

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2715

Title: London Community Response – wave two contribution

Executive Summary:

COVID-19 is a global pandemic which has affected all of the UK. London experienced a high case and death rate in wave one of the pandemic.

Voluntary and community sector and civil society organisations experienced a huge increase in demand due to the pandemic, combined with a loss of funding, the requirement to repurpose services, and increased need for those services. It was in this context that a London Community Response Fund was established. This pooled fund was convened by London Funders and administered by City Bridge Trust, with the GLA one of the founding partners. The GLA contributed £7.5m to the pooled fund and more than 65 funders came together, distributing over £40m. Yet demands on the third sector continue to be high – and will be exacerbated by the new lockdown which starts on 5 November and lasts as a minimum to 2 December.

Approval is therefore sought for a further GLA contribution of £2.15m through the London Community Response Fund. The GLA will work with City Bridge Trust, London Funders and other funders across London. It will provide urgent financial support for London's voluntary and community sector and will be informed by data around need that is available from the London Community Response Survey and other data sources.

Decision:

That the Mayor:


- 1) Approves expenditure of up to £2.15m as part of the London Community Response Fund. This funding will be a mixture of aligned and pooled funding, as determined by needs analysis. Any pooled funding will be paid to the City of London Corporation to hold on behalf of City Bridge Trust for use in the London Community Response fund; and
- 2) Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Good Growth to be able to approve the GLA's acceptance and expenditure of any match funding received in connection with the Community Infrastructure at risk strand.

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:

11/11/20

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 plays 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, social isolation, domestic violence charities and many more. Funding is precarious and organisations do not have substantial reserves – with many now having depleted their reserves to survive the last eight months and continue to provide services.
- 1.2. During wave one of COVID-19 there was unprecedented demand for the services of these organisations, combined with a loss of resources available to the sector. The Mayor joined with other funders and partners across London to provide emergency support funding. The Mayor was a founding partner in the London Community Response, through the contribution made to the London Community Response Fund. Overall the London Community Response brought together over 65 funders and was able to distribute over 2,500 grants worth over £40m. The Mayor committed £7.5m to London Community Response, which was sourced from a mixture of GLA reserves and existing budgets and managed jointly, with £5m administered via City Bridge Trust, and the remainder through existing MOPAC and GLA grant administration mechanisms. London Funders, the membership network for funders and investors of London's civil society then administered this funding on behalf of the combined group of funders.
- 1.3. With the second lockdown beginning on 5 November it is anticipated that demands on the voluntary and community sector, which were already high, will increase. In addition, levels of social isolation and loneliness, food insecurity and mental health issues are also expected to increase.

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. During wave one the GLA, London Funders and London Plus set up the London Community Response Survey. This enabled almost real time information to be gathered from the sector allowing funding priorities to be shaped in accordance with need. This approach will continue.¹ The latest survey data for week 28/29 (released 2 November 2020) shows the following patterns in need are likely:
 - continuing increase in demand; 56% of organisations saw an increase in people seeking support over the last two weeks;
 - organisations working with BAME Londoners were more likely to report increased need at 72% (compared to older low income Londoners where the rate was 50% or young people at 55% respectively);
 - demand is focused on issues of poverty, debt, rent payments, employment and mental health;
 - there has also been an exponential increase in referrals for social prescribing e.g. one provider (Bromley By Bow centre) reached its annual referral case load three months into the lockdown period; and

¹ <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/london-community-response-survey>

- access to and the retention of space has been identified as an issue for both organisations and their beneficiaries as they move towards recovery; it is a challenge consistently raised by community groups and impacts more severely on communities already under-represented and under-resourced.
- 2.3. The submission of the London Communities, Faith, Voluntary Sector and Funders Sub-Group to the London Delivery Coordinating Group outlined that three-fifths of charities expected to scale back their activity over the winter months, whilst two-thirds expected demand for services to rise. Nationally, a £9.8bn funding gap is expected over the second half of 2020 (made up of a £6.4bn drop in income and rise in demand for support for £3.4bn)².
 - 2.4. The London Community Response received £133.3m of applications in the first six months of the year from groups struggling to meet the urgent needs of their communities and their organisations – these were for three- or six-month grants, so would be the equivalent of £266.6m for the full 2020/21 financial year. Whilst grants of £41.8m have been awarded through the collaboration, that leaves a projected funding gap of £224.8m from October 2020 to March 2021.
 - 2.5. The GLA will not be able to fill this funding gap. However, the Mayor's commitment of £7.5m in the previous round leveraged £32.5m and the expectation is that this funding will leverage in substantial additional resources from other funders.

Responding to the need

- 2.6. Over the last eight months civil society organisations across London have transformed their delivery both in how services have been provided and the type of service provided. The fund was structured to respond to these changes, with strands of funding directed towards immediate crisis response, organisations delivering differently, whether digitally or otherwise, and enabling organisations to sustain and continue operations.
- 2.7. The three biggest categories of funding in previous waves were grants directed towards children and young people, people at risk, and food (the last one being mostly smaller grants).
- 2.8. GLA teams continued to work in partnership with the London Recovery Board and the Communities, Faith, Funders and Voluntary Sector sub-group of the London Transition Board to determine further short- and medium-term approaches.
- 2.9. In MD2666, the Mayor approved the repurposing of the GLA's 2020/21 budget, including the creation of a centralised recovery fund. In light of a new lockdown, which will last until early December at a minimum, this request for a Mayoral decision proposes an allocation of £2.15m from that fund to support the London Community Response. This consists of:
 - £500k to support emergency food aid provider grants (Robust Safety Net mission). This will be split between short-term crisis response work and longer term work to improve the sustainability of volunteer involving food organisations, which can include faith organisations, food banks and community hubs.
 - £275k for grants to civil society to address loneliness and isolation (Mental Health and Wellbeing / Healthy Food / Healthy Weight mission). Loneliness and isolation have increased in Londoners over lockdown with 11% of Londoners saying they felt lonely often at the high point of May. This is likely to rise again as we return to very limited social interaction.
 - £500k from the community action programme (Building Strong Communities mission) to respond to community and civil society need stemming from wave two and lockdown two and beyond.
 - £125k from the work to support mutual aid and hyperlocal volunteering programme (Building Strong Communities mission) for the support of hyperlocal volunteering and mutual aid activity, again to be directed by need.

² <https://www.probonoeconomics.com/september-15-20-covid-charity-tracker-survey-results>

- £750k towards the community infrastructure at risk programme (Building Strong Communities mission). This will extend the Culture at Risk model to safeguard community infrastructure at risk, which will combine one-on-one engagement and advisory support for grassroots community organisations to secure assets with small to medium grants when other routes have been exhausted.

2.10. A small amount of all funds (which will be agreed through delegated authority and detailed in the funding agreement) will be available as a contribution to the selected delivery partner's administration of the fund and the additional capacity needed for project management.

Delivery

- 2.11. Delivery will continue to be based on intelligence and insight into need – London Funders will 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.
- 2.12. For the elements where we are providing pooled funding, we would join with other funders joining the collaboration and provide staff support to design each element of the funding response (e.g. fund criteria, eligibility, guidance), drawing on their areas of expertise and interest.
- 2.13. For the safeguarding community infrastructure at risk aligned funding pot, the Culture and Creative Industries Unit will work with a delivery partner to administer the funding and provide capacity to the Culture at Risk Office to support project management and crisis services. A cross-team project board will oversee the programme and grant decisions.
- 2.14. Application process – London Funders has refreshed the online portal that was used following the Grenfell Tower fire, that can act as a single entry point to the funder collaboration by publishing guidance and providing a single application form for organisations to complete. This will be adjusted to take account of preference for aligned funds as appropriate.
- 2.15. 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).
- 2.16. Ongoing development – London Funders has been working with the funders in the partnership to capture learning as it emerges from the groups they are funding and has engaged a learning partner to provide insight and data around feedback, learning and emerging needs. This has enabled the process of funding to be needs led and be able to evolve over the funding period and this approach will continue.

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 of Londoners 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. 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. In earlier phases of London Community Response, we and other funders placed a particular emphasis on equity and grassroots led organisations. This led, in phase three to almost 50% of grants being awarded to BAME led groups, 11% of funding to organisations led by Deaf and Disabled people and 6% of LGBT+ led organisations.

4. Other considerations

Risk	Mitigating Action	Risk Rating
Other London funders will not add matched funding to phase four so that only a small amount of funding is available	Leadership from the Mayor and CBT combined to bring together over 65 funders previously and London Community Response has been regarded as a regional success story in terms of collaborative funding. We would expect this to continue.	Green
It will be complicated to administer a collaborative fund	We already have experience of working in this way with London Funders and it has been proven to work extremely well. Regular cross-partner strategy work means that any issues can be surfaced, and priorities reviewed and revised as necessary.	Green
There will be risk of fraudulent applications being made to the fund	Due diligence is undertaken on a collective basis and information is shared between funders to ensure that risk of fraud is minimised. All due diligence standards are mutually agreed and, monitoring and evaluation is aligned to funder preference.	Green
The Mayor will not be able to ensure that funding meets GLA requirements and is targeting those organisations we wish to support	As with previous Waves officers are engaged with developing and designing the fund criteria and application processes. Officers will also be involved in decision making and governance processes.	Green
There will be insufficient GLA staff to be able to engage with the fund to the level required	Officers within existing teams have worked on the fund to date and have been involved in developing the outline of the focus of this	Green

	next wave of support. This will continue to be drawn from officers already involved in the GLA Grants working group.	
Relevant civil society and voluntary and community sector organisations will not be aware of the fund and so not be able to apply	We had very positive experience of promoting to organisations who had never previously applied for funding and used our equity partners to reach out to equalities focused groups. This will continue.	Green
Insufficient evidence will be collected from grantees regarding impact and outcomes associated with the grants	Outcomes will either be centrally collected for each grant and consolidated across the portfolio or collected by GLA teams, depending on a pooled or aligned approach. Getting appropriate levels of impact evaluation will be important to all funders and we currently have a learning partner in place who will also feed in recommendations about evidence collection and evaluation practice.	Green

Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1. The Mayor in his statement of 16 March 2020 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.”
- 4.2. The London Community Response provided a much needed source of support to voluntary and community and civil society organisations supporting hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable Londoners.
- 4.3. The Recovery missions developed by the London Recovery board include missions focusing on Building Stronger Communities, High Streets for All and cross-cutting principles around equity and inclusion and engaging with and putting Londoners in the lead. This method of aligning or pooling GLA funding contributes to the aims and objectives of these recovery missions.

Impact assessment and consultations

- 4.4. As stated earlier in the decision, this proposal is based on the evidence gathered over the pandemic and collated in the London Community Response Survey and other research carried out over the last eight months. All research demonstrated the crucial role of the voluntary and community sector, faith organisations and civil society. In addition we saw a disproportionate impact on BAME Londoners, and we were able to focus funding on the areas most needed in order to respond to this. This process of responding to need and evidence will continue to be taken in the allocation of this new contribution.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.5. Sarah Mulley, Executive Director for Communities and Skills, GLA, is a Trustee of London Funders who administer the London Community Response. Sarah Mulley has not been involved in the development of this proposal and in any case London Funders derive no pecuniary interest from the administration of the London Community Response. Halima Khan, Executive Director for Communities and Skills in the GLA and a job-share with Sarah has therefore signed off this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for expenditure of up to £2.15m, as GLA's contribution to London Community Response in collaboration with City Bridge Trust, London Funders and other funders across London, to provide grant funding to the voluntary and community sector and civil society organisations.
- 5.2. The funding will be transferred to the City of London Corporation, to hold on behalf of the City Bridge Trust, subject to, match funding from other funders across London, and on provision of evidence of need for the funding from the sector. The total funding will be administered by London Funders if a pooled mechanism is being used, otherwise it will be administered by the Greater London Authority or preferred grant administrator supplier as appropriate.
- 5.3. The expenditure will be funded from the 2020/21 'Recovery Fund' created under MD2666. All necessary budget adjustments will be made.

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 (or the current agreement held with the City of London Corporation be varied) to govern the use of the additional GLA funding which is to be pooled (and to the degree applicable the securing and consistent use of match funding) before any commitment is made to the provision of the same;

- GLA funding which is to be awarded separately from that to be pooled (as per the previous bullet point) is distributed fairly, transparently, in accordance with the GLA's equalities duty, in manner which affords value for money in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code and the GLA and recipients enter into and execute legally binding funding agreements before any commitment is made to the provision of the same; and
- to the extent that 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.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Announcement	12/11/2020
Fund opens to applications	Week of 16/11/2020
Application assessment begins	Week of 30/11/2020 (tbd)
First grants paid out	Week of 7/12/2020
Projects in delivery/funding being used	Week of 14/12/2020

Appendices and supporting papers:

None.

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: In order to select the most appropriate delivery partner and outreach support for the different funds (as appropriate) which will include discussions around price, so we would not wish the total amount available for particular elements of work to be publicly known at this stage.

Until what date: 30 December 2020.

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:

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

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Debbie Weekes-Bernard & Nick Bowes have been consulted about the proposal and agree 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 9 November 2020.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Enver Enver for David Gallie

Date

11 November 2020

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature



Date

11 November 2020

