

Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support

Registered Charity No. 1066859

Dudley Place, Off Pinkwell Lane, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1PB
Tel: 0208 606 6780 Fax: 0208 606 6781 Email: enquiries@hacs.org.uk www.hacs.org.uk



Thursday 7th January 2015

Dear Kevin,

Re: Hillingdon Corporate Grant for 2016/17

Thank you for agreeing to meet with on Wednesday. The meeting proved really useful in bringing clarity to how we should proceed in briefing cabinet members of the impact that a grant reduction from £70,000 to £40,000 would have on the future of services delivered by HACS to disabled residents of the Borough.

If I may initially address some of the assumptions contained in the cabinet briefing. The briefing showed that HACS had received total funding in the region of £128,780 for the years 2015/16. This comprised of £70,000 core grant, £40,000 partnership agreement with the Leader to manage the RAGC Tea Room Project and a figure of £18,500 reimbursement of monies paid by HACS for the purchase 3 sensory trolleys to be used in Youth Centre's across the Borough.

The £18,500 was funded by a Central Government Autism Capital Grant allocated to make Youth Centre's across the borough more autism friendly. The £18,500 paid to HACS was to refund the charity for the purchase of the equipment until such time that Central Government Funding was received by the borough. At best this should be considered a pure accounting exercise as HACS do not own the Trolleys and are custodians of the equipment on behalf of the borough.

The combination of monies received for the RAGC Partnership Project and the purchase of 3 sensory trolleys totaling £58,500 somewhat skewed the projected spend level to 44% of charitable income where in reality the monies received from LBH towards core charity activities as a proportion of income actually remains at 23.8%.

The Charity's surplus reserves referenced in the cabinet briefing cannot be considered as free reserves as they are restricted funding allocations made to specific projects. Actual free reserves for the charity are running at a level of £55,958 which at this point represents only 2 months running costs were the charity to have to consider closing the operation.

Following our discussions, I believe it would be more appropriate that any monies received from LBH in addition to the core grant be identified as separate project line items and allocated an appropriate Project reference. Furthermore I also believe it would be appropriate both for HACS and the LBH that we put the

RAGC Project on a proper footing so that all parties are aware of what has been agreed as part of the shared project agreement.

Since submitting the 2016/17 grant application, unfortunately HACS were unsuccessful in securing a £90,000 application to Children in Need to fund the running of children services for the next 3 years commencing April 2016. At present we have only managed to secure short-term funding to allow children's services to continue until 30th April 2016.

In 2014/15 the cabinet agreed a temporary uplift in core grant funding to allow for the employment of a Business Development Manager. Since this date, the charity has significantly expanded project initiatives, continued to grow core charitable activities and has actively engaged with statutory services and agencies within the borough to align our aims with that of council priorities and initiatives as contained in the Autism Bill. The Charity's circumstances have therefore changed significantly since the original 'temporary uplift' decision was made in 2014/15.

Our request to Cabinet is that they re-consider funding the core grant at a level of £70,000 per annum with the caveat that this be considered the required level of core funding moving forward for each application cycle. This would give the charity the surety and financial footing to continue employing a Business Development Manager, to grow core services and activities, partner with statutory organisations to develop and bring on line new projects and initiatives whilst seeking economies of scale wherever possible; all of which can only be achieved through securing continued core grant funding at a level of £70,000 per annum.

Assuming the local authority were to agree to continue funding core activities at £70,000, why would the Charity still have a projected deficit of £24,500?

This is direct consequence of the loss of the Children in Need grant of £30,000 per year (£90k over the next three years) which was declined in November 15. The Business Development Manager has since sourced short term funding for the current financial year and is currently sourcing longer-term sustainable funding for the Saturday club projects (Pinkwell, Pield Heath & Charville) for the years 2016/17.

What would be the impact of a reduced grant allocation to £40k on existing activities and development of new services?

If HACS were not to receive the requested full grant award of £70,000, there would be an immediate increase in the budgetary deficit for 2016/17 from £24,500 to £54,500. Essentially, the immediate knock-on effect would be the loss of the Business Development Manager's post with effect from 31/3/16. The impact on the sustainability of existing services and development of new services would be catastrophic to the services currently offered to the borough's disabled residents.

The impact on existing services would be:

- I. Closure of Wednesday Youth club as of 30th April 2016 - currently supporting 25 young people per week
- II. Closure of Thursday Youth club as of 30th April 2016 - currently supporting 30 young people per week
- III. Closure of Charville Youth club as of 31st March 2015 - currently supporting between 12 and 15 young people per week

The Business Development Manager responsibilities are to develop existing and new initiatives and projects in conjunction with the Local authority whilst securing alternative income streams for sustainable growth. Many of the new services currently under discussion with the Local Authority should be considered by Cabinet on an 'Invest to Save' basis where the charity are aligning with council initiatives to actively engage with statutory services to offer residents access to affordable services and provision within borough on a 'not for profit' basis. The investment in the charity now will pay dividends in the longer term through direct reductions in the costs of autistic people attending out of borough provisions, significant reductions in transport costs, reduced isolation and improved social integration through people accessing local services in the borough where they, their families and friends live.

We would also not be able to pursue the planned expansion of the RAGC Stepping Stones to Employment Project. Due to overwhelming demand for the project, HACS are currently in discussions to takeover and manage a second cafe site to provide employment and training opportunities to additional 30 residents per year through providing 720 training sessions (currently in negotiation with HACL). In addition, The Business Development Manager would be expected to work in conjunction with 20 local employers to provide employment and training opportunities as part of the formal launch of the Employment service in 2016/17. It will not be possible to pursue this venture, as the Business Development Manager would be required to engage with local employers and pursue a sustainable source of funding for project expansion.

Finally without the post of Business Development Manager, it would not be possible to continue the discussions which been taking place since August 2015 with the Leader of the Council for the Planned development of Merriman's cottages and Independent Living programme. Whilst the Charity would not need to source capital funding for the project, the Business Development Manager would need to secure sustainable sources of revenue streams for project delivery. This project would most certainly have to be shelved, and again a significant opportunity to 'Invest to save' in the charity would be lost to the residents of the borough.

I would like to thank Cabinet members and Officers for their continued support and in anticipation of considering our unique grant request accept our most sincere thanks on behalf of the children and families we serve in Hillingdon.

Yours sincerely

A. R. Mullally

Antoinette Mullally
Chief Executive