

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 November 2009	Decision Ta: Executive Member for Environment
Report title:		Environment and Ecology Commissioning Programme 2010/11	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Environment and Housing	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Executive Member for Environment approves the Environment and Ecology Commissioning Plan for 2010/11 attached as Appendix1.
2. That the Executive Member for Environment agrees to approach solely the existing funded organisations for inclusion in the 2010/11 programme; and agrees to a review and the move to a wider commissioning plan for 2011/12.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The corporate and departmental arrangements for managing the Council's funding of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations require annual Commissioning Plans to be produced for each separate programme of activity resourced by departments. These plans set out the business case for seeking voluntary sector providers, expected links between the Council's priorities, policies and the outcomes that are to be delivered by the voluntary organisations which receive grant-aid.
4. Approval of the Commissioning Plan for Environment and Ecology Grants is a matter reserved for decision by the Executive Member for Environment.
5. Responsibility for the Council's relationship with the voluntary sector within the Council's conditions and grant aid and the overall processes for commissioning services from the VCS comes from within the portfolio of the Executive members for Citizenship, Equalities and Communities
6. The proposed process for commissioning grant aided voluntary sector service providers for 2010/2011 normally involves three key stages:
 - Development and agreement of Grant-Aid Commissioning Plans
 - Advertising and assessment of applications
 - Report and final decisions

7. The draft indicative timetable for the 2010/11 allocation is as follows:

Action	Date for Completion
Commissioning plan draft and signed off by the Executive Portfolio Member	Nov 2009
Invitation and application forms sent to existing voluntary service providers	Dec 2009
Action	Date for Completion
Assessment of applications	Jan 2010
Report to Individual Member Decision maker	Feb 2010
Notification to groups of decision	Feb 2010

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Environment and Ecology Programme

8. All funding to the voluntary sector is allocated according to the three priorities stated in the Environment and Ecology Commissioning Plan that is attached as Appendix 1, namely:
- A Greener Borough,
 - Increased Usage and Community Management of Parks,
 - Green and Sustainability Learning.
9. The commissioning plan is linked to National and Regional Policy, London wide policies including the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy and Sustainable Development Framework, and the 2016 Community Strategy. It is also linked to the Council/VCS framework report, with particular reference to the needs identified through community councils.
10. There is a need to ensure that there is an effective and consistent monitoring and evaluation system in process linked to identified standards and outcomes. This is achieved through regular grants monitoring and agreement of Key Performance Indicators to be monitored on award of funding.
11. This process has been undertaken with each of the currently funded organisations to the satisfaction of the monitoring officer to date. It is therefore proposed that only currently funded voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations will be commissioned through grant aid for a period of one year. This will enable the council to carry out a review and to assess the viability of operating a commissioning cycle on a three year basis with effect from 2011/2012 in line with the Council/Voluntary Sector Framework which was agreed by the Executive on 24 April 2007.

Community Impact Statement

12. As part of the application process VCS organisations must demonstrate who will benefit from their organisation's activities and how they will ensure that no particular community is excluded from their services. Within their annual reports organisations must evidence the benefits users gain from their services or activities.

13. The purpose of this element of the Environment and Ecology Grant Programme is to ensure that communities that may face exclusion and discrimination because of race and ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, disability or faith, have access to environmental and ecological education and resources. The Council recognises the importance of having specific organisations that support and enable specific communities to access mainstream services and to integrate. We are not aware of any adverse impact, which the recommended programme would have upon the community, or any groups within that community.
14. All organisations previously in the programme were awarded one-off project grants only so were not planning on the basis of longer term funding.

Resource implications

15. In 2009/2010 the year budget for grant awards for the Environment & Ecology programme was £304,063. For 2010/2011, the Council will determine the level of resources for the Environment & Ecology Commissioning programme as part of the budget setting process, taking into account the specific priorities for that area of service.

Consultation

16. Copies of the final report and commissioning plans will be made available to departments and to Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations (SAVO). There will be consultation with providers to assess their capacity for sustainability.

Supplementary Advice from Other Officers

Head of Resources, Environment & Housing (Env/ET/161109)

17. The approval of the proposed Commissioning plan does not commit the Council to any funds to the voluntary organisations. A further report will be presented with the recommended funding for the organisations, once the resources available have been established as part of the budget setting process for 2010/11.

Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance (SB171109)

18. The Strategic Director notes the content of this report and confirms that the agreement of service plans (in relation to their area of responsibility) is one of a number of matters expressly reserved for decision to an Individual Executive member under Part 3D of the Council Constitution. The report confirms that the recommendation described in paragraph 1 is consistent with both legislative powers and duties and with current corporate policy.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Council - Voluntary and Community Sector Framework Document – April 2007	160 Tooley Street 2 nd Floor London SE1 2TZ	Bonnie Royal, Principal Grants Officer Tel: 020 7525 7389
Grants files	160 Tooley Street 3 rd Floor London SE1 2TZ	Christine Wildhaber, Principal Community Outreach Officer Tel: 020 7525 0868

APPENDICES

Appendix	Title
1	The Environment & Ecology Commissioning Programme 2010/11

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Gill Davies, Strategic Director of Environment and Housing	
Report Author	Des Waters, Head of Public Realm	
Version	Final	
Dated	November 2009	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Head of Resources, Environment and Housing	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Executive Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Officer	November 23 2009	

Environment and Ecology Commissioning Programme

Appendix 1

Programme for the commissioning of community environment & ecology services from the voluntary sector

1. The Environment & Ecology Programme 2010-11

The council wishes to commission services that contribute overall objectives of the Environment & Ecology programme. These are to:

- Improve the lives of people in Southwark through opportunities to experience parks, open spaces and the natural environment whether for leisure or for learning.
- Provide services that deliver environmental education and life-long learning, social inclusion and community cohesion outcomes.
- Develop the environment sector for the benefit of the people of Southwark, recognising the importance of the natural environment in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal, and improving the life chances of young people in the borough.

These objectives fall within the Council's overall objectives and priorities in the Community Strategy – Southwark 2016, agreed by the Executive on 11 September 2006.

National & Regional policy that influences the Council's programme

Any organisations considering applying to the Environment & Ecology Programme are advised to keep in mind the broad context within which Southwark Council operates.

2. Duty to promote the well-being of communities

Councils have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of their areas and to work in partnership with others in order to achieve this. At the highest level, the Council is a partner in the Southwark Alliance - the local strategic partnership, and supports the development and implementation of the community strategy (Southwark 2016).

3. Key national policies or strategies include:

The last twenty years have seen a massive growth in the number and extent of environmental legislation and policy. This includes:

- The Local Government Act
- UK National Sustainable Development Strategy
- Local Government White Paper (2007)
- The Government's wider Cleaner Safer Greener and Sustainable Communities agendas
- Living Places: Caring for Quality (Jan 2004)
- The UK Climate Change Programme

See: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/>

4. London-wide policies:

The Mayor has produced eight environmental strategies, which set out his priorities and proposals for London. These are:

- Air Quality Strategy
- Ambient Noise Strategy
- Biodiversity Strategy
- Climate Change Strategy
- Energy Strategy
- Municipal Waste Strategy
- Business Waste Management Strategy
- Water Strategy

The Mayor has produced a number of environmental frameworks:

- Animal Welfare Framework
- Trees and Woodlands Framework

There are also a number of other London wide strategies that impact on the environment and ecology including:

- Sustainable Development Framework for London
- The London
- Central London Sub-regional Development Framework

See: <http://www.london.gov.uk/londonissues/>

Council

Policy

5. The 2007/11 Corporate Plan sets out the Council's long-term vision for improving outcomes for people and places and for delivering quality services. It explains what the Council is planning to do with the resources we have to support the Southwark 2016 vision and how we intend to track our progress.

The Council's aims and outcomes set out in the plan can be summarised as follows:

Aim	Outcome
Improving life chances	Our outcomes for people are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve economic well-being• Achieve educational potential• Enjoy cultural and leisure opportunities• Be healthy• Stay Safe• Value diversity and be active citizens
A better place for people	Our outcomes for place are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Localities of mixed communities• The sustainable use of resources• A vibrant and mixed economy• More and better homes• A liveable public realm
Delivering Quality Public Services	Our outcomes for services are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible and integrated localities• Customer focused• Efficient and modern

Organisations will demonstrate how their proposals support the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan. See: <http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCouncil/CorporatePlan/>

6. Southwark Alliance and the Community Strategy

Southwark Alliance is our Local Strategic Partnership, which includes key agencies and individuals responsible for improving the borough. This includes the Council, Police, Primary Care Trust, JobCentrePlus, Southwark College, South Bank University, Chamber of Commerce, several other key agencies and fora, and eight local residents (one for each Community Council area). Southwark Alliance “exists to make Southwark a better place to live, learn, work and have fun in.” Its key responsibility is to agree the Community Strategy (Southwark 2016) – the overall vision for the future of the borough; agree goals, targets and key decisions required; to problem solve “big issues”; and to negotiate with and influence Government departments and other agencies.

Organisations should demonstrate how their proposal can help the Community Strategy to succeed.

See: <http://www.southwarkalliance.org.uk/>

7. The Environment & Ecology Programme Priorities

Working at a neighbourhood level is prioritised nationally, locally and departmentally. Applications from projects working at the neighbourhood level are encouraged. All proposals should demonstrate how they will address one or more of the programme's priorities.

8. A Greener Borough

One of the Council's major priorities is to deliver a cleaner, greener and safer Southwark. The voluntary sector is a key partner in the delivery of this priority and the environment and ecology programme contributes particularly to the greener element. The Council will fund projects that involve local communities in:

- Promoting sustainable practices
- Improving the borough's biodiversity
- Providing specialist services to Local Nature Reserves and nature parks.
- Encouraging wildlife gardening and the reduction of pesticide use.
- Interpreting the local heritage and environment and understanding human impacts.

Organisations should take note of the borough's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and consider initiatives that will help meet the BAP's objectives.

9. Increased Usage and Community Management of Parks

The Council aims to increase the involvement of the community in parks and open spaces. In particular, the Parks Best Value Review, the Parks Business Plan and the Corporate Equalities Action Plan include the target to increase the use of parks and open spaces by disadvantaged groups. Southwark's Vision for Equalities (October 2004) seeks to promote equality and diversity by:

- Building values of mutual respect where individuals have a sense of belonging and where individuals are encouraged to participate and gain full access to services to which they are entitled
- Recognising that some individuals and certain communities are particularly disadvantaged and will require extra recognition and support to deal with their disadvantages

The Council's Corporate Equalities Action Plan identifies the following communities of interest in Southwark: ethnicity/cultural background; Faith; Refugees/asylum seekers; Travellers; Disability; Women; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT); and Age – both young people and older people

The Council will support initiatives that seek to:

- Increase the involvement of all sections of the community in parks and open spaces.
- Develop 'Friends of' groups.
- Raise the community's capacity for involvement in the management of local parks and open spaces.
- Build the capacity of voluntary sector organisations to undertake whole-site management.

Funding will be directed to areas of greatest need.

10. Green & Sustainability Learning

We aim to improve the teaching of environmental and sustainability issues in Southwark's schools and to promote life-long learning for all of Southwark's communities. The Council aims to support projects that:

- Provide curriculum support at the appropriate levels – pre-school, primary, secondary, special needs and post-16.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to interact with the environment in a structured manner.
- Provide life-long learning opportunities for all in relevant subjects.

Outcomes

In line with the three priorities noted above, organisation's proposals will be expected to demonstrate which of the following outcomes will be achieved; proposals will need to demonstrate how these will be measured.

11. A Greener Borough

- i) An increase in the amount of publicly owned and/or community managed green space.
- ii) An increase in the use of sustainable practices within parks and open spaces within Southwark.
- iii) An increase in local biodiversity.
- iv) An increase in the number of individuals gardening sustainably and for wildlife.

12. Community Management of Parks and Increasing Usage

- i) Increased involvement of minority communities in parks and open spaces
- ii) An increase in the numbers involved in 'Friends of' groups.
- iii) An increase in community involvement in the management of parks and open spaces.
- iv) An increase in local community organisations' capacity to undertake whole-site management of parks and open spaces.
- v) Increased use of parks and open spaces especially by priority groups.

13. Green & Sustainability Learning

- i) An increase in the number of children and young people taking part in environmental & sustainable development education initiatives.
- ii) Improved environmental & sustainable development learning, evidenced by the gain of specific skills and accreditation.
- iii) An increase in the opportunities for structured interaction with the natural environment.
- iv) An increase in life-long learning opportunities.

14. Funding Agreements

It is not proposed to enter into any three year SLA agreements for the year 2010/11.

15. Available Resources

The budget for 2010/11 is unknown at present and subject to the annual budget setting process.

16. Ineligible activities / other Council services and support

The Environment & Ecology grant aid programme will **NOT** consider applications for funding for organisations whose main activities fall within the following theme/service-based programmes:

- Advice Services (Strategic Services Department)
- Children's Services – Early Years (Education Department)
- Mother tongue & Supplementary Education (Education Department)
- After-school, Play & Holiday Playschemes (Education Department)
- Arts and Culture (Environment & Leisure Department)
- Community Safety (Strategic Services)
- Economic Development (Regeneration Department)
- Sports Development (Environment and Leisure Department)
- Community Support (Social Inclusion Division)
- Social care (Social Services Department/PCT)
- Youth provision (Education Department).

Each of these Council programmes has its own arrangements and timetables for commissioning from voluntary sector providers, including through formal tendering.

For more information on these programmes contact:

Bonnie Royal,
Principal Communities Law Commissioning & Officer Governance
160 Tooley Street
London SE1 2TZ

Telephone: 020 7525 7389, Email: bonnie.royal@southwark.gov.uk

17. Funded Groups 2009/2010

Organisation	Funding Mechanism
Centre for Wildlife Gardening	Grant
Groundwork Southwark & Lambeth	Grant
Surrey Docks Farm	Grant
Trust for Urban Ecology	Grant
Bankside Open Spaces Trust	Grant
Walworth Garden Farm	Grant
Pumphouse	Grant

All organisations will need to submit new applications for funding for 2010/11. All applications will be considered on the basis of the quality of the application and the total value brought by the organisation.