

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.32 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2017

**MP701, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG.**

Members Present:

Councillor Andrew Wood (Chair)
Councillor Ayas Miah (Member)
Councillor Candida Ronald (Member)
Councillor Shafi Ahmed (Member)
Margherita De Cristofano (Co-Optee) Ms

Officers Present:

Alison Denning	Festivals and Events Officer, Communities Localities and Culture
Barbara Disney	Service Manager, Strategic Commissioning, Adults Health & Wellbeing
Emily Fieran-Reed	Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning, Strategy, Policy and Equality
Steve Hill	Head of Benefits Services
Stephen Murray	Head of Arts and Events, Communities Localities & Culture
Michael Ritchie	Principal Officer - Place Shaping
Paul Greeno	Senior Corporate and Governance Lawyer, Legal Services
Ludovica Orlando	Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
Fiona Ugoji	Corporate Performance Manager
Dr Phillip Rice	Co-optee of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Alex Nelson	Voluntary Sector Children and Youth Forum Coordinator
Farhana Zia	Senior Committee Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clare Harrisson and Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the 3rd July 2017 were approved to be an accurate record of the meeting.

4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

The Sub-Committee noted that no public submissions had been submitted to the Committee Officer by the deadline. (5p.m. the day before the meeting.)

5. GRANTS DETERMINATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Event Fund - Report on Event Fund Awards 2016-17 Quarter 2

Alison Denning, Festival and Events Officer presented her annual report relating to the Event Fund. She informed members the Event Fund was a small grant fund for community arts events which had been operating successfully for a number of years. It works on a rolling programme with financial year 2016/17 still operating on monthly deadlines. The Event Fund is designed to support small scale local events with arts content to encourage participation from the local community across the borough.

The report provides an update on the year as a whole (April 2016 to 31st March 2017) plus provides details of activities undertaken in Quarter 4 (1st January 2017 to 31st March 2017).

Alison Denning referred members to point 3.2 and stated for Quarter 4 a total of five applications were received, of which three were granted. The Events team had recently moved to an 'online' application form and it was believed this had contributed to the dip in applications received. Alison Denning said her team was working to resolve the problems with the online form and were aiming to simplify the process for future applicants.

Members of the sub-committee made the following comments and asked questions in respect to the report:

- Do you keep records of the applications which you decline?
- Do you encourage organisations to re-apply and what support do you give to them?
- Referring to page 18 and the ward breakdown it is clear some wards have lower number of events. We know from previous meetings you were holding workshops to encourage participation. Has this had an impact?
- What has been done to address the dip in applicants, since you have introduced the 'online' application form?

- Page 23, in reference to Chisenhale Ladder Neighbourhood – the notes state £250 was awarded but declined due to the amount of paperwork required. How much paperwork is involved?
- Page 35 give a breakdown of equalities data – Hikapee states they had an audience of 400. How can we be sure this figure is accurate? How was the event advertised?
- *In response Alison Denning and Steve Murray stated the quality of the equalities data was hit and miss and work is in progress to simplify the process especially for smaller events that may not have the capacity to provide information. Consideration also needs to be given to how useful the data is. A balance needs to be achieved in terms of ensuring the Council has data on participation levels and equality information.*

The Grants Sub-Committee **NOTED** the report and recommended:

(a) the Event's team look at simplifying the forms for smaller grant applications; and

(b) Committee members offered to test any revised application process.

5.2 Historic Buildings Grant - St. Mary's Church, Bow

Michael Ritchie, Place Shaping Team Leader presented his report in relation to the Historic Buildings Grant to St Mary and Holy Trinity Church in Bow. – known as Bow Church.

Mr Ritchie explained the Council was looking to award the Bow Church a grant of £20,000 in relation to vital repair works to the exterior of the church tower. He said the building is on the Historic England Heritage at Risk register and the grant would contribute to the work that was needed.

Members of the sub-committee made comments and asked the following questions:

- This grant is part of a bigger fund for repair works. How does the Council ensure best value is achieved for the Council and who is overseeing the quality of the works undertaken?
- Members commented they were in support of the grant being awarded and had confidence the Heritage Lottery Fund and other stakeholders mentioned would ensure the work was of a high standard.

Members of the Grant Scrutiny Sub-Committee **AGREED** to endorse the recommendations contained within the report and asked their comments be reported to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee.

5.3 Extension of Mainstream Grants and Corporate Grants Policy

Emily Fieran-Reed, Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning presented her report regarding the extension to the Mainstream Grants and Corporate Grants fund.

She explained she was seeking the Sub-Committee's agreement to extend the Council's Mainstream Grants (MSG) by seven months to 31st March 2019 for those projects which are performing satisfactorily. This will allow sufficient time for the successor funding programme to be developed through a process of co-production with stakeholders and will bring the programme into line with the financial year.

She referred Members to the chart on page 31 which showed how the alignment of the MSG fund would dovetail with Commissioning and the Grant's Policy.

Members of the Sub-Committee asked the following questions:

- You are proposing the MSG funding be extended for seven months for those who are performing well. What will happen to those organisations that are under-performing?
- *Any decision regarding those who are under-performing will be referred to the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee and the Grant's Determination Sub-Committee.*
- What will the process involve with respect to the development of the Grants policy – will that be examined by the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee or this sub-committee?
- The move to commissioning will also have an impact on the work of the sub-committee long term and this will need to be considered.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** the recommendations contained within the report that:

1. The current three year MSG is extended by seven months to 31st March 2019 for those projects which receive grants and which are also performing satisfactorily, and
2. Note the proposed arrangements to develop a new corporate grants policy through a process of co-production.

5.4 MSG Theme 5 Closure Report

Steve Hill, Head of Benefits Services presented his report on the outcomes from Theme 5 – Community Engagement Cohesion and Resilience Grant Programme.

He informed Members this funding stream was an 18 month programme which ended on the 31st March 2017. The priority was to fund projects that had a cohesion and cross-cultural, intergenerational, engagement or capacity building focus.

In particular, theme five projects allowed community organisations to engage and support communities that are hard to reach – including women, migrants and the gypsy and traveller communities.

Steve Hill referred to the annual resident's survey and said in 2017 92% of residents agreed that the local area is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together compared to 81% in 2014/15.

Members of the Sub-Committee asked the following questions:

- Page 33, point 3.3. refers to projects that did not go so well. What lessons have been learnt and how will commissioning be a better and how will small projects be supported?
- In reference to the project referred to on Page 49, Grant's should be mindful of supporting political activity.
- In reference to page 42, this project focusses on one particular community rather than being cross-cutting. This needs to be made clear.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the report and recommendation that the achievements of Theme 5 be noted.

Members of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee also recommend to the Grant's Determination Sub-Committee that it must ensure the learning and training does not stop. The Council needs to ensure the programme of empowerment is built on.

5.5 Ageing Well Small Grants 2017/18

Barbara Disney, Service Manager for Strategic Commissioning presented her report on Ageing Well Small Grants fund 2017/18. She explained to Members this small grant valued at £3,435 helps those who are socially isolated and experience loneliness. It provides support to older people to have access to clubs and activities and helps in alleviating social isolation.

Barbara Disney referred members to the recommendations on page 54 and points 3.2 and 3.3. She said the qualitative feedback and equality data had been provided for the first time and data shows the grants awarded are highly valued by those who receive it.

Members of the Sub-Committee asked the following questions:

- In reference to Page 57 – it states the cost of coach hire has increased. Why is this?
- In reference to point 3.7 – what networks of communication are used to publicise the fund so people are aware of these pots of money.
- Page 58 – table refers to some organisations twice. Are these awards of money due to separate events?

The Grant's Scrutiny Sub-Committee **NOTED** the report and **ACCEPTED** the recommendations contained within the report to the Grant's Determination Sub-Committee that they:

1. Approve the process for inviting applications for the Ageing Well Small Grants fund 2017/18
2. Note the availability of funding for the proposal.
3. Agree the process for awarding the grant funding, and subsequent monitoring arrangements.
4. Agree to delegate responsibility for approving the awards of grant to the Corporate Director Health, Adults and Community Services or the Divisional Director Integrated Commissioning.
5. Agree to the award of eleven grants, totalling £3,435 from the 2015/16 and 2016/17 Small Grants funds.

5.6 ESF Community Employment Programme - Organisations Based in Council Buildings

Steve Hill, Head of Benefits Services informed Members the ESF Community Employment Programme was expected to launch in October 2017 and one of the Council's intention is to bring organisations who receive grant funding and are based in Council buildings, to have an appropriate property agreement in place before funds are released to them. The report seeks clarity if this condition should also apply to the ESF Community Employment Programme.

Steve Hill explained the ESF Community Employment Programme Grant 2016-19, is to be administered by the Greater London Authority, with the day to day management being undertaken by London Councils. The Council was expected to contribute £20,000 per year over three rounds of funding.

Members of the Sub-Committee asked the following questions:

- Will grants come from anywhere within the fund and can the Council's contribution to the pot be separately identified?
- *It will be one pot however each council will have their own criteria and this is why we'd like to align this fund to the same conditions we have for granting other types of grants.*

- Page 78 – point 5.3 refers to the disposal of land under legal comments. This should be removed from the report as it should not be part of the recommendation.
- Point 7.1 – states funding is on a 50/50% basis. Who will oversee the tender and bidding process?

The Grant's Scrutiny Sub-Committee **ACCEPTED** the recommendations made within the report that the Grant's Determination Sub-Committee should

1. Agree that organisations funded through the ESF Community Employment Programme and are based in or using a Council building must have an appropriate property agreement in place before payments can be released to them, as is the case with all new grant programmes going forward.

5.7 GDSC Forward Plan

The Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee **NOTED** the Forward Plan of the Grants Determination (Cabinet) sub-Committee.

6. SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Forward Plan

Members of the Grant's Scrutiny Sub-Committee discussed what they like to see on their Forward Plan and asked Officers to provide:

- A clearer communications process which promoted the availability of various grants to the wider community and how they can apply for this.
- The reporting capabilities, in the new system – in particular the ICT software should allow for summary infographics to help communicate what money is available and what it is being spent on.
- A summary of the current youth and sports grants should also be included in the Forward Plan.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

The Chair, Councillor Andrew Wood reminded members the next meeting of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee was scheduled to take place on the 19th October 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting ended at 7.43 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Andrew Wood
Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee