

**ITEM 9**  
**GRANT AID COMMITTEE**  
**30 NOVEMBER 1999**

**GRANT AID COMMITTEE REMIT**

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**1. Purpose**

1.1 Further to Minute GA14/00, to report back on the possible future role of the Grant Aid Committee.

**2. Summary**

2.1 Further to the discussion at the Committee's last meeting, this report seeks to define the scrutiny, monitoring and strategic options outlined in the previous report.

2.2 These proposals will be superseded by changes to structures that are due to be effective from next April, as part of the Council's response to new democratic management structures.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 That the most appropriate option for the Grant Aid Committee role in the future, be determined.

#### 4. **Background**

4.1 At its last meeting (Minute GA14/00 refers), the Committee considered a report on its role arising out of the Annual Council's decision to establish it as a full Committee. As a result it was resolved :

“That officers provide a report to the next Grant Aid Committee which gives more detail on the strategy/monitoring/scrutiny role outlined in Option 2, which the Committee could undertake in relation to Grant Aid, prior to further consideration about its role.”

#### 5. **Issues and Choices**

##### 5.1 **Scrutiny**

An issue raised in the last Committee paper was the difficulty in defining terminology. Scrutiny can be defined as ‘a close or minute examination’, ‘a searching look’. Additionally, the issues surrounding the Committee having a scrutiny role largely rest with the fact that there is already a Scrutiny Commission, the remit for which is attached as an **Annex** to this report.

It is clear that there is potential for conflict with the current Scrutiny Commission role and therefore such an approach appears unattractive.

It is difficult to see how the Grant Aid Committee could consider having a wider scrutiny role than presently, which would not duplicate the work of the existing Scrutiny Commission.

##### 5.2 **Monitoring**

Monitoring concerns: checks, controls and keeping a continuous record of the issues, policies and - in specific Grant Aid terms - the general running, organisation and achievements against objectives of not-for-profit organisations.

Officers are always working on developing this area of work and, specifically, are addressing the issues of Best Value.

The Committee is already involved in the monitoring process by virtue of the fact that voluntary organisations have and are presenting their work and being questioned about it as a standing item on the Committee's agenda.

The process of monitoring is an ongoing and evolving process, as issues such as Best Value require certain changes or adaptations to current practice to be made.

Monitoring of Grant Aid is already well established, but not consistently applied across the Council. The Committee could have a role in addressing this further although there may be funding implications in doing so.

##### 5.3 **Strategy**

A definition of strategy concerns the long-term plan for success. The Committee fundamentally has a role to play here in that this is exactly what voluntary organisations must have in place in order to achieve many of its stated objectives.

The Committee in more formally adopting an agenda which considers strategic approaches and the implications and impact both internally and externally to the

Council, might be better placed to make decisions. As this Committee leads on the Voluntary Sector Strategy it is well placed to develop this role.

The development of a Voluntary Sector Strategy has started the process of standardising the Council's approach to voluntary organisations. However, there are still many tasks to be undertaken where the Committee could lead through the Voluntary Sector Consultative Assembly. Ultimately, this would enable the Committee to have an influence on how voluntary organisations are treated across the Council.

However, there are a number of difficult issues that the Committee would have to address. For example: historically, grant-aided organisations have had a contribution in their grants towards staff pensions; not all departments within the Council have a requirement that funding applications go to Committee and annual inflationary/demographic growth changes are not applied consistently.

There are funding implications that the Council will have to address in a Grant Aid Committee having a wider monitoring role beyond that which it already has.

The Committee has taken on the stewardship of the Voluntary Sector Strategy, which enables it to take on a wider strategic role, which might better address and consider the impact of issues and decisions on voluntary organisations beyond those funded through the Community Development budget.

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Environmental

There are a number of annual grants awarded by the Environment Directorate in support of Agenda 21.

### 6.2 Equalities

Whichever option the Committee decides upon could better address the inequalities between a number of voluntary organisations funded by Milton Keynes Council.

### 6.3 Financial

The broadening of this Committee's remit may have financial implications not yet identified..

Milton Keynes Council funding in many cases is the lever for funding from other agencies.

### 6.4 Legal

All groups currently funded are subject to Terms and Conditions of funding and are able to be supported under the terms of the Local Government Act.

### 6.5 Staff and Accommodation

There will still be a need to retain the current links that exist between current organisations and Council Officers.

## 6.6 Cultural

Each organisation contributes significantly to improving the cultural life of its clients and the community of Milton Keynes.

## 7. **Conclusions**

7.1 Voluntary organisations have a key role as partners in realising the vision of Milton Keynes. The Grant Aid Committee has an opportunity to strengthen this partnership.

7.2 With representation of the Voluntary Sector Consultative Assembly newly appointed in a non-voting capacity to the Committee, better definition of the Committee's role can only enhance the Council's partnership with voluntary organisations.

Background Papers: Voluntary Sector Strategy, Past Committee papers