

# GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

## 7 SEPTEMBER 2010

**Chairman:** \* Councillor Nana Asante

**Councillors:** \* Sue Anderson \* Mrs Vina Mithani  
\* Nizam Ismail \* Chris Mote  
\* Krishna James \* Joyce Nickolay  
\* Manji Kara \* Sasi Suresh

**Adviser:** † Deven Pillay, Representative, Voluntary and Community Sector

**In attendance:** Rekha Shah  
**(Councillors)**

\* Denotes Member present

† Denotes apologies received

### 14. Attendance by Reserve Members

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance.

### 15. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Deven Pillay. The Chairman advised that he had been in a car accident and would not be attending this meeting. It was agreed that a letter of best wishes on behalf of the Panel be sent to him.

## **16. Declarations of Interest**

### Agenda Item 7 – Report from 29 July Panel Meeting

Councillor Nizam Ismail declared a personal interest in that he was Chairman of the Harrow Muslim Council. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

### Agenda Item 9 – Grants Review

Councillor Nana Asante declared a personal interest in the following organisations:

#### **Organisation**

- Age Concern
- Alan Senitt Memorial Trust
- Association of Senior Muslim Citizens
- Aspire
- Girl Guiding Middlesex
- Harrow Healthy Living Centre
- Harrow Mencap
- Home Group
- Middlesex Association for the Blind

She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Nizam Ismail (please see the declaration relating to Agenda Item 7).

## **17. Minutes**

The Chairman spoke on the delays to the production of the minutes which had prevented their completion in line with the guidelines set out in the Constitution. She further advised that, as Chairman, she had not been able to agree the content of the minutes sent for her confirmation as a correct record. She advised that Members had two choices of either deferring the minutes to the next meeting as proposed by the Democratic Services Officer or to consider the tabled amended minutes.

However, the Chairman emphasised her concern that it was necessary to try to approve the content to enable the issues contained therein to be considered at Cabinet. In view of this and in her capacity as chairman, she had prepared an amended version of the minutes which she wished to table for consideration by the Panel.

She proposed that if Members were in agreement, the meeting be adjourned to allow the Panel time to consider the content of the minutes and make any necessary amendments before they were signed as a correct record.

Various Members spoke on the issue advising their views in terms of agreeing or disagreeing with the proposal. A democratic services officer stated that as a performance standard it was aimed to produce minutes after five working days of the meeting. However, this process had been delayed on this occasion. She requested the Panel consider deferring the minutes on this occasion and considering them at the meeting in November 2010.

After a discussion on the options, it was agreed by majority that the Chairman's version of the minutes originally prepared by Democratic Services be tabled. Following the vote, Councillor Chris Mote left the meeting.

*(The meeting was adjourned at 8 pm for 35 minutes to allow the Panel time to consider the content of the minutes).*

Having considered the minutes, a Member advised that due to the length of the minutes, she did not consider it appropriate to approve the minutes due to the length and a need for additional time to absorb the content. She further expressed her concern that the tabled minutes had not had the opportunity of having been shared with the officers. Two Members of the Panel concurred with this view and abstained from taking further part in the discussion.

In addition, an officer of the Community & Environment Directorate confirmed that officers had not received a copy of the minutes prepared by the Chairman, based on the Democratic Services team minutes, in advance of the meeting and expressed her concern that the Corporate Director had also not received the minutes to allow him to consider the implications for his Directorate. The democratic services officer advised that she would be willing to circulate a version of the minutes prepared by Democratic Services for the Panel's consideration prior to any formal approval if Members felt this would be of value.

After further discussion the Panel agreed, by a majority, that the tabled version of the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**RESOLVED:** That the tabled version of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2010, be agreed and signed as a correct record subject to minor typographical amendments and:

#### Minute 3 – Declarations of Interest

Councillor Sue Anderson declared a personal interest in Harrow Mencap as her husband was a governor of Kingsley School. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

#### Minute 10 – Grant Appeals 2010/11

##### Alan Senitt Memorial Trust

That the sentence in the sixth line of the third paragraph be amended to read: "She added that the organisation only needed to demonstrate that projects supported by Harrow grant funding would benefit Harrow residents and the appellant had done so in their Deputation."

**Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To Cabinet)**

That the fourth line of the recommendation be amended to include “consider” and read: “..... that Cabinet **consider** how the grants ...”

Minute 13 – Any Other Business

That the first paragraph relating to the letter from Harrow Muslim Council be amended to include reference to public liability insurance and the restriction on the hours that the community premises could be used by new voluntary organisations users.

**(Councillors Joyce Nickolay, Vina Mithani and Manji Kara requested that their vote against the decision be recorded)**

**18. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputation**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting.

**RECOMMENDED ITEMS**

**19. Report from 29 July 2010 Panel Meeting**

The Chairman advised that the officers report relating to the letters referred to under Any Other Business from the 29 July 2010 Panel Meeting had not been finalised. She advised that she had responded in her capacity as Chairman, to Harrow Muslim Council and Girlguiding Middlesex North West. A Member of the Panel commented that a clause in the Facilities Use Agreements agreed with new organisations restricted the times that they could use community premises. He felt that the clause prevented these organisations from having full use of these premises. The Vice-Chairman concurred with this view. The Chairman suggested that these particular conditions imposed on new organisations during their six month probationary period be recommended to Cabinet to be revised in order to promote growth of voluntary sector organisations within the voluntary sector. She further suggested that the Panel could recommend to Cabinet that it explore the possibility of extending public liability insurance to the organisations using Council premises.

In response, an officer noted that the current rules regarding the use of community premises by new organisations and the potential risks regarding new and existing users had been in place for a significant time and that it seemed an appropriate opportunity to revisit the requirements to assess whether they remained valid. She confirmed that officers would consider the Panels proposal.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To Cabinet)**

- (1) that Cabinet be requested to consider revising the conditions placed on new organisations in relation to the use of community premises and to enable their use after 5 pm in line with other users;
- (2) that Cabinet be requested to explore extending the Council's public liability insurance to cover organisations using community and other Council premises.

**RESOLVED:** That officers prepare a report on community premises for consideration at the next Panel meeting.

## **20. Grants Review**

The Panel received a report of the Corporate Director of Community & Environment proposing the revision of the Council's voluntary sector funding arrangements and that the voluntary sector be consulted accordingly. The recommendations in the report and the reasons for the recommendations were outlined.

An officer additionally reported that:

- The Council was committed to reviewing the grant-making arrangements and report on this year's process and outcomes. Following feedback from the voluntary sector and an informal review by Members, it was considered that a more strategic approach to the funding arrangements for the voluntary sector should be sought;
- Members of the voluntary and community sector would be consulted before specific proposals were formulated;
- Options outlined in the report and arising from consultation with the voluntary sector would be considered before proposals to change existing funding arrangements were made. It was suggested that the consultation should seek views from the voluntary sector on commissioning a process to procure key services that aligned with the Council's priorities and whether provisions for small grants to fund innovative projects and groups should be made;
- In response to questions by Members, it was advised that officers would contact voluntary organisations to inform them that the timetable for the grants application process would be delayed and potentially change.

In light of this advice and to prevent any further delays, Members of the Panel suggested that correspondence to voluntary organisations should also seek their views on the proposed changes to the funding process.

The Chairman requested that the Portfolio Holder be consulted and agree on the content of this correspondence and that Members of the Panel be sent the final draft.

The Panel further agreed that the recommendations agreed at its previous meeting be included in the recommendations outlined in the report.

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

- (1) she consult with members of the voluntary and community sector on:
  - (i) a commissioning process to procure key services aligned to Council priorities;
  - (ii) a small grants programme;
- (2) the Portfolio Holder delegate authority to the Divisional Director of Community & Cultural Services to write to all voluntary organisations advising them that the grants process was likely to be protracted;
- (3) officers circulate this information to a wider area and advise the voluntary sector accordingly.

**RESOLVED:** That a report setting out the findings of the consultation process and proposals regarding voluntary sector arrangements be brought to the next meeting.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.35 pm, closed at 9.10 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR NANA ASANTE  
Chairman