

Meeting:	Grants Advisory Panel
Date:	19 November 2009
Subject:	Community Lettings Action Plan
Responsible Officer:	Brendon Hills – Corporate Director (Community & Environment)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Community Lettings – Proposed Action Plan 2009 - 2011

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report is in response to a request from the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 28 July 2009, for the Corporate Director for Community and Environment “to formulate an action plan with a view to improving the Council’s community lettings system”.

Recommendations:

The panel is requested to consider and comment on the proposed action plan for community lettings as set out in appendix 1 and recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services:

1. For approval of the plan
2. That a further report be provided to the panel in June 2010.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To implement a plan of action to ensure that improvements to community lettings are undertaken and monitored.

Section 2 – Report

2. Main options

Appendix 1 sets out the proposed plan of action for community lettings for 2009/11. The action plan, which has been divided into three strands, is detailed below:

Strand One: Review and improve current process

Strand Two: Consultation and engagement

Strand Three: Communication and implementation

2.1 Strand One: Review and improve current process

2.1.1 A thorough review of the community lettings arrangements will be undertaken, which will involve mapping the facilities available under the current scheme, as well as assessing the profile of the main beneficiaries and the type of activities that are supported through this resource.

2.1.2 It will be necessary to review the current charging policy and to ascertain the true value of the subsidy, as the current rate of 50% is based on a published hire rate, but does not relate to the schools private hire rate – which in some cases is 5 times more than the community lettings rate.

2.1.3 There is currently no monitoring undertaken of groups accessing the community lettings process. This means that we have no way of knowing whether the activity being undertaken is in line with that applied for. Therefore it is proposed that a simple self-assessment tool is developed and introduced.

2.1.4 As the current booking system is very cumbersome, there is a need to simplify the process. The Community Development team will also be working closely with Business Transformation and Customer Services to explore the possibility of using the proposed corporate on-line booking system.

2.2 Strand Two: Consultation and engagement

2.2.1 An option paper will collate and present the findings from the review and set out a number of options for consideration.

2.3.1 Initial discussions have already taken place between Community Development Team and Early Years and Extended Services, to explore the role that schools can play in supporting community lettings. Both departments will work closely together to develop a number of options for consideration.

2.4.1. The following stakeholders will be affected by any changes to the community lettings arrangements: schools; caretakers; voluntary and community sector and members. Therefore it will be necessary to consult with these key stakeholders on the proposed options for consideration and to consider the impact that these proposals may have.

2.5 Strand Three: Communication and implementation

- 2.5.1 As this community resource is not widely publicised within the community, it will be necessary to disseminate information on the changes to community lettings for 2010/11 more extensively, to ensure that this resource is accessed by those groups most in need.
- 2.5.2 The panel is requested to consider the above and the plans of action set out in appendix 1 and make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services for approval.

Section 3 - Implications of recommendations

3.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for the Council in this report.

3.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications for the Council in this report.

SECTION 4 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Name: Narinderpal Heer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 10 November 2009		
Name: George Curran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 6 November 2009		

Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Audrey Salmon, Interim Service Manager, Community Resources and Projects (ext: 5332)

Background Papers:

Appendix 1: Community Lettings – Proposed Action Plan 2009 - 2011

Appendix 1

Community Lettings Action Plan 2009/10

Strand		Action	Lead Officer	Timescales	Outcome
1	Review and improve current process	Agree action plan with Grants Advisory panel	Service Manager Community Resources & Projects / Integrated Early Years and Community services	Nov-09	Grants Advisory panel approval secured.
		To map the following: (1) the facilities available, (2) the beneficiaries, (3) the type of activities delivered, and (4) the extent that these activities meet the LAA priorities.	Community Lettings Officer	Feb-10	To have a full picture of the location of existing facilities, current uses and match against LAA priorities.
		Review hire rates and subsidy.	Service Manager for Community Resources and Projects	Feb-10	To ascertain the true value of the current subsidy.
		Develop and implement the use of a simple, self-assessment monitoring tool.	Community Lettings Officer / Principal Grants Officer	Apr-10	To gather feedback on how this resource is being used.
		To review community lettings hire agreements.	Community Lettings Officer / Principal Grants Officer	Feb-10	To clarify roles and expectations of the hirer, schools and the council.
		Develop and promote the use of an on-line application form.	Community Lettings Officer / Principal Grants Officer	Apr-10	To improve efficiency and access to the service.
		Liaise with the Business Transformation project re: links to corporate bookings system	Service Manager for Community Resources and Projects with the Business Transformation Programme	January 2010 onwards	To align community lettings to the corporate approach for bookings.
2	Consultation and engagement	Develop and publish a consultation and engagement timetable for schools.	Service Manager for Community Resources and Projects and Early Years and Extended Services	Jan-10	Clear consultation and engagement plan with schools.
		Develop and publish a consultation and engagement timetable for voluntary sector organisations.	Service Manager for Community Resources & Projects / Integrated Early Years and community services / Voluntary sector partners	Jan-10	Clear consultation and engagement plan with voluntary and community sector.
		Develop and agree a key messages approach with Integrated Early Years and Community services to engage schools using the extended schools and community cohesion framework.	Service Manager Community Resources & Projects / Integrated Early Years and Community services	Jan-10	Consistent and clear messages communicated to schools.

		Undertake consultation activities with schools and voluntary organisations re: changes to community lettings process.	Service Manager for Community Resources and Projects	January 2010 - April 2010	Key stakeholders consulted and engaged with the process.
		Prepare and present report to Grants Advisory Panel regarding proposed changes to community lettings process.	Service Manager - Community Resources & Projects	May-10	Recommendations made to Grants Advisory Panel on proposed changes.
		Undertake an equalities impact assessment on proposed changes to community lettings process.	Service Manager - Community Resources & Projects	May-10	Equality impact considerations considered within proposed changes.
3	Communication and implementation	To publicise the new arrangements through the Harrow website, libraries, various Harrow publications (such as Harrow People and Talking Communities), community notice boards, etc	Service Manager for Community Resources and Projects	Jun-10	Increased awareness of this community resource and increased resident satisfaction with the council.