

MEETING: 24/11/2016

Ref: 13460

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

Artsadmin

**Adv: Tania Bronstein
Base: Tower Hamlets
Benefit: London-wide**

**Amount requested: £90,535
{Amended request: £100,106}
Amount recommended: £95,500**

The Charity

Artsadmin supports artists at all stages of their careers in dance, new theatre, music, live art and mixed media. It offers advice, bursaries, mentoring schemes, residencies, showcases, project management, and links to arts promoters. Its base, Toynbee Studios (TS) is a centre for the creation and presentation of new work and provides: 6 spaces of various sizes for hire suitable for rehearsals, castings and exhibitions; a 280-seat theatre; 8 creative media units which are rented out to arts practitioners; and a café/bar.

The Application:

Funding is sought towards a programme of works to improve disabled access at TS. This includes: ingress and evacuation features; external and internal signage; adapting two toilets; and various other works to enable disabled people to safely and independently use the building. The request has been amended. It is for a one-off rather than for a two-year grant; is supported by suppliers' estimates; and no longer includes a new vertical platform lift. The revised breakdown is appended to the application form.

The Recommendation:

Artsadmin is playing an important role embedding work by disabled artists in London's cultural sector. A grant will provide the best possible accessibility standards to a facility already exceedingly well used by disabled artists and audiences. Having received more accurate costs, your officers are assured that the risk of cost overruns will be minimised.

£95,500 towards building works to improve access to Toynbee Studios.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
09/07/2015	£1,985 for an access audit of Toynbee Studios
22/09/2016	£2,400 (6 days @£400 per day) to conduct an eco-audit.

Background and detail of proposal

A major strand of Arstadmin's work is *Unlimited*, a commissioning and support initiative run in partnership with the disability arts charity Shape that helps disabled artists to develop, produce, and showcase their work. Although access standards at TS are better than average, further to alterations carried out in 2003, feedback from disabled artists and audiences using the premises has highlighted several access barriers for people with physical and sensory impairments. Disabled users of the building and an access audit (also funded by the Trust) provide the impetus for this project and have informed the programme of improvements.

This project is independent from, but connects to a £16 million initiative by Artsadmin's landlord, the charity Toynbee Hall (TH) to regenerate the Toynbee Estate. TH has sold two buildings to a developer, is refurbishing two properties for its own use, and is working with LB Tower Hamlets to create a public open space on site. As some works forming part of request (related to signage, way-finding access and evacuation) cannot be undertaken before the other parties complete their respective developments, Artsadmin applied for a grant over two years rather than on a one-off basis as is usual for capital requests. However, a portion of the grant can be claimed at a later stage when adjacent works are completed. The request originally included replacing a platform lift to access the theatre backstage (the existing one cannot fit larger powered wheelchairs), but funds for this item are no longer sought because a large lift would jeopardize access for others, including ambulant disabled people. However, the amended request is for a larger sum because costs (originally roughly guessed) are now based on suppliers' estimates.

Financial observations

Forecast income in the current year is £2,463,016, of which £1,901,979 (77%) was secured as of 19 October 2016.

The deficits on restricted funds in 2016 and forecasted for 2017 are due to the depreciation charge of the leasehold building and other assets, but the charity is setting aside designated funds for depreciation and asset replacement.

The reserves policy (reviewed in 2015/16) is set at 3 months' worth of "fixed costs" (which excludes projects undertaken as and when dedicated funds are raised). The bottom part of the table below appraises the free reserves holding with reference to total annual expenditure as usual. However, the usual analysis is not entirely appropriate, as the policy target is based on a proportion of annual expenditure (38% in 2015/16 and 39% in 2016/17). An appraisal on the basis of the charity's own definition shows that the free reserves holding equates to 2.9 and 2.5 months' worth of annual fixed costs expenditure in 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Audited Accounts	2015/16 Draft Accounts	2016/17 Current Year Forecast
Income and Expenditure	£	£	£
Income	2,918,186	2,203,390	2,463,016
Expenditure	2,484,425	2,481,953	2,736,230
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	80,613	67,471	0
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	353,148	(346,034)	(273,214)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	433,761	(278,563)	(273,214)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	14.8%	12.6%	11%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	188,798 (6.5%)	179,990 (8.2%)	189,851 (7.7%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	175,478	227,948	227,948
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.84	1.10	0.99
Reserves Policy target	150,000	236,483	267,974
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.72	1.14	1.17
Free reserves over/(under) target	25,478	(8,535)	(40,026)