


Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee Wednesday, 18 September 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Robin Beattie, Acting Director of Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Mayor's Community Grant Programme (MCGP) Performance Report – Apr-Jun 24	

Proposed Decision Path (indicate) – Delete Section Before Publication:

	Step [Delete as applicable]	Date
DLT Level (Tier One)	DLT / CD	
CLT Level (Tier Two)	CLT / CE	
Discussion with Mayor (Tier Three)	MAY	
Discussion with Lead Member (Tier Three)	LM	
Member Level (Tier four)	PAM	2 September 2024
Decision (Tier five)	GDSC	18 September 2024

Proposed Decision Path (indicate) – Delete Section Before Publication:

Lead Member	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Resources and the Cost of Living
Originating Officer(s)	Afazul Hoque, (Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy), Robert Mee (VCS Grants Lead)
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	N/a
Forward Plan Notice Published	[Insert date notice was published – see forthcoming decisions webpage]
Exempt information	N/a
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tackling the cost-of-living crisis 3. Accelerating education 4. Boosting culture, business, jobs and leisure 6. Empowering communities and fighting crime 7. Working towards a clean and green future

Executive Summary

This performance report provides the Committee with an update on the council-funded Mayor's Community Grants Programme (MCGP) for the voluntary and community sector for the period April – June 2024, including an overview of activities and performance for the five themes of the programme. The Project Summary (Appendix 3) gives an update by each project.

Following the review of Monitoring Returns covering the April – June 24 period 106 of the 110 projects classed as GREEN, 3 classed as AMBER and 1 classed as RED.

Due to underperformance by the Red rated project for both the Nov 23 – Mar 24 and the Apr – Jun 24 period there are options for how to proceed with this project with a decision requested.

THIS SECTION TO BE DELETED BEFORE PUBLICATION

Decision Type

Key Decision?	Urgent Decision?	Exempt from Call-In?	Restricted Report or Partially Restricted (e.g. appendix)?
No	No	No	No

*If the answer is yes make sure the forthcoming decision on the website states this or else the decision cannot be taken.

Guidance Documents

Further details on the procedure for Urgent Decisions can be found in the [Intranet Library](#) and the Guide to Report Writing [guidance note](#).

Specific Issues for Pre-Decision Meetings

(Officers may use the following table to add points of note for internal meetings such as CLT, MAB or DMTs. Content can be deleted at any stage and, in any case, will be before publication for the decision making meeting.)

Directorate Leadership Team
Corporate Leadership Team
Mayor's Advisory Board
Communications

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Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the performance of the Mayor's Community Grants Programme for April – June 2024, as set out in 3.3 and 3.4 and Appendices 3.1 – 3.5.
2. Note the updated arrangements for administering the programme as set out in section 3.2 and Appendix 1
3. Consider and agree option to tackle project under performance as set out in 3.3 (b) and Appendix 5.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Grants Determination Sub Committee (GDSC) Terms of Reference sets out the need to provide performance reporting to the Committee.
- 1.2 Regular performance updates ensure that the MCGP 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 Grants Determination Sub-Committee (GDSC) with an overall understanding of how projects and organisations have performed against the key elements of their Funding Agreements. This is a constitutional obligation.
- 2.2 GDSC could request further information.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 Background

In March 2023 the Council agreed a programme of funding for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations from 1st November 2023. This programme is called the Mayor's Community Grants Programme (MCGP) with 110 projects awarded funding totalling £11.96m up to 31 March 2027 to deliver activity across five themes:

- Theme 1 Tackling the Cost-of-living crisis
- Theme 2 Accelerate Education

- Theme 3 Culture, Business, Jobs and Skills
- Theme 4 Invest in public services
- Theme 5 Empower communities and fight crime

3.2 Management Arrangements for the Programme - Appendix 1 presents details of the management arrangements for the programme including:

- Reporting – First report covering 5 months, subsequent reports presented quarterly
- Visits – minimum of 1 visit between April – Mar with additional visits depending on circumstances
- Payments – paid quarterly in advance
- Monitoring Returns – one return submitted covering the first 5 months with subsequent returns submitted quarterly
- **Performance measures for projects with consecutive Red and / or Amber rating (updated measures to be agreed by Committee).**

3.3 Overview of April – June 2024

(a) Management: - Following the mobilisation period the first full reporting year began April 2024. Officers have undertaken visits to groups to see activity in person and / or discuss project issues. 28 of the projects have had monitoring visits / meetings since April with the remainder due to have at least one visit by the end of March 2025. **Appendix 6** has a breakdown by Theme.

(b) Project Under Performance Options

Limehouse Welfare Association has had two consecutive reporting periods with a Red RAG rating due to non-delivery. As problems with delivery were identified early on no payments have been made to the project. Appendix 5 goes into detail on the project and the actions taken so far, the delivery that took place in July and proposals for the future.

Options to consider:

- 1) The project activity and targets are revised to take into account the delayed start with the lifetime grant funding of £76,533 reduced to £67,200 due to the non-delivery between Nov 23 and Jun 24. This is the preferred option as the project has now started delivery in July and would have the minimum disruption to participants.
- 2) The project grant funding is withdrawn. Any evidenced spend on the activity in July is reimbursed but the project is ended following the process set out in the Funding Agreement for termination of the funding. New activity is commissioned to deliver the activity to the residents in the area.

(c) Project Performance summary (Red / Amber projects)

There is 1 red rated project and further details of the organisation and project can be found in **Appendix 5 – RED rated projects**.

RED Project:

Theme 2 – Scheme A

- **Limehouse Welfare Association** – LWA Community Language Bengali and Arabic Support Programme – No delivery took place in Apr – Jun 24. Preparation work took place with the intention to deliver in June but delays in booking the venue meant delivery took place in July. 3.3 (b) sets out options for going forward to be agreed by the Committee.

There are 3 Amber rated projects set out below by Theme / Scheme. Officers are working with the organisations to get projects on track going forward.

AMBER Projects:

Theme 2 – Scheme A

- **Young and Talented** - Triple Talent Enrichment Programme – the organisation has had some challenges around the venue for the project and this has had an impact on numbers of participants. They are working with Officers to resolve this. An action plan was drawn up to increase publicity for the project including use of Council Comms. There was improvement in the numbers but not up to the target. Further work is planned but if the project cannot get back on track for the next period, then options will be presented to the Committee.

Theme 2 - Scheme B

- **Quaker Social Action** - Made of Money - helping carers to increase their resilience to online financial scams – The main issue is around the project management with the monitoring return for April – June not submitted. This was due to staff sickness.

Theme 3 - Scheme B

- **Platform Cricket (Tower Hamlets Youth Sport Foundation)** - Platform Cricket Hubs: Bethnal Green, Bow, Isle of Dogs, Poplar, Stepney, Wapping & Whitechapel – The monitoring return for April – June has not been submitted.

3.4 Theme Updates

An overall summary of achievements by Theme collated from individual project reports. A summary of progress by project can be found in **Appendices 3.1 – 3.5**.

Theme 1 Tackling the Cost of Living Crisis

Scheme A - Advice, information, and crisis support

VCS advice services delivering services to mitigate and reduce levels of poverty by supporting vulnerable residents and low-income households to access their rights, understand their obligations and maximise their incomes.

6 organisations (6 projects – 6 GREEN) providing services to meet the following priorities:

- Information, advice and representation concerning individuals' legal rights, particularly for vulnerable, marginalised and hard to reach groups, including disabled people
- Immigration/asylum advice and casework
- Debt advice and support with budgeting and financial stability, particularly for vulnerable, marginalised, and hard-to-reach groups
- Support with welfare benefits
- Housing/homelessness advice and casework
- Employment advice
- Income maximisation
- Support for residents in crisis, especially those needing immediate support

No. of participants – 4,467	No. of clients accessing social welfare advice and income from benefits – 3,937	£600,016.55 of debt write offs
No. of successful appeals – 4,578	No. of community organisations supported - 85	

Theme 2 Accelerate Education

Scheme A – Education Attainment and Development of Children and Young People

17 organisations (17 projects – 15 GREEN, 1 AMBER, 1 RED) providing services to meet the following priorities:

- Access to community-based study support
- Access to community language development
- Community-based provision for children with Special Educational Needs
- Wide access to extracurricular activities and after school provision.

No. of participants across the theme – 691	No. of children / young people report improvements in their well-being - 52	No. of young people accessing youth services / activities - 78
No. of SEN children and their families accessing community-based provision - 197		

Scheme B – Lifelong Learning

13 organisations (13 projects – 12 GREEN, 1 AMBER) delivering activities to meet the following priorities:

- Skills for life and lifelong learning
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Digital Inclusion

No. of participants across the Scheme – 486	No. of people reporting improved digital skills - 120	No. of people reporting improved confidence - 129
No. of people reporting improved language proficiency - 47		

Theme 3 Culture, Business, Jobs and Skills

Scheme A - Employment and Skills Opportunities for Socially Excluded Residents

14 organisations (14 projects – 14 GREEN), delivering activities to meet the following priorities:

- Supporting people not in education, employment, or training (NEET)
- Targeted youth outreach
- Access to youth provision
- Promoting enterprise and innovation, particularly the greening of the borough
- Job brokerage by supporting people into work.

No. of participants across the scheme – 461	No. of people into employment - 33
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Scheme B - Sports, Local Culture and Heritage

14 organisations (14 projects – 13 GREEN, 1 AMBER) delivering activities to meet the following priorities:

- Promoting local culture and heritage
- Promoting sports activity

No. of participants across the scheme – 592	No. of people engaging in physical activities and sport - 120
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Theme 4 Invest in Public Services

Scheme A - Physical and Mental Health Wellbeing of Older People

15 organisations (15 projects – 15 GREEN) delivering activities to meet the following priorities:

- Supporting older and vulnerable people, including luncheon clubs, meals delivery services and pensioner projects
- Developing community activities aimed at tackling loneliness and inactive lifestyles.

No. of participants across the scheme – 870	No. of older people participating in physical activities - 24	
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Scheme B - Physical and Mental Health of Residents

15 organisations (15 projects – 15 GREEN) delivering activities to meet the following priority:

- Promoting health and well-being through tackling inequality.

No. of participants across the scheme – 1,083	No. of participants reporting improved mental and / or physical health - 177	
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Theme 5 Empower Communities and fight crime

Scheme A - Inequalities Experienced by People and Communities Reflecting Different Equality Groups and Socio-economic Backgrounds

8 organisations (8 projects – 8 GREEN) delivering activities to meet the following priorities:

- Addressing inequality for Black Asian & Multi-Ethnic communities and women
- Creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds to come together

No. of participants across the scheme – 1,282	No. of people more engaged in the local community - 12	No. of people supported from BAME communities accessing one-to-one support to identify barriers and goals - 21
Number of women undertaking leadership training - 16		

Scheme B - Community Safety

8 organisations (8 projects – 8 GREEN) delivering activities to meet the following priorities:

- Tackling drug and alcohol issues
- Promoting safer communities
- Supporting ex-offenders
- Gang intervention and prevention
- Victim support
- Tackling and preventing violence against women and girls

No. of participants across the scheme – 216		
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4 **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Mayors Community Grants Programme has been designed to promote equality in Tower Hamlets. It was designed using the following principles:

- Funding that supports a wider range of services and groups to ensure all sections of the community benefit from a grants programme and address the challenges facing Tower Hamlets residents.
- Funding that supports services and activities that are inclusive, promote cohesion and designed and delivered with residents.

4.2 In comparing the recommended projects to the previous Grant funding and the identified need in the borough the full equality impact analysis identified a number of specific equalities risks and proposes mitigation for these.

Appendix 4 sets out the Equality Analysis Action Plan with the recommendations and mitigation.

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 **Best Value Implications** - 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. The structure and process pathways of the Mayors Community Grants Programme were developed to meet the Council's best value duty. QC advice was secured confirming that the approach taken complied with the Best Value Duty.

5.3 **Risk Management** - The Mayors Community Grant Scheme is subject to independent external audit and internal challenge by a panel of senior officers resulting in learning and improvement actions as necessary.

5.4 **Safeguarding** arrangements are addressed as part of the grant application evaluation process.

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

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Appendix 3 details the projects and programmes allocated within the overall grant budget. There is an annual budget of £3.5m for the Mayor's Community Grant Programme. The programme is funded through the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) of £2.5m and £1.0m from Public Health grant.

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 As regards underperformance as referenced in paragraph 3.3 (b) either option is lawful. As regards the first option the reduction in grant should be proportionate to the lost time to maintain the veracity of the original evaluation. As regards the second option, the terms of the grant agreement should be followed relating to termination
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Mayor's Community Grants Programme (MCGP) Programme Management Arrangements
- Appendix 2 – April – June 2024 - Profile Of Beneficiaries (Geographical)
- Appendix 3 – MCGP Project Summary April – June 2024
 - Appendix 3.1 – Theme 1 Project Summary
 - Appendix 3.2 – Theme 2 Project Summary
 - Appendix 3.3 - Theme 3 Project Summary
 - Appendix 3.4 – Theme 4 Project Summary
 - Appendix 3.5 – Theme 5 Project Summary
- Appendix 4 – Equality Analysis Action Plan update
- Appendix 5 – RED rated projects – Organisation and Project details
- Appendix 6 – MCGP Monitoring Visits undertaken / scheduled 2024/25 by Theme

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:
N/A