


Grants Determination Sub-Committee	 TOWER HAMLETS
26 June 2024	
Report of: Robin Beattie, Acting Director of Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Classification: Unrestricted
Local Community Fund (LCF) Annual Report - October 2022 – October 2023	

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	
Member Level (Tier Three)	PAM	
Decision (Tier Four)	GDSC	

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

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

Executive Summary

This performance report provides the Committee with an update on the council-funded Local Community Fund (LCF) programme for the voluntary and community sector for the funding year October 2022 to October 2023, including an overview of activities and performance for the five themes of the programme, and the Infrastructure & Capacity Building project. The Project Summary (Appendix 3) gives an update by each project.

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 Local Community Fund (LCF) programme for October 2022 – October 2023, as set out in 3.2 to 3.7 and Appendix 3.
2. Note the performance of the Infrastructure & Capacity Building project as set out in 3.8.

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 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 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.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 **Background**

- (a) In July 2019 the Council agreed a programme of funding for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations from 1st October 2019. This programme was 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 were in operation whilst the Council developed new funding options for the VCS to commence in October 2023 (subsequently re-scheduled to commence in November 2023). The cost of this extension amounted to £1,325,823.
- (c) The delivery of the LCF Programme was 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 the 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 started 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 October 2022 – October 2023

- (a) In the October 2022-October 2023 funding year LCF providers had to respond to the cost-of-living crisis, which led to increased demands on their services, particularly for those focused on tackling poverty and social exclusion. Providers also had the challenges of finalising projects and seeking funding from the successor programme to LCF, the Mayor's Community Grant Programme.
- (b) LCF providers demonstrated significant resilience in responding to the demands and challenges that it faced. This is evident in the programme's success in supporting high percentages of residents from socially excluded communities, as outlined in Appendix 1. Projects successfully delivered their scheduled outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- (c) LCF projects were assigned a Red, Amber or Green rating (RAG rating) when reporting to the GDSC on project performance - please see Appendix 2 for more details. Of the 49 remaining LCF projects all were classed as Green in relation to the October 2022-October 2022 funding year, as was the

Infrastructure & Capacity Building Project, enabling all project payments to be made for that funding year.

3.3 Theme 1 Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing

(a) Scheme A Children, Young People and Families (Eight projects)

Projects in this scheme were focused on developing the confidence and life opportunities of young people. Significant areas of progress in October 2022-October 2023 included:

- 87% of the parents from the 92 families who participated in the Creative Play sessions at Half Moon Young People's Theatre's Professional Theatre and Inclusive Participatory Drama for Young People project said that the sessions had helped them to connect with their child and 53% said they felt more confident in their parenting skills.
- A distanced travelled survey revealed that 77% of the 113 girls on St Hilda's East Community Centre's Girls Driven Project experienced a substantial increase in confidence due to participation in the project.
- The Yard Theatre Ltd's Tower Hamlets Teens project premiered its *Unfair Society* performance that was created by the project's Yard Youth project over the course of 10 months.

(b) Scheme B – Older People (Seven projects)

Projects were concerned with improving the health and wellbeing of older residents. Notable areas of success included:

- East London Out Project's Tower Hamlets LGBT Support project enabled 80 LGBT people, who were either disabled or experiencing mental health concerns, to report better life satisfaction and better quality of life three months after attending either individual or group support.
- 135 older people reported feeling less isolated and lonely after participating in St Hilda's East Community Centre's Older People's Feeling Good Wellbeing project. Its wide range of physical and social sessions included Dancercise, Strength training, Arts & Crafts, Gardening and Jewellery making.
- 200 isolated older adults were visited by a befriender advocate on a fortnightly basis through Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours' Older Peoples Befriending Project.

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

Projects enabled older and physically disabled residents to be better informed and equipped to manage health and social care conditions. Progress included:

- Globe Community Project's Take Back Your Life project provided a mindfulness-based pain management programme to 54 people that supported 93% of these beneficiaries (50 people) to reduce the level of

pain and discomfort experienced and to increase their ability to manage pain through development of mindfulness practise.

- 80% of the 53 disabled beneficiaries supported by Real DPO's Taking Control of Your Life project to develop a support plan reported feeling more independent and having a better quality of life.

(d) Scheme D – Healthy Living and Healthy Choices (Six projects)

Projects were concerned with making residents better informed, to enable them to make healthier choices, and to increase engagement in physical activity. Successes included:

- 83.5% of the 200 children and young people (167 in total) supported by London Tigers' Exercise for Health project reported an improvement in their health and wellbeing.
- Newark Youth London's Healthy-Active-Together project partnered with Queen Mary University London to support the Festival of Communities event in Stepney Green Park, providing taster sports sessions for local residents and games/competitions for the whole family, involving over 100 people.
- 477 people participated in the Stifford Centre's Healthy Lifestyle Partnership Programme, with 92% of members reporting higher levels of well-being after six weeks of membership.

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

Projects were focused on improving health outcomes for disabled people and ensuring that people experiencing mental health issues were better supported. Areas of success included:

- People with learning disabilities participating on ICM Foundation CIC's CORE Projects Get Active Newspaper project working together to produce and distribute four editions of its newsletter on the theme of health and wellbeing, which was promoted at four events.
- Working Well Trust's Upskill project secured extra funding to support Tower Hamlets residents in the Over 50 age group with mental health challenges through delivering a summer programme of activities in Bow for this group, in partnership with Age UK.

3.4 Theme 2 Digital Inclusion and Awareness

(a) Scheme A: ICT Skills and Digital Careers (Three projects)

This theme's projects provided digital ICT skills and knowledge to residents:

- Limehouse Project's DigITIES project enabled 39 older people to expand their social networks due to the ICT skills that they gained through the project.
- Newham New Deal Partnership's @online club Network Tower Hamlets project supported 24 older residents to report increased confidence about going on-line.

- Wapping Bangladesh Association's Digital First project enabled twelve older adults to develop a better understanding of computers and how to navigate around the internet.

(b) Scheme B: Online Safety (Two projects)

Projects focused on children and young people's online safety. Progress included:

- SocietyLinks Tower Hamlets E-Safety Champions project trained young women to be champions for e-safety in the community, with 29 project participants receiving online safety champion certificates.
- Sporting Foundation's Building Digital Resilience project enabled 88 parents and 131 young people to be more aware of the relationship between social media and on-line grooming and other risks.

3.5 Theme 3 Advice and Information (Two projects)

(a) East End Citizens Advice Bureaux-led Advice Tower Hamlets Consortium successfully delivered support to vulnerable residents in the borough, surpassing many of its KPI's. It assisted 23,019 clients with social welfare advice, with 13,386 residents gaining successful benefit outcomes due to project support. The project secured £22,886,540 for clients, through either increases in income or backdated payments, and £4,237,043 in reduction or negotiations of personal debt for beneficiaries.

(b) Island Advice Centre's Tower Hamlets Advice Training and Capacity Building Project delivered 39 Advice Workshops on benefits issues to 615 people working in the borough's advice sector and trained 15 people to attain Learning to Advise certificates, seven of which were volunteers.

3.6 Theme 4 Employment and Skills

(a) Areas of this theme's projects' success in delivering employment and training support in the funding year are outlined below.

(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 engaged 66 organisations via one-to-one support to develop their confidence and capacity to be excellent employers of disabled people. Its one-to-one advice service supported 21 disabled people to access paid employment opportunities.

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

- Limehouse Project's Developing Potential project supported 38 women from Black, Asian & Multi-Ethnic communities to complete and gain accredited qualifications.

- SocietyLinks' Tower Hamlet's Job Club provided employment support to 131 individuals, with 23 individuals gaining accredited outcomes.
- 17 women on Stifford Centre Limited's BAME Women's Employment Support Programme gained accreditation and skills to help move them towards employment.

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

- Auto Italia South East's Learning Live! project supported 752 young people from socially excluded groups through portfolio review and mentoring workshops to explore creative careers and university courses.
- 10 trainees on Four Corners Ltd's ZOOM Film School - which supported disadvantaged residents to move into work in the creative industries – obtained employment.
- The Bromley by Bow Centre's Creative Communities project supported 28 beneficiaries to obtain sustainable paid employment of over 26 weeks in the arts sector within three months of completing the programme.

3.7 Theme 5 Community Safety

(a) Project achievements for this theme in promoting community safety in the funding year are outlined below.

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

- 80% of the 62 vulnerable young people on Kazzum Art's Build project reported that project participation had helped them to improve their confidence, with a similar percentage being supported to improve their communication skills.
- Osmani Trust's Schools and Community Resilience Programme delivered a series of one-off awareness workshops to 100's of young people in schools on spotting signs of exploitation and education on the effects of taking Nitro oxide.

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

- Four Corners Ltd's Into Focus Photography project supported 17 children and young people, aged between 14-25, and 15 people over 50, through a variety of experimental photography workshops co-designed by above participants. Participants co-designed three public exhibitions, with over 560 visitors attending their receptions.
- Leaders in Community's Mind the Gap project organised a number of intergenerational trips, including the Thames Barrier Park Eid Party and the O2 Greenwich adventure, which offered unique opportunities for joint adventures, reinforcing the community bonds that had been nurtured throughout the year.

(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 promoted awareness amongst children and families of domestic violence and sexual assault. 96.6% of project's 693 event attendees in its total lifetime reported an improved understanding of Domestic Violence Survivor Assessment and how to seek support on this issue. There were 407 attendees at the project's events in its final funding year and 33 workshops delivered.

3.8 Infrastructure & Capacity Building

(a) Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services (THCVS) was the lead organisation in a partnership with Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets (VCTH) to deliver the Infrastructure and Capacity Building project, which focused on increasing the range and number of VCS organisations in the borough that were well-run, resilient and sustainable and strengthening the VCS as a key public sector strategic delivery partner in Tower Hamlets. Achievements in the funding year included:

- supported 213 VCS organisations, with positive feedback received from 87% of these organisations.
- delivered training to 62 volunteer managers (target of 48)
- supported 25 VCS organisations to have improved volunteering practices
- 238 volunteering roles advertised through the Volunteering Hub
- 818 new volunteer registrations with the Hub (annual target of 500 registrations)

3.9 A summary of the progress of individual LCF programme projects and the Infrastructure & Capacity Building project is outlined in **Appendix 3 LCF Project Summary October 2022 – October 2023**.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The programme made good progress in October 2022-October 2023 in supporting protected characteristic groups and residents from different areas of the borough. This progress is outlined in **Appendix 1 LCF Programme Annual Report October 2022-October 2023 - Profile Of Beneficiaries**

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.

5.2 Best Value Implications: To ensure best value for the Council we require organisations to complete quarterly and annual monitoring returns which report on the progress organisations have made against their Key

Performance Indicators as set out in their funding agreements. Officers also conduct annual monitoring visits. This helps to ensure the Council is getting best value on the grants provided. If the Council has concerns about performance, then this is made a priority on the risk register and the group will be provided with additional support to achieve their Key performance Indicators. There are no other specific statutory implications relevant to consideration of this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1** The noting of the Local Community Fund Annual Report does not have any direct financial implications.
- 6.2** The new Mayor's Community Grant Programme (MCGP) approved by cabinet in March 23 replaces the Local Community Fund which ended on 31st October 2023. The new programme will be funded through the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL).
- 6.3** The Council's MTFs includes £4m annual funding for Community grants, including £982k funding from the Public Health grant for services that are eligible for the use of the Public Health grant.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1** The terms of reference of the Grants Determination 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.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 LCF Programme Annual Report October 2022-October 2023 - Profile Of Beneficiaries
- Appendix 2 – Local Community Fund Programme Management Arrangements

- Appendix 3 – LCF Project Summary October 2022 – October 2023

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A