

Item No. N/A	Classification: Open	Date: 19 January 2024	Meeting Name: Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy & Finance
Report title:		London Councils Grants Scheme 2024-25	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Assistant Chief Executive - Strategy and Communities	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy & 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 2024/25 be £6.686 million to be shared by all London Councils
 - Approves Southwark Council's contribution of £234,586 to the London Councils Grants Scheme 2024/25, subject to approval of the council budget by Council Assembly in February 2024.

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 2024/25, the apportionment is based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) June 2022 estimate of population. For Southwark this shows a reduction of just under 8000 people on the previous year's estimate.
4. The financial year 2024/25 represents the third 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. This report does not duplicate the details of the Grants Programme and performance reporting to London Councils. These are contained in the most recent report to the Grants Committee, referenced in the section headed 'Background Papers'.
7. However, some of the key elements of the programme and performance reporting are included in this report. This to demonstrate that there is a strong evidence base to support Southwark's contribution to the programme and that there is oversight, challenge and support for the benefits of the programme.
8. The Southwark contribution to the programme for 2024/25 is a decrease of £2, 451 on the current year's levy.
9. The two priorities of the new four-year Grants Programme 2022-2026 continue those in place since July 2019. Fourteen organisations are funded through the programme.
10. 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.
11. The November 2023 Grants Committee was asked to note the fourth performance report of the programme covering the period from April 2022 to September 2023 (quarters one to six) for the two main funding priorities.
12. It also includes the first performance report on service area 2.4 provided by the Ashiana Network, to deliver the Specialist Refuge Network which began delivery in April 2023.
13. Priority 1, combatting homelessness, overall is 4 per cent above profile with 15,962 interventions. Southwark residents represent 6.78% of total interventions under this priority. Priority 2, tackling sexual and domestic violence, overall is 3 per cent above profile with 110,812 interventions with Southwark residents at 4.18% of interventions under this priority.
14. The performance management system includes RAG ratings with 12 of the funded projects rated green and two rated amber, as well as an explanation of the RAG methodology.
15. There are also borough maps, service information and contact details and for the first year of the programme an equalities delivery report.

16. 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 to address diversity and inclusion service needs.
17. Organisations tackling sexual and domestic violence include Solace, SignHealth and Asian Women's Resource Centre and again delivery partnerships are in place to increase reach and maximise partnership working.
18. The VCS Commissioning Team is responsible for oversight of the funding contribution from the council to London Councils and officers attend the quarterly London Councils Borough Grants Officers Forum where London Councils report on the performance.
19. The commissioning team shares information about the services and where needed brokers contact with homelessness and sexual and domestic violence policy leads in the council. This is to ensure that Southwark services and residents are able to benefit from the pan-London services especially those targeted at specific communities.

Budget 2024/25

20. The London Councils Grants Committee agreed at its meeting on 22 November 2023 the following budget for 2024/25 subject to the Leaders Committee ratification.
21. An overall level of expenditure of £6,732 million for the Grants Scheme in 2024/25. This is an increase of £46,000 on the current year and includes:
 - The cost of borough pan-London commissioned services of £6.173 million covering priorities 1 and 2
 - The annual membership subscription for boroughs to London Funders of £60,000
 - The cost of administering the scheme of £435,000
 - One-off contribution of £64,000 towards the costs associated with the premises move for London Councils which will result in long term savings including for grants administration costs
22. London Councils Leaders' Committee ratified the London Councils Grants Committee proposals for expenditure on 12 December 2023.
23. 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 **£6,732,000**

- London Councils Grants programme 6,173,000
- Membership Fees to London Funders 60,000
- Operating (Non-Grants) Expenditure 435,000
- Premises costs 64,000

Income will comprise:

- Borough contributions 6,668,152

Policy framework implications

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

Community impact statement

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

- Homelessness
- Sexual and domestic violence

25. London Councils sets out how data and insight from commissioned services contributes to the development of London regional policy responses to tackle problems that local authorities and partners face. These include working with stakeholders in housing, social care and health to identify joint challenges in supporting people facing homelessness. Specific issues requiring a London wide response identified are:

- Agreeing a London response for people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
- Mapping the Temporary Accommodation population in London to provide greater visibility of need. There is potential for additional health intervention under the health inequalities banner
- Addressing the gap in housing support available when mental health deteriorates as traditional supported housing is not effective in meeting this need
- Quarterly indicators for homelessness, housing, health and social care on a sub-regional basis to ensure the legislative and policy frameworks of each sector is understood across London council services

26. London Councils also contributes to strategic regional policy development in areas including the future of Domestic Abuse safe accommodation support working with MOPAC, the GLA and London boroughs.
27. Southwark's contribution to the provision of these London wide services, meets the needs of some of the most vulnerable communities within Southwark and across London experiencing barriers to economic and social wellbeing. Southwark influences the pattern of the London Councils support through its representation on both Grants and Leaders Committees as a constituent council.
28. 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

29. The London Councils report link in the section headed Background Papers includes a detailed equalities delivery report and contains details of support to people within all the protected characteristics (as set out in the Equality Act 2010), and in particular target groups highlighted as particularly hard to reach or more affected by the issues being tackled.
30. 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.
31. 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+ people and minority ethnic communities. Providers include Stonewall Housing, Shelter, London Youth Gateway and St Mungo's.
32. 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.
33. 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, available in the background papers, lists all the

partnerships, providers, describes the services provided and provides contact details to enable referrals.

Health impact statement

34. 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

35. No particular climate change impacts have been identified.

Resource implications

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

Legal implications

37. Please see the concurrent report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance) below.

Financial Implications

38. The cost of the recommendations of this report for London Councils Grants Scheme 2024/25 is £234,586.
39. There is enough budget available for London Councils Grants Scheme 2024/25 and there are no planned efficiencies applied to this budget for the 2024/25 financial year. Based on this, the cost of the recommendations of this report can be contained within Comms and Corporate Consultations Division revenue budgets. Payments will come from cost centre CE411.
40. Staffing and any other grant monitoring costs connected with this proposal will be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

Consultation

41. 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

42. Not requested

Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance)

43. 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.
44. 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".
45. Paragraphs 22 and 23 of this report notes that the overall level of expenditure of £6.686 million for the Grants Scheme in 2024/25 was agreed by the London Councils Grants Committee on 22 November 2023 and ratified by the London Councils Leaders' Committee on 12 December 2023 and recommended to the constituent councils for approval.
46. 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 1st 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.
47. 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 2024/25, this has been calculated as £234,586.
48. 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 2024/25. 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.

49. The cabinet member's attention is drawn to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 which requires public bodies to have due regard, when making decisions, 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 is specifically referred to the community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts at paragraphs 24 to 34 of this report setting out the considerations that has been given to these issues which should be considered when approving the recommendations in this report.

Strategic Director of Finance (SC23/042)

50. The report recommends Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy & Finance to agree the London Councils Leaders Committee funding proposals for the 2024-25 grants programme and to approve Southwark Council's contribution of £234,586 to the London Councils Grants Scheme 2024/25, subject to approval of the council budget by Council Assembly in February 2024.
51. 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.
52. Staffing, subsequent grant monitoring and any other costs connected with this proposal to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

Other officers

53. N / A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
London Councils Grants Scheme Budget Proposals 2024/2025 Committee Report Grants Committee - 22 November 2023 - agenda and papers London Councils		Andrew.Matheson@southwark.gov.uk Or London Councils directly through link

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Gaskell, Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Communities	
Report Author	Andy Matheson, Senior Commissioning Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	9 January 2024	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance)	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Research and policy officer, Climate Change Team	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to constitutional team	10 January 2024	