

DIRECTOR DECISION – CD 201

Title: Small Grants funding 23/24 and 24/25

Executive summary

To build on and continue our Social Value and Community Partnerships work to provide local funding in the form of Small Grants to drive community capacity and cohesion by funding a range of community-led projects and initiatives at the request of £140,000 total for a rolling 2-year programme of £70,000 per year in FY 23/24 and FY 24/25.

Decision

That the Chief Executive approves:

- the total additional expenditure of £140,000 for a rolling 2-year programme of Small Grants to community-led projects of between £1,000-£5,000 per project at £70,000 per year. For 23/24 budget this will be funded by PA.0120.002, in 24/25 the budget will come from the Communications, Engagement and Strategy budget.

Chief Executive Officer

I do not have any disclosable interest in the proposed Decision. It is consistent with OPDC's priorities and has my approval.

Signature:



Date: 31/1/2024

PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

1. Background and context

- 1.1. OPDC's Small Grants scheme is a funding programme for community projects that support our mission to uncover, showcase and celebrate the heritage of London's largest industrial area. Launched in January 2019, as part of the Great Place Scheme (funded by Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund), the initiative offered local stakeholders the opportunity to bid for sums of between £500 and £5,000 to deliver their projects - through this we were able to embed arts, culture and heritage into our plans for Old Oak and Park Royal, as well as mobilise and support volunteering across the area.
- 1.2. In early 2022, OPDC opened another round of funding to continue the legacy of the Great Place Scheme. A CEO Decision was approved for £150,000 to kick start an open call for the OPDC Small Grants programme 2022/2023. This led to 21 local organisations being awarded a total of £145,000. The projects successfully delivered community benefits to over 30,000 local beneficiaries and ranged across mentoring, dance classes, community magazines, youth clubs, walking tours and art projects.
- 1.3. The Small Grants programme enabled OPDC to build and grow stronger relationships with a range of local groups and individuals by investing in the community and delivered tangible outcomes for the wider community, particularly younger people and those representing groups with protected characteristics. A full list of the projects and outcomes can be found [here](#).
- 1.4. The programme wrapped up in April 2022 and OPDC showcased the projects at a public event hosted in Park Royal which featured performances and presentations from the awardees and was attended by local residents, businesses and councillors.
- 1.5. The programme has generated a lot of interest and OPDC has received a number of requests from community groups for further investment and funding moving forwards, as well as feedback for more investment in grass roots community-led projects as part of our Old Oak West SPD engagement programme.
- 1.6. OPDC is proposing to secure funding for this programme for the next two financial years to continue the Small Grants legacy.

2. Relevant Decision History

- 2.1. CD178 - OPDC Small Grants Programme, Great Place Scheme (GPS) legacy was approved in April 2022 to deliver the programme for FY22/23.

3. The proposal and how it will be delivered

- 3.1. For the next tranche of funding, OPDC will amend the approach and criteria to ensure that a wider pool of community members have access to funding.

- 3.2. We will offer £70,000 of funding in FY23/24 and again in FY24/25. Grants of between £1,000 - £5,000 for each project will be administered each financial year.
- 3.3. To prioritise OPDC's social value objectives set out in its EDI strategy, the funding will prioritise projects and activities that meet one or more of the below criteria:
- support the cost-of-living crisis
 - contribute to the work of underrepresented community groups
 - benefit young people, up to the age of 21.
- 3.4. We will refine this approach building on the detailed brief and application process to be launched on an annual basis. To ensure the process is both fair and transparent, we will run an open call to attract groups which will be publicised across all OPDC's communications channels, as well as utilising existing networks and those who have already expressed an interest. Through our community outreach initiatives, several community groups are emerging as potential applicants.
- 3.5. All applications will be assessed by selection panel of OPDC staff. The panel will assess the programmes, activities and its outcomes against OPDC objectives.
- 3.6. There will be eight criteria, each with weighted scores between 1 (weak) and 5 (strong), giving each application a maximum 40 points. Successful proposals will achieve a minimum of 30+ points.
1. Locality of project to OPDC area
 2. Cause of project in relation to beneficiaries
 3. Support cost of living, protected characteristics and / or young people
 4. Grant value below or above £5,000 and balanced against criteria 5 and 6
 5. Monitoring & reporting
 6. Value for money worked out as cost per reach and cost per engagement
 7. RAG rating for any associated risks
 8. Strategic Links with OPDC priorities
- 3.7. Awardees will receive OPDC's letter of notification, the grant funding contract and terms and conditions before payments are processed.
- 3.8. The application process has been developed using procedures of past years, to ensure applicants do not face barriers to access grant funding and that OPDC can efficiently, quickly and robustly, having full assurances, grant fund claimants to swiftly begin work. Applications will have provided referees before but may still be subject to proportionate OPDC due diligence checks to mitigate risk
- 3.9. To kick-start the programme each year, OPDC will host a welcome event and an end of projects showcase to mark the completion of projects. In between, mid-project meetings and calls will be held with each grantee to review progress and commission mid-programme reports. End of project evaluation reports will be collected for year-end 24/25 and 25/26.
- 3.10. KPIs will track impact and deliverables and be quantitative and qualitative in nature, including numbers of projects/events; direct and indirect (in person and online) beneficiaries/audiences; number of volunteers; event type; partnerships; leverage and sentiments (for example surveys, testimonials), which will measure the

successes of the grant funded activities in terms of real outcomes and the impact on local people.

4. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 4.1. The Small Grants programme will build on and maximise the achievements of the previous two Small Grants programmes in 22/23 and 19/20.
- 4.2. The overarching expected objective is to enable and empower a diverse range of residents and organisations to activate and deliver new initiatives in Old Oak and Park Royal to support, help and benefit locals, making a tangible difference to people's lives and a positive change to the area they live, work or study in.
- 4.3. OPDC can expect to see outcomes very similar to past years where the impact of activities delivered through funding from the Small Grants scheme have made a real difference to those who need it most. Please see part 2 for specific metrics (numbers and deliverables) from the GPS Small Grants tracker and the Small Grants 21/22 end of year evaluation form for full details.
- 4.4. This year, outcomes will specifically focus on support for young people, the cost of living crisis and groups with protected characteristics. These will include, but not be limited to gaining new skills and knowledge that will increase chances of employment (educational workshops); environmental changes for all to enjoy (recycled and sustainable art, gardening clubs); improved mental and physical health and wellbeing for young people and families (workshops, food banks); better community cohesion (content and events for the community); community pride (film productions, blogs, content); and lessening loneliness and isolation (outreach project, intergenerational community arts).
- 4.5. Outcomes will be assessed and tracked through metrics (number of beneficiaries, area of reach, levels of engagement) and sentiments reporting (for example surveys, testimonials) to measure the successes of the grant funded activities.
- 4.6. Outcomes will be delivered in accordance with each project's agreed timeline and key milestones across each of the financial years. They will be evidenced in a final, end of year report at the close of each round of funding.

5. Strategic fit

- 5.1. The Small Grants Scheme aligns with the Mayor's priority to "increase the diversity of cultural activities and enable more Londoners to access culture on their own doorstep."
- 5.2. It also aligns with OPDC's aim to achieve change and capture benefits for Londoners: "not by telling residents and businesses what's good for them, but by thoughtful engagement, listening to, and learning from the insights and works of local communities, and reflecting this in planning the changes that we want to see."
- 5.3. There is a strong strategic fit with OPDC's Community Engagement strategy, and a number of our key aims for engagement and priorities:
 - Collaborate: building relationships across existing and new communities to work together effectively

- Empower: inspiring and assisting people to take an active role in local projects to benefit their community and shape positive change
- Improve public spaces and places
- Nurture local heritage, art and culture
- Promote skills, employment and opportunities
- Support local people affected by change in the area

5.4. Finally, the Small Grants programme aligns with the objectives and aims set out in OPDC's Equity Diversity and Inclusion strategy, including:

- Increase understanding of our communities
- Champion and celebrate the area's rich diversity
- Ensure diverse and inclusive representation
- Plan for a welcoming, inclusive place

6. Project governance and assurance

- 6.1. The resources required to administer and maintain this in-house will replicate the 22/23 model. The Head of Communications and Strategy will be the project lead, with day-to-day support from the Senior/Engagement Officers, and administrative, budgets and contractual support from Finance and Governance colleagues, overseen by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 6.2. The funding paperwork used previously for Small Grants programme will be built upon to set out and agree the terms of the funding and to monitor progress and control the outcomes to ensure success.
- 6.3. Performance reports and post project evaluation will be requested at the agreed milestones and variances will be discussed with the project lead(s) to ensure they are addressed.
- 6.4. Grant recipients will have access to advice and support from OPDC officers.

7. Risks and issues

| Risk description | Inherent score | Mitigations | Target score |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Financial mismanagement of any funding provided by OPDC to grant awardees and other partners involved in the delivery of the | Likelihood: [1] Impact: [5] Total: [5] | OPDC will enter into the required funding agreements and implement monitoring and evaluation at two points during delivery – mid-way point and on completion of the project – helping | Likelihood: [1] Impact: [1] Total: [1] |

| project outlined above | | recipients overcome any problems. | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 2. The risk of money not being used or being used incorrectly, or the risk of activities not being delivered or being incomplete in the agreed time | Likelihood: [3] Impact: [5] Total: [15] | The application process has been developed using procedures of past years to ensure applicants do not face barriers to access grant funding and that OPDC can efficiently, quickly and robustly, having full assurances, grant fund claimants to swiftly begin work. Applications will provide referees but could be subject to proportionate OPDC due diligence checks to mitigate risk. | Likelihood: [2] Impact: [3] Total: [6] |

8. Equality comments

- 8.1. Under Section 149 of the Quality Act 2010, as a public authority, OPDC must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.¹²
- 8.2. A key objective of the Small Grants programme is that community champions play an active role, using the knowledge gained through previous grassroots activities, to design upcoming initiatives they want and/or need to deliver to benefit the wider community, responding to local needs including to those who need support the most and those who may be seldom heard or whose first language may not be English.
- 8.3. OPDC will assess applications on this basis, ensuring that projects are developed using knowledge and that there are a range of initiatives to serve the diverse and multicultural population of Old Oak and Park Royal.
- 8.4. The evaluation metrics and KPIs will also include diversity monitoring and assess and track the real outcomes, impact and successes of the grant funded activities on equal measure.

¹ The protected characteristics and groups are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage/ civil partnership status. Fulfilling this duty involves having due regard to: the need to remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share a protected characteristic or one that is connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the different needs of such people; and encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low. Compliance with the Equality Act may involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without the characteristic. The duty must be exercised with an open mind and at the time a Decision is taken in the exercise of the OPDC's functions.

- 8.5. In addition, all applications and printed or written material will be fully accessible, in accordance with the GLA's accessibility guidelines, and will be offered in both language translations and Braille. All associated events for awardees will be in fully accessible venues that are DDI compliant and held at times that suit a range of lifestyles, including for school pupils and parents and carers.

9. Other considerations

9.1. *Communications and Engagement*

The communications team will ensure alignment on communications, branding, tone of voice etc. and reciprocal activity with community champions undertaking initiatives and projects using OPDC funding. The team will also support to promote the application process and successful initiatives using OPDC community comms channels.

9.2. *Safeguarding*

Safeguarding measures will be in place to protect individuals through risk assessments, for example ensuring accessible and safe event venues, protecting identities of participants from wider promotional material unless consent is provided and ensuring parental consent for individuals under the age of 18.

9.3. *Data protection.*

All events and activities will adhere to the GDPR regulations.

10. Conflicts of interest

No one involved in the preparation or clearance of this Form, or its substantive proposal, has any conflict of interest.

11. Financial comments

- 11.1. Whilst the scheme was discussed during the 23/24 budget setting bids, it was not included in original proposals but due its strategic fit with OPDC purpose and in discussion with the CEO we have managed to relocate budget and include in the engagement budget baseline
- 11.2. OPDC has allocated £70k in 23/24 budget following the allocation process,
- 11.3. As this is a two-year scheme, the second year rollout will be considered in the wider 24/25 budget setting process with the GLA to be funded within the baseline plans for Communications, Engagement and Strategy.

12. Summary timeline

| Milestone | Date |
|------------------|-------------|
|------------------|-------------|

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Decision approved | Sept 2023 |
| Brief and application process developed for FY23/24 | Sept – Oct 2023 |
| Launch of applications and open call for FY23/24 | Oct – Dec 2023 |
| Assessment of applications for FY23/24 | Jan - Feb 2024 |
| Grants for FY23/24 awarded | March - April 2024 |
| Welcome event for FY23/24 awardees | May 2023 |
| Launch of applications and open call for FY24/25 | Oct – Dec 2024 |
| Mid-year review for FY23/24 awardees | November 2024 |
| Assessment of applications for FY24/25 | Jan - Feb 2025 |
| End of year evaluation for FY23/24 awardees | March 2025 |
| Grants for FY24/25 awarded | March - April 2025 |
| End of year showcase for FY23/24 awardees | April 2025 |
| Welcome event for FY23/24 awardees | May 2025 |
| Mid-year review for FY24/25 awardees | November 2025 |
| End of year evaluation for FY24/25 awardees | March 2026 |
| End of year showcase for FY24/25 awardees | April 2026 |

Supporting papers

None.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Information in this Form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). OPDC aims to publish the Form within three working days of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the Decision (for example, impacting a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date (when it will be published). Deferral periods are kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Part 1 – Deferral

Publication of this Part 1 is to be deferred: **No**

Part 2 – Confidential information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in or attached to any separate Part 2 Form, together with the rationale for withholding the information at this time.

There is a separate and confidential Part 2 Form: **/No**

DECLARATIONS

Drafting officer: Liam Caulfield has drafted this Form in accordance with OPDC procedures, including for handling conflicts of interests, and confirms that:



Advice: The Finance and legal teams have commented on the proposal.



CONFIRMATIONS

Section 106 funding: This use of S106 to fund the expenditure proposal was approved via a Section 106 spend proposal form on N/A.

SMT review: This Decision was circulated to the **Senior Management Team** for review on Monday 7th August 2023.

Chief Finance Officer

Financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this Form.

Signature:



Date: 30.01.2024

Director of Communications, Engagement and Strategy

I do not have any disclosable interest in the proposed Decision. It is consistent with OPDC's priorities and can be referred to the CEO for final approval.

Signature:



Date: 30.01.2024