

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GRANTS DETERMINATION (CABINET) SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.00 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL MULBERRY PLACE

Members Present:

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

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Marc Francis	(Chair of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee)
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Officers Present:

Mohammed Ahad	(Community Programmes Officer, Third Sector Team)
Keith Burns	(Programme Director Special Projects, Commissioning & Health)
Janet Fasan	(Divisional Director, Legal)
Steve Hill	(Head of Benefits Services, Resources)
Abdul J. Khan	(Sustainable Development Manager, Strategy Innovation & Sustainability, Place)
Michael Ritchie	(Principal Officer - Place Shaping)
Tracey St Hill	(Principal RSL Partnerships Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Marc Francis, Chair of the Grants Scrutiny Sub – Committee declared that he had a disclosable non – pecuniary interest in the following agenda items as his partner Councillor Rachel Blake was the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality:

- 6.1 Affordable Housing Grant Programme - George Green's Almshouses

- 6.2 Informal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church
- 6.3 A12 Acoustic Barrier - Part of the A12 Green Mile Initiative

Councillor Francis advised that due to this interest, he did not participate in the discussion on these items at the Grants Scrutiny Sub – Committee meeting on Thursday 20th September 2018.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 August 2018 were presented and approved as a correct record of proceedings.

In response to question from the Sub – Committee, the following issues were noted:

- **Teviot British Bangladeshi Association**

Officers have engaged with the above organisation who in turn have reconsidered their position and have had submitted the outstanding monitoring information. Performance was now back on track and green rated.

- **Tower Hamlets Youth Sports Foundation.**

Officers had received some returns from the organisation which have been assessed with a view to identifying the amount of payment that could be released. Officers were also in the process of formulating recommendations for consideration by the Mayor in respect of the organisation.

4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

There were no public submissions relating to the agenda items to be considered at the meeting.

5. EXERCISE OF MAYORAL DISCRETIONS

The Sub - Committee noted that, since the last meeting, the Mayor had taken no urgent decisions in the form of an Individual Mayoral Decision that related to grants.

6. GRANTS DETERMINATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Affordable Housing Grant Programme - George Green's Almshouses

Tracey St Hill (Principal RSL Partnerships Officer) presented the report which proposed to allocate Right to Buy receipt grant funding to George Green's Almshouses to part finance the acquisition of one social housing unit.

The Mayor enquired and it was noted that the Sub-Committee asked questions about the age of the properties that the Council was buying under the initiative. The GSSC endorsed the recommendations.

The Sub Committee were also advised that paragraph 2.1 of the report required amending, to reflect changes to the rules around the use of right to buy receipts.

The Mayor then invited GDSC Members to comment on the report and they indicated that they supported the proposals.

RESOLVED

1. That the Corporate Director Place be authorised to award Right to Buy grant funding for the amount listed in paragraph 1.7 of the report to George Green's Almshouses, together with a 10% uplift to take account of potential increases in build or acquisition costs.
2. That the Corporate Director Place be authorised to enter into a grant agreement and make decisions relating to any associated matter to give effect to the delegation referred to in paragraph 1 above.

6.2 Informal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church

The Sub-Committee considered the report relating to an informal offer of a Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church (also known as Bow Church) for the second and final phase of repair works. It was confirmed that the building was a Grade 11* listed building and was on the Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. The funding would contribute to a larger partnership funding for a HLF grant.

The Mayor enquired and it was noted that the GSSC asked questions about the proportion of funding coming from the church itself and noted the lack of funding from the Church of England. The GSSC endorsed the recommendations. It was reported that since that meeting, Officers had contacted the Church regarding this issue and the Church had confirmed that they had earmarked funding from their remaining reserves for the works.

The Mayor then invited GDSC Members to comment on the report. They indicated that they felt that it was valuable project and supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED

1. That the issue of a letter of comfort to the church be approved, communicating the council's willingness to offer a Historic Building Grant of £30,000 in principle, subject to conditions.

6.3 A12 Acoustic Barrier - Part of the A12 Green Mile Initiative

The Sub-Committee considered the report relating to the design and installation of a new innovative acoustic barrier for a section of the A12 to primarily mitigate noise pollution. This was a pilot scheme in partnership with Transport for London (TfL) and Poplar HARCA. The project formed part of a wider programme projects to mitigate noise and pollution along the A12 including the provision of a pocket parks.

The GSSC had asked a number of questions about the merits of the barrier in terms of improving air quality, whether alternative options had been explored; the design of the barrier, value for money of the project and the use of s106 funding for the project. They also asked questions about the location of the barrier and the possibility of an in house solution to minimise costs. The GSSC felt that they could not endorse the project due to the above issues and asked that the funding be halted if possible. Officers had provided and circulated a written response to these questions, and the responses were noted as set out in the supplementary agenda.

The Mayor then invited GDSC Members to comment on the report. Members sought clarity about whether the barrier would help tackle air pollution or only noise pollution. It was also questioned if other options such as the use of a green wall had been looked at. Officers responded that the barrier should help reduce air pollution, although due to its size, the benefits would be marginal. Air pollution would still be able to travel around the barrier.

Given the above issues and the comments of the GSSC, the Sub – Committee requested to receive more information on the proposal, including the possibility of providing a green wall and alternative locations for the barrier.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the decision to approve the provision of £100,000 to Poplar HARCA as a grant to deliver the A12 acoustic barrier project be DEFERRED pending a further review.

6.4 Sheltered Housing: Tenant's Activity Pot

The Sub-Committee considered the report concerning funding for Sheltered Housing Tenant's Activity.

The Mayor enquired and the Chair of the GSSC reported that the Sub-Committee welcomed the initiative. They had questions about: how tenants from different housing associations would be able to access the various projects. They also requested that the scheme be evaluated to look at the effectiveness of the scheme. The GSSC endorsed the proposed recommendations.

In responses, it was confirmed that Officers would collect information regarding the social profile of the tenants benefiting from the projects, and would monitor and evaluate the projects on an annual basis. Officers would also work with landlords to encourage them to share information on activities and reach out to the local community to maximise the reach of the activities

The Mayor then invited GDSC Members to comment on the report and they asked questions and noted details about the number of tenants that would benefit from the projects and the support provided to extra care housing. GDSC supported the proposals.

RESOLVED

1. That the Corporate Director, Health Adults and Community be authorised to make grants to residents in sheltered schemes at a maximum value of £500 per resident per annum in line with the Ageing Well Strategy, the Council's Tackling Poverty agenda and the Mayor's commitment to tackle loneliness and isolation.
2. That the Corporate Director, Health Adults and Community be authorised to enter into agreements with the relevant sheltered housing providers who will administer the grants to residents under appropriate terms agreed in consultation with the Head of Legal Services.

6.5 LBTH Innovation Fund and ESF Community Employment Programme Updates

The Sub-Committee considered the report. The report provided an update on grants awarded through two funding streams – the LBTH Innovation Fund (match funding for organisations crowdfunding through Spacehive) and the European Social Fund (ESF) Community Employment Programme. This funding stream was co-financed through the European Union and administered by London Councils.

The Sub-Committee noted details of the number of grants that had been awarded and the amounts awarded for these initiatives. It was planned that round two of ESF programme would be launched in Autumn 2018. Officers

were looking to the revise the eligibility criteria in respect of the size of the groups that could receive funding.

The Mayor enquired and the Chair of the GSSC reported that the Sub-Committee asked questions about: the funding criteria and how the crowdfunding aspect was promoted. They also asked for details of the equalities data. The GSSC also asked questions about the training provided to organisations to allow them to access the ESF grant. Finally, the GSSC requested more detail on the organisations being funded to be provided in future. They asked that the project monitoring and evaluation reports for the ESF Community be brought to a future meeting. The GSSC endorsed the recommendations.

In response, Officers agreed to ensure that details of the equalities data captured by Spacehive was provided. It was noted that equalities data could be used and this requirement could be included in the specification for the new contract that was now out for tender. Officers also reported that they would follow up the requests made by the GSSC in respect of the training provided to organisations. It was also noted that greater details of the organisations would be provided in future reports.

The Mayor then invited GDSC Members to comment on the report and they asked further questions about the training to be provided by the groups, and stressed the need for the programmes to be monitored on a regular basis. They also commented on the difficulties in reaching hard to reach groups.

In response, Officers reported on the nature of the training programmes, to mainly focus on 'soft skills' and administration skills training. The groups might also arrange for a specialist company to deliver such things as accredited training. It was also confirmed that, in assessing the applications, Officers looked at a number of factors including the contents of the training courses and also the organisations track record. It was also noted that the payment of grant was results based and that Council and the London Councils regularly monitored the performance of the projects

RESOLVED

- 1) That the organisations and projects funded through the LBTH Innovation Fund and the ESF Community Grants Programme be noted as detailed in 3.3 and 3.7 of the report.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

None

The meeting ended at 6.45 p.m.

Chair, Mayor John Biggs

Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee