

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.45 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2017

**MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON E14 2BG.**

Members Present:

Councillor Clare Harrisson (Vice-Chair)

Councillor John Pierce (Member)

Councillor Amina Ali

Officers Present:

Zena Cooke

– Corporate Director, Resources

Steve Hill

– Head of Benefits

Vicky Allen

– Strategy Policy & Performance Officer

John Cooke

– Senior Strategy Policy & Performance Officer

Abdul Khan

– Service Manager, Energy & Sustainability

Emily Fieran-Reed

– Service Manager, Cohesion, Engagements & Commissioning

Hilary Hughes

– Grants Officer, Third Sector Team

Fiona Bateman

– Legal Services

Charles Yankiah

– Democratic Services

Others in Attendance

Gemma Cossins

– Tower Hamlets Community Voluntary Service (THCVS)

Councillor Clare Harrisson (Vice Chair) took the Chair in the absence of
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Abdul Mukit MBE, Peter Golds and Oliur Rahman.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Sub Committee agreed to note the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. FEEDBACK: COMMISSIONERS DECISION MAKING (INFORMATION ONLY)

4.1 Note for Commissioners Meeting - 8 November 2016

The Sub Committee agreed to note the feedback relating to the Commissioner's Decision Making Meeting.

5. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

The Sub Committee noted that no public submissions had been submitted to the Clerk by the deadline (5pm the day before the meeting).

On behalf of the Service Manager, Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning the Vice Chair, Councillor Clare Harrison requested that the order of business be amended in order that Item 8.1 "Update on the Work of the Co-Production Pilot to date" could be considered after Item 5 on the agenda.

The Sub Committee agreed.

6. SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Update on the Work of the Co-Production Pilot to Date

The Sub Committee considered the update on the work of the Co-Production Pilot to date, presented by Emily Fieran-Reed (Service Manager, Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning).

The report highlighted: -

- the change to the timetable of the co-commissioning such that delivery of the commissioned work on cohesion will now commence from 1st September 2017 rather than 1st April 2017;
- an update on the progress of the project to date;
- details of the support that will be provided to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations to enable them to participate in co-production and to tender for commissioned contracts; and
- The budget available for Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience activity is £105,000 per annum, which, over the period of the

co-production pilot (until the end of August 2016) amounts to £148,750 in total.

Councillor Harrison enquired about the project slippage period and whether it would be fair to the organisation and the services.

Emily Fieran-Reed informed the Sub Committee that although there was a project slippage, it is specific to the commissioned work on cohesion, the other aspects of the project will continue as scheduled.

Councillor John Pierce enquired about the results and how the project success will be judged.

Emily Fieran-Reed informed the Sub Committee that expectations would be developed as part of the co-production work, but it was anticipated that the outcomes would be based upon a wider approach enabling the community to come together and pro-actively do joint working between different parts of the community cohesively and sustainably according to the project aims.

The Sub Committee welcomed this report outlining the co-production support to the voluntary sector to date for commissioned projects relating to Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience.

The Sub Committee were pleased to hear that the training had been widely advertised and was oversubscribed. They were keen to hear that further training opportunities would be forthcoming; learning from the current pilot and findings from the independent evaluation of grants currently being undertaken will be taken into consideration to enhance the offer.

The Sub Committee welcomed the generic training element around co-production, which can be drawn on by voluntary sector organisations who want to apply for other forms of funding.

The Sub Committee wanted assurance that the co-production process would be fair and end-user focussed.

The Sub Committee heard that a wide range of stakeholders had been invited to participate and this would help to mitigate against using the process to shape commissioned services for their own benefit. Participants are being asked to undertake their own research which they will bring back to the co-production sessions and used, in conjunction with intelligence from the service, to ensure decisions made were evidence-based. In addition, Legal Services will be consulted.

The Sub Committee agreed to:

1. Note the new timetable for the Co-Production Pilot Project;
2. Note the progress on the project to date;

3. Note the support which will be provided to voluntary and community sector organisations to participate in the co-production process and bid for future funding; and
4. Requested that another progress update report be submitted to the Sub Committee further into the co-production programme (April).

7. COMMISSIONERS DECISION MAKING MEETING REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

7.1 Exercise of Commissioners' Discretion

The Sub Committee considered the Exercise of Commissioners Discretion report presented by Steve Hill who highlighted the following decisions made by the Commissioners relating to Emergency Funding: -

- Acorn FC – not approved
- Island House Community Centre – not approved
- IoD Bangladeshi Association & Cultural Centre – not approved
- The Rooted Forum – decision deferred pending further information

The Sub Committee requested that the reasons for declined grants be inserted into the table in Appendix 1 for future reports.

The Sub Committee were pleased to hear that the revised criteria for emergency funding was now published on the Council's website along with examples of what would and what would not receive funding. However the Sub Committee were concerned organisations were still applying for emergency funding which did not meet the criteria, which might indicate a review of communications relating to this might be necessary and asked Officers to review the situation and report back at a future meeting.

The Sub Committee agreed to support the recommendation.

7.2 Warmth Project

The Sub Committee considered the WARMTH Project Funding report presented by Abdul Khan (Service Manager, Energy & Sustainability) who highlighted the following:

- London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) Sustainable Development Team was working with Groundwork London (GWL) to deliver the "Warm Homes Agency Referral Method to deliver Health outcomes" (WARMTH) programme that tackles fuel poverty;
- GWL has been awarded money by the British Gas Energy Trust (BGET) to deliver a health/housing programme across London boroughs;

- The referrals network and home energy efficiency visits are a unique service offered by GWL;
- GWL has allocated £25,000 to deliver the WARMTH programme in LBTH throughout 2016;
- The project is facilitating the delivery of the LBTH adopted Fuel Poverty Strategy and the sustainable development team has committed to extend the programme to March 2017 by match funding the £25,000; and
- Proposed funding for the project extension is to come from finances held in reserves for the development of an energy co-operative to help council tenants and residents in fuel poverty.

Councillor Harrison enquired about the targeted use of council funding and about the 346 homes once they were complete what would be next.

Abdul Khan informed the Sub Committee that the database would be shared with everyone as referrals and it is hoped that after the success of the pilot project that the wider issues of health and safety could be looked at together with being able to access the Carbon Fund of at least £600k which could be released for some additional programmes.

This report was welcomed by Members as a positive move and a good use of Council money. The Committee felt that the report was a good example of outcomes based funding.

The Committee were interested to hear how this work would be integrated with other anti-poverty measures the Council was undertaking – such as welfare support help, linking with healthcare professionals and the fire service, and help identify other residents in need.

The Sub Committee were also pleased to hear that the pilot project was funded to be rolled out wider in future. Members were keen to ensure that support would be available to residents on low incomes living in properties owned by other registered providers and for residents living in the private rented sector.

The Sub Committee endorsed the proposed recommendations.

7.3 Stepney City Farm - S106

The Sub Committee considered the Stepney City Farm Water Efficiency and Care Upgrade Proposals presented by Abdul Khan (Service Manager, Energy & Sustainability) who informed the Sub Committee that the release of up to £32,500 of Section 106 resources to Stepney City Farm would be to deliver water efficiency projects and visitor experience improvements. He also stated that it would increase attendance to the Farm and improve accessibility.

Councillor John Pierce enquired about how the criteria referred to in the report (paragraph 3.9) would be assessed.

Abdul Khan informed the Sub Committee that as the projects were being delivered, invoices would be received, the work would be assessed and monitored, then the funds would be released.

Councillor Clare Harrison enquired about joint learning between projects e.g. health and safety and funding etc.

Abdul Khan referred to Gemma Cossins (THCVS representative), who advised that joint learning between projects is not currently done, but THCVS would be happy to do some work around it and report back to the Sub Committee at a future meeting.

Members enquired about the monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure delivery of the works and the outcomes for the funding that was being requested and commented that the Stepney City Farm had done a good job in leveraging funding. Members were keen to know whether the Council and / or the THCVS could help voluntary and community organisations capitalise on the funding opportunities available from planning gain.

Considering the current remit of the Commissioners, and therefore by default the Committee, of treating Section 106 and CIL funding as grant money, the Committee asked for some more information about Section 106 funding in general.

Zena Cooke informed the Sub Committee that these funding sources would be included in the quarterly financial monitoring reports from April 2017 onwards.

Members were keen to be able to scrutinise how this money could be spent in the best interests of the community through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Sub Committee agreed:

1. To endorse the proposed recommendations; and
2. To refer to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that consideration be given to scrutinising how Section 106 monies could be spent in the best interests of the community.

7.4 A12 Green Mile Pocket Park - S106

The Sub Committee considered the A12 Green Mile Pocket Park Project that involved the Council being asked to contribute £30k towards the total funding amount of £197,500 which would be part provided by TfL. The area had been designated as the Poplar Riverside Housing Zone with future plans to introduce 10,000 new homes. This pilot project to develop Green Infrastructure initiatives along the A12 with the installation of an innovative

green acoustic barrier and other cutting edge systems will improve the lives and health and wellbeing of local residents with the introduction of planting to “green” the space.

Councillor Clare Harrison enquired about how the site was chosen and what consultation had been conducted.

The Committee endorsed the proposed recommendations; they felt that the level of TfL funding represented a good investment for the Council.

The Sub Committee agreed:

1. The proposed recommendation.
2. That it be clarified as to what had taken place with people living in the area.

7.5 MSG Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report

The Sub Committee considered the Main Stream Grant (MSG) Project Performance Report for September 2015 through to August 2016 presented by Steve Hill (Head of Benefits Service) who highlighted the following:

- The programme is made up of 5 broad themes covering a range of activities and services;
- Project performance for this period shows 117 of the 125 live projects being rated as Green within the Council’s performance RAG rating system;
- Of the 8 remaining projects, 5 are rated Amber and 3 projects are rated Red;
- 3 projects ended at the end of June –
 - Mile End Community Project
 - Uprising
 - City Gateway

The Committee sought clarification and updates on property issues affecting the organisations which are red rated.

Steve Hill informed the Sub Committee of the following:

- **Theme 1 – Children and Young People**
There are 57 live projects within this theme of which 54 are rated Green, 1 is rated Amber and 2 are rated Red (the Monakka Monowar Welfare Foundation and Children Education Group – Berner Football Academy)
- **Theme 2 – Routeways to Employment & Welfare Advice Services**
This theme is made up of 20 projects, 19 of which are rated Green and 1 rated Amber
- **Theme 3 – Health and Wellbeing**

This theme is made up of 35 projects of which 32 are rated Green, 2 are rated Amber and 1 is rated Red (Children Education Group – Harkness Luncheon Club)

- **Theme 4 – Third Sector Organisational Development**
This theme consists of 3 projects all of which are rated Green
- **Theme 5 – Community, Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience**
This theme is made up of 10 projects of which 9 are rated Green and the other is rated Amber
- In December a new panel was established with the intention to make monitoring more robust;
- The Mainstream Grants Spotlight Review Panel will review every Red and Amber rated project. The Panel includes the THCVS who were in attendance at the first Panel Meeting in December 2015; and
- All Grant Monitoring Officers attend the panel and the proposal is to extend an invitation to all Red and Amber rated projects at future meetings.

Members were also pleased to hear that the Green Candle Dance Company had recently submitted a variation of contract for their targets.

The Sub Committee felt that the report was much clearer, however, it was recognised that there was still some work to do in focussing monitoring on outcome delivery.

Members raised concern that the Sub Committee could not properly scrutinise the effectiveness of the project where evidence had not been provided.

Steve Hill informed the Sub Committee that this was an ongoing piece of work and it would be easier to provide when the web based GIFTS software system had been refreshed.

The Sub Committee noted the letter from the Children Education Group (CEG) and were keen to see whether the co-production work would help build better relationships and a better understanding of the Council's requirements and intentions going forward.

The Sub Committee also raised concern regarding the budgeting difficulties for Tenant Resident Associations (TRA) where progress in arranging premises agreements had been slow which led to the TRAs not being able to access funding until the issue was resolved.

The Sub Committee agreed:

1. To endorse the proposed recommendations.
2. To request some contextual information be provided about beneficiaries in each MSG theme in order to help the Sub Committee assess whether the geographical breakdowns were fair and aligned to need.

3. To invite the appropriate officers to attend the next meeting in February 2017 and provide a presentation relating to the GIFTS web based system.

7.6 Grants Forward Plan

The Sub Committee noted the Grants Forward Plan.

8. OVERVIEW OF THE GRANTS REGISTER

The Sub Committee agreed to defer this item to next meeting in February 2017, with a presentation of the Council's grants management software system (GIFTS).

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

The Sub Committee considered:

1. Co-opted Members update - The Committee was advised that due diligence was being undertaken for the three candidates that were interviewed.
2. Grants Scrutiny sub-committee training - The Committee were reminded that the training session will be taking place on 2nd February at 6pm in room MP701, Town Hall. Proposed format:
 - Imparting skills, knowledge and best practice
 - Looking at Councillor approach and behaviours / empowering Members in a range of ways of doing scrutiny work
 - Workshop with practical examples

The meeting ended at 8.20 p.m.

Vice Chair, Councillor Clare Harrisson
Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee