

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**RECORD OF THE DECISIONS OF THE GRANTS DETERMINATION (CABINET) SUB-COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)**

**Members Present:**

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Councillor Candida Ronald (Chair) | (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)                      |
| Mayor John Biggs (Member)         | (Executive Mayor)  |
| Councillor Asma Begum             | (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities) |
| Councillor Sirajul Islam          | (Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing)                      |

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor Tarik Khan  
(Scrutiny Lead Resources)

**Officers Present:**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Onyekachi Ajisafe | – (Strategy & Policy Officer, Strategy Policy & Performance) |
| Janet Fasan       | – (Divisional Director, Legal, Governance)                   |
| David Freeman     | – (Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy Manager)    |
| Afazul Hoque      | – (Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)                      |
| Robert Mee        | – (Programme Analysis and Review Officer)                    |
| Zoe Folley        | – (Democratic Services Officer, Committees, Governance)      |

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Asma Begum declared a Non-DPI interest in Agenda items. This was on the basis that Councillor Tarik Khan was a Trustee of Tower Hamlets Youth Sports Foundation.

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Councillor Sirajul Islam declared a Non-DPI interest in agenda item 6,2, VSC Funding Under Delegated Authority. This was due to a historic application for an allotment from Prospect Walk (listed in the Attachments)

### **3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

#### **DECISION**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were presented and approved as a correct record of proceedings

### **4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS**

There were none.

### **5. EXERCISE OF MAYORAL DISCRETIONS**

It was noted that the following Individual Mayoral Decision had been taken since the last meeting in March 2020:

- Community organisations and Faith Based Groups Leasing Premises from the Council – Rent Relief, 23 April 2020.

### **6. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **6.1 MSG Performance Report October 2019 – March 2020**

Robert Mee (Programme Analysis and Review Officer) presented the report. This was the final performance report and covered the MSG extension agreed by Cabinet.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lead, Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report, regarding the low take up of the MSG Rent Subsidy scheme, expected participation in the Community Benefit Rent Reduction (CBRR) scheme and whether this was temporary.

In response the following information was noted.

- That the aims of the MSG Rent Subsidy scheme were to provide temporary support to organisations, to prevent large rent increases when agreeing a new lease.
- Only two MSG organisations qualified for support (of the groups listed in the report) - Stifford Centre and Our Base.

- Our Base had discontinued. Therefore, only Stifford Centre participated in the scheme.
- MSG Rent Subsidy was set up as a temporary scheme while the Community Benefit Rent Reduction (CBRR) scheme was developed and implemented.
- To date 11 groups had been awarded funding from the CBRR scheme with one group currently receiving the benefit.
- The other groups need to have their leases finalised before payments can be released.
- The CBRR is a permanent scheme for VCS groups in Council premises, that could demonstrate that they were providing a community benefit.
- Ongoing updates would be provided to the Committee as part of the VCS project updates.
- It was also noted that a video had been prepared showing MSG project outcomes and this could be recirculated.

Written responses to the questions are attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes..

In response, Members noted the amount of work that had gone into the MSG programme and thanked Officers for this. They also acknowledged the wider programme of support provided by the Council to groups, in addition to the Grants programme, which included commissioning and working with partners.

**DECISION:**

1. Note the performance of the Mainstream Grants (MSG) programme as set out in 3.3 – 3.6 and the premises update 3.7 – 3.9 of the report.

**6.2 VCS Funding Awarded Under Delegated Authority**

David Freeman, (Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy Manager), presented the report that provided an update on VCS Funding awarded under delegated authority by Council officers or, in the case of the small grants programme, the East End Community Foundation.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lead, Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report. In response it was noted that this was a regular update report to the Committee covering the period from the end of February 2020 to the end of August 2020, it included all delegated decisions in respect of the VCS Grants programme, as highlighted above.

Written responses to the questions are attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes.

In response, the Committee were mindful of the challenges that organisations may face due to the loss of income at this time. It was felt important that the Council understood these challenges.

**DECISION:**

1. Note the update on funding awarded to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations under delegated authority since their last meeting,
2. Note the new Small Grants Programme theme 'Covid-19 Test and Trace Outreach and Engagement' set out at appendix A2, and
3. Note the decisions made by the Mayor regarding rent relief for VCS organisations that lease premises from the council.

**6.3 Local Community Fund (LCF) Project Performance and Update Report – October 2019 – March 2020**

Robert Mee presented the report. This was the first report since the introduction of the new LCF programme. The report asked the Committee to agree programme management arrangements and provided an update on project performance.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lead, Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report. Clarity was sought on the following issues:

- The impact of COVID-19 on project delivery. It was noted that the LCF annual report, covering October 19 – September 20 and plans for the next 12 months, will provide details of project performance and will be submitted to the Sub - Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.
- Real DPO and Hestia Housing and Support. It was noted that due to the submission of the outstanding paperwork, (that had been outstanding since April 2020) payment could be released to REAL and they were now a green rated project. In addition, due to the satisfactory performance of Hestia Housing in terms of project delivery, payment could also now be made.

Written responses to the questions are attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes.

In response the Committee discussed the following issues:

- The approach to monitoring projects during the Covid 19 period.
- It was noted that the Council sought to take a different approach to monitoring project performance. The intention was to adopt an outcomes based approach, particularly during the Covid period, to identify how projects were actually making a positive contribution, rather than focusing on specific targets.
- Members felt it was important that projects should look at alternative ways of delivering services and outputs if necessary during the Covid period, and set revised targets.

- It was reported that Officers were working with groups to identify any underspends with a view to allocating these to other activities with the same outcomes, by the end of September 2020.
- Officers expressed confidence that the programme should achieve its aims over the remainder of the programme, potentially through using different ways of delivering outcomes.
- The Mayor noted that since last meeting, Rupert Williams the CEO of St Hilda's East Community Centre had retired. He noted he had done a great job.

**DECISION:**

1. Agree the LCF Programme Management arrangements including delegated authority to undertake appropriate actions in respect of all matters relating to the fund including but not exclusively in respect of Premises, Debtors, Projects and performance prior to payment

2. Note the performance of the Local Community Fund programme as set out in 3.3 to 3.8 for Oct 19 – Mar 20 and the impact of Covid-19 in 3.9 and Appendix 4.1 – 4.5.

3. Agree the premises condition dispensation continues for Age UK and REAL as set out in 3.8 with future decisions made by delegated authority as part of the proposed LCF Programme Management arrangements.

4. Agree that the Infrastructure & Capacity Building funding due to Tower Hamlets Community Transport be re-purposed to fund work on restructuring options

**7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT  
THERE WERE NONE**

The meeting ended at 6.15 p.m.  
Councillor Candida Ronald (Chair),  
Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee