

GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL

11 JUNE 2007

Chairman: * Councillor Joyce Nickolay

Councillors: * Ms Nana Asante * Mrs Myra Michael
* Don Billson * Asad Omar
* Ashok Kulkarni * Stanley Sheinwald
* Dhirajlal Lavingia (4) * Mrs Sasi Suresh
* Julia Merison (2)

Adviser: † Deven Pillay, Chief Executive, Mencap

* Denotes Member present

(2) and (4) Denote category of Reserve Members

† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Community Premises Update**

The Panel received a report of the Director of Financial and Business Strategy updating the Members on the Community Premises review.

The Director of Community and Cultural Services reminded Members of the Panel that this item would be included in the Council's community development strategy, and the subsequent review of support to the voluntary sector, which would start this summer. He further reminded Members that the original allocation of office space was intended for a three-year period to allow groups to establish themselves, although this strategy had not been implemented.

It was proposed to advertise the Community Premises in order to get an indication of interest without guaranteeing space.

A Member expressed concern that certain voluntary groups were funded solely by the Council and felt that these groups needed to look for alternative sources of funding.

Another Member expressed concern that in the case of over-capacity of the Community Premises following the advertising of office space, some voluntary groups could experience difficulties in finding new office space.

Another Member proposed a nominal charge for using the Premises meeting room prior to implementing charges for use of the office space. Members understood that these charges would produce a relatively small income and that a few groups with heavy use of the meeting room would find this financially difficult. Members asked the officer to consult the voluntary groups on this proposal at his next meeting with them. The officer subsequently informed the Panel that organisations had expressed disquiet to any such proposals to implement charges particularly in light of the recent reduced grants allocation.

A suggestion was made to look for alternative funding to help set up a Community Trust.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Portfolio Co-ordination)

That (1) all available space at Community Premises be advertised to assess levels of interest for occupancy (categories – individual office, designated desk, casual desk or postal address for correspondence) of any new and existing users;

(2) the implementation of charges for use of the Community Premises after three years occupancy be deferred until after the review of support to the voluntary sector;

(3) the items listed under 2.2.1 and 2.2.11 of the published officer report be closed until the budgets are available to carry out this work and, in the meantime, grants officers explore any external funding opportunities for this work.

[Reason for Recommendation: To ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Community Premises review.]

(See also Minute 68).

PART II - MINUTES59. **Appointment of Advisory Panel Chairman:**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment at the Cabinet meeting held on 15 May 2007 of Councillor Joyce Nickolay as Chairman of the Grants Advisory Panel for the Municipal Year 2007/2008.

60. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Mrs Anjana Patel
Councillor Mrs Rekha Shah

Reserve Member

Councillor Julia Merison
Councillor Dhirajlal Lavingia

61. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interest was declared:

Agenda Item

10. Community Premises Update

Member

Councillor Lavingia declared a personal interest in that he was a founder of the Hindu Council Harrow. Accordingly, he would remain in the room whilst this matter was considered and voted upon.

62. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

63. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**

Nominations were received and seconded for Councillor Mrs Anjana Patel. It was

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Mrs Anjana Patel as Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the Municipal Year 2007/2008.

64. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2007 be taken as read and signed as a correct record;

(2) the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2007 be deferred until printed in the Council Bound Minute Volume.

65. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

66. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

67. **Deputations:**

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

68. **Community Premises Update:**

Further to Recommendation 1 above, a Member queried what facilities were currently offered to groups that could not use the Community Premises and only required a postal address. The officer responded that this was one of the options being offered to groups.

A Member queried whether any comparative information was available from Merton Council, Harrow Council's closest demographic neighbour, in relation to their Grants Budget. Responding, the officer stated he would include the information at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That (1) the above be noted;

(2) the Director of Community and Cultural Services include the setting up of a Community Trust in the community strategy review.

69. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

Appointment of the Advisor to the Panel

RESOLVED: That Deven Pillay be appointed Advisor to the Panel for the Municipal Year 2007/2008.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.35 pm, closed at 8.50 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JOYCE NICKOLAY
Chairman