

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 4 December 2014	To: Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment and Business
Report title:		Creation of Neighbourhoods Fund (merger of CCF and CGS revenue streams)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All wards	
From:		Head of Community Engagement	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment and Business agrees to the proposal of amalgamating the Community Council Fund (CCF) and the Cleaner Greener Safer Revenue fund (CGSR) to create a new Neighbourhoods Fund for the 2015/16 round and onwards.
2. That the Cabinet Member notes that the decision to introduce a new Neighbourhoods Fund will be subject to a Leader's decision to vary the delegation of executive functions, requiring consequential changes to the constitution.
3. That the Cabinet Member notes that the availability of funding will be subject to decisions by Council Assembly on the 2015/16 revenue budget.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. A Cleaner, Greener, Safer Revenue Fund consisting of £210,000 across the borough, with an allocation of £10,000 per ward, was introduced as part of the budget strategy agreed at the council assembly meeting on the 29 February 2012. At the council assembly meeting which took place on the 27 February 2013, it was agreed to allocate an additional £10,000 per ward making a total revenue fund of £420,000 available across the borough (£20,000 per ward).
5. The purpose of introducing the CGS Revenue fund was to give community councils decision making powers over significant amounts of revenue funding that they could allocate to meet locally determined priorities and also to enhance and complement the effectiveness of the CGS Capital fund.
6. Community councils also take decisions on the Community Council Fund and award revenue grants of between £100 and £1,000 for community projects. The total fund available for projects is £122,000.
7. The Community Council Fund was first launched in 2004 with the intention to encourage small and hard to reach groups to organise activities and events which would benefit their community. It is designed to promote the work of community councils and provide opportunities to engage with some marginalised communities. The fund is targeted to build and improve community cohesion by creating opportunities for bringing different communities together in local activities.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. It was agreed to launch both the CGS capital and revenue fund in one single application process for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 rounds, as the programmes complemented each other.
9. Launching both CGS capital and revenue together caused some confusion for both applicants and members and raised significant administrative issues for officers.
10. Both CGS revenue and the CCF largely attract the same groups and individuals for funding, as the criteria for these programmes overlap, and/or complement each other. In many cases, facilitating some groups to maximise the level of funding they can receive.
11. Due to the issues listed above, a decision has been taken to separate the capital and revenue funding as of the 2015/16 round. The capital programme for 2015/16 was launched on 6 September 2014.
12. A decision now needs to be made regarding the revenue streams and how they are managed. A new round of revenue fund is to be launched from the beginning of January 2015, to allow decisions to be taken in the March 2015 cycle of community council meetings.
13. If both revenue streams (the CCF and the CGS revenue programmes) were to be amalgamated into one pot; each ward would have over £25,000 of revenue grants to allocate and this could make a significant impact locally. The duplication in the administration process of both CGS Revenue and CCF grants would be eliminated and allow officers to promote and administer one combined fund more effectively.
14. This would streamline the application procedure and would require the rebranding of the programme. It is proposed that the amalgamated funding programme would be named the Neighbourhoods Fund.
15. It is proposed that any unallocated funds for both CCF and CGS revenue are to be carried forward from previous rounds and made available in the new round (2015/16).
16. The council's reputation survey (February 2013) already uses some key indicators which can be used to determine the themes for the proposed Neighbourhoods Fund:
 - a. Creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds to get on well together; (e.g. community cohesion)
 - b. Establishing projects which treat each other with respect and consideration (e.g. being a good neighbour, inter-generational contacts)
 - c. Encouraging residents to be responsible for their own neighbourhood (e.g. community clean-ups; volunteering initiatives)
17. The criteria for the allocation of the current CGS revenue funding are set below.
 - a. Proposals that make an improvement to an area on the basis of making it cleaner, greener or safer or a combination will be considered.

- b. CGS applications from the capital round which were ruled out because they were revenue applications may be considered.
 - c. The revenue fund could be used to meet the revenue costs associated with a CGS capital award.
 - d. A Community Council may choose to allocate some or all of their revenue resources to their CGS capital allocations.
 - e. Subject to the availability of resources the revenue fund may be used to buy services from the council.
 - f. Community councils will be free to indicate whether they would like expenditure to be an ongoing commitment over more than one financial year or spending over a fixed timescale for a one-off project. Commitments will be subject to final agreement of the council budget and a decision by each Community Council on an annual basis.
 - g. While the allocation is based on £20,000 per ward a Community Council can if it chooses decide to aggregate all or part of the funding and spend more than £20,000 per ward.
18. The current CCF uses the following criteria when making decisions:
- a. One-off events such as fun days and festivals
 - b. Workshops or activities involving members of the local community
 - c. Publicity or merchandise to advertise an event
19. It is proposed to simplify the process so that the current criteria outlined in paragraphs 17 and 18 are merged into the new criteria as set out in paragraph 16.

Policy Implications

20. The introduction of the new Neighbourhoods Fund will be subject to a Leader's decision to vary the delegation of executive functions, requiring consequential changes to the constitution.

Community Impact Statement

21. The roles and functions of Community Councils include the promotion of involvement of local people in the democratic process. Community Councils take decisions on local matters including environmental improvement and community safety as well as consultation on a wide range of policies and strategies that affect the area.
22. The merger of Community Council Fund and Cleaner Greener Safer Revenue will not adversely affect groups who normally apply for these funding streams.

Resource implications

23. No resource implications.

Financial implications

24. The change suggested in this report will not impact on budgets, as the two funds are simply to be merged into one. Should the funds be merged, the following funds will be available for each Community Council:

Community Council	Current CCF budget	Current CGS revenue budget	Total new Neighbourhoods fund budget
Dulwich	£17,440	£60,000	£77,440 *
Camberwell	£17,440	£60,000	£77,440
Nunhead & Peckham Rye	£26,160	£90,000	£116,160
Bermondsey & Rotherhithe	£31,973	£110,000	£141,973
Borough, Bankside & Walworth	£29,066	£100,000	£129,066
Total:	£122,079	£420,000	£542,079

* Dulwich Community Council has allocated £18k CGS revenue funding on a semi-permanent basis to fund school crossing patrols within Dulwich, and therefore the effective funding available for allocation is £59,440.

It should be noted that any funding available in 2015/16 is subject to the Council's budget setting process, which will be concluded by Council Assembly's approval of the budget in February 2015.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

25. Approval of the allocation of funds under the CCF and the CGS revenue programme is an executive function.
26. Executive functions can be delegated by the Leader of the Council. Approval of the allocation of funds under the CCF and the CGS revenue programme is currently delegated to community councils in accordance with Part 3H of the Constitution.
27. Under paragraph 6.8 of the Articles to the Constitution during the course of the municipal year the Leader may provide written notice of any change to the delegation of executive functions. The recommendation in 2 above falls within the scope of a change which the Leader can give notice of.

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services (15DKz1415)

28. This report proposes the merging of two existing funds into a new Neighbourhoods fund and as such the two existing budgets are to be merged. This implies that there is no budgetary impact if the proposal in this report is accepted. The table in paragraph 24 clearly sets out the expected funds available in 2015/16 per Community Council, on the understanding that these amounts are subject to the Council's 2015/16 budget setting process.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cleaner Greener Safer Revenue IDM Report	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Forid Ahmed 020 7525 5540
Policy and Resources Strategy 2012/13-2014/15 - Revenue budget	Same as above	

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement	
Report Author	Forid Ahmed, Community Councils Coordinator	
Version	Final	
Dated	2 December 2014	
Key Decision	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Housing & Community Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		2 December 2014