

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 4 MARCH 2019

COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL MULBERRY PLACE

Members Present:

Councillor Marc Francis (Chair)
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury (Member)
Councillor Mohammed Pappu (Member)
Councillor Andrew Wood (Member) (Leader of the Conservative Group)
Kim Hayman (Co-Optee)
Sue Kenten (Co-Optee)

Officers Present:

Keith Burns – (Programme Director Special Projects,
Commissioning & Health)
Alison Denning – (Festivals and Events Officer, Place)
David Freeman – (Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy
Manager)
Steve Hill – (Head of Benefits Services, Resources)
Robert Mee – (Interim Voluntary & Community Sector Team
Manager)
Onyekachi Ajisafe – (Strategy & Policy Officer, Strategy Policy &
Performance)
Katy McGinity – Strategy and Policy Officer
Farhana Zia – Senior Committee Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ehtasham Haque and Councillor Sufia Alam.

Apologies for an early departure from the meeting were received from Cllr Mohammad Pappu.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests from Members.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the meeting held on the 7th January 2019 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Councillor Francis provided an update with regard to the Health App referenced at Page 10 of the agenda pack. Councillor Francis read out the response received from the Service that was provided for the Grants Determination Sub-Committee meeting of 7th November 2018. Councillor Wood confirmed he had made his own enquiries regarding the NHS app and agreed with Councillor Francis that no final decision had been made to release this tranche of money to TH CCG.

4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

The Sub-Committee noted that no public submissions had been submitted to the Committee Officer by the deadline. (5:00 p.m. the day before the meeting.)

5. GRANTS DETERMINATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Ageing Well Small Grants fund 2019/20

Mr Keith Burns, Service Manager, Ageing Well Commissioning presented his report on the Ageing Well small grants fund. He said the fund dealt with social isolation and loneliness among older people. He said that whilst it had been agreed for this fund to be part of the council-wide VCS Grants Programme which comes into effect on the 1st October 2019, it had been decided to bring this grant decision to the Scrutiny Sub-Committee and the Determination Sub-Committee, in order to make the fund available for activities that are to be held in the summer of 2019.

Mr Burns stated the fund was to the value of £25,000 and would be seeking applications from small organisations within the community. He referred Members to the Annual Report of 2017/18 appended at Appendix A and the draft application form appended at Appendix B.

In response to questions from Members the following was noted:

- Small amounts of money are released for social activities such as indoor bowling, lunches, purchasing of new equipment, religious events like Eid parties, Easter parties and Christmas events.
- **ACTION:** Service to provide a list of the organisations that have benefited from this fund, for the sake of transparency prior to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee of 6th March 2019.
- In reference to Page 33 and the map provided members enquired why there were a number of wards that were not represented or in receipt of the small grant. The sub-committee asked what had been done to address this anomaly. Mr Burns confirmed that in some parts of the

borough the response had been low. He said he hoped more organisations would be reached via the CVS distribution list and the new Health and Wellbeing localities running in the borough.

- In reference to the diagram at 3.9 of the annual report, members asked why the LGBT community made a smaller proportion of beneficiaries for the fund. Mr Burns said that the evaluation was based on those who had self-identified as LGBT and therefore there could be some under reporting. Mr Burns said whilst there was no specific plans to target this group the service would through the CVS work with LGBT providers to make them aware of the opportunity of accessing the fund.

Members of the Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** and **ENDORSE** the recommendations to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee to:

1. Approve the process for inviting applications for the Ageing Well Small Grants fund 2019/10.
2. Note the availability of funding for the proposal.
3. Agree the process for awarding the grant funding, and subsequent monitoring arrangements.
4. Agree to delegate responsibility for approving the awards for grants to the Joint Director of Integrated Commissioning.

5.2 Event Fund Report - Applications and Awards 2018-19

Ms Alison Denning, Festival and Events Officer presented her report on the Event Fund applications and awards 2018-19. Ms Denning apologised for the error in the report title which referred to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee happening on Monday rather than Wednesday 6th March 2019. She stated further amendments were at 3.2 and 3.4 of the report which she would resubmit for the Determination Sub-Committee meeting.

That said, Ms Denning informed members the format of the report had changed and going forward, she would provide the Sub-Committee with two reports, one detailing the Applications and Awards and a second report presenting the outcomes of the events.

Ms Denning informed members the Event Fund is a small grant with a budget of £52,000. For 2018-19, a total of 60 applications were received, with 43 organisations receiving funding. Applications that are rejected are provided with feedback as to why they were unsuccessful. Ms Denning stated that over the last year, the Service had involved THCVS who had provided workshops across the borough in order to encourage and engage with new groups and organisations. Eleven organisations who had not previously applied had been awarded with funding this year.

In response to questions from Members the following was noted:

- Some organisations change their plans from their initial submission however they are required to provide reasons for the change. Ms Denning said 80% of the grant would be paid up-front with 20% being paid after an evaluation of the event had taken place. Once funds have been allocated they cannot be reallocated. No organisation has had to refund the funding however the Event Fund has withheld second payments to certain organisations when needed.
- The Event Fund is working with THCVS to advertise to organisations in specific areas especially in wards where there is low take up. The approach has been generic in using the THCVS database and holding workshops in those areas however there is no guarantee that organisations will take up the offer.
- With regard to how the events are judged to be a success, Ms Denning said this depends on what the events is about and who it is targeted at. A minimum number is not specified on the form however the number of attendees does not mean an event is not successful as the beneficiaries may be able to cascade information to others.
- With regard to organisations that have been rejected this may be for several reasons. For example they may not have sufficient match funding, their event may not be widely targeting the local community or are considered to be closed events. Some organisations leave certain parts of the application form blank. Constructive feedback is given to organisations stating why they were unsuccessful.

Members of the Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** and **ENDORSE** the recommendations to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee to:

1. Note the report.

5.3 MSG Project Performance Report - Period 12 (July 2018 to August 2018)

Mr Steve Hill, Head of Benefits presented his report in relation to the Mainstream Grant Project Performance Report – Period 12 (July 2018 to August 2018).

Mr Hill informed Members the report covered Red and Amber performance projects and there were three red rated projects and one Amber project. He said the three red projects related to Tower Hamlets Youth Sports Foundation and their premises issues. The Amber project related to Wadajir Somali Community Centre who had applied for a significant variation.

Mr Hill referred Members to the recommendations at 3.3, 3.8 and 3.10 of the report.

In response to questions from Members the following was noted:

- The significant variation for Wadijir Somali Community Centre is being proposed because there has been a drop in the number of boys attending the homework club. Members asked what had been done to encourage boys to stay and if consideration had been given to holding joint classes rather than separate classes for boys and girls. Mr Mee, Interim Voluntary and Community Sector Team Manager said he had researched the reasons why this might be and had worked with the organisation to identify ways of encouraging attendance. However it was clear the boys had other interests and were attending activities provided by other organisations.
- With regard to Tower Hamlets Community Transport grant, Members asked if they had considered purchasing electric vehicles rather than diesel vehicles. Members stated that it would be better to purchase electric vehicles as they are more environmentally friendly.
 - **ACTION:** The Chair to request Grants Determination Sub-Committee if they will be willing to supply more funds for the purchase of electric vehicles instead.
- Members raised concerns about why the reporting period for this report and asked why it had taken a long time. Mr Hill stated that the team had been concentrating on the extension of contracts and although the performance report had been produced, the deadline for the 7th November 2018 meeting had just been missed. Hence it is why they were bringing this to the March meeting.

Members of the Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** and **ENDORSE** the recommendations to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee to:

1. Consider and agree the recommendations relating to the releasing of MSG payments to projects as set out in section 3.3 and 3.8 of the report.
2. Consider and agree the recommendation relating to Tower Hamlets Community Transport as set out in section 3.10 of the report.

6. SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

There were no Grant Scrutiny Sub-Committee reports for consideration.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

Councillor Marc Francis informed Members a review of the Grants process, in terms of what comes to the Scrutiny Sub-Committee and the Determination Sub-Committee had been requested by the Mayor. Cllr Francis said he would ask the Grants Determination Sub-Committee to consider collectively

involving non-executive members in the review and possibly consider co-optees being part of the decision making committee. Councillor Francis stated he would expect a statement to be made some time after the Council AGM.

Cllr Francis also reminded Members that the next meeting of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee would be on the 29th April 2019.

The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Marc Francis
Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee