

**DIRECTOR DECISION – DD125**

**Title: Good Growth Fund Round 2: Grand Union Canal biodiversity improvements**

**Executive Summary:**

The Design Team is seeking to commission consultants to create and implement a volunteering programme aimed at delivering biodiversity improvements along the Grand Union Canal. The specific areas of focus are the industrial edges on the north side of the canal which are not accessible to the general public.

Consultants will work with key businesses in this area to improve their canalside frontage with new planting in line with the objectives of OPDC's Canal Placemaking Study and OPDC's Good Growth Fund Round 2 grant.

This Decision seeks approval of expenditure up to £50,000 of Good Growth round 2 capital funding which. The funding needs to be spent by the end of FY20/21 but may be extended if the project delivery is delayed due to Covid-19 government guidance and mitigation measures.

**Decision:**

That the Director approves:

- Expenditure of up to £50,000 for consultancy services to develop and implement a volunteering programme to deliver biodiversity improvements along the Grand Union Canal.

**AUTHORISING DIRECTOR**

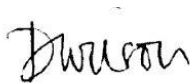
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the OPDC business plan and priorities.

It has my approval.

**Name:** Davena Wilson

**Position:** Land and Property Director

**Signature:**



**Date:** 18 May 2020

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1 Introduction and background**

- 1.1 In September 2019 OPDC published its Canal Placemaking Study (CPS), funded by the Good Growth Fund Round 1, which sets out a coherent vision and placemaking principles for the Grand Union Canal in Old Oak and Park Royal. The study identifies the opportunity to deliver quick win public realm and ecology improvements to protect its existing wild character, much loved by local communities, while at the same time celebrating its potential as a thriving public realm asset for the wider area.
- 1.2 Recommendation EH1 of the CPS sets out that “The Grand Union Canal should 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”. It 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.
- 1.3 The study 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).
- 1.4 In 2019, OPDC was awarded £1.2 million of 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).
- 1.5 The project will be delivered as a volunteering opportunity for key businesses located along the canal, as a first step towards developing a comprehensive volunteering approach for the area.
- 1.6 This project provides an opportunity for positive post-lockdown engagement with local businesses and community. The Design Team is keen on taking sufficient time for the development and planning stage of this project to ensure volunteering programme is flexible in scale and timescales to be rolled out in line with Covid-19 government guidance and social distancing measures.

#### **2 Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1 The Design Team is seeking to procure consultants to develop a volunteering programme which will deliver new planting along the canal as outlined in OPDC’s Canal Placemaking Study, and help OPDC to identify and engage with key stakeholders, be it businesses, employees or residents, to help improve the long-term safety and cleanliness of the canal and surrounding public space.
- 2.2 The consultants will liaise with businesses, develop and deliver volunteering days, supply planting as set out in the Canal Placemaking Study, and produce tools and recommendations to support OPDC’s future volunteering opportunities.

- 2.3 **The first output** of this commission will be partnerships with key businesses that will help deliver this project. The consultants identify and liaise with relevant businesses located along the Grand Union Canal in the OPDC area, develop the planting and volunteering approach, and agree on a volunteering schedule. The bidder is requested to propose a fixed fee for this output.
- 2.4 **The second output** of this commission will be the delivery of the biodiversity improvements in partnership with the businesses identified in Task 1. The consultants will supply plants as set out in the Canal Placemaking Study to the businesses and run the volunteering days with employees of those businesses and from the wider communities. The bidder is requested to propose a variable fee for this output since the amount of available space for biodiversity is not clear yet.
- 2.5 **The third output** of this commission will be an evaluation of the impact of the volunteering days, and a list of recommendations and/or tools for future volunteering projects. The evaluation will assess the project's success in building sustainable partnerships with local businesses and employees, delivering key recommendations from OPDC's Canal Placemaking Study, and building awareness and custodianship over the canal. The bidder is requested to propose a fixed fee for this output.

### **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) eliminate 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 procurement brief explicitly refers to the diversity of the wider OPDC area and its businesses and requires candidates to explain how they intend to be inclusive in their approach to engaging with employees whose first language is not English. This will help OPDC and the Mayor of London deliver the equality and inclusions policies to promote an accessible and inclusive environment and meet the Equalities Duty.
- 3.3 At the heart of this business volunteering project, and of the Canal Placemaking Study as a whole, is OPDC's ambition to facilitate the development of an inclusive community of canal users who will act as stewards over the canal and help OPDC, the Canal & River Trust and local authorities in making the canal into a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for the wider community. This should involve current and future communities of residents, employees and visitors, and reflect the diversity of the wider area.
- 3.4 The businesses eligible to be a partner in this project, and recipient of the volunteering opportunity, should be located within the OPDC area on the northern edge of the canal.
- 3.5 OPDC will ensure the volunteering opportunities are inclusive and accessible for employees with protected characteristics, and for people whose first language is not English.

## **4 Other considerations**

4.1 This project is part 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 vision; and
- c. Piloting activities and local initiatives that could grow with the regeneration of the area and potentially occupy space in new developments.

Funding to deliver this project is due to be spend by the end of FY20/21. However, we do anticipate this spending deadline to shift if Covid-19 related restrictions remain in place throughout summer. Design Team are in are currently working with the GLA to confirm a grant extension. Programme and timescale adjustments will be made in coordination with the appointed consultants once the grant extension is formalised.

4.2 Key risks and issues:

- a. Risk of lack of interest from businesses.

Mitigation 1: The number of businesses located within the project area with a potential for biodiversity improvements is limited;

Mitigation 2: Businesses will not be required to make any financial contributions to be a partner in this project;

Mitigation 3: OPDC entertains good relationships with West London Businesses and will work with them to promote this project.

- b. Landowner consent may be required for improving existing planting.

Mitigation 1: OPDC has good relations with key landowners in the area and may choose to work only with businesses located on property of those landowners if necessary.

## **5 Financial comments**

5.1 Expenditure of up to £50,000 on consultancy as detailed in this report will be funded by the Good Growth Fund 2020/21 budget. Officers are reminded to only incur eligible capital expenditure and to submit timely grant claims to the GLA, so as not to expose the Corporation to financial risk. Further expenditure is subject to the Corporation's decision making process.

## **6 Planned delivery approach and next steps**

6.1 The Design Team will invite 4-8 suitable consultants to tender.

- 6.2 TfL will manage the procurement through an invited tender process. Up to 8 suitable consultants will be invited to tender. They have been identified by OPDC in partnership with the GLA Environment Team and the Canal & River Trust.
- 6.3 Bidders will be shortlisted on the grounds of assessment criteria which include expertise in managing and delivering successful community and business engagement projects, as well as expertise in ecology and biodiversity. Up to 3 bidders will be shortlisted and invited for a post-tender clarification interview provided they meet the technical threshold of 60%.
- 6.4 OPDC is the lead client for this work. The Canal & River Trust will be a partner on the client team. The main point of contact will be the OPDC Urban Design and Graphic Officer, supported by the Principal Urban Designer. As needed, the project team will be assisted by representatives from the GLA regeneration and environment teams.
- 6.5 The OPDC Communication and Engagement team will also support with the liaison and engagement with local businesses.
- 6.6 The project programme, budget and risks will be managed by the OPDC Principal Project Manager and key milestones will be reported through the OPDC Wide Programme Board.
- 6.7 An In the Making internal working group has been set up to ensure the coordination with other OPDC teams and workstreams. This includes representatives from the following OPDC teams: planning, communications & engagement, sustainability, technical project management, the Great Place Scheme, and finance.
- 6.8 The OPDC Design Team is in the process of arranging regular meetings with the London Boroughs of Ealing, Brent and Hammersmiths & Fulham to update and gain input from them on the In the Making initiative.
- 6.9 The indicative project plan and timescales outlined below have been agreed with TfL and are based on the assumption of a gradual easing of Covid-19 lockdown measures allowing for on-site surveys around summertime. However, consultants will be asked to anticipate that restrictions may continue throughout summer and beyond, and plan for sufficient flexibility in their project plan, timescales and methodology to mitigate the impact of any further restrictions. Additional adjustments to the programme and timescales will be made once the grant extension is formalised with the GLA.

| Activity                                            | Timeline                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Procurement of contract                             | May – June 2020           |
| Announcement / Inception                            | June 2020                 |
| Delivery Task 1 (project & partnership development) | July - August 2020        |
| Delivery Task 2 (project delivery)                  | September - December 2020 |
| Delivery Task 3 (evaluation & recommendations)      | January 2021              |
| Project Closure                                     | February 2021             |

## Appendices and supporting papers:

- Board Paper 26 September 2019

**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 – NO**

**ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer  
to confirm the  
following (✓)

**Drafting officer:**

Jasper den Boeft 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.

✓

**CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:**

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

**Signature**

**Date 18 May 2020**



