

## TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Subject Heading:**

GLA Big Green Fund & HLF Landscape Partnerships funding applications

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**Policy context:**

This report reflects the green infrastructure objectives and policies of the London Plan, the Havering Local Development Framework, the All London Green Grid SPD and the 2014 Thames Chase Plan. Moreover the projects funded complement the Council's 'Clean, Safe and Proud' objectives.

### SUMMARY

On the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013 Cabinet gave approval for the submission of two funding bids, i.e. an application to the Greater London Authority Big Green Fund and an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Landscape Partnership grant. Both these applications were submitted and have been successful. This report describes the submission process and subsequent outcomes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

For noting and comment

### REPORT DETAIL

On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013 Cabinet agreed the following recommendations,

1. To agree the development and submission of grant funding applications to the GLA Big Green Fund and to the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnerships funding programme.

2. To agree that the Council be identified as the accountable body for these grant funding applications.

This report describes the submission process and subsequent outcomes.

The February 2013 Cabinet report described developing partnership work between the Council, the Thames Chase Trust, the Forestry Commission and other Thames Chase local authorities, in particular London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and Thurrock Council, aimed at securing funding for environmental regeneration programmes in Havering's countryside and green spaces. It is recognised that green infrastructure has an increasingly important role to play as we face the challenges of sustaining economic growth and the expected changes to London's demography and climate. Green infrastructure is becoming more important in urban areas because it can help absorb flood water, cool the urban environment and clean the air. It can be used for local food production, to promote sport and leisure and ensure space for London's fauna and flora; as a network it can provide links and connections between places, encouraging walking and cycling, highlighting landscape and heritage and supporting the local economy, in particular the visitor economy.

The report sought approval to make grant funding bids to the Greater London Authority Big Green Fund and to the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnerships programme and for the Council to act as accountable body for the grants should the bids be successful.

### **Heritage Lottery Fund – Landscape Partnerships**

This is a programme to support schemes led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests which aim to conserve areas of distinctive local landscape character throughout the United Kingdom.

A Landscape Partnership scheme is expected to deliver across all the following four programme outcomes:

- Conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character.
- Increasing community participation in local heritage.
- Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage.
- Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills.

Landscape Partnerships support schemes that provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits and create an integrated partnership approach to the management of our landscape heritage.

The Council, in partnership with Thames Chase Trust, Forestry Commission, LB Barking and Dagenham and Thurrock Council, met a May 2013 deadline for a Stage 1 application to the Lottery. The project was intended to engage the local population of 650,000 people in the rich history and development of the local

landscape between the country parks in the north of the borough and the River Thames.

This application was rejected by the Lottery in October 2013, partly because of insufficient funds, but also it was considered there was scope to strengthen the community engagement outcomes and the partnership structure further and that the scheme was less urgent than others at that time.

Despite this disappointment the partnership decided to re-submit the application in May 2014, and, having made an effort to overcome the objections to the original scheme, learned in October 2014 that the application was successful.

The partnership has now embarked upon the development stage, with funding from HLF that will pay for the appointment of a Development Manager and the commissioning of a Landscape Character Assessment and Action Plan, an Audience Development Plan, a training and skills audit and further community engagement. This work is now underway and, if successful, it is anticipated that the Lottery will be able to offer the full grant of an additional £1.3m.

### **Greater London Authority Big Green Fund**

In 2011 the London Mayor published the All London Green Grid (ALGG) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the London Plan which set a vision and framework for London's network of green and open spaces; its green infrastructure. The Mayor supported the identification of 11 Green Grid Areas and the establishment of area-based partnerships to promote cross boundary working. Havering is located in Area 3 of the All London Green Grid, *Thames Chase, Beam, Ingrebourne*. This partnership is chaired and administered by the Thames Chase Trust.

A *Big Green Fund* was then established to provide grants of up to £500,000 from a total fund of £2 million, to support the delivery of up to six Big Green projects. Its aim was to bolster the delivery of the green grid area frameworks by providing a major boost to a number of exemplar strategic green infrastructure projects across London. Big Green projects were to result in transformative actions 'on the ground' and to be delivered by March 2015.

The partnership described above met a March 2013 deadline for applications. That was successful and achieved a grant of £350,000 for a project called Thames Chase Big Green Destinations.

The project sought to improve access to the Thames Chase area by creating improved access for people visiting from London and arriving at Dagenham East Station. Improved connections between the station and the Ingrebourne Valley were delivered and were able to make use of the new bridge over the Beam River at Bretons. At Ingrebourne Hill visitors could travel north to Hornchurch Country Park and the new visitor centre and then on to Harold Hill following the Ingrebourne Way and south to Rainham Village, the marshes and the River Thames. The GLA grant was match funded by TfL investment in Bretons Bridge and Veolia North Thames Trust investment at Rainham Marshes and at the Thames Chase Forest

Centre. Other outcomes of the project were the interpretation of these destinations at Rainham Station, a downloadable app and signage.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### **Financial implications and risks:**

The GLA Big Green Fund grant required 100% match funding. This was secured through TfL and Veolia North Thames Trust, providing grants totalling £674,225 for Bretons Bridge, Rainham Marshes and access initiatives at the Thames Chase Forest Centre.

The current HLF grant for Stage 1 is £94,000 with an additional £42,000 from match funding and in kind contributions. The anticipated grant for the delivery stage is £1,359,700 with a further £468,000 match funding. The later sum will be the subject of a series of funding applications, including to Veolia North Thames Trust. A funding plan will be one of the outcomes of the Stage 2 development process.

Maintenance costs for the capital projects will be met from existing budgets within the Council (Parks Service) and its partner organisations, including Forestry Commission, RSPB and the Thames Chase Trust and the works would be designed to ensure that such costs would be affordable.

Risks associated with the Council being accountable body will be minimised by strong programme management. Opportunities provided by the Council being accountable body relate to the level of influence that the Council will have over grant spend and achievements.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

There have a will be contractual arrangements relating to funding agreements, and other arrangements required to deliver specific aspects of the scheme that must comply with the Council's approved procedures for procurement and which will continue to require legal input.

Authority was given to enter into a funding legal agreement with the GLA regarding the Big Green Fund by an Executive Decision in April 2014.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

The workload associated with delivering these projects will be managed within existing staff resources and/or posts paid for by the funder.

### **Equalities implications and risks:**

The GLA Big Green Fund and HLF Landscape Partnerships are important grants that will contribute to the Council's goals: to ensure a clean, safe and proud borough; to provide economic, social and cultural opportunities in thriving towns and villages and to value and enhance the life of individuals.

Both projects already have had and will have a positive impact on people from all protected characteristics, with children and young people (and their parents and/or carers), older adults, disabled people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds being amongst the groups that will benefit the most. It is also envisaged that the projects funded from these grants will increase social inclusion and improve community cohesion in Havering by bringing local people together and by providing them with opportunities to take part in various environmental and other activities.

An Equality Analysis will be carried out for these areas of work so as to ensure any potential negative impact is identified and minimised/eliminated and positive equality outcomes and opportunities are enhanced.

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
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None