

Committee: Community and Children's Services	Dated: 14/09/2018
Subject: Stronger Communities and Small Grants Programme	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

The Stronger Communities grant funding round – part of the Central Grants Programme (CGP) – closed to applications on 29 June 2018. Applications were assessed by an officer panel and recommendations made to the Director in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this Committee for approval. Four projects were successful and have, in total, received just under £27,000 in grant funding. One project was considered as a small grant, with three projects considered under the main grants programme.

The integration of the Small Grants Programme into the Stronger Communities Programme has been reviewed after the first round. The Central Grants Unit (CGU) is devising a new online application form for the Small Grants Programme, with a lighter touch but still robust assessment process for the November deadline of the Stronger Communities Programme.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the grants approved for Stronger Communities funding
- Note the changes to the criteria to include a specific small grants process for applications of £3,000 or less.

Main Report

Background

1. The Stronger Communities theme is a strand of the City of London Corporation's (CoLC) CGP that awards up to £10,000 to projects or services that are being delivered for the benefit of communities or beneficiaries within the City of London and its housing estates across London. It is funded from City's Cash and the CoLC Combined Relief of Poverty Charity.
2. Members of this Committee agreed in May 2016 that the award of grants will be determined by Officers of Community and Children's Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Grand Committee.

3. The grant assessment process for this and other themes in the programme is overseen by the CGU and draws on the unit's expertise in the field of grant-making and demonstrates good practice.
4. Grant applications were subject to a series of due diligence checks by the CGU to ensure compliance with the established eligibility criteria and passed a financial assessment by the Head of Charity and Social Investment Finance (Chamberlain's Department). All eligible applications were then considered by a panel of expert officers.
5. In February 2018, the Community and Children's Services Committee agreed to combine the Department's Small Grants Programme into the Stronger Communities Programme.

Stronger Communities

Grant allocation

6. In July 2018 the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance Committee, approved that a City's Cash underspend of £26,000 from financial year 2017/2018 could to be allocated to the 2018/2019 Stronger Communities funding programme. The overall funding pot available this financial year is £132,000.
7. For this financial year's funding round, the CGU received nine applications totalling £166,763.
8. Applications to this round were assessed by a panel of officers representing a range of Community and Children's Services functions and the CGU, chaired by the Assistant Director of Commissioning and Partnerships.
9. The officer-led Grants Panel proposed seven grants totalling £56,999 be awarded. The recommendations were put to, and agreed by, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this Committee.
10. Summary assessment reports of all recommended applications to the Stronger Communities grant scheme are provided in the appendices of this report, along with all the applications that were recommended for rejection. The successful applications are:

Organisation Name	Approved
Age UK East London	£9,270
Aldgate Community Events	£8,000
Little Angel Theatre	£8,615
Portsocken Ward Club	£1,000
Total	£26,885

Small Grants Programme

11. In February 2018, the Community and Children's Services Committee agreed to combine the Department's Small Grants Programme into the Stronger Communities Programme.
12. A proportion of the Stronger Communities funding was agreed to be allocated to smaller projects.
13. In the recent grant round, one application was received that could be considered a small grant. The organisation applying for this small grant provided feedback to the CGU during the assessment process which related to the complexity of the application form and financial information required, which was not considered proportionate for a small organisation applying for a small grant.
14. The CGU is developing a new application form for small grants of £3,000 or less and is agreeing a 'lighter touch' financial assessment with the Chamberlain's Department. All future applicants using the Small Grants form will be required to provide basic financial information depending on the size and structure of the organisation. This will include a recent set of accounts showing 12 months' income and expenditure and a budget for the organisation's current financial year. Due diligence checks are in line with grant-making best practice and to protect against fraud.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. The CGP Stronger Communities funding strand was created to promote a fair system of grant-giving by the CoLC.
16. The recommendations of the panel support the funding criteria and, in turn, the CoLC's Corporate Plan.

Conclusion

17. The Stronger Communities and Small Grants allocations will support four diverse projects working in the City's communities.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Stronger Communities: Criteria for funding
- Appendix 2 – Stronger Communities: Project outlines and grants awarded.
- Appendix 3 – Stronger Communities: Table of grants declined, deferred or withdrawn

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