

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR
ISSUES CONSIDERED IN FUNDING ASSESSMENTS
2011-12 FINANCIAL YEAR**

The decision to award a corporate grant to an organisation follows a process of officer assessment and recommendation to Cabinet who then make and agree the final decisions in December each year.

Corporate grants are unique in offering core funding to organisations that are seen to be key partners and offering essential services that contribute to the Councils priorities and the well-being of residents. They are an investment into organisations and in turn into the borough.

Due to their purpose, corporate grants cover a diversity of groups and a wide range of issues are considered when making funding assessments, some of which will be more pertinent to particular organisations than others. For instance a larger organisation would be expected to bring in significant external funding which would not be appropriate for a smaller organisation. Applications therefore can only be assessed on an individual basis.

Notwithstanding that caveat, the list below sets out some specific criteria and priorities of the Council which will be taken into account by officers when making recommendations:

◆ **Impact and Need**

Organisations should be able to demonstrate that what they do is effective, is needed and has the desired impact. Most usually this comes from feedback from clients and user participation in the development of services. However, the Council would encourage organizations to gauge the more long term outcomes and impact of their work.

◆ **Good Governance, Management, Financial Accountability and Sustainability**

This covers the structure of the organization and how it operates, its ability to account for and manage funding, its financial and general sustainability. Quality assurance measures, kite marks, business plans, funding strategies, risk management, and evidence of a range of policies are all positively acknowledged.

◆ **Fit with Sustainable Community Strategy, and other Council plans and policy**

That the organization and its direction of travel should contribute toward the Council's aims and priorities.

◆ **Partnership with the Council in the provision of services**

This acknowledges the key role that the voluntary sector make as a partner to the Council, both in the actual delivery of services and as an advocate for service users. The Council relies on the participation of many organizations in forums, panels etc to ensure that services reflect users needs and that the Council can achieve its aims.

◆ **Equalities and Community Cohesion**

The Council expects organizations to address equality issues within their programmes and operations. The Council is also committed to supporting the development of services intended to benefit those with 'protected characteristics' ie. Ethnic minorities, gender, age, disability

etc. Actively encouraging cross-cultural interaction between users and different groups is encouraged.

◆ **External Funding**

The Council is particularly interested in supporting organizations that bring in external funding as a result of the corporate funding which is used to increase services locally. As a return on its 'investment', it is also considered as part of VFM (see below)

◆ **Value for Money (VFM)**

In addition to external funding, VFM is considered by cost but also with quality and user satisfaction. The cost to the Council of not having the service provided is also a consideration.

◆ **Efficiency**

This agenda covers a number of ways that organizations may improve their use of resources, thereby reducing cost or extending services. It could be sharing resources, expertise or facilities, rationalizing delivery or partnering with other organizations to meet a demand.

◆ **Partnerships**

The Council is keen to encourage partnerships where this may reduce duplication of activities or achieve efficiencies (see above). This may enable groups to scale up to tender more effectively or reach a new community.

◆ **Reserves**

Organisations are expected to have and adhere to a reserves policy. Please refer to the enclosed guidance on reserves. If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact the Partnerships & Community Engagement Team.

◆ **Monitoring – Organisation's 2010-11 grant**

Each organisation in receipt of financial support for the 2010/2011 financial year will be required to co-operate in a monitoring exercise. The information obtained from the monitoring visits will serve to assist officers in coming to a recommendation on the level of funding to be offered for the 2011/2012 financial year.