

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee			
Report Title	Main Grants Programme 2017-18 update		
Key Decision	Yes	Item No.	
Ward	All		
Contributors	Executive Director for Community Services		
Class	Part 1	Date:	12 July 2017

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is provide an update on the Main Grants programme in relation to the current activity, the delivery of the agreed £1,000,000 budget saving and progress with a number of on-going workstreams.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee is recommended to:

note and comment on the Main Grants programme delivery in 2017/18, notably the various reviews underway.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020, 'Shaping our Future', sets out the borough's ambitions to encourage development, enable citizens to live healthy lives and to empower Lewisham's communities to prosper. It has six strategic priorities, including a commitment to creating a borough that is "Empowered and Responsible: where people are actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities".
- 3.2 The empowered and responsible strand of the strategy highlights the importance of the community and voluntary sector in all areas of public life. It recognises that the sector plays a significant part in Lewisham's ongoing success.
- 3.3 This is reflected in Lewisham's corporate priorities: "Community leadership and empowerment: developing opportunities for the active participation and engagement of people in the life of the community".
- 3.4 Lewisham has a strong history of working with the voluntary and community sector and empowering residents and communities. Lewisham is fortunate to have a strong and thriving sector which ranges from very small organisations with no paid staff through to local branches of national charities. The sector includes charities, not for profit companies limited by guarantee, faith organisations, civic amenity societies as well as social enterprises. There are estimated to be around 800 community and voluntary sector organisations in the borough.

- 3.5 What all these organisations have in common is their ability to bring significant additional value to the work that they do through voluntary support and raising funds from sources not available to other sectors such as charitable trusts. In addition they often provide services that the Council cannot easily provide; create links between communities and people; and give people a voice.
- 3.6 As well as being directly involved in delivering services to citizens in the borough, third sector organisations also provide the essential infrastructure to allow the sector as a whole to develop and support individual citizens to be able to play an active role within their local communities.
- 3.7 Lewisham was the first London Borough to develop a compact with the third sector in 2001. The compact seeks to support a positive relationship between the sector and key statutory partners. It includes expectations around the management of grant aid as well as broader partnership working principles. The compact was further developed in 2010 with the addition of guidelines for commissioning with the third sector in recognition of the important contribution that the third sector should play in identifying needs as well as potentially delivering service solutions.
- 3.8 Although the third sector's role within the commissioning of local public services continues to grow the council recognises that there continues to be a need for grant aid investment for the following reasons:
- a recognition of the importance of maintaining an independent sector that can act as a critical friend to challenge public sector policy and delivery.
 - a recognition of the key role that the sector plays in building civic participation, providing a voice for seldom heard residents and providing community intelligence.
 - a recognition of the great diversity of the sector and the need to engage with small and emerging groups as well as large established organisations.
 - a recognition of the sector's potential to take risks and innovate which does not always sit easily within commissioning frameworks.
 - a recognition that third sector organisations have been key delivery partners for a wide range of targeted short term initiatives. Grant aid provides a level of security for organisations ensuring that there is a strong sector ready to work in partnership with us.

4. Main Grants background

- 4.1 The current main grants programme was agreed by Mayor and Cabinet Contracts on 13 May 2015. Funding was provided over four themes:
- strong and cohesive communities
 - communities that care
 - access to advice services
 - widening access to arts and sports
- 4.2 In addition to the themes outlined above there is a commitment to fund:
- Organisations that are committed to working with each other and us to ensure the best possible outcomes for Lewisham's residents with our shared resources.
 - Active partners who are as passionate about Lewisham as we are and have the drive and capacity to make a difference to people's lives.

- Organisations that understand the level and profile of local need and have the ability to transform the way they work to meet that need.
- Organisations with a track record of adding value to council funding through attracting resources both financial and volunteer time.
- Organisations that share values with the council as well as commitment to the London Living Wage, equalities and environmental sustainability.

4.3 Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) agreed funding to 60 organisations on 17 February 2016. Funding was awarded for 2 years and 9 months, from July 2015 to March 2018.

5. Savings requirement and implementation

5.1 Due to the overall financial position of the Council, Mayor and Cabinet agreed to reduce funding to the grants programme by £1m from 1 April 2017. This equated to around 25% of the overall main grants budget.

5.2 In July 2016 the Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) agreed that a full re-letting of the current programme was not appropriate and that officers should seek to realise the saving from the existing funding allocations through the following activity in order of precedence:

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

5.3 In recognition of the fact that groups with funding agreements for three years faced reductions during that period it was agreed that the revised settlement would be extended for a further year through to 31 March 2019.

5.4 Formal meetings were held with all funded groups to formulate potential savings options. A recommendation report for each group set out performance and a proposed level of funding.

5.5 The vast majority of funded groups were meeting their agreed outputs and outcomes well with some groups significantly overachieving against targets. Some groups had strong mitigating factors which were taken into account. For all of these groups a pro-rata cut of 15.3% was recommended. However there were a small number of groups whose underperformance was not considered to be sufficiently mitigated and officers recommended a full or partial (greater than 15.3%) defunding. These were Grove Park Community Group, Irie!, Volunteer Centre Lewisham, Mencap, Lee Green Lives, Saxon Crown, and Eco Communities.

5.6 Funding to the London Amateur Boxing Alliance (ABA) was removed due the organisation having broken away from the recognised National Governing Body for boxing. £15,000 was ring fenced for boxing in 2017/18, and on 19 April 2017 Mayor & Cabinet (Contracts) agreed that this funding go to London Sport, working with London Boxing.

5.7 In undertaking extensive analysis of performance two specific pieces of work were agreed as follows:

- a review of grants awarded to organisations that provide similar activities around youth theatre and performing arts, including Lewisham Youth Theatre, Trinity Laban and Greenwich and Lewisham Young Person's Theatre (see section 10 for progress against this review)
 - a root and branch review of the grant making process to inform the process for any future allocation rounds.
- 5.8 Officers secured £250,000 from the Better Care Fund (BCF) to support the work of the Community Connections Consortium for the remainder of the programme. This funding means that the Main Grant to Community Connections was reduced to £86,000 while protecting the overall investment at the current level of £336,000 per annum.
- 5.9 There was also a reduction of £31,086 in the level of contribution to the London Borough Grants Scheme from 2017.
- 5.10 Discussions took place around a new infrastructure offer to the voluntary and community sector in the borough. These were in part due to the recommended defunding of the Volunteer Centre Lewisham but also in response to a wider set of circumstances including the removal of infrastructure funding through the London Councils grants programme, the production of 'The Way Ahead' report by London Funders and the investigation into the needs of the sector by Lewisham's Safer, Stronger Communities Select Committee. £210,000 was ringfenced for the development of the new offer (representing a 25% reduction on the current funding to VAL and VCL). Detail on progress on this can be found in section 9 below.
- 5.11 A full list of agreed allocations for 2017/18 and 2018/19 can be found at appendix 1.

6. Rent Grants

- 6.1 During 2015 the Council developed and consulted on a voluntary sector accommodation plan which was agreed by Mayor and Cabinet in July 2015 and November 2015. Part of this plan was to regularise the support offered to voluntary organisations in council owned buildings, and to ensure a transparent and fair approach across the board.
- 6.2 Historically the council has provided rent grants to some organisations to cover the cost of rent charged by the council. The rent grants are not linked to specific outcomes. Four organisations who previously received rent grants are as follows:
- Ackroyd Community Association
 - Lewisham Young Women's Resource Centre (LYWRC)
 - The Midi Music Company
 - Downham Community Association (Wesley Halls)
- 6.3 It was proposed, and agreed by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 7 December 2016, that since this work is coming to a conclusion, that rent grants cease from 1 April 2017 in order to regularise the support given to organisations in council buildings.
- 6.4 As Ackroyd, Midi Music and Wesley Halls are designated as core or specialist provision within the plan their tenancies changed to peppercorn from 1 April 2017. LYWRP are now fully liable for their rent from 1 April 2017. As such, the council no longer issues any rent grants.

7. 2017/18 delivery

- 7.1 Between January and March 2017 officers negotiated and agreed revised outcomes and outputs for every funded organisation, taking into account their funding allocation. In many cases organisations were able to protect front line delivery and / or reduce services by less than the proportion of their funding cut. In addition officers took the opportunity to strengthen outcomes and outputs for some organisations where previously they had been ambiguous or weak.
- 7.2 One full quarter of 2017/18 delivery has been completed (April – June 2017) and officers will be closely monitoring performance on return of quarterly reports by the end of July.
- 7.3 All funded organisations are required to complete an annual monitoring exercise through Rocket Science which is a self-analysis of themes such as finance, governance, leadership etc. This is due by end of July 2017.

8. Advice review

- 8.1 Main Grants provision for advice organisations represents a significant proportion of the total Main Grants budget, with over 30% of the budget being dedicated to supporting seven advice organisations and the coordinating group being Advice Lewisham. The level of grants reflects the challenge which the organisations face in responding to residents' demand for welfare benefits and other advice.
- 8.2 The organisations funded under Main Grants represent a range of general advice organisations as well as specialist organisations addressing disability, immigration issues and residents requiring language support. They are:
- 170 Community Project
 - Age UK
 - Citizens' Advice Lewisham (CAB) including Advice Lewisham, which coordinates the advice service across the borough
 - Evelyn 190 Centre
 - Lewisham Disability Coalition
 - Lewisham Multi-Lingual Advice Service
 - Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
- 8.3 Following the review of Main Grants in 2015, a review of the way that grant funded advice services operate within the borough was launched. The focus of the review was on ensuring that residents throughout the borough with defined needs are able to access appropriate advice provision regardless of their place of residence or prior knowledge of existing services. After extensive discussion with existing advice services, the review led to recommendations for a number of changes in the way in which the service operates. This included:
- better coordination of all providers' activities
 - improving access to services by residents
 - ensuring that there is a collaborative, coordinated, efficient and effective service delivered to Lewisham residents
 - providing a seamless journey for clients accessing services
 - providing an effective phone advice, triage and appointment booking service

- ensuring residents are able to access services through a channel that is most appropriate and convenient for them – this may be face to face, via e-mail, self-help guides, telephone advice or other appropriate methods
- supporting the management of demand for advice through the borough
- ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable clients are recognised and met by advice provision
- ensuring that the model is based on evidence of need and available resources

8.4 A project board to implement these changes was convened. It consists of Lewisham officers and representative advice service providers. A timescale for implementation was agreed, with the key dates being the launch of a common telephone service based at the Leemore Centre from February 2017. The service is managed by Citizens Advice Lewisham with other agencies providing staff to respond to callers on a rota basis. It is anticipated that a significant number of callers to the Advice Line will have their issues resolved by the end of their telephone call. However, if they present a complex case, a face to face appointment is booked for them with an appropriately skilled advice agency within the network. February also saw the launch of an advice hub at the Leemore Centre, managed by Citizens Advice Lewisham.

8.5 The outputs for the new service include targets for the number of enquiries dealt with, the number of appointments organised, the speed with which calls are answered and service user satisfaction rates. In future, the number of residents accessing the service through the website, as well as the number of enquiries responded to by e-mails, will form additional service measures.

8.6 The effectiveness of the Advice Line continues to be reviewed by the advice project board and by council officers. Initial feedback from the first five months of operation suggests that users of the service welcome the increased speed that their enquiries are dealt with. In many cases, this is achieved directly on the telephone rather than waiting several weeks for an appointment.

9. New infrastructure offer

9.1 Officers have worked closely with the trustees of Voluntary Action Lewisham to develop a new infrastructure support offer that can respond to the current and emerging needs of the Lewisham's voluntary sector. This new service was launched on 5 July 2017 with a vision to "Support a thriving civil society in Lewisham that achieves improved outcomes for everyone".

9.2 A new structure has been designed to achieve this vision through nine key work streams which describe how the organisation will work and which have been brought together under three statements of intent as follows:

1. Be the catalyst for positive change for Lewisham's people and communities
 - involve – getting communities involved in co-producing an understanding of need and what must happen to make Lewisham better, stronger and more sustainable
 - introduce – understanding and connecting people, groups and formal organisations – bringing people together to achieve change
 - initiate – identifying needs and encouraging others to act – sparking collaborations and starting discussions to get solutions
2. Enable civil society in Lewisham to realise its ambitions
 - incubate – providing seedbed space (physical and intellectual) for emerging groups to tackle new and changing needs;

- inspire – showcasing excellence, developing new ideas, sharing learning from within and outside Lewisham
 - invest – equipping civil society with the skills, knowledge and resources to make a difference
3. Equip civil society with the insight and ideas to achieve impact
- inform – sharing data on needs and policy developments with Lewisham groups, and out to local decision makers and the London Hub
 - influence – championing the role of the sector, the needs and strengths of local communities, and helping strategic people make better decisions
 - innovate – be a centre of excellence for civil society support, piloting new ways of working to achieve positive change

9.3 Officers will continue to work closely with the organisation and will monitor against the following agreed full year targets:

- 1,200 people signposted to volunteering
- 1,000 people using new website and digital tools
- 300 organisations connected to support
- 100 organisations provided with tailored support
- 50 community consultations/events engaged with
- 50 people with supported needs enabled to volunteer
- 24 specialist workshops reaching 200 people
- 20 people recruited and trained to represent the sector
- 16 forums and networks facilitated
- 12 in-depth policy briefings produced
- 5 snapshot surveys to capture data and intelligence
- 4 new private sector organisations engaged with the sector

10. Youth theatre and performing arts review

10.1 As part of the process that led to the decision to reduce Main Grant funding in 2017/18, an extensive review of the outcomes and outputs for all organisations was undertaken. This specifically highlighted the need for greater consistency in the way that monitoring information is provided by youth arts organisations and potential inequity in levels of funding between organisations providing similar services.

10.2 A review of these services has been initiated with a focus on gaining greater clarity on the:

- Nature of services provided
- Number of service beneficiaries
- Role of core funding
- Way that Main Grant funding is used to bring in other resources

10.3 The timetable for the review is as follows:

April – May 2017

Information to be gathered from organisations included in the review. Organisations to assist in giving information to Council officers. Organisations to assist in allowing access to systems to evidence information collected.

July 2017

Findings of the review to be collated and initial recommendations to be agreed

August – September 2017

Recommendations to be shared with organisations included in the review. Feedback period, including meetings and conversations between officers and organisations.

October 2017

Review and recommendation report to be taken to Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts).

11. Neighbourhood Community Development Partnerships (NCDPs)

- 11.1 It is important that the Main Grants programme does not operate in isolation and the activity is complementary to a range of other activity designed to increase the wellbeing of Lewisham residents. One of these initiatives is the transformation of Community Based Care (CBC) which is a critical part of Lewisham's overall vision to achieve a sustainable health and care system: one which better supports people to maintain and improve their physical and mental wellbeing, live independently and access high quality care when needed.
- 11.2 Community based care is the advice, support and care which is provided outside a traditional hospital setting. In Lewisham this includes services provided by GPs, social workers, pharmacists, other NHS and local authority services, as well as that provided by the voluntary and community sector and those provided by private organisations such as care homes.
- 11.3 In Lewisham, health and care partners plan to transform the way in which community based care is delivered so that people can access proactive and co-ordinated advice, support and care which is:
- Accessible to all – so that adults have improved access to local health and care services through for example neighbourhood care hubs, and so that children have increased access to community health services and early intervention support through for example children's centres and health visiting. And for everyone to have clear access to enhanced and urgent care when needed.
 - Proactive and Preventative – so that people can easily find the information and advice, and local activities and opportunities, they need to improve their health and wellbeing and manage their own health and care more effectively. And for them to be part of resilient communities, working with and alongside voluntary and community organisations.
 - Coordinated – so that people receive personalised care and support, closer to home, which integrates physical and mental health and care services, to help them to live independently for as long as possible.
- 11.4 To date a number of steps have been taken to improve the delivery and integration of existing community based services, raising quality and improving effectiveness through multidisciplinary working across services by establishing integrated teams (such as the Neighbourhood Community Teams and the Enablement Teams) and improving connections between services and within communities through neighbourhood care networks.

- 11.5 A key element of this work is to look at how statutory health and care partners can work even more closely together in the delivery of CBC and achieve the transformation required.
- 11.6 However, all health and social care partners recognise that they cannot deliver the positive outcomes they seek in isolation. It is one of the roles of the Main Grant funded organisations to effectively promote health and wellbeing across the borough and reduce the need for formal health and social care provision. This activity has been supported by the activity of Community Connections (Main grant funded) for several years and alongside this LB Lewisham has developed a Community Development Charter (available on request). The Charter outlines a partnership approach to community development and builds on current neighbourhood and borough-wide assets and networks.
- 11.7 As part of the process to re-let the Main Grants programme these approaches have been brought together under a Community Development steering group which oversees the work of NCDPs which have been created by Community Connections as the main delivery vehicle for community development across the borough. NCDPs will bring together all the relevant partners in each Neighbourhood to identify resources within communities to maximise their potential while also highlighting gaps in service provision and working with local voluntary sector to develop services to meet these needs.
- 11.8 The development of NCDPs will build on existing assets and will take different forms in each of the areas based on the history and infrastructure of the local area e.g. North Lewisham Health Improvement Partnership, Well Bellingham Programme. It will be a key task of the partnerships to identify gaps in specific areas and put forward solutions to meet local needs.
- 11.9 These partnerships will deliver benefits to local communities over and above those directly related to health and social care as they will provide vehicles for local people and organisations to take control of their areas and circumstances.
- 11.10 The NCDPs will develop a formalised partnership between community development workers, organisations and other key stakeholders across Lewisham at a localised (neighbourhood) level in order to facilitate a joined up approach toward the development of community resources.
- 11.11 A meeting schedule across the year will be agreed at each partnership and these meetings will:
- Inform neighbourhood development plans (compiled by Community Connections Community Development Workers) to promote health and wellbeing and to reduce social isolation
 - Provide an opportunity for shared learning and networking
 - Promote the voice of the community and community organisations within the integration of Lewisham's health and social care
 - Provide measurable outcomes from NCDPs to the Lewisham Community Development Steering Group using: meeting schedule; partnership participation; and neighbourhood level health and wellbeing gaps, priorities and resources.
 - Provide a platform for public health fund allocation through a participating budgeting model - £25,000 per annum will be available to each NCDP
- 11.12 The key personnel in delivering the NCDPs will be:

- Community Connections Community Development Worker – each neighbourhood partnership also has a designated Community Connections Development worker
- Lead Ward Assembly Officer – for each neighbourhood the ward assemblies will be represented by a lead ward assembly officer (this does not preclude other officers attending as relevant)
- Neighbourhood Development Workers – in each neighbourhood partnership there will be at least one neighbourhood development worker (there are 6 projects across the borough)

11.13 Overall the development of the NCDPs is progressing well with each having met once but they remain in their infancy. The borough-wide Community Development Steering Group will take active oversight of these partnerships and provide regular updates to the Stronger Communities Partnership Board and the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee as required.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The Main Grants programme continues to deliver considerable outputs and outcomes across a huge range of activity despite a reduction in funding of around 25% in April 2017.

12.2 A funding reduction of this magnitude has caused significant upheaval in the sector but, in general, it was approached in an extremely professional and collegiate manner with council officers and VCS organisations working closely together to mitigate the impact of the reductions on service users.

12.3 The council and the sector continue to work together in partnership across a number of sub-sector reviews as set out in this paper as well as day to day monitoring and service improvement activity. This work will continue for the life of the programme and seek to inform the approach to any future funding rounds.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Funding Allocations

