

Grants Committee

Grants Programme 2021-25

Item: 14

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Date: 10 July 2019
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Summary

The current Grants Programme is a four-year programme that is due to complete at the end of March 2021. The programme operates across three priority areas:

Priority 1 - Combatting Homelessness

Priority 2 - Tackling Sexual and Domestic Violence

Priority 3 - Tackling Poverty through Employment

Leaders' Committee determines the principles and priorities of the Programme and the overall budget of the Programme. The Grants Committee commissions services, makes awards of funding, manages projects' performance and may advise Leaders' Committee on the Programme.

This paper offers options to start developing a future 2021-25 Grants Programme that Grants Committee may wish to consider, and then make recommendations to Leaders' Committee.

Recommendations

Grants Committee is asked to:

- discuss and consider a new Grants Programme for 2021-25, and the activities presented at paragraph 4.1 to start the development of the programme
- make recommendations to Leaders' Committee to enable Leaders to determine the principles, priorities and overall budget of the Programme
- task officers with undertaking the detailed work to develop the Programme
- agree that officers should consult with and keep Grants Executive informed of activity before the next Grants Committee meeting in November

1 Background

- 1.1 London Councils manages the London Councils Grants Programme on behalf of all the boroughs and the City of London. The Programme makes grants to voluntary organisations to deliver improved outcomes for Londoners.
- 1.2 The Programme operates within a scheme made under Section 48 of the Local Government Act 1985. It is a collective scheme i.e. all the boroughs fund the Programme, through a levy contribution based on the boroughs proportion of the capital's population. Boroughs must exercise their functions in respect of the scheme 'with due regard to the needs of the whole of Greater London'.
- 1.3 Leaders' Committee determines the principles and priorities of the Programme and the overall budget of the Programme. The Grants Committee commissions services, makes awards of funding, manages projects' performance and may advise Leaders' Committee on the Programme.
- 1.4 The current Programme priorities, agreed by Leaders in 2016, are:
 - 1.4.1 Priority 1 - Combatting Homelessness
 - 1.4.2 Priority 2 - Tackling Sexual and Domestic Violence
 - 1.4.3 Priority 3 - Tackling Poverty through Employment
- 1.5 The principles under which the Programme operates are:
 - 1.5.1 Commissioning services that deliver effectively and can meet the outcomes specified by London Councils, rather than funding organisations
 - 1.5.2 Commissioning services where there is clear evidence of need for services that complement borough and other services to support organisations that deliver services
 - 1.5.3 Commissioning services where it is economical and efficient to deliver services on a London wide basis or where mobility is key to delivery of a service to secure personal safety
 - 1.5.4 Commissioning services that cannot reasonably be delivered locally, at a borough or sub-regional level
 - 1.5.5 Commissioning services that work with statutory and non-statutory partners and contribute to meeting the objectives of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.6 The Programme priorities were agreed following an extensive review of the Grants Programme in 2015, which included a wide-ranging public consultation. That

consultation concluded that tackling homelessness, combatting sexual and domestic violence and addressing poverty through employment should remain priorities for the Grants Programme. One priority from the 2012 Programme - Capacity Building to support London's voluntary and community organisations including help with fundraising and developing partnership work between these organisations - was discontinued, and aspects of capacity development were built into the remaining priorities (partnership working in particular).

- 1.7 The review did not seek to challenge or re-define the Programme principles, as Grants Committee at that time was content that they remained relevant.
- 1.8 This paper offers options to start developing a future 2021-25 Grants Programme that Grants Committee may wish to consider, and then make recommendations to Leaders' Committee.

2 Establishing Current London-Wide Priorities

- 2.1 As noted in paragraph 1.6, an extensive public consultation in 2015 reconfirmed that tackling homelessness, combatting sexual and domestic violence and addressing poverty through employment, should remain priorities for the Programme. These priorities were then formally agreed by Leaders' Committee.
- 2.2 In establishing the current London-wide priorities in relation to a potential future Grants Programme, it is important to start with what Leaders' Committee has already identified.
- 2.3 London Councils' Leaders' Committee has published a series of Pledges to Londoners¹, which the Leaders and Mayors of all 32 London boroughs and the City of London have jointly agreed to work together to deliver. Spread across seven policy areas, the Pledges represent a comprehensive set of plans for joint action that will improve life for Londoners by 2022. The themes and pledges are connected by the common thread of how local borough leadership integrates public services to deliver against the big challenges facing communities across London.
- 2.4 There are 46 specific pledges to all Londoners, across seven key policy areas:
 - 2.4.1 housing
 - 2.4.2 better health and care
 - 2.4.3 supporting business and inclusive growth

¹ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/who-we-are/pledges-londoners>

- 2.4.4 crime and public protection
- 2.4.5 transport and the environment
- 2.4.6 funding London
- 2.4.7 new ways of working.

2.5 Housing, crime and public protection and supporting business and inclusive growth demonstrate a continued commitment to the current Grants Programme priorities.

Housing

2.6 In addition to ambitions plans for house building, this key policy area includes a commitment to reduce homelessness:

2.6.1 “Supporting each other to reduce homelessness through collaboration across London including:

- Committing to use the boroughs’ joint company Capital Letters as a procurement vehicle for temporary accommodation.
- Providing a homelessness prevention service in every London borough based on boroughs sharing their best in class services and gaining adequate funding from central government.
- Developing a borough led pan-London strategy to end rough sleeping.
- Engage government to create more effective and fully funded solutions for homelessness and temporary accommodation in London.”

Crime and public protection

2.7 This policy area sets out Leaders commitment to building a safe city, where the upward trend in all serious violence is reversed, including against women and girls:

2.7.1 “Better safeguard women and girls through delivery of our VAWG strategy including the establishment of a pan-London approach to commissioning refuges for women suffering domestic abuse.”

Supporting business and inclusive growth

2.8 This policy area sets out Leaders commitment to business growth and to ensuring that all Londoners can share in the capital’s business success, and includes goals for increasing skills and employment:

2.8.1 “Working alongside the Mayor to transform adult skills training through the devolved powers starting in 2019; supporting in work progression and ensuring that we meet the job aspirations of learners and the skills needs of business in each part of London.

Supporting 55,000 disadvantaged Londoners towards a job through the devolved employment programme agreed with the DWP.”

2.9 The Pledges to Londoners show a strong, continued commitment to the Grants Programme priorities. As Leaders have already committed to these priorities, undertaking an extensive, and resource intensive consultation and review would not appear efficient or effective, however, a review of the service areas may be more appropriate.

3 Current Service Areas

3.1 Priority 1 and 2 have distinct, strands, or service areas of activity. For Priority 1, these are:

3.1.1 *Homelessness and Early Intervention* - Prevent homelessness through intensive support to key target groups, to sustain accommodation and increase individual resilience and independence (including targeted intervention for individuals that are street homeless).

3.1.2 *Youth Homelessness* - Prevent young people age 16 to 24 becoming homeless and support them to independent lives, ensuring interventions are responsive to local situations.

3.1.3 *Support Services to Homelessness VCOs* - Prevent homelessness and increase housing opportunities by improving the service delivery and effectiveness of frontline homelessness organisations.

3.2 For Priority 2, these are:

3.2.1 *Prevention* - To prevent current and future sexual and domestic violence by addressing gender stereotypes and the acceptability/condoning of sexual and domestic violence (including child sexual exploitation), knowledge of myths, warning signs, and healthy relationships (including appropriate support for children who disclose).

3.2.2 *Advice, counselling, outreach, drop-in* - To increase the safety and wellbeing of people who have experienced sexual and domestic violence and support them towards safe choices and independent lives, through intensive support.

- 3.2.3 *Helpline and coordinated access to refuge provision* - People affected by sexual and domestic violence can access the help they need including advice, support and access to emergency refuge provision through a helpline service and refuge database updated daily; commissioners and regional strategic leads are able to effectively coordinate refuge provision based on robust refuge data.
- 3.2.4 *Specialist emergency refuge provision* - To reduce immediate danger to life for high risk victims. To support service users to rebuild their lives (including sustainable housing solutions).
- 3.2.5 *Support services to sexual and domestic violence VCOs* - To support voluntary and community organisations working in the sexual and domestic violence sector to be more sustainable and resilient; to develop better working between voluntary and community organisations, local authorities, health services, and supporting links between Priority 1 and Priority 2
- 3.2.6 *Harmful practices (Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Violence, other)* - To support those at risk/affected by harmful practices and raise their awareness of the choices available to them, helping them to make safer choices and exit violent situations; rebuilding confidence, health, emotional wellbeing and independence through culturally specific services.
- 3.3 A targeted, focused review of the service areas for Priority 1 and 2 - with Grants Committee members, borough officers and appropriate stakeholders – would be less resource intensive and would enable Grants Committee to refine the service areas for the current landscape, in an efficient and effective way.
- 3.4 Priority 3 did not have discrete service areas and was aimed at tackling poverty through employment. This element of the Programme completed delivery at the end of June 2019. Whilst tackling poverty through employment remains a priority, Grants Committee decided not to pursue further employment projects in the current Programme as the wider welfare landscape had changed significantly over the past few years, most (if not all) boroughs had their own local programmes of activity, and many Priority 1 and 2 providers had employment related activity built into or available to beneficiaries.
- 3.5 Considering the Pledges to Londoners – a commitment to “...supporting in work progression and ensuring that we meet the job aspirations of learners and the skills needs of business in each part of London”, there may be an opportunity for the Grants Programme to support a strategic pan-London approach to tackling in-work poverty.
- 3.6 The latest Trust for London Poverty Profile data highlights that 58 per cent of Londoners in poverty live in a working family; an increase from 44 per cent a decade ago.

- 3.7 Whilst there is a complex relationship between low pay, the flexible labour market and living standards, there are some factors that are common when reviewing in-work poverty. Nuffield Foundation funded research (*In-work poverty in the UK: Problem, policy analysis and platform for action*, R. Hick & A. Lanau (2017)) identified that:
- 3.7.1 a key determinant of the experience of in-work poverty is having only one worker in the household. People living in one earner households face a very significantly elevated risk of in-work poverty, and account for almost six in ten people experiencing working poverty, more than double their population share. Understanding in-work poverty requires a shift from thinking about individual workers to thinking about the whole household and whether its income is adequate to meet its needs.
 - 3.7.2 The rise in in-work poverty has been concentrated amongst households in the private rented sector and in social housing.
- 3.8 The Evaluation of the Skills Escalator pilot, a trial project in West London targeted at residents living in the private rented sector or in temporary accommodation in receipt of partial Housing Benefit, with the intention that by overcoming barriers to progression, and increasing earnings, found that participants experienced a range of cross-cutting barriers that limited their ability to improve their earnings, including:
- 3.8.1 Individual behavioural and emotional barriers - including confidence, motivation and lacking direction
 - 3.8.2 Household barriers - including childcare and care for sick or disabled relatives which could limit the time they had available to commit to taking steps to improve their situation
 - 3.8.3 Complex housing or financial situations - which could distract clients from dealing with their employment issues and threatened disengagement from the programme in crisis situations
 - 3.8.4 Limited labour market and employability knowledge, with clients struggling to make successful applications in the right career sectors.
- 3.9 The pilot service offered residents an integrated support offer to help them increase their skills and enable them to achieve career development and/or career change and improve earnings. The project, whilst relatively small demonstrated some success; the evaluation makes several recommendations for rolling out support on a larger scale to tackle in-work poverty that could deliver greater impact.

- 3.10 A targeted consultation with boroughs, to identify the most effective ways to address in-work poverty would provide information to enable Grants Committee to refocus Priority 3 to tackle poverty through reducing in-work poverty.

4 A course of action

- 4.1 This report outlines a starting point to take forward a new Grants Programme for 2021-25, that Grants Committee may wish to consider, namely:
- 4.1.1 a targeted, focused review of the service areas for Priority 1 and 2 - with Grants Committee members, borough officers and appropriate stakeholders
 - 4.1.2 a targeted consultation with boroughs, to identify the most effective ways to address in-work poverty to refocus Priority 3 to tackle poverty through reducing in-work poverty.
- 4.2 These options have been developed considering existing pan-London priorities, with undertaking the work towards a new Programme with efficiency and effectiveness and taking account of discussions between the Chair and Vice Chairs of Grants Committee with the Chair of London Councils at a Portfolio Holders meeting earlier this year.
- 4.3 This report is brought to Committee at this point in the current cycle as several activities will need to take place over the next 18 months to bring about a new Programme. The broad, outline timetable would be:
- 4.3.1 *Summer/Autumn 2019*: Grants Committee recommends to Leaders' that a new Programme is established for 2021-25; Leaders' Committee approves the principles and priorities of the Programme and the budget for the Programme
 - 4.3.2 *Autumn 2019*: Focussed review of priorities to better understand borough needs and develop service specifications with the boroughs
 - 4.3.3 *March/July 2020*: Grants Committee reviews and endorses service specifications
 - 4.3.4 *Summer 2020*: Service specifications advertised, and bids sought
 - 4.3.5 *Autumn 2020*: Applications assessed with boroughs and other key stakeholders
 - 4.3.6 *November 2020*: Leaders' Committee considers the 2021-22 budget, following recommendations from Grants Committee.
 - 4.3.7 *February 2020*: Grants Committee considers recommendations for individual applications
 - 4.3.8 *April 2020*: New Programme starts.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Grants Committee is asked to:

- 5.1.1 discuss and consider a new Grants Programme for 2021-25, and the activities presented at paragraph 4.1 to start the development of the programme
- 5.1.2 make recommendations to Leaders' Committee to enable Leaders to determine the principles, priorities and overall budget of the Programme
- 5.1.3 task officers with undertaking the detailed work to develop the Programme
- 5.1.4 agree that officers should consult with and keep Grants Executive informed of activity before the next Grants Committee meeting in November

Financial Implications for London Councils

Funding for any future commissions will need to be agreed by Leaders' Committee.

Legal Implications for London Councils

London Councils manages the London Councils Grants Programme on behalf of all the boroughs and the City of London. The Programme makes grants to voluntary organisations to deliver improved outcomes for Londoners.

The Programme operates within a scheme made under Section 48 of the Local Government Act 1985. It is a collective scheme i.e. all the boroughs fund the Programme, through a levy contribution based on the boroughs proportion of the capital's population. Boroughs must exercise their functions in respect of the scheme 'with due regard to the needs of the whole of Greater London'.

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Legal advice has been sought on the scope of the consultation and equality impact assessment requirements.

Equalities Implications for London Councils

In reaching decisions for the implementation of any future grants programme, the Committee is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equalities Act 2010, particularly the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

London Councils' funded services provide support to people within all the protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010), and targets groups highlighted as particularly hard to reach or more affected by the issues being tackled. Funded organisations are also required to submit equalities monitoring data, which can be collated across the grants scheme to provide data on the take up of services and gaps in provision to be addressed. The grants team reviews this data annually.