

REPORT FOR: Grants Advisory Panel

Date of Meeting: 13 June 2011

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT – Update on London Councils**

Responsible Officer: Brendon Hills, Corporate Director
Community and Environment

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out an update on the current position relating to the London Boroughs Grants scheme.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

- 2.1 The London Boroughs Grants Scheme supports projects and services that work across London or across a number of London Boroughs for example, London-wide telephone helpline for children at risk of abuse, second tier support for Councils for Voluntary Service, legal services and support for victims of domestic violence. The services funded by the London Boroughs Grants Scheme may benefit local voluntary and community sector organisations and local residents, however the extent to which direct benefit is achieved is unclear. The Council is unaware of any Harrow based organisation that receives funding from this source.
- 2.2 Last year London Councils undertook a consultation on the future delivery of the grants scheme that resulted in a decision to maintain funding agreements only where services had been categorised as being genuinely pan-London and cease funding to all other services.
- 2.3 Each London borough makes an annual contribution to the scheme based on population figures. The decision taken by London Councils meant that the contribution required from London boroughs would be reduced. In January 2011 Cabinet approved its contribution to the scheme which was reduced by £357,000 making the total contribution £390,000.
- 2.4 In February 2011, Harrow Council was notified of the outcome of a Judicial Review taken against London Councils by clients of the Roma Support Group. The case alleged failures to properly consider the public sector equalities duty and deficiencies in the consultation process. The judgement required London Councils to;
- (i) reconsider the categorisation of all funded services
 - (ii) review the initial equalities impact assessment and undertake an assessment for each service affected by the revised funding arrangements.
- 2.5 London Councils completed its re-categorisation of services, equality impact assessments and further consultation on the 8th April 2011. Services were re-categorised as follows:
- A* - that meet principles and priorities
 - A - that do not meet priorities
 - B and C - which are capable of being delivered locally by boroughs working together or individually
- 2.6 Following consideration by the Leaders' Committee at its meeting on the 10th May 2011, 320 A* commissions have been advised, that subject to

resources and delivery, funding will continue to the end of their agreement. Services categorised as A, B and C will end no later than 15th August 2011.

- 2.7 As a result of this, organisations affected by this decision may approach Harrow for funding. Sub-regional meetings are being arranged during June and July to provide an opportunity for consideration of cross-borough organisations that are seeking funding from several boroughs. London Councils have offered interim support if requested to achieve a transition for services and their future commissioning. London Councils have offered assistance by passing on full information and analysis to assist any consideration of grants locally.
- 2.8 Early indications from neighbouring boroughs Hillingdon and Ealing are that they will consider approaches from organisations on a case by case basis and will refer organisations to their grants programme. Their views are that for an organisation to be successful it would need to show it has a track record in the borough or serves a high percentage of Borough residents (if working across boroughs). Ealing is also seeking further legal advice to ensure it responds to such queries in a fair and reasonable manner and will share this with other boroughs once it is received.

Section 3 – Further Information

- 3.1 A further report on the outcomes from the sub-regional meetings with London Councils will be provided to GAP.

Section 4 – Financial Implications

- 4.1 The impact of the decision taken by London Councils is an increase in the budget of £20.767 million (£3 million over the original budget set in December). The majority of this additional cost will be met from reserves. Harrow is required make an additional contribution of £21,947 in 2011/12.

Section 5 – Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 The Council recognises the valuable contribution that the VCS makes in helping it achieve its corporate priorities including the following corporate priorities;
- United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads
 - Supporting and protecting people who are most in need. The Council's decision to support the London Boroughs Grants Scheme helps supports these priorities.

Name: Steve Tingle



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 9th June 2011

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Kashmir Takhar, Head of Service – Community Development, 020 8420 9331

Background Papers:

(1) Cabinet report: London Boroughs Grants Scheme 2011-12

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=12461&T=9>