

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector

Sutton Borough Volunteer Bureau

Adv: Kate Moralee

Amount requested: £157,196

Base: Sutton

(revised request: £119,338)

Benefit: Sutton

Amount recommended: £119,300

The Applicant

Sutton Borough Volunteer Bureau, operating as Volunteer Centre Sutton (VCS), is a charity and has been established for over 50 years. Over this time it has delivered a broad portfolio of services to enhance community well-being through voluntary action, encouraging and supporting everybody who lives in or visits the Borough to volunteer with a positive outcome. Activities include capacity building, marketing and support, ensuring excellence in volunteer management and training. Projects support empower and promote strong communities and individuals.

The Application

The Trust is asked to support a 32-hpw part-time staff member to identify and work to improve organisational best practice around volunteering with emphasis on supporting people who are underrepresented and often marginalised. These people could potentially have additional needs such as mental health or disabilities or belong to groups that are often harder to reach and not fully represented within society, such as offenders, NEETS, refugees, etc.

The Recommendation

VCS is well placed to deliver this service with over 50 years' experience in delivering support to voluntary sector organisations to support volunteering. The organisation is well led and embedded in the local community, with a high number of volunteers involved in its own services. This project has been informed by feedback and observation gained through the delivery of a Citizens Commissioning Programme, with an aim of hearing as many voices as possible. This resulted in conversations with "unusual suspects" and involving people from all diversity of background. This project responds to feedback that people with additional needs are excluded from volunteering opportunities and aims to ensure that everyone can volunteer with any barriers being addressed. However, during conversation, it became clear that the request included more than one full time staff equivalent and your officer requested that a revised budget be submitted. This project fits well with your priority for Strengthening the Voluntary Sector and funding is recommended as follows:

£119,300 over 3 years (£41,800; £38,800; £38,700) for a Community Connect Coordlnator (32 hours per week); production of Good Practice Guidance; and association project and organisational costs.

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

VCS provides bespoke support to over 500 organisations, large and small, to ensure good practice volunteering is provided. Support includes one to one support;

strategic guidance around recruitment, volunteer management through to volunteer retention and motivation. VCS collaborates and partners strategically with other agencies and the Local Authority, having representation on the Health and Wellbeing Forum, Fairness Commission and Sutton Plan. It also delivers high quality programmes including Mentoring, Advocacy and Peer Support (MAPS) and has C4EO accreditation demonstrating the achievement of excellence in outcomes measurement.

It is through this support, regular engagement and discussions at various networking events that VCS has recognised the need to provide extra support to both identify and engage specific volunteers. Feedback received has stated the need for extra tools, information and training for organisations to equip them to work with volunteers with extra needs. Currently 11% of all enquiries from volunteers have additional needs and VCS have trouble in securing volunteer placements with appropriate support for these volunteers.

VCS will work with over 120 diverse organisations over the three years to upskill and support them to work directly with volunteers who may be hard to reach or have additional needs. Organisations will be able to access training and tools to equip them to strategically develop recruitment and volunteer strategies. With the additional resource available, one staff member will be dedicated to supporting organisations, including small, grass roots groups, working with hard to reach volunteers, community organising and creating opportunities. The second staff member will directly support recruitment with outreach and events plus training workshops to share information and learning.

Financial Information

The income is high in 2017 as a restricted grant from Games Aid was paid upfront to be used over the next two years (£126,843 received in 2017 relates to 2018 and 2019 expenditure) which explains the projected restricted income deficits in 2018 and 2019. VCS has had to diversify income streams over the last few years due to the challenges of local authority cuts. It has developed a funding strategy which is reviewed at the finance subcommittee and income generating subcommittee, both of which meet every six weeks.

Most of its income is restricted, and VCS applies a full cost recovery model to all funding applications. For consistency the table below has used total operating costs to calculate free reserves. However, the organisation has a reserves policy of "between three and six months of core expenditure with budgeted core expenditure for 2017/18 at £220,000" which equates to £55,000 to £110,000. With regard to its own reserves policy the organisation presents as financially healthy. The organisation also has designated reserves of £87,151 for an anticipated office move in the next few years and £39,500 for possible redundancies. The £39,500 designated for possible redundancies is required as all salaries are covered by restricted income, none of which includes any contribution to redundancies. In order to mitigate risk, the organisation feels it is prudent to be prepared if any funding streams come to an end and redundancies have to be made.

Year end as at 31 March	2017 Audited Accounts £	2018 Forecast £	2019 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	536,416	360,395	390,080
- % of Income confirmed as at 12.3.18	n/a	100.00%	65%
Expenditure	(532,285)	(490,201)	(489,047)
Total surplus/(deficit)	4,131	(129,806)	(98,967)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	4,825	(132,190)	(94,972)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(694)	2,384	(3,995)
	4,131	(129,806)	(98,967)
Cost of Raising Funds	42,971	20,460	15,175
- % of Income	8.0%	5.7%	3.9%
Operating expenditure (total funds)	532,285	490,201	489,047
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	95,452	97,836	93,841
No of months of operating expenditure	2.2	2.4	2.3
Reserves policy target	133,071	122,550	122,262
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(37,619)	(24,714)	(28,421)

