

MEETING: 31/01/2019

Ref: 14944

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

RedbridgeCVS (sic)

Adv: Julla Mirkin

**Amount requested: £339,957
(Revised Request: £250,896)**

**Base: Redbridge
Benefit: Redbridge**

Amount recommended: £250,900

The Applicant

RedbridgeCVS (RCVS) supports and builds the capacity of local voluntary groups; it delivers health and well-being projects and runs the Volunteer Centre. RCVS also plays a significant role in enhancing the employability of local people, which builds on its former lead role for employment and skills in the East London sub-region (during the existence of the Learning and Skills Councils). RCVS has continued to coordinate consortium bids for the delivery of employment and skills training in London. It delivers a small proportion of the training in Redbridge; however, the majority is sub-contracted to smaller voluntary organisations that are too small to bid independently. The employment and skills contracts coordinated by RCVS distort the scale of its operations and lead to significant amounts of income being deferred.

The Application

RCVS proposes to support voluntary groups in Redbridge to better utilise ICT to publicise their services; monitor and evaluate their work and raise funding. In addition to face-to-face training and support, RCVS proposes to develop online training materials and downloadable toolkits that allow its members to access ICT training flexibly. To implement and extend the reach of this project, RCVS needs to develop its own database and improve how it communicates with its members.

The Recommendation

Redbridge is the fourth most diverse local authority in England (www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk). The voluntary sector reflects this diversity with a large proportion of RCVS's members being older and from BAMER communities. It is these members that RCVS wishes to target specifically through this project, many of whom face multiple barriers to accessing information, funding and promotional opportunities through online platforms. RCVS anticipates that significant encouragement and support will be required to bring about what may represent significant culture change for many smaller voluntary organisations.

Following the assessment meeting, the applicant has revised the amount requested as it appeared to have been generously costed.

£250,900 over five years (£49,500; £49,000; £49,800; £50,800; £51,800) for the salary of the Information Officer (3 d.p.w), the Information Assistant (1 d.p.w), project costs and overheads.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
28/01/2015	£4,200 (10.5 days) to provide an eco-audit.

Background and detail of proposal

There are two strands to RCVS's proposal: firstly, to develop the ICT skills of its membership; and secondly, to develop its own capacity to meet these training needs by creating a new internal ICT training function, through an enhanced database; an

online training platform and new training materials. RCVS proposes to develop the role of its Information Officer and create a part-time Information Assistant post as part of this bid.

RCVS is aware that many of its local voluntary groups are run by older people from BAMER communities, many of whom face barriers to ICT, and there are, therefore, significant training needs within its membership. To address this, RCVS proposes to develop its Information Officer role to work directly with these groups to offer training sessions; ICT health checks; and to develop Wordpress websites and Facebook pages through face-to-face support.

RCVS will develop its ICT training and improve the platforms through which its training is accessed. It will also make its training more accessible to its members by increasing their ICT skills. In the longer-term, RCVS hopes to support local voluntary groups to use online platforms to promote their services; enhance the monitoring and evaluation of their work and to raise funds, particularly through crowd-funding and local giving schemes.

Training will be offered to ten groups annually and eight groups will receive onsite ICT health checks and face-to-face support in developing Wordpress websites and Facebook pages. Five new online guides, toolkits or template policies will be produced annually, and ten networking meetings will be convened each year to share best-practice and encourage peer support. As this would be a new piece of work for RCVS, it has been cautious in its outcome targets, reflecting the needs of its members in relation to efficient utilisation of ICT.

Financial Information

The majority of RCVS's core costs have been covered by core contributions made as part of restricted grants. Core expenditure has not, therefore, been recorded as unrestricted expenditure in the organisation's accounts, and the costs of core functions, such as fundraising, for example, have been obscured.

RCVS's 16-17 accounts show that it carried forward restricted funds of £436,118. This relates to consortium contracts for employment and skills work, for which RCVS receives funds upfront for distribution to consortium partners. As these contracts are payment-by-results, RCVS's budgets can fluctuate from year to year, explaining the increase in turnover budgeted in 2019.

Year end as at 31 MARCH	2017	2018	2019
	Audited Accounts £	Draft £	Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	861,784	810,282	1,295,235
- % of Income confirmed as at 19/12/18	n/a	n/a	72%
Expenditure	(871,981)	(916,416)	(1,336,535)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(10,197)	(106,134)	(41,300)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(52,162)	(161,786)	(71,562)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	41,965	55,632	30,262
	(10,197)	(106,134)	(41,300)
Cost of Raising Funds	0	0	0
- % of Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total expenditure	871,981	916,416	1,336,535
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	350,938	406,570	436,832
No of months of total expenditure	4.8	5.3	3.9
Reserves policy target	217,995	229,104	334,134
No of months of total expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	132,943	177,466	102,698