

Item No. N/A	Classification: Open	Date: 25 March 2024	Decision Taker: Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy & Finance
Report title:		Common Purpose grants programme 2024-25: uplift	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy & Communities	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy and Finance approves a 3.9% uplift to the Common Purpose grants allocations for the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The total annual budget for the programme including this uplift will be £849,629. The funded organisations are listed in Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy and Finance approved the extension of the Common Purpose grants programme for an additional year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 by way of an IDM report that was approved on 18 December 2024. See Background Documents section for more information.
3. Following a request by Community Southwark on behalf of the voluntary and community sector in the borough regarding the impact of the cost of living crisis on their work, an increase of 6% was approved for Common Purpose grantees for 2023 to 24.
4. The overall aims of the Common Purpose programme are to bring Southwark's diverse communities together, tackle social exclusion and promote a greener borough. It was developed to support the ambitions of the Southwark Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy '[Common Purpose Common Cause](#)' This includes a commitment to funding core costs and longer funding cycles. The fund provides 4 year 'strategic partner' grants and 2 year 'community engagement' grants, the majority of which are for core costs.
5. Common Purpose grant recipients are required to contribute to outcomes set out in the [Common Outcomes Framework](#). These outcomes contribute to healthier, more engaged and greener communities.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. Community Southwark have asked on behalf of Common Purpose funded groups that a further inflationary increase of 6% is applied to these grants for 2024-25. However, as the latest inflation rate announced on 20 December 2023 is 3.9% this percentage increase is recommended.

Policy framework implications

7. The Common Purpose grants programme was developed to support the ambitions of the 2016 'Common Purpose Common Cause' [Voluntary and Community Sector \(VCS\) strategy](#), with a focus on supporting resilient and connected communities, improving outcomes for residents and supporting a resilient VCS via core funding and longer funding cycles.
8. This grants programme supports the council's transformational agenda priorities
 - People powered
 - Thriving neighbourhoods
 - Closing the gap

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

9. There is a legal duty on local authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equal opportunities, eliminate discrimination and to promote positive community relations. This grants programme aims to empower and enable diverse communities and those communities that experience discrimination to achieve a better quality of life. This includes those communities who were disproportionately affected by the Covid 19 pandemic and are now disproportionately affected by the cost of living crisis.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

10. As part of the grant application process the council asks organisations to estimate the percentage of their service users that fall into the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. Funded organisations also provide data on the composition of the board or management committee of organisations against Protected Characteristics. This enables us to identify who is leading the groups we fund. This information enables us to assess the equalities impact of the programme, including whether our funding is supporting organisations that reflects the demographics of the borough.

Health impact statement

11. The Common Purpose grants programme aims to improve the wellbeing and resilience of local communities. Several of the outcomes that funded

organisations are required to achieve are taken from the ‘Healthier Communities’ list of outcomes in the Common Outcomes Framework. These relate in particular to enabling access to health services; and ensuring clients maintain and improve their independence.

Resource implications

12. The commissioning team is responsible for oversight and administration of the budget.
13. Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth are making arrangements to credit £16,832 for costs relating to Bankside Open Spaces Trust for the current financial year to the cost centre for the programme. They have confirmed they will make a permanent base budget adjustment in April/May 2024 for next year’s budget commitment.
14. Provision was made for additional resources to respond to the impact of inflationary pressures and the cost of living crisis on voluntary and community sectors. The additional inflationary costs will be met from this £200k fund. Specifically, line 448 of the commitments schedule in the budget agreed in February 6 2023 Cabinet meeting reads as follows:

Provision to receive bids to relieve excessive inflationary pressures in the Voluntary sector- £200K

Legal implications

15. Please see the concurrent report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Governance & Assurance) below.

Financial implications

16. The total budget for the Common Purpose programme in 2023/24 was £815,000. This did not meet the full £818,000 cost of the Common Purpose grants with the short fall being met through underspend in other budgets across the Community Engagement division. In order to meet fully the current costs and additional 3.9% uplift for this grant programme in 2024-25, we are proposing a 4.25% budget increase for cost centre CE409.
17. Funding will be transferred from Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth (i.e. ENG) and Cost Centre CE460, and the budget created to meet the cost of living stress funded VCS organisations were facing. Table below shows the detail of funding transfers to uplift the budget to the required level.

	Amount(£)
Current budget available in cost code CE409	815,000
Budget transfer from ENG in 2024/25	16,832
Budget transfer from cost code CE460 in 2024/25	17,797
Total budget in cost code CE409 after budget transfers	849,629

18. Staffing and any other grant monitoring costs connected with this proposal will be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

Consultation

19. The uplift is in response to a request from Community Southwark for an inflationary uplift on these grants.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance) (SB21032024)

20. This report seeks approval of a 3.9% uplift to the Common Purpose grants allocations to the funded organisations listed in Appendix 1, for the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
21. Paragraph 2 notes that an extension of the Common Purpose grants programme for an additional year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 had been previously approved by the Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities and Finance in December 2024. Paragraph 6 notes that the proposed uplift is commensurate with the current rate of inflation.
22. There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendation of this report and the decision to approve that recommendation is one which is reserved to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy & Finance under Part 3D of the Council Constitution.

Strategic Director of Finance (SC23/046)

23. The report seeks the Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy & Finance to approve a 3.9% uplift to the Common Purpose grants allocations for the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The total annual budget for the programme including this uplift will be £849,629. The funded organisations are listed in Appendix 1.
24. The Strategic Director of Finance notes that the costs of the recommendations of this report can be contained within existing resources, as mentioned under the financial implications. Required budget adjustments to the Common Purpose grants budgets will be carried forward in financial year 2024-25. It is expected that continued monitoring will take place with all grant recipients to ensure conditions of grants are met.
25. Staffing, subsequent grant monitoring and any other costs connected with this proposal to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Common Purpose grants programme 1 year extension 2024-25: Key Decision approval	Community Engagement Division, Strategy & Communities Department	Andrew.Matheson@southwark.gov.uk
Issue details - Common Purpose grants programme 1 year extension 2024-25: grant allocations - Southwark Council		
"Common Purpose Common Cause" Voluntary Sector Strategy	Community Engagement Division, Strategy & Communities Department	Andrew.Matheson@southwark.gov.uk
Common Purpose grants - Southwark Council		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	List of proposed Common Purpose funded groups 2024 to 25 with uplift amounts

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Andrew Matheson, Senior Commissioning Officer	
Report Author	Angus Lyon, Commissioning Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	25 March 2024	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive (Governance & Assurance)	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	25 March 2024	