

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 23 MARCH 2017**

**MP701, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,  
LONDON, E14 2BG.**

**Members Present:**

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

**Co-Opted Member:**

Margherita De Cristofano

**Officers Present:**

Steve Hill	– Head of Benefits
Vicky Allen	– Strategy Policy & Performance Officer
John Coker	– Strategic Housing Manager
Imelda Burke	– Regeneration Officer
Muhibul Hoque	– Strategy Policy & Performance Officer
Janet Fasan	– Legal Services
Melanie Aust	– Employment & Enterprise
Charles Yankiah	– Democratic Services

**Others Present:**

Stephen Hart	– Buzzacotts
John Sharples	– Buzzacotts
David Fardell	– Buzzacotts

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE and Councillor Oliur Rahman, Sirajul Islam (Co-Opted Member) 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 Item 7 and the word “buzzercocks” in the last sentence being amended to correctly read “buzzacott”.

### **4. 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).

### **5. COMMISSIONERS DECISION MAKING MEETING REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There were no items submitted for consideration.

### **6. PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE**

The Sub Committee received a presentation from representatives of “Buzzacotts” as part of the Sub Committee remit which provided a demonstration of the new GIFTS ONLINE grants management system.

The Sub Committee welcomed the introduction of the new system. They were reassured that the new system would make grant giving more efficient by automating the process and linking with finance for payments. In addition, they heard how the system would provide better monitoring information and analysis, provide greater transparency in grant making and improved workflow. The Sub Committee were especially keen to hear that the information would be accessible more easily.

The Sub Committee raised a concern about the ease of use of the application for small organisations.

Buzzacotts representatives assured the Sub Committee that research undertaken elsewhere had shown that this new system actually supported a better quality of application because of the amount of in-built guidance and template structure.

The Sub Committee were interested in hearing about the ability for third party collaboration, where organisations can share their application prior to final submission and were informed that this feature would enable organisations to seek support in writing their applications.

The Sub Committee heard about the enhanced audit controls on the system, both prior to submitting an application, after submission and throughout the grant administration process.

Finally the Sub Committee were directed to <http://www.360giving.org/> a platform that provides information on grants given in a particular geography.

The Sub Committee thanked the representatives from Buzzacotts for attending and the presentation and for answering the questions of the Sub Committee.

## **7. SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **7.1 Building Legacies Match Funding Approval**

The Sub Committee considered the Building Legacies Match Funding Approval report presented by Melanie Aust (Business and Town Centre Manager) who highlighted the following: -

- The report is seeking approval for £25,000 of match funding support for the Building Legacies project currently being delivered from East London;
- There are currently 94 SMEs in the borough receiving support out of a London wide 400; and
- The total value of the project is £1.62m of which half will be financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The Sub Committee noted that businesses in the borough would benefit from a high proportion of outputs, representing good value for money.

The Committee wanted some examples about the kind of businesses that would be supported and the kind of support they would receive. They were also keen to ensure there would be a diverse mix of businesses benefitting.

**The Sub Committee endorsed the recommendation.**

### **7.2 MSG Project Performance Update Report Period 5**

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

- The report provides an update on the premises related issues and provides the Committee with the detail of the project performance for the period from October to December 2016; and
- There are 2 Red rated projects and 2 Amber rated projects.

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

- **Children's Education Group (CEG)** – discussions are still ongoing as CEG want to stay at Harkness House, if no agreement can be made then the lease would be suspended and no further MSG payments will be made.
- **Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club** – the issues have been identified regarding DDA compliance and have been given till April to agree the terms and conditions, if no agreement can be made then payments would be suspended after the end of March.
- **Black Women's Health and Family Support (BWHFS) (Russia Lane)** – The Council is proposing the grant of a new lease from 1<sup>st</sup> April for the first floor at 82 Russia Lane, London, E2 9LU to Black Women's Health and Family support for a three or five-year term, at an annual rent of £25,000 per annum. New heads of terms have been issued for consideration.
- **Age UK East London (Russia Lane)** – The Council is proposing to grant a new lease from 1<sup>st</sup> April for the second floor at 82 Russia Lane, London, E2 9LU to Age UK East London for a three year or five year term, at an annual rent of £25,000 per annum. New heads of terms have been issued for consideration.
- **Pollyanna Training Theatre (Wapping TRA)** – Issues have been raised and work is being completed, however, payment has been suspended pending the outcome of the discussions.
- **Our Base Ltd** – A survey is being conducted of the building and payment will be suspended until an agreement is signed.
- **Betar Bangla** – it was discovered that the premises was being sub-let and this has now been raised with the original tenants Blue Pearl.
- **Family Action** – The Council is preparing a licence and the organisation has confirmed its intention to sign once the licence is ready.
- **Somalia Senior Citizens Club** – The licence has been signed and the grant has been released.
- **Premises Audit Update** – The Council has issued 41 new agreements to replace the arrangements which were previously in place. To date 35 agreements had been signed with 6 outstanding.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Harrison requested that the Sub Committee be kept up to date with the progress being made with the Children's Education Group.

Members were concerned that some of the rents being asked were disproportionately high for small organisations, especially where organisations are operating out of buildings other than those classified Community buildings and there was a potential disadvantage for some organisations which operated in wards where there is a lack of Community buildings.

Steve Hill informed the Sub Committee that both organisations have asked for their premises to be re-classified which would affect the lease and the annual rent and this was currently being looked at with the officers.

Members welcomed the work the Service will be undertaking to look into helping organisations who provide their services from premises other than Community Buildings.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Harrisson, reminded the officers that the Sub Committee had previously requested to see more monitoring of outcomes to understand the impact of the funding provided.

Steve Hill informed the Sub Committee that the officers were still working on the outcomes and this information would be submitted to a future meeting.

The Sub Committee welcomed the updates provided on the ongoing premises issues for organisations in receipt of MSG.

**The Sub Committee agreed:**

1. To endorse the proposed recommendations.
2. That the outcomes relating to the organisation be included in future reports.
3. That the Service undertakes a piece of analysis, tied in with the introduction of the new GIFTS system, focussing on health impacts and bring this to a future GSSC meeting.

**7.3 Ocean Regeneration Trust Grant Funding**

The Sub Committee considered the Ocean Regeneration Trust Grant Funding report presented by John Coker (Strategic Housing Manager) and Imelda Burke (Regeneration Officer) who highlighted the following: -

- The report seeks approval for ongoing grant payment and to lease the Harford Street Multicentre to Ocean Regeneration Trust (ORT) on a 5 year lease;
- The ORT was set up in 2008 as a legacy vehicle to the Ocean New Deal for Communities (NDC);
- The ORT has been based at the Harford Street Multicentre since the opening of the centre in November 2011 and as the successor body to the Ocean NDC continues to promote the socio-economic regeneration of the Ocean area and to hold assets, receive income and generate income for the benefit of the local community;
- The projected income in the ideal scenario from the new retail units is £231,800; and
- This projection is based on what the current cost per square foot is for the units and assumes that all 16 units can be let and the asking price and will be fully occupied by 2018.

Members enquired about the link with Limehouse and the issues raised in paragraph 3.5.2 of the report.

Imelda Burke informed the Sub Committee that in 2016 the Ocean and Limehouse Community Review was completed on the Ocean and Limehouse Fields estate to examine how services would be delivered locally. The review identified the need for greater community capacity and involvement, address gaps in services, better integration of services and stronger governance. The ORT will be developing a detailed action plan based on the issues raised which will be monitored by LBTH.

The Sub Committee were interested in hearing about the plans to bring in new businesses whilst ensuring sustainability for the shops on Ben Johnson High Street and the main source of funding the ORT going forward.

Imelda Burke informed the Sub Committee that the ORT is taking the time to look at the projects and build the trust in the community.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Harrison enquired about the governance structure and the local board.

The Sub Committee were concerned about the continued levels of deprivation on the Ocean Estate Regeneration area, and were pleased to hear about the work of the ORT to tackle the issues, including building trust, engaging residents, and bringing communities in the wider Stepney/Limehouse areas together. With regards to governance, the committee were pleased to hear that half of the ORT Board is made up from resident representatives (3) and local Councillors (2) and other specialists.

**The Sub Committee endorsed** the recommendations in the report.

## **8. GRANTS FORWARD PLAN**

**The Sub Committee noted** the Grants Forward Plan.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

There was no other business to be considered.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

Vice Chair, Councillor Clare Harrison  
Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee