

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

**RECORD OF THE DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING
MEETING**

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 19 AUGUST 2015

**C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Sir Ken Knight	(Commissioner)
Chris Allison	(Commissioner)
Max Caller	(Commissioner)
Alan Wood	(Commissioner)

Councillors Present:

John Biggs	(Mayor)
Councillor Peter Golds	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor John Pierce	(Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Officers Present:

Kate Bingham	(Service Head, Children's and Adults Resources)
Chris Holme	(Service Head, Resources & Economic Development)
Stephen Murray	(Head of Arts and Events, Communities Localities & Culture)
David Knight	(Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

3. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

No public submission requests were received for consideration.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Extension to Early Years Sector Support (ex MSG) funding

The Commissioners received a report the provide an outline with regards to the extension of the Early Years Sector Support (ex MSG) funding. As a result of a full and wide ranging discussion on this report the Commissioners noted that:

- The report had been published less than five clear days prior to the meeting as is usual practice. However, the areas contained in the report were considered to be significant in terms of service delivery and spend and would therefore benefit from obtaining a public decision as soon as possible. It was also noted that at the meeting on 29th of July the Commissioners' had requested more information before being able to agree to the extension to the Mainstream Grant roll-over due to delay in the decision on services Schools Forum wishes to commission in the future and that the commissioning process will in the future be a budgetary/service commissioning decision and not a grant funding decision.
- The Early Years Sector Support (ex-MSG) is a block of funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) that had previously been used to contribute to the Local Authority's Mainstream Grant programme. From 2015/16 this budget allocation will revert back to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as agreed by Schools Forum. Therefore, any future spend from this block of funding will be agreed by Schools Forum.
- That if no decision was taken or the extension to the funding not granted, then small organisations whose services may be needed at a later date might need to make staff redundant.
- The requested extension is to the 31 December, 2015, with a provision to extend for a further three months until 31 March 2016 in the event that the proposed commissioning exercise has not concluded within initial timeframe.

As a result of discussions on the report the Commissioners agreed the following recommendations:

RESOLVED to:

1. Agree to the extension of the original MSG contracts (albeit now funded by the Early Years Sector Support funding) in respect of 23 childcare providers and 4 infrastructure organisations to the 31 December, 2015 with a provision to extend for a further three months until 31 March, 2016 while the commissioning process for future services is completed;
2. Delegate to the Head of Legal Services the authority to enter into all necessary extension agreements on behalf of the Council under similar terms as are pre-existing and agreed between the parties;
3. Receive an update report within 4 months on the development of the proposed commissioning exercise.

4.2 Event Fund applications - September 2015

Stephen Murray (Head of Arts and Events, Communities Localities & Culture) introduced a report which explained that the assessment period for these applications had gone beyond the 29th July 2015 and for this reason it has not been possible for them to be considered at the public decision making meeting that had taken place on the 29th July. In addition, it was noted that some of the events will take place prior to the Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting scheduled for 9th September, 2015 hence why this report was being considered at this evenings meeting.

The Commissioners then asked the attending Members to respond to the proposals. Councillor John Pierce indicated that he felt that changes to the time tabling of the process might result in some events not taking place. Councillor Peter Golds commented that he would wish to see a more equitable distribution of applications across the Borough.

The Commissioners considered the points raised and indicated that the best way to ensure an equitable distribution would be to look at the pattern of applications, then work with local groups to bring forward bids for consideration.

The Commissioners then agreed the following recommendations:

RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the funding for new Event Fund applications as set out in Appendix B of the report;
2. Reject the funding for new Event Fund applications as set out in Appendix C of the report; and
3. Request that officers review their programme of activities to ensure reports for decision were processed to comply with normal Council decision publication rules.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

5.1 Bachelor of Arts Qualified Teacher Status Bursary Scheme

Kate Bingham (Service Head, Children's and Adults Resources) presented a report which stated that the intended recipients of this particular scheme are due to commence their final year of a full time degree in September 2015. They had applied with the expectation that this money would be awarded to

them on the basis that they have already successfully completed the necessary foundation degree.

It was noted that if no decision was taken then the eight individuals who intend to commence on a full time Bachelor of Arts Qualified Teacher Status degree course will be without access to the funding that would enable them to undertake this degree full time, after resigning from their current employment.

In reaching their decisions, Commissioners took into consideration the contributions made by the Mayor and Members present and whilst they acknowledged the comments made regarding the need to follow the due process, they stated that it was important to ensure that this matter was resolved without delay so that those eight individuals concerned would be able to commence their full-time studies. Commissioners noted that they had not been invited to consider the matter at any point previously.

Accordingly, the Commissioners agreed the recommendation as set out in the report.

RESOLVED

To approve the awarding of a bursary of £10,000 to each of the eight Tower Hamlets former school employees currently awaiting the outcome of this decision to be able to commence their full-time studies.

The meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.

**Chair: Sir Ken Knight
COMMISSIONER**