

<p style="text-align: center;">Grants Determination Sub-Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11 October 2023</p>	
<p>Report of: Robin Beattie, Acting Director of Strategy, Improvement & Transformation</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Local Community Fund (LCF) Performance Report April 2023 – June 2023</p>	

Executive Summary

The performance report for the Local Community Fund programme covers the period April 2023 to June 2023 and reports on the five themes of the LCF and the Infrastructure & Capacity Building funding. The Project Summary (Appendix 2) gives an update by each project.

Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the performance of the Local Community Fund (LCF) programme as set out in 3.2 to 3.7 and Appendix 2 for April 2023 – June 2023
2. Note the performance of the Infrastructure & Capacity Building project as set out in 3.9.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee's (GDSC) Terms of Reference sets out the need to provide performance report to the Committee.
- 1.2 Regular performance updates ensure that the LCF themes and individual projects are on track to achieve the targeted outcomes. Any issues that arise 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 GDSC with an overall understanding of how projects and organisations have performed against the key elements of their Funding Agreements.
- 2.2** GDSC could request further information or alter the recommendations.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 Background

- (a)** The Mayor in Cabinet agreed on 31st July 2019 to a programme of funding for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations from 1st October 2019. This programme is called the Local Community Fund (LCF) with 50 projects awarded funding totalling £9.31m up to 31 March 2023 to deliver activity across five themes:
- Inclusion Health and Wellbeing
 - Digital Inclusion and Awareness
 - Information Advice and Guidance
 - Employment and Skills
 - Community Safety.
- (b)** At GDSC meeting on 9th March 2022 it was agreed that the above LCF projects would be extended until September 2023 to ensure that Council-funded VCS services are in operation whilst the Council develops new funding options for the VCS to commence in October 2023 (now re-scheduled to commence in November 2023). The cost of this extension amounts to £1,329,616.
- (c)** The delivery of the LCF Programme has been supported by the Infrastructure & Capacity Building Programme. At GDSC meeting on 3rd July 2019 it was agreed that funding of £780,000 from this programme would be allocated between October 2019 to September 2022 to Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service (THCVS) to deliver infrastructure support for local VCS organisations and support the VCS in strategic partnership working. It was agreed at GDSC meeting on 25th January 2023 that funding for THCVS to deliver this programme would be extended from October 2022 to September 2023, on the basis of a £260,000 grant.
- (d)** Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 29th March 2023 to authorise the Chief Executive to agree to an extension of four weeks for current core Council grant funded VCS services – the Local Community Fund (LCF) and the Infrastructure & Capacity Building programmes - beyond their scheduled end date of 30th September 2023. This was agreed to enable these services to remain in operation until the new Mayor's Community Grant Programme starts in November 2023. This extension was subsequently confirmed by the Chief Executive for the whole month of October 2023 at a total cost of £241,304.

3.2 Overview of April-June 2023

- (a)** LCF providers are making good progress towards delivering their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and project outcomes, enabling local residents to fulfil their potential and access required support.
- (b)** LCF projects are assigned a Red, Amber or Green rating (RAG rating) when reporting to the GDSC on project performance - please see Appendix 1 for more details. All 49 LCF projects were classed as Green for the April 2023-June 2023 quarter, as was Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service's (THCVS) Infrastructure & Capacity Building Project, enabling payments to be made for these projects for that quarter.

3.3 Theme 1 Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing

- (a)** This theme involves five schemes focusing on promoting wider health and well-being for local residents, including a range of services targeted at specific protected characteristic groups:
 - Scheme 1A - Children, Young People and Families (Eight projects)
 - Scheme 1B – Older People (Seven projects)
 - Scheme 1C – Access, Information and Self-Management (Two projects)
 - Scheme 1D – Healthy Living and Healthy Choices (Six projects)
 - Scheme 1E – Improved Inclusion, Health and Well-being Outcomes for Disabled People and People Experiencing Mental Health Issues (Four projects)
- (b)** Notable project achievements in April-June 2023 quarter included:
 - 10 parents participating on Osmani Trust's Family Mentoring Project Early Help project were supported to be more confident in dealing with parenting problems, whilst eight young beneficiaries were supported to feel more confident due to project's mentoring support
 - Half Moon Young People's Theatre's Professional Theatre and Inclusive Participatory Drama for Young People project held creative play sessions in Meath Gardens and Wapping Children and Families Centre that were attended by 41 families
 - Mudchute Association's Playing Out at Mudchute project delivered 160 hours of play provision for children and young people, attracting approximately 4,400 people
 - Newark Youth London's Health Active Together project participated in the Queen Mary University Festival of Communities event in Stepney Green Park by providing taster sports sessions for local residents

- deafPLUS' Improving Health and Wellbeing for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People in Tower Hamlets project supported 22 people through a variety of activities, including trampolining, a historical walk, visit to café, bowling and a signed CPR training event with the British Heart Foundation.

3.4 Theme 2 Digital Inclusion and Awareness

(a) This theme involves two schemes whose focus includes promoting access to IT training and support for older people, digital skills development for children and young people and promoting on-line safety for children and young people.

- Scheme 2A - ICT Skills and Digital Careers (Three projects)
- Scheme 2B - Online Safety (Two projects)

(b) Areas of project progress in April-June 2023 included:

- Limehouse Project's DigiTIES project enabled eleven older people to use a search engine to find health information on NHS websites
- SocietyLinks Tower Hamlets's E-Safety Champions project enabled 16 beneficiaries to feel more confident to implement changes and check their children's IT devices
- Sporting Foundation's Building Digital Resilience project supported 36 young people and 23 parents to increase their awareness and ability to spot grooming on social media.

3.5 Theme 3 Advice and Information (Two projects)

(a) This theme has two projects, one providing direct social welfare advice to residents and the other providing capacity building and training for VCS providers and volunteers in this sector.

(b) East End Citizens Advice Bureaux-led Advice Tower Hamlets Consortium:

- assisted 5,738 clients with social welfare advice
- supported 557 beneficiaries to increase or maximise their income.
- enabled £5,690,057 of beneficiaries' income to be increased or backdated
- secured £1,090,719 in reduction or write off of personal debt for beneficiaries.

(c) Island Advice Centre's Tower Hamlets Advice Training and Capacity Building Project delivered nine Advice Workshops on benefits issues to 133 people working in the borough's advice sector on a range of issues.

3.6 Theme 4 Employment and Skills

- (a) This theme involves three schemes focusing on supporting people from socially excluded communities to access skills and employment opportunities:
- 4A - Developing and embedding good practice in the workplace for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and physical and mental health barriers to work (One project)
 - 4B - Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups (Four projects)
 - 4C - Support focused on increasing access to art and cultural industries (Four projects)

(b) Project achievements in April-June 2023 included:

- 17 women who attended an accredited courses through Limehouse Project's Developing Potential project will complete and gain certifications
- 10 socially and economically disenfranchised beneficiaries on the Stifford Centre's BAME Women's Employment Support Programme completed ESOL training and felt able to communicate in English
- New trainees on Four Corners' ZOOM Film School project participated in a one day in-person masterclass on the ethics of documentary making delivered by a documentary filmmaker.
- The Bromley by Bow Centre's Creative Communities project arranged a walk in the Olympic Park to enable beneficiaries to take photographs, resulting in an exhibition of their work in June 2023.

3.7 Theme 5 Community Safety

(a) This theme involves three schemes whose work includes promoting community safety for children and young people, bringing young and old people together and supporting victims of domestic violence:

- 5A - Reduction in the exploitation of children, young people and other vulnerable groups (Three projects)
- 5B - Improving the perception of young people in the community (Two projects)
- 5C - Services for people affected by domestic violence or other unsafe circumstances (One project).

(b) Significant areas of project progress in April-June 2023 included:

- Kazzum Arts' Build project sessions worked with 17 young people excluded from mainstream education, including a significant proportion of neuro-diverse students, to develop their communication skills and help them appreciate other people's thoughts and ideas

- 49 beneficiaries on Streets of Growth's Young Influencers Programme participated in the delivery of social action initiatives, such as the painting of a community mural
- 85% of both older and young people involved in the Leaders in Community's Project Connect reported that they have formed more positive social connections with other people across their local area, through taking part in project activities such as weekly exercise sessions and coffee mornings
- Hestia Housing and Support's Families Safe and Secure in Tower Hamlets project delivered nine community awareness events on Domestic Violence Survivor Assessment, including six educational coffee morning sessions. The project also organised a range of activities for children in a local refuge, including drama, gardening workshops, guided science experiments and arts and crafts.

3.8 Premises update

There are several LCF funded organisations that are based in Council-owned buildings. It is a condition of funding that LCF organisations occupying Council owned premises have an appropriate property agreement in place. As outlined in the Local Community Fund Programme Report for January-March 2023, there is currently no agreement between Real DPO, the provider of two LCF projects, and the Council for this provider's premises at Jack Dash House. However, the Council has approved outstanding payments to Real DPO for these two LCF projects - for January-March 2023 and April-June 2023 quarters - plus payment for July-October 2023 quarter, as above organisation has been engaging with the Council to secure a satisfactory premises agreement.

3.9 Infrastructure & Capacity Building

Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services (THCVS), in partnership with Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets (VCTH), delivers an Infrastructure and Capacity Building project, focusing on increasing the range and number of VCS organisations in the borough that are well-run, resilient and sustainable and strengthening the VCS as a key public sector strategic delivery partner. Its main achievements in April-June 2023 included:

- supporting 62 VCS organisations, with 95% of these organisations providing positive feedback on this support.
- delivering training to 23 volunteer managers
- advertising volunteering roles on behalf of 42 VCS organisations
- advertising 81 unique volunteering roles on behalf of VCS organisations

- 3.10 A summary of the progress of individual LCF programme projects and the Infrastructure & Capacity Building project is outlined in **Appendix 2 LCF Project Summary April 2023 – June 2023**.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The programme continues to deliver against the themes developed to address identified equalities needs, successfully supporting people from a range of protected characteristic groups, both through projects specifically addressing the needs of these groups and projects with a generic beneficiary focus.

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

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The overall grant budget was £11.67m. Details of the projects and programmes allocated to this budget are at Appendix 2.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The terms of reference of the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee require regular reporting where grants have been given based upon a general delegation. This report complies with that requirement.

- 7.2 The Council is required to ensure it achieves statutory Best Value in the delivery of its functions. Grants form part of that statutory framework and the monitoring of the use of the grant and achieved outcomes assists in compliance with the Best Value duty.

- 7.3** The Council was obliged by a previous Best Value review to ensure that use of Council buildings was subject to an appropriate property use agreement. Therefore, entering into such an agreement was made a mandatory part of the relevant grant agreements.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Local Community Fund Programme Management Arrangements
- Appendix 2 – LCF Project Summary April 2023 – June 2023

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A