

DD DECISION – DD 13

Title: Small Grants Funding 25/26 and 26/27

Executive Summary

To continue building on OPDC’s successful Social Value and Community Partnerships work, this decision seeks approval for funding over two years to support OPDC’s Small Grants programme. This will comprise a total of £140,000 (£70,000 for the Financial Year (FY) 2025/26; and £70,000 for the FY 2026/27). The programme will fund a diverse range of community-led projects that promote inclusion and deliver positive social impact across the Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area.

Decision

That the Director of Communications, Engagement and Strategy approves:

- the total additional expenditure of £140,000 for a rolling two-year programme of Small Grants to community-led projects. Individual grants will range between £1,000 and £7,000, with an overall budget allocation of £70,000 for 25/26 and £70,000 for 26/27. The 25/26 budget allocation will be funded by PA.0120.002. and the 2026/27 allocation will be met from the Communications, Engagement and Strategy budget.

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 has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

7/1/2026

PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

1. Background and context

- 1.1 OPDC's Small Grants Scheme is an opportunity for residents, businesses, conservationists, and voluntary groups who are active in their communities and passionate about local causes to improve the quality of life in their neighbourhoods over a 12-month period.
- 1.2 The Scheme is designed to celebrate all the different types of social action - from creating welcoming places for people to meet and develop new skills, to improving health and wellbeing and reducing loneliness.
- 1.3 Grants of between £1,000 and up to £7,000 are made available to support inclusive, grass-roots initiatives that make a positive difference to the community. In 2025, a total of almost £70,000 was awarded to 10 projects.
- 1.4 OPDC started the Scheme in 2019 to support neighbourhood projects that encourage people to volunteer, run special events, develop new interests, and give back to communities in the Old Oak and Park Royal area.
- 1.5 In total, almost £270,000 has been awarded to date to 52 community-led organisations to support foodbanks, training centres, and arts and culture programmes, supporting more than 60,000 residents so far.
- 1.6 OPDC launched its most recent Small Grants round in January 2025. This was the fourth time OPDC had rolled out the programme across the OPDC host London boroughs of Brent, Ealing, and Hammersmith & Fulham.
- 1.7 In 2025, for the first time and to ensure new organisations and initiatives were supported to maximise community benefit, OPDC prioritised projects and initiatives that had not received funding previously from the programme.
- 1.8 A summary of the programme's timeline and associated funding allocations is set out below:

2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small Grants launched (March 2019) as part of the Great Place Scheme, funded by Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund.• This offered local stakeholders the opportunity to bid for sums of between £500 and £5,000 (Decision CD102) to deliver projects to embed arts, culture and heritage into Old Oak and Park Royal, as well as to mobilise and support volunteering across the area.
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following a short hiatus, in February 2022, OPDC opened its own round of Small Grants to continue the legacy of the Great Place Scheme.• Decision CD178 was approved for £150,000 funding to kick start an open call for the OPDC Small Grants programme for 2022/23.

2023/24 and 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding was continued for the two subsequent years (Decision CD201) with a total budget of £140,000 covering 2023/24 and 2024/25.
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- 1.9 The Scheme enables OPDC to build and grow stronger relationships with a range of local groups and individuals by investing in the community - including younger people and those representing groups with protected characteristics - to deliver tangible beneficial outcomes.
- 1.10 The programme continues to generate a lot of interest with over 150 applications made over the last two years. OPDC has received a number of requests from community groups for further investment and funding moving forwards, as well as feedback seeking more investment in grass roots community-led initiatives to enable change within the area.
- 1.11 Projects delivered to date through the Scheme have included:
- mentoring
 - dance classes
 - cookery training
 - a development programme to create mental health ambassadors for young people
 - health and fitness and art projects.
- 1.12 In May 2025, a Small Grants celebration event was held at North Acton community venue The Foundry for those groups and projects that completed their projects in 2023/4 - and for those awarded funding for 2024/25. The next round will be the fifth time the programme has run.
- 1.13 A full list of the projects from the most recent round of Small Grants (2025) will be published in the next prospectus.

2. The proposal and how it will be delivered

- 2.1 To prioritise OPDC's social value objectives set out in its Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, the funding will prioritise projects and activities that meet one or more of the below criteria:
- contribute to the work of underrepresented community groups
 - benefit young people, up to the age of 21
 - support those who are undergoing change in the area
- 2.2 To ensure the process is both fair and transparent, we will run an open call for submissions which will be publicised across all OPDC's communications channels, as well as utilising existing networks and contacting those who have already expressed an interest.
- 2.3 Through our community outreach initiatives, several community groups are already emerging as potential applicants. We will use our existing community drop-in sessions to allow potential applicants to ask us questions. We can also offer one to

one meetings and phone calls to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage.

- 2.4 Evaluation of submissions will be carried out by a selection panel of OPDC officers, representing a range of relevant organisational functions (community engagement; inclusive growth; design). This panel will provide recommendations for award for review and validation by OPDC senior managers.
- 2.5 In evaluating projects, we will apply 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) Proximity of project to the OPDC area (where it is located)
 - 2) How the project will support local communities and beneficiaries in our area
 - 3) How the project will support and safeguard people with protected characteristics (as set out in the Equality Act 2010), and champion diversity and young people
 - 4) The amount of money applied for
 - 5) How monitoring & reporting will be carried out on the project
 - 6) Value for money worked out as cost per reach and cost per engagement (the intended reach of the project)
 - 7) The risks associated with the project
 - 8) Strategic links with OPDC priorities
- 2.6 The application process has been developed using procedures implemented in previous years, to ensure applicants do not face barriers to access grant funding and that OPDC can work efficiently, quickly and robustly, having full assurances and grant fund claimants can swiftly begin work.
- 2.7 Applicants are required to provide references as part of their applications but may still be subject to proportionate OPDC due diligence checks to mitigate risk.
- 2.8 Those awarded funding will receive a letter of notification from OPDC, the grant funding contract and terms and conditions before payments are processed.
- 2.9 To kick-start the delivery phase, in each of the two financial years, OPDC will host a combined welcome event for new awardees and showcase of project achievements from the previous year. This will give the new awardees and previous project teams an opportunity to share experiences. Funding for these events will come from the wider Communications, Engagement and Strategy budget.
- 2.10 Mid-project meetings and calls will be held with each project to review progress and commission mid-programme reports. End of project evaluation reports will be collected at year-end for each of the project years.
- 2.11 Key Performance Indicators (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 sentiment (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.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 3.1 The next rounds of Small Grants will build on the achievements of the previous four Small Grants programmes in 19/20, 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25.
- 3.2 The overarching 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 local communities, making a tangible difference to quality of life and bringing positive change to the area they live, work or study in.
- 3.3 In previous years, OPDC has observed Small Grants funding make a real difference to those who need it most. We anticipate similar positive outcomes from these subsequent rounds.
- 3.4 Aligned with the criteria set out in Section 2 above, initiatives could include but are not limited to opportunities to:
- gain new skills and knowledge that will increase chances of employment (educational workshops).
 - improve mental and physical health and wellbeing for young people and families (workshops, confidence building).
 - foster community cohesion (content and events for the community).
 - enable residents to spend time away from the impact of construction (i.e., day trips).
 - instil community pride (film productions, blogs, content).
 - and reduce loneliness and isolation (outreach project, intergenerational community arts).
- 3.5 Outcomes will be assessed and tracked through metrics (e.g., number of beneficiaries, area of reach, levels of engagement) and sentiment reporting (for example surveys, testimonials) to measure the successes of the grant funded activities.
- 3.6 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.

4. Strategic fit

- 4.1 The Scheme aligns with the Mayor of London's priority to increase the diversity of cultural activities and enable more Londoners to access culture on their own doorstep.
- 4.2 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."* (OPDC Management Plan 2023/4).
- 4.3 There is a strong strategic fit with OPDC's Community Engagement Strategy, and 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

4.4 The Small Grants programme aligns with the objectives and aims set out in OPDC's EDI strategy, including to:

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

5. Project governance and assurance

- 5.1 The resources required to administer the programme will replicate the 24/25 model. The Head of Communications and Engagement will be the project lead, with day-to-day management and support from the Senior / Engagement Officers, and administrative, budgets and contractual support from Finance and Governance colleagues, overseen by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 5.2 The funding paperwork used previously for the Small Grants programme will be updated and will set out and agree the terms of the funding and to monitor progress and control the outcomes to ensure success.
- 5.3 Performance reports and post project evaluation will be requested at the agreed milestones and variations will be discussed with the project lead(s) to ensure they are addressed.
- 5.4 Grant recipients will have access to advice and support from OPDC officers. OPDC officers will arrange regular meetings with grantees to ensure that they are on track and provide support where they are facing challenges. There are mechanisms in place to support them to adjust their project if required.
- 5.5 A final summary of Small Grants highlights and reach will be produced at the end of each year and presented at the celebration/welcome event. This will also be reflected in our annual communications dashboard monitoring.

Risk, Issues and Opportunities

Risk description	Inherent score	Mitigations	Target score
Grant awardees and / or other partners involved mismanage funding provided to them by OPDC	Likelihood: [1] Impact: [5] Total: [5]	OPDC will enter into the required funding agreements and will implement monitoring and evaluation at two points during delivery – at mid-way point, helping recipients overcome any problems, enabling any issues to be addressed during delivery - and on completion of the project.	Likelihood: [1] Impact: [1] Total: [1]
Funding is not used or is used incorrectly, and / or projects are not delivered, are only partially delivered, or are not delivered within the agreed timeframe.	Likelihood: [3] Impact: [5] Total: [15]	The application process has been developed to ensure applicants do not face barriers to access grant funding and that OPDC can grant funding to awardees efficiently, quickly and robustly, and with full assurances, to enable them to swiftly begin their work. Applicants are required to provide references and, in addition, OPDC can carry out due diligence checks to mitigate risk. Delivery of the project is reviewed by OPDC officers at two stages, a first stage mid-way through the programme and a second stage at its conclusion.	Likelihood: [2] Impact: [2] Total: [4]

<p>The scheme is oversubscribed and some high-quality submissions that meet OPDC's criteria do not achieve funding, leading to potential disappointment among affected bidders.</p>	<p>Likelihood: [1] Impact: [5] Total: [5]</p>	<p>OPDC will ensure transparency and fairness in the selection of projects. The selection team is comprised of officers from across the organisation to ensure there is a balanced view of projects. Where feasible, we will provide feedback on applications. We will also work with other teams, stakeholders, and contractors to see whether projects that do not gain funding through OPDC's Small Grants Scheme can be considered for funding / support through other means.</p>	<p>Likelihood: [2] Impact: [2] Total: [4]</p>
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6. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Comments

- 6.1 Under Section 149 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.¹²^[OBJ]
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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.

7. Social Value

- 7.1 The Small Grants Scheme provides social value to the communities OPDC serves by enabling them to deliver grass roots projects using their in-depth knowledge and close relationships with their communities.
- 7.2 Inclusive Growth – The programme enables community members to deliver jobs, skills, business and education benefits those who are taking part in the programmes.
- 7.3 Community Engagement – Meaningful and participative long-term engagement to inform, involve and empower the communities and businesses we serve. This programme allows OPDC to reach those who are seldom heard and ensures that we can disseminate information about our engagement activities to these groups as well.

8. Other considerations

Communications and engagement

- 8.1 The communications team will ensure alignment on communications, branding, tone of voice, etc. and will engage actively with community champions undertaking initiatives and projects using OPDC funding on wider strategic projects. The team will also support promoting the application process and successful initiatives using OPDC community communications channels.

Safeguarding

- 8.2 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.

Data protection

- 8.3 All events and activities will adhere to the UK's GDPR regulations.

9. Conflicts of interest

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

10. Financial comments

- 10.1 There is currently budget for 25-26 for £70,000, during the budget setting process for 26-27 we have also allocated £70,000.

11. Legal comments

- 11.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director of Communications and Engagement concern the exercise of the Authority's general powers; falling within the Authority's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental

to the promotion of social development in Greater London; and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to: pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people; consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and consult with appropriate bodies.

- 11.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Director of Communications and Engagement must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the director should have particular regard to section 6 of this report.
- 11.3 Paragraphs above indicate that the contribution of £154,500 amounts to the provision of grant funding and not payment for works, supplies or services. Officers must ensure that the funding be distributed fairly, transparently, in accordance with the GLA's equalities and with the requirements of section 12 of the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code. Furthermore, officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement be put in place between and executed by the Authority and the recipient before any (a) commitment to fund is made; and (b) funding is paid to the recipient.
- 11.4 The Subsidy Control Act 2022 requires that grant funding comply with its subsidy control principles. OPDC has considered the proposed grant funding under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and confirms compliance with the relevant principles.
- 11.5 No reliance can be placed on any future funding when approving this decision.

Summary timeline

Milestone	Date
Decision approved	Jan 2026
Brief and application process developed for FY 25-26	Jan 2026
Launch of applications and open call for FY25/26	Jan 2026
Assessment of applications for FY25/26	Feb 2026
Grants for FY25/26 awarded	Mar - Apr 2026

Welcome and celebration event	Spring 2026
Mid-year review for FY25/26 awardees	Nov 2026
Launch of applications and open call for FY26/27	Dec 2026
Assessment of applications for FY26/27	Jan - Feb 2027
End of year evaluation for FY25/26 awardees	Mar 2027
Grants for FY26/27 awarded	Mar - Apr 2027
Celebration event	Spring 2027

Appendices

- None

Other supporting papers

- CD178 - OPDC Small Grants Programme, Great Place Scheme (GPS) legacy was approved in April 2022 to deliver the programme for FY22/23.
- CD201- Small Grants funding 23/24 and 24/25 was approved in January 2024 to deliver a two-year programme for FY 23/25 and 24/25.

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**

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, 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.

Review: This Decision was circulated for **Senior Review** on 7 January 2026.

Chief Finance Officer

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

Signature:



Date:

7 January 2026