

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GRANTS DETERMINATION (CABINET) SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.10 P.M. ON MONDAY, 10 JULY 2017

ROOM MP702, 7TH FLOOR, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON E14 2BG

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs (Chair)	(Executive Mayor)
Councillor Sirajul Islam (Member)	(Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing)
Councillor Rachael Saunders (Member)	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Services)
Councillor Asma Begum (Member)	(Cabinet Member for Community Safety)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Peter Golds (Leader of the Conservative Group)

Officers Present:

Janet Fasan	– (Divisional Director, Legal)
Carrie Kilpatrick	– (Deputy Director for Mental Health and Joint Commissioning)
Steve Hill	– (Head of Benefits Services)
Mahbubul Anam	– (Interim Strategic Project Manager - Whitechapel Vision, Place)
Emily Fieran-Reed	– (Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning, Strategy, Policy and Equality)
Abdul J. Khan	– (Sustainable Development Manager, Strategy Innovation & Sustainability, Development and Renewal)
Christine McInnes	– (Divisional Director, Education and Partnership, Children's)
David Freeman	– (Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy Manager)
Neville Murton	– (Divisional Director, Finance, Procurement & Audit)
Antonella Burgio	– (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received from Sub Committee Members.

An apology was noted from Zena Cooke, Corporate Director for Resources.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Rachael Saunders declared an interest in respect of agenda item 8.1 in that her husband was secretary of Collingwood Tenants Resident Association.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The unrestricted minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2017 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4. GRANTS DETERMINATION SUB-COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, QUORUM, MEMBERSHIP AND DATES OF MEETINGS

The committee considered the report and noted a verbal update that a request had been made to the Chief Executive that the meeting on 1st August 2017 be cancelled as the reports expected at this meeting were solely for noting and were not time sensitive.

DECISION

1. That the Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of meetings for the Municipal Year 2017/18 as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 be noted.
2. That it be noted that the Chief Executive has given permission that the meeting on 1st August 2017 be cancelled.

5. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

The Clerk informed the Sub Committee that no written representations had been received in relation to items to be discussed at the meeting.

6. EXERCISE OF DISCRETIONS / INDIVIDUAL MAYORAL DECISION

No urgent decisions had been discharged individually by the Mayor since the previous Grants Determination Sub Committee meeting on 9 May 2017.

VARY ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair agreed that the order of business may be varied to better discharge the business of the meeting. Accordingly the items were discussed in the following order: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.6, 7.7, 8.1, 7.4 and 7.5.

7. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

7.1 Mental Health User Led Grants Programme - review of allocations for 2017-2018

The Deputy Director for Mental Health and Joint Commissioning introduced the report which concerned renewal of grants under the Mental Health User Led Grants Programme and a request to increase awards for named projects utilising unallocated monies from projects that had closed. The programme had been initially approved by Commissioners on 12 April 2016.

The written comments of Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee (GSSC) were noted, in particular that project outcomes should be measured and an outcomes questionnaire be obligatory to build an evidence base.

Councillor Saunders indicated that she supported the proposals. Members also noted that the projects would also be appraised.

RESOLVED

1. That the increased awards for the Mental Health Grants Programme which totals an additional £16,672 for the 2017-2018 year of the programme be authorised.
2. The individual groups and renewed allocations listed below be noted:

	Additional Funding	Original funding	Total 2017/18 grant amount
Cool to Believe	£3,310	£1,690	£5,000
Peace of Mind	£3,576	£1,424	£5,000
Upbeat	£3,576	£1,424	£5,000
Mindfulness photography	£3,576	£1,424	£5,000
Performing arts and cinema group	£2,634	£2,366	£5,000
Total	£16,672		

3. That the Mental Health User Led Grants recommended for the period 2017-18 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

7.2 Royal London Hospital Meanwhile Use Community Garden

The Sub Committee:

- noted that the matter had been previously considered by the Executive but was also a matter for the Sub Committee because the funding was in the form of a grant.
- heard that the proposal concerned the establishment of a container grown garden on a plot near the new Royal London Hospital.

- noted the comments of the GSSC and the tabled addendum which responded to the matters raised by Scrutiny.
- noted that the garden site would be closed at night to mitigate antisocial behaviour issues and safeguard against damage to the site. The site would be looked after by Core Landscapes.

The Sub Committee supported the proposal in principle but expressed concern that Barts NHS Trust were not providing the funding for the project. It was agreed that officers would provide a response to Members on this matter in writing.

RESOLVED

That grant funding of £40,222 to Core Landscapes to enable the relocation and set-up of their community garden project in Whitechapel be approved.

7.3 Schools Energy Retrofit Programme

The Mayor introduced the item which concerned grant funding from the Carbon Offset Fund to enable schools to retrofit low cost energy efficient equipment.

The written comments of GSSC were noted and the Sustainable Development Manager explained how the scheme would be implemented and its expected benefits.

The Sub Committee broadly supported the proposals but noted that the Council would not receive direct benefit from the proposal.

RESOLVED

That grant funding of £240,000 to deliver the Schools Energy Retrofit Programme be approved.

7.4 MSG Project Performance Report - Period 6 - January to March 2017

The Chair noted that representatives from Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club, Age UK and Tower Hamlets CVS were present at the meeting to hear the discussion of the item.

The Head of Benefits Services presented the report which provided full performance data for Members' information for period 6 and updates on premises issues.

The written comments of GSSC were noted and the following updates provided on outstanding issues:

- Children Education Group – outstanding property matters were almost resolved and consolidation was expected over the coming four weeks.

- Black Women's Health and Family Support, this was a presentation issue and the matter would be reported at the next GDSC meeting.
- Red-Amber-Green Context - it was intended the report would be presented in a more accessible format. Proposal would be brought to the Sub Committee in September.
- Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club – there was now a S25 notice which permitted a six-month negotiation period before enforcement of the notice. Officers from the Strategy Team would examine how best to address and mitigate the situation.

The Sub Committee enquired how the Community Buildings Review – Extended Scope review would impact the organisations that had attended to hear the discussion. Members were informed that proposals (of the Community Buildings Review report) were intended to address the performance ratings issues evidenced in previous performance reports by means of a subsidy. The issues were expected to be resolved by April 2018.

RESOLVED

1. That the content of the report and the comments of the Sub Committee be noted.
2. That the premises updates provided at para 3.10 to 3.25 be noted.

7.5 Forward Plan

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

7.6 Grant Support to Oxford House (Bethnal Green)

The Divisional Director, Finance, Procurement & Audit informed the Sub Committee the grant together with Heritage Lottery funding and a repayable loan would fund the restoration of the premises.

The written comments of GSSC were noted and the Divisional Director outlined how the Council would mitigate risks around the loan using controls and ongoing review. The Sub Committee noted the intended outcomes and benefits that the project would achieve.

Sub Committee Members and Councillor Golds indicated that they supported the proposals because of benefits that the premises could provide to the community and its heritage value.

RESOLVED

That grant funding of £250,000 as a contribution to Oxford House in support of their refurbishment project be approved.

7.7 School Clothing Grants: 2017/18 Academic Year

The Divisional Director, Education and Partnership informed the Sub Committee that the report asked Members to agree to the continuation of the discretionary clothing grant in the academic year 2017/18.

The written comments of GSSC were noted and Members were informed that:

- families claiming working tax credit would be able to apply although benefits financial thresholds operated by the Department of Work and Pensions applied.
- That the scheme was advertised via the Council website

Members recommended that there should be adequate signposting for the scheme.

RESOLVED

1. That the provision by the Council of school clothing grants in 2017/18 within the budget specified in paragraph 5.1 of the report be approved.
2. That the Corporate Director Resources or her duly authorised representatives be authorised to be able to determine the granting of funds from that budget on a time for time basis for the purposes of carrying out the activities described in this report.

8. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

The Clerk informed the Chair that the Community Buildings Review – Extended Scope report had been supplied for publication in accordance with the statutory deadlines but due to a clerical error had been omitted from the agenda. The item was published as soon as the error was detected and the Sub Committee was asked to consider the report as an item of urgent business since the content would impact future project monitoring.

8.1 Community Buildings Review - Extended Scope

The Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning presented the report which asked the Sub Committee to consider proposals to address financial issues affecting otherwise successful projects which operated from premises that fell outside of the 'community building' category.

The report outlined proposals to review and extend the range of premises that could be considered in the category dependent on the extent of its community

use, to eliminate current anomalies and to maximise the usage of buildings for community use.

The Chair noted that the proposal was a matter for the Cabinet (the parent committee) but agreed that it was appropriate to seek the views of the Sub Committee as this had responsibility for grants upon which community associations and projects relied.

The written comments of GSSC were noted and Sub Committee indicated its support for the proposal. Additionally Members wished the policy to ensure that well run tenants associations were supported.

RESOLVED

1. That it be agreed that the scope of the review of Council owned community buildings occupied by voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations agreed by Cabinet on 1 November 2016 to include all Council owned buildings occupied by VCS organisations be extended;
2. That it be agreed that the process and criteria for reduced rent agreed by Cabinet on 1 November 2016 be extended to apply to all Council buildings and reviewed to ensure they are appropriate in the context of the wider review of Council support to the VCS; and
3. That it be agreed that further work is carried out to explore the potential unintended consequences for local services of implementing the new arrangements and ways of mitigating the impact, including exploring possible transitional arrangements for organisations affected by the changes, where appropriate.

The meeting ended at 7.08 p.m.

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