

Committee(s)	Dated:
Open Spaces and City Gardens – For decision	01 Feb 2016
Subject: Implementation of Grants Review	Public
Report of: Deputy Town Clerk	For Decision
Report author: Neil Davies, Head of Corporate Performance and Development	

Summary

As part of the Service Based Review, a review of the grant giving activities of the City of London Corporation under City Fund and City's Cash was commissioned. The results of the review were reported to Members during 2015, and a new approach to grant giving was agreed, with a target implementation date of 1 April 2016.

One of the key principles of this new approach was to consolidate the City Corporation's grants programmes under "a smaller number of distinct themes which reflect the City Corporation's priorities". Proposals for four themes, including "Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment" are being presented to the Policy and Resources Committee in February for their approval. For each agreed theme, it is intended that the governing Committee be consulted on sub themes and associated eligibility criteria, before applications for grants under the new arrangements are invited.

As this Committee does not meet between the date of the Policy and Resources Committee in February and the target commencement date for the new arrangements, Members' approval is being sought to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to consider the matters outlined above, should the Policy and Resources Committee agree to an open spaces/natural environment theme.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to agree the sub themes and eligibility criteria for the proposed grant giving theme of "Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment", subject to that theme being agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Main Report

Background

1. As part of the Service Based Review, a cross-cutting review of the grant giving activities of the City of London Corporation under City Fund and City's Cash was commissioned. The objectives were to analyse the grants programmes offered by the Corporation to develop a more consistent approach to grant giving, improve value for money and increase impact.
2. Following the agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee to the overall approach proposed, the review report was considered by the various Committees and Boards with responsibilities for grant giving. This included the Open Spaces and City Gardens; Epping Forest and Commons; Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park; and West Ham Park Committees.
3. One of the key principles of the agreed approach was to consolidate the City Corporation's grants programmes under "a smaller number of distinct themes which reflect the City Corporation's priorities".

Current Position

4. Following the recruitment of a dedicated project manager in November 2015, work has been undertaken to investigate how the detailed recommendations and principles identified within the grants review report should be implemented. The target commencement date for the new arrangements is 1 April 2016.
5. The broad outline for the new process is:
 - Resource Allocation Sub Committee/Policy and Resources Committee identifies priorities for grant giving activities, and sets the annual quantum for each programme;
 - The relevant Service Committee(s) agree appropriate sub-themes and eligibility criteria and consider applications related to priorities within their area of responsibility, and
 - The Finance Grants Sub Committee monitors the grants which have been awarded and reports annually to the Resource Allocation Sub Committee on the effectiveness of the scheme.
6. Following consideration of the potential themes identified in the review report, and discussion with Chief Officers, four funding themes for 2016-2018 are being proposed to the Policy and Resources Committee in February. These include the theme of "Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment", governance for which would be the responsibility of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.
7. Your officers have also considered sub themes that could be adopted by your Committee, should the Policy and Resources Committee agree to the proposal for an open spaces/natural environment theme. The draft sub-themes are:
 - Connecting communities with their green spaces;
 - Promoting nature conservation;

- Promoting sport and physical activities, and
 - Supporting community events.
8. Your officers will also be developing relevant eligibility criteria to be applied to grant applications under the agreed themes. As far as possible, the application process will be standardised across the themes, and administrative management will be consolidated under the Chief Grants Officer. The Chief Grants Officer has also been involved in the development and oversight of the work programme to implement the review recommendations.

Proposal

9. As this Committee does not meet between the date of the Policy and Resources Committee in February and the target commencement date for the new arrangements, your Committee is asked to give early consideration to the prospective sub-themes outlined at paragraph 7 above and agree to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve the final sub-themes and eligibility criteria. These would also be circulated to the full Committee ahead of sign-off for information and any further comments.

Appendices: None

Background Papers

Grant Giving: report of cross-cutting Service Based Review, presented to:

- Open Spaces Committee 8 June 2015
- West Ham Park Committee 27 July 2015

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