

NOTICE OF MEETING
*PLEASE NOTE START TIME

Voluntary Sector Grants Committee

TUESDAY, 20TH JUNE, 2006 at *20.00 HRS – CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, LONDON N22 8LE CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

MEMBERS: To Be Advised

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair will consider the admission of any late items of urgent business. (Late items will be considered under the agenda item where they appear. New items will be dealt with at item 8).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY, IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgement of the public interest.

4. MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 2)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2005.

5. DEPUTATIONS

To consider any deputations received in accordance with Standing Orders.

6. ANNUAL REPORT ON VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS 2005-2006 (PAGES 3 - 10)

(Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy)): To provide an update on the administration of voluntary sector grants through the Chief Executive's Corporate Voluntary Sector Team (CVST).

7. LEGAL AND ADVICE FUNDING 2006-2010 (PAGES 11 - 26)

(Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy)): To agree core funding to the legal and advice agencies based on the recommendations of the independent evaluation of their services over the last 3 years of funding.

8. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items admitted at item 2.

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12 June 2006

**MINUTES OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS COMMITTEE
8 NOVEMBER 2005**

Councillors Reith (Chair), Canver, *Hillman, *Meehan and *Wynne.

* Members present

Also present: Councillor Hoban

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
VSGC.6	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Canver and Reith. In the absence of Councillor Reith, Councillor Hillman took the Chair.</p>	
VSGC.7	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2005 be approved and signed.</p>	HMS
VSGC.8	<p>APPEAL BY THE AFRICAN CARIBBEAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (ACLIC) AGAINST WITHDRAWAL OF GRANT AID - (Report of the Head of Member Services - Agenda Item 6):</p> <p>Our Chair agreed to take this report as an item of urgent business. The report was late because of the need to complete necessary consultations and was too urgent to await the next meeting because it related to a specific appeal which was being heard at the meeting.</p> <p>We resolved to exclude the public and press at this juncture because the schedules and appendices to the report were not for publication as they contained exempt information relating to a particular applicant for, or recipient of any service provided to the Council and information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (other than the authority). Councillor Hoban remained in attendance for the oral submissions made by the ACLIC and the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) but not during the Committee's subsequent deliberations.</p> <p>The ACLIC had presented a bundle of written submissions and documents in support of their appeal and the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) had also presented written submissions and documents in opposition to the appeal against the decision to withdraw Grant Aid. Councillor Wynne asked that it be reported that she had not received her papers for until the afternoon of the meeting. Our Chair also agreed to accept a letter from the Inland Revenue to the ACLIC and to an application pack for a post of Centre Manager being tabled by the ACLIC.</p> <p>Representatives of ACLIC addressed our meeting and spoke in support of their appeal, the principal grounds of which were that the Notice which made it a condition of grant aid that a Centre Manager should be appointed by July 2005 was not a valid amendment to the General Terms and Conditions of Grant Aid to Voluntary Organisations. Also, that they had made a further</p>	

**MINUTES OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS COMMITTEE
8 NOVEMBER 2005**

application to a different funding stream for funds to appoint a Centre Manager which should have been considered as a response to point 8 of the Default Notice. We noted that the ACLC were continuing to progress the recruitment process for the appointment of a Centre Manager and that a public advertisement for this post had now appeared. We also noted the steps being taken to settle certain historical debts and their contention that Council officers had not been prepared to enter into meaningful negotiations with them on these points. Questions were then put by Members of our Committee and answers given. In answer to a question, the ACLC indicated that they had reserves of £42,000. They also agreed that they would use their reserves to pay off tax and national insurance liabilities.

Officers from the Council's Voluntary Sector Team then responded and pointed to evidence in their written submission of proper authorisation of the imposition of a condition in relation to the appointment of a Centre Manager, recruitment to which should have been made from core funding rather than from the additional grant funding which had been sought. With regard to the historic debt, we were advised that while an indemnity by a voluntary organisation was of variable value depending on the reserves of the organisation, it was a standard term of all grants that the grant maker was indemnified as to compliance with minimum legal measures by the recipient of the grant. The written submissions made demonstrated that half way through a three year grant period the ACLC were not able to show that the grant received had been applied in accordance with their business plan which had been the basis of the award of the grant. Questions were then put by Members of our Committee and answers given.

We noted although the ACLC's accounts for year ending 31 March 2004 had been examined by the Council's Internal Audit Service who had reported to the Voluntary Sector Team, the weaknesses which had been identified and the recommendations made had not been relayed to the ACLC. We were of the view that the concerns identified in that report should have been put in writing to the ACLC together with a timetable for suggested remedial action and details of the consequences if this action was not taken. We were also of the view that, in future, when weaknesses or concerns were identified the Voluntary Sector Team should write to the particular organisation outlining those concerns, specifying necessary actions and timescales and spelling out the likely consequences of non-compliance.

RESOLVED:

1. That the appeal submitted by the African Caribbean Leadership Council be not upheld and the action taken by Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) in withdrawing their grant aid with effect from 30 November 2005 be endorsed. ACE(S)
2. That an officer be appointed by the Council to work with the Management Committee of the ACLC over a period of time to build capacity and to ensure the continued provision of services to the community. ACE(S)

Voluntary Sector Grants Committee
On 20th June 2006

Report title:	Annual Report on Voluntary Sector Grants 2005-2006
Report of:	David Hennings - Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy)
<p>Introduction by Executive Member: The Council provides over £3m worth of grant aid to the voluntary sector each year. This is a substantial investment and it is important that we are able to ensure the money is well spent. From 2002 we have made an annual report to the Committee on progress in improving the administration of the grants programme and other key developments in our work with the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Key developments over the year have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater partnership working both across Council services and externally; • the completion of the Voluntary Sector Compact (due to be formally launched on 21st June); • commissioning the Council of Ethnic Minority Organisations to undertake capacity building work with some 15 local organisations; • making recommendations to achieve a consistent approach in addressing the allocation, administration and maintenance of community buildings, including work with Property Services on a draft 'model lease' <p>Finally, we have just taken over as the accountable body for HARCEN and are drawing up a Service Level Agreement with them so we can monitor and evaluate their effectiveness and overall value for money in providing a community empowerment network in the borough.</p>	
1. Purpose	
1.1 This report updates the Committee on the administration of voluntary sector grants through the Chief Executives Corporate Voluntary Sector Team (CVST).	
2. Recommendations	
2.1 The Committee note the Report	
Report authorised by:	David Hennings Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy)

Contact officers:	Amir Rashid Interim Head of Strategy Business Unit	Susan Humphries/ Head of Voluntary Sector
Telephone:	0208 489 6955	020 8489 6902
3.1 Executive summary		
<p>This report updates VSGC on the progress of improving the administration of voluntary sector grants. Considerable progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the Best Value Review and District Audit recommendations.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Clarification and rationale for the purpose of awarding grant aid▪ Development of the Supporting People project▪ Partnership working across the Council and with the Voluntary Sector▪ Introduction of a grants management package 'Benefactor' and J4B – funding information web site▪ Funding reviews and Strategy development▪ Establishment of the Voluntary Sector COMPACT and capacity building partnerships with the voluntary sector.▪ Review of community buildings		
4. Access to information: Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985		

5. BACKGROUND

5.1 Following the District Audit report and the Voluntary Sector Best Value Review, in 2002 the Council agreed a package of improvements to the support provided to the voluntary sector and to the way in which voluntary sector grants are administered. One of the recommendations in the District Audit report was that an annual report is presented to Members showing the progress of improvements in policy, procedures and performance towards the voluntary sector. This is the third Report to the Committee.

5.2 Funding administered through the Corporate Voluntary Sector Team (CVST):

The Council's mainstream grant funding for 2005/06 from the Corporate Voluntary Sector Team totals £3,078,499. This funding is distributed through the main grants programme and the New Initiative Development Fund.

5.2.1 **Main Grant Programme** - The main grants programme provides up to 3 year funding to for:

1. **Grant Aid for Core Funding:**

Grant aids a contribution towards the management costs that support the central running costs of the organisation. Core funding is provided to those organisations who have demonstrated their ability to:

- Play a strategic role in voluntary sector activity and development,
- Be a key partners with the Council in supporting the delivery of the Community Strategy;
- Support voluntary sector sustainability and development.

2. **Commissioning for Direct Services Provision:**

Project cost that relates to specific services will be commissioned either by a lead Directorate service commissioner or in the case of strategic, cross-sector borough services (e.g. Advice) grant aided through the CVST. It has been agreed that grants that have traditionally provided by grant aid, which should be commissioned by services, are transferred to the appropriate service for future administration (Appendix 1).

Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of those organisations that are currently in receipt of grant aid through a 3 year funding agreement.

5.2.2 **New Initiative Development Fund (NIDF)** – 'One-off' grants up to £3,000.

Approximately 32 organisations have benefited from the NIDF over the last year (See Appendix 2). The Corporate Voluntary Sector Team reviewed the monitoring procedures for organisations receiving NIDF. The aim is to implement more effective robust monitoring procedures that identified opportunities for capacity building and development support.

5.3 **External Funding Stream**

5.3.1 **Supporting People Project**

The Supporting People (SP) Grant to the Voluntary Sector of £811,624 per annum administered and monitored to the voluntary sector by the CVST. Twelve organisations currently benefit from this funding stream (See Appendix 2). This funding is in addition to the mainstream grants programme.

- 5.3.2 The Team also provides capacity building and support for organisations in readiness for Review from the Supporting People Team and support the development of potential SP providers of the future. This has enable the organisations to manage and deliver contract effectively and efficiently and to achieve level C or above in the review.
- 5.3.3 The CVST has set up and supports a Small Providers Network which brings together small providers for mutual support, information exchange, discussion and helps facilitate effective partnership working. Haringey's method of working with a voluntary sector supporting people programme has been acknowledged at government level and by the wider Supporting People arena and Haringey as a 'Model of Good Practice'.

6. IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 Voluntary Sector Grants Committee (VSGC)

The VSGC is a decision making Committee and is made up of those Lead Members whose services have links with the Voluntary Sector. The Committee has overviewed issues that affect the voluntary sector, reviewed the grant making process and approved 3 year grants funding programmes.

6.2 Local Partnership Working

6.2.1 **Corporate Grants Officers Group (CGOG)** Lead Officers from each service working with the voluntary sector meet quarterly to share good practice and exchange information on issues and funding, which affect the voluntary sector.

6.2.2 **2nd Tier Organisations Partnership (2TOP)** Lead officers from voluntary sector Infrastructure organisations and the CVST meet quarterly to share good practice, exchange information and when required provide support and mentoring to organisations who are experiencing difficulties within their management or governance.

6.2.3 Haringey Community Legal Services Partnership (CLSP)

On an initiative lead by the Legal Services Commission the CLSP was established in Haringey in 2001 with support of the CVST who continues to administered, service and support the partnership. The CLSP bring together legal and advice agencies from the Voluntary and Community sector, private solicitors and statutory agencies to provide a place where issues that affect the sector can be addressed strategically. In 2005/06 the CLSP commissioned Advice UK to set up a quality mark training project in HAVCO and initiated and provided support to an Advice Providers Network.

6.3 Audit Service

6.3.1 From time to time Officers have major concerns regarding the management, in particularly the financial management, of organisations who are receiving grants for which the Council has accountability. The CVST works in partnership with the Audit Services to look at the financial procedure and governance , should there be

cause for concern. The auditor provides the CVST of their findings and recommendations which informs the appropriate action to be taken by the monitoring officer.

- 6.3.2 At the request of the CVST Internal Audit method of auditing the work of the CVST now includes a random selection of organisations that receive a Council grant. The purpose is to independently check organisations compliance with the Terms and Conditions of Revenue Grant Aid by those who have a particular expertise around financial matters. A Report on the findings is provided to the CVST and to the organisation that has been audited. This has been very beneficial to both the CVST and the organisations as it provides management at all levels either with assurance that controls are in place to ensure effective and efficient administration of grant or a monitoring tool against which organisations can improve their performance. Although there is a risk that failure within a voluntary organisation could effect the scoring of the CVST it does provide assurance of a mutually open and accountable process.

6.4 Grants Management

- 6.4.1 In addition to the Council's main stream funding there is a variety of funding streams available to the voluntary sector for which the Council is the accountable body. It is important to co-ordinate these funding streams to ensure that the potential for duplication of funding is minimised and that each funding stream compliments and works together to maximise impact.
- 6.4.2 Benefactor, a grant management programme, was installed in March 2004 to provide a mechanism to do this. It is services by the CVST. The information on the programme relies heavily on information provided from other services and this is being achieved in most part though the Corporate Grants Officer Group. However building up the database is time intensive and there is still more to do to ensure the programme meets its full potential.
- 6.4.3 A website of funding opportunities as also been put in place. This is supported and promoted to the sector through the CVST. J4B is the external agency that provides the website and ensures that information on the website is kept update and relevant to Haringey. www.open4community.info/haringey1

6.5 Funding Reviews

- 6.5.1 In 2005/06 the Michael Bell Consultants undertook an independent review of organisations that provide dedicated legal and advice services funded through the mainstream grants programme. This involved an evaluation of the quality of services, effectiveness of their work and the value for money of the investment in complimenting and enhancing the Council's own services. This financial year will see the implementation the review including exploring the

recommendation of the need to development a Council wide Advice Strategy.

- 6.5.2 An evaluation of the community organisations element of the mainstream grant programme will be commissioned this year. This will involve evaluating the success of the organisations that are in receipt of grant funding for the delivery of a range of community activities and services. The outcome of this evaluation will inform the awarding of new 3 year funding agreements from April 2007.

6.6 Voluntary Sector COMPACT

- 6.6.1 The 2 year process to develop Haringey's Compact will finish with an official launch on the 21st June 2006 at the Cypriot Centre. This has been a positive partnership with HAVCO as the lead agency for the voluntary sector and the CVST servicing the work of the COMPACT for the Council

- 6.6.2 The Compact now moves from its developmental stage to implementation. A three work plan will accompany the agreement and it will set out clear objectives and targets. To support the implementation of the Compact, Compact link officers will be appointed across the directorates. The aim of the Compact link officer is to build awareness, ownership, involvement, use and accountability of the Compact and partnership working. The effectiveness of the Compact will be reviewed by a Compact Evaluation Group reporting annually to Haringey's HSP.

6.7 A.L.G.

The Council has Member representation on the ALG Grants Committee and the Corporate Voluntary Sector Team provide support to the designated Member to make certain that issues relevant to the voluntary sector in Haringey are appropriate raised, discuss and considered when the ALG Grants Committee are making funding decisions.

6.8 Council of Ethnic Minority Organisations (CEMVO)

Through NRF funding the Corporate Voluntary Sector Team, in partnership with HAVCO, commissioned the Council of Ethnic Minority Organisations (CEMVO) to undertake a capacity building programme with 15 organisations in the Borough. The post is based at HAVCO. As necessary some referrals are made to CEMVO by the CVST for capacity building work. The programme includes an audit of the organisations internal management process and provides support and guidance in establishing a 3 year Business Plan.

6.9 HarCEN - (Haringey's Community Empowerment Network) - 2006/07

- 6.9.1 The purpose of the Community Empowerment Network is to engage and develop local representation on the LSP. HarCEN was developed in Haringey 2 years ago by the Government Office for London (GOL) with the Scarman Trust as accountable body for the funding.
- 6.9.2 In 2006/07 the funding to HarCEN has been transferred from GOL to the local authority through the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF). There is only one years dedicated funding of this work on the understanding that, if it is considered by the authority to be worthwhile and effective mechanism for community engagement, the funding in subsequent years will be identified by the Council.
- 6.9.3 The responsibility for administering, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of HarCEN to deliver this role into the future will be undertaken by the CVST. This will include consultation with the community and voluntary sector and statutory agencies on the merits of continuing to funding both HAVCO and HarCEN as separate entities is the best use of public funds within a value for money framework.

6.10 Community Building

- 6.10.1 A Report was presented to the VSGC on the 6th September 2005. The Report outlined the current difficulties in the allocation, administration and maintenance of community buildings and made recommendations for a consistent approach in the future.
- 6.10.2 It was agreed a draft 'model lease' would be prepared by Property Services and presented to VCGC for agreement. The model lease is in the final stages of consultation with officers but been delayed due to the recent loss of key staff within Property Services.
- 6.10.3 There is resource implication within the agreed recommendations which were not met within the Council's budget setting process. To address this and find a way forward a Project Group with Property Services and the CVST is to be established to look at the how to take forward the recommendations.

7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

7.1 Future Reviews

Currently all grants awarded by the CVST for the main grants programme are for a 3 year period. Towards the end of the 3 year cycle an independent evaluation against the reason the grant was provided takes place. This is an ongoing rolling process which reports to the Voluntary Sector Grants Committee.

Currently an evaluation is underway to review the dedicated legal and advice agencies. This will be followed in 2006/7 with a review of the community organisation.

7.2 Business Planning

The last few years has seen the work of the CVST expand from its original remit to take on more of a strategic role. In order to define the strategic and operational functions of the CVST more clearly and to

enable members of the team to work towards a longer term vision a business plan will be developed. This will set out a series of strategic objectives and related performance indicators together with a 3 year action plan. The business plan will be an evolving document which will be updated annually.

7.3 Procurement Strategy

Best practice suggests that councils should adopt a corporate approach to commissioning services from the voluntary sector. To this effect a Procurement Strategy is being developed which will set out measures that can be implemented in order to move from the current approach of administering funding to an approach which will involve commissioning of services. This will apply to business units in the Council that fund organisations to deliver specific services. As the CVST fund an organisations core costs in order to maintain the organisational capacity to deliver, this approach will not be applicable for the Corporate Grants programme.

7.4 Voluntary sector strategy

Consultants have been engaged to scope out terms of reference for a voluntary sector strategy. This will set out the strategic issues which face the sector and the approach the Council needs to take, corporately into order to address these. One example is the absence of a strategic approach to the delivery of advice provision in the borough. This would enable the long term commissioning of advice services in the borough based on need and local strategic priorities.

8. COMMENTS

8.1 Legal Services Comments

The Head of Legal Services notes the contents of the report and does not have any comments but should be consulted on the specific projects/initiatives which result from the report

8.2 Financial comments

Although this report is largely to update the Committee on the work of the CVST it does raise a number of policy issues and future work plans which may have financial implications for the authority in the future such as funding for and role of HarCEN after 2006/07 and work around maintenance of community buildings. At this stage it is difficult to quantify likely impact and it is expected that separate reports will be written when there is greater clarity.

Report title: Legal and Advice Funding 2006-2010	
Report of: David Hennings – Assistant Chief Executive - Strategy	
<p>Introduction by Executive Member: access to good quality advice is of major importance to many of our residents, especially those on low incomes. The consequences of not getting access to good advice at an early stage can be debt, homelessness, loss of employment and the social exclusion and poor health that comes from living long-term with disrepair and inadequate income. More starkly, lack of legal help with immigration rights can result in deportation.</p> <p>There has been a gradual reduction in the number of private solicitor firms taking on legal aid work and this has placed additional demands on the borough's advice agencies. In recognition of this we commissioned an independent evaluation of the borough's advice agencies and the recommendations in this report are based on that evaluation. In addition to agreeing funding for specific agencies this report also recommends that we develop a borough-wide Advice Strategy. This will make an important contribution to our anti-poverty work.</p>	
Wards(s) affected: ALL	Report for: Key
1. Purpose	
1.1 To agree the recommendations for core grant funding to the legal and advice agencies based on the recommendations of the independent evaluation of their services over the last 3 years of funding.	
2. Recommendations	
2.1 To agree the funding recommendations (5.5.1& 5.5.4) up to March 2010.	
2.2 That a Borough wide Advice Strategy is developed (5.5.2).	
2.3 To agree that inflation is added to the core grant for advice agency from April 2007 to the end of the newly agreed funding agreement (5.5.5).	
Report authorised by: David Hennings – Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy.	

Contact officer:	
Amir Rashid Interim Head of Strategy Business Unit	Susan Humphries Head of Corporate Voluntary Sector Team
Telephone: 020 8489 6955	020 8489 6902
3. Executive Summary	
3.1 The Report provides information on the evaluation of the legal and advice agencies currently in receipt of council core grant aid and sets out the recommendations for the distribution of funding up to March 2010 through the legal and advice funding programme.	
4. Policy summary	
4.1 Current or proposed policy: None	
4.2 Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development	
5. Access to information:	
Access to Information Local Government 1985	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Public Management (OPM): Best Value Review of Support and Funding to Advice – November 2002 • Michael Bell Associates: Review of Advice Funding - March 2006 	

5. REPORT

5.1 Background

5.1.1 The corporate grants budget provides core funding to range of voluntary organisations through long term funding arrangement and the a small grants budget. A Best Value Review of the support and funding to advice provider voluntary sector in Haringey was undertaken in 2002 by the Office of Public Management (OPM). This review recommended funding to 2003 with 2 dedicated advice providers in the Borough from April 2003 to March 2006.

Haringey Citizen's Advice Bureau (HCAB) – The funding of 3 Bureaux based at Tottenham Town Hall, Turnpike Lane and Hornsey.

Haringey Law Centre (HLC) formerly Tottenham Law Centre – One Centre in Tottenham High road

5.1.2 A further funding arrangement was put in place to the **Angolan & Cabinda Community Organisations (A&CCO)**, both based at the Selby Centre for the delivery of immigration advice from 1st January 2004.

5.1.3 Michael Bell Associates (MBA), who are recognised as experts in the field of advice reviews, were commissioned by the Council to undertake an independent evaluation of the quality of the services, effectiveness of their work and the value for money of the Council's investment to these 3 organisations over the last 3 years. The funding to these 3 organisations was extended to October 2006 to enable the evaluation to deliver its conclusions.

5.2 The need to fund advice provision

The Council's acknowledgement that provision of effective advice agencies is crucial for the following reasons:

- They contribute to regeneration and renewal across a wide spectrum of activities by offering opportunities to link the socially excluded to a range of regeneration initiatives;
- They empower individuals by transferring knowledge and skills about rights and entitlements;
- They bridging the gap between excluded individuals and mainstream services.
- They provide early intervention which prevents a problem getting worse, and may well lead to its prompt resolution.
- An active advice sector also strengthens local democracy by improving accountability of local services and can provide valuable feedback to local authorities and other statutory bodies about the impact of policies and about how their services are performing.

5.3 The changing context for advice services

5.3.1 The Legal Service Commission (LSC)

The LSC have moved to the commissioning of services based on outcome funding and have introduced of fixed fees for Not for Profit contracts. It is expected that this new way of funding will to have a significant impact on small advice providers, particularly those from the voluntary and community sector. This will in turn lead to a reduction locally in the supply of legal advice particularly to those in marginalised communities. HLC have already become a victim of this new funding regime with a reduction of their LSC contract of 50.1%.

5.3.2 As part of the LSC strategy they are also promoting the establishment of Community Legal Advice Centres or Networks (CLAC's or CLAN's). These are envisaged by the LSC to become the channel for distributing funding to local legal and advice agencies in partnership with local authorities and other funders. There has been no increase to the LSC legal aid budget over the last 5 years with little prospect of any increase in the future. This coupled, with the huge pressure on their budget through criminal law, has created a general scepticism as to the motivation of the LSC's for proposing the setting up of these Centres or Network which has meant that to date there does not appear to be any public move to implement these proposals.

5.3.3 Key Indicators and Local Strategy

The local provision of advice is assessed through Best Value Performance Indicator 177 and impacts on 3 Public Service Agreement target areas. Further more social welfare advice plays an important role in meeting four key themes of Haringey Community Strategy:

- Improving access to public services for everyone in the community
- Improving the most deprived neighbourhoods
- Better access to jobs and training
- Better housing for all.

5.4 Current Situation

5.4.1 **Findings:** The key finding from the MBA evaluation are summarised as follows (Appendix 1 for full details of findings):

5.4.2 Haringey Citizen's Advice Bureau

- HCAB is performing well and is of a good standard The service is well managed and has a committed workforce;
- Well-established and effective systems and processes with appropriate reference resources, quality systems and file management is of a high standard;
- Considerable pressure with long waiting periods for appointments and actual long physical queues. The service has adopted appropriate methods to manage this;
- There is a need for additional social policy work;
- The service has had to severely restrict its involvement in tribunal and court representation because of the impact on advisers' time.

5.4.3 Haringey Law Centre

- The Law Centre is providing a fair service with some good quality advice alongside other advice which is less satisfactory; feedback about the Centre in surveys was very variable
- There are concerns about a lower than expected level of outputs by the Law Centre;
- Haringey Law Centre appears to operate as a direct public access advice service rather than as a specialist second tier service;
- The Legal Services Commission has indicated that it is indeed to cut its funding to the Centre (see 5.2.1 of this Report); such a cut would cause sustainability problems;
- No Social Policy work taking place despite the regular evidence from cases about defective services and errors by statutory bodies.

5.4.4 Angolan & Cabinda Community Associations

- A good service is being provided on immigration law, but ACA/CCA are not equipped to provide advice on areas of social welfare law apart from immigration
- Both organisations have high levels of outputs and despite efforts to manage the flow of work, the advisers are often working well beyond what is expected;
- Good links with many other local organisations and communities and are not just a service for people of central African heritage.

5.4.5 Generic Findings –

- There is “a huge and unmet need” for advice in Haringey made worse by the gradual drift out of legal aid work by good quality private sector solicitors;
- Demand for advice services in Haringey appears to be significantly amplified by:
 - poor quality referrals by voluntary and statutory agencies
 - lack of knowledge and lack of engagement about social welfare law among many staff working in LBH and partner agencies
 - A noticeable trend to try to provide advice often on complex matters
 - Significant customer service failures by Jobcentre Plus Service in Haringey,
- Serious shortages of advisers in many areas especially for social security tribunal representation

- No strategic plan for the provision of social welfare law advice, either in-house or externally.
- Poor quality advice being provided by some local community and voluntary organisations which have drifted into advice work
- There is a small but active network of private, fee-charging individuals who provide advice on social welfare law to the public.
- Funding Agreements with the advice agencies are very comprehensive and based on best practice. Council officer support on such issues is both valued and forthcoming.
- Analysis of benefit take-up in Haringey shows that take-up levels, (especially among people of working age), are far lower than one would expect to see and they compare badly with other, similar London Boroughs.
- None of the local advice agencies are using benefits calculation software.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Based on the findings and recommendations of the MBA it is clear that withdrawal of funding from any of the agencies evaluated would have a negative impact on an already stretched advice sector. Therefore it is **recommended** that these 3 organisations are offered a further grant up to March 2010 with specific conditions built into their respective SLA's (see table below). Full summary of the recommendation are Appendix 2 of this report. The Council's Terms of Conditions of Revenue Grant Aid will apply to these grants.

ORGANISATION	RECOMMENDATIONS
Haringey Law Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a robust Development Plan to address to points of weakness identified by MBA (see Appendix 1):
Haringey Citizen's Advice Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further improvement to the access of telephone advice • Additional representation work • Increase to supervision frequency
Angolan and Cabinda Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake immigration work only • Referral systems for other advice work is put place • Increase of supervision frequency

5.5.2 The recommendations of the evaluation have identified the need for a consistent approach to the development of the Advice services in the Borough. To address this it is **recommended** that a borough wide Advice Strategy is put in place. This Advice Strategy will address areas of economic and social deprivation and support and complement the Anti Poverty Strategy and the currently being explored Voluntary Sector Strategy. This process will help develop service provision in line with identified needs and will in the future inform the Council as to how funding should be allocated. The putting place of putting in place this Strategy is estimated to be in the region of £25k.

5.5.3 While the development of this Strategy is being explored Council wide there is a need to put in place stable funding to the key voluntary sector agencies who are currently delivering advice in the Borough. With this in mind the SLA will also place on them an expectation of a strategic partnership role with the Council in the development of an Advice Strategy.

5.5.4 Funding is **recommended** to each organisation as follows:

	Current CE Core Grant Funding	Other Income 2005/06	Proposed CE Core Grant Funding 2006/2010	Timescale	Rational
HCAB	£640,000	£370,000	£640,000	1 st Oct 2006 – 31 st March 2010	The MBA report raised no major concerns. HCAB providing high quality services.
HLC	£110,000	£115,000	£110,000	1 st Oct 2006-31 st March 2008.	The MBA report raised several concerns that needs to be addressed before longer term funding is recommended. Some addition work is being undertaken by MBA to look at options with HLC and other stakeholders for their future sustainability. A further 2 years funding will be provided to March 2010 subject to a further Report to the VSGC on the progress of HLC to meet the reviews recommendation and the concerns being address to the satisfaction of the Council.
Angolan & Cabinda Partnership	£19,000	£13,000	£19,000	1 st Oct 2006 – 31 st March 2010	The MBA report raised no major concerns in respect to the funding provided by the core grant (Immigration only).
TOTALS	£769,000	£498,000	£769,000		

5.5.5 Currently voluntary organisations who are in receipt of 3 year grant funding through the Chief Executives core grants programme have been subject to a standstill budget over the 3 year period. This has been necessary so that inflation awarded can be off set to meet the required efficiency savings. However in light of the desperate need to advice in the Borough to be at least maintained at the level of the new SLA, it is **recommended** that inflation is awarded annually on these grants from April 2007 until the next review period. This will enable them to concentrate their efforts to further access external funding opportunities in order to develop much needed services.

6. Comments

6.1 Equalities Comments

Monitoring statistics provided by the legal and advice agencies demonstrate that the services are provided primarily to people from BME communities, (72%) women (61%) and the unemployed (90%). The Review commented that all advice agencies in Haringey have multi-lingual staff and an ethnically diverse workforce and this greatly facilitates access to advice.

6.2 Financial Services Comments

Director of Finance supports the need for a borough-wide advice strategy to ensure best value is achieved in delivering an advice service within limited resources. It is accepted that this will take time to implement and that in the interim it is in the interests of the Haringey community to achieve stability in funding, so support is given to re-award the three grants as outlined in this report.

The impact of agreeing inflationary increases (2.5%) from April 2007 to March 2010 would equate to an additional £20k per annum on the current proposed figure of £769k. If agreed this would have an impact on the section's ability to identify savings and would need to be built into future PBPR's.

As indicated in the report, the costs of developing a Borough Wide Advice Strategy will vary considerably depending on the ultimately agreed scope, although it is likely that a wider review encompassing the whole of the HSP would lead to greater value for money and improved outcomes in the longer term. It should be noted that currently no budget has been identified to fund this strategic work.

6.3 Legal Services Comments

The Head of Legal Services notes the contents of the report and does not have any comments but should be consulted on the specific projects/initiatives which result from the report

Generic findings

- There is “a huge and unmet need” for advice in Haringey
- Demand for advice services in Haringey appears to be significantly amplified by poor quality referrals by a wide range of voluntary and statutory agencies, lack of knowledge and lack of engagement about social welfare law (especially welfare benefits) among many staff working in London Borough of Haringey services and partner agencies, a very noticeable trend among some community organisations to try to provide advice often on complex matters and to frequently make mistakes, significant customer service failures by Jobcentre Plus services in Haringey,
- Serious shortages of advisers in many areas especially for social security tribunal representation (and Court representation in debt and housing matters) and employment advice. Just one debt adviser post.
- There is a shortage of health based advice initiatives.
- The gradual drift out of legal aid work by good quality private sector solicitor provision on social welfare law is placing additional demands on advice agencies as well as leading to a loss of specialist level help for more complex matters.
- There is no strategic plan for the provision of social welfare law advice, either in-house or externally.
- There is not enough informal contact between workers in different advice agencies.
- Staff employed by the London Borough of Haringey who have an advice giving function appear to have very little contact with advice agencies and the customer contact centre has no processes for referring people to independent advice agencies.
- Little use is being made of volunteers for advice work.
- Poor quality advice being provided by some local community and voluntary organisations which drifted into advice work
- There is a small but active network of private, fee-charging individuals who provide advice on social welfare law to the public.

- All advice agencies in Haringey have multi-lingual staff and an ethnically diverse workforce and this greatly facilitates access to advice.
- Funding Agreements with the advice agencies which cover governance and financial arrangements are very comprehensive and based on best practice and better than those encountered in other local authorities. Council officer support on such issues is both valued and forthcoming.
- There is a need for advice agencies to have access to timely and skilled advice on human resources challenges.
- Analysis of benefit take-up in Haringey shows that take-up levels, (especially among people of working age), are far lower than one would expect to see and they compare badly with other, similar London Boroughs.
- None of the local advice agencies are using benefits calculation software.

CAB findings

- Haringey Citizens Advice Bureau is performing well, having greatly improved in recent years and it has good prospects for further improvement. The service is well managed and has a committed workforce who use well-established and effective systems and processes.
- There is a raised level of sickness among advisers at Hornsey.
- The CAB is under considerable pressure with long waiting periods for appointments and actual long physical queues. The service has adopted appropriate methods to manage this.
- There is a need for additional social policy work coordinated with other advice agencies to address issues of service delivery by local welfare agencies.
- The service is accessible (save for the difficulty in waiting times and limited access hours, caused by volume of work) and has taken steps to ensure accessibility.
- Generally work is of a good standard. However, a number of shortfalls in advice giving in some of the small number of cases sampled were identified.
- This highlights the importance of thorough case checking, and a process for this and to address shortfalls is now under way.
- The service has had to severely restrict its involvement in tribunal and court representation because of the impact on advisers' time. It is felt that this is adversely affecting the overall quality of work.

- The service has appropriate reference resources, quality systems and file management is of a high standard. Process for updating advisers about changes could be enhanced by a process of having monthly verbal briefings.
- Feedback about the service from both stakeholder interviews and the survey of referring agencies was good.

Law Centre findings

- The Law Centre is providing a fair service with some good quality advice alongside other advice which is less satisfactory and a number of other concerns which can be surmounted with the right support and planning. The leadership of the Law Centre was already aware of these concerns and had begun to address them in a proactive manner before fieldwork was undertaken.
- There are concerns about a lower than expected level of outputs by the Law Centre.
- Haringey Law Centre appears to operate as a direct public access advice service rather than as a specialist second tier service.
- The Centre has faced a number of human resource challenges in recent months and this has placed additional strains on both staff and the Management Committee and they are to be commended for maintaining a service in the circumstances.
- The majority of customers reside within Haringey but the Centre may wish to consider explicitly restricting its work to Haringey residents, save for that proportion which relates to work which has to be done elsewhere (e.g. work funded by the Association of London Government).
- The Legal Services Commission has indicated that it is indeed to cut its funding to the Centre by 61% because of low output levels. Such a cut would cause sustainability problems.
- Core funding by the London Borough of Haringey has enabled the Centre to attract additional external funding.
- Some of the recruitment problems will only be solved by setting pay levels for solicitors at a more attractive level, but additional funding will be required to achieve this.

- The Centre's private landlord doubled the Centre's rent recently and this used up the Centre's contingency funding.
- The Centre has put a lot of effort into making its premises accessible, welcoming and a pleasant environment in which to work. The location of the premises is as near as perfect as one could expect.
- Feedback about the Centre in surveys was very variable but the return rate was too low to draw strong conclusions.
- The Law Centre's engagement with external networks in Haringey is not as strong as one might hope and there is no Social Policy work taking place despite the regular evidence from cases about defective services and errors by statutory bodies.
- The sampling of a small number of case files showed that there was some effective work being undertaken, but several cases were identified where it was felt that the advice was significantly deficient.
- The Centre's library appears to lack several reference books and journals and it is not catalogued. In addition, storage of case files was not always appropriate. There are no concerns about the Centre's systems and supervision arrangements, provided that the manager's post is filled.

Angolan Community Association/Cabinda Community Association findings

- A good service is being provided on immigration law, but a less good service on other areas of law.
- The ACA/CCA are not equipped to provide advice on areas of social welfare law apart from immigration and there is a considerable danger of people being misadvised as a result.
- Both organisations have high levels of outputs and despite efforts to manage the flow of work, the advisers are often working well beyond what is expected.
- The ACA/CCA advice services do not appear to operate as a single entity, though there clearly are close links between the two advice workers and they are located on the same campus.
- Both the advice workers are highly committed and have good links with many other local organisations and they are targeting communities which have particular needs for immigration law advice. They increasingly see their

service as a community immigration law advice service, not just a service for people of central African heritage.

- Supervision is provided externally but not by someone who is an experienced advice worker and it takes place every three months.
- Approximately 80% of clients are from the Haringey Area. This means that 20% of capacity is being spent on people who do not live in Haringey.

Generic recommendations

- The London Borough of Haringey should consider establishing a strategic planning and commissioning body and engage advice funders such as the Primary Care Trust and Legal Services Commission in developing a joint strategy.
- London Borough of Haringey should encourage community and voluntary organisations which receive funding for other services and activities, to identify a limit on the level of signposting and information giving work they will offer and also not provide any funding to additional organisations to provide advice and information.
- It would be advantageous for many London Borough of Haringey staff to have welfare rights training to enable them to be 'early identifiers' for advice problems.
- Up-to-date referral procedures should be developed and regularly updated and distributed.
- The London Borough of Haringey should work with the Citizens Advice Bureau and Law Centre to identify resources to develop tribunal representation and increase the supply of debt and employment advice.
- The London Borough of Haringey should provide resources for advice agencies which undertake welfare benefits advice to have appropriate benefit calculation software and training and to work with these agencies to maximise benefit take-up in the borough.
- The London Borough of Haringey should encourage the key advice providers to play an effective role in the Haringey Advice Providers' Network and resources are identified to enable the lead advice agencies to take on a strategic liaison function within the Network.
- The London Borough of Haringey should support the advice sector to recruit, train and support volunteer advice workers.
- London Borough of Haringey should work with local advice agencies to revise Service Level Agreements to include outputs, Social Policy work, supply copies of external audit/inspection reports.

CAB recommendations

- The London Borough of Haringey should monitor sickness levels and require the CAB to reduce sickness levels at Hornsey.
- Further work could be undertaken to improve access to telephone advice (possibly as a borough-wide telephone advice service on behalf of other agencies) and this is an area for investment by the London Borough of Haringey.
- Some limited, additional representational work is undertaken as part of a selective and targeted approach to developing individual advisers' skills and knowledge.
- The current frequency of supervision every three months should be increased to monthly.

Law Centre recommendations

- Funding to the Law Centre should continue, subject to the Centre agreeing a development plan with the London Borough of Haringey. The plan would cover:
 - The role of the Centre's manager and recruitment to the vacancy (including recruitment of an interim manager as matter of urgency)
 - Possible cuts to LSC funding
 - Output levels
 - Developing a second tier function in partnership with other agencies in Haringey
 - Restricting service use to Haringey residents
 - Improving the Centre's staff's access to reference materials
 - Identifying areas where staff need additional support and training in order to deliver high quality complex advice and setting out how this will be achieved
 - Development of outcome measures
 - Communication issues with external agencies
 - Networking with external agencies
 - Development of Social Policy work.
 - The London Borough of Haringey to provide as much ongoing support with this as is possible.

**Angolan Community Association/Cabinda Community Association
recommendations**

- The number of cases referred to specialist level services should be recorded and reported on to the London Borough of Haringey
- A condition of future funding by the London Borough of Haringey should be that the advice services provided by ACA and CCA merge and are co-located.
- The London Borough of Haringey should make it a condition of funding that the ACA/CCA does not provide advice on debts, welfare benefits, employment, community care and housing law but should refer people with such issues to other local advice agencies. Workers also need some foundation training in these areas.
- The frequency of supervision should be increased to monthly and be provided by an experienced adviser.

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Report title: Membership, Amended Name and Terms of Reference of the Committee

Report of: The Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected: Not applicable

Report for: Information

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Membership, Amended Name and Terms of Reference of the Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Executive Voluntary Sector Committee note the membership, amended name and terms of reference as outlined in paragraph 7 below.

Report authorised by: Ita O'Donovan, Chief Executive

Contact officer: Richard Burbidge, Principal Support Manager, Committee Secretariat
(Tel. No. 8489 2923 Fax No. 8489 2660)

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Because the Executive did not meet until 13 June 2006 the membership of the Committee was not known at the time of the agenda despatch. In agreeing the membership of the Committee the Executive also changed the Committee's name and amended its terms of reference.

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

- 4.1 The Constitution sets out rules for the Terms of Reference and Delegation of Powers as well as provisions with respect to the proceedings of the Executive and Executive Committees and Non-Executive Committees and Sub-Committees.

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Background papers

Report to the meeting of the Executive on 13 June 2004 entitled 'Appointment of the Executive Procurement Committee and the Executive Voluntary Sector Grants Committee'

Agenda for the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 22 May 2006

6. Background

- 6.1 The Council at their Annual Meeting on 22 May 2006 referred to the Executive decisions on the establishment of Executive Committees and the appointment of Members to serve on them.

7. Description

- 7.1 The Executive on 13 June 2006 agreed, amongst other things, to re-establish the Voluntary Sector Grants and to re-name it the Executive Voluntary Sector Committee. The Executive Voluntary Sector Committee will enable this Council to build on the constructive and positive relationships with partners within the Voluntary Sector. The remit of this body was to be broader than in previous years and to go beyond the scope of solely allocating grant aid to that of issues relating to the Voluntary Sector in general.

- 7.2 The Executive resolved that the membership for the Executive Voluntary Sector Committee should be 5 with a quorum of 2. Membership was to consist of -

Executive Member for Community Involvement (Chair)
Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety
Executive Member for Finance
Plus 2 other Members of the Executive

(All Members of the Executive to act as a panel of substitutes selected according to whose portfolio responsibilities were relevant to the particular areas of activity under review).

- 7.3 The Terms of Reference agreed for the Committee were as follows –

- a. To consider officer recommendations for future funding and agree the awarding of grant aid to the voluntary and community sector
- b. To review funding to organisations where there is a potential breach of conditions of grant aid and/or service level agreement
- c. To advise the Executive on variations to the overall grant aid policy
- d. To advise the Executive on all aspects of the Council's relationship with the Voluntary Sector including the management and use of the community buildings portfolio.

8. Comments of Head of Legal Services

- 8.1 The Council's Constitution sets out the relevant Executive arrangements at Part H4 Section 2 and confirms that it is for the Executive to determine its own decision making and advisory committees as well as its consultative bodies. Where changes to the nature of both decision making and advisory committees, are proposed these should be reported to the next Council meeting so that any changes can be incorporated into the Council's Constitution.

9. Comments of Director of Finance

- 9.1 The Director of Finance has been consulted on this report and has no comments to add.

10. Summary and Conclusions

- 10.1 This report sets out the arrangements which were agreed by the Executive for the 2006/07 Municipal Year in respect of the Executive Voluntary Sector Committee.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 That the Executive Voluntary Sector Committee note its membership, quorum and terms of reference as outlined in paragraph 7 above.

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