

POLICY STATEMENT ON VOLUNTARY SECTOR SUPPORT

The Council recognises that the voluntary sector makes a major contribution to the quality of the life of people who live and work in the Borough. This contribution can be complementary or supplementary to the work of the Council or other agencies. The voluntary sector can be more efficient and/or cost effective than if the Council were to be directly involved.

Within agreed overall resources, the Council will provide support to voluntary and community sector organisations, either directly or in partnership with other agencies. The Council will target its support to those organisations that contribute towards the achievement of its general priorities and objectives and, more specifically, those set out in the Community Strategy. The major themes of which are:-

- Community Spirit;
- Environment;
- Transport;
- Housing;
- Health and Well-being;
- Local facilities and Services.

The Council will publicise widely the availability of support to the voluntary and community sector, together with the conditions with which applicants are expected to comply in making an application.

In determining whether a grant should be made, the voluntary organisation will be expected to demonstrate how:-

- its aims accord with the Council's priorities and objectives;
- much progress has been made from its own efforts in achieving its aims, including the raising of necessary resources;
- the grant will improve the likelihood that the aims will be achieved, and represents value for money.

The Council will make assistance available in a variety of ways:-

- One off grants;
- On-going revenue support;
- Discretionary rate relief;
- Concessionary rents/provision of accommodation;
- Indirect support, such as provision of Officer time and/or access to services.

After a grant has been made, the recipient will be required to show how the money has been spent and the extent to which the objectives of making the grant have been achieved.

The approval of all grants will be as a result of decisions taken fairly and openly, with the justification and conditions attached to any grant clearly recorded. The Council will publish an annual report of support provided, and a summary of the community benefits gained.

Agreed by Council on 19 February 2004