

Main Grants 2017-18 report

Name of organisation	Lewisham Pensioners Forum (LPF)
Date of meeting	15 September 2016
Names and positions of attendees	<p>Stephen McGann – Forum Coordinator, Lucy Formolli – Development Officer Cultural Development (Lead Officer), James Lee – Head Culture and Community Development (C&CD).</p> <p>Follow up meeting on Thursday 6th October 2016. Attended by James Lee (C&CD) LPF Executive Committee members including: Chair - Bridget Sam Bailey, Founder and Committee members- Doris Smith, Other Executive Committee representatives, names not available LFP Administrator - Tamsin Baccaus</p>

Group Name:	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total funding received 2015-16	£30,000	N/A	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Total funding to be received 2016-17	£40,000	£10,000	£10,000		

Outcomes	Support
	Wellbeing Project: Facilitating a proactive and successful wellbeing project in partnership with other older peoples groups to meet the needs of individuals who have protected characteristics under the Equality legislation, combating loneliness and bringing people together.
	Digital Drop-in: To promote and advance the digital inclusion of older people by making information more accessible; empowering older people to use email, skype, online services, etc. Continued development of partnerships with local and national business and community groups to co-ordinate accessible and fun digital inclusion projects for older people.
	Renewal: Increase the membership of LPF to revitalise the organisation and keep it relevant to the challenges faced by pensioners in Lewisham. Improved resource of 'What's On' information that can be shared digitally.

	Financial Fair: Raise the awareness, knowledge and capabilities around financial issues in general, highlighting the need for vigilance and developing a more critical approach to the claim of the financial industry and the choice of products on the market. Improve the financial wellbeing of older people living and working in Lewisham. Tackling financial inequality, maximising income, and supporting vulnerable people.									
	Community Cohesion: Continuing with our own use of volunteers in a range of activities, e.g. on each mail-run and be present to engage with the public at the regular Friday stall and at LBL and other events, e.g. Carers Day. Increasing sense of connection to their community among the elderly by encouraging volunteering; Encourage older people to volunteer and support, where relevant, the Council's new Community Neighbourhood Development initiatives Keeping older people connected and informed.									
	Networking:- Building cohesive communities by maintaining links between various bodies, service providers, groups and community centres throughout the borough, who provide services, information, support, activities for the elderly.									
	Developing Partnerships: The Forum will continue to promote and broker partnerships that connect services to older people, that maximise access to services and guidance and which make good use of human and financial resources.									
Outputs:	2015-16 Target	2015-16 Q2	2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2015-16 Total	% Achieved	2016-17 Target	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	% Achieved TD
<i>e.g. run 12 classes for older people</i>	12	2	5	3	10	83.3%	16			
<i>e.g. deliver 7 workshops</i>	7	1	3	3	7	100%	9			
<i>e.g. 100 new referrals</i>	100	35	40	22	92	92%	133			
In partnership with local and national stakeholders we will co-ordinate two Financial Fairs in 2015/16 bringing local and national advisors and other resources to the Borough. The themes for these fairs are determined by the feedback from the 2014 Financial Fairs. These Fairs will be open to people 50+ across the borough and each will be widely publicised to maximise participation.	1	N/A – One in Q1	0	1 – 28th October	1	100%	1 (in Q3)	N/A	N/A	N/A till Q3
A Hustings for up to 60 to ensure that older people are given an opportunity	0	N/A – One in	0	0	0	N/A	1	1 x EU ref	N/A	100% on Session

to hear how candidates propose addressing the issues and challenges facing older people – Hustings will be structured to maximise Q&A time so that the voices of older people are heard		Q1 (28 April) 45 attendees						Hustings 35 attendees		delivered 58% on attendees
A publicised talk with guest speaker on the 'Journey to Democracy' for up to 60 older people combined with afternoon tea as part of the national 'LiberTeas' event.	1	N/A – One in Q1 (June)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
Increase membership – Target is 75 additional members each year which needs to absorb the natural decrease that we experience annually.	75 – 25 x 3 Quarters	13	14	12	39	52%	80	7	8	18.75%
Monthly low-cost no-cost social activities including FREEDOM PASS Days to London's iconic places of interest	9	3	3	3	9	100%	11	3	1	36% - on target
Regular weekly IT learning coordinated in partnership with other groups as part of the Wellbeing and Lifelong learning project and recruitment of IT "buddies" as part of Monday Project	36	0	12	12	12	100%	44	12	12 – now rebranded digital drop in	27% - on target
Co-ordination of exciting digital partnership projects that encourage participation e.g. recent O'Cha project with Goldsmiths University, MyCompleteFocus, Phoenix Housing, Green Man IT Hub – where LPF members were supported in a 'real time' skype project with secondary school children in Japan.	4	1	2	1	4	100%	8	0	0	0%

Bi-monthly public Forums: These raise awareness about the challenges to local and national agendas with speakers and an opportunity to discuss and debate topics.	5	3	2	2	7	140%	8	1	2	37.5% - on Target
Monthly Meetings of Executive Trustees: To examine, feedback and discuss issues on the local and national agenda as well as oversee good governance of the Forum.	9	3	3	3	9	100%	10	2	3	50% - on Target
Bi Monthly Newsletter sent to individual members and ad hoc round robin e-mails	6	2	2	2	6	100%	6	1	2	50% - on Target
Friday Stall: The Forum's regular stall in Lewisham Town Shopping Centre (twice a month).	14	10 – inc summer events	4	5	19	135%	20	8	6	66%
Ongoing distribution and updating of the 'Older People's Information Network Directory for Lewisham' – helping existing organisations build their capacity. Dissemination of information between networked groups (110) and members through its website and through the Forum bi-monthly newsletter, several copies of which are delivered/posted to all network groups.	up to 5000 copies	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Dist is ongoing to plan at all events and through other channels	100%	Up to 5000 copies – this is being revised to include an online directory and app	ongoing	ongoing	TBC

1. Remove funding from under-performing groups/those performing least well

Have you achieved at least 90% of the agreed reporting outputs and outcomes in all quarters since the start of the programme?

LPF are achieving or exceeding the majority of targets, they are however behind on 1 target of increasing membership numbers. In 2016-17 are behind on the coordination of the delivery of digital inclusion events.

As above, membership is increasingly falling year on year and efforts to encourage new members are proving difficult. In 2015-16 they achieved only 52% of target members. 2016-17 is behind schedule for their target this year.

Although events are being put on and therefore reaching their target of event delivery, numbers of attendees at these events are falling which put this at amber.

There have been no special digital partnerships and events this year. The move from the Saville Centre has been cited as the reason for this, but there are opportunities to use alternative venues so it is unclear why this output has stalled.

Have you achieved all of the wider outcomes outlined in the initial grant application?

Wellbeing Project – this project was faltering after the move from the Saville Centre. The Forum continues successfully to deliver its Monday Project but age and infirmity has had some impact on the Knit & Knatter group. LFP intergenerational partnership with some local young mothers who wish to learn to knit will have a positive effect. Monday Project venue at the Owen Centre at University Hospital Lewisham (UHL) is not ideal and LPF are hopeful of a move to a more accessible and accommodating setting – current options include St Mauritius House.

Digital Drop in and addressing the digital divide are cornerstone outputs and outcomes for the LPF and the digital weekly sessions are starting to get traction, although moving from the Saville has had an impact on the drop-in side but these are rebounding. UHL is not ideal location for these sessions, but they are gaining in popularity over time. There have been discussions to deliver them in St Mauritius House. They are behind this year on delivering the digital events.

The financial fair continues to be a popular attraction for older people, as does pensioners day, although numbers are dropping for the more traditional hustings and information meetings held by the forum

Networking and providing opportunities for community cohesion are taking place, the forum attends community events and assemblies and embraces other organisations being a part of their newsletter. There is a question mark over the distribution of this. There is potential to work with the pensioners Gazette to help their newsletter reach more people and is a potential partnership that could be brokered. This has not been raised as an option with the organisation as yet.

One of the outcomes is to develop partnerships, however it appears that when presented with some partnership opportunities that the forum feel they are not right for them to be involved with. The LFP Coordinator suggests this is due to the perception that LPF are different to other older people's organisations as a campaigning group. However their

move to being more service delivery based suggests this is not an entirely accurate assessment.

An example of this such is not being a part of the joint Seniors / Ackroyd membership scheme. They do however create partnerships where they feel it is appropriate for the organisation and their meeting to re definite their mission and aims will help them to focus their partnerships more effectively

The outcomes and outputs are as agreed in the initial application process.

If no to either of the above:

- what are the mitigating factors?
- what plans are in place for improving performance?
- what progress has been made against actions agreed with your Development Officer?

Mitigating factors

With regard membership there are no mitigating factors which is a source for concern. There is a question over whether diluting the aims of the organisations to encourage funding from a fully campaigning organisation has had an impact. Discussion was had around if this was an irrevocable decline due to the changing nature of politics and campaigning over the last few years. The Board feel that by adjusting the branding of the organisation and delivering to a wider age group, this could be offset and firmly believe there is a need for an organisation acting as the voice for older people in Lewisham and a campaigning body for older adults.

With regard falling figures at meetings and events, It has been stated that the move from the Saville Centre has had an impact, as older people not wishing to change routine can feel uncomfortable in a new venue and are not turning out as in the past. However this could also be due to falling membership numbers and an issue over the delivery of the offer.

There are no mitigating factors around delivering 'exciting tech events' as there are many other options to run these events with partners in other locations. However it was cited that the move from the Saville and a change of coordinator pushed some of these events to the back burner and they should catch up over the year.

The move from the Saville centre to the old town hall has had an impact on older people dropping in to the forum which was important to help older people and the outcome of reducing isolation – their move to the Old Town Hall will exacerbate this issue as it is not an open office. The potential move to St Mauritius house might help improve this drop in facility.

Plans to improve performance

There are plans in place to diversify on some of the projects run by the Forum. For instance they are looking into developing a Man Cave to encourage older men which there is evidenced need for in Lewisham.

There is also a discussion happening around running retirement courses for the soon to retire – working with businesses and recent retirees. This is all in the early discussion stages. There is potential to sell this service to businesses in Lewisham.

Coordinator states that having to deliver the Monday project is diluting effectiveness of the campaigning work as a quarter of the coordinators time is focused on delivering the Monday project and Digital Drop-ins

Actions developed with Lead Officer

Coordinator and Lead officer have discussed developing the membership offer and to have a stronger online presence. The LPF have recently joined twitter and are trying to improve their web presence. There has also been discussion around broadening partnerships.

Attempts have been made to broaden the partnership events of the Forum through working with other organisation. LPF have improved their contact through the Positive Ageing Council newsletter.

What local support/evidence of need can you identify for the work you are undertaking?

With 30 years in Lewisham the LPF have extensive knowledge of the borough and of older people's needs and issues. The initial application suggested that they were in a strong position to position themselves as a hub for older peoples organisations across the borough

The Coordinator raised questions about the relevance of the organisations without the strength of membership and of their campaigning arm as membership targets are so difficult to meet. Coordinator was clear that he felt the board needed to refocus in order to take a leadership role in campaigning in Lewisham on the behalf of older people. The strategy meeting on the 6th of October suggested that although the LPF are not prepared to change their key mission they are prepared to change their aims and objective to achieve it.

However there was a discuss that perhaps the political climate in 2016 is vastly different to when the forum was set up in 1986 and that the want from older people to campaign has diluted. This cannot be taken forward until broader discussion happens with the board and they clarify their mission at their strategy meeting

The Coordinator did state that they had some small scale campaigns they were currently looking into and campaigns was still an agenda item at every meeting.

The LPF are keen to develop a campaign around toilets for public use in Lewisham. There is need for this after a questionnaire carried out by Positive Ageing Council stated that 75% of respondents cited toilets for public use were the most important issue when shopping town centres and shopping hubs. There is a distinct need for this within the older person community.

2. Negotiate reductions and seek alternative funding streams

Are there any proposals that you can put forward that will deliver significant saving against current expenditure? This can include capital investment to change your delivery/business model.

There are no relevant proposals, other than a merger, that can deliver significant savings. They do not have a building and rent space in the old Town Hall.

The Forum have already introduced a £10 annual membership fee. There is no scope to raise this and membership is already falling without greatly improving the membership offer.

Reducing events such as Pensioners Day will only deliver a minor saving. Lewisham's Main Grant pays coordinator and administrator.

What alternative funding streams are you already pursuing?

There are funding applications in the pipeline but these are all small bids under £10,000.

They have recently had a successful bid for £660 to deliver chair based exercise sessions at their Monday club.

The bids they are pursuing are around increasing the frequency of their newsletter to bring in extra membership, creative arts projects, increase the digital drop in offer.

The Forum are hoping to do a Big Lottery bid to help deliver the above and the aforementioned Men's Cave and Retirement services. This bid would be towards supporting salaries as well.

Are there any other funding streams that you can identify that the council can support you to access?

None were raised at this meeting, however with new and renewed potential after a rebrand the Lead Officer will work with the organisation to access funding streams not previously considered

3. Work with groups to consider mergers or asset sharing

Are there any organisations doing similar work to you in the borough who you may consider sharing resources or merging with? Who have you considered/approached?

There was a detailed discussion around merging and asset sharing.

The LPF Coordinator has called a meeting of Trustees for the 6th of October 2016 to strategize over the future of the organisation. There was a feeling from the coordinator that if the LPF did not come up with a strong plan for future development, re assess their aims and mission that the organisation could fold. It was suggested by the coordinator there was a possibility that the LPF could become redundant.

The Lewisham Pensioners Forum are in the process of partnering with St Mauritius house to deliver the Monday project. There is an attitude within the organisation that merging or partnership working was not appropriate for LPF in most instances, as they are still fundamentally a campaigning organisation over delivery. This was clarified with the Executive Committee that the LPF could be both.

There is also an impression from the Executive Committee that the LPF have been asked to think about mergers as the council are trying to force them into a merger with POSAC.

This was clarified by officers that there was no intention to force this and as POSAC is part of the Councils Constitution it wouldn't be possible.

Suggestions about possible mergers, particularly with 'Seniors' was raised. Lead officer suggested the possible benefits for the LPF from this thought of a merger would be space for the men's project, drop in facility to negate the loss of the Saville Centre, a place to deliver the Monday project, access to office space and access to more and diverse membership.

There was also a suggestion around taking on more one to one advocacy for individuals.

It was felt that 'Seniors' would not be an option that the Executive Committee were unlikely to discuss due to issues they feel 'Seniors' have dealing with their building. This was confirmed at the subsequent meeting with the committee on the 6th of October.

Are there other groups in the local area that you could share resources with even if they are delivering a different type of service? Again, who have you considered/approached?

As above there are currently no organisations that the LPF have approached around sharing resources, however there are potential options that can be raised with the organisation around working more actively with trade unions to support their campaigning work and potential to share resources with the Lewisham Pensioner's Gazette around delivery and distribution of the newsletter – these are approaches still to be raised with the Executive Committee

What support might you need to move these suggestions forward?

LPF Coordinator agreed that they would attend a joint meeting of some groups to discuss asset sharing and potential to merge or work more closely together if it was arranged by the council.

4. Pro-rata reductions across all groups

What would a 25% cut in your grants look like in service delivery terms? What are the wider impacts?

At the initial Main Grant meeting on the 15th of September, the cut was not directly discussed as the coordinator stated that the Executive Committee Meeting planned for the 6th of October to reconfirm aims and mission of the organisations will influence this outcome.

Coordinator is proposing 2 plans to the committee.

The first plan is about going forward and refocusing either as campaigning or as delivery organisation but not both. The other plan is to seriously discuss the future of continuing and possible wind down of the organisation.

Discussions at the meeting on the 6th of October concluded that the LPF are keen to continue as a delivery organisation, delivering the Monday Club project to older people, with some changes of offer that should enhance the offer to users. This includes moving the sessions from the unpopular Owen centre at UHL, to St Mauritius House – which is a location nearer to the Saville Centre, their previous base and more of an appropriate set up for their members and an existing base for older people.

The LPF are keen to strengthen the memberships offer, including increased trips enhancing the bi monthly newsletter and reinvigorating their campaigning strategy, becoming the indispensable voice for older people in Lewisham.

It was also agreed that far more outreach was needed by the organisation, to other older peoples groups and individuals, as part of their offer to the council.

The Committee also felt that a rebranding of the organisation in early 2017 was important to increase membership. This is intended to be a significant rebranding - essentially removing the term 'Pensioners' from the organisation's name and focus on a 45+ approach.

The LPF emphasised the importance of the LFP remaining and enhancing their importance as a voice for social justice for older people as well as adapting and improving their delivery to the most at need by providing activities through the Monday club project.

The organisation were keen to stress that they were different to other older peoples organisations in that their ethos was more focused around being that strong voice and campaigning for the rights of older people in the long term on local and national issues.

Have you modelled this cut and developed an action plan for its implementation?

The LPF held an away day strategy meeting on the 6th of October, to model the cut and discuss the forward strategy for the organisation. They were unable to schedule this prior to the Main Grant meeting. C&CD manager attended part of this meeting to speak to the board regarding the appendix B questions. The outcomes of that meeting are referenced in the above section.

The Executive Committee decided that a rebrand would be preferred option and officers are minded to support this initiative. However, if this does not prove successful then further discussions will have to take place regarding the ongoing grant.

Conclusion

Any other comments / areas discussed

Conclusion and recommendation

The Lewisham Pensioners Forum have delivered on most of their outputs and outcomes, they are however below on a key output of increasing membership, which is vital to keep a campaigning organisation relevant and viable. There are no mitigating factors for this. They are taking significant moves to address this by reviewing their aims and objectives as noted within this report.

These aims and objectives were clarified at the Executive Committee Away Day to include renewed focus on Campaigning and being the primary voice for older people in Lewisham, rebranding to remove the term pensioners from the organisation title, reinvigorating the membership offer and focusing on service delivery through the Monday Club project by relocating to a more suitable venue.

There is little supporting evidence for the relevance of a purely campaigning pensioners body in this current climate, however by potentially opening the Forum up to wider campaigns for older adults in general, rather than focusing on 'pensioners' this could be addressed. However evidence of success of campaigns is directly linked to the success of the organisation and demonstration of need.

The LPF do small scale fundraising applications but need to consider more substantial applications to become financially sustainable in the event of further reductions from LBL.

The organisation are not prepared to consider a merger as they feel that they are unique with a unique ethos and therefore do not sit comfortably within another working model that would be involved with merging with another organisation.

Asset sharing also was not considered as a priority for the organisation, however the LFP would be involved in an asset sharing workshop to be arranged by LBL for Main Grant Funded older peoples organisations

The Lewisham Pensioners Forum are planning a significant rebrand and change to offer which is being factored into delivery changes in the event of an LBL cut.

The Lewisham Pensioners Forum are achieving or exceeding on most target outputs and outcomes and have significant organisational changes in the pipeline to address the membership target.

The Executive Committee decided that a rebrand would be preferred option and officers are minded to support this initiative. However, if this does not prove successful then further discussions will have to take place regarding the ongoing grant.

It is recommended that the Lewisham Pensioners Forum received a pro-rata cut