

## GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL

8 JUNE 2009

Chairman: \* Councillor Chris Mote

Councillors: \* Ms Nana Asante \* Asad Omar  
 \* Manji Kara (1) \* Mrs Rekha Shah  
 \* Mrs Myra Michael \* Mrs Sasi Suresh  
 \* Narinder Singh Mudhar (3) \* Yogesh Teli (2)  
 \* Joyce Nickolay

Adviser: \* Mike Coker, Representative, Voluntary and Community Sector Representative

\* Denotes Member present  
 (1), (2), (3) Denote category of Reserve Member

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 1 - Grant Funding 2009/10 - Grant Appeals**

The Panel considered a report of the Corporate Director of Community and Environment which presented the appeals received against the recommendations made on 4 March 2009 by the Grants Advisory Panel and/or the decisions made by Cabinet on 26 March 2009. Members were requested to consider whether organisations met the grounds for appeal and make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services accordingly.

A Member questioned whether the report submitted by officers to the Grants Advisory Panel on 4 March 2009 had made presumptions about the activities of the Indian Association of Harrow. The recommended grounds for appeal were if organisations felt that the information contained in the officer report submitted to the Panel was incorrect or incomplete, and therefore had a material effect on the application. The same Member suggested that, had assumptions been made in the report regarding the Indian Association of Harrow, the Association would have grounds for an appeal. She added that as the report was a summary of the application there might have been a misrepresentation. An officer replied that the Indian Association of Harrow had not clearly indicated what the scope of their activities were and therefore the summary of the application was based on the information it had provided.

A Member queried whether organisations had an option to discuss their proposal at the time of submitting their application. An officer replied that the Grants team were very supportive of all applications and, although the onus to provide information was on the applicant, if important information was missing from the application the organisation would be contacted.

The Advisor to the Panel commented that organisations did require some level of support in submitting good quality bids, and praised the Grants team for their efforts in supplying much needed help. He added that the Scrutiny Review 'Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary Community Sector for Harrow' recommended that more support was needed for organisations during the application stage. The Advisor to the Panel suggested that support could be provided by the Harrow Association of Voluntary Service.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Service)

That (1) Bentley Priory Nature Reserve, London Kalibari and Youth United be confirmed as meeting the grounds for appeal;

(2) funding for Bentley Priory Nature Reserve be revised from £3,500 to £5,000;

(3) funding for London Kalibari be revised from nil to £1,557;

(4) funding for Youth United be revised from nil to £980.

**[Reason for Recommendations:** A number of organisations had appealed against the recommendations made by the Grants Advisory Panel at the meeting of 4 March 2009 and/or the decisions made by Cabinet on 26 March 2009].

[Note: Councillors Ms Nana Asante, Mrs Rekha Shah, Mrs Sasi Suresh and Asad Omar wished to record as having voted against (1) above on the basis that other organisations also met the grounds for appeals].

**Recommendation 2 - Community Premises, 27 Northolt Road - Accommodation/Usage Categories**

An officer introduced a report of the Corporate Director of Community and Environment, which set out the current categories of accommodation/usage at the Community Premises building, 27 Northolt Road, and proposed an amendment to an existing category.

In agreeing that the Interim Head of Services of Community and Development be given delegated authority to approve all eligible applications for Community Premises 2009/10, that it needed to be clear that the Grants Advisory Panel could overturn the decisions if they saw good reason to. The Chairman added that applications could be approved by the Interim Head of Services of Community and Development subject to ratification by the Panel. A Member was of the view that all appeals ought to be considered by the Panel and it was

**Resolved 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 set out in the report;

(2) the Interim Head of Services of Community and Development be given delegated authority to approve all eligible applications for Community Premises 2009/10. The decisions would be subject to ratification by the Panel at the next meeting at the next meeting of the Grants Advisory Panel;

(3) all appeals were to be heard by the Panel.

**[Reason for Recommendations:** 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].

**Recommendation 3 - Street Collections 2009**

An officer introduced a report of the Director of Community and Cultural Services which set out the current procedure for dealing with street collections in the borough and presented two applications for sponsorship received for 2009.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Service)

That the sponsorship of two local organisations in their applications to the Metropolitan Police to hold street collections in the borough in 2009.

**[Reason for Recommendation:** To enable each organisation to make a formal application to the Metropolitan Police in order to obtain a permit to collect on a specified date. The organisations would then be able to raise funds, which would allow them to continue to deliver services and improve the quality of life of their users].

**PART II - MINUTES**

159. **Appointment of Advisory Panel Chairman:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the appointment of Councillor Chris Mote at the Meeting of Cabinet on 14 May 2009 as Chairman of the Grants Advisory Panel until 31 August 2009.

160. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Don Bilson  
Councillor Golam Chowdhury

Reserve Member

Councillor Manji Kara  
Councillor Narinder Mudhar

Councillor Ashok Kulkarni

Councillor Yogesh Teli

161. **Declarations of Interest:****RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
10. Interim Review of Grant Criteria 2010-11	Councillor Yogesh Teli	Councillor Yogesh Teli declared personal interests in that he was a trustee of Ashiana Charitable Trust Ltd, an appointee of the Harrow Agenda 21 Environmental Forum and a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had undertaken the review on 'Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary Community Sector for Harrow'. Accordingly, he remained in the room for the discussion and decision making on the item.
	Councillor Joyce Nickolay	Councillor Joyce Nickolay declared a personal interest in that she was an appointee of the Bentley Priory Nature Reserve Committee. Accordingly, she remained in the room for the discussion and decision making on the item.
	Councillor Myra Michael	Councillor Myra Michael declared personal interests in that she was an appointee of both Age Concern Harrow and Harrow in Europe Committee. Accordingly, she remained in the room for the discussion and decision making on the item.

162. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**

A nomination was received and duly seconded for the appointment of Councillor Joyce Nickolay as Vice-Chairman.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Joyce Nickolay be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Grants Advisory Panel for the Municipal Year 2009/2010.

163. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 149 – Declarations of Interest – Agenda Item 7, Grant Applications 2009-10

The reference to Councillor Ms Nana Asante being a representative of the Council on Harrow Agenda 21 Environmental Forum be removed;

The reference to Mike Coker, Advisor to the Panel, being a representative of Age Concern be removed;

Councillor Myra Michael was an appointee of Harrow in Europe Committee and be added to the list of interests declared.

Minute 152 – Grant Applications 2009-10

In the fourth line of the second paragraph, the sentence beginning 'A discussion took place...' should be replaced to read: A discussion took place on the allocation of grants to groups, such as Girl Guiding Middlesex North West, Headway and St. Luke's Hospice. There were similarities, for instance The Willow Tree Centre was based in Hillingdon (outside the borough) and St. Luke's Hospice was based in Brent (outside the borough) but had eight of its eleven shops in the borough. The Willow Tree Centre served guides in Hillingdon and Harrow and St. Luke's supplied services for clients in Harrow and Brent.

164. **Public Questions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

165. **Petitions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

166. **Deputations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

167. **Appointment of Panel Advisor:**

**RESOLVED:** That Mike Coker, Voluntary and Community Sector Representative, be appointed as adviser to the Panel for the Municipal Year 2009/2010.

168. **Interim Review of Grant Criteria 2010-11:**

The Panel considered a report of the Corporate Director of Community and Environment, which provided an update on action taken in response to the Scrutiny Review 'Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector for Harrow'.

Officers sought the views of the Panel in order to incorporate them into the final report which would be presented to their meeting on 2 July 2009 for consideration.

A Member commented that it would have been preferable for the Panel to have seen the report prior to initial consultation with the voluntary and community sector. At present the consultation reflected the officers' views and could be construed as biased. In response the Chairman indicated that as some of the Members of the Grants Advisory Panel had taken part in the Scrutiny Review and it was possible that their involvement may also be construed as bias. A Member added that it was important for Councillors, who depended on the public support, that they were viewed as acting impartially and fairly.

In consideration of the suggested change to the options for the statement regarding eligibility criteria for grant aid, Members expressed concern about the wording. Although some voluntary organisations were happy with the proposed change to the criteria many had expressed concern, especially those that were situated outside Harrow but delivered their services in the borough. A Member added that problems could arise with schools and organisations which were situated on the borough's boundaries. Overall, it was felt that the wording of the criteria was too rigid and could unfairly disadvantage those groups that provided essential services in Harrow, although operating from a different region.

The Panel concluded that the wording for the statement regarding eligibility criteria for grant aid should read:

"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 in Harrow."

In terms of the suggested change to the size of the grants available and whether the grants budget should be divided and a percentage allocated to different size grants, Members agreed with the proposal and welcomed the development opportunities for organisations seeking medium size grants and the simplified application process for those organisations seeking small grants. A Member added that caution was required when considering the Citizens' Advice Bureau's funding as it was going through a difficult transitional phase. The Chairman commented that consultation was taking place with groups on interim ways forward, including the one organisation which received above the proposed £100,000 grant limit.

In considering whether the funding priorities should be restricted to a few selected themes each year that reflected the Council's corporate priorities, Members expressed concern that a broad interpretation of the priorities could cause problems. It was suggested that it might be better to reflect the Council's Local Area Agreement (LAA) in

order to better represent the needs of the whole borough. In response an officer stated that it might be useful to map out the corporate priorities against the National Indicators to see which organisations did not fit, in the hope of better understanding any potential future fallout. The advisor to the Panel commented that the breadth of the corporate priorities would be beneficial for those traditional organisations which served people who would otherwise slip through the net. He expressed concern that reflecting the LAA might force some groups to abandon their services and concluded that regardless of what was decided, it was important that the criteria was clear and easy to understand for the voluntary and community sector.

In discussing the stage at which applicants should be asked to submit supporting documents and whether the amount awarded should reflect the amount of supporting documents requested, Members agreed that a constitution/memorandum and article of association/trust of deed should be included under the supporting documents required for grants under £2,000.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the report be noted:

(2) that the views of the Panel be noted and incorporated into the final consultation report to be presented to the Grants Advisory Panel meeting on 2 July 2009 for consideration.

169. **Grant Funding 2009/10 - Grant Appeals:**

Further to Recommendation 1, after having allocated further grant funding a total of £3,110 would remain in the budget. The Chairman reminded the Panel that if the money remained unallocated at the end of the financial year, the amount could not be carried over into the following year. A Member suggested that the funds could be used to top-up grants of those organisations that had received amounts less than they had applied for. The Advisor to the Panel suggested that a nominated reserve list, in order of priority, be established. The Chairman added that the Grants team could look at the options and bring forward suggestions to the 2 July 2009 meeting.

The Chairman suggested a review of the way in which compact challenges were submitted by organisations. At present the compact panel only met four times a year. He suggested that organisations be asked to submit compact challenges at certain times and that a sub-group be established to review such submissions. He further suggested that an external group or another authority be approached to review the challenges in an effort to remain impartial and transparent.

170. **Community Premises, 27 Northolt Road - Accommodation/Usage Categories:**

Further to Recommendation 2, a Member requested that visits by the Panel to the Community Premises, 27 Northolt Road, be organised.

**RESOLVED:** That officers make the necessary arrangements to allow members to visit 27 Northolt Road.

171. **Street Collections 2009:**  
( Recommendation 3)

172. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

In accordance with Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following items were admitted late to the agenda. The items were considered as a matter of urgency in order to gather views on how to better facilitate the review of the grants criteria 2010-11.

**(i) Grants Advisory Panel Meeting – 4 March 2009**

In response to a letter presented to the Chairman of the Grants Advisory Panel from Labour Members expressing their concerns in relation to the Panel's modified report submitted to Cabinet on 26 March 2009 detailing the grant applications 2009/2010, the Chairman reiterated that he had not taken part in the voting at the Grants Advisory Panel meeting of 4 March 2009 in order to avoid a conflict of interests inasmuch as he was also a Member of the Cabinet. To address the possibility of a large number of compact challenges, the Chairman, in his role as Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, had met with the then Corporate Director of Community and Cultural Services, the Grants team and a legal advisor to review all the grants applications against the grants qualifying criteria. The Chairman had accepted the assertions of the Labour Members and reminded them that he acted as advised by the legal officer. He added that any such future incidents would be avoided by the reviewing and strengthening of the grants criteria.

A Member expressed concern that the modified report represented a failure to follow due processes accurately and that the recommendations made at the meeting of 4 March 2009 should have been submitted in their entirety to Cabinet on 26 March 2009. The Chairman replied that the recommendations, as decided at the 4 March 2009 meeting, were submitted in their entirety to Cabinet, but that an additional column had been added to the worksheet detailing the revisions made at the meeting of the Portfolio Holder, Corporate Director of Community and Cultural Services, the Grants team and a legal advisor.

A Member suggested that it would have been helpful to have viewed the modified report prior to its submission to Cabinet. In addition to this, it was suggested that the Chairman might remind the Panel of the grants criteria at the beginning of future meetings. The Chairman replied that he was under the impression that other Members had seen the modified report and apologised for not disseminating it earlier.

A Member reported that they had some misgivings about the reports which were presented at the 4 March 2009 meeting, particularly those concerning the Girlguiding Middlesex North West and Age Concern.

A Member commented that although many of the Black Minority Ethnic Organisations looked to be disadvantaged by the grants awarded at the 4 March 2009 meeting, the decisions taken by the Panel were made properly in accordance with legal advice.

**RESOLVED:** That the Director of Legal and Governance Service submit a report to the Grants Advisory Panel meeting on 8 September 2009 outlining the rationale for amending the Grants Advisory Report from the meeting of 4 March 2009 submitted to Cabinet on 26 March 2009.

(ii) Writing to Organisations

**RESOLVED (unanimously):**

That no organisation concerning their grants application should be written to in advance of the relevant Panel meeting and that all applications should be recorded in the report.

(iii) Girlguiding Middlesex North West

The Vice-Chairman requested that it be noted that she did not have, and had never had, a personal or prejudicial interest in the Girlguiding Middlesex North West. She had visited the organisation during 2008-09 in her capacity as Mayoress and did not intend to take part in a return visit.

**RESOLVED:** The above be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 9.28 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRIS MOTE  
Chairman