

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

RECORD OF THE DECISIONS OF THE GRANTS DETERMINATION (CABINET) SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 5.10 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2017

MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON E14 2BG.

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs (Chair)	(Executive Mayor)
Councillor Sirajul Islam	(Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Performance)
Councillor Rachael Saunders	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services)
Councillor David Edgar	(Cabinet Member for Resources - Substitute for Councillor Asma Begum)

Commissioners Present:

Max Caller	(Commissioner)
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Other Councillors Present:

none

Officers Present:

Nadir Ahmed	– (Business Support Manager, Development and Renewal)
Zena Cooke	– (Corporate Director, Resources)
Alison Denning	– (Festivals and Events Officer, Communities Localities and Culture)
Steve Hill	– (Head of Grants & Benefits Service)
Ann Sutcliffe	– (Divisional Director, Property & Major Programmes)
Selina Talukdar	– (Zero Emissions Project Officer)
David Tolley	– (Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards)
Vicky Allen	– (Strategy Policy & Performance Officer, Strategy, Corporate Strategy and Equality Service, Chief Executive's)
Antonella Burgio	– (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Asma Begum.

An apology was noted from Councillor Md Mukit, Chair of Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee.

DECISION

That the apologies submitted be noted.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were made by all Elected Members of the Grants Determination Sub Committee in respect of agenda item 5.3 in that the Chair of Children Education Group Board (CEG) was known through their common Labour Party membership.

DECISION

That the declarations be noted.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

DECISION

The minutes of the Grants Determination Sub Committee held on 17 January 2017 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

3. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

Public submissions in relation to agenda item 5.3 'MSG Project Performance Report – Period October – December 2016' were received from the following organisations and considered as part of the discussion of the item:

Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club
Black Women's Health and Family Support (Russia Lane)
Age UK (Russia Lane)
Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services (THCVS) regarding concerns raised by community organisations about new rental/lease arrangements issued by the Council.

4. EXERCISE OF MAYORAL DISCRETIONS

DECISION

The Sub Committee noted:

1. the report circulated in the agenda had been duplicated from the previous meeting.
2. No urgent decisions had been discharged by Mayor as individual decisions since the Sub Committee meeting on 17 January 2017.

5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Event Fund - Report on Event Fund Awards 2016-17 Quarter 2

The Festivals and Events Officer presented the quarterly report which provided details of grant applications and grants made that were:

- approved by the Divisional Director Sports, Leisure, Culture & Youth under delegated powers;
- for small community events that met the Event Fund criteria;
- for the period July –September 2016.

Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee and Members broadly supported the proposal. Their comments were noted.

DECISION

That the report of applications made and awards approved by the Divisional Director Sports, Leisure, Culture & Youth for applications for events taking place in July, August and September 2016 under the Event Fund Grant be noted.

5.2 Zero Emissions Network Phase Two

The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards presented the report which set out proposals for a tri-borough scheme funded through the London Mayor's Air Quality Fund:

- to promote sustainable travel options and low emissions technology;
- that is aimed at businesses in the Borough;
- that made these grants via officer delegated decisions and reported to Grants Determination Sub Committee in keeping with procedures established for reporting grants made under delegated powers.

Comments of Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee were noted. The Chair invited Members to comment and they indicated that they had no comments that they wished to make.

DECISION

1. That the implementation of a grant scheme, as outlined in Appendix 1, for promoting sustainable travel options/low emission technology for businesses in the borough be approved.
2. That Divisional Director Public Realm be delegated authority to make grant awards in accordance with the scheme in Appendix 1, provided that the totality of the grants made does not exceed the available funding for grants up to March 2019, that is £67,100.
3. That it be agreed that the project reports back as part of the annual reporting cycle to Members and the Greater London Authority, the project sponsors.

5.3 Mainstream Grant monitoring report - Update

The Head of Grants & Benefits Service introduced the performance monitoring report which provided an interim update for the period October – December 2016. Members were informed that since the next MSG reporting cycle would deliver a full monitoring report after the period of the SoS directions had ended, it was intended to provide interim data covering red and amber rated projects.

At the Chair's invitation representatives of Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club, Black Women's Health and Family Support, Age UK and THCVS each addressed the Sub Committee concerning their written submissions. The written representation from Children Education Group was also considered.

Comments of Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee were noted. Sub Committee Members' and Commissioner Caller's comments on the following broad issues were noted:

- Red performance ratings recorded in the period were as a consequence of premises issues;
- Premises issues were a matter identified by Commissioners in 2014;
- Moves toward regularising property arrangements had created significant financial issues for a number of community groups;
- The common issues raised by THCVS in its written representation which affected the projects delivering their schemes via Council properties could not be properly resolved in the meeting but required further discussion, analysis and review. These matters should therefore be progressed and a report made at a future meeting.

The Sub Committee considered and discussed each of the recommendations and

DECISION

Recommendation 1 – Children Education Group

That this project, on the basis that a prior meeting with the Mayor failed to take place, that the organisation had been offered alternative options in regard to rent and premises and on the basis of the written representation discussed by the Sub Committee, be **offered a period of two weeks** hence in order to make arrangements to meet with the Mayor to discuss their concerns and for mediation. Failure to do so will result in the group being removed from the Grants programme.

Recommendation 2 – Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club

That this group, on the basis that it has engaged with the Council in respect of its property arrangements, its representation at the meeting and in view of the possibility of a partnership arrangement with Ability Bow organisation,

1. be **offered support** to explore the viability of partnership with Ability Bow.

2. **receive MSG funding one month in arrears** while property issues are being resolved pending an update on the property agreement to be provided at the next meeting
3. be offered officer support to apply for Emergency Funding.

Recommendation 3 and 4 – Black Women’s Health and Family Support and Age UK

That, on the basis that both have confirmed their willingness to enter into a formal premises arrangement with the Council and that red performance ratings returned for both in the period are due to premises issues

1. The quarterly MSG payment *be paid* to these organisations **monthly in arrears** (rather than quarterly in advance), subject to satisfactory MSG performance ratings excluding consideration of premises issues.
2. That property issues are considered separately for the purposes of the MSG payments whilst the premises agreements are being finalised.
3. That officers support these organisations to apply for Emergency Funding.

Recommendation 5 – Pollyanna Training Theatre

1. That the current Red performance ratings allocated due to the premises issues **be considered separately** for the purposes of the MSG payments.
2. That that whilst the premises agreement is being finalised, the quarterly MSG payment *be paid monthly in arrears* (rather than quarterly in advance), subject to satisfactory MSG performance ratings in the context of the first part of this recommendation.

Recommendation 6 – Evidence of Premises Arrangements Awaited

That in light of the on-going premises/MSG audit work and given each organisation’s commitment in providing evidence of their current premises arrangements it is recommended that **MSG payments should continue to be released** to organisations which required further verification in terms of their arrangements for the Council buildings that they were using subject to satisfactory performance ratings.

Recommendation 7 – DeafPlus

That **MSG payment should continue to be released** to DeafPlus subject to satisfactory performance ratings.

Recommendation 8 – Limehouse Welfare Association

That **MSG payment should continue to be released** to the Limehouse Welfare Association subject to satisfactory performance ratings

Recommendation 9 – Splash Play

That **MSG payment should continue to be released** to Splash Play subject to satisfactory performance ratings.

Recommendation 10 – Our Base LTD

Since, additional checks were required on the address at which this organisation is based and the organisation does not have an appropriate property agreement on place, that payment to Our Base LTD be **suspended** until the organisation enters into an appropriate property agreement with the Council for the use of 16 Goulston Street. That Asset Management enter into negotiations with the organisation for the development of an appropriate property agreement.

Recommendation 11 – Bromley By Bow Centre

That, since there has been contact between the organisation and the Council on 14 February 2017 and it was confirmed that the organisation was not using the Atlee Centre, payments be **continued** subject to satisfactory performance ratings. .

Recommendation 12 – Betar Bangla

That, since the landlord contacted the Council on 14 February 2017 and confirmed use of the premises by Betar Bangla, payments be **continued** subject to satisfactory performance.

Recommendation 13 – Wadajir Somali Community Centre

That, since the Council is presently awaiting confirmation of the use of Teviot Community Hall, payments be **suspended** until the organisation provides confirmation of its use of the premises.

Recommendation 14 – St Giles Trust – Gamechangers

That, following officer visits and the Mainstream Grants Spotlight Review Panel assessment of performance, outstanding payments be **released** to the organisation as a result of the organisation's performance being classified as having a Green performance rating.

Recommendation 15 – Cubitt Town Bangladeshi Cultural Association

That in light of the Mainstream Grants Spotlight Review Panel assessment, of this project,

1. performance should remain **Amber rated** for this period.
2. that the organisation be **awarded two thirds of MSG funding** due, in accordance with the agreed procedures.

Recommendation 16 – Somali Parent's Children and Play - Somali Women's Engagement Forum

That in the light of the Mainstream Grants Spotlight Panel considerations and the further officer performance review subsequently undertaken,

1. the project performance should remain **Amber** rated for this period.
2. that the organisation be **awarded two thirds of MSG funding** due, in accordance with the agreed procedures.

Recommendation 17 – EC Lighthouse (Lithuanian School)

As a result of the Mainstream Grants Spotlight Review Panel assessment of performance

1. that the organisation be classified as having a **Green** performance rating.
2. that any outstanding payments be **released** to EC Lighthouse as a result of the assessment

Recommendation 18 – Written Representations from THCVS

In the light of the common issues raised by THCVS on behalf of a number of organisations relating to:

- a disparity between VCS organisations creating a sense of an uneven playing field, (some discussions focussing on market rent and some on community rent),
- the actual or potential usage of the buildings rather than their designation,
- Pressure on organisations to sign leases with very little time for discussion or negotiation,
- little or no reference to the community benefit offset. Lack of information about the offset means that organisations currently feel under pressure to sign leases quickly are therefore unable to predict what the real costs of occupying their premises will be.
- substantial and unexpected increases in rent, threatening the viability of local VCS organisations,

That the issues highlighted by CVS be afforded **more consideration** and a **report be made** at a future meeting addressing the matters raised in the representation

5.4 Grants Forward Plan

DECISION

That the report be noted.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

Mayor John Biggs (Chair),
Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee