

ADHS DECISION – 15

Title: Open City Education Pathway Grant

Executive summary

This decision seeks to approve grant funding to Open City and their education pathway programmes to encourage the participation in city making workshops and promote the awareness of careers in the built environment to young people at schools.

This initiative follows on from a successful run of programmes delivered by Open City to Primary and Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools in 2024, which were also part grant-funded by OPDC. As a result, OPDC has had discussions with Open City to expand their scope in 2025 to include programmes which cover students who are in Secondary and Sixth Form, as well as Primary and SEN students. This will also include rolling out the programme for 2026.

Decision

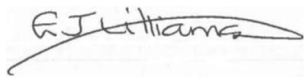
That the Director of Planning approves £30,000 of grant funding from the Planning Policy 2025/26 and 2026/7 budget to Open City Education, comprising:

- i. Grant funding of £30,000 to fund the delivery of the 'Young City Makers' and 'It's My City, Too!' programme in the Summer Term of 2025 and 2026.

Director of Planning – Emma Williamson

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

Signature:



Date: 02/09/2025

PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

1. Background and context

- 1.1 Open City is an education charity empowering the community to learn about, experience and have a role in shaping the places where they live. Open City runs and operates the Young People's education programme which supports children and young people from under-represented communities to learn about and be empowered to pursue careers in city-making.
- 1.2 In summer 2024, OPDC had sponsored two programmes (approved via DD185 for £15,000), as part of a collective initiative to engage both primary and SEN school children in city making and build awareness of their roles in shaping cities. With the use of OPDC funding and match funding from Open City, 330 children in total were engaged with from 6 schools in OPDC host boroughs. These programmes were:
 - Young City Makers (Ages 8-11) - Whole primary year groups develop their collaboration and model-making skills together with their understanding of their role in shaping their city. Across in-school workshops and a trip to explore a new part of the city, this Open City programme brings learning to life. A shared celebration event at the end of the programme brings teachers, students and parents together to enjoy their achievements and develop their public speaking skills.
- 1.3 It's My City Too! (Ages 8-14) - This SEN programme is tailored to the needs and interests of the cohort. These sensory sessions are intended to build awareness of and access to the spaces which these young people may often find intimidating or noisy. Programmes typically run weekly across half a term to allow students to build trust and confidence in both the Open City team and the new ideas they introduce. Students enjoy trips to explore the city and a celebration event at the end of the term which also welcomes their parents and encourages them to share in the creative experience alongside their children.
- 1.4 OPDC has the opportunity to continue sponsorship of the 'Young City Makers' and 'It's My City, Too!' programmes in different schools within or near to the OPDC area for summer 2025 and 2026.
- 1.5 Six new schools have been chosen, benefitting approximately 212 children and their families:
 - Ark Bentworth, Hammersmith & Fulham (1 class)
 - Ark Conway, Hammersmith & Fulham (1 class)
 - Sir John Keble, Brent (2 classes)
 - John Perryn Primary, Ealing (2 classes)
 - Phoenix Arch, Brent (2 classes)
 - The Village School, Brent (2 classes)
- 1.6 Open City is also matching OPDC's funding contribution.

2. The proposal and how it will be delivered

2.1 Open City's plans are to deliver these programmes over a 3-year period. Whilst OPDC recognises the success of the 2024 programmes, the corporation has agreed to fund the years (FY 25/26) and EY (26/27); effectively running this as a grant funded pilot.

2.2 Open City will deliver the following activities as part of the agreement:

- organise(d) the partnership of professional practices working in the built environment sector with one or more primary schools in or near to the OPDC area;
- create(d) and distribute(d) kit/craft boxes and work booklets to enable each school to complete the project;
- manage(d) the delivery of in-school workshops for one year group of KS2 students and one site visit for each class;
- Provide(d) a selection of photography recording the workshops for the OPDC to use for its promotional purposes.
- training for staff and/or contractors to participate in Open City Youth Engagement Training and then to mentor, facilitate or lead workshops with young people (subject to the provision of a DBS certificate);
- organised a final celebration ceremony in July 2025 at the end of the programme where OPDC can present the winners with awards and there will also be an opportunity to promote the work of OPDC at that event.

2.3 Commencing this as a pilot project for OPDC ensures that the programme can be reviewed over the course of the 12 months, OPDC will be able to explore the lessons learned and then refine the approach in a way which aligns with OPDC's ambitions as part of a wider aspiration for an OPDC-led initiative.

2.4 This can then be used to form a demonstrable case to secure budget and extend the offering as a competitive commission from the 26/27 financial year. This will enable the opportunity to implement a longer-term approach over a number of years, opening up the chance to apply for those delivering similar initiatives of educational and careers provision.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

3.1 The Objectives of the programme are to:

3.2 Raise awareness of OPDC in local schools

3.3 Raise interest in the built environment with pupils and teachers

3.4 Support our wider community engagement programme with diverse groups and organisations

Expected outcomes

- 3.5 Increase understanding of participants about the built environment and its impact on their lives
- 3.6 Increased awareness of OPDC and our work
- 3.7 Participation of young people in the built environment, with feedback fed into wider programmes.

4. Strategic fit

- 4.1 OPDC has a responsibility to engage all sections of the community in its work and to promote involvement in the built environment. This project provides an excellent opportunity to involve young people in the work of OPDC and to promote involvement in the built environment.
- 4.2 This also builds on the objectives set out in our newly updated community engagement strategy, our EDI strategy and the forthcoming Youth Engagement Strategy. It does this through:
 - Building and nurturing connections / relationships – this work will enable us to connect with different groups and use different methods to engage with them.
 - Continue to care for and celebrate the local area – members of staff will be volunteering their time to take part in the programme and this will help increase our presence in the area
 - Enabling opportunities for young people to shape the future of the area – by providing a pathway to a career in the built environment, nurturing their talent and creativity.
- 4.3 OPDC is already working closely with young people on helping shape the area, with works to improve the public realm, including Wesley Playing Fields. The designs of the improvements have been heavily influenced by consultations with teenage girls and these programmes at the multi-aged schools help complement the engagement and the promotion of collaboration being undertaken by OPDC with young people already.
- 4.4 Collaboration - Fostering and promoting a collaborative approach, listening to, sharing ideas with and building relationships with our partners, stakeholders, communities and each other. This also builds relationships with local schools and gives them an opportunity to feed into our wider plans.
- 4.5 Inclusivity - Championing London's rich diversity, where everyone is welcome and valued, ensuring we create an equitable culture within the team and that the places we create do too. By working with schools, we are reaching audiences that are typically harder to reach and showing them the impact they can have on major changes in the area they live.
- 4.6 Curiosity - This programme allows us to understand experiences of young people and their perspectives on the built environment.

- 4.7 Integrity - With some of our consultations and team taking part this shows our commitments to the community and shows are desire to hear from a wide range of audience.
- 4.8 Delivery – The work that has been completed by the schools will be fed back to the design teams and consultants.
- 4.9 Community – As OPDC is a young area (45.4% of the population is up to the age of 29) it is important that we engage with this group and understand their needs and aspirations.

5. Project governance and assurance

- 5.1 The work will be overseen by the Director of Planning, the Director of Comms and Engagement and the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.

Timeline

- 5.2 The work with the primary schools has taken place over May and June of 2025. The next years programme will follow a similar programme to the above.

6. Risk, Issues and Opportunities

- 6.1 The mitigation of the following risks has been demonstrated through the success of the 2024 programme of works, however the expansion of the scope to older students warrants them being retained for the 2025 programme.
- 6.2 This initiative will be overseen by the project sponsors and the project manager will be maintaining regular check-ins with Open City to ensure that risks are being appropriately treated to prevent them from becoming issues.

Risk description	Inherent score	Mitigations	Target score
There is not enough uptake from local schools.	Likelihood: [2] Impact: [3] Total: [6]	OPDC will directly contact schools	Likelihood: [1] Impact: [1] Total: [1]
Children and parents don't attend the celebration event	Likelihood: [2] Impact: [3] Total: [6]	OPDC will encourage the schools to attend directly	Likelihood: [1] Impact: [1] Total: [1]
Students may not be aware of the built environment sector to spark interest	Likelihood: [2] Impact: [3] Total: [6]	The programme is designed to increase awareness and we will work with schools to continue this	Likelihood: [1] Impact: [1] Total: [1]

7. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Comments

- 7.1 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

- 7.2 The focus of this initiative is to promote education and careers in the built environment, which whilst only benefitting young people, it does so for all young ages, from primary school to sixth form (ages 8-18).
- 7.3 Children of all races, genders, disabilities, orientations and religions will be given equal opportunity to benefit from this scheme, and no child with protected characteristics will be held at a disadvantage.
- 7.4 Through both programmes we are able to engage with two main protected groups that are those who are young and those who are classed as disabled. This enables us to reach and engage with them in a creative way.
- 7.5 This programme is proactive and innovative to creating equitable opportunities for all regardless of background, race, age, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or ability.

8. Social Value

- 8.1 **Inclusive Growth** – the purpose of the grant funding is to promote education and career choices within the built environment to young people. This initiative encapsulates inclusive growth benefits for all young people.
- 8.2 **Community Engagement** – this initiative is an example of the promotion of social value, especially through community engagement and participation. This will also enable us to meet with groups that are not normally engaged in process.

9. Other considerations

Consultations and impact assessments

- 9.1 Open City ensure that all health and safety impacts are addressed.

Communications and engagement

- 9.2 This widens our engagement with the younger population and fits in with the wider strategy of engaging with a diverse audience.

Safeguarding

- 9.3 All staff participating in the Open City programmes will be trained and will be subject to the provision of DBS certifications.

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.

Data protection

- 9.4 Apart from numbers of children participating in the programmes, no other data will be collected.

10. Conflicts of interest

- 10.1 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 There is budget under planning policy to cover the £30k funding for 25/26 & 26/27 within the overall Planning Budget as certain workstreams are likely to be pushed back to future years and quotes coming in slightly under initially forecast for.

12. Summary timeline

Activity	Date
Workshops take place	May 2025
Awards ceremony	July 2025
Workshops completed	May 2026
Awards ceremony	TBC summer 2026

Appendices

- None

Other 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 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 confirm that:



Advice: The Governance and Finance 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.

Review: This Decision was circulated for **Senior Review** on 02/09/2025.

Head of Finance – Philip Hall

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

Signature: 

Date: 02/09/2025