

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 15 December 2015	<b>Decision Taker:</b> Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety
<b>Report title:</b>		Community Capacity and Environment and Ecology Commissioning Programme 2016/17	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet member for communities and safety approves the funding recommendations for voluntary sector organisations delivering services under the community capacity and environment and ecology programme 2016/17 subject to council assembly approval of the council's budget. The recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The cabinet member for communities and safety approved the community capacity / environment and ecology commissioning plan for 2016/17 in July 2015. The commissioning plan is attached as Appendix 2. 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 communities and safety portfolio. Approval of the commissioning plan and approval of grants over £2,500 under the community capacity and environment and ecology 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 working with and resourcing of the sector. The council's medium term resources strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18 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 objectives of the community capacity and environment and ecology programme are to improve community relations; to empower and enable diverse communities and those who experience discrimination to achieve a better quality of life; and to support a greener borough. The programme is divided into 3 categories:
6. **Category A: 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.**

The purpose of this category 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.

In addition organisations are 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.

7. **Category B: 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.**

The purpose of this category 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, including IT access to facilitate digital inclusion. This includes settlements, community centres and faith based organisations. In addition organisations are asked to provide evidence of: understanding of levels of need in the area covered, and the ability to bring together 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.

8. **Category C: A greener borough (Environment & Ecology). This category relates to promoting the environment, engaging with the community and providing site management where applicable.**

The purpose of this category is to promote sustainable practices, and promote the wellbeing of the community, in particularly those from disadvantaged groups, through engagement with nature. Funded organisations should provide volunteering, training and formal or informal learning opportunities based around the natural environment; and should work with tenants and residents associations to involve residents in the care, improvement and enjoyment of green spaces. They should also contribute to robust biological monitoring of the borough's open spaces and support the objectives of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

9. Council officers have held a workshop for VCS groups, aimed primarily at those not currently funded, which covered these commissioning categories described above and the requirements for making applications.
10. Funding will be targeted at those organisations that can show evidence of strengthening local area 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.

11. The objectives of the community capacity and environment and ecology programme fall within the council's Plan and the ten fairer future promises (updated July 2014) to create a fairer future for all in Southwark.
12. It is particularly important in the current financial climate that organisations 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

13. The council's policy and resources strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18 revenue budget was agreed in February 2015, in the context of unprecedented cuts in its budget settlement from government. For 2015/16 the council's settlement was reduced by £20.4m (5.7%) from 2014/15.
14. The last strategic review and consultation in relation to the categories, carried out in 2011/12, indicated strong support for an approach that targeted funding to priority organisations, rather than blanket budget reductions across all funded groups.
15. The review also found that funding recommendations should be guided by the need to ensure stability for the sector, and create sufficient flexibility within the criteria, balancing interests of continuity of funding with the need to ensure that groups not previously funded have the opportunity to apply for funding. Duplication should be avoided, and as clear a picture as possible should be obtained of the financial health of organisations applying.

### Assessment and funding recommendations

16. The community capacity and environment and ecology programmes were openly advertised in September-October 2015. The applications received are summarised in the table below:

	<b>Community Capacity priorities</b>	<b>Environment &amp; Ecology priority</b>
<b>Currently funded organisations</b>	27	2
<b>New applications</b>	8	0
Those that do meet the priorities	3	
Those that don't meet the priorities	5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	35	2
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>	£1,245,446	£99,392

17. Of the 8 new applications 5 do not meet the community capacity priorities as they are focussed on a specific departmental service area such as children's social care. 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 and voluntary sector support unit.

18. In addition, an application has been received from Southwark Refugee Project which was previously funded but was not approved for funding for 2015/16 owing to high level of dependency on council funding and lack of funding from any other sources. Assessment of their application for 2016/17 indicates that this situation has not changed.
19. 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 3 to this report.
20. 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.
21. For the community capacity and environment and ecology programme, funding recommended totals £729,735 for 27 organisations. This consists of 26 organisations currently funded in 2015/16 and one new applicant organisation, The Bike Project.
22. The Bike Project provides refurbished bicycles to refugees and asylum seekers. Bikes are donated to the organisation by the police and Santander and training in safe use of bicycles and basic maintenance is also provided. This enables access to services, independence and well-being at no cost. The project provides volunteering opportunities and seeks to support the integration of refugees into the community in a visible and practical way.
23. Applications were not received from two organisations that are currently funded. These are Southwark Cyprus Turkish Association and Southwark Vietnamese Chinese Community. This achieves a saving of £48,839.
24. Due to the need to achieve a 25% budget reduction, officers considered a range of options to determine the funding recommendations. As stated in paragraph 19 above, the scoring system informs the recommendations. The one currently funded organisation not recommended for funding in 2016/17, Wickway Community Centre, achieved the lowest score of currently funded groups. There have been a number of issues relating to the performance of the organisation and its reliance on council funding in recent years which have not been satisfactorily addressed. This achieves an additional saving of £30k.
25. After taking the above savings into account officers considered the impact of applying an equal percentage budget reduction of 20% to all currently funded groups which would achieve the required saving. This approach was rejected as too blunt and failing to take account of the complexity of the funding landscape.
26. Consultation with VCS representatives through the council / VCS liaison group has in recent years considered how to take a strategic approach to managing the impact of budget reductions on communities. There has been consensus from sector representatives that applying equal percentage reductions across the board (sometimes referred to as "salami slicing") should not be the default approach.

27. Officers therefore considered the potential impact on the resilience and infrastructure resources of Southwark communities of making more nuanced recommendations with either a standstill budget, or higher/lower percentage reduction for a number of organisations. This approach has been taken to make the final recommendations.
28. Of four organisations recommended for a budget reduction of 25%, two, Surrey Docks Farm and London Wildlife Trust, are funded under the Greener Borough category. Both currently receive relatively larger grants and are considered to have the capacity to continue to generate resources to sustain their future which the grants will support. The other two, Beormund Community Centre and St Faith's Youth and Community Centre (St Faith's) are local valued services but not of borough wide strategic importance or serving specifically disadvantaged communities. The Beormund Community Centre has been in receipt of the second highest grant amount and to achieve savings, reductions are required of recipients of the largest grants. St Faith's has a track record of successfully generating income but not of applying for other funding.
29. Two other groups AAINA Women's Group (AWG) and Southwark Travellers Action Group (STAG) are recommended to receive a standstill grant. Since the demise of Southwark Muslim Women's Association in 2014, AWG are the only group funded through the programme specifically to meet the needs of Muslim women in the borough. STAG as well as meeting the needs of a vulnerable community is close to becoming an independently constituted organisation and therefore funding is recommended to remain at the current level to provide stability for this to be achieved.
30. Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers, Southwark Pensioners Centre and Somali Integration and Development Association are each recommended for reductions below 20%. These organisations have a borough wide remit and meet the needs of communities that are either specifically disadvantaged or at risk of social isolation.
31. In line with the principles of the Southwark Compact, which is an agreement between the council, the VCS and other partners on the way they work together, the council has undertaken to give 3 months notice to existing funded groups where funding is not recommended for 2016/17. This notice will run from the date the decision is made which is anticipated to be 16 December 2015. No additional funding is required to meet this notice period as the one affected organisation will have more than 3 months notice as it is still due to receive its final quarterly payment for 2015/16 at the beginning of January 2016. Organisations will be given the opportunity to request to make either a written or verbal representation to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety before the decision is taken.
32. In addition, officers have visited these organisations to discuss the recommendations in person and set out the reasons. Groups will also be offered support with fundraising from other sources and exploring options for continued service delivery or exit strategies from both the communities division and CAS.

### **Conditions of Grant Funding**

33. Organisations awarded grant funding are subject to monitoring through the council's Conditions of Grant Funding (COGF). Schedules to these cover the key areas of: governance and employment; finance; employment practices and monitoring and information. In addition to a requirement to comply with these conditions,

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 COGF as well as service delivery.

### **Community Impact Statement**

34. The organisations funded under the Community Capacity programme play a vital role in supporting the delivery of the council's equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring that communities that may face exclusion because of discrimination 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.
35. The council recognises the importance of having specific organisations that support 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 marginalised 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.
36. Equalities analysis has been carried out with currently funded organisations and with new applicants to ascertain where their target groups fall within the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 i.e. age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation. A copy of the analysis has been provided to the Forum for Equalities and Human Rights in Southwark (FEHRS). The recommendations contained in this report have taken into account the results of this analysis.
37. CAS and 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.
38. 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)
39. 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.

## **Financial implications**

40. For 2016/17, the budget for the Community Capacity programme is £712,427. This represents a 25% reduction on the 2015/16 budget of £949,902. This is subject to agreement of the budget at Council Assembly on 24 February 2016. 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. An additional £17k is available to support the budget in 2016/17 making a total budget of £729,426. The additional £17k is available as a one-off return to the council has been made by London Councils from the Grants Programme reserves to London boroughs.

## **Consultation**

41. The programme priorities of Community Engagement and Area Based Resources have not changed; therefore a consultation exercise has not been deemed necessary. In addition the Environment and Ecology priorities have been streamlined into one priority of A Greener Borough in consultation with the council's ecology officer, but there has been no fundamental change. CAS has been kept informed of the development of the 2016/17 commissioning plan, which contained updated needs analysis and policy context.
42. Organisations recommended for funding, will be 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 IDM 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.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Strategic Director of Finance and Governance**

43. The division has sufficient resources to fund the recommendations set out in this report. These recommendations take into account savings proposals put forward during the 2016/17 budget setting process. As the budget setting process is not yet concluded, the final budget amount available is not yet known for certain, and is thus only indicative.

### **Director of Law and Democracy**

44. The director of law and democracy notes the contents of this report and confirms that under the provisions of Part 3D of the council's constitution, the agreement of significant programmes relating to revenue and capital budget allocations and the approval of grants over £2,500 to voluntary sector organisations is a matter that is reserved to the relevant IDM for decision.
45. Cabinet member for communities and safety will be aware of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. At each stage, in exercising its function (and in its decision making processes) the council must have due regard 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 share it;
  - c. Foster good relations between person who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
46. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership are protected in relation to (a) only.
47. Paragraphs 34 to 39 of the report which note the community impact statement, demonstrate how the council has had due regard to PSED and the cabinet member for communities and safety should read the equality analysis to satisfy himself that this duty has been complied with when considering the recommendation.
48. The cabinet member for communities and safety is also referred to paragraphs 41 and 42 of this report which set out the consultation that has taken place. The cabinet member for communities and safety must conscientiously take into account the outcome of consultation when taking a decision on the recommendation in this report.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Equality Analysis	Community Engagement 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Katherine Pitt 020 7525 1579

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Community Capacity recommendations 2016/17
Appendix 2	Community Capacity and Environment & Ecology commissioning plan 2016/17
Appendix 3	Scoring Criteria for Community Capacity Programme 2016/17



## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities	
<b>Report Author</b>	Katherine Pitt, Commissioning Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	14 December 2015	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	14 December 2015	