

Committee:	Date:
The City Bridge Trust	12 th February 2014
Subject: Strategic Initiative: 'Greening the Economy' Conference	Public
Report of: Chief Grants Officer	For Decision
<u>Summary</u>	
<p>This paper proposes that you organise a conference with the theme 'Greening the Economy' in collaboration with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>That you approve a budget of up to £20,000 towards the cost of a conference entitled 'Greening the Economy' to be held in May 2014, to be charged against the City Bridge Trust Strategic Initiatives allocation for 2013/14.</p>	

Main Report

1.0 Background

- 1.1 As London's largest environmental funder, you have exercised considerable influence and leadership in this field, including developing new and strategic initiatives such as the London Sustainability Exchange (LSx) which you established with grants totalling £1.65m over a five year period. LSx promotes and communicates the concept of sustainable development across the charitable, public and business sectors.
- 1.2 You have also shown leadership through your *Greening the Third Sector* initiative which offers environmental audits to London charities. Learning from the original pilot of this initiative was shared in your occasional publication 'The Knowledge - Learning from London' and helped influence the Charity Commission's guidance on environmental responsibility and the role of charities. The pilot won a 'Green Apple' award in November 2007.
- 1.3 This paper proposes a conference to be held in May on the theme 'Greening the Economy' which will help to disseminate the considerable environmental experience and knowledge which you have amassed during the life of the Trust and enable your grantees to share theirs. Over the years the conferences which you have organised have demonstrated your expertise as convener, as a catalyst for change and for offering a forum for small organisations to make connections and to learn from and to be inspired by the work of others. Recent conferences

you have organised have included the dissemination of research undertaken for the Trust by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) on the future care needs of London's growing older population and launching the findings of Refuge and NSPCC's research into the needs of children and young people living with domestic violence. Both of these conferences attracted widespread media coverage, thereby raising the profile of the issues raised and enabling new audiences to be reached.

- 1.4 Last July, you held a conference in partnership with Barrow Cadbury Trust, LankellyChase Foundation and nef (New Economics Foundation) entitled 'Creative Solutions for Tough Times', a highly successful event which showcased practical and local responses to poverty and inequality and received much positive feedback.

2.0 Other Environmental Achievements

- 2.1 **Growing Localities:** The Trust has also demonstrated similar leadership at the community level. In 2012 – 2013 you launched your Growing Localities £2m grants programme to celebrate H.M. Queen's Diamond Jubilee. This was additional to your main grants programme London's environment.

- 2.2 Growing Localities comprised two themes, the first, 'Growing and Greening' encouraged small community organisations to grow their own food and to improve open spaces in their localities. The range of organisations which you supported was impressive and the work funded has changed the landscape of many of London's communities whilst often contributing to the local economy through a number of innovative food growing initiatives. Examples include the 'Edible Playgrounds' project of Trees for Cities, a school based project where children learn how to grow their own vegetables, the importance of nutrition and at the same time improve the appearance of the playground. 'Grow bags for Gourmets', a project of St Luke's Trust, helps older people grow their own food, even on tiny balconies. As well as environmental benefits, the scheme helps improve well-being and in a modest way contributes to the 'green economy'. You have supported bee-keeping initiatives, community growing projects and even helped plant orchards in London.

- 2.3 The programme's second strand, Horticultural Work Training, promoted horticultural work training and helped address the then rising unemployment figures. It is benefitting some of the most disadvantaged Londoners including those with learning difficulties, mental health issues, ex-offenders and young people described as NEET (not in education, training or employment). Work funded included a grant to St. Mungo Community Association, a major provider of services for homeless people. Its 'Putting Down Roots' project is a training ground for homeless and ex-homeless people where they can learn a variety of horticultural skills, helping prepare them to return to the world of work. Based in Merlior Street, formerly a derelict area used by people from a

nearby homeless centre, it has now been transformed into a Parisian style park with an area for food growing. As well as benefitting from therapeutic gardening, participants acquire horticultural skills which will help them back into the labour market. 'Putting Down Roots' has a business-like approach and some of the produce supplies a local restaurant thereby playing its part in the local economy.

- 2.4 Last year, you launched the 'Growing Localities Awards', in partnership with Lemos and Crane, which recognised and celebrated the very best of "growing and greening" initiatives from non-profit organisations large and small. A highly successful Awards Ceremony was held at the Barbican in April 2013. Feedback from the event was universally positive, with community groups particularly valuing the opportunity to network and share their experiences. As a consequence, you have agreed to continue the partnership in 2013/14. A total of 140 applications have been received this year (compared with 97 last year) and judging is due to take place in March 2014.
- 2.5 Case studies from the Awards were written up into your latest edition of 'The Knowledge – Learning from London' which particularly highlighted the role that participation in horticultural activities can play in increasing health and wellbeing amongst vulnerable people.
- 2.6 'Growing Localities' is now established as a recognised 'brand' amongst those working in London's environmental sector. Officers would like to use the proposed conference as an opportunity to consult on a possible successor scheme for this initiative that would build on its success to date.
- 2.7 **Get Young People Working – the Youth Offer:** This £3.2m initiative, launched in 2012, was one of your responses to the growing problem of youth unemployment. Each of the 32 London boroughs was offered £100,000 to work with a voluntary sector partner to improve the employability of young people who are NEET. Through work training and apprenticeships, literally hundreds of young Londoners are benefitting. Some of these boroughs are working with charities providing horticultural training. In Waltham Forest, for example, the charitable social enterprise, OrganicLea, trains young people with learning disabilities to grow food, which then supplies local shops and restaurants. Trainees also produce 'veg boxes' of seasonal food for the domestic market. It is an exemplar project which addresses several of your priorities and at the same time is making a significant contribution to the green economy.

3.0 Sharing the Learning – The Conference Proposal

- 3.1 Your environmental portfolio, as illustrated by the earlier paragraphs, therefore, contains a range of good practice and innovation which deserve wide dissemination. Funding for the environment is an area often overlooked by charitable funders who do not always recognise the

wider social, regenerative and economic benefits. Therefore, there is a real need to highlight the role of the environment in promoting healthy living, well-being and the employment opportunities it offers to people of all abilities.

- 3.2 It is proposed to work in partnership with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, a national funder, on a major conference to help spread the learning from your respective environmental programmes, with the theme of 'Greening the Economy'. A third funder is considering joining the collaboration, but this is yet to be confirmed. If it does join the collaboration, its financial contribution would reduce the amount of funding required from the Trust.
- 3.3 The conference would aim to:
- share learning and best practice among small local organisations and with larger, established environmental organisations, including think tanks
 - inform other funders and policy makers about the value of engaging with the environment and the wide benefits it brings to individuals, communities and the local economy in terms of increasing health and wellbeing, particularly amongst those who are vulnerable .
 - enable City Bridge Trust to consult on how to build on the success of its 'Growing Localities' work and design a successor programme (see paragraph 2.6).
- 3.4 It would target relevant grantees of City Bridge Trust and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, other funders, policy makers and other key commentators. A minister would be invited to speak but a key component would be an 'open space' session¹ where grantees can learn about different approaches, network and build collaborations. City Bridge Trust would benefit from this learning, not only to build on the success of 'Growing Localities' but also to look at where, for example, a targeted small grants initiative might be most effective.
- 3.5 A multi-agency steering group comprising funders, representatives from environmental agencies and voluntary organisations would advise on content and detailed arrangements.
- 3.6 It is suggested that conference would take place at a City venue, possibly Guildhall or The Barbican Centre. The Chief Grants Officer is currently investigating suitable venues, possible discounts/ free lets. Depending on the outcome of this, there may be a reduction in the venue hire budget line.

¹ 'Open Space' is a type of facilitation that aims for maximum participation, energy and focus

4.0 Cost

4.1 The cost would be as follows:

• City/Central venue hire, lunch, refreshments, AV hire	22,650
• Publicity and Conference Report	2,500
• Cost of filming the event	2,500
• Conference facilitation	1,350
• Contingencies/sundries	<u>2,000</u>
TOTAL	30,000

4.2 It is proposed that the Trust and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation each provide half of this amount, that is, £15,000 each. In addition, you are asked to approve a budget to meet the Trust's costs in organising the event (£3,000) and to engage a media agency, such as Champollion, to provide press and media support surrounding the event (£2,000) making a total of up to £20,000. As stated earlier, this is the maximum that will be required and the budget may reduce if venue hire costs are less than currently estimated and/or if a third funder comes on board.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The proposed conference represents a real opportunity to add value to your grant-making by demonstrating your commitment to sharing and embedding learning.

5.2 Collaborating with other funders obviously reduces the cost to the Trust of the conference costs but other positives of working in partnership include an opportunity to bring together national, regional and local initiatives to highlight innovative practice and help local organisations achieve national recognition.

5.3 The collaboration would also offer the opportunity for some of your grantees to meet other funders who may be interested in funding some of the successful models, thereby increasing the sustainability of other work in which you have invested.

5.4 Furthermore, the conference would provide an opportunity for the Trust to consult on how a successor programme to your 'Growing Localities', initiative might be constructed and targeted and where it might most effectively develop a small grants programme.

5.5 The experience of other collaborators is that a partnership approach sends a stronger message, results in a greater profile and attention on the core issue the conference is covering, as was demonstrated in the 'Creative Solutions for Tough Times' conference you held in July 2013 in partnership with Barrow Cadbury Trust, LankellyChase Foundation and Nef (New Economics Foundation). The proposed multi-agency steering group to advise on the detail of the conference will build a collaborative approach to the delivery of this proposed conference.

Recommendation

That you approve a budget of up to £20,000 towards the cost of a conference entitled 'Greening the Economy' to be held in May 2014, to be charged against the City Bridge Trust Strategic Initiatives allocation for 2013/14.

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