

HARROW COUNCIL

3.6.2

3.6.3 FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE/CHECKLIST

Directorate	Community and Environment	Section	Community Development		
1 Name of the function/ policy to be assessed	Review of the Grants Programme	2 Date of Assessment	July 2009	3 Is this a new or existing function/policy?	Existing

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4 Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the function/policy

The Grants Programme enables the voluntary and community sector to work in partnership with the Council to provide appropriate and responsive services to meet the needs of the borough's diverse community. The proposed improvements to the grants programme will ensure that:

- **The eligibility criteria is clear and unambiguous.** The current grant eligibility criteria is contentious and open to interpretation, therefore it is recommended that the Grant Advisory Panel adopt the following statement:
“Grant aid will be available to support voluntary and community organisations to deliver services where this resource is used for the benefit of people living (or working) in Harrow.
- **This resource is aligned to meet the Harrow Strategy Partnership priorities.** Although applicants are asked to demonstrate how their proposed project addresses Harrow Sustainable Community Strategy, it is acknowledged that this is too high level and too board to properly inform the grant decision-making process. Therefore it is recommended that the national indicators of the Local Area Agreement be adopted as the grants funding priorities for the 2010/11 grants round.
- **The application process is simplified and easier to access**
The current process is cumbersome and the Overview and Scrutiny Review, which examined the relationship between the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector (2008), raised a number of concerns about the grants programme that related to the application process. It is recommended that the application process is improved; the timescale is shortened; grants recommendations are brought forward to the January meeting, subject to budget decisions for 2010/11; supporting documents to be submitted after a grant has been agreed; and the appeals process is abolished.
- **The application process is clearer and transparent**
Each year, voluntary and community groups request grant aid without knowing how much funding is available. For the last few year only 27% of the funding has been available for allocation to support ‘one-off’ project as the remaining budget has been committed to 4-year service level agreements. It is recommended that applicants be invited to apply for three different sized grants and that the Panel should move towards awarding more medium-sized grants and reduce the number of organisations receiving grants over £10,000 each year.

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<p>5 Are there any associated objectives of the function/policy? Please explain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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%. • The recommended improvements to the grants programme have the potential to contribute to improving performance against this indicator. • The provision of grant funding to voluntary and community sector organisations 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 48% and target performance is 61%. • The provision of grant funding 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'. • The LAA comprises 34 National indicators and the proposal to align funding with these functions would potentially assist all of them.
<p>5 Who is intended to benefit from the function/policy and in what way?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By broadening the eligibility criteria it is hoped that applications will be received from a wider spectrum of organisations and therefore the Grant Advisory Panel will be able to consider awarding grants to organisations that have not received funding before and in turn provide services to sections of the community (such as the BME and other disadvantaged communities) that may have not received support before. • By aligning the grants budget to the Harrow Strategy Partnership (HSP) priorities, this will ensure that this resource will meet the needs of sections of the community (such as the BME and other disadvantaged communities) that were identified as in most need of support by the HSP. • By simplifying the application process – more organisations, particularly new and emerging grassroots organisations, will be able to access funding. This in turn would mean that communities that have not been previously supported by the grants programme could benefit.

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<p>7 What outcomes are wanted from this function/policy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vibrant and responsive voluntary and community sector that provides services that meet the changing and diverse needs of borough • A credible grants programme that has a fair, transparent and clear process. 		
<p>8 What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?</p>	<p><u>Contributory Factors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of support and response from voluntary and community sector during the consultation and the implementation of the policy improvements • The role of the Grant Advisory Panel is essential to the achievement of these outcomes, if agreed <p><u>Factors that could detract from the outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the voluntary and community sector continue to mistrust the process, new and innovative projects will not be developed and supported by the council • If officers and the Grant Advisory Panel do not apply the recommendations in a consistent, fair and transparent way. 		
<p>9 Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the function/policy?</p>	<p>Voluntary and Community Sector Community Members</p>	<p>10 Who implements the function/policy and who is responsible for the function/policy?</p>	<p>The council provides grant aid to the voluntary and community sector, which is administered by the Grants Team. The Grants Team make recommendations to the Grant Advisory Panel which if agreed go to Cabinet for final approval.</p>

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<p>11 What data or other existing evidence have you used to assess whether the function/policy might have a differential impact? (please continue on a separate piece paper if necessary)</p>	<p>The attached documents provide evidence of the assessment that was undertaken to assess the differential impact of this proposal.</p> <p>Attachment 1: “A breakdown of the grants budget 2009/10” – shows that 73% of the budget for the last 4 years has been committed to organisations receiving service level agreements, and therefore a shift towards either 50%, 30% or 20% as suggested in the consultation would have an adverse affect on those organisations in particular.</p> <p>Attachment 2: “Mapping Local Area Agreement priorities and national indicators against the Sustainable Community Strategy”. Currently funded activities have been mapped against national indicators as set out in attachment 2. Some organisations meet a number of the indicators, but for the purpose of this exercise have only been linked to one, others have been tenuously linked to an indicator and one organisation does not appear to address any of the priorities or the indicators. For example, there are no national indicators for adult mental health and therefore Relate’s current project would not receive funding if this approach were to be adopted</p>				
<p>12 Has the data or other evidence raised concerns that the function/policy might have a differential impact? If so in what area (please circle)?</p>	<p>Race No</p>	<p>Gender No</p>	<p>Disability No</p>	<p>Other</p>	<p>(If other please specify)</p>

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<p>13 What are the concerns? (please continue on a separate piece paper)</p>	<p><u>Race:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If these recommendations were to be adopted there are no concerns that they would have detrimental impact on race related issues. <p><u>Gender:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If these recommendations were to be adopted there are no concerns that they would have detrimental impact on gender related issues. <p><u>Disability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If these recommendations were to be adopted there are no concerns that they would have detrimental impact on disability related issues. <p>It is recommended that activities that do not address the agreed funding priorities should not be supported through the grants programme. However this is not seen as detrimental or discriminatory to any one section of the community as all grant applications will be assessed through the grants process in a fair and transparent way. It is possible to see from the mapping exercise discussed earlier that currently funded projects reflect the borough's diversity and that aligning grants to the HSP priorities would not have an adverse affect on any section on the community.</p>		
<p>14 Does the differential impact amount to adverse impact i.e. could it be discriminatory, directly or indirectly?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>15 If yes, can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>16 Have you considered ways in which the adverse impact might be reduced or eliminated?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 		

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<p>17 How have you made sure you have consulted with the relevant groups and service users from Ethnic Minorities? Disabled people? Men and women generally?</p>	<p>Consultation took place during a 6-week period, with a closing date of 5 June 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation documents were distributed to approximately 300 voluntary and community groups on the community development database and through various partnership networks • Posters were displayed at the council's eleven libraries and at community premises • The proposal and the consultation questionnaire was available to complete on-line <p>Respondents were encouraged to use a number of drop-off points in the community to submit their completed questionnaires</p> <p>The views of the Grant Advisory Panel were also sought through this process.</p>		
<p>18. Please give details of the relevant service users, groups and experts you are approaching for their views on the issues</p>	<p>As above.</p>		
<p>19 How will the views of these groups be obtained? (Please tick)</p>	<p>Letter Meetings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interviews Telephone Workshops Fora Questionnaires <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>20 Please give the date when each group/expert was contacted</p>	<p>Consultation information was available mid April 2009</p> <p>A discussion paper was presented to the Grant Advisory Panel on the 8th June 09</p>
<p>21 Please explain in detail the views of the relevant groups/experts on the issues involved. (Please use a separate sheet if necessary)</p>	<p>Please see attached Grant Advisory Panel report: "Review of grant criteria and results of the grants consultation" (July 2009)</p>		
<p>22 Taking into account the views of the groups/experts, please clearly state what changes if any you will make, including the ways in which you will make the function/policy accessible to all service users, or if not able to do so, the areas and level of risk (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</p>	<p>Same as responses to question 6 and 16.</p>		

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<p>23 Please describe how you intend to monitor the effect this function/policy has on different minority groups (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</p>	<p>To monitor the number applications received from different minority groups and to analyse the effect that the revised grants process has had on the proportion of these groups that are awarded or denied funding.</p>		
<p>24 If any elements of your function/policy are provided by third parties please state, what arrangements you have in place to ensure that to ensure that the Council's equal opportunities criteria are met</p>	<p>N/A</p>		
<p>25 Please list any performance targets relating to equality that your function/policy includes, and any plans for new targets (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</p>	<p>N/A</p>		
<p>26 How will you publish the results of this Impact assessment?</p>	<p>To accompany the reports, detailing the grants recommendation, to the Grant Advisory Panel in July 09.</p>	<p>27 Date of next assessment</p>	

Signed:
 NAME:
Completing officer Audrey Salmon

Date:

Signed:
 NAME: Audrey Salmon
Lead Officer

Date:

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Please list actions you intend to take as a result of this assessment. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

ISSUE IDENTIFIED	ACTION REQUIRED	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
To clarify eligibility criteria	GAP to agree criteria	Audrey Salmon	Mid July 09	
To simplify the application process	GAP to agree to revised application process	Audrey Salmon	Mid July 09	
To align the grant to the Harrow Strategy Partnership priorities	GAP to agree funding priorities	Audrey Salmon	Mid July 09	
To ensure that the application process is clear and transparent	To communicate to the VCS the types and availability of grants for 2010/11	Audrey Salmon	Mid July – Mid August 09	