

Committee(s): Finance Grants Oversight and Performance Sub-Committee	Dated: 21/06/2021
Subject: Central Grants Programme – Annual Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2,3,4,9, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Managing Director of Bridge House Estates and Chief Charities Officer	For Information
Report author: Jack Joslin, Head of the Central Grants Unit	

Summary

This annual report provides an update on the Central Grants Programme (CGP). The report includes the outcomes of the four CGP grant programmes delivered in 2020/21.

Recommendations:

- a) To note the Central Grants Programme (CGP) Annual Report

Main Report

Background

1. The CGU was established in October 2016 to manage the effectiveness of the CGP based on recommendations of the Effectiveness of Grants Service Based Review (SBR) 2014/15.
2. The CGU is co-located with the City Bridge Trust (CBT) team in the Town Clerk’s Department in order to facilitate consistency of approach and harmonise service standards across grant-making activities by the City Corporation (in its various capacities, including as trustee of a number of charities which form part of the CGP). The CGU supports the ambitions of the 'role-modelling' pillar of the Joint Philanthropy Strategy, approved in May 2018, by enabling a more joined up, consistent and ultimately impactful approach to all grant-making taking place across the City of London Corporation and its Charitable Funder, City Bridge Trust.

3. In March 2018 the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and Policy and Resources Committee met and both agreed to support the implementation of the CGP on a permanent basis from the 1st April 2018.
4. The four CGP funding themes were agreed in March 2016 by the Policy and Resources Committee, and the eligibility criteria subsequently agreed by each respective grant-giving committee.

Overview of CGP

1. Like all City of London Departments, the CGU had to adapt to the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. All staff have been working from home throughout the period and continued to deliver grant programmes remotely. The CGU has always delivered a paperless process since its inception so did not need to amend many processes.
2. To replicate best practice approach of CBT, the CGU signed up to London Funders' Pledge to offer support to civil society groups affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. Contact was made with all CGU grantees on several occasions outlining how projects could be extended, and money could be spent differently where required in order to support the small organisations we work with. The CGU Team had conversations with many organisations that had been affected in different ways by the lockdown restrictions and used their resulting insights to influence the wider work CBT have been doing in this field.
3. The CGP maintained its existing deadlines to ensure that organisations still had access to support and could still plan projects for the future. Several applications were considered out of funding rounds to respond to emerging needs.
4. The CGP role-models best practice in grant making by working collaboratively with departments to ensure that the most impactful funding decisions are made across the grant's programmes. The use of expert Officer Panels adds rich expertise to the process that draws on the wealth of knowledge and talent within the organisation. The knowledge of grant making best practice is delivered by the CGU with decisions being made by informed Officers and Committees across CoLC.
5. The table below outlines the total number of successful applications awarded in the year ending 31 March 2021. It is worth noting that the CGP received 92 applications for support in the year, with only one third of these being successful.

12 Month Grant Period April 2020 – March 2021		
CoL Programme	Number of Grants	Amount Awarded
Education & Employment	0	0
Inspiring London through Culture	12	£92,888
Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment	7	£83,568
Stronger Communities	12	£99,189
Combined Relief of Poverty Charity	2	£15,795
Total	33	£291,440

6. Detail of all applications approved, withdrawn and rejected under the CGP in 2020/21 is shown at **Appendix 1**.

Education and Employment

7. The Education and Employment theme of the Central Grants Programme is responsible for the distribution of funds from the City Educational Trust Fund (290840) and The City of London Corporation Combined Education Charity (312836). Grant decisions for this programme are made by the Education Charity Sub-Committee.
8. A grant programme was delivered in April 2020, with only a few applications received. During the assessment process it was highlighted that the deficit brought forward from 2018/19 and grants awarded in the year had to be covered by income received in 2019/20, which left a low balance in unrestricted income funds that were carried forward as at 31 March 2020. As the charities cannot forecast the level of income due to be received in 2020/21 due to the impact of Coronavirus, it was unable to make grant commitments ahead of the next investment income distribution due in October 2020.
9. At the Education Board in July 2020 Members noted that if any grants were awarded by the City Educational Trust Fund then the charity would hold a deficit within its unrestricted income funds. The Combined Education Charity would be overdrawn on cash balances held as its income funds are held in non-liquid investments and cannot be accessed until October 2020.
10. The Committee therefore approved the rejection of the three applications received and moved to close the programme for the rest of the financial year. The CGU has since worked with the applicants to identify other funding bodies to approach to support the work that was applied for.
11. The Corporate Charity Review (CC Review) has undertaken a review of these two education charities and has submitted proposals to the relevant Committees in June/July for improved policy and administration arrangements in the best interests of each charity. A separate report will be prepared for your Sub-Committee outlining these proposals (if agreed) and the involvement of the CGU in September 2021.

Inspiring London through Culture

12. One of the three City's Cash Grants Programmes, the Inspiring London through Culture programme, remains one of the most in demand themes under the Central Grants Programme.
13. 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.
14. In the January grant round the CGU outlined to the officer 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 programme budget. Grants totalling £44,563 were approved spending the full budget for the year totalling £92,888.
15. At the Inspiring London through Culture Panel meeting in March the panel discussed the implications of the cut to the City's Cash grants budget and proposed to move to one grant programme a year rather than the two that are currently offered. Noting that the previous top award of £15,000 represents 20% of the total grant figure, it was also suggested that a maximum grant level of £10,000 should be applied to the programme. These recommendations seek to make best use of the funding available by enabling it to be shared amongst a greater number of applicants and will enable the panel to assess applications holistically in one go. This may also allow for a fairer balance across communities and cultural disciplines.
16. This approach was approved at the Culture Heritage and Libraries Committee in March 2021. A new application deadline for 2021/22 has been set for November, with decisions in January 2022.

Stronger Communities

17. The Stronger Communities Programme is funded from City's Cash and from the City of London Corporation Combined Relief of Poverty Charity (1073660).
18. At the February 2020 CCS Committee meeting, it was resolved that the CGU administer the City's Cash Small Grants (up to £3,000) element of the Stronger Communities Programme on a rolling basis from 1 April 2020. A subsequent paper went to September 2020 CCS Committee to extend this approach to the Main Grant programme to ensure that the programme can react to emerging community needs in a more strategic and impactful way. This has been well received by the sector and allowed for the CGU to deepen its collaboration with DCCS.
19. The Stronger Communities Programme received a huge amount of initial applications and enquiries at the start of the year due to an erroneous perception that the programme was London-wide. Further work has been done to clarify the area of benefit through the website.

20. Two Grants totalling £15,795 were awarded in 2020/21 through the City of London Combined Relief of Poverty Charity in April and July 2020 to support Age UK City of London with its efforts to set up a City of London Foodbank.
21. There had previously been challenges in attracting suitable applications for the City of London Combined Relief of Poverty Charity and the policy for the charity has been subject to review to also take account of the transfer of funds from two other charities¹. A new funding strategy which is more suitable to the charity, but still operating within the Stronger Communities Programme and supporting its overarching policy objectives was approved by the Community and Children's Services Committee on the 27 September 2020 . The CGU continue to work with DCCS Officers to explore grant making policy and will be updating the Children and Community Services Committee on this progress in June 2021.
22. The CGU is doing further work with DCCS Officers to explore different options for Strategic Grants. Consideration will need to be made to how grants are publicised in light in the reduction to the City's Cash Grants Budget.

Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment

23. This programme is funded solely from City's Cash. Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment delivered one programme in 2020/21. The October grant awarded 7 grants totalling £83,568.
24. The programme continues to offer one funding deadline each year. CGU Officers usually visit the different open spaces sites to publicise the programme and deliver grant workshops. Due to the impact of Coronavirus these events did not go ahead in person in 2020/21. Instead the CGU provided advice and support on request to all potential applicants to the scheme, working with Open Spaces officers to ensure it was well publicised.
25. The CGU will continue to offer one grant programme a year, with the next deadline for this programme in October 2021.

General

26. The table below outlines the shows the application deadlines for the CGP in 2020/21.

¹ Nearly £300,000 was transferred from the Corporation of London Benevolent Association in 2019 and around £15,000 from the Signor Favale Marriage Portion Charity in 2020, the former being subject to binding restrictions on the application of those funds, the latter being subject to an expression of wishes which was accepted in receiving the funds.

Funding Theme	Application Deadlines
Education and Employment	Proposed January 2021
Inspiring London through Culture	November 2021
Stronger Communities	Both Small and Main Grant Programmes are accessible throughout the year
Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment	October 2021

Conclusion

27. Although operating in a difficult environment the CGP continued to provide funding for a range of projects, supporting communities, green space management and cultural activity. The CGP continues to role-model best practice in grant making and works collaboratively across CoLC to ensure the grants awarded make the maximum impact.

Appendix 1 – Overview of Approved, Rejected and Withdrawn Grants 2020/21

Background Papers:

- Policy and Resources Committee, January 2017, 'Review and Reclassification of Former Finance Grants Sub-Committee Grants'.
- Policy and Resources Committee, March 2018, 'Central Grants Programme Review'

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