

GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

25 JUNE 2012

Chairman: * Councillor Nana Asante

Councillors:

* Manji Kara	* Joyce Nickolay
* Kairul Kareema Marikar (1)	* Varsha Parmar
* Mrs Vina Mithani	* Bill Phillips
* Chris Mote	* Sasi Suresh

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

* Denotes Member present
(1) Denotes category of Reserve Members

95. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor William Stoodley

Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar

96. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: That it be noted that

(a) the following personal interests were declared and that all Members remained in the room during the discussion and decision-making:

Councillor Nana Asante – stated that her involvement with the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum meant that she had a personal interest related to most of the organisations under

consideration, particularly the following organisations: Harrow Association of Disabled People, Girlguiding Middlesex North West, Harrow Kuwaiti Community Association, Harrow MENCAP, Harrow Shopmobility, the Ignite Trust, London Kalibari, Somali Cultural and Educational Association, Soul Survivor Harrow

Councillor Chris Mote – St Luke’s Hospice, in that his sister carried out fundraising for them and Harrow Heritage Trust as his wife was a member of its board

Councillor Mrs Vina Mithani – in that she was a governor at Priestmead School and had attended events organised by London Kalibari

Councillor Bill Phillips – in that he was a member of the Harrow Association of Disabled People

Councillor Sasi Suresh – in that her husband was a governor at Vaughan Primary School and she had attended events organised by London Kalibari

Marianne Locke – Watford FC Community Sports and Educational Trust in that in that she was a Council nominated member of the Management Board of Cedars Centre

- (b) the following prejudicial interest was declared and the adviser remained in the room during the discussion and decision-making on this item:

Deven Pillay, Adviser – declared a prejudicial interest in that he was Chief Executive of Harrow MENCAP and a personal interest in that his involvement with the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum meant that he had a personal interest related to most of the organisations under consideration.

97. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Mrs Vina Mithani as Vice-Chairman of the Grants Advisory Panel for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

98. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2012 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to a minor amendment. Paragraph 7 on page 2 to read: ‘Deven Pillay, Adviser - Age UK, Bentley Priory Nature Reserve, Harrow in Europe, Harrow Indian Association and any organisation that was involved in the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum.’

99. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

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

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

100. Update on Grant Appeals

The Panel received a report of the Corporate Director Community Health and Well-Being which provided an update on the process for managing grant appeals and finalising grant awards for the 2012/13 Main Grants Programme.

The Divisional Director of Community and Culture stated that 78 grant applications had been received by the deadline date of 28 November 2011 and the total funds requested amounted to over £1.5 million. The Panel had made recommendations to Cabinet for funding successful grant applicants and the process for managing these. These had been approved by Cabinet in March 2012.

Unsuccessful applicants had been invited to appeal their decision within seven working days of receipt of the outcome notification letter. The appeals were determined by the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, the Divisional Director of Community and Culture in consultation with an independent adviser and in the presence of an independent observer nominated from the Harrow Voluntary and Community sector. Ten appeals were lodged by the deadline date and were heard in camera.

As a result of the appeals process, the following five organisations were successful in meeting the scoring threshold agreed for grant funding: Afghan Association Paiwand, Asperger's Syndrome Access to Provision, Harrow Shopmobility, South Harrow Christian Fellowship and Special Connection.

The Divisional Director added that in 2012/13 a total of 42 organisations had been given grant funding, of which 20 were large grants and 22 were small grants. In 2011/12 the figure had been 37 successful applications, of which 17 were large grants, 14 were medium grants and 6 were small grants.

She added that changes to the grants process in recent years following guidance from the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, the Grants Advisory Panel and the Internal Audit Review had resulted in a clearer and more robust process.

The Chairman of the Panel expressed her disappointment that the recommendation of the Panel arising out of its meeting of 1 March 2012 regarding conduct of the appeals had not been agreed and operated. She added that the Panel was of the view that an open appeals process was preferable to one where meetings were held in camera and that Member involvement provided democratic accountability.

Panel Members queried why, in view of the fact that the grants process had been revised to make it more robust, there were discrepancies in scoring. 80% of those who appealed had their scores adjusted upwards on the basis of the appeals. This gave rise to the question whether those with low scores in the initial application stage could have been successful in securing a grant had they appealed.

The adviser to the Panel stated that the feedback from the observer had been that the appeals process had been robust and consistent, however, the robustness of initial panel process itself is questionable as borne out by the outcome of the appeals. He added that some learning points from the appeals process would have proved useful for the Panel.

The Divisional Director stated that:

- scores following appeals had been adjusted only in cases where the eligibility criteria had been upheld. The adjusted scores didn't necessarily indicate that a group qualified for funding as there was a threshold to be reached;
- any groups that were unsuccessful in their grant applications had been referred to alternative funding streams and had been offered both one to one and telephone support in completing their application forms. This support had resulted in an increased number of successful applications;
- two six monthly monitoring exercises were undertaken as part of the annual grants monitoring regime;
- the grant application form emphasised strict adherence to the criteria and therefore no group had been unfairly disadvantaged.

The Divisional Director undertook to circulate more detailed information about the scoring for the five successful appeals to Panel Members.

Following further discussion, Panel Members also agreed that the grant application form was a comprehensive document and the criteria for submission and eligibility were clearly set out in it. Organisations needed to take responsibility and adhere to the criteria and deadlines set and submit their paperwork in a professional and timely fashion.

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

That organisations awarded grant in 2013/14 and future years should comply with the requirement to produce essential policy documents and references by the deadline set, and where these are not received by the deadline, the grant should be withdrawn and redistributed to other successful applicants or those on the reserve list.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that organisations successful in being awarded grant funding comply with requirements to produce policy documents and references in a timely manner to prevent the late distribution of funds.

101. Edward Harvist Trust applications

The Panel received a report of the Corporate Director Community Health and Well-Being which set out information regarding applications that had been made to the Council for Edward Harvist Trust (EHT) funding.

The Divisional Director of Community and Culture stated that EHT funds were administered by Harrow Council behalf of the Trust and that there was £24,237.64 currently available in the fund and the total amount requested by applicants to the fund amounted to £40,678.

An officer advised that the eligibility criteria for EHT stated that the maximum amount of grant funding that could be applied for was £1,500 and that this could only be used for capital costs and that two quotes must be provided for any proposed purchase. She added that 30 applications had been received, of which 9 fully met the eligibility criteria, however, a further 6 applications had queries against them as follows:

- Harrow MENCAP had only provided one quote stating that the items they wished to purchase were specialist and they had not been able to locate two suppliers;
- St Luke's Hospice had provided two quotes, however, these were from the same supplier;
- Harrow Anti Racist Alliance had provided quotes which did not identify the supplier;
- Harrow Shopmobility and Soul Survivor Harrow's applications included an element of funding to purchase software;
- a number of applications from local schools to purchase sports equipment had been submitted. None of the schools had supplied the required background information. The Children and Families department had confirmed that schools were not-for-profit organisations.

Panel Members made the following points:

- HM Treasury defined schools as statutory bodies and these were therefore not eligible to receive EHT funding. EHT funding was aimed specifically at voluntary and community sector groups;
- Sandwell Local Authority's website defined third sector groups as community and faith groups, tenants and housing associations, co-operatives, social enterprises, sports organisations, private clubs etc and schools did not easily fit into any of these categories;

- if groups found themselves unable to provide two quotes because their application related to specialist equipment, then it would be the responsibility of the group to flag this up in their application and provide relevant evidence for the purposes of transparency and auditing;
- the EHT application form made it clear that grants could be used for Capital spends only. Software purchases constituted a revenue spend as defined by Community Accountancy Self Help (CASH). The Panel had previously agreed to abide by CASH's definition rather than the HMRC definition of Capital spend as set out in the report;
- residential trips overseas did not constitute a Capital spend;
- it was clear that St Luke's Hospice had misunderstood the eligibility criteria, which stated that two quotes from two different suppliers should be provided. They had provided quotes for different types of equipment from the same supplier;
- groups should be reminded that the maximum amount of funding available per group was £1500 and that they would be expected to provide receipts as part of the monitoring process;
- response letters to each unsuccessful group should be tailor made to ensure it specified why the group's application had been unsuccessful and incorporate the above comments from Panel Members where relevant.

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

- (1) the nine applications identified below as fully meeting the criteria set by the Panel be awarded the sums applied for:

Organisation	Amount requested
9 th Kenton Scout Group	£1,100
Girlguiding Middlesex North West	£1,361.46
Harrow Carers	£1,500
HOPE Harrow	£1,340.82
Ignite	£1,397.38
Kenton Table Tennis Club	£750
London Kalibari	£1,500
The Wish Centre	£550
Watford FC Community Sports and Educational Trust	£1,500

- (2) the application from Harrow MENCAP be agreed provisionally, subject to the submission of satisfactory documentary evidence demonstrating that the supplier of specialist equipment stated in the quote was the only one of its kind;

- (3) The applications for Harrow Shopmobility and Soul Survivor should be approved for capital items only (which does not include software);
- (4) the application for Harrow Kuwaiti Community Association be approved for Capital items only.

Reason for Decision: To enable the distribution of Edward Harvist Trust funds held by Harrow Council to local Third Sector organisations to support them in delivering a range of services and activities to Harrow residents.

RESOLVED ITEMS

102. Consideration of the Terms of Reference for the Panel

The Panel considered its Terms of Reference. The adviser to the Panel stated that his nomination by the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, for a period of two years, and due to expire shortly. However, the Forum had not yet sought nominations as it was awaiting clarification about the future role of the Panel. He would continue in the position of adviser in the interim.

The Chairman of the Panel stated that the value of a Member led Panel was that it allowed for transparency in the grants process and public engagement in the form of public questions, petitions and deputations to the Panel.

RESOLVED: That the terms of reference be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.45 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR NANA ASANTE
Chairman