

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GRANTS DETERMINATION (CABINET) SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2019

COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL MULBERRY PLACE

Members Present:

Councillor Candida Ronald (Chair) (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Asma Begum (Member) (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar (Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
(Substitute for Councillor Sirajul Islam)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Tarik Khan

Officers Present:

Awo Ahmed (Programme Assessment and Monitoring Officer)
Alison Denning (Festivals and Events Officer, Place)
Janet Fasan (Divisional Director, Legal, Governance)
David Freeman (Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy Manager)
Alan McCarthy (Interim Head of Asset Management)
Katy McGinity (Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy & Policy Team)
Robert Mee (Interim Voluntary & Community Sector Team Manager)
Huw Morgan-Thomas (Senior Manager Enterprise Support, Enterprise Team – Growth & Economic Development)
Zoe Folley (Committee Officer, Governance)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Sirajul Islam.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2019 were presented and approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

There were none

5. EXERCISE OF MAYORAL DISCRETIONS

There were none.

6. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 One Public Estate - Transfer of grant funds to Barts Health NHS Trust for the Whitechapel Development programme.

Alan McCarthy, (Interim Head of Asset Management) presented the report requesting that the Council passport One Public Estate grant funding of £150,000 to Barts Health NHS Trust. This proposal was in accordance with Memorandum of Understanding for the project.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lead, Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report regarding: the governance arrangements and how the outcomes of the programme will be monitored and reported back to the Council. The written responses would be circulated and published on the website.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council transfer (passport) the One Public Estate grant monies of £150k currently held in The Council's account to Barts Health NHS Trust in accordance with the memorandum of understanding entered into by the Council and Barts.

6.2 Building Legacies Match Funding

Huw Morgan-Thomas, (Senior Manager Enterprise Support), presented the report regarding the allocation of match funding for the Building Legacies Match funding programme which was delivered by the East London Business Place.

The programme was an East London based initiative that supported SME's to capacity build to supply larger organisations. The funding had been agreed in principal and it was recommended that the funding should be paid in annual instalments over a three year period.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lead, Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report regarding the measures to ensure that the programme concentrated on East London and the monitoring arrangements. Written responses to these questions were noted and would be published on the Council's website

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the programme specifically focused on East London and that representatives of the participating London Boroughs were part of the project board. Council Officers and the Greater London Authority regularly monitored the programme. The results indicated that the programme mostly supported East London projects. Should the monitoring information in the future indicate otherwise, early action could be taken to address any issues.

RESOLVED:

1. That the provision of match funding support for the Building Legacies project be approved in the sum of £75,000 over the period 2019/20 – 2021/22, in annual instalments of £25,000 (the first such instalment to be allocated in 2019/20).
2. That the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1 of the Committee report be noted.

6.3 Event Fund Annual Report - 2018-19

Alison Denning, (Festivals and Events Officer Arts, Place) presented the report providing an overview of Event Fund applications received and awards made for the financial year 2018-19. In particular, it was noted that a total of 41 applications were awarded funded in the period. A wide range of projects, were funded, including new events, providing a diverse range of activities in most wards. No events were held in the following wards – Blackwall and Cubitt Town, Bromley South, Island Gardens or Mile End Wards this year. This was likely to be partly due to the fact that no application was received for the Women's History Month which normally had a number of events across the Borough.

The Council carried out a number of activities to market the Events Fund. Officers also provided feedback to the unsuccessful applicants and monitored the programme. Details of the feedback was set out in the report. There would be further report next year.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lead, Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report regarding the plans to ensures that Arts focused events continued, following the decision to discontinue the Events Fund.

The Sub – Committee also asked questions about this issue and the measures to help the groups supported by the Events Fund apply for Small

Grants funding. Members noted that it was important to ensure that the groups were aware of the application process and the criteria.

The Committee also noted that there should be support for smaller organisations who are not familiar with the process and the way that arts events fit into the new grants programme.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report is noted.

6.4 Local Community Fund (LCF) Mitigation and Transition

David Freeman, (VCS Strategy Manager) presented the report.

The report provided an update on the proposed LCF mitigating actions and other MSG transitional arrangements agreed in principle at Cabinet on 31st July 2019.

The report also contained details of:

- The proposed renaming of the Emergency Fund to 'Contingency Fund' to provide 'bridging funding' for MSG groups facing a significant loss of Council funding.
- Revisions to the criteria for the fund to reflect the changes.
- An update on the implementation of the LCF. Agreements had been reached with all but one of the projects to be funded and the issues in respect of this project were in the process of being addressed. Regular monitoring reports would be submitted to the Sub – Committee on progress with the LCF.
- A proposal to waive a pre - funding condition relating to the submission of a premises agreement for two organisations to allow payments to be made. The two groups were: Age UK East London in relation to occupation of 82, Russia Lane, and REAL in relation to occupation of Jack Dash House. No other groups, apart from the two highlighted in the report had outstanding lease issues. Progress on these arrangements would be reported to the Sub – Committee.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lead Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report regarding the plans to notify community organisations of the name change from the Emergency Fund to the VSC Contingency Fund. Clarify was also sought about the risks to the Council of waiving the funding condition requiring a satisfactory premises agreement. Written responses to the questions were noted and would be published on the Council's website.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that: the Council is working with MSG groups to help identify ways to secure alternative sources of grant funding. This may involve helping them secure funding from the Contingency Fund. It was also noted that, to qualify for funding from the

Contingency Fund, organisations must demonstrate amongst other things that they had clear goals and a realistic chance of securing funding from other sources.

Officers also confirmed that the decision making process for the Contingency Fund would be the same as for the Emergency Fund with authority to agree proposals delegated to the Divisional Director, Strategy, policy and performance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector.

A full list of the mitigation action, including the specialist support to be provided, was set out in Appendix A of the report.

RESOLVED:

1. Note the progress and budget allocation relating to the transitional arrangements and equality mitigation actions for projects whose current MSG funding came to an end on 30th September 2019 as set out in the report and appendices
2. Agree the propose changes to the Emergency fund as set out in paragraphs 3.7 including the new name, 'Contingency Fund'.
3. Agree the variation of funding conditions in individual cases as set out in paragraph 3.10
4. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4

The meeting was adjourned at 6pm and reconvened at 6:30pm due to a fire alarm.

6.5 Innovation Fund update

Robert Mee (Interim Voluntary & Community Sector Team Manager), presented the report providing an update on the LBTH Innovation Fund. The report also contained proposed changes to the process to improve efficiency.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lea, Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report regarding: the measure to ensure that hard to reach groups were made aware of the funding opportunity, and the geographical spread of the project. Written responses to the questions were noted and would be published on the Council's website.

In responses to these questions, it was noted that:

- Officers worked with a range of organisations, including the Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services (THCVS) and Spacehive, to implement the initiative.

- Recent improvements included the appointment of a dedicated officer resource to drive the project forward.
- The Council also organised workshops, work with organisations and publicised the fund amongst other measures.
- A 50+ trainee from workpath has been added to the team to add extra resource.
- In terms of the geographical spread of projects, it was fairly even. The geographical spread of the projects would continue to be monitored.

In response to further questions, Officers explained the proposed improvements to the process. It was proposed to carry out the part 2 assessment first, before organisations meet the campaigning requirements. A key benefit of this is that it would enable the Council to consider at an earlier stage whether a project is suitable for funding and enable it to gain momentum in mobilising support. It was also proposed to change the decision making process to ensure decisions were made in a timely way.

RESOLVED

1. That the organisations and projects funded through the LBTH Innovation Fund (Appendix 1 of the report) and the update on progress (3.6 – 3.11) and improvements to the scheme (3.12 – 3.13) be noted

6.6 Small Grants Programme

David Freeman, (VCS Strategy Manager) presented the update on the Small Grants Programme, administered by the East End Community Foundation. The report also provided details of the two new grants themes agreed by the Mayor in Cabinet to mitigate the impact of the Local Community Fund around: Access and Participation support for BAME communities and Community Support Services for Older People.

The report also proposed a variation to the upper income threshold for eligible organisations to apply to future funding rounds.

Regarding the round one results, it was noted that the Small Grants fund was oversubscribed. 76 applications were received and, of these, 13 applications received funding from a diverse range of organisations, across the Borough. Details of the geographical spread of the projects were set out in the report. A number of former MSG projects received funding. Regarding the second round of funding, the results were expected to be available by the end of November/early December. The closing date for the third round would be in the spring of 2020. Officers felt that this programme should more clearly promoted as a 'rolling programme' and would discuss this with East End Community Foundation, as well as the lessons learnt.

Councillor Tarik Khan (Scrutiny Lead, Resources) advised of the Overview and Scrutiny's questions on this report regarding: the feedback and the support provided to unsuccessful groups, the measures to raises awareness of the two new themes and the revised threshold.

The written responses were noted and would be published on the website.

In response to these questions it was noted that:

- That the East End Community Foundation provided feedback to the successful organisations.
- That the Council will carry out targeted publicity for the two new small grant themes, as well as more general publicity.
- Regarding the proposed £250,000 threshold, this mirrored the Charity Commission's definition of a small and medium sized organisation. The feedback from organisations showed that there was support for this change. In response to questions about how this would be assessed, Officers expressed an intention to identify an average income for organisations over a period of time to identify if organisations met this threshold.

In response to further questions, it was noted that all projects funded would be required to complete an end of project report. It was also noted that an annual report would be brought to the Sub – Committee.

Members also noted details of the number of BME led projects that received funding.

RESOLVED:

1. Note the progress in implementing the Small Grants Programme and the outcome of the first round of the programme
2. Note the details of the two new small grants Themes agreed by the Mayor in Cabinet as part of the proposals to mitigate negative impact identified in the Local Community Fund Equality Analysis, and
3. Agree the eligibility criteria for the whole of the small grants programme be amended to restrict the programme to voluntary and community organisations with an income of less than £250,000 per annum.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

There were none

The meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Candida Ronald
Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee