

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

Greater London Volunteering

Adv: Jenny Field

Base: Westminster

Benefit: London-wide

Amount requested: £515,000

{Revised request £500,000}

Amount recommended: £500,000

The Applicant

Greater London Volunteering (GLV) is the legal entity for London Plus, the new hub for London's civil society. In September 2017, you approved a grant of £350,000 towards the first year of London Plus in the knowledge that it was highly likely (depending on the success of this new entity) that you would be approached for continuation funding.

London Plus was established as a result of the findings of The Way Ahead¹ which has strongly influenced your approach to working with and supporting civil society infrastructure support in London. Its remit is to support civil society organisations and networks across London and to build collaborative partnerships that use data, insight and intelligence on what works and what doesn't in order to better tell the story of the collective impact of London's voluntary sector. Its Chief Executive was recruited in June 2018 and she oversaw the recruitment of the core team over the summer of last year.

The staff team comprise:

- Chief Executive
- Networks and Partnerships Officer
- Data and Intelligence Officer
- Employment and Skills Policy Lead (funded by Trust for London)
- Business Support Manager

The Application

You are asked to fund the core costs of London Plus for a further two years. During the past 9 months, work has been ongoing in building the London Plus brand, together with its new website which launched in January 2019 <https://londonplus.org/>. London Plus has remained actively engaged with The Way Ahead and the Systems Change Group.

Although it is governed by the trustees of GLV, its workstreams are directed by a cross-sectoral steering group and fall under three key objectives:

- **Convening and connecting** – by bringing together local voluntary sector organisations through a number of networks, to share expertise and best practice in order to raise standards across London. Also, by helping funders and decision-makers to understand the importance of civil society infrastructure both at the local level and pan-London.

¹ The Way Ahead is a collaboration which aims to improve, and secure the future of, civil society support by putting London's communities at the heart of what we do.

- **Evidence-based practice** – The Data and Intelligence Officer has established strong links with a number of key projects in London, including the GLA's Datastore. London Plus is a partner on the Superhighways Cornerstone Fund proposal before you today which aims to embed digital skills within small voluntary organisations across London. London Plus recognises the importance of raising digital skills and capacity within the sector as well as the vital role a robust evidence-base needs to play for the sector to be able to demonstrate impact. Amongst a number of ongoing projects, London Plus has begun work on developing an equalities data standard.
- **Speaking up and changing attitudes** – It is the aim of London Plus to amplify the voice of Londoners and to use evidence to influence policy and decision-makers.

Some aspects of London Plus' work cut across all three objectives, of course. For example, in April 2019, the Employment and Skills Policy Lead (funded by Trust for London) led the launch of London Plus' Good Work Commission which brings together over 20 leaders (including the respective Directors of Business in the Community, London First and the Centre for London). The Commission will develop a series of proposals on pay equality, universal lifelong learning, responsible and socially purposeful business, and work-life balance.

It is partnering with the GLA's Team London ahead of National Volunteers' Week in June, to offer small grants of between £500 and £1,000 to organisations to develop additional activities that recognise and reward volunteering.

London Plus has worked with CBT on the Cornerstone Fund². As well as being a partner in one of the bids before you today, it has attended the two workshops held so far with the Cornerstone Fund learning partner, Collaborate, and plans to work with the Trust to promote the work of the successful stage-two applicants with regular case studies.

The Recommendation

Although there is still work to be done to make the London Plus brand better known, London Plus has clearly focused objectives and has structures in place to ensure it is accountable to the sector. As well as funding from Trust for London, London Plus has also received a small amount of funding from the GLA and will receive funding of c£35,000 during 2019-20. However, as anticipated, CBT has been its principal funder since its start-up and is likely to remain so if continuation funding is approved today. Alternative sources of funding from sources such as the National Lottery Community Fund are beginning to be identified and it is recommended that if you approve a grant today, that funding in Year 2 is conditional on London Plus having made satisfactory progress in diversifying its funding base. Since submitting the original bid, London Plus has slightly reduced the total amount requested.

£500,000 over two years (£222,500; £277,500) towards the continued development of London Plus, through the legal entity, Greater London Volunteering. Funding in Year 2 is conditional on satisfactory progress being made in diversifying the organisation's funding base.

² The Cornerstone Fund is the Anniversary Infrastructure Support programme of £3m originally which you have developed in partnership with a cross-sectoral advisory group and in consultation with the voluntary sector in London.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
20/09/2017	£350,000 to secure the first year of operation of the new hub for London. The grant is conditional on Greater London Volunteering's new governing document being in place.
11/05/2017	£48,400 towards salaries, on-costs and operational costs. The grant is to be spent over a minimum 10 month period to support the organisation's involvement in The Way Ahead and the development of the London Hub and is subject to a review after 6 months. (Bridge Fund)
24/11/2016	£23,600 to enable GLV and LVSC to work together to establish the London Hub as recommended by The Way Ahead report. (Strategic Initiative).

Future Plans

A detailed workplan for 2019-20 has been provided in support of this application. A flavour of planned activities include:

- Continued partnership working around data literacy.
- Regular e-bulletins (these have recently started to be produced).
- In-depth research on one or two agreed topics that will impact on Londoners.
- Continuing the work of the Good Work Commission.
- Brokering relationships and convening meetings on social prescribing with NHS, GLA, Health London Partnership, Healthwatch organisations, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships and with civil society organisations.
- Provision of skilled volunteering programme in partnership with London Insurance Consortium and Pilotlight.
- A collaboration with Clinks to support small voluntary organisations working in the criminal system.
- Scoping the provision of infrastructure support for those working in the housing advocacy sector.
- Work with successful stage-two applicants to the Cornerstone Fund.

Financial Information

The 2017-18 audited accounts are for an 18-month period as GLV's financial year end used to be 30th September. It is early days in the life of London Plus and it will take time for it to build free reserves to its target of three months of expenditure. Its five-year financial plan includes £20,000 per annum from earned income through consultancy from 2021/22 onwards. The plan includes this request to CBT in 2019-20 and 2020-21 but not in subsequent years. Nevertheless, if it is to be sustainable, it will need to increase the amount and the range of funds from other sources by 2020-21, and the recommended condition is therefore prudent.

Year end as at 31 March	2018 Audited Accounts	2019 Forecast	2020 Budget
Income & expenditure:			
Income	260,988	318,315	352,120
- % of income confirmed as at 12/04/19		100%	34%
Expenditure	(227,043)	(290,126)	(402,462)
Total surplus/(deficit)	33,945	28,189	(50,342)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	25,545	20,749	(40,670)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	8,400	7,440	(9,672)
	33,945	28,189	(50,342)
Cost of Raising Funds	2,499	6,300	6,300
- % of income	1.0%	2.0%	1.8%
Total expenditure	227,043	290,126	402,462
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	41,165	48,605	38,933
No of months of expenditure	2.2	2.0	1.2
Reserves policy target	37,841	72,532	100,616
No of months of expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	3,325	(23,927)	(61,683)