

Grants Determination Sub Committee	
16 January 2020	
Report of: Will Tuckley, Chief Executive	Classification: Unrestricted
MSG Project Performance Report – Extension Period 04 (July to September 2019)	

Lead Member	Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector
Originating Officer(s)	Robert Mee, Interim Voluntary & Community Sector Team Manager
Wards affected	All
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	16 December 2019
Reason for Key Decision	Not a key decision
Community Plan Theme	All

Executive Summary

The Mainstream Grant (MSG) 2015/18 Programme was approved by the Commissioners on 29 July 2015 and was initially expected to be delivered from 1st September 2015 through to 31st August 2018.

At the 12th September 2017 Grants Determination Sub-Committee, the programme was extended to 31st March 2019.

A further extension to the programme, to the 30th September 2019, was agreed by the Grants Determination Sub-Committee at its meeting on the 6th June 2018.

At the 3rd July Grants Determination Sub-Committee it was agreed to extend funding to the organisations delivering lunch clubs and community languages. This will be at the same level of funding under the council's mainstream grants programme (MSG) for a period of six months from 1st October 2019 to 31st March 2020, subject to the same funding conditions as those in place for MSG funding and also subject to continued satisfactory performance.

The activities and services were delivered by a portfolio of projects each of which has targeted outcomes to achieve during the course of the programme period (July-September 2019). Projects are classified as Red, Amber or Green within the Council's agreed performance management framework. This report covers Red and Amber rated projects only. Red or Amber performance ratings may be as a consequence of premises issues, debtor issues, performance issues, failure to submit the quarterly monitoring returns or a combination of these factors.

There were 106 live projects in July to September 2019, the fourth extension period.

A project delivered by St Giles Trust (*Gamechangers*) ended delivery in May 2019. The organisation has been requested to reimburse the council with £3,416.67 which represents funding for June 2019. The *Gamechangers* project has evolved to the St Giles Trust's SOS+ Project, which continues to deliver workshops in schools across the borough.

Project performance for this period (July-September 19) shows there is 1 Red and 1 Amber rated project.

Red rated project:

Our Base Ltd – One Stop Youth Service

Amber rated project:

Toynbee Hall – Wellbeing in Tower Hamlets

This report details these issues and provides recommendations for the Sub-Committee to consider.

Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the performance of the Mainstream Grants (MSG) programme as set out in 3.3 – 3.6 and the premises update 3.7 – 3.9.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Regular performance updates ensure that the MSG themes and individual projects are on track to achieve the targeted outcomes.
- 1.2 Any issues that raise concerns can be addressed and appropriate remedial actions agreed. Where necessary, this could include the reduction, withdrawal or reallocation of funds to ensure that the overall Programme is making the most effective use of resources and maximising the potential achievement of agreed aims and objectives

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Information relating to various aspects of project and monitoring activity is contained within the report to provide Grants Determination Sub Committee with an overall understanding of how projects and organisations have performed against the key elements of their Grant Agreements.
- 2.2 Grants Determination Sub Committee could request further information or alter the recommendations.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 For the reporting period July to September 2019, the MSG Programme had 106 live projects. The St Giles Trust (*Gamechangers*) project ended in May 2019. This is the fourth period of the extension up to September 2019. The extension is for 13 months and is split into four reporting periods – Sep-Dec 18, Jan-Mar 19, Apr-Jun 19 and Jul-Sep 19.
- 3.2 At the 3rd July Grants Determination Sub-Committee it was agreed to extend funding to the organisations delivering lunch clubs and community languages. This will be at the same level of funding under the council's mainstream grants programme (MSG) for a period of six months from 1st October 2019 to 31st March 2020, subject to the same funding conditions as those in place for MSG funding and also subject to continued satisfactory performance.
- 3.3 Theme 1 Summary – Children and young people**

The work of the theme focuses primarily on delivering activities and services aimed at children and young people.

There were 51 live projects in July to September 2019 within this theme of which 49 are RAG rated Green and 1 is rated Red.

The Red rated project is:

Our Base Ltd – One Stop Youth Service

No monitoring report has been received for the July – September 2019 period. The organisation has ceased delivery and Officers are working to ensure required evidence of performance is supplied as part of the closure of the project.

The Grants Officer from the VCS team who has worked with Our Base and carried out telephone assessments and monitoring visits (last visit was on 23 June 2019) can confirm that project activities took place during July to September. Some of the youth club activities included visits to the cinema, football sessions, go-karting, and health and safety accredited training. The Project Manager reports that since mid-2018, the profile of groups has changed. Much younger people (12-14 of age) attend the NW provision on Friday evenings (6-9pm) and (15-19 of age) attend the SW group on Sunday afternoon (3-6pm).

Our Base had limited access its premises during this quarter, which the organisation reports was due to an electrical issue caused by works carried out by either London Metropolitan University or East End. This was reported in an email dated 08 November 2019 to the Asset Management team with regards to its lease arrangements. Our Base also confirmed in the same email that it will not be continuing its youth services beyond the MSG contract.

St Giles Trust - Gamechangers

A project delivered by St Giles Trust (*Gamechangers*) ended delivery in May 2019. The organisation has been requested to reimburse the council with £3,416.67 which represents funding for June 2019. The *Gamechangers* project has evolved to the St Giles Trust's SOS+ Project, which continues to deliver workshops in schools across the borough.

Gamechangers model of an embedded worker in two secondary schools to offer whole family support to young people at risk is being replicated in schools outside Tower Hamlets.

Community Languages extension

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee of 3rd July agreed an extension of the Community Languages strand to March 2020. Extension letters have been prepared and advance payments for the October – December 2019 period have been raised.

3.4 Theme 2 Summary – Routeways to Employment & Social Welfare Advice Services

The theme is split into two distinct areas of focus; the first being employability skills training which is formally referred to as Routeways to Employment. The other area focuses on delivering a range of social welfare advice services.

There are 20 projects within this theme all of which are RAG rated Green.

3.5 Theme 3 Summary – Health and Wellbeing

This theme is entitled prevention, health and wellbeing and is intended to achieve a range of targeted outcomes with a primary focus on what were traditionally referred to as adult services.

This theme is made up of 33 live projects, 1 of which is rated Amber.

The Amber rated project is:

Toynbee Hall – Wellbeing in Tower Hamlets

The project has underachieved in 2 key output areas: Number of peer support volunteers recruited and Number of successful peer support matches made. The project was put on an improvement plan since January 2019 and though it has made some improvements over the months, it hasn't made sufficient progress to be RAG rated Green. £2,490, the equivalent of a full quarter payment, has been held back as the project did not meet the Green rating each quarter. The organisation has been informed, and accepted, that this payment will not be paid due to the under performance against the agreed targets in the extension period.

Toynbee Hall delivered two MSG projects during 2018 and 2019, the Wellbeing Centre and the Wellbeing in Tower Hamlets.

The Wellbeing Centre project performed in every quarter and met the lifetime targets and RAG rated Green.

Toynbee Hall was awarded funding through the Local Community Fund (LCF).

The LCF funded project: The Wellbeing Centre at Toynbee Hall will deliver on 3 areas:

1. A varied and flexible programme of social, learning and physical activities at the Wellbeing Centre such as tai chi, yoga, and chair-based fitness.
2. Provision of physical and health-promotion activities for older people. Sessions to ensure users can improve their health, including weekly health check-ups from professionals to help users maintain physical wellbeing and monthly health-promotion sessions to build knowledge of health issues.
3. An outreach and older people's volunteering project offering peer-support to those who are severely isolated. The peer-support outreach model will engage those hardest-to-reach and most at-risk of loneliness. Our Tower Hamlets Wellbeing Project Worker will recruit, train and support older volunteers who want to support socially isolated peers.

The outreach and older people's peer-support element (area 3) is part of the new LCF funded project and the lessons learned from the MSG extension has fed into this project.

Lunch Clubs extension

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee of 3rd July agreed an extension of the Lunch Clubs strand to March 2020 for those projects that were not funded through the Local Community Fun. Extension letters have been prepared and advance payments for the October – December 2019 period have been raised.

3.6 Theme 4 Summary – Third Sector Organisational Development

Theme four consists of 3 projects. All projects within this theme have been RAG rated Green for performance for this reporting period.

One of the projects covers a key "strategic partner" role to the Council and is undertaken by Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services. The other two consortium projects provide organisational development and capacity building support to local voluntary and community sector organisations

Premises

3.7 At the Grants Determination Sub Committee meeting on the 1st August 2018, it was agreed that subject to completion of an appropriate property agreement, the following organisations would receive a rent subsidy to cover the cost of rent up to the end of the MSG programme (30th September 2019). Officers are in the process of liaising with these organisations confirming the rent subsidy and next steps. In accordance with the decision on 1st August 2018, whilst this takes place, together with lease negotiations, MSG payments to these organisations continue subject to satisfactory performance:

- Age UK East London
- Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club
- Black Women's Health and Family Support
- Legal Advice Centre
- Stifford Centre
- Our Base
- Tower Hamlets Community Transport

3.8 Asset Management team is working with the organisations to put in place appropriate property agreements. The position of each organisation is set out below:

Age UK East London

Delays with communication experienced. Heads of Terms re-sent early June 2019 after initial contact was made in May '18. A further follow-up has been made-hoping for a response in the coming days.

Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club

CBRR grant now approved. Heads of Terms redrafted. Main issues to be resolved are agreement of new rent up from £26.5k to circa £35k and mechanical repairs of £34k plus external repairs and decorations (cost not yet known).

Black Women's Health and Family Support

Met with occupant and provided Heads of Terms. Issues with funding indicated by occupant i.e. rental is unaffordable

Legal Advice Centre

The organisation has confirmed that it has concluded lease negotiations, and now has an agreed lease with Tower Hamlets.

Stifford Centre

Heads of Terms have been sent to Stifford Centre for signature.

The MSG Rent Subsidy agreement has been signed and payments are being raised so Stifford Centre can pay the outstanding rent invoices.

Our Base

The Offer Letter setting out the Rent Subsidy amount and conditions to fund the rent up to September 2019 has been sent to Ourbase. Payments are scheduled and the first payment has been made following the signing of the agreement. With the end of MSG funding in September there is a question whether the organisation will be able to continue and pay the outstanding rent invoices.

Tower Hamlets Community Transport

Rent subsidy agreed. Section 25 notice served. Legal services to confirm expiry date. Currently waiting for confirmation from Legal.

- 3.9 There are other MSG funded organisations in Council buildings that are not covered by the agreed Rent Subsidy scheme. The position of these is set out below:

Somali Senior Citizens Club

The lease to SSCC was completed April 2019

Splash (St Vincent's Porta- cabin)

Asset Management have chased Splash again on 26/07/2019 to approve the Heads of Terms and still awaiting response before instructing the Legal Team to start preparing the lease.

Splash has been awarded Community Benefit Rent Reduction.

Wadajir (Teviot Community Hall)

This is tied in with agreeing the general approach to granting leases to TRAs and how they will fund the various lease and occupational costs in order to make any agreement sustainable over the term granted and is still ongoing. No further update until the final Locality Review has been completed.

Wapping Bangladesh Association

A draft lease was issued to the tenant's solicitor March 2019 and confirmed instructions. The leases are with Legal Services.

Weavers Community Forum

The lease has been extended until September 2019 in line with extended MSG programme. Asset Management has started negotiation for a new lease beyond September by issuing Heads of Terms to Weavers on April 2019. Negotiations have started for a new lease beyond September 2019.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A strategic assessment was undertaken of the proposed MSG programme in April 2015. It focused on identified need (or beneficiaries) and the difference between the MSG Programme 2013-15 and the proposed programme. Looking in particular at the potential impact of;
- Reduction in overall funding;

- Rationalisation of themes; and
- Introduction of locality boundaries

4.2 The programme continues to deliver against the themes developed to address the identified need.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.

5.2 There are no other specific statutory implications relevant to consideration of this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 The Main Stream Grant (MSG) Programme was approved by the Commissioners on the 29 July 2015 and initially covered the period between 1st September 2015 and 31st August 2018. However, subsequent Grants Determination Committees (GDC) revised the end date of the current programme to 30th September 2019; this was decided at a GDC meeting held on the 6th June 2018.

6.2 At the 3rd July Grants Determination Sub-Committee it was agreed to extend funding to the organisations delivering lunch clubs and community languages. This will be at the same level of funding under the council's mainstream grants programme (MSG) for a period of six months from 1st October 2019 to 31st March 2020. Appendix 2 lists the organisations.

6.3 The Council's MSG programme is budgeted at approximately £3.049m per annum. Funding exists within individual directorate budgets to fully fund the agreed programme and associated payments until 31st March 2020.

6.4 At the conclusion of the MSG programme, there will need to be a full review of expenditure and income to determine the remaining funds available to deliver the post MSG programme from 2019-20 onwards. If at the point of the review it is determined that there is the potential for incurring costs that exceed the current envelope, those additional costs will need to be approved using existing financial procedures and rules before any further commitments can be made.

6.5 Section 3 of this report highlights individual project performance and identifies Our Base Ltd as Red rated as failing to provide monitoring information. The remaining projects have managed to achieve an acceptable level of performance.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 The decisions of the Commissioners relating to the Mainstream Grants were made at a time when the Council's grant function was being carried out by the Commissioners. Therefore, the Council executive should still consider itself to be bound by those decisions.

7.2 The key requirement for the Council is to act reasonably and consistently with the advertised grant process and terms. In addition, the Council is bound by its Best Value duty to ensure that the grant funds are being used in accordance with the grant terms.

7.3 In the event that organisations are not performing in a manner consistent with those terms then the Council is entitled to take the variety of actions as highlighted in this report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Project Performance April – June 2019
- Appendix 2 – Community Languages / Lunch Clubs Extension

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

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