

MAYOR AND CABINET		
Report Title	Response to the comments of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on the Main Grants Programme 2017-19	
Key Decision	No	Item No.
Ward	All	
Contributors	Executive Director for Community Services	
Class	Part 1	Date: 8 February, 2017

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the response to the comments and views arising from the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee discussions held on the Council's Main Grants Programme at its meeting on the 28 November 2016.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Mayor:

- 2.1 Approves the responses from the Executive Director for Community Services to the comments from the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee.
- 2.2 Agrees that this report should be forwarded to the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 28 November 2016, the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee considered an officers report on the Main Grants Programme 2017-19. Following the Select Committee a referral was made to the Mayor and Cabinet on 7 December 2016. The Committee resolved to advise Mayor and Cabinet of the following:

3.2 Referral 1

- 3.2.1 That the Council should prioritise support for refugees and migrants and consideration of this should be part of the process for allocating funds from the Main Grants Programme.

3.3 Response

- 3.3.1 The allocations for Main Grants Programme was agreed by Mayor and Cabinet Contracts on 13 May 2015. As part of this process support for vulnerable groups and equalities work was prioritised. This led to the allocation of significant funds to equalities organisations including Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network.
- 3.3.2 Due to the overall financial position of the Council Mayor and Cabinet agreed to reduce the funding to the grants programme by £1m from 1 April 2017.

- 3.3.3 As such the Council was required to develop an approach to delivering the saving in the Main Grants budget and an open consultation was undertaken for 6 weeks between 19 May 2016 to 30 June 2016 to inform this work.
- 3.3.4 Organisations were asked to respond to the consultation via the council's online Consultation Portal, via post or via email.
- 3.3.5 A consultation meeting was held on 8 June 2016 to provide further information, answer questions and encourage networking and collaborative thinking between organisations. Feedback from the event has not been used as part of the consultation as organisations have been asked to complete the formal consultation to ensure accuracy of responses. The event was attended by 60 individuals (a mix of senior officers and trustees) from 43 organisations.
- 3.3.6 36 responses were received via the online consultation portal, and 4 written responses in the form of letters.
- 3.3.7 There was general consensus among funded organisations on the process to be used to achieve identified savings targets. The process was formally agreed by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) in July 2016 and was followed robustly in order to arrive at recommendations for all groups. The four key stages, as understood by all participating organisations and in order of precedence, were:
1. Remove funding from under-performing groups/those performing least well
 2. Negotiate reductions and seek alternative funding streams
 3. Work with groups to consider mergers or asset sharing
 4. Pro rata reductions across all groups
- 3.3.8 This approach rejected the prioritisation of specific organisations at the expense of others and agreed that all who were judged to be performing well would receive a pro-rata cut. As such the prioritisation of support for refugees and migrants (or any other specific group) over others has previously been rejected as a basis for the allocation of Main Grant funding.
- 3.3.9 Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network are one of the groups assessed as performing well and have received a pro-rata reduction in their grant. This means that their relative allocation as part of the Main grants programme has increased as several groups were de-funded in recognition of a number of factors.
- 3.3.10 Overall, the Council continues to work to support refugee and migrant communities in a range of ways and has recently engaged with the Home Office to secure funding for the resettlement of Syrian families to Lewisham.

3.4 Referral 2

- 3.4.1 That the importance of early monitoring of organisations receiving funding should be noted so as to ensure effective management and delivery by organisations.

3.5 Response

- 3.5.1 Officers recognise the importance of early monitoring and are currently agreeing output and outcomes with all funded groups for 2017 – 2019 to ensure a common understanding of the grant requirements and expectations from 1 April 2017.

3.6 Referral 3

- 3.6.1 Proposals for the development of a new infrastructure offer, as outlined in the report to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on 28 November, should return to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee for further scrutiny once they have been worked up.
- 3.7 Response
- 3.7.1 Officers welcome the opportunity for further scrutiny of the ongoing development of the new infrastructure offer, and wider support to the sector. Officers will work with the chair of the committee to ensure that this is brought to the committee at the appropriate time.
- 4. Financial Implications**
- 4.1 Any financial implications in respect of the above will be part of the existing budget resourcing.
- 5. Legal Implications**
- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.
- 6. Crime and Disorder Implications**
- 6.1 There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.
- 7. Equalities Implications**
- 7.1 There are no adverse equalities implications associated with this report.
- 8. Environmental Implications**
- 8.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

Background papers

Report of comments of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on the Main Grants Programme 2017-19

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s46647/03MandCResponseMainGrantsProgrammeSSCSC281116.pdf>

Report to the Mayor and Cabinet Committee on the approach to Main Grants Programme savings

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s44598/Main%20Grants%20Programme%202017-18.pdf>

For further information on this report please contact James Lee, Head of Cultural and Community Development on 020 8314 6548.