

GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL

19 JANUARY 2009

- Chairman: * Councillor Chris Mote
- Councillors: * Ms Nana Asante * Joyce Nickolay
* Don Billson * Asad Omar
* G Chowdhury * Mrs Rekha Shah
* Ashok Kulkarni * Mrs Sasi Suresh
* Mrs Myra Michael
- Adviser: * Mike Coker, Voluntary and Community Sector Representative

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Update and Amendment of Allocations at the Community Premises at 27 Northolt Road**

An officer introduced a report of the Director of Community and Cultural Services, which presented usage and monitoring information on the groups based at the Community Premises at 27 Northolt Road, South Harrow, for the period 1 April to 30 September 2008; it recommended the introduction of certain amendments to the Facilities Use Agreements and their extension to 31 March 2010.

The officer added that, after the allocations agreed at the Grants Advisory Panel meetings of December 2007 and June 2008, there remained two designated desks and casual use space available for allocation. There were no vacant offices.

In order to review the current allocation, officers had used information on the average time that an organisation had spent in its allocated accommodation as well as monitoring the attendance at the Community Premises User Group meetings and the return of the Quarterly Monitoring Forms.

One organisation, Harrow Agenda 21 Environmental Forum, had exceeded its minimum office usage requirements and it was therefore being recommended that it be upgraded from casual use to designated desk accommodation with immediate effect.

Two organisations, Harrow Youth and Community Project and Hestia Housing and Support, had requested that they be downgraded from casual use to 'post box address for correspondence' as they were unable to meet the minimum office usage requirements. It was therefore being recommended that these requests be granted with immediate effect.

To ensure efficient usage of the premises and help monitor the situation more closely, it was proposed that the groups that did not meet their minimum office usage requirements for their current accommodation and/or had not met the monitoring requirements that they had agreed to when signing their Facilities Use Agreement, be subject to a 3-stage monitoring process, as follows:

Stage 1 – Consultation meeting with the Community Premises Co-ordinator to discuss usage and monitoring requirements and any problems/issues faced in meeting them. The outcome of the meeting would be to agree a way forward for the organisation that helped them meet their user requirements, which could be a re-grading of its current accommodation.

If there was no improvement within three months of the Stage 1 or the organisation did not attend the consultation, they would progress to Stage 2;

Stage 2 – An initial written notification would be issued highlighting failure to meet the usage/monitoring requirements. A further consultation meeting with the Co-ordinator would be offered to review issues or agree a re-grading of usage.

If there was no improvement within three months of Stage 2, the organisation would progress to Stage 3;

Stage 3 – A final written notification would be sent with a further three months to improve, with another opportunity to meet with the Co-ordinator to resolve concerns or agree a re-grading of accommodation. If there was no improvement at the end of a further three month period, a report would be presented to the Grants Advisory Panel.

It was also being recommended that all existing Facilities Use Agreements be extended from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 for all organisations as they had all provided monitoring reports that demonstrated they were continuing to provide valuable services to their community in accordance with the Criteria and Conditions of Use and no other applications for accommodation had been received.

It was also being recommended that usage information be collected on a weekly basis in order to ensure that all organisations were monitored by a consistent measure.

In response to questions the officer confirmed that:

- To avoid the implication that some organisations might appear better than others the term 'modified to meet their needs' would replace the terms 'upgrade' and 'downgrade' in future reports;
- Organisations using the premises just as a postal address would be listed as a fourth category in future reports;
- Organisations using the premises as a postal address were eligible to use the meeting and interview rooms, with the stipulation that they provide evidence of the necessary insurance cover being in place.

A Member moved that the improvement period of three months referred to under the 3 Stage Monitoring Process be reduced to two months. The motion was seconded and upon being put to a vote it was carried.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services)

That (1) Harrow Agenda 21 Environmental Forum be upgraded from casual use to designated desk accommodation and officers be authorised to amend the Facilities Use Agreement accordingly with immediate effect;

(2) Hestia Housing and Support and Harrow Youth and Community Project be downgraded from casual use to 'post box address for correspondence', as requested by the organisations and officers be authorised to amend their Facilities Use Agreements accordingly with immediate effect;

(3) officers be authorised to introduce the modified 3-stage monitoring process to groups that have failed to meet usage and/or monitoring requirements and to amend the Criteria and Conditions of Use accordingly;

(4) officers be authorised to extend all existing Facilities Use Agreements from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010;

(5) the existing criteria for the allocation of space be amended so that the minimum office usage requirements for designated desk and casual use accommodation are given in weekly figures, in line with those for individual office accommodation.

[Reason for Recommendation: To enable better utilisation of space at the Community Premises at 27 Northolt Road.]

(See also Minutes 138 and 143).

RECOMMENDATION 2 - Application for Use of the Community Premises Building at 27 Northolt Road

An officer introduced a report of the Director of Community and Cultural Services which presented an application received from Harrow Over 50 Club for use of the Community Premises building at 27 Northolt Road, South Harrow. The organisation wished to make use of the Community Premises for committee meetings (use of meeting room), administrative work and photocopying facilities for three days per week for approximately 3-4 hours per day. The current Criteria and Conditions of Use for the Community Premises stated that the allocation of individual offices and designated desks was only drawn from existing casual users unless the Grants Advisory Panel made a specific decision.

Following consideration of the report, it was

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services)

That (1) casual use accommodation be allocated to Harrow Over 50 Club;

(2) officers be authorised to issue a Facilities Use Agreement to Harrow Over 50 Club with immediate effect until 31 March 2009;

(3) officers be authorised to review the allocation in line with the six-month probation period for new users.

[Reason for Recommendation: To enable better utilisation of space at the Community Premises at 27 Northolt Road.]

(See also Minute 144).

RECOMMENDATION 3 - Applications to the Edward Harvist Trust

An officer introduced a report of the Director of Community and Cultural Services, which set out the applications for monies that had been made to the Edward Harvist Trust Fund as at 31 December 2008. The officer highlighted the accidental omission of the funding request by the Somalia Cultural and Education Association from the final report, which amended the total amount requested from £22,582 to £24,582. If all applications were granted in full, the amount requested would exceed the current balance of Edward Harvist Trust Fund by £9,332.

In response to questions, the officer confirmed that:

- officers would check whether the Edward Harvist Trust Fund was open to applications from tenants' and residents' associations;
- Carramea was not listed as a user of a community premises but their work involved providing training at community premises.

The Chairman suggested to the Panel the option of granting 50% of the funding requested in a bid to ensure fairness to all organisations, and requested the Panel's views on this suggestion. Concerns were raised by the Panel that organisations might have requested a specific amount in order to carry out certain projects, and that these might not be viable should the full funding not be granted. Members also expressed their concerns that, should they scrutinise the appropriateness of the equipment and resources requested by organisations, it would be impossible to make well-informed judgements of where specific funding could be reduced. The Panel agreed to award each organisation 50% of their funding request, which would leave a small reserve sum should any organisation need additional funds in an emergency.

At the request of the Chairman, the officer introduced an additional report on the Girlguiding Middlesex North West application for funding which had been rejected, as the organisation did not meet the qualifying grant condition that 'the applicant must be a voluntary group based in Harrow, with 80% of its beneficiaries either living or working in Harrow'. The Chairman confirmed to the Panel that exceptional reasons were needed before the Grants Advisory Panel could allocate funding.

A Member suggested that, if Harrow could not offer any financial support to the organisation, Girlguiding Middlesex North West might wish to consider offering the use of their premises to neighbouring boroughs. The same Member added that Girlguiding Middlesex North West provided a service that no other organisation could offer in Harrow, and should therefore qualify for a grant for those exceptional reasons. It was noted that the Girlguiding groups in Harrow were essentially buying the services provided by the organisation for the children of the borough.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services)

That (1) the Girlguiding Middlesex North West be added to the list of organisations making applications to the Edward Harvist Trust Fund;

(2) the following organisations be granted the following amounts from the Edward Harvist Trust Fund monies:

- Bridge Trust Organisation - £825
- Bridging Educational Trust - £1,000
- Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association - £900
- Carramea - £298
- Community Link-Up - £935
- Harrow African-Caribbean Association - £1,000
- Harrow Association of Disable People - £1,000
- Harrow Kuwaiti Community Association - £854.50
- Harrow Tamil Association - £1,000
- London Kalibari - £600
- Russian Immigrants' Association - £878.50
- Sai School of Harrow - £1,000
- Somali Cultural and Educational Association - £1,000
- Special Connction - £1,000
- Girlguiding Middlesex North West - £955

[Reason for Recommendation: To enable the distribution of Edward Harvist Trust monies held by Harrow to local voluntary organisations to enable local organisations to deliver services to their members and users, thereby improving the quality of life for people in Harrow.]

(See also Minutes 138 and 145).

PART II - MINUTES

137. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

138. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

| <u>Agenda Item</u> | <u>Member</u> | <u>Nature of Interest</u> |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 7. Update and Amendment of Allocations at the Community Premises at 27 Northolt Road | Councillor Rekha Shah | The Member declared a personal interest in that she was a member of the Harrow Anti-Racist Alliance. She remained in the room whilst this matter was considered and voted upon. |
| 9. Applications to the Edward Harvist Trust – Application from Community Link-Up | Mike Coker, adviser to the Panel | The adviser declared a prejudicial interest in that he was an Executive Director of Community Link-Up. He left the room whilst the allocation of grant to this organisation was considered and voted upon. |

139. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2008 be agreed, subject to the following amendments:

Recommendation 1

That the first sentence of the second paragraph of Recommendation 1 – Update on Harrow Council for Racial Equality should read 'The Chairman informed the Panel...'

Minute 129

That Councillor Golam Chowdhury's name be spelt correctly and that under his Declarations of Interest, reference to LEA Governor be removed.

That under Myra Michael's Declarations of Interests reference Harrow Gingerbread be removed.

Minute 134

That the fourth bullet point of the fourth paragraph be amended to read, 'Both Harrow African-Caribbean Association and Harrow Somali Women's Action Group Volunteers were claiming a flat rate for expenses and they could therefore be taxed on the amount'.

That the last sentence of the first bullet point of the fifth paragraph be amended to read, 'The loan had been repaid and normal funding had resumed'.

That the second bullet point of the fifth paragraph be amended to read, 'The Council could not dictate to Hesita Housing Support which women they legally could or could not work with'.

That the following additional sentence be added to the end of the third bullet point of the fifth paragraph, 'The Panel unanimously requested that the applicant should be written to in advance of the relevant Panel meeting and that all applications should be recorded in the report'.

140. **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).

141. **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).

142. **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).

143. **Update and Amendment of Allocations at the Community Premises at 27 Northolt Road:**

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the report at agenda item 7 was admitted late so that Members could consider the item as a matter of urgency, in order to allow the agreement to be amended and implemented at the earliest opportunity.

Further to Recommendation 1, it was

RESOLVED: That the usage and monitoring information presented in the report and the recommendations be noted.

144. **Application for use of the Community Premises building at 27 Northolt Road:**

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the report at agenda item 8 was admitted late so that Members could consider the item as a matter of urgency, in order to allow a decision to be made regarding the allocation of a community premises.

Further to Recommendation 2, it was

RESOLVED: That the information presented in the report and the recommendations be noted.

145. **Applications to the Edward Harvist Trust:**

Further to Recommendation 3, it was

RESOLVED: That the information presented in the report and the recommendations be noted.

146. **Community Lettings of Schools and Youth and Community Centres:**

The Chairman stated that a report on Community Lettings of School and Youth Community Centres would be submitted to the June 2009 meeting of the Grants Advisory Panel in order to allow the Panel to make an informed decision.

147. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

The Chairman advised the Panel that a decision was still pending on the proposed dissolution of Harrow Council for Racial Equality (HCRE), and that communication between him and the Chairman of HCRE had been difficult over the recent holiday period. A suggestion had been made to the Chairman of HCRE by the Grants Advisory Panel as to a way forward for the organisation and it was hoped that this would be accepted. Harrow Association of Voluntary Services were still looking after the day-to-day running of HCRE, and would continue to do so up until the middle of February 2009. The Chairman concluded that until the HCRE had officially disbanded the monies available for the payment of staff would be unable for release.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.03 pm, closed at 7.33 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRIS MOTE
Chairman