

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL
Date:	15 SEPTEMBER 2003
Subject:	GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS: PROPOSED NEW FUNDING PRIORITIES
Key decision:	NO
Responsible Chief Officer:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	PARTNERSHIP AND PROPERTY
Status:	PART 1
Ward:	N / A
Enclosures:	NONE

1. **Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)**
2. This report proposes changes to funding priorities and recommends that should Members agree the proposals, they be put to wide consultation with the voluntary sector in Harrow before adoption.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 **That Members approve, in principle, the proposed changes to funding priorities set out in paragraph 6.5 of the report and agree that they should be considered by the forthcoming Grants Review.**
- 2.2 **That subject to 2.1 above the proposed changes do not come into effect until after consultation with the voluntary organisations in Harrow.**

REASON: To ensure that the Council's funding meets identified Council priorities and the quality of services funded by the grants is underpinned by quality assurance systems in most of the organisations funded by the Council.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors** - Not applicable
4. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)** - None

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 The report addresses the Council's stated priority of "strengthening Harrow's local communities by promoting social inclusion amongst all Harrow residents both young and old, by seeking to eradicate poverty and by reducing the fear of crime."

6. **Background Information**

- 6.1 Funding to voluntary organisations in Harrow has been governed by very broad priorities which largely come within the four partnership themes, i.e. strengthening communities, lifelong learning, the environment & the economy, and health social care.
- 6.2 The bulk of the Council's grants budget is allocated to a relatively small number of organisations. Whilst the services provided by these groups may be of high standard and could be shown to meet the council's broad funding priorities, it is nevertheless evident that funding continues to be allocated on a historical basis and does not necessarily lead to the delivery of specific Council objectives and targets.
- 6.3 Developments over the past 12 – 18 months have resulted in some independent identification of need. Two of these initiatives are the Community Legal Services Partnership (CLSP) Strategic plan 2002 – 03 (revised in 2003-04) and the Mapping of funding provided in Harrow by the Council and the Health authority carried out in June 2002. The CLSP Strategic Plan identified the following areas of need: Consumer, Debt, Immigration (Refugees and Asylum Seekers), Housing and Mental Health. The report on the mapping of funding in Harrow identified that most of the funding goes to the Health & Social Care sector. The report recommended that in future priority should be given to groups serving Black & Minority Ethnic communities, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Women and projects dealing with domestic violence, as these are not well resourced.
- 6.4 In addition to the above developments, the Audit Commission has set up a best value performance indicator (BVPI 177), which requires local authorities to provide the percentage of expenditure on legal and advice services, which is spent on services that have been awarded the Quality Mark and meet a priority legal need identified in the Community Legal Service Partnership Plan. The target for Harrow in 2002/03 was 20.5% of the total grants. The figure achieved is 20%. This figure does not compare well with those of other London authorities. Their scores were: Kingston 57%, Camden 84%, Tower Hamlets 92%, Southwark 100%, Havering 26.1%, Kensington 91%, Redbridge 52.03%.
- 6.5 **Proposed new funding priorities:** It is recommended that in addition to the broad priorities linked to the four partnership themes, the Panel and the Cabinet are requested to agree in principle the following funding priorities:
- a) In line with the Best Value Performance Indicator 177, priority should be given to groups that have been awarded the Community Legal Service Quality Mark, or to groups that have been awarded other recognised quality marks. Priority may also be given to groups that have applied for a recognised quality assurance award, but their application is still pending.
- b) In response to the findings of the CLSP Strategic Plan, it is recommended that priority be given to projects addressing the identified areas of need, e.g. Consumer, Debt,

Immigration (Refugees and Asylum Seekers), Housing and Mental Health.

c) In order to address the issues highlighted by the funding mapping exercise, it is recommended that groups serving Black & Minority Ethnic communities, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Women and projects dealing with domestic violence be given priority, if they meet all the other funding conditions.

d) Members are also asked to agree in principle that projects which can demonstrate that they will use the Council's grant to lever funding from other sources should be given priority over groups that rely entirely on the Council for funding. This to apply only to groups applying for grants of £5,000 or more, so as not to disadvantage small / emerging groups.

7. **Consultation**

7.1 No consultation has taken place yet, but it is recommended that, if Members agree these proposals in principle, officers should consult widely before they are formally approved with whatever amendments that may result from the consultation.

8. **Finance Observations**

8.1 None

9. **Legal Observations**

9.1 None

10. **Conclusion**

10.1 The Strategic Plan of the Harrow Community Legal Service Partnership and the report on mapping of statutory funding in Harrow have identified the need for a review of the Council's funding priorities. The Audit Commission's Best Value Performance Indicator 177, requiring the Council to provide a certain percentage of its grant budget to legal and advice services that have been awarded the Quality Mark and meet a priority identified in the CLSP strategic plan, provides another justification for a review of the Council's funding priorities. In order to address the issues raised, the Council may need to target specific groups and service areas by inviting grant applications for projects serving the target groups or covering the target service area.

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 Harrow Community Legal Service Partnership: Strategic Plan 2002 /03.

11.2 Funding Arrangements Task Group: Voluntary Sector Funding in Harrow 2001/02.

12. **Author**

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