

For general release

REPORT TO:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee 25 July 2012
AGENDA ITEM:	5
SUBJECT:	CALL-IN: Grant funding to voluntary organisations for the Education Community Grants Programme
LEAD OFFICER:	Cover report: Julie Belvir Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer Director of democratic and Legal Services
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Tim Pollard Cabinet Member for Children Families and Learning

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	Cabinet's decision of 9 July 2012 on grant funding for voluntary organisations for the Education Community Grants Programme has been called in by 18 Members of the Council
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To consider and respond to the Call-in in accordance with the procedure set out in the Council's constitution

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The decisions taken by Cabinet on 9 July 2012 on grant funding for voluntary organisations for the Education Community Grants Programme have been called in by 18 members of the Council. Attached is the original report to Cabinet. This report details the decisions of Cabinet, the reasons given for the Call-In and the relevant procedures for call-ins in the Council's Constitution.

2. CALL-IN: GRANT FUNDING FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME

2.1 REPORT TO CABINET

Cabinet considered a report by Cllr Tim Pollard (Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning) and Paula Dunkley, Interim Inclusion Officer, on the future of grant funding to voluntary organisations for Education Community Grants Programme at its 9 July meeting. The report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The Cabinet , having given consideration to the report, agreed to:

1. The commissioning of a mentoring programme targeted at BME communities in the north of the borough at a value of £15,000 per year as part of a single coordinated approach to mentoring from January 2013
2. The principle of further funding, using some external grant funding for this purpose, subject to agreement of the funding agency.
3. The cessation of funding for community language classes, supplementary education provision and the play scheme from January 2013, which will have the effect of saving £78k per year.

2.2 CALL-IN

Cabinet's decision was called in on Thursday 12 July 2012 by 18 members of the Council. The completed pro-forma is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The reasons stated for the Call-In were that:

1. The decision is outside of the Policy Framework
2. The decision is inconsistent with the budget
3. The decision is inconsistent with another Council Policy
4. Other:

1) The failure to provide sufficient detail on the performance of individual BME groups so that the under-performance of children from a Caribbean and white & Caribbean heritage relative to the Croydon average was hidden, giving a false impression of performance and avoiding the need to discuss any ongoing needs for these groups of children

2) Impact on education attainment by BME groups in Croydon - the decision ignores the contribution that these services to the increase in attainment of these groups and the risk that attainment will fall back if the funding is cut

3) That school exclusions still proportionally impacts on BME groups and remains an issue of concern

4) There has been insufficient consultation with children and young people who use these services so that the impact from their perspective is not properly understood

5) No evidence that Croydon Secondary Schools will make up shortfall in funding for supplementary education, or that a free school initiative is a viable or desirable alternative

6) More clarification is needed on future of Mentoring projects to assess suitability of new approach

7) The majority of the organisations funded operate in the deprived North of the Borough and the report does not address the concerns of local voluntary organisations that, coming on top of the previous cuts to BME voluntary sector organisations in North Croydon, there is a risk of hollowing out the sector in an area of high deprivation

The outcome desired is:

- 1) To withdraw/suspend current funding cuts
- 2) To re-engage in a meaningful consultation with the community groups on the proposals
- 3) to bring a new report back to Cabinet in autumn outlining community group responses to the current proposals
- 4) To provide more detailed information on those project the Council will continue funding

2.3 Call-In Procedures

The Council's constitution states:

- 2.3.1 At the meeting, the referral will be considered by the Committee which shall determine how much time it will give to the call-in and how the item will be dealt with including whether or not it wishes to review the decision. If having considered the decision there are still concerns about the decision then the Committee may refer it back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of the concerns. The Cabinet shall then reconsider the decision, amending the decision or not, before making a final decision.
- 2.3.2 The Scrutiny and Overview Committee may refer the decision to the Council if it considers that the decision taken by the Leader or Cabinet is outside the Budget and Policy Framework of the Council. The Council may decide to take no further action in which case the decision may be implemented. If the Council objects to Cabinet's decision it can nullify the decision if it is outside the Policy Framework and/or inconsistent with the Budget.
- 2.3.3 If the Scrutiny and Overview Committee decides that no further action is necessary then the decision may be implemented.
- 2.3.4 If the Council determines that the decision was within the Policy Framework and consistent with the Budget, it will refer any decision to which it objects, together with its views on the decision, to the Cabinet. The Cabinet shall choose whether to either, amend, withdraw or implement the original decision within 10 working days, or at the next meeting of the Cabinet after the referral from the Council.
- 2.3.5 The responses of the decision-taker and the Council shall be notified to all Members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee once the Cabinet or Council has considered the matter and made a determination.
- 2.3.6 If either the Council or the Scrutiny and Overview Committee fails to meet in accordance with the Council calendar or in accordance with paragraph 11.08 above, then the decision may be implemented on the next working day after the meeting was scheduled or arranged to take place.
- 2.3.7 The Council's constitution states that
'if the scrutiny of Health Services, Crime and Disorder matters or the duties and functions of the Council as a Local Education Authority are delegated to a Sub-Committee, that Sub-Committee shall have sole power to scrutinise that matter included within its terms of reference and may report direct to the Cabinet'.

2.3.8 The call-in is therefore being convened by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Appendices

1. Report to the 9 July Cabinet meeting on the future of grant funding to voluntary organisations for Education Community Grants Programme
2. Completed Call-In pro-forma

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None