

COMMITTEE:	CABINET
DATE:	1 AUGUST 2002
SUBJECT:	RATE RELIEF AND GRANT APPLICATIONS - ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION AND DECISION
JOINT REPORT OF:	HEAD OF COMMUNITY FINANCE, HEAD OF REGENERATION AND MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER
Ward(s):	All
Purpose:	To agree arrangements for the establishment of a Grants Task Group to act in an advisory capacity.
Contact:	Mr Martin Chilvers, Head of Community Finance, telephone (01323) 415157 or internally on extension 5157. Ms Penny Shearer, Head of Regeneration, telephone (01323) 415030 or internally on extension 5030. Mr David Robinson, Member Services Manager, telephone (01323) 415022 or internally on extension 5022.
Recommendation:	That the Cabinet agree the proposed arrangements for the establishment of a Grants Task Group to advise the Cabinet and help formulate proposals on grant applications.

1.0	<u>Introduction</u>	

1.1	Prior to the adoption of the Council's new Constitution, applications for discretionary and hardship rate relief and grants to voluntary and other organisations were dealt with by the Grants Panel. This cross-party panel had extensive delegated powers but was required to work within criteria and a budget set by the Cabinet.	
1.2	Under the division of responsibilities between the "executive" and the rest of the Council now required by the Local Government Act 2000 these applications are now for the Cabinet to deal with and as such cannot be decided upon by a cross-party body. Only the Cabinet, a sub-committee of Cabinet Members or an officer with the delegated authority of the Cabinet can make decisions on such matters.	
1.3	For this reason, when drawing up the new political management structure, provision for a Grants Panel was not made.	
2.0	<u>Proposal for a Task Group</u>	
2.1	The current leadership is keen to maintain cross-party involvement in rate relief cases and grants to the voluntary sector and whilst acknowledging that the decisions on such matters must be taken by the Cabinet wish to act with the involvement of other Councillors, albeit in an advisory capacity.	
2.2	It is proposed to establish a Grants Task Group. Provision is made in the Council's new Constitution for Task Groups (see Part Three - Responsibility for Functions - Full Council and its Committees). Meetings would be at a similar frequency to the former Grants Panel. Proposed membership would be the Lead Cabinet Member (Councillor Leggett) together with two other Councillors (one from each party to be nominated by Group Leaders). Meetings would be informal and in private. The Task Group's role would be to advise the Cabinet and help formulate proposals on grant applications. The Task Group would be serviced by the relevant accountable officers.	
3.0	<u>Terms of Reference</u>	
3.1	The proposed terms of reference are as follows:-	
	(a)	To receive details of applications for grant/renewal of discretionary and hardship rate relief prior to consideration by the Cabinet and comment thereon having regard to the approved criteria and budget limits.
	(b)	To receive details of applications for grant assistance from charitable, social, cultural, educational and sporting groups active within the Borough prior to consideration by the Cabinet and comment thereon having regard to the approved criteria and budget limits.

	(c)	To foster close liaison with other grant providing agencies (e.g. lottery funding, County Council, Health Authority, Single Regeneration Budget (Community Chest Grants) etc.) in order to maximise the benefit of the Council's grant aiding capability and propose joint working and/or contractual arrangements with such bodies where appropriate.	
	(d)	To review the effectiveness of the Council's grant aiding activities having regard to the Council's corporate aims and objectives.	
	(e)	To review the criteria and budgets for the allocation of grants generally and advise the Cabinet of their findings.	
4.0	<u>Consultation</u>		
4.1	Apart from Cabinet Members and relevant officers, the views of the Opposition were sought. Councillor Marsden questions the need for a Task Group. He considers that as grant applications are now the responsibility of the Cabinet they should be dealt with by the Cabinet. Whilst he accepts that it is open to the Cabinet to decide whether or not to consult on such matters, any consultation should be genuine and not merely part of a process.		Leader of the Opposition He considers that as grant applications are now the responsibility of the Cabinet they should be dealt with by the Cabinet to decide whether or not to consult on such matters, any consultation should be genuine and not merely part of a process.
5.0	<u>Resource Implications</u>		
5.1	There are no financial or staffing implications arising from this report.		
6.0	<u>Other Implications</u>		
6.1	The proposed arrangements will assist the Council in pursuing its corporate aims and objectives and in particular its commitment towards promotion of equalities and encouraging a fair and socially inclusive society.		
7.0	<u>Conclusion</u>		
7.1	The Cabinet believe that the involvement of other Councillors in an advisory capacity will assist them in reaching decisions on rate relief and grant applications.		

<p>Martin Chilvers</p> <p>Head of Community Finance</p>	<p>Penny Shearer</p> <p>Head of Regeneration</p>	<p>David Robinson</p> <p>Member Services Manager</p>
<p>Background Papers:</p> <p>None.</p>		
<p>(der\P:cabinet\reports\02.08.01\grants task group)</p>		