

DIRECTOR DECISION – DD 140

Title: Community micro-projects

Executive summary

OPDC's In the Making initiative involves various capital projects to improve the local environment for communities. This decision is to approve expenditure from the 2020/21 delivery team budget and to authorise grant agreements to various delivery partners. This is to implement the micro community projects which contribute to the wider projects that sit within the In the Making programme. The projects and delivery partners are listed below:

- £5,000 for installation of community banners on Station Approach: Abundance Arts
- £5,500 for clearing ground and new planting at Willesden Junction Station: Energy Garden
- £2,500 for improvements to Cerebos Gardens: LB Ealing
- £7,000 for improvements to community noticeboards in Brent: LB Brent

Decision

The Director approves:

- i. The virement of £20,000 within the Delivery budget from Phase 1A Outstanding to Design for these work streams.
- ii. Expenditure, by way of grant funding, of £20,000 for a number of micro projects that will create immediate improvements and will be the first phase of some of the In the Making capital projects.

Authorising Director

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

Signature:



Date: 3 March 2021

PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

1. Background and context

- 1.1 The projects above form part of OPDC's 'In the Making' initiative, incorporating OPDC workstreams which are delivering creative projects and activities benefiting local communities and creating a new public life and a sense of place across Old Oak and Park Royal in the next one to five years.
- 1.2 The overarching objectives of the In the Making initiative are:
 - delivering everyday improvements and opportunities with and for local people
 - growing initiatives which will shape successful places
 - celebrating and promoting what makes Old Oak and Park Royal special
- 1.3 The In the Making capital projects form part of the OPDC's wider Accelerated Delivery ambitions.
- 1.4 The micro projects all contribute to the wider In the Making capital projects, and will act as 'phase 1' ahead of the longer-term improvements being delivered.

2. The proposal and how it will be delivered

- 2.1 *Willesden Junction Station Public Realm:* The wider project is funded by the Good Growth fund and includes; installation of planters and a new community noticeboard, decluttering of signage and street furniture, and creative graphic and wayfinding interventions. This decision seeks to approve grant funding to grassroots, local community organisations and delivery partners to deliver:
 - *Community banners:* Designing with the local community banners and installation of the banners on Station Approach. This project will be delivered by Abundance Arts, a local community arts organisation (£5,000).
 - *Planting:* Clearing ground and delivering new planting at Willesden Junction Station and maintenance: This project will be delivered by Energy Garden, a local volunteer-based gardening group (£5,500).
- 2.2 *Cerebos Gardens co-design:* Improvements to three green spaces along Victoria Road. Community design team meetings were held with the community last year to develop a concept design for the green spaces. The community group and OPDC are now seeking to gain capital funding to deliver the proposals. This decision seeks to approve grant funding of £2,500 to LB Ealing to deliver the first phase of improvements to kick-start the project. The works will include; pruning overgrown trees at Cerebos Gardens, planting of spring bulbs and planting of hedgerow whips to create a buffer from the busy Victoria Road, and a general clean and tidy of the spaces. The works will be delivered by LB Ealing's grounds maintenance contractor.
- 2.3 *Improvements to community noticeboards in Brent and Park Royal:* Improvements to noticeboards in Harlesden. This will involve cleaning and repainting the noticeboards, co-designed by the community. This decision seeks to approve expenditure and authority to grant £7,000 to LB Brent to deliver the improvements.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

3.1 The expected outputs and outcomes include:

Outputs	Outcomes	Date completed
Improved green spaces at Cerebos Gardens and Willesden Junction	Increased community wellbeing	Summer 2021
Community flags at Willesden Junction Station	Increased sense of community identity	Autumn 2021
M&E and structural design development towards wider public realm improvements at Willesden Junction station	Increased sense of user wellbeing, identity and belonging.	Autumn 2021
Improvements to community noticeboards	Increased sense of community belonging and stewardship	Autumn 2021

3.2 Above outputs and outcomes will be assessed and evaluated by the appointed evaluator who will be completing an impact assessment of all of the In the Making capital projects.

4. Strategic fit

4.1 The projects form part of OPDC's 'In the Making' initiative and support its overarching objectives (see above).

4.2 Through greening and planting, the project aligns with the below wider OPDC and GLA policies and strategic objectives:

- OPDC Local Plan policy: EU2 Urban Greening and Biodiversity
- GLA draft London Plan: Policy G1 Green Infrastructure, Policy G5 Urban Greening and Policy G6 Biodiversity and access to nature

4.3 Through working with local communities and growing existing initiatives, this project will also support local communities and volunteering, aligning with the Mayor's Recovery Mission of 'Building strong communities'.

4.4 The Willesden Junction Station public realm works and improvements to noticeboards form part of a programme of projects led by both LB Brent and OPDC in and around Harlesden.

4.5 The public realm project is the first phase of improvements to Willesden Junction Station ahead of the wider, more longer-term improvements to the Station, that are currently being scoped by Mott Macdonald for the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- 4.6 The Cerebos Gardens project is a first phase of improving green spaces in the Western Lands development area and testing models of community governance and co-design that can grow in the future.

5. Project governance and assurance

- 5.1 The Principal Project Manager will manage the day to day of the micro-projects, including collaborating with, supporting where necessary, and monitoring all delivery partner activities, ensuring they coordinate with the wider projects they are a part of.
- 5.2 The programme of micro-projects and wider In the Making initiative is overseen by the Head of Design.
- 5.3 Grant agreements will be arranged and approved in line with OPDC governance rules and will be prepared and approved by the Chief Finance Officer and Head of Governance ahead of contracting. All grants will be paid upfront.
- 5.4 Risks and issues
- 5.5 Willesden Junction micro-projects:
- There is a risk the interventions are not managed and maintained well and result in poor outcomes. Both interventions are designed to be low maintenance and the banners include a two-year guarantee. Maintenance allowance is provided in the budget for Energy Garden, and the community group will be responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance.
 - There is a risk both interventions are not approved by the station leaseholder, Arriva, or freeholder, Network Rail. Projects have already been discussed with both organisations and final approval will be undertaken through Network Rail's landlord's consent.
- 5.6 Cerebos Gardens planting
- There is a risk the planting is not maintained well, resulting in poor outcomes – all interventions have been designed to be low maintenance and some of the funding will go towards maintenance through LB Ealing's grounds maintenance contractor. The community that has participated in the project so far will also tend to the new planting, as well as colleagues from HS2 who have volunteered to support the project. After the establishment period the planting will be very low maintenance and will be under the Borough's responsibility to maintain as part of their regular management and maintenance arrangements of the space. It is also hoped that through this initial planting more community members begin to help maintain the space. Through the wider project, the team are exploring various community governance stewardship arrangements.

6. Equality comments

- 6.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, OPDC must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.^{1[OBJ]}
- 6.2 There is a low risk of having adverse impacts on protected groups. The projects aim to engage with, benefit and empower those with protected characteristics.
- 6.3 Data will be collected to assess impacts on those with protected characteristics, through the In the Making capital projects impact evaluation.
- 6.4 In regard to the wider projects, a thorough accessibility statement for the Willesden Junction public realm project has been prepared as part of the RIBA Stage 3+ design report, assessing each area of the Station.

7. Other considerations

Consultations and impact assessments

- 7.1 As mentioned above, an evaluator is in the process of being procured who will undertake an impact assessment and evaluation of the project, in line with the outcomes and outputs that are specified under the GLA grant agreement.

Communications and engagement

- 7.2 Thorough engagement has been undertaken on Willesden Junction Station public realm project to ensure feedback from the community; including an in person initial event and survey in November 2019, an online event and survey in November 2020 and ongoing collaboration with a local community groups and volunteers; including Energy Garden and Abundance Arts, who has part of this decision will deliver some of the interventions. Any communications through the pre-election period will be carefully managed with the Head of Communications and Head of Governance. However key communications and engagement will be undertaken by the delivery partners.
- 7.3 The improvements to Cerebos Gardens and are part of the wider concept designs that were put together by the community group.
- 7.4 LB Brent will undertake community engagement regarding the improvements to the community noticeboards.

Safeguarding

- 7.5 Where children are involved in activities led by the delivery partners, the relevant safeguarding policies will be noted in the grant agreement.

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. Fulfilling this duty 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. 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.

Data protection

- 7.6 The GDPR and data protection policies and procedures that OPDC require delivery partners to adhere to will be included in the grant agreement.

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 virement of £20,000 within the Delivery budget from Phase 1A Outstanding to Design for these work streams.
- 9.2 Expenditure of £20,000 from the reallocated Design element in the FY 2020/21 delivery team budget.
- 9.3 The disbursing of funds entirely upfront (rather than in stages) removes a control mechanism that consequently risks under-delivery. It is important that the recipients are monitored effectively by OPDC to ensure adequate delivery of services and, hence, value for money, and that OPDC has the contractual right to recover funds not delivered.
- 9.4 Further expenditure and contract variations are subject the Corporation's decision-making process.
- 9.5 Please ensure that any Procurement undertaken is in line with the Corporation's Procurement Guidance and that the Contracts and Funding Code is adhered to.

10. Summary timeline

Activity	Date
Grant awarded to delivery partners	Feb 2021
Delivery start date	March 2021
Delivery end date	Autumn 2021
Evaluation period	March 2022
Project closure	April 2022

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**

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: Kavita Tailor has drafted this Form in accordance with OPDC procedures, including for handling conflicts of interests, and confirms that:



Advice: The Finance team 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 Monday 01 March 2021.

Chief Finance Officer

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

Signature:



Date: 03/03/21