



Strategic Partner Programme

Sutton

In a move that will ensure the funding of selected partners for three years, Sutton Borough Council has established a Strategic Partner Programme (SPP).

Structure

Initiated from an internal audit that looked at how the Council was giving funding to the voluntary sector, the SPP has emerged as a key to restructuring available funding in a context where it can not be increased.

The Council's Third Sector Commissioning group, with representatives across the Council and the Compact, focused on where current funding was going. The outcome was a Commissioning Framework that provides support for voluntary and community sector core services within a structure built on clarity, clear parameters, accountability and transparency.

Initiated and managed by the council's corporate centre, the SPP was launched in December 2008, and is in its implementation stage. Bids for the SPP were invited for tender and as of April the council will announce the successful bids. Those selected will receive amounts up to a maximum of £175,000 per annum over three years.

Aims

The SPP will invest in a small number of strategic partners that will work collaboratively with the Council to develop capability and capacity in the third sector. Strategic partners will provide second-tier support to the third sector in Sutton. Funding provided through the SPP contributes to the organisation's core costs and is not intended for investment in specific projects. The organisation will commit to deliver certain outcomes or improved services to qualify for the funding and the performance against these outcomes will be managed through an agreed process. Some third sector organisations qualifying for the Strategic Partner Programme may also have contracts with the Council for additional services provided.

Next steps

The Council will announce its strategic partners in April.

Checks and balances

There will be an annual review of the provider's effectiveness, economy and efficiency in its use of the funding, including a strong emphasis on feedback from local residents or service users. Officers from the London Borough of Sutton will be nominated as contract/commissioning managers and they will be responsible for performance management and evaluation. It is anticipated that meetings will be held at least quarterly to review performance against the agreed outcomes.

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Further resources

[Click here to download a copy of Sutton's Commissioning Framework](#)