

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GRANTS DETERMINATION (CABINET) SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 5.35 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2017

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, MULBERRY PLACE, LONDON E14 2BG

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs (Chair)	(Executive Mayor)
Councillor Sirajul Islam (Member)	(Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing)
Councillor Asma Begum (Member)	(Cabinet Member for Community Safety)

Others Present:

Councillor Andrew Woods	(Chair Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee)
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Guests Present:

Gemma Cossins	Tower Hamlets CVS
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Officers Present:

Ludovica Orlando	–	Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
Zena Cooke	–	(Corporate Director, Resources)
Alison Denning	–	(Festivals and Events Officer, Culture and Leisure)
Barbara Disney	–	(Service Manager, Strategic Commissioning)
Janet Fasan	–	(Divisional Director, Legal)
Emily Fieran-Reed	–	(Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning, Strategy, Policy and Equality)
David Freeman	–	(Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy Manager)
Michael Ritchie	–	(Principal Officer - Place Shaping)
Karen Sugars	–	(Acting Divisional Director, Integrated Commissioning)
Antonella Burgio	–	(Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were submitted by members of the Sub Committee.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th July were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

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

5. EXERCISE OF DISCRETIONS / INDIVIDUAL MAYORAL DECISION

The Mayor advised that an Individual Mayoral Decision was taken after the publication of the agenda for this meeting. He reported that he had agreed to provide funding to the organisers of the Shuffle Festival in the form of a loan.

The decision was taken in the same context decisions of this kind made by Commissioners that an expedited decision is necessary.

The organisers had subsequently declined to accept the support; however the option presently remained should they wish to re-engage with officers.

6. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Event Fund - Annual Report 2016-17

The Festival and Events Officer presented the report which reported applications and events funded from the Event Fund during 2016/17 and also reported quarter four data in this period. The grants made were approved by the Divisional Director Sports, Leisure, Culture & Youth under delegated powers. During the latter part of the year on line applications had been introduced and it had been observed that applications had reduced. It was thought that this might be due to the appearance of the web form.

The Chair of Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee provided comments on behalf of its Sub-Committee members. They supported the aims of the fund and by way of scrutiny had examined the delivery of one event. They found that the event had not been well promoted in the community, there being evidence of its promotion only at Area and Tower Hamlets Homes offices and came to a view that better/wider publicity would have attracted engagement from a greater proportion of the target audience. The Festival and Events Officer noted the views expressed. She advised that there was a framework of council locations through which organisers were required to publicise their events. However it was agreed that options to achieve a broader reach into the community would need to be looked into.

Members of Grants Determination Sub-Committee considered the report and indicated that while they broadly supported the operation of the fund, there were some matters to address around effective advertising to the local community and the reduction in applications upon moving to on-line applications. The Mayor asked that work to address the communications issues highlighted be taken forward.

RESOLVED

1. That the annual report of Event Fund grant applications submitted for Quarter 4 and the year as a whole from April 1st 2016 to March 31st 2017, and awards approved by the Divisional Director, Sports, Leisure, Culture & Youth be noted.
2. That work to address communications issues identified by Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee be taken forward.

6.2 Extension of Mainstream Grants and Corporate Grants Policy

The Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement & Commissioning and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy Manager presented the report which asked the Sub-Committee to extend the current Main Stream Grants programme on a case by case basis for projects that were performing satisfactorily while a new programme was developed through a process of co-production.

Members noted that a representative from Tower Hamlets CVS was in attendance and she indicated that it supported the proposed approach to the preparations for the successor Main Stream Funding programme as this gave time for engagement with groups and projects

At the Chair's invitation the comments of GSSC were received stating that the proposals were supported. GSSC, nearer the time, also wished to receive further information about outputs as the programme development progressed.

Members of the Sub-Committee also considered the proposals and endorsed them noting that bidding for the new programme would begin in the summer of 2018 and the programme launched on 1st April 2019.

RESOLVED

1. That the current three year MSG be extended by seven months to 31 March 2019 for those projects which receive grants and which are also performing satisfactorily, and
2. That the proposed arrangements to develop a new corporate grants policy through a process of co-production be noted.

6.3 Historic Buildings Grant - St. Mary's Church, Bow

The Place Shaping Team Leader presented the report which concerned a contribution of £20,000 funding from the Historic Buildings Grant to St Mary and Holy Trinity Church (Bow Church) - 'the church'. It was noted that

1. in December 2016 Commissioners had informally agreed that a letter be sent to the Rector of the church stating the Council's intentions to offer a grant in principle subject to the submission of all necessary documents including three tenders.
2. the remainder of the monies for repair works would be provided by Heritage Lottery Fund, the Grocer's Company, the National Churches Fund, the Heritage of London Trust and the church's own funds.

At the Chair's invitation the comments of GSSC were received stating that the proposals were supported.

Members of the Sub-Committee considered the report and noted the church was in a poor state of repair but had historical and community value and that there had been practical issues around highways which had delayed the works. Members also wished the Council's contribution to the works to be clearly conveyed by means of appropriate advertising.

RESOLVED

1. That the grant funding of £20,000 to the church as a contribution to vital repair works to the exterior of the tower be approved.
2. That the issue of a formal offer of grant to the church be approved.
3. That the Council's contribution to the works be clearly publicised.

6.4 Ageing Well Small Grants - 2017/18

The Acting Divisional Director, Integrated Commissioning and Service Manager, Strategic Commissioning presented the report which concerned the provision of grants to small projects to address isolation and loneliness amongst older people in the community. The report asked the Sub-Committee to:

- approve the reassignment of the previous 'Small Grants for Pensioner's Groups' fund, (following a review), as the Ageing Well Small Grants fund (following the approval of the Ageing Well Strategy by Cabinet in May 2017)
- note that the value of the fund in 2017/18 is £25,000 excluding £3,435 which was recommended for outstanding 2015/16 and 2016/17 awards.
- approve the process for inviting applications and monitoring

- approve an increase of grant payable from a maximum of £500 to a maximum of £600 and
- to delegate the responsibility for approving future awards from this fund to the Divisional Director Integrated Commissioning.

At the Chair's invitation the comments of GSSC were submitted. These stated that while the proposals were supported, there were concerns around inadequate communications and whether the methods of publicity proposed for the new grant could inadvertently exclude some sectors of the community.

Members of the Sub-Committee also considered the report and while they endorsed the aims of the project, Members:

- echoed the concerns of GSSC and asked officers to ensure that methods of communication were broad, diverse and effective in reaching the intended recipients.
- were concerned that recipients of this grant should reflect the demographics of the community

Following discussion, the Sub Committee agreed the following revised recommendations:

RESOLVED

1. That the reassignment of the previous 'Small Grants for Pensioner's Groups' fund as the Ageing Well Small Grants fund be approved.
2. That it be noted that the value of the fund in 2017/18 is £25,000 less £3,435 recommended to be retained for outstanding awards under previous years' Small Grants for Pensioners scheme.
3. That it be approved that awards of eleven outstanding grants, totalling £3,435, from the 2015/16 and 2016/17 under Small Grants scheme be made from the newly formed fund.
4. That the process for inviting applications for the Ageing Well Small Grants fund 2017/18 be approved.
5. That the process for awarding the grant funding and subsequent monitoring arrangements be approved.
6. That responsibility for approving future awards from this fund be delegated to the Divisional Director Integrated Commissioning.
7. That an increase of grant payable from a maximum of £500 to a maximum of £600 be approved.

6.5 MSG Theme 5 Closure Report

The Corporate Director for Resources presented the report which informed the Sub-Committee:

- of the closure of the stream of funding under Theme 5 of the MSG programme and an assessment of outcomes.
- that future funding in this theme was intended to be commissioned via co-production on an interim basis until the conclusion of the extended MSG programme.

Members noted the achievements and the lessons learned from projects delivered under this Theme.

At the Chair's invitation the comments of GSSC were received stating that the achievements and feedback were supported however Members considered that:

- it was necessary to ensure that training and empowerment was continued
- success messages needed to be neutrally worded to avoid political bias or misinterpretation
- it was necessary to clarify if the programme/project was intended to support the immediate or wider community.

Members of the Sub Committee indicated that they had no comments they wished to make on this report.

RESOLVED

1. That the achievements of the MSG Theme 5 programme be noted.
2. That the above from GSSC as set out in the preceding paragraph be noted.

6.6 ESF Community Employment Programme - Organisations Based in Council Buildings

The Corporate Director for Resources presented the report which informed the Sub-Committee of proposals to ensure that the principle established by Commissioners: that organisations in receipt of funding and which operated from Council owned buildings must have an appropriate property agreement in place, is applied to recipients of this grant and hence apply the same principles across all areas of grant funded activity.

At the Chair's invitation the comments of GSSC were received stating that Members accepted the recommendation, however the legal comments of the report referenced disposals which did not appear to be relevant. Members were informed that legal officers would review these legal comments.

Members of the Sub-Committee indicated that they had no comments that they wished to make on the report.

RESOLVED

That it be agreed that organisations funded through the ESF Community Employment Programme and are based in or using a Council building must have an appropriate property agreement in place before payments can be released to them, as is the case with all new grant programmes going forward.

7. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED

That the forward plan be noted.

8. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.

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