

# LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Agenda item:

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<b>Meeting:</b>	GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL
<b>Date:</b>	8 MARCH 2004
<b>Subject:</b>	GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS – STRATEGIC REVIEW
<b>Key decision:</b>	NO
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BUSINESS CONNECTIONS
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	PARTNERSHIP & PROPERTY
<b>Status:</b>	PART 1
<b>Ward:</b>	N / A
<b>Enclosures:</b>	

1. **Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)**

- 1.1 To outline the total support provided by the Council to voluntary organisations in 2003-04 and seek Members initial views regarding strategic criteria.

2. **Recommendations (for decision by Portfolio Holder)**

- 2.1 That Members note the overall support provided by the Council to voluntary organisations in 2003-2004.
- 2.2 To agree in principle any areas where the current grants criteria may need to be amended to better reflect the Councils corporate priorities and draft community strategy.

**REASON:** To seek Members views regarding revised criteria and inform the strategic review.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors**

N / A

#### **4. Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

4.1 Grants Panel 19<sup>th</sup> February 2004 – Timetable for the review of support to voluntary organisations was agreed.

#### **5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

5.1 The purpose of this report is to ensure that the criteria for administering support to voluntary organisations is relevant to the Councils corporate priorities and its community strategy.

#### **6. Background Information and options considered**

6.1 There has been no strategic review of the way in which the Council supports voluntary organisations across the Borough for a number of years. As well as the funds allocated to organisations via the Grants Panel, the Council provides support to voluntary organisations from a number of sources, including;

- Concessionary lettings
- Payments direct from departmental budgets
- Free / discounted use of premises
- Discretionary rate relief

#### **Baseline Support – Current Position**

6.2 At this early stage in the review this report seeks to provide Members with the “bigger picture” of the overall support provided to voluntary organisations.

6.3 Appendix 1 sets out a summary of the overall support provided in the current year. Members views are sought on how this or similar information may be useful in considering future grant applications and how this information may be used to better co-ordinate voluntary sector funding across the Council.

#### **Grants Criteria**

6.4 The criteria for considering voluntary sector support is key to ensuring a consistent and co-ordinated approach across the Council and ensuring the support reflects the Councils priorities.

6.5 Therefore at the outset of the review it is considered important to identify any areas of the current criteria that may need amendment in the light of experience. This is particularly timely as the Council has released a new draft community strategy against which the current grants criteria can be benchmarked.

6.6 Appendix 2 sets out the corporate strategic priorities, the current grants criteria and the priorities of the new draft community strategy for comparison.

6.7 Appendix 3 demonstrates how the draft community strategy links with the corporate priorities.

6.8 Appendix 4 sets out a matrix showing how the current grants criteria link with the corporate priorities and illustrates how 5 other London Boroughs share Harrow’s grants criteria.

6.9 Appendix 5 provides some draft suggestions for sharpening the current grants criteria and ensuring the links to the community strategy / corporate priorities.

7. **Consultation** None

8. **Finance Observations**

8.1 None.

9. **Legal Observations**

9.1 None.

10. **Conclusions**

10.1 In order to understand the total support provided to voluntary organisations by the Council it is necessary to collate information from a number of sources. This information may in future add value to the decision-making process of the Grants Panel together with the other Council services providing support.

10.2 In addition there is a need to re-examine the criteria for providing support to ensure that this is still appropriate, particularly in the light of the Council's new community strategy.

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 None

12. **Author**

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