

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

### **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

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Amount</b>
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
<b>Total</b>		<b>£93,600</b>

- 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

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Amount</b>
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
<b>Total</b>		<b>£8,500</b>

- 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

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Amount</b>
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
<b>Total</b>		<b>£2,100</b>

- 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

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Amount</b>
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](mailto: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)
<b>Hampstead Heath &amp; Highgate Woods</b>	Heath Hands	Registered Charity	In-kind secondment of staff member		Own insurance	6500 hrs
<b>Queen's Park</b>	Transition Town Kensal to Kilburn	Constituted group	None		Own insurance	160
	Queen's Park Residents Association	Constituted group	None		Own insurance	140
<b>West Ham Park</b>	Friends of West Ham Park	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	230
	Community gardening group	Directly managed	Management of group		City insurance	260
<b>City Gardens</b>	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	
<b>The Commons</b>	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	
<b>Epping Forest</b>	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