

# GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL

## MINUTES

### 2 DECEMBER 2010

- Chairman:** \* Councillor Nana Asante
- Councillors:** \* Sue Anderson \* Mrs Vina Mithani  
\* Nizam Ismail \* Chris Mote  
\* Manji Kara \* Joyce Nickolay  
Kairul Kareema Marikar (2) \* Sasi Suresh
- Adviser:** \* Deven Pillay, Representative, Voluntary and Community Sector

- \* Denotes Member present  
(2) Denote category of Reserve Members

#### 25. Delivery of Council's Main Grant Programme for 2011/12 and Review of Support to the Voluntary Sector

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, this item was admitted late to the agenda to allow Members to consider interim arrangements for the delivery of the Council's main grant programme. Members also received a copy of a consultation questionnaire which formed part of the Council's review into support offered to the Voluntary and Community Sector. These documents had not been available at the time the agenda was dispatched and circulated as they were still being consulted on.

An officer stated that due to the current economic climate there was a need to ensure that all Council budgets were used effectively. The Council was therefore undertaking a review of the support it offered to the Voluntary and Community Sector and was in the process of seeking the views of relevant stakeholders. The review would also consider other support offered to the Voluntary and Community Sector such as Community Lettings and Community Premises. The officer stated that, in light of the review, the Panel was being asked to determine how to manage the grant application process for 2011/12. She added that all voluntary organisations in Harrow had been

informed of the review and were aware that transitional arrangements would be required.

Following questions from Members of the Panel, officers stated that:

- in the future, any consultation forms would be agreed with the Grants Advisory Panel;
- in relation to Community Lettings, a full breakdown would be provided to Members detailing income received by the Council, payments made to schools and any associated staff and other costs;
- approval of Option D would extend all existing grant agreements for one additional month. If agreed, the extension would exclude any top-up funding received in 2010/11;
- the main risk associated with pursuing Option D was a reduced timescale which had the potential to put significant pressure on officers. However, officers were confident that deadlines would be met;
- in relation to Community Lettings, it would not be possible to provide a breakdown of bookings made by hirers directly with schools as this information was held by individual schools;
- any voluntary organisation eligible under the Council's Grants Criteria was able to apply for Community Lettings;
- in 2010/11, 28% of the grants budget had been allocated to small and medium grants. However, approximately 80% of the administrative work undertaken by officers related to small and medium grants.

A Member stated that, in principle, she agreed with Option D. However, she would prefer the top-up funding to be taken into account when calculating the month extension. The Chairman stated she could not recommend this as the additional money offered in 2010/11 had been taken from the reserves held by the Council.

A Member reminded Members that some organisations only received money in 2010/11 due to top-up funding. If Option D was agreed with top-up funding excluded from the calculation, these organisations would receive no funding for the additional month. The Panel's Adviser was of the view that most voluntary organisations in Harrow would prefer Option D, as it provided the most stability.

The Chairman stated that the officer's report indicated that 26 organisations were currently registered with Community Premises and that the annual cost to the Council was £105,000. She stated that in 2005, the annual cost of Community Premises was in the region of £80 000 and requested that officers provide the Panel with a full breakdown of costs. Officers agreed to look into the matter.

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

That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director for Community and Environment to make decisions on extending individual grant agreements, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 2.2.2 and option D as referred to in the report.

**Reason for Decision:** To enable the Council to undertake and implement a review of its support to the Voluntary and Community Sector and deliver a grants programme for 2011/12.