

GRANT APPLICATION 2014/15 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Priority Corporate Outcomes | To create better life chances for children and young people To support children and young people who are most at risk of not achieving their potential and prevent later difficulties To enhance family and community well-being and engaged, cohesive and safe communities | |
| Organisation | FAIR PLAY BARNET | ref 221/E/CTY |
| Address | St Joseph's Pastoral Centre, St Joseph's Grove, NW4 | |

Relevant policy, aims and objectives

The Corporate Plan and the Children and Young People Plan, 2013/16, reflect a focus on improving outcomes for Barnet's younger population, creating the conditions for children and young people to develop skills and acquire knowledge to achieve their full potential and targeting those with disabilities or complex needs who require additional support. Strategic objectives of the Youth & Community Service include commissioning, supporting and enabling the voluntary sector to develop a wide range of provision, building capacity for vulnerable young people to engage in positive extra-curricular activities as part of leading a healthy lifestyle.

Development of the Big Society in Barnet seeks to make greater use of local creativity and entrepreneurial spirit and help galvanize new citizen- and community-led projects to address local issues. Community events that enable all sections of the community to mix and interact are an effective means of promoting social integration; building community cohesion; and generating pride in the borough.

Activities / proposal

Fair Play Barnet (FPB) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee formed in April 2012 following the merger of Barnet Play Association (BPA) and the Inclusive Play Opportunities Project (IPOP). Its core aim is to support children and young people to experience positive activities, enhancing their emotional and physical health, and to promote, co-ordinate and develop play provision across the borough. Services include:

- * intensive support for children and young people with disabilities or other special needs to access and participate in mainstream play and recreational activities;
- * open access play projects / holiday play schemes and help to set up play events and opportunities in the community;
- * football and music schools;
- * targeted youth work;
- * a volunteering scheme for young people;
- * a sensory equipment loan service;
- * accredited training courses in play work and quality development work with voluntary groups;
- * an information, advice and advocacy service.

FPB provides regular support to 400 of the 1,500 children in Barnet with a statement of special educational needs and is in contact with a further 630. In 2013, it provided services to another 4,900 children and trained or supported over 500 play and leisure providers, professionals and parents/carers.

This application concerns Barnet Play Day, an annual event in the borough run in conjunction with National Play Day, aimed at giving play opportunities to children aged 5 to 13 that may not

be available to them at other times and encouraging children, regardless of age, ability or background, to play together and interact. To be held in the grounds of St Joseph's Pastoral Centre on 6 August and with capacity for upwards of 500, the event will include giant inflatable equipment, parachute games, circus skills, outdoor adventure play, arts/crafts, face painting, a sensory zone and live music and performances. Trained staff and volunteers will ensure full participation by disabled children and young people.

The Children's Service endorses the value of Play Day as an effective way of reducing inequalities amongst children and young people; stimulating involvement in positive activities; promoting emotional well-being; and providing a building block for engagement with vulnerable families at risk of experiencing complex problems. The event, run before the merger by BPA, has been shaped over the years to enhance experience and encourage interactive play and continues to attract families from across the borough.

Cost and financial need

The amalgamation of BPA and IPOP into FPB was aimed at strengthening capacity; pooling resources; and taking advantage of economies of scale in reducing core costs. IPOP was awarded £93,000 by the Cabinet Office Transitions Fund to facilitate the merger.

62% of FPB's estimated income (of £587,825) in 2014/15 is from two sets of contracts with the Children's Service, one (extending to 2016) for the provision of early intervention and prevention services to disabled children and young people, including help for play groups and settings to achieve quality standards and the development of open access free play clubs in areas of deprivation (£122,244), and the other (extending to 2015) embracing short break activities; residential trips; and the provision of youth services (£239,500). The balance of income derives mainly from charges to clients who are not eligible for subsidy; contracts with other local authorities for the provision of short breaks; and charitable funding, both towards core costs and specific activities.

The grant request is for £2,500 towards a 2014 Play Day budget of £4,496, comprising the cost of staging activities; equipment hire; staff costs; administration; publicity; insurance; and cleaning. As previously, admission will be free of charge.

The corporate grants programme has supported Play Day on a number of previous occasions, most recently with a grant of £1,500 in 2013/14.

FPB's accounts for the nine months ended 31/12/2013 show a surplus of £39,573 on a turnover of £655,704, resulting in net current assets of £321,299, of which £308,043 were unrestricted funds, a working contingency equivalent to 60% of projected expenditure this year, twice the usual allowance made for such. The application suggests the organisation recorded a further surplus in 2013/14, the validity of which information is open to doubt and cannot be established until the accounts for the year are completed, which will not be until the autumn. But, based on the financial data presented, which includes another projected surplus in 2014/15, there is no justification for awarding a grant on this occasion.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

NIL

Date: July 2014