

## **CITY BRIDGE TRUST – Delegated Authority (Requests £50k to £100k)**

### **ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital\Access improvements to community buildings\Capital works**

**Wac Arts**

**Ref: 15701**

**Amount requested: £100,000**

**Adv: Ciaran Rafferty**

**Base: Camden**

**Amount recommended: £100,000**

**Benefit: Several London boroughs**

**Purpose of grant request:** Wac Arts will improve accessibility for our intergenerational and disabled community, creating new spaces for creative and social connectivity while opening our building with additional lifts and step free entrances.

#### **The Applicant**

Wac Arts, a charity, was established in 1974 to provide a range of activities and programmes for the local community not least disabled young people. Based in the old Town Hall building on Haverstock Hill it offers fully inclusive arts-based programmes that celebrate diversity and inclusion. Its provision and support for older people is also significant and includes the largest university of the Third Age. The premises are used 7 days per week, all year round and form a very important community hub in an area which may appear to be well-heeled but which has many social housing estates and pockets of significant disadvantage.

#### **Background and detail of proposal**

The application is for capital costs towards making the 140 year-old, grade II listed, building more accessible (Wac Arts has an 80 year lease). The access works have been informed by a comprehensive independent access audit and your officer visited the premises and was taken through the proposed works step by step. Whilst a lot of the building complex is accessible there is clearly room for improvement and for refashioning some of the interior layout to make it easier to navigate and to enable more interaction between the different groups who use the facilities. The access works form part of a bigger renovation and improvement project, which in total would cost c.£3.2m. Of this £3m is currently being considered by other funders, including the GLA (£1.5m) and the Heritage Lottery. Their support is likely and should be confirmed by April 2020. Your funding, should you agree it, will help in this regard.

#### **Financial Information**

The organisation has a history of overspending over recent years which has depleted its free reserves. Some of this has been as a result of a Diploma programme which the charity ran and which was a regular loss-maker. This has now been stopped and replaced with a new course which generates a surplus. The Board also appointed a new Chief Executive in mid 2019 who has considerable commercial expertise and is in the process of working with the Board on a realistic and sustainable business plan to increase free reserves and to reverse the overspending trend. The CEO has also reduced staffing costs, implemented a new staffing structure and appointed an experienced Strategic Financial Advisor. The organisation's balance sheet is positive, largely through its significant fixed asset

holding, and although there is scope to borrow against the assets the charity has been cautious to date and has worked closely with Triodos and the Co-operative Bank, both of which are supportive of the direction in which the charity is now moving. The aim is for the charity to break even on its unrestricted reserves by the end of the 20/21 financial year. Given that this is a proposal for capital works and your funding is released retrospectively and on receipt of invoices or equivalent when the work is done, a grant would not be unduly risky.

Year end as at 30 September	2018	2019	2020
	Signed Accounts	Draft	Forecast
	£	£	£
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	2,025,225	2,054,683	2,712,667
- % of Income confirmed as at 21/1/20	N/A	100%	65%
Expenditure	(2,123,543)	(2,222,592)	(2,259,370)
Total surplus/(deficit)	<b>(98,318)</b>	<b>(167,909)</b>	<b>453,297</b>
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(175,658)	0	603,177
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	77,340	(167,909)	(149,880)
	<b>(98,318)</b>	<b>(167,909)</b>	<b>453,297</b>
Operating Expenditure	2,123,543	2,222,592	2,259,370
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	(5,220)	(173,129)	(323,009)
No of months of operating expenditure	0.0	-0.9	-1.7
Reserves policy target	530,886	555,648	564,843
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(536,106)	(728,777)	(887,852)

### Recommendation

**£100,000 towards the capital costs of improved access facilities to the Old Town Hall.**

Approved.....  
Chief Grants Officer

Approved.....  
Chair

Approved.....  
Deputy Chair

Date.....

Date.....

Date.....