

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 10 November 2022	<b>Decision Taker:</b> Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness
<b>Report title:</b>		2022/23 Getting Involved Grants (GIG), part of the Resident Participation Fund (RPF) – Review of GIG Grant Administration and Stage 1 decision making	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Tenant and Homeowner Involvement Team Leader	

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That the Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness approves the recommendations to review the administration and Stage 1 decision-making of the 2022/23 Getting Involved Grants (GIG) programme.
2. That the GIG programme is moved to an annual programme allowing groups to apply for a Getting Involved Grant at any point during the year.
3. That Stage 1 decision making is moved from a panel of residents to the Local Housing Forums using anonymised applications scored through a standardised matrix.
4. That LHF's have a role in monitoring and reporting on the outcomes of GIG grants to the wider resident body.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

5. In February 2020 Cabinet approved a series of recommendations to strengthen the way the council works with the people who live in council homes. The agreed recommendations opened up the council's approach to resident participation so everyone who lives in a council home can get involved. The recommendations also shifted the resources that the council puts into resident participation back to the grassroots, giving residents more support and funding to do the things they want to do to improve their local estates and communities.
6. One of the recommendations allocated £900,000 to a new Resident Participation Fund, which replaced the previous single budgets: Tenants Fund, Homeowners Fund and Tenant and Residents Social Inclusion Grants (TRSIG).
7. The agreed recommendations also set aside £272,000 of the £900,000 new Resident Participation Fund for a Resident Participation Small Grants programme. Since 2020/21 the programme was renamed as the Getting Involved Grants (GIG), and replaces the previous TRSIG.
8. The GIG programme allows residents and community organisations to apply for

up to £5,000 to support revenue projects that bring people who live in council homes together and improve their wellbeing. These grants fund projects and activities that primarily benefit people who live in council owned homes, regardless of tenure type.

9. The subsidies exclude capital schemes and projects must have clear outcomes and benefits for local residents.
10. Typically application rounds start with a virtual roadshow workshop, open to all likely applicants and cover the following:
  - Eligibility
  - The functioning of the grant portal
  - Type of funding, revenue (qualified for funding) versus capital (not qualified for funding)
  - Financial threshold
  - Raising awareness of and tackling estate issue
  - Value for Money
  - Involvement of the residents
  - The essential concept of the global benefit for the community
  - The monitoring return system, including outputs and outcomes
  - Q/A session
11. A Grants Officer administers the programme and ensures compliance with grant criteria and ensures that there is no duplication with other LBS grants programmes.
12. The eligible applicants fall within these categories:
  - SHUs, Sheltered Housing Units
  - TMOs, Tenant Management Organisations
  - TRAs, Tenants & Residents Associations
  - Also, SHUs/TMOs/TRAs can apply in partnership with service provider organisations, but the application must come from the SHUs/TMOs/TRAs, which have the overall responsibility for the scheme.
  - Constituted local groups that can evidence that the application has been developed by and for people living in council homes.
  - Where a SHU/TMO/TRA already exists but the application originates from outside these associations, it is expected that the applicant demonstrates the support from the mentioned associations to complete the application.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

13. At the moment the GIG Grant application process takes place once a year with the exception of 2021/22 where applications were invited over three separate rounds due to the pandemic. Moving the GIG grant to a rolling programme, will enable groups to identify projects as ideas arise locally. At the moment if a group does not have a project ready to go during the grant application process, the

group may have to wait for the application opportunity. Moving to an annual lifecycle, will provide an enhanced opportunity for Tenant and Homeowner Involvement Officers to work with groups to submit robust applications and will also provide the Council with more undertake checks to ensure that money awarded will make a difference and time to execute administrative tasks.

14. Currently, first stage decisions are made through a residents' panel. Members are drawn from the tenant body depending on availability and there is no static membership. The panel is chaired by the Grants Officer and formal training on reviewing grant applications is not provided. Moving the process for reviewing grant applications and identifying successful grant proposals could be moved to the Local Housing Forums. Moving this responsibility to the LHF's supports the Council's wish to move towards Community Power. Panel members can receive training to build specific expertise and this will ensure that decision making takes account of diversity and inclusion. Applications could be anonymised to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and decision making can be structured through the use of a scoring matrix. The scoring matrix would cover issues such as tangible benefits to the community, inclusion and value for money. This will ensure consistency across the five forums. Sign off on shortlisted schemes would be required by the Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness.
15. Local Authorities are under increasing pressure to evidence transparency and accountability for finance and services. Local Housing Forums could have a role in monitoring and evaluating the GIG programme ensuring that objectives have been met and providing assurance to the wider resident body that the programme produces meaningful benefits for communities. Undertaking reviews by talking the programme methodology and challenges will avoid a prescriptive approach and provides regular opportunities to adapt the programme to ensure the identified outcomes are delivered.

### **Policy framework implications**

16. The proposed changes to the GIG programme remain targeted at interventions to tackle social problems linked to quality of life indicators. These are anti-social behavior, social wellbeing, environmental concerns, poor diet/obesity, economic hardship and a general inequality suffered by tenants and residents.

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

17. The changes introduced in the GIG programme enables local residents to make decisions on local priorities for funding. The cost of living is one of the significant challenges facing a number of residents. Tenants and residents associations have come forward to host warm hubs and provide hot food which would help to improve the socio-economic and health outcomes for a number of residents.

### **Community impact statement**

18. GIG helps to facilitate community cohesion and the programme has over the years helped to promote diversity and inclusion.

### **Health impact statement**

19. The GIG is used for community activities that helps to build community cohesion through activities that helps with the health and well-being of all residents.

### **Climate change implications**

20. GIG is used for fund revenue programmes to build community cohesion and there is no adverse implications for climate change.

### **Resource implications**

21. GIG is managed within existing resources in the Housing and Modernisation Department. The budget is ring fenced from the Resident Participation Budget which forms part of the Housing Revenue Account.

### **Finance implications**

22. See below concurrent from the Director of Finance and Governance below.

### **Legal implications**

23. See below concurrent from the Director of Law and Governance.

### **Consultation**

24. The establishment of the GIG programme was part of wider changes by resident participation agreed by Cabinet in February 2020. The said changes followed a period of almost two years consultation including an in depth review delivered by an independent organisation, a resident's co-design panel and a three month borough wide consultation.
25. Last year's exceptional pandemic circumstances meant that the panel making recommendations on projects for the GIG grants was made of officers but this year the panel reverted back to being made up of residents and an officer. The key issues for consideration outlined above have been discussed with the five Local Housing Forums Chairs who support the changes proposed.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Law and Governance**

26. The Localism Act 2011 enables the council to do anything that individuals generally may do, which would include incurring expenditure, giving financial or other assistance to any person or entering into arrangements or agreements with any person. This power can be used even if legislation already exists that allows the council to do the same thing although the council cannot to do anything which it was restricted or prevented from doing under that previous legislation.
27. The provision of grants from within the funds identified for the Getting Involved Grants (GIG) falls within the scope of activities the council can undertake under the

Localism Act 2011.

28. Under the decision making arrangements set out in Part 3 of the council's constitution, the decision on the recommendation in paragraph one of this report is one that the cabinet member is able to take.
29. The council is under an on-going duty, in exercising all of its functions, to have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, and advance of equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (such as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership) and those who do not.
30. When making a decision on the recommendation in this report the cabinet member must actively consider the PSED. The community impact statement set out in the report identifies relevant matters to be taken into account in discharging that duty.

### **Strategic Director of Finance and Governance**

31. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance notes the recommendations of the report and that existing resources are available to cover the recommended grants from within the Resident Participation Fund budget, with a further funding round later in the financial year.

### **Other officers**

32. None.

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Southwark Resident Participation Framework Cabinet Report	<a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s86945/Report%20Southwark%20Resident%20Participation%20Framework.pdf">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s86945/Report%20Southwark%20Resident%20Participation%20Framework.pdf</a>	John McCormack, Tenant and Homeowner Involvement Team Leader

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix	Links to the IDM for the approved 21/22 RPF/GIG Total Budget: <a href="file:///G:\Communities\Resident%20Involvement\Housing%20Consultation%20Structure%202020\Resident%20Participation%20Fund\Resident%20Participation%20Fund%2021-22%20IDM.docx">file:///G:\Communities\Resident%20Involvement\Housing%20Consultation%20Structure%202020\Resident%20Participation%20Fund\Resident%20Participation%20Fund%2021-22%20IDM.docx</a>

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Cheryl Russell, Director of Resident Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Nat Stevens - Resident Involvement Manager	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	13 April 2022	
<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 Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	10 November 2022	