

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 February 2021	Decision Taker: Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Safety
Report title:		VCS COVID-19 Prevention Grants Programme	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Borough-wide	
From:		Head of Programme for Healthy Places, Public Health	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Safety approves the award of the seven VCS COVID-19 Prevention Grants detailed in this report and in Appendix A.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. On 22 May 2020, the Government announced £300m additional funding for local authorities to support them to develop and action their plans to reduce the spread of the virus in their area as part of the launch of the wider NHS Test and Trace Service. This funding was to enable local authorities to develop and implement tailored local COVID-19 outbreak plans through, for example, funding the recruitment of additional staff where required. Details of the funding allocation can be found in paragraphs 20 and 21 of this report
3. Southwark's Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan (OPCP) sets out Southwark Council's ambition and approach to providing local leadership and support for the pandemic response; led by Public Health, but working closely with many council, health service, and voluntary sector partners.
4. The OPCS operational response involves three strands of work: Prevent Identify and Control. Our prevention works aims to develop a sustainable and meaningful dialogue with residents, communities and the voluntary sector that enables the exchange of information and intelligence that will facilitate the objectives of the OPCS and the prevention of COVID-19 outbreaks.
5. Community Southwark and local VCS organisations are important partners for the Prevent strand, as they have existing relationships with key communities who are vulnerable to COVID-19 and are well placed to both communicate prevention messages and offer support to these groups.
6. The Council funded the employment of a VCS Engagement Officer at Community Southwark for six months to support COVID-19 prevention work,

including the VCS COVID-19 Preventions grants programme and the Community Health Ambassadors Network. In connection with the VCS Covid-19 Prevention grants programme the VCS Engagement Officer has :

- supported Southwark Council to advertise the grants programme;
- engaged VCS organisations to help them apply for a grant, with a particular focus on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic led organisations and those working with people from less affluent socio-economic backgrounds to ensure the process is equitable;
- provided administrative support for the grants programme; including development of the application form and process, and will support each project's grant monitoring and evaluation in line with guidelines from Public Health Southwark, producing reports after both grant rounds and at the end of the programme.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. The VCS COVID-19 Prevention Grants Programme aims to enable local VCS organisations to support our prevention work, by;
 - helping us to identify barriers that vulnerable and high-risk communities face in receiving and following COVID-19 public health guidance;
 - overcoming barriers by assisting communities to more effectively protect themselves;
 - amplifying and improving messaging and engagement with community members to build trust and improve the effectiveness of public health initiatives and their delivery to specific communities.
8. Southwark Public Health have used the best available local and national data to ascertain which population groups should be targeted by the funded projects. We included these population groups within the grant criteria and stated that at least 60% of the funds available would be ring-fenced for projects focusing on the needs of these priority groups. The groups can be found in paragraph 17.
9. In December 2020 VCS and community organisations were invited to apply for funding of between £1,000 and £5,000. The initial single round of funding was for a maximum of £40,000 and 18 eligible applications were received.
10. An assessment panel was convened to assess applications, which included relevant staff members from Southwark Council, representation from Southwark CCG, a local funding organization (St George the Martyr) and a local resident.
11. A shortlist of 7 organisations was drawn up and clarification on their proposed projects sought.
12. A final list outlining the 7 projects can be found in Appendix A

13. Southwark Council is the grant awarding body. Community Southwark will be providing ongoing monitoring and evaluation support for the grants programme, in partnership with Southwark Council.
14. The Council will agree the monitoring and evaluation requirements that each grant recipient must adhere to. This information will be shared with the Lead Cabinet Member who will be updated on progress. This will provide an audit trail of how the grant funding has been used and its impact. The VCS Engagement Officer will support the administration of the monitoring and evaluation requirements, working with the grant recipients to ensure documentation is accurate and collected in a timely manner.

Policy implications

15. The VCS COVID-19 Prevention Grants Programme is aligned to Southwark's OPCP. It is a crucial operational aspect enabling us to deliver the Prevent strand within the OPCP.

Community impact statement

16. The grants programme has focused on:
 - Communities who are at higher risk of COVID-19 infection,
 - Communities who are at a higher risk of poor outcomes from COVID-19, and
 - Communities who are less likely to be reached by traditional council communication methods
17. Specifically, it was explained that at least 60% of the funding would be used for projects targeting:
 - People aged 18 - 39 (because they are at higher risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19)
 - BAME populations (because they are at higher risk if infected)
 - People aged over 65 (because they are at higher risk if infected)
 - Men (because they are at higher risk of poor outcomes / mortality)
 - People with existing health conditions and disabilities (including physical, mental ill-health and learning disabilities)
18. The grants programme aims to provide additional support to these communities to understand and adhere to government guidance and prevent outbreaks of COVID-19, where possible.
19. The Council has undertaken a baseline Equality Impact Assessment for the Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan.

Resource implications

20. Two new posts have recently been recruited to, enhancing our capacity to run the grants programme. Community Southwark have recruited a VCS Engagement Officer, as mentioned above. Southwark Public Health have also recruited a Programme Officer who will support the grants programme,

and wider prevention work.

Legal implications

21. The Council must ensure that the agreed criteria for award, set out in paragraph 7 of this report, are transparent and that an appropriate mechanism is put in place to monitor and ensure that the funds are used for the purpose for which the grants are awarded.

Financial implications

22. Southwark Council has been allocated and received £2,521,368 as a fixed grant supplementing the Public Health grant, relating to the local (Southwark) implementation of the Test and Trace function for COVID-19 pandemic response.
23. The Strategic Director has approved £145,000 of funding to support working with communities through the VCS. This has funded the recruitment of the VCS Engagement Officer based at Community Southwark (initially for 6 months with an extension of a further 12 months). In addition £40,000 has been allocated to support an initial round of grant funding. A remaining sum of £30,000 may be used to support further grant funding rounds, dependent on the success of the first round.

Consultation

24. Formal consultation on the grants programme has not been undertaken and is not planned. However, the purpose of the programme is to open a dialogue between the council and key communities, and feedback from residents on the approach will be regularly sort and fed back to the council.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Governance

25. This report seeks the approval of the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Safety in relation to the VCS COVID-19 Prevention Grants Programme and the associated award of grants, as set out in paragraph 1 of this report.
26. The approval sought is one of a number of matters for decision expressly reserved to the relevant Cabinet Member under Part 3D of the council's Constitution, which include the agreement of significant policy issues and key policy objectives, in relation to his/her areas of responsibility.
27. The council has power to provide grants to voluntary and community sector organisations under the general power of competence set out in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 The proposed grant awards are also consistent with other statutory duties and powers (notably the Public Sector Equality Duty imposed by the Equality Act 2010, as reflected within the Community Impact

Statement) and with corporate policy, in particular, the OPCP and Fairer Future commitments.

28. Each grant will be regulated by a grant agreement allowing the council to monitor the use of the funds and ensure that the funds are used for the purposes for which they are intended.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (EL20/081)

29. This report is requesting approval from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Safety for the VCS COVID-19 Prevention Grants Programme as part of the Prevent strand of the Southwark’s Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan in response to COVID-19.
30. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that the total funding of £70,000 available for these grant awards is an allocation from the £2,521,368 additional DHSC grant, ring-fenced for the pandemic response.
31. Staffing and any other costs connected with these recommendations are to be contained within pre-allocated and existing departmental revenue resources.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
VCS COVID-19 Prevention Grants Programme Proposal	Public Health / Environment, Leisure and Public Health	Rosie Dalton-Lucas 07917307597
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s92625/Appendix%20%20Community%20Grants%20Scheme%20-%20Prevention.pdf		
Southwark’s Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan	Public Health / Environment, Leisure and Public Health	Kirsten Watters, Consultant in Public Health 07540464033
https://www.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/12902/Southwark-s-Outbreak-Prevention-and-Control-Plan-15-July-2020-.pdf		

APPENDICES

No	Title
Appendix A	Outline of Projects

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Jin Lim, Acting Director of Public Health	
Report Author	Ginette Hogan, Public Health Policy Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	2 February 2021	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
List other officers here	N/A	N/A
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		16 February 2021