

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector**LawWorks****Adv: Sandra Jones****Base: City****Benefit: London-wide****Amount requested: £111,285****(Revised request: £162,663)****Amount recommended: £162,700****The Charity**

LawWorks is the operational name for the Solicitors Pro Bono Group – a charity which coordinates its members from the legal sector to provide free advice to small not-for-profit organisations (voluntary, community groups, CICs and social enterprises) as well as to individuals. In 2016 approximately 2,350 pro bono hours were given for advice to the sector, with 144 organisations benefitting. The main areas of law advised on were property, commercial, and employment law, as well as ‘corporate’ matters (such as constitutions and transfers of assets).

The Application

The applicant is seeking three year funding towards the costs of supporting free legal advice to community organisations in London. The original bid was for two years, but after discussions with your officer this was changed to three years to ensure continuity (a revised budget is appended to the application form). Funding will cover 0.5FTE of both the Head of the Not for Profits Programme (NfPP) and the NfPP Caseworker; 0.5 day per week for Director of Programmes; and associated running costs. This is 50% of the programme costs, with the other 50% funded through their unrestricted funds raised from membership and funding from the Law Society.

The Recommendation

The charity has over 15 years’ experience of delivering free legal support to local community organisations through volunteer solicitors – work which has been supported by you previously. The support is highly regarded and provides legal advice to organisations that would otherwise be unable to access the support they need to resolve serious problems. It is important work expertly delivered by the most appropriate organisation. Funding is advised:

£162,700 over three years (53,000; £54,200; £55,500) towards the salaries of the Head of NfPP (0.5FTE); NfPP Caseworker (0.5FTE); Head of Programmes (0.1FTE); and associated running costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
28/04/2011	£99,000 over three years (3 x £33,000) towards the general salary and running costs of supporting free legal advice to community organisations in London.

Background and detail of proposal

LawWorks’ NfPP programme provides a range of services. The main activity is matching small local organisations with Pro Bono volunteer solicitors. Work undertaken by the volunteers includes face-to-face advice clinics; mediation to

resolve disputes; advice by e mail; as well as advice to small charities on business law such as employment, leases, data protection and charity law. To be eligible for the project's services, organisations should have a turnover of less than £500,000. Free legal advice, especially on employment, leases and charity law, will often help organisations become more sustainable.

The organisation also produces a series of fact sheets, regular seminars and provides training to solicitors to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge required to deliver the best service.

Financial Information

LawWorks' income is from a variety of sources. Core funding is largely from the Law Society, Ministry of Justice, and Membership subscriptions and is unrestricted. Unrestricted income equates to 77% of the total income for 2016. It is forecast that this pattern for unrestricted income will continue in the current year.

In 2013 and 2014 the charity showed the organisation had operating deficits. This has not been the case in subsequent years; in 2015 the Trustees agreed to increase the reserves policy to 6 months and have been seeking to increase their free reserves. Cost of raising funds is relatively low as the unrestricted income for core funding (above) is ongoing.

Year end as at December	2015	2016	2017
	Examined	Examined	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	860,556	907,977	912,375
- % of Income confirmed 02/08/17	n/a	n/a	100%
Expenditure	(810,428)	(775,503)	(856,060)
Total surplus/(deficit)	50,128	132,474	56,315
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	1,000	374	(440)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	49,128	132,100	56,755
	50,128	132,474	56,315
Cost of Raising Funds	26,092	29,078	36,000
- % of income	3.0%	3.2%	3.9%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	628,228	565,917	989,399
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	259,113	391,213	447,968
No of months of operating expenditure	4.9	8.3	5.4
Reserves policy target	157,057	282,959	494,700
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	102,056	108,255	(46,732)