

LCTS Management Board: LBL main grant application core assessment response and clarification

This appeal statement reports on areas that were not acknowledged in the decision making process or required further clarification.

LCTS strongly believe that we provide a unique service to 128 member groups and individuals that is not available elsewhere. As well as the membership, our assets include a fleet of 7 vehicles owned or managed by LCTS; all are available 365 days a year, in addition to our brilliant bank of dedicated volunteer passenger assistants and drivers not only provide practical duties, but use their work-life experience to support and enable passengers to access the community with more confidence. This cultivates an environment of trust and consistency that has created a stable and growing member and passenger core. Group transport in its many shades offers a social environment where people can share and benefit for each other's experiences.

We have a wide range of members which reflects Lewisham's culturally diverse community. Although our transport service is especially beneficial to vulnerable older adults and our diverse membership is an asset which helps us to provide services to faith groups; ethnic minority/marginalized groups (our members include representatives from the BAME, LGBT & refugee and migrant communities); individuals facing isolation due to disability and mental health; those with a limited income who would potentially be categorised as falling into the underprivileged socio-economic groups. In order to address the challenges and barriers facing these groups, LCTS have ensured that our charges are affordable, whilst sufficient to offset the costs of running such a unique service, allowing us to avoid excluding the disadvantaged.

In relation to partnerships, we have already developed links with other vehicle owning organisations in order to maximise the availability of minibus transport in Lewisham. We plan to expand this with our existing links through our widely accessed training that we offer to schools and other minibus owning organisations. Our wider community assets or partnerships have been previously mentioned, and we are proactively engaging with new organisations and individuals to extend our services based on identified need. For example, through direct contact with our service users, we have been able to create a shopping bus service that meet a clearly identified passenger need.

Upon reflection, we realise that we have given the Council the impression that we could not function with 75% of the funding requested in the application. In fact our financial projection indicates that to enable us to develop the service to its potential LCTS would need core funding assistance from LBL in the short-term to ensure we meet the growing demands of providing a more environmentally-friendly, passenger-led transport service. We would still be able to provide and develop the services, while pursuing a path of sustainability on considerably less funding than the amount indicated in the application, thanks to the dedication and good will of volunteers and staff. Our main grant application omitted a 2017 application for funding from NCDP and one of the applications in 2018 was £10,000 not £1,000.

As attendance of the Community Safeguarding Adults Conference in November demonstrates, safeguarding is consistently considered throughout the service that LCTS provide, whether it be in relation to our service delivery, individual service users or organisations that use our transport. LCTS have a clear equality and diversity policy, and are actively working on a policy around our duties and awareness of modern day slavery, and ensuring that those who may be victims or at risk can be linked with appropriate services.

One of the areas of concern raised in our initial application was LCTS board members. Currently LCTS actually have 4 members with longer engagement than indicated in the application and have identified a fifth member to join the committee in place of a recently deceased long standing colleague. Current members were appointed because of their skill and knowledge that would enhance and benefit the operational functions of the service. A formal skills audit is currently taking place. However, previous, current and new members have been selected using the following factors identified by the Charity Commissions Governance Code 2017 covering all seven principles: leadership; integrity; decision making, risk and control; board effectiveness; diversity; openness and accountability; all underpinning organisational purpose. These principles underline the role and function of LCTS members. Potential new members are identified, then co-opted where appropriate and ratified by the AGM.

We are already working with CCG and other services to identify people who need transport services to help develop more independence following health issues. It is envisaged that this could be developed to compliment health services to help improve the lives of people recovering from long term health and previously acute conditions.

This statement is submitted along a the request to address our appeal to Mayor and Cabinet on the 27th March 2019. Submitted by Matt Gummer on behalf of the LCTS Management Board. Wednesday, 20 March 2019; 5:03 PM