

Minute Extract from Cabinet Meeting held on 7 April 2011

Key Decision - Grant Funding 2011/12

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services introduced the report, which set out the recommendations for the allocation of grants to the voluntary and community sector for 2011/12 together with the recommendations of the special meeting of the Grants Advisory Panel meeting held on 30 March 2011.

The Portfolio Holder stated that altogether, the Council had received 131 applications and the total amount requested was £2.3m. However, the budget available to the Council was £600,000, as savings had been forced upon the Council by the government. She commended the partnership working between the Council and the Voluntary Sector and the valuable work carried out by this Third Sector. Compared to other local authorities that were either cutting their entire grant budgets or reducing them drastically, this Council was reducing its grant funding by 15% only.

The meeting was informed that, on the basis of the funding criteria, it was being recommended that those applications with a score of 95% or above be awarded 85% of the amount applied for subject to a number of conditions being met. The report also recommended that 5% of the budget be set aside to fund appeals, amounting to a figure of £30,336.

The Portfolio Holder also drew attention to the recommendations of the Grants Advisory Panel, which, inter alia, proposed that all appeals be considered before final recommendations are made and that the appeals be considered by a Panel of Reserve Members. She agreed in principle with the Grants Advisory Panel that decisions on appeals should be made quickly. However, having given due consideration to the Panel's recommendations and having reflected on the experiences and lessons learnt from last year which resulted in significant delays for organisations, the Portfolio Holder proposed changes to the officer recommendations set out in the report, namely that a sub-paragraph 1(c) be added and recommendation 2 be replaced. She added that the report also sought approval to ring-fence £20,781 to fund the development of support services to the voluntary sector to replace those previously provided by the former Harrow Association of Voluntary Services (HAVS). This would be matched by £47,000 carried forward from the current year.

In addition, the report sought delegated authority to the Corporate Director Community and Environment, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to withdraw grant offers from organisations that did not meet the conditions described in the report. In commending the report to Cabinet with the changes proposed, as set out in the resolution below, the Portfolio Holder stated that she recognised the benefits the voluntary and community sector provided to Harrow's diverse communities.

The Leader of the Council stated that the decision before Cabinet was difficult as some organisations would lose out but, the Council had a strong record of supporting the voluntary and community sector. He further noted that a record number of applications had been received for 2011/12.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) grant recommendations for the 2011/12 Main Grants Programme, based on the assessment of applications described in the officer report and as outlined in paragraph 2.2.6 Option 1, be agreed subject to:
 - (a) a receipt of satisfactory supporting documents and references;
 - (b) confirmation from the recipient organisation that the proposed project can be delivered within the amount recommended by the deadline of 3 May 2011
 - (c) any variation to the percentage score range and percentage grant allocation necessitated by decisions on appeals as set out in resolution 2 below
- (2) authority to consider and determine appeals be delegated to the Divisional Director Community and Cultural Services in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Culture Services including the appointment of an Independent Advisor to advise the Divisional Director and the Portfolio Holder on those appeals and, furthermore, the Divisional Director, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to vary both the percentage of the grant awarded and the scoring range within which grants are allocated, in light of the decisions on appeals;
- (3) £20,781 be ring-fenced to fund the interim delivery and long-term development of support services for the voluntary and community sector to replace those provided by Harrow Association of Voluntary Service (HAVS);
- (4) applications with a score below the threshold agreed for funding be placed on a reserve list;
- (5) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Community and Environment, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Culture Services, to:
 - (i) withdraw grant offers where organisations do not comply with the conditions of grant funding as in Resolution 1 above; and
 - (ii) award available funds to organisations on the reserve list in order of highest scores achieved and, where scores are tied, that funding be only distributed when available.

Reason for Decision: To award funding from the Main Grants Programme to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to support them in delivering their services in 2011/12.