

<b>SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE</b>			
<b>Title</b>	Main Grants Programme 2015-18 – Equalities Update		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Community Services	Item	5
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date:	16 September 2015

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report provides the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee with an update on the co-ordination of the Equalities aspect of the Lewisham Main Grants Programme 2015-18 and on the continued work with EqualiTeam Lewisham.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee are recommended to note, and comment upon, the content of this report.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 At Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 13 May 2015, a decision upon the Main Grants Programme awards for 2015-18 was taken that 62 voluntary and community sector groups be funded as set out in Appendix 1 (referenced in the background documents section), for the financial years 2015/16 – 2017/18 except as modified in Appendix 2 (referenced in the background documents section), following appeals heard on 11 May 2015, whereby a further 3 organisations were awarded transition funding.
- 3.2 Under the Main Grants Programme funding was awarded to Voluntary Action Lewisham (VAL) to coordinate borough-wide work on equalities and to support voluntary and community sector organisations to meet their equalities commitments. The other organisations that have a specific equalities remit are:
- Age UK Lewisham & Southwark
  - Lewisham Disability Coalition
  - Lewisham Multilingual Advice Service
  - Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
  - METRO (The Metro Centre Ltd)
  - Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust
  - Lewisham Pensioners Forum
  - EqualiTeam Lewisham
- 3.3 Subsequently at Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee, on 14 May 2015, an update was provided detailing the decisions taken at Mayor and Cabinet contracts the previous evening. At that meeting a number of key points relating to equalities were noted;
- Mayor and Cabinet had accepted officers' recommendation that the Council should work with EqualiTeam Lewisham to use existing unspent grant funding of £180,000.
  - EqualiTeam Lewisham was in possession of their outstanding funding.

- All organisations would be subject to performance monitoring and action would be taken where organisations failed to deliver on their objectives.
- 3.4 There was further discussion by members around the decision to approve officers to work with EqualTeam Lewisham to use its outstanding funding from the current grants programme. Again the following key points were noted:
  - Some Members felt that the grant assessment process had highlighted EqualTeam Lewisham's lack of demonstrable outcomes.
  - Members questioned the possibility of setting a timescale on which the outstanding funds could be used.

The Chair indicated that the Committee should seek to assure itself that there were demonstrable outcomes being delivered against this funding.
- 3.5 At Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 3 June 2015 the resultant call-in was presented. The Mayor resolved that the original decision be upheld and the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel be informed the Cabinet approved the request for a review of EqualTeam's operations and an examination of wider issues relating to comprehensive equalities objectives, the outcomes of which would be reported to the Safer, Stronger Communities Select Committee.

#### **4. Progress to date**

##### **4.1 Equalities Co-ordination**

- 4.1.1 The Main Grants Programme 2015-18 tasked Voluntary Action Lewisham (VAL) to lead on co-ordinating activities for Equalities across the borough and report into the Stronger Communities Partnership Board. The initial detail for this was presented to 13 May 2015 Mayor and Cabinet paper with the intention that the Voluntary and Community Sector will contribute towards the 5 outcomes of the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES).
- 4.1.2 The CES 2012-16 has 5 main objectives, these are;
  1. Tackling victimisation and discrimination
  2. Improving access to services
  3. Closing the gap in outcomes for different citizens
  4. Increasing mutual respect and understanding in communities
  5. Increasing participation and engagement
- 4.1.3 The role that the VCS will have in helping to deliver these objectives is as follows;
- 4.1.4 **Objective 1. Tackling victimisation and discrimination.**  
*Ensuring access to information, advice, advocacy and representation*  
 This will be delivered across the advice sector but additional work is required on the coordination of activity to ensure specialisms such as immigration, language support and translation are open and available to all.
- 4.1.5 *Easy access to report victimisation and discrimination*  
 There will be VCS representation on both the Hate Crime forum and Stop and Search Group with outcomes to be agreed with these forums. Additionally the Equalities Working Group will ensure that trends or spikes in victimisation and discrimination are monitored and responded to in a cohesive and joined up fashion.

4.1.6 *Ensuring that patterns of discrimination and victimisation are fed from the grassroots (groups and residents) into the appropriate forums and then into the partnership board*

The following groups and forums will feed into the new Equalities Working Group co-ordinated by VAL: Disability Forum; Lewisham Disability Coalition; Stephen Lawrence Centre; Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network; Lewisham Pensioners Forum and Ageing Well Council; Metro (with the model for capturing views from grassroots to be developed). In addition to the grant funded groups the Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Forum and Refuge will also be invited to be standing members of the group.

The Working Group will then report to the Stronger Communities Partnership Board on patterns of discrimination and victimisation with suggested actions required across the borough.

4.1.7 **Objective 2: Improving access to services**

*Ensuring that grassroots organisations can access training and support to develop deliverable equality plans*

This support will be co-ordinated through the Equalities Working Group once training needs have been identified. The subsequent training will be delivered by a number of key organisations, including; Stephen Lawrence Centre; Lewisham Disability Coalition; Metro; VAL; EqualITeam Lewisham (using unspent grant from previous years) and Lewisham Pensioners Forum

4.1.8 **Objective 3: Closing the gap**

*Ensuring that forums have an infrastructure to work in partnership with public sector providers*

The membership of the Stronger Communities Partnership Board will provide the leadership for the VCS in this area will be reviewed to ensure that the make-up is both relevant and representative of the VCS.

Partnership with the health sector will be coordinated through Bromley and Lewisham Healthwatch and it is important that the work of this group is effectively linked to the work of the SCP Board.

4.1.9 **Objective 4: Increasing mutual respect**

*Helping organisations to work together at neighbourhood level.*

The Neighbourhood development strand of the Main Grants programme brings together 10 key organisations to help deliver on this agenda locally. They are; Ackroyd Community Association; Bellingham Community Project; Corbett Estate Neighbourhood Forum; Goldsmiths Community Association; Grove Park Community Group; IRIE!; Lee Green Lives; Somerville Youth & Play Provision; Teatro Vivo; and Age UK Southwark and Lewisham (Community Connections). These organisations have been tasked with building capacity, engagement and developing partnership working at a local level. The main Equalities Working Group will monitor any issues arising from the work of these groups and make suggestions regarding remedial actions required.

Additionally there is also a role for recipients of any Faith Funding and/or Prevent Funding to help to deliver against this objective.

4.1.10 **Objective 5: Increasing participation and engagement**

*Influencing all organisations*

We will expect that *all* funded groups and Lewisham partners will be working to actively increase participation and engagement within communities, and

that they work towards achieving a representative client base across the protected characteristics. Officers working with the Equalities Working Group will help feed in additional intelligence as to where gaps and needs are to allow funded organisations to effectively share good practice and meet the needs of communities.

4.1.11 In terms of taking this delivery and coordination forwards, VAL has established an Equalities Working Group, made up of the Main Grants funded Equalities organisations (with others invited on an ad hoc basis) that will work in partnership to better meet the needs of their communities/service users and help identify gaps in provision. The organisations that are currently funded, and will be a part of the working group in addition to VAL and the Council, are;

- Age UK Lewisham & Southwark
- Lewisham Disability Coalition
- Lewisham Multilingual Advice Service
- Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
- METRO (The Metro Centre Ltd)
- Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust
- Lewisham Pensioners Forum
- EqualTeam Lewisham

The first meeting of this group was on 12 August 2015.

4.1.12 Following the first meeting of the working group, members are currently identifying and evidencing how their current work delivers against the 5 objectives of the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (as set out above), as well as producing documented evidence (from research, client base and consultations) that help create a picture of the communities and clients served, to see how this reflects the make-up of the Borough.

4.1.13 A full array of monitoring information will need to be agreed but initial suggestions include:

**Tackling victimisation and harassment**

- third party reporting
- casework

**Improving access to services**

- casework
- referrals made (need to give this one further thought but the idea is to encourage VCSO's to identify alternative service options for referring clients in need, so that the council becomes the provider of last, rather than first resort)

**Closing the gap in outcomes (outcomes for clients)**

- clients accessing benefits/ entitlements
- clients accessing full/ part-time-time work
- clients accessing education/ training
- clients re-housed
- client/ service user evaluation ('do the services that you receive have a positive impact on your Quality of Life')

**Improving mutual understanding and respect**

- events held

- quarterly evaluation/ feedback from clients/ service users attending events ('do you think people from different backgrounds get on well together')
- diversity of client group attending events

#### **Increase participation and engagement**

- attendance at scheduled events/ forums
- number of new clients reached (where this is a stipulated output or condition of funding)

4.1.14 In addition the working group has also highlighted the opportunity for the council and particularly those working on the development of CES 2016-2020 to utilise the group as an engagement tool and how the group can have a collective 'watching brief' across shared characteristics to highlight any pitfalls.

4.1.15 Additionally the group is providing an effective communication tool across the Equalities brief ensuring that services are effectively coordinated (e.g. work on hate crime), as well as creating an effective signposting 'database' via the VAL website.

4.1.16 VAL will co-ordinate the production of an action plan with the working group that will establish specific areas for priority action. This will form the basis of the Voluntary and Community Sector's contribution to the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (and the development of the next CES 2016-2020), and the implementation of a structure for co-ordinated activity. This will be focussed on ensuring that the sector is knowledgeable and appropriately trained to have a positive impact on equitable representation, equality of access and advocacy/ influence on behalf of marginalised and disadvantaged groups. The work will also connect key VCS organisations with the Stronger Communities Partnership Board (co-chaired by VAL's Director and the Cabinet Member for the Third Sector), with scrutiny of this work being undertaken by Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee.

4.1.17 VAL will produce an annual equalities report, highlighting the issues, successes and on-going priorities which will be submitted to the Stronger Communities Partnership Board for discussion, comment and direction.

## **4.2 *EqualiTeam Lewisham***

4.2.1 In June 2015 the EqualiTeam Lewisham (ETL) Board employed an interim Project Manager to facilitate the movement of the organisation out of the St Laurence Centre and into a temporary hot-desking arrangement at the Moonshot Centre, until new premises are identified.

4.2.2 Since the move they have been working with the ETL Board to put the necessary steps in place to enable ETL to become sustainable. This ongoing work has included;

- Producing a draft Business Plan 2015-18
- Developing a Business Development Strategy
- Developing a Communications Strategy
- Establishing a service infrastructure
- Re-engaging with Lewisham (Council, Partners and Residents)

- 4.2.3 In addition to this the Chair has been working with existing board members to ascertain as to whether they have the correct skills, attributes and commitment to help take the organisation forward. The result has been the start of a board recruitment process to identify prospective board members with the requisite characteristics.
- 4.2.4 In August ETL recruited a Business Development Manager for 6 months to lead on the development of the Business strategies.
- 4.2.5 Within the draft Business Plan, ETL's vision is to *'Enable social cohesion, fairness and equality with a particular focus on the African and Caribbean community. Working in partnership with different groups and organisations to achieve harmony, equality of opportunity and fair access to services for all'*
- 4.2.6 The draft plan goes on to cover 5 key strategic aims for the organisation;
1. To foster good relationships between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not, to promote harmony
  2. To have a strategic and collective lobbying role on behalf of the African and Caribbean communities in Lewisham
  3. To provide information, guidance and support to ETLs community and stakeholders
  4. To promote equality and challenge discrimination
  5. To develop and maintain a robust infrastructure and a sustainable organisation.
- 4.2.7 ETL is taking on the co-ordination of Black History Month from the Library Service and is currently undergoing the process of planning events and activities. This piece of work is being tied in with the wider 'Lewisham at 50' campaign, which again will provide positive exposure to ETL, but may also help bring in a wider variety of historical stories and media.
- 4.2.8 In addition, as mentioned above, ETL are included within the Equalities Working Group that is being coordinated through Voluntary Action Lewisham.
- 4.2.9 Officers continue to work with ETL around their business planning to help move the organisation towards a relevant and stable footing.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 EqualiTeam Lewisham are funding their current work using an underspend of £180,000 from their previous Main Grant, and are working with the council to identify an acceptable use for these funds.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **7. Crime & disorder implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. Some of the recommended main grant organisations deliver services and projects which help to reduce the fear of crime and indeed feed into the CES objectives above.

## **8. Equalities implications**

8.1 The Equalities implications are set out in the body of the report.

## **9. Environmental implications**

9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

If you have any queries relating to this report, please contact James Lee, Head of Culture and Community Development on 020 8314 6548.

## **Background Documents**

Additional documents for reference, from Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) report 13 May 2015.

**Appendix 1** – List of recommended allocations for main grant funding

**Appendix 2** – Appeals outcomes