

Committee	Date:
City Bridge Trust	26 th November 2015
Subject: Strategic Initiative: Hampstead Heath	Public
Report of: Chief Grants Officer	For Decision

Summary

This report sets out a proposal from the charity, Hampstead Heath, on behalf of the charities: Epping Forest; Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn; and West Ham Park (the "Open Spaces"), for a three-year learning programme, *Green Spaces, Learning Places*, designed to improve Londoners' understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing and sense of connection with respect to London's open spaces. The projects will take place at Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath, West Ham Park, Wanstead Flats, Queen's Park and Bunhill Row.

The programme has been designed in consultation with communities local to those spaces in order to understand main barriers to accessing green spaces. By taking the learning from pilot projects run elsewhere in London, the programme will target some of those most disadvantaged communities in London and it is intended that the work will be self-sustaining at the end of the three years. It is also proposed to work in partnership with others in order to develop a sector-specific evaluation toolkit that will enable a standard approach to outcomes and impacts; guidance on different approaches to sustainable funding; and guidance on scalability and transferability.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.
- Agree a grant of £400,000 over three years (£220,000; £130,000; £50,000) towards an environmental learning programme (under the Improving London's Environment strand of your policy) designed to improve London's engagement and sense of wellbeing with respect to green spaces; as well as a sector-specific evaluation toolkit.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation is the charity trustee of the Open Spaces applying to the City Bridge Trust for grant funding. You have supported the work of these Open Spaces twice before, with a grant of £3m over three years awarded in April 2011 and received by the charity, Epping Forest to benefit both Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath. A grant of £388,000 over one

year was approved in March 2014 and was received by the charity Hampstead Heath.

2. The role of green spaces in supporting good health and wellbeing is well-documented. A number of the open spaces managed and administered by the City of London Corporation as charity trustee are located in areas of high disadvantage – notably West Ham Park, Wanstead Flats and Queen’s Park. Hampstead Heath, whilst characterised by areas of high economic prosperity and wealth, also borders one of the most deprived wards in London, Gospel Oak, which is ranked in the worst 4% of London boroughs on the index of multiple deprivation. Bunhill Fields are located in the Bunhill ward of LB Islington and is ranked in the worst 5% of boroughs on the same index. It also serves as an open space for the wards of Hoxton and Haggerston in LB Hackney.
3. However, it is clear that these spaces are not being accessed by the most disadvantaged communities who stand to benefit most from them.
4. It is recognised that a fresh approach is needed in order to ensure that those most disadvantaged, and often living on the doorstep of some of London’s best open spaces, not only use them, but use them in an engaged way and with confidence. For example, one young pupil taking part in a school session at Hampstead Heath said *“I can see this place from my bedroom window but I didn’t think I was allowed to come here.”*
5. By taking a targeted approach to the recruitment of local volunteers and by working closely with local community centres, family centres, play centres, playgroups and schools, this proposal aims to address this issue over the next three years and leave a lasting legacy that will continue the work in a sustained way.

Green Spaces, Learning Spaces Programme - a new approach

6. Five new strands of work are proposed, as follows:

i) Guerrilla Interpretation

Building on the success of a pilot programme at Hampstead Heath, the charity and its partners will continue its partnership with RSPB, in order to train 45 local volunteers as ‘guerrilla interpreters’ to help families explore their natural surroundings through a series of regular events. This will take place principally at West Ham Park and Wanstead Flats, both areas with high levels of disadvantage. Introductory taster sessions will be held, targeted at the most under-represented communities, followed by regular interpretation events. It is anticipated that 3,000 families will benefit over three years. The volunteers will be supported and guided by the partnership and, at the end of the three years, it is anticipated that the project will be firmly embedded within the local community and able to continue through the team of experienced volunteers.

ii) Green Space Play

One of the most effective ways of engaging the under 5's with the natural world is through the provision of play opportunities. A study commissioned by the London Sustainable Development Commission highlights that children and young people in London experience more barriers to accessing nature than elsewhere in the UK. The number of children playing in natural places on a regular basis has declined from 40% in the 1970s to 10% in 2010 (Natural England 2010). A previous study by the National Trust in 2008, found that inner city children in disadvantaged areas face greater barriers to natural play due to the attitude of adults, authorities and parents to the perceived risk of outdoor play. The Green Space Play strand of this programme will aim to address these barriers by building relationships with community centres, family centres and playgroups to promote natural play opportunities to their constituents. This strand of the work will target those disadvantaged communities that border the southern edge of Hampstead Heath. Green Space Play events will introduce parents to natural play which will then be followed by the creation of play trails to encourage independent exploration and play. These will be available to download, thereby creating a legacy for this strand of work at the end of three years. It is anticipated that 2,000 children and parents will participate in 90 natural play events over three years, and that 10 local volunteers will be recruited, trained and supported to deliver these events.

iii) Green Space Friendly Schools

Working with schools to engage children with nature is a critical part of this programme. Whilst around 75% of schools do have a school garden, approximately 30% of London schools lack any other natural features, such as trees, hedgerows, rough grass areas or wildflowers. Green Space Friendly Schools comprises two key elements:

- Booked Sessions
These sessions will introduce young people to the natural environment and give teachers the skills and confidence to deliver the curriculum in this area. They will engage 20,500 students over the three years and will take place in the Education Centre near Gospel Oak on Hampstead Heath and at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Centre in Epping Forest. 18,000 primary schools will take part and, for the first time, the sessions will be opened up to secondary schools. It is anticipated that 2,500 students from 5 secondary schools, in partnership with the Field Studies Council, will also participate.
- Embedded approach
Following a pilot on Hampstead Heath, it is proposed to work with schools near West Ham Park in LB Newham that do not have access to nature in their school grounds. Over three years, it is anticipated that 9,000 students from 15 schools will benefit and that 20 local volunteers will be recruited, trained and supported to deliver green space friendly schools activities. The aim will be to work with teachers, senior leadership and students to embed outdoor learning within the school.

Following the pilot of a charging system for its schools work, it is proposed to introduce a structured pricing system over the three years that will help to sustain this strand of the programme at the end of the funding period. In addition, the two elements of this strand will recruit, train and support 20 volunteers each who will continue to deliver the work in schools at the end of the three years.

iv) Green Talent

This strand of the programme will be delivered in partnership with London Youth as part of its Lottery-funded “Talent Match London” initiative which aims to support long-term unemployed young people into positive and productive futures. Opportunities will be provided for young people to learn about the natural environment and to explore potential career paths in the sector. Over three years, a total of 120 young people will benefit – 100 will attend one-day ‘taster’ sessions; 45 will benefit from week-long placements, whilst a total of 6 will be placed on longer-term work experience placements. In addition, 15 volunteers will be recruited to help deliver the taster sessions in the CoLC-run open spaces.

v) Evaluation Toolkits

The final strand of this programme will be delivered in partnership with London Parks and Green Spaces Forum (LPGSF). It will aim to harness the learning and experience gained from the ‘Green Spaces, Learning Spaces’ programme and to develop a sector-specific toolkit for evaluation which takes a standard approach to the measurement of outcomes and impacts, as well as guidance on sustainability, transferability and scalability.

LPGSF aims to promote best practice, share knowledge and provide mutual support for managers of green spaces and environmental charities in London. It also acts as a link between park users, managers and policy makers to ensure that views of the public are represented.

It is proposed that the Green Spaces, Learning Places project team will set up, chair and maintain an action group as part of the LPGSF on learning and engagement. The action group will work to develop guidance and best practice in developing green space learning initiatives. In particular, it will lead the development of a sector-specific toolkit for evaluation with a standard approach to outcomes and impacts, guidance on sustainable approaches to running environmental projects and guidance on transferability and scalability. It is proposed to involve City Bridge Trust (CBT) in this development to ensure that the toolkit is helpful to CBT’s grantees funded under its environmental programme and more widely.

It will also work closely with its partner organisations to ensure that learning from their respective projects informs best practice. For example, learning from a previous partnership with RSPB to find new ways of engaging hard-to-reach groups on its ‘Wild About Hampstead Heath’ project informed RSPB’s subsequent partnership with the Royal Parks in developing ‘guerrilla interpretation’ events at Regent’s Park.

Monitoring of previous grants

7. Monitoring and evaluation reports from the previous grants have been of a good standard. Key highlights included in the latest report on the previous grant include:
- 16,384 people directly engaged with the environment through various project activities.
 - 23,000 veteran oak and beech pollards mapped and monitored for tree disease by staff and volunteers, resulting in the UK's largest database.
 - 135 volunteers gained skills and knowledge in the environmental sector through training and conservation tasks.
 - 111,599 students learned about the cultural and environmental value of ecosystems and trees.
 - 9 transects mapped and monitored by volunteers to record birds, butterflies and plants.
 - 18 family learning events and school sessions developed to teach people about the natural world.
 - 1,020 hours of walking for health resulted in a greater sense of wellbeing.

Cost

8. A detailed budget for the proposal for the next three years has been provided, a summary of which is contained in the table below:

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Costs	Staff Costs	368,228	363,228	357,228	1,088,684
	Project/running costs	114,000	60,500	60,500	235,000
	Total	482,228	423,728	417,728	1,323,684
Contributions	Non-cash contributions CoLC	31,775	31,775	31,775	95,325
	Non-cash contributions RSPB	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
	Cash contributions CoLC	200,000	200,000	200,000	600,000
	Income from schools	21,000	24,000	27,000	72,000
Request from CBT		219,453	157,953	148,953	526,359
Recommended by CBT		220,000	130,000	50,000	400,000

9. Hampstead Heath and the partner charities are committed to raising funds from other sources, including other trusts and foundations and work is underway in this respect. It is recommended that you fund the full amount requested in Year 1 with a taper in Years 2 and 3, to reflect the potential to

source alternative grant funding. The amount recommended is therefore £400,000 over three years (£220,000; £130,000; £50,000).

Financial Information

Year-end at 31 March	2013/14 Audited Accounts	2014/15 Audited Accounts
Income and Expenditure	£	£
Income	9,369,678	11,317,895
Expenditure	8,422,367	8,731,964
Comprising:		
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(120,155)	(108,660)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	9,234	(3,198)
Capital grants from the City Corporation	1,058,232	2,697,789
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources	947,311	2,585,931
Revaluation gain on investments	2,044,374	1,825,189
Total movement in funds	2,991,685	4,411,120
Unrestricted Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(1.3%)	(1.0%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	183,924 (2.0%)	170,391 (1.5%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	45,186	(214,514)
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.1	(0.3)
Reserves Policy target	n/a	n/a
How many months' worth of expenditure	n/a	n/a
Free reserves over/(under) target	n/a	n/a

10. Whilst the charity does not hold unrestricted free reserves it does have other funds amounting to £30.7m which are largely invested in managed investments and generate income (£1.3m in 2014/15) to finance the charitable activities of the trust.
11. The reserves policy of the trust does not specify a free reserves target but sets out that the original permanent endowment of the trust of £15m in 1989 (now worth £30.7m) should be invested to produce income to cover a proportion of the running costs of Hampstead Heath.
12. The cost of generating funds is low as the majority of income is generated from ongoing grants and managed investment income.
13. The increase in income in 2014/15 of £1.9m is due to capital funds provided from City's Cash towards the Hampstead Heath Pond project which are expected to be expended during 2015/16.

Legal Implications

14. The Comptroller and City Solicitor has advised that the open spaces charities which will benefit from this grant are eligible to secure funding from the City

Bridge Trust under the Improving London's Environment strand of the grants policy which has been agreed in respect of the application of the Bridge House Estates charity's income surplus to that retained to maintain and support the five bridges. The policy has been settled following public consultation and addresses particular needs of the public within Greater London in pursuit of the charitable objects of Bridge House Estates set down in the *cy-pres* Scheme.

15. The City Bridge Trust Committee, in exercising the City of London Corporation's duties and powers as trustee of the Bridge House Estates charity must act in the best interests of that charity and for the public benefit, and any conflicts of interest which arise must be properly managed. The City Corporation's role as trustee of the applicant charities gives rise to a conflict of interest and raises additional matters which have been carefully considered in recommending the grant to the Committee, having regard to previous specialist legal advice on this point.
16. The City Bridge Trust Committee may fund discretionary activities and services otherwise provided by the City Corporation acting in a different capacity, such as those proposed in this case subject to:
 - (a) those purposes being charitable and for the benefit of the public within Greater London (i.e. any benefit to the City Corporation must be incidental to ensure that the decision does not give rise to "self benefit");
 - (b) the City Corporation not being relieved of any legal obligation to fund those activities/services (i.e. to address "self benefit")
 - (c) decision-making should be transparent with actual and perceived conflicts of interest or loyalty being managed in accordance with Charity Commission guidance.
17. The conditions set out at sub-paragraphs 12 (a) and (b) are met. In order to meet the third condition at sub-paragraph 12(c), it is recommended in this case, having regard to the City of London Members' Code of Conduct that Members of this Committee who are also Members of the relevant City Corporation Committees responsible for administering the Open Spaces charities which will benefit from the grant, should not participate in the discussion or vote on the application although any decision is of course for the Member concerned.

Conclusion

18. The benefits of engagement with the natural environment and health and wellbeing are unarguable. Hampstead Heath and the partner charities are highly committed to reach some of London's most disadvantaged communities over the next three years.

19. They are also highly committed to working in a way that is sustainable. The projects set out in their proposal are designed to leave a clear legacy at the end of the funding period and to be self-sustaining.
20. Additionally they are highly committed to attracting funds from new sources, including trusts and foundations and are making progress in this respect. The recommendation at a level lower than that requested reflects the competition for your resources but the taper should allow reasonable time for other applications to come to fruition.
21. Finally, Hampstead heath and the partner charities are highly committed to learning from its projects and to leave tools for the sector that will enable outcomes and impacts to be measured using standard metrics that mean that it will be possible to understand their overall impact, and enable others to do the same.

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