

6th January 2012

Dear ,

We are writing about the decisions you will be taking on the 2012/2013 budget in your Local Authority. We understand that the financial situation is very tight and difficult decisions have to be made.

We believe this does not mean there has to be short term thinking and cutting of consultation processes. It means the opposite, more debate and fuller consultation to make certain the right decisions are made in difficult circumstances. It means more notice for organisations losing funding so that they can ensure contingency plans are put in place for their beneficiaries and staff. And we believe that partnership working between local councils and voluntary organisations can be a key part of the solution to working with tighter budgets.

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government agrees with this view and, as such, published statutory guidance on best value for local authorities requiring councils to:

- Consider overall value, including economic, environmental and social value, when reviewing service provision
- Consult representatives of a wide range of local persons at all stages of the commissioning cycle, including decommissioning
- Avoid passing on disproportionate reductions by not passing on larger reductions to the voluntary and community sector and small businesses as a whole, than they take on themselves
- Give at least three months notice of funding reductions
- Follow the commitments in your local Compact

We are well aware that many councils are already exceeding these statutory requirements, as the LGA has noted, by finding “new and innovative ways to work with charities and voluntary groups are being used by councils to improve services whilst saving taxpayers millions,” with “every effort made” to avoid cutting charities’ budgets.

We hope you will not simply adhere to the minimum requirements set out in the statutory guidance on funding for voluntary groups, but go above and beyond it as described by the LGA.

If we can be of any assistance in helping with that task or if you would like to discuss any of the matter, please contact Oliver Reichardt: oliver.reichardt@ncvo-vol.org.uk.

Kind regards,

Sir Stuart Etherington



Chief Executive
National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Sir Stephen Bubb



Chief Executive
Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations

Kevin Curley



Chief Executive
National Association of Voluntary and Community Action