

MEETING: 25/07/2019

Ref: 15161

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions

Evergreen Play Association Ltd

Adv: Sandra Davidson

Base: Hackney

Amount requested: £130,000

Benefit: Hackney

Amount recommended: £46,200

The Applicant

Evergreen Play Association is an open access, free, supervised adventure playground formed in 1973 and a registered charity. It is situated in just under an acre of land in the tri-ward area of Dalston, Queensbridge and De Beauvoir Square in Hackney, East London. The playground is open all year-round during term times and school holidays offering a range of child centered and child-led activities. The Association is committed to offering stimulating play to all children aged 5-15 (up to 18 for those with a disability) regardless of ethnicity, ability and social economic status. All activities are inclusive and are adapted to suit a child's need where necessary. The adventure playground has a good reputation, considered innovative, offering an exciting environment for children. The Association has a register of over 700 local children.

The Application

This request is for funding to meet the salary costs of the Inclusion Co-Playleader. This role will continue to develop inclusive play for disabled children to meet increasing demand. The postholder will support disabled children on site; work closely with statutory agencies, schools and community groups to raise awareness of this provision; and provide a greater number of disabled children with access to the programme of activities the playground has to offer.

The Recommendation

Evergreen Play Association provides a total and inclusive play programme and is recognised for its good practice. The play environment is child centered, inclusive, accessible and well adapted to meet each child's individual needs. Children enjoy an excellent range of art and craft activities including pottery, painting, sewing and collages. The inclusion project at Evergreen is well-managed, thought out and planned by committed staff, parents, and members. The funding request has been reduced during assessment as the charity was seeking funds towards costs which were unrelated to your priorities (i.e. fundraising) and the recommendation is for two years only as the organisation's sustainability beyond this period is uncertain at this point in time. Funding is advised as follows:

£46,200 over two years (24,000; £22,200). Of this grant £6,000 each year is for the costs of sessional staff to work with disabled young people and the remainder is towards the Play Leader-Inclusion Officer post.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
10/04/2014	Application withdrawn when the organisation realised the proposal did not meet your priorities.

Background and detail of proposal

The organisation offers a wide variety of programmes to provide for children's social intellectual, creative, physical and emotional wellbeing. All activities are selected by the children on site and encourage a celebration of difference. The organisation works with a diverse group of children from various backgrounds and facing many different challenges. All support staff and most play workers are Makaton trained. Two members of staff are qualified to offer British Sign Language. Staff have developed excellent partnerships between parents, other professional and local schools ensuring a collaborative approach to identifying and meeting children's needs, including those with a disability. The staff turnover at the playground is very low and most staff have been employed for many years.

Financial Information

The charity raises about 40% of its income from the local authority, and the rest from charitable trust and foundations. It is conscious of its current and forecast free reserves falling below target. Trustees are working with Accenture – Consultancy Group and East London Business Alliance to bring budgets back to balance through efficiency savings and initiatives to diversify income. To date the organisation has not included the costs of raising funds within their accounts. Your officer has explained this, and they are seeking advice on how best to represent this in the future.

Year end as at 31st March	2018 Examined Accounts £	2019 Forecast £	2020 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	150,813	147,788	155,760
- % of Income confirmed as at 29 May 2019	N/A	N/A	54%
Expenditure	(153,592)	(143,153)	(139,180)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(2,779)	4,635	16,580
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(630)	0	(1,289)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(2,149)	4,635	17,869
	(2,779)	4,635	16,580
Cost of Raising Funds	0	0	0
- % of Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Operating expenditure (total funds)	153,592	143,153	139,180
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	1,368	6,003	23,872
No of months of operating expenditure	0.1	0.5	2.1
Reserves policy target	38,398	24,153	34,795
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	2.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(37,030)	(18,150)	(10,923)