

**LONDON COUNCILS GRANTS COMMITTEE**  
**20 March 2019**

Minutes of the Grants Committee AGM held at London Councils, 59½ Southwark Street, London SE1 0AL on Wednesday 20 March 2019.

London Borough & Royal Borough:	Representative:
Bexley	Cllr David Leaf
Brent	Cllr Margaret McLennan
City of London	Alderman Dhruv Patel (dep)
Croydon	Cllr Hamida Ali
Greenwich	Cllr Miranda Williams
Hackney	Cllr Philip Glanville (Chair)
Haringey	Cllr Patrick Perryman (dep)
Harrow	Cllr Sue Anderson
Havering	Cllr Viddy Persaud
Hounslow	Cllr Katherine Dunne
Kensington and Chelsea	Cllr Gerard Hargreaves
Kingston upon Thames	Cllr Sam Foulder-Hughes
Islington	Cllr Una O'Halloran
Lewisham	Cllr Jonathan Slater
Merton	Cllr Edith Macauley
Newham	Cllr Charlene McLean
Redbridge	Cllr Helen Coomb
Richmond	Cllr Gareth Roberts
Southwark	Cllr Rebecca Lury
Sutton	Cllr Marian James
Tower Hamlets	Cllr Candida Ronald
Wandsworth	Cllr Paul Ellis
Westminster	Cllr Tim Mitchell (dep)

Connie Cullen, London Hub Manager at Shelter UK, for Item 4.

London Councils officers were in attendance.

### **1. Apologies for Absence and Announcement of Deputies**

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Saima Ashraf (LB Barking and Dagenham), Cllr Richard Cornelius (LB Barnet), Cllr Colin Smith (LB Bromley), Cllr Jonathan Simpson (LB Camden), Cllr Ben Coleman (LB Hammersmith and Fulham), Cllr Mark Blake (LB Haringey), Cllr Douglas Mills (LB Hillingdon), Cllr Andy Wilson (LB Lambeth), Cllr Louise Mitchell (LB Waltham Forest), and Cllr David Harvey (City of Westminster).

The Chair welcomed Una O'Halloran, who has replaced Cllr Kaya Comer Schwartz as the representative for LB Islington, and congratulated Cllr Margaret McLennan for her new role on the Grants Executive.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

2.1 Cllr Helen Coomb (LB Redbridge) declared that her sister was a trustee of Redbridge CVS.

2.2 The Chair declared that he used to work closely with Shelter in his role as Cabinet Member for Housing.

2.3 Cllr Anderson noted that her son may have received support through the European Social Fund (ESF).

### **3. Minutes of the Grants Committee meeting held on 21 November 2018**

3.1 The minutes of the Grants Committee meeting held on 21 November were agreed. The Chair requested that in future, as well as going to the Leaders Committee, the minutes of the Grants Executive should be presented at the Grants Committee meetings, for noting.

#### **4. Thematic Review – Co-Location: Shelter and Ealing Council**

4.1 Connie Cullen, London Hub Manager, gave apologies on behalf of LB Ealing representatives who were due to attend the meeting but were delayed due to transport issues.

- Ms Cullen gave a presentation on the STAR (Supporting Tenancies, Accommodation and Reconnections) partnership, a multi-agency partnership programme which provides free housing, welfare and debt advice, delivers support to clients in the private rented sector, and helps clients to access employment and training. She said that the majority of existing clients (81 per cent) are single people with no dependents, living in overcrowded properties with extended families.

4.2 Other features of the partnership include:

- Co-location - Joint working with LB Ealing in order to prevent homelessness, such as working together to resolve rent arrears.
- Working in partnership with other agencies such as outreach teams for single homeless people.

4.3 In response to questions from members, Ms Cullen said that:

- STAR clients are generally good at budgeting; however, they are often on the minimum wage which does not cover housing costs, particularly in expensive parts of London. The STAR partnership helps people find jobs which pay the London living wage.
- The project takes on cases on a long-term basis to prevent problems re-emerging further down the line (a case study of a family who got into rent arrears as a result of a complicated immigration status was given as an example; periodic support was appropriate in that case).
- Although there are sometimes differences of opinion between Shelter and local authorities about how best to proceed with a particular case, the partnership is open and collaborative, and works well.

#### **5. Performance of Grants Programme 2017-21**

5.1 Yolande Burgess, Strategy Director, introduced this paper and said that:

5.1.1 Priority 1 and 2 commissions were performing well in general.

5.1.2 One of the commissions in Priority One – Signhealth – was currently RAG rated AMBER, due to lower outcomes achievement and a reduction in their Contract Compliance score (i.e. accuracy, timeliness and risk management). Ms Burgess said that the Grants team was satisfied that this was a temporary issue related to changes in staffing and that Signhealth's RAG score was expected to recover in subsequent quarters. Meanwhile, the commission's performance would be kept under review.

5.1.3 The delivery of the Priority 2 Commission that works within schools - Tender Education and Arts - is subject to the academic year timetable and this is reflected in its outcomes.

5.1.4 Two London Councils funded commissions (delivering across Services Areas 2.2 and 2.3) have submitted bids to the Home office to deliver national domestic violence helpline services. The Home Office has yet to announce its decision. Officers will keep Members informed as to any potential impact to the London Councils grant funded services.

5.1.5 In response to members' queries about over-performance and whether this meant that some targets may have been set too low, Ms Burgess said that this was being monitored closely; the majority of commissions were reporting a significant increase in demand for services.

5.1.6 In response to members' concerns about whether the strong performance of New Horizons Youth Centre would continue following the award of a grant from the Mayors' Fund for Londoners, which may put pressure on their resources, Ms Burgess said that there were no indications that the existing commission would be adversely affected.

5.1.7 All Priority 3 projects are RAG rated Red and are at highest level of risk intervention. This is due to the risks associated with the compliance regime for ESF. All partners in this priority are subject to a monthly 100 per cent check of activity and evidence to mitigate the risk of non-compliance with ESF and to closely monitor performance. With the introduction of a robust quality assurance process, and payments based on delivery of results, a monthly payment model is low risk.

5.1.8 Options for using the projected underspend related to the withdrawal of a Priority 3 partner and the under delivery across the Priority, were discussed with Grants Executive in February 2019; these will be discussed under item 6.

5.2 The Grants Committee noted:

a) outcomes at priority level:

- i) Priority 1, combatting homelessness, overall is 17 per cent above profile for quarters one to seven
- ii) Priority 2, tackling sexual and domestic violence, overall is on profile (a marginal 0.87 per cent above) for quarters one to seven
- iii) Priority 3, tackling poverty through employment, overall is -52 per cent below profile for the period October 2016 to December 2018

b) the number of interventions delivered in the relevant periods:

- i) Priority 1, combatting homelessness – 39,849
- ii) Priority 2, tackling sexual and domestic violence - 184,970
- iii) Priority 3, tackling poverty through employment – 4,766

c) project level performance, using the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) performance management system (explained at Appendix 1):

- i) Priorities 1 and 2: 12 projects are rated Green and one is Amber
- ii) Priority 3: as previously discussed with Grants Committee members, all projects remain rated Red to ensure performance management actions support continuous improvements in delivery (Section 4)

d) that options for using the underspend related to the withdrawal of a Priority 3 partner and the under delivery across the Priority, were discussed with Grants Executive in February 2019; Grants Executive Committee member's deliberations are presented to this committee under item 6

e) the progress on administration of £200,000 on behalf of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime to enhance training to front-line professionals on identifying harmful practices (paragraph 3.16)

f) the borough maps (Appendix 2), and borough engagement (Section 6).

## **6. Priority 3: Options for anticipated underspend**

6.1 The Chair introduced this report and noted that a correction had been tabled for the information contained in Table 1.3. He added that:

6.1.1 The Priority 3 strand of the 2017-2021 London Councils Grants Programme – Tackling poverty through employment – will complete at the end of June 2019. The programme is funded by the Grants Committee and is match-funded by ESF. Based on the delivery profile to-date, the programme is estimated to outturn on completion at over £3 million; half this value is attributable

to the Grants programme. Considering management and administration costs, it is projected that circa £1,135,000 will be returned to the Grants Programme once Priority 3 has completed (this is an estimated value).

6.1.2 Tendering a new commission through an open bid procedure, to meet a London-wide priority, had been discussed and considered by Grants Committee Executive members at their February meeting. It was noted that having a new tender that would address a pan-London issue would require a lengthy, resource intensive process. Along with all the associated risks attached to tendering, it was agreed that a new tender was not a preferred option.

6.2 The Grants Committee was then asked to comment on the remaining three options:

Option 1: To commission additional activity within existing commissions delivering across Priority 1 and Priority 2 to address the needs of London residents impacted by No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) - that is, residents who are permitted to live in the UK but are subject to the condition of no entitlement to public funds such as welfare benefits and housing assistance from the state. The mid-programme review had highlighted that there are services at capacity due to increases in demand and a rise in complexity of need.

Option 2: To hold the underspend in reserves to allow the Grants Committee more time to consider the redeployment of funds.

Option 3: To return funds to the boroughs through a one-off repatriation from reserves in 2020-21

Following key considerations during their discussions - geography/reach (pan-London); no duplication with existing borough services; impact (improved outcomes), and; savings to boroughs - Grants Executive members considered that investing additional resources in addressing the needs of those with NRPF would be a reasonable course of action. It was noted that:

- There is currently significant pressure on local authority staff resources relating to NRPF; for example, following up with the Home Office, gathering caseload information, resolving priority cases.
- NRPF related pressures impact all the boroughs, placing increased service and financial pressure as local authorities are often left with the responsibility to provide for subsistence and accommodation needs that, under different circumstances, would be centrally funded. At the moment, local authorities receive no additional funding for these costs
- NRPF related expenditure for the boroughs mainly arises through the need to support families with children, and care leavers.
- The issues of NRPF, homelessness and domestic violence are interrelated.

6.3 Grants Committee members agreed that Option 3 should not be taken forward on the basis that the funding can have a greater impact pan-London.

6.5 The Grants Committee decided that whilst the option of holding the underspend in reserves for now should not be taken off the table, Option 1 - investing the funding in addressing issues related to NRPF - would be the preferred option to be presented to the Leaders' Committee in the summer.

The Chair asked Ms Burgess to undertake further work to examine NRPF issues and potential solutions necessary to address them, to present at the next Grants Committee meeting.

**The meeting finished at 12.30**