

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2623

### Title: COVID-19: Voluntary and community sector emergency support fund

#### Executive Summary:

COVID-19 is an international pandemic which has affected all of the UK. London is currently experiencing the highest number of cases. Voluntary and community sector and civil society organisations are already experiencing a combined impact of loss of volunteers and funding, the requirement to repurpose services and increasing need for those services.

This decision is to approve a GLA contribution of £5m to an Emergency Support Fund, developed in collaboration with City Bridge Trust, London Funders and other funders across London. It will provide urgent financial support for London's voluntary and community sector.

The funding will be released in tranches, on evidence of need from the sector, and dependent on matched funding being available from other funders across London. The initial tranche of funding will be £1m.

#### Decision:

That the Mayor:

- 1) approves expenditure of up to £5m from GLA reserves to fund a COVID-19 emergency support fund for the voluntary and community sector and civil society organisations. This funding will be paid to the Corporation of London to hold on behalf of City Bridge Trust.
- 2) delegates authority to the Executive Director of Communities & Skills to approve expenditure from that £5m of £1m to be paid as grant funding over the next three months, subject to a) matched funding being received (in aggregate) from other funders across London, and b) on provision of evidence of need for the funding from the sector (i.e. suitable applications being received via the unified funding portal).
- 3) delegates authority to the Chief of Staff and the Executive Director of Resources to approve further expenditure of between £1m and £5m from that £5m if required, subject to a) matched funding being received (in aggregate) from other funders across London, and b) on provision of evidence of appetite for the funding from the sector.

#### Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date: 01 April 2020

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. The voluntary and community sector and civil society play a vital role in supporting Londoners, particularly vulnerable and low-income Londoners. This is in multiple ways, working with all age groups and all sectors, including food poverty, housing, legal advice, youth services, domestic violence charities and many more. Funding can be precarious and organisations do not have substantial reserves.
- 1.2. We have now entered a period of unprecedented demand for the services of these organisations, combined with a loss of resources available to the sector. The Mayor wishes to join with other funders and partners across London to provide emergency support funding to the sector at this time. In order to do this the Mayor will commit up to £5m to the Emergency Support Fund, from GLA reserves. This funding will be released in tranches of £1m, according to the levels of need and applications from the sector. The funding will be paid over to the Corporation of London to hold on behalf of City Bridge Trust<sup>1</sup>. London Funders, the membership network for funders and investors of London's civil society, will administer this funding on behalf of the combined group of funders.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. The objectives of the fund are to provide support to the voluntary and community sector at this time of increased need and drastically reduced resources.

##### *Evidence of need*

- 2.2. Information gathered from surveys over the past two weeks, carried out by London Funders and from London Plus, shows the following headline results and emerging need:
  - cashflow – organisations are seeing threats to their income from individuals (due to the cancellation of fundraising activities<sup>2</sup>), from charged-for services (such as venue hire and ticketed events being cancelled), and from contracts (payment by results services have been financed from other sources, but the “results” (such as on employability) may not be achieved in the expected timeframe)
  - maintaining services – organisations are already experiencing challenges in continuing to deliver core services (20% had already experienced staff or volunteer absence, for example through self-isolation<sup>3</sup>), and are anticipating increased costs due to covering sickness or other leave<sup>4</sup> or providing additional expenses for volunteers (for example on childcare if schools and other facilities are closed)
  - adapting services – organisations are anticipating or seeing increases in demand (from telephone helplines linked to mental health, through to those providing emergency food), and are needing to deliver their services in new and often more expensive ways (moving to one-to-one outreach

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<sup>1</sup> The funding will be paid via grant to “The Mayor and Commonality and Citizens of the City of London”, the “City of London Corporation” in its capacity as trustee of Bridge House Estates (BHE) a registered charity.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the London Marathon alone raised £66m for charities last year and most of that sponsorship income was only raised in the weeks immediately before and after the event. The Institute of Fundraising suggested, before the Prime Minister's updated social distancing guidance on 13 March, that there would be up to a 15 per cent drop in income from events such as this arising from the pandemic.

<sup>3</sup> A London Plus survey shows one in six organisations already had staff self-isolating before the updated social distancing guidance, and one in five had seen drops in volunteer numbers or other staffing problems.

<sup>4</sup> NCVO's data show those aged 65-74 are the most likely to volunteer (42 per cent at least once a year, 29 per cent regularly), and this is also the group most likely to be asked to self-isolate for a prolonged period.

rather than group activities, or needing to buy-in support or resources that were previously donated, particularly in the case of food projects<sup>5</sup>); and

- developing new services – organisations are needing to deliver new versions of services, or work in partnership in new ways (for example combining a befriending service that reaches isolated older people with a foodbank to ensure food can reach them during self-isolation), as well as deliver entirely new offers (for example to the children and youth sectors if schools close and/or policy changes impact on younger people<sup>6</sup>).

2.3. Alongside these headline areas of need, there are also concerning areas of feedback from specific sectors – such as the concerns of the domestic abuse sector about the impact on people who are self-isolating in dangerous settings. We also need to ensure any response addresses the needs of grassroots organisations and networks which may not be as strongly engaged with formal structures, including the emerging mutual aid groups at local level, so that resources flow appropriately and that communities are protected.

#### *Responding to the need*

2.4. From the initial assessment of need we believe there are three core areas of focus for funders which will act as the headlines for this fund:

- sector sustainability – core/unrestricted funding that enables organisations to survive through the difficult period in terms of ensuring a core income, or rapidly redeploy resources to meet needs as they emerge;
- delivering differently – funding to enable groups to adapt their activities to continue to deliver their core services in different ways, maintaining their reach and support to vulnerable communities, including covering staffing costs associated with this; and
- increasing and innovating – funding to groups that are able to expand their services with target communities, including in partnership with others, to address emerging needs; and providing space for groups to come up with more innovative solutions to delivering in response to community need in the coming months.

2.5. In summary, this would include:

- intelligence and insight – London Funders would continue to liaise with other sector bodies and community groups on behalf of funders to gather and share insight about how the situation is developing, to inform funding programmes and responses;
- fund design – funders joining the collaboration would be asked to provide staff support to design each element of the funding response (e.g. fund criteria, eligibility, guidance), ideally drawing on their areas of expertise and interest;
- application process – London Funders has refreshed the online portal that was used for Grenfell, which can act as a single entry-point to the funder collaboration by publishing guidance and providing a single application form for organisations to complete;
- funding decisions – funders joining the collaboration will be asked to provide staff support to review, assess and approve the applications that were received through the portal, bringing the benefit of their expertise and insight of organisations and sectors applying (as with the fund design, we will try to match funders to areas of interest);
- monitoring and evaluation – a common evaluation framework and reporting mechanism will be developed for grants given via the fund and reporting will be available which will show which groups have been funded and what funding outcomes and impacts there are; and

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<sup>5</sup> North Paddington Food Bank, for example, have seen a 25% reduction in donations in the week to 16<sup>th</sup> March.

<sup>6</sup> London has around 1.3 million school-age children and young people, and around 200,000 of those are eligible for free school meals – activities, hunger and impact on families are all concerns as policy develops

- ongoing development – London Funders would work with the funders in the partnership to capture learning as it emerges from the groups they are funding, and provide an overview role in terms of feedback, learning and emerging needs so that the process of funding can evolve over the period we are covering.
- 2.6. Throughout the process the group would seek to embed the learning from [“The Possible Not The Perfect”](#), a report London Funders commissioned via the Institute for Voluntary Action Research in terms of building on the relationships and expertise they have with the communities and organisations they fund, whilst bringing the speed and efficiency of a collaborative response that ensures we also reduce pressure on the frontline organisations responding to the crisis.

### 3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA must have ‘due regard’ of the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
  - advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. Community and voluntary sector and civil society organisations support vulnerable and low-income Londoners and Londoners with protected characteristics. All of these groups are particularly vulnerable to the economic and health impacts of COVID-19. They are more likely to be in employment that comes under the “gig” economy (for example short term contracts, freelance work) and so less likely to receive sick pay and other benefits. It will also be more difficult for them to access child care if schools shut down and many will rely on grandparents to provide support which will no longer be available due to risk. This will result in increased vulnerability to eviction from private rented housing. Equally older people already at risk of loneliness and/or social isolation will be even more isolated as self-isolation regimes are required due to their vulnerability.
- 3.3. This emergency support fund will aim to support the voluntary and community and civil society organisations providing vital services to these vulnerable Londoners and those living with protected characteristics. This fund is a very much needed resource in London at this time.

### 4. Other considerations

#### 4.1. Key risks and issues

| Risk   | Mitigating Action   | Risk Rating |
|--|---|-------------|
| Other London funders will not add matched funding to the emergency support fund so only a small amount of funding is available | We already have a commitment of £1m from City Bridge Trust. Leadership from the Mayor and CBT has already resulted in a fund going live on 27/03/2020 with funding available of over £5m.           | G           |
| It will be complicated to administer a collaborative fund  | London Funders will administer the fund on behalf of the combined funders. They have experience of managing a similar situation post-Grenfell and have tried and tested ways of working effectively | G           |
| The Mayor will not be able to ensure that funding meets GLA requirements and is targeting those                                | Officers are engaged with developing and designing the fund criteria and application  | G           |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| organisations we wish to support  | processes. Officers will also be involved in decision making and governance processes  |   |
| There will be insufficient GLA staff to be able to engage with the fund to the level required                                     | Officers with grant experience will be redeployed in order to provide support in terms of application assessment and grantee support. This can be drawn from officers already involved in the GLA Grants working group.  | G |
| Relevant civil society and voluntary and community sector organisations will not be aware of the fund and so not be able to apply | The fund will be promoted via a huge range of networks, ranging from funder to funder and through civil society infrastructure networks such as London Plus. The Mayor will also be able to promote via his communications channels  | G |
| Insufficient evidence will be collected from grantees regarding impact and outcomes associated with the grants                    | The grants are being allocated according to 3 categories: (i) core costs (ii) additional costs (iii) innovation and new ways of delivery and appropriate levels of impact and outcome will be centrally collected for each grant and consolidated across the portfolio. Getting appropriate levels of impact evaluation will be important to all funders | G |

#### *Mayoral strategies and priorities*

- 4.2. The Mayor in his statement of 16<sup>th</sup> March stated “ This is going to be an immensely challenging time for millions of Londoners – and we will all have to look out for our most vulnerable family members, friends and neighbours – but London has faced immense challenges before and always come through them by staying united- as we must do now.”
- 4.3. This emergency support fund will provide a much-needed source of support to voluntary and community and civil society organisations supporting hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable Londoners.

#### *Impact assessment and consultations*

- 4.4. As stated earlier in the decision, this proposal is based on evidence that has been gathered by London Funders and London Plus over the last two weeks as Coronavirus has begun to impact heavily on Londoners. It also takes into account government and NHS guidance about the likely length of time (at least 12 weeks) in which there will be significant impact on the way that London and Londoners go about their everyday lives.

### **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. This decision requests approval for expenditure of up to £5m towards the Emergency Support Fund. The Emergency Support Fund is a collaboration fund between City Bridge Trust, London Funders and other funders across London to provide urgent financial support for the voluntary and community sector. An initial £1m can be incurred on the approval of the Executive Director of Communities and Skills. Expenditure between £1m and £5m needs the additional approval of the Chief of Staff and the Executive Director of Resources.
- 5.2. These funds will be transferred to the Corporation of London, to hold on behalf of the City Bridge Trust and is the GLA’s contribution towards the Emergency Support Fund. The GLA funding will be match funded from other donors. The total funding will be administered by London Funders.

- 5.3. This expenditure will be funded by the Team London and Community Sport Unit budget in the first instance and the Business Rates Reserve will be used as necessary thereafter. All necessary budget adjustments will be made.
- 5.4. The expenditure is anticipated to be incurred in 2020-21.

## 6. Legal comments

6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that: the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London; and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:

- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
- consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
- consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2. The Mayor may delegate authority to GLA officers to exercise the powers of the GLA as proposed, pursuant to section 38 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, should he so wish.

6.3. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty - namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to Section 3 (above) of this Mayoral decision form.

6.4. Should the Mayor be minded to make the decisions sought officers should ensure that:

- a legally binding agreement is entered into with the Corporation of the City of London governing the use of the GLA funding (and to the degree applicable the securing and consistent use of match funding) before any commitment is made to the provision of the same;
- to the extent the GLA is reliant upon any third-party funding, legally binding commitments are secured from such funders before any such reliance is placed upon the same; and
- as officers have indicated that the expenditure concerns the award of grant funding rather than the purchase of works/goods/services, the funding is administered in fair and transparent manner in accordance with the requirements of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

| Activity                      | Timeline                         |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Announcement                  | 18/03/2020                       |
| Fund opens to applications    | 27/03/2020                       |
| Application assessment begins | Week of 30/03/2020 (provisional) |
| First grants paid out         | Week of 6/04/2020 (provisional)  |

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| Application processes open   | March-June 2020        |
| Projects in delivery/funding being used  | March-July 2020        |
| First wave application evaluation and changes/amends made to funding structures accordingly        | May/June 2020          |
| Impact and evaluation data available and project reporting completed and lessons learnt identified | September/October 2020 |

## Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

## Part 1 - Deferral

### Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES

If YES, for what reason: No public commitment as yet to release of up to £5m of funding

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring) 30/05/2020 by which time situation regarding a) impact on sector b) disease progression and impact and c) demand for support should be more clear.

## Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

### Is there a part 2 form – NO

## ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

### Drafting officer:

Alice Wilcock has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

### Sponsoring Director:

Sarah Mulley has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

### Mayoral Adviser:

Debbie Weekes-Bernard has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

### Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

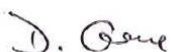
### Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on the 24 March 2020.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

### Signature



### Date

30 March 2020

## CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

### Signature



### Date

31 March 2020