

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.10 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2017

TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG

Members Present:

Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE (Chair)
Councillor Peter Golds (Member)
Councillor Clare Harrisson (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Amina Ali (Member)

Co-Opted Members:

Margherita De Cristofano

Officers Present:

Steve Hill	– Head of Benefits
Vicky Allen	– Strategy Policy & Performance Officer
Neville Murton	– Divisional Director Finance & Procurement
David Tolley	– Head of Trading Standards
Salina Talukdar	– Zero Emissions Project Officer
Stephen Murray	– Head of Arts and Events
Judith St John	– Head of Idea Store
Janet Fasan	– Legal Services
Charles Yankiah	– Democratic Services
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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Pierce, Rabina Khan and Oliur Rahman and Zena Cooke (Corporate Director, Resources).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Sub Committee agreed to note the minutes of the previous meeting subject to Councillor Clare Harrisson's name being spelt correctly throughout the minutes.

4. FEEDBACK: COMMISSIONERS DECISION MAKING (INFORMATION ONLY)

4.1 Note for Commissioners Meeting - 20th January 2017

The Sub Committee agreed to note the feedback relating to the Grants Determination Sub Committee (Commissioner's Decision Making Meeting).

5. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

The Sub Committee noted that no public submissions had been submitted to the Clerk by the deadline (5pm the day before the meeting).

6. COMMISSIONERS DECISION MAKING MEETING REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Zero Emissions Network Project Phase Two

The Sub Committee considered the Zero Emissions Network Project Phase Two presented by David Tolley (Head of Trading Standards and SC) and Selina Talukdar (Zero Emissions Project Officer).

David Tolley informed the Sub Committee of the following: -

- The Zero Emissions Network (ZEN) Project is in Phase 2 covering the period April 2016 – March 2019;
- The ZEN project is a partnership project between Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets Council to improve local air quality;
- The project was awarded funding from the London Mayor's Air Quality Fund (MAQF) and match funded by the respective boroughs;
- In April 2016 the project secured £300,000 in the second round of MAQF to continue the project into Phase 2 until March 2019;
- The total size of the MAQF grant allocation for Phase 2 of the ZEN in Tower Hamlets is £100,000;
- Businesses are invited to apply for grant funding from the project of up to a maximum of £2000 to implement reduction measures such as installing cycle racks to encourage staff to travel sustainably;
- The project is managed and delivered by the ZEN Senior Project Officer and 3 supporting staff based in Hackney;
- The measure of success for the project is based on what is achieved;
- A Progress report will be submitted at the end of the financial year and at the end of the project;
- Tower Hamlets is declared an Air Quality Management Area under the UK Air Quality Strategy as it exceeds targets for 2 human health related pollutants (Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter); and

- The Council is implementing a business engagement programme in Spitalfields & Banglatown, Weavers and Whitechapel areas called ZEN.

The Sub Committee welcomed measures to tackle air quality in the borough, which has recently been highlighted as being particularly poor.

Councillor Harrison enquired about the impact of the cross borough working, how the success of the project will be measured and how many businesses had been engaged and noted that a third of the budget over the three boroughs (LBTH, Hackney, and Islington) went on staffing and was therefore keen to hear about the wider role of the Officer employed to manage this initiative.

David Tolley informed the Sub Committee that based upon the nature of the project it was difficult to measure the successes as the project was based upon air quality.

Selina Talukdar informed the Sub Committee that the staff costs involved all 3 officers across all 3 boroughs, with the Lead Project Officer being based at Hackney Council. She also commented that all 3 project officers were involved in engaging with businesses, staff training, case studies and evaluating data. Up to 300 businesses in Tower Hamlets have been contacted and offered support with awards, registrations, social media, website building and press releases relating to the project. There are pop-up events across the borough and bike repair workshops and electric vehicles and bicycle promotions as well.

The Sub Committee enquired about the measureable impacts on the borough's air quality from the Phase One initiatives and wanted assurance that Phase Two was not a duplication of effort, considering the area covered is the same as in Phase One.

The Committee were assured to hear that initiatives and activities on reducing poor air quality in other areas of the borough will be included in the Council's Air Quality Action Plan.

Margherita De Cristofano enquired about the World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark and whether it had been exceeded and also if the air quality in the borough had improved since Phase 1.

Dave Tolley informed the Sub Committee that an Annual Average is calculated and this information can be found on the London Air website, but it is calculated against those affected and are vulnerable in walking areas of London. Text messages and a BBC alert is usually despatched when the air quality is very poor. He also stated that it is very difficult to measure as the air quality does not recognise borough boundaries and information is collated based upon small changes in the air quality.

The Chair, Councillor Mukit commented that the project focussed on specific areas to the North and East of the Borough and enquired if there was anything in the pipeline to work on the South and the West of the borough.

David Tolley informed the Sub Committee that the Air Quality Action Plan for Tower Hamlets was being presented to the Mayor's Advisory Board in a week's time and there were 57 action plans included that involved schools, projects and other educational programmes across the borough with a public consultation.

The Chair, Councillor Mukit enquired if this is all part of a joined up strategy so that all areas in the borough would be considered.

David Tolley informed the Sub Committee that it was a joined up strategy and that information was fed back to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and any issues highlighted would be looked into.

The Sub Committee agreed, to: -

1. Endorse the recommendations.
2. Request that a copy of the ZEN Project 1 Evaluation sent to the GLA be circulated to the Sub Committee.
3. Request that any case study reports relating to "electric vehicles" be made available to the Sub Committee.

6.2 Event Fund Award Quarter 2

The Sub Committee considered the 2nd Quarter Event Fund Awards for 2016/17 presented by Stephen Murray, Head of Arts and Events.

Stephen Murray informed the Sub Committee that the report covered the Event Fund applications for events in the 2nd Quarter between 1st July 2016 and 30th September 2016. The Event Fund is a small grant fund for community arts events which has been operating successfully for a number of years and works on a rolling programme with monthly deadlines to support small scale local events.

Stephen Murray referred to paragraphs 3.1 – 3.5 of the report that identified the following –

- Annual budget for the Event Fund is £52,500;
- Maximum grant award is £2,500, however, most awards are in the region of £500 - £1,500;
- A total of £12,000 was awarded in the Quarter 2;
- Applications are assessed by 3 officers independently of each other and are initially checked for eligibility;
- If not eligible then applications are rejected and not assessed;

- If eligible then applications are scored across 7 sections on the assessment form;
- A total of 18 applications were received in Quarter 2;
- A total of 11 applications were awarded funding;
- A total of 7 applications were declined funding;
- To date a total of £27,200 has been awarded for quarters 1 and 2 with a remaining balance of £25,300 still to be allocated.

Councillor Amina Ali enquired about the monitoring of events and improving the take up of applications across the Borough.

Stephen Murray informed the Sub Committee that events and applications are closely monitored and awards of £500 or more receive an initial payment of 80% of the grant reflecting the spend profile of events that typically require necessary infrastructure to be purchased in advance of the events. The balance of the 20% of the award is retained until receipt of the completed evaluation form, final budget statement and all supporting documents as specified in the guidelines and criteria. He also stated that the Award Fund is well marketed across the Borough through various media and social platforms including Our East End, Arts & Social Media, buildings that host events and workshops across the Borough. The geographical spread of the applications across the Borough is also monitored and sometimes applications can be denied for those reasons as well where a particular venue may be over-represented in applications.

The Chair, Councillor Mukit commented that he was pleased to see that the Sub Committee recommendation about setting up workshops to support small organisations to be successful in their application is being implemented and it would be good to hear whether this has led to any successful outcomes.

The Sub Committee enquired about the processes in place to monitor the level of integration at events and whether it was appropriate to include technology in the scope for the event funds.

Stephen Murray informed the Sub Committee that the criteria for the award fund is based upon more creative and artistic events but incorporates a whole spectrum of events including Black History Month, exhibitions, women only events, performances, a mixture of media events etc.

The Committee discussed the Rich Mix centre and were assured to hear that the service gave consideration to ensuring a balance between the numbers of events hosted there and ensuring a fair geographical spread.

The Sub Committee agreed:

1. the report and supported the recommendations; and
2. Requested for future reports, the presentation of event participants' equalities data be included.

6.3 Mainstream Grant Monitoring Report - Update

The Sub Committee considered Period 5 of the MSG Project Performance Report (October to December 2016) presented by Steve Hill, Head of Benefit Services who highlighted the following:

- The report provides an update on Period 5 from October to December 2016 covering Red and Amber performance rated projects;
- There are 9 Red rated projects and 4 Amber rated projects;
- This compares to 3 Red rated projects and 5 Amber rated projects for the previous performance monitoring period (July to September 2016); and
- The MSG Programme currently has 124 live projects.

Councillor Amina Ali enquired about the Somali Parents and Children's Play Association.

Steve Hill informed the Sub Committee that they had weekly advice sessions for Somali Women and were based at 102 Mile End and mainly the service was run by volunteers.

Councillor Peter Golds enquired about the Cubbitt Town Bangladeshi Cultural Association.

Steve Hill informed the Sub Committee that it provides student support and is based at St Luke's Primary School between 7.00pm – 9.00pm.

Steve Hill provided updates to the Sub Committee relating to the following:

- **Theme 1 – Children and Young People**
There are 56 live projects within this theme of which 3 are rated Amber and 4 are rated Red (the Black Women's Health and Family Support (x2), Pollyanna Training Theatre and Children's Education Group)
- **Theme 2 – Routeways to Employment & Welfare Advice Services**
This theme is made up of 20 projects, no projects have been rated Amber or Red.
- **Theme 3 – Health and Wellbeing**
This theme is made up of 35 projects of which 5 are rated Red (Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club, Black Women's Health and Family Support, Age UK East London (x2) and Children Education Group)
- **Theme 4 – Third Sector Organisational Development**
This theme consists of 3 projects all of which are rated Green
- **Theme 5 – Community, Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience**
This theme is made up of 10 projects of which 1 is rated Amber (Somali Parents and Children's Play Association)

The Sub Committee heard a representative from the Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club who informed the Sub Committee that they were agreeable to entering into an appropriate property arrangement. However, they were concerned to hear that the organisation had only just been made aware of the situation having received no correspondence from the Council. Steve Hill, Head of Benefits Service was asked to look into this breakdown in communication.

The Chair, Councillor Mukit, reminded the officers that the Sub Committee had previously requested that when referring to a particular group, that a short sentence should be provided to remind Sub Committee members what service the organisation provides, especially where it is not implicitly clear in the name of the organisation.

The Sub Committee agreed:

1. To endorse the proposed recommendations.
2. That a brief description of the grant being considered is provided within the report.
3. To remind the appropriate officers to attend the next meeting in March 2017 and provide a presentation relating to the GIFTS web based system.
4. To invite the MSG Panel to attend a future meeting.

6.4 Grants Forward Plan

The Sub Committee noted the Grants Forward Plan.

7. OVERVIEW OF THE GRANTS REGISTER

Steve Hill informed the Sub Committee that the recent changes to the Commissioners Decision Making Meeting returned responsibility back to the Council relating to Grants and would be Chaired by the Mayor. He also stated that the MSG Team were looking at new ways of presenting information relating to the Grants and were currently in discussions with “buzzercocks” interrogating new formats and presenting information.

The Sub Committee noted the update.

8. SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

There were no Sub Committee reports for consideration.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

There was no other business to be considered.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee