



Dawn Austwick's speech to London Funders AGM

Following the AGM meeting, we had a key note speech from Dawn Austwick, Chief Executive of the Big Lottery Fund which was followed by questions and a conversation with attendees.

Dawn spoke about the Big Lottery Fund's place in the funding ecology. The Fund is currently considering its future strategic framework and recognising that much has changed fundamentally since its last one, the role of public services, of the VCS and how funders need to relate to this new context.

Dawn noted that the Big Lottery Fund has three elements to it that help determine the choices it will make:

1. Its scale, scope & reach
2. Its blended funding model, mixing high volume responsive funding with strategic investments
3. The Fund's position as an NDPB – sponsored by government but largely autonomous

The Fund should be responsive because local communities know best what they need (an example is London Play and their local Play Advocates, who know their locality inside out)

The Big Lottery Fund sees building and maintaining partnerships as an important part of the future. It is important to be clear how each partner adds value and how the network can be greater than the sum of its parts.

The Fund has a role in opening doors for others. The Fund can support long-term change, work outside the rhythms of the political/electoral cycle – commission long term evaluation – work with beneficiaries to inform design (e.g. Head Start)

The Fund wants to do more in the realm of open data, knowledge and information sharing.

When an organisation applies to more than one funder, they probably have to supply lots of the same information in duplicate. Is it beyond funders to work more closely on sharing data for the benefit of applicants and efficiency?

All funders should be smarter with their metrics – the right information allows you to ask better and more informed questions. Impact is about stories as well as stats.

The Fund should be absent so that others can talk amongst themselves about the impact they are having.

The heartland for the Fund is responsive grant making. In essence the Fund wants to be a well connected good listener