

MEETING: 28/01/2016

Ref: 13048

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector**

**Volunteer Centre Greenwich**

**Adv: Jenny Field**

**Amount requested: £105,907**

**Base: Greenwich**

**Benefit: Greenwich**

**Amount recommended: £106,000**

**The Charity**

Established in 1999, Volunteer Centre Greenwich (VCG) is the volunteer development agency serving the Royal Borough of Greenwich. It provides the range of services usually associated with a local volunteer centre, including a volunteer brokerage service; the provision of information about volunteering opportunities at various outreach posts across the borough; training for volunteers and for those who work with volunteers; and promotion of good practice around volunteering.

**The Application**

In October 2012, you approved a grant of £162,000 over three years (£55,000, £53,000, £54,000) towards the full-time salary and associated running costs of a project to increase the quantity and quality of volunteering placements in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Funding has been requested to continue this project for a further two years. Whilst three years is the maximum period that you will usually fund a particular project or activity within an organisation, your policies allow you to consider funding work considered to be of strategic importance to London for a further two years. Borough volunteer centres fall within this categorisation.

**The Recommendation**

The work to date has been of a consistently good standard. In the current climate, the number of people coming forward to volunteer is increasing, as is the demand for volunteers from local voluntary organisations. It is more important than ever, therefore, to ensure that volunteer-involving organisations receive the training and information they need to ensure they are offering volunteers a good quality experience. Funding for a further two years is recommended:

***£106,000 over two years (£52,500; £53,500) for the salaries of a 2dpw Volunteer Services Manager; a 3dpw Membership Services Officer; and associated running costs of a project increasing the number and the quality of volunteering placements in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.***

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
31/10/2012	£162,000 over three years (£55,000; £53,000; £54,000) towards the full time salary and associated running costs of a project increasing the number and the quality of volunteering placements in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
03/04/2008	£75,000 over 2 years (2 x £37,500) for the salary costs of an Assistant Director.
03/02/2005	£93,000 over 3 years (£30,000; £31,000; £32,000) towards the salary costs of a Development Manager.

### **Background and detail of proposal**

VCG's 'Opportunities for All' project, the subject of this application, aims to improve the quality of the management, support and experience of volunteers in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

It is proposed that the project would continue to work with its 20 'specialist' volunteers that are helping to improve both the quantity and the quality of volunteering in the borough. Community Engagement Volunteers deliver face-to-face brokerage appointments at outreach sites across the borough and then provide supportive follow-up contact to track and support potential volunteers into suitable roles. Opportunity Champion Volunteers establish relationships with key personnel within volunteer-involving organisations, providing support and guidance on best practice with regard to engaging volunteers.

As organisations in the borough experience reduced funding they are looking increasingly to volunteers to help them meet their objectives. VCG is playing an important role through its training programme in helping organisations to understand when using voluntary support is and is not appropriate. There is also an increasing demand, as the local demographics change, from new, emerging community ethnic minority and refugee community organisations which are heavily dependent on volunteers.

### **Financial Information**

Total forecast income for the current year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 is £296,228 of which £224,203 (76%) had been confirmed as at 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

The charity has advised that it adopts a risk based approach to setting its target level of free reserves and this has arrived at a modest target of £67,827, equating to approximately 2.5 months' worth of total expenditure. Actual free reserves held as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 were £39,748 and, therefore, below the target. During the current year, free reserves are forecast to fall further below the target to £29,748 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, equating to 1.2 months' worth of expenditure.

VCG has advised that it plans to build its free reserves by increasing the amount of training and consultancy it undertakes. The charity has also noted that a high proportion of its income is restricted for specific projects (75% in 2014/15) and, should funding for these projects cease, then the work would also cease if alternative funding could not be found.

<b>Year end at 31 March</b>	<b>2014/15 Audited Accounts £</b>	<b>2015/16 Current Year Forecast £</b>
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income	369,946	296,228
Expenditure	401,464	300,300
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(16,450)	(10,000)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(15,069)	5,928
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(31,518)	(4,072)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	8.5%	1.4%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	20,861 (5.6%)	18,758 (6.3%)
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	39,748	29,748
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.2	1.2
Reserves Policy target	67,827	67,827
How many months' worth of expenditure	2	2.7
Free reserves over/(under) target	(28,079)	(38,079)