

Brentwood Borough Council

Funding Strategy

2017-2020



Contents

	Foreword	3
1	Aims	4
2	Scope	4
3	Statement of principles	4
4	Current level of support	5
5	Next Steps	6
6	External funding	6
7	Governance and Monitoring	6
8	Timescales for Delivery	9
8	Action plan	10

Foreword

This strategy sets out our priorities and future funding plans for supporting the local voluntary sector through a variety of funding schemes, especially support for strategic voluntary groups that meets the Council's priorities, fulfil a legislative requirement or build voluntary or community capacity.

The Council recognises the contribution that the local voluntary and community sector (VCS) makes both towards the quality of life of local people and in ensuring that all members of the community have a voice. This strategy aims to ensure best use of the limited funding available to support the work of the voluntary and community organisations in the Borough, through a fair and transparent process. The Council is also aware that not all organisations will be eligible to enter into a commissioning process. Therefore, a small grants scheme will be retained by the Council.

We believe that this is the best way forward in which services can be supported and provided. The Council can also ensure that outcomes can be clearly measured, and the level and quality of service will be reviewed as an essential part of the process. This will result in some changes and opportunities for funding for organisations delivering specific services linked to acknowledged Council priorities. It is expected that the need for some services or organisations that are currently funded may reduce, but advice, support and guidance for alternative external funding sources will still be available and accessible to all local organisations.

Councillor Louise McKinlay, Leader of the Council

1. Aims

The aim of this strategy is to explain the Council's strategic approach to funding and will include the method for commissioning services that effectively supports the local voluntary and community sector. It will also set out the Council's external funding principles that will be utilised to apply and secure external funding together with the governance arrangements that will be implemented to review and report on funding activity.

2. Scope

This strategy includes the funding support that Brentwood Borough Council gives to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). This support can be provided in a number of ways:

- Commissioned services
- Grant funding
- Provision of accommodation and/or preferential rent or lease arrangements or support services
- Discretionary rate relief
- Parish Council discretionary grants
- Officer support

This strategy will look at the following areas:

- Commissioning Prospectus
- Small grants programme – Brentwood Community Fund
- In Kind support
- External funding principles
- Funding support, advice and guidance
- Governance arrangements

The strategy will involve all service areas of the Council and Brentwood's local voluntary and community sector organisations.

3. Statement of principles

The Council will only support funding for the voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) if they support the following principles:

- The funding will help the Council to deliver its priorities and sub priorities of the Brentwood Corporate Plan
- Supports the creation of a Community Hub of VCS organisations within the Town Hall as part of the Town Hall Transformation
- Any organisation in receipt of funding acknowledges the support that it has received from the Council
- Any proposals or initiatives actively increases volunteering and supports the use of volunteers.

4. Current level of support

Commissioning Prospectus

The Council's Commissioning Prospectus currently supports Brentwood Citizen's Advice Bureau, Brentwood Community Transport and Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services.

Preferential lease arrangements

The Council has a number of preferential lease arrangements in place with organisations that are providing valuable services or activities to our residents and as such are providing social value to the local community.

Small discretionary grants programme

The Council continues to provide a small discretionary grants programme through the Brentwood Community Fund.

Free parking permits/marketing materials

Are we including this?

Discretionary Rate Relief

Discretionary Rate Relief Policy and Procedures was reviewed and revised as part of the Funding Strategy 2012-2016 and was approved by Members in November 2013.

Parish Council Discretionary Grants

The Council currently provides a discretionary grant to the nine Parish Councils in Brentwood.

Officer and funding support

Officers continue to provide advice and guidance on funding applications and providing support around opportunities for new community development projects. The Council also subscribes to GrantNet and Open4Community which has a search facility for available funding pots.

5. Next Steps

With reduced available funding, Brentwood Borough Council needs to rationalise and prioritise any support that it gives to local voluntary and community organisations. The Funding Strategy action plan sets out the four key priority areas of the strategy which includes reviewing the current level of funding and support, the commissioning of some support services and the timescales for delivery, the discretionary small grants programme, and external funding principles. The current funding advice and support will continue as usual.

6. External funding

The Council needs to ensure that any external funding activity supports the delivery of the Council priorities and sub priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2016-19. Through improved sharing of information and intelligence, a framework for bidding and monitoring external funding across the authority we will ensure that we concentrate on our priorities, avoid duplication of effort and maximise officer input where it is most important. It is envisioned that cross service collaboration on projects will increase. This will enable officers to determine and commit appropriately allocated resources, rather than seeking funding opportunistically, resulting in priorities being skewed towards available funding.

7. Governance and Monitoring

The Council needs to ensure that there is a robust framework of governance in place so that we have a clear idea of what we fund, why we fund it, what the benefits are to the Brentwood Community and how this funding supports the Council objectives.

In the current financial climate, the Council cannot afford to maintain the current level of support to this number of organisations. Therefore, the Council will continue to commission some support services through the Commissioning Prospectus, which meet local community need and supports the desired outcomes of the Council's priorities in the Corporate Plan.

This will ensure that we will be able to:

- Map, evaluate and monitor community development in the Borough
- Ensure quality assurance of commissioned work
- Provide measures of success regarding commissioned work
- Provide accessible information and funding and support to the community and voluntary sector
- Provide support and advice on community development to those involved in council led initiatives
- Continue to support councillors in their community councillor role
- Build stronger relationships with the community and voluntary sector
- Ensure that the council is recognised by those organisations that are in receipt of funding.
- Provide a framework for the development and submission of bids and the development of guidance in the preparations of applications for external funding – processes, risk management, exit strategies, succession planning etc.

To do this the Council needs to put in place clear policies in terms of priorities, resources, staffing, commissioning and monitoring to reflect a targeted

commissioning approach which supports the council priorities.

The Council needs to know the commercial value of its assets, so that when issuing any preferential leases, it is aware of the 'social value' that should be provided by any voluntary or community organisation.

It is also proposed to ensure that the local level of need is clearly evidenced so that gaps in provision are identified which will enable services to be effectively commissioned.

The strategy will also ensure that any kind of support or funding that is given out or received will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the Council is strategically targeting resources and support, both effectively and efficiently across the Borough.

Following the implementation of the Funding Strategy Brentwood will have:

- A robust framework of governance is in place so that we have a clear idea of what we fund, why we fund it, what the benefits are to the Brentwood Community, and how this funding supports the Council objectives
- Collection of data that will enable us to identify the need and priorities of the local community and to map any gaps in service provision so that funding can be appropriately and effectively utilised
- Work with local community and voluntary organisations to develop priorities for community development initiatives
- Reduce the financial burden on the Council, deliver savings and ensure better value for money
- Monitor and evaluate funding that has been awarded to ensure expected outcomes are met and Council priorities are supported

Timescales for delivery

Milestone	Date
Launch review of current level of funding/support	19/06/17
Draft Funding Strategy to be agreed by Community Health and Housing Committee	19/06/17
Launch consultation for the draft Funding Strategy and the Commissioning Prospectus	20/06/17
Deadline for comments from the consultation of the Funding Strategy	01/08/17
Member agreement of the Funding Strategy by Community, Health and Housing Committee	01/09/17
Deadline for applications to the Commissioning Prospectus	02/09/17
Community Fund closes for applications	29/09/17
Complete review of current level of funding/support	30/09/17
Member recommendations for allocation of Brentwood Community Fund	01/12/17
Agree allocation of funding through the Commissioning Prospectus	01/04/18

Priority 1 : Review current level of support to the voluntary and community sector				
What we will do	Why we need to do it	How we will do it	When we will do it by	Responsible Officer/Group
Undertake a review of the current level of support to the voluntary and community sector	To ensure that targeted and effective services are in place to support our residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current level of support to the voluntary and community sector and identify areas of support that can be reduced which will include: Review current level of concessionary and preferential rent/lease agreements Review current commissioning arrangements Review of the level of in kind support Review the current level of discretionary rate relief Identify opportunities to secure external funding that will only support council priorities 	September 2017	Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager Asset Manager Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager All service areas Revenues and Benefits All service areas

Priority 2: Draft Commissioning prospectus with timescales for delivery				
What we will do	Why we need to do it	How we will do it	When we will do it by	Responsible Officer/Group
Develop a draft Commissioning Prospectus for consultation and Identify and map gaps in service provision	<p>To ensure that there is clear and transparent processes and procedures for the commissioning element of the Funding Strategy</p> <p>And</p> <p>To ascertain baseline data to identify local priorities to ensure that appropriate and targeted funding is made available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out statement of principles for future funding • Provide a clear process to apply for funding with deadlines for applications • Provide clear criteria for what initiatives will be supported through funding and what will not be supported • Identify any gaps in provision of services (emerging trends) • Provide clear monitoring procedures to ensure that expected outcomes are achieved • Circulate to VCS organisations for comment • Agree evaluation and monitoring templates and frequency of reporting • Agree final Commissioning Prospectus • Evaluate and report to the Community Panel of the outcomes achieved by the allocation of funding 	<p>June 2017</p> <p>June 2017</p> <p>June 2017</p> <p>September 2017</p> <p>June 2017</p> <p>September 2017</p> <p>Annual report</p>	<p>Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager/Member decision</p>

Priority 3: Discretionary Small grants programme				
What we will do	Why we need to do it	How we will do it	When we will do it by	Responsible Officer/Group
Review current small grants programme	Ensure our priorities for funding are accurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with service heads to identify local need and gaps in service provision that can be supported through voluntary sector funding • Liaise with voluntary and community sector organisations to identify local need • Utilise data sets to identify local priorities that also support the Council's priorities 	<p>June – August 2017</p> <p>June – August 2017</p> <p>June –August 2017</p> <p>Review on an annual basis</p>	Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager / Service Heads/ Voluntary and Community Organisations

Priority 4: Maximise external funding opportunities				
What we will do	Why we need to do it	How we will do it	When we will do it by	Responsible Officer/Group
Develop process and procedures for external funding activity	Ensure that resources are adequately allocated to support bid writing for projects that support the Council's priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with voluntary and community sector organisations, service areas in the Council, to identify local projects that can be supported by the Funding Strategy, that also support the Council's priorities 	June 2017 and then ongoing	Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager / Voluntary and Community Organisations / Heads of Service & Senior Managers

