

Draft Community Commissioning Prospectus for voluntary and community Sector funding

April 2018 – March 2020

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1. Introduction

The Commissioning Prospectus is part of the Council's Funding Strategy 2017-2020, which set out the Council's strategic priorities and future funding plans for supporting the local voluntary and community sector through a variety of funding schemes. The Council needs to ensure that with reductions in funding across the public sector, any funding it allocates is targeted and effectively supports the needs of the local community. This Prospectus sets out the services that the Council would like to commission voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to provide which in turn will support the residents of Brentwood. Rather than direct grant funding, the bidding process will provide an equal opportunity to all interested parties.

Organisations that are looking to apply will need to fulfil one or more of the stated outcomes listed later in the document. Organisations should be aware that these are planned as 'not for profit' opportunities that can build capacity and achieve community wellbeing. This could be achieved through match funding, maximising volunteering opportunities, demonstrating added value and achieving community re-investment.

Brentwood Borough Council is looking for the following elements to be incorporated alongside agreed objectives. These must be clearly demonstrated in your application if, and when you apply:

- Evidence of opportunities for recruiting, training and supporting volunteers
- Evidence of inclusion regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, gender or disability
- Evidence of the mechanisms of engagement with stakeholders/users of the services specified
- Evidence of quality assurance underpinning all service provision
- Ability to understand social impact /investment within the provision
- Ability to understand and measure qualitative and quantitative outcomes achieved through the provision offered
- Evidence of the added value that the organisation can bring to enhance the available funding
- Evidence of re-investment back into the community

Brentwood Borough Council is keen to maximise the effective use of the limited funding available to benefit the most vulnerable and needy members of our community. Therefore, we also welcome partnership bids and applications from consortia of groups who can work together to deliver the desired outcomes, whilst avoiding duplication and sharing resources.

The Prospectus will give equal opportunity to new and existing provider organisations that want to bid for funding. This approach recognises the unique nature of the many possible applicant organisations and it is hoped that the process will encourage innovation in public services, collaboration and capacity building within the VCS sector.

2. How does the Commissioning Prospectus support the Council's plans and priorities?

The Council Corporate Plan 2016-2019 sets out the Council's ambitions, priorities and key pledges to residents and businesses over the next three years. To support the Corporate Plan, the Commissioning Prospectus will focus on **three** key areas of support which sit under the Community and Health strand of the Corporate Plan - Developing innovative approaches to grant funding and the use of community assets and provide effective representation of local people's views and needs for improved and accessible health services.

3. Brentwood Compact

Brentwood Borough Council is signed up to the Brentwood Compact which sets out how public-sector bodies work with the voluntary and community sector to provide effective support for the local community. There are five key outcomes for the Brentwood Compact

- A strong, diverse and independent civil society
- Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services
- Responsive and high-quality programmes and services
- Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
- An equal and fair society

The Commissioning Prospectus sets out the services that the Council wants to commission the Voluntary and Community to provide. It sets out an open and transparent approach to funding. Whilst it is not always possible to commit to funding of three years or more, the Council's timescales for decision on funding arrangements is clearly set out within the document. Any decision on funding amounts is agreed by Members in February as part of the annual budget setting process.

4. The desired outcomes

The following pages set out the three areas of focus with the desired outcomes. The descriptions and outcomes are deliberately at a high level and non-prescriptive to allow for potential innovative solutions in the delivery of the provision.

5. Funding amounts and how long the funding is for.

Brentwood Borough Council can only give indicative funding amounts now as Council budgets will not be set until February 2018. At this point the Council advises that you carefully consider all items of expenditure that you would need to cover to achieve the outcomes listed, and when budgets are confirmed in February 2018 you will receive an update from us. The funding is for two years and it will be reviewed after year one.

6. Priority areas

Priority 1: Provide of VCS infrastructure support service in Brentwood			
Description	Desired Outcomes	Objectives	Indicative Funding Amount
Provide the development, support, liaison, representation and strategic partnerships for the Voluntary and Community Sector	A thriving, supported and well represented Voluntary and Community Sector(VCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That you have a good understanding of the VCS in their area in particular of: community needs, resources, capacity and opportunities for service development and to actively stimulate/facilitate local VCS -led responses and promote innovation and adoption of good practice, where appropriate to the community assets, unmet needs and gaps in provision identified. • To ensure that local VCS groups/organisations have access to information, training, guidance and other support to help them to be legally, safely, effectively and sustainably run and have access to appropriate funding and other resources. • To facilitate and enable effective communication and collaboration between VCS groups/organisations and between commissioners and the VCS including identifying and sharing good practice. • To provide a coherent voice for the VCS both Essex wide and within each locality through effective engagement with as wide a range of VCS groups/ organisations and other stakeholders as possible. • To participate, and /or enable effective VCS representation, in as wide a range of strategic forums as possible to ensure policy, funding and service development is sensitive to the needs of, and opportunities presented by, the VCS in Essex and the responses to local needs are flexible and timely. • The organisation has effective performance management in place against a clear outcomes framework that demonstrates value for money in delivery of the service • The organisation has trained and capable staff/volunteers 	£10,000 p.a

		<p>with relevant experience in place to deliver the service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation has effective governance arrangements underpinned by ethical values • The organisation has a medium-term plan for sustainability • The organisation supports the development of the Council Community Hub at the Town Hall. 	
Priority 2: Provision of accessible transport service			
Description	Desired Outcomes	Objectives	Indicative Funding amount
To provide accessible and safe transport for residents of Brentwood who are unable to access conventional public transport due to limited mobility or who would otherwise be socially excluded or geographically isolated.	Provide access to health services and social and leisure facilities to support all sectors of the community	<p>To ascertain what additional transport requirements are required to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a high quality, specialised transport service that is socially inclusive • Providing the following types of transport services • Minimise carbon emission, reduce car reliant travel and provide viable and sustainable long-term travel solutions • Provide appropriate driver training such as MiDAS • Promote volunteers and volunteering opportunities • Work in partnership with Brentwood Borough Council to explore new services dependent on community need • The organisation has effective performance management in place against a clear outcomes framework that demonstrates value for money in delivery of the service • The organisation has trained and capable staff/volunteers with relevant experience in place to deliver the service • The organisation has effective governance arrangements underpinned by ethical values • The organisation has a medium-term plan for sustainability • The organisation supports the development of the Council Community Hub at the Town Hall. 	£27,000 p.a

Priority 3: Provision of independent advice and guidance services			
Description	Desired Outcomes	Objectives	Indicative Funding Amount
Provide a quality, independent, quality assured, easily accessible and legally based advice service	Better informed and empowered individuals through the provision of general and specialist impartial advice	<p>Ensure the needs of Brentwood residents are supported through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a holistic approach to the advice and guidance that is provided to our residents • Working with volunteers to support the delivery of the desired outcomes • Ensuring that information, advice and guidance given on a range of issues, is up to date, legally informed and quality assured • Providing a responsive range of advice services that have been identified from local need, customer exit surveys and client needs analysis • Focussing on emerging trends/needs from the changes in the economic environment such as debt advice, housing and benefits advice • Identifying areas for collaborative or partnership working • The organisation has effective performance management in place against a clear outcomes framework that demonstrates value for money in delivery of the service • The organisation has trained and capable staff/volunteers with relevant experience in place to deliver the service • The organisation has effective governance arrangements underpinned by ethical values • The organisation has a medium-term plan for sustainability • The organisation supports the development of the Council Community Hub at the Town Hall. 	£59,000 p.a

7. Application process

All documents relating to the Commissioning Prospectus will be placed on the Council's website on its procurement pages www.brentwood.gov.uk/business . To ensure that you submit the best possible bid, please let us know how you will deliver the outcomes and priorities, how you will use the funds and how you will be able to show us how well your service is working.

If you are delivering a service, providing training opportunities or events to members of the public then this creates many responsibilities for an organisation. This means that successful applicants must be able to show they are or will be able to meet these responsibilities. If you have concerns over this you must discuss them with the Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager before you make an application. Within your application the Council will also need to see evidence of the following documents or procedures:

- Evidence of Public Liability insurance
- Evidence of Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, if you are working with children, young people or adults with care and support needs
- Equal opportunities policy
- Complaints procedures
- Your organisation's constitution
- Current accounts, approved by management committee or independent auditor
- Reserves Policy (If you have one)
- Copies of previous client questionnaires or survey (if you have any)
- Copies of any quotes for anything you are requesting funding for.

Dependent on the amount of funding applicants will be required to either complete the pre-qualification questionnaire or a full tender pack. The procurement team can also be contacted directly, to ensure opportunities are not missed.

The tender documentation issued for each contract will detail the following:

- Procurement process
- Instructions for tenders
- Submission requirement and deadline
- Checklist for information to provide e.g. financial accounts, references
- Contact requirements
- Evaluation procedure
- Selection and award criteria
- Contract length

All tender submissions, once the deadline has passed, will be opened and an evaluation panel will score them against the published award criteria, a mixture of price and quality criterion.

The highest scoring organisation(s) will be awarded the contract.

Key dates	
Full application period begins	September 2017
Full application period closes	December 2017
Decision on the awarding of funding	February 2018
New contracts commence	1 April 2018

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Frequently Asked Questions

The following section may assist with some initial queries that you have.

- 1. Can I bid for more than one priority area or more than one outcome?**
 - a. Yes, if you or your organisation has the relevant expertise in a variety of areas, you can apply for more than one outcome area.
- 2. One outcome area looks as though it can be delivered in two sections. Can budgets be split between groups?**
 - a. Not really. We would rather organisations work in partnership or as part of a consortia to deliver the overall outcome as this ensures that none of our vulnerable community slip through the cracks of different agencies.
- 3. How long are funding arrangements for?**
 - a. With the exception of any pilot projects, all other outcomes are **2**-year arrangements with an annual performance review built in, and scheduled monitoring arrangements within each year.
- 4. Will the funding amount (which is indicative as this stage), be the same for each of the X years?**
 - a. The funding will be for the same amount each of the years specified in the contract.
- 5. Is the amount of funding subject to different processes?**
 - a. For amounts between £10,000 and £50,000 organisations are subject to the Council's Standing Order process. For amounts over £50,000 organisations are subject to a competitive tender process. For more information visit the Council's website www.brentwood.gov.uk/business
- 6. I'm interested in applying – what do I do next?**
 - a. Complete the application form and submit to **XXX** by **XXX** for consideration. Applications received after this date will not be considered. You will be informed by **XX** whether your application has been successful or not.
- 7. When does the funding start?**
 - a. The funding commences 1 April 2018.

Other funding options and information

Brentwood Community Fund

Brentwood Borough Council also operates a small discretionary funding pot, Brentwood Community Fund. It is open for applications from 3 April 2017 and closes on the 29 September 2017. Currently the Brentwood Community Fund can fund up to £2,000 for projects and initiatives that support the Council's Corporate Plan 2013-2016. For up to date information on this and other funding opportunities visit the Council's website www.brentwood.gov.uk/funding

GrantNet and Open4Community

The Council is signed up to GrantNet and Open4Community which provides a search facility for various funding pots. Just type in your details and the type of funding you require and it will generate a list of potential funders that can support your project or initiative.

External funding

Essex County Council also has a funding page which lists a number of external funders, which includes trusts and foundations:

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Business-Partners/Partners/voluntary-sector-funding/Pages/External-Funding.aspx>