

	<h2>ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE</h2>
Title	Micro Fund, 2014/15 – SPACES
Report of	S151 officer
Wards	All
Status	Public
Enclosures	Appendix Micro Fund assessment – SPACES
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Summary

This report attaches an assessment of an application for a grant in support of the SPACES High Barnet resident group who are seeking to take resident action to improve and maintain a public area within the Chipping Barnet library grounds.

Decisions

To approve a grant from the 2014/15 corporate grants programme in support of the SPACES Conservation and Environment proposal.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 An application for a micro-fund grant by the SPACES resident group was received on October 2nd 2014 for £984.66. Annex B (Responsibility for Functions) of the Scheme of Delegated Authority to Officers in the Council Constitution provides that the Deputy Chief Operating Officer may approve the issuance of grants to the voluntary sector for amounts £5,000 and below.

2. REASONS FOR DECISIONS

- 2.1 The assessment herewith of the application in this case explains the rationale for awarding a grant.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 3.1 This proposal fits well with the new Area Committee Budgets. However that application process does not conclude until 15th January. This grant is for environmental and ground works which the group would like to commence before the winter in order to get maximum benefit in 2015. This route is therefore rejected in order to promote the Corporate Plan objective to encourage local volunteers to improve and care for their area by carrying out extra work which will make their neighbourhoods look more attractive in a timely way.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The applicants will formally be informed of the decision and the grant, if approved, will be paid within seven days.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Corporate Plan for 2013-16 includes the following strategic objectives:

- Creation of the right environment to promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough
- Supporting families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being
- Improving the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study

- 5.1.2 The outcomes around which these objectives are prioritised include:

- To maintain a well designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough.
- To promote family and community well-being and encourage engaged, cohesive and safe communities.

5.1.3 The Corporate Plan also states how it will be encouraging local volunteers to improve and care for their area by carrying out extra work which will make their neighbourhoods look more attractive. The council is seeking to develop new and effective partnerships to deliver high quality public services having regard to the significant reduction in government funding. The voluntary and community sector has a significant role to play in this strategy, especially by increasing choice, accessibility and value for money, leading on innovative solutions and improving customers' perception of public services.

5.1.4 A Third Sector Commissioning Framework, approved by the Cabinet Resources Committee in July 2008, sets out guidelines to:

- bring consistency to the council's financial arrangements with the voluntary and community sector; and
- bring procurement from, and grants to, the sector into a single framework consistent with the council's procurement rules

5.1.5 The Micro Fund is open to anyone who has an idea for a project in Barnet that needs a small amount of kick-start funding but could have a big impact and made £25,000 will be available through the Micro Fund in 2013-14. An underspend of £24,150 was rolled forward into 2014/15 in order to continue to support local action. Funding can be used for (a) one off setting up costs (b) business support (c) setting up a project e.g. equipment or tools and (d) certain other one-off costs.

5.2 **Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 The provision for making start-up and one-off grants is in 2014/15 budget.

5.2.2 The current position on the funding available in 2014/15 is £24,150.

5.3 **Legal and Constitutional References**

5.3.1 The council has power to make grants awards under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

5.3.2 Responsibilities for Functions – Annex B (Responsibility for Functions) of the Scheme of Delegated Authority to Officers in the Council Constitution provides that the Deputy Chief Operating Officer may approve the issuance of grants to the voluntary sector for amounts £5,000 and below.

5.4 **Risk Management**

5.4.1 All grants are made subject to the council's Standard Conditions of Grant Aid, with which applicants are required to signify their compliance by signing a written undertaking. Amongst other things, the conditions cover how awards are spent, allowing council officers a right of access to proof thereof, and requiring notification of any change in an organisation's circumstances which

significantly affect its finances, operations or grant entitlement. The council reserves the right to withhold payment of any approved grant, or to demand full or partial repayment, if it appears that an organisation has failed to comply with any of the conditions attached to an award.

5.4.2 The shift towards greater community involvement in the delivery of services has involved some relaxation in the attitude traditionally taken to compliance with eligibility criteria before an award is recommended. Whilst all applicants are expected to satisfy basic governance requirements, such as having an independent management committee, it is accepted that community-led and self-help groups often require the support of a parent organisation or other agency. In cases such as these, account is taken of other relevant factors, such as knowledge of a supporting agency and mechanisms to manage an applicant's financial affairs. All applicants are expected to work towards full independence within a reasonable period.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the council and all other organisations exercising public functions must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups;
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making; the design of policies; and the delivery of services

5.5.2 All voluntary and community organisations grant-aided by the council are required to demonstrate that they have an equal opportunities policy covering users, staff and volunteers, which promotes equal treatment for all irrespective of their age, disability, gender, sexuality, ethnic background, faith, health, language or social and economic background. Scrutiny of compliance with these considerations, and how applicants support the council in meeting its equalities obligations having regard to the greater emphasis on commissioning and awarding of contracts, forms part of the standard procedure for assessing all applications

5.5.3 Awards from the corporate grants programme fund projects and activities in support of people from all communities and focus on those who may be regarded as vulnerable. In the case of this particular award, the venue to be used is fully accessible to people with disabilities and should appeal to a wide cross section of the community who use the library or pass by.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 The application in question has been assessed in conjunction with the Youth

and Community Service, which supports the award recommended.

5.6.2 The Chairman of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, Cllr Thompstone has been consulted on this report and endorses the recommendation.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Cabinet Resources Committee, 22 July 2008 (decision item 11): approval of a Third Sector Commissioning Framework.

6.2 Council, 4 March 2014: approval of corporate grants budget for 2014/15.

7. DECISION TAKER'S STATEMENT

7.1 I have the required powers to make the decision documented in this report. I am responsible for the report's content and am satisfied that all relevant advice has been sought in the preparation of this report and that it is compliant with the decision making framework of the organisation which includes Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, Budget and Policy Framework and Legal issues including Equalities obligations.

8. OFFICER'S DECISION

8.1 **I approve an award of £984.66 in support of the SPACES High Barnet project, subject to the council's Standard Conditions of Grant Aid.**

Signed Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Date 5 December 2014