



Report of the North East Area Manager

North East (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 10th September 2007

Subject: Sources of support for voluntary organisations and community groups

Electoral Wards Affected:

Chapel Allerton
Moortown
Roundhay

Ward members consulted
(referred to in this report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

x

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This report provides the Area Committee with detailed information on the range of support available for voluntary and community organisations in the area. It provides the national context concerning external funding and gives local information in order that members can signpost organisations to appropriate sources of support, following their decision not to continue funding the Grant and Funding Advice Worker post.

Purpose of this report

1. At the last Area Committee meeting, members requested further details on options available to voluntary organisations and community groups in the area for funding advice, following the resignation of the Grant and Funding Advice Worker. This post was funded by the Well-Being Fund.
2. The Area Committee agreed the recommendation not to continue funding this post, but wanted more detailed information on what other support would be available for groups so that members can signpost future enquiries appropriately.
3. The report also provides the Area Committee with up to date information on the current national and local situation regarding external funding sources.

Current external funding situation

4. The way in which the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is funded will undergo significant changes in the short and medium term. The global amount of funds available from two major streams which had funded significant grant making programmes, the National Lottery and the European Union, will reduce significantly. At the same time, the government's strategic shift in emphasis, from grants to contracts will require many groups to reassess their operations.
5. These changes come about just as the final grants made by the Community Fund (now subsumed into the Big Lottery Fund) are ending. Many projects are thus starting to look for significant amounts of continuation funding. The inevitable result is increased competitive pressure to access funds from a reduced 'pot'.
6. As the government's drive for the VCS to take on service delivery filters down, local authorities, Primary Care Trusts and other statutory funders are increasingly moving from grant making to commissioning through contracts. This means that VCS groups are increasingly being expected to move away from the traditional charitable approach to a social enterprise model. It also means that the current position, where VCS groups identify a need and seek funding to address it will tend to shift to a position where VCS groups bid to meet needs identified by statutory bodies.
7. The full effects on the sector of this approach have yet to be seen, but there is some evidence that it will mean a change in the types of organisations starting up, and a reconsideration by existing smaller organisations of the type of projects they wish to undertake. Some research also suggests that larger organisations are better equipped to operate under these arrangements than smaller ones, and the profile of the sector may change accordingly.
8. This is already having an impact on the type of posts that are required to support groups. Support is moving away from the traditional approach of assisting groups to complete funding applications to a much stronger emphasis on business case support. Also, expertise is needed in social enterprise models along with knowledge of where tendering opportunities are likely to arise. The following sections provide details of the support that is currently available for local groups in the context of this changing national position.

Support available for local voluntary organisations

9. **Voluntary Action Leeds** – is the Council for Voluntary Service in Leeds and provides a range of services to voluntary and community groups across the city. These services include support to increase volunteering, information and library services, support for small groups including capacity building, constitutional advice, payroll support and training. They also offer intensive ‘project management’ support to management committee’s looking at reviewing their organisation, how to operate and secure sustainability for the future. This service costs approximately £25,000 per year and provides a part-time member of VAL staff to work intensively with the organisation.
10. **Resourcing the Community (RtC)** – RtC are based on Roundhay Road and provide a citywide service for voluntary organisations and community groups giving funding advice, training, and assistance with completing forms. They also offer support to groups to make best use of their resources, for example suggesting a way of streamlining programmes if they feel there is duplication within the organisation and with other providers. RTC can also provide assistance to organisations seeking business planning and social enterprise advice. They are particularly targeting organisations who are based in, or provide a service in Objective 2, Priority 3 areas of the city. This is because they have been awarded European Funding which is geographically targeted. In inner north east, this covers the Chapeltown, Scott Hall, Miles Hill and Beckhill areas.
11. **Leeds VOICE** – The Community Link Team work directly with community groups, primarily in the Objective 2 areas of the city, but do have a citywide remit. The team can provide support to access funding streams and access to their ‘Grant Finder’ service. They provide organisational support to groups getting established and offer training and links to get groups developed into sustainable organisations. The team also provide capacity building support and expertise in future planning including social enterprise advice.
12. **Fit4Funding** – previously the Charities Information Bureau is based in Wakefield and has a long track record of supporting the sector. Services are available for groups across West Yorkshire. It provides a wide range of training covering every aspect of the funding process, and has some advice giving capacity targeted at disadvantaged groups. It also offers one to one support and consultancy as well as an online funding search facility and regular funding newsletters.
13. **Leeds Connecting Communities** - offers funding advice and support to organisations working with black and minority ethnic community groups across Leeds. They have Development Workers to work with groups on funding applications and to advise on how to develop and sustain their work. They are based at Centenary House.
14. **The Scarman Trust** - offers resources and support to individuals and small groups, based on their ‘Can Do’ model of community involvement and development. They may also be able to offer some assistance with the development of social enterprises.
15. **Sustainable Futures Project** – Part of the Council, this is a European Funded project that offers tailored support and signposting to the voluntary and community groups wishing to develop as social enterprises. They also give some grant funding and have a specific responsibility for helping social enterprises gain contracts with Leeds City Council. They only work with organisations who are based or work in the Chapeltown, Scott Hall, Miles Hill and Beckhill areas.

16. **West Yorkshire Social Enterprise Link** – is a partnership between Business Link West Yorkshire and the Social Enterprise Support Centre. They provide advice, support and training for new, developing and existing social enterprises.
17. **Link Age Plus** – Leeds is one of 8 local authorities chosen by the government to pilot a £10 million to help deliver services to disadvantaged people over 50 years old. It will provide a single gateway to services provided in the community ranging from housing, social care, financial benefits and health. The type of support that they can offer to voluntary groups is around capacity building. For example some groups have already received support to offer more varied activities and programmes, older people's champions and advocacy groups are being established. Age Concern are being supported by the project to develop a transport programme with other voluntary organisations.
18. All of these organisations are happy to receive referrals from members to work with individual groups. A list of contact details for each of the above will be emailed to all Area Committee members.
19. In addition, support is available to groups online. There are an ever increasing number of free online services which provide a library of funding opportunities as a resource for groups. The Council also produces a very detailed booklet 'Small Grants to Voluntary Organisations' which provides information on small grants available to voluntary, community and faith organisations in Leeds. This is available online through the main Council website.

Recommendations

20. The Area Committee is requested to note the contents of the report.