

Tower Hamlets New Grants Programme Engagement

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council conducted engagement activities between December 2022-January 2023 to support the development of the new Grants Policy & Outcomes Framework which consists of:

- A Mayor's Community Grant Programme for the voluntary and community sector (VCS), which will replace the current Local Community Fund programme in October 2023
- A Small Grants Programme that is proposed to commence in October 2023.

1.2 The engagement was launched on 5th December and concluded on 31st January 2023. It involved engagement with a range of external stakeholders:

- VCS organisations in the borough
- Residents of the borough
- People who work or study in the borough
- Any other interested partners or stakeholders

1.3 The total number of people engaged in this process totalled 309 and involved 144 VCS organisations.

1.4 The purpose of this engagement was to seek feedback on the themes and priorities proposed under the new grants programmes, and to further explore whether they address the needs of the community. The Council will consider all feedback obtained in the engagement process – and from the internal engagement process outlined in section 6 below - when finalising the Programme.

2. Methods of Engagement

2.1 To ensure a cross section of the borough contributes to this process a range of different engagement methods were incorporated into the engagement plan.

(a) VCS Organisation Engagement Workshops

(i) Six engagement workshops with VCS organisations took place across different geographical areas of the borough, using a number of techniques:

- The Ecology Pavilion, Mile End on 15th December 2022 (in-person)

- The Reach Community Hub, Poplar on 17th December 2022 (in person)*
- Osmani Centre, Whitechapel on 10th January 2023 (in person) *
- Virtual event 18th January 2023 (on-line)
- Professional Development Centre, Bethnal Green on 26th January 2023 (hybrid: in person and on-line)
- St Luke's Millwall Church Hall, Isle of Dogs on 31st January 2023 (in person) #

* Aimed at smaller VCS organisations with annual incomes of less than £150,000 a year.

Aimed at VCS organisations of all sizes, but also covered Small Grants Programme

(ii) The workshops were facilitated by Council and Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service (THCVS) staff. They involved presentations from LBTH Cabinet members that highlighted the Council's commitment to the VCS.

(iii) The above workshops were publicised via:

- LBTH website consultation platform (Lets Talk Tower Hamlets)
- LBTH social media
- LBTH Councillors
- LBTH VCS Newsletter – December 2022 and special January 2023 edition
- THCVS web site, newsletter and officer networking
- Eventbrite web site

(iv) The workshops were attended by 155 people from 144 VCS organisations. Those in attendance were based in a wide range of localities in the borough and included organisations representing and supporting a range of protected characteristic groups.

(b) On-line Engagement Survey

(i) An on-line engagement survey took place between 6th December 2022 and 31st January 2023. It was set up on the Let's Talk Tower Hamlets Platform on the Council's web site.

(ii)

(iii) The survey was publicised via:

- Council Social media channels- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, intranet, website, members bulletin, VCS newsletter
- CVS Website and Newsletter
- other Council engagement activity on the proposed grant programmes – VCS engagement workshops and engagement with residents at the Ideas Stores

(iv) The survey was completed by 57 people. Breakdown of survey respondents includes:

- 31 respondents (35%) were Tower Hamlets residents
- 38% of respondents were people who work/study in the borough
- A quarter of respondents were responding on behalf of an organisation/group/association in the Tower Hamlets
- 2 business organisations in the borough responded.

(c) Engagement with residents

(i) Engagement events were held at Ideas Stores–Bow, Chrisp Street, Whitechapel and Cubitt Town Library between 16th and 25th January 2023 - This involved the set up of pop-up stalls in the Ideas Stores to engage residents visiting these facilities. An additional engagement session was organised by the Limehouse Project, where 30 women from Black, Asian & Multi-Ethic communities were engaged. A total of 97 residents were engaged as part of this process.

3. Prioritisation of Mayor’s Community Grant Programme Themes

3.1 The engagement activity involved the Council:

- Sharing the proposed themes and priorities of the Mayor’s Community Grants programme and, where applicable, the proposed themes of the Small Grants Programme
- Asking participants to confirm which is the most important theme of the proposed Mayor’s Community Grant programme. This question was addressed in the on-line survey and resident engagement and in four of the six VCS engagement workshops.

3.2 The Tackling the Cost-of-Living theme was identified as the most important one by all forms of engagement:

- 31% of respondents to this question from the VCS engagement workshops
- 63% of on-line respondents identified this as the top priority
- Feedback from resident engagement highlighted this theme as the most important priority, detailing difficulties in managing their families and spreading money that does not provide enough for bills and food.

3.3 Culture, Business, Jobs and Skills was another theme that was identified as important by participants in the engagement:

- It was the second highest priority theme for participants in the VCS workshops, with 22%
- The second highest percentage of on-line survey respondents identifying it as extremely important: 52%

3.4 The on-line engagement survey also asked respondents to identify the most important scheme under each of the proposed priorities. The schemes with the highest percentage are detailed below:

- 59% - Crisis Support for Tackling the Cost of Living theme
- 36% - Access to Youth Provision for Culture, Business, Jobs and Skills theme.

3.5 In the VCS workshops the theme with the lowest percentage of respondents prioritising was Accelerate Education with 11%.

3.6 In the on-line survey the theme with the lowest percentage of respondents identifying it as extremely important was Empower Communities and Fight Crime, with 41%.

4. Outcomes and Activities for Mayor's Community Grant Programme

4.1 All participants in the VCS workshops and resident engagement were asked to identify potential outcomes and activities to be delivered under each of proposed Mayor's Community Grant programme themes. Respondents to the on-line survey were asked to identify potential activities under the programme themes. Their responses are summarised in Table 1.

5. Small Grants Programme

5.1 The engagement process also obtained participants' views on what outcomes and activities should be delivered under the proposed Small Grants Programme themes. Their responses are summarised in Table 2.

5.2 The online engagement survey sought feedback from respondents on how important they thought a number of proposed schemes for the Small Grants Programme are in terms of developing the VCS and support for residents. The schemes with the highest percentage of respondents seeing it as important were the following:

- Young people are prevented from becoming involved in harmful and/or anti-social activities: 45%
- Young people to improve their physical and mental health: 39%
- Reduce social isolation: 38%

6. Internal Council Engagement

6.1 Ten workshops were held with relevant senior managers in the council on the Mayor's Community Grant Programme and Small Grants Programme. This involved providing information on the proposed focus of the above programmes and to obtain feedback on what outcomes and activities they would like the programmes to deliver. A summary of this is included in table 1 & 2 below. These workshops took place between 10th January and 1st February 2023 with the following services:

- Benefits & Revenue
- Community Safety
- Culture & Commissioning
- Customer Services
- Education
- Growth & Economic Development
- Independent Living
- Integrated Commissioning
- Public Health
- Youth

6.2 Two briefing sessions were held with elected members, on the 24th and 31st January 2023, involving 12 members in total. A summary of suggested outcome and activities are included in table 1 & 2 below.

Table 1 – Mayor’s Community Grant Programme – Proposed Outcomes and Activities Identified By Engagement Process

Programme Theme	Proposed Outcomes	Proposed Activities
Cost of Living Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income maximisation and the reduction of the number of people who are living in poverty and debt • Residents are aware of their rights and obligations and what they are entitled to from the state i.e. benefits entitlements • Residents grow and develop new capabilities which stop them falling into poverty and help them escape it • Better health and enhanced wellbeing, including access to housing • Promoting independence, enabling local residents to be more independent from advice and Council services • Supporting residents to get access to nutritious food and drink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored and holistic advice and support that uncovers the root causes of poverty, • One-stop shops across the borough • Interpreting services to support advice/guidance sessions • Food banks/co-operatives and community larders that provide food to hungry people, with links developed with advice services • Targeted support, including financial training, for groups more likely to be in poverty such as Somali and Bengali women • Education on finance management, energy savings, buying and cooking healthy food • Warm hubs • Increasing the capacity in the VCS to be able to engage in partnership initiatives such as the Resident Hub model. • Baby bank network – taking secondhand prams, clothes for babies and donating to families experiencing poverty. • School uniform banks, providing warm coats and actual money for new clothes – shirts and blouses.
Accelerate Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in young people’s well-being, including mental health • Residents are able to speak in mother tongue languages to improve their overall learning outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic support to address young people’s well-being • Mother tongue education services and ESOL, including a focus on health and education • Innovative outreach support – e.g. in barber shops, embedding tutors within youth

Table 1 – Mayor’s Community Grant Programme – Proposed Outcomes and Activities Identified By Engagement Process

Programme Theme	Proposed Outcomes	Proposed Activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in young people’s leadership skills • Young people are enabled to secure good jobs • Improve the confidence of everyone – young and old - building resilience and self- esteem, developing relationships and aspirations • Reduction in anti-social behaviour, radicalisation, crime, substance abuse and post-code wars • Improved English language skills for residents who do not speak English • Development of skills for life 	<p>projects to support with homework clubs,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs • Music and cultural activities, featuring a diverse range of cultures. • Online safety guidance and support for young and older children and some specific groups of adults, such as women. • Targeted activity to improve the digital skills of vulnerable groups, such as disabled people • Skills for employability • Fast track training programmes that help young people to obtain employment – e.g. in Canary Wharf • Mentoring and provision of advice in schools, including focus on rights and responsibilities of citizens • After school clubs and mix-sports activities • Extracurricular educational activities for children who are in care • Engaging parents in lifelong learning
Culture, Jobs, Business and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting people into employment • Reducing poverty and social isolation • Reduction in crime • Improved perception of young people • Improved health outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on a range of skills – digital, soft, language, functional, how to find work/CV writing • Local training and employment partnerships and projects for local people, including for people not in education, employment and training (NEETs) and women

Table 1 – Mayor’s Community Grant Programme – Proposed Outcomes and Activities Identified By Engagement Process

Programme Theme	Proposed Outcomes	Proposed Activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents take part in arts and culture activities for the first time • Residents’ confidence and mental health is developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare and child-minding training for young mothers • Training courses on green issues and environmental volunteering • Arts & craft and cookery classes • Targeted sports for women • Celebratory events – focusing on different culture, heritages and community histories • Cultural project which also provide employment • Conservation work and local history workshops • Film, arts and drama groups and exhibitions • Funding for cultural events throughout the year, with flexibility if unexpected events arise – e.g. the King’s Coronation • Enabling VCS organisations to use empty buildings and shops to provide services, activities, and events.
Invest in Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved awareness of and access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services • Improved community cohesion • Residents’ aspirations are raised, with their confidence and resilience developed to empower them to make choices • Better educational outcomes • Improved mental and physical health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch clubs, coffee mornings, community cafes, gardening clubs and inter-generational groups to bring people together to tackle loneliness and social isolation • Coaching/mentoring/leadership programmes • Sports and wellbeing activities • Raising awareness of mental health and mental health support, including amongst Black, Asian & Multi-Ethnic communities • Social prescribing, where patients are referred to community services

Table 1 – Mayor’s Community Grant Programme – Proposed Outcomes and Activities Identified By Engagement Process

Programme Theme	Proposed Outcomes	Proposed Activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced health inequalities in Tower Hamlet’s communities • Reduction in social isolation • Crime prevention • Residents gain new skills and feel more engaged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meals on wheels services • Community events and fayres • Peer support and health and wellbeing support activities, including training in resilience • Befriending services for isolated people • Promoting discussions between young and older people e.g. local area and history • Diverse well-being activities for carers – e.g. yoga, arts & crafts, museum visits • Activities specifically targeted at women and girls
Empower Communities and Fight Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men and boys are better educated on the need to respect women • Improved community cohesion, including between different communities and age groups • Reduction in crime, anti-social behaviour and drug use • Improved relationships between young people and people in authority – e.g. police • Reduction in structural racism • Ex-offenders’ life opportunities are enhanced, particularly in relation to sustainable employment • Improved opportunities for women and Black Asian & Multi-Ethnic residents • Residents feel safer in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising campaigns, including education and awareness raising in schools on violence against women and girls • Providing culturally sensitive services to combat violence against women and girls, especially within the Somali community • Peer support projects for women, including for survivors of domestic abuse and for women aged 55+ and walking with women projects • Providing support for children and young people who are misusing drugs and alcohol • Self-defence classes for young people and women. • Youth clubs, after school clubs, breakfast clubs and school trips • Youth workshops focusing on community safety • Community safety projects to combat violence and hate

Table 1 – Mayor’s Community Grant Programme – Proposed Outcomes and Activities Identified By Engagement Process

Programme Theme	Proposed Outcomes	Proposed Activities
		<p>crime against LGBT communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement activities between police and local community. • Organising regular multicultural meetings and events to celebrate diversity. • 1-1 support for victims of crime • Fast track training for ex-offenders, leading to employment placements, with practical teaching opportunity and mentorship support • Social drop-in and activities for visually impaired people • Empowerment projects for people with learning disabilities • Sport and physical exercises for women, including free gym and swimming • Promotion of cycling with Black, Asian & Multi-Ethnic communities

Table 2 – Small Grants Programme - Proposed Outcomes and Activities Identified By Engagement Process

Programme Theme	Proposed Outcomes	Proposed Activities
Mayor's Youth Empowerment Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of sense of pride and ownership for young people • Enhanced communication and leadership skills for young people • Improved confidence and enhanced aspirations for young people • Improved educational attainment • Young people's voices are heard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on range of areas - financial and project management, decision making and leadership. IT coding, careers advice • Resilience development • Sports - football, martial arts, • Arts projects • Mentoring projects, including peer mentoring • Social media projects • Early help hubs to support young people
Positive Activities for Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in life skills, public facing skills, confidence and safety • Enhanced mental and physical health • Improved understanding of intergenerational differences • Better understanding of different cultures and diversity • Girls feel safe about participating in community activities • Ensuring that young people can disconnect from constant IT usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth centres • Out of school term clubs • Arts & crafts and science projects • Summer camps. • Sports – e.g. swimming, martial arts classes. • Theatre • Meditation classes • Educational trips. • Mentoring activities and information advice & guidance • Inter-generational activities with elderly communities. • Trips out of London and overseas • Visits to farms and national heritage sites • Development activities focusing exclusively on girls.

Table 2 – Small Grants Programme - Proposed Outcomes and Activities Identified By Engagement Process

Programme Theme	Proposed Outcomes	Proposed Activities
Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of confidence • Promoting community cohesion and better understanding between different communities • Improved health and well-being • Better participation in sporting activities • More representative community activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Peoples Tea Dance with entertainment • Borough wide celebrations to mark specific events and local history: International Womens Day, Black History Month, LGBT History Month • Health and wellbeing events, involving health checks and healthy activities • Outdoor events that explore local landscape • Festivals, cultural celebrations and arts events • Dance and learning to dance • Cultural celebrations, art events and exhibitions, including photographic exhibitions
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced infrastructure and expertise within VCS organisations • Improved management and governance practices adopted by VCS organisations • VCS organisations are enabled to develop their potential and expertise • Shared expertise between VCS organisations, particularly smaller ones • VCS organisations are able to deliver targets and deliverables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions to deliver additional or reactive/emergency work to secure programme and project targets • Capital costs and premises renovation and development – e.g. equipment, new boiler • Support in accessing external funding – e.g. bid writing workshops

Table 2 – Small Grants Programme - Proposed Outcomes and Activities Identified By Engagement Process

Programme Theme	Proposed Outcomes	Proposed Activities
	<p>agreed with funders and to survive emergency situations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring and peer support for larger VCS organisations • Development, networking and peer support for smaller VCS organisations • Training
<p>Community Chest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved relationships within the community, including improved inter-faith cohesion • Removing barriers to people taking part in activities • Enabling people to get together, reducing loneliness and social isolation, building relationships and promoting cultural awareness • Promoting a sense of community, belonging and civic pride • Personal development of beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family-focused health and well-being events • Celebratory events, trips and exchange visits to promote understanding between different cultures and religions • Training • Payment for project running costs - transports, leaflets, and refreshments • Buying new equipment • Day trips • Concerts and theatres for people who have not experienced such events before