COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING MEETING

TABLED ADDENDUM REPORT

Wednesday, 22 April 2015 at 6.30 p.m.
C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

The meeting is open to the public to attend.

Members:

Sir Ken Knight CBE QFSM (Chair)   (Commissioner)
Max Caller CBE   (Commissioner)

Public Information:

The public are welcome to attend these meetings.

Contact for further enquiries:
Matthew Mannion, Democratic Services,
1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG
Tel: 020 7364 4651
E-mail: matthew.mannion@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Web:http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2015

6.30 p.m.

Commissioner Decision Report 22nd April 2015	
Report of: Acting Corporate Director of Resources	**Classification:** [Unrestricted or Exempt]
Mainstream Grants 2015-18 Programme Addendum Report (Agenda Item 5.1)	

Originating Officer(s)	
Wards affected	All
Key Decision?	N/A
Community Plan Theme	**All**

Executive Summary

This addendum to agenda item report 5.1sets down the feedback from 3 cross party workshops held during April, and that of Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 7th April, as part of the Mainstream Grants consultation process.

The information is provided in accordance with direction A9, which states: "At the request of the Commissioners, to provide to them the views of the Authority as to the appropriate recipient and amount of any grant to which paragraph 1 of Annex B applies."

Recommendations:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Consider the feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cross Party Members workshops prior to deciding upon the recommendations of the main agenda item report 5.1.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

1.1 Commissioners have expressed their wish to consider views of the Authority prior to making their decisions on the recommended framework, outcomes and process for the 2015-18 MSG programme. That decision is required so that the programme can be launched with a reasonable timetable for submission and assessment of bids, prior to the final decision by Commissioners on allocations in time for a 1st September start.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

2.1 Not to provide feedback from members. Commissioners have expressed their wish to seek views.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

3.1 Direction A9 states "At the request of the Commissioners, to provide to them the views of the Authority as to the appropriate recipient and amount of any grant to which paragraph 1 of Annex B applies."

3.2 The Commissioners have expressed to officers their wish to consider the views of councillors prior to making their decisions as to the framework, structure and process f the proposed 2015-18 MSG programme.

3.3 All written submissions are appended in full, along with the draft aide memoire of Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Appendix A**, who considered the proposed approach at their meeting of the 7th April.

3.4 Three cross-party briefings were arranged on the 1st, 8th and 16th April. Key issues arising from the feedback received are set out in the table below, together with the response from officers. Detailed feedback from these meetings together with officers comments are attached as **Appendix B.**The officer response to the request from Commissioners regarding theimplications of Moving from 11 Funding Streams to 5 Broad Themes is also attached as Appendix C.

Issue	Officer Comment
What evidence will be used to ensure a fair geographical allocation of resources?	Where appropriate data is available at super output area level, then that will be used to accurately reflect need within wards/ clusters. Otherwise ward based data will be used to assess need for the service/ outcome being assessed.
How will you ensure smaller organisations are not excluded from the process?	Officers will work closely with the CVS to ensure that smaller organisations, that have appropriate governance arrangements in place, are not excluded. It is recognised that different approaches to delivering desired outcomes

	require a broad spectrum of service providers.
What support will be provided for organisations to work collaboratively	In some areas, smaller organisations will be encouraged to collaborate to reduce duplication and maximise delivery of outcomes. The CVS will be required to support organisations who would be interested in working in a form of partnership with others
Approach to be taken with regard to organisations referred to the Police/ other investigation	Where genuine concerns have been raised through referral to the Council, or though the Council's published whistleblowing process, then all endeavours will be taken to investigate in conjunction with internal audit. Where serious corporate governance and/or probity issues are identified, such organisations would not meet the Council's required threshold for corporate governance, and would therefore not be recommended to Commissioners for allocation of grants.

However, if organisations are referred independently to Police, and not through the Council's processes- whilst we will maintain ongoing dialogue with the Police, officers would not be in a position to comment further than to assess through our own due diligence processes.

It is important that, as part of our gateway process for assessing applications all organisations are treated fairly, with the risk of vexatious allegations mitigated. |
| Ensuring robust monitoring arrangements | Paragraph 3.74 to 3.77 sets out the monitoring arrangements, with further detail provided in Appendix B. These take account of areas of weakness identified within internal audit reports, as reported to Audit Committee. |

4.   COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

4.1.   Comments of the Chief Financial Officer are contained within the main report.

5.   LEGALCOMMENTS

5.1.   Legal comments are set out in the main report, to which this report is an addendum.

6.   ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

6.1.   These are set out in the main report

7.   SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

7.1   These are set out in the main report.

8.   RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1.   These are set out in the main report.

9.   CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

9.1   These are set out in the main report.

10.   EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

10.1   These are set out in the main report

11.   Safeguarding Implications

11.1   These are set out in the main report

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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report
- The Mainstream Grants 2015/18 Programme

Appendices
- Appendix A Draft Aide MemoireOverview & Scrutiny 7th April 2015
- Appendix B Detailed response to feedback from councillors
- Appendix Cimpact of moving from 11 funding Streams to 5 broad themes

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012
- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

'AIDE-MÉMOIRE'.OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

ON THE MAIN STREAM GRANTS (MSG) PROGRAMME UPDATE

HELD AT 7.15 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 7 APRIL 2015

The Committee received and noted a report that provided an update on the Main Stream Grants Programme. The Committee heard that the 2012-15 MSG programme continued the same funding streams as the previous 2009-12 programme. It was noted that a more in depth development of the new programme was required. In addition, a number of issues and weaknesses the Committee heard been identified across the current 11 funding streams. These included an imbalance in the spread of provision across wards. In some funding streams resources had been spread too thinly across too many projects; this affects their viability and the quality and impacts of services delivered. In many of the funding streams services are fragmented with a lack of integration and cross-referral between projects.

The Committee noted that Tower Hamlets has an extensive and diverse Third Sector. That plays a key role in the delivery of the Tower Hamlets Community Plan and in improving the lives of all those living and working in the Borough. The sector is diverse with a broad range of organisations types, approaches and skills. Whilst the sector also faces many challenges it can be effectively mobilised to make a significant contribution to the corporate goals of the Council.

The Committee heard that MSG is a useful funding mechanism for deploying Third Sector organisations to support the delivery of the Council's key priorities. The funding can be effectively targeted toward specialist service providers in order to meet clearly articulated community needs and grant agreements can be negotiated with successful service providers to maximise the potential achievement of targeted outputs and outcomes.

The Committee heard that for clarity it should be understood that MSG is a 'commissioned grant' process where desired service outcomes and other requirements are clearly specified within what is effectively a 'tender document'. Grants are treated as 'restricted funds' within an organisation's accounts and can therefore only be spent on the funded activity.

The main points of the discussion may be summarised as follows:

- The Committee was concerned that there should be adequate provision to ensure access to jobs;
- The Committee wanted to see services being provided that are ambitious and address those who are in greatest need;

- The Committee wanted to see a more dynamic and transformational jobs programme that would have a realistic opportunity of getting residents back into work;
- The Committee heard that the greatest challenge is working with those furthest from the employment market and the Third Sector have a good record of success in delivering such programmes;
- The Committee heard that LBTH has a process in place to ensure that those organisations in receipt of main stream grants are fit for purpose and they have been subject to the necessary robust checks prior to the signing of any contracts.

As a result of consideration of this report the Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED that:

the Committee should receive details with regards to the number of organisations in receipt of MSG where any questions have been raised regarding their financial health and stability.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

Issue	Officer Comment
1. What data is available from the existing grants programme?	Monitoring of all projects funded by MSG has been undertaken on a quarterly basis. A report on outputs and spending achieved to date on the programme was compiled in December 2014 across the MSG portfolio. Performance Monitoring Data was made available at the Cross Party Member Forum held on 5th March 2015.
2. What has worked well?	The process of performance monitoring reporting on funded projects has been carried out on a quarterly cycle. Funded organisations have been RAG rated in terms of their performance in achieving contracted outputs, spend and in meeting reporting requirements in line with contractual agreements.
3. What has been less successful?	An important output of the MSG 2015-18 Review Panel (made up of the relevant Service Managers from relevant directorates, representatives of the CVS and Third Sector Advisory Board and senior Third Sector Team officers) has been an assessment by the Service Managers of the strengths and weaknesses of the MSG 2012-15 funding streams and their relevance in going forward. • One weakness of the previous MSG programme was that funds were spread too widely, across too many organisations. Service Managers have highlighted the drawbacks of there being too many funded projects. Many have received too little funding to provide good quality services, high standards of support or to optimise impacts. This has limited the potential impact of the funding and some organisations have ended up with insufficient funding to keep them going. • Much of the funding allocation was dependent on who came forward with bids, rather than pre-determined geographical allocations that made for fairer dispersal of resources. This meant that some services had over-provision in some areas, with providers competing with each other, whilst in other areas, the same services were under-provided. • There have been instances of the council funding providers who do not have the capability to deliver to the required standard for provision that is already being funded and delivered elsewhere through well accredited providers. • In other cases, there have been funding streams involving a very fragmented mixture of projects providing services that do not relate to each other.

	There are many opportunities to cross-refer to other MSG projects or mainstream delivery to encourage progression and to maximise impact. Because no mechanism was put in place for this, and due to an absence of effective tracking, such progression opportunities could not be exploited.
4. Which organisations have worked well? Where have there been geographical gaps in provision?	The vast majority of funded organisations have delivered to their contractual requirements successfully, on time and to budget and have fulfilled their reporting requirements satisfactorily. The results of the quarter 4 performance report identified 269 projects ragged green with a further 21 ragged amber. This represents 89% of the MSG portfolio. The remaining projects were either ragged red (18) or have closed (19).
5. Regarding the new streams – has any work taken place on what impact these might have on existing organisations? For example the new streams are much more tightly focused and will this lead to third sector organisations in the borough who have previously received funding on a regular basis being unlikely to receive the same degree of funding in the new round. I am particularly keen to ascertain whether some of our long standing successful organisations might be adversely impacted by the narrowing of grants available.	The implications of the above weaknesses from the programme have been considered in detail in formulating the forthcoming MSG programme. In the proposals for the current programme, service specifications have been designed to minimise fragmentation, integrate projects and their related outcomes together. The previous programme tended to fund too many small and immature organisations. This dissipated the resources available, reducing funding to the more established and capable organisations. This has been a key factor in reducing the number of funding streams and adopting a more strategic approach to the way funding is deployed, specifically, promoting quality rather than just quantity. To this end, the service specifications encourage consortium bidding whereby the more experienced organisations work with smaller but capable and innovative organisations that are particularly well placed to engage hard to reach clients in the communities. In this way, it is intended that community beneficiaries receive the best possible services and support from available resources. **Appendix C** to this report provides details of the likely impact of moving from 11 individual Funding Streams to 5 broad Themes.
6. Future monitoring of grants: as we know there has been a problem with the monitoring of some previous grants. What new measures have been introduced to ensure that a robust monitoring framework is in place before any new funding is	The monitoring arrangements put in place for the Mainstream Grants programme are well developed and are set out in comprehensive detail in the Grant Officers' Manual. This and various supporting documents are available for review on request. As part of the new programme proposals organisations

agreed? Any monitoring regime needs to ally good quality financial monitoring with expertise in the particular sectors. How will large scale grants be monitored where one organisation may be in receipt of funding from different streams and should be monitored in its entirety as well as through individual streams?	will be required to attend special workshops to take them through the monitoring, reporting and business assurance requirements. In regard to large scale grants where organisations are in receipt of funding from different Themes, specific monitoring arrangements will be put in place which takes into consideration various risks including 'risk by volume': i.e. the number of that an organisation has; and, 'risk by value' i.e. the total level of grant funding that an organisation has. These matters will be dealt with when assigning Monitoring Officer Portfolios and clear instructions set out for the appropriate officers.
7. Have any organisations been identified from the previous funding round who will be actively discouraged from applying this time around? If so who and why? If not, why not?	No organisations will be discouraged from bidding. However, there are "gateway" criteria that need to be met for an organisation to be eligible for funding, (e.g. provision of accounts, constitution etc.) which if not provided satisfactorily would mean that their bid cannot be considered.
8. In the report prepared for the Cross Party Member Forum page 2 para 3.1 talks of the some of issues and weaknesses identified from the 2012-15 MSG particularly: • Imbalance across wards • Resources spread too thinly • Fragmentation, lack of integration and cross-referral between projects Is the detailed information on which these assertions are based available?	The 2015-18 MSG programme will seek to reduce imbalances and lack of integration by assuring a fair spread of resources across four defined ward clusters covering the borough consistent with levels of population and identified need for services within each. The approach will be based on strategic grants commissioning of projects within each of these ward clusters, with delivery based on lead providers and hubs where appropriate and mechanisms for achieving closer synergies and cross-referral between funding streams so that funded projects add value to each other.
9. GIFTS grants management system – what is this, what does it do and how much will the top slicing cost?	The GIFTS management information system designed to record and monitor all third sector grant funded activity across the borough. It is subject to continuous development and maintenance to improve its performance and value as a management tool. An annual amount of £50,000 is estimated to cover maintenance costs -circa £16k for 2015/16 rising by about 3% annually, system upgrades - circa £5-10k, consultancy fees for development support - circa £10k and training for LBTH personnel – circa £14k
10. Assessments – the new assessment process suggests the introduction of external assessors – who will these be and how will they be appointed?	External assessors are to be recruited on a temporary basis. They will undergo briefing and training via a series of workshop sessions during the late April and early May period prior to undertaking. Officers are currently identifying the most appropriate steps to be taken. Once established information will be available.

11. Fast tracking of grant decisions – what procedures will be put in place to ensure that this fast tracking will be sufficiently rigorous and robust?	The process of bid assessments and recommendations on grant awards will be undertaken on a rigorous and robust basis in line with the proposals to be agreed as part of the Main Stream Grants 2015/18 Report. The fast tracking arrangements relate to the timescales for receiving Finance and Legal comments inputted into the report and taking the final draft of the report through the cross-party Member Board. Tight decision making timelines involving strict deadlines are advocated in order to minimise the risk of delays.
12. Grant Agreement Negotiations – standardised outputs. There is a risk that this might lead to insufficiently rigorous targets which will become difficult to monitor. Please could you give specific examples of these standardised outputs and demonstrate what measures will be taken to ensure they are sufficiently robust? Would it be more sensible, given the impossible time scale, to prepare draft agreements for an initial period – say six months – and then prepare more detailed agreements for years 2-3 with specific outputs and KPIs, relevant to each organisation?	<u>Standardised Outputs</u> Standardised outputs are being proposed in order to: a) assure consistent standards of delivery b) provide a consistent basis for demonstrating the value and impact of the funded thematic activities against identified needs c) facilitate the introduction of on-line monitoring and d) enable the aggregation of meaningful output data at programme evaluation stage. Outputs will need to be defined on a consistent basis if these benefits are to be achieved, classified by name, definition and what impacts need to be demonstrated. An overview document accompanying the service specifications for each funding stream will have a separate section setting these out. Funded organisations will also be allowed to add their own outputs in their proposals. <u>Whether Draft Agreements Could be Prepared then Updated</u> The process of grant negotiations and the drawing up of agreements is a major exercise which takes many weeks to complete and a significant amount of capacity of the available officers. If the process has then to be updated and repeated after six months, this will have a major impact on the finite capacity of the Third Sector Team and is likely to be at the expense of maintaining good standards of monitoring and ensuring that funded organisations get paid in a timely manner.
13. As a result of the continuation of the previous MSG programme there is a reduced amount in year 1 for the new funding streams. What work has been done to ensure that there is enough funding in 2015/16 to deliver specified outcomes? Has any impact	The new streams will have 7-twelfths of the agreed annual funding in year 1 to deliver approximately the same proportion of the targeted outputs and outcomes. Additionally, to assess the impact of reduced funding, equality impact assessments have been carried out across all projects subject to funding rollover.

assessment been carried out in this area?	The equality impacts assessments are attached as Appendix 5.1 to the main report and further commented upon in that report. An analysis of the proposed changes to the 2015-18 Mainstream Grant programme do not identify any adverse effect on any group with protected characteristics. The programme continues to target vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. This assessment however, acknowledges that monitoring, assessment and or review at certain points in the process e.g. final recommendations of grant awards, monitoring during delivery are also essential to ensuring the desired equality outcomes.
14. Concerns from Third Sector organisations about the new themes and programme – Can you provide information of any major concerns which arose from your consultation with the Third Sector other than the scarcity of funding available?	Below are number of concerns that have been expressed. • Insufficient time to develop partnerships/consortia • Funding of geographical areas to be based on need rather than Wards or Ward Clusters • Can the small grants programme (tower hamlets community fund) be launched at the same time or in very close proximity so that organisations can decide which grant scheme they should target? • Who will make final decisions and will these be made in public? • Levels of grants that will enable effective delivery and impact
15. The points about insufficient timescale to form consortia/partnerships and launch of small grants programme (is this going ahead?) need to be fed back to the Commissioners.	Officers are aware of the tight timescales but will work as efficiently as possible with the sector, within the timescales to maximise the quality of bids. The MSG Report recognises this issue and there is a recommendation to extend the application period by one week.
16. We have asked questions about a number of organisations and received various assurances around council and police investigations. It is vital that the commissioners do not make grants to organisations whose integrity is in question, so any investigations that are underway need to be concluded rapidly.	Where genuine concerns have been raised through referral to the Council, or though the Council's published whistleblowing process, then all endeavours will be taken to investigate in conjunction with internal audit. Where serious corporate governance and/or probity issues are identified, such organisations would not meet the Council's required threshold for corporate governance, and would therefore not be recommended to Commissioners for allocation of grants. However, if organisations are referred independently to Police and not through the Council's processes- whilst we will maintain ongoing dialogue with the Police, officers would not be in a position to comment further than to assess through our own due diligence processes. It is important that, as part of our gateway process for

	assessing applications all organisations are treated fairly, with the risk of vexatious allegations mitigated.
17. The balance between supporting particular communities to self-organise out of poverty, and creating a cohesive borough where services support us to come together, is a complex one. We suggest the commissioners think through a mechanism that allows them to consider whether they have met that balance. It is important that the issue of cohesion is not just left to strand 5 which covers it specifically.	Through the assessment process and recommendation process the Commissioners will be provided with the necessary information that will enable them to make informed decisions. This will include individual application assessments and an Equality Assessment of the proposed programme.

The Equalities Assessment will identify which projects are supporting individual communities and which have a universal offer. This will be an important part of the equalities/cohesion considerations prior to award of grant. |
| 18. It is vital that all equalities protected characteristics are considered in the balance of services provision. Gender is particularly important in services for young people, who are too often not inclusive of women and girls. | The expectation in the Children, Young People and Families specification is that providers deliver services that are inclusive to all children and young people and that in particular they ensure they target excluded and hard to reach groups.

All services will be monitored against the 9 equalities strands which will assist with measuring performance in this respect. |
| 19. We are concerned about the use of "clusters" in allocating services. The clusters are big areas with diverse geographies within them. It will be important to ensure that service provision reflects need at a more locally understood level than a cluster. A needs analysis by polling district might be one rough tool that could help in making decisions about allocating resources. | The Ward Clusters are merely a 'geographical guide' for the delivery of Main Stream Grant funded services in the same way that LAP's & paired LAP's were used in previous years.

The benefits of using the Ward Cluster model, is that a wide range of statistical data has been built up from the borough's Super Output Areas and then to the new Wards to provide key facts and figures relating to the "Clusters".

For example, the North East Cluster (made up of Bow East, Bow West, Bromley North, Bromley South and Mile End), the following is amongst the available information:
- Total population - 62,283
- Children 0 to 15 - 13,721
- Older people 65+ - 4,161
- Unemployed - 3,444
- No qualifications - 7,896

Comparable information is also available for each of the other Clusters. It follows therefore, that this and other available information can be used as a guide to assessing the 'need' for particular services in a given area. |
| 20. Theme 1: Children and Young People and Families
- Including educational attainment and vulnerable children, young people and | Early years providers delivering services that specifically meet the outcomes in the specification would be eligible to apply for funding. However, providers who deliver 2, 3 and 4 year old places would not be eligible for funding as the specification does not reflect this provision. |

families priorities The Labour Group understands that the funding that was previously allocated through early years provision from MSG is going via funding for 2, 3 and 4 year old places (DSG) and this will mean there is a top up per place per hour. However, there is a concern that some groups may be missing out on funding if they provide provision for children with disabilities or additional and more complex needs. We would be grateful of confirmation, based on the new eligibility for the children and families grant stream, whether an early years provider who has children with disabilities might still be eligible to apply? The criteria suggests that they might in terms of supporting children with SEN, disability, etc. Consideration of gender and race, and how services bring young people together, is important here. There has long been a geographical imbalance where the south and east of the borough, which has more young people, has less provision for young people.	All early years providers must be able to accommodate children with SEN and/or a disability. If a child has additional needs there is an additional early years grant that is made available to support individual eligible children which supplements the early years grant. The move to funding services that reach children, young people and families within the four ward clusters will ensure that we have a good geographical spread of MSG funded programmes.
21. Theme 2: Jobs, Skills and Prosperity • Including Routeways to Employment and Social Welfare Advice This is a particularly sensitive area because the most controversial part of the last MSG process was cuts to advice services, with the biggest cuts to services in the poorest areas. It will be vital that effective advice services, linked in well with other services such as employment and health, available to everyone who needs them across our communities, are properly funded in this process.	In developing the 2015-18 specifications for both the employment related and welfare advice strands of the Jobs, Skills and Prosperity Theme, a significant emphasis has been placed upon applicants clearly demonstrating their partnership working, both formal (consortiums) and informal (referral networks and tracking processes) with a broad range of providers both mainstream and third sector. Applicants will have to clearly demonstrate their awareness and understanding of, for example, the Council's Integrated Employment Services, JCP, local health and housing providers, and other employment, training and social welfare advice providers across the borough; and illustrating realistic and workable cross referral processes will be key to applicants effectively demonstrating their ability to deliver. Organisations / applications that are unable to fulfil these requirements will not be recommended for funding by Officers. The advice services budget has been maintained at its original level of circa £900k per annum in recognition of the ongoing demand on social welfare advice services,

	due to the impact of economic austerity and welfare reform changes on the poorest households.
22. Theme 3: Prevention Health and Wellbeing

It is important that projects that are purely about culture are not disadvantaged by this strand being merged with wellbeing, even if they cannot demonstrate specific wellbeing outcomes.

We would be glad to see an evaluation of outcomes of lunch clubs before they receive additional funding – other services with more tangible outcomes for older people have had cuts over recent years. The priority for tackling loneliness amongst isolated older people should be retained. | Wellbeing will be considered in its broadest sense which will enable projects about culture not to be disadvantaged. There will be elements of wellbeing that will be negotiated and monitored during the grant process.

Applications for lunch clubs will be evaluated in accordance to the new service specification which includes a greater focus on prevention services, healthy eating and healthy lifestyles, and addressing social isolation with the provision of a meal bringing people together engender cohesion.

Tackling loneliness amongst isolated older people remains a priority. |
| 23. Theme 4: Third Sector Organisational Development

In the past the actual outcomes here have not always been clear – suggest the CVS is closely involved. | The required outcomes for this theme have been made perfectly clear within the current Specification document. This includes additional clarification being provided following feedback from the recent consultation process.

The former Chief Executive of the CVS (together with other representatives from the Third Sector) was a member of the MSG Review Group which helped to develop the outcome and output proposals for this theme. |
| 24. Theme 5: Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience

We do not believe this is an appropriate funding stream for PREVENT work at this time - the Prevent strategy locally and nationally needs to be reviewed. | It is not proposed that any specific 'Prevent work per-se is supported through this theme. It is anticipated however, that a wide range of cohesion and community engagement activities are likely to be part of project proposals. |
| 25. The Labour Group has some concerns over the evaluation of the previous MSG programme. It is important that any learning from the previous 2012/15 MSG programme informs the new programme but a detailed evaluation of the 2012/15 programme is not yet available. The RAG rating gives us an insight into outputs from individual projects but we do not know if the programme streams achieved their overall outcomes, nor how projects performed against their objectives. | The evaluation of the 12 to 15 MSG programme is an Action within the Best Value Action Plan – Officers are currently developing the scope, which will then be commissioned.

Performance Monitoring Information that has been collected has been used to inform the status of organisations and their rollover period.

This information continues to provide an indication of the level of performance of the organisation on a quarterly basis and will assist in determining its success in delivering its objectives. |

| This evaluation needs to be produced as a matter of urgency in order that successes can be built upon and organisations with a good track record of achievement can be prioritised in the new programme. | The prioritisation of an organisation for funding within the new programme will be determined by the result of the overall assessment score of an application. The track record of an organisation is indeed one of the factors that contribute toward the overall score; however the evaluation of the Programme is not required in order to determine this matter. |

Implications of Moving From 11 Funding Streams to 5 Broad Themes

1. Changes Affecting Previous Funding Streams

1.1   The reduction in the number of funding streams should facilitate better targeting and a more rational allocation of limited resources focussed on the delivery of better aligned outcomes. It should not preclude any activity undertaken as part of the previous programme, so long as they contribute towards the delivery of desired outcomes as determined through the community plan. Early Years is the exception, which will progress via a separate commissioning process. Below are some themes from the previous programme and how they would fit

    a) Early Years Services is to be phased out from the grants programme in any event due to the decision to switch this to commissioning.

    b) There is no separate funding stream for Arts, Sports and Environmental Services. However, Children and Young People and Families, Prevention, Health and Well Being and Community Cohesion and Resilience each have provision for healthy activities for such as play facilities exercise and sports, and for arts and other recreation activities. The risk is that it may be a little more complicated for bidders to identify which funding theme to bid into, but against this, it will encourage bids to be more aligned to specific outcomes.

    c) There is no specific funding stream for Lifelong Learning.. This is already well provided for through the Ideas Stores and delivery by Ofsted approved providers, funded by the Skills Funding Agency. Any further provision that needs to be grant funded to fill gaps in, or add value to existing serviceswill be progressed via the Jobs, Skills and Prosperity funding theme.

    d) There is no specific theme for community languages. Potential projects that add value to existing provision will be considered either through the Children, Young People and Families theme (and there is specific reference to it in the specifications), or Jobs, Skills and Prosperity.

2. Implications of the New Approach for Small Organisations

2.1   Whilst the approach advocated for 2015-18 is on quality rather than quantity in terms of the number of service providers that is not intended to preclude smaller organisations from bidding. Commissioners recognise there is a place for both smaller and larger organisations in the delivery of the desired

community outcomes – but all organisations must demonstrate compliance with required standards of corporate governance to be eligible. They must also either hold appropriate accreditation to provide certain services, or work in partnership with organisations that do, as part of consortia arrangements to avoid duplication and get best value from local specialisms.

2.2   Grantswillalso be primarily available to small organisations through both the Community Cohesion and Resilience theme, which is there to encourage innovative new initiatives.

2.4   Consideration is being given to allowing an additional week before the deadline for return of bids to ease time pressures and to speed up the process, to running a networking event for each theme in each ward cluster between mid-April and the end of the first week of May to help organisations to get to know each other. This could involve a speed dating process. The CVS will be working with local organisations to support their ability to develop appropriate proposals and ensure eligibility arrangements are able to be met.

3.   Funding Allocations for Specific Activities

3.1   Concerns may be raised about how much grant funding continues to go into specific activities that have had defined budgets allocated in the past.

3.2   Geographically, it is proposed that funding will take account of levels of need and identified gaps in mainstream provision.

3.3   However, beyond this if too much detail is prescribed as to how funds are allocated within each funding theme, this will discourage the strategic delivery, innovative approaches and the achievement of synergies. It is therefore proposed that service specifications provide a general indication of funding available by theme but recognising actual allocationsbetween themes must be left flexible.

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