

MEETING: 14/03/2018

Ref: 14328

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Older Londoners

Community Empowerment and Support Initiatives (CESI)

Adv: Julia Mirkin

Amount requested: £124,806

Base: Greenwich

Benefit: Greenwich

Amount recommended: £69,600

The Applicant

The Community Empowerment and Support Initiative (CESI), a registered charity, was established in 2007 to support the needs of the Nepalese, ex-British Gurkha community in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. CESI delivers a range of activities to improve beneficiaries' health and well-being, including regular exercise classes and a running club; it offers advice, signposting and casework for housing, benefits and health issues and works to reduce social isolation amongst its elderly beneficiaries by offering social events and day trips.

The Application

The original application comprised four elements: health and fitness activities; advice sessions delivered by volunteers; volunteer training; and a community events programme. Costs are requested for staffing, programme and on-costs at c. £40K per year for three years.

The Recommendation

CESI is very well connected to the Nepalese Gurkha community in Greenwich and has a ten-year track-record of delivering a range of health-related, advice, and social events that offer a lifeline for many of its beneficiaries. CESI has secured significant grants in the last few years from the Big Lottery and from the Royal British Legion, which cover the costs of its main programme and some additional outreach work. This application is to work specifically with beneficiaries over the age of 75 years.

It is your officer's recommendation, however, that the original proposal be simplified and focussed - losing the advice element as CESI is not an accredited advice provider, as is your policy, and scaling back the community events element as it would be challenging to restrict these to the target group. The sum recommended, therefore, is less than the sum requested, which has been agreed with the applicant.

£69,600 (£24,200; £22,700; £22,700) for the salary costs of a P/t Project Coordinator (3 dpw), and running costs of healthy-living workshops, yoga, jogging, Volunteer training and expenses, excursions and a 10% contribution to core costs.

Funding History

N/a

Background and detail of proposal

The revised programme comprises three healthy living awareness workshops on issues such as, managing diabetes, high blood-pressure and alcohol addiction; regular exercise activities, specifically tailored for the target age group, such as yoga and facilitated exercise in local open spaces; a programme of volunteer training to encourage elderly people to engage positively with their communities and three annual excursions to visit places of British historical and cultural importance. The costs of a part-time Project Coordinator (0.6 FTE) have been included in the revised proposal; the costs of producing publicity and an advertisement on the

Nepalese television channel, plus a contribution to core costs has also been included.

Although CESI is closely connected to the needs of the local Nepalese community, it became apparent at assessment that it would benefit from some capacity building, particularly in relation to preparing its accounts, fundraising and financial planning. All of CESI's core operational tasks are carried out by volunteers; paid staff are solely project-funded. As the organisation becomes more established and seeks to develop its programme, it would, no doubt, benefit from greater professionalisation.

Financial Information

In the last four years, CESI's income has ranged from £81,207 to £145,208, which is an overall increase of 44%. However, the accounts for the year ending March 2017 show that less than two weeks of running costs were held in reserve, and a large proportion of CESI's income derived from only two sources. Furthermore, the 2017 accounts do not include a reserves policy target or a figure for the cost of raising funds. The 2018 and 2019 figures for both the cost of raising funds and the reserves policy targets in the table below are estimates provided by the charity.

A modest amount of unrestricted income is raised annually from a community fundraising event, which is used to cover audit fees and slowly build reserves. It is hoped that the applicant can move closer towards a full-cost recovery model as it gains skills and experience in fundraising. It is partly in this context that your officer has recommended streamlining the request to ensure it is manageable, can be delivered to a high standard and does not lead to a funding dependency. Details of the Cranfield Trust's capacity-building support have been passed onto the applicant.

Year end as at 31 March	2017 Examined Accounts £	2018 Forecast £	2019 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	145,208	108,119	140,931
- % of income confirmed as at 12/01/18	n/a	n/a	79%
Expenditure	(115,228)	(136,886)	(137,931)
Total surplus/(deficit)	29,980	(28,767)	3,000
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	34,236	(32,325)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(4,256)	3,558	3,000
	29,980	(28,767)	3,000
Cost of Raising Funds	0	1,816	2,000
- % of income	0.0%	1.7%	1.4%
Total expenditure	115,228	136,886	137,931
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	4,184	7,742	10,742
No of months of operating expenditure	0.4	0.7	0.9
Reserves policy target	0	9,500	18,000
No of months of operating expenditure	0.0	0.8	1.6
Free reserves over/(under) target	4,184	(1,758)	(7,258)