

DIRECTOR DECISION – DD135

Title: Canal Volunteering

Executive Summary:

The Design Team is seeking to grant fund the Canal & River Trust to support the enhancement of their volunteering programme for the Grand Union Canal located within the OPDC boundary. The programme will focus on volunteer-led litter picking and planting improvements aimed at individuals and businesses located along the canal.

This initiative aligns with key ambitions outlined in OPDC's Canal Placemaking Study (2019), as well as the volunteering and community engagement targets of OPDC's Great Place Scheme.

This Decision supersedes DD125, which approved spending for volunteer-led biodiversity improvements. The project could not be delivered in the originally proposed form due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.

Decision:

That the Director approves:

- The grant funding of £50,000 to the Canal & River Trust (CRT) to support their volunteering programme for the Grand Union Canal, outlined hereafter, of which £15,000 revenue funding is sourced from the Great Place Scheme budget, and £35,000 capital funding is sourced from OPDC's Good Growth Round 2 Grant for activation and placemaking projects along the Grand Union Canal.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the OPDC business plan and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Ben O'Neill

Position: Development Director

Signature:



Date: 10/11/2020

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Great Place Scheme (GPS) is a three-year arts, culture and heritage programme funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England. The total grant award is £1,489,200 and overall expenditure was approved, by OPDC's Board on 22 June 2017, with approval of detailed expenditure plans delegated to the Chief Executive.

The core objectives of the programme are:

- to deliver a high quality, participatory arts and culture programme, with the local community at its heart;
- to showcase and uncover the rich heritage of Park Royal, in order to influence and shape the future of Old Oak;
- to celebrate the fascinating businesses located in Park Royal;
- create opportunities for local people to volunteer, participate and learn new skills; and
- establish a stronger, more distinct, identity for the area and improved sense of local pride.

- 1.2 In 2019, OPDC was awarded £1.2 million capital funding from the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund Round 2 to deliver a series of community and public realm focused initiatives along the Grand Union Canal in Old Oak and Park Royal. The projects and funding were approved by OPDC Board on 26 September 2019 (see Appendix 1).

- 1.3 Part of the Good Growth Funding (GGF) is towards delivering key biodiversity improvements along the Grand Union Canal as outlined in OPDC's Canal Placemaking Study (CPS). In particular recommendation EH1 aiming at providing "a continuous green edge throughout Old Oak and Park Royal, simultaneously considering the creation and protection of habitat, ensuring effective species movement, and enabling access to nature". The CPS identifies the northern edge of the canal as a site for ecology enhancements by preserving existing wild spaces and enhancing planting in areas where businesses along the canal break up this existing wild character.

- 1.4 The CPS further suggests OPDC to "quickly demonstrate tangible, on-the-ground interventions and readiness to work with the wider community and business community" (recommendation CL6.2), and to work "with local groups for community planting to foster a sense of custodianship and a 'canal community' that achieves on-going and long-term stewardship and management" (recommendation EH 2.3).

- 1.5 It is the aim of both OPDC's GPS and GGF projects to create long-term opportunities for volunteering in the area that will help build community ownership, and provide opportunities for businesses to engage positively with the wider area. In particular along the Grand Union Canal, where issues of littering are reported regularly to OPDC, there is an opportunity for volunteer-led programmes to help keep the towpath and its surroundings clean and improve planting where possible. Local community as well as investors in the area have expressed their interest. We have identified that the CRT already has initiatives in place that align with these opportunities and that can easily be expanded with support from OPDC.

- 1.6 The total cost of this is £50,000 which will be grant-funded to the CRT. £15,000 revenue funding is sourced from the GPS budget towards developing a volunteering programme. The remaining £35,000 capital funding is sourced from the GGF budget towards the delivery of volunteer-led litter picks and planting improvements along the canal.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The Design Team is seeking to grant-fund the CRT to support the enhancement of their volunteering programme across the OPDC area in alignment with OPDC's ambitions outlined in the Canal Placemaking Study. The grant will allow the CRT to develop a comprehensive volunteering programme, and deliver a series of volunteer-led litter picking and planting initiatives.
- 2.2 The project will form part of a programme managed by CRT's in-house community engagement team. They will liaise with OPDC's Comms & Engagement team, local community, businesses and other stakeholders to deliver two outputs.
- 2.3 The support provided by OPDC will serve as a blueprint for OPDC and CRT to approach local community, businesses and investors in the area., and to manage and oversee up to 10 volunteering activities over the course of one year. These will include litter picking and planting improvements. The provision of any tools, plants, catering and other requirement to successfully deliver these initiatives is included in the budget.
- 2.4 The anticipated outcomes include:
 - a. Working with local community to foster a sense of custodianship and a 'canal community' that achieves ongoing and long-term stewardship and management (CPS recommendation EH2.3);
 - b. Demonstrate tangible, on-the-ground interventions and a readiness to work with the wider community and business community (CPS recommendation CL6.2);
 - c. Provide a continuous green edge throughout Old Oak and Park Royal, simultaneously considering the creation and protection of habitat, ensuring effective species movement and enabling access to nature (CPS recommendation EH1);
- 2.5 It is anticipated that this project will provide volunteering opportunities for local community, workers and businesses in the area, and create a precedent for a long-term volunteering and engagement approach along the Grand Union Canal.
- 2.6 Grant-funding the CRT will allow the CRT to direct additional resource towards delivering their statutory mission around volunteering and community engagement within the OPDC area. We anticipate that this one-off grant will set the precedent for the CRT to allocate resources and investment in a more structural manner towards the OPDC area within the CRT in the years to come, to benefit the long-term regeneration and development of the area.

3 Equality comments

- 3.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the OPDC is subject to the public sector equality duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to (i) eliminated unlawful discriminations, harassment and victimisation; (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (iii) foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sex orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being "relevant" protected characteristics).
- 3.2 The CRT is a registered charity and as such it is also required to meet the standards set out in the Equality Act.
- 3.3 The grant agreement between OPDC and CRT will explicitly refer to the diversity of the wider OPDC area and require the grantees to explain how they intend to be inclusive in their approach to

developing and delivering the works required and meet OPDC's obligations under the Equality Act 2010. This will help OPDC and the Mayor to deliver equality and inclusion policies to promote an accessible and inclusive environment and meet the Equalities Duty by identifying opportunities for existing and newly arriving communities to benefit from development in the OPDC area.

- 3.4 OPDC will ensure the terms of the grant agreement are applied throughout each stage of the grant through the grant monitoring process.

4 Other considerations

- 4.1 This grant aligns with the ambitions of OPDC's In the Making programme aiming at delivering improvements and initiatives within locations where it is possible to accelerate delivery, and to provide confidence that OPDC are bringing forward the regeneration of Old Oak and Park Royal, by:

- a. Creating immediate benefits for local communities from the public investment and regeneration in old Oak and Park Royal by improving physical links, open spaces and community infrastructure;
- b. Establishing a strong identity and profile for Old Oak and Park Royal further afield to attract high calibre investors and organisations who will deliver the visions; and
- c. Piloting activities and local initiatives that could grow with the regeneration of the area and potentially occupy space in new developments.

4.2 Key risks and issues

- a. Risk: Financial mismanagement of any funding provided through the GPS fund awarded to OPDC to grant awardees and other partners involved in the delivery of the project outlined above.
Mitigation: OPDC will enter into the required funding agreements, and payments will only be made on completion of milestones.
- b. Risk: ongoing Covid-19 restrictions may further delay or prevent the delivery of volunteer initiatives on the ground.
Mitigation: OPDC will ensure to build in sufficient flexibility allowing for an extension of the grant contract in case the required outputs cannot be delivered within the given timescales due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- c. Risk: Volunteers may be subject to health and safety risks working alongside the canal and an actively used towpath.
Mitigation: OPDC will ensure all required insurances and liabilities are included in the funding agreement with the CRT.
- d. Risk: The CRT may be unable to deliver the outputs due to internal restructuring or pressures due to Covid-19 (i.e. furlough of staff etc.)
Mitigation: the grant-funding is to allow the CRT to direct dedicated resource towards the delivery of the outputs outlined in this decision.
- e. Risk: the grant funding may not be claimed within the GPS and GGF spending deadlines due to project delays.
Mitigation: the grant outputs will be broken up into key milestones that align with spending deadlines and allow for sufficient flexibility in case any delays occur.
- f. Risk: the CRT may not be able to attract or engage with the desired community groups and other stakeholders.
Mitigation: OPDC will organise regular co-ordination meetings with the CRT and key staff from OPDC, including the OPDC Engagement Team, to ensure local knowledge is shared throughout all stages of the delivery of the grant-funded project.

5 Financial comments

- 5.1 Expenditure of up to £50,000 will be funded by the Great Place Scheme (£15,000) and Good Growth Fund (£35,000) budgets. The report states activities will include litter picking and planting; officers are reminded to only incur eligible capital expenditure when utilising capital grant. Grant claims should be submitted to the GLA in a timely manner to reduce financial risk to the Corporation. Issuing grants to external organisation must be in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code. Additional expenditure is subject to the Corporation's decision making process.

6 Legal comments

- 6.1 The report above indicates that the decision requested of the Director falls within the OPDC's object of securing the regeneration of the Old Oak and Park Royal area and its powers to do anything it considers appropriate for the purpose of its objects or purposes incidental to those purposes, as set out in the Localism Act 2011.
- 6.2 The report indicates that the contribution of £50,000 to the CRT amounts to the provision of grant funding and not payment for works, supplies or services. Officers must ensure that the funding is distributed fairly, transparently, and in a manner which affords value for money in accordance with the OPDC's Contracts and Funding Code.
- 6.3 Officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement is put in place between and executed by the OPDC and recipient before any commitment to fund is made.

7 Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1 OPDC will grant fund the CRT to deliver this project. The Grand Union Canal and adjacent towpath is part of the estate owned and managed by the CRT. As part of their statutory mission, the CRT organises and delivers volunteering opportunities within their estate, to achieve greater stewardship and community ownership over the canal, and promote the canal's health and wellbeing potential. Initiatives run by the CRT include litter picking, as well as maintenance of the towpath and surrounding green infrastructure.
- 7.2 Therefore, the CRT is uniquely positioned to support the OPDC's volunteering ambitions and the policies set out in OPDC's CPS document, as compared to third-party consultants or directly by OPDC ourselves. The initiatives funded from the grant are exclusively within the CRT estate.
- 7.3 The grant will allow the CRT direct dedicated resource towards volunteering along the Grand Union Canal within the OPDC boundary.

Activity	Timeline
Grant Agreement signed	1 December 2020
Draft Volunteering Programme	Mid-February 2021
Volunteering Programme agreed	March 2021
Volunteering activities delivered	January – November 2021
Final report & recommendations	December 2021

Appendices and supporting papers:

- DD125
- Good Growth Round 2 Board Paper
- OPDC's Canal Placemaking Study (2019):
<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/organisations-we-work/old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation-opdc/making/grand-union-canal/grand-union-canal-placemaking>

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the OPDC 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 approval 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 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – YES/NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer
to confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Jan Ackenhausen has drafted this report in accordance with OPDC procedures and confirms that:

✓

Finance advice:

The Finance team have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments

✓

Legal advice:

The Legal team have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

S106:

Click and insert name has provided information on the S106 that this proposed expenditure relates to.

N/A

Click and insert name can confirm that s106 decision form has been appended to this DD.

N/A

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature



Date 11/11/20

