

Item No:	Classification: Open	Date: 14 December 2020	Meeting Name: Cabinet member for Communities and Equalities
Report title:		Common Purpose 2 year grants programme 2021-23	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member for Communities and Equalities approves the funding recommendations for voluntary sector organisations delivering services under the 2 year 'community engagement' Common Purpose grants programme 2021-23 subject to Council Assembly approval of the council's budget. The recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The overall aims of the Common Purpose programme are to bring Southwark's diverse communities together, tackle social exclusion and promote a greener borough.
3. These aims are in line with the Southwark Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy 2017/2022 '[Common Purpose Common Cause](#)' which was launched by the VCS, the council and Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in 2016. The overall ambition of the strategy is to support a sustainable, confident and resourceful VCS.
4. The role of the VCS in supporting resilient and included communities has been crucial in the past few months during the COVID 19 pandemic. Evidence shows that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and marginalised communities have been disproportionately affected by both the virus itself and the economic and social impacts of lockdown. The majority of organisations currently funded via the programme were able to quickly adapt their services at the start of lockdown to continue to provide support particularly for the most vulnerable clients. A number of them were also involved in the borough emergency response including food distribution via community hubs.
5. The current two year grants are due to expire in March 2021 and the 4-year grants in March 2023 hence only the 2 year grants have been advertised at this time. A key objective of the VCS strategy is to improve the council's commissioning and grant giving to focus on outcomes and [the Common Outcomes Framework](#) was developed in order to achieve this. The 4 and 2

year grants were introduced to support greater stability and certainty for funded organisations.

6. The following outcomes have been selected from the Common Outcomes Framework to support the aims of the programme. Organisations applying to the current round were asked to select a maximum of 4 outcomes and minimum of 2 outcomes that they would aim to achieve with the funding:
 - Residents have improved access to community services
 - Residents feel that they have access to services to improve their wellbeing
 - Residents feel more confident to maintain their independence without the need for higher levels of support
 - Residents have increased opportunities and support to volunteer
 - Residents have the skills and confidence to increase their use of online services and there is less digital exclusion
 - Residents and organisations have greater access to community spaces and premises
 - Residents increase their use of public transport, cycling or walking around the borough
 - Residents and organisations feel more able to use green spaces to support social action and health & wellbeing activities
 - Increasing numbers of residents and organisations support initiatives to make Southwark greener.

Organisations are not required to meet all the criteria but can specify which ones they will use the funding to achieve and the indicators they will use to measure progress.

7. These outcomes are in line with the Council Plan 2018 and the ten Fairer Future promises to create a fairer future for all in Southwark.
8. For the first time, organisations were asked to apply via the council's new online grants portal.
9. Oversight of the council's relationship with the voluntary sector, the council's Conditions of Grant Funding (COGF) and the overall processes for commissioning services from the VCS comes within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Equalities.
10. The programme is not able to fund organisations whose main activities fall into specific service areas of other council departments. These include: Adult Learning, Advice Services, Arts & Culture, Community Safety, Early Years, Local Economy, Public Health, Social Care (adults' or children's), Youth and Play.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Common Purpose grants: assessment and funding recommendations

11. The two and 4-year time scales are intended to create a balance between ensuring greater stability and certainty for organisations while at the same

time enabling 'new' organisations and innovative projects to be funded. The intention is to enable change and churn in the programme.

Criteria

The grant criteria for the Common Purpose programme were reviewed in autumn 2020 to ensure they remain fit for purpose during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Organisations applying for 2 year grant are required to meet **all** the following criteria.

General (also applies to 4-year grants)

- Registered charity and / or registered not for profit company and / or other form of registered not for profit organisation
- Based in and / or providing services within borough of Southwark
- Show evidence of stable governance and finances
- Operate from fit for purpose premises **and show evidence of ability to adapt services during the COVID 19 pandemic to ensure they continue to meet the needs of their clients**
- Show evidence of promoting equality and supporting the council's equality objectives and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics
- Quality assurance measures in place.

Specific criteria: 2-year community engagement grants

Organisations applying for a 2-year grant were also required to meet these criteria

- Meeting the needs of one or more community of interest **including communities that are particularly affected by the COVID 19 pandemic** and bridging different communities together
- Shows evidence of co-operation with other VCS organisations serving different client groups
- Shows evidence of **some** non-council funding and is not wholly reliant on council funding
- Provides advice, information and signposting to the correct services.

Currently funded organisations

The following organisations are in receipt of 2-year grants in 2020-21:

Organisation	Amount
AAINA Women's Group	£32,073
Age UK Lewisham & Southwark	£18,000
Beormund Community Centre – closed Sept 2020	£49,749
Bike Project	£15,000
Crystal Palace Community Trust	£12,000
Future Men	£16,000

Latin American Disabled People's Project	£18,000
Latin American Women's Rights Service	£18,000
Mental Fight Club	£9,000
Paxton Green Time Bank	£15,750
Pecan (Hour Bank)	£29,000
Somali Integration & Development Association	£56,000
Southwark Everywoman's Centre	£21,000
The Manna Society	£55,000
TOTAL	£364,572

12. Organisations currently in receipt of a 4-year grant were not able to apply for a 2-year grant, except for one instance where an organisation is currently in receipt of both a 4-year and a 2-year grant.
13. The Common Purpose programme was openly advertised in September – October 2020. The applications received are summarised in the table below:

Currently funded organisations	12
New applications	28
Total number of applications	40
Applications that meet the criteria	25
Applications that don't meet the criteria	15
Total amount applied for	£1,960,561
Annual amount applied for	£999,800

14. Two organisations that are funded in 2020-21 did not apply. These are:
- The Beormund Community Centre, which closed in September 2020. Funding to the centre has been stopped and termination of the grant has been approved via an IDM report.
 - Age UK Lewisham and Southwark, which are being funded to provide a time-limited engagement project with older people. This has been delayed owing to the pandemic and the project is due to be completed in early 2022. The organisation is in receipt of £18,000 per annum from 2019-21 for the project. It will not receive any further funding from the council for this project.
15. Officers have assessed applications, using a scoring system. The scoring system is embedded in the online grants portal. Applications are scored using the following scale for each area scored:

- 0 – not met
- 1 – satisfactory
- 2 – good

3 – outstanding

16. The following areas are scored:

- Governance
- Financial health
- Premises issues
- The proposal for funded activities – including beneficiaries, evidence of need, quality, evidence of promoting equality & diversity and evidence of collaboration with other organisations; evidence of ability to adapt services during the pandemic.

17. Scoring the applications is based on:

- Whether they meet the criteria
- Ability to demonstrate whether they are meeting VCS strategy objectives and relevant outcomes from the common outcomes framework.
- Where currently funded, any concerns about performance that have not been resolved.

18. Officers have tracked the level of inward investment to the borough by currently funded organisations through analysis of their audited accounts and this has been taken into account.

Officers have also cross-checked with other departmental funding programmes, including the Neighbourhood Fund, in order to avoid duplication.

The recommendation for each individual organisation is based on the score achieved, budget considerations and taking a borough wide approach to supporting VCS services for communities. This includes consideration of those communities most at risk of exclusion and most affected by the COVID 19 pandemic; as well as the Southwark Stands Together agenda (see Community Impact Statement below).

19. Fifteen applications were received that did not meet the criteria. Reasons were as follows:

- 1 from an unincorporated association which is not a registered charity or registered not for profit company. Organisations are required to be registered charities and / or registered not for profit to be eligible to be funded.
- 10 that are within the remit of a specific departmental service area, including Youth and Play, Education and Community Safety.
- 4 applications solely for specific physical activities / sports with no community engagement work.

Details of these groups have been forwarded to the relevant departmental commissioners where appropriate and fundraising advice will be available from Community Southwark and the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Team.

20. Officers in Community and Voluntary Sector Engagement have had discussions with other departments to ensure funding priorities are aligned.
21. For 2021-23, it is proposed to fund the following 'new' organisations:
 - Central Southwark Community Hub, a BAME-led organisation to provide a community 'hub' based around a food bank and pantry, in Camberwell
 - Walworth Golden Oldies, to support to older BAME people, in particular people from the Windrush generation, including specific support with digital inclusion
 - Opening Doors, to provide support to older LGBT people
 - Global Generation, to involve young people, with a focus on BAME young people, in environmental and social action and volunteering. It aims to involve facilitators from BAME backgrounds, and promote awareness of activists and experts from BAME backgrounds.

Conditions of Grant Funding

22. Organisations awarded grant funding are subject to monitoring through the council's Conditions of Grant Funding (COGF). Schedules to these cover the key areas of: governance and employment; finance; employment practices and monitoring and information. In addition to a requirement to comply with these conditions, organisations are subject to an annual monitoring visit, and the monitoring framework includes a monitoring checklist, which assesses each of the areas covered within the COGF as well as service delivery.
23. In 2020-21, funded organisations were asked to report on the progress they had made in achieving their selected outcomes, using the indicators they had chosen. Officers collated the data provided and a summary of the data is available as a background document.
24. At the same time organisations were also asked to provide information of the impact the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic was having on their organisation, including financial impact, and whether they had been able to adapt their services. All funded organisations, with the exception of the Beormund Community Centre, had moved their services to telephone and online, and by other means such as providing doorstep deliveries. The three environmental groups funded (all 4 year grants) continued to maintain their sites.
25. Where any significant issues are identified during monitoring which could give rise to a breach in the COGF, the council will write to the relevant organisation and set out what action needs to be taken. In such cases they will be advised that the funding continuation is subject to their taking the necessary remedial action to address concerns. Failure to do so may result in the council taking the appropriate action to terminate the funding by way of a further report.

Policy implications

26. The Common Purpose grants programme assists the council in meeting its statutory and policy objectives for eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and good community relations, and for tackling poverty and social

exclusion. The aim is to fund organisations whose core activities do not fall within service-specific departmental programmes.

27. The council has a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" in the exercise of its functions. This includes a requirement that the council should take the opportunity when new contracts for the delivery of their services are being made to ensure that the principles of the duty are written in to those contracts. This approach will apply equally to grant agreements.
28. The council's Policy and Resources Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 Revenue Budget was agreed in February 2020, in the context of ongoing unprecedented cuts in its budget settlement from government and before the scale of the COVID 19 became apparent.

Community Impact statement

29. 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 will empower and enable hard-to-reach communities and those communities which experience discrimination, and who continue to be disproportionately affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, to achieve a better quality of life.
30. In 2020 the [Southwark Stands Together programme](#) has been launched in response to the Black Lives Matter movement, to tackle ingrained racism in the borough and make the council an effective anti-racist organisation. This has implications for the whole work of the council including grant-giving and a review of council grant giving is planned with the aim of dismantling barriers to access to grant funding by BAME organisations.
31. As part of the 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. This information is used to assess the equalities impact of the programme and the impact of any funding reductions. The form used to collect this information has been developed in line with feedback from the Forum for Equalities and Human Rights in Southwark (FEHRS) and with the council's Equalities and Inclusion officer. An equalities analysis on these funding recommendations has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 2.
32. As part of the application process VCS organisations must demonstrate who will benefit from their organisations' activities and how they support cohesion and community bridging initiatives. Within their annual reports organisations must evidence the benefits users gain from their services or activities (Conditions of Grant Funding - Section 4. paragraph 1.1).
33. Grant funded VCS organisations are required as part of the COGF to sign up to the Southwark Diversity Standard. Contained within this is a requirement

that all subcontractors and service providers pay workers the London Living Wage as a minimum. The council has achieved Friendly Funder Accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation. Living Wage Friendly Funders support charities to pay the real Living Wage that meets the cost of living through their grant-making.

Resource implications

34. The council is committed to providing 3 months notice of funding decisions.
35. Where organisations are awarded more than one year's funding, the funding amounts for year 2 may be subject to review. An organisations' circumstances may change, or there may be broader strategic changes which may result in a need to review the year 2 award. Organisations will be informed in writing at the time of the award that the current funding is subject to review and therefore the year 2 figures are conditional. Where the year 2 award changes, organisations will be notified at least 3 months in advance.

Legal implications

36. See comments from the Director of Law and Democracy at paragraph 41.

Financial implications

37. In 2021-22 the total budget for the Common Purpose grants is £369,572. This includes £5,000 available from a one year grant in 2019-20 that was not re-advertised. In 2021-22 the overall budget for both the 4 and 2-year Common Purpose programme is £796,546.

Consultation

38. The Voluntary and Community Sector strategy was developed with feedback from 4 'listening events' held with the VCS in 2016, as well as feedback from VCS groups provided via Community Southwark. A clear wish was expressed by the VCS for longer funding timescales and for commissioning to be more focussed on outcomes for residents.
39. As a result the Common Outcomes Framework was developed in consultation with the VCS via a consultation event, in small workstream groups and at meetings of local VCS networks as well meetings with individual organisations and council commissioners. The council's Equalities lead was also consulted.
40. Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic officers have continued to liaise closely with the VCS, including funded groups, on how they have adapted their services and continued to support vulnerable people, and on patterns of need and demand for services.

Supplementary Advice from Other Officers

Director of Law and Democracy

41. The cabinet member is recommended to approve the funding recommendations for voluntary sector organisations delivering services under the Common Purpose Grants programme 2021-23 subject to council assembly approval of the council's budget. The detailed recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.
42. Under part 3D of the council's constitution, this is a decision the cabinet member is empowered to take. The cabinet member should note if council assembly fails to approve this portion of the budget then funding would not take place.
43. The council has the power to do anything that an individual may do (Localism Act 2011). Further, the council may incur expenditure where this is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of its functions. Both these powers enable this funding to be provided.
44. The council is subject to the "Best Value" duty to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". The government's Best Value Statutory Guidance requires the council to approach "value" as including economic, environmental and social value, and to be responsive to the needs of the voluntary and community sector. The new grant programme as outlined in this report appears to be consistent with these duties.
45. The cabinet member is reminded that the council is subject to the public sector equality duty in section 149 Equality Act 2010. This requires the council, in the exercise of all its functions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The duty is a continuing one. The cabinet member will need to comply with this duty in making this decision.
46. The community impact section of the report contains an account of the information sought by the council from organisations applying for grants to assist its understanding of the impact on those with protected characteristics. A full analysis of this information has been provided as Appendix 2 and this should be taken into account by the cabinet member to assist in meeting the public sector equality duty. It is noted in particular that there are a number of new grants proposed to organisations where additional benefits will be available for individuals with protected characteristics of race, age, disability and sexual orientation.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

47. The report recommends cabinet member approval for the funding programme to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in Appendix 1. The report notes

a dependency on the budget setting process due to take place which is relevant for multi year programmes.

48. There are no proposed savings for the service in the development of the 2021-22 budget and the minor increase in funding available between 2020-21 and 2021-22 is noted in paragraph 34. Paragraph 36 notes multi year awards are subject to review and, where changes are required, organisations will be notified at least 3 months in advance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Common Outcomes Framework	Environment & Leisure 160 Tooley St SE1P 5LX	Katherine Pitt 020 7525 1579 Katherine.pitt@southwark.gov.uk
Southwark Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy	Environment & Leisure	“ “
Common Purpose programme data summary 2019-20	Environment & Leisure	“ “

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Common Purpose 2 year grants funding recommendations 2021-23
Appendix 2	Common Purpose 2 year grants equalities analysis November 2020

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure	
Report Author	Katherine Pitt, Commissioning Officer	
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Key Decision	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
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