



# Cabinet Member Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services and Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community
<b>Date:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2018
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Funding for the My Westminster Programme and DHP
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City For All
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services

Councillor David Harvey, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community

**Financial Summary:** It is proposed that the My Westminster Programme budget of up to £3.322m will be financed from two sources a newly created £2.982m ring-fenced budget and the projected 2014-2018 ward budget underspend currently £0.34m.

The breakdown of the proposed expenditure of up to £3.322m is as follows:

- £0.5m to deliver My Westminster Fund community based projects
- £1.742m to deliver the currently identified & scoped out My Westminster Projects
- £0.1m to establish the My Westminster Club
- £0.5m allocated directly to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to help residents meet the costs of their housing
- £0.48m to be set aside to augment current or finance a later tranche of projects under the My Westminster programme

**The purpose of this report is to:** Seek Cabinet Member approval to finance the My Westminster programme with the forecast underspend of £2.982m reported in the budget monitor as at month 6 for the financial year 2017/18 with a further budget contribution of up to £0.34m to be funded from the projected 2014-2018 ward budgets underspend.

**Report of:** Steven Mair, City Treasurer

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. At the Cabinet meeting of the 30th October it was agreed that a number of “My Westminster” community projects could be given one off funding using the forecast period 6 budget monitor underspend. This was subsequently reported to and agreed by Council on the 8th November 2017
- 1.2. It was also agreed that the governance arrangements for these projects would be approved by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services
- 1.3. This report deals with this requirement and also seeks approval to the financing of the My Westminster Fund and gives approval to the budgeted expenditure on the individual projects
- 1.4. At period 6, service area revenue budgets are projected to underspend by £2.982m by year end.
- 1.5. It is proposed that £2.982m is set aside to finance the My Westminster programme and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) subject to agreed parameters for disbursements of the fund as set out in this report.
- 1.6. It is further proposed that the projected underspend of £0.34m on the 2014-2018 ward budget programme is set aside to finance the My Westminster Fund subject to agreed parameters for disbursements of the fund.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services approves:
  - the total budget for the My Westminster programme and DHP as £3.322m
  - that the underspend of £2.982m as reported in the budget monitor at period 6 is utilised to partially finance this

- the governance arrangements required by the Council decision on 8 November 2017 for the Community Fund element of the My Westminster Fund as set out in Appendix A
  - that the decision to award individual bids for the Community Fund element of the My Westminster Fund be delegated to the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications
  - that the other individual projects be limited to the sums set out in the report in sections 4.4 to 4.6, are transferred to the relevant Executive Directors budget and managed as part of their revenue budgets under the Council's Financial Regulations
- 2.2. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community approves the financing of the remainder of the My Westminster Programme (My Westminster Fund) to the value of up to £0.34m from the projected underspend on the 2014-2018 wards budget.

### **3. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF MY WESTMINSTER PROGRAMME**

- 3.1. City for All 2017/18 was launched in March 2017, marked a change in direction with three new priorities: “civic leadership and responsibility at the heart of all the Council’s activity, promoting opportunity and fairness across the city and setting the standards for a world class city”. In launching City for All 2017/18, the Leader also signalled her commitment to establish an open, working partnership between residents, businesses and stakeholders. This includes the voluntary sector.
- 3.2. If the Council is to retain high levels of satisfaction and engagement across the city, it is critical that investments are made in improvements to the city and enhancements to services that matter to residents. The My Westminster programme sits at the heart of the Council’s ambition to create a City for All.
- 3.3. It also sits alongside the Council’s commitment to community cohesion, our overall approach to community engagement, including Open Forums and the My Westminster Day, first held in June 2017. The programme and its individual elements are underpinned by a comprehensive communications and engagement plan to ensure projects achieve maximum reach into the community
- 3.4. In light of the above and noting that at period 6 the projected year end underspend was £2.982m and that this would be carefully monitored, the Leader advised Cabinet that a number of “My Westminster” community projects could be given one off funding using this underspend and it was therefore agreed that it should be earmarked for this use. These proposals have subsequently been refined and this report makes the necessary approvals

#### **4. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT**

4.1. The main My Westminster programme is made up of three strands as follows:

1. My Westminster Fund – (£0.5m initial investment) This is an open fund for community groups to bid in to for funds to be used on projects to support the needs of the Westminster community and its residents. The proposed funding for this of up to £0.34m is to be financed directly through the projected 2014-2018 Ward Budget underspend, with the balance of £0.16m funded from the £2.982m underspend detailed in the budget monitor as at month 6.
2. My Westminster Projects (£1.742m initial investment) – These are a range of Council-led initiatives to improve the lives of residents and the city as a whole
3. My Westminster Club (£0.1m initial investment) – This is a development programme for 13-15 year olds

4.2. In addition to the above

1. £0.5m is to be allocated directly to Discretionary Housing Payments as outlined in the financial summary above.
2. £0.48m to be set aside to augment current or finance a later tranche of projects under the My Westminster programme

Further detail on each strand of the My Westminster programme and the DHP allocation is set out below.

#### **4.3 My Westminster Fund (0.5m)**

4.3.1 There are around 700 voluntary and community sector organisations in Westminster that focus on the needs of Westminster, our community and our residents. There are many more faith groups, amenity societies, and residents and tenant's associations.

4.3.2 In launching the City for All 2017/18, the Council made a number of commitments, but also acknowledged that there is always more we can do to support the city and our residents.

4.3.3 In order to facilitate this, the My Westminster Fund will offer voluntary and community sector organisations in the city the opportunity to access funding for up to two years.

4.3.4 The Fund will be open to all voluntary organisations, residents, faith and community groups within the boroughs. Schools and other establishments that care for WCC residents (e.g. residential care homes) will also be eligible.

- 4.3.5 Bids will be expected to demonstrate how funding will contribute to the delivery of City for All objectives with a particular focus on priority areas to be set out when the Fund is launched.
- 4.3.6 Groups will be able to bid for funds up to £10,000 per project in line with the Evaluation principles as detailed in Appendix A, with up to £0.5m available in total to finance eligible projects.
- 4.3.7 The finances will be held by the Policy, Performance and Communications directorate in a ring-fenced budget which can be drawn down by the Cabinet Secretariat and Member Services team for the management and delivery of funds.

#### **4.3. My Westminster Projects (£1.742m)**

##### **4.4.1. Civic Leadership (Approved spend to be over a 2-year period) £0.67m**

###### 4.4.1.1 Housing Standards Taskforce - £420,000

To create a multi-disciplinary team of officers focused on driving up standards in housing across the city for benefit of both tenants and the wider community. This will include deploying resources to combat irresponsible and illegal short-term letting. This will involve highly visible enforcement against problematic landlords and supportive evidenced-based campaign activity.

###### 4.4.1.2 Active Streets - £150,000

To temporarily close select residential streets to road traffic to allow community activities that bring neighbours together, promote active play, and create areas free from traffic noise

###### 4.4.1.3 Reducing Isolation Amongst Older People Project - £100,000

To expand Silver Sunday style activities to a 12-month programme of community events and activities targeted at isolated older people living across the city.

This will include a My Westminster tea club (which will provide free meals at restaurants in Westminster during quieter periods in the afternoon) and harnessing the city's cultural networks and assets to increase to reduce older people's social isolation.

##### **4.4.2. Opportunity and fairness (Approved spend to be over a 2-year period) £0.327m**

###### 4.4.2.1 EU Citizens Support Programme - £50,000

To deliver a package of support including an advice service, helpline and online resources for Westminster residents who are EU citizens as the UK

leaves the EU. This will be complemented with seminars in collaboration with embassies. These support services should offer EU citizens as much certainty as possible during the exit process. Lobby central Government to provide as much protection as possible to EU citizens residing in our city.

#### 4.4.2.2 Stay Safe Project - £75,000

To provide targeted intervention for young victims of crime in the form of skills-based programmes, safety workshops and one to one support for those young people at greatest risk of crime. To work with a voluntary sector provider to fund and facilitate a film created by young people and to be used as resource for social media, secondary school lessons and targeted intervention.

#### 4.4.2.3 Life Skills Lessons- £80,000

To strengthen the quality of Personal, Social, Health Education Lessons resources by disseminating best practice across schools and offering targeted support for schools seeking the Healthy Schools Award accreditation. To work with primary schools to provide quality and appropriate Relationship Education. To deliver an in-school workshop programme promoting mental and physical wellbeing.

#### 4.4.2.4 Life Skills Short Breaks - £72,000

To enhance the Council's short breaks, offer for carers and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). These breaks will aim to enhance young people's ability to live independently (e.g. by providing managing money workshops) and find employment (e.g. by providing ICT skills workshops.).

#### 4.4.2.5 Supported Accommodation Plus - £50,000

To provide additional mental health support for Westminster young people in supported accommodation. Embed a mental health professional in accommodation services for young people, train young people to offer peer to peer assistance and provide one to one support for those who need it.

### **4.4.3 World Class City (Approved spend to be over a 2-year period) £0.745m.**

#### 4.4.3.1 Integrated Street Unit - £250,000

To develop an Integrated Street Unit, modelled on the Integrated Gangs Unit.

The new Unit will bring Council resources such as City Inspectors and Neighbourhood Problem Solving Coordinators together with local police teams and externally commissioned services such as outreach services or substance misuse services in a formal partnership structure to tackle challenges associated with Westminster's street population such as drug-taking, begging, street-fouling and other anti-social behaviour.



#### 4.4.3.2 Constructors Community Pledge - £70,000

To develop a voluntary Code of Practice for construction companies building in Westminster. To strengthen the existing Considerate Constructors Scheme by working directly to mitigate the effects of major building works on residents and local businesses. Suggest practical remedies for lessening noise and environmental impacts.

The Code will be supplemented by a Major Development Community Liaison Officer to ensure residents' concerns are addressed, the Council will publicise the work it does with constructors that support the Pledge.

#### 4.4.3.3 Air Quality Manifesto - £100,000

To deliver short term improvements to support the Air Quality Strategy. Using learning from the flagship Marylebone LEN, we will take steps towards becoming a Low Emission City (LEC). We want to engage residents on a citizen science project to raise awareness of localised air pollution and provide innovative ideas on how to tackle them. There will be a ten-point manifesto plan to provide a framework for activity.

#### 4.4.3.4 Road to Wellbeing - £75,000

To support the development of the 'Road to Wellbeing Map' signposting service. Holding the first 'Big Sing concert', which will bring community choirs together for an event in Central London (possible Leicester Square) and promote the positive benefits of singing and music for mental wellbeing.

#### 4.4.3.5 West End Cultural Forum - £50,000

To create a forum to examine issues arising for cultural partners in Westminster and West End Partnership spatial area, to look for strength and innovation in numbers. To share good practice both within and outside forum membership, and to use Westminster and partners leverage to overcome issues arising. To promote and strengthen Westminster's unique cultural offer. The Forum will also be used to support the production of Westminster's new Cultural Strategy.

#### 4.4.3.6 Market Curator - £50,000

To recruit a Market Curator to work across all of Westminster's six street markets to bring in innovative and first-time traders. The post holder will foster community support, investment and ownership of our street markets, increasing promotion, vibrancy and footfall. The Curator will work internally across licensing, economy, policy and communications teams to create a robust internal framework to support the growth of our markets. The Curator will also develop Westminster's New Markets Strategy.

#### 4.4.3.7 West End Waiting Room - £100,000

To develop, alongside Licensing Charter businesses, an ENTE hub(s) as the licensing charter is rolled out across the city. This hub will coordinate a network of specially trained volunteers to provide information and support for those made vulnerable by alcohol. It will also provide e-learning to staff who

work in smaller licensed premises for the same purpose, improve the accessibility of the network of safe spaces for those made vulnerable by alcohol and support other related campaigns.

#### 4.4.3.8 Street Planting - £50,000

To plant 100 new trees in Westminster over two years, in addition to those already planned. This will offer various benefits in terms of air quality and achieving the City for All vision of a greener city.

#### 4.4. **My Westminster Club (£0.1m)**

- 4.5.1 Westminster's schools are excellent; educational attainment is very high, but there is more the Council can do to ensure our young people can realise the benefits of being at the heart of the nation's capital.
- 4.5.2 In order to create opportunities for young people and fill the gap in existing programmes, the My Westminster Club will target 13-15 year olds and focus on linking young people with the most highly profile companies and iconic institutions in Westminster.
- 4.5.3 The Club will specifically target young people who are less likely to access the enrichment opportunities across the city.

#### 4.5. **Discretionary Housing Payments (£0.5m)**

- 4.6.1 £0.5m is proposed to be allocated directly to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to help residents meet the costs of their housing.
- 4.6.2 The one off funding is required to mitigate the financial exposure arising as the Council faces an increased number of DHP claims due to the implementation of the new, reduced Benefit Cap threshold under the Government's on-going Welfare Reform programme. This has resulted in over 600 households in Westminster being affected by the Benefit Cap for the first time from January 2017. Of these new cases, 78% live in either private rented tenancies or temporary accommodation provided by the Council and presents a financial risk to the Council if sufficient DHP was no longer available.
- 4.6.3 The allocation for DHP in 2017/18 is £1.405m which is just over 50% of the allocation of 2016/17 (£2.7m). In order to address the shortfall £1m was set aside in general reserves and the sum of £0.5m will serve to further reduce the funding gap for future years.



## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The Council has a wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do. The Council can therefore rely on this power to finance the My Westminster programme and DHP as proposed in this report.
- 5.2. The Council must be mindful of the principles imposed by the Public Sector Equality Duty enacted in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when taking any decisions in relation to the My Westminster Programme and DHP.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. Utilising the underspend has no impact on the budget for 2017/18 but it should be recognised that the funds are one off in nature and cannot be counted on in future years. Projects should therefore be delivered with a view to ending after the funding period ends or being brought into the mainstream of service delivery at the same point.
- 6.2. The due diligence on bidding organisations that request funding via the My Westminster Fund will be underpinned by the principals detailed in Appendix A.
- 6.3. Funding for My Westminster projects i.e. Council led initiatives will be approved via the Council's standard financial regulations protocol.

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Period 6 Financial Monitor

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact:**

**Dave Hodgkinson, Assistant City Treasurer**

**Tel: 020 7641 8162**

**Email: [dhodgkinson@Westminster.gov.uk](mailto:dhodgkinson@Westminster.gov.uk)**

## Appendix A – Evaluation Principles

Below are principles that will need to be adhered to before Council funds are released for bids from community organisations.

The My Westminster Fund will be managed by a cross-party Members' Board, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community and advised by an officer group incorporating officers from across the Council.

1. The Council will need to ensure that the bidding organisations are fit and proper to access Council funds. This will be done via:
  - a. The Procurement department obtaining a credit reference report on the bidding organisation. For charity organisations the department will seek information from the Charity Commission.
  - b. The Finance department will review the credit reference report and any information provided from the Charity Commission to highlight any financial concerns.
2. All community bids will complete a standardised project bid form to secure up to £10,000 of funds. The form will require the community organisation's details, the purpose of spend and how it will achieve Council objectives.
3. The community organisation will provide valid bank details. The details will need to be evidenced in the form of a bank letter or a copy of the bank statement. The Council will not transfer funds to an organisation unless the evidence is submitted.
4. No funds will be transferred to an individual's personal bank account.
5. The funds awarded will be on an arrears basis and will reimburse the community organisation after the expenditure has been incurred and the outcomes have been delivered. Any claim will need to be supported by evidence of expenditure, e.g. payslips and invoices. No upfront payment will be made however where there may be cash flow implications then the board will consider on a case by case basis.
6. Post implementation will be undertaken by the Policy, Performance and Communications directorate to capture the impact on Westminster communities.
7. The individual bids be formally approved by the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications.

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

State nature of interest if any

.....

.....  
*(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Funding for the My Westminster Programme and DHP** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

Cabinet Member for **Finance, Property and Corporate Services**

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

.....  
.....  
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed

from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.