

GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

17 JANUARY 2012

Chairman: * Councillor Nana Asante

Councillors:

* Sue Anderson	* Chris Mote
* Nizam Ismail	* John Nickolay (2)
* Krishna James	* Joyce Nickolay
* Mrs Vina Mithani	* Sasi Suresh

Adviser: * Deven Pillay, Representative, Voluntary and Community Sector

* Denotes Member present

(2) Denotes category of Reserve Members

84. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Manji Kara

Councillor John Nickolay

85. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 8 – Edward Harvist Trust

Councillor Nana Asante declared a Personal Interest in relation to the following organisations: Flash Musicals, Age UK, Harrow MENCAP and Harrow Citizens Advice Bureau. She had also chaired the recent Scrutiny Harrow Association for Voluntary Service Challenge Panel. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 8 – Edward Harvist Trust

Councillor Krishna James declared a personal in relation to MIND in Harrow. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 8 – Edward Harvist Trust

Deven Pillay, Representative of the Voluntary and Community sector stated he was Chief Executive of Harrow MENCAP. He would remain the room whilst the matter was considered.

86. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2011 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

87. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

88. Edward Harvist Trust

The Panel received a report of the Divisional Director Community and Culture setting out monitoring information relating to the previous grant application round for the Edward Harvist Trust (EHT) and the draft timetable and proposed publicity material for the next call for proposals.

The Divisional Director stated that since writing the report, an additional sum of £7409.17 had been received from the EHT and the new total was £22,185.42.

She added that officers were seeking the Panel's agreement for the Afghan Association to use its award underspend for purposes other than originally specified.

With regard to underspends and where monies had been spent on items not specified in a group's grant application, Panel Members made the following comments:

- it was reassuring that the Afghan Association had informed officers of its underspend and requested permission to spend the outstanding balance. The request should be agreed as a one-off because its request had been open and transparent. However, it was important not to set a precedent that other groups might follow in the future. Officers should inform the Afghan Association that in the future, successful applicants to the EHT would be expected to buy items specified in their funding application;

- allowing each individual on the course to be responsible for their memory sticks was acceptable as the individual unit cost was low and the expected benefit to the group's members was high;
- some groups had spent some of their grant fund on toner cartridges. This was not an approved item as toner cartridges are a revenue spend, and not a capital spend. One group had spent 25% of its EHT grant on toner cartridges, even though the criteria clearly states that only capital expenditure is covered. The concerns of the Panel should be communicated to the Groups in question;
- third sector organisations could make a case for a grants scheme similar to EHT which would provide revenue funding. It may be necessary to provide a separate revenue stream from other sources for this purpose.

Panel Members also requested that the EHT publicity material be amended to reflect the following:

- EHT fund information for prospective applications should specify that groups would be expected to adhere strictly to the funding criteria;
- there should be consistency and clarity regarding what constituted a capital spend. Although it would not be feasible to provide an exhaustive list of these, the information for prospective applications should refer groups to Community Accountancy Self Help (CASH) for advice regarding this;
- groups must not spend EHT grant funds on items not specified in the original grant application, and any monies thus spent would be reclaimed by Grants officers. If subsequent to receiving funding, a group's needs changed, then it would be required to submit an amended proposal to Grants officers for consideration. However, small underspends or changes in expenditure of less than £100 need not be reported;
- any group successful in securing EHT funding will not normally be eligible to re-apply to the fund for a period of three years. The EHT grant information poster to specify the year in which these groups may re-apply;
- groups would still be required to provide two quotes for any item to be purchased;
- an Equalities Impact Assessment be carried out every three years on the EHT grants scheme;

Panel Members also agreed the following:

- the maximum amount of grant funding that can be applied for be reduced from £2,000 to £1,500 for 2012/13. This would open the fund

up to more groups in the borough. This figure to be reviewed annually taking into account monitoring results.

Following questions and comments from Members of the Panel, officers made the following points:

- of the twenty six groups which had applied to the EHT fund in 2011/12, eleven of these had been successful in securing grant funding;
- future monitoring reports would be presented in a similar format to those provide for EHT and grants monitoring;
- the EHT funds were divided between 5 London boroughs and the fund was managed by Harrow, although Harrow was not permitted to charge a management fee;
- successful applicants to the fund were expected to provide monitoring reports and receipts for spends within six months of receipt of the grant funding. If receipts were not provided then officers would seek to reclaim the money from the group in question;
- the monitoring form requested information about where equipment such as computers were stored because Members had previously requested this information. Groups sometimes stored equipment at their members' homes as there was no provision for storage at the Community Premises;
- some groups were VAT exempt as they were registered charities;
- receipts for the purchase of memory sticks for one of the groups had not been pursued as they had used their small surplus towards this;
- the Harrow Tamil Association often hired Roxeth Pavillion for its meetings and events;
- the banner for the Hillplayers had been approved for use in 2012/13.

Officers would seek clarification on the following items and report back to the Panel:

- whether website development constituted a capital or revenue spend;
- an exact description of the item listed as LG BX401C purchased by the Indian Association of Harrow.

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

That

- (1) the monitoring information from the previous Edward Harvist Trust round be noted and approval given to the Afghan Association to use its award underspend as described;
- (2) the proposed Edward Harvist Trust grants timetable and publicity material be approved, subject to the agreed amendments.

Reason for Decision: To enable the distribution of Edward Harvist Trust monies held by Harrow to local Third Sector organisations.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Edward Harvist Trust grants publicity material as described in paragraph 2.4.3 be amended as follows:

1. the maximum amount of grant funding that can be applied for be reduced from £2,000 to £1,500 for 2012/13. This would open the fund up to more groups in the borough. This figure to be reviewed annually taking into account monitoring results;
2. groups would be expected to adhere strictly to the funding criteria;
3. there should be consistency and clarity regarding what constituted a capital spend. Although it would not be feasible to provide an exhaustive list of these, the information for prospective applications should refer groups to Community Accountancy Self Help (CASH) for advice regarding this;
4. groups must not spend EHT grant funds on items not specified in the original grant application, and any monies thus spent would be reclaimed by Grants officers. If subsequent to receiving funding, a group's needs changed, then it would be required to submit an amended proposal to Grants officers for consideration. However, small underspends or changes in expenditure of less than £100 need not be reported;
5. any group successful in securing EHT funding may not normally be eligible to re-apply to the fund for a period of three years. The EHT grant information poster to specify the year in which these groups may re-apply;
6. groups would still be required to provide two quotes for any item to be purchased;
7. an Equalities Impact Assessment be carried out every three years on the EHT grants process.

RESOLVED ITEMS

89. Information Report: Grant Monitoring 2011/12

The Panel received a report of the Divisional Director Community and Culture setting out information on the monitoring of grants awarded under the Main

Grants Programme 2011/12. The Divisional Director highlighted the following points:

- thirty eight projects had been awarded grant funding for a period of eleven months. One organisation had declined its award, and this funding had subsequently been redistributed amongst the remaining successful applicants;
- at the time of writing the report, thirty five organisations had returned completed monitoring forms. Two organisations would be returning their forms shortly and had provided valid reasons for the delay in returning their forms;
- four further organisations had submitted their forms after the deadline and monitoring visits to two of these organisations would be carried out shortly;
- twenty-three grant funded projects had been assessed as part of the joint monitoring. The monitoring process consisted of a self-assessment by groups, which was followed by a monitoring visit by joint monitoring officers. Following a review of information provided during the monitoring visit, feedback, in the form of individual action plans was provided to organisations;
- in 2011/12, monitoring visits had been carried out jointly by officers from Community and Environment, Children's Services and Adults and Housing. Each funded organisation had been visited once by a team from one of these directorates and officers had been briefed prior to the monitoring visit as to expected outcomes and supporting evidence;
- actions plans were yet to be completed for the two organisations where monitoring visits had not yet been undertaken, as well as for Kids Can Achieve, as this latter's projects were being monitored separately by Children's Services, as this related to an OFSTED report.

The Divisional Director stated that organisations had reported a number of positive achievements during the first six months of the funding period and added that:

- approximately thirty one thousand people in the borough were expected to benefit from these grant funded projects;
- some funded organisations had developed new partnerships with strategic organisations and other third sector organisations;
- some organisations had seen an increase in demand for services;
- some organisations had seen a notable increase in volunteering, and developed new services which had been enabled by the grant funding;

- other organisations had been able to respond to emerging needs such as the Ignite Trust, which during the week of the riots had used peer leaders as role models and worked with a number of young people who might otherwise have been tempted to get involved in the disturbances;
- some organisations had been able to secure additional funding as a consequence of receiving grant funding from Harrow, for example, several organisations had been able to secure additional ADHD autism support;
- many organisations had reported positive feedback from users, for example, Harrow Citizen's Advice Bureau undertook a satisfaction survey, which showed that 73% of its users reported they were happy with the service.

Following questions and comments from Members of the Panel, the Divisional Director stated that:

- during monitoring visits to organisations, officers were able to review the governance and operational practices of groups and offer advice on child protection and safeguarding. Whereas the monitoring process focussed on an assessment of the measurable outcomes related to the grant funding, it was not a full audit. She added that organisations were responsible to the Charities Commission for financial reporting;
- the funding allocated to the organisation that had declined had been a small sum and it would not have been feasible to award it to a single group. Following discussions with the Portfolio Holder, it had been agreed that this sum be redistributed amongst the remaining successful groups;
- in addition to relationship counselling, Relate offered support to families, which was the reason for its partnership work with Children's Centres;
- this new model of monitoring grant funded organisations would be developed further in order to capture the impact of funding on groups in greater detail. She added that in the future, the main grants report could be circulated as library document, and the confidential information be circulated in the agenda in order to economise on paper and costs.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.22 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR NANA ASANTE
Chairman