

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 27 May 2021	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet Member for Equalities, Neighbourhoods and Leisure
<b>Report title:</b>		Getting Involved grants 2021/22	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All wards	
<b>From:</b>		Resident Involvement Manager	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member approves the Getting Involved Grants (GIG) programme recommendations for 2021-22 for a total sum of £46,671 to fund 14 projects by 13 organisations as detailed in Appendix 1.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In February 2020 Cabinet approved a series of recommendations to strengthen the way the council works with the people who live in council homes. The agreed recommendations opened up the council's approach to resident participation so everyone who lives in a council home can get involved. The recommendations also shifted the resources that the council puts into resident participation back to the grassroots, giving residents more support and funding to do the things they want to do to improve their local estates and communities.
3. One of the recommendations allocated £900,000 to a new Resident Participation Fund, which replaced the previous Tenants Fund, Homeowners Fund and Tenant and Residents Social Inclusion Grants (TRSIG).
4. The agreed recommendations also set aside £272,000 of the £900,000 new Resident Participation Fund for a Resident Participation Small Grants programme, which has now been named the Getting Involved Grants (GIG), and replaces the previous TRSIG programme.
5. The GIG programme allows residents and community organisations to apply for up to £5,000 to support revenue projects that bring people who live in council homes together and improve their wellbeing. These grants will fund projects and activities that primarily benefit people who live in council owned homes, regardless of tenure type.
6. These grants are aimed at funding projects and activities that primarily benefit all people who live in council owned homes.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. Against a year-long backdrop of lockdowns, social distancing, shielding, and stay-at-home policies, take up of these grants was significantly lower in 20/21 than originally anticipated. However, with the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination programme, and a roadmap out of Covid-19 restrictions now in place, it is expected that interest in this grant programme will increase amongst resident groups but not to pre pandemic levels.

8. Given the current challenging circumstances, instead of the customary annual application period in April/May, it was agreed that officers will invite applications over three rounds, in April, July and October with a shorter turn around time so that there is more flexibility for TRAs to apply within the financial year.
9. The current round of funding was launched in early April 2021 and was publicised directly to SHU/TRAs/TMOs, via the Southwark Group of Tenants' Organisations (SGTO), via Community Southwark, the new Residents Online Panel (circa 500 residents) and the council's website. Information about this opportunity was provided upon request to others eg potential service providers. The deadline for the submission of completed applications was the 23/04/21.
10. A virtual workshop on the GIG programme was held on 14/04/21 attended by over 40 potential applicants (TRAs and potential service providers). The purpose of the workshop was to:
  - Explain the programme criteria and the functioning of the application form on the new grant portal
  - Explain the financial principle, especially regarding the revenue funding
  - Offer advice on completing applications
  - Outline the budget breakdown
  - Indicate the monitoring info for future reporting of inputs/outputs/outcomes
  - Emphasise the importance of the community's outcomes and benefits
  - Offer presentations by TRAs and service providers who currently run GIG schemes
  - Answer questions from attendees about the funding and the procedure.
11. The grants allocation panel was made up of two LBS officers and two residents.
12. Officers have administered the programme and ensured that criteria is complied with and that there is no duplication with other grants programmes. They also cross referenced with the Neighbourhoods Fund or Cleaner Greener Safer Fund to ensure there would be no duplication of funding with these schemes.
13. Following Cabinet recommendations earlier in the year the projects' criteria were simplified so that applicants simply had to demonstrate that projects "bring tenants and residents together and improve their wellbeing", as far the funding leads to benefits for the local residents.
14. Eligibility requirements are that applicants must be from:
  - Tenants & Residents Associations (including Sheltered Housing Units)
  - Tenant Management Organisations
  - SHUs/TRAs/TMOs can apply in partnership with service provider organisations, but the application must come from the SHU/TRA/TMO, who have overall responsibility for the scheme.
  - Constituted local groups that can evidence that the application has been developed by and for people living in council homes.
  - Where a SHUs/TRAs/TMOs already exists but the application originates from outside the TRA it is expected that the applicant demonstrates the TRA support for the application.
15. In addition, applications:

- Must be for revenue funding only. The maximum amount that can be applied for, is £5,000 for revenue cost.
- Must have at least two committee member signatures and one must be the Chair's.
- Must include the minutes of the Management Committee meeting when their application was discussed and agreed.
- Must also include a copy of the SHU/TRAs/TMOs safeguarding policy and confirm that they, and any proposed Service Provider, are compliant with disclosure and barring service (DBS) legislation.

### **Panel Recommendations**

16. A total of 16 applications were received totalling £63,948. The Panel recommended 14 applications for funding and the total amount recommended for funding is £46,671. For a detailed breakdown of projects, amounts applied for and amounts recommended please see appendix 1.
17. In making its recommendations the Panel considered, if the proposals met the benefits for the community, value for money and the funding criteria. The focus was centred on the human resources of the applicants, the potential outputs and the clarity of the budget's items.
18. In assessing the applications the Panel took the following into account:
  - Ensuring that there is a mixture of awards to new applicants, as well as awards to organisations that have previously delivered schemes successfully. At least 6 of the 14 awards recommended are for new schemes.
  - Whether the costs submitted were reasonable and provided Value for Money (VFM).
  - The VFM, per unit, that is per user/beneficiary of project
  - The costs follow benchmark market comparisons
  - The number of stated beneficiaries of the scheme.
  - Subject to the criteria being met, ensuring that there is a good geographical spread of awards across the borough.
  - Whether there was evidence that previously funded schemes making a new application had delivered expected outcomes and complied with the monitoring requirements.
19. Where the Panel recommended a lower amount of funding than the amount applied for this was due to costs such as hall hire, insurance, publicity, printing and management costs being considered costs that the TRA or service provider would already be able to cover from other sources including Resident Participation Fund Tenant Fund grants. In addition some budget items were unclear e.g. no hourly rates or session fees provided or offering poor value for money. In some cases the unit cost were unidentifiable, were considered too high for the service on offer or there was no proper breakdown of the budget's items.
20. The Panel did not recommend two applications as seen in Appendix 2. Reasons for declining these two applications include:
  - One application was received from a private organisation that has no

support from a local TRA or similar organisation, neither from a local group of residents.

- Another application was forwarded from an individual, rather than a local TRA or similar organisation, neither from a local group of residents. With no support from any of them.
21. Unsuccessful applicants will be written to and given reasons why their applications do not meet the grant criteria. Feedback is offered with a view to building knowledge and awareness of the criteria and to enable other organisations to be funded at the next round in July 2021.
22. Applicants will be advised that payments for any projects where face to face activities are included will be subject to the completion and submission of a COVID compliant risk assessment. This was clearly outlined in the roadshow workshop and it is explained in the application form, that contained a link to the government's website for the most up to date information.
23. A comparison of applications submitted and applications recommended for funded is below. The lower number of applications this year is likely due to the fact that many TRAs have previously used this funding for summer activities and the fact that the current social distancing measures make delivering community based projects a lot harder. Also, some organisations may apply in the next available rounds, that is July 2021 and October 2021.

Year	Applications submitted	Applications recommended for funding
2018/19 TRSIG	48	31
2019/20 TRSIG	44	26
2020/21 GIG	22	16
2021/22 – GIG APRIL 2021 ROUND	16	<b>14</b>

### Monitoring, outcomes and impact

24. Outcomes of the 2020-2021 GIG projects have been identified through provision of monitoring information. The below activities are some examples monitored through events, risk assessment, inputs, outputs and milestones. The users of the projects can be counted in hundreds, direct beneficiaries and family members (e.g. parents).
- Gardening
  - Theatre acting
  - Sport activities for young people
  - Street Fest
  - After school tuition
  - Yoga
  - Circus and Performance
  - Film making and photography classes
25. Examples of comments on schemes from 20/21 projects' users:
- *Fitness exercise (1) "Looking forward to the classes starting again"*
  - *(2) "Just done 60 minutes of Stretching and toning. It feels fantastic"*
  - *Circus classes, Quotes from parents:*

*“ I’m so glad she can do the class, I wish I had that chance when I was young and it’s good for her to move...”*

*“He loves the class so much, now I know how to get him to do what I ask. I say if you don’t come now, you won’t go to Circus class”*

*“it’s really good to have the class here, I wanted the girls to have sport activities for ages but I couldn’t afford it, they really love it”*

26. Key outcomes from the council’s new Common Outcomes Framework (COF) will be identified for successful applicants and they will be expected to report on progress made in meeting them. Some examples are:

- Safer Communities
  - (A3) Children & young people feel safer in their neighbourhoods & in Southwark
  - (A5) Residents feel treated with respect & listened to through ongoing engagement & collaboration
- Healthier Communities
  - (B1) Residents have improved access to community services
  - (B3) Residents feel that they have access to services to improve their wellbeing
  - (B6) Children, young people & families feel more supported & able to access appropriate health & wellbeing services for the best start in life
- Engaged Communities
  - (C2) Residents have increased opportunities & support to volunteer
  - (C3) Residents have the skills & confidence to increase their use of online services & there is less digital exclusion
  - (C7) Residents & organisations have greater access to community spaces & premises
- Greener Communities
  - (D1) Residents are more able & willing to access community spaces especially local green spaces
  - (D2) Residents & organisations are more able to look after designated green spaces
  - (D4) Residents & organisations feel more able to use green spaces to support social action & health & wellbeing activities
  - (D5) Increasing numbers of residents & organisations support initiatives to make Southwark greener
- Vibrant Communities
  - (E1) More young people feel ready to engage with their education
  - (E7) Residents across communities have access to a broad range of cultural activities & organisations in the creative economy are more able to access support

### **Policy implications**

27. The projects recommended for funding principally target interventions and provide resources to tackle social problems linked to quality of life indicators. These are anti-social behaviour, social wellbeing, environmental concerns, poor diet/obesity, economic hardship and a general inequality suffered by tenants and

residents. In the workshop, applicants were invited to come forward with new ideas to resolve social issues and/or opening an insight into other drawbacks, such as littering, recycling, pollution. Theatre, afterschool classes, sport, food banks, gardening are among the various proposals.

### **Community impact statement**

28. In previous years demographics data of beneficiaries of grants beneficiaries have not been collected consistently. This year, officers included a question to start collecting this information via the new centralised grants portal currently being rolled out. This is part of the wider grant review work stream under Southwark Stands Together and will allow to have a better understanding of the demographic make up of those applying for and proposing projects as well as those benefitting from the activities.
29. It is anticipated that the outcomes of GIG schemes will prove beneficial to tenants and residents of the estates and surrounding areas, particularly those from marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. The majority of proposed schemes in 2021/22 target children and young people, isolated and lonely older residents and vulnerable groups. Also, some schemes involve the whole community and bring a sense of togetherness and co-operation.

### **Resource implications**

30. GIG is managed within existing resources in the Communities division. The budget is ring fenced from the Resident Participation Budget part, of the Housing Revenue Account.

### **Financial implications**

31. The grant recommendations of which £46,671 mentioned in this report are funded by way of a dedicated 2021/22 GIG budget of £272,000 within the overall Resident Participation Fund budget of £900,000.
32. Given the current circumstances officer will run two more rounds of funding this year in order to maximise the level of available funding allocated to community led projects.

### **Consultation**

33. The establishment of the GIG programme was part of wider changes by resident participation agreed by Cabinet in February 2020. Said changes followed a period of almost two years consultation including an in depth review delivered by an independent organisation, a residents co-design panel and a three month borough wide consultation.
34. Last year's exceptional pandemic circumstances meant that the panel making recommendations on projects for the GIG grants was made of officers but this year the panel reverted back to being made up of residents and officers. This was the first time that the grants panel was carried out virtually.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Law and Governance**

35. The Localism Act 2011 enables the council to do anything that individuals generally may do, which would include incurring expenditure, giving financial or other assistance to any person or entering into arrangements or agreements with any person. This power can be used even if legislation already exists that allows the council to do the same thing although the council cannot do anything which it was restricted or prevented from doing under that previous legislation.
36. The provision of grants from within the funds identified for the Getting Involved Grants (GIG) falls within the scope of activities the council can undertake under the Localism Act 2011.
37. Under the decision making arrangements set out in Part 3 of the council's constitution, the decision on the recommendation in paragraph one of this report is one that the cabinet member is able to take.
38. The council is under an on-going duty, in exercising all of its functions, to have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, and advance of equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (such as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership) and those who do not.
39. When making a decision on the recommendation in this report the cabinet member must actively consider the PSED. The community impact statement set out in the report identifies relevant matters to be taken into account in discharging that duty.

**Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (H&M 21/022)**

40. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance notes the recommendation of the report and that existing resources are available to cover the recommended grants from within the Resident Participation Fund budget, with a further two funding rounds later in the financial year.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Resident Participation Framework Cabinet Report	<a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s86945/Report%20Southwark%20Resident%20Participation%20Framework.pdf">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s86945/Report%20Southwark%20Resident%20Participation%20Framework.pdf</a>	Eva.gomez@southwark.gov.uk

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Applications recommended for approval
Appendix 2	Applications not recommended for approval

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities	
<b>Report Author</b>	Eva Gomez, Resident Involvement Manager	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	27 May 2021	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<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 Governance	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>	27 May 2021	