

LONDON COUNCILS' GRANTS COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE – INFORMAL MEETING

Minutes of the Informal Grants Committee Executive meeting held via Microsoft Teams on Monday 14 November 2022 at 10am

Members:

Mayor Damien Egan (LB Lewisham) - Chair
Cllr David Leaf (LB Bexley)
Cllr Marian James (LB Sutton)
Cllr Stephanie Cryan (LB Southwark)
Cllr Eleanor Stringer (LB Merton)
Cllr Sof McVeigh (RB Kensington & Chelsea)
Cllr Jean Lammiman (LB Harrow)
Paul Martinelli (City of London)

London Councils officers were in attendance.

The Chair welcomed Grants Executive members and London Councils officers to the meeting.

1 Apologies for Absence and Announcement of Deputies

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz (LB Islington) and Cllr Vicky Ashworth (LB Waltham Forest)

2 Declarations of Interests*

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Grants Executive held on 2 March 2022 (for noting – to be agreed by Urgency)

3.1 The minutes were noted with the following amendment: Cllr James to be added to the list of attendees.

4 Minutes of Grants Committee AGM held on 13 July 2022 (for noting)

4.1 The minutes were noted.

5 Review of Agenda for Grants Committee 30 November 2022

5.1 Strategy Director – London's Communities introduced this item and said that:

- Items 1-5 – these were the standard items, including a report on the performance of the new Grants Programme from April 2022 to September 2022.
- Item 6 - James Banks, Chief Executive of London Funders, has been invited to speak at the next Grants Committee meeting on London Funders' support to boroughs (London Councils pay £60,000 per annum on behalf of the boroughs for their services) and the Grants Programme. His presentation would also cover the cost of living crisis. One of the roles of London Funders was to consider issues such as how to fund projects in a more strategic way and how to ensure the reach of projects across London (for example through its project *Propel*). The Strategy Director was a Trustee of London Funders on London Councils' behalf and it would be helpful for the Grants Committee to consider what else could be done to maximise the benefits of this role.
- Item 7 - *Deferred Commissioning of Refuge Provision for the 2022-2026 Programme* – the Grants Committee Executive would discuss this report at the present meeting, and then the Grants Committee would be asked to endorse the proposals at the meeting on 30 November.
- Item 8 - *London Councils Grants Scheme - Budget Proposals 2023-24*
- Item 9 - *Month 6 Revenue Forecast 2022-23*

5.2 In response to a question from a member on whether the breakdown of borough contributions would be included in the budget report for the benefit of new members, the Strategy Director confirmed that borough contributions and other data such as population shifts would be included in the report.

5.3 In response to a members' suggestion that since both London Funders and the Grants Programme were doing work on the cost of living crisis, it would be useful if the CEX of London Funders talked about how those two streams of work align in his presentation at the Grants Committee, the Strategy Director said that she would ask the CEX of London Funders to cover this in his presentation.

5.4 Grants Committee Executive members agreed the proposed agenda for the Grants Committee meeting on 30 November 2022.

6 Deferred Commissioning of Refuge Provision for the 2022-2026 Programme – Next Steps

6.1 The Strategy Director introduced this item and said that in March 2021, Grants Committee agreed to delay this commission due to the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which placed new duties on the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) with regards to commissioning provision for domestic abuse. The intention was to see what work the GLA and MOPAC would commission, in order to ensure there were synergies with the work of the Grants Programme. The existing grant agreement with Ashiana Network for provision of refuge services was extended to the end of March 2023. This delay to commissioning meant that the timescales would be quite tight; however, they were still achievable.

6.2 The Strategy Director introduced Rachel Buttrick, the London Councils lead on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) policy at London Councils, who has been liaising with the GLA and MOPAC as part of this work.

6.3 In response to a question from a member about how this work related to the existing borough provision for VAWG, the Strategy Director said that GLA and MOPAC, with involvement with London Councils, had undertaken a strategic review and the Grants Committee would be guided by what comes out of the reviews.

6.4 In response to a question about whether a spike in demand was expected due to the current economic circumstances, the Strategy Director said that demand continued to outstrip supply; however, it was not the level of funding that was the main consideration, but other issues, such as having sufficient 'move-on' provision from refuges. Rachel Buttrick added that the cost of housing in London was a major factor as to why women tended to stay in refuges in London for longer periods of time, than was the case outside the Capital. In addition, service providers were reporting an increase in complexity of needs – e.g. more people needing immigration advice, more people presenting with mental health issues, which led to additional case management, as working with individuals was now taking more time than it used to.

6.5 In response to a member's question about the possibility for providing 'move-on' accommodation outside London, the Strategy Director said that this was a possibility that could be looked into. However, this would not be an ideal solution, as it would put additional pressure on out of London boroughs, and it would be harder to put in place the necessary support arrangements.

6.6 In response to a question about the financial risk of inflation on the Grants Committee budget, the Strategy Director said that the financial pressures may have an impact on the volume of what is delivered.

6.7 In response to a question about overlap with the GLA/MOPAC work, the Strategy Director said that all commissions were undergoing similar demand pressures, especially in specialist provision (e.g. women who flee with adolescent boys were finding it hard to access provision as their sons were considered men). There was also a shortage of provision for women with disabilities (e.g. blindness, deafness) and also learning disabilities, both in terms of accommodation and support available. London Councils would be working with the GLA on this.

6.8 In response to a question about members getting access to borough by borough breakdown of information about instances of VAWG, the Strategy Director said that this data would be sent to members after the meeting. London Councils officers also had access to national statistics which they were happy to share with the Grants

Committee Executive members. However, caution must be exercised as DV incidences were still underreported. The Strategy Director agreed to send the draft service specification to members (with the proviso that this information needed to be kept confidential until the Grants Committee papers for 30 November meeting were published).

6.9 In response to a question about whether the Grants Committee were looking for a single provider or a consortium, the Strategy Director said that consortium proposals would be encouraged, partly because of the complexity of the issue and also because of the need to have access to niche provision.

6.10 The Strategy Director added that there would be a 'market warming' event the following week, where London Councils officers will give a presentation to the sector which would contain the key things that the Grants Committee was looking for in the specification and the key things that needed to be included in the application.

Action: Strategy Director to email members after the market warming event

Action: Strategy Director to email members information on VAWG statistics, broken down by borough, and email the draft specification

6.11 Members agreed Grants Committee Executive takes the decision to award the grant for refuge provision in late January 2023

The meeting ended at 10.30am