

LONDON COUNCILS' GRANTS COMMITTEE AGM
11am, 13 July 2022

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Grants Committee held on 13 July 2022

London Borough & Royal Borough:

Representative:

Barnet	Cllr Sara Conway (attending virtually)
Bexley	Cllr David Leaf
Brent	Cllr Mili Patel
City of London Councils	Paul Martinelli
Croydon	Cllr Ola Kolade
Ealing	Cllr Jasbir Anand
Greenwich	Cllr Adel Khaireh
Hackney	Cllr Christopher Kennedy
Hammersmith and Fulham	Cllr Rebecca Harvey (attending virtually)
Haringey	Cllr Sarah Williams (attending virtually)
Harrow	Cllr Jean Lammiman (attending virtually)
Hillingdon	Cllr Martin Goddard (attending virtually)
Hounslow	Cllr Shivraj Grewal
Islington	Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz
Kensington and Chelsea	Cllr Sof McVeigh (attending virtually)
Kingston upon Thames	Cllr Andreas Kirsch (attending virtually)
Lambeth	Cllr Donatus Anyanwu
Lewisham	Mayor Damien Egan
Merton	Cllr Eleanor Stringer
Newham	Cllr Charlene McLean (attending virtually)
Redbridge	Cllr John Howard (attending virtually)
Richmond upon Thames	Cllr Nancy Baldwin
Sutton	Cllr Marian James (attending virtually)
Tower Hamlets	Cllr Saied Ahmed (attending virtually)
Westminster	Cllr Nafsika Butler-Thalassis

Nazira Mehman (IKROW) and Tai Rosenzweig (Women and Girls Network) were present for item 12.

London Councils officers were in attendance.

Members were informed of the hybrid meetings protocols for London Councils' Grants Committee and reminded that this meeting would be live-streamed for the press and public.

1. Apologies for Absence and Announcement of Deputies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Saima Ashraf (LB Barking and Dagenham), Nadia Shah (LB Camden), Cllr Vicky Ashworth (LB Waltham Forest) and Cllr Simon Hog (LB Wandsworth).

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Cllr Martin Goddard declared his non-pecuniary interest as a retired Grant Thornton partner.

3. Acknowledgement of outgoing and new members

- 3.1 Yolande Burgess, Strategy Director, London Councils, welcomed the new and returning members of the Grants Committee. She also expressed her team's appreciation to outgoing members for all their hard work on the Grants Committee.
- 3.2 Members asked for their thanks to the former members of the Grants Committee to be recorded.

4. Election of Chair of the Grants Committee for the 2022-23 Municipal Year

- 4.1 Mayor Damien Egan was nominated as the Chair of the Grants Committee by Cllr David Leaf (LB Bexley) and seconded by Cllr Nancy Baldwin (LB Richmond upon Thames)
- 4.2 There being no other nominees for the Chair, the Strategy Director declared Mayor Egan Chair of the Grants Committee and stepped down to allow the elected Chair to preside over the remainder of the meeting.

5. Election of Vice-Chairs for the Grants Committee for the 2022-23 Municipal Year

- 5.1 The Chair called for nominations for the three Vice Chairs for 2022-23. He nominated the following members as Vice Chairs of the Grants Committee, seconded by Cllr Shivraj Grewal (LB Hounslow):

- Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz (LB Islington) as the Labour Vice Chair;
- Cllr David Leaf (LB Bexley) as the Conservative Vice Chair;
- Cllr Marian James (LB Sutton) as the Liberal Democrat Vice Chair.

5.2 There being no other nominees, the Chair declared Cllr Comer-Schwartz, Cllr Leaf and Cllr James as the Vice Chairs of the Grants Committee.

6. Election of the Grants Executive for the 2022-23 Municipal Year

6.1 The following members were appointed:

- Mayor Damien Egan (LB Lewisham) – Chair (Lab)
- Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz (LB Islington)
- Cllr Eleanor Stringer (LB Merton)
- Cllr Stephanie Cryan (LB Southwark)
- Cllr Vicky Ashworth (LB Waltham Forest)
- Cllr Jean Lammiman (LB Harrow)
- Cllr David Leaf (LB Bexley)
- Cllr Sof McVeigh (RB Kensington and Chelsea)
- Cllr Marian James (LB Sutton)
- Paul Martinelli (City of London)

7. Minutes of the Grants Committee held on 16 March 2022

7.1 The minutes of the Grants Committee held on 16 March 2022 were agreed.

8. Minutes of the Grants Committee AGM held on 14 July 2021 – for noting

8.1 The minutes of the Grants Committee AGM held on 14 July 2021, which had been previously agreed, were noted.

9. Constitutional Matters:

9.1 The Strategy Director introduced this report which proposed an amendment to London Councils' Standing Orders. The report also provided, for information, the most recent version of London Councils Scheme of Delegations, which

encompasses amendments to reflect the current officer structure of London Councils.

9.2 The Grants Committee:

- Noted the proposed amendments to London Councils Standing Orders
- Noted the proposed amendments to London Councils Scheme of Delegations to officers.

10. Operation of Grants Committee 2022-2023

10.1 The Strategy Director introduced this report, which informed members of the Terms of Reference for the Grants Committee and Grants Executive and set out dates for meetings in the municipal year 2022-23.

10.2 The Strategy Director added that funded organisations would be invited to future meetings of the Grants Committee to talk about their projects, and there would also be a number of partner visits organised for Grants Committee members. This would help the Grants Committee gain a better understanding of the funded partners' work, and they could then disseminate that information to their boroughs. In addition, the team would explore the possibility of inviting all partners to a meeting of the Grants Committee to showcase their work.

10.3 Members made the following comments:

- It would be helpful for members to receive written guidance for visiting funded organisations.
- It would be helpful if reports were page-numbered for future meetings, to make them easier to read.

10.4 The Grants Committee:

- Noted the Terms of Reference for the Grants Committee and Grants Executive;
- Noted the programme of meetings.

11. London Councils Grants Committee - Pre-Audited Financial Results 2021/22

11.1 David Sanni, Director of Corporate Resources at London Councils presented this report, which detailed the provisional pre-audited final accounts for London Councils Grants Committee for 2021/22.

11.2 Director of Corporate Resources added that Grant Thornton LLP was due to audit the Grants Committee's accounts for 2021/22 in October 2022. The audited accounts would be presented to the Audit Committee, along with the annual audit report, for approval. The London Councils' Executive would then be asked to adopt the accounts at its November 2022 meeting. The audited accounts and annual audit report would also be circulated to all members of the Grants Committee.

11.3 Members were asked to note that the underspend on commissioned services were offset by overspends on staff and evaluation costs and that the provisional level of uncommitted reserves was c.£790,000.

11.4 Cllr Goddard requested that a formal conversation be held with the auditors regarding the pension liability fund and the minimum level of reserves, as this could have a significant effect on any decision-making with regards to future spending. The Director of Corporate Resources said that he would raise this with the auditors, but noted that the triennial valuation was a better measure of the pension deficit as it took into account a more realistic view of investments.

11.5 Grants Committee members:

- Noted the provisional pre-audited outturn position and the indicative surplus of £56,000 for 2021/22, the final year of the extended five-year programme of commissions;
- Noted the provisional level of reserves and the financial outlook.

12. Partner Presentation: Women and Girls Network (ASCENT Advice and Counselling Project) and IKWRO

12.1 Tai Rosenzweig (Women and Girls Network) gave a presentation on the organisation's ASCENT project and said that:

- ASCENT Advice and Counselling Project provides support services for women and girls (aged 14+) who have been impacted by all aspects of violence against women and girls, including those who face multiple disadvantages and additional barriers, such as those with No Recourse to Public Funds status.
- The project has two London hubs and has spokes across all the London boroughs. ASCENT support workers speak a number of community languages including Arabic and languages commonly spoken in South-East Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe. They also have specialised translators for the languages not spoken by the ASCENT staff.
- The project helps service address issues with housing, legal matters, emotional well-being, child-related issues and counselling, amongst others. Relevant services such as social services and the police are contacted when appropriate.
- The project also helps with training legal professionals, who are taught to understand the dynamics surrounding violence against women and girls.
- Recent challenges include an increase in mental health issues, increase in sexual violence, the cost of living crisis, and housing issues.

12.2 Nazira Mehman gave a summary of the work of IKWRO:

- IKWRO specialises in providing practical support and counselling to Middle Eastern, North African and Afghan women and girls living in the UK, who have experienced, or are at risk of “honour” based abuse, including; forced marriage, child marriage and female genital mutilation, or domestic abuse.
- Most of IKWRO’s clients would not be comfortable in going to mainstream organisations or the police for help, due to language and cultural barriers. The support workers speak a number of community languages and women are helped access services such as health, legal and housing services.
- The charity also operates a refuge for women who are victims of domestic abuse.

13. Performance of Grants Programme 2017-22: April 2017 to March 2022 (end of programme)

13.1 FERIA Henry, Grants Manager, London Councils, summarised the main points in the report, which provided members with an update on the two priorities of the Grants programme, for the period April 2017 to March 2022. She said that all 13 projects have ended their cycle with a Green RAG-rating. Some of the highlights from the report were:

- Priority 1, Combatting Homelessness, performed five per cent above profile overall. Some of the notable successes included:
 - The STAR Partnership, where Praxis have made a significant impact with their immigration advice.
 - The London Youth Gateway's 'hub and spoke' model, which provided two clear building-based points of access in north London (the NHYC day centre) and south London (Depaul UK Endeavour Centre), together with satellite services, drop-ins, street and prison outreach, and community-based support across the capital.
 - St Mungo's has established and strengthened multi-agency partnerships through the Grants Programme, and have carried out some valuable work with the rehabilitation of people leaving prison. St Mungo's has also continued to provide support services for ex-offenders under 35, many of whom have complex needs.
 - Homeless Link's PLUS Project, has continued to focus on innovative and emerging practices.
- Priority 2, Tackling Sexual and Domestic Violence, was nine per cent below profile overall. This was mainly due to the fact that the work of Tender Education and Arts was severely impacted by the pandemic due to school closures and schools prioritising core subjects post-lockdown. Some of the successes across Priority 2 included:
 - Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) worked with survivors on finding or retaining safe housing by making homelessness applications, applying non-molestation or occupation orders, working with women

experiencing harmful practices and the creation of sector wide innovations in harmful practices interventions and partnership work.

- The Ascent EHP partnership and report making small but important steps in reversing the longstanding inequalities faced by the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) specialist sector.
 - SignHealth's Domestic Abuse Service have been able to continue ongoing face to face support and delivering workshops to the Deaf community in London.
 - Galop as Lead Partner of the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP) were involved in a number of high-profile campaigns, such as the Home Office's You Are Not Alone campaign, as well as campaigns from Women's Aid, Hestia, and Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)/MOPAC.
- Some of the challenges that applied across both priorities were working with councils to accept service users under various responsibilities including homelessness. Those experiencing the most barriers were young people, those weaving prison, and those with complex needs. There was also a significant increase in calls to helplines during the last two years of the programme due to the Covid19 pandemic. Projects had also experienced challenges to staffing and recruitment due to the added stress and pressure on staff during the pandemic. However, the partnership model meant that if an organisation was experiencing recruitment issues, other partners could step in to cover. In light of the staffing challenges experienced by a number of organisations, London Councils officers have asked partners to look at their budgets for the 2022-26 programme to see if they could allocate some resources for staff mental health.
 - Feedback from the funded partners, staff, stakeholders and service users on the impact of the projects has been very positive.
 - The Youth Homelessness Hub 12-month pilot, run by New Horizon Youth Centre and Depaul UK, working with Cardinal Hume Centre, was open to any young person aged 18-24 years of age who was rough sleeping or at immediate risk of doing so. Young people were then supported to move on into private rented properties, supported accommodation, local authority housing, accommodation projects run by New Horizon, and to return to their

families (where appropriate). By the end of April 2022, 185 young people had stayed as guests at Hotel 1824 with 132 of them having moved on positively. The Department for Levelling up Communities and Housing is currently considering a grant via the Rough Sleeping Initiative and if successful this will ensure longer term security for the provision.

14. Grants Programme 2022-26: Implementation Update

14.1 The Strategy Director introduced the report which provided an update on the implementation of the new Grants programme:

- At the November 2021 meeting, Grants Committee agreed recommendations for grant funding for Priority 1, Combatting Homelessness, and Priority 2, Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence for the 2022-2026 Pan-London Grants Programme.
- Since then, the Grants team have been working with partners to get the grant agreements signed and there were only two outstanding agreements, which were due to be signed off shortly.
- The first quarter report would be out in November 2022. London Councils' Grants team were looking at allocating budgets more flexibly over the life of the programme, which would be particularly helpful when organisations encounter staffing problems. The Grants team were also conscious of the cost-of-living crisis and the impact it was likely to have on organisations and people accessing services.

14.2 Grants Committee members would be given the opportunity to be involved with the programme, in terms of visits, and being 'champions' for certain areas – this could include one-off work and ongoing involvement. Members were invited to get in touch with the Grants team if they wanted to champion a particular element of the Grants Programme.

14.3 In response to a question on the impact of rising inflation on the viability of projects, the Strategy Director replied that regular conversations were being held with funded organisations to ensure they could still deliver in the current challenging financial climate. There was also a possibility for the Grants Committee to ringfence some reserves.

14.4 In response to a question about carrying out a cost/benefit analysis of the Grants programme to all the boroughs, the Strategy Director said that the report in November 2021 showed the levy contribution that each borough made to the programme. However, a cost/benefit analysis is not done at borough level, as this was a pan-London programme.

14.5 Grants Committee members:

- Noted the activity to-date and continuing activity to implement the 2022-2026 pan-London Grants Programme;
- Noted the final awarded grant values to partners who are delivering the programme from April 2022.

The meeting finished at 1pm.