



Open Spaces Grants Review Working Party

Date: WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2015
Time: 3.30 pm
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: George Abrahams
Verderer Peter Adams
Deputy John Barker
Councillor Bryan Collier MBE
Martyn Foster
Alderman Gordon Haines
Alderman Ian Luder
Virginia Rounding
Graeme Smith

Enquiries: Natasha Dogra 020 7331 1434
Natasha.dogra@cityoflondon.gov.uk

NB: Part of this meeting could be the subject of audio or video recording

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT.**
3. **MINUTES**
To agree the minutes of the previous meeting.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 4)

4. **OPEN SPACES GRANTS REVIEW REPORT**
Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Discussion
(Pages 5 - 16)

OPEN SPACES GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY

Wednesday, 16 September 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces Grants Review Working Party held at the Guildhall EC2 at 9.30 am.

Present

Members:

Verderer Peter Adams	Alderman Ian Luder
Deputy John Barker	Virginia Rounding
Councillor Bryan Collier MBE	Graeme Smith
Martyn Foster	Jeremy Simons

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	Superintendent, Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	Superintendent, Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common
Bob Warnock	Superintendent, Hampstead Heath
Esther Sumner	Open Spaces Business Manager
Edward Wood	Controllers and City Solicitor's Department
Mark Jarvis	Chamberlain's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Alderman Haines and George Abrahams.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no declarations.

3. OPEN SPACES GRANTS REVIEW - PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION PAPER

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces informing Members that following the corporate cross cutting review of grants, the Open Spaces Committees agreed to establish a working party to consider the current position and to make recommendations in respect of establishing a 'jointly governed and accessible to all' grants programme for open spaces.

Members noted that the definition of a 'grant' for the purposes of the review was "*an award to an external organisation or individual to undertake an activity or produce an outcome which the City Corporation is not required to do under statutory obligation – or which furthers the charitable objects of the charity from which the payment is made - and which has been (or should be) awarded as a result of an openly publicised and transparent process of prioritisation against clearly pre-defined objectives.*" This definition excludes internal transfers between different parts of the City Corporation, commissioned services, discretionary donations, subscriptions, sponsorship, ongoing legal commitments and unallocated Community Infrastructure Levy.

Members thanked Officers for compiling the report and noted that the City of London, acting through the Common Council was the corporate trustee of the open spaces charities and under the current Committee terms of reference delegated the exercise of those trustee functions to various Committees of the Common Council.

Members noted that currently there was very limited monitoring in place and grants were given without outcomes being specified and agreed. The report noted that Members may find it helpful to consider instructing Officers to develop a consistent and proportionate framework for specifying and monitoring outcomes for grants. Although Members were supportive of this, particularly in respect of the small scale grants, Members gave a clear steer in respect of the role of the Open Spaces being one of open space provision rather than grant giving.

The Working Party noted that currently the open spaces committees provided some £90,000 of grant funding to local groups, however Members noted that a number of these grants could be considered 'commissioned activity or services' or 'events supported by the City of London Corporation' / 'events jointly run'. Members noted that the majority of the grant funding was provided to the Field studies Council, Lower Mole Countryside Management Project and Downlands Countrywide Management Project. Members noted in particular that there may be cases where it would be appropriate to consider alternative, strategic sources of grant funding rather than grants through the Open Spaces charities.

In response to a query, Members noted that the open spaces charities did not all benefit from endowment funds to meet the relevant charity's objects and where they did those funds were inadequate to meet the current costs of administering the charity and funding current activities. That deficit was met by the City from City's Cash. Resource allocation was the responsibility of Policy and Resources Committee, and budgets for Departments and Spending Committees were set by Finance Committee.

The Director said that a further £140,000 was provided through benefits in kind. The Superintendent of Epping Forest informed Members that some of the amounts listed were currently being reviewed, such as the benefit of providing land for parking; this would be considered by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in due course. In response to a query regarding providing insurance to friends groups and volunteer organisations, Members suggested that Officers should investigate the use of protocols signed by all major groups obliging the group to provide insurance for their volunteers.

The Chairman of the Committee drew Members attention to the amount of money granted to the Heath Hands groups which Officers said was spent on employing a Volunteer Development Officer. Members agreed that it would be beneficial to receive a report outlining the breakdown of funding granted to volunteer groups on a biannual basis. Officers agreed that this would help

inform discussions regarding benefits in kind within a broader corporate perspective.

Discussions ensued regarding the development of a grants policy statement and the potential to adopt a “de minimis” position in respect of small scale grants which were in line with this agreed policy. Membered noted that in effect grants would be removed from the Open Spaces local risk budget and management committees would be asked to make a bid to the Resource Allocation Sub Committee to support the new grants programme. Members agreed that Officers should be instructed to investigate the possibility of developing this policy and update Members at the next meeting of the working party on 25th November 2015 at 3:30pm.

Resolved – that Members views and guidance were received on the following issues, mindful of the Charity Commission guidance:

- The current position in respect of grant giving;
- The development of a grants policy statement and the potential to adopt a “de minimis” position in respect of small scale grants which were in line with this agreed policy;
- Monitoring and effectiveness; and
- Operation of a grants programme.

4. QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE GROUP

There were no questions.

5. ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 10:45am.

Chairman

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Open Spaces Grants Working Party - For discussion	25 November 2015
Subject: Open Spaces Grants Review – discussion paper	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Discussion

Summary

Subsequent to the first meeting of the Open Spaces Grant Review Working Party, officers have refined the list of groups that currently receive a grant from the two grant giving committees. They have also identified which other groups volunteer (appendix 1) within the City Of London's Open Spaces and under what structure and support they operate.

The report proposes the introduction of a Small Grants Policy for below a de-minimus amount and this is attached as appendix 2.

Members' views and guidance are sought on:

- the proposed draft Small Grants Policy which includes a de-minimus position
- the development of a larger grant policy if required
- the implications of providing an 'open and transparent' grant funding process in terms of increased interest and potential desire for additional committees to award grants.
- officers to gather further information with regard to 'Benefits in Kind' granted by Open Spaces
- whether a further Grant's Report is presented to:
 - an additional Open Spaces Grant Review Working Party meeting or
 - the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.

Main Report

1. Background

- 1.1. In September, the Open Spaces Grants Working Party reflected on the corporate review of grants which set out seven core principles informing the basis of a more consistent, coherent and co-ordinated approach to grant giving across the City Of London. These were the need to:
- Set out a clear, corporate offer
 - Allocate resources strategically
 - Streamline governance
 - Establish a common identity for City of London Corporation grants
 - Provide a consistent 'City of London' customer experience
 - Undertake a consistent, regular review of all City of London Corporation grants
 - Manage City of London Corporation grants more effectively and more efficiently.
- 1.2. Members were advised that approximately £94k of grant funding is given to local groups within Open Spaces.
- 1.3. Members were also advised that approximately £140k of 'benefits in kind' is also provided to local groups. Further work to assess the accuracy of this information will be undertaken. An approach as to how this should be managed in the future will be developed in tandem with the corporate approach being taken to 'benefits in kind'.
- 1.4. A number of issues were discussed in relation to grants funded by Open Spaces, being mindful of the Charity Commission guidance. Following this initial Working Party meeting, officers were asked to:
- a) investigate developing a grants policy taking into consideration the current allocation of grants of approximately £94k to local voluntary groups.
 - b) consider adopting a 'de-minimus' position in respect of small scale grants where they fall in-line with the proposed policy.
 - c) investigate the use of protocols signed by all major groups obliging the group to provide insurance for their volunteers.

2. Current Position

- 2.1. Table 1 below shows how the £94k grant funding is allocated.

Table 1

Committee	Recipient	Amount
Epping Forest & Commons	Field Studies Council	£53,000
Epping Forest & Commons	Lower Mole Countryside Management Project	£15,000
Epping Forest & Commons	Downlands Countryside Management Project	£15,000
Epping Forest & Commons	Trust for Conservation Volunteers	£3,000
Epping Forest & Commons	Friends of Kenley Airfield (Kenley Fun Day)	£1,000

Epping Forest & Commons	Friends of Stoke Common - insurance	£200
Epping Forest & Commons	Friends of Swaines Green - insurance	£200
Epping Forest & Commons	Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers – insurance	£200
Epping Forest & Commons	Bushwood Conservation Group	£500
Epping Forest & Commons	The Lake House Project	£500
Epping Forest & Commons	WREN Group	£500
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park	Parliament Hill Bowling Club	£4,500
Total		£93,600

- 2.2. Of these grants, three are identified as payments to groups for services that they are providing on behalf of the Corporation of London rather than grants to provide additional services. These payments are:

Table 2

Committee	Recipient	Amount
Epping Forest & Commons	Trust for Conservation Volunteers	£3,000
Epping Forest & Commons	Friends of Kenley Airfield (Kenley Fun Day)	£1,000
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park	Parliament Hill Bowling Club	£4,500
Total		£8,500

- 2.3. Six of the grants are for £500 or less. These grants support the provision of volunteer groups who assist in the management of the Open Spaces. These payments are:

Table 3

Committee	Recipient	Amount
Epping Forest & Commons	Friends of Stoke Common - insurance	£200
Epping Forest & Commons	Friends of Swaines Green - insurance	£200
Epping Forest & Commons	Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers – insurance	£200
Epping Forest & Commons	Bushwood Conservation Group	£500
Epping Forest & Commons	The Lake House Project	£500
Epping Forest & Commons	WREN Group	£500
Total		£2,100

- 2.4. These grant funded groups are not exclusive to the volunteer provision provided at the different Open Spaces. Appendix 1 details 22 different groups that volunteer approximately 37,000 volunteer hours on a regular basis in the City of London's Open Spaces.
- 2.5. Appendix 1 shows that some groups undertake their volunteering under the direct supervision of an Open Spaces officer and in such instances they are insured through the City Of London's insurance. Other organisations have their own Public Liability Insurance (PLI) or they receive a grant from Open Spaces which they use to pay their PLI. Both these groups would work without the direct supervision of an Open Spaces officer.
- 2.6. Members were keen that there be a de-minimus figure for the grant giving. A Small Grants Policy has been drafted for Members consideration in relation to

grants of £500 or less (appendix 2). The proposed policy is based upon the same level of grant funding being available from the appropriate committee each year.

- 2.7. Table four below, shows that three of the grants are of significantly greater value. Withdrawal of this funding without consultation would have a reputational impact on the City Of London. It is proposed that the relevant Superintendents work with Officers and these groups to identify the benefits that such funding brings to the City Of London; consider if there could be alternate means of provision and if required, develop a second Grant Policy which would be an above de-minimus figure.

Table 4

Committee	Recipient	Amount
Epping Forest & Commons	Field Studies Council	£53,000
Epping Forest & Commons	Lower Mole Countryside Management Project	£15,000
Epping Forest & Commons	Downlands Countryside Management Project	£15,000

- 2.8. Considering all the information provided, Members are asked for their views and guidance on the provision of an open and transparent grant making process in terms of the implications this may have if more groups are aware of the funding. Such implications may include:
- a) more groups than are currently funded apply for funding, as per the proposed policy principles.
 - b) some groups that don't currently ask City Of London to fund their insurance may make such a request.
 - c) other Open Spaces committees which currently do not provide grants may wish to make such provision.
- 2.9. How the additional funding process would be implemented is detailed in the Finance section below.

3. Finance

- 3.1. If it is resolved that an above de-minimus grant policy is required, the following will need to be taken into account:
- The funding for those payments confirmed to be grants would be passed to the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee (RASC).
 - RASC will bring together all grants streams formerly embedded in Departments in order to decide whether the existing distribution accords with policy priorities and potentially switching resources between themes – even potentially ceasing some streams and creating others.
- 3.2. These themed allocations will then potentially be available to fund relevant Open Spaces requirements.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. Having received Members views and guidance on the issues discussed, officers anticipate that further work will need to be undertaken and will aim for a further report to be available in May. Members are asked where they would like such further report to be considered:
- 1) at an additional Open Spaces Grants Review Working Party meeting
 - 2) at the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.

5. Implications

- 5.1. This report follows on from the cross-cutting review of grants. It is anticipated that effective, outcome focused grant giving will support the work of the Open Spaces charities; and the Corporate Plan's aim "to provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation" and the objectives of the Open Space Business Plan.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This report seeks Members views to enable the development of grant policy. It is anticipated that this will enable the development of an accessible and effective grants programme for the benefit of our charities and the communities they serve.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Support received from volunteer organisations

Appendix 2 – Draft Small Grants Policy

Background Papers:

Report of the Town Clerk - Grant Giving: Report of the Cross-Cutting Service Based Review, 2015

Open Spaces Grants Review Working Party papers and Minutes – Wednesday 16 September.

Gerry Kiefer

Business Manager, Open Spaces

T: 020 7332 3517

E: gerry.kiefer@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Support Received From Volunteer Organisations.

Open Spaces	Name	Type	Type of support given by COL	Amount of support £	Insurance	Hours volunteered per year (estimate)
Hampstead Heath & Highgate Woods	Heath Hands	Registered Charity	In-kind secondment of staff member		Own insurance	6500 hrs
Queen's Park	Transition Town Kensal to Kilburn	Constituted group	None		Own insurance	160
	Queen's Park Residents Association	Constituted group	None		Own insurance	140
West Ham Park	Friends of West Ham Park	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	230
	Community gardening group	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	260
City Gardens	Friends of City Gardens	Constituted group	None		Own insurance	4664 (combined)
	Barbican Wildlife Club	Constituted group	None		Own insurance	
	Petticoat Square Wildlife Club	Constituted group	None		Own insurance	
The Commons	Ashted Common Volunteers	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	7,000
	The New Hillbillies	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	1,000
	The Chain Gang	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	800
	Kenley Volunteers	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	1,300
	Riddlestown Volunteers	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	2,000
	WWaSPs	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	500
	Friends of stoke Common	Constituted group	Insurance	£200	Grant for insurance	6500 (combined)
	Burnham Beeches volunteers	Directly managed	Management of groups		City insurance	
Epping Forest	WREN group	Constituted group	None	£500	Own insurance	Unknown
	Epping Forest Conservation volunteers	Constituted group	Insurance	£200	Grant for insurance	4,806
	Bushwood Conservation Group	Constituted group	Training and management of group, tools	£500	City insurance	Unknown
	Friends of Swaines Green	Constituted group	Insurance	£200	Grant for insurance	150
	Epping Forest Centenary Trust	Registered Charity	None		None	4,746
	Lakehouse Lake Project	Constituted group	Tools and equipment	£500	Own insurance	200
	Tidy our flats	Constituted	Tools and		Own	650

		group	equipment		insurance	
	Calluna Conservation Group	Constituted group	Training and management of group, tools		Own insurance	60
	Friends of Highams Park	Constituted group	Training and management of group, tools		Own insurance	126
	Friends of Epping Forest High Beech Visitor Centre	Constituted group	Uniform and training		City insurance	2,093

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APPENDIX 2

DRAFT SMALL GRANTS POLICY

The City of London Open Spaces, with the exception of City Gardens and the Cemetery & Crematorium, are registered charities. As the trustee of these charities, the City of London and its members must ensure that the open spaces are carrying out their stated purposes for the public benefit.

The City of London recognises that third party non-profit organisations make a significant contribution to the objectives of the open space charities. Working in partnership with a variety of non-profit organisations is an effective method of furthering the aims of the charities.

Four of the Open spaces charities: Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath, Ashted Common and Coulsdon Common have assisted third party organisations by providing funding. This policy sets out the City of London's, acting on behalf of these charities, position on providing financial support to non-profit organisations or groups who assist in delivering the aims of these two charities.

The Charities Objectives

In summary these are:

Epping Forest - The preservation of Epping Forest in perpetuity by the City of London Corporation as the conservators of Epping Forest, as an open space for the reaction and enjoyment of the public.

Hampstead Heath - the preservation of Hampstead Heath for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Ashted Common - the preservation of the Common at Ashted for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Coulsdon and other Commons – the preservation of the Open Spaces known collectively as West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, and Coulsdon and Other Commons for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Priorities For Support

In line with the charities aims the priorities for funding will be:

- the preservation of the open spaces
- the provision of recreation for the public

The Trustees may prioritise specific types of projects / initiatives from year to year and these additional priorities will be recognised and highlighted within the application process.

The number of projects which can be supported is limited by the amount of funds available for distribution in any one year.

Do we want to specifically reference funding for insurance or leave it vague so that we don't need to change it in the future?

Principles

The Charities will apply the following principles:

- Funding will only be granted to projects that deliver activities exclusively within the boundaries of Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath, Ashted Common and Coulsdon Common Charitable Trusts.
- Applications will only be considered from *constituted* 'not for profit' organisations.
- The Charity will not make awards for sums in excess of £500.
- Grants will be awarded every two years commencing financial year 2016/17
- *How do we want to wean current groups off their current level of support?*

Exclusions

The Charity will not fund:

- Individuals.
- Retrospective applications i.e. a grant will not be considered where the expenditure for which the application is being made, has already been committed or spent.
- Ongoing recurring expenses

Grant Application Process

All applications for grants should be completed in conjunction with this policy.

The Grant Application Process will be promoted to the local communities surrounding the charitable Open Spaces.

There will be one closing date and projects which cover a period of no more than *two* years will be considered.

An application form must be completed by using the *online application form* on the COL's website (*www.xxxxx*) or by sending a hard copy of the application form which can be downloaded from the website to *xxxxx* address.

The following information will be required within the application:

1. Organisation name and contact details

2. Purpose and aims of the organisations
3. Geographical location of the project / beneficiaries
4. Details as to why the funding is requested including timeline for the project and why the activity would not be able to take place if the grant was not awarded.
5. Details as to how the organisation aims to successfully fundraise after the grant period is over
6. Details of the Outputs and Outcomes by which the charity will measure the benefit of the funding *e.g. xxx volunteer hours*, including details as to how these outputs and outcomes will be measured and reported back to the *Director of Open Spaces*.
7. *Names and contact details of two referees that support the application.*
8. *Copy of the groups constitution*
9. *Information regarding the identity and financial status of the group*
10. Details of the total cost of the project (costs broken down) and the amount of funding requested.
11. Be signed by the applicant to confirm that all information provided is correct and that the applicant undertakes to comply with the general terms and conditions of the grant.

Assessment Process

1. All applications will be subject to initial assessment to ensure they meet the basic principles for funding.
2. Applicants must be prepared to provide such other information as may reasonably be required in order to assist in the decision making process.
3. That the *Director of Open Spaces (or Chair and Deputy Chair of the Epping Forest and Commons committee and Chair / Deputy Chair of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Committee)* be authorised to award applications up to a maximum of £500
4. The timetable for the Small Grant Fund will bi-annually (*every other year*) be:
 - Promotion of the Grant Fund: *xxxx (when will budgets be confirmed?)*
 - Application closing date: six weeks after Grant Fund promoted
 - Assessment of grants: Weeks seven to nine
 - Applicants advised: Week ten
 - Funds awarded: Week *xxxxxx (need confirmation of period it takes to process a payment if not set up as a supplier)*
5. Applicants should note that it is likely that more applications will be received than funds are available.
6. Even if an application fits within the priorities of the Small Grant Fund and a detailed assessment has been made, it may still not be possible to provide a grant.

7. The trustees will not be obliged to provide an explanation to the applicant should his/her application be unsuccessful.
8. The decision of the *City Of London's Director of Open Spaces* (depending on 3 above) on whether to fund a grant is final.

Monitoring And Publication

In order to ensure the ongoing suitability of the awarded grants and the success of grant making activities, a system of monitoring and reporting will be put into place for each grant.

1. Monitoring visits by representative of the City of London's Open Spaces Department may be expected during the period of the grant.
2. The awarded organisations are required to recognise the funding received in any publicity or advertising material.
3. The outputs and outcomes detailed in the application are to be reported annually to the *City of London's Director of Open Spaces*. Reporting should not be onerous but should capture relevant information that is applicable for monitoring the value of grant making activities. Failure to provide such information may result in remaining / future funding being denied.
4. Grants must be used within the timescale stipulated in the application.
5. Those organisations receiving funding must ensure that:
 - a. all local applicable laws and working practices associated with the work are fully and properly applied e.g. health and safety, insurance etc.
 - b. That suitable safeguarding policies are in place in cases where the applicant work with children or vulnerable adults.
6. Grants are restricted funds. They may only be used towards the project costs outlined in the application submitted to the Trust or as subsequently agreed in writing.
7. Where the grant is for a specified project or purpose and where that project / purpose does not proceed or where any grant or part thereof remains unused, unused funds must be refunded to the City of London.
8. Where in the Charities opinion the grant has not been used for the purposes for which it has been given, the grant must be repaid.
9. The City of London's Director of Open Spaces will report on grant making activities on an annual basis to the relevant committee.