

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving London's Environment****Lift People****Adv: Sandra Jones****Base: Brent****Benefit: Brent****Amount requested: £40,000****{Revised request: £50,000}****Amount recommended: £50,000****The Charity**

Lift People (LP) was established in 2001 when individuals who made contact through a service for homeless people in Brent began to meet as a group on a regular basis. Initially, LP was a small self-help group working locally, and has since developed to work across London, gaining a good reputation for research and user involvement. The organisation's work is under three strands: employment support; housing; and engagement and involvement.

**The Application**

LP is requesting a two year grant of £25,000 per year for a part-time post and running costs to co-ordinate a community gardening project that will complete the transformation of a neglected urban garden into a thriving green hub. Phase 1 has been completed and funding from the Trust is sought to cover Phase 2.

**The Recommendation**

LP has significant experience and a demonstrable track record in developing projects with local people, building capacity in order that the local people would be in a position to take over the running of the project. The initial application did not fully address your criteria for Improving London's Environment, but after discussions with your officer the organisation has revised the proposal to be more focused on the criteria, specifically regarding improved knowledge and understanding of the environment and biodiversity, improved well-being through the use of open spaces, and increased numbers of young people understanding the benefit of growing local food. The budget was also revised to reflect the activities to be undertaken.

**£50,000 over two years (2 x £25,000) for the salary costs of a part-time (0.4 FTE) Project Worker and associated running costs.**

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
10/04/2014	Application withdrawn following discussion with your officer.
17/03/2011	Rejected on the basis that proposed work fell outside the Trust's programme priorities.

**Background and detail of proposal**

Challenge Close in Harlesden contains a small public park that had been badly neglected. Drug crime, vandalism and prostitution were rife and the space was used for site tipping. It was known as a hot spot for crime, and local residents were afraid of using the park. LP has been working with the local community to turn the park into a green learning space and community garden. Harlesden lacks usable green spaces and this project will offer the opportunity for people to learn about biodiversity and growing food.

In 2012 LP was commissioned to undertake a consultation on the future of the garden, with over 200 local people taking part. Since then 50 volunteers have been working to regenerate the site, and the charity has been working with them to set up 'The Friends of Harlesden Town Garden'. Funding was secured from Brent Council to create a basic infrastructure (Phase 1) which has included security fencing, the creation of a community garden/food growing area, playground and paving for accessibility.

Phase 2 builds on this, increasing the amount of food growing as well as working with The Friends group to create a space with training and volunteering opportunities to manage a green space and increase the understanding of its importance to the local biodiversity. The work will be delivered by employing a co-ordinator to manage the project and organise a programme of training and events, supporting volunteers who will play a key role in improving the green space. LP will also build the capacity of The Friends group to take over the running of the park once Phase 2 of the project ends.

### Financial Information

£610,027 (88%) of the forecast income for 2014/15 had been confirmed as at December 2014, with the remainder being grant applications.

The cost of generating funds figure shown in the table only relates to raising voluntary income (£322k in 2013/14), and LP has advised that this will be reviewed as part of the year-end process to reflect the cost of generating all income.

Year end at 31 March	2012/13 Audited Accounts £	2013/14 Draft Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Budget £
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>			
Income	504,579	622,612	693,212
Expenditure	473,480	583,750	639,326
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	23,580	82,593	(8,989)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	7,519	(43,731)	4,861
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>31,099</b>	<b>38,862</b>	<b>53,886</b>
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	6.2%	6.2%	(0.8%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	12,286 (24.3%)	18,742 (5.8%)	-
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	49,334	139,318	130,329
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.3	2.9	2.4
Reserves Policy target	118,371	145,938	159,832
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
<b>Free reserves over/(under) target</b>	<b>(69,037)</b>	<b>(6,620)</b>	<b>(29,503)</b>