

VSF Policy Briefing November 2009

Consulting the Capital: London Councils commissioning programme 2011-15

Your chance to have a say about what London Councils funds in the future

Introduction

London Councils' Leaders Executive has approved the framework that has been proposed: two consultations and a series of public events based around the challenges identified in the London Narrative, which are:

- Helping people live longer healthy and independent lives
- Reducing crime
- Making the environment more sustainable
- Increasing prosperity and reducing child poverty
- Helping everyone, especially young people, achieve their full potential
- Creating stronger, more empowered and cohesive communities

Leaders Executive has also agreed a vision for the 2011-15 programme:

'Londoners enabled to live better and healthier lives, enjoying economic, housing, educational and cultural opportunities in a safer and more sustainable environment; through improved services delivered by the voluntary sector working in partnership with London's local authorities'.

There will be two consultations – the scoping and the formal – both with the statutory 12-week consultation periods. The scoping will gauge the 'lie of the land' and inform the formal consultation. It is vital that we deliver a strong response at this stage to ensure we inform the next stage.

The online survey is open (see end of briefing for details). **The deadline for responses to this first phase of consultation is 29th January 2010.**



This is a briefing from Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF) - the independent network of all voluntary and community sector organisations commissioned by London Councils

London Councils wants to hear your opinions on:

- The challenges in London that London Councils funding should tackle
- Whether the services funded at the moment are the right ones and if not how they should be updated
- The differences that funding makes to local people, the voluntary sector and other organisations working to support Londoners like the Health Service and the Police
- How London Councils' funding can help local people and organisations get through the recession

What VSF is doing?

- Written two **briefings**
- Sent out information on **bulletins**
- Regularly updated VSF specific web pages on the LVSC website
- Sending out a consultation survey
- Delivering an **event** to gather evidence, opinion and responses from members **in partnership with Third Sector Alliance**
- **VSF will respond** to both consultations
- The VSF Development Officer will be attending as many of the London Councils public consultation events as possible as well as sector specific events such as the children and young people, women and the homelessness events
- **VSF case studies report** – Regional action, local benefit – that highlights the work of 29 VSF members across the majority of commissioning themes

Why it is important to be involved?

- Important that in setting its new commissioning priorities London Councils hears from as wide a range of organisations as possible about the added value of London Councils commissioning

- From organisations that have already received commissions – helping to inform the process with evidence of the value of the work commissioned
- From the wider sector – identifying gaps in service provision
- The number of priority areas may decrease – there are currently 59 under 12 themes
- Some priority areas may merge, others may be lost
- This is an opportunity for the sector to make the case for prioritising identified gaps in the London Councils' commissioning programme, for continuing to prioritise areas of the programme that have evidenced benefit and for ensuring that the beneficiaries we serve receive the best possible services
- London Councils aim is to ensure that the highest quality services are commissioned and that elected members are accountable to their constituents as to value for money for their borough contributions (made per capita)
- There are serious financial pressures on local authorities that may affect the Grants budget – no funding is safe
- If new areas for commissioning are identified, current priorities may be lost

The key elements in a response

- What is the **added value** of London Councils' funding – especially when it doesn't duplicate local work?
- What clear **evidence** do you have that demonstrates the benefit to Londoners of services commissioned?
- What would the **impact** be of **withdrawal** of funding from a specific area i.e. on beneficiaries, impact on VCS and implications on local authorities?
- What are the **cost savings** of a service being funded by London Councils?
- What is the **added value** of regional, sub-regional and cross-borough funding?
- Is there any **evidence of the impact of the recession** on demand for services and available resources?
- What other external funding environment concerns impact

on VCS?

- What is the particular value to **equalities groups** of London Councils funding?

Examples of evidence that might inform your response

- LVSC's Big Squeeze report identified increases in demand for advice, volunteering and infrastructure support services as a result of the recession. As the social impacts of the recession will be long-lasting, it is likely this increased demand will continue for several years
- The Young Foundation has predicted that there will be increasing demand for health, education, care and environmental services at least until 2020

How you can get involved

- **Read** the [VSF briefings on the consultations](#)
- **Go to** one of the [London Councils public meetings](#) across London in November and December 2009
- **Come to the VSF/Third Sector Alliance event on Monday 14th December**
- Read more about London Councils' proposals and **complete the online survey** on the [London Councils website](#)
- **Send anything you would like submitted in a VSF response to tim@lvsc.org.uk**

Please send any enquiries about this briefing to tim@lvsc.org.uk

The deadline for responses to the scoping consultation is 29th January 2010.

London Councils' Leaders Committee will make final decisions on service priority areas, themes and the budget in July 2010.

VSF is funded by London Councils

