

MEETING: 27/07/2017

Ref: 14020

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector

Voluntary Action Islington Limited

Adv: Sandra Jones

Base: Islington

Amount requested: £52,826

Benefit: Islington

Amount recommended: £50,000

The Charity

Voluntary Action Islington (VAI) is the council for voluntary service serving the London Borough of Islington. As well as providing some capacity building support and an information service, the charity has been responsible for running the borough's volunteer centre since 2009. The organisation represents Islington's voluntary and community sector in various cross-sectoral partnerships and networks, enabling its members to influence change. Operating from premises in Pentonville Road, the charity provides a resource centre used by the voluntary sector for hiring desk space and meeting and conference rooms.

The Application

In March 2015, you awarded a grant of £96,900 over two years (£48,000; £48,900) focused on VAI's role as the borough volunteer centre to provide support to improve induction and training for volunteers and create volunteer supervisor roles in small and medium sized community organisations. This grant is due to end in September 2017, and the charity now seeks a third year's funding for this project to cover the costs of a part time project officer at increased hours, some communication officer time and associated running costs.

The Recommendation

The organisation wishes to slightly change the structure of the project, to provide more support to organisations on an individual basis, and less generic training courses. Feedback from the participants identified that this was a more effective way of delivering support, particularly for smaller organisations that were unable to make the time to attend the training programme in its entirety; and they requested support at their own premises. The recommendation is slightly less than requested as the amount for core funding was high in comparison with the previous application.

£50,000 for a third year towards VAI's volunteer project. The funding covers a Project Officer (3.5 days per week), Information and Communication Officer (2.5 hours per week), associated running and training costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
12/03/2015	£96,900 over two years (£48,000, £48,900) for the costs of a (2.5dpw) Project Officer; 1dpw Senior Project Officer; and associated running costs and the costs of delivering training courses.
30/06/2011	£91,000 over two years (£45,000; £46,000) towards the salary and on-costs of a full-time Development Officer.

Background and detail of proposal

The project will continue to work with small and medium sized organisations in Islington to develop the skills of staff and volunteers. This will be achieved by

offering training to 30 staff and volunteers from 15 organisations on effective management of volunteers as well as offer advice sessions to 60 individuals focusing on supporting the development of relevant policies and procedures, induction and developing new volunteer supervisor roles to increase the range and quality of volunteering leading to increased quality activities.

The level of support is the same as the previous two years, although they are changing the methodology slightly, offering less training courses and more support to organisations on an individual basis.

Financial Information

Forecast income for 2017/18 covers grant funding that has been approved, and does not include generated or investment income, such as fees and rental income. The figure calculated for this is based on previous year's income. The organisation states that they treat the cost of generating funds as relating to the costs of raising donations and their accountant includes work on applications that generates income for charitable activities as a cost of charitable activities, and this includes grants. The charity has a free reserves target of "between 30% and 70% of annual expenditure, averaging at 40% over a three year period". This has been difficult to calculate for the forecast figures, and so officers have adopted using a target of 40% of operating expenditure. In order to move towards their policy, the charity has been using its free reserves to enable them to move from a position where most of its income is from statutory sources to one of more varied streams including the rental space at the charity's resource centre.

Year end as at March	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	Audited	Forecast	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	493,627	418,933	413,875
- % of Income confirmed as at 31/05/17	n/a	n/a	28%
Expenditure	(535,687)	(444,069)	(471,898)
Net gain/loss on investments	(16,828)		
Total surplus/(deficit)	(58,888)	(25,136)	(58,023)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(15,473)	(9,823)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(43,415)	(15,313)	(58,023)
	(58,888)	(25,136)	(58,023)
Cost of Raising Funds	3,966	0	0
- % of income	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	387,617	342,721	396,523
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	247,250	231,937	173,914
No of months of operating expenditure	7.7	8.1	5.3
Reserves policy target	155,047	137,088	158,609
No of months of operating expenditure	4.8	4.8	4.8
Free reserves over/(under) target	92,203	94,849	15,305