

Mayor John Biggs and Will Tuckley, Chief Executive  
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24 January 2017

Dear Mayor and Chief Executive,

Revised Intervention Package- New Direction on Grants

The Secretary of State, in his letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017, noted that how Commissioners would operate the Direction requirement to direct and be satisfied with the exercise of the Authority's functions with respect to Grants would be determined locally. This letter sets out the Commissioners initial views and approach.

On arrival in Tower Hamlets, Commissioners established a set of key principles which has modelled the way in which grants have been determined under the original Directions.

1. All decisions, as far as possible, would be taken in public and on the basis of a written report which is published in advance.
2. When emergency grant award decisions are required on the basis of the published scheme and which cannot wait for a scheduled meeting in public, the decision will be reported in public to the next scheduled meeting.
3. A cross-party group of Councillors should be established to scrutinise reports before each Decision Taking meeting in public with the right to provide advice on any element they consider appropriate. The Council has implemented this by setting up a Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee of Overview and Scrutiny with appropriate terms of reference.
4. All decisions are guided by a published policy framework which has been subject to consultation before adoption.

Commissioners believe that these fundamental elements should be continued and as necessary enhanced. It will, of course be open to the Council to develop and adopt changes to its policy platform. However, decisions must

**Sir Ken Knight CBE QFSM | Max Caller CBE | Chris Allison CBE**

always be guided by the policy platform currently approved until it is formally changed. It follows that officer advice and recommendations can only be based on established Council policy and all reports, both for public decision making meetings and emergency decisions, should be prepared on this basis.

The Council has an established process for preparing and drafting reports destined for the grants determination meetings which involve Commissioners and have normally been attended by a Deputy Mayor. These should continue under arrangements to be established by the Mayor with a Commissioner present, which will enable any issues of non-compliance with policy to be identified and resolved.

Commissioners have taken a relatively restrictive view on delegation to officers and, when delegation has been agreed, to grant it on the basis that the results of decisions taken under delegated powers are reported on a regular basis so that both the individual decision and the cumulative impact can be made public. This has had the benefit of drawing both Members and the public's attention to often hidden parts of the Council's activity.

Commissioners have also required that grants are monitored with respect to geographic coverage of the Borough's area and achievement of the objectives sought and this should continue taking account of the observations of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Commissioners intend that the oversight function required by the new Direction will be exercised by Commissioner Max Caller CBE who should be in attendance at all relevant meetings.

On this basis there should not be any need to intervene on any specific decision at the new Cabinet Sub-Committee which will be attended by Mr Caller.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Ken Knight,  
Lead Commissioner

Max Caller,  
Commissioner

Chris Allison,  
Commissioner