

**Report of :** Head of Regeneration

**Report to :** Director of Environments and Housing

**Date:** June 2016

**Subject:** SCIP Community Fund – Cross Green Food Growing Utilities Project and Fencing Project.

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<b>Burmantofts &amp; Richmond Hill</b>	
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

### Summary of main issues

- 1 Cross Green Community Group was re-established in 2014 and has put together a programme of community activities to get local people involved in improving their community. A food growing group has been established since 2015 on land at back Cautley Road, Cross Green.
- 2 The food growing group is well established in the local community with a schedule of activity and working with partner organisations. Hyde Park Source is third sector agency with a city-wide remit which is supporting the group and helps to run community growing sessions. These are playing a key role in promoting community cohesion, healthy and active lifestyles in this neighbourhood.
- 3 Funding has previously been provided from the City Council's Sustainable Communities Investment Programme (SCIP) for materials, tools and planters. Keepmoat, as a contractor to the housing group repair scheme within the programme, has also supported the scheme by providing a poly tunnel to support the growing initiative.
- 4 The group has now requested further funding from the Sustainable Communities Investment Programme (SCIP) to provide a water connection and utilities on site. The aim is to have utilities housed in a building that can help support the group in

delivering community learning and their plant and food growing programme.

- 5 Moreover, following the clearance of land at Back Cautley Road to provide garden plots, there is a need to fence this land now to create the plots and improve take up of the individual leases that are available to members of the community. It proposed that funding is provided to create the improved plots in order to encourage use of this area and deter fly tipping.

### **Recommendation**

- 6 That the Director of Environment & Housing agrees to release £18,000 for the Cross Green Food Growing Utilities project and £15,000 for the Back Cautley Road fencing project and grants authority to spend from parent scheme number 16500/BEI/000 during 2016/17.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request £18,000 to be released from the Council's Sustainable Communities Investment Fund Community Fund budget for the Cross Green Food Growing Utilities project and £15,000 for the Back Cautley Road Fencing project.

## **2. Background Information**

- 2.1 In February 2013 Executive Board agreed investment of £5million from the Economic Initiatives Capital Programme for the delivery of projects in Cross Green and the Nevilles. These neighbourhoods were selected due to their significant levels of deprivation and their size, meaning that investment could be targeted in a relatively small area to make significant impact. Cross Green also has a transient population, with a high level of private rented homes in need of investment. This also impacts on community cohesion and ownership of the area.
- 2.2 Funding was focused on highways and open space improvements, energy efficiency improvements to homes, and environmental improvements to the public realm. Collectively the projects are known as the Sustainable Communities Investment Programme (SCIP).
- 2.2 Consultation was undertaken during 2013 to determine the Community priorities for the funding. As part of the prioritisation of funding a community fund was established to support the community in developing small scale local projects to improve the local environment. The community fund was allocated £150,000 capital funding. The Cross Green Community Group along with other residents helped to determine priorities for the fund.
- 2.3 The parameters of the Community Fund are that the money must be:
- invested into a scheme that will provide new and additional benefits to the locality, rather than investing in existing infrastructure,
  - spent by March 2017
  - address the overall aims of the programme,
  - contribute to the priorities outlined in the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan for Burmantofts & Richmond Hill.
- 2.3 As part of the SCIP programme consultation, local residents came up with a list of schemes in which they wanted like the community fund to be invested:

- Clearance of plots on Back Cautley Road
- Community food growing scheme
- A play area for children and families
- Improvements to the refuse system in the Copperfields
- Installation of alley gates on Back Cautley Road
- A number of general environmental improvements across the area

2.4 In 2015 all the community fund allocation was committed and spent as follows:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Back Cautley Road Improvements	The project has transformed the overgrown areas into useable garden plots, demolished unsafe garages, and installed some fencing to improve community safety and reduce levels of environmental crime. The leases for the Garden plots have now been issued and community members are currently promoting the take up of the remainder of the plots. Residents have requested additional fencing between plots.	£81,536.00
Food Growing initiative	Planters provided for the Fewston Avenue site to provide raised areas for food growing. The community group has been very active in the development of this area for food growing supported by Hyde Park Source. This has attracted some positive media.	£2,360 and £2,640
Cross Green Lane informal play and environmental improvements	Informal play provision (rocks and wood/ ropes activity based play) has been installed on open space at Cross Green Lane. This is alongside improvements to the visual amenity space in this area through clearance and treatment of vegetation. This has made it a safer, more attractive place to play. Community members have responded positively to this investment and the play area is well used. Improvements to the crossing to this play area are currently being considered as part of a highway improvement scheme.	£66,000

### 3 Main issues

- 3.1 The food growing initiative has been very successful in Cross Green in engaging residents and working with local third sector organisation, Hyde Park Source, which supports the residents in the development of the project, provides training, and is also the responsible body in maintaining and managing the community garden. A well-attended volunteer group has created an edible garden, with a polytunnel, raised beds, water catchment and a garage converted for use as storage and workspace. Volunteers have been trained in woodwork, horticulture and painting – but more importantly the project has provided a safe and welcoming space where people can come and feel valued. The project provides important social interaction for local people who have engaged with the project fully and purchased tools and equipment which they store on site and share with local people so that gardening can take place outside the regular volunteer days.
- 3.2 The project has 15 regular members, with a further 50 volunteers attending on a less regular basis. The majority of volunteers are between 40-60 years of age, two regular volunteers are aged 18-24 and there are younger children attend during school holidays with their parents.
- 3.3 The inclusive and safe environment provided by the project has enabled beneficiaries to make positive changes: *“People feel safe and welcome here”* – Mary. Participants have reported better physical and mental health, better lifestyle choices and an improvement in skills and confidence. *“I feel better about myself and have done things I’ve not done before”* – Danny. People feel a greater sense of place and an improvement in cohesion and connections between people in the area. *“I love coming to garden group and seeing the positive impact we are having in the area. I’ve met new people who live near me and feel safer”* – Cathy.
- 3.4 The site has also hosted a 6 week ‘Mindful Gardening’ course funded by the NHS and delivered by HP Source and Oblong, another third sector community organisation. Advonet (mental health advocacy) also use the site to meet with clients who would not access their services otherwise. A new lottery funded project offering supported outdoor volunteering opportunities to people suffering from poor mental health will also be part delivered from this site by Hyde Park Source, Leeds Mind and TCV Hollybush. There has also been significant interest from other groups, including St Georges Crypt, about running groups on the site.
- 3.3 In order to develop work on the site there is a need for improved access to utilities for running water and electricity. There is also a need for basic kitchen and toilet facilities (currently there is a portable toilet on site, being rented for £1,200 per annum and water storage containers). This will enable more groups and activities to run from the site and increased use within the community.
- 3.4 Hyde Park Source is in the process of obtaining a lease on the site from Leeds City Council to enhance and sustain the management of the area and help in obtaining funding from external sources. It intends to lease the land on behalf of the community group and in so doing support them in the delivery of the project.
- 3.5 Hyde Park Source is developing proposals for a building to house utilities and will be seeking match funding in order to achieve an enhanced facility. However, it should be noted that if no match is available Hyde Park Source will use the funding that is allocated to provide basic utilities, namely water supply, as a minimum.

Hyde Park Source is currently working with Leeds Environmental Design Architects, which is based in Cross Green, to look at options for the facility.

- 3.6 The overall SCIP programme has £76,000 of unallocated funding. It is proposed that £18,000 is allocated to the provision of utilities for the food growing project in Cross Green in order to enhance usability of the site.
- 3.7 Hyde Park Source will be responsible for the delivery of the project and the provision of utilities. Funding will not be released to Hyde Park Source until they have the lease for the land in place with Leeds City Council. Hyde Park Source will be delivering the improvements on behalf of CGCG as leaseholder for the land.
- 3.8 In addition to this requirement there is also a need to properly fence the garden plots that have been created at Back Cautley Road. The land was cleared using SCIP funding in 2015. However, take up of garden plots by the community has been slow, with residents citing the lack of plot boundaries as an issue. It is proposed that £15,000 of the unallocated funding is utilised to provide fencing definition to improve the attractiveness of the plots and to ensure that they area does not become overgrown and a 'dumping area' again. Fly tipping is an issue in the area and the take up of the plots is needed to create ownership and deter future abuse of the site.
- 3.8 It is proposed that Hyde Park Source undertake the fencing work as part of their work in the area and in doing so train up local people in new skills, which will be an extension of the community garden project. This will link well with the work that is being undertaken on the food growing initiative, with both sites located next to each other and with a ready supply of local volunteers to enhance their skills and create ownership of projects in the local community.
- 3.9 Permission of garden plot leaseholders will be sought by Hyde Park Source prior to undertaking the works to the plots. Where the plots are in the ownership of the Council, a licence to undertake the works will be provided.
- 3.10 The Director of Environment & Housing is recommended to approve £18,000 for the Cross Green Food Growing Utilities project and a further £15,000 for the Back Cautley Road fencing project. Hyde Park Source will deliver both of these projects independently as an extension of their work in the Cross Green neighbourhood. Funding will be provided as grant to Hyde Park Source, subject to the lease for the community garden and licence for work on Council land.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 There has been a comprehensive consultation exercise undertaken with local residents as part of the overall SCIP scheme. This took place in April 2013 which covered all elements of SCIP, which the community fund is an integral part of.
- 4.1.2 Subsequently to this, further consultation has been undertaken with local residents at the Cross Green Community Group to develop their ideas further on the Community Fund projects. There is now an agreed list of scheme that have been developed, for which more detailed project plans are currently being worked up.
- 4.1.3 Ward Members have also been consulted on the ideas generated by the community for the investment of the Community Fund and Members are fully supportive of the suggestions put forward by local residents.

- 4.1.4 The two projects recommended for funding are an extension of the projects previously agreed as part of the community fund to enhance delivery.

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 There has been an equality impact assessment screening document completed to establish whether or not a full equality impact assessment needed to be undertaken. There is no requirement to undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment as there are no adverse impacts which this particular project could have for any of the equality groups, and the project is meeting an identified need within the locality.

## **4.3 Council Policies and Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 The activities being delivered through the Cross Green Food Growing scheme and the Back Cautley Road improvements link to the City Priority of Best City for Communities, as activities provided contribute towards increasing a sense of belonging to build cohesive and harmonious communities.
- 4.3.2 The aims and objectives of this project directly contribute towards the priorities outlined in the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Neighbourhood Improvement Plan. The activities involved in the project link to the 'Improving the Local Environment' and 'Creating Community Confidence & Cohesion' sections of the NIP.

## **4.4 Resources and Value for Money**

- 4.4.1 Hyde Park Source will obtain three quotes for the materials which they require, to ensure best value for money.
- 4.4.2 Hyde Park Source have also requested materials from the Council's Parks & Countryside service, to ensure that LCC is providing the materials, where possible.
- 4.4.3 The revenue implications for the Cross Green Food Growing utilities project will be the responsibility of Hyde Park Source with the Back Cautley Road fencing implications being dealt with through existing Council revenue budgets or via leaseholders of the plots.
- 4.44 Funding will be drawn down at 50% on commencement and 50% on completion to ensure the completion of the project. A funding agreement and key outputs and timescales will also be agreed with Hyde Park Source prior to commencement.

## **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.
- 4.5.2 There is no exempt or confidential information contained in this report.
- 4.5.3 There are no key decisions associated with this report, so it is not subject to call in.
- 4.5.4 The Council will be using its powers under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, which allows the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area. As the project has been identified as a priority by the community and is in line with the priorities of the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan it is considered the project will have a positive impact in the community.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 Any potential risks associated with this project have been identified through the project plan for the scheme. Hyde Park Source will provide full risk assessment for activities carried out. The project will also be scrutinised through the usual methods used by Hyde Park Source; weekly staff meetings and regular Management Committee meetings, to ensure that targets for delivery within agreed timescales are being met and that procedures and policies are being followed. It has been previously agreed that any future repair or maintenance of the sites that Hyde Park Source manage with CGCG would be their responsibility and they would need to generate money through fundraising or other grant applications to cover these costs. Any future maintenance of the fencing on back Cautley Rd would not be the responsibility of Hyde Park Source. This will be the responsibility of the leaseholders of the garden plots.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 This project is proving to be a success in terms of the local community taking pride in their neighbourhood. The benefits of the scheme are that it will continue to support community cohesion between existing and new members of the community, improving unused communal spaces across the locality. The scheme is also providing health benefits for local people with the opportunity to lead active lifestyles and access fresh produce. In conclusion, this community led scheme is creating a number of positive benefits in the local area and it is felt that support, in terms of officer time or funding, should be provided to help this activity develop further.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 That the Director of Environment & Housing agrees to release £18,000 for the Cross Green Food Growing Utilities project and £15,000 for the Back Cautley Road fencing project and grants authority to spend from parent scheme number 16500/BEI/000 during 2016/17.

## **7. Background Documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None

---

<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.