Questions from the engagement workshop sessions

During the six engagement workshops participants raised several questions. In this document we have attempted to respond to those questions we were able to respond to.

**Mayor’s Community Grant Programme**

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| **1** | **How did LBTH come to these priorities?**  The priorities have been identified to support the delivery of the Council’s [Strategic Plan 2022-26.](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/community_plan/strategic_plan.aspx) |
| **2** | **Are these the areas with greatest need?**  The Council’s priorities are based on evidence from data and community engagement. These have informed the development of our new Strategic Plan which was agreed by Cabinet in 2022. |
| **3** | **What’s the level of duplication with existing provision?**  The proposed funding will support activities which add value to existing provision. |
| **4** | **Are we targeting opportunities for youth art?**  The proposed funding will support a range of youth provision to support children and young people. |
| **5** | **Can there be some consideration to timing of small grants programme offer so that people can apply for small grants to run events for Black History Month 2023**  **The Council will consider how it can support activities during Black History Month 2023.** |
| **6** | **Do organisations need match funding to be eligible?**  There is no requirement for match funding. The proposed assessment process will give some credit for other resources levered in such as volunteers, other non-financial resources and funding for other projects |
| **7** | **Will there be provision or preference for activities that have secured external funding for large one-off events, eg. Festivals**  The proposed grant programme will support a range of activities and events to support local residents. |
| **8** | **What will be the size of the max grants? Larger events have larger costs to hold (up to 5K for venue hire for example).**  Size of grant is currently being considered and will be confirmed in the published prospectus. |
| **9** | **What limitations will there be around project costs and delivery costs?**  You should apply for the funds your organisation needs to be able to deliver your projects effectively, whilst being mindful of the overall budget available for each theme and the scope of the schemes and priorities within it  We will ask for a budget as part of the assessment of value for money and to ensure the project is fully costed. |
| **10** | **Are we going to re-instate grants to celebrate International Women’s day?**  The proposed grant programme will support a range of community events. |
| **11** | **Are we going to include childcare for targeted services aimed at women?**  Projects aimed at women may want to consider this or other provision. |
| **12** | **What kind of support package will be available to get a quality assurance mark? Can we work with THCVS? Other local authorities to get that?**  THCVS and the Council will be able to support organisations to get a quality mark. |
| **13** | **Will the application process involve written application only or also interviews/ meetings?**  The application process will be written application only. |
| **14** | **Where are the food bank options? Is that within the cost of living?**  This could be delivered within the cost-of-living priority and applicants should consider how any provision meets the requirement of the theme and its priorities. |
| **15** | **Crisis support needs defining in this scheme, what does this entail?**  Further details will be set out in the published prospectus. |
| **16** | **Crisis support can include hardship funds for people that need immediate support with buying white goods, topping up fuel meters, food vouchers, how does link to council’s hardship fund? Will it duplicate this?**  This will complement existing provision and is not set to duplicate the existing council hardship fund. |
| **17** | **How do we link to existing services, I.e London debt free provision provided by Toynhee Hall?**  The advice provision across the borough is supported by THCAN and through this forum providers are expected to link into existing provision. |
| **18** | **The cost of living and the impact of health, why is that not a priority?**  The cost of living is a priority theme and health under themed called Invest is public services is a priority. |
| **19** | **There is nothing under employment within the cost of living, why is that?**  There is a separate theme called culture, business, jobs and skills. |
| **20** | **What does accelerate “education” mean? Does it include informal and formal education?**  Accelerate education is ensuring we can collectively support all residents to use education to improve their employment opportunities. This includes both formal and informal education. |
| **21** | **Why has Culture, Business, Jobs and Skills been put all under one theme, when they are all different? What do each one mean?**  Culture, Business and Jobs and Skills is a key priority in our strategic Plan. Further details can be found here:[Strategic Plan 2022-26.](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/community_plan/strategic_plan.aspx) |
| **22** | **How can adults with mental health and with barriers to jobs and skills fit into the youth provision?**  This will fit in the Culture, Business, Jobs and Skills theme under the priority job brokerage. |
| **23** | **How much of the grant will cover:**   * **Core costs,** * **Electricity cost,** * **Premises,** * **Etc?**   Further details on what the grants can cover will be in the published prospectus. |
| **24** | **How much funding will be available for the Mayors Grants Programme and how much for the Small Grants Programme?**  The Mayor’s Community Grants Programme annual budget will be approximately £3.5 million and the Small Grants Programme annual budget will be approximately £800,000. These budget are subjects to agreement by the Council’s Cabinet. |
| **25** | **The council need to be clear what outcomes needs to be achieved as part of the Mayor’s Community Grant programme?**  The published prospectus will set out the outcomes to be achieved as part of the Grants Programme. |
| **26** | **Invest in Public services- is this statutory public services?**  The focus of this theme is to improve health and wellbeing of local people. |
| **27** | **Public services themes, does this aim to tackle one or multiple inequalities?**  The priorities focuses on multiple inequalities. |
| **28** | **Public Services- can projects be intergenerational?**  Organisations can decide on nature of their projects. |
| **29** | **Can organisations bid across priorities? Projects overlap across themes.**  The published prospectus will set out further details. |
| **30** | **Can we work in partnership with other organisations?**  A key principle of the grant is to encourage partnership working between organisations. |
| **31** | **Empower Communities & Fight crime- Beyond the streets- Project around women as sex workers, would trying to change attitude around projects like this fit into this category?**  Further details on the priority and outcomes will be included in the published prospectus. |
| **32** | **Will there be a further session to see how our ideas have been considered?**  Once the programme is launched we are aim to hold events which will include details of how ideas have been considered. |
| **33** | **What is the value of the Mayor’s Grant Programme and how was this calculated?**  The total value of the programme is £3.5m which includes growth agreed by the Mayor on the current Local Community Fund. |
| **34** | **Violence against women and girls doesn’t seem to appear in the themes?**  **Violence against women and girls in a priority within the Empower Communities and Tackle Crime theme.?** |
| **35** | **Is there an up to date directory of the voluntary sector?**  Tower Hamlets Council commissioned the set up and management of Tower Hamlets Connect which provides information and advice to borough residents on health and social care, local events and community services across the borough, including voluntary sector services. The council encourages VCS organisations to register on Tower Hamlets Connect to promote their services. |
| **36** | **What do you mean by “promoting” culture?**  Enabling borough’s diverse residents to participate in cultural activities. |
| **37** | **Nowhere in the priorities is there anything to do with well-being or tackling isolation post covid?**  Invest in Public Services theme is focused on well-being and tackling isolation. |
| **38** | **Would we get extra points during the assessment stage if we attempt to cover more than 2 priorities under a theme?**  The assessment details will be included in the published prospectus. |
| **39** | **Accelerate Education: Where is the importance of play reflected? It’s vital that we support services that enable/offer and support play opportunities.**  This can be incorporated in Investing in Public service under theme 4b 'Physical and Mental Health of Residents'. Further details will be in published prospectus. |

**Small Grants Programme**

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| **1** | **Can we have less questions for monitoring for small grants programme?**  This will be considered in the development of the proposed Small Grants Programme. |
| **2** | **Do small organisations need to have a Quality assurance mark? If so, what kind of support is available to the small organisations?**  Some services will need to have some quality assurance and support will be available from THCVS. One of the proposed theme of the Small Grants Programme is Mayor’s Capacity Building Programme which will enable organisations to access Quality assurance support. |
| **3** | **How much funding is available per theme?**  The size of the grant is currently being considered and will be confirmed in the published prospectus for the Small Grants Programme. |
| **4** | Is the Small Grants programme open to Peer led groups that are not a registered charity but are delivering mental health support services?  Groups will need to ensure they have basic governance process in place such as a constitution that is sufficient to cover the not for profit principles and to get a bank account or the group could get a partner organisation to apply on its behalf as an accountable body. Further details will be available once the Small Grants Programme is launch. |
| **5** | **Will the application process involve written application only or also interviews/ meetings?**  Only written application. |
| **6** | **Too much emphasis on “young people”, what about the marginalised groups e.g those with special educational needs, or older people?,**  The overall grants programme and council’s wider work will ensure all sections of the community are supported. |

**General**

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| **1** | **What kind of quality assurance will you put in place and will it link in with TH Connects? (which has a two-level sign up process for VCS groups in the online database)**  The Council will put measures in place to ensure all funded organisations provide a quality service. The requirements for this will be laid out in funding agreements between the council and organisations and will include written reports and visits. A requirement of the funding will be for all organisations to share details of their service on Tower Hamlets Connects, which is the Councils website to provide information and advice, and information of community events and services.  <https://www.towerhamletsconnect.org/> |
| **2** | **Can individuals who were alumni and involved in attending local VCS organisations have access to apply for funding to start their own business/ organisations?**  The proposed grants programme has a range of themes which will support small VCS organisations. The proposed grants programme will not fund individuals or businesses that are not set up as ‘not-for-profit. |
| **3** | **How are you going to capture the “social value” rather than it being outcome drive/ or a numbers game?**  This will be considered as part of the development of the proposed grants prospectus. |
| **4** | **Will the Workshop engagement sessions be recorded and slides sent around?**  The slides are available on the council website. |
| **5** | **Do you have data on how much the voluntary sector brings into the borough VS what the local authority gives?**  As at March 2023 VCS organisations in Tower Hamlets had secured £44.3 million in external funding related to the pandemic – the fifteenth highest total for a borough in the UK and the ninth highest for a London borough. |