



<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection; Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and the Voluntary Sector
<b>Date:</b>	31 January 2023
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Community Grants 2022-2023
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	Fairer Communities
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	£800,000 in total (breakdown in recommendations)
<b>Report of:</b>	Serena Simon, Director of Communities  Contact details: <a href="mailto:ssimon@westminster.gov.uk">ssimon@westminster.gov.uk</a>

## **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Communities are proposing to run three different grant schemes within the budget allocated for this year, 2022-2023.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and the Voluntary Sector are recommended to:
  - 2.1.1 Approve the extension of the Communities Priorities Programme to all areas of deprivation in Westminster by a further £300,000 so that the total fund is £600,000;
  - 2.1.2 Create an Emergency Fund of £100,000 for community organisations in temporary financial crisis;

- 2.1.3 Create a Community Events Fund of £50,000;
- 2.1.4 Invest in capacity building for communities whose needs are not currently being met by the existing VCS, in Westminster, with a fund of £50,000 drawn from VCS community reserves; and
- 2.1.5 Delegate authority to the Director of Communities to determine the exact allocation of grant funding and decision to award grants as outlined in this report to organisations.

### **3 Reasons for Decision**

- 3.1 Fairer Westminster and Fairer Communities prioritise investment in community organisations and increased participation of and engagement with residents in everything the council does.
- 3.2 The approach to grants from communities follow the principles of community engagement and participation, community development, and a shared approach to decision making.
- 3.3 The Cost of Living crisis has added additional challenges for residents facing hardship, and for community organisations, in particular small local organisations. This has created an additional urgency to be able to disperse funds rapidly if needed.
- 3.4 The Community Priorities programme begins with undertaking a needs assessment through interviews with residents. This work needs to start immediately for the grant fund to be opened in January 2023.
- 3.5 Supporting community events and cultural events enhance working inclusively with all the communities living in Westminster.
- 3.6 The entire community grants programme will contribute to enhanced outcomes for communities and will be evaluated.

### **4 Project background**

#### **4.1 Community Priorities Programme**

- 4.1.1 The Community Priorities Programme takes a community development approach to grant funding. Engagement takes place with residents to identify the needs and to be involved in the selection of projects to be awarded grants. Local community organisations are supported to submit bids for the grants.
- 4.1.2 The Community Priorities Programme initially focused in four wards of North Westminster where there are higher levels of need: Queens Park, Harrow Road, Westbourne and Church Street.

- 4.1.3 In addition the Neighbourhood Keepers programme and Create Church St programmes provided additional grants in Church Street through the regeneration programme. The Neighbourhood Keepers Fund is due to end in 2023.
- 4.1.4 The proposal is to extend the reach of the Community Priorities Programme to any area of Westminster which is showing the highest levels of deprivation, according to the indices of multiple deprivation. When the guidelines are published a map showing where the highest levels are across Westminster will be included.
- 4.1.5 This year extended community development work will start to include residents from areas outside of North Westminster to identify any new needs or priorities to be included in the programme.
- 4.1.6 The funding will be increased from £300,000 to £600,000, to bring together £300,000 committed funding from Public Health as part of the #2035 programme and £300,000 funding from the Communities budget.

## **4.2 Emergency Fund**

- 4.2.1 Due to unprecedented economic challenges with inflation and increased costs, a number of small community organisations have approached the council for emergency funding to cover temporary cash flow problems.
- 4.2.2 The council does not currently have a path for distributing emergency funding within a rapid timeframe.
- 4.2.3 This report proposes to run an emergency fund within the Communities department which organisations could apply for at a time of financial crisis.
- 4.2.4 Strict criteria for the fund would include: evidence of the financial crisis; evidence that it is short term; evidence that the organisation would return to a stable position and is financially viable for the long term; a plan for financial recovery; the particular contribution of that organisation in that area which means that we need to ensure its stability.
- 4.2.5 The total for the Fund would be £100,000 in any year.

## **4.3 Events Fund**

- 4.3.1 The Council recognises the importance of communities being able to organise events of cultural significance as well as events that promote community cohesion and integration. Therefore, funding has been made available for communities in Westminster to lead and organise events. These can be:

- cultural events
- events that raise awareness of issues that affect the community
- events that bring communities together.

The Community Events Grant Fund can be used to book a space or pay for other associated event costs.

The Community Events Grant Fund will offer financial support to organisations to help deliver new events in the City of Westminster.

4.3.2 The total funding available for this grant programme is £40,000 for 2022-23 and then £50,000 from 2023-24 onwards. The maximum grant available per successful event application will be from £500-£2500, depending on the type of event and collaboration between organisations grants of up to £5,000 will be awarded annually.

4.3.3 We are keen to develop an interesting and successful year-round events calendar and would like to encourage new community leaders and groups to come forward. As part of this ambition, we are keen to see new events that will complement the existing offer.

#### 4.3.4 **Who can apply**

- registered charities and CICs with sound governance and accountability structures
- Individuals affiliated to a registered group in Westminster who lives or works in Westminster and volunteers their time to help and support others can apply where no suitable organisation can be found.

#### 4.3.5 **What we can fund**

- costs of venue hire and other related event costs
- refreshments for consumption at the event
- small items of expenditure for activities
- any other reasonable expenditure directly relating to the activity or event.
- Staffing costs related to the event

Applicants will be asked to present a breakdown of costs.

#### 4.3.6 **What the fund will not pay for:**

- private events e.g. birthdays, christenings, graduation
- political events or campaigning
- profit-making or fundraising activities
- running costs including salaries not related to the event
- Transportation costs, storage or delivery fees

Furthermore, the fund will not cover costs for any event that may be perceived as non-inclusive or could cause the Council reputational

## **5 Capacity Building Fund**

- 5.1 The fund will be used this year to build capacity for communities whose needs are not currently being met by the existing VCS provision. Consultation will begin with residents and existing organisations to determine how best to develop this capacity.
- 5.2 The fund available this year is £50,000, to be drawn from VCS reserves.
- 5.3 This fund will be supported by a strategy to widen participation and engagement across Westminster.

## **6 Options**

- 6.1 Consideration has been given to running a Core Funding grants programme this year. While there is ample evidence that a Core Funding programme is needed, and that is one of the components of the Community Investment Strategy, the design of the programme will take more time to undertake consultation with the sector, review other council's approaches and design a suitable fund for Westminster community organisations.
- 6.2 The money Public Health contributes to the Community Priorities programme is to deliver Public Health outcomes in line with #2035, and cannot be transferred to core funding without careful thought about how we would account for Public Health outcomes.
- 6.3 A separate briefing note will be developed to outline how to develop a core funding grant, and identify what budget would be needed to deliver it. This paper will be presented for discussion in February 2023.

## **7 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The funding for the Community grants comes from three sources, Public Health funding of £0.450m, Phase 2 Community Programme funding of £0.300m and £0.050m of Volunteering Reserve. These are within the budget constraints of the department and funding is fully available for these payments to be paid.

## **8 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The report seeks to award grant funding to various organisations as set out in the report.
- 8.2 Under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has the power to award funding, as it is permitted to do anything that individuals generally

may do. This power can be exercised in any manner and for the benefit of the Council and its residents.

### 8.3 Subsidy Control Regime Considerations

8.4 Following the UK's exit of the European Union and termination of transition period arrangements, State Aid obligations ceased to have effect within the UK. A new domestic regime codified by Subsidy Act 2022 (the Act) came into force on 4 January 2023.

8.5 It is noted that the Act is not retrospective and therefore the previous funding nor subsidies granted to recipients under it will not be subject to the Act at this time. Notwithstanding, this proposal seeks to modify the scheme and grants within it by awarding additional grant funding. In accordance with s81(1) of the Act any modifications to subsidies or subsidy schemes are to be treated as the giving of a new subsidy or subsidy scheme.

8.6 Provided the additional grant funding arrangements are formalised prior to the Act coming into force Subsidy Control obligations will not have to be considered. In the event the additional grant funding is given after the Act comes into force considerations for the regime will need to be had. The first consideration will be whether the grant funding given to each organisation a subsidy within the meaning of s2(1) of the Act. A four Limbed test is applied, of which each limb must be satisfied for the grant to be considered a subsidy/scheme and for the regime to apply. The four limbs are:

- i) Limb A – Financial assistance is given, directly or indirectly from public resources by a public authority.
- ii) Limb B – The financial assistance confers an economic advantage on one or more enterprises.
- iii) Limb C – The financial assistance is specific such that it benefits one or more enterprises over one or more enterprises with respect to the production of good or provision of services.
- iv) Limb D – The financial assistance has or is capable of influencing competition or investment within the UK, or on trade or investment between the UK and another country or territory or both.

8.7 The grant funding is limited in its nature and geographical influence in that its recipients are based within the local community of Westminster in the voluntary sector. The current programme therefore is not capable of influencing competition or investment within the UK due to its limited reach. The four limbed test is therefore not satisfied, and the current programme does not fall within the definition of a subsidy.

8.8 In the event the grant funding awarded is to be considered a subsidy scheme, due to being in existence prior to the Act coming into force, it would be a "Legacy Subsidy Scheme" and the grants given under it "Legacy Subsidies" both which are exempt from Subsidy Control rules (s48(1)(a) of the Act). Further, the proposed modification would be a "permitted modification" within the meaning of s81(3)(a) of the Act which allows for

legacy subsidy modifications permitted by the subsidy or subsidy scheme in accordance with its terms. Clause 2.2 of the grant agreements permit the Council to extend the agreement by a period or periods not exceeding 12 months, illustrating that the proposed amendment would fall within the meaning of a permitted modification that is exempt from the Subsidy Control rules.

## 8.9 Formalities

All grant funding awarded will need to be documented in an appropriate agreement or letter and executed in the same form as the original grant agreement. Legal can advise and assist with drafting where necessary.

## 9 Carbon Impact

9.1 To reduce our carbon footprint, we will take the following measures when planning and delivering events:

- a. Travel and transport – We will plan and deliver events in venues easily accessible by public transport, and as local as possible to reduce the distance that participants must travel. We will also plan our logistics to reduce the number of trips to venues to deliver and collect equipment where needed. We will book and encourage all recipients of our grants to book venues that are already equipped with the necessary resources for activities.
- b. Waste - We will minimise waste by using recyclable materials when delivering events and we will ask recipients of community grants to sign a statement that they will do the same. We will also avoid using single-use containers, bottles, crockery, and cutlery for catered events and activities. We will use china tableware and metal utensils as often as possible. We will introduce a waste management policy that will encourage and support individuals and organisations to minimise waste when delivering events and activities.
- c. Energy - We will request that individuals and organisations use energy-efficient venues and resources when delivering activities.

## 10 Equalities Implications

10.1 The EqIA shows that the existing project Communities Priorities Fund has had a positive impact on enabling people with protected characteristics to make decisions and participate in solutions relating to their own local area. This proposal increases this funding opportunity to more locations. The extended grant opportunity will benefit people in areas of deprivation, contributing to increasing socio-economic benefit. As these are new grants, we will monitor who is receiving them to ensure they are accessible to a wide range of people including those people with protected characteristics.

Below are based on analysed data so far received from 7 out of 24 projects within the Community Priorities Programme round one, the

remaining projects have until the end of February to submit their end of project evaluation. (Please note data includes recurring participant data – session attendance and not new attendees).

- A higher proportion of participants within sessions have been female (632), compared to males (226).
- The programme had 635 participants from the Global Majority ethnic group.
- 65 participants with disabilities.
- There were 388 participants from religious backgrounds, majority that declared were Muslims.
- The programme engaged participants from different cohorts, from under 5 up to over 70.

We will support organisations to increase engagement among male participants.

## **11 Consultation**

Ward councillor involvement will include being invited to be involved in drafting the scoring criteria, participation in the scoring panel which will decide on distribution of funds i.e. successful funded projects, successful grantees (organisations and individuals) and grant sizes.

All ward councillors will be emailed a briefing paper covering the grants outline in this paper for their review and consideration. Councillors will be given 5 days to respond back with any amendments.

CPP team will have meetings with all ward councillors prior to awards being granted and will keep them informed via the Members' Bulletin.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact: Christine Mead, [cmead@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:cmead@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Breakdown of deprivation across wards



For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed: Aida Less Date: 31 January 2023

NAME: Councillor Aicha Less

State nature of interest if any

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*(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 **Community Grants 2022-23**

Signed Aida Less.....

**Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection**

Date ...31 January 2023.....

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and the Voluntary Sector**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed: N. Butler-Thalassis Date: 31 January 2023

NAME: **Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis**

State nature of interest if any

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*(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 **Community Grants 2022-23**

Signed N. Butler-Thalassis

**Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and the Voluntary Sector**

Date ...31 January 2023.....

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:  
.....  
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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 & Democratic Services, Director of Finance 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.