

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 24 September 2015	<b>Decision maker:</b> Leader of the Council
<b>Report title:</b>		Response to London Councils Grants Consultation	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Head of Community Engagement	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the response to the London Councils grants consultation set out at Appendix 1 be agreed.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Cabinet approved the Council's contribution to the London Councils Grants Scheme of £319,175 for 2015/16.
3. Approval of the Council's contribution to the Scheme for 2016/17 will be sought in December 2015.
4. Constituent Councils are required to contribute to the London Councils Grants Scheme under Regulations 6(8) of the Levying Bodies (General) Regulations 1992.
5. The London Councils Grants Scheme enables voluntary organisations based throughout London to deliver services and activities within the four defined thematic priority areas:
  - Homelessness
  - Sexual and domestic violence
  - Poverty
  - Infrastructure
6. Southwark Council influences the pattern of the London Councils support through its representation on both Grants and Leaders Committees as a constituent council.
7. The current London Councils grants programme comes to an end in March 2017 and London Councils are consulting as part of a review of the programme. London Councils have asked Borough Leaders/Grants Committee members to provide one response on behalf of the Council to the review consultation.
8. In addition borough officers have been invited to respond. Community engagement takes a co-ordinating role for the London Councils' Grants Levy annual approval process and an officer also attends and chairs the London Councils' Grants Borough Officer Forum at which quarterly grants performance reports are presented.

9. The aim of the consultation exercise is to inform London Councils decision as to whether the grants programme should continue past March 2017 and if it does what the priorities of the programme should be from 1 April 2017. The consultation will also inform London Councils' decisions on any future budget and allocation of resources to projects that deliver the priorities
10. Officers across the council, with responsibility for each of the thematic areas specified above, have met to consider how best to respond to the consultation.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

11. At this officer meeting there was consensus that:
  - There remains a need for commissioning of pan-London services and the programme should continue.
  - Performance management information needs to be improved including better information on the impacts/outcomes and resulting VFM implications.
  - Co-ordination & communication at a borough level needs to be improved.
  - Better information should be provided on whether services complement or duplicate.
  - There is recognition that some valuable strands within thematic areas are not commissioned at a borough wide level and that commissioning services for particular communities at borough level isn't good value for money – e.g. services for LGBT communities.
12. The issues raised are not new and have been raised during the course of both the current and previous grants programme by London boroughs. In response to these issues London Councils set up a Task and Finish Group to consider ways of improving linkages between the Grants Programme and the boroughs.
13. An initial meeting took place in February 2015 with representatives from the boroughs, from the voluntary and community sector and infrastructure organisations. The Task Group identified a number of ways in which the challenges set out above could be addressed. It recognised that the complexity of the scheme and the varying patterns of need and provision across London boroughs mean that taking single borough perspectives on whether value for money is achieved may run against the grain of the programme which is pan-London.

## **Community impact statement**

14. As noted above the London Councils Grants Scheme enables voluntary organisations based throughout London to deliver services and activities within the four defined priority areas:
  - Homelessness
  - Sexual and domestic violence
  - Poverty
  - Infrastructure
15. Southwark contributes to the provision of these London wide services meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable communities within Southwark and

across London experiencing barriers to economic and social wellbeing. Southwark Council influences the pattern of the London Councils support through its representation on both Grants and Leaders Committees as a constituent council.

16. This funding is based on levels of deprivation and need. Residents in Southwark benefit from a wider range of services from organisations other than those simply based within the borough. Organisations based in Southwark also serve the populations of other London boroughs.
17. London Councils' funded services provide support to people within all the protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010), and in particular targets groups highlighted as particularly hard to reach or more affected by the issues being tackled. Funded organisations are also required to submit equalities monitoring data, which can be collated across the grants scheme to provide data on the take up of services and gaps in provision to be addressed. Their grants team reviews this annually.

### **Resource implications**

18. Southwark council's current contribution to the London Councils s scheme is £319,175 for the 2015/2016 financial year. The borough levies for the scheme are calculated annually on a population basis. Moving forward the subscription will need to be considered within the context of the overall council budget-setting process.

### **Consultation**

19. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety has been consulted on the proposals. Senior officers with responsibilities for commissioning across the council were also consulted.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Consultation response

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement	
<b>Report Author</b>	Andrew Matheson, Senior Commissioning Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	24 September 2015	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Legal Services	N/A	No
Strategic Director of Finance & Corporate Services	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	24 September 2015	

## **Appendix 1 Southwark Council Response to London Councils Grants Consultation**

### **1. General issues**

There remains a need for commissioning of pan-London services and the programme should continue. Southwark council welcomes the opportunity to work with London Councils to continue to improve how the scheme operates into the future.

Performance management information needs to be improved including better information on the impacts/outcomes of the funded activity.

Co-ordination & communication at a borough level needs to be improved.

Better information should be provided on whether services complement or duplicate.

There is a recognition that there are valuable strands within the thematic areas of the grants programme that are not commissioned at a borough wide level and that commissioning services for particular communities at borough level isn't good value for money – e.g. services for LGBT communities.

The issues raised are not new and have been raised during the course of both the current and previous grants programme by London boroughs. We welcome the fact that in response to these London Councils set up a Task and Finish Group to consider ways of improving linkages between the Grants Programme and the boroughs and this should continue and feed into the review of the programme. An initial meeting took place in February 2015 with representatives from the boroughs, from the voluntary and community sector and infrastructure organisations. The Task Group identified a number of ways in which the challenges set out above could be addressed. It recognised that the complexity of the scheme and the varying patterns of need and provision across London boroughs mean that taking single borough perspectives may run against the grain of the programme which is pan-London.

### **2. Response to the current thematic strands/priority areas:**

#### **2.1 Homelessness**

Economies of scale dictate that there is still a need for pan-London services that offer support and meet the need of specific homeless groups, particularly where it would not be practical or effective for local authorities to do so on an individual basis. We would welcome the opportunity to work closely with London Councils and other boroughs to determine our priorities for future pan-London services, to ensure that these are delivered in a way that achieves the greatest impact for homeless and potentially homeless people.

A greater level of engagement with local authorities including commissioners and operational services could enable better integration and avoid any potential duplication with local provision. In relation to homelessness services, existing strategic partnerships such as South East London Housing Partnership (SELHP) could be better leveraged to enable consistent engagement on a sub-regional basis.

Greater transparency in relation to performance information and the quality of service outcomes achieved through the grants programme is important going forwards, to ensure

that the programme is achieving value for money and that the vulnerable clients supported through these projects are safeguarded appropriately.

## **2.2 Poverty**

In terms of tackling poverty through employment, there is a need for better integration and alignment with what is happening at a local level. For example, Southwark Works is funded to support people with disabilities, mental health needs, women and substance misuse clients into employment. These are all client groups that have been funded through the London Councils grants programme and if these are to continue to receive funding it is essential that there is better integration with local delivery.

There is a need for more information on how the target groups have been identified. From a Southwark perspective, other priority groups include young people, offenders and people at risk of gang related activity, older people (50+), lone parents and non-English speakers as people likely to have particular barriers to work and therefore at higher risk of being in poverty. That said, employment support for women, BAME clients and ESOL support is not currently being funded locally.

Job sustained rates through the programme are lower than what would be expected through locally funded provision and this needs to be considered going forward.

## **2.3 Infrastructure**

The average unit cost of the funding for 35 groups is £285,714 per organisation, per annum and this is relatively high. It is therefore essential that the monitoring clearly demonstrates outcomes and impact to establish ongoing value for money.

If the programme continues there should be a robust evidence base for what is funded and the priorities as well as a consideration of future and current factors impacting on the level of need for example the increasing impact of Universal credit, the bedroom tax and other, welfare reforms.

The review should consider to what extent the calculation based on population reflects the different levels of need across boroughs.

## **2.4 Sexual and Domestic Violence**

There is room for improvement in the co-ordination of prevention services in this area. Southwark is keen to work with London Councils and the funded organisations to avoid any potential duplication or gaps in provision .

The review should take on board to what extent there are local linkages in place. The council's own commissioned domestic abuse provision is broad and well co-ordinated, but there are some gaps in provision for example in terms of age, gender and inter generational Domestic Abuse.

Southwark commissions at least one of the same organisations. The numbers reported by London Councils for Southwark clients are high. Monitoring data should be used to establish whether there are duplications or gaps.

There is significant value in the Helpline and Refuge commissions.