

DIRECTOR DECISION – DD 193

Title: Oaklands Rise continued venue hire 2024-25

Executive summary

To approve expenditure of £13,000 for the continued use of venue space at Oaklands Rise until October 2025 to facilitate site visits, meetings and community engagement events.

Decision

The Director of Communications, Engagement and Strategy approves the total additional expenditure of £13,000 to extend our contract for a year for the use of venue space at Oaklands Rise.

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: 04/11/2024

PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

1. Background and context

- 1.1 Oaklands Rise is a Notting Hill Genesis housing development based in Old Oak Common, near Willesden Junction Station. The development includes a Boardroom which is situated in the main office and a community space called The Lab, which is used as a local café and hub from Thursday-Sunday.
- 1.2 These premises are managed by Bow Arts Trust, an arts education charity and social enterprise that support local creative economies.
- 1.3 As part of our agreement with Bow Arts, OPDC has use of both the Boardroom and The Lab to hold site visits, on-site meetings and community events.
- 1.4 Our existing agreement with Bow Arts Trust started in October 2023 and comes to an end in October 2024. This decision seeks approval to renew this agreement through to October 2025.
- 1.5 DAR407 and DAR419 were each for £5,000 and covered a period of 6 months from August 2022 to July 2023. DD 177 covered the period from October 2023 – October 2024.
- 1.6 This decision seeks approval for £13,000, renewing the contract to October 2025.
- 1.7 The money paid to Bow Arts is invested back into the community with the money being used by the trust to help run The Lab Community Centre, a popular community space and other community projects.

2. The proposal and how it will be delivered

- 2.1 In order for Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) to comply with statutory consultation requirements, a number of consultation and engagement events will be taking place in 2024-25. These events will ensure that we are consulting and engaging with key stakeholders both from the business and local communities. It is important that where possible, we hold these events in OPDC area, and both The Lab and Boardroom provide us with the space to hold events locally.
- 2.2 Oaklands Rise is located directly within the OPDC area and using The Lab and Boardroom space illustrates OPDC's commitment to community engagement and working locally within the area.
- 2.3 OPDC's agreement with Bow Arts ensures that we have access to both The Lab, Boardroom and facilities on site to help facilitate meetings with key stakeholders, engagement events, consultations and drop-ins with the local community.
- 2.4 The Boardroom is available on a booking system for OPDC staff to use between Mondays and Fridays, and The Lab Community Centre is available on a booking system for OPDC to use between Mondays and Wednesdays.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 3.1 Both venues will be used for meetings, consultations, engagement events and stakeholder meetings all of which will comply with the access requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 The use of the venue hire is for the following:
- public consultations
 - workshops
 - presentations
 - drop-Ins
 - meetings
 - site visits
 - engagement events.
- 3.3 A touchdown space within the local area helps OPDC to meet objectives set out in the OPDC Management Plan 23/24, the Community Engagement Strategy, the Corporate Strategy 2024-26 and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, enabling colleagues across the organisation to engage with a wide range of local stakeholders and community members.
- 3.4 The cost represents very good value for money, giving OPDC almost unlimited access to meeting rooms and touchdown spaces. Previous to this agreement, OPDC would hire out space in the local area with an average rate of £500 per day.

4. Strategic fit

- 4.1 Using the space at Oaklands underpins our work with the local community as it allows us to have a strong presence in the area. OPDC's Corporate Strategy and Management Plan states that we want to "increase network of stakeholder and community relationships" through "meaningful and inclusive engagement and consultation" by "empowering everyone to have a say in the future of the area." Having access to this space in the heart of our area makes sure that OPDC is accessible and available for residents and community members and serves as an excellent base to host a range of external stakeholders.
- 4.2 Having access to the space at Oaklands has also allowed us to host a number of consultation events, which supports our corporate objectives to run inclusive and accessible engagement with the community for Old Oak West. The Lab is equipped with accessible access which ensures everyone in the community can attend in person events. It is also located in the centre of Oaklands Rise which houses families, students and working professionals, with close proximity to public transport links.
- 4.3 Our agreement with Bow Arts also responds to key deliverables highlighted in our Community Engagement Strategy. Our community drop-in surgery is held every two weeks at The Lab and provides an opportunity for focussed discussions between the community and our engagement team on our work in and around the

area. Another key deliverable outlined in the strategy is site visits which are held with residents and key stakeholders and hosted by OPDC. We use the Boardroom as a base and have access to the rooftop where we can show visitors our key development areas.

- 4.4 The Mayor has set out a priority of “making sure Londoners from all walks of life can enjoy arts and culture” which OPDC actively supports through our agreement with Bow Arts. The money we invest into Oaklands, goes directly back into the community through Bow Arts which funds The Lab, a café and arts centre which local people can use. The Lab hosts a number of exhibitions which celebrate and promote the rich diversity and culture in the area.
- 4.5 OPDC’s current temporary office space at Portal Way does not have the space or the facilities needed to host community engagement events, it is not fully accessible and does not meet the requirements needed to meet with the community.
 - a. We are expecting to move into new office space in summer 2025 – this new office space will offer bigger, more accessible spaces to hold engagement and public events, in the interim it is really important we continue to have the space at The Lab.
 - b. The cost of our agreement with Bow Arts remains the same as our 23/24 contract – representing great value for money.

5. Project governance and assurance

- 5.1 OPDC will enter into a year-long agreement with Bow Arts Trust. This agreement will be managed by the by the Director of Communications Engagement and Strategy on a day-to-day basis, with regular liaison with Bow Arts and Notting Hill Genesis to allow OPDC access to the space.
- 5.2 There is an OPDC-wide booking system to use the space which all staff can use to book the Boardroom and The Lab when available.
- 5.3 Prior to this agreement, corporate operations conducted a risk and health and safety assessment and concluded that the space was safe for use by staff, visitors and the local community.

Risks and issues

- 5.4 There is a risk of health and safety issues, but we have mitigated this through carrying out a full and thorough risk assessment before entering into the agreement to ensure the space is safe to use.
- 5.5 There is also a possibility of running into problems of overusing or underusing the space which means we face booking clashes or don’t receive full value for money through lack of use, but the OPDC Comms & Engagement team controls the booking system and keeps a close eye on the use of the space which manages this risk.
- 5.6 A reputational risk is that we’re regularly using a popular community resource and space, but we will always ensure that we give priority to the community who need to book the space and sort room hire elsewhere.

6. Equality comments

- 6.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality 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.¹~~[OBJ]~~
- 6.2 The venues that are used for all meetings, consultations and engagement events comply with the access requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The venue is based within and convenient to the diverse communities who live and work in the local area.
- 6.3 Since we started the agreement with Bow Arts, we have held several successful events within the space at Oaklands including community drop-in's and engagement workshops related to our work at Old Oak West, bi-weekly community drop-in surgeries, high profile MP and Councillor visits and regular meetings with developers and organisations interested in OPDC and our work. The Lab is equipped with accessible access which ensures everyone in the community can attend in person events.

7. Other considerations

Communications and engagement

- 7.1 The Communications and Engagement team will manage the booking system and ensure that we are getting the best use out of the space through our drop-in surgeries, consultations, events and site visits.

Health in all policies

- 7.2 A health and safety assessment was carried out by the Corporate Operations team before we entered into our agreement with Oaklands.

8. Conflicts of interest

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

9. Financial comments

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.

- 9.1 The expenditure of £13,000 for the continued use of venue space at Oaklands Rise intended to facilitate site visits, meetings and community engagement events, will be funded from the 2024/25 Comms and engagement budget (PA.0110.001)

10. Legal comments

- 10.1 Single Source Justification has been approved by TFL Procurement team.

11. Summary timeline

Activity	Date
Decision is agreed and signed	October 2024
Length of agreement	October 2024 - 2025

Appendices

- 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 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: Grace Kelly 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 for **Senior Review** on 29/10/2024.

Chief Finance Officer – Gurdip Juty (Executive Director Finance & Operations)

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

Signature:



Date: 29/10/2024