

## **LONDON COUNCILS GRANTS COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE MEETING**

22 June 2015

Minutes of the Grants Committee Executive meeting held at London Councils, 59 ½ Southwark Street, London SE1 0AL on Monday 22 June 2015

Members	Cllr. Paul McGlone (Chair)	LB Lambeth
	Cllr. Forhad Hussain (Vice Chair)	LB Newham
	Cllr. Stephen Carr (Vice Chair)	LB Bromley
	Cllr. Simon Wales (Vice Chair)	LB Sutton
	Cllr. Asima Shaikh	LB Islington
	Cllr. Joan Millbank	LB Lewisham
	Cllr. James Madden	LB Wandsworth
	Cllr. Gerard Hargreaves	RB Kensington and

Chelsea

London Councils officers were in attendance.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

1.1 An Apology was received from Cllr James Madden.

1.2 Members of the Grants Executive and London Councils officers introduced themselves.

### **2. Deputies and Declaration of Attendance**

2.1 There were no deputies or declarations of interest.

### **3. Minutes of the Grants Executive held on 17 September 2014**

3.1 Minutes of the meeting which took place on 17 September 2014 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **4. Minutes of the Grants Committee held on 25 March 2015 (for noting)**

4.1 The minutes from the Grants Committee meeting held on 25 March 2015 were noted.

4.2 The Chair requested that the issue in section 4.5 relating to public recognition for the work done by the funded commissions needed to be put into action by the Grants team at London Councils.

4.3 The Chair added that the low attendance at the last full Grants meeting was of concern, and that steps needed to be taken to boost attendance for the July AGM.

## **5. Oral Update on Performance of Grants Scheme**

5.1 The Head of Grants at London Councils said that the update constituted a performance report based on data received from projects which has been analysed by Grants officers. He added that:

- The scheme currently comprised 35 projects, covering four priorities: Homelessness, Domestic Violence, Tackling Poverty Through Employment, and Capacity Building for the Voluntary Sector.
- Among the commissions, all bar one were Green under the RAG rating. St Mungo's Community Housing Association, co-funded by the ESF, was rated Amber.
- Up-to-date versions of the reports would be available at the Grants AGM in July 2015, along with graphs depicting performance against expectations and one page summaries for each projects, which include case studies.

The order of the agenda was then varied, and items were taken in the following order:

## **7. Pre-Audited Financial Results 2014-2015**

7.1 The Director of Corporate Resources at London Councils outlined the Pre-Audited Financial Results 2014-2015 report, which, once noted by the Grants Executive, would be approved by London Councils' Executive, and then passed on to auditors.

7.2 In response to member queries, the Director confirmed that:

- The provisional surplus of £174,000 was split between the S.48 borough commissioned services and the ESF/borough funded commissions. The provisional general reserves of £1,074,000 remain after allowing for potential ESF commitments of £250,000 in 2015.
- There was a provisional net overspend of £58,000 in relation to grants administration expenditure attributable to an overspend of £87,000 in respect of salary costs, general running costs and central recharges, and offset by underspends of £12,000 in respect of the research budget and £17,000 in respect of investment income received on Committee reserves.
- The pension fund liability has increased by £648,000 from £912,000 to £1,560,000. The reason for this significant increase in the deficit is attributable to a greater increase in scheme liabilities over the increase in scheme assets over the year, due to changes in the financial assumptions used by the actuary between 2014 and 2015.

7.3 Members requested that the financial results report was presented to the Grants Committee at the November 2015 meeting, after the audit had taken place.

7.4 The report was noted.

## **6. Proposals for Review of Grants Programme**

6.1 The Head of Grants introduced the report and said he was looking for views and steers from the Members on the review of the Grants Programme, and the upcoming consultation.

6.2 Members were told that the report consisted of 8 sections, and were invited to make comments and suggestions for each section in turn.

*6.3 Section 1: Context – Grants Programme Summary.*

Members said that the document needed stronger wording on sub-regional partnerships, particularly as there was currently strong movement in working in groups of boroughs in areas such as homelessness.

*6.4 Section 2: Programme Management and Governance*

Members noted the section.

*6.5 Section 3: Performance of Programme*

Members noted the section.

*6.6 Section 4: Review Approach*

Members were told that London Councils' officers recommended that the purpose of the review should be to establish whether the programme should be continued, provide opportunity to give views on the current principles, and establish whether, if the programme is continued, the existing programme priorities are still the right ones and if not, make recommendations as to any new priorities.

*6.7 Section 5: Timetable*

Members noted the timetable.

*6.8 Section 6: Consultation and Equalities Impact Assessment*

*6.8.1 The Head of Grants said that:*

- The consultation asked consultees to comment on the current priorities and to suggest any new priorities and focuses within these based on emerging pan-London needs.
- The consultation would be published on the London Councils website, and would be open to everyone. Stakeholders such as Chief Executives and Leaders of boroughs, voluntary organisations (both those currently funded by the Grants programme and those not funded), and other main stakeholders would be sent a letter or notice and invited to respond to the consultation.
- The consultation would be available on the London Councils website from 27 of July until 2 October 2015.
- The consultation would run for 10 weeks, which was reasonable in this situation, in order to give the London Councils Grants team time to analyse the results and prepare a report ahead of the November Grants Committee meeting.
- A major focus of the consultation is equalities issues, and boroughs would be expected to do their own Equalities Impact Assessments ahead of submitting their response.

6.8.2 Members said that the legal requirements of consultations stated that 50% of people consulted should be those affected by the consultation, and 50% not affected. Therefore it was important that a 'neutral cohort' of people were consulted.

6.8.3 Members felt that the current focus on the existing four priorities in the consultation would potentially make it difficult for consultees to suggest alternative priorities, and that the consultation needed to be more open.

6.8.4 Members said that the Boroughs needed to input strongly into the review of the Grants Programme, as they had the most awareness of what the priority needs in their boroughs were.

6.8.5 Members said that the consultation should be pitched at senior officers in boroughs, not just Grants Officers. London Councils' officers confirmed that the consultation would be drawn to the attention of Chief Executives and they could consult other appropriate officers in their boroughs.

6.8.6 The Corporate Director at Services at London Councils said that due to capacity issues, he has authorised a temporary member of staff at London Councils to support the review process.

6.8.7 The Chair asked the Head of Grants to slightly amend Table 3 in order to show detailed funding for each strand of the Priorities.

#### *6.9 Section 7: Aligning Funding Cycles*

6.9.1 The Head of Grants explained that the Grants Committee Priority 3 - tackling poverty through employment service - is half funded by the ESF. The current projects funded under this priority were due to close at the end of March 2015. Under normal circumstances, there would have to be new projects from April 2015. However, delays in negotiations between the European Commission (EC) and the UK government meant that there was no UK ESF programme. Therefore, the Grants Committee had extended the existing projects until the end of June 2015 to provide continuity. The GLA has now launched a new ESF programme starting in January 2016, which London Councils was applying to join; however this would still result in a 6 month break in service delivery (although there would still be funding going to those projects in the Autumn of 2015, due to delays in getting the funding from the EC). Proposals in the report were designed to give the Committee continuing control of decisions on the funding of any new ESF programme within the grants programme.

#### *6.10 Annex A, B and C:*

Members noted Annexes A, B and C.

#### *6.11 Annex D - consultation questionnaire*

6.11.1 Members were invited to comment on the proposed consultation questionnaire.

6.11.2. Members said that:

- The questions should be less focused on the existing priorities and more open-ended, to encourage consultees to think about the current needs. With regard to the priorities, consultees should think about whether they still remain important, and whether there were other emerging priorities which should be considered for the next funding period. It should be borne in mind that boroughs already had a statutory duty on some of the current priorities (e.g. on homelessness) so it was important to avoid duplication.
- Respondee who ticked the box to say they did not think the programme should continue after March 2017, should be still given a chance to answer the questions in section C, and not be asked to skip to question D.
- The bullet points around public health and community cohesion should be taken out of the questionnaire.
- Question 6 should be made more specific, and perhaps given a scale from 1-5 (rather than 'important', 'quite important' and 'not that important').
- The 'no recourse to public funds' in question 6 needed a caveat or a note explaining exactly what it meant in this context.
- Question 9 on Capacity Building was missing a comments box.

#### *6.12 Section 8: The Recommendations*

The recommendations were agreed by the Grants Executive.

**The meeting ended at 14:00**