

MEETING: 06/07/2018

Ref: 14601

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving London's Environment

Roots and Shoots

Adv: Jack Joslin

Amount requested: £120,203

Base: Lambeth

Benefit: Lambeth

Amount recommended: £120,200

The Applicant

Roots and Shoots (RS) is a charity that was set up in 1982 to help young people from Lambeth and Southwark prepare for the world of work. Each year the charity works with up to thirty 16 – 25 year olds who have difficulty coping in the traditional educational system, providing alternative education. Alongside the educational training RS involves local schools and the wider community by establishing the site where they are based as an important green space for urban biodiversity. RS is set in over 2 acres of land in a secluded part of Lambeth surrounded by social housing. It has an award-winning wildlife garden, a half-acre public open garden, greenhouses and a Learning Centre, all in addition to the Natural Roots Building where the main educational provision takes place.

The Application

The Natural Roots programme is looking to establish a three-year programme that will imbed the charity's environmental education offer, separate to the main training delivered on site. This programme will facilitate the evolution of opportunities for learning about biodiversity at RS and will provide a structured approach to working with the wider local audiences of schools, families, adult groups, older people and local charities. The education programme will take place in the extensive gardens, greenhouses and the self-contained learning centre. Each programme will be tailored to its audience with over-arching themes of Bees, Biodiversity and Evolution in our backyard, plus storytelling and food growing.

The Recommendation

RS has been delivering environmental education programmes for many years and is well-established in its local community. The site and space are truly unique open spaces with a huge amount on offer. Your funding is being sought towards the part time salary of the Environmental Education Manager and the Gardener Educator. This project is a good fit with the Improving London's Environment theme as more people in Lambeth and Southwark will have a greater knowledge and understanding of biodiversity and the 'green' environment and more young people will understand the benefit of growing local food. Funding is recommended as follows:

£120,200 over three years (£39,300; £40,000; £40,900) for the part-time salaries of the Environmental Education Manager (21 hpw) and Gardener Educator (14 hpw)

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
13/05/2015	Declined as request was too similar to previous grant
04/06/2009	£120,000 over three years (3 x £40,000) towards the Director's salary.

Background and detail of proposal

The Natural Roots environmental education programme aims to widen the provision of RS and structure it to allow for a wider range of learners to access the programme. RS in the past has always offered a similar programme to local primary schools. The staff noted that in recent years this has become almost entirely early years groups and believe this is associated with staff pressures and curriculum focus. RS plans to utilise the Natural Roots programme to widen the audience and move away from the more traditional primary school provision. The charity wishes to keep some elements but scale it back to two sessions each week leaving more time to focus on family days and adult learning. The primary school provision will focus on themes of wildlife and biodiversity and will utilise the Education Manager's knowledge of the local habitat in an engaging programme. The Gardener Educator will run a food growing programme alongside this which will identify how to grow food and herbs in tight city spaces. The wider Natural Roots programme will deliver an Adult and Family Learning programme which will look at Bees, Biodiversity and Evolution as well as the turning of the seasons. The sessions will be delivered during the week and at the weekend to ensure they are accessible to all.

Financial Information

The Charity receives one major contract each year from the Department of Education EFSA for the main education programme. This contract is on a payment by results basis which can be impacted if the paperwork is not filed correctly or a student leaves the course before the end of the academic year. In the table the split between restricted and unrestricted surplus and deficit is significant. The Charity uses unrestricted reserves to pay for activity which is then reimbursed once they receive the payment by results funding at the end of the academic year. The figures in the table below are before transfers between unrestricted and restricted funds and therefore shows negative free reserves in 2019. The Charity is on track to deliver on its Education contract this year. The accounts do not include cost of generating funds. At assessment the Director outlined that this was £4,000 per year or 10% of their salary.

Year end as at 31 March	2017 Examined Accounts £	2018 Forecast £	2019 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	562,050	975,949	739,483
- % of income confirmed as at 23/05/2018	n/a	n/a	100%
Expenditure	(686,497)	(661,836)	(662,124)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(124,447)	314,113	77,359
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(32,760)	391,053	247,947
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(91,687)	(76,940)	(170,588)
	(124,447)	314,113	77,359
Cost of Raising Funds	0	4,000	4,000
- % of income	0.0%	0.4%	0.5%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	653,737	301,836	432,648
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	140,707	63,767	(106,821)
No of months of operating expenditure	2.6	2.5	(3.0)
Reserves policy target	163,434	75,459	108,162
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(22,727)	(11,692)	(214,983)