

MEETING: 28/01/2015

Ref: 12228

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Older Londoners

Royal Air Force Museum

Adv: Jenny Field

Base: Barnet

Amount requested: £87,600

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £87,600

The Charity

The Royal Air Force Museum was established in 1972 to tell the stories of the RAF through its people and its collections. Its collection includes nearly 250 aircraft, from the 1909 Bleriot to the RAF's latest aircraft, the Eurofighter Typhoon; a wide range of archive items; half a million photographs; 6.5 million feet of film; and 7,000 works of art. There are two sites, one in Cosford, Shropshire; the other in London in Hendon which is the subject of this application.

The Application

Its 'First World War in the Air' exhibition opened at the beginning of December 2014. Recent research into the demographics of the museum's audience yielded the surprising result that the number of its older visitors was below the number it would expect given the number of older people in the UK as a proportion of the total population. Of those older people who had visited the museum, 25% were from the London Borough of Barnet and 40% from Greater London. In order to help make the museum more relevant and attractive to a greater diversity of visitor, including older people, the Museum proposes to engage a Director of Public Programmes and an Audience Development Officer. You are asked to contribute towards a number of costs to increase the number of older people engaged with the Museum.

The Recommendation

Although the Museum is a national resource, it's commitment to making itself more relevant to its local community came across clearly during your officer's assessment meeting. As well as increasing the number of older visitors to the Museum, it is also proposed to engage increased numbers of older people as volunteers in a number of aspects of the Museum's work, including its schools work.

£87,600 over three years (£39,200; £24,200; £24,200) towards the costs of three posts (Education Officer, Community Development Officer and Volunteer Co-ordinator) together with development costs to increase the number of older people engaged with the Museum.

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

The Museum is located on the site of the former London Aerodrome which was purchased by the aviation pioneer, Claude Graham-White in 1911. The site was requisitioned during WW1 and played a key part in both the mass production of Britain's fledgling air force and the urbanisation of its surrounding vicinity. The first airmail, parachute jump, night flights and aerial defence of a city all took place there. Millions flocked to Hendon to enjoy the aerial displays and dramatic exploits of the early pilots.

Approximately 260,000 people visit the London site each year, including 60,000 who participate in its learning activities. The First World War exhibition will provide an excellent opportunity for it to develop its audience, including older people. The Heritage Lottery Fund is one of the major contributors and if you approve funding today, your grant will support the requirement to provide match funding.

Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year 2014/15 is £12,931,748, of which £10,747,444 (83%) had been confirmed as at 4th November 2014. The charity explains that the higher income level in 2013/14 of £13,420,901 was due to the receipt of an exceptional grant for a specific maintenance project.

The table below shows that unrestricted fund deficits have been incurred and financed from reserves over the past 2 years and a further unrestricted fund deficit of £311,950 is forecast in the current year to 31st March 2015. After this latest deficit, free reserves are forecast to reduce to £291,587 at that date, which would be insufficient to fund a similar unrestricted deficit should there be one in the forthcoming year.

The reserves policy of the charity is to hold a minimum of £250,000 as a cash reserve. The charity's trustees recognise that this figure is low and not as strong as desired. A new Chief Executive will join in January 2015, who has been tasked with reviewing the reserves policy. In addition, the charity advises that the new CE will oversee the transformation of the Museum ahead of the centenary of the RAF in 2018, ensuring that by improving its commercial activities, increasing visitor numbers and profile, the Museum enjoys a healthier financial position and is able to build reserves from the current level.

Year end at 31 March	2012/13 Audited Accounts	2013/14 Draft Accounts	2014/15 Current Year Forecast
Income and Expenditure	£	£	£
Income	12,177,791	13,420,901	12,931,748
Expenditure	12,165,886	12,651,847	13,446,673
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(29,160)	(124,133)	(311,950)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	41,065	893,187	(202,975)
Gains/(losses) on fixed and investment assets	674,772	850,208	-
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	686,677	1,619,262	(514,925)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	5.6%	12%	(4.7%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	2,515,635 (20.7%)	2,453,006 (18.3%)	2,503,516 (19.4%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	605,857	526,287	291,587
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.6	0.5	0.3
Reserves Policy target	250,000	250,000	250,000
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.2	0.2	0.3
Free reserves over/(under) target	355,857	276,287	41,587