

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2561

Title: Grow Back Greener – additional funds

Executive summary:

This decision requests approval for the allocation of an additional £118,000 budget to the 2021-22 Grow Back Greener Fund, part of the Inclusive Green Space and Climate Resilience Programme (approved under MD2827). This funding will be allocated from budget approved in the 2021-22 GLA Mayoral Budget under the Green New Deal Mission (under cover of MD2795) for “Climate Adaptation Delivery”.

The additional funding will support the delivery of two additional grant-funded projects within the “climate change adaptation and water” theme of the Grow Back Greener Fund, that will contribute to improving London’s climate resilience, enhancing green space and reducing flood risk. This will deliver additional impact from the fund and enhance its climate adaptation outcomes.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth approves the following:

- Expenditure of £118,000 in 2021-22 on the Grow Back Greener Fund, part of the Inclusive Green Space and Climate Resilience Programme.
- The related variation of the GLA’s grants management support contract with Groundwork London.

This is in addition to the £2,025,000 allocated to the programme under cover of MD2827 (£825,000 in 2021-22, £1,200,000 in 2022-23), giving a total budget for the programme of £2,143,000 (£943,000 in 2021-22, £1,200,000 in 2022-23).

This expenditure will be allocated from budget approved in the 2021-22 GLA Mayoral Budget under the Green New Deal Mission (under cover of MD2795) for “Climate Adaptation Delivery”, which is being repurposed to support additional work to reduce flood risk.

This additional funding allocation will specifically provide grant funding to projects selected by the Grow Back Greener Fund that deliver increased resilience to the impacts of climate change.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

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: Philip Graham

Position: Executive Director, Good Growth

Signature:



Date:

11/1/22

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Accelerating the delivery of a cleaner, greener London is one of the London Recovery Board's five key outcomes for the programme for the capital's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this programme, the Green New Deal mission, jointly developed by the GLA and London Councils, will tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and improve air quality by doubling the size of London's green economy to accelerate job creation for all.
- 1.2. The Mayor approved (under cover of MD2827) an Inclusive Green Space and Climate Resilience Programme, comprising a community greening and climate adaptation grants programme (the Grow Back Greener Fund), and a Schools Climate Resilience project.
- 1.3. The Grow Back Greener Fund makes grants available for local projects that support communities to improve and create green spaces; restore wetlands and waterways; plant trees, install sustainable drainage; create wildlife habitat; and promote access to green space for Londoners. The grants will be offered in two rounds in 2021-22 and 2022-23, prioritising projects located in areas of poor access to green space and high climate risk, as well as those that offer training and skills-development opportunities. The 2021-22 Grow Back Greener Fund is split into two themed categories: "access to green space" and "climate change adaptation and water".
- 1.4. Under MD2827 the Mayor approved expenditure of £2,025,000 on the Grow Back Greener Fund, comprising £825,000 in 2021-22; and £1,200,000 in 2022-23.
- 1.5. This DD seeks approval to spend an additional £118,000 on the Grow Back Greener Fund in 2021-22. This expenditure will be allocated from budget approved in the 2021-22 GLA Mayoral Budget under the Green New Deal Mission (under cover of MD2795) for "climate adaptation delivery".
- 1.6. This will bring the total expenditure on the Grow Back Greener Fund in 2021-22 to £943,000, comprising £52,000 on a grant management charges, and £891,000 on grant funding cascaded to recipients via that contract. The additional expenditure of £118,000 will be allocated to grant funding (without any increase in grant management charges) to enable two additional climate adaptation focused projects to be supported. The Grow Back Greener fund was heavily oversubscribed, so this extra funding would allow the Mayor to support additional projects that meet the Green New Deal objectives, as well as the project selection criteria for the fund.
- 1.7. As approved by the Mayor under cover of MD2827, in July 2021 Groundwork London was awarded a contract to provide grant management support services having been procured under an existing GLA Framework agreement (ICT12805-A). The additional grant funding allocated if approved under cover of this DD will be managed through this existing contract.
- 1.8. As outlined in MD2827, the programme will be delivered in partnership with Thames Water, who has contributed an additional £500,000 in match funding to Groundwork London for use on the Grow Back Greener Fund in 2021-22.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. As outlined in MD2827, the Grow Back Greener Fund contributes to the overarching objectives of the Green New Deal Mission, as well as the objectives of the Inclusive Green Space and Climate Resilience Programme to:
- enhance London's vital green infrastructure, make the built environment greener, and help the capital adapt and respond to the climate and ecological emergency by improving biodiversity and air quality; reducing flood and heat risks; and providing shade
 - address the environmental and health inequalities highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic by prioritising interventions in locations with poor access to green space; high vulnerability and exposure to the impacts of climate change; and high flood risk
 - support schools, communities, environmental groups, local authorities, and housing associations to create and enhance green space and take action to build their resilience to climate change
 - create more opportunities for all Londoners, especially those from under-represented communities and children, to develop new green skills and knowledge, and to get outdoors, including by volunteering.
- 2.2. This additional funding allocation will specifically provide grant funding to projects supported by the Grow Back Greener Fund that deliver increased resilience to the impacts of climate change, including reducing surface-water flood risk; improving water quality and water security; reducing the urban heat island effect; and providing shade. These projects will also deliver wider co-benefits including improved access to green space to support physical and mental health; enhanced biodiversity and ecological resilience; and opportunities for Londoners to volunteer and build community cohesion.
- 2.3. The Grow Back Greener fund requires successful applicants to submit a mid and end point monitoring report on the project as part of their grant agreements. Learning from the projects will be captured through these monitoring reports and will then be collated and used to inform programme evaluation. Where relevant recommendations to improve future project and programme delivery are identified, these will be disseminated through wider engagement with the sector.

Outputs

- 2.4. The 2020-21 Grow Back Greener Fund has followed an open, transparent call for applications, and has been significantly oversubscribed, with 195 applications received, and a high volume of high-quality applications, many of which will not currently be funded. Applications have been assessed through a two stage-process managed by Groundwork London and the GLA. Forty-five suitable applications have been identified for funding, comprising 30 projects in the access to green space theme, and 15 projects in the climate change adaptation and water theme.
- 2.5. This additional funding allocation will enable two more high-quality projects to be supported by the fund. This expenditure will be allocated to the "climate change adaptation and water" theme, which provides grants of between £10,000 and £75,000 for projects including, but not exclusive to:
- installing green Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features to reduce local flood risk and store water for reuse

- increasing green cover and reducing surface-water flood risk by de-paving to turn grey to green
- cleaning up, restoring and enhancing water bodies including rivers, canals and ponds
- tree planting to create shade and promote cooling, improve air quality, managed surface water, and support natural food management
- using nature-based solutions such as constructed wetlands to improve water quality
- increasing water and wastewater awareness.

2.6. The additional funding allocation will support the following projects, identified by Groundwork London in its provision of services under its grant management support contract with the GLA and which are located in areas of high climate risk, that will be completed between November 2021 and November 2022:

- Oakthorpe School SuDS and Wetlands, led by London Borough of Enfield and Thames 21: transforming a school playground from grey to green with rain gardens to reduce surface water flooding, connecting to new wetlands in an adjacent green space
- Water Quality Nature Solutions, led by Canal and River Trust, which will install floating reedbeds to improve water quality and create wildlife habitat at the Welsh Harp Reservoir in Brent

2.7. The grant awards and payments will be made by Groundwork London as part of its provision of the grant's management support services.

2.8. The table below sets out the revised budget for the Grow Back Greener Fund, taking into account the additional funding allocated by this DD.

Table 1 – revised budget

		Approved under cover of MD2827 (£)	Additional budget to be allocated (£)	Total (£)	Additional match funding (not included in budget figures)
2021-22	Grant funding	773,000	118,000	891,000	£500,000 from Thames Water
	Groundwork London grants management contract	52,000		52,000	
	2021-22 Total	825,000	118,000	943,000	
2022-23	Grant funding	1,148,000		1,148,000	
	Groundwork London grants management contract	52,000		52,000	
	2022-23 Total	1,200,000		1,200,000	
TOTAL		2,025,000	118,000	2,143,000	

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3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor of London must 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 characteristic¹ and those who do not. This involves having due regard to the need to remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected 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.
- 3.2. The Grow Back Greener Fund forms part of the policies and proposals in the London Environment Strategy, which has been informed by a full integrated impact assessment, including consideration of equalities.² The Equalities Impact Assessment Report for the London Environment Strategy noted that exposure to poor environmental conditions is much higher among Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) Londoners.
- 3.3. BAME Londoners, and lower-income Londoners, are more likely to live in areas of deficiency of access to green space, or in areas where green space quality is poor. GLA research has found that women, Londoners aged 25 and under, lower-income Londoners, and social renters visit parks less often. National research has found that BAME people are least likely to visit green spaces. Similarly, 21 per cent of households in London lack access to a private or shared garden, and across England, BAME people are less likely to have access to a garden than White people.³
- 3.4. Climate change will disproportionately affect those least able to respond and recover from it. Poorer Londoners will find it more difficult to recover from flooding and will suffer more from the impacts of the urban heat island effect. Extreme heat events will have a greater impact on older people, very young children, socially isolated people and people with existing health conditions.
- 3.5. The Grow Back Greener Fund grant scheme will improve access to green space among Londoners who currently benefit less from the capital's green infrastructure. It will also help to support climate resilience in locations where there is high exposure and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. The two funded projects outlined in this DD are located in areas of high climate risk. The Oakthorpe School SuDs project is also in an area of deficiency of open space.
- 3.6. The Grown Back Greener Fund will support projects that work with local communities, and will prioritise projects that are led by, or work with, Londoners who are less likely to have access to green space, including Black, Asian and minority ethnic Londoners, lower-income Londoners and those aged 65 and over.
- 3.7. Equalities implications will be kept under ongoing review and taken into account as individual project applications are assessed and projects are delivered as part of the Grow Back Greener Fund.

¹ 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. Conscientious regard must be had that is appropriate in all of the circumstances.

² [Equalities Impact Assessment Report for the London Environment Strategy](#), 10 August 2017

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/oneineightbritishhouseholdshasnogarden/2020-05-14>

4. Other considerations

4.1. The key risks and issues for the Grow Back Greener Fund are set out in Table 2, below.

Table 2 – risks and issues

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	RAG rating
Grow Back Greener Fund projects delivered are of a poor quality or are poorly maintained	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant agreements will include clear milestones for payment. Project applications will be required to set out how schemes will be maintained. Project monitoring will include site visits to a proportion of projects to check on delivery. 	AMBER
Grow Back Greener funding awarded to fraudulent grant applications	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due diligence checks carried out before any funding award. An experienced grant-management organisation with appropriate skills and expertise to identify fraud (Groundwork London) will be used. Appropriate framework put in place to monitor project delivery. Mid-term and final grant payments conditional on evidence of delivery and expenditure. 	AMBER
Further Covid-19 lockdown restrictions	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good communication to ensure frank discussions can take place around organisational capacity and delivery. Guidance on social distancing and other public health measures will be promoted to Grow Back Greener Fund grantees. In the event of a further lockdown, project delivery reviews will agree new parameters with grantees. The principles of the Covid-19 funders' statement will be followed to support grantees during exceptional circumstances (endorsed by the GLA) – adapting activities, discussing dates, financial flexibility, listening. 	AMBER

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2. The Grow Back Greener Fund will contribute towards:

- London Environment Strategy Policy 5.1.1: protect, enhance and increase green areas in the city, to provide green infrastructure services and benefits that London needs now and in the future.
- London Environment Strategy Policy 8.2.1: reduce the risk and manage the impacts of surface water, sewer, fluvial, reservoir and groundwater flooding in London
- London Environment Strategy Policy 8.2.3: increase the amount of sustainable drainage, prioritising greener systems across London in new development, and also retrofit solutions
- London Environment Strategy Proposal 5.1.1.f: back greater community involvement in the improvement and management of London's green spaces and natural environment
- London Environment Strategy Objective 5.1: increase tree canopy cover by 10 per cent, and ensure that over half of London is green by 2050
- Inclusive London Strategic Objective 12: work with partners to help ensure our approach to improving green spaces is inclusive
- London Health Inequalities Strategy Objective 3.3: a greener city where all Londoner have access to good-quality green spaces
- London Recovery Board high-level outcome to accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London; and Green New Deal Mission to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and improve air quality by doubling the size of London's green economy by 2030 to accelerate job creation for all.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.3. GLA officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this form are not aware that they have any conflicts of interest with the proposed programme.
- 4.4. If any conflicts of interest arise during the delivery of the programme (e.g., a GLA officer has links with an organisation that applies for a grant), they will declare that interest and not take any part in assessing that grant application or awarding funding to that organisation.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for additional expenditure of £118,000 on the 2021-22 Grow Back Greener Fund, as part of the Inclusive Green Space and Climate Resilience Programme, to support the delivery of additional grant-funded projects within the "Climate Change Adaptation and Water" theme of the Grow Back Greener Fund.
- 5.2. The expenditure will be funded from the 2021-22 Environment Programme budget under the Green New Deal Mission (under cover of MD2795) for Climate Adaptation Delivery.
- 5.3. Including the previous funding approved for the overall Inclusive Green Space & Climate Resilience Programme of £2.025m (MD2827), the updated Grow Back Greener Funding allocation is summarised in the table below

Funding Source	Expenditure Profile		Total
	2021-22	2022-23	
MD2827 - Inclusive Green Space & Climate Resilience Programme	£825,000	£1,200,000	£2,025,000
Grow Back Greener - Additional Funding	£118,000	-	£118,000
Total	£943,000	£1,200,000	£2,143,000
<i>Match Funding</i>	<i>£500,000</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>£500,000</i>

- 5.4. The programme will be delivered in partnership with Thames Water, who have contributed match funding of £500,000 to Groundwork London for use on the Grow Back Greener Fund grants scheme in 2021-22. This match funding will be paid directly to grant recipients and/or suppliers and will therefore not be accounted for within the GLA accounts.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director concern the GLA's exercise of its general powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of the improvement of the environment 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.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Director 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, gender, 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 Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3. Should the Director be minded to make the decisions sought officers must ensure that the GLA's contract with Groundwork London is varied (in accordance with the terms of that contract) prior to any commitment is made to provide the additional funding proposed.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Successful applications for the first round of the Grow Back Greener fund selected following open application process and assessment	November 2021
Funding awards announced and grant agreements finalised	December 2021
Projects start delivery	December 2021
Mid-project monitoring and review	June 2022
Projects complete delivery	December 2022

Appendices and supporting papers: None

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

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the 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:

Holly Smith has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Phillip Graham has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

Financial and Legal advice:

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

✓

Corporate Investment Board

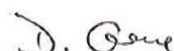
This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 10 January 2022.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

11/1/22