


<b>Grants Determination Sub-Committee</b>	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
9 November 2022	
<b>Report of:</b> Sharon Godman, Director Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Local Community Fund (LCF) Performance Report – April 2022 – June 2022</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities Mark Waterman, Senior VCS Development Officer
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	N/a
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	All

### Executive Summary

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. A total of 50 projects were 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. At Grants Determination Sub Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 it was agreed that the above Local Community Fund (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 from October 2023.

The performance report covers the period April 2022 to June 2022 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 to June 2022.
2. Note the change of RAG ratings for Age UK East London's Caxton Hall and Friend at Home projects, moves from RED to AMBER and then GREEN, which has permitted the release of project funds due to Age UK for work on these projects, as outlined in 3.2 (f)
3. Note the updates on the funded organisations in Council premises and the Infrastructure & Capacity Building funding as set out in 3.8 to 3.9.
4. Approve the proposed provision and the continuation of a grant variation for the Infrastructure & Capacity Building project for the extension period for this project, from October 2022 to March 2024, as outlined in paragraph 3.9 (e) and Appendix 3.

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The Grants Determination Sub Committee 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.
- 1.3 There is a need to agree to the activities that are proposed to be delivered by the Infrastructure & Capacity Building project for the extension period for this project, from October 2022 to March 2024. This should include continued Council support through this project for the activities of Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlet's COVID-19 Volunteering Hub to support volunteering within VCS organisations in the borough, particularly with the persistence of COVID-19 and the possibility of a full-scale resumption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **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.

- 2.2 GDSC could request further information or alter the recommendations.
- 2.3 The Infrastructure and Capacity Building project does not provide continued funding for the COVID-19 Volunteering Hub between October 2022 to March 2024 to support volunteering within local VCS organisations. This would result in the removal of Council funding for a centralised volunteering recruitment system for VCS organisations in the borough in the context of the persistence of COVID-19 in the borough and the possibility of a full-scale resumption of the COVID-19 pandemic

### **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 9<sup>th</sup> 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. The cost of this extension amounts to £1,328,537. Council officers have been negotiating with VCS organisations delivering LCF projects about the KPIs and outcomes that their projects will deliver during the extension period of April-September 2023.

(c) As outlined at GDSC meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 one of the above 50 LCF projects, St Hilda's East Community Centre - Surjamuki Disabled Youth Project, was permanently suspended in January 2022 after the provider conducted a review of its services. St Hilda's ensured that the project beneficiaries, who had reached the point to move on from its services, were satisfactorily transitioned to other appropriate services to receive required support.

#### **3.2 Overview of April 2022 – June 2022**

(a) The 3-month period in this update witnessed LCF projects encountering a number of challenges:

- projects continuing to have to deliver their services through a range of methods due to COVID-19 pandemic – physical basis, digitally, via the

telephone (e.g. for befriending of elders). Many projects operated on a hybrid basis, combining the above methods.

- high levels of staff and volunteer sickness absence for LCF providers in April – June 2022 due to high rates of COVID-19
  - projects having to respond to demands relating to the cost of living increase and higher rates of poverty in Tower Hamlets.
- (b)** LCF projects have continued to deliver against targets in spite of the above challenges, delivering outcomes to meet the needs of residents in the borough.
- (c)** 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. When a project is classified as Red the Council suspends LCF payments to the project until it moves off Red status, to Amber or Green. When a project is classified as Amber the Council pays it two thirds of the LCF that it is due until the project moves to Green. When a project moves from Amber to Green then the Council pays the provider any LCF funds that it has held back for the provider.
- (d)** All of the 49 current LCF projects are now classed as Green.

The Infrastructure & Capacity Building project, which is managed on a similar basis to LCF and supports local VCS organisations is classified as Green

**(e) Age UK East London**

- (i)** Age UK East London's two LCF projects – Caxton Hall and Friend at Home - have moved from RED status, as reported at GDSC meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022, to AMBER and then GREEN status. The above RED and AMBER RAG ratings had not been made due to performance issues – both projects are on track to deliver agreed outcomes – but due to a tenancy issue between Age UK East London and the Council.
- (ii)** Age UK East London occupies the ground and second floors of a Council-owned building at 82 Russia Lane in Bethnal Green. The grant agreements with Age UK East London for the delivery of the above two LCF projects state that the Council may withhold a grant payment, or withdraw it, if Age UK East London occupies or uses Council owned premises and there is no satisfactory premises agreement in place. This is a standard condition of Council grant funding.
- (iii)** The Council began negotiating a lease with Age UK East London to regularise its occupation of 82 Russia Lane before LCF funding commenced in October 2019. Progress towards agreeing a lease was reported to the Sub-Committee in order to seek a temporary waiver of the funding condition and continue payment of LCF quarterly instalments, on the basis that some, albeit limited, progress, was being made towards completing a lease. Following the Sub-

Committee's decision to delegate to the Divisional Director (Strategy, Improvement and Transformation) authority to waive this funding condition in consultation with the Corporate Director, Place, funding to Age UK continued until January 2022.

- (iv) Officers considered that discussions with Age UK to agree lease terms had not progressed satisfactorily and, accordingly, the LCF funding was suspended from January 2022.
- (v) There have been further discussions between Council officers and Age UK East London since the last GDSC meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Age UK had been making sufficient progress towards meeting the premises grant payment conditions with the Council for Council officers to agree in September 2022 that Age UK's RAG rating for LCF projects be moved from Red to Amber and then Green. This change of RAG rating permitted the Council to make payments due to Age UK for its work on its two LCF projects between January to September 2022. Lease terms between Age UK and the Council for the premises at 82 Russia Lane are now near completion.

### **3.3 Theme 1 Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing**

#### **(a) Theme Overview**

Theme 1 incorporates five schemes supporting children and families, older people, and people with disabilities. There are 27 current projects, focusing on improving the health and wellbeing of residents and the quality of the care services they receive.

#### **(b) Scheme A Children, Young People and Families (Eight projects)**

Projects in this Theme are focused on developing the confidence and life opportunities of young people, enabling them to fulfil their potential and access opportunities and services. During the reporting period projects have made good progress in engaging their beneficiaries. Activities have included:

- Projects engaging their beneficiaries in a range of networking, social, cultural artistic and physical activities to develop their confidence and improve their physical and mental health. Between April-June 2022 119 young people participated in Half Moon Young People's Theatre's Professional Theatre and Inclusive Participatory Drama for Young People project, thus helping them to develop their communication and life skills. Four of the project's theatre groups had their end of term performance in the last week of June 2022.
- St Hilda East's Community Centre's Girl Driven project has provided its beneficiaries with mental health awareness day sessions on self-love and care and an evening advice session from creative industry professionals on career options in that sector

- linking socially excluded young people to training, employment and performance opportunities in the arts sector. The Yard Theatre's Black Excellence at Night-time initiative, part of its Tower Hamlets Teens' project, is supporting its group of 16-21 year olds to develop a creative project for young people their age to be launched in January 2023. This has involved the beneficiaries attending workshops on how to run a successful project and explore what projects there are for young people in London
- developing relationships within families, enabling parents to understand their children better and improving understanding between parents and their children. Osmani Trust's Family Mentoring Project - Early Help has supported families whose mental health has been challenged by the pandemic. It has provided one to one and group parenting support, relationship development and healing and family trips.
- assisting young women to develop their confidence, resilience and life skills. The Canaan Project launched its After School Club in May 2022 which meets for two hours every Thursday. The young women that it supports enjoy a variety of activities at the Club, including crafts and football.

**(c) Scheme B – Older People (Seven projects)**

The seven projects in this Theme are concerned with improving the health and wellbeing of older residents and the quality of the care services that they receive. Notable areas of progress have included:

- befriending projects have helped to reduce loneliness, isolation and anxiety for housebound older people or those with very limited mobility, improving their psychological well-being. Services have been delivered on physical, digital and telephone basis. For example, due to COVID-19, Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbour's Older Peoples' Befriending Project has supported beneficiaries by combining face to face visits, when safe, with a remote tele-befriending service. More than 85% of adults the project interacts with reported improved outcomes; reduced isolation, less anxiety and improved confidence levels.
- delivery of a range of health promotion, user led and social activities to improve beneficiaries' physical and mental health and widen their social networks. 22 elderly people from the local Vietnamese and Chinese communities were able to participate in diet and healthy cooking sessions in April-June 2022 through Community of Refugees from Vietnam - East London's Vietnamese and Chinese Lunch and Social Club project.
- provision of local support groups and one to one support on-line and remotely to LGBT people over 50 through East London Out Project's

Tower Hamlets LGBT Support project. Fifty nine disabled LGBT people or LGBT people experiencing mental health concerns who participated in such support reported better life satisfaction and better quality of life three months after start of service.

- fifty-nine older people participating in St Hilda's East Community Centre's Older People's 'Feeling Good!' Wellbeing Project have reported to being less lonely and isolated after attending its range of activities such as Tai Chi, women only Dancercise, yoga and social coffee mornings.
- for the first time 50% of activity sessions at Toynbee Hall's Wellbeing Centre are user led, facilitated by service users who have a skill and have identified a need and interest.

**(d) Scheme C – Access, Information and Self-Management (Two projects)**

**(i)** The focus of projects in this Theme is enabling older and physically disabled residents to be better informed and equipped to manage health and social care conditions. Projects have continued to support clients who are isolated/excluded – with their needs heightened because of COVID-19 – due to a number of reasons:

- physically, due to lack of accessible infrastructure
- linguistically, due to insufficient developed English language skills
- sensory impairments
- lacking accessible information and experiencing digital exclusion.

**(ii)** Many clients have complex needs and some would be classified as hard to reach. The provision in this Theme has been delivered during the reporting period through online, remote and face to face/one-to-one sessions. Successful examples of project interventions have included:

- 14 people were able to increase their knowledge, awareness and confidence to self-manage their health conditions in April-June 2022 through participation in a mindfulness-based pain management programme delivered by Globe Community Project's Take Back Your Life project
- Real DPO's Taking Control of Your Life project developed action plans and delivered support relating to these plans to 14 physically disabled people. The project supports beneficiaries through providing high level support and in-depth time to make information accessible for them, It provides home visits and follow up support with the hard-to-reach beneficiaries who have differing levels of engagement.

**(e) Scheme D – Healthy Living and Healthy Choices (Six projects)**

**(i)** Projects under this theme are concerned with:

- making residents better informed to enable them to make healthier choices
- increasing engagement in physical activity.

(ii) Projects have delivered a range of activities during the reporting period to promote exercise, healthy eating and improve social and life skills, including holding of communal celebrations to bring people together. This has included:

- London Tigers' Exercise for Health (BAME Women, Children and Young People) project holding celebration events for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, involving fun activities, and Baishakhi Mela & Multicultural Festival to celebrate Bangladeshi culture with traditional music and dance.
- Stifford Centre Limited's Healthy Lifestyle Partnership Programme holding celebration events for Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Festival of Communities. The second event involved hands-on demonstrations of local research and services, many fun family activities, food stalls and games to create two-days of fun for all ages and interests.
- The Royal Society for Blind Children's Live Active Live Well Tower Hamlets project responding to beneficiaries' feedback by providing sessions that are more social in nature, such as bowling and trampolining.

(iii) Projects under this scheme have also delivered health promotion sessions, such as sexual health workshops, and workshops focusing on pain management and promoting healthier lifestyles. The Bangladesh Youth Movement 's Live Healthy Enjoy Life (Female Health & Development Project) supported 42 women from Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic and refugee communities to access health support activities between April-June 2022.

(iv) Projects have supported interactions between residents and improved their physical and mental health. During the Easter holidays Mudchute Association's Playing out at Mudchute project added animal handling sessions to its programme, which were very popular. This involved three sessions a day, that attracted an average of 90 children.

**(f) Scheme E – Improved Inclusion, Health and Well-being Outcomes for Disabled People and People Experiencing Mental Health Issues (Four projects)**

(i) Projects in this theme are focused on improving health outcomes for disabled people and ensuring that people experiencing mental health issues are better supported. Projects have responded to the pandemic to deliver a range of successful interventions, including:



- deafPlus' Improving Health and Wellbeing for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People in Tower Hamlets project has delivered eight events in April-June 2022 as part of a programme to improve the health and well-being of its beneficiaries. This has included six week programmes for fitness, healthy cooking and a Face Yoga course. In the Easter holidays it also organised family events for trampolining and bowling.
- ICM Foundation produced its summer edition of its beneficiary-led newspaper for young people with learning difficulties, which had 5,000 copies printed. It included 13 articles and received excellent feedback from its readers. This included comments on how valuable the newspaper is as a community resource and how the discounted prices in the newspaper are useful when readers take people out on trips.
- the Woman's Trust's Therapeutic Support Groups for Women Affected by Domestic Abuse project has supported 15 women in April-June 2022 to reduced their stress and anxiety, increase their confidence and self-esteem.
- Working Well Trust's Upskill project has run a series of joint workshops with Look Ahead for its beneficiaries, which it will continue to run with this organisation, along with information sessions. It has also made progress in networking with organisations, supporting isolated and elderly residents in the borough.

### **3.4 Theme 2 Digital Inclusion and Awareness**

#### **(a) Theme Overview**

There are two schemes in this theme, concerned with promoting Information, Communication and Technology skills support and training for older people and the development of digital skills and training for young people.

#### **(b) Scheme A: ICT Skills and Digital Careers (Three projects)**

- (i)** The three projects under this theme all provide digital ICT skills to residents and continue to build their knowledge, giving them the confidence to use digital devices to access online activities and health information. They have responded well to increases in COVID-19 rates in the borough, ensuring that provision safeguards beneficiaries' health. Examples of successful LCF project progress in this area in April-June 2022 have included:
- Limehouse Project's DigITIES project, which supports older people to become digitally included, has increased its co-production work with local charities, organisations, residential social landlords and community centres to reach those most in need and extend its geographical reach in the borough. The project has achieved 71% of its lifetime targets and has been focusing on providing additional support

sessions and interventions for its beneficiaries, delivered by inter-generational volunteers remotely for reasons of personal safety during the recent increase in COVID-19 rates.

- Newham New Deal Partnership's @online club Network Tower Hamlets project increased eight older residents' confidence about going on-line and enabled nine older residents to do more things on-line.
- Wapping Bangladesh Association's Digital First project has enabled nine older people to have a better understanding and appreciation of the potential benefits of learning computers and how to navigate around the internet. Project beneficiaries have been taught about the risks of internet scams, how to shop on-line and how to collect medicine from their pharmacists.

**(c) Scheme B: Online Safety (Two projects)**

- (i) The priority of this theme is children and young people's online safety. The two funded projects in this theme have empowered children to recognise and deal with the impact of online abuse, resulting in young people speaking out and getting the help that they need, including from their families. Parents have gained skills and knowledge to keep their children safer online.
- (ii) SocietyLinks' Tower Hamlets E-Safety project continues to link up with the Metropolitan Police's Safer Neighbourhood Teams to enable women participating in the project to benefit from weekly workshops addressing e-safety issues. This support has addressed topics such as on-line shopping web sites, where individuals have to share personal details and addresses, how to meet safely on a physical basis with people met online and authenticity checks for holiday booking sites to combat potential fraud.
- (iii) Sporting Foundation's Building Digital Resilience project is focusing on securing more female beneficiaries. The project engaged 22 parents and 35 children in April-June 2022. They all reported that the project had supported them to develop an understanding and awareness of grooming on social media and identifying signs of grooming. These parents thus felt more confident about maintaining their children safe online, whilst the children increased their ability to spot signs of grooming.

**3.5 Theme 3 Advice and Information (Two projects)**

- (a) Both of this theme's projects provide social welfare advice and information, one delivered by a consortium of providers and one delivered by a partnership of two organisations. Both projects in this theme have made good progress between April to June 2022 on meeting their KPI targets, outputs and outcomes, despite the high level of demand on their resources:

- East End Citizens Advice Bureaux (East End CAB)-led Advice Tower Hamlets Consortium assisted 5,402 beneficiaries on social welfare advice in April-June 2022
  - 1,260 East End CAB project clients were supported to increase or maximise their income in April-June 2022. £4,937,994 of clients' income was increased/or backdated. There were £1,146,556 debt reduction or write offs resulting in reduction in amounts of personal debt for beneficiaries.
  - Island Advice Centre/Tower Hamlets Advice Training and Capacity Building Project delivered 72 participants on a range of issues, such as benefits, housing, homelessness, employment, and immigration.
- (b)** During the April-June 2022 period social welfare advice services have faced a number of challenges, including:
- cost of living crisis, which has led to increased reliance on food banks, inability to pay fuel bills or afford basic decent amenities. Beneficiaries of services have included people in employment.
  - increase in transport costs
  - random increases in housing rents and increases in the number of disrepairs and possession proceedings by private landlords. Landlords are asking their clients to quit their properties unless they pay for increased costs.
  - huge increase in the number of reported redundancies, which has led to increased demand on services in relation to benefit claims and appeals over negative decisions relating to Personal Independence Payments, Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance. LCF-funded services have responded effectively to these demands. Advice Tower Hamlets Consortium reports a 97% success rate in dealing with the latter cases in April-June 2022.

### **3.6 Theme 4 Employment and Skills**

#### **(a) Theme Overview**

Theme 4 incorporates three schemes focusing on supporting socially excluded groups to access employment, delivering employment and training support to project beneficiaries and working with employers to provide employment and work placement opportunities for beneficiaries.

**(b) Scheme 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)**

Real DPO's Then and Now project delivered two workshops for local employers in April-June 2022 - 'Taking the fear out of employing Disabled people' and 'Empowering Disabled candidates'. Attendance and feedback from both sessions was good and resulted in several new employer becoming members of the project. The project also produced two new inclusive employment guides, *Find your audience* and *Be an inclusive employer of choice*. The project also facilitated two co-production workshops in April-June 2022 with project beneficiaries. The first workshop gathered the beneficiary group's experiences and opinions on job design for the project's next inclusive employment guide, *Inclusive Job Design*. The second workshop was a review of the work that the project has done so far as a group and a discussion on the future direction of its work.

**(c) Scheme 4B: Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups (Four projects)**

The projects in this scheme continue to work closely with their beneficiaries and project partners. Projects are engaging with beneficiaries to motivate them, increase their confidence levels and deliver training to them in work-related qualifications. Focus of individual projects has included

- Limehouse Project's Developing Potential project providing an integrated programme of personal skills development to enable socially excluded women to work towards achieving qualifications such as Childcare Levels 1 and 2, Teaching Assistant Level 2 and Functional Skills English from Entry Level 1-3 to Level 1 and 2 courses.
- St Giles Trust's Choices Tower Hamlets project working with a cohort of 13 young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET) to support their progress into training and education courses and improve their mental health and wellbeing.
- SocietyLinks' Tower Hamlet's Job Club working on a resettlement programme with refugees from Afghanistan who are currently being housed in the City of London. It has been planning workshops to run in line with SocietyLinks' employment service to help the refugees create CVs to enable them to obtain employment, when they are eligible to do so.
- Stifford Centre Limited's BAME Women's Employment Support Programme supporting beneficiaries through a range of methods:
  - creating and updating CVs
  - mock interview sessions
  - job search

- ESOL classes
- training for Health & Social Care and Teaching Assistant roles, digital skills and business start-up.

**(d) Scheme 4C: Support focused on increasing access to art and cultural industries (Four projects)**

**(i)** Projects have continued to work with young people and socially excluded residents to provide them with opportunities to access training and employment in the arts and culture industries:

- Auto Italia South East's Learning Live! project delivering two Creative Learning workshops in Tower Hamlets Schools - St Paul's Way Trust, for GCSE and A Level Photography and GCSE and A Level Art and Design students, and Stepney All Saints School, for GCSE Media Studies students. The project supports young people to progress into higher education courses, with the aim to increase access into the art and cultural industries.
- six trainees on Four Corners Ltd's ZOOM Film School completed their accredited film/TV skills training programme, one trainee obtained a work placement and two trainees obtained paid employment.
- the Bromley by Bow Centre's Creative Communities project taking project participants and their families to Van Gogh Immersive experience in Spitalfields to introduce them to the art sector. The majority of participants never had an experience such as this before. There have also been similar trips, with a similar purpose, to Charles Saatchi contemporary art gallery, for a smaller group of beneficiaries and their children, and to Kensington Palace.

**3.7 Theme 5 Community Safety**

**(a) Theme Overview**

Projects in this theme are concerned with protecting children and young people, improving community cohesion – including between young and older people – and combating domestic violence.

**(b) Scheme A- Reduction in the exploitation of children, young people and other vulnerable groups (Three projects)**

Projects in this scheme are focused on supporting children excluded from mainstream education, developing the confidence and emotional intelligence of children in secondary schools and developing peer support amongst young people. Notable areas of progress for projects for the period covered by the report have included:

- Kazzum Arts' Build project supports four groups of vulnerable young people aged 13-16 in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), reducing their vulnerability to exploitation through a programme of creative and regulating activities, such as drama, visual arts and digital media. This includes a boy's group, focusing on supporting mental health and masculinity and the intersection between the two through games and discussions. The project has a girls group, focusing on wellbeing and common interests and considering what helps them to feel respected in relationships, mostly through visual arts activities and discussion. There is also a group supporting students with communication skills and another group within the Inclusion unit of the PRU that supports beneficiaries to develop social connections and interpersonal skills.
- Osmani Trust's Youth Intervention Officers, working on behalf of its Schools and Community Resilience Programme, have delivered one-to-one mentoring sessions to 28 pupils. Young people involved in the sessions responded well to the mentoring, as it gave them the space to speak safely and openly about their challenges, including dangers of being exposed to violence and being groomed in the community.
- Streets of Growth's Resilient Young Leaders Programme beneficiaries produced a community mural launched in an event in June 2022 which was co-ordinated and delivered by five of the project's young influencers/leaders. This involved a 'Community Roundtable' hosted by 'The People Speak' with local police and councillors taking part. This event strengthened the Young Influencers/Leaders partnerships with Tower Hamlets Young People's Services and with the local police.

**(c) Scheme B - Improving the perception of young people in the community (Two projects)**

This scheme's two projects are concerned with enabling children to be a positive part of the community, promoting community cohesion and inter-generational relationships between young and older people. Significant achievements between April-June 2022 for projects in this theme have included:

- the photographic work of 14 to 25 year olds and over 50s supported by Four Corners Ltd's Into Focus Photography project being displayed at an exhibition in Four Corners Gallery in May 2022. Beneficiaries have received support from professional photographers and artists to develop their photography skills.
- Leaders in Community's Project Connect has gained a new group of elders in April-June 2022 who joined in with project's weekly social activities. Young people involved with the project have been volunteering with these activities, helping the elders with teas and coffees, and joining in the discussions and conversations

**(d) Scheme C - Services for people affected by domestic violence or other unsafe circumstances (One project)**

Hestia Housing and Support's Families Safe and Secure in Tower Hamlets project has promoted awareness amongst children and families of domestic violence and sexual abuse, including information on how to report this abuse and access appropriate support services. Project has delivered awareness sessions in the community and in its own refuge in the borough. Group sessions in the refuge in April-June 2022 focused on domestic abuse awareness, emotions and feelings, mental health awareness, self-esteem and body positivity.

**3.8 Premises update**

- (a)** 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. There are monthly meetings between officers responsible for the VCS and the Council's Asset Management Team to ensure that these agreements are in place, and, where they are not, to monitor progress. Where organisations are not actively negotiating with the Council to put appropriate agreements in place, quarterly instalments of LCF funding may be delayed or withheld.

**3.9 Infrastructure & Capacity Building**

- (a)** Although the current Infrastructure & Capacity Building Programme funding was awarded through a separate process, the management and reporting arrangements are the same as for LCF and performance reporting is thus included as part of this report. Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services (THCVS) is the lead organisation in a partnership with Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets (VCTH) to deliver an Infrastructure and Capacity Building project. Tower Hamlets Community Transport (THCT) was a partner in this project, but, as reported to GDSC on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022, it had to suspend its services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project is focused 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 in Tower Hamlets. From October 2020, after approval by Cabinet, the project has also supported VCTH to continue to deliver and manage the COVID-19 Volunteering Recovery Hub to recruit and place volunteers to support local VCS organisations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and assist the recovery process in the borough.

**(b) THVCS**

During the reporting period THCVS delivered the following development support to VCS organisations:

- supported 45 VCS organisations in development support over 75 interactions. 43 of the above 45 organisations reported positive outcomes (96%) from the support that they received from THCVS.
- the above areas of intervention were wide in scope and included:
  - support in producing funding bids
  - business planning
  - producing fire safety policy
  - risk register
  - governance and organisational structure
- worked with 257 people across all funding, learning and networking events, including 202 people from VCS organisations and 8 individual community members. These sessions were also attended by 34 people from public sector organisations – Council and the NHS; 13 people from housing associations and academic institutions.
- ran a Meet the Funders event on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022 which was attended by 192 organisations.

**(c) VCTH**

VCTH project activities in April-June 2022 included:

- delivered a training session for five volunteer managers - *Your Volunteer Policy – is it Fit for Purpose?*
- running a peer learning session on Zoom for 8 volunteer managers - *Adapting your Volunteer Programme for Living with COVID*
- registered 5 new VCS organisations for the COVID-19 Volunteering Hub for the first time
- supported 26 VCS organisations to advertise their volunteering roles via the COVID-19 Volunteering Hub (annual target of 75)
- advertised a total of 40 unique roles on behalf of VCS organisations via volunteering alerts
- 149 new volunteer registrations with the Hub (annual target of 500 registrations).

- (d)** VCTH continued to deliver within the project a small programme of Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic community trustee training, that also involved matching trained trustees with local VCS organisations. This programme involved training for 25 people, all of which were Tower Hamlets residents from a wide range of Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic communities. 22 beneficiaries completed their training in line with the programme's target. Fourteen



registered charities based in or providing significant services in Tower Hamlets were recruited for programme participation. VCTH worked with these organisations to prepare them for a trustee matching event that took place on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022, including reviewing their trustee selection process. 17 programme beneficiaries were subsequently offered and accepted VCS organisation trustee positions, exceeding programme target of 15.

- (e) GDSC is asked to approve the continuation of the grant variation for the Infrastructure and Capacity Building project as outlined in **Appendix 3 - Proposed Infrastructure & Capacity Building Programme Activity In Extension Period (October 2022 to March 2024)**. This would enable the above project to continue to support the delivery of the COVID-19 Volunteering Hub, managed by Programme partner, VCTH, to recruit volunteers for VCS organisations in the borough during the extension period for the project. Appendix 3 outlines the previously approved grant variations for this project and the proposed basis of the grant variation for October 2022 to March 2024. THCVS activity for the Infrastructure & Capacity Building Programme for the extension period will be on the same basis as current provision, on a pro rata basis.

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 A strategic equalities assessment was undertaken of the Local Community Fund (LCF) programme with the Equality Analysis comprising part of the report recommending funding as agreed at the 31 July 2019 Cabinet. This included looking at the change from Mainstream Grants (MSG) to the Local Community Fund and whether the recommended projects were able to deliver against identified need.
- 4.2 The analysis identified some potentially adverse impacts relating to age, race and disability and these were addressed by initiating activity outside the LCF programme including:

New themes developed for the Small Grants Programme

- Access and Participation
- Community Support Services for Older People

Commissioned Services contracts to address key areas:

- Young People's Mental Health
- Early Years
- Young People's Disability Sports
- Young Carers

- 4.3 The programme continues to deliver against the themes developed to address the identified need.

#### **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 There are no direct financial implications of this report. If report implications were to lead to re-alignment of funding then it would need to be within the agreed grant budget of £9.31M.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

7.1 The Council is required to ensure it obtains Best Value in the administration of the various grants referred to in this report. A significant part of demonstrating Best Value is ensuring that the recipient organisations perform in accordance with the original applications and to take action where performance does not meet the required standard. This report shows compliance with this legal duty.

7.2 It is also part of the Council's overall duty to the burgesses of Tower Hamlets that its assets are appropriately safeguarded. It therefore continues to be in the Council's interest to ensure that written agreements are in place for the use of all the Council's buildings by VCS organisations as referred to in this report.

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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 Apr 22 – Jun 22

- Appendix 3 - Proposed Infrastructure & Capacity Building Programme Activity In Extension Period (October 2022 to March 2024).

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

- NONE

**Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A