

## **Comments of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee of 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017 for Commissioners Decision-Making meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

### **Feedback**

#### **5 Exercise of Commissioner Discretion**

This report was noted.

The Committee asked for the reason for declined grants requested to be added to the table in Appendix 1 for future reports.

The Committee were pleased to hear that the revised criteria for emergency funding was now published on the Council's website along with examples of what would and what would not receive funding. However the Committee were concerned organisations were still applying for emergency funding which did not meet the criteria; which might indicate a review of communications relating to this might be necessary and asked Officers to review the situation and report back at a future meeting.

#### **6. Reports for Consideration**

##### **6.1 WARMTH project funding**

This report was welcomed by Members as a positive move and a good use of Council money. The Committee felt that the report was a good example of outcomes based funding.

The Committee were interested to hear how this work would be integrated with other anti-poverty measures the Council was undertaking – such as welfare support help, linking with healthcare professionals and the fire service, and help identify other residents in need.

The Committee were also pleased to hear that the pilot project was funded to be rolled out wider in future. Members were keen to ensure that support would be available to residents on low incomes living in properties owned by other registered providers and for residents living in the private rented sector.

The committee endorsed the proposed recommendations.

## **6.2 Stepney City Farm Water Efficiency and Visitor Experience Improvement Works**

The committee endorsed the proposed recommendations and asked about the monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure delivery of the works and outcomes the funding was being requested for.

Members commented that the Stepney City Farm had done a good job in leveraging funding. Members were keen to know whether the Council and / or the CVS could help voluntary and community organisations capitalise on the funding opportunities available from planning gain.

Considering the current remit of the Commissioners, and therefore by default the Committee, of treating Section 106 and CIL funding as grant money, the Committee asked for some more information about Section 106 funding in general. Members heard that these funding sources would be included in the quarterly financial monitoring reports from April 2017 onwards. Members were keen to be able to scrutinise how this money could be spent in the best interests of the community through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that this be referred back to the Chair of the main OSC.

## **6.3 A12 – Green Mile Pocket Park Project**

The Committee endorsed the proposed recommendations; they felt that the level of TfL funding represented a good investment for the Council.

The Committee were keen to hear what pre-consultation had taken place with people living in the area.

## **6.4 MSG Quarterly Monitoring report**

The Committee sought clarification and updates on property issues affecting the organisations which are red rated. And Members were pleased to hear that the Green Candle Dance Company had recently submitted a variation of contract for their targets.

The Committee felt that the report was much clearer however there was still some work to do in focussing monitoring on outcome delivery; Members felt that they could not properly scrutinise effectiveness of the project where evidence had not been provided. The Committee heard from Officers that this was an ongoing piece of work and would be easier to provide when the web based GIFTS system has been refreshed.

The Committee asked for some contextual information to be provided about beneficiaries in each MSG theme in order to help them assess whether the geographical breakdowns were fair and aligned to need.

The Committee noted the letter from the Children Education Group (CEG) and were keen to see whether the co-production work would help build better relationships and a better understanding of the Council's requirements and intentions going forward.

On a separate note, the Committee raised a concern that there may be some budgeting difficulties for Tenant Resident Associations where progress in arranging premises agreements has been slow which has led to them not being able to access funding until the issue is resolved.

## **6.5 Grants Forward Plan**

The Committee noted the Grants Forward Plan

### **Grants scrutiny sub-committee business**

#### **a. Overview of the Grants Register**

This item was deferred until the next meeting in February, with a presentation of the Council's grants management system (GIFTS).

#### **b. Update on the work of the co-production pilot to date**

The Committee welcomed this report outlining the co-production support to the voluntary sector to date for commissioned projects relating to Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience.

The Committee were pleased to hear that the training had been widely advertised and was oversubscribed. They were keen to hear that further training opportunities would be forthcoming; learning from the current pilot and findings from the independent evaluation of grants currently being undertaken will be taken into consideration to enhance the offer. The Committee welcomed the generic training element around co-production, which can be drawn on by voluntary sector organisations who want to apply for other forms of funding.

The Committee were keen to hear how these projects fit into the new outcomes based approach and asked what outcomes were expected.

Members heard that expectations would be developed as part of the co-production work, but it was anticipated that outcomes would be around proactive joint working between different parts of communities and sustainability.

The Committee wanted assurance that the co-production process would be fair and end-user focussed. The Committee heard that a wide range of stakeholders had been invited to participate and this would help to mitigate against using the process to shape commissioned services for their own benefit. Participants are being asked to undertake their own research which they will bring back to the co-production sessions and used, in conjunction with intelligence from the service, to ensure decisions made were evidence-based. In addition, Legal Services will be consulted.

The Committee asked for another progress update report further into the co-production programme (April).

**c. Any other business the Chair considers to be urgent**

1. Co-opted Members update: The Committee was advised that due diligence was being undertaken for the three candidates that were interviewed.
2. Grants Scrutiny sub-committee training: The Committee were reminded that the training session will be taking place on 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 6pm in room MP701, Town Hall. Proposed format:
  - Imparting skills, knowledge and best practice
  - Looking at Councillor approach and behaviours / empowering Members in a range of ways of doing scrutiny work
  - Workshop with practical examples