

# MEETING OF THE ENGLAND COMMITTEE

12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Microsoft Teams

## MINUTES

### PRESENT:

John Mothersole	Chair
Kevin Bone	Member
Halima Khan	Member
Kamran Rashid	Member
Karin Woodley	Member

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Phil Chamberlain	England Director
Emma Corrigan	England Director
Jon Eastwood	Deputy Director, England
Mark Purvis	Deputy Director, England
Hannah Rignell	Deputy Director, England
Catherine Lindsey	Senior Governance Officer (Minutes)

### FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS:

Mike Bates	Senior Head of Finance (Item 3)
Juliette Kelvin	Senior Grantmaking Manager (Items 5&6)
Amandeep Khondo	Funding Officer (Item 5)
Rachel Mitchell	Funding Officer (Item 5)
Gillian Halliwell	Head of Regional Funding, North West (Item 5)
Amy Ingram	Funding Officer (Item 6)
Alexandra Cosme	Funding Officer (Item 6)
Richard Beadon Ekers	Funding Officer (Item 6)
Tia Halliday	Funding Officer (Item 6)
Sara Dalton	Funding Officer (Item 6)
Abi Tsouvallaris	Funding Officer (Item 6)
Diane Hall-Williams	Funding Manager (Item 6)
Lucy Tennant	Funding Officer (Item 6)
Andrew Chapman	Funding Officer (Item 6)
Jennie Thompson	Head of Funding, Strategic Programmes (Item 6) (Observing)
Andy Gray	Development Manager (Item 6) (Observing)

## 1. COMMITTEE INFORMAL CATCH UP

- 1.1. The Committee held a closed session for members only.

*ESLT and the Senior Governance Officer joined the meeting.*

## 2. WELCOME

- 2.1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all.
- 2.2. Apologies were received from Ray Coyle.
- 2.3. Halima Khan had declared connections with three of the organisations whose proposals were to be considered by the Committee: London Funders, Romsey Mill Trust and Youth Options. The Chair agreed that two of the connections were not significant and therefore would not disqualify Halima from participating in decision-making.
- 2.4. Halima's connection to Youth Options was deemed appropriate for NOTING by the Committee and Halima AGREED that she would not participate in decision-making

regarding the application.

- 2.5. Emma Corrigan declared, as a trustee of London Funders, she would not be participating in any discussion regarding the organisation's application for a grant variation.
- 2.6. The minutes for the business meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 and strategic meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were **APPROVED** as an accurate record.
- 2.7. There were no matters arising.

### 3. **ENGLAND UPDATE**

*Mike Bates joined the meeting.*

- 3.1. Emma Corrigan introduced the report, highlighting that feedback from the most recent staff survey indicated a significant improved outcome for England. The Committee praised leadership within the Directorate, particularly noting the improved culture since the appointment of the current Directors. ESLT felt that the positive response from colleagues gave the portfolio a strong platform from which it could progress into the coming year of change.

#### **Portfolio Review**

- 3.2. Hannah Rignell thanked the Committee for their input at the meeting in February. At the next strategic meeting the team hoped to present a sense of what the portfolio might look like in terms of priorities and where funding might sit.
- 3.3. The outcomes and discussions of February's meeting had been reflected across the Directorate and positive feedback had been received. Time had been allocated in late April and early May for soft testing of some portfolio review conclusions externally, and the portfolio was seeking a partner organisation to run community engagement events with a focus in areas which currently did not see much Fund activity.
- 3.4. Committee members praised the engagement taking place with them as mission leads outside of meetings, noting that the team were open and responsive. They queried whether headline outcomes and learning from the portfolio's previous large programmes could factor into how the review moved forward. ESLT reassured members that these had been considered during the strategic renewal process, and AGREED to pull together a fact sheet to be circulated for the Committee's information.

**ACTION: ESLT**

#### **Latest Financial Position**

- 3.5. Mike Bates summarised the portfolio's financial position, highlighting 2023/24 performance on Grant Awards, Operating Costs, Income and headline figures from the latest forecast.
- 3.6. In response to a query from the Chair regarding the unallocated sum discussed during the January meeting, Mike confirmed this had been pushed into future years. Noting that the sector was facing a funding crisis, the Chair was keen that this amount be looked at as a resource for sector support, rather than be absorbed into larger Reaching Communities or Awards for All (AFA) pots. ESLT confirmed that this was feeding into the portfolio review process and would be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

- 3.7. Regarding income projections and the scope for significant growth going forward, the Committee queried what strategic approach would be taken should the portfolio be required to scale up its activity significantly. ESLT advised that these considerations were factoring into business planning discussions, with Directors keen to ensure that the portfolio remain flexible and agile in order to deliver at pace and scale, however noting that any large uptick in growth would not impact the budget until FY 25/26. Mike confirmed that Finance had no concerns regarding the upcoming FY but were monitoring projections for 25/26.
- 3.8. Noting the immediacy of the crisis facing the sector and the anticipation of income growth for the Fund in the long-term, Committee members encouraged ESLT to consider the wider context in which the Fund was operating and how current unallocated sums might be used to bridge this gap. ESLT confirmed that the strategic meeting in April would include a conversation regarding infrastructure, which could be used as an opportunity to discuss this further.

### **Third Party Activity**

#### ***Sections 3.9 - 3.11 are Commercially Sensitive - S43(2)***

#### **Revised Paper Format**

- 3.12. Halima Khan, together with England's Deputy Director for Operations, had worked with Funding and Continuous Improvement colleagues on an updated format for Funding Decision papers. Two papers for consideration at this meeting (P31 and P32) had been submitted in the revised format.
  - 3.13. The Chair thanked Halima and Fund colleagues for their work, and the Committee responded positively to the revised format. Members advised that inclusion of details that placed the application within the context of the portfolio would be welcome, for instance if the project was the only one of its kind within a region/area, or addressed a specific gap in the portfolio.
  - 3.14. Committee members also requested that richer detail be provided regarding EDI, specifically the number of trustees and senior staff who had protected characteristics within the organisations applying for funding. This information was requested by the Fund as part of the application process, and using it effectively would be key in achieving a meaningful equity-based approach going forward.
  - 3.15. ESLT advised that the Fund-wide position on data use and legal permissions presented challenges around utilising EDI information in this way, however they acknowledged that it was something they would like to achieve and would be working towards once appropriate systems were in place. The Committee indicated they would, nonetheless, like to see more assertive statements provided regarding organisations' EDI positions and intentions, within the confines of the Fund's current privacy notice.
  - 3.16. The Committee also supported including analysis of stage 1 rejected applications in the England Update paper intermittently going forward, with an occasional deep dive to provide members with a richer picture and an idea of trends around unsuccessful applications.
- ACTION: ESLT**
- 3.17. The Committee agreed that, in order to ensure all applications were being scrutinised in the same way and to build culture of similar thinking between the

Committee and Fund colleagues, there should be a small number of 'core' points covered by each Funding Decision paper presented for consideration. ESLT confirmed this would be picked up offline with Committee members and the Deputy Director for Operations.

**ACTION:** ESLT and Committee Members

- 3.18. The Committee, having provided feedback and noting a resource implication flagged by ESLT, AGREED to the adoption of the new template as best possible, recognising that the change might not be immediate but work would be ongoing to improve papers in line with members' comments.

*Mike Bates left the meeting.*

#### **4. BBO CONTINGENCY UPDATE**

*Section 4 is Commercially Sensitive - S43(2)*

#### **4. GRANT VARIATIONS & FUNDING DECISIONS**

*Section 5 is Commercially Sensitive - S43(2)*

- 4.1. Grant Variations and Funding decisions are restricted and can be found in Annex A.

#### **5. REFLECTIONS ON THE DAY**

- 5.1. The Chair, noting that this would be Kevin Bone's final meeting, thanked him for his time, efforts and invaluable contributions made to England Committee during his time as a member. Committee members and Fund colleagues wished him well.
- 5.2. Committee members and ESLT reflected positively on the meeting, and discussed the merits of undertaking more reflective conversations in the presence of Funding colleagues in order to unpack and identify the Committee's position on broader portfolio matters.
- 5.3. ESLT, noting that the financial year end was approaching, praised the considerable work carried out by teams in distributing an additional £100m in National Lottery funding, and delivering two additional third party programmes. The Chair echoed this praise and advised he would communicate his thanks in writing to teams.

**ACTION:** John Mothersole

- 5.4. There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 15:25.