

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Grants Advisory Panel
Date:	22 November 2004
Subject:	Grant Aid Process 2005/06 – Implementation of New Strategy
Key decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Director Financial & Business Strategy
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Property & Partnership
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	All
Enclosures:	APPENDIX – FINAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT

1. **Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)**

- 1.1 The report seeks the Panel's approval for the timetable of the grant aid process 2005/06.

2. **Recommendations (for decision by Portfolio Holder)**

- 2.1 **That the Panel approve the timetable outlined in the report for the grant aid process 2005/06.**

REASON:

a) Because the new strategy has only been agreed very recently, the grant aid process 2005/06 needed to be launched immediately.

b) This will enable Members to decide on the process for determining such grant applications.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors.**

N / a

4. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

- 4.1 Grants Advisory Panel 13 September 2004 – The Panel finalised its recommendations to Cabinet on the new strategy for supporting the Voluntary Sector in Harrow.

4.2 Cabinet 14 October 2004 – Approved the new strategy for supporting the Voluntary Sector in Harrow.

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

5.1 This report addresses the Council's stated priority of strengthening Harrow's local communities by promoting social inclusion amongst all Harrow residents, both young and old by seeking to eradicate poverty and by reducing the fear of crime.

6. **Background Information and options considered**

6.1 The Council carried out a strategic review of grants to the Voluntary Sector, which included an extensive consultation process. The Grants Advisory Panel considered at length the outcome of the consultation with the Voluntary Sector at its meeting on 13th September 2004 and finalised its recommendations to Cabinet on the new strategy for supporting the Voluntary Sector in Harrow.

6.2 The Cabinet considered the Grants Panel's recommendations on the strategic review of grants to the Voluntary Sector and agreed the new strategy for supporting the Voluntary Sector in Harrow.

6.3 As the new strategy could not have been agreed earlier, it was not possible to launch the grant aid process 2005/06 by the middle of July as in previous years. This means that voluntary organisations have considerably less time to prepare and submit their grant applications for next year's funding.

6.4 **The Grant Aid Process 2005/06:** Grant application packs were dispatched on Tuesday 26th October 2004. Organisations currently in receipt of grants were sent the application packs automatically. Similarly, those organisations that have already expressed an interest were sent the packs at the same time. All other groups are being sent the packs on request. The availability of grants has been advertised in the local press, on the Council's website and other venues. As in previous years, organisations in receipt of funding under service level agreements (SLAs) are not required to fill in a grant application form. However, they may need to submit a budget for 2005/06, if they are likely to ask for growth to their funding in 2005/06.

6.5 The deadline for the receipt of completed grant application forms and supporting documentation is 5 pm on Friday 26th November 2004. Organisations have been advised that late applications will not be accepted.

6.6 On receipt of the grant applications, officers will check them to ensure that they are fully completed and the supporting documents are attached. In line with the new strategy, officers will need to discuss and agree with organisations applying for £10,000 or less the outcomes they propose to achieve in 2005/06, as these will be the subject of monitoring later in the year.

6.7 Again in line with the new strategy, organisations applying for funding in excess of £10,000 will be recommended for a service level agreement, and if approved by the Panel, they will be issued with a detailed service specification, which will include quantity and quality standards, milestones to be achieved, monitoring and reporting requirements.

6.8 All new applicants will be visited and pre-assessed in order to ensure that they meet the qualifying conditions and the common grants criteria.

- 6.9 As soon grant applications are received, if they relate to a departmental service, they will be photocopied and delivered by hand to the appropriate officer in the relevant department, so they can write the officer comment and recommendation, which will be included in the composite report to be presented to the Grants Advisory Panel.
- 6.10 It is proposed that all requests for funding will be reported to the Grants Advisory Panel on 24th January 2005 (both grants and slas). Applications for funding in relation to the Community Premises will be presented to the Grants Advisory Panel in February 2005. It is anticipated that this meeting will also deal with any outstanding grant applications, which could not be considered at the January meeting.
- 6.11 Any outstanding grants issues for 2005-06 can be considered at the Panel meeting on 2nd March 2005, which has been brought forward one week with the Chairs agreement, in order to meet report deadlines for the Cabinet meeting on 17th March.
- 6.12 Regarding the education lettings process it was necessary to extend the existing process for a further six month cycle, which will give officers and Members the time to finalise the new process and ensure both hirers and schools are properly prepared for the transition to the new grants-based process. This extension takes the education lettings service up to the end of August 2005, with the new grants-based system becoming effective from 1st September.
- 6.13 From 1st September 2005, it is proposed that the new process of allocating grants for education lettings is an annual, rather than bi-annual one. This will spread the peak workloads for the grants unit and the Grants Panel more evenly through the year and increase the ability to control the budget, as well as providing hirers with the ability to plan for a longer term.
- 6.14 Applications for funding from the grants-based education community lettings would be considered at the first meeting of the Panel in the new municipal year, probably in June 2005. Prior to this, the Panel will receive detailed proposals for the new proposed system for consideration.

7. **Consultation**

None

8. **Financial Observations**

- 8.1 This is a report of the Director of Financial and Business Strategy and deals with financial matters.

9. **Legal Observations**

- 9.1 None

10. **Conclusion**

- 10.1 The strategic review of grants was only recently completed and this resulted in a delayed launch of the Grant Aid process 2005/06. The proposed timetable needs to be agreed by Members in order to ensure that applications for funding in 2005/06 can be processed under the new strategy, within the period between now and the Cabinet meeting in March 2005. Deferral of implementation of the provisions of the strategy in relation to community

lettings will allow Members time to agree a new process for determining such applications.

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 None

12. **Author**

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