



CABINET 13 February 2013	
Subject Heading:	GLA Big Green Fund & HLF Landscape Partnerships – approval to make funding applications
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Robert Benham Cabinet Member for Community Empowerment
CMT Lead:	Cynthia Griffin Group Director Culture and Community
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Policy context:	London Plan All London Green Grid SPG Havering LDF Thames Chase Plan
Financial summary:	Authority is sought to bid for GLA & HLF funding for environmental initiatives, with no additional budget requirement for the Council.
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Is this a Strategic Decision?	No
When should this matter be reviewed?	March 2015
Reviewing OSC:	Towns & Communities

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

This report describes developing partnership work between the Council, the Thames Chase Trust, the Forestry Commission and others aimed at securing funding for substantial environmental regeneration programmes in Havering's countryside and green spaces. 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. 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 seeks approval to make grant funding bids to the GLA Big Green Fund, an All London Green Grid initiative, and to the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnerships programme and for the Council, on behalf of the partnership, to act as accountable body for the grants should the bids be successful.

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.

REPORT DETAIL

1. The Council, in partnership with a number of organisations such as the Essex Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, Thames Chase Trust and SUSTRANs is a key partner in the development and delivery of a number of significant environmental regeneration programmes. These include the Ingrebourne Way Sustrans Connect2 project, due to be completed in March 2013, the Ingrebourne Valley Project, Thames Chase Community Forest, Wildspace and Rainham to the River and a series of town centre public realm improvements, including in Romford, Hornchurch and Rainham. The Council remains committed to these projects because of their significance in terms of its Living Ambition goals to ensure a clean, safe and green borough; to provide economic, social and cultural opportunities in thriving towns and villages and to value and enhance the life of individuals.

2. In this context the Council is currently working with partners to investigate future grant funding opportunities for environmental regeneration in Havering's countryside and green spaces.
3. An effective partnership has been developing since 2011 between the Council, Thames Chase Trust and the Forestry Commission with a joint ambition to develop a project that re-establishes the environmental, social and recreational benefits that were the original aims of the Thames Chase Community Forest.
4. By way of background, following reductions in core funding and the expiry of the Thames Chase Joint Committee in 2011, Thames Chase Trust emerged to take on the role of developing and promoting Thames Chase in partnership with the Forestry Commission. Havering, along with Thurrock and Essex County Council, continue to support Thames Chase Trust financially through a modest annual subscription. A business plan was put together to help steer the development of the new management and operational arrangements at the Forest Centre at Broadfields Farm where the Trust are based.
5. There are two grant funding opportunities that this partnership is exploring.

6. **Heritage Lottery Fund – Landscape Partnerships**

6.1 This is a grant 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 This programme is currently closed but will re-open for new applications in February 2013. The maximum grant will be £3m.

7. Greater London Authority Big Green Fund

7.1 In 2011 the London Mayor published the All London Green Grid (ALGG) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the London Plan which set the vision, and framework, for London's network of green, and open spaces – its green infrastructure.

7.2 The SPG says 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. 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. And that by providing informal places for people to visit and interact, it brings Londoners together.

7.3 The Mayor has supported the identification of 11 Green Grid Areas and the establishment of area-based partnerships to promote cross boundary working. The Area Groups have developed a programme of projects and opportunities, set out in Area Frameworks, to enhance and extend the network. ALGG Area Frameworks expand on the implementation points and strategic opportunities identified in the All London Green Grid SPG. 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.

7.4 The Big Green Fund will 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. The fund aims to bolster the delivery of the ALGG Area Frameworks by providing a major boost to a number of exemplar strategic green infrastructure projects across London.

7.5 All projects must be already identified in an ALGG Area Framework; be strategic in nature and should contribute to the delivery of several of the following ALGG 'functions':

- Access to open space
- Conservation of the natural environment
- Adaptation to climate change
- Sustainable travel connections
- Distinctive destinations
- Healthy living
- Sustainable food production
- Green skills, and sustainable design and

furthermore, where appropriate, projects should also aim to improve the quality of and access to the urban fringe, the Thames and its tributaries.

7.6 Big Green projects should result in transformative actions 'on the ground'. There must be physical, manifest changes delivered by March 2015. Clusters of spaces and projects that together are strategic in nature, that are clearly interconnected or that provide a framework to bring different activities and partners together will be considered alongside strategic projects based around single big green spaces. There is a 1st March 2013 deadline for applications.

8. Partnership Proposals

8.1 The recent announcement of the GLA Big Green Fund together with interest in the HLF's Landscape Partnerships has strengthened the partnership of the Council, Thames Chase Trust and Forestry Commission and its commitment to developing a project covering all or part of the geographical area of the Thames Chase Community Forest, extending to the River Thames across the Council's land at Rainham Marshes and the forested parklands of the Havering Ridge in the north of the borough. Funding applications are proposed that deliver all of the objectives of the two funding schemes described above, in particular, access to nature and open space, sustainable transport opportunities, distinctive destinations, healthy living, community participation and learning and promoting economic development through the visitor economy.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

9. Reasons for the decision:

9.1 The GLA Big Green Fund and HLF Landscape Partnerships are important grant opportunities from which Havering and its partners could benefit.

9.2 In order to maximise the benefits of these opportunities to Havering a decision by Cabinet is required to authorise the submission of funding bids in excess of £500k. The Constitution sets out that pursuant to the delegated authority for general functions in Part 3 Section 2.1 in the following paragraphs to Cabinet:-

(g) To allocate and control financial and land and property resources, to determine priorities in the use of these resources, and take any other action necessary to achieve those objectives; and

(r) To be responsible for all executive matters even if not expressly set out in Part 3 of this constitution.

Pursuant to Corporate Functions under Part 3 Section 2.2:-

(a) To take decisions on all matters relating to the Council's finances including but not exclusively:

(i) budgetary control

10. Other options considered:

10.1 Submitting bids above £500k requires Cabinet approval, without which there are no other options for approval.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

11. Financial implications and risks:

11.1 GLA Big Green Fund

The GLA expects to allocate £2m in total to six projects across London up to a maximum of £500k each. The grant requires 100% match funding. The two key partners have already secured sufficient match funding through a mixture of other funding from Veolia Havering Riverside Trust (VHRT) and the 2013/14 TfL Local Implementation Plan. The LIP funding (£100,000) relates to the Connect 2 Ingrebourne Way, a grant that will be spent on closely related initiatives. The Thames Chase Trust and the Council have received grants totalling £510,000 from VHRT for related projects in 2012/13 – 2015/16. These funds will form the basis of the match funding for a maximum (£500,000) Big Green Fund bid; and It can be seen that there is in fact excess match funding of £1110,000 over and above that needed to support a bid of this scale. Other opportunities for match funding are also being explored, e.g. the TfL Greenways Quick Wins fund for 2013/14.

11.2 HLF Landscape Partnerships

HLF will contribute between £250,000 and £3 million to the cost of an agreed landscape partnerships scheme including any development funding. A grant of below £1 million will need at least 10% of the scheme costs from other sources either in cash or in kind. This increases to 25% for grants of £1 million or more. The applicant must provide at least 5% in cash. Match funding for the HLF application could come from a number of non-Council sources, i.e. a successful GLA Big Green Fund bid for 2013/14 – 2014/15 and continued Forestry Commission investment in landscape restoration activities in Thames Chase and Havering during the duration of an HLF funded programme (up to 5 years)

11.3 The authority to bid for HLF Landscape Partnerships is subject to success at stage 1. The Forestry Commission have indicated they would contribute towards the cost of producing a stage 1 application and the Council will contribute through existing staff resources and the Council's 2012/13 Regeneration revenue budget.

Subject to Cabinet approval, an application for the Big Green Fund will be developed before the end of 1st March 2013 deadline for submission and a Stage 1 bid for the HLF Landscapes Partnerships programme will be developed and submitted around May 2013. The level of the HLF bid will ultimately depend on the amount of match funding available but it is anticipated by partners that a bid would be towards the higher end of the grant available.

11.4 Should either or both bids be successful, 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.

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

12. Legal implications and risks:

12.1 The legal implications and risks associated with this decision relate to the need to secure cabinet approval before making funding bids of more than £500,000 and to seek Cabinet authority to make applications to each of these funding sources.

12.2 Should either or both applications be successful there 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 require legal input.

13. Human Resources implications and risks:

13.1 There are no direct human resources implications and risks associated with a decision to make a funding application. Should either or both the applications be successful the workload associated with delivering the projects will be managed within existing staff resources.

14. Equalities implications and risks:

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

14.2 Should either or both bids be successful, they 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 this 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.

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None