

REPORT FOR: GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL

Date of Meeting: 9th November 2011

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT –
Update on process for Main
Grants Programme 2012/13**

Responsible Officer: Brendon Hills, Corporate Director
Community and Environment

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Appendix 1: Grant application form

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out an update on the process for administering the Main Grants Programme for 2012/13.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

- 2.1 The Grants Advisory Panel (GAP) received a report on revisions to the Grant Application Form and assessment scoring sheet at their meeting of the 13th September 2011. This report provides an update on the process for administering the Main Grants Programme for 2012/13.
- 2.2 Following feedback from GAP, the Women’s Centre and the public question received, the following amendments have been made to the application form:
- To address the queries raised by the public question regarding eligibility for not-for-profit social enterprises the words ‘voluntary and community grants’ have been amended to read ‘Main Grants Programme’ and where reference to ‘voluntary organisations’ was used in the guidance notes this has been replaced with the term ‘Third Sector’.
 - There was some concern expressed about the question on partnerships, this question has now been removed.
 - Members requested reference to ‘activity’ be included throughout the form, this has been amended.
 - The requirement that professional references excludes Councillors or Harrow Council employees was approved by GAP as part of the ‘Update on Community Premises’ report considered on the 2nd December 2010. This criterion was introduced to protect Councillors and Council employees from any conflicts of interests in the grant application process.
 - The comments provided by GAP and the Women’s Centre regarding the use of a single application form is acknowledged. Whilst it is understood that it could be considered onerous for an organisation requesting a small grant to complete the same form as an organisation requesting a larger amount the form has been designed to be accessible for all organisations. The Council continues to respond to feedback for a clear and less burdensome process, for example in 2009 changes were made to remove the requirement to submit supporting documents at the application stage so that they are only now requested when a grant has been awarded.
 - The Council has a duty to balance the need for a simplified process with the need to ensure a fair, robust and transparent processes for the distribution of public funds. A single application form responds to this need. It has been designed to be clear and easy to use with guidance notes provided throughout the form. In addition to this, information sessions will be provided during the application stage to ensure that organisations have all the information they need to complete the form.

- 2.3 The Divisional Director Community & Culture wrote to organisations to advise them of the new process timetable. In this letter, following on from discussion at the Grants Advisory Panel 13th September 2011, organisations were urged to submit a single application for funding, concentrating on a key project or activity. This is in order that the Council can distribute the available funding as widely as possible to support the voluntary and community sector to deliver services to borough residents.
- 2.4 The application form will continue to be reviewed in light of any feedback received during 2012/13, this will inform the process for the Small Grants Programme in 2013/14.
- 2.5 This year there will be two categories of grant an organisation can apply for (1) a small grant of up to £5,000 or (2) a large grant of over £5,000 up to £100,000. To ensure as wide a distribution of grant-funding as possible a proportion of the grants budget will be ring-fenced for small grant applications. This amount has been determined after an analysis of previous funding allocations and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. The proposal is to allocate 15% of the annual grants budget for 2012/13 to small grants. In 2011/12, this would equate to just over £100,00 of the £669,300 that was available in total for the Main Grants Programme. The actual allocation sum cannot be confirmed for 2012/13 until the Council's final budget allocations are confirmed later in 2011/12.
- 2.6 The timetable for the administration of the Main Grants Programme 2012/13 is as follows;

| Activity | Date |
|---|---|
| Application process for 2012/13 opens | 31 st October 2011 |
| Information sessions for grant applicants | 9 th November, 2-4pm 14 th November, 6-8pm |
| Closing date for applications | 28 th November 2011 |
| Administration and assessment of applications | 28 th Nov – 13 th Jan 2012 |
| Report to Grants Advisory Panel | February 2012 (tbc) |
| Report to Cabinet | 8 th March 2012 |
| Appeals process opens | 19 th March 2012 |
| Deadline for appeals | 28 th March 2012 |
| Appeals considered | 2 nd April 2012 |
| Final grant awards announced | 5 th April 2012 |

Section 3 – Further Information

- 3.1 A further report on grant recommendations for 2012/13 will be presented to GAP on completion of the grant application process as described above.

Section 4 – Financial Implications

4.1 The budget for the delivery of the Main Grants Programme in 2011/12 was £669,360. The proposals contained within this report are based on the assumption that the budget in 2012/13 will remain at the same level. However, this level of funding is by no means guaranteed and whether it stays the same, is increased, or decreased, depends on the outcome of the budget and medium term financial planning process. Therefore, the final amount allocated to small grants for 2012/13 will be determined once this budget is confirmed but will be 15% of the total Main Grant Programme funding budget.

Section 5 - Equalities implications

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment was not carried out for this report but an assessment was carried out for the Cabinet report on the Third Sector Investment Plan 2012-15 and an initial Equalities Impact Assessment for the application form.
- 5.2 This impact assessment identified that the introduction of commissioning and small grants as proposed by the Third Sector Investment Plan has the potential to have both a positive and negative impact on protected equality groups. The proposed commissioning and grant funding principles are designed to support the delivery of discretionary services for the Council in accordance with its statutory functions including equalities duties. The commissioning principles aim to support the delivery of services that tackle disadvantage based on evidence of need; prevention services that promote health and well-being; advocacy, information / advice and sign-posting service; culturally specific services that address the needs of communities and infrastructure support services for the Third Sector to support all Third Sector organisations delivering services in Harrow. The adoption of these principles should enable the Council to secure services that meet the needs of the protected equality groups.
- 5.3 It is also recognised however, that the proposals will have an impact on the availability of grant funding to support a wider range of services provided by Third Sector organisations in the borough. With increasing competition for reduced grant funding there is the potential for a negative impact on some Third Sector organisations serving the needs of protected equality groups.
- 5.4.1 A phased implementation of commissioning and small grants aims to mitigate the potential negative impact on equality groups. A phased implementation aims to allow those Third Sector organisations likely to be affected an opportunity to prepare for commissioning as well as time to put in place alternative fund-raising strategies. In addition, by identifying a budget allocation for small grants based on an analysis of previous grant awards, the Council aims to ensure high levels of support for smaller projects or activities which are frequently targeted

at the protected equality groups. The Council will continue to review its equalities duties during the development and implementation phases.

5.5 The amendments to the grant application form and reintroduction of a single application form are unlikely to have a disproportionately adverse impact of any of the protected equality groups. The grant application process is designed to be accessible to all. A range of support will be put in place to assist grant applicants both specifically with the form and also with completing funding application forms more generally.

Section 6 – Corporate Priorities

6.1 The provision of grant funding to Third Sector organisations has the potential to contribute to the delivery of the corporate priorities in particular:

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Name: ... Kanta Hirani..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer |
| Date: | | |

Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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

Background Papers:

Cabinet report on the Third Sector Investment Plan 2012-15
<http://modern.gov:8080/documents/q60641/Public%20reports%20pack,%20Tuesday%2018-Oct-2011%2019.30.%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>