

GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL

MINUTES

4 FEBRUARY 2013

- Chairman:** * Councillor Nana Asante
- Councillors:** * Manji Kara * Joyce Nickolay
* Kairul Kareema Marikar (1) * Varsha Parmar
* Chris Mote * Bill Phillips
* John Nickolay (2) * Sasi Suresh
- Adviser:** * Deven Pillay, Representative of the Voluntary and Community Sector., Voluntary and Community Sector
- In attendance:** David Perry Minutes 124 and 125
(Councillors)

* Denotes Member present
(1), (2) Denote category of Reserve Members

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

124. Grant Recommendations for Outcomes Based Grants 2013-16 and Small Grants Funding 2013-14

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, this report was submitted following agenda publication as it had not been available at the time the main agenda was printed and circulated.

The Panel received the report of the Corporate Director of Community, Health and Wellbeing, which set out information regarding applications that had been made for Council funding under the Outcomes Based Grants programme for 2013-16 and the Small Grants programme for 2013-14. Members noted that there was also a confidential part to the report which was appended elsewhere on the agenda.

An officer outlined the changes to the process, in particular the move to a three year funding programme, and advised the Panel on the numbers of applications received, the process by which applications had been assessed, including measures for quality assurance, and the support provided to organisations in submitting their applications.

Members considered the recommendation to ring-fence £75,000 for an infrastructure support service. The Chair sought views as to whether it would be preferable to reduce the amount to £50,000, and release more funds for grants. The Panel Adviser expressed his personal view that an independent, overarching organisation, accountable to member groups, should be properly funded as it would provide a much needed focus and voice for the voluntary sector, although he added this might not be a universal opinion among voluntary sector organisations. He also stated that it should be funded separately from the Grants budget. Members discussed the purpose and viability of such an organisation, and a majority felt that it could provide vital co-ordination, support and information for local voluntary sector organisations, particularly in signposting them to other funding streams.

The Panel Adviser commented that any cut in funding would have an impact, and while some organisations might be able to adjust, others would not. A Member added that organisations making grant applications for specific projects would be very concerned if their bid did not secure all the funds required to deliver the project. The Panel Adviser suggested that if the Council could agree strategic priorities, then they could allocate funds accordingly. Another Member commented that if groups received only a proportion of their bid, they could still use it well, and it would be her preference to see more groups supported even if the amounts were lower.

A Member commented that the choice appeared to be to fund specific, deliverable projects to the level required, or to fund as many organisations as possible. He said that 'match funding' could have been an option, but it was too late to consider this option at this stage in the process.

An officer then outlined the choices before Members in determining their preference for the allocation of funds. A range of values was set out in an appendix, and Members considered how the different permutations would impact on successful and unsuccessful applicants, and to what extent their ability to deliver projects would be affected. Members sought clarification as to how applicants would renegotiate their bid for funds if the allocation was significantly less than expected.

The Chair reminded the Panel that there had been an agreed principle to 'reward excellence', and gave her view that a top tier of applicants should receive a higher proportion of funding, with a secondary tier receiving a smaller proportion, which would allow them to continue to operate with the possibility of securing other funding. Members discussed whether lower level funding would be of value, as it would reduce an organisation's ability to deliver quality projects, or whether it was better to fund fewer organisations and enhance their ability to deliver quality services. The Chair reminded the Panel that voluntary sector organisations had made the significant point that funding from the Local Authority was a positive endorsement which helped

them to lever money into the borough. A group in receipt of £26,000 grant funds last year had secured a further £500,000.

A Member queried whether it were possible that applicants might overstate their requirement, and could manage with a lesser amount. Another Member observed that quality projects needed to be funded appropriately and that too great a reduction in grants would be counter productive.

Members considered a balance of allocation that would reward excellence and provide funds for a broad spectrum of organisations, and voted on their preferred option. An officer reminded the Panel that it would be necessary to confirm that the figures quoted fell within the budget available.

The Panel, having agreed to some variation to the recommendations to Cabinet

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Cabinet) That

- (1) £75,000 be ring-fenced from the Grants budget to fund the commissioning of an infrastructure support service for the Third Sector during 2013-14;
- (2) grant applicants be awarded funding at the following levels, subject to officer confirmation that that these funding scenarios could be managed within the budget available:
 - a) Outcome Based Grants
 - (i) Applicants scoring 88% and above will receive 70% of the grant requested;
 - (ii) Applicants scoring 80% to 87% will receive 44% of the grant requested.
 - b) Small Grants
 - (i) Applicants scoring 80% and above will receive 75% of the grant requested;
 - (ii) Applicants scoring 55% to 79% will receive 52% of the grant requested.

subject to:

- (i) receipt of satisfactory references and supporting documents by the 11th March 2013;
- (ii) confirmation from applicants that the proposed project or activity could be delivered at the same or different level as described in the application with the amount of grant recommended by the 11th March 2013;
- (iii) satisfactory responses to any queries raised by the grant assessment panels by the 11th March 2013;
- (iv) completion of the appeals procedure and any changes to the amounts awarded necessitated by decisions on appeals.

- (3) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Community Health and Well-Being in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services to withdraw funding offers where organisations did not comply with the conditions as detailed in Recommendation 2 above;
- (4) authority be delegated to a Panel of councillors (membership in proportion) who had not taken part in the decision of 4th February 2013, with an independent observer from the voluntary sector, to consider and determine appeals, and to vary both the percentage grant awarded and the threshold above which grant awards are made in light of decisions taken on appeals.

Reason for Recommendation:

To award Council funding under the Outcomes Based and Small Grants programmes to Third Sector organisations to support them in delivering their services to Harrow residents.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.35 pm, closed at 10.30 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR NANA ASANTE
Chairman