

Cultural and Project Services

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Date: 31 March 2010

Dear «Dear»

Ashford Borough Council Funding and Support of Voluntary and Community Organisations

You may recall responding to a consultation the Council held last year as part of our review of funding and support of voluntary and community organisations. We invited comment on several proposals including the introduction of a policy to set out the Council's position on funding and support of voluntary and community organisations. Many people gave us their views and we considered all feedback carefully in finalising the new policy and accompanying procedures. The policy was adopted by the Council's Executive Committee on 4 March 2010. I attach a copy for your information and thank you again for your input.

As part of the review we also notified current recipients that their funding may be at risk in the future, and consulted on some proposed changes to the allocation of discretionary rate relief to which we received considerable opposition. We heard your concerns and acknowledge the present economic challenges, particularly for grass roots community organisations. We value their contribution to community life and consequently councillors agreed on 4 March that, despite significant pressures on the Council's budget, we would not introduce any changes to discretionary rate relief at this time.

The funding policy will come into effect from 1 April 2010 accompanied by a new one-stop process to be known as the Single Grants Gateway, through which all applications for Ashford Borough Council funding will eventually be made. We are currently drafting Single Grants Gateway funding guidance for applicants and will be formalising the process over the next six months. We envisage minimal outward changes to the Community Grants Fund process and it will continue in the same format for the time being. I will be writing to all Council funding recipients with more detail in due course.

Yours «Yours»

Kim Harlow
Voluntary Sector Manager - KH - Policy for Funding and Support Ltr/EB