

CEO DECISION – CD 160

Title: Great Place Scheme – Absolute Beginners: additional grant funding

Executive summary

OPDC was awarded just under £1.5million revenue funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's (NLHF) Great Place Scheme (GPS) to deliver a three-year community-focused arts and culture programme, supporting the delivery of OPDC's long-term objectives.

One of OPDC's GPS projects is Absolute Beginners, a grant-funded, artist-led project which was due be delivered through a physical facility where young people could learn to produce basic goods using expertise and resources found amongst experienced craftspeople and workers in Park Royal. Absolute Beginners has, however, been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The programme has been redesigned, re-scheduled and substantially altered to accommodate safe working. These necessary adaptations will require additional work and additional costs also.

The original project grant of £50,000 was approved in DD117. This decision builds upon DD117 to request that an additional £10,000 of grant funding, is provided for the project to cover these additional costs. This will be funded from the Great Place Scheme contingency budget (drawn down in accordance with the grant agreement) and therefore will not affect any other GPS projects or OPDC's core budget.

Decision

That the Chief Executive approves:

- i. Approval of an additional £10,000 grant funding from the Great Place Scheme budget, to Tom James for the Absolute Beginners project, bringing the total grant to £60,000.

Chief Executive Officer

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

Signature:



Date: 19 May 2021

PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

1. Background and context

- 1.1. In April 2017, OPDC was successful in securing a grant of £1,489,200 from the Great Place Scheme (GPS). Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Arts Council England, GPS is a national scheme that aims to boost and improve outcomes from investment in arts and culture in 16 'great places'. As well as just under £1.5m of GPS funding, OPDC is directly contributing £150,000 and securing match funding of £275,000, bringing the total three-year programme budget to £1,914,200.
- 1.2. The GPS programme was originally due to conclude in December 2020; however, due to Covid-19, the funders have granted us a nine-month extension to September 2021. They have also provided flexibility to allow funding to be directed to Covid-19 response work and have allowed us to renegotiate some key performance indicators in recognition of the impact Covid-19 restrictions have had on community programming.
- 1.3. Absolute Beginners is one of the Great Place Scheme major art commissions. It was devised by artist Tom James and submitted to OPDC via an open call for artist proposals in 2019. Tom James was awarded a grant of £50,000 to deliver the project in December 2019 (approved under DD117).
- 1.4. Absolute Beginners is a participatory project which will teach 18 young people (the absolute beginners of the title) the skills to make a range of everyday items in a low-tech, sustainable way. The project uncovers the history of manufacturing in Park Royal, as well as providing tangible skills and training outcomes for young people.
- 1.5. The original plan was for local older people ('old makers') to teach the young people, thus creating an intergenerational dialogue and educational experience for all participants. It would have also resulted in a physical hub space (the Absolute Beginners factory) which could have been used for other GPS activities too, and potentially become a longer-term asset for OPDC to use for community focused activities.
- 1.6. The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting extended lockdowns throughout 2020 and early 2021 have had a significant impact on the planned Great Place Scheme programme for 2020. The Absolute Beginners project has had to be revised, re-scheduled and substantially altered. These necessary adaptations require significant additional work and incur additional costs. For this reason the original grant funding of £50,000 needs to be supplemented with a further £10,000, (drawn from the NLHF grant funding) to support the delivery of the project in these changed circumstances.

2. The proposal and how it will be delivered

- 2.1 Absolute Beginners cannot deliver its intended benefits without local community involvement and under Covid-19 restrictions, face-to-face engagement with participants cannot happen as originally planned, therefore a robust digital approach as well as additional precautions to ensure a safe working environment (should face to face activities resume) have been developed to ensure that 18 young people and a number of 'old makers' are still able to participate safely and appropriately.
- 2.2 The additional grant funding requested in this form will pay for necessary adaptations to ensure the programme can be delivered safely and successfully, within the new timeline of the Great Place Scheme programme. The funds will be used for the following:
- Design fees for creation of the Absolute Beginners in-depth project website, which will document the stories and process of the project and will include more interactive elements in order for wider public engagement. Additional resources and equipment needed for filming of video blogs and workshops.
 - Online inductions supported by physical welcome packs, with key materials (e.g.: recycled paper, clay, tools etc) posted to participants.
 - Production of ten online interviews/stories – in particular to help the young makers engage with older makers on the Absolute Beginners website and build intergenerational links between them – realising and sustaining one of the original objectives of the project.
 - Printed materials and distribution – costs associated with printing/distributing project materials for those not able to access digital content, mitigating limitations of the digital/data-divide.
 - PPE/Covid-19 health and safety adaptations if the face-to-face workshops are able to take place. This will include developing a Covid-19 specific Risk Assessment, sourcing adequate PPE for the project lifespan, adaptations to workspaces such as Perspex screens and taxis/transport costs for safe travel of participants and workshops facilitators
 - Artist fees incurred due to the extended timeline of the project, well beyond its intended lifespan.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 3.1 The objective of this £10,000 additional grant funding is to ensure the Absolute Beginners project is able to meet its original objectives and outcomes despite the challenges incurred by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.2 The wider objectives remain the same as in the original project proposal and referenced in DD117:
- To work with exceptional artists to uncover, connect, showcase, celebrate and better understand the heritage and culture of Park Royal – London's largest and most vibrant industrial area.
 - Provide 18 participants with high quality arts activity and the opportunity to explore their own creativity, grow in confidence and to learn new skills and/or knowledge.

- To raise awareness, provide exposure, and inspire local people to consider a career in the creative industries.
- To actively communicate with neighbours and interest groups the nature of the changes taking place locally and support local people to have a voice in these changes.
- To create volunteering opportunities that build confidence, develop new skills and increase a sense of pride in the area.

The outputs of the project will be:

- The design and implementation of a creative programme with local residents, workers and young people.
- The creation of two participant-designed products.
- An open source manual inspired by the framework of the Absolute Beginners project, that will allow for successful replications for similar activities.
- Public events led by the lead artist, including opening of workshop/factory shop (these may be online if restrictions remain in place by Summer 2021).
- Space for dialogue within the community; to talk about what we make, how we work, how we live now, and how we want to live in the future.

4. **Strategic fit**

4.1 The Absolute Beginners project is relevant to OPDC's 2020/21 Work Programme, in particular the '**Accelerated Delivery**' objective which aims to: Build community capacity through community programming, including co-design and co-development of programmes and volunteering initiatives. Deliver our targets and milestones for the Great Place Scheme.

4.2 In addition, it aligns with the following Mayoral strategies:

- The Mayor's Skills for London Strategy: 'A City for all Londoners - making sure Londoners, employers and businesses get the skills they need to succeed in a fair, inclusive society and thriving economy.'
- The Mayors Culture Strategy for London, in particular the following priority: 'Creative Londoners - investing in a diverse creative workforce for the future'

5. **Project governance and assurance**

5.1 Absolute Beginners is a project funded by OPDC that forms part of The Great Place Scheme programme which is managed by the Great Place Scheme Programme Manager, who reports to the Head of Design within the Delivery Directorate.

5.2 Programme oversight is through normal management structures, with weekly meetings between the Programme Manager and Head of Design, who in turn reports to the Director of Delivery.

5.3 The Absolute Beginners project is an externally run grant-funded project and is managed day to day by the grant recipient, artist Tom James, who provides bi-

weekly reports to the Great Place Scheme team. The grant is drawn down according to a schedule of milestones set out in the grant agreement. The agreement will be extended and varied in accordance with the terms of the agreement to include the additional £10,000 should this decision be approved.

Risks and issues

- 5.4 This decision relates only to the need for additional funding to cover costs incurred by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent delay and alterations to the programme. All other risks were addressed in DD117 and continue to be monitored and mitigated in line with the Great Place Scheme management processes.
- 5.5 The only significant risk at this stage is that Covid-19 restrictions continue (or are increased) for the remainder of the Absolute Beginners programme which has to end by August 2021. However, this has been mitigated by the development of two versions of the project, one that can be fully delivered online, and one which combines online and face-to-face activities. Therefore, the risk is minimal.

6. Equality comments

- 6.1 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
- 6.2 OPDC's Great Place Programme has been developed in consultation with and to be relevant to the local community now and for future communities through an intensive six-month pilot phase in 2018, which incorporated detailed consultation activities. The varied projects are therefore relevant and inclusive to the people who live and work in the OPDC area, both those taking part in Great Place activity and those who will become audience members for the activity.
- 6.3 As such the Great Place Programme has been developed to have 'due regard' of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. In relation to this part of the programme, the lead artist brief was developed to ensure that the objectives and outcomes of this role were broad enough so they neither disadvantaged or advantaged anyone with a protected characteristic. The brief was circulated widely and those taking part in the selection process had no access to the personal information of those submitting.

¹ This 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. 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. 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.

- 6.4 Through careful monitoring, OPDC will ensure the successful Artist delivers the project in a manner which recognises diversity and is in line with OPDC's own policies of Equality and Diversity.
- 6.5 Absolute Beginners is in the process of recruiting participants for the project and has advertised the opportunity locally in close collaboration with the OPDC Communication team to ensure the cohort of young people benefitting from the programme is diverse and representative of the local community.
- 6.6 Throughout the past three years of the Great Place Scheme, OPDC has built up a substantial network of contacts including over 50 youth service providers embedded on the three local boroughs of Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham. These have been integral to promoting the project as they are able to reach a much wider range of community members, and already have equality and accessibility built into their operating models.
- 6.7 In addition, the Absolute Beginners team has developed a bespoke Anti-Discrimination policy to ensure that all participants are protected from any type of discrimination or harassment throughout the whole lifetime of the project.
- 6.8 The Absolute Beginners website and all content produced is being developed according to accessibility standards.
- 6.9 In summary this decision will have no negative impact on those with protected characteristics, and will potentially allow more significant and in-depth engagement between young and older people to happen in a safe way, thus fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

7. Other considerations

Health in all policies

- 7.1 This request for additional funding has been made in order to protect the health of participants in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and Public Health England requirements.

Safeguarding

- 7.2 A robust Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document has been produced by the Absolute Beginners team which details measures taken to ensure the safety of all participants throughout the programme. The document has a specific section dealing with working online and setting out how the young people and any vulnerable adults will be kept safe during remote participation sessions.

8. Conflicts of interest

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

9. Financial comments

- 9.1 The total amount of revenue grant expenditure on this project is £60,000, in addition to DD117. Revenue grant expenditure of up to £10,000 can be contained within the existing Great Place Scheme budget, using funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England.
- 9.2 The Grant Agreement should be revised to reflect this change. Additional expenditure is subject to the Corporation's decision-making process.

10. Legal comments

- 10.1 The report above indicates that the decision requested of the Chief Executive falls within OPDC's objective 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.
- 10.2 In taking the decision requested, the Chief Executive 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 and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Chief Executive should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 10.3 In respect of the grant funding received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Arts Council England which the OPDC has received and proposes to further use for the extension of this project, officers have confirmed in paragraph 1.2 above that such funding arrangements have been extended. Officers must ensure they are content that the OPDC continues to comply with any conditions to which the grant funding is subject.
- 10.4 In respect of the match funding received from other funders for the OPDC's Great Place Scheme, to the extent that such match funding is used for the Absolute Beginners project, officers must ensure they are content that the extension of the project is also in-line with any conditions of the match funding and that the OPDC continues to comply with any conditions to which the match funding is subject.
- 10.5 Officers have indicated in paragraph 1.6 that the OPDC is proposing further grant funding to the artist Tom James to deliver his Absolute Beginners project. Officers must ensure that the existing funding agreement is extended and varied in accordance with the terms of the agreement and appropriate contract variation documentation is put in place and executed by the OPDC and Tom James or a new funding agreement is put in place between and executed by the OPDC and Tom James, before any commitment to the additional funding is made.

11. Summary timeline

Activity	Date
Procurement of contract /Grant award	April 21

Announcement	N/A
Delivery start date	May 21
Delivery end date	August 21
Evaluation period	Aug-Sept 21
Project closure	Sept 21

Appendices

- Appendix A: DD117 Absolute Beginners

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: Grace Williams has drafted this Form in accordance with OPDC procedures, including for handling conflicts of interests, and confirm that:



Advice: The Finance and Legal teams have commented on the proposal.



CONFIRMATIONS

Section 106 funding: N/A

SMT review: This Decision was circulated to the **Senior Management Team** for review on Friday 23rd April 2021.

Chief Finance Officer

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

Signature:



Date: 12/05/21

Director Ben O'Neill Director Of Development

I do not have any disclosable interest in the proposed Decision. It is consistent with OPDC's priorities and can be referred to the CEO for final approval.

Signature:



Date: 12 May 2021