

**DIRECTOR DECISION – DD 187**

**Title: Funding for Harlesden Canalside activation**

**Executive summary**

This decision seeks approval for expenditure of up to £18,000 to support Young Brent Foundation (YBF) and The Sharks in the activation of the Harlesden Canalside project. This also includes costs associated to celebrate the works completed on site with a launch event on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

The projects include activation of the Canalside through provision of kayaking and education work on sustainability for young people in the area.

The launch event which will bring together stakeholders including Young Brent Foundation, Jason Roberts Foundation and the steering board along with others from the area to activate the space and showcase the ongoing activation work of YBF and the sharks. This is being coordinated in conjunction with the Harlesden Canalside community coordinator and steering board to ensure that it is a co-designed event.

**Decision**

The Director of Communications, Engagement and Strategy approves the total funding of up to £18,000 for costs associated with the Harlesden Canalside activation:

- i. £6,000 to support the Young Brent Foundation
- ii. £7,000 to support the Sharks; and
- iii. Up to £5,000 for the preparation and launch of the Harlesden Canalside event

**Authorising Director**

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

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 07/06/2024

## **PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **1. Background and context**

- 1.1 In partnership with Brent Council and the Canals & Rivers Trust (CRT), we have completed work to improve the Harlesden Canalside. This include:
  - Widening the towpath
  - A new amphitheatre
  - New planting and seating
  - Improved canoe facilities for the Sharks Canoe Club
  - Dedicated spaces for local community organisations to moor their narrow boats (which includes a mooring for the John Lyon (JL) which is operated by The Sharks and YBF).
- 1.2 Both the Sharks and YBF have been fundamental to OPDC's Harlesden Canalside improvement project. They are both part of the current steering board, who work closely with the team to contribute to designing the space ensuring the space continues to be used by all communities in Brent.
- 1.3 OPDC has continued to support both organisation through various funding schemes such as the Great Place Scheme and Small Grants. This has allowed us to have access to their wide range of stakeholders they work with including young people in the area who have previously not engaged with OPDC.
- 1.4 Ahead of our launch event in May, which will celebrate the completed construction of Harlesden Canalside, OPDC will be working closely with both organisations and the steering board to ensure that the space is available to be used by all communities.
- 1.5 The Sharks and YBF both applied for funding through our oversubscribed small grants programme in January 2024. We were unable to fund them through this programme due to the volume of applications. Therefore, we have looked at other ways to fund the high-quality projects that will support our strategic objectives.
- 1.6 Both proposals supported the strategic aims of the small grants programme including:
  - Supporting the cost of-living crisis
  - Benefiting young people, up to the age of 21
  - Projects that focus on health and wellbeing

- 1.7 YBF and the Sharks have been working closely alongside OPDC and CRT to start activation within the space, including holding their own launch over the easter holidays. They have both proposed a number of activities to ensure that the community can enjoy the space and it is used to its full potential.
- 1.8 Over the Easter weekend YBF, The Sharks, CRT, QPR and other organisations came together to hold a soft launch of the John Lyon Boat and the community initiatives for the Harlesden Canalside. At the launch over **134** people attended, with **54** people taking part on the water kayaking.
- 1.9 Feedback from those who attended the launch was gathered, specifically on how they want to use the John Lyon Boat to activate the canal. Suggestions from that feedback included:
- A base to learn kayaking and canoeing
  - An opportunity for all to use the waterways safety
  - An opportunity to find out more about the environment.
- 1.10 The proposed projects will complement the ongoing discussions with the Harlesden Canalside steering board, who are working closely with the community coordinator to design a programme of events.
- 1.11 The launch event will take place on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, there will be a number of various activities including:
- Charity Race: which will include Garden Studios and McVities (both on the steering group), enabling better staff engagement and getting feedback from them on the improvements. It is hoped that more local businesses will take part as well.
  - Walking tours of the improvements and local area
  - Kayaking and canoeing lessons detailed in the Sharks proposals
- 1.12 We will also seek feedback with key stakeholders/attendees to understand what events they would like to see along the canal and to gain feedback on further improvements in the area. The event will allow us to build stronger relationships with those taking part.
- 1.13 Confirmed stakeholders attending include:
- Young Brent Foundation
  - London Borough of Brent

- Canal and Rivers Trust
- Jason Roberts Foundation
- Brent health matters
- United borders
- Standard road market
- The sharks
- Garden studios
- Mcvities
- OPDC
- Recollective

## **2. The proposal and how it will be delivered**

- 2.1 There are two proposals included within this decision. Both YBF and the Sharks applied for funding with their individual proposals set out below.

### **Young Brent Foundation**

- The Young Brent Foundation aims to improve outcomes for children and young people in disadvantaged communities, particularly in STEM and social action.
- Using the YBF Narrowboat (JLC) as a floating classroom at Harlesden Canalside, coordinated by LB Brent, LB Ealing, and John Lyons Charity (JLC) YBF will run tailored programmes supporting the Greener Communities Youth Ambassador Programme.
- Through working in partnerships and engagement with existing stakeholders, they aim to address the STEM skills gap and promote environmental awareness. Their previous project, [Brent Goes Wild](#), exemplified the approach.
- They will be targeting underrepresented youth to cultivate curiosity and interest in STEM. The proposed Brent Goes Green and Blue model aims to continue this approach by engaging young people, amplifying local projects, and collaborating with community partners like The Sharks Canoe Club and Canal & River Trust and in doing so will activated the Harlesden Canalside.

### **The Sharks**

- The proposal aims to host funded activities on the canal at Harlesden Canalside to increase participation and engagement.
- These activities include canoeing and kayaking for people of all ages, with a focus on school-age participants. Additionally, open canoes are available for family activities, promoting inclusivity and participation among families.

- The stable and user-friendly nature of the canoes facilitates involvement, with a particular emphasis on encouraging adults to enhance their wellbeing and fitness through tailored sessions addressing their specific needs and preferences.

2.2 The objectives of both project fits within the feedback received (1.9) at the soft launch event over the easter period and supports the activation of the Canalside.

### **3. Objectives and expected outcomes**

#### **Young Brent Foundation**

- 3.1 The project aims to increase the number of community mentors who provide both online and offline support to young people. This will enable them to express their thoughts on green and blue spaces in their communities using the community moorings at Harlesden Canalside as a base.
- 3.2 The project will hold individual and group sessions with young people on the Canalside, to empower them to set and achieve goals related to social action and greener communities in Brent and along the Canal.
- 3.3 The project targets are:
- 600 children and young people annually
  - 180 families annually
  - 36 weekend programmes annually
  - Goals for youth feeling heard, appreciated, listened to, respected, and valued, as well as encouraging creativity and experimentation.

#### **The Sharks**

- 3.4 The project aims to increase canal activity at Harlesden Canalside, offering canoeing and kayaking for all ages, with a focus on school-age participants. It will provide affordable activities with no upfront or regular payments, ensuring accessibility during financial hardship.
- 3.5 A total of five free activity days and regular coaching sessions, totalling around 250 and 800 participants respectively are planned. Additionally, 36 sessions with Harlesden Primary School and other organisations will engage approximately 60 additional young people.

#### **Launch event**

- 3.6 The launch event is planned for the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024, this will act as celebration of the work done and to start the activation of the space.
- 3.7 The event is being coproduced with the community coordinator and the steering board. The event will include various activities as outlined above but we will need to help organise and purchase items ahead of the event, these include:

- Printing of leaflets, photos, feedback materials and directional signage for the event
- Supply of food/drinks for attendees from local businesses
- Hire of any equipment needed for the day such as tables, chairs, gazebos.
- Payment for Mahogany Carnival to undertake a walk from Harlesden town centre to the Canalside in carnival costumes
- Contribution to young people volunteering with [united borders and the filming of the event.](#)
- Purchasing of equipment for the clean-up prior to the event and after the event including gloves, bin bags, litter pickers, gardening equipment etc
- Payment for car park suspension in car park to accommodate the united borders double decker bus and standard road market stalls
- Payments for suppliers on the day such as face painters, exercise activity (TBC), other activities for children and bird watching walks
- Transport for materials to and from the Canalside including the gazebo, tables, chairs and easels

### 3.8 The day will include an opportunity to:

- Find out about the works that have been undertaken
- Give feedback on what people would like to see happen along the canal
- Engage with other key stakeholders in the area
- Take part in the kayaking/canoeing
- Celebrate the Canalside and its importance to the area
- Engage in activities for free during half term week for all ages

## 4. Strategic fit

### 4.1 Both of the proposed projects fit within the aims of the Small Grants, EDI and updated engagement strategy. They will do this through:

- **To cultivate a unified vision for the area**, through this work we will be able to engage different groups particularly young people, who are a main focus of the updated engagement strategy.
- **Building and nurturing connections / relationship** – funding these projects will help us continue to develop our relationship further with YBF and the Sharks. This will also help us connect with different demographics, ages and those who may not have engaged with us to date.

- **Planning for a welcoming, inclusive place** – The activation of the Canalside will create a welcoming and inclusive place for all to use and help us gain feedback on further changes that maybe required to enhance this important asset in OPDC.
- **Championing and celebrating the area's rich diversity**- Through the activation we are celebrating the variety of uses along the canal and championing the waterways.
- **Ensure diverse and inclusive representation** – through their networks both organisations will work with a diverse and inclusive audience.

## 5. Project governance and assurance

- 5.1 The projects will be closely monitored by OPDC's communications and engagement team – ensuring that the key outcomes are achieved.
- 5.2 YBF will provide quarterly progress updates to OPDC, including any necessary project adjustments and associated risks.
- 5.3 They'll present project structure and data via a highlight dashboard on a quarterly basis to the communications and engagement team. Additionally, they'll produce a final impact at the end of the project report measuring outputs, outcomes, and the overall impact on local children, young people, and families.
- 5.4 The Sharks will maintain attendance records for activities, events, and regular sessions, documenting participant progress and ongoing involvement. With permission, they'll keep photographic records and compile information for reports.

### *Risks and issues*

Risk description	Inherent Score	Mitigations	Target Score
Low response to participant engagement across projects	Likelihood: 2 Impact: 3 Total: 6	OPDC will work closely with both The Sharks and YBF to ensure that we can assist (through our networks, communications and social media channels)with reaching out to relevant organisations. We will also rely on the sounding board and community coordinator to work with us.	Likelihood: 1 Impact: 3 Total: 3
Inadequate resource in OPDC Communications and Engagement team to monitor and manage the funded projects	Likelihood: 3 Impact: 5 Total: 15	The team are fully staffed so this will enable us to track effectively.	Likelihood: 2 Impact: 4 Total: 8

Forward funding reduces OPDCs ability to control the outputs of the project and results in under delivery against agreed objectives	Likelihood: 4 Impact: 5 Total: 20	Forward funding will be used in projects where recipients can demonstrate that claiming in arrears would impede delivery e.g. cashflow issues. Clawback clauses have been included in all grant funding agreements. We have also worked with both organisations previously so have a good working relationship with them	Likelihood: 3 Impact: 3 Total: 9
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## 6. Equality comments

- 6.1 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.<sup>12</sup><sup>OBJ</sup>
- 6.2 The projects aim to engage with a diverse audience including those who share protected characteristics under the Equality act. As part of the project, both YBF and The Sharks monitor this data to ensure that participation for their activities is inclusive, diverse and includes groups that can traditionally be underrepresented.
- 6.3 The programmes will be advertised through a variety of methods, including the use of their networks which are extensive. We will also advertise the opportunities through our newsletters, website and social media. We will also use our relationships with stakeholders to advertise this and will utilise the Harlesden Steering Board and community coordinator. All printed materials will follow the GLA's accessibility guidelines and be available in Braille or translated into other languages.

## 7. Other considerations

### Data protection

- 7.1 All activities and events will adhere to the GDPR regulations.

<sup>1</sup> 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.



## Safeguarding

- 7.2 Safeguarding measures will be in place to protect individual through the Sharks and YBG risk assessments.

## 8. Conflicts of interest

- 8.1 No one involved in the preparation or clearance of this form, or its substantive proposal, has any conflicts of interests.

## 9. Financial comments

- 9.1 Expenditure of £18,000 will be funded from the 2024/25 CEO, Communications and Engagement Budget.
- 9.2 Payment will be split across two WBS lines: £6,000 to support the Young Brent Foundation and £7,000 to support the Sharks will be funded from Small Grants (PA.0120.002) while up to £5,000 for the preparation and launch of the Harlesden Canalside event will be funded from events (PA.0120.001).
- 9.3 All associated costs will be approved by the Director of Communications and Engagement and will be closely monitored at all times.

## 10. Summary timeline

Activity	Date
Procurement of contract /Grant award	May 2024
Delivery start date	May 2024
Milestone 1	June 2024
Milestone 2	September 2024
Milestone 3	December 2025
Milestone 4	March 2025
Delivery end date	March 2025
Evaluation period	Ongoing
Project closure	March 2025

## 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 day 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**

The deferral is until: N/A

This is because: N/A

### 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:** Claire Callow has drafted this Form in accordance with OPDC procedures, including for handling conflicts of interests, and confirms that:



**Advice:** The Finance team have commented on the proposal.



## CONFIRMATIONS

**Section 106 funding:** N/A

**SMT review:** This Decision was circulated to the **Senior Review** on Friday 7 June 2024.

### Chief Finance Officer

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

**Signature:**



**Date:** 07/06/2024