

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2018**

**C1, 1ST 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)

Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed

Ms

Substitute for Councillor Clare Harrison

**Officers Present:**

Alice Bigelow

Jonathan Fox

Alexander Hatt

Muhammad Islam

Rachel Jenman

Suzanne Jones

Ludovica Orlando

Zena Cooke

Interim Parks Manager, Parks & Open Spaces

Legal Services

Infrastructure and High Streets Officer

Pollution Team Leader, Environmental Health

Brick Lane Town Centres Manager

Supporting Divisional Director, Finance

Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer

Corporate Director, Resources

Farhana Zia

Senior Committee Officer

**Others Present:**

Alex Nelson

Voluntary Sector Children and Youth Forum

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clare Harrison and Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim. Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed was deputising for Councillor Clare Harrison.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were declared by the Members.

Councillor Andrew Wood declared in relation to item 5.2 that he knew various people who manage the Mudchute Park reasonable well.

Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed declared in relation to item 5.2 that he had raised charity funds for the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park when undertaking the Speakers role and knew the people from the organisation.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the previous meeting 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were approved as a correct and 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. (5:00 p.m. the day before the meeting.)

### 5. GRANTS DETERMINATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

#### 5.1 Tower Hamlets Mayor's Air Quality Fund

Muhammad Islam, Team Leader for Pollution presented his report stating a sum of £200,000 was sought in relation to the Mayor's Air Quality Fund. He said the Council recognised that poor air quality impacts on the health and quality of life of all in Tower Hamlets and as such the Fund would help set up projects to improve air quality.

He said the monies would support the actions identified as part of the Air Quality Action Plan and would "raise awareness and tackle the significant pollutant issues within Tower Hamlets, mainly due to traffic which has resulted in the borough currently breaching the national and EU nitrogen dioxide target."

Members of the Sub-Committee made the following comments and asked questions in relation to the report:

- £200,000 seems insufficient to run high impact projects on Air Quality. What will the money be spent on?
- How will the Council ensure it has the correct equipment to measure the levels of air quality?
- Has the Council applied or made a bid for funding from Central Government for things like charging points for electrical cars. It would be useful to invest in this area.
- **ACTION:** This is a brand new area and Members would like to be kept informed of the steps taken to progress this and the outcomes achieved.

Members of the Sub-Committee **AGREED** to recommend to the Grant's Determination Sub-Committee to:

1. Agree to implement a grant scheme for promoting measures to improve air quality in the borough subject to meeting the criteria set out in the growth bid i.e.
  - To be related to either reducing emissions of, reducing exposure to or increasing awareness of air pollution;
  - Be directly relevant to action in our Air Quality Action Plan;
  - Have a measurable impact; and
  - Have wider community benefits.
2. Delegate to the Corporate Director, Place or to any officer nominated by him/her, the authority to make grant awards in accordance with the scheme criteria in 1 above, provided that the totality of the grants made does not exceed the available funding for grants. This would be subject to quarterly reports back to the Sub-Committee on grants awarded and monitoring of outcomes.
3. Authorise deferring the award of grant to 2018/19 and 2019/20 from 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years to enable committed monies to be allocated in preceding years.

## **5.2 Service Level Agreement: Mudchute Farm and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park**

Alice Bigelow, Interim Manager for Parks and Open Spaces informed Members that although both parks – Mudchute Park and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park were owned by the local authority, they had been managed by charitable community based organisations. She said Mudchute Park had been managed in this way since 1974 and the Cemetery Park since the formation of the Friends group in 1990. Both open spaces were much loved and well used by the local community.

The Council has provided funding to both parks from the Parks Department's revenue budget in the form of service level agreements to support the management and maintenance of the important open spaces. However the government Commissioner recommended that the service level agreements should be treated as a grant and as such the Parks Department have worked with the Council's Legal Team to ensure this is the case.

Ms Bigelow said she was seeking approval for a three year service level agreement to come from the Parks Department's revenue budget for these two organisations.

Members of the Sub-Committee made the following comments and asked questions in relation to the report:

- Members concurred that both parks provided vital green space for the community and were managed effectively. £31,000 per year is extraordinary value for the money.

The Members of the Sub-Committee **AGREED** to recommend to the Grant's Determination Sub-Committee to:

1. Approve two Service Level Agreements (appended) for Mudchute Farm (£31,000 per year from April 2018 to March 2021) and the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park (£31,900 per year from April 2018 to March 2021).

### 5.3 Brick Lane Regeneration Programme Phase 2 - Shopfront Programme Grant Payments

Rachel Jenman, Brick Lane Town Centre Manager presented her report stating that she was seeking approval for a grant payment for the Shopfront Improvement Programme contained within Brick Lane Phase 2 PID, the latter of which was approved by Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

£270,000 had been identified within the Brick Lane Regeneration Programme Phase 2 PID for the Shopfront Improvement Programme which would be part funded (50%) by S106 contributions at £135,000, with the remaining 50% provided by shopkeepers.

Members of the Sub-Committee made the following comments and asked questions in relation to the report.

- 50% of the funding will come from the Council and 50% from the individual owners. How will the contribution made by the shopkeepers be checked and monitored?
- Do they pay their 50% in one lump sum?
- Is there any course of recompense to recoup the Council's money, if the individual shopkeeper pulls out of the agreement?
- Are all the shops designs uniformed and the same?
- Is this the best use of S106 monies when only 5 shopfronts will be improved? Where is the public benefit of re-doing the shopfronts?
- Has any Shopkeeper refused to contribute to the cost of upgrading their shopfronts?
- You state this project will look at the south end of Brick Lane. How have you involved the Bengali community in this?
- The real issue in Brick Lane is the anti-social behaviour – the lack of public toilets and policing of the area.
- Is Brick Lane part of the Business Improvement District partnership?
- What else are you doing to improve footfall for the restaurants at the south end of Brick Lane. – i.e. the curry mile?
- **ACTION:** Officers agreed to circulate the architect sketches to show the Members how the area will look like post shopfront regeneration.

The Members of the Sub-Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Grants Determination Committee to:

- Approve the grant payment for the Shopfront Improvement Programme contained within Brick Lane Phase 2 PID, the latter of which was approved at Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

#### 5.4 Toynbee Hall S106 contribution

Suzanne Jones, Supporting Divisional Director for Corporate Finance stated that the report was seeking S106 resources to fund the regeneration of Toynbee Hall. She informed Members Toynbee Hall had been on the same site since 1884 and although it had changed much in that time, the buildings and the sense of place have continued to be a valuable resource for the organisation and for the community.

The plan is to conserve the historic halls, transform Mallon Gardens into an accessible public space and build a new building in place of Profumo House. The new building will consist of a Centre for Advice, a Centre for Wellbeing and four floors of commercial office space to bring in a sustainable source of unrestricted funding that will support the activities of the charity.

The total cost of the redevelopment project is £16.7m The Charity has secured funding from a variety of sources that amounts to £16.4m, leaving a gap of £305,000.

It is this shortfall of £305,000 that the Council wishes to fund by way of S106 contributions, which was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

Members of the Sub-Committee made the following comments and asked questions in relation to this report:

- The work Toynbee Hall does will elderly residents, is greatly appreciated. They make a positive contribution to the community at large.
- Is there a risk of an overspend in relation to the regeneration work? We will not be asked to approve further funding if their costs escalate?

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to recommend to the Grants Determination Sub-Committee to:

- Approve the granting of £305,000 as a contribution to Toynbee Hall in support of their refurbishment project.

#### 5.5 SG Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report

Zena Cooke, Corporate Director for Resources introduced this report stating the Main Stream Grant (MSG) 2015/18 Programme had been approved by

the Commissioners on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and this was a update report looking at the grants awarded for Period 8 – July to September 2017.

She said the Programme was made up of five board themes and covered a range of activities and services. Projects were classified Green, Amber or Red within the Council's agreed performance management framework. She informed Members that of the project for this period (July to September 2017) 7 had been rated red and 0 had been rated Amber.

She informed members the report gave detailed information on why projects had achieved Red ratings and said the report contained 9 recommendations for the Members to consider.

Members of the Sub-Committee made the following comments and asked questions in relation to the report:

- In reference to page 116 – Culloden Bangladeshi Parents Association what were the issues highlighted?
- In reference to page 106 point 3.5, it states three organisations did not return the online monitoring form. What has been done to ensure forms/returns are submitted on time?

Members of the Sub-Committee **AGREED** to recommend to the Grant's Determination Sub-Committee to

1. Consider and agree the 9 recommendations relating to the releasing of MSG payments to the projects as set out in section 3.3 and sections 3.8 to 3.15 of the report.

## **6. SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There were no Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee reports to consider.

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

The Chair Councillor Andrew Wood informed Members the Scrutiny Challenge looking at the Youth Sport Grants would be reporting its findings in the March Meeting of the sub-committee.

The Senior Committee Officer informed Members the next meeting of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee had been brought forward to **Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> March** in line with the Grants Determination Sub-Committee moving its meeting to Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

There was also a final meeting for the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee scheduled for the 28<sup>th</sup> March and it was being proposed that this should move the Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March, so as to avoid meeting in the purdah period which commenced on the 26<sup>th</sup> March.

It was intended that the 20<sup>th</sup> March meeting would receive the Scrutiny Challenge report however after discussion it was **AGREED** with the Officer writing the report and the Members that she would in all intents and purposes get the report finalised for the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 meeting, thus negating the need to meet on the 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Hence, the final meeting of this municipal year of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee shall be held on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 6:30 p.m. Committee Room C1, Town Hall Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG**

The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Andrew Wood  
Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee