

MEETING: 23/11/2017

Ref: 14190

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving London's Environment

Widehorizons Outdoor Education Trust

Adv: Jack Joslin

Base: Greenwich

Amount requested: £153,035

Benefit: Greenwich

Amount recommended: £122,500

The Applicant

Wide Horizons (WH) was formed and registered as a charity in 2004 following a joint initiative between the London Borough of Lewisham and Greenwich. Today the Charity operates eight outdoor centres across England and Wales providing adventure learning programmes to children and young people and the communities they live in. The aim of the charity is to develop well-rounded young people who are environmentally conscious, active members of their communities and have the right skills to build a better future for themselves.

The Application

WH is looking for your support to restore and develop a once well-loved nature reserve in Thamesmead called Tump 53. Working in partnership with Peabody, WH are looking to develop the site to create a community-focused project that will provide a range of engaging outdoor learning experiences and activities that will inspire and educate local people about the natural world and the environment. Tump 53 is located in the heart of the Thamesmead estate on the border of Greenwich and Bexley. The estate is extremely deprived and most families live in tower blocks with little access to green spaces and gardens. Your funding is sought for an Adventure Learning Manager and additional costs to open up Tump 53 to local schools and the local community. WH will offer a diverse programme of events and projects that will improve the local community's knowledge of the green environment and local biodiversity.

The Recommendation

WH has a long track record of delivering Outdoor Adventure Learning Initiatives across London and nationally. Working in partnership with Peabody they are looking to develop the Tump 53 site in Thamesmead into an outdoor wildlife and environmental learning centre. Your funding is being sought for a Manager to oversee all of the different planned programmes that will encourage schools, children and young people and the local community to learn more about the green environment and biodiversity - which fits with the outcomes for your programme Improving London's Environment. A revised budget is included in Appendix A after a discussion with your officer at assessment. Funding is recommended as follows:

£122,500 over 3 years (£42,900; £40,700; £38,900) towards a full-time Adventure Learning Manager (35hpw) associated running costs and overheads. The grant is conditional on receiving confirmation of the revised loan agreement with Greenwich Council.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
13/05/2015	Application was withdrawn pending a financial review.

Background and detail of proposal

Tump 53 is a former munitions site in the heart of Thamesmead which was reclaimed and transformed into an ecology centre in the 1970's. It is set in mixed woodlands and surrounded by a reed-fringed moat creating a perfect environment for a range of wildlife. Tump 53 is set in the heart of the Thamesmead estate which has high levels of deprivation. The Tump has always been a popular space used by the local community but has lacked any continuity in management. The Thamesmead Estate was taken over by Peabody from Gallions Housing in 2015 and a regeneration of the estate is now underway. Peabody have now taken ownership of Tump 53 and invested much needed resource into improving the site and refurbishing the classroom and kitchen facilities. They formed a partnership with WH this year as they required a partner experienced in managing outdoor spaces and developing educational programmes for local communities. WH is well placed to do this work and is planning to develop a number of programmes on the site. With your support they will firstly set up an Environmental Education Programme targeting local schools and youth centres; secondly, a Community Programme that will encourage more local people to be active and engage with the natural environment and thirdly to develop a volunteering programme to get more local people giving back to their local community. A partnership with Thames21 has also been formed to provide education on the nearby parts of the Thames.

Financial Information

The Charity is expecting to make a deficit in the year ending 31 July 2017 as a result of not achieving their ambitious target for sales through their marketing strategy. A cost saving review has been implemented across the organisation and a new CEO has recently come into post with plans to deliver a surplus in 2018 in order to re-build free reserves. The charity took out a loan with the Social Investment Group in 2010 for capital works to upgrade and re-furbish two outdoor centres in Kent and Dorset. The loan has been restructured in principle by Greenwich and Lewisham Council who will re-pay the SIB and allow the loan to be paid back on a fixed interest rate over 26 years. This will significantly improve the organisational cash flow.

Year end as at 31 July	2016 Audited Accounts £	2017 Draft £	2018 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	3,122,000	2,883,479	3,235,652
- % of Income confirmed as at	n/a	n/a	61%
Expenditure	(2,952,429)	(3,048,172)	(3,157,274)
Total surplus/(deficit)	169,571	(164,693)	78,378
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	26,921	60,725	(328)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	142,650	(225,418)	78,706
	169,571	(164,693)	78,378
Cost of Raising Funds	41,651	131,960	137,000
- % of income	1.3%	4.6%	4.2%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	2,706,945	2,867,421	2,911,595
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	18,379	(207,039)	(128,333)
No of months of operating expenditure	0.1	-0.9	-0.5
Reserves policy target	330,000	330,000	330,000
No of months of operating expenditure	1.5	1.4	1.4
Free reserves over/(under) target	(311,621)	(537,039)	(458,333)