

LONDON COUNCILS GRANTS COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE MEETING

Minutes of the Grants Committee Executive meeting held at The Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS, on Thursday 7 February 2019

Members	Mayor Philip Glanville (Chair)	LB Hackney
	Cllr. Saima Ashraf (Vice Chair)	LB Barking and Dagenham
	Cllr. Paul Ellis (Vice Chair)	LB Wandsworth
	Cllr. Gareth Roberts (Vice Chair)	LB Richmond
	Cllr. Kaya Comer-Schwartz	LB Islington
	Cllr. Gerard Hargreaves	LB Kensington and Chelsea
	Cllr. David Leaf	LB Bexley
	Alderman Alison Gowman	City of London

London Councils officers

Yolande Burgess, Strategy Director
David Sanni, Chief Accountant
Ana Gradiska, Principal Governance and Projects Officer
Sam Armitt, ESF Technical Adviser
Daniel Houghton, Liberal Democrat Political Advisor

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

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Miranda Williams (RB Greenwich), and Cllr Charlene McLean (LB Newham).

2 Deputies and Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no deputies or declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Grants Executive held on 18 September 2018

- 3.1 Members agreed the minutes of the meeting which took place on 18 September 2018.

4 ESF Match Funded Priority 3 – Tackling Poverty Through Employment

- 4.1 Yolande Burgess, Strategy Director, introduced this report and said that the Priority 3 strand of the 2017-2021 London Councils Grants Programme - *Tackling poverty through employment* - will complete at the end of June 2019. This strand of the programme is due to under-deliver against the original targets set and is estimated to outturn on completion at £3,019,000. This figure includes both the borough money and the ESF match funding. It is projected that £1,135,000 will be returned to the Grants Programme once Priority 3 has completed. These figures are estimates, based on delivery to the end of December 2018.

- 4.2 Ms Burgess then presented the three potential options outlined in the paper for deploying the underspend:
 - 4.2.1 Commissioning additional activity with existing commissions delivering across Priority 1 and Priority 2, based on intelligence gathered from the mid-programme review;
 - 4.2.2 Tendering a new commission through an open bid procedure, to meet a London-wide priority;
 - 4.2.3 Repatriating funds to the boroughs.
- 4.3 The Chair invited members to give their initial thoughts on the three options and said that the options recommended by the Executive would then be presented to the full Grants Committee in March 2019. He clarified that Option 1 would not attract matched ESF funding.
- 4.4 Members and London Councils officers made the following points in the ensuing discussion:
 - 4.4.1 Members said that Option 2 - tendering a new commission through an open bid procedure to meet a London wide priority - was not a preferred option due to the time and administration resources it would command.
 - 4.4.2 Cllr Roberts said that he believed that Option 3 - repatriating funds back to boroughs - would not be in line with the aims of the Grants programme which supported pan-London projects.
 - 4.4.3 Cllrs Ellis, Hargreaves and Leaf, and Alderman Gowan thought that Option 3 should not be discounted; however, there was scope to amend the option to include further elements, such as rolling over the funding to the next financial year to then either be used for future projects, or to reduce borough' future contributions.
 - 4.4.4 Members were keen to consider some of the projects in Option 1 - commissioning additional activity across Priority 1 and Priority 2 - for additional funding.
 - 4.4.5 Ms Burgess said that many existing commissions were reporting that they were noticing a significant increase in need from people with no recourse to public funds, and that this was becoming an emerging area that needed extra attention. Members agreed and said that this issue was putting further pressure on borough budgets.
 - 4.4.6 The Chair said that concentrating on priorities such as homelessness dovetailed with the existing London Councils priorities.
 - 4.4.7 Members also thought that some of the underspend from Priority 3 could be used to commission research, for example to ascertain what could have been done better with regards to Priority 3. Ms Burgess said this would be addressed in the performance report going to the full Grants meeting in March 2019.
 - 4.4.8 London Councils officers confirmed that giving additional resources to existing commissions would be a one off and would not commit the programme to give additional funding in following years.
 - 4.4.9 Cllr Hargreaves said that modern-day slavery and people trafficking were growing issues in West London and suggested that this may be a good area to invest additional funding. Members agreed and said that this was related to the no recourse to public funds issue.
 - 4.4.10 Members agreed that activity which potentially duplicated the work done by boroughs and the NHS or were not likely to have enough impact through additional funding, should be excluded.

4.4.11 Members thought 2.2.7 - family support workers in refuges - was a good candidate for additional funding as it would help save boroughs money in the long run.

4.5 The Chair then summarised the discussion:

4.5.1 Members were interested in going forward with either Option 1 or Option 3.

4.5.2 With regards to Option 1, evidence-based ranking should be used to determine which activities would represent good value with additional funding, with priority given to activities with a wide geographic impact. The extra funding would be time limited.

4.5.3 Option 3 needed to be broadened to include additional options in addition to the pure repatriation of funds to boroughs, as proposed in the report. The additional options would comprise a rollover to the next financial year, which could either reduce future contributions or provide more time for the Grants Committee to consider redeploying funds.

4.5.4 Option 2.2.3 - raising deposits for private rented sector accommodation - was discounted as many boroughs have their own deposit schemes; however, there was significant interest in option 2.2.7, relating to providing additional resources for family support workers in refuges.

4.6 The Chair asked that a draft of the options paper capturing the points from the discussion, should be sent to all members of the Executive for comment, ahead of the full Grants Committee in March.

5 Month 9 Revenue Forecast 2018/19

5.1 David Sanni, Chief Accountant, introduced this report which outlined actual income and expenditure against the approved income and expenditure in the budget to the end of December 2018. The report also provides a forecast of the outturn position for 2018/19 for both actual and committed expenditure on commissions including ESF match funded commissions (excluding borough-specific ESF projects) and London Councils' administration of these commissions.

5.2 Mr Sanni said that there is a projected surplus of £154,000 for the year. This was largely comprised of a projected underspend of £80,449 in respect of S.48 borough funded commissioned services relating to 2018/19, and a projected underspend of £67,593 from operational costs.

5.3 Projected total reserves of £2,137,000 are forecast at the year-end, which are split between ESF funding and borough contributions. However, some of these are expected to be used in 2019-20.

5.4 In answer to a member's question, Mr Sanni said that the recommended levels of reserves were 3.75% of the Committee's annual expenditure.

6 AOB

6.1 Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz said that this was her last Grants meeting as she has taken on a different portfolio at LB Islington.

6.2 Members and London Councils officers thanked Cllr Comer-Schwartz for all the work she has done on the Grants Committee and wished her the best for her new role.

The meeting ended at 15:35