

GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL

15 SEPTEMBER 2003

Chair: * Councillor Harrison

Councillors: * Arnold * Mrs Joyce Nickolay
 * Marilyn Ashton * Anjana Patel
 * Bluston * N Shah
 * Ismail * Thammaiah

* Denotes Member present

RECOMMENDATION 1 (To Portfolio Holder): Reserved Grants 2003/04

The Panel received a report in the name of the Chief Executive which provided an update on the reserved grants to Voluntary Organisations 2003/04. Members expressed concern that additional information had not been forthcoming from Harrow in Europe. The Chair agreed to write to the organisation to advise that the Panel were minded to withdraw the funding held in reserve if further information was not provided by the organisation by the time of the next Panel meeting in November. Members were reminded that Harrow Women's Centre would not be in a position to ascertain true running costs until they had been in the new premises for at least six months. Members were advised that sufficient information had now been received from Harrow Kuwaiti Community Association to support the release of the group's reserved grant.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: That (1) the reserved grant of £1,000 be released to the Harrow Kuwaiti Community Association;

(2) the reserved grant of £2,500 for Harrow in Europe and the reserved grant of £5,000 for the Harrow Women's Centre remain reserved.

REASON: To enable the Harrow Kuwaiti Association to improve its services by utilising the reserved grant. To give Harrow in Europe and Harrow Women's Centre time to provide the required information.

RECOMMENDATION 2 (To Portfolio Holder): Monitoring of Grant Funding Allocated in 2002/03

The Panel received a report in the name of the Chief Executive detailing monitoring information supplied by organisations in receipt of grant funding in 2002/03. Forms were sent to thirty-six organisations, all of which were returned, although reminders and duplicate forms were sent to some of the groups.

Members welcomed the summaries of the monitoring forms. A Member added that a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data was useful. The report suggested that the monitoring process be refined to enable greater analysis. An officer advised that all groups in receipt of funding were required to provide annual accounts and monitoring forms. Groups that had a service level agreement or were in receipt of a grant in excess of £3,500 were visited, which made the monitoring process easier to carry out than for groups in receipt of smaller grants.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: That (1) the monitoring and assessment information submitted by organisations in receipt of funding in 2002/03 be noted;

(2) the setting of specific outcomes for each funded organisation be further explored, and that future monitoring could concentrate on outcomes agreed in advance with the organisations, which could be supported by documentary evidence.

REASON: To enable the Council to carry out a more meaningful monitoring of the organisations it funds and to be able to ascertain that the funding provided meets specific objectives and targets in line with the Council's priorities.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (To Portfolio Holder): Grants to Voluntary Organisations: Proposed New Funding Priorities

The Panel received a report in the name of the Chief Executive, which outlined proposed changes to funding priorities and sought agreement from the Panel to put the proposals out to wide consultation with the voluntary sector.

The report noted that grants budget funding tended to reflect the historical priorities. Recent work had been carried out which had identified areas of need and a number of areas that could be prioritised in future.

A Member noted that only 20% of groups had currently been awarded a Quality Mark and enquired as to how and when groups were made aware of the Marks. An officer advised that three seminars had taken place with representatives of the Legal Services Commission for all voluntary organisation regardless of whether they were funded by the Council or not. Such Marks demonstrated that groups were ready to administer public funds, and groups were regularly advised of the benefits of recognised Marks. One of the seminars had taken place at the community premises and two of the groups that had attended had since achieved a Quality Mark.

A Member requested information on the target of 20.5%. The officer advised that the Audit Commission set the target, and that he was of the view that the number of groups with Marks was likely to increase when applications for 2004/05 were received.

In response to a question from the Chair, the officer advised that Quality Marks were not included on the application form for grant funding as it was not current policy, but agreed that it would become relevant to the process if in future it was agreed that priority should be given to those with a recognised quality assurance award.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: That (1) the proposed changes to funding priorities set out in the officer report be approved in principle to enable them to be considered by the forthcoming Grants Review.

(2) that the proposed changes be put to wide consultation with the voluntary sector prior to the changes being formally approved by the Executive.

REASON: To ensure that the Council's funding meets identified Council priorities and the quality of services funded by the grants is underpinned by quality assurance systems in most of the organisations funded by the Council.

RECOMMENDATION 4 (To Portfolio Holder): Street Collections 2003

The Panel received a report detailing an application received from Community Aid UK, a registered charity offering financial support to local hospices, hospitals and individual people with special needs.

The organisation was a registered charity, but the organisation had only been formed six months ago. A Member suggested that the officer request that the organisation provide details of the distribution of funding.

Members noted that registered charities were required to produce audited accounts and that the Panel could take comfort from this when considering applications for sponsorship.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: That the application received from Community Aid UK to hold a street collection between 27 October and 1 November 2003 be sponsored.

REASON: To enable the organisation to make formal application to the Metropolitan Police in order to obtain a permit to collect on the dates specified in the application.

65. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at the meeting.

66. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

- Councillors Marilyn Ashton, Arnold, Harrison and Joyce Nickolay declared a prejudicial interest in Harrow in Europe (Agenda Item10), but in accordance with Paragraph 12.2 of the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors they remained and took part in discussions and voting on the agenda item in question.
- Councillor Arnold declared a personal interest in Harrow Citizens' Advice Bureau (Management Committee).
- Councillor Bluston declared a personal interest in Harrow in Business and North

West London Community Foundation.

- Councillor Thammaiah declared a personal interest in the Crime Prevention Panel.
- Councillor Shah declared a personal interest in Harrow Anti Racist Alliance (HARA) Trust.

67. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

68. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the signing of the minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2003 be deferred until printed in the next Council Bound Minute Volume.

69. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no public questions to be received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

70. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no petitions to be received at this meeting submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Advisory Panel Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

71. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no deputations to be received at the meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

72. **References from Council/Cabinet:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no references from Council or Cabinet.

73. **References from other Committees/Panels/Forums**

(i) **Reference from the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 30 June 2003 - Youth Service Plan:**

The Panel received a reference from the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee arising from its consideration of the Youth Service Plan.

The Panel discussed the reference, and were advised that the forthcoming Grants Review would be examining all forms of support to voluntary organisations, including community premises. A Member noted that the Review was therefore more encompassing than that implied by the reference. The Panel were assured that they would have role to play in the process.

RESOLVED: That the Panel receive a report on, and timetable for, the Grants Review at its next meeting.

74. **Reserved Grants 2003/04:**

See Recommendation 1.

75. **Monitoring of Grant Funding Allocated in 2002/03:**

See Recommendation 2.

76. **Grants to Voluntary Organisations - New Funding Priorities:**

See Recommendation 3.

77. **Harrow Agenda 21 - Progress Report:**

The Panel received a report detailing progress made by Harrow Agenda 21 (HA 21) and information on how Local Agenda 21 was supported in other London Boroughs.

The Panel was of the view that HA 21's problems were not financial, but that the organisation was suffering because of its current lack of a Chair, and the effect that this had on lines of communication and participation. The Panel also noted the role that Councillor Alan Blann had played in supporting HA 21.

The Panel agreed to refer the matter to the Publications Advisory Panel and to request that the Panel work with HA 21 in order to raise its profile.

RESOLVED: That (1) the progress report be noted;

(2) the information about Local Agenda 21 in other London boroughs be noted;

(3) that the Publications Advisory Panel be requested to consider ways of publicising and promoting the role of Harrow Agenda 21.

78. **Street Collections 2003:**

Further to Recommendation 4, Members of the Panel noted that the responsibility for the provision of street collection permits would in future rest with the Council rather than the Metropolitan Police.

A Member pointed out that the Council still had capacity to support three more applications for street collections and enquired as to how groups were made aware that opportunities were still available. An officer advised that an advertisement was placed on the Council's website annually, and agreed to ask Community Aid UK how they had become aware of the opportunity. It was suggested that a further advertisement be placed.

79. **Community Premises:**

Under any other business, the Chair advised the meeting that a number of letters had been received arising from the Panel's recent discussion of the three-year rule affecting the Community Premises.

The Panel agreed to send a letter from the Chair to the users of the community premises to clarify the position and to assure users that implementation of the rule would not be necessary unless a number of new and emerging groups applied to use the premises at any one time. Should this position arise, the Council would consult fully with the groups based at the premises in excess of three years.

An officer advised that there was currently only one new application pending (which had not been received in time to be considered by the Panel at this meeting), and that new users were offered casual use for six months in the first instance.

RESOLVED: That a letter be sent from the Chair to all organisations based at the community premises.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.33 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CYRIL HARRISON
Chair