

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 16 January 2017

Wards: All

Subject: London Councils Grants Scheme
Subscription for 2017/18

Lead officer: Paul Dale, AD Resources

Lead member: Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community
Safety, Engagement and Equalities

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Recommendations:

1. That Cabinet approves the council's contribution to the London Councils Grants Scheme 2017/18 as per the subscription set by London Councils Leaders' Committee on 6 December 2016;
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The London Councils Leaders' Committee has set a revised budget for the London Councils Grants Scheme (LCGS) for 2017/18. The LCGS is governed by statute which requires the budget to be approved by two thirds of London boroughs by 20 January 2017.
- 1.2 This report seeks Cabinet's approval for Merton's contribution to the LCGS for 2017/18, which the London Councils Leaders' Committee has determined should be £180,853. This can be met within existing resources.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1 The LCGS funds a range of services across London with financial contributions from all London boroughs. The budget for the grants scheme is determined by the London Councils Leaders' Committee and boroughs are asked to confirm their contributions each year.
- 2.2 In 2016/17 the London Councils Leaders' Committee determined Merton's contribution to be £214,515.
- 2.3 For 2017/18 London Councils Leaders' Committee has determined Merton's contribution to be £180,853 which represents a £33,661 reduction compared to 2016/17.
- 2.4 This reduction followed the conclusion of the Grants Review during 2015/16, which included two public consultations and consideration of a wide range of evidence including equalities impact information.

- 2.5 Based on the findings of the Grants Review, the London Council's Leaders' Committee agreed in March 2016 to deliver a Grants Programme from April 2017 focussed on three priorities:
- Priority 1 – combatting homelessness
 - Priority 2 – tackling sexual and domestic violence
 - Priority 3 – tackling poverty through employment (European Social Fund match funded).
- 2.6 Priority 4 which previously focussed on capacity building in the voluntary sector will cease to exist. The budget proposals to the Grants Committee and Leaders Committee reflected this reduction of £1.332 million compared to the 2016/17 budget. As part of this saving, a proposal to fund an additional officer resource whose role would be to represent boroughs needs to independent funders and supporting performance management was agreed.
- 2.7 With this in mind, the £180,853 subscription for 2017/18 can be met within existing resources, and Cabinet is therefore recommended to approve Merton's contribution in line with the decision of the London Councils Leaders' Committee.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Merton could decide not to approve the proposed contribution. However, if at least two thirds of London boroughs approve the budget it will apply to all councils.
- 3.2 If at least two thirds of constituent councils do not agree the revised budget within the timescales, then the subscription levied for 2016/17 (£214,515) will apply in 2017/18.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 A Grants Review in 2015/16 was carried out. It included two public consultations. The London Councils Leaders' Committee approved the overall revenue budget for London Councils for 2017/18 and the level of borough subscriptions and charges for the year on 23 November 2016, including those relating to the LCGS.
- 4.2 A circular setting out individual borough subscriptions and charges to be levied in 2017/18 was sent to Chief Executives on 09 December 2016, and is attached to this report as Appendix I.

5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The subscription for 2017/18 can be met within existing resources. The saving of £33,661 will count toward the savings target previously agreed by Cabinet in the Business Plan 2016-20.

6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The LCGS is governed by statute which requires at least two thirds of London boroughs to approve the budget in order for the budget to apply to all councils. If at least two thirds of constituent councils do not agree the

revised budget within the timescales, then the subscription levied for 2016/17, £214,515 will apply for 2017/18.

- 6.1. The LCGS can only be revoked if a majority of the member councils so decide. In such circumstances the revocation would take effect from the end of any financial year after that in which the decision to revoke is made. The Council cannot, therefore, unilaterally withdraw from the scheme and is bound to make a contribution to the scheme in 2017/18.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None for the purposes of this report.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Appendix I: London Councils Grants Budget – Borough Contributions 2017-18

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1. None.

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