

<b>Meeting Taker:</b>	Cabinet Member for Equalities, Democracy and Finance
<b>Date:</b>	21 November 2024
<b>Report title:</b>	Warm Spaces Fund 2024-25: Grant Awards
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>	All
<b>Classification:</b>	Open
<b>Reason for lateness (if applicable):</b>	Not applicable
<b>From:</b>	Interim Assistant Chief Executive – Strategy and Communities

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet member for equalities, democracy and finance approve the Warm Spaces Fund 2024-25 grant allocations totalling £93,265 to the 14 voluntary, community and faith sector organisations listed in Appendix 3.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Warm spaces are open access community spaces primarily aimed at mitigating the cost of heating and other utilities for people affected by the cost-of-living crisis.
3. Evaluation research commissioned by United St. Saviour's Charity on the first year of Warm Spaces 2022-23 highlighted the majority of people accessing warm spaces were experiencing financial pressures. Warm spaces also demonstrated additional value in supporting:
  - Relationship building and social connection
  - Access to nutritious food
  - Access to additional services, such as financial management advice or counselling.

The research gave four recommendations for the continuation of services:

- Prioritising access to free, impartial and sensitive financial management advice
  - Targeting services to support working families
  - Increasing the number of warm spaces available
  - Supporting the VCS to retain volunteers.
4. In year two, winter 2023-24, a further warm spaces programme led by the Council was agreed. This was a collaborative piece of work between VCS and Council-run services, including libraries, children and families' centres and Southwark Resource Centre.

5. This programme delivered 381 dedicated warm space sessions across the 15 VCFS providers and supported 1,352 individuals. Additionally, the programme provided
  - 7,831 meals to 396 people
  - 655 received an income maximisation information and advice
  - 442 people were sign posted to other health and wellbeing support
  - 722 warm bags were distributed to people who were housebound and their carers.
6. For year three, 2024-25 Southwark Council and Southwark Charities again agreed to create a warm spaces grant programme to support VCS provision.
7. Southwark Charities who invested in the programme alongside United St Saviours Charity in 2022-23 and 2023–24 has agreed to contribute to the programme for a further year, dependent on their eligibility criteria and existing funding relationships with applicants. Southwark Charities are only able to fund organisations once per year, as well as organisations must be able to demonstrate that their services are for the benefit of people aged 55+.
8. Public Health have agreed to contribute to meet the costs of additional food provision.
9. Strategy and Communities department are contributing from funds carried forward from previous years raised from external funders, Travis Perkins and its own budgets.
10. British Land agreed to part fund the hot food and refreshment element of the Time and Talents application, so their requested grant total was adjusted to reflect this.
11. Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) and Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) are able to apply for Getting Involved Grants (GIG) to host warm spaces in community halls. This HRA funding stream is managed by Housing's Resident Involvement team. See Appendix 4 for a list of TRAs that have notified them that they want to host warm hubs.
12. Organisations applied for funding via a common online application process agreed between funders, Southwark Charities, Public Health and Strategy and Communities.
13. Applications were accepted by invitation only, due to the time sensitive nature of the funding and to align with the recommendations made in Community Southwark's [State of the Sector report](#), which called for the simplification of fundraising for the VCS and for funders to consider the time and resource it makes for organisation to make funding applications. A list of potential VCS providers was determined from organisations who were funded last year or provided a warm space independently and were included in council communications. In addition, four organisations were invited to attend engagement about the funding programme and to apply for funding. These were Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers, the Livesey Exchange, the

LGBTQ Centre and Latin American Disabled People's Project. The last two decided not to apply this year.

14. It was agreed that all invited organisations who applied for funding would receive funding, dependent on the proposed warm space meeting the basic criteria for the Fund which set out the offer is:

- Open on a regular weekly schedule starting November 2024 until end of March 2025
- A welcoming space for residents to spend time, possibly for the whole length of opening
- Free of charge
- Accessible to the public and not exclusive to any particular group or membership
- Heated.

Proposed warm spaces were also required to provide additional services addressing at least one of the following:

- Food insecurity or difficulty accessing warm meals
- Income maximisation, such as providing advice or signposting to relevant organisations
- Another identified need in the community (this required justification within the application)

15. Public Health are further supporting applications by offering:

- Signposting resource pack (including Cost of Living booklets, Healthy Ageing Directories, cold weather leaflets, mental health signposting flyers and Making Every Contact Count signposting booklets for staff, income maximisation through Citizens Advice).
- Vital 5 health checks for service users (the Southwark health outreach service will visit you to deliver in-person health checks at least once in the November – March period).
- Making Every Contact Count training for staff/volunteers
- Mental Health Awareness or Mental Health First Aid training for staff/volunteers
- Older adults' nutrition support training for staff/volunteers (subject to availability)
- On-site vaccination clinics for flu and COVID-19 (subject to NHS capacity)
- Information session for service users on winter health (including how to stay well during cold weather and protecting yourself from winter viruses)
- Information session for service users on reducing energy costs delivered by Green Doctors (subject to Green Doctors capacity)
- Information session for staff, volunteers and/or service users on the NHS Healthy Start scheme (whereby people more than 10 weeks pregnant or with a child under 4 can get support to buy healthy food, milk and vitamins)

Applicants were requested to select services from this list that they were interested in. These requests will be passed to the Public Health team for

them to take forward.

16. In addition, the aging well programme will be funding additional outreach to deliver income maximisation and energy saving advice to older people working closely with the warm spaces to deliver.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

17. Applications for the Warm Spaces Fund 2024-25 closed on 17 October 2024. 16 invited organisation made applications.
18. A panel consisting of Commissioning Officers from Community & Voluntary Sector Engagement Division and the Southwark Charities Grants Manager met on 22 October to review and allocate applications between funder organisations dependent on their requirements and priorities. Southwark Charities were a part of the assessment panel so they could consider which organisations they could fund from the applications. This process represents a positive example of partnership working across institutions with similar ambition to support Southwark's most vulnerable.
19. All organisations who applied for funding met the basic eligibility criteria for proposals. The panel reviewed budgeted items to ensure they were within the remit of the programme. There were two reductions as a result of this review:
  - One organisation's budget was felt to be both unclear and excessive in places. The award amount was reduced accordingly
  - Although the panel agreed to fully fund one church organisation's proposal, it will be subject to them excluding religious knowledge questions in their "Edutainment" quiz sessions as Warm Spaces need to be inclusive for those of other faiths or none
20. Some groups stated that their Warm Spaces would be open from 1 January 2025
21. The two applications allocated to Southwark Charities are listed in Appendix 2 and total £13,952. This partner funder is responsible for conducting its own due diligence and making payments to allocated organisations. They have confirmed that their trustee board has approved this funding.
22. Fourteen organisations are recommended for funding through the Council, listed Appendix 3. These applications total £93,265.
23. In addition to the community organisations offering warm spaces, the council offer includes:
  - Those libraries that were warm spaces last year, plus the new Una Marsden library
  - The leisure centres (who offer free gym and swimming to Southwark residents) ie Camberwell Leisure Centre, The Castle Centre, Dulwich Leisure Centre, Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre, Southwark Park Sports and Athletics Centre
  - Children's Centres

- TRA Halls
  - We are awaiting applications from Christ Church/Bread of Life Cafe on Barry Road (Dulwich Hill Ward) and Albrighton Community Centre (Champion Hill Ward) and are looking to identify a suitable venue in Peckham Rye and Surrey Docks wards.
24. A table representing all grant funded warm space locations by ward is provided in Appendix 1.
25. As with the previous year, a map of all Warm Spaces locations will be available on the council website along with service information and will be included in the cost of living newsletter that will be sent to all households at the end of November. A map has been developed, additional information about the participating TRA halls and the additional spaces identified above will be added when their details have been confirmed.
26. The link is here:  
<https://geomap.southwark.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=%2FAnalyst%2FNamedProjects%2FSouthwark%20Warm%20Spaces>
27. Application guidance included the need for service providers to complete a short evaluation survey, as well as submit supporting evidence of the impact of their provision. Evaluation questions will be:
- Average number of unique service users attending per session
  - Average number of new users attending per session ie. people not previously supported by your organisation
  - Average number of meals distributed per session
  - Number of income maximisation sessions conducted or referrals made
  - Number of other referrals or signposting carried out
  - Did you feel any services and/or activities were missing from your warm space offer?
  - What would you have done differently knowing what you now know?
  - Demographic information about the people who are coming to their sessions.
  - How well do you feel that the council ran this grants programme?

In addition the team will visit approximately 50% of the providers to capture some qualitative information from the users to further understand the impact of the programme.

### **Policy framework implications**

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

### **Community impact statement**

28. There is a legal duty on local authorities to have due regard to the promotion of equal opportunities, the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of positive community relations in the exercise of their functions.

29. The primary aim of the Warm Spaces Fund 2024-25 is to provide residents, particularly residents impacted by the economic pressures of the cost-of-living crisis, to access space that enables them to keep warm through the winter and helps mitigate the cost of utilities. The programme also aims to deliver additional economic value to residents in the form of supporting access to hot, nutritious food and the provision of income maximisation services. An additional social value of the warm spaces may be the reduction of social isolation and the building of community bonds for service users.
30. The secondary aim of this grant programme is to empower VCS organisations to deliver community-based services, particularly organisations serving communities which experience discrimination or barriers accessing universal services. The funding supports organisations to develop and/or expand their existing provision, as well as supports their overall sustainability.
31. Additionally, the programme was designed and delivered in partnership with Public Health and Southwark Charities. This demonstrates the commitment of the programme to work build relationships and work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to work toward shared aims.

### **Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement**

32. Care was taken to invite a variety of organisations who provide services targeted towards a range of demographics who may have barriers to accessing services, including older people, women who have experienced violence against women and girls, ethnically minoritised and LGBTQ+ communities. Whilst some of these organisations were not able to make an application, those organisations who did apply still target a range of service users through their provision.
33. The Council identifies organisations as led by those identifying with a protected characteristic when 75% of their trustee board or management committee identify with that characteristic. Of those organisations with data on management committees available, 13% of organisations are elder-led (aged 55+), 29% are female-led and 20% are BAME-led

### **Health impact statement**

34. As described in the community impact statement, the programmes have a variety of aims which contribute directly and indirectly to health. Direct contributions to health include:
  - Shelter from cold
  - Access to nutritious food
  - Improvements to mental health associated with connection with others

Contributions to the wider determinants of health include:

- Improvements to economic circumstances
- Knowledge of wider networks of supportive services available

### **Climate change implications**

35. There have been no specific climate change implications identified as part of

this programme. It is not anticipated that there will be any negative climate or sustainability implications.

### **Legal/Financial implications**

36. The total cost to the council of the recommendations of this report for the Warm Spaces Fund 2024-25 grant allocations is £93,265.
37. The funding is derived as follows:
  - £34,010 from Public Health for food and food delivery. Senior Public Health Programme Manager communicated the agreement of Director of Public Health of this funding.
  - £20,000 transferred from Exchequer services, as confirmed by the Head of Strategy and Compliance.
  - £17,500 from external funders unspent from 2023–2024 in cost code CE409
  - £21,755 from existing budgets held by Strategy and Communities. This is made up of £12,000 from Travis Perkins and the remaining amount from existing Communities Engagement Team budgets.
38. Staffing and any other grant monitoring costs connected with this proposal will be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

#### **Head of Procurement**

39. Not applicable

#### **Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance**

40. This report seeks the cabinet member for equalities, democracy and finance's approval of the Warm Spaces Fund 2024-25 grant allocations to the 14 voluntary and community sector organisations listed in Appendix 3, making a total allocated budget of £93,265.
41. The report notes the process by which applications for funding have been invited, received and evaluated, and how individual grant allocations have been decided.
42. The report further notes that the intention of the programme is to continue the provision of warm, open access community spaces for the purpose of mitigating the cost of heating and other utilities for people affected by the cost of living crisis.
43. The cabinet member for equalities, democracy and finance's attention is drawn to the Public Sector Equality duty (PSED General Duty) under the Equality Act 2010, which requires public bodies to have regard, when making decisions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. The cabinet member for equalities, democracy and finance is specifically referred to the community,

equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts at paragraphs 27 to 33 setting out the consideration that has been given to these issues which should be considered when approving the recommendations in this report.

44. The decision to approve the recommendation of this report is one which is expressly reserved to the cabinet member under the council's constitution.

### **Strategic Director, Resources**

45. The report seeks the cabinet member for equalities, democracy and finance to approve the Warm Spaces Fund 2024-25 grant allocations totalling £93,265 to 14 voluntary, community and faith sector organisations. The funding recommendations are listed in Appendix 3.

46. The strategic director of resources notes that the costs of the recommendations of this report can be contained within resources, as mentioned under the financial implications. It is expected that continued monitoring will take place with all grant recipients to ensure conditions of grants are met.

47. Staffing, subsequent grant monitoring and any other costs connected with this proposal to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

### **Other officers**

48. None

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Application form and guidance	160 Tooley Street	Angus.lyon@southwark.gov.uk

### **APPENDICES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	VCS Warm Spaces fund ward locations
Appendix 2	Applications allocated and approved by Southwark Charities
Appendix 3	Funding recommendations for council
Appendix 4	Proposed TRA Warm Spaces locations (subject to successful GIG funding application)



## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rhona Cadenhead, Interim Assistant Chief Executive – Strategy and Communities	
<b>Report Author</b>	Angus Lyon, Commissioning Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	19 November 2024	
<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>
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director, Resources	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	20 November 2024	