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| Committee Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee | Dated: 18 July 2016 |
| Subject Implementation of Grant Theme - Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment | Public |
| Report of: Director, Open Spaces | For Decision |
| Report author: Gerry Kiefer, Business Manager | |

Summary

Following discussion with this Committee on 6 June 2016, this report provides Members with the proposals for the granting of awards under the 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' Central Grant Programme Theme. Appendix 1 lists the Grant Eligibility Criteria which proposes that grants should be awarded to constituted groups/organisations for projects where the majority of impact will be on the COL's Open Spaces. Five sub-themes are proposed covering biodiversity, conservation, improving mental ill-health, behaviour change in relation to littering and connecting communities with their green spaces.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment Grant Eligibility Criteria detailed in Appendix 1.
- Agree to delegate authority to the Policy and Resources Committee to approve levels of staffing and associated management fee.

Main Report

1. Background

- 1.1. At this Committee on 6 June 2016 a report was presented outlining to Members that central funding for four new grant themes had been made available over a two year period (2016 to 2018). One of these four themes is 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment'. The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee has been tasked with determining and agreeing the Grant Eligibility Criteria. A total of £145,139.67 (including the central grant unit management fee costs which have yet to be determined) has been set aside for 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' and it is anticipated that funding in the region of £110k will be available to award.

2. Current Position

- 2.1. On 6 June 2016 Members discussed a range of issues including; funding parties, geographical area, sub themes, value of grant awards, length of grant, number of funding rounds. These discussions have informed and enabled officers to develop the proposed Grant Eligibility Criteria (GEC) detailed within appendix 1 of this report.

2.2. Members were interested to know what the current City Bridge Trust (CBT) funding themes were, so as to avoid any overlap with potential sub-themes within Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment. The current CBT themes are:

- English for Speakers of Other Languages
- Improving Londoners' Mental Health
- Improving London's Environment
- Making London More Inclusive
- Making London Safer
- Older Londoners
- Reducing Poverty
- Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Offenders
- Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector
- Eco-audits
- London Youth Quality Mark Awards
- Arts Apprenticeships

3. **Proposal**

3.1. The proposed GEC is detailed in Appendix 1. Members' attention is drawn to the following points extracted from the proposed GEC

3.2. **Geographical area** - Grants issued through the 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' theme will be awarded to projects where the majority of impact will be on the COL's Open Spaces.

3.3. **Funding parties** - Grants will only be awarded to constituted groups / organisations and not to individuals.

3.4. **Funding rounds** - One grant round will be established; the opening and closing date for which will be determined in consultation with Chief Officers, once all four corporate grant themes have finalised their GEC (this will ensure that the required grants administration is evenly spaced across all four themes).

3.5. **Sub themes** – There will be five funding sub-themes:

- a) connecting communities with their green spaces
- b) improving the conservation value of the open spaces
- c) improving our knowledge of the biodiversity of the open spaces
- d) delivering behaviour change initiatives which reduce the amount of litter and flytipping within open spaces
- e) improving mental ill-health through the use of open spaces

3.6. **Funding duration** – A project's duration will be determined by the applicant but may be for up to a total of two years; 2016 to 2018 so long as all funding is claimed/awarded by 31 March 2018.

3.7. **Value of grant awards** - The anticipated grant award will be in the region of £12k per award. It is anticipated that ten grants may be awarded across the five sub-themes with a minimum of one grant being awarded per sub-theme.

- 3.8. **Decision to Award** - Open Spaces officers, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee will determine the award of grants.
- 3.9. Projects will be asked to complete monitoring forms and the data received can be collated so that an 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' funding review and outcomes report is brought back to this Committee at the end of the funding period.
- 4. Corporate & Strategic Implications**
- 4.1. **Strategic Corporate Priorities** – The creation of this grant funding theme and sub theme criteria will deliver the Corporate Key Policy Priority of:
- KPP4 – Maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities
 - KPP5 – Increasing the outreach and impact of the City's cultural, heritage and leisure contribution to the life of London and the nation
- 4.2. **Departmental Vision** – this grant theme will deliver the Departmental vision to 'preserve and protect our world class green spaces for the benefit if communities and the environment.
- 5. Implications**
- 5.1. The administration, management and monitoring of the 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' grant theme will be undertaken by the Central Grants Unit. The cost of this will be determined by the Policy and Resources Committee once the GEC for all four themes has been agreed. The management fee costs will be deducted from the available £145,139.67.
- 6. Conclusion**
- 6.1. Following discussion with Members in June, detailed grant criteria are proposed for the 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' grant theme. Total funding of approx. £110k will be available for community organisations through one funding round to improve the biodiversity and conservation of the COL's open spaces, educate people about the impact of flytipping and littering in our open spaces, improve the 'connection of communities' with our open spaces and enable projects which will use our open spaces to improve the quality of life for people suffering from mental ill-health.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment Grant Eligibility Criteria

Background Papers:

- Policy and resources Committee, March 2016 'Implementation of Grants Review'
- Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment grant Funding Theme Report – OSCGC - 6 June 2016

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Appendix 1: GRANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment

1. Types of projects and activity to be supported

Grants issued through the 'Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment' theme will be awarded to projects where the majority of impact will be on the COL's Open Spaces

The Stronger Communities funding theme has been separated into five sub themes:

a) Connecting communities with their green spaces.

The activities supported through this sub-theme should help local communities connect with the City of London's Open Spaces (<http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/Pages/default.aspx>) Projects are particularly encouraged from community or voluntary groups who work with local communities that infrequently visit, enjoy and engage with their local City of London Open Space. The projects should demonstrate positive outcomes for these newly connected communities and should demonstrate how they will support the groups to continue to visit the open spaces after the end of the project. Projects should align to the City of London's Open Spaces learning impact framework where possible.

b) Improving the conservation value of the open spaces.

The activities supported through this sub theme should aim to assist with the conservation of the City of London's Open Space(s) and should be able to demonstrate positive actions and outcomes that address the relevant Open Space's Management Plans (Details of which can be found on the City of London Corporation website). This could be via practical work on the ground, production of plans or a combination of both.

c) Improving our knowledge of the biodiversity of the open spaces.

The activities supported through this sub theme should help improve our knowledge of the biodiversity of the City of London's Open Space(s). This could include survey or inventory projects or small scale research projects on species habitats found in open spaces. They could include comparative studies using other locations/sites but the majority of the project should be carried out on a City of London Open Space. Projects should either be able to demonstrate positive actions and outcomes that address the relevant Open Space's Management Plans or which complement them. (Details of which can be found on the City of London Corporation website).

d) Delivering behaviour change initiatives which reduce the amount of litter and flytipping within open spaces.

The activities supported through this sub theme should deliver behaviour change initiatives which reduce the amount of fly tipping and leaving of litter in open spaces through increasing awareness and understanding of the impact of littering, and embedding long term changes in behaviour. The initiatives can use a wide range of innovative approaches but should be able to demonstrate a solid grounding in behaviour change techniques which embed long term change.

e) Improving mental ill-health through the use of open spaces.

Good mental health lies at the heart of wellbeing and quality of life, and of effective functioning for both individuals and communities. The activities supported through this sub-theme should support programmes which encourage contact with the COL's Open Spaces as an addition to treatment options within mental health.

2. Who can apply for a City of London Corporation Grant?

The City of London Corporation Central Grants Programme is open to organisations that fall into one of the following categories:

1. Constituted voluntary organisation
2. Registered charity
3. Registered Community Interest Company
4. Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation
5. Charitable company (incorporated as a not-for-profit)
6. Exempt or excepted charity
7. Registered charitable industrial and provident society or charitable Cooperative (Bencom)

3. Opening Dates

There will be one grant round for this theme, the opening and closing date for which will be confirmed at a later date.

4. What is the minimum and maximum Grant that can be applied for?

The anticipated value of grant applications will be £12k. It is anticipated that ten grants may be awarded across the five sub-themes with a minimum of one grant being awarded per sub-theme.

Overview:

| Minimum and maximum grant allowed | Opening date for applications | Closing date for applications | Decision timeframe |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | 2016-2018 | 2016-2018 | |
| £8,000 | TBD | TBD | 12 weeks from closing date |
| £15,000 max | | | |

4. How do you apply for a grant?

To apply for a City of London Corporation grant you will need to complete an online application form by the corresponding deadline and submit this electronically with your supporting documents to the City of London Corporation Central Grants Unit.

You should send your application to us well before the stated deadline to allow us to process your application in time. We will only consider one application from your organisation at any one time.

All application forms should be completed through the online City of London Corporation grants web portal. Application forms in large print, Braille or audio tape would be offered to applicants by special request.

5. How are applications assessed?

Once the City of London Corporation has received your online application and all supporting documents it will be passed to one of the City Corporation's Grants Officers for assessment. As part of this process a City Corporation's Grants Officer may contact you for more information.

We will acknowledge receipt of your application within 10 working days of it being received. If your application is not complete it will be returned to you and you will have a further 10 working days to send us the missing information.

The City Corporation's Grants Officer may also arrange to visit your organisation as part of the assessment process.

All applications that satisfy the eligibility criteria will be forwarded to Open Spaces officers for approval/rejection.

Once a full assessment has been completed, approved applications will be referred to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee for decision.

The timescale to process your application will vary; however, we will endeavour to ensure your application is assessed within 12 weeks of the closing date. You should take account of this when planning your project.

6. How do we monitor and evaluate grant recipients once an award has been made?

If we fund your project we will need you to complete an end of grant monitoring report to confirm how the grant has been spent and what you achieved. Please make sure that you keep receipts for all the items or services you buy with the grant and that you keep them somewhere safe as we may ask you to provide them.

We may also visit you to check how the grant has been spent.

Please keep us up to date if your project or any of your contact details change at any stage during the period of your grant.

7. If your grant application is successful

If your application is successful, an initial offer letter detailing the level of grant awarded will be issued. This may contain special conditions relating to the grant award or pre-agreement grant conditions.

Grant acceptance terms and conditions will be subsequently issued which should be signed and returned within 20 working days.

Once all documentation has been received and approved you would be asked to formally request payment of your grant award.

Note: You cannot start your project until we have received, checked and approved all information that we have requested.

8. If your grant application is unsuccessful

Due to the limited budget available and the number of applications for funding we receive, the City of London Corporation unfortunately cannot provide funding to every applicant that applies for a grant. Grants are therefore issued on a discretionary basis, there is no appeal process and the decision of the City of London Corporation is final.

9. Support with your application

We urge all applicants that are unsure about whether to submit an application to read all available eligibility criteria on our website and attend one of our City Corporation's Grants Officer led workshops; dates for which will be publicised on our website throughout the year.

If you have an enquiry that is not covered within the online guidance, please contact the City of London Grants Unit directly, who will be able provide answers to general queries regarding the application process.

10. Can you reapply for funding?

You may reapply for funding to deliver a continuation of the same project however; organisations cannot hold more than one of our grants at any one time

If you are a current grant holder, you will need to have satisfactorily met all our grant monitoring requirements before applying again.

11. What do we not fund?

There are some things we are unable to pay for are shown below.

- activities that have already taken place or start before we confirm our grant
- any costs you incur when putting together your application
- fundraising activities for your organisation or others
- items that are purchased on behalf of another organisation
- loans or interest payments
- projects that actively promote religious or political activities
- purchase of alcohol

12. Further information

If you have questions about how to apply or about the status of an application, you can contact us on 020 7332 3710, email us at grants@cityoflondon.gov.uk, or visit our website www.cityoflondon.gov.uk to find out more.