

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

**RECORD OF THE DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING
MEETING**

HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 5 JULY 2016

**MP701, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Max Caller	in the Chair	(Commissioner)
Chris Allison		(Commissioner)
Alan Wood		(Commissioner)
Mayor John Biggs		(Executive Mayor)

Co-opted Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs	(Executive Mayor)
Councillor Rachael Saunders	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Childrens Services)

Councillors Present:

Councillor Peter Golds	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE	
Councillor John Pierce	

Officers Present:

Zena Cooke	(Corporate Director, Resources)
Alison Denning	(Festivals and Events Officer, Communities Localities and Culture)
Barbara Disney	(Service Manager, Strategic Commissioning, Adults Health & Wellbeing)
Everett Haughton	(Third Sector Programmes Manager, Third Sector Team)
Steve Hill	(Head of Benefits Service)
David Lee	Project Officer Whitechapel Vision Delivery Team
Robert Mee	(Programme Analysis and Review Officer)
Stephen Murray	(Head of Arts and Events, Communities Localities & Culture)
Jen Pepper	(Affordable Housing Programme Manager, Development and Renewal)
Alison Thomas	(Head of Housing Strategy, Partnerships and Affordable Housing, Development and Renewal)
Owen Whalley	(Service Head Planning and Building Control, Development & Renewal)
Keith Williams	(Head of Health Borough Programme)
Antonella Burgio	(Democratic Services)

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Chris Allison nominated and Alan Wood seconded that Max Caller be appointed Chair for the duration of the meeting.

RESOLVED

That Max Caller be appointed Chair for the duration of the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sir Ken Knight.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of diclosable pecuniary interests were made.

3. DECISIONS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The published decisions of the meetings held on 12 April and 24 May 2016 were noted and were to be signed as a correct record of proceedings. Commissioner Caller asked that officers ensure that a formal response be provided to THCVS in regard to the written submission at the meeting on 24 May 2016.

The decisions of the meeting held on 14 June 2016 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

The Chair advised that two public submissions had been received concerning agenda item 6.6, MSG Project Performance January to March 2016. These were from Tower Hamlets CVS and from Shadwell Community Project representations and would be considered during the discussion of the item.

5. EXERCISE OF COMMISSIONERS DISCRETION

The Chair introduced the item which reported urgent decisions discharged as 'Commissioners Individual Decisions' in the period 31 May – 14 June 2016.

RESOLVED

That these decisions be confirmed

6. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Can Do Development programme - Award of Local Project Support Awards

Keith Williams, Head of Health Borough Programme, introduced the report that provided details of the recipients of awards in this category of funding through a mechanism approved by Commissioners at their meeting on 15 May 2015.

The Chair invited Councillor Mukit to comment on the report on behalf of the Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee (GSSC) and he indicated that GSSC had no comments it wished to make. The Chair then invited Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Rachel Saunders and Commissioners to comment and they also indicated that they had no comments they wished to make.

Mr Williams clarified that the programme was to cease in September 2016 but other sources of funding could be accessed by the projects hitherto supported by the Council.

RESOLVED

1. That the report setting out the project awards made during 2015-16 and 2016-17 and the background report on the impact of the programme since 2009 be noted.
2. That it be noted that,
 - a. due to reductions in the level of the local authority public health grant and the need to make significant savings, it is not proposed to continue the programme beyond the end of the current contract span in September 2016.
 - b. the Council will, however, work with the programme providers through the voluntary sector strategy to seek continuation funding from external sources such as corporate social responsibility funds.

6.2 Tower Hamlets Affordable Housing Grant 2016-19

Alison Thomas, Head of Housing Strategy, Partnerships and Affordable Housing and Jen Pepper, Affordable Housing Programme Manager introduced the report which provided details of the progress of the Affordable Housing Grant following its authorisation by Commissioners on 2 December 2015. Commissioners were asked to approve funding for schemes by two registered housing providers from; the funds originate from non-expired retained right-to-buy receipts.

The Chair invited Councillor Mukit to comment on the report on behalf of GSSC and he advised that GSSC requested that comparative unit costs be included in the report and that the technical terms used in the assessment

exercise should be standardised. The Chair then invited Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Rachel Saunders to comment and they indicated that they supported the proposals. Commissioners indicated that they also supported the proposals.

RESOLVED

That Right To Buy grant funding be approved, in the amounts listed, to the Registered Providers outlined in the table below and allow for a 10% uplift to this amount to allow flexibility to take account of potential higher build or acquisition costs.

	Registered Provider	Scheme	No: Rent	Grant per unit	Social Rent	Grant £
A	Peabody	Times House	37	52,452	37*	1,194,732
B	Family Mosaic	Turnberry Quays	16	70,000	16*	1,118,944
	Total		53		53	£3,059,676

6.3 Event Fund Annual Report 15/16

Stephen Murray, Head of Arts and Events and Alison Denning, Festivals and Events Officer introduced the report which provided an account of the awards made through the Event Fund in the period 1 April 2015- 31 March 2016.

The Chair invited Councillor Mukit to comment on the report on behalf of GSSC and he advised that GSSC requested that report should include analysis of geography and reach of the events. The Chair then invited Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Rachel Saunders to comment; they indicated that they supported the views of GSSC.

Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting (CDMM) members discussed the geography and reach of the events delivered in the period and were of a view that additional and innovative approaches should be undertaken to ensure a better/more even distribution of support across the borough. Officers were also asked explore how better to support applicants who had not achieved funding to enable them to achieve better outcomes in future.

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual Report of Event Fund Grant awards made and approved by Service Head for Culture Leisure and Learning for events that took place between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 be noted
2. That the comments of Commissioners and Members be noted

6.4 Whitechapel High Street Fund as grant to London Small Business Centre to deliver capital refurbishment and accessible workspace at 206 Whitechapel Road (SITE 2)

Owen Whalley, Service Head Planning and Building Control, introduced the report which provided final details of the grant agreement in respect of 206 Whitechapel Road (Site 2) requested by Commissioners on 24 May 2016, at which time they agreed a grant for refurbishment of the premises. The Chair noted the letters from Royal Mail and London Small Business Centre confirming their intention to enter into a lease agreement for the premises.

The Chair invited Councillor Mukit to comment on the report on behalf of GSSC and he advised that GSSC no comments about the proposals. However GSSC Members requested that all Councillors should be provided details of the Accessible Workspace Scheme so that this can be promulgated to residents and businesses.

RESOLVED

- 1 That it be noted that the heads of terms for the lease arrangement between LSBC and Royal Mail Group have been negotiated successfully and that both in the letters table at the meeting confirmed their intention to sign the lease; and
- 2 That the draft grant agreement letter giving final detail of the grant agreement be noted.

6.5 Adult Services Small Grants for Pensioners' Groups 2016/17

Barbara Disney, Service Manager, Strategic Commissioning, introduced the report which concerned a proposal to delegate responsibility for agreeing awards in the 'small grants for pensioners' funding stream to the recently appointed Corporate Director for Adults Services.

The Chair invited Councillor Mukit to comment on the report on behalf of GSSC and he advised that GSSC had no comments it wished to make about the proposals. Councillor Saunders asked that the funding stream should in future be aligned to the 'cohesion' theme of the MSG Programme. The Chair supported the delegation requested on condition that an annual report of the monies spent for this purpose be made to Commissioners.

RESOLVED

1. That the process for inviting applications for Adults' Services Small Grants for Pensioners' Groups 2016/17 be approved.

2. That the availability of funding for the proposal as set out in the report be noted.
3. That the process for awarding the grant funding as set out in the report be approved.
4. That responsibility for agreeing awards for this funding stream be delegated to the Director of Adults' Services.
5. That an annual report of grants made under this scheme be made to Commissioners.

6.6 MSG 2015/18 Performance Report - January/March 2016

Zena Cooke, Corporate Director for Resources and Everett Haughton, Third Sector Programmes Manager presented the report which informed CDMM members of the performance of MSG projects in the period January – March 2016. Ms Cooke advised that information relating to emergency grant funding was currently removed from the website pending review. She also acknowledged the representations from THCVS and the Shadwell Community Project and the comments of GSSC on the report.

The Chair invited Councillor Mukit to comment on the report on behalf of GSSC and he advised that GSSC recommended that future reports should focus on exceptions and outliers, provide analyses of relevant issues, geography and the reach of the grants.

CDMM Members discussed the report and noted:

- the issues described at paragraph 3.5.2 and the officer recommendation
- that grants were released part in advance and part in arrears and this caused cash flow issues in the sector. However it was appropriate that payment continue on the basis of satisfactory performance
- that projects required support to ensure that monitoring was completed appropriately
- that underperforming projects needed to be encouraged to deal with underperformance in a proactive manner
- that Shadwell Community Project performance issues centred on poor reporting
- that remaining issues around community building leases were progressing towards resolution

CDMM members recommended:

- that previous performance ratings should be included in future reports so that performance trend can be seen
- that projects be reported on the basis of population and activity rather than Ward
- that new methods of effective monitoring without excessive bureaucracy be explored
- that a verbal update on the current performance position be provided in conjunction with each future performance report

- that officers work with THCVS to provide the framework for performance and enable the projects to transfer successfully to a commissioning basis in future

RESOLVED

1. That the content of the report be noted, in particular:
 - (i) The make-up of the 2015/18 programme as set out in paragraphs 3.1-3.4
 - (ii) Key issues within the January to March as set out in section 3.5
 - (iii) Key programme performance information as set out in Appendices 1 & 2
 - (iv) Details of the 'spotlight' information relating to the Routeways to Employment information as set out in Appendix 3
2. That the recommendations of CDMM members on required improvements or specific information to be provided in future performance reports be noted
3. That the revised grant payment arrangements for GREEN rated projects as set out in paragraph 3.5.2 be approved
4. That presently there be **no withdrawal** of approved grants to projects as set out in paragraph 3.7.7 pending further clarification of performance.
5. That it be noted that the performance report for period 3 (April to June 2016) will be presented to the Commissioners Decision Meeting scheduled for 27 September 2016.
6. That it be noted that Appendix 4 of the report sets out the actions arising from the 24 May 2016 Commissioners Decision Making Meeting where the MSG Performance Report for period 1 September to December 2015 was discussed. Appendix 4 provides a quick reference guide to updates and references relevant sections within this report for period 2, in response to the actions arising from the meeting on 24 May 2016.

6.7 Grants Register - Moving to Commissioning

Zena Cooke, Corporate Director for Resources introduced the report which informed Commissioners of a review of existing grants which would be undertaken as part of the intention to move from grant funding towards commissioned voluntary sector services. As part of the transition, the Council planned hold training and to build capacity in the voluntary sector so that these organisations would be able to compete in a commissioning environment.

The Chair invited Councillor Mukit to comment on the report on behalf of GSSC and he advised that GSSC supported the proposal to move towards commissioning arrangements. The Mayor and Councillor Saunders also indicated that they supported this approach.

Commissioner Caller cautioned against a move to a solely commissioning based environment as this would deter new and/or innovative projects.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That it be noted that the outcome of the review will be reported to the next meeting.

6.8 Grants Decision Making - Transitional Arrangements

Zena Cooke, Corporate Director for Resources introduced the report which discussed proposals for transitional arrangements for grants decision making.

The Chair invited Councillor Mukit to comment on the report on behalf of GSSC and he advised that GSSC wished to discuss the potential to develop its role beyond pre-decision scrutiny. Councillor Saunders supported the proposal.

Commissioner Caller recommended that a transitional measure should involve return of grants decisions to Councillors with oversight by Commissioners. Mayor Biggs recommended that these arrangements should be discharged in an open setting involving a number of elected members together with the Mayor. He asked for proposals for a suitable body for this role to be investigated.

Commissioner Caller noted that the suggested arrangements would require new directions to be issued by the Secretary of State. The suggestion would need first to be supported by evidence and formally endorsed by a senior Member Level body of the Council before they may then be consulted upon with the Secretary. Additionally he recommended that GSSC consider how it wished to enhance its engagement with Commissioners to give an account of the discharge of their responsibilities.

RESOLVED

1. That the principle of transitional arrangements for Grants Decision Making be endorsed
2. That detailed proposals for the transition be drawn up in consultation with Commissioners to incorporate appropriate record keeping and audit trail.
3. That the detailed proposals be formally endorsed by elected members

6.9 Forward Plan

The Chair noted the forward plan published at item 6.9.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 7.05 p.m.

Chair: Sir Ken Knight
COMMISSIONER