

MAYOR AND CABINET			
Report Title	Green Capital Grants – permission to bid		
Key Decision	Yes	Item No	
Contributors	Executive Director for Customer Services		
Class	Part 1	Date	7 February 2018

Reason for urgency

This report is presented to Mayor and Cabinet on February 7 as an urgent item in order to ensure that a funding bid can be submitted by the deadline of 19 February 2018. It was not included in the Key Decision Plan on January 8 because no application was planned at this point. It cannot wait for correct inclusion in a Key Decision Plan for consideration at Mayor and Cabinet on February 28 because the deadline for submission of expressions of interest will have passed. Notification that this report should be considered as urgent has been given to the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel and by way of public notice.

1. Purpose

1.1 This report to Mayor and Cabinet sets out details of the Green Capital Grants fund and seeks consent to submit a funding bid of up to £500k, which if successful will support the delivery of improvements in Beckenham Place Park, and requests that if the funding bid is successful authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Regeneration to agree the terms of the funding agreement.

2. Summary

2.1 On 10th July 2013, Mayor and Cabinet approved the submission of bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for financial support for a Beckenham Place Park regeneration project.

2.2 The HLF 'Parks for People' bid was successful in phase 1 and funding of £4.9m was set aside for the project in summer 2014.

2.3 A small proportion of the Heritage Lottery Funds were made available to carry out consultation, engage partners and work up the initial designs to become detailed designs and plans for the park. Following approval by Mayor and Cabinet on 17th February 2016, to close the golf course and progress with the regeneration plans, these plans were worked up in earnest, and submitted back to Parks for People in a Round 2 bid, in August 2016. This was approved in December 2016, and maximum funding, of a total of £5m was awarded to the Council to implement the regeneration plans for the park.

2.4 At 245 acres in size the scale of the park means that delivering all the investment needed is a challenge. The support of the Mayor of London through a Green Capital Grant of up to £500k will help safeguard the full range of parkland improvements that are needed to transform it into a thriving local park and a key destination on the Green Chain Walk.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Mayor is recommended to:

3.1.1 note the content of this report and approve the submission of a funding bid of up to £500k to the Green Capital Grants fund; and

3.1.2 If the funding bid is successful, delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Law, to agree the terms of the funding agreement and to enter into it.

4. Policy context

4.1 Lewisham's long standing vision is: 'Together, we will make Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn'. This vision was developed following extensive consultation with Lewisham residents, public sector agencies, local business, voluntary and community sector organisations, and has been adopted by all our partners. It continues to be a bold ambition that stretches and motivates the Council and its partners to set priorities and deliver services in ways that achieve our vision.

4.2 The restoration of Beckenham Place Park could create a significant open space, venue and leisure facility that genuinely impacts the quality of life of thousands of residents. A park of this scale and history could make a substantial contribution to the regeneration of the south of borough, helping to engender a sense of place and pride in the area. This opportunity to transform Beckenham Place Park offers a key moment to make a further a step towards making Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn.

4.3 The key strategic document for Lewisham and our partners is the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020, "Shaping our Future". In this document, the strategic partners set out six priorities – creating communities that are:

- Ambitious and achieving
- Safer
- Empowered and responsible
- Clean, green and liveable
- Healthy, active and enjoyable
- Dynamic and prosperous

4.4 A large and thriving open space can make a contribution to local communities in each and every priority area above. Yet Beckenham Place Park is not yet having this positive impact on the locality. Significant external funding has been secured to deliver a range of improvements that will regenerate the park, and offer the opportunity to harness the potential of the park for the benefit of the local community.

5. Background

5.1 The Green Capital Grants fund is part of the Mayor's Greener City Fund. Through the Greener City Fund the Mayor of London has committed £9m to create and improve green spaces and encourage tree planting and management in London.

5.2 The Green Capital fund has £3m of funding to support strategic green space improvements which deliver multiple environmental benefits. For example river restoration in parks could provide flood water storage, new habitats for wildlife and improved space for play.

5.3 The Green Capital Grants fund will assess bids based on how well they meet the following five aims:

5.4 **Transforming London's Environment** - projects should demonstrate and show evidence for providing a range of green infrastructure functions:

- Promote healthier living
- Lessen the impacts of climate change
- Improve air quality and water quality
- Encourage walking and cycling
- Store carbon
- Enhance biodiversity and ecological resilience

5.5 **Making Better Places** – projects should be part of a wider long-term effort to improve a place. Green infrastructure should make better, more imaginative use of existing spaces and public realm to benefit more people. Green Capital projects should help make London greener. They should provide better access to nature for children and groups that might currently use green space less often. Projects must improve the quality of the place. They will also include opportunities for informal gathering, play, tranquil places to rest and enjoy nature, and encourage walking and cycling.

5.6 Empowering People

The grants aim to build a fairer city and stronger communities, bringing people together at a neighbourhood level. Projects should cater for London's diverse

and changing population. Projects are welcomed that will improve Londoners' quality of life and contribute to their health and wellbeing.

Green Capital projects should already have a high level of local political and community support. The proposed outcomes should bring benefits to the whole community. In addition, it is vital to have the support of a wide range of partners.

Projects which engage people in training and volunteering opportunities are welcomed. In particular, projects to target traditionally under-represented groups, like refugee and migrant communities, or older people are welcomed.

5.7 Making things happen

Projects that receive funding must complete by December 2019.

Projects may form distinct parts of a larger scheme delivered over a longer time, as is the case at Beckenham Place Park.

The Expression of Interest must set out key project development milestones and a spend profile. It must also detail any longer term timetable for achieving any additional phases or outcomes (if applicable) after December 2019.

Permissions required such as landowner agreements and planning permission must be secured by the time the grant funding agreement is signed (towards the end of May 2018). These elements are already secured in the case of Beckenham Place Park.

5.8 Leaving a positive legacy

Projects should make London an even greener city and leave a legacy of environmentally sound, well designed and cherished spaces for future generations of Londoners to enjoy. They should have a clear set of outcomes and have a plan and resources for future maintenance. A ten-year maintenance plan will be required to show how this will be achieved, and such a plan has already been prepared as part of the development of the Beckenham Place Park restoration project.

Bids must describe the project's proposed social, environmental and economic outcomes. It should also show how these contribute to relevant aims and objectives in the draft London Environment Strategy. Specific project outputs including a rationale for how these are measured must be included, these could include:

- area of new accessible green space (m2 or hectares)
- area of improved green space (m2 or hectares)
- number of trees planted
- amount of new or increased green infrastructure functions
- increase in visitor satisfaction
- length of new and improved connections between green spaces
- length of new/improved walking and cycling routes connecting green spaces
- number of new jobs created
- number of volunteers involved

- increase in visitor numbers
- number of new/enhanced visitor facilities/attractions
- stakeholder group involvement
- amount of habitat restored or enhanced
- number of heritage assets restored or enhanced

5.9 Any projects which are funded must provide match funding equivalent to the Green Capital Grant. In the case of Beckenham Place Park this match funding is already secured.

5.10 The Green Capital Grants timetable is as follows:

19 February 2018	Deadline for expressions of interest
Early March 2018	Shortlisted projects invited to make a full application
Late April 2018	Deadline for full applications
May 2018	Project Pitch day – shortlisted projects present to panel
By 31 May 2018	Funding agreements signed
June 2018	Project start
December 2019	Project complete
By March 2020	Monitoring information submitted and final funding claimed

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 In accordance with the Mayor Scheme of Delegation, the approval of any application for external funding which requires match funding from the Council in excess of £250,000 is reserved to members.
- 6.2 If the funding bid is successful, the terms of a funding agreement will need to be agreed and entered into. This report requests that authority is delegated to the Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Law, to do this.
- 6.3 This is a key decision under the Council's Constitution, namely an applications for funding from any external body which if successful would also require Council match funding of £500,000 or more, or entail a revenue commitment of at least £500,000 in total by the Council.

7. Financial Implications

This report recommends that the Mayor approves the submission of a funding bid of up to £500k to the Green Capital Grants fund. If successful, the Council will need to provide match funding equivalent to the amount of Green Capital Grant awarded. In the case of Beckenham Place Park, this match funding is already secured through the existing programme budget including Heritage Lottery Funds.

8. Environmental implications

- 8.1 In regenerating the park officers seek to improve the ecological value of the open space, introducing new habitats, such as a lake and wetland areas, and enhancing existing habitats through enhanced woodland and meadow management.
- 8.2 The project team are working closely with ecologists to ensure the ecological opportunities of the park's regeneration are maximised. At the same time, the importance of encouraging park users to interact with and appreciate nature in the park is recognised and many new opportunities are being created to help school groups and individual park users understand and value the park's ecology.
- 8.3 The park and its extensive woodland also perform an important 'green lung' function for the area, improving the air quality and thus the health of residents. We have already been working with the GLA to plant over 12,000 new trees in the park and will investigate what additional planting is possible.
- 8.4 The overall scheme including the creation of flood storage capacity for the River Ravensbourne on the eastern side of the park will greatly enhance flood protection in the borough and help the local area adapt to the challenges posed by climate change and more intense weather events.

9. Equality Implications

- 9.1 In regenerating the park, officers are seeking to address issues which hinder use and enjoyment of the space by the widest section of the community. A number of physical interventions to enhance facilities and accessibility will be implemented through the project, addressing key issues such as inaccessible toilets, poor quality paths etc. These physical improvements will be combined with outreach to target groups who might otherwise feel reluctant or unable to use the park to understand and break down any further barriers to use.
- 9.2 Events and activities will be developed to appeal to the wider population. Evaluation surveys will allow officers to compare usage prior to works with that that occurs after completion with the aim of ensuring that usage is more reflective of the surrounding population.
- 9.3 The Green Capital Grants fund places a particular emphasis on extending the benefits of their investment to traditionally under represented groups and this is already a focus of our plans.

10. Crime and disorder implications

- 10.1 Increasing the use of Beckenham Place Park is key to reducing anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in this open space. Investing in the park and removing damaged and derelict features will also deter anti-social behaviour, helping people to feel safer and discouraging casual vandalism.
- 10.2 In addition, there are plans to engage residents and school pupils extensively in the park, through volunteering opportunities and environmental education. As volunteers invest in the open space, the sense of ownership and pride in the park will grow. This in turn moves them to actively look after the space, and deters anti-social behaviour.

11. Human Rights Implication

11.1 There are no human rights implications arising out of this report.

12. Conclusion

12.1 There are very significant synergies between the work planned for Beckenham Place Park and the objectives of the Green Capital Grants fund. Due to the advanced state of the planning for project delivery, the opportunity to secure support from the Mayor for London towards delivering this major project does not place an onerous burden on the Council. Much of the groundwork has been carried out already, consents have been secured, match funding is in place and the delivery timetable is realistic. All of the above creates a solid platform for this proposed funding bid.

13. Background Documents and report author

13.1 A copy of the Green Capital Grants prospectus is available at:
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/green_capital_grants_guide_nov_2017.pdf

If you would like further information on this report, please contact, Gavin Plaskitt – Senior Programme Manager on ext. 46398 or gavin.plaskitt@lewisham.gov.uk