

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

**EXECUTIVE MEETING  
21.07.03**

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS & LIBRARIES

NAME OF WARD(S)  
ALL

**REPORT TITLE: CONSULTATION ON THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR SUPPORT  
REVIEW**

**1.0 SUMMARY**

1.1 This report seeks Members' approval of the principles that are proposed as the basis of a changed relationship between the Council and the voluntary and community sector. It also seeks members' approval of the consultation process.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Members approve the principles set out in the paper, "From Patronage to Partnership – building a new relationship with the voluntary and community sector" (Appendix 1), as the basis for consultation with the sector, and authorise the Chief Executive to make minor changes to the paper to make it more accessible for consultees.

2.2 That Members approve the consultation process set out in paragraph 6.3.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The costs of the consultation will be met from within existing resources. The financial implications of the proposals for changing the nature of the funding relationship between the Council and the voluntary sector are set out in the consultation paper.

**4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 No staffing implications arise immediately. The implications for staff that arise from the proposed new relationship are outlined within the consultation paper.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has power to make grants for a variety of purposes. As part of the assessment of applications for grant funding from the main programme each year, Legal Services considers whether the Council has the power to make the specific grants recommended by officers.

## **6.0 DETAIL**

- 6.1 The Council's relationship with the Voluntary Sector was fundamentally reviewed during 1996-7 and the Voluntary Sector Strategy was published in March 1997. The strategy reflected the need for a re-examination of the Council's relationship with the voluntary sector. It was based on a comprehensive audit of joint working relationships with the voluntary sector and of grant aid allocation, and on a number of detailed consultation exercises. Although considerable improvements have been made, subsequent reviews demonstrate that the strategy has not been fully implemented and that problems still exist.
- 6.2 Based on the findings of these reviews and upon an analysis of good practice elsewhere, the attached paper proposes a modernisation of the relationship and a shift from patronage by the Council to a working partnership between it and the voluntary sector. It proposes a change in the type of funding available to organisations, the funding relationship, and the priorities upon which funding decisions will be made. It also proposes a greater emphasis upon providing support to, and building capacity within, voluntary and community organisations, above and beyond that which is purely financial.
- 6.3 It is essential that as wide as possible a range of voluntary and community organisations and other stakeholders are fully consulted on the proposals. The consultation programme, which will run from July until October, will incorporate the following elements:
- i) Direct mailing of the consultation paper to all voluntary and community groups known to the Council. Responses may be made in writing, on-line, by e-mail or by phone.
  - ii) Publicity in the Brent Magazine and other appropriate publications.
  - iii) Focus groups of different types of organisations and of stakeholders.
  - iv) A Voluntary Sector Conference to be held in September at which representatives from the sector will have an opportunity to discuss the proposals with Councillors and officers.
  - v) Discussion at the Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum in October.
- 6.4 The consultation paper will be accompanied by a brochure setting out the varied support that the Council already offers to the voluntary sector across the board.
- 6.5 All organisations currently in receipt of funding from the Main Grants Programme will additionally be informed of the possible implications for their funding in 2004/5.

- 6.6 Following the consultation, a further report setting out its results and officers' recommendations for change will be presented for consideration by Members at the October meeting of the Executive.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The following papers were used in the compilation of this report:-

- i) Voluntary Sector Strategy, March 1997
- ii) Best Value Review of Voluntary Sector Support, 2002
- iii) Review of Main Grants Programme by Peter Williams Consultants, August 2002

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Karen Tyerman, Assistant Director, Education Arts and Libraries, Chesterfield House, 9 Park Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 7RW.

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