

MEETING: 12/03/2015

Ref: 12495

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving London's Environment

Kingston Environment Centre (KEC)

Adv: Sandra Davidson

Amount requested: £27,000

Base: Kingston upon Thames

Benefit: Kingston upon Thames

Amount recommended: £27,000

The Charity

The Kingston Environment Centre (KEC) is one of the leading environmental organisations based within Kingston upon Thames, promoting a range of environmental activity across the borough. Its primary aim is to increase public knowledge and understanding of the natural environment including how human beings can live without compromising the ability of the planet to sustain future generations. KEC started as a partnership between two existing local organisations, Save the World Club and Kingston Green Fair. In 2011, with the support of Kingston Voluntary Action, it became independent and formed its own charitable company.

The Application

KEC is requesting a three year grant for a part-time Biodiversity Network Co-ordinator and associated costs to co-ordinate and develop the operation of the Kingston Biodiversity Network. The Network was established to highlight conservation concerns throughout the borough. The role will lead to the Network strengthening and forging partnerships and relationships.

The Recommendation

£27,000 over three years (3 x £9,000) for the salary of a part-time (14hpw) Biodiversity Network Co-ordinator and associated costs.

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

KEC has created a Biodiversity Action Plan for Kingston, drawing expertise from across the borough, from previous research, and by consulting with the Council's Green Spaces Service Manager. KEC's Biodiversity Plan has been included within the Council's Green Space's Strategy 2008-18.

The Network is passionate about Kingston's wildlife, and establishes strong links between organisations and people who are interested in conserving and preserving biodiversity. Over 100 members are now part of the network, representing a range of interest groups, including London Wildlife Trust, Richmond Park Beetle Group, The Conservation Volunteers, and The Environment Agency to name a few.

The Network facilitates the exchange of environmental knowledge between people and organisations but currently lacks the capacity to share the knowledge more widely. The Network is helping to design biodiversity documentation including habitat management plans, as well as carrying out research to build a picture of Kingston's wildlife and borough updates. Meetings are attended by local conservation groups and ecologists and are open to the general public. The

102

recruitment of the Biodiversity Network Co-ordinator will help promote conservation activity, encourage volunteer recruitment, and create and manage innovative projects targeting areas of biodiversity need throughout the borough. The role will create and develop environmental documentation - such as Habitat Action Plans - in consultation with the local authority. The worker will be supported by a strong voluntary presence and an established board of trustees, with the Network's steering group providing direction and training opportunities.

KEC is based in central Kingston, with access to a range of facilities – including a meeting space, office resources, small kitchen area, and a backyard/open-air space - available for use by a wide range of environmental groups. The Centre has a wide range of publicity material and notices about environmental work of all kinds. Future developments include obtaining registration with the Charity Commission and expanding activities beyond the Centre to increase contact with the general public.

Financial Information

Total forecast income in the current year is £32,100, of which 47% had been confirmed by December 2014. City Bridge Trust is not expected to make up the whole 53% shortfall, as KEC is currently working on other funding proposals it hopes to use towards its 2014-15 income target.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts	2014/15 Current Year Forecast
Income and Expenditure	£	£
Income	16,376	32,100
Expenditure	16,520	34,401
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	634	(2,201)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(778)	(100)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(144)	(2,301)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(0.9%)	(7.2%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	25 (0.2%)	1,000 (3.1%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	5,405	3,204
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.9	1.1
Reserves Policy target	6,500	6,500
How many months' worth of expenditure	4.7	2.3
Free reserves over/(under) target	(1,095)	(3,296)