

# COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING MEETING

2<sup>ND</sup> SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

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Tuesday, 5 July 2016 at 5.30 p.m.  
MP701, 7th Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent,  
London, E14 2BG

The meeting is open to the public to attend.

**Members:**

Sir Ken Knight (Chair)	(Commissioner)
Chris Allison (Member)	(Commissioner)
Max Caller (Member)	(Commissioner)
Alan Wood (Member)	(Commissioner)
Mayor John Biggs	(Executive Mayor)
Councillor Rachael Saunders	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services)

**Co-opted Members:** (Non Voting)

Mayor John Biggs	(Executive Mayor)
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**Public Information:**

The public are welcome to attend these meetings.

**Contact for further enquiries:**

Antonella Burgio, Democratic Services,  
1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG  
Tel: 020 7364 4881  
E-mail: [antonella.burgio@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:antonella.burgio@towerhamlets.gov.uk)  
Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>

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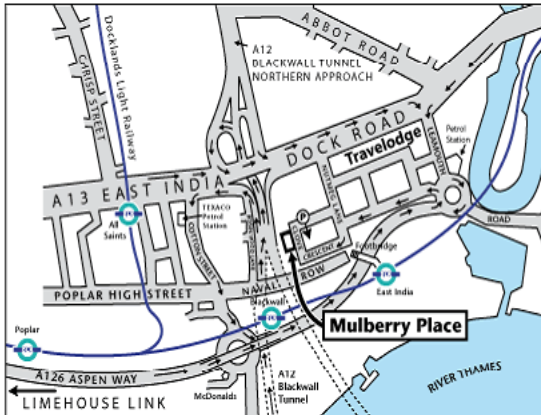
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## A Guide to Commissioner Decision Making

### **Commissioner Decision Making at Tower Hamlets**

As directed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the above Commissioners have been directed to take decision making responsibility for specific areas of work. These include examples such as the disposal of properties, awarding of grants and certain officer employment functions. This decision making body has been set up to enable the Commissioners to take their decisions in public in a similar manner to existing processes.

### **Key Decisions**

Executive decisions are all decisions that are not specifically reserved for other bodies (such as Development or Licensing Committees). Most, but not all, of the decisions to be taken by the Commissioners are Executive decisions. Certain important Executive decisions are classified as **Key Decisions**.

The constitution describes Key Decisions as an executive decision which is likely

- a) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the borough.

Upcoming Key Decisions are published on the website on the 'Forthcoming Decisions' page through [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee). The Commissioners have chosen to broadly follow the Council's definition in classifying their determinations.

### **Published Decisions**

After the meeting, any decisions taken will be published on the Council's website.

- The decisions for this meeting will be published on: **Friday, 8 July 2016**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 5 JULY 2016**

**5.30 p.m.**

**4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS (Pages 1 - 2)**

Consideration of any written comments received from members of the public in relation to any of the reports on the agenda.

[Any submissions should be sent to the clerk listed on the agenda front page by 5pm the day before the meeting]

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT  
(Pages 3 - 6)**



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Tower Hamlets CVS St Margaret's House 15a Old Ford Road London E2 9PL  
tel: 020 8980 8427 admin@thcvs.org.uk www.thcvs.org.uk

4<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Sir Ken Knight  
Chief Commissioner  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London E14 2BG

Dear Sir Ken,

**Public submission from THCVS for Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

We write in relation to the 'MSG 2015/18 Performance Report - January-March', which has been published for the Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016. THCVS is pleased to note that the MSG report shows the continuing positive performance of the programme overall. We would also like to add our support to the proposal that allows for green rated projects to receive their funding once their monitoring has been received by their monitoring officer, as this will assist with smaller organisations' cash flow issues.

We note from pg. 8 of the report that two projects, having been rated as red in two consecutive quarters, are now 'recommended to be withdrawn'. Whilst the reasons for withholding, suspension or cancellation of grant payments are made clear in the Standard Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement and the RAG rating and Performance by Results criteria have been provided to MSG funded organisations, we are concerned that the report presented lacks the evidence of underperformance (and any efforts taken to address it) to warrant the withdrawal of these projects from the MSG programme.

Both of the organisations recommended for withdrawal are known to THCVS and have engaged with our support offer following referral by Officers. One of them, Shadwell Community Project, wrote to the Grants Scrutiny sub-committee last week to dispute the reasons presented for stopping their funding. Whilst the late submission of their letter (re-submitted for this meeting) meant that it could not be discussed, we were interested to hear the

discussion it provoked about red rated projects, the evidence that might be required in order to assure decision makers that cessation of funding is necessary, and the possibility of organisations making representations to the panel before a final decision is made.

In the light of this discussion we ask that you delay the decision to withdraw funding from the two projects at this meeting and seek additional evidence from Officers about the reasons for recommending withdrawal, including any remedial actions taken and engagement with external support. We also ask that a clear process around withdrawal of funding is developed, including timely notifications of red or amber ratings so that projects have time to develop and present action plans to Officers, and a process for organisational representations to the Grants Scrutiny sub-committee before the decision to cease funding is made.

Appendix 4 of the MSG report makes reference to the emergency funding scheme for the sector. We would like it noted that at the date of writing this letter there is still no published criteria on the council website for the emergency fund.

Lastly, Agenda item 6.7 of the meeting refers to the council's plans to move from grants to commissioning. We strongly believe that this needs to be done in discussion with the voluntary and community sector in order to meet the objectives of the VCS strategy and action plan in relation to collaborative commissioning, and a transparent and well communicated move from grants to commissioning.

Thank you for your time in considering our letter,

Yours sincerely,




**Kirsty Cornell**

CEO

THCVS

Cc Zena Cooke, Steve Hill, Everett Haughton

# Agenda Item 7

<b>Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting</b> Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Kevin Kewin, Interim Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Comments of the Grants Scrutiny sub-committee (29<sup>th</sup> June 2016)</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Vicky Allen, Corporate Strategy and Equality
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

## Summary

The Grants Scrutiny sub-committee met on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 to consider the reports submitted to the Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July as part of the sub-committee's pre-decision scrutiny remit.

This note presents the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The following sub-committee Members were present: Cllr Mukit MBE (Chair), Cllr Amina Ali and Cllr Clare Harrisson.

## Recommendation:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Consider the comments of the Grants Scrutiny sub-committee (appendix 1)

## **Appendix 1: Comments of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

### **Exercise of Commissioners' Discretion**

#### *Home Grants*

All Members should be provided with details about Home Grants repairs so they can signpost residents to the scheme if appropriate.

### **Can Do Development Programme**

The Council should signpost recipients to potential external funding sources.

### **Annual Report on the Event Fund Awards 2015-16**

The sub-committee agreed that supporting arts projects, through the fund, was an important way to foster community cohesion.

### **Tower Hamlets Affordable Housing Grant 2016-2019**

The report could be strengthened by including the comparative unit costs from other London Boroughs.

The terminology in the assessment exercise (appendix 1) should be standardised including information relating to the rents for each scheme.

### **Whitechapel High Street Fund**

All Members should be provided with details of the accessible workspace scheme, including the criteria, so they can advise local residents and businesses.

The Council should consider the learning from other London Boroughs, such as Westminster, who have operated similar schemes

### **Adult Services Small Grants for Pensioners' Groups 2016/17**

The sub-committee discussed the importance of focusing on outcomes, rather than outputs, from grants wherever possible – this was a general observation rather than specific to this scheme.

### **MSG 2015/18 Performance report (Jan – March 2016)**

The sub-committee suggested that future monitoring reports should be shorter and more focussed on exceptions and outliers. This should be accompanied by officer analysis of the pertinent issues to better focus Members' time.

Members highlighted the importance of analysis on geography and reach within grant reporting.

### **Grants Register – Moving to Commissioning**



The sub-committee welcomed the approach outlined in report. Members highlighted the importance of outcomes rather than outputs. In addition, they felt commissioning may offer providers more stability than grants.

The sub-committee noted the support of CVS to the approach.

### **Grants Decision Making – Transitional Arrangements**

The sub-committee considered the need for further discussions of the potential to develop their role beyond pre-decision scrutiny.

### **Forward Plan**

Members noted the Forward Plan

### ***General observations***

During the course of their discussion, the sub-committee made a number of observations that are relevant beyond the particular items. These are highlighted above and include a greater focus on outcomes, monitoring reports to include more analysis and a stronger focus on problem issues. The sub-committee also highlighted the benefit of ensuring that grants are joined-up with other arrangements, including commissioned services.

The importance of marketing grant schemes effectively, including targeting where appropriate was raised. Where necessary support should be provided or signposted to for community groups who lack the capacity to apply (for example, because of language barriers).

In terms of developing scrutiny's role, the sub-committee highlighted a number of areas to consider at its future meetings;

- The participation / role of community groups at the sub-committee (if any)
- How Members can better understand the organisations that they are being asked to comment upon
- Identifying issues for pro-active scrutiny rather than pre-decision scrutiny, informed by a better understanding of grant spend in general

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