

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

NOTES OF INFORMAL GRANTS DETERMINATION (CABINET) SUB-COMMITTEE (MEETING INQUORATE)

HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 23 JUNE 2021

DISCUSSION RELATED TO MAYORAL DECISIONS TO TAKEN BY THE MAYOR AND PUBLISHED

Members Present:

Councillor Candida Ronald (Chair) (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Mayor John Biggs (Member) (Executive Mayor)

Other Councillors Present – online.

Councillor Asma Begum* (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services and Education)
Councillor Leema Qureshi* (Scrutiny Lead – Resources)

Officers Present:

Emily Fieran-Reed* (Senior Strategy and Policy Manager, Communities Team, Corporate Strategy & Policy Strategy, Policy & Performance Division)
Jonathan Fox (Principal Contracts Lawyer, Legal Services Governance)
Robert Mee (Programme Analysis & Review Officer, Corporate Strategy & Policy, Communities Team, Governance)
Anna Zucchelli (Heritage at Risk Projects Officer, Place)
Filuck Miah* (Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy and Policy Team)
Zoe Folley (Democratic Services Officer, Committees, Governance)

*attended online.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sirajul Islam

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Item deferred for considered at the next meeting

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

Item deferred for considered at the next meeting

4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

There were none.

5. EXERCISE OF MAYORAL DISCRETIONS

There were none.

6. GRANTS DETERMINATION SUB-COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, QUORUM, MEMBERSHIP AND DATES OF MEETINGS

Deferred for consideration at the next meeting.

7. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

7.1 Formal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to Columbia Market Primary School

Anna Zucchelli presented the report.

This report related to a formal offer of a LBTH Historic Buildings Grant (HBG). This was for a maximum of £10,000 to Colombia Market School to contribute towards the cost of repair of the grade II listed railings, gate and gate piers and reinstatement of missing lanterns in front of the school.

This grant would act as match funding for a £15,000 from the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT).

The following issues were noted:

- The school and railings were in a highly visible location in the Conservation Area. The railings and gate etc were the last remaining remnants of the Columbia Road Market complex which had been demolished.
- Given this, it was proposed that the HGB, be allocated to the works. This funding was normally allocated to buildings on Historic England's Buildings at Risk register. An exception could be made in this case given the merits of the proposals, and that there are currently no further applications of expressions of interest for the grant. There was also sufficient funding in the budget for this work.

- The grant funding (of £10k) equated to less than 60% of the total costs of the project (with the rest covered by match funding). The proposals therefore meet the grant criteria.
- The proposals would significantly improve the appearance of the building, as well as support community engagement work.
- A contractor had been appointed to carry out the works (selected in line from the relevant requirements from 3 bids).
- The works were due to start in September 2022.
- It was noted that HOLT would carry out community engagement work with school pupils and community groups to learn about the conservation work and the heritage of the site. The committee noted an overview of the work.

The Committee discussed the following:

- The community engagement work. In particular, the aims of HOLT in providing opportunities for school pupils and community groups to learn about the heritage of the site – as part of their Proud Places programme. It was noted the school may also have their own ideas regarding how they wish to build on these activities.

Members felt this was an excellent proposal and supported the recommendations in the report.

Recommendations (to be agreed by the Mayor as an Individual Mayoral Decision)

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to issue a formal offer of grant, subject to conditions, of a maximum of £10,000 to Columbia Market Nursery School towards the cost of repair to the historic gates and railings.
2. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to enter into the grant agreement and any such other agreements required to affect the grant as detailed in paragraph 1.

7.2 Local Community Fund (LCF) Performance Report - October 2020 – March 2021

Robert Mee provided an overview of this report. The performance report covers the period October 2020 to March 2021. It reported on the five themes of the Local Community Fund and the Infrastructure & Capacity Building funding. The Project Summary (Appendix 1) gives an update by project.

The following issues were noted:

- Whilst this had been a difficult period due to Covid, most of the projects had successfully adjusted to the difficult circumstances, through adapting the way projects were delivered.

- However, in view of the circumstances, a new 'Covid/Amber' performance rating had been introduced - to the RAG rating – to identify performance issues, where the Covid restrictions has had a particularly significant impact.
- For example, this rating had been given to projects involving schools or intergenerational projects which had been significantly impacted
- Other performance issues (for example relating more to other issues), continued to be rated as Amber. Details of these were set out in the report.
- Officers continued to work with these Amber rated projects to address the issues. They were confident that these issues should be resolved by the next update and they would gain a green rating.

The Committee asked a number of questions and the following points were noted:

- Members sought clarity on the need for the new Covid/Amber rating - given the previously agreed changes to the programme. The revised arrangements encouraged projects to take a more flexible and imaginative approach.
- Officers further explained the need for the new Covid/Amber rating. It was noted that these projects have worked hard to adapt their services and to take a more flexible approach, through for example, providing remote learning and online activities. Despite their best efforts, the impact of the restrictions has simply been out of their control. Only a small number of projects had been awarded this new rating.
- Officers had been working with these groups to help them make the adjustments and adapt their practices as best as they could to meet targets. It was noted that many of these projects sought to deliver projects that would help the recovery.
- It was also discussed that the format of Appendix 1 should be reviewed to make the RAG rating clearer.
- Members also discussed the need to plan for the next round of funding.

The Committee welcomed the report and thanked Officers and the voluntary sector for their work.

Recommendations (to be endorsed by the Mayor as an Individual Mayor Decision)

1. Note the performance of the Local Community Fund programme as set out in 3.2 to 3.7 and Appendix 1 for Oct 20 – Mar 21
2. Note the updates on the funded organisations in Council premises and the Infrastructure & Capacity Building funding as set out in 3.8 to 3.9.

7.3 VCS Funding Awarded Under Delegated Authority

Robert Mee provided an overview of this report

The following issues were noted

- The report should be amended to read 'VCS Funding Awarded Under Delegated Authority', deleting equalities contract funding provision'
- Since the last meeting it was noted that, one new grant had been approved for glass making activities - as set out in Appendix B, Innovation Funding Award
- That in respect of para 3.26 (Legal Advice Centre)– it has been agreed to continue to pay the organisation the Community Benefit Rent reduction.
- That Appendix A sets out the small grants contingency funding plans
- Also attached to the report was the 2020/21 Small Grants Fund Annual Report – setting out the significant achievements of the projects.

The Committee welcomed the report and passed on their thanks to Officers as well as the East End Community Foundation for their hard work.

Recommendation (to be endorsed by the Mayor as an Individual Mayor Decision)

1. Note the update on funding awarded to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations under delegated authority since their last meeting.

8. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 6.15 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Candida Ronald
Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee