

<b>Committee(s):</b> Community and Children's Services Committee	<b>Date(s):</b> 01/05/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Stronger Communities Annual Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Managing Director of the City Bridge Foundation	<b>For Information</b>

### Summary

The Stronger Communities theme of the Central Grants Programme (CGP) opened in October 2016. The integration of the Small Grants Scheme into the Stronger Communities Programme took place in February 2018. The Central Grants Unit (CGU) offers the Stronger Communities scheme on a rolling basis to ensure that the funds were more accessible to City of London communities. This report provides an overview of projects funded through the programme in 2023/24 Financial Year.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the criteria for the Stronger Communities Programme at **Appendix 1**
- Note the recent grants awarded from the Stronger Communities Fund at **Appendix 2**.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The Stronger Communities theme is a strand of the City of London Corporation's (CoLC's) CGP that awards grants to projects or services that are being delivered for the benefit of communities or individual beneficiaries within the City of London and its housing estates across London.
2. The Community and Children Services Committee delegate the award of grants to Officers of the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS).
3. The grant assessment process for this and other themes in the programme is overseen by the CGU. It draws on the unit's expertise in the field of grant-making and demonstrates good practice. The CGU manage a number of other grant programmes on behalf of the City of London including the CIL Neighbourhood Fund and Proceeds of Crime Act Funding.
4. Grant applications are subject to a series of due diligence checks by the CGU to ensure compliance with the established eligibility criteria. All eligible applications are then considered by a panel of expert departmental officers.

## **Stronger Communities Programme**

5. In February 2018, the Community and Children's Services Committee agreed to add Small Grants to the Stronger Communities Programme, as there was no longer resource in the Department to deliver a Small Grants Scheme of its own. A discreet budget was made available to ensure that Small Grant applications would be available under the main programme. The funding is open all year round with decisions made on a rolling basis.
6. Delivering the grants programme on a rolling basis has allowed for communities to seek funding when it is required and receive quicker responses to applications.
7. In 2023/24 the CGU received 17 applications in total. 8 organisations were awarded funding under the main grants programme, with 3 organisations awarded funding under the small grants programme. 6 Applications were rejected or withdrawn with most of these applications being for projects outside the City of London and its managed housing estates.
8. The Central Grants Programme has an annual City's Estate budget of £220,000 split across three grant programmes. The Stronger Communities programme receive an annual budget of the £73,000 to allocate to eligible applications. In 2023/24 funding of £77,612 was awarded over 11 grants, a list of all of these grants and more detail on the projects funded can be found at **Appendix 2**. The overspend on this programme have been covered by funds written back in year and allocated to the programme.
9. The CGU is in the process of reviewing its grant programmes, which will include a review of the Stronger Communities programme later in the year. With a substantive update brought back to Committee in due course.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

10. The CGP Stronger Communities funding strand was created to promote a fair system of grant-giving by the CoLC.
11. The Stronger Communities Programme is a rolling programme, making it more accessible to the City of London communities and those who live in its housing estates across London.

## **Conclusion**

12. The Stronger Communities Programme will be established on a rolling basis to ensure consistent community access for all levels of funding. The CGU will provide advice and guidance to applicants about all of the funding that may be available to City of London communities or those living in its housing estates.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – CoLC Stronger Communities Eligibility 2024
- Appendix 2 – Stronger Communities – Approved Assessments

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