



Match-funding for advice services

Hillingdon

New and innovative ways of funding have begun to emerge as the grip of recession tightens. One of these is match-funding. Recently moving in this direction, to increase services available, is Hillingdon Borough's match-funding programme.

Structure

Initiated within the Council, £75,000 of funding has been committed through the Cabinet and the programme is being led by the Council and managed in the Partnerships Business and Community Engagement Team.

The funding has been made available within existing budgets and the Council has used it to encourage additional funders from within the borough to come forward with matched funding. Matched funding of £75,000 has now been made available by the Hillingdon Community Trust, which supports projects in the southern part of the borough. The Local Strategic Partnership is overseeing the response to the economic downturn and seeking to coordinate activities across partners.

Aims

In the short term the Council aims to ensure a wide range of advice and support is available and to determine if there are new ways of providing advice. The funding is being used to provide more telephone advice through CAB, services to address relationship breakdown and domestic violence, outreach work on financial advice and support, work with community groups on estates to provide targeted financial advice, and additional help for the Hillingdon Credit Union.

The Council's preference is to have a broad package of advice and support measures. In addition, having a continued relationship with some of the groups has enabled additional sums to be invested and allows other issues to be discussed.

Next steps

£150,000 from Hillingdon Council has been allocated over two years (2009-10 and 2010-11). Given that the length of the recession is unpredictable, and the impacts on the need for advice and support are only beginning to be understood, the Council's main focus in the immediate future is to work out if the funding stream is sustainable and targeting the right needs. As it is too early to predict outcomes, as well as need, the Council is concerned with ensuring that the funding is not a temporary uplift for organisations already depending on the Council for funding.

Checks and balances

The biggest challenge on the horizon for Hillingdon is the restricted budget available to allocate to new priorities for the recession, as central government reductions have an impact on local government. It considers now as timely to have a dialogue to determine priorities.

For future success of match-funding, Hillingdon is clear that the right monitoring systems need to be in place. Monitoring will be key to track how the funds are spent and what they are achieving.

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