

We the undersigned call-in the recent Mayoral Executive Decision on the Community Chest and Community Events Fund Round 4 (Mayoral Decision 46).

There are a number of important questions which are not addressed by the report accompanying the decision which we believe warrant further scrutiny.

One key point of concern is that little if any justification has been given for the decision to move £161,695 from Community Grants fund to the Community Events fund. With such a significant sum being reassigned we think it is only right that O&S is given the opportunity to seek clarity about the reasoning behind this.

We ask the Committee to consider a number of specific issues:

- Following the decision to move £161,695 from Community Grants into the Community Events fund there will no longer be any community grants budget for the remainder of the year. By contrast there is now an unspent events budget of almost £80,000 all to be spent between January and April 2014. It is our opinion that allocating an additional £80,000 budget for events in the months running up to the 2014 election without giving any real justification raises real questions about the politicisation of the Mayor's allocation of tax payer funds.
- The Mayor states in his decision that *"I have questioned four Community Chest funding applications where the proposed funding awards, as listed in Appendix 1 had negative comments originating from programme officers against them. Although officers may come to the view that an application is poor and/or that it should not receive funding, there are from time to time cases where, when taking account of wider circumstances, projects are worth supporting in the view of the perceived potential community benefits."*
- The Mayoral Decision does not however state what factors he believed justified his decision was based on nor what differences with officer recommendations he had. It appears highly likely that what instead of actually carefully considering the impact of this grant funding the Mayor has just copied and pasted his previous mayoral decision notice as this decision is virtually identical to that made on the 19th June this year. We would ask that the O&S committee look into this and to ask the Mayor on what he based his decisions and why he has abdicated his responsibility to have informed and clear regard to the allocations of funding.
- To be sure of any discrepancies between the original officer advice and the final decision we would ask that the O&S Committee request all papers and assessments which went to the CGPB as well as the individual funding applications themselves to be sure they meet the relevant criteria for this fund.

- Following previous grant awards it is clear that there are serious concerns about the way in which grants funding is allocated. Round 3, only two months ago, saw the Mayor choose to award £8,500 of funding to commercial media organisations yet he refused to fund the Citizens Advice Bureaux to run welfare reform advice sessions. We would also like to know if, and if not why not, bids from organisations submitted as part of Round 3 were included in consideration for Round 4 of the Community Events fund.

Alternative course of action:

- That the Mayor actually considers the decision put in front of him and then issue a relevant decision sheet making clear he has taken into account the impact this funding will have.
- That the Mayor explains his decision to allocate funding from Community Grants to Community Events.
- That the Mayor pledges not to utilise the remaining £79, 895 events grant for events which fall within the 2014 elections purdah period.

Signed:

Cllr Carlo Gibbs

Cllr Sirajul Islam

Cllr Khales Ahmed

Cllr Ann Jackson

Cllr Joshua Peck