

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 13 February 2013	<b>Decision Taker:</b> Cabinet member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing
<b>Report title:</b>		Community Capacity Voluntary Sector Commissioning Programme 2013/14	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Housing & Communities	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing agrees the funding recommendations for voluntary sector organisations delivering services under the Community Capacity programme for 2013/14, are set out in Appendix 1, subject to Council Assembly on 27 February 2013 agreeing this level of budget.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Cabinet member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing approved the Community Capacity commissioning plan for 2013/14 in October 2012. The commissioning plan is attached as Appendix 2. The plan sets out the business case for funding voluntary sector providers, the expected links between the Council's corporate plan, council policy and priorities and the outcomes that are to be delivered by the voluntary organisations that receive grant funding. The plan also sets out the funding mechanism for commissioning services (via contract or grant aid).
3. Oversight of the council's relationship with the voluntary sector, the council's conditions of grant funding and the overall processes for commissioning services from the voluntary sector comes within the portfolio of the Cabinet member for Community Communities & Economic Wellbeing. Approval of the commissioning plan and approval of grants over £2,500 under the community support programme is a matter for the Cabinet member through individual member decision-making. (Constitution: Clauses 2 and 5 Part 3D).
4. The Council's commissioning approach is set out in the VCS Framework which was agreed by the former Executive in 2007. This document sets out the policy and principles governing the council's arrangements for partnership with and resourcing of the sector. In June 2011 the Council's Cabinet also approved the Medium Term Resources Strategy which incorporates further principles which underpin the council's approach to the VCS to strengthen the resilience of the sector in the context of budget reductions.
5. The main objective of the Community Capacity programme is to improve community relations and to empower and enable diverse communities and those who experience discrimination, to achieve a better quality of life. The programme is divided into 3 categories:

- a. Category One: Community Engagement. This category relates to support for organisations that promote specific cultural, social, and faith activities in ways that contribute to the development of confident communities able to play a full role in public and civic life; and that encourage people to take more responsibility for their lives.
6. The purpose of this category of the Community Capacity programme is to ensure that communities that may face exclusion and disadvantage have access to support and services that enable them to fully participate as active citizens. Funded organisations should contribute to building mutual understanding and shared ways of working across different faiths, cultures and ethnic identities. They should also seek to promote community cohesion, participation, volunteering, advocacy, mediation and consultation between communities and public services.
  7. In addition organisations were asked to provide evidence of their capacity to provide basic advice at a general help level and to make links with the providers of community legal advice services. This approach aims to build the capacity of organisations to provide basic support to residents affected by welfare reform and to signpost them to the appropriate organisations. The community legal advice service providers will offer training and support to the community organisations through the Southwark Advice Forum, online resources and a telephone service.
  - b. Category Two: Specialist Capacity Building & Infrastructure Support. This category relates to support for organisations that build the capacity of the voluntary sector to enable it to play a full and effective role in the development and delivery of the Council Plan.
  8. The purpose of this element of the Community Capacity programme is to promote an effective and vibrant voluntary sector which is capable of sustaining long-term service delivery in a rapidly changing climate.
  9. Capacity building organisations provide services to other voluntary sector organisations delivering frontline services through a range of specialist services such as acting as a voice for the sector or providing support services such as legal, financial, IT, and business planning. Funding is targeted at those aspects of capacity building that cannot be funded through other sources, which demonstrate added value and can provide evidence of effectiveness in supporting smaller organisations.
  10. In addition organisations were asked to provide evidence of 1) working towards the creation of a unified infrastructure support service over the next 2 years which will be funded via one single contract and 2) the development of a systematic approach to the sustainability of the voluntary and community sector in the borough.
  - c. Category Three: Area based resources for tackling social exclusion. This category relates to support for organisations that provide a core resource base for work that tackles social exclusion in the deprived areas and neighbourhoods of the borough.
  11. The purpose of this element of the Community Capacity programme is to support a range of community based resources within localities on the areas of

- greatest deprivation which act as a focus for community engagement, engage with marginalised communities and provide a physical base and support to voluntary sector organisations and communities. This includes settlements, community centres and faith based organisations. In addition organisations were asked to provide evidence of: understanding of levels of need in the area covered, and the ability to bring together of a wide range of services to meet that need; development of accessible premises that bring different groups together; and evidence of business planning and income generation.
12. Funding will be targeted at those organisations that can show evidence of strengthening local areas and neighbourhood partnerships between local agencies and people. It will contribute to core costs that enable organisations to act as a local focus for the community and enable funds from other sources to be levered in.
  13. Particularly important in the current financial context organisations are expected to demonstrate evidence of fundraising efforts; that they are not solely reliant on the Council for funding; how they add value including partnership activity; value for money; innovation/transformation; reduced back office costs, fitness for purpose, building social capital and potential to meet new and emerging needs.

#### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

14. The Community Capacity (then Community Support) programme remained at the same level in 2011/12 as the previous year despite the unprecedented cut in the budget settlement from Government of £34m. A proposed budget reduction of £200,000 to the Community Support programme for 2012/13 was offset using £123,000 of savings from a reduction in the London Councils Levy (agreed by Cabinet in January 2012).
15. Budget recommendations, subject to agreement by Council Assembly on 27 February 2013, contain a budget reduction of £60,000 for the Community Capacity programme for 2013/14.
16. All organisations currently funded through the Community Capacity programme were warned of a likely budget reduction to the programme during monitoring visits and also through the letter sent to all groups in November 2012. This states that the Council would not have information on its financial settlement from central government for the year 2013/14 until December 2012 and that it was considering a range of options on reductions to the overall budget of between 5 and 15%. An assurance was also provided that 3 months notice of implementation of the funding decision would be provided.
17. The voluntary sector was invited to input to the revised commissioning plan for the programme. Representatives from Southwark Voice, including two organisations currently funded through the programme, and one not funded through the programme, attended two half day sessions with the objective of recommending a revised commissioning plan and funding priorities for 2013/14.
18. In addition to the above as part of the council's ongoing efforts to improve the effectiveness of the relationship with the VCS the council undertook the following:

- The establishment of a Task & Finish group to review commissioning processes and propose improvements. The final recommendations have been presented in a report to Cabinet in January 2013.
  - The Council's Policy and Resources Strategy 2011-12 included a £1.5m Transition fund over 2011/12 and 2012/13 to provide interim support in helping VCS organisations make the changes necessary to meet the challenges from reduced public sector funding and in order to develop a more sustainable sector. To date 4 rounds of the Transition Fund have been run and £934,262 awarded to 61 organisations (this includes two consortia bids).
19. As a result of openly advertising the Community Capacity programme in September 2012 a total of 46 applications were received totalling £1,954,734. 34 of these applications were from existing funded groups with 12 new applications. The applications can be categorised as follows:
- a. 34 applications from existing funded organisations. One organisation in the programme, Blackfriars Settlement, has submitted a combined bid for both its core costs and older people's projects.
  - b. A range of new applications from the following:
    - Applications that do not meet the Community Capacity priorities (8 in total) mainly because they focus on a specific service area such as children's services, health & community services, education, employment and training.
    - Applications which do meet the Community Capacity priorities (4 in total) providing support to diverse communities, intergenerational work, peer support, role modelling, promoting active citizenship, community cohesion and integration.
20. The new applications which meet the Community Capacity priorities were assessed alongside the applications from the existing 34 funded organisations. Where the organisations were not previously known to the council visits were made to them in order to obtain additional information and to observe their service delivery.
21. The 8 applications which fall outside the Community Capacity priorities relate to departmental service themes. Contact details of these groups have been forwarded to the relevant departmental commissioners where appropriate and fundraising advice will be available from both Community Action Southwark (CAS) and the Commissioning & Voluntary Sector Support Unit.

### **Assessment and funding recommendations**

22. In revising the commissioning plan for 2013/14 representatives from Southwark Voice were invited to provide input. Scoring criteria were drawn up based on the revised plan and additional criteria required to be met by organisations applying. This consisted of 2 stages designed to inform the final recommendations, the criteria for which, are set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

23. Factors also taken into account include the equalities impact, the financial health of the organisation, the level of dependency on council funding, the impact of withdrawal of services on particular groups and the scope to refer beneficiaries to alternative service providers.
24. Funding recommended to the Cabinet member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing totals £1,077,411 for 33 organisations, four of which are completely new applicants to the programme. These organisations are listed in Appendix 1 of this report.
25. In 2013-14 it is proposed to bring the Forum for Equalities and Human Rights in Southwark (hosted by Southwark Citizens Advice Bureaux Service) into the Community Capacity programme. Previously this has been funded under a separate contract.
26. Funding in 2013/14 is not recommended for four organisations which are currently funded through the Community Capacity programme. They are Catch 22, Hornafrik Integration Projects, South East Muslim Association, and Southwark Refugee Project, as detailed in Appendix 1. These are organisations that did not meet essential criteria within the scoring assessment including reliance on council funding, borough base or meeting commissioning priorities.
27. The closure of Peckham Settlement in 2012 means that funding will no longer be provided to that organisation.
28. In order to comply with the Compact and the undertaking given to the sector the council is required to give 3 months notice to existing funded groups where funding is not recommended for 2013/14. The 3 months notice would run from the date the decision is made. Funding during the notice period will be met within existing departmental resources and the budget provisions. Organisations will also be given the opportunity to request making either a written or verbal representation to the Individual Decision maker before the decision is made.
29. In addition, officers have visited each of these organisations in order to discuss the recommendations in person and set out the reasons. Groups will also be offered support with fundraising from other sources from both Community Engagement and Community Action Southwark and explore options for continued service delivery or exit strategies. Organisations will be invited to apply to future rounds of the Transition Fund but will be required to demonstrate evidence of how a funding award will improve sustainability through transition and transformation.

### **Community Impact Statement**

30. The organisations funded under the Community Capacity programme play a vital role in promoting the diversity agenda and ensure that communities that may face exclusion because of discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability or faith, have access to support and services that enable them to fully participate as citizens. As with any grants process there is the potential for there to be winners and losers, some organisations awarded funding and some not.

31. The council recognises the importance of having specific organisations that support and enable communities to access mainstream services that enable them to fully participate as citizens. In arriving at recommendations account has been taken of both established need as well as responding to changing needs and critical immediate needs i.e.
- Integration of specific communities of interest
  - Support for particularly marginalized communities e.g. migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
  - Reducing duplication of organisations offering support to specific communities
  - The impact of regeneration and redevelopment on communities and the need to support the infrastructure of such communities
  - The impact of welfare reform by improving the capacity of organisations to provide initial support, information and signposting to accredited community legal advice providers
  - Community engagement and the promotion of community cohesion.
32. Equalities analysis has been carried out with currently funded organisations to ascertain where their target groups fall within the protected characteristics i.e. religion, age, gender and gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. The recommendations contained in this report have taken into account the results of this analysis. Recommendations not to fund organisations have been assessed for equality impact. Any significant equalities issues arising are mitigated by the alternative services available within the Community Capacity programme to those target groups.
33. Community Action Southwark and the Forum for Equalities and Human Rights have provided input on the guidance to be provided to organisations on providing equalities information about their services. Future rounds of the programme will include this amended guidance. The information requested does not form part of the assessment criteria and contributes to raising awareness of broader equality objectives.
34. The equalities scheme “Southwark Council’s approach to equality: delivering a fairer future for all” is available on the council’s website at: [http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/2921/southwark\\_councils\\_a\\_pproach\\_to\\_equality\\_delivering\\_a\\_fairer\\_future\\_for\\_all](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/2921/southwark_councils_approach_to_equality_delivering_a_fairer_future_for_all)
35. An important consideration in relation to future service delivery under this programme will be how changing needs will be addressed in the context of the economic climate and budgetary constraints.

### **Resource implications**

36. For 2013/14 the council’s base budget to fund the Community Capacity programme is £1,117,511 subject to agreement of the budget at Council Assembly on 27 February 2013. The council has determined this level of resources within the context of tight financial constraints and through the council’s annual policy and resources process.

## **Consultation**

37. Voluntary sector representatives from Southwark Voice (the representative body for the voluntary and community sector) took part in consultation which considered revisions to the commissioning plan 2013/14 through 2 half day workshops that took place in September and October 2012. Copies of the programme documentation were provided to Community Action Southwark for further comment and input. Council officers took part in a workshop organised by Community Action Southwark for the broader voluntary and community sector which covered the commissioning priorities and the requirements for making applications. The Forum for Equalities & Human Rights (FEHRS) also commented on the commissioning plan.
38. Each of the groups recommended for funding have been sent a copy of their project summary and asked to sign their acceptance of the written representation of their organisation. Copies of this report have also been sent to Community Action Southwark (CAS), FEHRS and the individual groups. Those organisations not recommended for funding have been contacted and offered the opportunity to get feedback on their application, reasons for the recommendation, other sources of funding and referral as appropriate to other departments or to CAS for support. They will also be given the opportunity to request a representation before the decision is made.
39. In addition where applications were unsuccessful or where funding is proposed to be reduced organisations will be invited to apply to any future round of the Transition Fund but will be required to provide evidence of transformation and modernisation in those proposals.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

40. Taking into account the £60k budget reduction for the Community Capacity Programme included in the Policy and Resources Strategy 2013/14 - 2015/16 Revenue Budget report, sufficient budget resources will exist in 2013/14 to allow for the funding of organisations as proposed in this report. The Policy and Resources Strategy 2013/14 - 2015/16 Revenue Budget report was submitted to Cabinet on 29 January 2013. A further budget report setting out a balanced budget was approved by Cabinet on 12 February and is subject to agreement by Council Assembly on 27 February 2013.

### **Director of Legal Services**

41. The Director of Legal Services notes the contents of this report which seeks the approval of the Cabinet Member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing to the Community Support Voluntary Sector Commissioning Programme 2013/14.
42. The decision on the approval of this report is within the decision making authority of the Cabinet Member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing in accordance with Part 3D of the Constitution which provides for matters reserved for decision of an Individual Cabinet Member which are within their area of responsibility.
43. The report notes that the budget for the Community Support Commissioning Programme is to be reduced by £60,000.00 in 2013/14.

44. The cabinet member's attention is drawn to the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The PSED requires the council to consider all individuals when carrying out any of their functions. It requires the council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. The relevant characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also applies to marriage and civil partnership but only in relation to the elimination of discrimination strand.
45. The cabinet member is referred to the Community Impact Assessment at paragraphs 30 to 35 of the report that set out consideration that has been given to equalities impact and issues relating to the recommendation in this report.
46. The cabinet member is also referred to paragraphs 37 to 39 of the report that set out the consultation that has taken place. The cabinet member must conscientiously take into account the outcome of consultation when taking a decision on the recommendations in this report.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Equality Analysis	Community Engagement	Andrew Matheson 020 7525 7648

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
1.	Community Capacity programme recommendations 2013/14
2.	Community Capacity Commissioning Plan 2013/14
3.	Scoring Criteria for Community Capacity Programme 2013/14

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement	
<b>Report Author</b>	Andrew Matheson, Senior Commissioning Officer	
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<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
Officer Title	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet member</b>	Yes	Yes
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