

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Decision	29/03/2021
<b>Subject:</b> Central Grants Programme – <i>Inspiring London through Culture</i> : recommendations to the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>3, 10</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>City’s Cash</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Major Projects	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Jack Joslin, Head of Central Grant Unit and Nick Bodger, Cultural and Visitor Development Director	

### Summary

The *Inspiring London through Culture* funding theme, which forms part of the Central Grants Programme (CGP), had a second (and final) round closing date for applications on 8 January 2021 for the 2020/21 financial year. Applications were assessed by a panel of expert officers, your Chair and Deputy Chair and external assessors on 3 March 2021 following grant assessment and due diligence checks by the City’s Central Grants Unit (CGU) which also oversees the scheme. This paper reports on grant decisions made at the meeting (for information) and proposes amendments to the established process for assessing grants under the theme noting a reduction in the available grant pot from the 2021/22 financial year (for decision).

### Recommendations

Members are asked:

- To note the grants approved by the panel under the *Inspiring London through Culture* funding stream, a part of the City Corporation’s Central Grants Programme.
- To note the reduction in budget for the scheme for 2021/22.
- To approve that the scheme move to one application deadline a year with a maximum grant cap of £10,000 (reducing from £15,000).

### 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 (see appendix 1) 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), the grant assessment process for this and other themes in the programme draws on the Unit's expertise in the field of grant-making and demonstrates good practice.
3. The CGU oversees a range of the City of London's grant making activities which includes the Central Grants Programme (CGP), the management of grant making on behalf of Charities where the City of London is Trustee and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Fund.
4. On 14 May 2018 your Committee approved delegation of grant decisions for awards of £10,000 or less to the Director of Major Projects in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.
5. The *Inspiring London Through Culture* grant assessment panel met on 3 March 2021 comprising City Corporation officers, the Cultural and Visitor Development Director (chair), your Chair and Deputy Chair and external assessors. Panel members unable to attend were invited to send comments which were then considered as part of the assessment process at the meeting.
6. For this *Inspiring London through Culture* funding application round, the CGU received 15 applications totalling £112,821. This was another popular round and likely reflects the financial hardship faced by many City cultural and creative sector operatives.
7. The budget for *Inspiring London through Culture* was £84,000 for 2020/21. In the July 2020 grant round the panel approved grants totalling £48,325 leaving a remaining budget of £35,675 for the year. The CGU outlined to the panel members that an additional amount of £9,000 could be made available to this grant programme if required, due to an underspend in another grant budget.
8. The panel agreed to apply additional scrutiny to each application reviewing the viability of the proposal in light of the pandemic, prioritising the City communities most affected by it be they artists facing financial hardship, community groups facing digital and/or educational poverty, or those affected by isolation and well-being issues amongst other themes; as well as considering the alignment of applications with the emerging priorities of the Recovery Taskforce. Consideration of whether the project was best value for money was also given.

9. Apart from officer time handling enquiries, all resource implications are budgeted for within the *Inspiring London through Culture* grant fund.

## **Current Position**

10. Summary assessment reports of all recommended applications to the *Inspiring London through Culture* grant scheme are given in the appendices with full details of all are available on request from the Director of Major Projects.
11. Grants totalling £44,563 have been approved as per the reports outlined in the appendices, spending the full budget for the year.
12. At the panel meeting the CGU officer outlined that in line with the work of the Fundamental Review and savings required as a result of the financial impact of the Coronavirus pandemic the City's Cash elements of the CGP and related management costs have been subject to a 12% reduction in line with other departments. The total City's Cash Grants Budget for 2021/22 will be £230,000. This equates to a reduction of £30,000, or £10,000 for each of the City's Cash Grant Programmes. The ongoing budget for the *Inspiring London through Culture* grant programme will be £74,000.

## **Proposals**

13. The panel discussed the implications of this cut to the budget and proposed to move to one grant programme a year rather than the current two that are offered. Alongside this it was suggested that a maximum grant level of £10,000 should be applied to the programme. These recommendations seek to make best use of the grant pot by enabling more applicants, noting the previous top award of £15,000 represents 20% of the total grant figure, and support the panel in being able to assess applications holistically in one go allowing for a fair balance across communities and disciplines. If in agreement, Members are asked to approve this recommendation. Your Chair and Deputy Chair will continue to attend the panel meeting under these new proposals.
14. The CGU also has oversight of the CIL Neighbourhood Fund which opened for applications in September 2020. Applications for cultural activity can be considered by the fund and the Cultural and Visitor Development Director sits on the Officer Panel for the fund. The Neighbourhood Fund can receive applications at any point in the year.
15. The CGU proposes to work with the Cultural and Visitor Development team to advertise the CIL Neighbourhood Fund for cultural activity grants which exceed £10,000. In so doing, while there will be a cut to the *Inspiring London through Culture* budget, there will be more overall funding available to support cultural recovery in the City of London going forwards.
16. The CGU is in the process of organising a Members Briefing on the CIL Neighbourhood Fund. Any further information on the scheme can be provided by the CGU.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

- **Strategic implications:** the approved grants of the panel support the funding criteria and, in turn, the City Corporation's Corporate Plan by "maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities" as well as the delivery of the City's Cultural and Visitor Strategies.
- **Financial implications:** all financial implications are contained within the report.
- **Risk implications:** none identified.
- **Resource implications:** all resource implications are contained within the report.
- **Legal implications:** none.
- **Equalities implications:** the Central Grants Programme *Inspiring London through Culture* funding stream was created to promote a fair system of grant giving by the City Corporation in the cultural context. Prioritisation of applications benefitting the City communities most affected by the pandemic, be they artists facing financial hardship, community groups facing digital and/or educational poverty, or those affected by isolation and well-being issues amongst other themes
- **Climate implications:** none
- **Security implications:** none

## Conclusion

17. This report summarises the discussions of the *Inspiring London through Culture* grants assessment panel and presents the decisions made in relation to the applications considered on 3 March 2021, as well as proposes a refined process for the consideration of grants under the theme driving value and delivering the opportunity for a fairer and more balanced assessment system.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – *Inspiring London through Culture* – Eligibility Criteria
- Appendix 2 – *Inspiring London through Culture*: project outline of Decisions to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee
- Appendix 3 - *Inspiring London through Culture*: table of grants rejected, deferred or withdrawn

## Background Papers

Full details of all applications to the *Inspiring London through Culture* grant scheme are available on request from the Cultural and Visitor Development Director

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