

**REPORT FOR: GRANTS ADVISORY
PANEL**

Date of Meeting:	2 December 2010
Subject:	Update on Community Premises
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Brendon Hills – Corporate Director Community and Environment
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Rekha Shah – Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes, following consideration by the Portfolio Holder
Enclosures:	<p>Appendix 1a–b: Community Premises attendance and usage statistics and monitoring information for all registered users.</p> <p>Appendix 1c: Sample form for 3 months record of mail received in respect of organisations using postal address facilities.</p> <p>Appendix 2a: Updated Community Premises Application Form</p> <p>Appendix 2b: Updated Guidance Notes for Community Premises Applicants</p> <p>Appendix 3: Facilities Use Agreement sample.</p>

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report presents an update on the following matters relating to Community Premises:

- Usage and monitoring information;
- Documentation Refresh:
 - Revised application pack – application form, guidance notes for Community Premises applicants, e.g. qualifying conditions, information to organisations, etc.
 - Facilities Use Agreements;
- Six months probationary period for new organisations;
- Public Liability Insurance.

Recommendations:

This report is to inform and update Members on matters relating to the Community Premises as outlined above.

1. The Panel is requested to consider and note the following:
 - Note the usage and monitoring information presented in this report (see Appendices 1a, 1b, and 1c);
 - Note the updated application pack, which consists of application form and qualifying conditions. (See Appendices 2a and 2b);
 - Note the updated Facilities Use Agreement in respect of all categories of accommodation, including organisations using Community Premises for postal address only (see Appendix 3);
 - Note the increase in access times during the probationary period for new users;
 - Note the advice given by the Council's insurance department regarding Public Liability Insurance for organisations based at Community Premises.
2. The Panel is further requested to recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services to delegate authority to the Head of Service for Community Development to approve all new eligible applications for Community Premises for 2010/11 and future years, subject to ratification by the Grants Advisory Panel.

Reason for Recommendation:

To streamline the application process and reduce delay. Continuation of this delegation would ensure that this system continues into all future years, improving the experience for new organisations.

Section 2 – Report

1. Introductory paragraph

- 1.1 The developments described in this report helps the Council meets its draft Corporate priorities to create united and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads and supporting and protecting people who are most in need. The report informs the panel on monitoring data of organisations based at Community Premises, informs the panel on amendments to the current application pack for community premises in line with the new criteria agreed in July 2009, and amendments to the Facilities Use Agreements for all categories of accommodation. The report seeks approval for the delegation of authority to the Head of Service for Community Development to approve all future eligible applications for Community Premises subject to ratification by the Grants Advisory Panel.

2. Background for Community Premises

- 2.1 The Community Premises building at 27 Northolt Road enables new and emerging groups to gain access to office accommodation. The accommodation is categorised as individual office, designated desk or casual use, depending on the number of hours spent at the premises and individual groups needs. There is also the option for organisations to use the Community Premises as a postal address only. Currently 26 organisations benefit from this support.

3. Monitoring Information

- 3.1 Usage and Monitoring Information:

Appendix 1a: - outlines the statistics compiled for the periods April – September 2009, October 2009 – March 2010, and April – September 2010. These statistics are in respect of average weekly office attendance hours, User Group attendance, and return of quarterly monitoring returns, for all registered users of community premises;

Appendix 1b: - outlines the statistics for the usage of the Meeting Room for the period April 2009 – September 2010;

Appendix 1c: - sample form for 3 months record of mail received in respect of organisations using postal address facilities.

4. Documentation Refresh

- 4.1 Revised Application Pack:

Appendix 2a: - amendments to the Community Premises Application Form 2010/2011. Notable amendments are:

Eligibility Criteria (page 2): “You will need to meet the following criteria to be eligible. Please tick each relevant box to confirm your eligibility”.

Question 1 (page 2) – new criteria agreed for grant funding in July 2009, now also extended to eligibility for community premises: “Office facilities are available to support voluntary and community organisations to deliver services, where this resource is for the benefit of people living, working or schooling in Harrow”. “Will your service(s) be for the benefit of people living, working or schooling in Harrow?”

Question 3 (page 2) after the tick boxes: “If you feel that your organisation does not meet any of the above criteria, please contact the Community Premises Coordinator before you proceed”.

Appendix 2b: - amendments to the Guidance Notes for Community Premises Applicants. Notable amendments are:

Section A Qualifying Conditions: (page 1): last bullet point “The organisation should provide two professional references from agencies that have worked with the organisation and are able to comment on the organisation’s services or activities. Referees cannot be Harrow Councillors or Harrow Council Officers due to potential conflict of interests”.

Section F Conditions of Use: (page 3): paragraph 2 “Keys/entry cards will be issued to all organisations. Key/card holders will be able to use the premises seven days a week within the times specified in the Facilities Use Agreement”.

Section G Monitoring Requirements for the Use of the Community Premises (page 5): paragraph 7 “Annual updating of relevant policies provided to the Council”. Also “Other user organisations that fail to comply will be moved onto the current 3-stage monitoring procedure as outlined below:”

5 Six Months Probationary Period for New Organisations

5.1 Six Months Probationary Period for New Organisations:

The 6 months probationary period enables new organisations to be monitored to ensure that they are using the facilities in an appropriate way. This has been carried out by Harrow Council staff on site. Consequently, access during the probationary period was restricted to weekdays from 9am to 5pm while staff were on site. Feedback from organisations has shown that this poses challenges for new organisations where they need to gain access to the premises after 5 pm and during weekends. In order to overcome this barrier, keys are now issued to new organisations after induction at the start of the probationary period. Monitoring will continue to take place as part of the probationary arrangements. Risk assessments are ongoing to ensure adequate management of risk factors associated with the change in access arrangements. Control measures are being reviewed including for example, the installation of CCTV cameras.

6 Public Liability Insurance

6.1 Public Liability Insurance:

It was recommended by the Grants Advisory Panel at its meeting on 3rd March 2010 and agreed by Cabinet on 18th March 2010 that grant funding could not be used to

cover insurance costs. Following receipt of a letter from the Secretary of Harrow Muslim Council dated 2nd September 2010, the Chair of the Grants Advisory Panel requested officers to “explore” the possibility of the Council supporting organisations by investigating the options available for a group public liability insurance. Advice from Harrow Council’s insurers is that any Public Liability Insurance procured by the Council on behalf of organisations would be limited to indemnifying the organisations exclusively for their activities at Community Premises. If organisations have any other activity in any other location at any time, the Council would require insurance to cover these activities. Organisations would need to take out Public Liability insurance in their own right as this cannot be arranged by the Council on behalf of organisations.

7 Authority to approve applications

- 7.1 The Grants Advisory Panel (8 June 2009) recommended that the Interim Head of Services of Community and Development be given delegated authority to approve all eligible applications for Community Premises for 2009/10. The decisions would be subject to ratification by the Grants Advisory Panel. This system has worked well and has streamlined the application process for new applicants and has therefore reduced delay.
- 7.2 Continuation of this delegation would ensure that this system continues into all future years and so would further underpin an improved experience for new organisations. The panel is requested to recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services to approve this continuation.

Implications of the Recommendation

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Costs of CCTV installation would be found from existing budgets.
- 8.2 The cost of Public Liability Insurance cover for organisations is the responsibility of organisations. Any costs incurred by the Council for any group cover that might be supplied by the Council’s insurers would be passed on to organisations. Consequently, there are no additional financial implications to the Council for this item.

9 Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

- 9.1 Any risk management implications associated with changes to access times for new organisations will be determined following reviews of risk assessments.
- 9.2 Any risk management implications associated with recommendations on public liability insurance will be determined once officers have made further progress regarding this item.

10. Equalities implications

- 10.1 An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken on the matters raised in this report. The assessment does not indicate any adverse impact on any of the equality groups in fact it offers an improvement through the increased access and streamlining of application process through delegated authority.

11. Corporate Priorities

- 11.1 The Council recognises the valuable contribution that the voluntary and community sector makes in helping to achieve its corporate priorities. The report's recommendations support the delivery of the following draft corporate priorities:

- United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads;
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Kanta Hirani	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 12 November 2010		
Name: Jessica Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 19 November 2010		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Melvyn Leach, Service Manager, Community Resources 020 8416 8062;
Parveen Vasdev, Principal Grants Officer 020 8424 7625.