

MEETING: 28/01/2016

Ref: 12846

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

Camden Arts Centre (CAC)

Amount requested: £133,257
(Revised request: £94,077)
Amount recommended: £94,100

Adv: Joan Millbank
Base: Camden
Benefit: Camden and other boroughs

The Charity

Formed in 1965 Camden Arts Centre (CAC) is today an internationally renowned contemporary arts and education venue. CAC's mission is to break down barriers for people of all ages to experience and make art, and to nurture artists. It places particular emphasis on engaging people and artists who are disadvantaged. CAC provides a wide range of activities to engage communities, inspire children and young people, and delivers a combination of exhibitions, artists' projects and educational activity. In 2014-15 98% of visitors to CAC rated their experience as good or very good. Housed in an old library owned by Camden Council, CAC has three galleries, three studio spaces, a book shop, café with outdoor space and administrative offices. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee. CAC is an Arts Council portfolio grant holder (total grant £2,758,800 over three years).

The Application

CAC is requesting three year funding towards its 'Breaking the Barrier' programme. The programme expands CAC's work to address exclusion in the arts by delivering two multifaceted initiatives to benefit disabled young people aged 11 to 25 years. 'Get the Message' provides creative workshops for secondary school students with complex learning disabilities while 'How Can Art Youth Collective' offers Saturday art sessions to disabled and non-disabled young people. It will also provide a mentoring opportunity for disabled artists to co-lead workshops and thereby acquire professional skills which can be used elsewhere and within future CAC projects.

The Recommendation

CAC has a strong track record and reputation in providing arts education; its work programme is currently rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted and 'excellent' by the Arts Council. It works closely with the specialist learning disability arts organisation Action Space and its approach and projects have been evaluated by sector experts. 'Breaking the Barrier' builds on and develops its work with and for young people. Following discussion at the assessment meeting the original application has been modified to focus on disabled young people within Breaking the Barrier; costs have been reviewed and you are advised to support the revised request:

£94,100 (£19,000; £39,200; £35,900) towards the Breaking the Barrier initiative, to contribute towards the cost of three Lead Practitioners, activity and running costs, on condition that match funding is secured in years 2 and 3.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
04/10/2007	£24,000 (£8,000, £8,000, £8,000) towards the costs of an arts group and courses for older people in North London.

Background and detail of proposal

Development of 'Breaking the Barrier' has emerged from need identified from CAC's 12 years of direct experience in arts participation with disabled young people; it also reflects findings from national studies (Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities; Mencap). 'Get the Message' will deliver 18 workshops (24 in year 2 and 3) over 3 terms each year to a total of 110 disabled students with profound and complex learning disabilities drawn from four Special Educational Needs schools together with 3 (4 in year 2 and 3) family days and a public Summer exhibition. 'How Can Art? Youth Collective' will offer inclusive and open-access Saturday arts sessions to enable a minimum of 12 young people aged 15 to 25 years to develop their own creative projects and gain experience in curating a show. 40% participants will have disabilities. 4 adult artists with learning disabilities will benefit from the mentoring opportunity, which will focus on developing leadership and technical skills.

Financial Information

Forecast income for the current year to 31 March 2016 is £1,723,405, of which £1,197,214 (69.5%) had been confirmed by end of November 2015.

The free reserves policy target is to hold 3 months' worth of operating costs (£240k) and a designated building fund of £60k, amounting to a total target reserve of £300k which equates to 2.1 months' worth of total expenditure. The charity has confirmed that it considers this sum to be sufficient. Actual free reserves held at 31 March 2015 were £105,155, which is £194,845 short of the reserves policy target, and free reserves are not forecast to increase in the current year 2015/16.

CAC trustees have advised that they hope to increase unrestricted free reserves using the proceeds from a charity auction run in collaboration with Christies auction house which is scheduled to take place in September 2016. The auction target is to raise £500,000, of which at least £200,000 will be set aside to increase free reserves to the required level. To date, confirmed pledges amount to £275,000 and include a major sculpture from Sir Anthony Gormley valued at approximately £175,000.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Audited Accounts	2015/16 Current Year Budget
Income and Expenditure	£	£
Income	1,615,483	1,723,405
Expenditure	1,745,411	1,723,405
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	17,699	0
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(147,627)	0
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(129,928)	0
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(8%)	-
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	189,539 (11.7%)	172,340(10%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	105,155	105,155
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.7	0.7
Reserves Policy target	300,000	300,000
How many months' worth of expenditure	2.1	2.1
Free reserves over/(under) target	(194,845)	(194,845)