

# COMMISSIONERS' INDIVIDUAL DECISION MAKING

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Wednesday, 12 October 2016

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Commissioners' Decision Log No. 65


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1. **HEARTSTONE ODESSY PROJECT GRANT FUNDING (Pages 1 - 10)**

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact: Matthew Mannion, Democratic Services  
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# Agenda Item 1

<b>Individual Commissioner Decision</b> Decision Log No: <u>65</u>	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
Report of: Zena Cooke, Corporate Director, Resources	Classification: [insert Unrestricted or Exempt]
<b>Heartstone Odessy Project Grant Funding</b>	

Is this a Key Decision?	No
Decision Notice Publication Date:	Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
General Exception or Urgency Notice published?	Not required
Restrictions:	None

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out a proposal to award grant funding to Heartstone Odessy, a pilot project, involving the GLA, TFL and other local authorities across the country, to promote and support community cohesion in Tower Hamlets schools.

## DECISION

The Commissioners are recommended to:-

Approve the grant funding allocation of £5k for the Heartstone Odessy pilot project working with the Council's HEC Global Learning Centre and schools to promote and deliver community cohesion activities.

Note the total cost to the council of the project of £20k and the external match funding of £5k.

**APPROVALS**

**1. (If applicable) Corporate Director proposing the decision or his/her deputy**

I approve the attached report and proposed decision above for submission to the Mayor.

Signed [Signature] ..... Date 5/10/16.

**2. Chief Finance Officer or his/her deputy**

I have been consulted on the content of the attached report which includes my comments.

Signed [Signature] ..... Date 5/10/16.

**3. Monitoring Officer or his/her deputy**

I have been consulted on the content of the attached report which includes my comments.

(For Key Decision only – delete as applicable)

I confirm that this decision:-

(a) has been published in advance on the Council's Forward Plan OR  
(b) is urgent and subject to the 'General Exception' or 'Special Urgency' provision at paragraph 18 or 19 respectively of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Signed [Signature] ..... Date 05/10/16.

**4. Commissioner**

I agree the decision proposed in paragraph above for the reasons set out in paragraph 1 in the attached report.

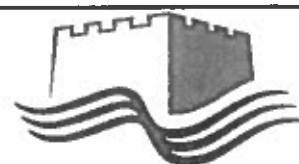
Name [Signature] ..... Signed [Signature] .....  
Date 5/10/16

Name ..... Signed .....

Date .....

## Commissioner Decision Report

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016



**TOWER HAMLETS**

**Report of:** Corporate Director of Resources

**Classification:**  
[Unrestricted or Exempt]

Heartstone Odessy Project Grant Funding

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Steve Hill
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	One Tower Hamlets

### Executive Summary

This report sets out a proposal to award grant funding to Heartstone Odessy, a pilot project, involving the GLA, TFL and other local authorities across the country, to promote and support community cohesion in Tower Hamlets schools.

### Recommendations:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Approve the grant funding allocation of £5k for the Heartstone Odessy pilot project working with the Council's HEC Global Learning Centre and schools to promote and deliver community cohesion activities.
2. Note the total cost to the Council of the project of £20k and the external match funding of £5k.

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The Council has been given the opportunity to participate in a pilot project supported by the GLA, TfL and a number of councils, working with local schools to deliver a number of community cohesion objectives. The project will enable Tower Hamlets schools to be part of a project that involves schools from other areas as well as to participate in an event at the House of Commons in October. The timetable for the project has been set and the decision to participate is therefore time-limited with confirmation required before the end of September.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Council could choose not to participate in this pilot project, but this would mean that Tower Hamlets' schools would miss the opportunity to be part of a wider community cohesion project across London as well as involving schools from other areas of the country.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 The Heartstone Odyssey Project was born out of a fantasy story centred on a female heroine, Chandra, and her quest to overcome intolerance, prejudice and racism in collaboration with her allies – the mice. This community cohesion project is a pilot that is being supported by the GLA, TfL and is being rolled out by a number of councils across the country.
- 3.2 The project is considered to be a good opportunity for Tower Hamlets schools to be part of a wider collaboration of schools addressing community cohesion issues, using the story and the materials developed by Heartstone. The Council is proposing that the project be delivered in collaboration with the HEC Global Learning Centre (HEC), part of the Tower Hamlets Schools Library Service, as the HEC has significant experience of delivering projects and working with Tower Hamlets schools.
- 3.3 The pilot project will engage with schools, organise the relevant training, maintain contact with the schools during the course of the project and will culminate in a finale event that will be planned, organised and led by the young people. The pilot project will be evaluated to ensure that the project's objectives are achieved and the evaluation will be used to identify how the project will be mainstreamed across the borough's schools.
- 3.4 The schools participating in the pilot project are also invited to attend an event at the House of Commons in October. The young people will host the event, they will oversee the timetable for the event and will receive a certificate to mark their involvement. The opportunity to attend the House of Commons and participate in the event, taking an active part in its organisation and delivery, is considered to be a very positive opportunity for the young people in terms of raising aspirations and developing their skills.

- 3.5 The HEC has confirmed that it is able to oversee and support the delivery of the project and to ensure that the project's objectives are met within the period of the pilot and within the identified budget.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 The total cost of the project is £25k, with the cost to the Council, approximately £20k. £15k will be allocated to the HEC to support delivery of the project and £5k for the Heartstone Project organisation. A further £5k match funding from sponsors has also been confirmed.

#### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 This report seeks the approval of Commissioners to a grant allocation of £5K. The Council is not under a legal duty to provide this payment. The payment is discretionary and therefore considered to be a grant.
- 5.4 The power of the commissioners to make decisions in relation to grants arises from directions made by the Secretary of State on 17 December 2014 pursuant to powers under sections 15(5) and 15(6) of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Directions). Paragraph 4(ii) and Annex B of the Directions together provide that, until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, the Council's functions in relation to grants will be exercised by appointed Commissioners, acting jointly or severally. This is subject to an exception in relation to grants made under section 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, for the purposes of section 23 of that Act (disabled facilities grant).
- 5.5 To the extent that the Commissioners are exercising powers which would otherwise have been the Council's, there is a need to ensure that the Council has the power to make the grant in question. In that regard, the proposed grants are supported by the Council's general power of competence. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to specified restrictions and limitations imposed by other statutes.
- 5.6 The Council has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This is referred to as the Council's best value duty. Best Value considerations have also been addressed in paragraph 7 of the report.
- 5.7 The Council must ensure that no part of the funds issued represents a profit element to the recipient. The inclusion of profit or the opportunity of making a profit from the grant or third parties indicates that the grant is really procurement activity and would otherwise be subject to the Council's Procurement Procedures and other appropriate domestic and European law. This would mean therefore, that the Council would have failed to abide by the

appropriate internal procedures and external law applicable to such purchases.

- 5.9 When making decisions, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty). A proportionate level of equality analysis is required to discharge the duty and information relevant to this is contained in the One Tower Hamlets section of the report.

6. **ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The pilot project contributes to One Tower Hamlets as it supports the Council's community cohesion objectives.

7. **BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The HEC will ensure that the pilot project will deliver the agreed objectives and will demonstrate value for money.

8. **SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 There are no direct SAGE implications arising from this report.

9. **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The project will be managed by the HEC and any risks will be identified and managed as part of the project plan.

10. **CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

11. **SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Any safeguarding implications will be considered as part of the project plan that will be overseen by the HEC.

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**Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

**Linked Report**

- None
- Appendices**



- Project Outline – Hearstone Odessy Pilot Project

**Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

- none

**Officer contact details for documents:**

Or state N/A

1. Heartstone will provide 10 project packs for the schools participating in the project, delivered to the location of the training session which will initiate the project (or sent to individual schools if preferred). Each pack will comprise the following:
  - A class set of 30 books;
  - Teachers' notes – incorporating discussion concepts and ideas drawn from previous schools' experiences together with input from Heartstone's Advisory Team for the project representing different faiths. The notes are not prescriptive, they are intended to be a guide – discussion is intended to be an 'organic' process, arising from the personal experiences of the children and the local area. Thus, no two projects are the same and will vary from area to area depending upon the age group, background and experience of the children.
  - Small-scale encapsulated exhibition of 15 photographs, drawn from the main Heartstone Odyssey exhibition, covering some of the real locations featured in the books allowing each school to construct a display in their lobby or corridor to ensure work done within the classroom reaches out to the whole school community and can form the basis of assemblies and school presentations.
2. HEC Global Learning Centre will locate 9 schools covering any combination of Years 5, 6 and 7 with one class in each school identified to participate in the project. Where necessary, Heartstone will support recruitment with additional telephone advice and input as required;
3. HEC Global Learning Centre will identify one school from which a group of around 8-10 or a class of girls between the ages of 14 and 16 will be recruited to take part as hosts of the House of Commons event on November 15 2016;
4. Start time for the project will be January 2017 running for a period of 2 terms concluding in the Summer term 2017;
5. Schools will need to allocate approximately one hour a week to read the story and discuss the issues raised with the children over a period of 1-2 terms. There are 22 chapters in the book and how long it takes to read a chapter will largely depend on the level of discussion raised. Some chapters may only take a short time to read, whilst others may take substantially longer if children have a lot to say. How long the schools put into the project will be down to them and their own curricular constraints;
6. Alongside the discussion, as part of each session, children will be encouraged to produce art and written work to express their ideas and conclusions and use these in the exhibition they will construct as a joint activity to be presented in the school lobby or along a corridor. Centrally placed will be their conclusions on the values they have agreed on as a result of their discussions. The set of photographs in the pack related to the main characters and key locations in the story provide a framework for the exhibition. The images are drawn from the main Heartstone Odyssey exhibition which is being exhibited at high profile locations in different parts of the UK thus giving the schools a sense of contact with the wider nationwide project;
7. HEC Global Learning Centre will arrange one training session of approximately 2 hours to be led by Heartstone for the girls who will be hosting the House of Commons event in advance of November 15;
8. HEC Global Learning Centre will arrange one introductory training session for the teachers leading the project in each school, to be led by Heartstone, to take place either at the end of the Autumn or beginning of the Spring term. This will be approximately 2 and a half hours held either morning, afternoon or after school led by a Heartstone trainer who will go through use of the pack, what is expected in the project, curriculum areas in which to incorporate it (see below), milestones, evaluation tools, children contributing to the Newsletter, online

support and email/telephone support through Heartstone and the Advisory Team which will continue for the period of the project. Location of the training session may be one of the participating schools. One follow up meeting will be held half-way through the project should this be needed or direct telephone support from Heartstone if required;

9. The story is an adventure in its own right and in 2000, was funded by the DFE under Literacy and Citizenship. The training course will highlight curriculum areas where the project can be incorporated including both the above. Most schools opt to incorporate it under English, some schools may opt to include it under RE or just as a special thing to do on a Friday afternoon. It is not designed to be an 'extra thing to do' and this will be specified at the training session as the longterm goal is to see the project 'embedded' in the curriculum as has happened in many of the other project areas to date;
10. The project will be led by the class teacher in each school with ad-hoc contact from HEC Global Learning Centre by phone or email to check on progress and identify any issues arising which need to be dealt with either locally or by Heartstone eg. the teacher leading the project has dropped out therefore needing a second teacher to follow through;
11. Other local individuals / organisations who can contribute to the discussion process will be discussed at the training session eg. a local police officer who can talk about hate crime, local historian who can talk about their own area to connect with the Heartstone Odyssey and other experts who can provide a beneficial input;
12. Evaluation reports will be discussed at the training session and will focus on written reports from the teachers and the children reflecting (1) discussions held and interesting / valuable anecdotes, (2) specific curriculum connections made which will help schools participating in the future, (3) a simple attitude survey at the start and completion of the project. Heartstone will provide questionnaires for this purpose or whatever is felt to be the simplest route to do this without overburdening teachers.

**Final celebration:** the art/written work produced from the schools will be presented at a finale celebration in the summer term to be staged in a Civic location, not incurring additional cost for hire. This will be arranged by HEC Global Learning Centre. The schools will need to bring their work for display to this presentation which will be promoted across Tower Hamlets providing a mechanism to interest additional schools across the borough.

**Sustainability:** Once in place, the project pack can be used year after year with new classes. Heartstone will maintain contact to ensure schools are aware of all updates and new resources so that this becomes an ongoing and growing resource.

