

Meeting:	Grants Advisory Panel
Date:	8 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
Subject:	Community Premises, 27 Northolt Road – Accommodation/Usage Categories
Key Decision: (Executive side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Brendon Hills – Corporate Director (Community & Environment)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Chris Mote – Community and Cultural Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Criteria and Conditions for the Use of the Community Premises

## SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out the current categories of accommodation/usage at the Community Premises building, 27 Northolt Road, and proposes an amendment to an existing category.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Grants Advisory Panel is requested to recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services that:

1. The amendments to the usage category 'Post Box Address for Correspondence' be agreed as laid out in this report;
2. Interim Head of Services, Community Development be given delegated authority to approve all eligible applications for Community Premises usage received during 2009/10.

### REASON:

1. To enable organisations to have a better understanding of the facilities available at the Community Premises building and to enable better monitoring of the use of the building.

## SECTION 2 - REPORT

### 2.1 Introductory Paragraph

2.1.1 This report sets out the current categories of accommodation/usage at the Community Premises building, 27 Northolt Road, and proposes an amendment to an existing category.

### 2.2 Brief Background

2.2.1 The Community Premises building at 27 Northolt Road provides office space and other facilities for voluntary organisations representing a wide range of communities within the London Borough of Harrow. There are currently 22 registered users of the Premises.

### 2.3 Current Situation

2.3.1 Currently, there are four categories of use for organisations accessing the Community Premises building. These are listed below along with the requirements expected of the organisations allocated these types of usage:

1. **Individual office:** To warrant an organisation being allocated an individual office, it must:

- be able to occupy the office for **more than 35 hours per week**
- provide evidence of achievements, which are in line with the Harrow Community Strategy and a level of activity, which justifies the hours spent in the premises.

2. **Designated desk in a specified room:** An organisation must:

- demonstrate that it uses the office **at least 5 hours per week**
- provide evidence of achievements, which are in line with the Harrow Community Strategy and a level of activity, which justifies the hours spent in the premises.

3. **Casual use:** For this an organisation must:

- demonstrate that it uses the office **at least 1 hour per week**
- provide an action plan, which outlines activities that are in line with the Harrow Community Strategy.

4. **Post Box address for correspondence:** For this an organisation must:

- provide an action plan, which outlines activities that are in line with the Harrow Community Strategy.

2.3.2 There is also an External Bookings Procedure for organisations that have their own accommodation and only wish to make use of the Community Premises meeting room and/or counselling rooms.

2.3.3 Category 4 is named 'Post Box Address for Correspondence', but organisations with this usage have access to the same facilities as other users apart from the use of an office – they are able to access the meeting/counselling rooms through the normal booking procedures and have access to photocopying facilities. They are also expected to comply with the benchmarking criteria as outlined in section F of appendix 1.

2.3.4 At present, the Grants Advisory Panel considers all applications from organisations wishing to become registered users of the Community Premises building and/or any modifications of use, and the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services approves the Panel's recommendations.

## **2.4 Options Considered**

2.4.1 It is proposed to amend the existing category of use of 'Post Box Address for Correspondence' as follows:

- Re-name the category 'Postal Address and Facilities';
- Introduce a minimum requirement that users collect their mail once a fortnight.

2.4.2 As the organisations under this category would not have access to office space, the qualifying criteria would be simplified and be made more relevant to them. This would include the introduction of a separate, and simplified quarterly monitoring form, currently being prepared and will be presented to the Grants Advisory Panel meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July for consideration.

2.4.3 With regards to the approval of applications for use of the Community Premises building, the options to consider are whether:

- Interim Head of Services, Community Development should be given delegated authority to approve applications that meet the current criteria.
- these applications should continue to be sent to the Grants Advisory Panel for consideration.

## **2.5 Why a change is needed**

2.5.1 The re-naming of the existing fourth category would give a clearer picture of the facilities available to the organisations that are interested in using the Community Premises building but do not need office/desk space.

2.5.2 The requirement for organisations under this category to collect their mail once a fortnight would ensure that the corridor, where the pigeon holes are situated, would remain free of clutter thus complying with health and safety requirements.

2.5.3 If officers were given delegated authority to approve any eligible applications for Community Premises received during 2009/10, the process of modifying the usage of existing users and agreeing the use of new users would be quicker and therefore organisations would have access to the facilities without delay.

## **Implications of the Recommendation**

### **2.6 Staffing/workforce**

2.6.1 There are no staffing/workforce implications for the Council related to this report.

### **2.7 Equalities Impact**

2.7.1 The provision of the Community Premises facility to voluntary and community groups in the Borough aims to address inequalities and disadvantage and promote community cohesion. The proposed amendments to the current category of use will assist some organisations serving black and minority ethnic communities, young people, women, people with disabilities, the elderly and carers.

### **2.8 Legal Implications**

2.8.1 The Council should ensure that access to the Community Premises facilities are in accordance with its agreed criteria and conditions for use. Agreed policies should only be departed in exceptional circumstances. Due weight must be given in terms of equalities duties, procedural fairness and the statement of intention of the Compact with the voluntary sector. If the Council was to disregard these principles when allocating resources, then it will be at risk of legal challenge.

### **2.9 Community Safety**

2.9.1 The users of Community Premises are expected to have Health and Safety policies and procedures, Child Protection policies (where applicable), and procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (where applicable). Some of the Community Premises users contribute to community safety through the provision of community safety activities such as diversionary activities for young people, third party reporting sites and support for victims of crime.

### **2.10 Financial Implications**

2.10.1 There are no financial implications for the Council related to this report.

### **2.11 Performance Issues**

2.11.1 National Indicator (NI) number 7, which relates to creating an environment in which the voluntary and community sector can thrive, has been included within Harrow's Local Area Agreement. Results from the first national Third Sector Survey indicate that Harrow's performance against this indicator is 10.4%. Harrow will be aiming to improve performance by a statistically significant amount, now agreed as an increase of 4.4%.

2.11.2 The recommendations in this report have the potential to contribute to improving performance against this indicator.

The provision of facilities at community premises to the voluntary and community sector has the potential to contribute to NI 1: '% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area'. Current performance against this indicator is 49% and target performance is 61%.

- 2.11.3 The provision of facilities to voluntary and community sector organisations has the potential to contribute to NI 6 'Participation in regular volunteering'. The target increase in numbers volunteering is 300 for 'socially excluded' volunteers and 1,200 for other volunteers. The current position is an achievement against target on 'socially excluded' volunteers and a slight under-achievement against 'other volunteers'.

## 2.12 Environmental Impact

- 2.12.1 Current and future users of the facilities, through their activities, contribute to the preservation of local biodiversity, flora and fauna and to improving the quality of publicly accessible open space.

## 2.13 Risk Management Implications

- 2.13.1 The potential risk associated with this decision is that organisations may not comply with the condition of use. This risk is mitigated through a process of on-going monitoring that also aims to support groups to improve their capacity to deliver.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

## SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

<b>Name:</b> Sheela Thakrar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
<b>Date:</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2009		
<b>Name:</b> Jessica Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
<b>Date:</b> 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2009		

## Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

**Name:** Tom Whiting



Divisional Director  
(Strategy and  
Improvement)

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2009

## Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

**Name:** John Edwards



Divisional Director  
(Environmental Services)

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009

## SECTION 6 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

### Contact:

Audrey Salmon, Interim Service Manager – Community Resources and Projects (ext. 5332)

Parveen Vasdev, Principal Grants Officer (ext. 7625)

Charlotte Clark – Senior Grants Officer (ext. 2335).

### Background Papers:

Appendix 1 – Criteria and Conditions for the Use of the Community Premises

## APPENDIX 1

### LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

## **CRITERIA & CONDITIONS FOR THE USE OF THE COMMUNITY PREMISES**

### **A. General Conditions:**

The main purpose of the premises is to support Harrow community development. Access to the Community Premises is subject to the same criteria and conditions as grant aid. Therefore, a voluntary organisation applying for access to the premises must:

- Provide evidence of the community it represents in Harrow;
- be based in Harrow and be able to demonstrate that at least 80% of its users, management committee and beneficiaries live in Harrow;
- demonstrate that it is a voluntary organisation rather than a profit-making concern and that it has a majority of unpaid members;
- not promote or oppose any political party, or engage in any party political activity;
- demonstrate that it is properly constituted, and has appropriate management and financial controls;
- agree to comply with the Council's Standard Conditions of Grant Aid.

**References: Prospective new applicants should provide references that verify that the management committee members have been residents of Harrow for a certain period. References could be provided by agencies that have worked with the group, e.g. HAVS, HCRE or Council officers.**

In addition, applicants for accommodation at the premises must satisfy the following criteria and conditions of grant aid.

### **B. Criteria for the use of the premises:**

1. The community premises are primarily for new and emerging groups.
2. The main purpose of the premises is to support community development initiatives, and priority will be given to those agreeing to set service development criteria linked to the Harrow Partnership Strategic Priorities.
3. All applications for accommodation are considered on an annual basis. Organisations allocated accommodation are required to demonstrate that their organisation has consolidated, and evidence must be provided of community development.
4. Accommodation will normally be allocated for a maximum of three years. Exceptions may be made where organisations can demonstrate that they are continuing to provide a valuable service to their community, but that, despite their best efforts, it has been impossible for them to generate sufficient income to relocate elsewhere.
5. All users will be subject to monitoring, and their use of the premises will be evaluated to prioritise the allocation of accommodation.

6. Monitoring and evaluation of community premises' use is based on a combination of the monitoring of physical attendance and agreed criteria to evaluate community and organisation development (paragraph D).
7. All users of the premises will be assessed and monitored in accordance with agreed benchmarking criteria (paragraph F). Those groups which fail to make progress may be given 28 days notice to vacate the premises.
8. Umbrella organisations or organisations providing outreach services may make use of facilities booked under the casual use booking system, if available.
9. Decisions to exclude an organisation are taken by Members, but officers are authorised to suspend an organisation until that decision is taken.

### **C. Types of accommodation**

There are three types of accommodation: individual offices designated desks and casual use. All users are entitled to up to three keys or entry cards (which are time-limited) per organisation and are able to access the premises during the opening hours of 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday – Saturday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays. **This does not apply to new users who are subject to a six-month probation period (see below).**

#### **(1) Individual offices and designated desks:**

Users with individual offices or designated desks are able to install a telephone subject to certain conditions to that specified accommodation. Storage space is made available at the allocated space. Additional equipment can be installed and left at the premises subject to suitable insurance and acceptance risk. They are entitled to a set allocation of photocopies. The allocation of individual offices and designated desks is only drawn from existing casual users unless the Grants Advisory Panel makes a specific decision.

#### **(2) Casual Use:**

Casual users are not allocated a desk and space is subject to availability and pre-booking. Casual users have access to a limited number of photocopying facilities and use of meeting rooms, but are not allowed to install telephones or other equipment. Limited locker facilities remote from the office space are available and storage space is allocated on the basis of need. Casual users are expected to leave the space they have used in a clear, clean and tidy condition at the end of the booked session. **Failure to do so will result in termination of their casual user status.**

#### **(3) Post Box address for correspondence:**

Post box users are allocated facilities for receiving incoming mail, which can be collected by arrangement with the Community Premises Co-ordinator. Post box users also have access to a limited number of photocopying facilities and use of meeting rooms through the normal booking procedures.

#### **(4) New users – probation period:**

All new users will be allocated accommodation on a casual use basis as above and will be subject to a six-month probation period. During this period, they will only be able to access the premises when premises staff are present and will only be entitled to keys/entry cards, which are time-limited. Premises staff will meet with new users on a monthly basis to monitor their progress and identify any needs they may have. After an organisation has passed the probation period successfully, they will be entitled to keys/entry cards to enable them to access the premises between the times stated under C above.

**THERE IS NO DISCRETION ON THE PART OF THE PREMISES STAFF TO VARY THE CONDITIONS.**



## **D. Criteria for allocation of space:**

The Grants Advisory Panel has decided that allocation of premises should primarily be based upon the value that the people of Harrow obtain from organisations using the premises. To this end, all user groups are required to complete annually a simple form showing the performance of their organisation.

To achieve added value for the community, the organisations clearly have to demonstrate not only that their work achieves benefits, but that they can make use of the facilities that are available. Accordingly, usage (both past and predicted) is an important factor in allocation.

**1. Individual office:** To warrant an organisation being allocated an individual office, it must:

- be able to occupy the office for **more than 35 hours per week**
- provide evidence of achievements, which are in line with benefiting the Harrow Partnership Strategies and a level of activity, which justifies the hours, spent in the premises.

**2. Designated desk in a specified room:** An organisation must:

- demonstrate that it uses the office **at least 20 hours per month**
- provide evidence of achievements, which are in line with benefiting the Harrow Partnership Strategies and a level of activity, which justifies the hours, spent in the premises.

**3. Casual use:** For this an organisation must:

- demonstrate that it uses the office **at least 4 hours per month**
- provide an action plan, which outlines activities that are in line with benefiting the Harrow Partnership Strategies.

**4. Post Box address for correspondence:** For this an organisation must:

- provide an action plan, which outlines activities that are in line with the Harrow Community Strategy.

## **E. Conditions of use:**

1. All users will be required to sign a Facilities Use Agreement.
2. Keys/entry cards will be issued to all organisations after they have passed their six-month probation period. Key/card holders will be able to use the premises at evenings and weekends within the times specified in the Facilities Use Agreement.
3. New users are only permitted to use the premises Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm during their probation period.
4. All visitors and users are required to log in and out of the premises as a condition of grant aid.
5. Keys/entry cards to the premises are only given to users solely for the use of their organisations and must be signed for by individual members of the organisations.
6. Users are required to abide by the code of conduct and the complaints procedure of the premises.

**F. Benchmarking criteria for the use of the community premises:**

1. Record of weekly attendance using the Attendance Monitoring Form;
2. Submission of quarterly monitoring forms, which will include statistical information on:
  - Number of cases dealt with;
  - Number of people visiting the project;
  - Evidence of an active management committee, i.e:
    - \*frequency of meetings
    - \*number of members attending regularly
    - \*written and verbal reports considered at each meeting
    - \*accurate minutes produced and circulated
    - \*testimonials/ thank you letters from individual users and organisations/ agencies the group is working with.
  - Evidence of community involvement, i.e.
    - \*information provided to members/users regularly
    - \*members/users are consulted and invited to participate in activities and decision-making
    - \*number of members in relation to their numbers in the community
    - \*number of people attending social and cultural events.
3. Evidence of gradual improvement in the administrative and financial records and systems being used by organisations.
4. Annual return showing evidence of efforts made to raise funds from sources other than the Council.
5. Evidence of relationship with other projects/agencies/ Harrow Partnership:
  - Membership of consultative groups, umbrella organisations, consortia and partnerships
  - Records of referrals to and from other agencies