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| Meeting:             | Grants Advisory Panel                       |
| Date:                | 6 July 2006                                 |
| Subject:             | Community Premises                          |
| Responsible Officer: | Director of Financial and Business Strategy |
| Contact Officer:     | Chander Vasdev                              |
| Portfolio Holder:    | Business Development - David Ashton         |
| Key Decision:        | No  |
| Status:              | Part I                                      |

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

To note the plans to take forward the recommendations arising from the review of community premises.

### **Reason for report**

To ensure that the review is implemented.

### **Benefits**

Clarity about way forward on review of community premises.

## **Cost of Proposals**

No direct costs at this stage but some recommendations do have resource implications.

## **Risks**

None associated with noting the plan.

## **Implications if recommendations rejected**

Failure to act on findings of review.

## **Section 2: Report**

### **2.1 Brief History**

During 2005-06 a sub group of the Grants Advisory Panel, chaired by Cllr Omar, carried out a review of the community premises.

The report produced by the review group was received by the Grants Advisory panel and considered by cabinet in March.

Cabinet resolved:

- (1) To note the submission and report made by the Chair of the Review of Community Premises;
- (2) that further analysis and research of the issues raised in the reports and recommendations be undertaken;
- (3) that technical feasibility studies and detailed analysis of financial implications be undertaken in order to prepare a business plan;
- (4) that there be full consultation with members of the voluntary and community sector prior to the finalisation of recommendations.

An extract from the cabinet minutes is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

As shown above, cabinet recommended further work before finalising and implementing the recommendations.

The recommendations from the review along with proposed actions are set out in Appendix 2.

The recommendations are quite complex and implementing them has considerable resource implications. The grants team is very small and has limited capacity to take on this extra work.

In summary:

- Some minor changes about information and management arrangements can be made relatively quickly;
- For the Community Trust, a lot more research needs to be carried out;
- For physical works and ICT, there is a need to carry out a feasibility study and identify capital resources before the work can be done.

### 2.3 Consultation

Further consultation will be carried out with voluntary groups as the project progresses.

### 2.4 Financial Implications

None at this stage. Once the recommendations of the review have been explored further the financial implications will be clarified. There is no budget set aside for implementing the review.

### 2.5 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications at this stage.

### 2.6 Equalities Impact

The community premises are an important resource for the voluntary sector in Harrow.

### 2.7 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

No direct implications.

## **Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents**

Background Documents: None.

**Excerpts from March 16 2006 Meeting of Cabinet relating to the Grants Advisory Panel**

948. **Urgent item - Review of Community Premises:**

Members received a report from the Director of Financial and Business Strategy in relation to a recommendation made by the Grants Advisory Panel at their meeting on 8 March 2006.

A Member expressed concern that the officer report considered by the Grants Advisory Panel was not before Cabinet for consideration.

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Partnership and Human Resources moved an amendment and it was

**RESOLVED:** (1) To note the submission and report made by the Chair of the Review of Community Premises;

(2) that further analysis and research of the issues raised in the reports and recommendations be undertaken;

(3) that technical feasibility studies and detailed analysis of financial implications be undertaken in order to prepare a business plan;

(4) that there be full consultation with members of the voluntary and community sector prior to the finalisation of recommendations.

**Reason for Decision:** To take the Review forward.

[Councillors D Ashton and C Mote wished to be recorded as having abstained from voting on this item as the officer report considered by the Grants Advisory Panel had not been available at the meeting].

| No. | Recommendation  | Responsible officer                               | Action plan   | Timescale  | Resource implications   |
|-----|---|---|---|--|---|
|     | <b>Develop Community Space</b>  |   |   |  |   |
| 1A  | <b>Set up a Community Trust</b> to manage and develop provision guided by the O-Regen Model in Waltham Forest and the Selby Trust Model in Haringey. Develop a Harrow Model which will take account of our demographics and history and take lessons from the private sector.             | Chander Vasdev                                    | Further research required.  | tbc  | Considerable staff time required.   |
| 1B  | <b>Streamline information on premises</b> – improve on the information sheet available on the Harrow Website and provide a comprehensive directory of premises available in Harrow. This could be linked with the aim of putting Harrow on the map.                                       | Chander Vasdev / Community Premises Manager (CPM) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve information sheet on website</li> <li>• Pull together information for Directory</li> </ul> | Information sheet can be done by 30 September 06<br><br>Directory by 31 March 07 | Depends on how much information is readily available on premises, could involve considerable officer time |
| 1C  | <b>Raise funds</b> with Harrow Council providing leadership, Community & Voluntary Sector taking responsibility, through a mechanism such as a Community Trust, funds could be raised through bids and community fund raising events. The latter would help develop a sense of ownership. |   | This is subject to establishment of a community trust. Further research required.   | Not known  | Not known   |

| No. | Recommendation   | Responsible officer  | Action plan  | Timescale   | Resource implications   |
|-----|--|----------------------|--|---|---|
| 2   | <p><b>Scrap current criteria based on hours of use</b> – Criteria of 4 hours for casual use, 20 hours for shared desk and 40 hours for an individual office is not useful in measuring actual use or need of groups. At the very least, groups who need a desk should be given a desk and a filing cabinet and should be allowed to install a telephone line if they wish. To avoid clutter and provide an inspiring work environment, modern storage options should be explored and groups should be encouraged to minimise use of paper in the interests of space and the environment.</p> | Chander Vasdev / CPM | <p>Hours of use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish new criteria</li> <li>• Consult current occupants</li> <li>• Implement new system</li> </ul> <p>Modern storage options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess feasibility and costs</li> </ul> | <p>Implement new system from January 07</p> <p>Storage subject to identifying capital budget for works.</p> | <p>Changes to the criteria for hours of use will require staff time.</p> <p>Storage options may involve capital expenditure – not quantifiable at this stage.</p> |
| 3   | <p><b>Improve Information Management</b> – We have concerns about the recording of information on users of Community Premises and recommend that it should be addressed as a matter of urgency.</p>  | Chander Vasdev / CPM | Set up new recording and monitoring system.  | Implement new system by the 30 <sup>th</sup> September 06   | Staff time  |

| No. | Recommendation  | Responsible officer | Action plan  | Timescale   | Resource implications   |
|-----|---|---------------------|--|---|---|
|     | <b>Improve the Quality of work environment</b>  |                     |  |   |   |
| 4A  | <p><b>Different use of space available</b></p> <p>1) <b>Open Plan rather than Individual office:</b> Debating the merits and disadvantages of cellular and open plan offices is guaranteed to inflame passions in many organisations. Although individual offices allow for a high level of concentration and privacy, open plan environments are more flexible in coping with changing demand, supporting better communications and team working. The disadvantage is that they can be more distracting to work in. The advantage is that it will allow the networking that most groups have claimed to value, minimise the waste of space i.e space which is claimed but not used and allow those in cramped offices to spread out when needed to accommodate volunteers and work patterns. Protocols will need to be developed with the sector to avoid friction and conflict.</p> | Chander Vasdev      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess feasibility and cost for open plan layout, larger meeting space and internet cafe</li> <li>• Carry out further consultation with occupants</li> <li>• Protocol for working in open plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to capital resources being identified</li> </ul> | <p>Capital expenditure not quantified at this stage.</p> <p>Project management also required.</p> |

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|     | <b>Improve the Quality of work environment</b>  |                      |  |   |   |
| 4A  | <p>2) <b>Larger Meeting Space</b> Current Meeting room can be made larger by incorporating the 2 interview rooms. New interview rooms can be provided as shown in Appendix 3</p> <p>3) <b>Resource Room</b> – enlarge the IT room and use as an Internet Café to provide additional resources for Community Premises so that groups are able to work effectively and develop as sustainable organisations</p>                                       | Chander Vasdev       | See above  | See above   | See above   |
| 4B  | <p><b>Enable use of Information Technology</b> – IT promotes new ways of working and enables small emerging organisations to work in very cost effective ways. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, using IT to work should be seen as an Invest to Save approach for supporting the community and voluntary sector. Negotiating broadband for the premises and enabling every organisation to be IT enabled would be a really positive way forward.</p> | Chander Vasdev / CPM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asses feasibility of IT enhancements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to capital resources being identified</li> </ul> | <p>Capital expenditure not quantified at this stage.</p> <p>Project management also required.</p> |



| No. | Recommendation   | Responsible officer | Action plan   | Timescale   | Resource implications   |
|-----|--|---------------------|---|---|---|
| 4C  | <p><b>Join up working with Harrow Council and other HSP members</b><br/>           - Steps should be taken to implement the IT project CASEWORKS which enables the recording and tracking of hate crime across the borough, extend access to the Council Website to users at Community Premises and generally enable voluntary and community groups to go online.</p>  | Chander Vasdev      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting of Hate Crime – Council is launching new 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting system</li> <li>• Assess feasibility of providing access to website</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website access is subject to capital resources being identified</li> </ul> | <p>Capital expenditure not quantified at this stage.</p> <p>Project management also required.</p> |
| 4D  | <p><b>A new egalitarianism</b> – All groups should be treated EQUALLY regardless of previous use. The idea that we value every community should start to permeate the system and show that Harrow Council is a forward-thinking organisation willing to support the development of all groups serving communities. The idea is to provide the facilities to get the job done, rather than artificial status. We also need to address the current reality about access: You need to occupy the premises to be given permission to use the premises. This “catch-22” means that new and emerging organisations have to navigate a situation which does not promote their sustainable development. It also fuels the perception that some other groups can again access easily while others cannot.</p> | Chander Vasdev      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop ideas for improving access to the premises</li> <li>• Produce new policy</li> </ul>  | Publish policy by January 07  | Staff time  |

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|-----|--|---------------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| 4E  | <p><b>Extend the service</b> – Provide Community Premises as a resource for more groups in the community. In an era of community cohesion, hand-picking organisations to support needs justification. In terms of Value for Money, the Council would benefit from an approach with supports community development by supporting grass-roots initiatives which are, more often than not, based on the needs in the community. Mainstreaming Community Premises and exploring models of operation to improve the quality of provision and its sustainability is the way forward.</p> | -                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council does not have the resources to extend this service at present</li> </ul> | None at this stage  |                       |
| 4F  | <p><b>Better Support Services</b> – Re-evaluate and provide better on-site support. Join-up the provision of advice, training and capacity building and offer it at times that suit groups and take real account of their needs. It was clear during the interviews that many groups were unaware of the services available from infrastructure organisations such as HAVS and HaRF.</p>   | CPM                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get information pack together on resources available</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish pack by 30 September 2006</li> </ul> | Staff time            |

| No. | Recommendation  | Responsible officer | Action plan   | Timescale                                       | Resource implications                                |
|-----|---|---------------------|---|---|--|
| 4G  | <p><b>Promote Sharing positively:</b> almost as emotive as the open-plan office is the “hot-desk”, the idea being that, in an ICT-based working environment, all desks are equal. The number of desks required is equal to the maximum number of staff likely to be in at one time, goes hand-in-hand with flexible working arrangements and enables people to work in a wide range of locations. A good scheme will involve all types of organisations and invest some of the space benefits of “hot-desking” in improving the shared facilities – meeting rooms, resource centres, kitchen etc.</p> | -                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to moving to open plan environment.</li> </ul>             | None at this stage                              |  |
| 5   | <p><b>Introduce Charging after free rent period</b> – Charges should be made after 3 years occupancy and groups should be encouraged to write in a portion for overhead costs when bidding for external funding for projects. This would support the development of sustainable organisations.</p>  | Chander Vasdev      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw up charging policy</li> <li>• Further consultation</li> </ul> | Implement changes from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 07 | Would generate income. Not quantified at this stage. |

| No. | Recommendation   | Responsible officer | Action plan  | Timescale                      | Resource implications |
|-----|--|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6   | <p><b>Analysis of Grants Advisory Panel decisions</b> – To promote trust in the transparency of our grants decisions – we need to perhaps provide an analysis by ethnicity, sector (women, environment, children, elderly, health, disability etc) so that we get away from the arguments and perception (in every community) that they are at a disadvantage and their needs are not being met. It would also help the Council (officers and councillors) to look a little more closely at decisions because it will be analysed and scrutinised.</p> | Chander Vasdev      | Review monitoring information available at present to see if this facilitates analysis required. If not, amend application form. | Produce data for 07-08 grants. | Staff time            |
| 7   | <p><b>Compare Harrow Grants Budget with other Boroughs</b> – to help set in context Harrow’s support to the Community and Voluntary Sector, a comparison with other boroughs would be useful.</p>  | Chander Vasdev      | Produce analysis for grants November Panel.  | 30 November                    | Staff time            |
| 8   | <p><b>Improve Support to Users at Community Premises</b> – Closer link with the umbrella or larger organisations (HAVS, HCRE, CAB, Women’s Centre) which receive relatively high levels of funding from Harrow Council. Their Service Level Agreements need to reflect the work needed in Harrow.</p>  | CPM                 | See 4F above   | See 4F above                   | See 4F above          |