

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Community and Children's Services	09/02/2018
<b>Subject:</b> Stronger Communities and Small Grants Programme	Public
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For decision
<b>Report Author:</b> Simon Cribbens, Assistant Director of Commissioning and Partnerships	

### Summary

The Stronger Communities grant funding round - part of the Central Grants Programme (CGP) - closed to applications on 3 November 2017. Applications were assessed by an officer panel and recommended to the Director in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman for approval. Seven projects were successful and have together received just under £57,000 in grant funding. It is proposed that Members commit a further £30,000 to support a new "crowdfunding" project that aims to lever in additional contributions to fund community based schemes.

The Small Grants programme – funded by the Department - has allocated just over £9,000 in 2017/18 to support seven small community initiatives. This programme will be combined into a single Stronger Communities fund in 2018/19 that will provide opportunities for both smaller and larger projects.

### Recommendations

Members are asked:

- to note the grants approved for Stronger Communities funding
- to commit £30,000 from the unallocated Stronger Communities fund to trial a crowdfunding grant initiative
- to note the grants approved for the Small Grants Programme and its merger into the Stronger Communities fund for future years.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The Stronger Communities theme is a strand of the City Corporation's Central Grants Programme (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 City of London Corporation 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 Central Grants Unit (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 that they 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. Alongside this programme, the Department also ran a small grants bidding round awarding up to £2,000 for smaller projects funded and administered by the departmental.

## **Stronger Communities**

### *Grant allocation*

6. For this application round the overall funding pot available was £109,645 for which the CGU received 16 applications totalling £144,511.
7. 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 Housing and Neighbourhoods.
8. 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.
9. Summary assessment reports of the all recommended applications to the Stronger Communities grant scheme are given in the appendices along with all the applications that were recommended for rejection. The successful applications are:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Approved</b>
Age Concern	£9,940
Aldgate Community	£9,300
All Hallows	£10,000
GLERA	£3,100
Goldsmiths	£9,885
Mint Street Music	£4,884
Opening Doors London	£9,890
<b>Total</b>	<b>£56,999</b>

### *Crowdfunding initiative*

10. The Community and Children's Services Department is leading a pilot project to explore the use of crowdfunding as a way of allocating grants, encouraging and supporting community organisations to put forward ideas and leveraging in additional funding from businesses, individuals and funding bodies.
11. Crowdfunding uses an internet based platform to seek funding or investment for promoted projects.
12. Following discussions with senior colleagues, other departments and the Town Clerk's Summit Group, a procurement exercise was undertaken, and the organisation Spacehive has been appointed to work with the City Corporation on a crowdfunding project which will be piloted initially in the Aldgate area.
13. Spacehive is a crowdfunding specialist supporting community and civic projects that has raised over £8m for community projects. The organisation uses its expertise and platform to attract new funders to support community activity. They will promote the crowdfunding platform in the community, running workshops and events to inspire and encourage groups to come forward with ideas that they can be supported to develop into projects.
14. The aim is to bring forward projects that meet the criteria Members have agreed for the Stronger Communities theme, and that also deliver to corporate and departmental objectives.
15. To support the projects, and leverage additional funding, it is proposed that £30,000 of the unallocated 2017/18 Stronger Communities funding pot (£52,646) is committed to provide a match funding pot for new initiatives. Spacehive will then work with businesses and funding bodies to promote the campaigns and attract further funding to reach the targets needed. The target is to attract an additional £2 in other funding for every £1 invested by the City Corporation from the match funding pot.
16. The focus on Aldgate reflects not only the higher levels of need and diversity in that part of the City, but also a desire to encourage community activity to balance the very high level of business development in the area, and to promote the new Aldgate Square as a community hub.
17. Potential projects will be subject to assessment by the CGU and be subject to the same due diligence checks as all applicants to the Central Grants Programme.
18. The pilot will be assessed after the first six months of operating and, if successful, proposals will be developed to extend it into future years and to the rest of the City.

19. Apart from officer time handling enquiries, all resource implications are budgeted for within the Stronger Communities grant fund.

#### *Unallocated funds*

20. Subject to Members approval of the crowdfunding commitment, there remains £22,646 unallocated from this year's Stronger Communities pot. The CGU will request that the Chamberlain, in conjunction with the Chairman of Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, approves the carry forward of this funding for allocation in 2018/19.

#### **Small Grants programme**

21. The Small Grants programme is funded and administered by the Department to provide grants of up to £2,000 for community groups and activities within the Square Mile.

22. For 2017/18 the following awards have been made:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Approved</b>
Wingate Golden Oldies	£1,600
Three score club	£1,600
Portsoken chess club	£410
Barbican Tuesday Club	£1,600
Craft and conversion group	£1,000
Strictly Stylish Sequence Dancers	£1,600
Golden Lane Baggers	£1,600
	<b>£9,410</b>

23. The maximum amount awarded was reduced to £1,600 to support as many projects within the budget available.
24. The funding and administration have been subject to budgetary and resource pressures within the Department. To mitigate these issues, the Small Grants programme will be absorbed into the Stronger Communities programme in 2018/19. A lighter touch process will remain in place for grant applications up to £2,000. The advantages of this are:
- a significantly increased pot of funding available to support smaller projects
  - eligibility criteria that will allow projects on City Corporation housing estates outside of the Square Mile to apply (they are not eligible for the current Small Grants programme)
  - a single scheme
  - an improved administration and assessment process led by the dedicated resources of the Central Grants Unit.

25. A proportion of the Stronger Communities pot will be allocated to smaller projects. If the carry forward of the unallocated 2017/18 funds is approved, it is proposed that this amount is targeted for allocation to small grants.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

26. The CGP Stronger Communities funding stream was created to promote a fair system of grant giving by the City Corporation.
27. The recommendations of the panel support the funding criteria and, in turn, the CoLC's Corporate Plan.

## **Conclusion**

28. The Stronger Communities and Small Grants allocations will support fourteen diverse projects working in the City's communities. Further opportunity and innovation are offered by the commitment to crowdfunding.

## **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

Simon Cribbens  
Assistant Director – Commissioning and Partnerships  
Community and Children's Services

T: 020 7332 1210

E: [simon.cribbens@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:simon.cribbens@cityoflondon.gov.uk)