

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Voluntary Sector Funding Update: August 2008

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to the local voluntary and community sector and stakeholders on the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames voluntary sector funding programme. The Voluntary Sector Funding Strategy clearly outlines a staggered approach to funding the various sectors, with sectors being considered separately in three different rounds. The first round was originally scheduled for decisions to be effective from 1st October 2008. However following a review of the timetable and discussions with voluntary sector representatives it has been decided to allow some additional time within the programme to ensure that funded activity is both aligned with Council priorities and integrated into the overall funding of the voluntary sector. The first round will therefore now be scheduled for decisions to be effective from 1 April 2009. This will also provide opportunity for further comment from the voluntary sector on local priorities.

Arrangements for the remainder of 2008/09 and current grant recipients

All current grant recipients will receive further rollover funding to the 31st March 2009. This will be at the same level as 2007/08 plus 2.5% inflation. Please note that this commitment is subject to organisations continuing to meet agreed priorities under the grant agreements and the provision of satisfactory monitoring.

New Funding Rounds

To follow are details of when each round will be considered and the proposed sectors:

Round One

Decision effective from 1st April 2009

Sectors:

- Infrastructure and Capacity Building
- Homelessness
- Generalist Advice Services

Round Two

Decision effective from 1st October 2009

Sectors (proposed):

- Children and Families
- Young People
- Carers
- Community Development
- Crime Reduction
- Learning
- Environment
- Culture (includes Leisure)
- Arts

Round Three

Decision effective from 1st April 2010

Sectors (proposed):

- Older People
- Learning Difficulties
- Physical Disability
- Mental Health

Transitional Arrangements for 2009/10

For organisations not being considered in Round One the intention is to agree further rollover funding to be awarded until their sector is reviewed. It is important to note that the actual funding allocation for each organisation will be dependent on the amount of funds available for distribution (please see the section below on resources). The awards will also be subject to satisfactory monitoring and the activity continuing to complement Council priorities.

Resources

In 2004 the local authority delegated responsibility for the management of its grants programme to Richmond CVS. In the first year of managing the programme RCVS successfully negotiated additional funds from the Learning & Skills Council, and was able to use additional one off funds to add to the budget. In the second and third years of the Grants Direct programme changes in funding arrangements by the LSC meant that these one off funds were not available for distribution from the grants budget at the same level. However, RCVS and later the Council, continued to maintain the levels of funding by securing funding on a year by year basis to supplement the budget and maintain its commitment to the voluntary sector. Unfortunately this approach is no longer sustainable and although the local authority has been able to maintain funding levels in 2008/09, it is likely that funding from this budget will reduce in future years. The current estimate is a 6% reduction in 2009/10.

To help counter the effects of this the local authority is seeking to increase the level of investment in the voluntary sector through a combination of contracts, service level agreements and partnership funding arrangements. A key aim of the voluntary sector funding strategy is to move the allocation of resources from grants to commissioned and contracted services, and to maximise opportunities for the sector to benefit from these new funding arrangements.

The grants budget for 2009/10 is scheduled to be agreed in December 2008 at which stage the local authority will issue further communication about the funding position for 2009/10 to the sector.

Further information

The Council will continue to update with information on the funding programme as it becomes available, on its website and via the RCVS newsletter.

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