

**Overview & Scrutiny Feedback**  
 In respect of: Voluntary Sector Funding  
 Membership: Councillor Mistry (chair)  
 Councillor Fox  
 Councillor Pagnamenta

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
 Lead Member: Councillor R Colwill  
 Lead Officer: Mike Bibby

Recommendation	Has or will this be Implemented / Not Implemented	If not Why not	Timescales for implementation	Officer Responsible
<p>1. That an overarching Voluntary Sector Strategy is developed that clearly sets out what the council is trying to achieve in the way it works with and funds the voluntary and community sector to achieve more for local people. The strategy should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide clear links to the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Corporate Strategy and the Local Area Agreement</li> <li>b. Set out all of the different types of funding available from the council</li> <li>c. Ensure meaningful engagement with the voluntary and community sector when developing priorities for funding</li> <li>d. Provide a framework for supporting</li> </ul>				

<p>and developing a vibrant voluntary and community sector through capacity building initiatives</p> <p>e. Encourage partnership working by providing a framework for the implementation of Brent’s voluntary sector compact.</p> <p>f. Define the role of the council’s voluntary sector team and other relevant sections of the council</p> <p>e.Promote equity, equality and diversity.</p> <p>The Voluntary Sector Team should lead on developing this strategy with input from other parts of the council including the Policy and Regeneration Unit. The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee to receive an update on the strategy in six months.</p>				
<p>2. That the council holds an annual event or conference with the voluntary and community sector with the aim of enhancing relationships and building trust.</p>				
<p>3. That consideration should be given to phasing the introduction of the proposed</p>				

<p>changes to the funding process over a period of up to three years and that no organisation that is currently funded has all of their funding withdrawn immediately, unless there are issues relating performance.</p>				
<p>4. That within the context of the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Corporate Strategy and the LAA the council should be more specific about what services it wants to fund from the Main Programme Grant and identify the outcomes and outputs it expects from the funding it provides. The council should allocate specific amounts of money for each priority.</p>				
<p>5. That the allocations of resources should be on the basis of analysis of need based on robust evidence and that the voluntary and community sector are able to feed into that process, through information they have gathered via their direct contact with Brent residents.</p>				
<p>6. That funding provided under the new funding process should be awarded for a period of three years, with service level</p>				

<p>agreements that are monitored annually prior to funding being released. An increase for inflation should be added each year.</p>				
<p>7. That the Voluntary Sector Team ensures that the application and assessment process be as transparent as possible by:</p> <p>a. Advertising spending priorities and inviting applications as widely as possible including: The Funder’s Fair, the Internet, the Brent Magazine, Brent Brain, via Brava and the local press. This should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Include a clear time line for applications.</li> <li>o Be sufficiently in advance to enable applications to be processed and agreements made well before the end of the financial year.</li> </ul> <p>b. Providing clear written guidance to applicants on how to complete the application form.</p>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Being clear about assessment criteria prior to applications being invited e.g. the use of a points system.</li> <li>d. Sufficient checks to ensure that there is no duplication of applications</li> <li>e. Providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants on how to improve future applications</li> </ul>				
<p>8 That monitoring should take place at least once per year and should focus on outcomes and outputs including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Self assessments against agreed targets.</li> <li>b. Annual Voluntary Sector Team visits to a selection of organisations, clients and users.</li> </ul>				
<p>9. That the Executive considers allocating an additional amount equivalent on 15% – 20% of the current Main Programme Grant as ‘seed corn’ capacity building money to help the development of voluntary and community sector groups where there are emerging needs, communities and organisations. This should be provided for 3 years on the understanding that this will cease thereafter.</p>				

10. That an annual Funder's Fair is established with the aim of bringing together all funding organisations operating in the area and the voluntary and community sector.				
11. That there is a review of the role of the Voluntary Sector Team and the role of Brava to ensure that there is greater clarity and to avoid duplication particularly in relation to capacity building.				
12. That the Voluntary Sector Team is provided with a period of stability and as we recognise that a number of our recommendations will incur additional expense, that they are resourced and supported sufficiently during the implementation of the changes introduced as part of the review of Main Programme Grant giving.				