

MEETING: 30/01/2020

Ref: 15334

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions

NOVA new opportunities

Adv: Sandra Jones

Amount requested: £150,000

Base: Kensington & Chelsea

Benefit: Kensington & Chelsea,
Westminster

Amount recommended: £150,000

The Applicant

NOVA New Opportunities (NOVA), based in North Kensington, was set up in 1983 to provide a range of online and on-site training courses to local people in subjects such as IT, literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Its focus is on increasing the basic skills of disadvantaged communities and individuals so that they may take a fuller part in society and secure and sustain employment and/or further education. In 2017 the organisation provided the Wider Community Programme (WCP) to support to Grenfell survivors and local people through a range of activities and family programmes including a 'human library', to offer a safe space to explore situations and feel connected to people and places

The Application

The application is to develop the WCP, aiming to create connections and support to local people by building skills and confidence and improving wellbeing by bringing together a wide range of local people to break down barriers and build relationships through creative, learning and pastoral activities. Funding is sought for 14 hours per week of the current WCP Programme Manager and 17.5 hours per week of a new WCP assistant.

The Recommendation

NOVA has a very good track record and a high status within its North Kensington /North Westminster area for delivering effective programmes addressing local needs. It works in an area where up to 60% of the population lives in social housing and where up to 70% of children live in workless households. Over 80% of the people accessing the pilot WCP were migrants and refugees, who clearly benefited from the programme and were able to increase their civic participation and voice with decision makers and service providers.

£150,000 over five years (£30,000 per annum) towards 14 hours per week of the current WCP Programme Manager and 17.5 hours per week of a new WCP Assistant. Release of each year's payments is subject to the receipt of satisfactory management accounts, until such time that free reserves reach a reasonable level.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
28/11/2013	£51,300 over three years (3 x £17,100) for the salary of a part-time (3dpw) ESOL Co-ordinator.

Background and detail of proposal

The WCP is based on a programme of activities delivered post Grenfell. The programme was also supported by local charities such as Campden Charities and

Kensington and Chelsea Foundation. The programme, which attracted over 800 people, undertook a range of activities and approaches for attracting people from all backgrounds to come together in engaging, creative, stimulating learning activities and to construct an annual programme that embraces diversity. This was evaluated and the proposed WCP designed based on the evaluation. The programme provides local people with opportunities to come together on an equal platform with those from very different backgrounds to connect and share initiatives towards building a positive future.

Activities include a Human Library which builds a positive framework for conversations that challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue. Real people provide personal dialogues which are on loan to readers, creating a safe space where topics are discussed openly between the 'human books' and their readers. 'Books' are from groups that have been stigmatized and isolated. Respectful conversations positively change people's attitudes and behaviours towards communities that are marginalised and excluded. Other activities are; 'ladies that lunch' bringing together diverse women using food as the unifying factor; workshops to increase resilience and self-confidence; Action Learning Sets to create an equal platform for people to create connections across boundaries. TEDx Talks will be utilised, as will an annual Festival of Learning in the spring and the Great Get Together (a legacy to Jo Cox MP), all involving the participants of the programme.

Financial Information

The table below shows a decline in income from 2017/18 to 2018/19. This was due to Campden Charities decision to withdraw funding due to NOVA's trustees change of strategy. Consequently, NOVA reported a deficit in 2019 and the trustees made the decision to maintain the programme of work and staff whilst seeking alternative funding, including the application to City Bridge Trust and National Lottery Community Fund. It is anticipated that this situation will improve in 2020 and figures for the years up to 2022 show an improvement year on year. It is recommended that, each year's payment is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory management accounts, until such time that free reserves reach a reasonable level.

Year end as at 31 March	2018	2019	2020
	Examined Accounts £	Budget £	Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	458,320	440,201	461,963
- % of Income confirmed as at 22/02/2019	n/a	n/a	80%
Expenditure	(441,185)	(495,348)	(454,965)
Total surplus/(deficit)	17,135	(55,147)	6,998
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(2,300)	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	19,435	(55,147)	6,998
	17,135	(55,147)	6,998
Unrestricted expenditure	417,202	261,423	217,512
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	90,658	35,511	42,509
No of months of unrestricted expenditure	2.6	1.6	2.3
Reserves policy target	139,067	87,141	72,504
No of months of total expenditure	4.0	4.0	4.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(48,409)	(51,630)	(29,995)