



Mayor and Cabinet

Main Grants Programme 2022-25

Date: 14th September 2021

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1

Purpose of the report and summary of recommendations

This report makes recommendations for the priorities and processes for the Main Grants Programme due to operate from April 2022-March 2025, following community consultation.

It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet agree:

1. That the overarching priorities for the programme are:
 - a. An economically sound future, specifically:
 - i. Advice Services and
 - ii. Enabling Digital Access for All
 - b. A healthy and well future
 - c. A future we all have a part in
2. That four community fundraiser posts are funded, to be hosted by the VCS, with the following areas of focus:
 - 1x FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on equality and equity including ethnicity and disabilities as protected characteristics specifically impacted by Covid, but with an expectation that the hosting organisation should also look at addressing other protected characteristics as part of the brief, along with intersectionality.
 - 1x FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on geographical cold spots in the borough/areas of high deprivation that do not have other sources of income such as NCIL
 - .5 FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on the arts
 - .5 FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on sports
3. That the Community Fundraiser funding is let earlier, through an Expression of Interest/Interview process, and awards granted by late November 2021
4. That significant partnership grants for advice and social prescribing are retained, but with a more rigorous outcomes-based approach
5. That partnership grants of £10,000 are established with clear, measurable and proportionate partnership outcomes

6. That the approach to achieving equity in the Main Grants programme will be to focus grants on projects which benefit:
 - communities most impacted by Covid
 - people with protected characteristics – specifically age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, and
 - seldom heard voices
7. Funding Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic infrastructure support that is tied to and works alongside the Community Fundraiser. The focus of the support will be capacity building to enable collaboration, enabling organisations to identify need, generate ideas for funding, and support to become sustainable.
8. That a separate grant programme for Arts and Culture organisations is run aligned to London Borough of Culture with the following strategic themes:
 - A healthy and well future
 - A greener future
 - A future we all have a part in
9. That the art and culture funding programme funds the following activities:
Funding a cultural anchor organisation to:
 - Provide sector leadership
 - Co-ordinate consortium funding bids
 - Support emerging artists
 - Nurture partnerships

Funding for organisations to address barriers to cultural participation focusing on:

- Ethnic diversity
- Disability
- Economic disadvantage
- Age (young people and older people)

One off funding to deliver projects around key themes:

- Increasing participation
- Addressing the climate emergency
- Celebrating diversity
- Promoting equality and fairness of opportunity

Address inequalities in the cultural workforce through

- Bursary funding for emerging artists
- Broadway Theatre associate artists
- Employment and training programmes
- Support for cultural and creative enterprise growth

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Timeline of engagement and decision-making

27th May 2021: Launch of consultation via online survey and two engagement events with the voluntary and community sector (VCS)

22nd July 2021: Close of consultation (8 weeks)

14th September 2021: Revised proposals post-consultation to Mayor and Cabinet

23rd September – 18th November 2021: Programme open for applications (8 weeks)

December 2021: Provisional allocation letters sent – notice of change in funding to existing groups

13th Jan 2022: Safer, Stronger, Select Committee - Main grants pre-decision – recommendations for funding

17th Jan 2022 – Main Grants Appeals

2nd Feb 2022: Mayor and Cabinet – recommended allocations for agreement

January 2022: Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel – potential call in

April 2022: New grants begin

1. Summary

1.1 Lewisham Council's most recent Main Grants programme was let in 2019, with agreements due to end at the end of March 2022. In May 2021, a full consultation with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) was launched, with the purpose of identifying local views on priorities for the new programme which is due to start in April 2022, taking into account learning as Lewisham enters the post pandemic period. The consultation sought views on the following three revised priorities:

- An economically sound future (specifically Advice Services and Enabling Digital Access for All)
- A healthy and well future
- A future we all have a part in

1.2 The consultation also incorporated a suggestion that organisations should be able to bid for funds to employ community fundraisers to raise funds for initiatives with a designated focus, including:

- Equality
- Sports, arts and culture
- Geographical “cold spots” in the borough

1.3 The consultation also sought feedback on:

- Funding of significant partners
- Partnership grants
- A specific arts grant programme aligned to London Borough of Culture

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- Equalities and equity
- 1.4 The consultation concluded on 22nd July and having reviewed responses to the online survey, meetings with service users and discussions with the VCS, we are recommending the criteria and process by which the 2022-25 main grants programme will be let.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet agree the following priorities and processes for the main grants programme 2022-2025:
- 2.2 That the overarching priorities for the programme are:
- a. An economically sound future, specifically:
 - iii. Advice Services and
 - iv. Enabling Digital Access for All
 - b. A healthy and well future
 - c. A future we all have a part in
- 2.3 That 4 Community Fundraiser posts are funded, to be hosted by the VCS, with the following areas of focus:
- 1x FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on equality and equity including ethnicity and disabilities as protected characteristics specifically impacted by Covid, but with an expectation that the hosting organisation should also look at addressing other protected characteristics as part of the brief, along with intersectionality
 - 1x FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on geographical cold spots in the borough/areas of high deprivation that do not have other sources of income such as NCIL
 - .5 FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on the arts
 - .5 FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on sports
- 2.4 That the Community Fundraiser funding is let earlier, through an Expression of Interest/Interview process, and awards granted by late November 2021
- 2.5 That significant partnership grants for advice and social prescribing are retained, but with a more rigorous outcomes-based approach
- 2.6 That partnership grants of £10,000 are established with clear, measurable and proportionate partnership outcomes
- 2.7 That the approach to achieving equity in the Main Grants programme will be to focus grants on projects which benefit:
- communities most impacted by Covid
 - people with protected characteristics – specifically age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, and
 - seldom heard voices
- 2.8 Funding Black Asian and Minority Ethnic infrastructure support that is tied to and works alongside the Community Fundraiser. The focus of the support will be capacity building focused on collaboration, enabling organisations to identify need, generate ideas for funding, and support to become sustainable.

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- 2.9 That a separate grant programme for Arts and Culture organisations is run aligned to London Borough of Culture with the following strategic themes:
- A healthy and well future
 - A greener future
 - A future we all have a part in
- 2.11 Additionally that the art and culture funding programme funds the following activities:
1. Funding a cultural anchor organisation to:
 - Provide sector leadership
 - Co-ordinate consortium funding bids
 - Support emerging artists
 - Nurture partnerships
 2. Funding for organisations to address barriers to cultural participation focusing on:
 - Ethnic diversity
 - Disability
 - Economic disadvantage
 - Age (young people and older people)
 3. One off funding to deliver projects around key themes:
 - Increasing participation
 - Addressing the climate emergency
 - Celebrating diversity
 - Promoting equality and fairness of opportunity
 4. Address inequalities in the cultural workforce through
 - Bursary funding for emerging artists
 - Broadway Theatre associate artists
 - Employment and training programmes
 - Support for cultural and creative enterprise growth

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 As noted in the 2020/21 budget, the Council's strong and resilient framework for prioritising action has served the organisation well in the face of austerity and on-going cuts to local government spending. This continues to mean, that even in the face of the most daunting financial challenges facing the Council and its partners, we continue to work alongside our communities to achieve more than we could by simply working alone.
- 3.2 It remains clear that the Council cannot do all that it once did, nor meet all those expectations that might once have been met, for we are in a very different financial position than just a decade ago. Severe financial constraints have been imposed on Council services with cuts to be made year on year on year, and this on-going pressure is addressed in the 2021/22 budget report to Mayor and Cabinet, incorporating further budget cuts for 2021/22 and noting the continued outlook for austerity to at least 2023/24. This is pending the Fair Funding Review (FFR) and Business Rates Retention (BRR) consultations now due to conclude for 2022/23 at the earliest.
- 3.3 In addition to the ongoing pressures faced by the Council, over the past year, the Council's business, and the day to day lives of Lewisham's residents, has been turned on its head. In March 2020, Council activity simultaneously ground to a halt and

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ramped up in equal measure. With many traditional services wound down almost overnight and a new, urgent focus on critical COVID response services the Council's staff, Councillors and partners faced new demands, challenges, pressures and opportunities

- 3.4 The Council's finances have been severely affected by the ongoing pandemic. The cost of coronavirus for Lewisham is estimated to be over £60m this year and, with the risk of a return of high levels of infections and further restrictions imposed, the impacts will continue into 2021/22. How these costs will be funded in this financial year (2021/22) and the budget pressures for future years will be met is not clear.
- 3.5 As such, in the midst of the COVID response we have had to begin the long, difficult process of identifying cuts of at least £40m for the next three years (to April 2024) with up to £24m to be cut in 2021/22 alone. In this context it has been agreed by Mayor and Cabinet that the budget for the main grants (excluding contribution from the Better Care Fund) will be cut by £800,000 (approximately one third) from 1 April 2022.
- 3.6 Lewisham's recovery from coronavirus will be underpinned by the following anchoring principles which will be at the heart of all decision-making, planning and action over the coming months:
- Tackling widening social, economic and health inequalities;
 - Protecting and empowering our most vulnerable residents;
 - Ensuring the Council's continued resilience, stability and sustainability;
 - Enabling residents to make the most of Lewisham the place; and
 - Collaborating and working together with our communities and partnership across the borough.
- 3.7 Lewisham Council's Corporate Strategy, developed in 2018, agreed the following priorities for supporting our residents:
- Open Lewisham
 - Tackling the housing crisis
 - Giving children and young people the best start in life
 - Building an inclusive local economy
 - Delivering and defending: health, social care and support
 - Making Lewisham greener
 - Building safer communities
- 3.8 The Council has also reflected on what has worked well and what hasn't worked so well over the pandemic, learning from it, nurturing and developing the new relationships and community networks that have built up and recognising things that stand in the way of a future where we can all benefit equally from what Lewisham and London has to offer
- 3.9 This has led to the development of four themes which will focus our efforts on building a future for all residents – we are Lewisham, and this is our future. The themes are based on evidence of what our residents' need – from all the rich data gathered and analysed during the pandemic, and residents' experiences in their own words as part of the Voices of Lewisham project. They are:
- An economically sound future
 - A healthy and well future
 - A greener future
 - A future we all have a part in

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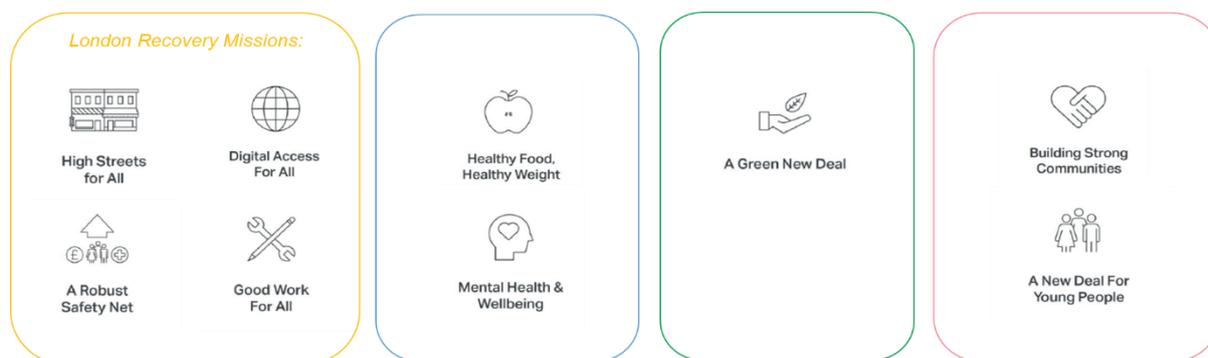
3.10 We are also proud of our place and our role in London and you can see the Mayor of London's nine recovery missions clearly in our four strategic recovery themes:

Lewisham's recovery focus:
An economically sound future

Lewisham's recovery focus:
A healthy and well future

Lewisham's recovery focus:
A green future

Lewisham's recovery focus:
A future we all have a part in



3.11 The delivery of each of these themes will be supported by the activities of our residents through local community action, both formally organised and otherwise.

4. Background to the Main Grants consultation

4.1 Lewisham Council has funded the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) through a Main Grants programme for over 20 years, in 3-year funding cycles. The programme was last fully let in 2019 following a full consultation on priorities. The Main Grants programme retained the 4 themes that had been the basis of the programme in 2015. These are:

- *Strong and Cohesive Communities*
- *Communities that Care*
- *Access to Advice Services*
- *Widening Access to Arts and Sports*

4.2 The 2019-2021 Main Grants programme allocation totals £3,064,308 per year made up of £2,636,308 core Council funding and £428,000 from the Better Care Fund (BCF).

4.3 Due to the impact of COVID and wider financial pressures the Council is having to cut at least £40m from its budget in the next three years (to April 2024) with up to £24m being cut in 2021/22 alone. In this context the budget for the Main Grants will be reduced by £800,000 from 1st April 2022. However, support for voluntary and community sector groups remains a core priority for Lewisham Council and, in partnership with the NHS, we will continue to invest £2,361,308 per annum through the Main Grants programme.

4.4 In order to set the priorities for this spend the Council has undertaken a thorough review of all of the available evidence on the impact of COVID and the needs of the borough during the recovery phase.

4.5 We have consulted on replacing the current Main Grants priorities with new ones in line

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with the Council's overall approach to recovery. The proposed new priorities are:

- **An economically sound future** (specifically Advice Services and Enabling Digital Access for All)
- **A healthy and well future**
- **A future we all have a part in**

4.6 Overall we proposed to focus on supporting the sector as a whole through strong infrastructure, coordination and fundraising services rather than trying to directly fund everything that is needed in the borough. We proposed to provide some level of project funding but that greater relative weight be given to services that strengthen the sector and allow it to benefit from the wider funding landscape across London and locally with funding available for borough wide and ward based Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) in Lewisham in the coming months. As previously we proposed that the vast majority of the funding will be for services for adults.

4.7 Lewisham will be London Borough of Culture in 2022 and we proposed that the best way to protect investment in our cultural services is to align the current level of funding to these organisations (with a proportionate cut) with the Borough of Culture programme rather than retaining it within the Main Grants programme.

4.8 The proposals included:

- Funding under the three broad criteria outlined above
- Significant grants to partners delivering advice and social prescribing services
- Three Community Fundraisers hosted by the VCS, with specific focus areas covering equalities, culture and sports, and 'cold spots' - areas of high need and low services coverage in the borough
- Small partnership grants of £10,000 for organisations willing to work with the Council in the coming years
- A specific funding pot for London Borough of Culture (LBoC), administered through the LBoC Team as part of the wider programme
- An approach to equality and equity that prioritised funding proposals on the basis of those most impacted by Covid, an equalities-focused Community Fundraiser, and a commitment to funding BAME infrastructure support

4.9 Taken together we felt that the above proposals would help ensure that the available funding best meets the needs of our Borough over the coming three years (2022-2025), but we were keen to hear the views of the sector and Lewisham residents.

4.10 This consultation was launched on 27th May and was open for 8 weeks till 22nd July.

5. Consultation methodology

5.1 The consultation was run on the Council's Citizenspace platform and through a number of events with specific groups. A separate consultation on possible approaches to a Borough of Culture led programme ran concurrently and the approach to, and outcome of, that is set out in section 7. Respondents were also offered the option of responding

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via post to Laurence House or to call to request additional support by phone if needed.

- 5.2 Two information sessions were held on:
- Wednesday 9th June 2:00 – 3:30pm
 - Thursday 17th June 6:00 - 7:30pm
- 5.3 The consultation was publicised via the Council and Lewisham Local website, and by email to existing grant funded organisations and the wider VCS.
- 5.4 Council staff also attended service user forums to get the thoughts and views of service users directly where VCS organisations requested this.
- 5.5 Additionally, two meetings were held with specific service user groups (older people and those with learning disabilities) and a roundtable event was convened with key partners in the sector and officers on the funding of BAME infrastructure. The event was held on 28th July and was focused on the needs of BAME led organisations in the borough and the most effective infrastructure support to help grow a thriving and resilient BAME voluntary sector.
- 5.6 The consultation focused on the following key questions from the proposals:
- 5.6.1 To what extent did respondents agree with our proposed priorities, i.e.
- a. An economically sound future
 - b. A healthy and well future
 - c. A future we all have a part in

Respondents who disagreed were asked to comment on why they disagreed

- 5.6.2 To what extent did respondents agree with our proposed activities to fund under these priorities, i.e.
- a. An economically sound future, specifically:
 - i. Advice Services and
 - ii. Enabling Digital Access for All
 - b. A healthy and well future, specifically:
 - iii. Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - c. A future we all have a part in
 - iv. Building strong communities

Respondents who disagreed were asked to comment on why they disagreed

- 5.6.3 To what extent did respondents agree with the areas of focus for the Community Fundraisers, i.e.
- a. Equality and Equity including needs of BAME communities and needs of disabled communities
 - b. Sports, Arts and Culture - activities and organisations that support health and well-being through sports, arts and culture
 - c. Geographical cold spots in the borough/areas of high deprivation that do not have other sources of income such as NCIL

Respondents who disagreed were asked to comment on why they disagreed

- 5.6.4 To what extent did respondents agree or disagree that we should continue to provide larger grants to our significant partners for the provision of Advice

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Services and Social Prescribing.

Respondents who asked to comment on the reasons for their response

- 5.6.5 To what extent did respondents agree or disagree with the proposal for grants of £10,000 to organisations who can demonstrate commitment to working in partnership with the Council over the coming years.

Respondents who were asked to comment on the reasons for their response

- 5.6.6 To what extent did respondents either agree or disagree that providing a new and dedicated funding programme for the Borough of Culture is a good idea

Respondents who were asked to comment on the reasons for their response

- 5.6.7 We indicated that we want to achieve equity by:

- Focussing grants on those most impacted by Covid 19
- Supporting BAME led infrastructure
- Funding a Community Fundraiser targeted on equalities

To what extent did respondents agree or disagree that this is the right approach to achieve equity

Respondents who were asked to comment on the reasons for their response

- 5.6.8 What impact did respondents think our proposed approach could have on these protected characteristics

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Religion/Belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage/civil partnership

- 5.6.9 What impact did respondents think our proposed approach to the Main Grants programme could have on residents

- Refugees & Asylum seekers
- Residents impacted by lack of housing & risk of homelessness
- Residents impacted by loss or lack of employment
- Residents impacted by socio-economic deprivation

- 5.6.10 Respondents who identified positive impacts on specific Protected Characteristics or the additional groups identified above, were asked to describe these

- 5.6.11 Respondents who identified negative impacts on specific Protected Characteristics or the additional groups identified above, were asked to describe these

Respondents were asked to identify ways that we might mitigate the negative impact

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5.6.12 Respondents were asked how useful the Community Fundraisers would be to their organisations, were they to experience a cut to, or loss of their grant

5.6.13 Respondents were asked to identify other types of support that the Council could offer, if we were unable to fund their organisation

5.6.14 Respondents were asked for any additional comments that they wanted to make

6. Consultation Results

6.1 The online consultation was launched on 27th May and was open for 8 weeks till 22nd July.

6.2 43 individuals in total attended the two information sessions held on 9th and 17th June 2021

6.3 There were 58 individual responses to the consultation. 56 respondents completed the consultation online and a further 2 respondents returned responses by e-mail.

6.4 These were made up of:

- 76% (44 respondents) - Professionally, on behalf of a voluntary or community organisation
- 5% (three respondents) - Personally, as an individual employed by a voluntary or community organisation
- 10% (six respondents) - Personally, as an individual using services provided by a voluntary or community organisation
- 9% (five respondents) – identified as other. This included; a volunteer, a trustee, a Councillor, a resident and a sports provider.
- 29 of the responses (50%) were from existing recipients of Main Grants funding. Assuming all those who responded did so professionally, on behalf of their organisation, this would equate to 65% of those who responded professionally on behalf of their organisations.

6.5 Officers also attended two sessions with service users from Ageing Well and Lewisham Speaking Up (LSUP) during the consultation period.

6.6 The session with Ageing Well members, hosted by Diamond Club in partnership with Ageing Well, was held on 29th June 2021 virtually, and was attended by 20 older Lewisham residents.

6.7 The session hosted by LSUP was part of their weekly Tuesday meeting with members; it was also held virtually, on 13th July 2021, and was attended by 28 LSUP members who are people with learning disabilities and autism living in Lewisham.

6.8 In response to the survey, overall there was strong agreement on the priorities, with an average of 92% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed priorities. No respondent disagreed with the priorities. The breakdown of responses against the individual priorities was:

- **An economically sound future** - 91% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this priority
- **A healthy and well future** – 97% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this priority
- **A future we all have a part in** – 87% of respondents either agreed or strongly

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agreed with this priority

- 6.9 There was strong agreement for the kinds of activities we propose to fund within each priority, with an average of 88% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposals:
- **An economically sound future, specifically good quality, independent Information and Advice Services** – 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposed activity. 9% (five) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Comments included the need to address the root causes of poverty and financial hardship; increase opportunities for employment; that advice should be a statutory provision; and that advice services have become over-reliant on statutory funding.
 - **An economically sound future, specifically enabling Digital Access for All** including training on digital skills, – 86% agreed or strongly agreed with this proposed activity – no respondents disagreed with this activity
 - **A healthy and well future** – including volunteering, social prescribing, connecting people to their local community or communities of interest as a means of improving their well-being – 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this activity, none disagreed.
 - **A future we all have a part in** – through investments in infrastructure to enable the VCS to be independent – e.g. Community Fundraisers, volunteer brokerage and community directory – 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this activity, with only one respondent disagreeing with the proposed activities.
- 6.10 There was also a high level of support for the idea of community fundraisers with the majority of respondents saying they would be useful if they were to lose their own funding through the Main Grants programme. In addition there was strong support for the areas of focus for these roles:
- **Equality and Equity** – 81% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this area of focus, 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
 - **Sports, Arts and Culture** – 71% agreed/strongly agreed with this area of focus, while 9% disagreed/strongly disagreed
 - **Areas with low service coverage/lack of access to local funds** – 79% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this area of focus agreed/strongly agreed, 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 6.11 However, it is also important to note that this proposal prompted many comments and questions from respondents. The common themes were:
- The need for capacity building organisations and their ability to fundraise rather than doing it for them
 - The need to ensure sustainability longer-term rather than look to additional funding for Lewisham in the next three years
 - The need for collaboration support to engage organisations and support them to work together
 - The need to engage with external funders as part of the fundraisers role
 - The need to look at broader income generation models and business development than just grant funding
 - The need for the equalities focused post to cover all protected characteristics and also include intersectionality, and socio-economic and health inequalities
 - How the three fundraisers will work together and coordinate their efforts
 - More clarity on the salary and on-costs so that there is parity across the three posts and so that hosting organisations are clear about the budgets and expectations
 - Questions regarding culture and sports being too disparate as areas for one

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fundraiser to cover

- 6.12 Due to the range of issues raised by respondents, we recommend that some amendments are made to the proposal to address the feedback received, including separating the culture and sports brief and enabling the letting of these grants sooner – the recommendations are outlined in more detail in sections 8.6 and 8.7.
- 6.13 The question whether we should continue to provide larger grants to our significant partners for the provision of Advice Services and Social Prescribing prompted a more mixed response with 53% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to this proposal, while 29% neither agreed or disagreed, and 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. While the majority of respondents agreed with the need for both services, there were a range of issues and concerns raised by respondents.
- 6.14 Some of the comments (both from those who disagreed and those who felt unable to agree or disagree) were:
- The need for clearer evidence that the two services – advice and social prescribing - are effective and offer value for money
 - Concerns that larger grants for these services will mean that investment in actual provision, especially for smaller providers who will see an increase in referrals, will lessen
 - That newer providers are given the opportunity to apply, rather than fund existing provision
 - Offering a larger partnership grant to an African and Caribbean led infrastructure organisation for social prescribing to ensure a proportionate offer to Lewisham's communities
 - That the services operate as partnerships, with proportionate funding for partners, rather than being funded as individual organisations
- 6.15 We recommend therefore that while we prioritise advice and social prescribing as significant services, we take a more rigorous approach to funding these services, both in terms of coordination and support of sector activity and responsibility for data and evidence. This is set out in more detail in Section 8.8.
- 6.16 There was support for the proposal to introduce partnership grants of £10,000 to organisations who can demonstrate commitment to working in partnership with the Council over the coming years with 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, 14% neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 6.17 There was also support for the provision of a new and dedicated funding programme for the Borough of Culture with 69% agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, 24% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 6.18 Respondents who disagreed felt that this was not a good use of funds in the context of Covid, that taking out this funding would impact on health and well-being programmes and leave less for the main identified priorities in the grants programme, and that the link between culture and health and well-being has not been sufficiently evidenced for this to be an appropriate priority for the programme.
- 6.19 The LBoC grant programme was subject to a separate consultation, undertaken in this same consultation period. The detail of proposals and results of the consultation are outlined in Section 7.
- 6.20 On the question of whether the proposed approach of achieving equity through focusing grants on those most impacted by Covid 19, supporting BAME led

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infrastructure and funding a Community Fundraiser targeted on equalities was the correct one, there was again positive support with 76% of respondents saying they agreed or strongly agreed with this approach, 19% neither agreed or disagreed, and 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed

- 6.19 There were differences in opinion in the comments, from those who felt that the approach was too targeted to specific communities to achieve equality, and those who felt it was not targeted enough. For example, it was felt by some that BAME communities should be the sole focus, while others felt that prioritising some protected characteristics over others would further result in marginalising communities.
- 6.20 It was suggested that while Covid-related priorities were important, the longer-term inequalities and needs highlighted by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) should not be ignored. Comments also referenced the need to focus on poverty as an overriding issue, the need to build on Lewisham's commitment to being a Borough of Sanctuary, and the fact that core funding for equalities groups would be a better approach to achieving equity than fundraising for projects.
- 6.21 It is likely that prioritising specific protected characteristics will have an impact on those that have not been identified as areas of focus in the grants programme. We therefore recommend that we amend the proposals so that we include protected characteristics and seldom heard voices as a key criteria when prioritising bids, alongside those impacted by Covid. We are also recommending that while we keep the priorities on ethnicity and disability for the equalities focused fundraiser role, we have an expectation that the hosting organisation should also look at addressing other protected characteristics as part of the brief, along with intersectionality
- 6.22 Overall, respondents felt that the proposals would have a positive rather than negative impact across the Protected Characteristics as set out below with the remaining percentage of respondents either stating no impact or don't know:
- **Age:**
41% positive impact
9% negative impact
 - **Disability**
53% positive impact
5% negative impact
 - **Ethnicity**
62% positive impact
2% negative impact
 - **Sex**
24% positive impact
3% negative impact
 - **Gender Reassignment**
19% positive impact
3% negative impact
 - **Pregnancy/maternity**
16% positive impact
2% negative impact
 - **Religion/belief**
26% positive impact
0% negative impact
 - **Sexual orientation**
21% positive impact
3% negative impact

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- **Marriage/civil partnership**
16% positive impact
0% negative impact
- 6.24 The Main Grants programme has historically addressed equalities (as defined by protected characteristics) through funding organisations working with older people, BAME communities, people with disabilities and LGBTQ+ communities.
- 6.25 It is therefore unsurprising that respondents felt most confident about assessing positive or negative impact for these protected characteristics. However, it was noted that within these protected characteristics, the largest percentages of respondents who said they didn't know what the impact would be, were in relation to gender reassignment and sexuality. This may be an indication that awareness of the needs, services and support for these communities is not well understood by the responding organisations. However, overall there is also a large proportion of those who felt unable to make an assessment about protected characteristics not a part of their remit. This may indicate the need for more joined up working between and across equalities groups and a stronger focus on intersectionality.
- 6.26 Intersectionality was a key theme identified through the Democracy Review and work on Seldom Heard Voices led by the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee; the review identified the need for a stronger understanding of the intersectional needs of residents and good practice in how we support individuals in a holistic way.
- 6.27 As such we will ensure that all projects funded with a focus on protected characteristics have a requirement to address intersectionality; both in their approach to service users and in creating effective pathways across and between services to offer the best support to residents. We will also ensure that there is a regular network to support organisations to learn from each other on the needs of diverse communities and develop best practice.
- 6.28 When it came to the wider equalities considerations there was again strong support for the proposals and a sense that they would make a significant positive impact in each of the areas. Overall, respondents felt that the proposals would have a positive impact on these additional groups impacted by inequality, with very few respondents feeling that these groups would be further disadvantaged. Respondents felt that residents impacted by lack of employment and socio-economic deprivation particularly would be supported through these proposals:
- **Refugees and asylum seekers**
53% positive impact
3% negative impact
 - **Residents impacted by lack of housing & risk of homelessness**
50% positive impact
0% negative impact
 - **Residents impacted by loss or lack of employment**
59% positive impact
0% negative impact
 - **Residents impacted by socio-economic deprivation**
60% positive impact
3% negative impact
- 6.29 The consultation also asked respondents to identify any positive impacts on specific Protected Characteristics or the additional groups identified above.

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- 6.30 There were 28 responses to this question. Respondents highlighted that ethnicity, disability and socio-economic deprivation were all factors addressed through the programme and therefore it was likely that there would be a positive impact on residents effected by these factors. Others commented that any grant programme with a focus on equalities is likely to have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics. One response highlighted the value of open access front doors as important for equality, as it enables all residents to easily access a personalised provision that is responsive to their needs. Another respondent commented that if the Council funds services promoting equality, all protected characteristics would benefit.
- 6.31 In relation to identifying negative impacts on specific Protected Characteristics or the additional groups identified there were 16 responses.
- 6.32 Respondents highlighted that cuts to current equalities focused groups will have a negative impact on people with protected characteristics served by those organisations; others commented that it is only possible to assess the equalities impact once the new grants programme is awarded. There were comments about the need for a clearer baseline in terms of need by protected characteristics and a map of funded services responding to these needs.
- 6.33 Respondents raised the issue that social prescribing may be seen as geared towards older people, and therefore may not be accessed by young people. Similarly it was highlighted as a risk that the removal of arts and culture funding from the Main Grants programme may mean that the whole programme, including the front doors, are seen as geared towards adults and older people. Not identifying the needs of LGBTQ+ people while identifying some protected characteristics was raised as likely to have a negative impact on this community. The negative impact of the pandemic and insufficient support for people whose first language is not English was raised, and the need for more coordinated support for refugees and asylum seekers, who one respondent felt did not currently receive coordinated support.
- 6.34 There were 15 responses providing suggestions to how the Council could mitigate against the negative impact of the cuts. These included:
- building in potential to offer cyclical funding to organisations who are impactful
 - having a more robust monitoring programme
 - developing a better evidence base
 - requiring existing providers to deliver services needed/wanted by residents in ways that are accessible to them
 - Sustaining work with vulnerable groups and communities - such as older people with multiple health conditions
 - Funding new groups working with refugees offering targeted support such as employment
 - Continued funding for language support
 - Specifying in funding to Advice Services the need for greater outreach and engagement with people at risk of discrimination against each of the protected characteristics
 - Addressing all the protected characteristics in the Main Grants Programme to include complex and intersectional needs of the borough's communities, equitably and equally, ensuring that minority groups such as trans people are not left behind post COVID-19
 - Funding an African and/or Caribbean infrastructure organisation which provides a platform for strategic conversation for transformation and tailored and responsive

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support to grow a more resilient Black third sector and healthier and more resilient Black population

- 6.35 We will ensure that the new programme encompasses these ideas and principles, for example in ensuring that the commissioned monitoring and evaluation framework addresses the question about how we are addressing equity.
- 6.36 The section on equalities elicited several comments about funding for children and young people (CYP), and the disproportionate impact of the proposed cuts on young people. The Main Grants programme is focused on adults; this seems not to be clearly understood by respondents. It is important therefore that the programme criteria clearly identifies this, and highlights that funding for activities for CYP can be accessed separately.
- 6.37 The final question related to the support that organisations might wish to see if the Council was unable to provide direct funding and 54 of the 58 respondents answered this question.
- 6.38 Common themes that emerged were:
- Opportunities for Networking and partnership working
 - Training
 - Promoting and showcasing activities of organisations
 - Endorsement of funding applications
 - Help to secure national funding
 - Brokering relationships with other organisations that the sector could partner with
 - Support with data
 - Support identifying strategic opportunities
 - Access to Council venues and space
 - Enabling access to decision-makers
 - Pro bono support
- 6.39 The Community Development team will review, prior to the letting of the grants programme, the most effective way to provide this support to the VCS. Some of the support identified will be deliverable through the funded programme – for example the Community Fundraisers will play a significant role in enabling partnerships, and officers could support with bringing key partners to the table to help discussions on need and bids to be developed. Support with data for example, could be delivered through the monitoring and evaluation framework with a plan for promoting and sharing this data on a regular basis.
- 6.39 We asked respondents for any additional comments or contributions.
- 6.40 There were 34 responses, which included the following:
- A number of organisations highlighted the valuable work they undertake with vulnerable communities in Lewisham
 - There was a plea for sports organisations not to be forgotten
 - Others highlighted the fact that the Council needs to recognise the challenges faced by the VCS through the pandemic and not to place further burdens on the sector, but rather to take a partnership and enabling approach
 - Respondents appreciated and endorsed the fact that despite the cuts the Council was committed to investing in the VCS
 - A question was raised about what role the Community Development team would play within the new grant programme
 - Respondents endorsed the idea of the front doors

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- There was a call for more co-production with the sector going forward
- The need to assess and use the assets of existing organisations to support the sector as a whole, and stabilise local funding for the sector

6.41 All feedback will be reviewed alongside the suggestions for supporting the VCS prior to letting the grants programme, to ensure they are either embedded within the programme or responded to by the Community Development team.

7. Arts and Culture consultation and response

7.1 A separate consultation process was undertaken to gather views on the way that funding might be used if the proposal was taken forward to develop a separate arts and culture funding stream aligned to the Borough of Culture and its ongoing legacy rather than retaining it within the Main grants programme.

7.2 The consultation took place in the same time frame as the wider Main Grants consultation and was again run on the Council's Citizenspace platform with respondents offered the option of responding via post to Laurence House or to call to request additional support by phone if needed.

7.3 There were 16 responses to the consultation, these were made up of:

- 8 - Professionally, on behalf of an arts and culture organisation
- 5 - Personally, as an individual employed by an arts and culture organisation
- 1 - Personally, as an individual using services provided by an arts and culture organisation
- 2 - Other

7.4 Overall, there was strong agreement on the proposed strategic themes, with 12 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed priorities, four neither agreeing or disagreeing and no respondent disagreed. The breakdown of responses against the individual themes was as follows:

- **A healthy and well future** – 94% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this priority
- **A greener future** – 100% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this priority
- **A future we all have a part in** – 94% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this priority

7.5 There was support for all activities we propose to fund within each theme but the level of support varied across the range of proposals as follows

1. A cultural anchor organisation to:

- Provide sector leadership – 56% of respondents agreed that this was important or very important, 19% felt it was slightly important, 13% were neutral and 13% felt it was not important
- Co-ordinate consortium funding bids - 63% of respondents agreed that this was important or very important, 31% felt it was slightly important, 6% were neutral and 0% felt it was not important
- Support emerging artists - 81% of respondents agreed that this was important or very important, 19% felt it was slightly important, 0% were neutral and 0% felt it was not important
- Nurture partnerships - 81% of respondents agreed that this was important or very

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important, 6% felt it was slightly important, 6% were neutral and 6% felt it was not important

2. Funding for organisations to address barriers to cultural participation focusing on

- Ethnic diversity - 88% of respondents agreed that this was important or very important, 12% were neutral
- Disability - 100% of respondents agreed that this was important or very important
- Economic disadvantage - 100% of respondents agreed that this was important or very important
- Age (young people and older people) - 88% of respondents agreed that this was important or very important, 6% felt it was slightly important, 6% were neutral

7.6 Consultation also included proposals to use film location income to provide one off funding to deliver projects around key themes. There was very strong support across the range of themes as follows:

- Increasing participation – 94% important or very important
- Addressing the climate emergency – 75% important or very important
- Celebrating diversity – 94% important or very important
- Promoting equality and fairness of opportunity – 94% important or very important

7.7 The consultation also included proposals to implement a number of measures designed to address inequalities in the cultural workforce. Respondents expressed strong support overall but with varying levels as follows:

- Bursary funding for emerging artists – 100% important or very important
- Broadway Theatre associate artists – 50% important or very important and 19% slightly important
- Employment and training programmes - 81% important or very important
- Support for cultural and creative enterprise growth – 69% important or very important

7.8 Some respondents provided detailed replies when asked if they would like to make additional comments about the proposed support for arts and culture. The following is a summary of the main themes raised:

- Five respondents commented on the proposal to fund an anchor organisation. Varying concerns were expressed such as whether it would be possible for the role to be delivered in a democratic, collaborative and neutral manner and across the whole borough and responding to the needs of all art forms. Also concern about the level of funding and the need for more detailed information about the role.
- The importance of funding as an endorsement
- Two respondents highlighted the importance of recognising that organisations work across a number of priorities and communities, thereby promoting community cohesion
- The importance of ensuring that the whole programme of support works in a cohesive way
- Concern about further cuts to the sector
- Concern about lack of mention of wider equalities groups

7.9 All comments will be taken into consideration as the details of the funding programme are further developed. Officers particularly recognise the importance of providing more detail around the role of the anchor organisation, how it will be chosen and the framework that will be put in place to ensure that it delivers a programme of work for the benefit of the whole art and culture sector in Lewisham.

7.10 Overall respondents felt that the proposals would have a positive rather than negative impact across most of the Protected Characteristics as set out below with the remaining

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percentage of respondents either stating no impact or don't know:

- **Age:**
45% positive impact
13% negative impact
- **Disability**
50% positive impact
6% negative impact
- **Ethnicity**
62% positive impact
2% negative impact
- **Sex**
6% positive impact
6% negative impact
- **Gender Reassignment**
6% positive impact
6% negative impact
- **Pregnancy/maternity**
0% positive impact
0% negative impact
- **Religion/belief**
6% positive impact
0% negative impact
- **Sexual orientation**
13% positive impact
6% negative impact
- **Marriage/civil partnership**
0% positive impact
0% negative impact

7.11 In relation to the wider equalities considerations there was again support for the proposals with respondents expressing a view that the proposals would have more of a positive impact on these additional groups impacted by inequality, with very few respondents feeling that these groups would be further disadvantaged:

- **Refugees and asylum seekers**
43% positive impact
0% negative impact
- **Residents impacted by lack of housing & risk of homelessness**
13% positive impact
0% negative impact
- **Residents impacted by loss or lack of employment**
44% positive impact
0% negative impact
- **Residents impacted by socio-economic deprivation**
50% positive impact
6% negative impact

7.12 The response to the consultation shows a high level of support for the strategic themes set out in the proposals and for the proposed activities to be funded under each theme. A slightly lower level of support was expressed around some aspects of the proposals for a cultural anchor organisation and it is clear from comments provided by respondents that a more detailed description of the role needs to be articulated and assurances provided around concerns expressed.

7.14 Officers therefore recommend moving forward with this approach, which builds on Lewisham's role as Borough of Culture in 2022, provides an important legacy and an effective response to the current needs of the arts and culture sector.

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- 7.15 In relation to arts and culture, proposals respond to recognised inequality within the sector seeking to provide a response that address these issues in Lewisham by engaging those who are most disadvantaged.
- 7.16 Taking current art and culture grant recipients into account, officers do not anticipate any specific impact on protected characteristics, although it has to be recognised that reduced funding will have an overall impact. In mitigation the programme of funding focusses more strongly on addressing inequality and will now be part of a package of support that draws on wider resources, including film location funding and the Broadway Theatre as a physical asset.
- 7.16 Future strategy around resourcing art and culture in Lewisham and specifically closing the gap around inequality will have a stronger focus on bringing in external resources to the borough. With reduced local authority funding available it is anticipated that support for a cultural anchor organisation as proposed in this report will provide the necessary capacity for successful future partnership bids.

8. Feedback outside of online consultation

Lewisham Speaking Up and Lewisham Ageing Well

- 8.1 The consultation offered the opportunity for organisations to facilitate sessions with service users so that Council officers could hear directly from residents about their experience of services and their views about the proposed grants programme.
- 8.2 Officers attended two sessions with service users from Ageing Well and Lewisham Speaking Up (LSUP) during the consultation period.
- 8.3 The session with Ageing Well members, hosted by Diamond Club in partnership with Ageing Well, was held on 29th June 2021 virtually, and was attended by 20 older Lewisham residents.
- 8.4 The group had met regularly in person pre-pandemic and was keen to learn more about the Main Grants proposal and consultation.
- 8.5 After briefly outlining the purpose of the consultation, the officer took questions and feedback from the group, which was delighted to share its newly developed Zoom abilities. Participants made a number of points, including highlighting the benefits of the 1-2-1 training and support they had received in the use of digital devices, and the part that improved digital inclusion had played in enabling them to access support and interaction so as to reduce loneliness and isolation. Their improved access to digital resources had also enabled them to access a range of online workshops, including dance and exercise, which had been fun and kept them active and healthy.
- 8.6 They were passionate about how liberating they had found their increased ability to work with digital technology, and their increased confidence in this area was clear. They highlighted their appreciation for the facilitation of the current group which enabled them to maximise the benefits from their weekly meetings and enabled everyone to participate in a constructive way.
- 8.7 They were keen advocates of the Council's support for digital inclusion and shared a strong view that many of their friends and neighbours would equally benefit from training and support of the nature they had experienced.

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- 8.8 The session hosted by LSUP was part of their weekly Tuesday meeting with members; it was also held virtually, on 13th July 2021, and was attended by 28 LSUP members, who are people with learning disabilities and autism living in Lewisham.
- 8.9 Officers worked with LSUP to structure the session so that it was accessible and enabled participation. Further to officers outlining the context, discussion focused on three questions:
- What problems have you had to deal with in the last year? Were there extra problems because of COVID?
 - How does LSUP help you and other people? What's good about the things LSUP does?
 - How would it affect you if LSUP had less money for things like advocacy or self-advocacy?
- 8.10 In answer to the first question, members identified loneliness, isolation and loss of other regular social contacts e.g. church, gym as a key challenge in the last year. Another equally challenging issue for members was COVID regulations including mask wearing – including impact on people with multiple impairments. The lack of appropriate IT and inadequate data plans to access information and online services was a significant challenge identified by members.
- 8.11 Members of LSUP were overwhelmingly positive about the benefits they gained from the service, including:
- Feeling valued
 - Social contact combatting loneliness and isolation
 - Having a voice and being heard
 - Feeling enabled to make contributions
 - Increased confidence
 - Knowing that disabled people are on the board representing people with learning disabilities
 - Many felt that the service they received was crucial to them
- 8.12 In answer to the question about reduced funding, the majority of attendees felt that funding to LSUP should be increased or maintained as they felt they would not know how to manage without the service.

Roundtable discussion on BAME infrastructure

- 8.13 The roundtable discussion was held on 28th July 2021 via Teams. The purpose of the roundtable was to learn about the needs of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic-led Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations to help them thrive and continue to provide services to BAME communities in Lewisham during post-COVID recovery. Key objectives of the roundtable were:
- To create a shared understanding of the definition and specific needs of BAME-led VCS organisations in Lewisham
 - To understand the role of infrastructure and funding to best support BAME-led VCS organisations in Lewisham
- 8.14 The session was facilitated by the Social Investment Consultancy and was supported by the Ubele Initiative; both gave feedback from research that they had undertaken on work with BAME organisations and funders that evidenced the inequality that exists in the funding landscape and made recommendations on some ways that funders can address this.
- 8.15 24 participants attended on the day. Organisations that participated in the roundtable were either a) delivering services to BAME communities as part of a BAME-led

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organisation, b) funding BAME VCS organisations, and/or c) providing infrastructure support to the VCS. There were also representation from public health services in Lewisham. The roundtable was structured to include small-group discussions with facilitators in each of the groups, as well as presentations and whole-group discussions.

8.16 A key issue was defining what 'BAME led organisations' mean. Among the participants there was strong support for a definition that includes both the mission and purpose of the organisation as well as the make-up of the leadership.

8.17 Discussions on the needs and challenges faced by BAME led organisations identified the following as key issues that need to be addressed:

- Sustainable funding with a long-term focus (rather than the short-term project funding made available prior to and throughout Covid)
- Challenges in eligibility for funding and commissioning - high numbers of BAME-led organisations face barriers even in the pre-application stages. Funders often do not recognise that the majority of BAME-led organisations are relatively small and have low turnover or lack specific documentation which lead to them not being eligible for funding at all. These barriers are not only applicable in securing funding, but also commissioning opportunities
- Need for flexibility in application forms. Participants also shared that the application forms often require a level of proficiency in being able to express yourself, and therefore benefit those who use sophisticated language that is knowledgeable about the funding landscape. Members of BAME-led organisations felt that more flexibility and consideration is needed during this stage to take into account different backgrounds the applicants might come from and different levels of knowledge.
- Removing other barriers in funding processes. A number of other barriers faced by BAME-led VCS organisations that need to be removed were also mentioned, including 1) short turnaround times to respond to funding opportunities; 2) lack of succession funding; 3) lack of compensation for fulfilling administrative requirements; and 4) long payment periods.

8.18 In terms of what was needed from infrastructure support, participants highlighted:

- Lack of flexibility of infrastructure - Participants felt that the current infrastructure at times seems too rigid and does not always welcome change, whether in the form of new leaders, new ideas or adopting individual approaches to supporting different organisations.
- Different, more flexible ways of supporting organisations – a number of attendees cited the Familia Project (a food-related pandemic response in Lewisham specifically targeting BAME communities) and other collaborative opportunities that enabled organisations to work together in a short period of time to secure funding, rather than the traditional and formal ways of delivering infrastructure through training for example.
- Need for support for latter stages in organisational development. While it was acknowledged that currently it is possible to get support for establishing the initial policies, board and governance, it is much more complicated to get support to be able to transition into the next stage and become more self-sustaining.
- Following from above, the need for infrastructure support tied into looking beyond a short-term funding bid – support around how the organisation can build on its learning,

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communicate its impact, plan for the next stage, apply for more funds, develop a track record, and become viable.

- Feedback and mentoring. Based on earlier discussions around barriers in applying for funds, participants discussed that they very rarely receive feedback on their unsuccessful applications, which diminishes their confidence and does not let them know what areas they can improve on later on. Alternatively, an idea of collaborations between more and less experienced organisations were raised to be able to share expertise on how to secure funding.
- Supporting and growing leadership from BAME communities – enabling representation and voice and making sure particularly smaller organisations with limited capacity are supported by compensating them for their time and expertise.
- Institutional racism. Participants expressed their concerns around institutional racism across different structures that they work with. They felt that often commissioners and funders do not accept their own privilege and implicit bias which increases the mistrust from BAME communities.

9. Overall Conclusions and recommended response

- 9.1. The response to the consultation shows a high level of support for the priorities set out in the proposals, namely
 - a) An economically sound future
 - b) A healthy and well future
 - c) A future we all have a part in
- 9.2 The response also showed a high level of support for the proposed activities to be funded under each priority, i.e.:
 - a) i. An economically sound future, specifically good quality, independent Information and Advice Services
 - a) ii. An economically sound future, specifically enabling Digital Access for All, including training on digital skills
 - b) A healthy and well future – specifically physical and mental health and well-being – including volunteering, social prescribing, connecting people to their local community or communities of interest as a means of improving their well-being
 - c) A future we all have a part in – specifically building strong communities through investments in infrastructure to enable the VCS to be independent – e.g. community fundraisers, volunteer brokerage and community directory
- 9.3 We therefore recommend moving forward with these as our agreed priorities for the Main Grants programme 2022-25. A number of respondents raised the issue of advice services addressing symptoms rather than the fundamental causes of financial hardship, specifically clearer pathways and opportunities for employment. We propose that as part of the funding, advice services support the development of a clear pathway to employment over the next funding cycle, and lead on partnerships with others in the sector and with the Council on increased opportunities for employment.
- 9.4 While there was overall a high level of support for the idea of Community Fundraisers, and for the areas of focus, the proposal prompted many comments and questions from respondents. There was uncertainty amongst respondents as to whether or how the fundraisers can support them if they were to lose their funding; uncertainty about how the fundraisers would prioritise projects and bids; how the work would be coordinated and how the work would achieve consistent support across the focus areas. It is understandable that this proposal raised many questions. It is a new model and not one

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that has been attempted before through the Main Grants programme. However, the proposal builds on learning from a collaborative fundraiser model that was trialled with a small number of VCS partners. Conversations and discussions about the way collaborative fundraising for the sector could work has already begun. A funding partnership was set up to oversee this pilot which could continue to provide some oversight and support for coordination of the Community Fundraisers. Further, we believe the model offers scope for the VCS to take a leadership role and have more control in directing its fundraising efforts. In order to address concerns expressed by some that the posts will not assist them if they lose Main Grants funding it is proposed that these grants are let through a bespoke and shortened process to ensure that individuals can be in post before the end of the current funding round – see paragraph 9.7 below.

- 9.5 There was general agreement about the focus areas, although some concerns that culture and sports could not be delivered in one fundraiser brief as they are too disparate and require different kinds of subject expertise. A suggestion was that this post could be split and hosted by relevant subject matter experts; i.e. an arts organisation to host a .5 FTE and a sports organisation to host an equivalent resource. Concerns were also raised about the specific named characteristics for the fundraiser for the equalities brief, as it was felt that other protected characteristics would be excluded.
- 9.6 We recommend that we proceed with the Community Fundraiser proposals but respond to the issues raised by:
- Splitting the culture and sports brief, so that subject matter experts can host a part time post each
 - Keeping one of the Community Fundraisers' focus on equality and equity including ethnicity and disabilities, as communities specifically impacted by Covid, but with an expectation that the that the hosting organisation should also look at addressing other protected characteristics as part of the brief, along with intersectionality. In line with the recommendation that ethnicity and disability are specific areas of focus, we would welcome applications from organisations directly working with and experienced in the needs of these communities.
- 9.7 In order to address the issues around coordination, consistency, mechanisms and process for prioritising projects, we propose the process for Community Fundraiser applications are expedited so that the fundraisers are in post as soon as possible, to begin the work of engaging the sector and developing a coordinated plan of support. We propose a three-week Expression of Interest (EOI) period from the launch of application stage (26th September), followed by interviews, with awards of grants by late November 2021. This would enable early recruitment to the fundraiser posts.
- 9.8 There were mixed responses to the proposals for significant partnership grants for advice services and social prescribing. While the majority of respondents recognised the importance of both activities, there was concern that funding signposting might take resources away from frontline services; there were concerns about larger partnership grants cutting out smaller providers; there were also concerns and a call for the funded activity to be evidence based, provide data and for the funded organisations to play a role in coordination and support.
- 9.9 Based on the above, we recommend that there is continued priority given to advice and social prescribing as significant services; however, funding these services should encompass a more rigorous approach, with a clear expectation in terms of the design of the service, outcomes, targets, development plans and the role of the services in coordination and support of the sector. While maintaining the flexibility of the grants

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programme, we propose moving to a more commissioning-based approach to the two services.

- 9.10 The majority of respondents were supportive of proposals for partnership grants of £10,000, although there were some questions about what this small sum of money could be expected to achieve. There was also a request for more clarity on the intended aims and outcomes of partnerships.
- 9.11 We recommend that the partnership grants are part of the Main Grants scheme but recommend that the grants are awarded on the basis of:
- Areas of the borough where we see the need for strong VCS leadership
 - Aspiration and potential to grow on the part of the VCS
 - Willingness to connect with partners and specifically to work closely with the Council
 - Conversation and agreement with partners about how we work together moving forward, including how we support each other to achieve our ambitions for the borough
 - Specific outcomes in relation to the above
- 9.12 The majority of respondents were in favour of a new and dedicated funding programme for the Borough of Culture, we therefore recommend this is taken forward in line with the findings of the separate consultation outlined in Section 7.
- 9.13 Our approach to equity was supported by the majority of respondents. However, issues about the focus areas in terms of equity were raised, specifically in relation to our Borough of Sanctuary commitment, and the needs of LGBTQ+ residents. We have outlined the proposal for Community Fundraisers above. However, we recommend that we change our approach in relation to how we assess bids overall to not just focussing on those impacted by Covid, but extending this focus to include the protected characteristics traditionally funded by the Main Grants programme, and seldom heard communities.
- 9.14 Based on findings from our roundtable discussions about an effective BAME infrastructure, we propose infrastructure support that is ideally tied to and works alongside the Community Fundraiser. BAME led organisations through this support will be able to collaborate, gather data and explore ideas about need, identify ideas for funding, and be supported pre-and post- applications to become sustainable. This approach responds directly to what BAME led organisations have asked for. We would ensure that the intended support developed a robust framework of monitoring and evaluation, to show how many of our BAME led organisations have been enabled to grow and in what way, what income they have generated, the resulting increase in support to BAME communities and the impact of this support.
- 9.14 Taken together it is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet agree the following priorities and processes for the Main Grants programme 2022-2025:
- 9.15 Moving forward with the following priorities for the programme:
- a) An economically sound future, specifically:
 - i. Advice Services and
 - ii. Enabling Digital Access for All
 - b) A healthy and well future, specifically:
 - i. Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - c) A future we all have a part in
 - i. Building strong communities

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- 9.16 Funding four Community Fundraiser posts, to be hosted by the VCS, with the following areas of focus:
- 1x FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on equality and equity including ethnicity and disabilities as protected characteristics specifically impacted by Covid, but with an expectation that the hosting organisation should also look at addressing other protected characteristics as part of the brief, along with intersectionality
 - 1 x FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on geographical cold spots in the borough/areas of high deprivation that do not have other sources of income such as NCIL
 - .5 FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on the arts
 - .5 FTE Community Fundraiser with a focus on sports
- 9.17 That the Community Fundraiser funding is let earlier, through an Expression of Interest/Interview process, and awards granted by late November 2021
- 9.18 Moving forward with significant partnership grants for advice and social prescribing, but with a more rigorous commissioning-based approach
- 9.19 That we move forward with partnership grants of £10,000 but with clearer, measurable and proportionate partnership outcomes
- 9.20 Our approach to achieving equity in the main grants programme will be to focus grants on projects which benefit:
- communities most impacted by Covid
 - people with protected characteristics – specifically age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, and
 - seldom heard voices
- 9.21 Funding Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic infrastructure support that is ideally tied to and works alongside the Community Fundraiser. The focus of the support will be capacity building focused on collaboration, enabling organisations to identify need, generate ideas for funding, and support to become sustainable.
- 9.22 That we move forward with a separate grant programme aligned to London Borough of Culture
- 9.23 That the art and culture funding programme has the following strategic themes:
- A healthy and well future
 - A greener future
 - A future we all have a part in
- 9.24 Additionally that the art and culture funding programme funds the following activities:
1. Funding a cultural anchor organisation to:
 - Provide sector leadership
 - Co-ordinate consortium funding bids
 - Support emerging artists
 - Nurture partnerships
 2. Funding for organisations to address barriers to cultural participation focusing on:
 - Ethnic diversity
 - Disability
 - Economic disadvantage
 - Age (young people and older people)

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3. One off funding to deliver projects around key themes:
 - Increasing participation
 - Addressing the climate emergency
 - Celebrating diversity
 - Promoting equality and fairness of opportunity
4. Address inequalities in the cultural workforce through
 - Bursary funding for emerging artists
 - Broadway Theatre associate artists
 - Employment and training programmes
 - Support for cultural and creative enterprise growth

10. Application process and guidance

- 10.1 The programme will be launched on 23rd September and will close on 18th November (8 weeks). The application process will be managed on the recently developed funding portal. The borough-wide NCIL programme was launched and managed through the portal, and we will be using the learning from this process to ensure the Main Grants application process is as accessible and easy to complete as possible.
- 10.2 Officers will ensure that the launch of the programme is publicised as widely as possible. This will include the Council and partner's websites (including Lewisham Local), by e-mail to our existing funded VCS organisations and by e-mail to wider sector networks, for example faith groups, BAME network, funding partnership, etc. It will also be circulated widely within Council.
- 10.3 There will be three distinct application forms;
 1. Expressions of Interest for the fundraising posts
 2. Specific application forms for £10,000 partnership grants
 3. Specific application forms for grants under the agreed priorities
- 10.4 Officers will run a number of workshops for the VCS in the first 4-6 weeks of the period to describe the application process and outline our expectations in terms of responses. This proved extremely useful for organisations through the NCIL process. Similarly to the NCIL process, we will tailor some of the workshops to our smaller VCS organisations.
- 10.5 Using learning from the borough-wide NCIL process and previous programmes of funding, officers will ensure that the application process generates the information we need for rigorous and consistent assessment of bids. We propose to have guidance for assessors to ensure consistency in the assessment process.
- 10.6 Assessments will take place in November and December so that organisations can be informed of proposed recommendations prior to Christmas. They will be informed with the clear caveat that the recommendations are subject to the appeals process and Mayor and Cabinet decisions.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation framework

- 11.1 In response to calls to increase the rigour of the Main Grants monitoring and evaluation approach, we will commission a specialist organisation to develop a specific framework based on the range of services who receive funding through the programme.
- 11.2 The successful evaluation partner will work with the Council, health partners and VCS

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organisations to identify the key performance indicators that together show the impact of the Main Grants funding to the VCS.

- 11.3 Flowing from this, the evaluation partner will work with the Council to identify the key monitoring information to be gathered from all funded organisations and specific information to be gathered by a smaller sub-set of funded organisations.
- 11.4 The evaluation partner will also work with the Council to develop a performance dashboard that can provide quarterly information on key agreed data sets.
- 11.5 As previously mentioned, organisations that receive grants of more than £100,000 will have specifically designed, rigorous monitoring arrangements.

12. Financial implications

- 12.1 The current available budget for the Main Grants Programme is £2,636,308 plus an additional £313,000 of agreed Better Care Funding which specifically supports the grant paid to Age UK Lewisham and Southwark in respect of SAIL (safe and Independent Living).
- 12.2 As part of the councils Medium Term Financial Strategy a revenue saving of £800,000 (ref B-06 Cuts to Main Grant Programme) has been agreed for the 22-23 financial year onwards. The new Main Grants Programme is due to run for three years from April 2022-March 2025 and the annual cost will need be to be contained within the revised general fund budget of £1,836,308 plus whatever ongoing funding is agreed from BCF for future years.

13. Legal implications

- 13.1 Under S1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do unless it is expressly prohibited.
- 13.2 The giving of grants to voluntary organisations is a discretionary power which must be exercised reasonably, taking into account all relevant considerations and ignoring irrelevant considerations.
- 13.3 In relation to any consultation exercise sufficient reasons must be given for any proposal, adequate time must be given for consideration and response and the outcome of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account by the decision maker. Taking into account the results of the consultation, the report sets out the revised priorities of the Main Grants Programme, revised approaches and focus areas, and new grant programmes to support particular social needs and themes.
- 14.4 Decisions on making a grant or giving assistance to a voluntary organisation require the approval of Mayor and Cabinet where the level of a grant is over £10,000 (Mayoral Scheme of Delegation section Q). Those decisions will be key decisions (Constitution Article 16(c)(xiii)). As such it is for Mayor and Cabinet to approve the recommendations with regards to the revised process for allocating grants in relation to the Main Grants Programme.
- 14.5 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) contains a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

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- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 14.6 The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- 14.7 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:
- <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-actcodes-ofpractice-and-technical-guidance/>
- 14.8 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:
- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
 - Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
 - Engagement and the equality duty
 - Equality objectives and the equality duty
 - Equality information and the equality duty
- 14.9 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at
- <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

14. Equalities implications

- 14.1 The proposals set out in the consultation and in this report have been based on:
- reviewing the ongoing inequity in Lewisham (set out in the Consultation document, Appendix 1)
 - identifying the emerging and/or worsening issues brought about by the pandemic (set out in the Consultation Document, Appendix 1)
 - consulting with our VCS and residents on the impact of proposals on equalities (Section 6.22 – 6.36)
 - Consulting with specific service users on the proposals (Section 8)

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- 14.2 Based on the above, we have set out our rationale for the proposals in relation to equalities, assessed the impact on equalities and protected characteristics, and proposed mitigations. This is outlined below.
- 14.3 The review of ongoing inequity and emerging need through Covid highlighted a number of key issues that were important to address for recovery:
- Increasing financial hardship
 - Impact on physical mental health and well-being
 - Digital exclusion and the impact of this both in terms of accessing information and support, in an intensely digitally-driven context
 - The disproportionate impact of Covid, highlighting existing inequalities, for people from BAME communities, people with disabilities, and those impacted by socio-economic deprivation
 - The need for communities to connect and become resilient post-pandemic
- 14.4 The proposals try to directly address these issues in the context of the voluntary and community sector, and the preventative support they can offer, reaching out to our most disadvantaged communities and residents.
- 14.5 The proposals for large grants for advice and social prescribing respond to increasing financial hardship and the impact on physical and mental health; digital inclusion and building strong communities is one of our key priorities, and within this we have highlighted what we believe will be strong foundations for infrastructure that will enable communities to navigate their way to services, volunteer and participate – a good community directory and volunteering brokerage are examples.
- 14.6 We have also set out our approach to achieving equity by:
- Focusing grants on those most impacted by Covid 19, residents with protected characteristics, and our seldom heard communities
 - Supporting BAME lead infrastructure
 - Funding a Community Fundraiser targeted on equalities
- 14.7 On the basis of existing grant recipients, we assess that the following protected characteristics and those additional factors/characteristics identified since Covid are most likely impacted by these proposals:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Ethnicity
 - Sex
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Gender Reassignment
 - Refugees and Asylum Seekers
 - Residents impacted by lack of housing & risk of homelessness
 - Residents impacted by loss or lack of employment
 - Residents impacted by socio-economic deprivation
- 14.8 The proposals suggest a number of focus areas for equalities, primarily based on a review of the impact of Covid. These are: ethnicity, disability and those impacted by socio-economic deprivation. As is evidenced by responses from the consultation, our approach to equalities has general support, with many feeling that the impact on ethnicity, disability and socio-economic deprivation, will be positive.
- 14.9 Due to the reduction of funding available through the programme, it is likely that other protected characteristics not identified as focus areas in the new programme –

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specifically older people (as younger people were not the focus area of the Main Grants programme), gender re-assignment and sexuality, will be impacted by loss of funds and therefore lack of services. Respondents from the online survey have both commented directly on this and highlighted this in the responses they have chosen.

- 14.10 In order to mitigate the above, we have recommended that we amend the proposals so that we include protected characteristics and seldom heard voices as a key criteria when prioritising bids, alongside those impacted by Covid, to ensure the needs of specific communities such as LGBTQ+ people are responded to as part of this programme.
- 14.11 In relation to older people, and the potential loss of funding in this area, one clear mitigation is the larger partnership grant recommended for a social prescribing 'front door' service. This service is a key preventative intervention for older people and is accessed primarily by older people, as is evidenced by monitoring data from the service. Therefore older people remain a key beneficiary of the Main Grants programme. It is important however, that we respond to the feedback from the consultation that larger signposting services may be prioritised at the cost of smaller delivery organisations. We are committed to ensuring that the pathway for support to older people, through the social prescribing service, is effectively resourced going forward, through better use of our small grants and Neighbourhood Community Development Partnership (NCDP) grants.
- 14.12 The feedback from the consultation identified a number of other ways we can mitigate the negative impact on equalities, including addressing intersectionality, focusing larger funded services on targeting communities with protected characteristics, and developing better data to assess how well we are responding to addressing equity. We will ensure that the new programme encompasses these ideas and principles, for example in ensuring that the commissioned monitoring and evaluation framework addresses the question about how we are addressing equity.
- 14.13 We will also work closely with existing grant recipients to ensure that the impact on service users is mitigated by identifying other streams of local funding, for e.g. borough-wide or ward NCIL, that other kinds of support for e.g. use of community spaces are offered where needed, or that Community Fundraisers are able to support the organisation to meet any funding gap moving forward.
- 14.14 There will be a further, full Equality Assurance Assessment (EAA) completed on the recommendations for funding through the Main Grants programme

15. Climate change and environmental implications

- 15.1 London Borough of Culture has provided the opportunity for the arts and culture sector to take a lead in addressing the climate emergency, highlighting the issues in an engaging way and bringing residents together to develop a solutions based approach. A greener future is one of the strategic themes of the proposed programme of future funding for art and culture, thereby resourcing this continued role over the coming three years.
- 15.2 London Borough of Culture has also highlighted the role of art and culture in partnering with the Council to address strategic objectives. During this time important relationships have been developed between voluntary organisations and the Council's Climate Emergency Team which will continue to bear fruit as a result of the proposed funding programme.
- 15.3 As part of London Borough of Culture a sustainable events plan has been developed

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as a means of encouraging organisations to consider environmental issues in their planning. Funding applicants will be expected to sign up to this plan and describe how they will contribute to a sustainable future.

16. Crime and disorder implications

- 16.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications from the consultation, and resulting proposals for the main grants programme.

17. Health and wellbeing implications

- 17.1 Many of the activities of the existing and proposed new grants programme address the health and well-being of Lewisham residents and one of the criteria specifically proposes social prescribing and voluntary sector services to support physical and mental health and wellbeing.

18. Background papers

- 18.1 Appendix 1 – Consultation on Priorities for, and approach to, the Main Grants Programme – May 2021

19. Glossary

Term	Definition
Main Grants programme	A funding programme operated by Lewisham Council, providing support to a range of voluntary and community organisations working with vulnerable residents and contributing to the borough's key priorities
Voluntary and Community Sector	Independent not-for-profit organisations, often registered with the Charity Commission, working towards social objectives

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