

Committee(s)	Dated:
Policy & Resources Committee	17/11/2016
Open Spaces Committee	05/12/2016
Subject: Open Spaces Learning Programme – Short Term Funding Arrangements	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces and the Chamberlain	For Decision
Report author: Esther Sumner, Open Spaces	

Summary

This report addresses the funding of the new Open Spaces Learning Programme.

In 2015, Open Spaces developed an entirely new Learning Programme which supports the City's broader London agenda. The Learning Programme aims to engage over 30,000 people with green spaces over the next 3 years, creating positive impacts in five main areas; understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection. The programme takes an outcomes-based approach to deliver tangible change in under-represented communities, provides a robust evaluation framework to measure this change, and defines strong legacies for all the projects undertaken.

It had originally been anticipated that the new programme would in part be supported from property income. As the powers to generate additional income are not yet in place, it is proposed that the £200,000 originally intended to be delivered through property income be met directly by City's Cash, rather than via hypothecated property income. As property income comes "on-stream" this call on City's Cash would be reduced.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- To allocate up to £200,000 per year to support the Learning Programme for the years 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Main Report

Background

1. Following the end of the previous City Bridge Trust grant, it was agreed that a completely new approach to learning would be taken. As a result an entirely new, people centred and outcome focused, programme was developed. This new team is centrally coordinated within the Open Spaces Directorate and delivers an exciting new programme of projects across the open spaces.
2. When the programme was being developed and the current bid submitted to the City Bridge Trust, it was proposed that £200,000 of hypothecated property income would be used to support the programme. Some Members may be aware that a number of legislative changes are in progress, which are required to support this programme. Unfortunately these changes have not happened to the timescale originally anticipated.

The Learning Programme

3. In 2015, Open Spaces developed an entirely new Learning Programme which supports the City's broader London agenda.
4. The Learning Programme aims to engage over 30,000 people with green spaces over the next 3 years, creating positive impacts in five main areas; understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection. The programme takes an outcomes-based approach to deliver tangible change in under-represented communities, provides a robust evaluation framework to measure this change, and defines strong legacies for all the projects undertaken.

What we are trying to do				
Make a positive impact on the communities, who use, or border, our green spaces through learning activities				
By positive impact we mean...				
Understanding	Confidence	Involvement	Wellbeing	Connection
People understand and value the importance of our green spaces	People are confident to use our green spaces, as part of our activities or independently	People take positive action for, and get involved with, our green spaces	People have restorative and meaningful experiences in our open spaces	People develop a sense of place with our open spaces, and pass this down through generations

5. In the first 6 months of the programme, over 5000 people including school children, parents with under-5s, young people, volunteers and families have benefited from this work.
6. This programme has been generously funded by the City Bridge Trust to the sum of £400,000 over three years but does not meet the full costs of the programme which are illustrated in this table:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Programme Cost	£483,000	£421,000	£419,000
CBT Grant	£220,000	£130,000	£50,000
Schools Income	£21,000	£24,000	£27,000
Sponsorship target	0	£25,000 ²	£100,000
City Non-Cash Contribution	£32,000	£32,000	£32,000
RSPB Non-Cash Contribution	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
City Cash Contribution (originally hypothecated property income)	£200,000 ¹	£200,000	£200,000

1. The City's cash contribution was met this year by department SBR savings which were brought forward from 2017/18 to 2016/17. There was therefore no call on additional City Cash funding
2. The Learning team has submitted a funding bid to Esmée Fairbairn for £52,000 over two years starting in 2017/18. If this is achieved, this would reduce the call on City's cash contribution in 2017/18 by £25,000.

7. When funding arrangements were being considered prior to the grant application, it was proposed that in addition to the CBT grant and other grant applications made by the department, money generated from the letting or sale of surplus property would be used to fund the programme to a maximum of £200,000 per annum. It was anticipated that this funding would be hypothecated and come directly from property income. Unfortunately due to the longer than expected Parliamentary timetable this has not yet been possible.
8. When planning budgets for 2016/17, the department was able to make up the shortfall in the funding for the programme by bringing forward other SBR savings. This will not be possible for next year due to pressure already exerted by other projects being delayed.

Current Position

9. The Department of Open Spaces had expected some level of delay in the enabling legislation and was able to substitute the property income in 2016/17 for SBR savings brought forward from 2017/18. Unfortunately this is not possible again for next year or the following year, as the uncertainties of the legislative process have meant slower progress than anticipated requiring the department to substitute proposals for delivering agreed income targets. This report therefore requests that an additional £200,000 of City's Cash be allocated for the years 2017/18 and 2018/19. The call on this funding would reduce as the expected property income comes on stream.

Proposals

10. It is proposed that up to £200,000 per year is allocated to support the Learning Programme and that a full evaluation of the Learning Programme is undertaken in 2018, so that consideration can be given to appropriate long term funding.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. The Learning Programme has introduced a completely new model of learning provision to Open Spaces; focusing in particular on a people centred, outcomes based approach. This experience has been important in spreading the understanding of impacts and outcomes of the services across the Department and to other parts of the organisation. As the City of London continues to seek to demonstrate its impact and contribution to London and the nation, this outcomes based approach will become increasingly significant. The Learning Programme is a demonstration of the City's commitment to engaging with and improving the lives of disadvantaged communities.
12. The Learning Programme is a major mechanism for delivering the departmental objective of 'enriching the lives of Londoners by providing a high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities'. The achievement of these strategic outcomes also contributes to our charitable objectives of "recreation and enjoyment".
13. The Learning Programme supports the City of London's Education Strategy 2016-19 which states:
The City of London Corporation (the City Corporation) is committed to providing access to world class" education and learning opportunities. It will maximise the educational opportunities that the cultural, heritage and environmental assets offer to City residents, its schools, and residents throughout London.
14. The programme also supports: *KPP4 – Maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities and KPP5 – Increasing the outreach and impact of the City's cultural, heritage and leisure contribution to the life of London and the nation.*

Implications

15. The learning framework and programme aims to develop a robust evidence base for the impact of learning activities; to enable more effective fundraising, involve volunteers in the creation and management of learning activities, and work with new and existing partners; all to the furtherance of our charitable objectives of “recreation and enjoyment” for the public. There is a longer term aim for the project to increasingly achieve financial sustainability. However, it is likely that a core of City funding will remain necessary.
16. The Learning Programme is currently partially funded by the CBT. Without the expected property income or substitution funding, the programme will not be able to continue.

Conclusion

17. At the time of the CBT bid, it was intended that the Learning Programme would also be supported through hypothecated property income. The powers to enable this are not yet in place and there is therefore a funding shortfall. It is proposed that short term funding of up to £200,000 is allocated from City’s Cash for the years 2017/18 and 2018/19. It is further proposed that the success of the Learning Programme be evaluated in 2018 and if appropriate, a bid for a permanent increase in resource base be submitted.

Appendices

None

Esther Sumner

Open Spaces Business Manager

T: 020 7332 3517

E: esther.sumner@cityoflondon.gov.uk