

MEETING: 23/09/2015

Ref: 12860

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector

Voice4Change England

Adv: Jenny Field

Amount requested: £175,200

Base: Wandsworth

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £122,240

The Charity

Voice4Change England was established during 2007 in order to represent the black and minority ethnic (BME) voluntary sector at the national policy level. It is a membership body that aims to increase the involvement of the BME voluntary sector in the policy making process. It undertakes research in order to evidence the value of the BME voluntary sector and the obstacles they face.

The Application

You have funded Voice4Change for the last three years towards work developing collaborations between London's BME and mainstream voluntary sector. A further two years' funding is requested to continue this work in two key areas: volunteering; and community asset management.

The Recommendation

Voice4Change is one of the key players in the infrastructure field and it has gained a reputation as an effective contributor to the policy, planning and decision making arenas. One of the recommendations of the *Change for Good* report on the future of infrastructure for the voluntary sector was the importance of ensuring the sector's voice is heard. Voice4Change works to ensure that the voice of the BME sector feeds into the wider policy debate.

Three years is usually the maximum that you will fund a particular project or activity. However, your policies allow you to consider funding for a further two years, work which is of strategic importance to London. You have treated infrastructure support as meeting this criterion and it is within your policies, therefore, to consider funding this project for a further two years. However, your previous grant has supported a part-time Development Officer, together with project running costs and a contribution to Voice4Change's core costs, including the salary of the Director. The grant recommended is therefore at the same level as your previous funding, albeit less than that requested in this application.

£122,240 over two years (2 x £61,120) towards a part-time (21 hpw) Development Director plus associated running costs of a project to support the BME voluntary sector in London to develop policies and good practice around volunteering and asset management.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
19/06/2014	£60,000 as a third year's contribution towards the full-time salary and associated running costs of a project developing models of collaborative and partnership working.

07/09/2011	£108,200 over two years (£55,800; £52,400) towards a project to develop fair and equitable collaborations between London's BME and mainstream voluntary sector.
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Background and detail of proposal

In the current economic climate, volunteers are an increasingly valuable resource for the BME voluntary sector (as is the case throughout the sector). Volunteering is also being seen as an important pathway into paid employment. NCVO recently published guidance on internships and volunteering, highlighting their differences and the different roles and responsibilities that come with engaging volunteers and interns. Voice4Change proposes to disseminate this guidance through its networks, supported by a programme of training in volunteer management and one-to-one support.

In the second strand of the proposal, Voice4Change wishes to build on work it has begun in partnership with Locality (the neighbourhood development membership organisation) that, amongst other things, supports the voluntary sector over asset transfer and with community asset management, through the *My Community* initiative. Voice4Change will support its membership to feed into, and participate in, the Localism agenda. Voice4Change will disseminate information about community assets and the *My Community* agenda, again supported by a programme of training and one to one support.

Financial Information

The charity advised that in 2012/13 and 2013/14 a number of grants came to an end, which it struggled to replace and resulted in deficits for these years. In response it reduced its expenditure in 2014/15, as seen in the table below, by reducing its overheads and making staff redundancies.

Of its projected income for the current year 2015/16, £152,500 (54%) had been confirmed as at 30th August 2015. The charity advised that forecast income is higher than the previous year as it includes a number of new grants, in particular Arts Council for £100k and this application of £30,000 (for the remaining 6 months of year).

The Trustees of Voice4Change advised that they recognise the need to build unrestricted reserves which are below the target to hold three months' worth of expenditure. It will aim to do this through a combination of prudent financial management (for example, it has moved to cheaper premises) and increasing fundraising activity (in which case, cost of generating funds will increase).

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts/ £	2014/15 Draft Outturn £	2015/16 Current Year Forecast £
Income and Expenditure			
Income	142,706	137,297	281,500
Expenditure	230,466	161,801	215,652
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(47,683)	18,832	(10,498)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(40,077)	(43,336)	76,346
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(87,760)	(24,504)	65,848
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	61%	17.8%	23.3%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	7,253 (5%)	9,000 (6.5%)	9,000 (3.2%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	11,036	29,868	19,370
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.6	2.2	1.1
Reserves Policy target	57,617	40,450	53,913
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(46,581)	(10,582)	(34,543)