



MAIN STREAM GRANTS PROGRAMME 2015/18 GRANT SPECIFICATION

THEME: Community Engagement Cohesion and Resilience

1. Basis of Need

The Council has a duty to foster good relations between groups as part of the Equality Duty on all public sector organisations. In Tower Hamlets this means promoting cohesion across a diverse population and in an area facing high levels of poverty and disadvantage.

This funding stream is about supporting and nurturing activities that promote cohesion and also build the capacity of local groups and people to create, lead and deliver projects on behalf of their communities. This is with the aim of improving the sustainability of projects that are supported within this theme.

Consistently high numbers of people report that they feel the borough is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (Annual Residents Survey). This continues to be an important marker of cohesion in the context of a diverse borough where for example over 90 languages are recorded as mother tongue or second languages in schools.

Often described as hyper-diverse, the profile of the borough includes the largest proportion of Muslim residents in any local authority area in the country. Another characteristic is of a high level of churn in the wider population with many people making Tower Hamlets a port of arrival from other countries. Current national and international issues such as extremism and migration could have an impact locally.

There have been serious flashpoints such as the vigilante activities dubbed the 'Muslim' and 'Christian' patrols that have had the potential to challenge community relationships. Long term investment in the development of strong community networks and on-going engagement are key tools in ensuring communities are able to withstand any setbacks or challenges posed by incidents such as these.

Local communities face additional challenges because of the high levels of poverty and worklessness in many wards across the borough. Poor health outcomes which are often linked to unemployment are all issues that have the potential to affect the confidence and resilience of communities to these broader issues and this could be

exacerbated by Welfare Reform which is reducing the support available to these communities.

The experience of past regeneration and partnership work that has aimed to improve local areas has highlighted the need for bottom up and co-produced solutions for changes to be more sustainable.

The Council has in place a number of programmes and frameworks covering the different challenges described above which are used to engage and support local people to develop positive projects for their communities. It is proposed that this MSG funding stream is combined with the One Tower Hamlets fund I which has provided small grants for projects designed to bring together residents to either: address specific local issues which undermine cohesion; and/or bring communities together through exhibitions, cultural activities and celebrations that help to break down the barriers to understanding between different faiths, cultures and beliefs.

2. Target Outcomes (and likely outputs/activities)

We specifically wish to fund local organisations which will:

- Engage local community groups and residents in taking ownership of, and collective responsibility in responding to local issues
- Promote greater involvement of local residents in developing solutions to local issues
- Bring people of different backgrounds together to develop strong and positive relationships through positive interactions;
- Identify and celebrate local identities and culture and engage wider communities as part of these projects
- Ensure the sustainability of projects through developing new and emerging community leaders who can speak for the interests of their community, recognising the multi faith, non-faith and different cultural background of the peoples of the borough, articulating shared values and concerns, and being able to calm any emerging tensions.
- Equip individuals and groups to act positively for the wider benefit of their communities
- Be involved in 2 council sponsored Action Learning workshops and a closing seminar towards the end of the programme to feedback on project outcomes, and lessons learned.

3. Scope of Activities

This theme will be a small grants programme for localised activities. We are interested in supporting projects which bring together residents and local organisations, and also which develop social capital and community leadership.

Key activities that will be considered under this theme include projects that achieve a geographic spread of activities across the borough. Potential activities include:

- projects that celebrate local life and share cultures through relevant events and projects
- local interventions that tackle estate and ward level priorities and concerns
- events that bridge communities and build cohesion
- projects that develop community organising and community leadership skills
- projects that improve the engagement opportunities for diverse groups
- projects that involve people in local decision-making

4. Beneficiaries and Priority Groups to be Targeted

Cohesion is a borough wide issue and there is a wide scope of potential beneficiaries. The priority will be to fund projects that have a cohesion and cross-cultural, intergenerational, engagement or capacity building focus. Projects that work with key equality groups with particular needs as defined by protected characteristics and the Borough Equality Analysis will be prioritised.

5. Required Geographic Coverage

We will seek to fund projects and activities to achieve a good geographical spread of initiatives across the Borough, responding to any particular local issues from the Ward Profiles or identified by local communities.

6. Equality Opportunities

Projects that work with key equality groups with particular needs as defined by protected characteristics and the Borough Equality Analysis will be prioritised.

Groups and organisations must ensure that activities and services are open and available to and inclusive of all potential users in the area where the activity is being delivered. The aim is to fund projects which specifically enable the meeting and coming together of people from a variety of backgrounds.

Barriers which may exclude individuals from participation must be appropriately addressed as part of project development process.

7. Requirements for Tracking, Onward Referral and Progression

Project monitoring in line with standard MSG monitoring arrangements, appropriate to the size and scale of funding, clarifying evidence of the outputs and outcomes agreed. Evaluation report reviewing impact of the programme on the Theme aims.

8. No. of Grants to be Allocated by Type and Size

£105K per annum is available for this theme. Allocations of funding between £5-10K will be made on an annual basis.

9. Guidance on Delivery Methods

Projects will need to deliver One Tower Hamlets objectives as outlined in the Target Outcomes section above and the Getting On Together toolkit, in terms of the type of activity and how it will meet objectives.

Partnership and consortium working are actively encouraged particularly for any unincorporated groups who may have community project ideas.

Applicants should demonstrate that they involve potential beneficiaries in how they design, run and review projects and services. Activities and services should be delivered in ways that are responsive to customer needs addressing barriers to participation, involvement and cohesion;

Neighbourhood Agreements provide a vehicle for co-ordinating activities at ward or smaller geographies and will be encouraged. A [toolkit](#) is available for residents to use in preparing and developing Neighbourhood Agreements.

10. Options for Consortium Bidding and Partnership Working

The emphasis will be on supporting a diverse range of projects across as many wards as possible. There is scope for consortia and partnership arrangements to ensure inclusivity and local coverage.