members will join the group through word of mouth and referrals from the organisation's other services. The project was originally due to finish in mid-April 2021.	Older People	The organisation has asked for the monitoring report due date to be extended to end of July 2021 . The delay in reporting on the project is due to staff sickness (Covid-19).
Wadajiir Somali Community Centre	May-20	The organisation is applying for funding to deliver a programme of activities for 30 young Somali women aged 11 to 19. Drop-in sessions will take place for three hours on Saturday and Sunday afternoons at Teviot Community Hall and will provide the opportunity to socialise in a culturally appropriate environment. Activities will include arts and crafts, healthy eating sessions,	Loneliness	Final monitoring report due date to be extended to end of September 2021 . The delay in reporting on the project is due to staff sickness (Covid-19).

		higher education workshops and intergenerational Somali dancing. The Project was originally due to finish in June 2021.		
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Appendix B – Innovation Funding

No.	Organisation / Project	Total crowdfunding target	Recommended pledge	Reason for Recommendation
1.	<p>Fitzrovia Noir Community Interest Company Making Space in Poplar</p>	£35,968	£10,000	<p>Fitzrovia Noir CIC was incorporated in 2011, set up in partnership by Lucy Williams and Garry Hunter (Project Delivery Manager of Making Space in Polar)</p> <p>The pitch This project is a response to the Pandemic and they want to get people of their phones and devices and to take part in outdoor covid secure safe activities, working with the Royal College of Art & Crafts Council they will be training people in glass making. The organisation has been operating in the borough over ten years and they have conducted research on the demographics of the local community and would like to bring different communities together in glass making activities, volunteering and training – in a purposely built covid secure premises.</p> <p>Fitzrovia Noir acknowledge that most of the beneficiaries live in flats with no outdoor space, by encouraging residents to put down their devices that have become part of everyone’s lives in the last year and to come out and partake in outdoor activities.</p> <p>Delivery;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large collaborative glass chandelier for the community to enjoy • New, Covid-secured outdoor and indoor Making Spaces • Opportunities to acquire new design and making skills <p>Steps to get it done;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating raw/recyclable materials while promoting upcycling ideas • Demonstrating glassblowing, to recruit participants • Conducting fused glass workshops in safely distanced groups, indoors • Firing of elements, involving participants in assembly and lighting • Open invitation launch events for participants, their families and any interested parties • Expanding usable outdoor areas through a design and build project with young people • Securing work experience, apprenticeships and employment for young people with local developers • Securing more 'meanwhile spaces' locally to encourage more creative practice in the neighbourhood <p>Project Outcomes;</p>

- Creative making will facilitate cultural understanding and social cohesion across a very wide demographic.
- Giving people 'a place to be' to share their thoughts and issues, with applied arts and culinary practice offering opportunities to learn new skills.
- Most local residents have no personal outside space, so by creating a multi-use outdoor Making Space we can encourage wellbeing through physical activities including glassmaking and ceramics.
- The construction of an upcycled 'chandelier' will involve people of all ages, guided by professional glassmakers.

Project Page information – 05th May @ 11.52pm

Total amount – £35,968

Pledged to date – £23,183

Campaign deadline – 11th May 2021.

Number of backers – 98

Using the IF assessment criteria the organisation scored 89% - with this score the organisation is eligible for 50% of total target, this equates to £10,000.

Documents Attached

- Fitrovia Noir CIC Governance In the Light Of Covid 19 2020-2023
- Safeguarding Policy 2020-2023 (health and safety in the penultimate paragraph of page 2)

Experience of Glass Blowing/Making

Trained in the early 90's experienced Glass Makers Tom Chadwin curator of the Glass Biennale and a Board Member of The Crafts Council will be facilitating the sessions. This will be project managed by experienced tutor Doralba Picerno of Picture Utopia CIC, who has led creative learning at Tower Hamlets College and Barking College.

Additional Health & Safety Provisions

Health and Safety is at the absolute core of what we do, tuition in glass making and blowing (when safe to do so) is one-to-one and we cordon off the furnace/fuel well away from participants, who are carefully guided by makers to ensure everyone's safety. Audience members are kept well away behind a barrier and all equipment is fully tested the day before.

Additional Info provided by the project delivery manager – 5th May 2021

I'm now working with Caroline Murray who joined Poplar HARCA's Accents team in March, to involve youth groups from Spotlight at Langdon Park and have just been in

touch with both Jill at New City College and Tom at Volunteer-It-Yourself, who we first worked with eighteen months ago, their quotes copied in below - this is for a feature on the new Poplar London blog.

Conditions of offer

Fitzrovia Noir to obtain written consent from Landlords that they support the project and consent to the renovations

% Received	Amount to be pledged
76% - 100%	Recommended for funding – 50% of total target up to a maximum of £10,000

Using the innovation fund criteria above the organisation is recommended to be awarded £10,000 of the Innovation Funding providing the conditions above are met.



