

Committee	Dated:
City Bridge Trust	25 th July 2019
Subject: Strategic Initiative – London Legal Support Trust Ref: 15328	Public
Report of: Chief Grants Officer	For Decision
Report author: Sandra Jones, Funding Manager	

Summary

As members will recollect, at the November 2018 meeting, the need for supporting the establishment of a London-wide Forum for legal advice agencies was identified.

The London Legal Support Trust (LLST), is a specialist and unique charity that provides expertise to build the capacity of local voluntary sector legal advice agencies. They are very well placed to manage and facilitate a London-wide specialist Advice Forum. The London Specialist Advice Forum (the Forum) will be a very practical and hands-on platform to discuss, mainly, emerging issues from across the sector and look for solutions collectively to some of these emerging issues. LLST has excellent connections with the city law firms and other funders that can help to resolve some of these practical issues and disseminate the lessons learnt to wider advice agencies. The Forum will have multiple aims: a) It will be a platform to identify common issues and to collectively look for solutions; b) to share learning and good practice to increase effectiveness and overcome the common obstacles that the providers face; c) to be a platform to provide peer support and mentoring opportunities across the sector; d) to collect and share the common issues and lessons learnt to funders and other decision makers to influence wider decision making and policy work.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree:

- ***£345,000 over five years (£69,000 per annum) to the London Legal Support Trust to cover the cost of a f/t Development Officer plus senior officer support from the CEO and Head of Funding and associated project costs of establishing, developing and maintaining the London Specialist Advice Forum.***

Main Report

Background

- 1. LLST, established in 2003, works to assist voluntary sector legal advice agencies and law centres in London and the Home Counties by providing them with a range of support including grant funding (raised through the annual London Legal Walk). LLST is part of a network of seven Legal Support Trusts across Wales and England working with the Access to Justice Foundation to support pro bono and advice agencies. The charity has four core strands of work in support of free legal advice services in London which are raising funds to distribute as grants; working collaboratively with others to raise funds for the free legal advice sector; supporting the improved management and infrastructure of the sector through the Centres of Excellence programme; and helping reduce costs and save money through pro bono or discounted schemes.**
- 2. After the November 2018 meeting where Members identified the need to support networking, co-ordinating and sharing good practice amongst legal advice agencies, your officers met with the LLST and London Legal Education Foundation to explore how to best develop this support. Subsequently LLST held a series of consultation meetings with a range of specialist legal advice providers and undertook a survey on how best to support the sector. From this the following proposal was submitted.**

Proposal

- 3. This initiative aims to support the specialist advice providers to become more sustainable and continue providing access to justice to the most vulnerable sections of our communities by bringing solutions to the issues that may threaten the viability of specialist advice providers. This will contribute towards London becoming a city that works for everyone, a mission that is identified in your Bridging Divides Strategy.**
- 4. This forum will be a platform to discuss and identify early action approaches to the deep rooted problems including inequality and lack of diversity within the legal sector; lack of legal aid lawyers; and mental and physical restraints on the front line staff. The forum will look into impact reporting and make recommendations in ways to demonstrate the impact of the service provision.**
- 5. The objectives of the forum will include:**
 - To act as a platform for specialist legal advice providers in London, to share learning and good practice**
 - To respond to emerging issues coming from front line service provision, particularly from our Centres of Excellence (COEx) programme, by discussing potential solutions and gathering support from a range of funders to support these solutions**
 - To bring in more resources by way of working in partnerships and to avoid duplication to ensure long term sustainability of the sector**

- To use the learning and the issues emerging from the sector in influencing the decision making both among the funders and policy makers.
- To develop potential mentoring and peer support programmes in discussion with the senior managers of the advice providers to provide more support to the senior managers and front line staff.

6. Outcomes

- Improved efficiency by sharing good practice and learning coming directly from the front line service and minimising cost
- Improved ability and capacity to intervene timely to overcome emerging obstacles that may affect long term sustainability of the specialist advice providers
- Increased ability to maintain best legal knowledge by sharing good practice and learning
- Improved knowledge of emerging issues and good practice that will help in decision making
- Increased peer support and resources for senior management

7. Budget costs of the project per annum is:

London Legal Support Trust - London Specialist Advice - Annual Budget				
Budget Item	Total Project Cost		Requested from City Bridge	
	Cost	Comments	Cost	Comment
Salary (Development Officer)	38,677.00	Development officer - 38,667 (f/t)	38,677.00	Development officer - 38,667 (f/t)
Salaries (CEO and HoF)	28,761.00	CEO - 2 days/month, HoF - 4 days / month	16,800.00	
Meetings (refreshments)	720.00	4 network meetings a year @ £120 per meeting including refreshments and travel cost ((6+4)*£120) On average £50 refreshments and £70 travel cost	720.00	6 progression partner meetings and 4 network meetings a year @ £120 per meeting including refreshments and travel cost ((6+4)*£120) On average £50 refreshments and £70 travel cost
Volunteers	600.00	2 volunteers a week, doing one day a week each for 30 weeks a year @£10/per day for travel and lunch (2*£10*30)	600.00	2 volunteers a week, doing one day a week each for 20 weeks a year @£10/per day for travel and lunch (2*£10*20)
Sharing good practice, summarising policies, presentation at the network meetings by network members	11,000.00	Expenses to those partners supporting the Forum and sharing good practice	11,000.00	
Contribution to core cost (audit, finance, governance)	450.00	2.24 % of overall overall cost	215.00	LLST will contribute £235
Publicity	500.00	Cost of developing and procuding a leaflet in the first year and depending on the progression partners' meeting, developing further publicity material for year 2 and 3	250.00	Cost of developing and procuding a leaflet in the first year and depending on the progression partners' meeting, developing further publicity material for year 2 and 3 - LLST to match half a year within its publicity budget
Total cost	81,708.00		69,262.00	

Financial Information

8. LLST's free reserve target is derived from operational expenditure, on the basis that a large amount of the budget relates to the grants that they award to legal advice organisations that are part of their Centres of Excellence. The target is to hold funds equivalent to 6 months of their operational costs.

9. The charity has not asked for any uplift on salaries or other associated costs as they are confident that they would be able to absorb any further costs incurred.

Year end as at 31 December	2017 Audited Accounts £	2018 Audited Accounts £	2019 Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	1,167,000	1,231,484	1,113,700
- % of income confirmed as at 20/01/2019	n/a	n/a	78%
Expenditure	(1,237,181)	(1,181,037)	(1,113,300)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(70,181)	50,447	400
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	37,500	0	-
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(107,681)	50,447	400
	(70,181)	50,447	400
Cost of Raising Funds	204,452	212,893	177,599
- % of income	17.5%	17.3%	15.9%
Operating expenditure (non-grant expenditure)	309,671	317,626	327,800
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	137,720	188,167	188,567
No of months of total expenditure	5.3	7.1	6.9
Reserves policy target	154,836	158,813	163,900
No of months of total expenditure	6.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(17,116)	29,354	24,667

Conclusion

10. LLST has successfully delivered the previous grant awarded by CBT for their Centres of Excellence since launch in 2014. They have an extremely good track record and investment in this strategic initiative will help strengthen and improve the legal advice sector.

Appendix

Appendix A – Summary Assessment of Strategic Initiative

Sandra Jones
 Funding Manager, City Bridge Trust
 T: 020 7332 1314 E: sandra.jones@cityoflondon.org.uk

Summary Assessment of Strategic Initiative for Committee Decision
(Use: Y/N/Potentially or N/A where relevant)

FILTERS	
Will The pro-active grant:	
Further the Trust's Vision and Mission?	Y
Support work within the Bridging Divides programmes?	Y
Or, meet a clear need that has arisen since Bridging Divides were agreed?	
Have the potential for impact beyond that of an individual reactive grant or number of individual grants?	Y
Be affordable within the agreed annual budget (from the Trust alone or in combination with other funders) and, looking forward, leave sufficient budget to meet anticipated pro-active grants for the remainder of the financial year?	Y
Be made to an organisation(s) that conforms to the Trust's eligibility criteria and has the capacity and expertise to deliver the work?	Y

PRIORITISATION GUIDANCE	
Evidence	
Is there external and/or internal research and information that supports the need for the proposed grant?	Y
Is there external and/or internal research and information that indicates the approach proposed in the grant will be successful?	N
Is there evidence that indicates the work will be hard to fund from other sources?	In part
Impact	
Will the grant tackle a root cause(s), or positively influence policy or practice?	Y
Will the work/approach funded be replicable?	Y
Does the grant provide an opportunity to strengthen Civic Society in London?	Y
Is the work sustainable beyond the period of the grant?	Y
Can the impact of the work be measured through evaluation?	Y
Leverage	
Will the grant particularly benefit from the Trust's and the Corporation's distinctive networks and connections? Is there an opportunity to add value in this regard?	Y
Will the grant be able to build on the Trust's, and its existing grantees'/investees', knowledge and expertise?	Y
Will the grant have the potential to leverage any other funding from other sources?	Y
Spread	
Geographic	
Will the grant support work in a geography where there is high need but relatively low Trust spend?	Potentially

Thematic	
Will the grant support work in a thematic area of the Bridging Divides Programme where there is high need but relatively low Trust spend?	Possibly
Portfolio	
Within the Trust's Strategic Initiative portfolio, is the grant duplicating or complementing anything already funded?	N
Approach	
Will the grant enable better collaboration between relevant organisations?	Y
Is the proposed work across more than one LA or is London-wide?	Y
Does the proposed work explicitly link the private, statutory and voluntary sectors?	N