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DCMS / CAMELOT: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES TO GOOD CAUSES – TOP LINE RESULTS

Methodology

We completed two full day **citizens workshops** with a cross section of lottery players. One workshop was conducted in Essex, the other in Manchester.

This note summarises the key messages coming from the consultation.

Overview

Little known about distribution of 'OUR lottery money'

There is very little awareness of who oversees the distribution of good causes monies. The majority of respondents considered that it must be the role of some sort of panel, commission or government body, but a number still consider that it must be the role of Camelot itself. Due to this lack of information respondents consider that there is a lack of transparency and accountability within the distribution system and do not trust the distribution bodies.

Further to this there is limited awareness of how much money has gone to good causes and little knowledge of local beneficiaries. Estimates of the percentage per pound ranged from ten pence through to ninety-five pence. In sum, there seems to be little excitement or appreciation of the volumes of monies that have gone to good causes that can in part be contributed to this lack of knowledge of the beneficiaries at a local level. At a national level there is awareness of the more controversial beneficiaries such as the Dome, the Royal Opera House and most recently asylum seekers. Generally there is a mixed response to the 'worthiness' of these projects, however there is agreement that the Dome was a waste of good causes funds and that this project in itself has tarnished the supply of funds to large capital projects in the area of arts and heritage. Indeed it is the area of arts and heritage that causes most debate and seems to be regarded as the lowest priority for funding. Larger national projects are by their very nature more controversial as they involve much larger volumes of money.

The money that is raised by the lottery is considered by the public to be **their** money, and the lottery is described as being 'of the people for the people' hence the public's strong frustration

and suspicion surrounding how money is allocated and spent. Given this, there is also strong opinion that this money should only be spent in the UK.

Difficulty defining a 'good cause'

Respondents generally found it difficult to define what constitutes a good cause, however they managed to come up with a number of principles. Generally a good cause is considered to be one that will benefit a community, either locally or nationally. There was also some feeling that the beneficiary should be established and respected for its work. Suggestions were vague but tended to include charities that work with children, with the disabled and with older people.

Respondents found it easier to suggest what causes should not get money and within that included those, which are of no benefit to the community, and those which support a 'cause' in the political sense of the word.

Communication vacuum

When supplied with information about the distribution bodies respondents were further intrigued by the system and keen to understand how the various distribution bodies are elected and whether there is representation on these bodies from the 'man in the street'. There is a lot of suspicion that these bodies are staffed by 'Tony's cronies' or an upper class elite.

There was strong feeling that there should not be '14 quangos' and that these themselves must be a strain on good causes resources. Respondents were generally keen to see a much more transparent, less bureaucratic system and spontaneously suggested that there be only one distribution body. Although they appreciated that having specialist bodies dealing with particular areas would use important expertise.

Respondents also heavily criticised the twelve pence government lottery duty per pound describing it as a hidden tax. It was considered that this 12 pence in the pound should also go to good causes, as the government is already receiving 33.3 % of good causes money for health, education and the environment. There is a mixed response as to whether health and education should be funded with some respondents feeling that these projects should be paid for solely out of government taxes.

Respondents also considered that the current divide of monies amongst sport, art, heritage, charities and health, education & environment may need to be addressed. As mentioned earlier generally the feeling is that arts and heritage tend to come at the bottom of the list with charities being at the top in terms of priorities. It was also suggested that environment should be a separate category as it is an area of concern.

There is a high level of frustration about how to access information on where good causes money is going. The public are concerned by this communication vacuum as they are aware that they rely solely on the media and word of mouth for this information, which they are aware may not provide the full story: *"The lack of information makes you sceptical."/ "Nothing gets to you so you speculate."*

Signage on all projects

Respondents were unanimous in their view that all good causes projects should be branded with the crossed fingers of the National Lottery. They did not mind if the distribution body wanted to add their logo as well. However, they have no recognition of these bodies and associate good causes funding with the National Lottery brand. It is clear that there is a need to create this very obvious connection in local communities between the lottery and good causes.

Allocate on the basis of need

In London respondents were most concerned that good causes funding should be going to the areas that need it, i.e. those areas that are deprived and have social problems. Thus London respondents were generally not concerned about their area getting a certain percentage of money, whereas Manchester respondents did feel that London gets the bulk of the monies and that funds should be better spread around the regions.

The sustainability of projects was also considered important and respondents were happy to hear of the use of revenue grants. Respondents were also keen on the idea of flexible matched funding as in some way it encourages stability in the projects funded. Further to this they wanted to be assured that there is some sort of watchdog which assures that beneficiaries are spending the money in the way in which they said they would.

It was also considered that there should be flexibility in the projects that receive awards, some small scale, some large scale and some new projects as well as existing projects.

More public accountability

Respondents came up with a number of ways to get the public involved with distribution and were initially keen to see much more public involvement and much greater accountability. Spontaneously London respondents thought that there should be one decision-making committee on which there should be a number of elected members of the public who are replaced on a rotational basis, thus ensuring that the 'man on the street' has a voice. It was also suggested that local councils be given a pot of money that they can allocate on a local basis having consulted locally. Manchester respondents did not want a national distribution body and felt that each region should get a slice of funding which they can then distribute to local projects as they wish. A number of other suggestions were made relating to referendums, questionnaires and voting on the back of lottery tickets, however, having gone through the process of trying to decide on what principles good causes awards should be made respondents generally felt that they did not want the responsibility for making those decisions.

Positive impact of workshop

Of the 26 participants 10 respondents said that they had changed their view on good causes after the workshop, the change primarily related to now having some information about local beneficiaries and the details of how much money has been raised.

Summary

Due to the lack of information around the distribution of good causes monies there is a high level of distrust and cynicism of the distribution bodies and thus to some extent about the decisions that they make. This illustrates that there is a clear need for this information to be communicated to the public. Further to this the public consider the good causes monies to be their money and thus are keen not only to have transparency and accountability in the operations that surround distribution but want some sort of public voice/involvement.

Providing access to information on distribution and public involvement in the process should go a long way to address the media furore which often surrounds good causes awards and create the involvement which the public are craving in 'their lottery'. The public appreciate to an extent that there needs to be breadth and diversity in the variety of beneficiaries who receive awards and understand that some decisions will always be subjective.