

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - English for Speakers of Other Languages**High Trees Community Development Trust****Adv: Shegufta Rahman****Base: Lambeth****Amount requested: £133,265****Benefit: Lambeth****Amount recommended: £133,300****The Applicant**

High Trees Community Development Trust (HTCDT) was born out of the local community almost 20 years ago when local residents campaigned to save the old library based in Tulse Hill, turning it into a Community Development Trust. The charity's vision is to ensure individuals have increased skills and stronger voice for life and work and to build active, resilient communities by providing higher level training, volunteering opportunities, employment and community action.

The Application

The charity is seeking funding for its new Strength in Words project, which will deliver ESOL for community involvement. Building on the strength of its ESOL delivery, as well as other training courses to date, HTCDT will target disadvantaged Lambeth residents who have English skills below Entry Level 3.

The Recommendation

HTCDT is seeking funding for its Strength in Words project. The charity's integral role in the local community as well as its strong track record in delivering ESOL training has it well positioned to engage significant numbers in this project. One objective is to encourage residents to take an active role in their local community through representation on tenants' associations and other local decision-making bodies.

£133,300 over three years (£43,800, £44,400, £45,100) towards the cost of a Project Coordinator (2 dpw), Lead ESOL Tutor (12 hpw), Assistant ESOL Tutor (8 hpw), and associated project costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
15/06/2017 (S/Stones)	Declined as proposed work was judged to be at very early stage, and would be some time before social investment would be considered.
22/09/2016 (S/Stones)	Declined as proposal was judged not to fit with priorities for Stepping Stones.
14/02/2008	Declined as applicant was already holding a grant.

Background and detail of proposal

The charity specialises in the delivery of contextualised ESOL, functional skills, personal growth and community development courses. The curriculum offer varies year on year based on local trend and needs. An Equalities Commission report published by Lambeth Council in June 2017 highlights types of inequality faced by migrants in Lambeth. Economically and socially disadvantaged groups are less likely to participate in public life. Often these groups have less voice and influence and are also less likely to experience the well-evidenced benefits of participation, particularly

on health and wellbeing. There is a recognised and significant democratic deficit for BAMER groups at all levels either in direct representation or involvement within localised decision making.

The Strength in Words project will deliver four main activities: ESOL classes, Conversation Clubs, Learning Trips, and Community Volunteering. Whilst the primary focus of the ESOL classes will be to improve language skills, the contents of the courses will be contextualised to encourage community involvement, e.g. how to access your local library or GP surgery. Conversation Clubs are facilitated by an ESOL tutor, designed to be participant-centred and led by the needs and interests of the participants. Examples of activities include understanding the school application system, and applying for benefits online. The Learning Trips will provide practical knowledge and confidence to access the many free services and cultural activities available across Lambeth and surrounding boroughs. Finally, Community Volunteering offers opportunities to improve involvement and representation in community life.

Financial Information

In 2015 the charity underwent an organisational restructure which contributed to the deficit in 2016. Since then, there has been an increase in staffing costs due to the implementation of a Senior Leadership team to lead on the creation and implementation of a new business plan to support income diversification to support sustainability and build reserves from 2017 onwards.

Cost of raising funds has been reported as nil for 2016 and 2017 as the relevant costs had not been allocated to this category of spend, but will be captured for 2018 onwards. 2016 audited accounts stated the reserves target of three months operating expenditure as £120,000. HTCDT confirms this was an error based on total operating expenditure, including restricted funds, and the actual figure should have been £37,812. A forecast for 2018/19 has been provided which shows surplus in both restricted and unrestricted funds, and further building of reserves.

Year end as at 31 March	2016 Audited Accounts £	2017 Draft £	2018 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	544,317	686,935	732,834
- % of Income confirmed as at 27/11/2017	n/a	100%	74%
Expenditure	(589,860)	(703,965)	(704,504)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(45,543)	(17,030)	28,330
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(45,543)	(17,030)	28,330
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Cost of Raising Funds	n/a	n/a	20,416
- % of Income	n/a	n/a	2.8%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	151,246	111,544	72,281
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	29,088	12,058	40,388
No of months of operating expenditure	2.3	1.3	6.7
Reserves policy target	120,000	27,886	18,070
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(90,912)	(15,828)	22,318