

Lewisham Council Main Grants 2026-29 Consultation

Overview

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Help shape the main grants Programme 2026 - 2029

- The main aim of this consultation is to gather comments and feedback to the proposed priorities to help shape the next programme
- Target audience: Lewisham's voluntary and community organisations, local residents', service users, volunteers and other stakeholders.
- We are seeking feedback on our proposals to ensure that the voices of the community and stakeholders are heard and considered.

Priorities and Fund Allocation for 2022-26

An Economically Sound Future

- Borough-wide Advice Services
- Digital Access for All

A Future We All Have A Part In

- Black-led Infrastructure
- Volunteer Brokerage
- Community Directory
- Community Fundraisers

A Healthy and Well Future

- Coordinated Social Prescribing
- Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Arts and Culture Fund

- Aligning the Arts and Culture Fund with the London Borough of Culture to invest in cultural infrastructure and diversity.

Evaluation and Impact

- The programme's evaluation is based on a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework aligned with a Theory of Change.
- An Annual impact review has been conducted since 2023, ensuring a consistent approach to evaluating programme effectiveness and impact.
- The framework facilitates the regularisation of data, allowing for comparable insights across various organisations and grant types. The findings are used to improve the current programme and feed into design of the main grants 2026-2029



Positive Impacts



Increases in the following areas:

- Beneficiaries due to the accessibility of local organisations
- Partnerships created and more enthusiasm to collaborate.
- Community support and assistance
- Number of volunteers supporting projects
- Support between Lewisham's voluntary organisations, community projects, and initiatives – networking, sharing resources, venues, knowledge and skills
- Support from larger organisations to smaller organisations
- Inclusion and engagement of Lewisham residents

Sector Challenges

- **Increased demand** for services due to the cost of living crisis affecting all social strata.
- **Funding** is highly competitive, making it difficult to secure necessary financial support for core costs.
- **Recruitment and retention** of skilled staff have become increasingly competitive, particularly in critical sectors
- **Place based services** - identifying and providing local services in areas of greatest need – there is less capacity for delivering services flexibly across a range of settings
- **Identifying venues** to deliver services and managing increasing rental costs pose significant logistical challenges for service providers.

Key considerations for the next round - learning from this round

- Cost of living and financial hardship have an ongoing impact on residents
- Increasing demand for advice and support that is more complex
- Ongoing need for preventative services on health and well-being that support residents to remain well and be engaged in their communities, and reduces the need for more intensive Adult Social Care and Health services
- The Community Fundraiser programme shows the value of capacity building and support to bring in external income
- Ongoing need for support of Black-led organisations to develop and thrive but work to date proves the benefit of supporting specific communities/types of services directly

Key considerations for the next round - learning from this round

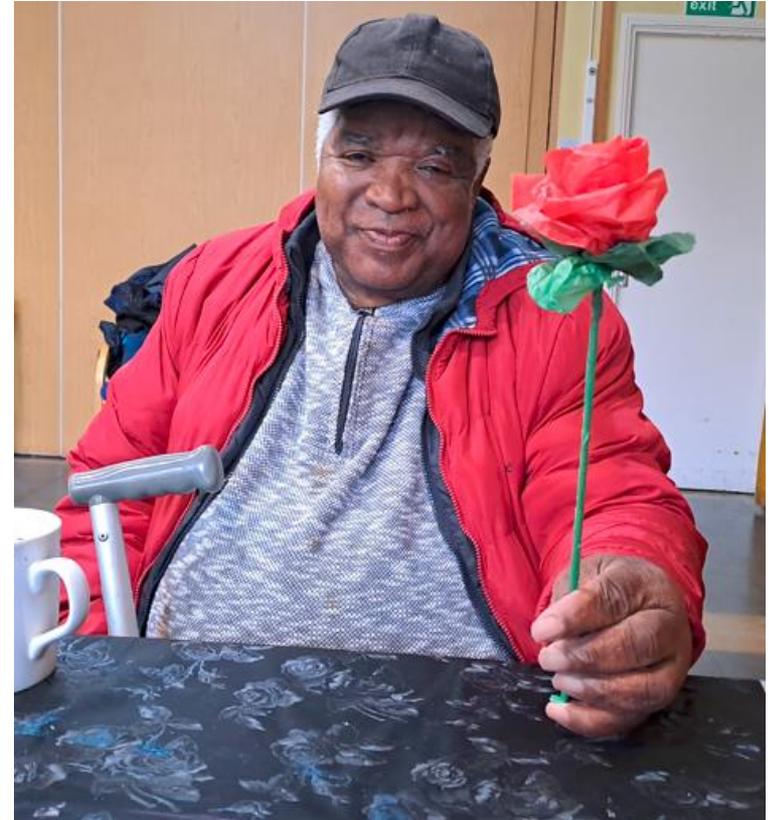
- A disconnect between the 'funded' VCS and the wide variety of activity that happens at a local level through organisations such as Churches or less formal voluntary groups
- Arts and Culture funding needs to be more closely aligned to the wider programme and Cultural Strategy action plan
- Need for capacity building and advocacy for provision both geographically (i.e. in areas with limited provision overall) or for certain groups (i.e. people or groups of people who needs are not met well locally)

Key considerations for the next round

- Move to a place-based model:
 - Development of Family Hubs
 - Integrated Care System Neighbourhoods
 - Economic Development Town Centre focus
 - Healthy Neighbourhoods and Sustainable Streets
 - Focused activity such as the Catford Forum
 - Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding
 - Adult Community Mental Health pilot
- VCS needs to be more aligned to Integrated Neighbourhood Model
- Some areas have better infrastructure & capacity than others
- In the context of decreasing council funds, diminishing frontline services vs. investment in capacity building
- With ending of the Assemblies Programme, what capacity is needed in local areas for communities to lead?

Proposed Investment in Advice Services

- We are seeking feedback on our ongoing investment in advice services to support the community effectively.
- In previous rounds, 25% of the grant was allocated to advice services, indicating our commitment to this area.
- Advice services provide crucial support for those facing financial difficulties, reaching approximately 20,000-25,000 each year
- Advice services offer: telephone, in-person, local and online provision
- To maintain the current level of funding to support residents across a range of advice needs



Proposed Changes to Advice Services

- Removal of advice services from the main grants programme to commissioned based model
- In recognition of both the scale & complexity of advice services and allows for better integration with wider Council services.
- The advice specification to be very clear to ensure that the ongoing needs of residents are met
- Consultation feedback will help to identify the right balance between face to face, online and telephone provision
- To continue our stand-alone service or align more closer to family hubs, local community programmes
- And the continued level of investment in advice as our key solution to support and help those in financial hardship

Option1: Maintaining Current Priorities

- Continuing funding is proposed for successful programs, albeit at reduced levels, to maintain service impacts
- Services would deliver against the current 2022-2026 main grant criteria
- Continue to fund those infrastructure programmes that we have assessed as meeting an ongoing need. This option therefore includes:
 - Social Prescribing
 - Community Fundraisers
 - Voice and Representation of the VCS
 - Digital Inclusion support
 - Black-led Infrastructure Programme
 - Grants to support Health and well-being
 - Arts and culture grants with a closer alignment to the cultural strategy



Option 2: Place-based and Infrastructure Funding Model



- Moving to a focus on integration with neighbourhood teams, locality-based infrastructure and coordination including local capacity building.
- Recognising the limitations of Council resources, this model aims to build local capacity for front line services for a long-term service impact
- To support a stronger and more integrated VCS
- To seek to align our VCS more closely to the place-based approach, and specifically the four Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs)

What option 2 would look like



Each of the four neighbourhoods will have

In council



Lewisham Community Development Officer

In host organisation(s)



Fundraising Development Manager



Capacity Building Officer

NB. There will be additional council resource for neighbourhoods with the greatest need

How to Engage with the Consultation

Access the online survey to share your views, comments & ideas to help shape the future main grants programme



Visit the Lewisham Consultation Hub to fill in the survey online:

<https://consultation.lewisham.gov.uk/community-services/main-grants-2026-2029-consultation/>

Timeline

Date	Action
February 2025	Stronger Communities Partnership Board meeting
31st March- 25th May 2025	Consultation
July 2025 (date tbc)	Post- consultation Report to Mayor & Cabinet
14th July 2025 (estimated date)	Launch of Main Grants
14th July – 5th October 2025	Open Call Process (12 weeks)
October – November 2025	Assessments of applications
January 2026	Allocation recommendations to Mayor & Cabinet. Contact organisations to communicate proposed recommendations
April 2026	Delivery commences

Other Ways to Respond to the Consultation

By Post:

Responses can be sent to: Community Development Team, 3rd Floor, Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, London SE6 4RU

Online and Face to Face Consultation Meeting:

9th April 11am - 1pm, Orchard Gardens Community Centre, SE13

24th April 10am - 12pm, Evelyn Community Centre, SE8

29th April 10am -12pm, Forest Hill Library, SE23 3HZ

1st May 6pm - 7:30pm (online)

8th May 10am – 11:30am (online)

15th May 10am – 11:30am, Room 1 Civic Suite, SE6 4RU

Email main.grants@lewisham.gov.uk to register

Further Information

If you need any further information or support with responding to the consultation, please contact us:

Email: main.grants@lewisham.gov.uk

Telephone: 0208 314 7249



Conclusion

The importance of Consultation

- The 2026-29 Consultation is a vital chance for stakeholders to influence future funding decisions.

Encouraging Participation

- Active participation from all stakeholders is crucial for collecting valuable insights and shaping effective funding strategies.

Valuable Insights

- Stakeholder insights are essential for understanding needs and priorities, leading to better funding outcomes.

Q&A Session