

MEETING: 26/11/2015

Ref: 12976

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

L'Arche London

Adv: Sandra Davidson

Base: Lambeth

Benefit: Lambeth, Southwark

Amount requested: £100,000

Amount recommended: £100,000

The Charity

L'Arche London is a member of L'Arche UK, itself part of the international network of L'Arche Communities which cares for people with learning disabilities. The movement began over 40 years ago with the Frenchman, Jean Vanier, who was working in a Mental Institution when it closed down. Jean Vanier's response was to invite three people to come and live with him in his own home. What started out almost by accident grew rapidly into a worldwide network of 143 Communities in 35 countries, from Belgium to Brazil, Uganda to the United States. Over 3,500 people with learning disabilities live in L'Arche Communities worldwide.

The Application

L'Arche London purchased the freehold of its terraced Victorian building from Guy's and St Thomas' Charity (GSTC) in December 2013 having raised £930,000, thereby securing a permanent home for its offices and main workshop and enabling the creation of two additional dwellings. L'Arche now seeks funding to undertake access improvements as phase 2 of its redevelopment plans. The plans incorporate the recommendations of a recent access audit and include: widening corridors and doorways; creating fully accessible toilets; installing a permanent hearing induction loop, and adding assistive technology. The works are part of a larger refurbishment programme costing £600,000 of which £470,000 has been raised to date. Access elements of the refurbishment work are expected to cost £350,000 of which L'Arche seeks £100,000 from the Trust.

The Recommendation

The support needs of L'Arche users increase with age, and some members have been with the community for 37 years. The charity has been unable to meet the increase in demand because of a lack of specialist accommodation, and more people need structured day services to help their potential for employment and independent living. With the majority of the refurbishment funding already in place, City Bridge Trust's grant will allow important access improvements. The proposed works will enable L'Arche to provide additional activities, increase the number of people it supports and promote further interaction with the general public:

£100,000 towards the access improvements of the hub site at Norwood High Street as part of Phase 2 of the development project.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
06/04/2006	£20,000 towards the purchase of a people carrier, specially adapted to accommodate wheelchairs.

Background and detail of proposal

L'Arche London community comprises 32 adults with learning disabilities, and 32 assistants, accommodated over seven houses. It provides tailored, person-centred, support for people with learning disabilities to enable them to live fulfilled lives, developing interests and talents whilst building a network of friends. The philosophy is one of mutual care, friendship and trust. L'Arche is ecumenical, rooted in the Christian tradition, but welcomes and values all regardless of personal beliefs. It offers both therapeutic and work opportunities. The charity's work takes several forms: there are carpentry and stoneware workshops, and crafts include collage, weaving and candle making. The products are of good quality and generate some income but does not amount to a commercial operation.

L'Arche London has occupied its site for 37 years. It is confident it will raise the full refurbishment funds needed by December 2015, in order to competitively tender the project in early 2016 with a view to completing works by autumn 2016.

Financial Information

Forecast income for the current year 2015/16 is £8,918,360 of which £8,609,271 (96%) had been confirmed by October 2015. The cost of generating income is low as the majority of its income comes from local authorities across the UK on a contractual basis.

Year end at 31 July	2013/14 Audited Accounts	2014/15 Forecast Outturn	2015/16 Current Year Budget
Income and Expenditure	£	£	£
Income	8,669,250	8,590,991	8,918,360
Expenditure	8,013,855	8,383,511	9,105,209
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	1,663,113	84,895	89,089
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,007,718)	122,585	(275,938)
Other recognised gains and losses	11,683	-	-
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	667,078	207,480	(186,849)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	7.7%	2.4%	(2.1%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	173,493 (2.0%)	-	-
Free unrestricted reserves			
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	2,484,481	2,569,376	2,658,465
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.7	3.7	3.5
Reserves Policy target	2,003,464	2,078,185	2,276,302
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	481,017	491,191	382,163