

MEETING: 18/03/2016

Ref: 13143

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving London's Environment

Kentish Town City Farm Ltd

Adv: Shegufta Rahman

Base: Camden

Amount requested: £116,550

Benefit: Camden

{Revised request: £118,308}

Amount recommended: £118,300

The Charity

Kentish Town City Farm (KTCF) was established in 1972, and is a working farm providing an essential green, open space in the heart of the city. It offers an immersive, hands-on experience in farming, gardening and animal care, enabling many local children to learn about the vital role natural environments play in everyday life. For Camden's most vulnerable individuals it provides unique farm-based therapeutic and developmental activities to help them cope with disability and disadvantage. KTCF has over 16,000 visitors a year, including approximately 6,000 school children, teachers and parents who come through its education programme.

The Application

You are asked to fund the salary of a full-time Education Officer and associated project costs over three years. The post-holder would be responsible for delivering the education programme, which includes an advice service for nurseries, schools, special needs groups, play schemes and agencies working in the environmental or educational field in London. They would also be available to the 10,000 visitors each year to answer questions about the plants, animals and natural spaces, and support the corporate volunteer days. The current Education Officer has been in post for 14 years.

The Recommendation

KTCF has been successful in developing numerous educational activities and programmes that cater to the diverse environment in which it operates. Over the last 10 years it has worked towards an on-going commitment to reducing its carbon footprint, including for example, by investing in green roofs and solar panels. It has developed the only inner-city horse riding club to compete in the London Youth Games, as well as training hundreds of young people in equine and animal care. KTCF has worked extensively with volunteers and has a consistent flow of demand from children; young people; and adults with mental health issues or learning disabilities. The charity has revised its initial request to include, now, an element for inflation. This increased sum can be recommended.

£118,300 over three years (£38,850, £39,450, £40,000) for the salary of a full-time Education Officer, together with the associated project running costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
10/09/2009	£115,500 over three years (£37,500; £38,500; £39,500) for the salary and project costs of an Education Development Officer.
27/02/2003	£87,000 over three years (£29,000, £28,250, £29,750) for the salary and project costs of an Education Development Officer.

Background and detail of proposal

In 2015 KTCF developed a programme with the Camden Centre for Learning for secondary aged students whose primary need is their social, emotional or behavioural development. Six students go to the farm weekly (during term-time) for 90 minute sessions with the Education Officer, who uses a 'Learning Outside the Classroom' approach to introduce basic scientific and mathematical principles to the group.

School visits have grown considerably over the last 15 years, with demand increasing by 22% over the last three years. Each visit delivers material based on the curriculum, providing a truly educational, environmentally sound experience. Due to the tailored nature of the visits, many schools plan multiple visits throughout the year to coincide with seasonal changes. 97% of teachers of nursery children up to Key Stage 2 have reported that the standard of delivery was "Very Good" (the top score).

Financial Information

Total forecast income for the current year ending 31st March 2016 is £247,241 of which £233,478 (94%) had been confirmed by February 2016. Budgeted income for the following year ending 31st March 2017 is £259,525, of which £97,825 (38%) had been confirmed at the same date.

The charity advises that income was higher in 2014/15 due to a capital receipt of £86,000 which has been used to upgrade the farm's facilities.

Unrestricted free reserves held at 31st March 2015 were £50,774, which is equivalent to 2.1 months' worth of expenditure and below the reserves policy target of 3 months' worth of expenditure. The trustees have advised that in 2016/17 they will seek funding for a Director to be in post in 2017, and whose focus will be to grow restricted and unrestricted revenue going forward.

The cost of generating funds is very low but the charity advises that this is due to almost two thirds of its income coming from statutory sources and self-generated income. Due to anticipated reductions in statutory income, the charity expects fundraising expenditure to increase over the coming years.

Year end at 31 March	2014-15 Audited Accounts	2015-16 Current Year Forecast	2016-17 Budget
	£	£	£
Income and Expenditure			
Income	324,263	247,241	259,525
Expenditure	287,492	251,218	259,450
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(37,643)	(3,979)	75
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	74,414	0	0
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	36,771	(3,979)	75
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	11.3%	(1.6%)	0.0%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	4,437 (1.4%)	6,676 (2.7%)	5,000 (1.9%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	50,774	46,795	46,870
How many months' worth of expenditure	2.1	2.2	2.2
Reserves Policy target	71,873	62,805	64,862
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(21,099)	(16,010)	(17,992)