

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	11/12/2018
Subject: Inspiring London through Culture – Revisions to Eligibility Criteria	Public
Report of: Peter Lisley, Assistant Town Clerk and Culture Mile Director	For Decision
Report author: Nick Bodger, Cultural and Visitor Development Director	

Summary

This report seeks approval for amendments to the awarding criteria of the *Inspiring London Through Culture* theme of the Central Grants Programme, as proposed by the theme's expert assessment panel.

The revisions recommended by the panel have been driven by concerns over the quality and diversity of applications received to date, noting that during the last round, most applications considered were classical-music-based and from repeat applicants.

The revisions proposed (see appendices 1 and 2) seek to make the criteria less restrictive and easier to understand. By explicitly listing a wider set of priorities for the theme and the panel's expectations for the content of applications, it is hoped that a greater number of applications from a more diverse applicant pool may be generated. The priorities suggested are – in the panel's view – those where small-scale enabling grants may make the greatest impact, and are aligned with the City Corporation's Corporate Plan and Cultural Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the amendments to the Inspiring London through Culture eligibility criteria as tracked in appendix 1.

Main Report

Background

1. On 7 March 2016, your Committee delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with your Chairman and Deputy Chairman to agree the sub themes and eligibility criteria for the proposed grant-giving theme of *Inspiring London through Culture*, subject to your Policy and Resources Committee approving that theme, which they agreed at their meeting on 19 May 2016.
2. Overseen by the City's Central Grants Unit (CGU), grant applications for this theme are submitted to an expert assessment panel comprising City Corporation

officers: the Cultural and Visitor Development Director (chairman); the Business Manager, Open Spaces; the Artistic Director, Barbican; and the Strategic Partnerships Manager – Culture Mile, Barbican and Guildhall Creative Learning; external assessors: the Head of Culture at GLA; the Director, Content and Channels at London & Partners; and the Head of Learning, Museum of London; as well as your Chairman and Deputy Chairman (Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee).

3. The panel met on 11 September 2018. At that meeting, concerns were raised over the quality, diversity and limited number of applications received, with most considered at that meeting being classical-music-based and from repeat applicants.

Current Position

4. While it should be noted that the *Inspiring London Through Culture* theme remains the most popular of all themes in the Central Grants Programme, panel members expressed the view that the criteria needed to be less restrictive and easier to understand if the theme is to attract a wider and more diverse applicant pool (and so ensure greater and better impact for the relatively low-value grants awarded).
5. It is therefore suggested that the criteria include a wider list of priorities for the theme and describe the panel's expectations for the content of applications (to enable a fair assessment). The priorities suggested are – in the panel's view – those where the City Corporation, through low-value investment, may make the greatest impact, and are aligned to its Corporate Plan and Cultural Strategy. These amendments are tracked in appendix 1 with a clean, revised copy shown in appendix 2.

Proposals

6. In brief, the new criteria seek to remove the need for proposals to take place in the Square Mile only, extending this to any location but with the need for the activity to benefit City communities when taking place outside of the Square Mile.
7. The core criteria have also been amended slightly (see appendix 1) to help clarify our objectives for funding and are now underpinned by a longer list of priorities. They are:
 - Engage with people living or working in the Square Mile;
 - Engage with new audiences, attracting people from a wide variety of backgrounds and locations to participate in the City's cultural offer;
 - Animate places and spaces within the Square Mile;
 - Encourage access to local buildings and local heritage within the Square Mile;
 - Improve health and wellbeing;
 - Use technology to deliver cultural excellence;
 - Highlight environmental issues and promote sustainability;
 - Build organisational capacity;

- Support entrepreneurialism;
 - Build innovative partnerships (especially with one or more of the cultural/heritage providers already operating within the City); and/or
 - Demonstrate some level of match-funding, noting we value opportunities where City funding can help to lever in funding from other sources.
8. In addition, a short list of inclusions the panel would wish to see in any application is added to the criteria under section 4 (How do you apply for your grant?) to help ensure that the fundamental information needed to assess grant applications fairly (and against one another) is given by all applicants.
9. Finally, another exclusion (Section 11: what do we not fund?) has been added noting that a number of recent applications have been to support core running costs; this is not, in the view of the panel, something that makes best use of the relatively low-value enabling grants the theme is able to award.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. The proposals in this report align with all parts of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan (2018/23) in that they help to contribute to a flourishing society, support a thriving economy and shape outstanding environments. Specifically, the following outcomes are met through the revisions suggested to the criteria:
- a. People enjoy good health and wellbeing;
 - b. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential;
 - c. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need
 - d. We are a global hub for innovation in financial and professional services, commerce and culture;
 - e. We have access to the skills and talent we need;
 - f. We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive; and
 - g. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.
11. The revisions also align with the vision of the City Corporation's Cultural Strategy 2018/22 in that they help us to "...work collaboratively with cultural partners to drive social and economic change and contribute to a thriving city"; in addition, they support strategic objectives 2, 3, and 7 in that they help to develop Culture Mile; support cultural excellence and champion an ethos of innovation; and widen the appeal of our cultural offer to a more diverse audience, enabling communities in the City and beyond.

Conclusion

12. The *Inspiring London through Culture* grant theme of the Central Grants Programme is the most popular and – arguably – the most effective of all themes. The revisions proposed in this report are part of an iterative review process and seek to improve take up and widen the benefit of the grants awarded.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Revised Criteria for the Inspiring London through Culture programme (tracked)
- Appendix 2 – Revised Criteria for the Inspiring London through Culture programme (clean)

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