

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

Councillors Hillman, Meehan and Wynne

Apologies Councillor Canver and Reith

Also Present: Councillor (none)

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
VSGC01.	<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>	
VSGC02.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p>	
VSGC03.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IS ANY IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA</p>	
VSGC04.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p><i>That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2005 be approved and signed.</i></p>	YS
VSGC05.	<p>DEPUTATIONS</p>	
VSGC06.	<p>APPEAL BY THE AFRICAN CARIBBEAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (ACLC) AGAINST WITHDRAWAL OF GRANT (REPORT OF THE HEAD OF MEMBER SERVICES): <i>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.</i></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We resolved to exclude the public and press at this juncture because the schedules and appendices to the report were not for publication as they contained exempt information relating to a particular applicant for, or recipient of any service provided to the Council and information relating to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 ACLC and the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) but not during the Committee's subsequent deliberations.</p> <p>The ACLC 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.</p>	DH DH

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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 ACLC and to an application pack for a post of Centre Manager being tabled by the ACLC.

Representatives of ACLC 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 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.

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	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.[1] 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. [2] 	
VSGC07.	NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
VSGC08.	APPEAL BY THE AFRICAN CARRIBEAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (ACLC) AGAINST WITHDRAWAL OF GRANT (REPORT OF THE HEAD OF MEMBER SERVICES)	
VSGC09.	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
VSGC10.	NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS:	

CHARLES ADJE

Chair