

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION MEETING

30 JULY 2009

Chairman: * Councillor David Ashton

* Denotes Member present

[Note: Councillor Chris Mote also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 90 below].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**

84. **Declarations of Interest including Declarations of any Dispensations Granted by the Standards Committee:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business to be transacted at this meeting.

85. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2009, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

86. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

87. **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).

88. **Matters referred to the Executive Member:**

RESOLVED: That no matters had been referred to the Executive Member for reconsideration in accordance with the provisions contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 22 (Part 4F of the Constitution).

89. **Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committees:**

RESOLVED: To note that no reports had been received.

90. **Review of the Grants Application Process:**

Under the Special Urgency provisions the Leader, acting as the Executive, considered a report of the Corporate Director of Community and Environment on the recommendations of Grants Advisory Panel in relation to the grants programme for 2010/11.

The report was urgent due to the need to launch the Grants Scheme for the coming year, prior to the next Cabinet programmed for 17 September 2009.

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Grants Advisory Panel. The Leader further sought the views of officers upon the proposals particularly in relation to the proposed threshold levels of grants and the proposals around the timescale and process for the consideration of grants application.

The Leader commented that the previously identified threshold levels of grants was established historically and supported by a recent scrutiny challenge process in relation to this area. He noted the proposed change in threshold would be relevant, currently, for one organisation and was advised by officers that when a consultation upon the levels was undertaken with applicants for grants no specific comments against the suggested £100,000 had been received from that applicant. He therefore concluded that the proposal to increase the threshold level for grants should not be adopted.

The Leader then raised the issue of the shortened timescale with respect to the grants process. He noted the concerns of officers with regard to the submission of grants reports and appropriate resourcing to achieve the proposals of the Grants Panel. He further examined the initial proposals by officers with regard to operating

arrangements. In deliberating upon the Panel's recommendation the Leader considered the ability of officers to engage with grants applicants in the process to ensure the accuracy of information presented for final consideration by the Panel. He also suggested that arranging an informal working group of officers and Members during January 2010 to consider initial draft applications would contribute to a more effective grants process consideration through gaining Members input at an earlier stage and therefore, create greater transparency with regard to grant approval outcomes. The Leader concluded that an amendment to the recommendation regarding the proposed timescale was required to enable the suggestions he had outlined and that the Panel recommendation should not be adopted, setting out his alternative decision instead.

RESOLVED: That (1) Recommendation 1 (Review of Grants Criteria & Results of Grants Consultation) be agreed subject to the threshold of large grants remaining at £100,000;

(2) Recommendation 2 (Funding Arrangements for 2009/10 & 2010/11) be agreed;

(3) Recommendation 3 (Review of Grants Application Process) be agreed subject to the timescale for grants round 2010/11 be as detailed in the table below:

END August 2009	Grants application round launched
END October 2009	Grants application round closing date
END October – END December 2009	Applications are assessed
Early January 2010	Informal Working Party of Members of Grants Advisory Panel, Independent Adviser and officers of Grants Team held to consider initial grant application submissions.
MID January – February 2010	Copy of draft report sent out to applicants for comments
EARLY MARCH 2010	Final Report presented to GAP to agree grant allocations for 2010/11, subject to Cabinet's decision.

Reasons for Decision:

- To address the recommendations raised in the Overview and Scrutiny Review: "Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector for Harrow" (December 2008).
- To ensure greater clarity and transparency in the grants process for round 2010/11.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 5.49 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR DAVID ASHTON
Chairman