


Commissioner Decision Making Report 5 July 2016	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Aman Dalvi Corporate Director, Development and Renewal	Classification: Unrestricted
Report Title: Whitechapel High Street Fund as grant to London Small Business Centre to deliver capital refurbishment and accessible workspace at 206 Whitechapel Road (SITE 2)	

Originating Officer(s)	Duncan Brown, Strategic Project Manager, Whitechapel Delivery Team
Wards affected	Whitechapel, Stepney Green, Spitalfields-and-Banglatown, Bethnal Green
Key Decision?	Yes
Community Plan Theme	A great place to live; A fair and prosperous community; A safe and cohesive community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on 24th May 2016 the Commissioners made the following decision:

1. That a grant allocation of £227,000 to the London Small Business Centre (party one) to undertake shop-front upgrades and internal refurbishment works at the Royal Mail Group (party two) owned unit at 206 Whitechapel Road (site 2) to deliver and occupy approximately 280 m² (3010 ft.²) of vacant space to deliver publicly accessible workspace provision to serve the local resident community, subject to a signed lease agreement of no less than three years between party one and party two be completed by 5 July 2016, be approved;
2. That Commissioners receive notification of final detail of the grant agreement relating to 206 Whitechapel Road (site 2) at a future Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting in public; and
3. That the Corporate Director of Development and Renewal and the Corporate Director of Resources be authorise to approve the details of the agreement prior to the disbursement of funds to the London Small Business Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioners are recommended to:

- 1 Note that the heads of terms for the lease arrangement between LSBC and Royal Mail Group have been negotiated successfully and that the lease completed on 20th June 2016; and

- 2 Note the draft grant agreement letter giving final detail of the grant agreement.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The decision is required is required to give effect to the decision of the Commissioners from there meeting on 24th May 2016.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 None.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 At the last Commissioners Decision Making Meeting held on 24th May 2016 a detailed report ('Whitechapel High Street Fund as grant to London Small Business Centre to deliver capital refurbishment and accessible workspace at 206 Whitechapel Road') was considered and endorsed. Through this decision Commissioners approved a capital grant allocation of £227,000 to the London Small Business Centre to undertake enabling works at 206 Whitechapel Road subject to receiving notification of the successful completion of a lease between the parties.
- 3.2 The Whitechapel Vision Delivery Team is informed since the time of the last meeting that the heads of terms for this lease arrangement have been negotiated successfully and that the lease is due to achieve sign-off by the Royal Mail Group's Authority Board on 20th June. Subsequent to this approval, the lease is to be executed by both parties and appended to this report for information.
- 3.3 The Whitechapel Vision Delivery Team has negotiated heads of terms for the grant funding agreement required to disburse funds to the London Small Business Centre. The proposed draft grant funding agreement is appended to this report for information.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 The Commissioners' meeting on 24th May 2016 approved the release of funding of £227,000 from the Whitechapel High Street Fund to the London Small Business Centre (LSBC) to support the capital works that are required in order to provide publicly accessible workspace at the former Royal Mail offices at 206 Whitechapel Road.
- 4.2 The grant was approved on condition that funding would not be released until evidence is provided that the property lease arrangements between the LSBC and the Royal Mail Group have been legally agreed. This report updates the Commissioners on progress.

- 4.2 The Whitechapel High Street Fund was established with total financing of £1.123 million, funded from a Council contribution of £603,000 supported by a grant of £520,000 from the GLA. In order to maximise the GLA match funding in respect of the element of the programme that relates to the refurbishment and reuse of vacant and underused workspaces within the Whitechapel area, the Council must commit funding by 30th September 2016.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 This is a noting report advising that the actions required by the Commissioners following their meeting on 24th May 2016 have been undertaken and there are therefore no legal implications arising from this report.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Whitechapel Vision Delivery Team have selected the preferred workspace provider as part of the Enterprising Whitechapel project as part of the criteria set out in the previous report considered by Commissioners on 24th May, including scores on elements of the LBTH Social Cohesion Toolkit, as well as their contribution to overarching WHSF outputs. This involved engagement with representatives from the Council's Community Cohesion, Engagement and Commissioning Team who provided expert advice on its use and relevance to all assessment processes and projects in the Whitechapel Delivery Plan. All of these criteria and outputs relate strongly to One Tower Hamlets Considerations, particularly in terms of employment and apprenticeships targets, for which equalities and diversity will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Officers have taken every measure to ensure best value and return to the Council. More broadly the economic and social benefits of providing workspace within Site 2 at 206 Whitechapel Road will help ensure longer term savings to the Borough. In order to provide a comprehensive response on best value all of the issues relating grants, as highlighted in the Council's **Best Value Strategy and Action Plan (March 2015)**, a full consideration of Best Value Implications of the project were provided in the report considered by Commissioners on 24th May 2016.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 Reuse of this currently unused space could, through the terms of the grant agreement, will serve as platform for a number of organised workshops/ day time events and training which will be designed to relate to public health and environmental community participation. This would also have clear benefits in terms of wider social cohesion.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A detailed statement of risks and alternative options were provided in the report considered by Commissioners on 24th May 2016.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Using and securing a previously unoccupied space will contribute to natural surveillance within the high street and minimise the sense of neglect vacant spaces can bring to a centre. The events, training and job outputs that the project will engender will make a contribution to wider social cohesion which in turn will contribute to reducing the likelihood of crime and disorder.

11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

11.1 London Small Business Centre relieves poverty by the provision of assistance in the setting up in business of persons who by their social and economic circumstances are in need and suffer voluntary unemployment and to advance the education and training of persons in the skills required for employment and self-employment. The activities that they undertake are closely aligned to the approach set out in London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (2015) which prioritises working with adults at risk of abuse and neglect to have greater control in their lives to both prevent it from happening, and to give meaningful options of dealing with it should it occur.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix A) LBTH/LSBC Grant Offer Letter - DRAFT

N.B. Appendices to the report considered by Commissioners on 24th May included the Vacant Building Register Call for Spaces guidance note, Enterprising Whitechapel Call for Bids guidance note, and a Business Questionnaire completed by LSBC.

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

- Enterprising Whitechapel Report 2015

Officer contact details for documents:

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