

HOCKLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE – REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report relates to an application for financial assistance from the Hockley Community Centre Association in respect of costs incurred following the occupation of land by travellers.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During October, travellers camped on the playing fields of the Hockley Community Centre. The Hockley Community Association incurred substantial costs in evicting the travellers and making good the damage caused. Estimates of the costs involved are:-

	£
Removal of caravans	160
Height barrier	2,300
Solicitors' and Court fees	1,505
Replacement of damaged gate and fence	3,298
Clearance of field	1,000
Grading and reseeding of field	1,600
Repair of outside lighting	<u>1,800</u>
TOTAL	11,663

- 2.2 Annual accounts have been provided up to 31 August 2002, which show the Association as having cash available of £9,408 as at 31 August. The Association achieved an excess of income over expenditure in the previous year of £23,468 and had funds available of £32,858 at 31 August 2001. During 2001/2 £44,655 was spent on improving the premises.
- 2.3 Expenditure incurred as set out in paragraph 2.1. above will set back any further improvements. As this was a totally unforeseen occurrence, the Association is requesting the Council to consider meeting an element of this cost.
- 2.4 The area in question is owned by the Council, but is on a long term lease to the Association. The duty to evict the travellers, therefore, fell to the Association.

3 ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- 3.1 At present there is no provision within the Council's budget to assist local voluntary bodies when issues such as this occur. If Members were minded to make a contribution it is suggested that the sum be funded from the contingency provision.
- 3.2 When any special assistance is given there is the possibility of setting a precedent for future eventualities. It should, therefore, be stressed that any case such as this is considered on its merits and the decision does not indicate a policy for future reference.
- 3.3 This is a very unusual event and there is no doubt that there has been a severe financial impact on a voluntary organisation.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any offer of financial assistance could be met from the contingency provision.

5 RECOMMENDED

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That it be determined whether an element of the above costs be met by the Council and, if so, to what degree. (CD(F&ES))

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

Background Papers:

Fax from Hockley Community Association received 25 November 2002
Hockley Community Centre Association accounts for financial year ending 31 August 2002.

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