

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 12 January 2023	Decision Taker: Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities & Finance
Report title:		London Councils Grants Scheme 2023-24	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities and Finance agrees:
 - To the recommendation of the London Councils' Leaders' Committee that the proposed overall level of expenditure of the London Councils' Grants Scheme for 2023-24 be £6.686 million to be shared by all London Councils.
 - Approves Southwark Council's contribution of £237,037 to the London Councils Grants Scheme 2023-24, subject to approval of the council budget by Council Assembly in February 2023.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The London Councils Grants Programme enables boroughs to tackle high-priority social need where this is better done at a pan-London level. The programme commissions third sector organisations to work with disadvantaged Londoners to make real improvements in their lives. All 32 London boroughs and the City of London contribute to the grants programme, run by London Councils. The Leaders' Committee sets the overall funding strategies, policies and priorities for funding to voluntary organisations.
3. Individual council's contributions are calculated on an annual basis and are proportionate to their populations. For 2023-24, the apportionment is based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) June 2020 estimate of population.
4. The financial year 2023/24 represents the second year of the new four-year programme of commissions. The original decision covered the period from 2021 to 2025; however, due to the extension to the current programme as a result the pandemic the current programme covers 2022 to 2026.
5. There are two priorities of the programme:

- Priority 1 Combatting Homelessness
- Priority 2 Tackling Sexual and Domestic Violence

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The Southwark contribution to the programme for 2023-24 remains at the same level as the current year's levy.
7. The two priorities of the new four-year Grants Programme 2022-2026 continue those in place since July 2019.
8. London Councils officers report quarterly to the Grants Committee on the performance of the grants programme, based on the Commissioning Performance Management Framework agreed by Grants Committee.

The November 2022 Grants Committee was asked to note two quarters of reporting:

a) outcomes at priority level to end of quarter two:

- i) Priority 1, combatting homelessness, overall is 14 per cent below profile
- ii) Priority 2, tackling sexual and domestic violence, overall is 13 per cent below profile.

b) The number of interventions delivered in the two quarters April to September 2022:

- i) Priority One, combatting homelessness: 3,866
- ii) Priority Two, tackling sexual and domestic violence: 9,227.

9. To develop the new programme that started in April 2022, London Councils:
 - Carried out consultation with boroughs (elected members and officers) and stakeholders engagement plans
 - Ensured that Grants Committee members remained involved throughout the process, consultation and stakeholder engagement; emerging best practice for grant making, equity and inclusion work.
10. Organisations delivering London wide services under the combatting homelessness priority include Shelter, Homeless Link, Stonewall Housing, St Mungo's and New Horizon Youth Centre. Lead organisations work with a range of partner organisations to ensure that there is a delivery network across London and so that diversity and inclusion service needs are addressed.
11. Organisations tackling sexual and domestic violence include Solace, SignHealth and Asian Women's Resource Centre and again delivery partnerships are in place to increase each and maximise partnership working.

12. The VCS Commissioning Team is responsible for oversight of the funding contribution from the council to London Councils and officers attend London Councils Borough Grants Officers Forum where London Councils report on the performance. Other officers in the council are responsible for delivery and commissioning of homelessness and sexual and domestic violence services. The commissioning team is responsible for sharing information about the services and how to make referrals to the service providers reaches service leads. This is to ensure that Southwark services and residents are able to benefit from the pan-London services.
13. Ensuring the needs of people with no recourse to public funds did feature in the consultation findings for the new programme. The recommendations for the new programme included two organisations that will be working with a specialist advice organisation (Praxis) throughout the life of the programme. Additionally, there are a number of specialist organisations across Priority 2, Domestic and Sexual Abuse that are connected to specialist immigration support.

London Councils Grants Scheme 2023-24 budget

14. The London Council Grants Committee agreed at its meeting on 30 November 2022:
 - An overall level of expenditure of £6.686 million for the Grants Scheme in 2023-24. This is an increase of £18,000 from the current year.
 - That borough contributions for 2023-24 should be £6.668 million with a transfer of £18,000 from reserves to cover the difference.
 - That constituent councils be advised that the apportionment of contributions for 2023-24 is based on the ONS mid-year population estimates for June 2020; and
 - That subject to the approval of an overall level of expenditure, the committee agrees to set aside a provision of £453,000 for costs incurred by London Councils in providing staff and other support services.
15. London Councils Leaders' Committee ratified the London Councils Grants Committee proposals for expenditure on 13 December 2022.
16. The budget recommended to constituent councils (which then need to be agreed by each of the councils) is set out below.

Overall Level of Expenditure	£6,686,000
• London Councils Grants programme	6,173,000
• Membership Fees to London Funders	60,000

- Operating (Non-Grants) Expenditure 311,000
- Central Recharges 142,000

Income will comprise:

- Borough contributions 6,668,000

Policy framework implications

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

Community impact statement

17. The London Councils Grants Scheme commissions services for activities within the two priority areas:

- Homelessness
- Sexual and domestic violence

18. 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.

19. 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.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

20. London Councils' funded services provide support to people within all the protected characteristics (as set out in the Equality Act 2010), and in particular targets groups highlighted as particularly hard to reach or more affected by the issues being tackled.

21. Funded organisations are required to submit equalities monitoring data, 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.

22. A number of organisations provide services to specific communities. Specialist provision for key target groups who face additional barriers to accessing housing includes those with NRPF status, LGBTQ+ and minority ethnic communities. Providers include Stonewall Housing, Shelter, London Youth Gateway and St Mungo's.

23. Specialist providers for key target groups facing additional barriers and experiencing domestic and sexual abuse include FORWARD, IMECE Women's Centre, Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO), Jewish Women's Aid, Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS), Women and Girls Network, Solace Women's Aid, Southall Black Sisters, Stonewall Housing, London Friend and Deaf Domestic Abuse Service.
24. There is a benefit to commissioning these services on a pan-London basis for these key priority needs. The projects include a mix of prevention services, direct support and wraparound services for particularly vulnerable people. Some examples include the street homeless, those needing specialist refuge accommodation, deaf people facing domestic abuse and prison leavers facing homelessness. Appendix 3 of the Grants Performance Commissions lists all the partnerships, providers, describes the services provided and provides contact details to enable referrals to be made.

Health impact statement

25. These services have a positive impact on clients' health and wellbeing in terms of:

- Supporting clients to avoid homelessness, or to be rehoused
- Supporting victims of sexual and domestic violence to be safe and to access services reduce the risk of abuse and poor physical and mental health

For both sets of clients, these services support them to access services, including health services, and move on positively with their lives.

Climate change implications

26. No particular climate change impacts have been identified.

Resource implications

27. The commissioning team within the communities division is responsible for oversight of Southwark's contribution and administration of the budget.

Legal implications

28. Please see the concurrent report of the Director of Law and Governance below.

Financial Implications

29. Funding of £237,037 is available for London Councils Grants Scheme 2023-24 and there are no planned efficiencies applied to this budget for the 2023-24 financial year.

Consultation

30. Southwark Council is represented on the London Councils Grants and Leaders Committee. In addition, officers attend the London Councils Grants officers meetings. The Scheme requires two thirds of constituent councils to support the recommended budget. If this is not achieved then the budget will remain the same as that approved for 2023-24.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

31. Not requested.

Director of Law and Governance

32. Section 48 of the Local Government Act 1985 ('the Act') enables schemes to be made in relation to Greater London and the metropolitan counties for the making of grants to voluntary organisations. In each such area, one constituent council is designated in the scheme for purpose of making the grants, with the other councils contributing financially. In Greater London the constituent councils are the councils of the London boroughs and the Common Council of the City of London. The London Councils Grants Scheme is governed by section 48 of the Act.
33. Section 48(3) of the Local Government Act 1985 requires that at least two-thirds of the constituent councils in Greater London must approve the proposed overall level of expenditure on grants to voluntary organisations and other costs incurred in "the making of grants".
34. The report notes that the overall level of expenditure of £6.686 million for the Grants Scheme in 2023-24 was agreed by the London Councils Grants Committee on 30 November 2022 and ratified by the London Councils Leaders' Committee on 13 December 2022 and recommended to the constituent councils for approval.
35. Section 48 (4)(A) of the Act and The Grants to Voluntary Organisations (Specified Date) Order 1992 provides for a situation where the overall level of expenditure in relation to a financial year is not approved before 1 February immediately preceding that financial year by at least a two-thirds majority of the constituent councils. If this approval has not been obtained, the constituent councils shall be deemed to have given their approval to the amount approved or deemed to have been approved for the preceding financial year.
36. The council's contribution to this amount is determined by reference to the size of the council's population as provided for in Regulation 6(8) of the Levying Bodies (General) Regulations 1992. For 2023-24 this has been calculated as £237,037.

37. The approval of the overall level of expenditure of the scheme and the making of a financial contribution to the London Councils grants programme is an executive function, though (as this report points out) one that is subject to the approval by council assembly of the council's budget for 2023/24. The council's constitution (part 3D) delegates to cabinet members executive functions relating the agreement of significant programmes in their areas of responsibility and grants to voluntary organisations. The cabinet member is therefore empowered to take this decision.
38. In the exercise of all his/her functions, the cabinet member must comply with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires the cabinet member to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. In this regard the cabinet member's attention is drawn to paragraphs 17-24 of the report.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

39. The report recommends cabinet member agreement of the London Councils Leaders Committee funding proposals for the 2023-24 grants programme and Southwark council's calculated contribution using ONS mid year population estimates from June 2020.
40. Paragraph 29 notes the contribution figure of £237,037 and mentions there are no efficiency saving proposals for this expenditure area within the development of the 2023-24 budget. The existing budget is sufficient for the proposed 2023-24 contribution.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
London Councils Grants Scheme Budget Proposals 2023-2024 Committee Report	Environment & Leisure, 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Andrew.Matheson @southwark.gov. uk

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Cllr Stephanie Cryan, Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities & Finance	
Lead Officer	Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	
Report Author	Andy Matheson, Senior Commissioning Officer	
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Dated	13 December 2023	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		3 January 2023