

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 18 JANUARY 2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>London Councils Grants Scheme 2021/22</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Executive Director of Resources Gavin Handford, Director of Policy and Partnership</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr David Wood, Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Resilience</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

Approval of the 2021/22 budget for the London Councils Grants Scheme and Croydon Council's contribution to the Scheme.

The Grants to Voluntary Organisations (Specified Date) Order 1992, as read with Section 48(3) of the Local Government Act 1985, provides that two-thirds of constituent councils must agree the London Councils Grants Committee's budget by 1 February each year. If it is not agreed, the overall level of expenditure is deemed to be set at the same level as was approved or deemed to be approved for the preceding financial year, in this instance the sum approved for the 2020/21 year, a larger sum than is proposed for 2021/22.

The [London Councils Grants Scheme](#) has allocated funding against two priorities:

- Combatting homelessness
- Tackling sexual and domestic violence

These align with the following Croydon Council [priority for 2021/24](#):

- We will focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Approval of the Council's contribution of £287,731 to the London Councils Grants Scheme for 2021/22. This amounts to a reduction of £722 compared with the Council's net contribution to the Scheme in 2020/21.

**FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: Not a key decision**

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below:

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1 Cabinet is recommended to agree the recommendation of the London Councils Leaders Committee to:

- a. Approve the London Councils Grants Scheme budget for 2021/22 of £6.668m.

b. Agree Croydon Council's 2021/22 contribution to the London Councils Grants Scheme budget amounting to £287,731.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2.1 This report seeks approval for the London Councils Grants Scheme (LCGS) budget in 2021/22 set at £6.668m, and Croydon Council's contribution to that budget of £287,731, being the level recommended by the London Councils Leaders' Committee at their meeting on 8 December 2020.

## **3. DETAIL**

### **3.1 Budget**

3.1.1 The London Councils Grants Scheme (the Scheme) was established in accordance with the Local Government Act 1985, following the abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986. The Scheme is now governed by the London Councils Grants Committee and membership comprises all the London Borough Councils and the City of London.

3.1.2 The financial year 2021/22 represents the final year of the extended five-year programme of commissions as recommended by the Grants Committee and approved by the Leaders Committee in March 2016.

3.1.3 Notification has been received from the Chief Executive of London Councils that, following a recommendation as to proposals for expenditure under the Scheme for 2021/22, the London Councils Leaders Committee agreed on 8 December 2020 to make the following recommendation to constituent Councils:

Overall level of expenditure of £6,668,000 comprising:	(£m)
Payments to Commissions	6.173
Administrative Expenditure	0.435
London Funders Membership Fees	0.060
Income would comprise:	
Borough contributions	6.668

3.1.4 The recommendation to constituent councils from the London Councils Leaders Committee proposes an overall budget in 2021/22 of £6.7m, funded entirely by constituent council contributions. The total amount required from councils is the same as 2020/21. An outline of the approved budget is attached at Appendix A.

3.1.5 Population changes affect the levels of contribution due from each constituent council. The contribution required from each council for 2021/22 is shown at Appendix B.

3.1.6 For 2021/22, the apportionment is based on the Office of National Statistics' mid-year population estimates for June 2019 and the overall proposed programme budget as detailed in paragraph 3.1.3 above.

## **3.2 Commissioning 2017-22**

3.2.1 In March 2016, the London Councils Leaders' Committee agreed a revised set of priorities for commissioned services:

Priority 1: Combatting Homelessness

Priority 2: Tackling Sexual and Domestic Violence

Priority 3: Tackling Poverty through Employment (European Social Fund match-funded – now closed)

3.2.2 The priorities of the scheme align with the following Croydon Council [priority for 2021/24](#):

- We will focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough.

3.2.3 13 projects have been commissioned to deliver pan-London services under Priorities 1 and 2 between April 2017 and March 2021. The scheme was subsequently extended for a further year. A full list of these commissioned services is available on the London Councils website at <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/30010>.

3.2.4 The grants programme is focussed on the needs of both inner and outer London, which is critical given that as the second most populous borough, Croydon is the second highest contributor to the LCGS. The approach enables boroughs to tackle high priority need where this may be more effective at a pan-London level.

3.2.5 The LCGS provides monitoring data to demonstrate performance and the benefits to individual boroughs from commissioned services. LCGS data for April 2017 to September 2020 (14 quarters of this programme) compare the indicative levels of delivery per borough based on relevant needs data with the actual proportion of new service users from each borough.

3.2.6 With regard to Priority 1 services for combatting homelessness, overall performance was 10% above profile, with particularly strong performance in relation to tackling youth homelessness. Locally, the indicative level for Croydon was between 3% and 4% of service users and the proportion of actual service users who were from Croydon was 3.83% (the ninth highest share among London boroughs).

3.2.7 With regard to Priority 2 services for tackling sexual and domestic violence, overall performance was 4% below profile. This underperformance related mainly to prevention services (-12%). Performance around tackling harmful practices (such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage) was particularly strong. Locally, the indicative level was between 3% and 4% of users, and the proportion of actual users from the borough was 4.06% (the third highest share among London boroughs).

- 3.2.8 Lockdown disrupted the delivery of prevention projects in schools, alternative provision and youth settings, though some work moved online. Taking referrals and finding safe accommodation took longer due to the perpetrator being present. The pandemic has decreased the availability of refuge services due to reduced throughput. Following London Councils' declaration of its commitment to use money flexibly to meet emerging needs due to Covid-19, some organisations furloughed or redeployed staff within their respective organisations to meet the increased demand for frontline services for tackling violence against women and girls. Helplines, emails and web chats were heavily used by survivors finding it difficult to access support.
- 3.2.9 All 13 projects are rated Green. The report to London Councils Grants Committee on Performance of the LCGS between April 2017 and September 2020 is available at: <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/37815>.
- 3.2.10 The priorities and projects funded by the LCGS align well with the Council's priorities. The projects provide additional options for the Council in supporting residents in these priority areas, aligning with local projects, services and support.
- 3.2.11 Croydon council officers and partners are aware of the projects funded by LCGS. The projects provide added value and additional specialist support for people with protected characteristics who are facing homelessness or domestic and sexual violence.
- 3.2.12 The performance data suggests that work by officers with London Councils to ensure that pan-London projects deliver locally has ensured that the programme impact is maximised in Croydon.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The Council is required by statute to contribute to the London Councils Grants Scheme as set out in paragraph 7 below.

#### **5. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

- 5.1 This decision did not go to a Scrutiny meeting for pre-decision debate. The Council is required by statute to contribute to the London Councils Grants Scheme as set out in paragraph 7 below.

#### **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 As set out in section 7 below, the Council is required under statute to contribute to the London Councils Grants Scheme in proportion to the population of the borough. The level of expenditure for the Scheme varies from year to year as does the estimated population of Croydon as a proportion of the total estimated population of Greater London. It is therefore not possible to accurately predict the precise level of the Council's contribution from year to year.

6.2 The costs are updated annually and the Council's contribution for 2021/22, based on a population of 386,710 (4.32% of the population of Greater London), results in a reduction of £722 in the contribution required from Croydon. 2021/22 is the final year of the 2017/22 Grants Scheme. This will be followed by a new pan-London grants programme for 2022-26, the priorities of which are currently out to consultation.

### 6.3 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations

	Current year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3 year forecast		
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
<b>Revenue Budget available</b>				
Expenditure	288	288*	288	288
Income	0	0	0	0
<b>Effect of decision from report</b>				
Expenditure	288	288	288	288
Income	0	0	0	0
<b>Remaining budget</b>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Capital Budget available</b>				
Expenditure	0	0	0	0
<b>Effect of decision from report</b>				
Expenditure	0	0	0	0
<b>Remaining budget</b>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

\* The annual cost for Croydon Council has reduced by £722 from 2020/21 to 2021/22; this is not shown in the table above due to the denomination the numbers are reported in.

Note – Future years have been assumed at 2021/22 amounts, although this is the final year of the 2017/22 Grants Scheme. It will be followed by a new scheme for the 2022/26 period, contributions to which will be reported to Cabinet in the future once confirmed by London Councils.

### 6.4 Risks

6.4.1 If the Council fails to make a decision by the statutory deadline of 1 February 2021 there is a risk that the Secretary of State will order that the 2021/22 budget should be set at the rate agreed for 2020/21, resulting in additional cost of £722. However, agreement of only two-thirds of the constituent councils is required for London Councils to set a budget for the scheme. The Secretary of State would only have the power to intervene if eleven councils failed to approve the recommended budget by 1 February 2021.

## **6.5 Options**

- 6.5.1 The Council is required to contribute to the London Councils Grants Scheme under the provisions of the 1985 Local Government Act if the proposals recommended by the Leaders Committee are agreed by two-thirds of the constituent councils by 1 February 2021.

## **6.6 Future savings/efficiencies**

- 6.6.1 The Council's contribution to the scheme is updated annually dependent upon the agreed level of expenditure, the population of the borough as a proportion of the total population of Greater London and minor variables such as the use of reserves and balances by the Scheme. The Council may influence the total level of expenditure through its membership of the scheme but is bound by the two-thirds majority decision of the London Councils Grants Committee

Approved by Lisa Taylor, Director of Finance, Investment and Risk, S151 Officer

## **7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer that under Section 48(3) of the Local Government Act 1985 and Regulation 6(8) of the Levying Bodies (General) Regulations 1992, member authorities are required to contribute financially to the Scheme in proportion to their respective populations.
- 7.2 The Grants to Voluntary Organisations (Specified Date) Order 1992 which came into effect on 2nd November 1992 and remains in force, as read with Section 48(3) of the 1985 Act, provides that two-thirds of constituent Councils must agree the London Councils Grants Committee's budget by no later than 1st February annually. If it is not so agreed, the overall level of expenditure is deemed to be set at the same level as was approved or deemed to be approved for the preceding financial year, in this instance the sum approved for the 2020/21 year (which was £288,453 for Croydon).
- 7.3 While the Council is not directly responsible for administration of the Scheme, as a participant Council in the Scheme it must still be mindful of its general equalities duty under the Equality Act 2010 and take such steps as are appropriate to consider this duty. Any such considerations need to be addressed in the equalities impact assessment section below.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of Jacqueline Harris-Baker the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer.

## **8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Approved by: Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1 London Councils is responsible for assessing the impact of individual funding decisions but constituent councils must consider the overall impact of changes to the budget available to the London Councils Grants Committee.
- 9.2 An Equalities Analysis was carried out in 2017/18 (when the commissioned services were originally funded) to ascertain the likely impact of the proposals on groups that share protected characteristics. This indicated that the Council's decision on this matter will have no significant impact on groups that share a protected characteristic.
- 9.3 Providers combatting homelessness continue to support vulnerable and disadvantaged service users who share protected characteristics. London-wide, over the 14 quarters to September 2020, 42.3% of service users were female; 46.2% were under 25 years of age; 7% were over 55 years of age; 76.6% were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds; 17.3% declared a disability; 12.4% were LGBT; and 1,886 people had no recourse to public funds (4%).
- 9.4 Providers combatting sexual and domestic violence continue to support vulnerable and disadvantaged service users who share protected characteristics. London-wide, over the 14 quarters to September 2020, 64.2% of service users were female; 8.6% were aged less than 25 years; 4.5% were aged over 55 years; 74.2% were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds; 14.7% declared a disability; 4.6% were LGBT; and 3,325 people had no recourse to public funds (3%).

Approved by Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 10.1 There are no main environmental sustainability impacts arising from this report.

## **11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 11.1 There are no implications for crime and disorder reduction arising from this report.

## **12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

- 12.1 If the Council failed to agree the recommendations of the London Councils Leaders' Committee, there is a risk that the requisite majority of boroughs could fail to agree the proposals by the statutory deadline and the budget would be deemed to be set at the 2020/21 level.

## **13. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 13.1 The options available to the Council are to agree or reject the recommendations of the London Councils Leaders Committee. If rejection is considered, unless

the Council was reasonably sure it could secure the support of at least two-thirds of the constituent councils, it would be futile to seek agreement for an alternative budget. As the Leaders Committee which put forward the proposals is made up of the Leaders of all the constituent councils, it is extremely unlikely a sufficient number would be minded to support an alternative budget to that which they had already agreed.

13.2 For reasons set out in 12 and 13.1 above, rejecting the recommendation made by the London Councils Leaders' Committee is not the proposed option.

#### **14. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

##### **14.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

**NO**

Approved by: Gavin Handford, Director of Policy and Partnership

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** John Montes, Senior Strategy Officer, Ext 61613.

##### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

Appendix A Grants Committee Income and Expenditure Budget 2021/22

Appendix B Grants Programme Borough Subscriptions 2021/22

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None