

<b>Committee</b>  Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	<b>Dated:</b>  6 June 2016
<b>Subject</b> Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment grant Funding Theme	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director, Open Spaces	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Gerry Kiefer, Business Manager	

### Summary

Policy and Resources Committee has approved a new grant scheme following a recent 'grants review'. As part of this a new two year (2016 – 2018) grant funding theme has been created entitled 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' and an allocation of approx. £110k funding has been assigned to this over a two year period.

This discussion paper identifies the main criteria which officers request a lead from Members on, to help them develop a final grant criteria paper for consideration at this Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee on 4 July 2016.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

Direct officers as to their preference in relation to the following grant criteria:

- funding parties
- geographical area
- number of sub-themes
- sub themes
- value of grant awards
- length of grant
- number of funding rounds

#### 1. Main Report

##### Background

- 1.1. In March 2016, Resource Allocation Sub Committee (RASC) and Policy and Resources Committee (PRC) received a report outlining the need to; increase the strategic impact of grant-making, ensure that grants are managed more efficiently and effectively and improve the consistency and quality of the customer experience.

- 1.2. One outcome of the report was that four overarching funding themes would be implemented for a two year grant programme (2016-2018). These grants would be established and administered by the Central Grants Unit .The four funding themes are:
- Stronger Communities
  - Education and Employment Support
  - Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment
  - Inspiring London through Culture.
- 1.3. The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee terms of reference were amended 'To take joint responsibility for allocating grants in relation to Open Spaces taking into account of any views or recommendations expressed by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, West Ham Park Committee or Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee as relevant' and this amendment was approved in the annual report to the Court of Common Council in April 2016.

## **2. Current Position**

- 2.1. Resource Allocation Sub Committee and Policy and Resources Committee resolved that the geographical area and grant eligibility criteria for the four funding themes would be left to the discretion of the decision making Committees.
- 2.2. City's Cash funding of £72,569.83 per annum has been allocated to the 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment theme' over two years (£145,139.67 in total). However, it should be noted that this total funding amount does NOT include deductions for the management fee. The more resource intensive the grant criteria to administer the higher the management fee is likely to be. This management fee has yet to be determined but it is anticipated that the available funding will be in the region of £110k over the two years.
- 2.3. The central grants unit is aiming for the four funding themes to 'go live' in September and therefore the grant criteria will need to be agreed to enable the application form to be developed and the grant funding opportunity promoted.

## **3. Options**

- 3.1. Members are asked to discuss the following different approaches to direct the development of the funding criteria.
- funding parties
  - geographical area
  - number of sub-themes
  - sub themes
  - value of grant awards
  - length of grant
  - number of funding rounds
- 3.2. Members are requested to consider that from both an applicants and the Grant Unit's perspective, the simpler the approach the easier for all.

### **Funding parties**

- 3.3. Ordinarily grants are invited from constituted organisations as this provides a more robust and auditable funding approach which reduces the reputational risk to the COL. This would include registered charity's; registered community interest companies; registered charitable incorporated organisations; charitable companies (incorporated as a not-for-profit); exempt or excepted charity; registered charitable industrial and provident societies or charitable cooperatives (bencom) or constituted voluntary organisation. Generally grants to individuals are very specific and are usually only made to an individual when they are the primary beneficiary e.g. support for training/expedition.
- 3.4. Members are asked to consider if they wish to fund:
- a) only groups / organisations
  - b) only individuals
  - c) both

### **Geographical area**

- 3.5. Members are asked to discuss whether they wish to accept applications from across London or from a more restricted area. Suggested options for discussion are:
- a) Fund projects that take place entirely within the COL's Open Spaces.
  - b) Fund projects where the majority of impact will be on the COL's Open Spaces.
  - c) Fund projects that take place within Greater London which may have little or no direct benefit to the COL's Open Spaces.

### **Sub Themes**

- 3.6. The overall funding theme agreed by RASC and PRC is 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' and it is requested that each grant decision making committee discuss and agree any appropriate sub-themes for their specific theme.
- 3.7. Members are requested to direct officers as to the number of sub-themes they would like.
- 3.8. To initiate discussion some suggested sub themes for this funding could be for projects which:

If a) or b) is chosen in paragraph 3.5 in relation to 'geographical area'

- a) deliver the Open Spaces charitable objectives of the 'preservation of open space' and/or 'provision for recreation and enjoyment of the public'.
- b) deliver actions/outcomes within the Open Space's Management Plans
- c) support the development of Col Open Spaces 'Friends of Groups' (FOG) – e.g. website development, training, FOG led activities and

events to increase awareness and involvement but excluding ongoing day to day costs.

d) any of the suggestions listed below (e to k)

If a) or b) or c) is chosen in paragraph 3.5 in relation to 'geographical area'

- e) focus on rough sleeping within open spaces
- f) focus on conservation
- g) focus on heritage
- h) connect communities with their green spaces
- i) focus on the use of open spaces to improve the quality of life for people with mental health issues
- j) reduce the impact of the use of open spaces as public sex environments
- k) focus on education to reduce the amount of litter and flytipping within open spaces

### **Grant finance**

**3.9.** A total of approximately £110k funding should be available for 'award' across 2016/17 and 2017/18. Members are asked to consider their preference in relation to the number of funding rounds; the value of the grants awarded and the length of the grant, recognising that the decisions on each are inter-connected.

**3.10. The approach to the number of funding rounds could be:**

- a) One funding round
- b) More than one funding round
- c) Different number of funding rounds for each sub-theme which could also relate to the value of funding to be awarded and the length of the grant

**3.11. The value of grant awards could be:**

- a) A maximum and minimum value that is the same for all sub-themes, for example £5k to £25k
- b) A maximum and minimum value that is different for each sub-theme e.g. £5k to £10k for a sub-theme which is aimed to attract smaller local organisations and a larger amount for a sub-themes which is anticipated to attract larger organisations and the grant duration is for a longer period.
- c) One grant value for each sub-theme with no maximum or minimum value.
- d) Applicants for larger grants could be asked to contribute a percentage of match funding / support 'in kind'.

**3.12.** It is felt that a lower level of grant e.g. £5k will be more manageable by many of the smaller 'friends of groups' or smaller voluntary organisations who may struggle to spend larger sums.

**3.13.** The number of funding rounds and the value of grants would inform the **length of grant** (and visa-versa) and these could be that the:

- a) Grant duration is fixed so projects have to be completed within a set timeframe e.g. 31 March 2018.
- b) Grant duration is determined by the applicant but finishing no later than 31 March 2018
- c) Grant is for a specific period e.g. six months determined by the funding round closure dates
- d) Grant is for two years e.g. end August 2018 so long as all funding is claimed/awarded by 31 March 2018.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1. Officers will use the information arising from discussion of this paper to present a final report for agreement in July 2016. If agreed the final paper will set the criteria for funding.
- 4.2. There will be a standardised application form which the Grants Unit will make available online, via a dedicated web page on the City of London Corporation website and will be promoted by the Open Spaces Department. The Grants Unit will be resourced so that they can administer, manage, monitor and evaluate the 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' grants as per their normal small grants funding process.

#### **Background Papers:**

Policy and resources Committee, March 2016 'Implementation of Grants Review'

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