



Happy new year! (Is it too late to say that? Happy nearly springtime anyway.) As you probably know, I'm now back in my Development Manager role after year of [acting up](#) as CEO of THCVS. There are a lot of local policy developments affecting the Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector at the moment so I thought it would be useful to send out an update.

I'm sending this mail to our whole bulletin list because I've had queries from a wide range of people, but since we don't want to bombard you with too many mailings, from now on I'll **only send funding, legal and policy information to those who have signed up** for it. If you would like to be kept updated you can subscribe to the 'funding and development' bulletin here: <https://thcvs.org.uk/join-our-mailing-list>

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## 1. A New Compact for Tower Hamlets

The Compact is an agreement that lays out principles and commitments governing how the voluntary and statutory sectors should relate to one another. The [previous](#) Tower Hamlets Compact was adopted in 2011 but is now in need of an update. Following a workshop and research last year, a [new draft Compact](#) has now been produced by Tower Hamlets council.

The new document is aligned with the [The Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2016-19](#) and will inform the development of the council's new Grants and Community Commissioning programmes (both outlined below). It will be presented to the Council's [Cabinet](#) this spring.

In order to be useful, the Compact needs to reflect the interests, needs and concerns of both the voluntary sector and the council. If you have comments or suggestions about how the [current draft](#) could be improved, how the text could be clarified, or how the commitments should be implemented and monitored please contact David Freeman, VCS Strategy Manager at Tower Hamlets Council - [david.freeman@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:david.freeman@towerhamlets.gov.uk) as soon as possible.

We are hoping to do more work to launch and promote the Compact across all sectors after the final document is approved. See [www.thcvs.org.uk/compact](http://www.thcvs.org.uk/compact) for updates.

## 2. Community Cohesion Tenders now out

A number of local organisations and residents took part in some co-production sessions around the usage of section 106 money last year. This work has now been developed and the Tower Hamlets Community Cohesion Pilot Programme (CCPP) is inviting bids for community-based projects to improve community cohesion in Aldgate East and Mile End areas. [The invitation to tender documentation is now live](#). Please click the following links for further information and to register your interest in the opportunity:

- [Aldgate East](#) (maximum budget per project £41,788)
- [Mile End](#) (maximum budget per project £31,312)

For more information contact Jaber Khan, Cohesion Programme Manager at Tower Hamlets Council: [Jaber.Khan@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Jaber.Khan@towerhamlets.gov.uk), 020 7364 0300

### 3. Developing a New Local Grants Programme

THCVS is helping Tower Hamlets Council to [co-produce a new grants programme](#). Phase 1 took place in the last part of 2017 when Elvis Langley (then employed as Interim Development Manager at THCVS) gathered experiences and ideas from a range of organisations and individuals, asking them to consider what should be funded with grants, who should be eligible and how the grantmaking process could be improved. The work was conducted through a series of workshops, one to one meetings and a follow up survey. You can read a [write up of the events and findings in our blogs section](#).

All the evidence and feedback has been utilised to create a [Draft Grants Framework](#), which will also be taken to the LBTH Cabinet for agreement this spring.

The initial grant themes outlined in the framework are:

- Innovation
- Prevention
- Neighbourhood action
- Community cohesion
- Capacity building
- Partnership working

Community cohesion and equality and diversity will also be cross cutting themes.

Phase 2 of this work will be starting soon and will get into a lot more detail. We'll be looking at how the new grants programme should work, including developing the outcomes in more detail and creating an application and assessment process for the grants. We want to consider how applications are structured and what questions should be asked, how decisions should be made and who should be involved.

Trustee session: [5pm - 7pm 1st March, Whitechapel Idea Store](#)

Outcomes and Priorities Workshop: [10am - 1pm, 12th March \(venue TBC\)](#)

Please do contact me if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions about the development of the grants process. We want to hear from you about how to get the best feedback from the people you work with so we can make sure everyone's interests are represented.

### 4. Community Commissioning: Successor to the Mainstream Grant

Tower Hamlets Mainstream Grants will finish at the end of March 2019. In line with the VCS Strategy the new programme of commissioning that replaces the MSG will be co-produced with the voluntary and community sector and other local stakeholders.

The first step in developing the new '[Community Commissioning](#)' programme was a series of events, co-facilitated by the New Economics Foundation, that took place in January 2018. These have led to some initial ideas for outcomes ([download here](#)) which are currently being written up into a fuller format. We'll put any new information onto our new [Community Commissioning](#) page as soon as we receive it.

The work on Community Commissioning is being led by Tower Hamlet Council. The main contact for the work is Elvis Langley [Elvis.Langley@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Elvis.Langley@towerhamlets.gov.uk) (Elvis was working for THCVS in 2017 but is now at the Town Hall); please contact him by email or direct line - 020 7364 4150 if you have any questions or concerns.

## 5. Community Buildings

Following discussions with the voluntary sector premises forum and an online consultation, the proposed revisions to the Council's Community Buildings policy have [now been finalised](#). The revisions broaden the scope of the November 2016 Community Buildings: Allocation and Charging policy, and should help make it easier for organisations to get a realistic picture of their premises costs when bidding for contracts or applying for grants.

In response to requests from a number of organisations, the next voluntary sector premises forum will focus on community spaces in a broader sense, including [community hubs](#), sessional hire arrangements and meanwhile use. We want to broaden the discussion to focus on spaces that aren't owned by the council, and update the functionality and content of our [venues directory](#) to make it more useful for organisations and local residents looking to hire space. If you are interested in this work please get in touch and reserve your place at the next [Voluntary Sector Premises Forum meeting on 5th March](#).

## 6. Funding Available Now

Just a couple of items this time. You can find more listings on [our website](#) and via [Funding Central](#). I'll send out a fuller set of opportunities in a few weeks time.

**[Weston Anniversary Fund](#) – capital grants for registered charities, CIOs, places of worship and schools**

Open 5th January to 30th June 2018 exclusively

Garfield Weston usually encourages charities to have a broad base of support and tends to be one of a number of funders of projects. The Anniversary Fund is different as they will consider funding the *entirety* of a project, or help to complete your fundraising, with grants ranging from £30,000 to £150,000. This is a Capital grants scheme and applying is a simple one-step process. [Read the grants guidelines](#) and [frequently asked questions](#).

**[Comic Relief Core Strength Local Communities Fund](#) - core costs for community groups**

Next application deadline is 12 noon on Monday 5th March

Comic Relief's Core Strength Local Communities Fund is responding to the growing needs of small locally led groups to cover their day to day costs. Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 are available to support groups' core costs - meaning expenditure that is not connected to delivering projects but focused on investing in the organisation as a whole, such as basic running costs.

Organisations can apply for funding under one of the following themes:

- Connected Communities: seeking to improve inclusion and cohesion in communities
- Productive Communities: investing in local residents to help them solve the issues they are facing using local people and resources
- Empowered Communities: working to empower marginalised and disadvantaged communities

This Fund is distributed via East End Community Foundation. [Read the guidelines on their website](#).

**[Our Tower Hamlets](#) – Crowdfunding and Council Innovation Grants on Spacehive**

Our Tower Hamlets is a crowdfunding project, hosted and supported by Spacehive, that provides the opportunity for local projects to raise money from the community and also to access grants from a [range of sources](#). Tower

Hamlets Council is awarding its Innovation Grants through the Spacehive platform. Find out more on their [Spacehive Page](#) and [read their factsheet](#) to find out more about the assessment process.

The team at Spacehive regularly run workshops to help you set up your project, and we can help you promote it via the [@thcvs](#) Twitter account. Please do take a look at the [projects that are currently fundraising](#) and consider either donating or passing on the link to anyone you think might want to support the causes.

### [Tower Hamlets Emergency Fund](#)

The council has grant funding support available to voluntary organisations based in Tower Hamlets, who are experiencing an unforeseen emergency which is placing either the organisation or a London Borough of Tower Hamlets funded project at risk.

Organisations are able to apply for a one-off Emergency Funding Grant of up to £20,000.

Requests for Emergency Funding support will be assessed to establish the extent to which applications meet the scheme's criteria which include being currently funded by the council, demonstrating that the organisation provides a service that is of strategic importance to the borough; and, that it has already taken/or is in the process of implementing reasonable measures to address their 'emergency' situation.

To apply for Emergency funding please complete and return the [application form](#). View the [criteria for Emergency Funding](#) and [FAQs](#). There is no submission deadline. Applications will be considered on a rolling-programme basis.

## 7. Support and Advice from THCVS

If you would like information, advice or support with any of the above, or with the wider development and sustainability of your organisation, please contact me at [Gemma.cossins@thcvs.org.uk](mailto:Gemma.cossins@thcvs.org.uk) or on the main office number. THCVS has funding under the current Mainstream Grants programme to work with organisations on a one to one basis and we also run a range of training courses. We are particularly keen to work with trustees and can host or visit evening meetings if that's more convenient.

We also have a fantastic opportunity for voluntary and community groups, social enterprise or faith groups that work in Tower Hamlets to access **8 hours of FREE support** through our **governance, finance and impact project**. Whether it is advice on your funding bids, writing your policies, registering as a charity or managing your finances we can help. Places are limited and will be offered on a first come basis. All work will need to be completed by 30 April 2018. To get more information contact [Jacqui.cocker@thcvs.org.uk](mailto:Jacqui.cocker@thcvs.org.uk) or call 020 8980 8427.

Have a great week,

Gemma

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