

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION - ADD2499

Title: London Urban Forest Plan – partnership delivery grants

Executive Summary:

The ADD seeks approval for a small grant scheme to catalyse and support the London Urban Forest Partnership to help deliver the actions in the newly published London Urban Forest Plan. London's urban forest is an integral part of the city's green infrastructure. It provides multiple environmental, social and economic benefits. Investment in London's trees and woodland will directly support the Green New Deal recovery mission by greening the public realm, creating much needed green jobs and training opportunities to support a green economic recovery from COVID-19, whilst also tackling the nature, air pollution and climate crises.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Environment approves:

Expenditure of £30,000 in financial year 2020-21 on small grants (under £10k) to support delivery of London Urban Forest Plan actions.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Elliot Treharne

Position: Interim Assistant Director,
Environment and Energy

Signature:



Date:

10 February 2021

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The London Urban Forest Plan (LUFP) was published in November 2020. The Plan was coordinated by the GLA and Forestry Commission but is owned by the Urban Forest Partnership. The Partnership contains a wide range of organisations with a strategic interest in the capital's trees and woodlands and the plan sets out 12 goals which bring these organisations together to protect, grow and enhance London's urban forest.
- 1.2 As joint coordinators of the Plan, the Forestry Commission is allocating £20,000 to fund a coordinator role from within the partnership to help support delivery. The GLA will not be in receipt of this funding.
- 1.3 London's urban forest – all the trees and woodlands in the capital – is an integral part of the city's green infrastructure and currently covers around 21% of London. There are several policy drivers informing the management of London's urban forest. Protecting and planting trees and woodlands in and around towns and cities is a key objective of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and an England Tree Strategy is currently being drafted. The new London Plan has policies to protect existing trees and promote the planting of trees in new developments. The London Environment Strategy sets out an ambition to increase tree cover by 10% and create 200 hectares of species-rich woodland by 2050.
- 1.4 Trees and woodlands provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits. These include wildlife habitat, improved air quality, shade and urban cooling, reduced flooding and significant health and wellbeing benefits to Londoners, amounting to at least £133m of benefits every year. Getting outdoors into leafy public spaces has proved particularly vital to Londoners' mental and physical wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis, with visits up 25% in May 2020 compared to 2018, highlighting their critical role as an essential part of London's infrastructure. However, there is significant variation on tree canopy cover in London, from less than 3% in some wards, to over 50% in others. In addition, some boroughs are significantly under resourced in this area. The actions within the Plan will start to address these inequalities.
- 1.5 Investment in the urban forest will bring additional jobs to the green economy and it will also lead to the development of new skills and better sharing of skills across boroughs and organisations. This growth in green jobs and skills, alongside enhancing climate resilience by making the city greener, is a core part of the Green New Deal mission as part of the London Recovery Programme.
- 1.6 This ADD seeks approval for grants to be offered to the London Urban Forest Plan partners with the aim of supporting and kickstarting delivery of the LUFP action plan. The grants will be below £10,000 and are offered to the delivery organisations within the partnership in a competitive process. The grant funding will be managed in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code. The work undertaken as a result of these small grants will directly inform and support the Green New Deal mission and its medium-term investment programmes as well as the wider green skills academy development work.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. Small grants will be offered to LUFP partners to support the delivery of projects to progress or lay the foundations for actions in the London Urban Forest Plan. The action plan includes 36 broad actions with identified lead and support delivery organisations from within the Partnership. The grants will be offered to partners to support priority actions under the three themes of protecting and managing, growing and expanding, and promoting and supporting the urban forest across London.
- 2.2. A total of £30,000 will be available and depending on the proposals submitted, this can either fund a number of actions in the region of £2k-£5k in value or fewer more costly actions in the region of £6k

- £8k or a mixture of both. There will be no requirement for match funding, as these grants aim to support the capacity of partners to deliver actions. However, proposals which add value to existing funded work or include contributions in time or resources will be considered favourably.

- 2.3. The grants will fund projects which can be delivered by March 2021. Research, mapping, communication, engagement, knowledge sharing, dissemination or training are examples of the types of project that may be funded. These will support the delivery of the London Environment Strategy target to increase existing tree cover by 10% by 2050. They will provide the foundations for later action on the ground to take place, including maintaining existing trees and planting new trees. The applications will be assessed by a small panel of GLA and Forestry Commission staff against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
IMPACT: Contribution to LUFP goals/actions and delivery against LUFP KPIs	40%
QUALITY: Previous relevant experience and ability to deliver	30%
COST: Cost and value for money	30%

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. One in five households in London have no access to a private or shared garden and in England, Black and Minority Ethnic people are nearly four times less likely as White people¹ to have no access to outdoor space at home. While access to public parks is more evenly spread the pandemic has made clear that not all people feel comfortable or able to use parks. There is a need to bring the benefits of green infrastructure closer to people's home and daily travel routes. Ensuring the benefits of London's urban forest can be accessed by all Londoners including the under 25s, BAME communities, people from lower-income families and disabled people is a key aim of the London Urban Forest Plan. The foundations laid through these grants will enable strategic green infrastructure development to help meet this need.
- 3.2. The London Urban Forest Partnership includes organisations whose remit is to engage with all Londoners such as the Conservation Volunteers and Trees for Cities. In line with the GLA's responsible procurement policy, grant applicants will be required to hold a suitable equality and diversity policy or equivalent.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. This project supports the London Environment Strategy, The Mayor's Strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (A Great Place To Live, strategic objective 12) and the Health Inequalities Strategy (objective 3.3 Healthy Places & Healthy Communities). The primary recovery mission focus of this project is the Green New Deal and its objective to drive a fair and inclusive recovery from the pandemic including providing access to green spaces and tackling the climate emergency.
- 4.2. The key risks and issues are set out in the table below:

Risk description	Likelihood of the risk occurring	Impact if the risk occurs	Mitigating action
Poor quality grant proposals	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria made clear to the partnership and will be used to score the applications

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/oneineightbritishhouseholdshasnogarden/2020-05-14>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants only available to the partnership who have been involved in the development of the plan and are therefore familiar with the need
Grants do not deliver on LUFP need	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant assessment criteria include how well the proposal meets the LUFP goals Grants only available to the partnership who have been involved in the development of the plan and are therefore familiar with the need
Delays due to COVID-19 or other reasons	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only short term, quick win projects will be considered which can be delivered under the current lockdown conditions Capacity of the organisation to deliver the actions will be part of the grant assessment

- 4.3. There are no conflicts of interest to declare from any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of this Decision Form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is being sought to award funding of small grants under the London Urban Forest Partnership, for the sum total of £30,000 to support delivery of the London Urban Forest Plan. This is a strategic partnership with various organisations including the Greater London Authority. The individual grants will be below a threshold of £10,000 each, depending on the proposals submitted and reviewed by the panel.
- 5.2. The funding source for this project will come from the available resources contained within the 20-21 Urban Greening budget, held in the Environment unit. Payment will be made in arrears based on the milestones agreed and managed according to the existing GLA grant funding protocol.

6. Planned timetable

Milestone	Duration	By when
Grants awarded/actions commence	2 weeks	13/02/21
Grant funded work complete and claimed	6.5 weeks	31/03/21
Actions completed	10.5 weeks	30/04/21

Appendices and supporting papers:

The London Urban Forest Plan can be viewed [here](#).

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO**

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form –NO**ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Ruth Knight has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 8 February 2021.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature**Date**

10 February 2021