

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 22 January 2014	<b>Decision Taker:</b> Cabinet member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing
<b>Report title:</b>		Community Capacity Voluntary Sector Commissioning Programme 2014/15 and Environment & Ecology programme 2014/15	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Housing & Community Services	

## **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 2014/15 and the Environment & Ecology programme 2014/15 subject to council assembly agreeing this level of budget. The recommendations for Community Capacity are set out at Appendix 1 and the recommendations for Environment & Ecology are set out at Appendix 2.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2. The Cabinet member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing approved the Community Capacity / Environment & Ecology commissioning plan for 2014/15 in September 2013. The commissioning plan is attached as Appendix 3. The plan sets out the purpose of the programme, how it fits with the council's corporate plan, objectives 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 and community sector (VCS), 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 Communities & Economic Wellbeing. Approval of the commissioning plan and approval of grants over £2,500 under the Community Capacity and Environment & Ecology programmes 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 working 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.
- 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 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 in 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. For the 2014/15 programme, the advertising and assessment of the council's Environment & Ecology programme has been carried out as part of the same process as the Community Capacity programme. The objectives of the Environment & Ecology programme are to:
  - Improve the lives of people in Southwark through opportunities to experience parks, open spaces and the natural environment whether for leisure or for learning.
  - Provide services that deliver environmental education and life-long learning, social inclusion and community cohesion outcomes.
  - Develop the environment sector for the benefit of the people of Southwark, recognising the importance of the natural environment in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal, and improving the life chances of young people in the borough.

Monitoring of the Environment & Ecology funded organisations will continue to be the responsibility of the Environment and Leisure department.

14. It is particularly important in the current financial context that 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**

15. For 2013/14 the budget for the Community Capacity programme was £1,118,567. This represented a reduction of £59,000 from the programme's budget for 2012-13.
16. As part of the council's ongoing efforts to improve the effectiveness of the relationship with the VCS, the council is undertaking the following:
  - A £1.5M Transition Fund was set out in the council's Policy and Resources Strategy 2011-12 to provide interim support in helping VCS organisations meet the challenges from reduced public sector funding and develop a more sustainable sector. 4 rounds of the Transition Fund have been run and £918,834 awarded to 61 organisations (including two consortia bids). In

autumn 2013 a fifth round of the Transition Fund was held along a revised model developed in partnership with Community Action Southwark (CAS) and with a specific focus on the following areas: employment and worklessness; welfare reform and advice; economic wellbeing and regeneration. A number of organisations recommended for Community Capacity funding have also applied to the Transition Fund and 6 have been recommended for funding. These organisations are listed in the Transition Fund IDM report.

- Establishing an approved list of VCS organisations. Organisations on the approved list will have been pre-vetted and therefore will not have to complete the PQQ stage of any council contract they bid for. The intention of the approved list is to save transactional costs for both VCS organisations and the council and to improve consistency.

17. The Community Capacity and Environment & Ecology programmes were openly advertised in October-November 2013. The applications received are summarised in the table below:

	<b>Community Capacity programme</b>	<b>Environment &amp; Ecology programme</b>
Currently funded organisations	33	2
New organisations	8	4
<b>Total</b>	41	6
<b>Total amount requested</b>	£1,681,317	£207,624

#### **Assessment and funding recommendations: Community Capacity programme**

18. Applications to the Community Capacity programme received from new organisations, i.e. not currently funded through the programme, can be summarised as:

- 7 applications that do not meet the Community Capacity priorities mainly because they focus on a specific service area such as or adult social care
- 1 application which does meet one of the Community Capacity priorities (community engagement)

19. The application which meets the Community Capacity priorities was assessed alongside the applications from the existing funded organisations.

20. The 7 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 and the Commissioning & Voluntary Sector Support Unit. For those organisations whose remit is adult social care, they have been provided with details of the 2013-14 Adult Social Care Innovation Fund.

21. Applications were assessed using a scoring system, consisting of 3 stages, designed to inform the final recommendations. The scoring criteria are set out in Appendix 4 to this report.
22. Factors taken into account include: meeting the programme priorities, 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.
23. Funding recommended to the Cabinet member for Communities & Economic Wellbeing totals **£1,142,402** for **34** organisations, **1** of which is a completely new applicant to the programme. These organisations are listed in Appendix 1 of this report.
24. All currently funded organisations are recommended for funding in 2014-5.

**Assessment and funding recommendations: Environment & Ecology programme**

25. Applications for 2014/15 Environment & Ecology Programme were received from six organisations:

Organisation	Amount applied for	E & E Award 2013/14
LWT Centre for Wildlife Gardening	£43,000	£42,500
New Leaf	£55,000	0
Groundwork	£17,679	0
London Community Resource Network	£20,928	0
Bethwin Road Playground	£5,000	0
Surrey Docks Farm	£66,000	£56,951

26. The applications were evaluated against the criteria detailed in Appendix 4 which concluded that the following organisations failed stage one of the assessment process:

- New Leaf
- London Community Resource Network
- Bethwin Road Playground

The three organisations that passed stage one of the assessment criteria were:

- Groundwork
- London Wildlife Trust Centre for Wildlife Gardening
- Surrey Docks Farm

These bids were all strong bids and met the majority of the criteria of the Environment and Ecology programme. Surrey Docks farm and CWG previously demonstrated value in the past in that they have consistently delivered the

- requirements of the Environment and Ecology grants programme over a significant period of time.
27. It is recommended to fund Surrey Docks Farm and the Centre for Wildlife Gardening to the value funded in previous years through this programme based on the strength of their submission and previous track record.
  28. It is also recommended to fund Groundwork the sum of £8,603, which is a lower amount than requested on the basis that this is a new project and it is felt that this should be given time to develop rather than fund the full amount requested from the outset.
  29. It is therefore proposed to fund the three organisations as set out in Appendix 2.
  30. Organisations awarded grant funding are subject to monitoring through the council's Conditions of Grant Funding (COGA). Schedules to these cover the key areas of: governance and employment; finance; employment practices and monitoring and information. The COGA was updated and strengthened in a report agreed by cabinet in January 2013. In addition to a requirement to comply with these, organisations are subject to an annual monitoring visit and the monitoring framework includes assessment through a monitoring checklist which assesses each of the areas covered within the COGA as well as service delivery.

### **Community impact statement**

31. The organisations funded under the Community Capacity programme play a vital role in promoting the diversity agenda and ensuring 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.
32. 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.
33. 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. All groups currently funded are recommended for funding in 2014-15 and an additional recommendation is to fund a new group, Southwark Travellers Action Group, which provides services to the traveller community. Any significant equalities issues arising are mitigated by the alternative services available within the Community Capacity programme to those target groups.

34. Community Action Southwark and the Forum for Equalities and Human Rights in Southwark (FEHRS) have provided input on the guidance to be provided to organisations on providing equalities information about their services. The information requested does not form part of the assessment criteria and contributes to raising awareness of broader equality objectives.
35. 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\\_approach\\_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)

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 2014/15 the council's base budget to fund the Community Capacity programme is £1,118,467. An additional £27,000 is available following a one-off reduction in the council's levy to London Councils grants scheme for 2014/15 as result of a one-off transfer from reserves to the revenue account. The budget available for allocation is therefore £1,145,467. This is subject to agreement of the budget at council assembly on 26 February 2014. The council has determined these levels of resources within the context of tight financial constraints and through the council's annual policy and resources process.
37. For the Environment & Ecology programme, the total budget available is £99,451. The amount being recommended for approval is £108,054, leaving a shortfall of £8,603. It is proposed to address this shortfall by a one off reprioritisation of budgets that allows for funding Groundwork London in 2014/15.

### **Consultation**

38. For the Community Capacity programme, a two year approach was agreed in September 2012, relating to 2013/14 and 2014/15. At that time:
  - A consultation exercise took place with voluntary sector representatives from Southwark Voice, which considered revisions to the commissioning plan 2013/14 at 2 half day workshops.
  - 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.
  - FEHRS commented on the commissioning plan.

For 2014/15, in line with the 2 year approach, the priorities for the programme have not changed; therefore it was deemed that a further consultation exercise was not necessary. However, CAS has been kept informed of the development of the 2014-15 commissioning plan, which contained updated needs analysis and policy context.

39. Each of the groups recommended for funding via the Community Capacity programme have been sent a copy of a written summary of their application and asked to sign their acceptance of this as a written representation of their application. Copies of this report have been sent to CAS, FEHRS and the individual groups. Those organisations not recommended for funding have been contacted and offered 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.
40. 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 their proposals.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Legal Services**

41. The Director of Legal Services notes the contents of this report and confirms that under Part 3D of the council's constitution the agreement of significant programmes relating to revenue and capital budget allocations and the approval of grants of over £2,500 to voluntary sector organisations is a matter that is reserved to IDM for decision.
42. Pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 the council has a duty to have due regard in its decision making processes to the need to:
  - (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
  - (c) Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it.
43. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The PSED also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in relation to (a) above.

Paragraph 33 of the report shows that this duty has been complied with.

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

44. For 2014/15 the council's base budget to fund the Community Capacity programme is £1,118,467. An additional £27,000 is available following a one-off reduction in the council's levy to London Councils grants scheme for 2014/15 as result of a one-off transfer from reserves to the revenue account. The budget available for allocation is therefore £1,145,467, compared to a recommended



allocation of £1,142,404. This is subject to agreement of the budget at council Assembly on 26 February 2014. It must be noted that as the £27k relating to the London Councils scheme is a one-off available amount the amount available for 2015/16 will revert back to £1,118,467. The council has determined these levels of resources within the context of tight financial constraints and through the council's annual policy and resources process.

45. For the Environment & Ecology programme, the total budget available in 2014/15 is £99,451. The amount being recommended for approval is £108,054, leaving a difference of £8,603, which will be contained within the Public Realm division's budget. It is expected that the difference is a one-off difference in 2014/15 only.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Equality Analysis	Community Engagement	Katherine Pitt Tel: 020 7525 1579

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Community Capacity programme recommendations 2014/15
Appendix 2	Environment & Ecology programme recommendations 2014/15
Appendix 3	Community Capacity Commissioning Plan 2014/15
Appendix 4	Scoring Criteria for Community Capacity Programme 2014/15

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement	
<b>Report Author</b>	Katherine Pitt, Commissioning Officer	
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<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
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Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
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