


<p align="center"><b>Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting</b> Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016</p>	
<p><b>Report of:</b> Kevin Kewin, Interim Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>Comments of the Grants Scrutiny sub-committee (29<sup>th</sup> June 2016)</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Vicky Allen, Corporate Strategy and Equality
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

### Summary

The Grants Scrutiny sub-committee met on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 to consider the reports submitted to the Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July as part of the sub-committee's pre-decision scrutiny remit.

This note presents the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The following sub-committee Members were present: Cllr Mukit MBE (Chair), Cllr Amina Ali and Cllr Clare Harrisson.

### Recommendation:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Consider the comments of the Grants Scrutiny sub-committee (appendix 1)

## **Appendix 1: Comments of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

### **Exercise of Commissioners' Discretion**

#### *Home Grants*

All Members should be provided with details about Home Grants repairs so they can signpost residents to the scheme if appropriate.

### **Can Do Development Programme**

The Council should signpost recipients to potential external funding sources.

### **Annual Report on the Event Fund Awards 2015-16**

The sub-committee agreed that supporting arts projects, through the fund, was an important way to foster community cohesion.

### **Tower Hamlets Affordable Housing Grant 2016-2019**

The report could be strengthened by including the comparative unit costs from other London Boroughs.

The terminology in the assessment exercise (appendix 1) should be standardised including information relating to the rents for each scheme.

### **Whitechapel High Street Fund**

All Members should be provided with details of the accessible workspace scheme, including the criteria, so they can advise local residents and businesses.

The Council should consider the learning from other London Boroughs, such as Westminster, who have operated similar schemes

### **Adult Services Small Grants for Pensioners' Groups 2016/17**

The sub-committee discussed the importance of focusing on outcomes, rather than outputs, from grants wherever possible – this was a general observation rather than specific to this scheme.

### **MSG 2015/18 Performance report (Jan – March 2016)**

The sub-committee suggested that future monitoring reports should be shorter and more focussed on exceptions and outliers. This should be accompanied by officer analysis of the pertinent issues to better focus Members' time.

Members highlighted the importance of analysis on geography and reach within grant reporting.

### **Grants Register – Moving to Commissioning**

The sub-committee welcomed the approach outlined in report. Members highlighted the importance of outcomes rather than outputs. In addition, they felt commissioning may offer providers more stability than grants.

The sub-committee noted the support of CVS to the approach.

### **Grants Decision Making – Transitional Arrangements**

The sub-committee considered the need for further discussions of the potential to develop their role beyond pre-decision scrutiny.

### **Forward Plan**

Members noted the Forward Plan

### ***General observations***

During the course of their discussion, the sub-committee made a number of observations that are relevant beyond the particular items. These are highlighted above and include a greater focus on outcomes, monitoring reports to include more analysis and a stronger focus on problem issues. The sub-committee also highlighted the benefit of ensuring that grants are joined-up with other arrangements, including commissioned services.

The importance of marketing grant schemes effectively, including targeting where appropriate was raised. Where necessary support should be provided or signposted to for community groups who lack the capacity to apply (for example, because of language barriers).

In terms of developing scrutiny's role, the sub-committee highlighted a number of areas to consider at its future meetings;

- The participation / role of community groups at the sub-committee (if any)
- How Members can better understand the organisations that they are being asked to comment upon
- Identifying issues for pro-active scrutiny rather than pre-decision scrutiny, informed by a better understanding of grant spend in general