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| <p>Briefing Note (Notification only)</p> <p>08 November 2023</p> |  <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p> |
| <p>Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director of Place</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Community Gardens – Phase 2 Update & Termination of Grant Delivery Contract</p> | |

Executive Summary

The Community Gardens Programme was adopted as one of the projects approved from the 2019 LIF consultation, with a budget of £437,500 capital funding to include food growing, allotments and other forms of green community infrastructure at locations across LIF Areas 1,2, 3 and 4.

The project aimed to deliver a number of community gardens which people value, enjoy and feel safe and comfortable in and which promote social interaction and inclusion.

A report was taken to the January 2022 Grants Determination Sub Committee to approve the phase 2 delivery plan to appoint a grant delivery organisation to distribute Local Infrastructure Funding via a grant to community groups and other organisations.

In late August we were instructed to pause on the launch of the grant whilst a review of the LIF Programme was carried out by the Mayor and Lead Cabinet Members.

After discussions with the Mayor, the recommendation was not to proceed with launching this grant, the mayor recognised the importance of growing spaces but would like to see a more carefully considered approach in terms

In view of the above we are notifying the committee of the termination of the Termination of Grant Delivery Contract and closure of the grant.

THIS SECTION TO BE DELETED BEFORE PUBLICATION

Decision Type

| Key Decision? | Urgent Decision? | Exempt from Call-In? | Restricted Report or Partially Restricted (e.g. appendix)? |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------|--|
| No | No | No | No |

Recommendations:

The Mayor is recommended to:

1. To note the termination of the Community Gardens Phase 2 Grant Delivery contract.
2. To note the closure of this grant.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 In late August we were instructed to pause on the launch of the grant whilst a review of the LIF Programme was carried out by the Mayor and Lead Cabinet Members.
- 1.2 After discussions with the Mayor, the recommendation was not to proceed with launching this grant, the mayor recognised the importance of growing spaces but would like to see a more carefully considered approach in terms of where and how we spend money on grants- which will emerge from the review of LIF programme more generally.
- 1.3 In October 2022 we attended a LIF Working Group meeting to seek a steer on next steps for the programme, we were advised that a report will be taken to cabinet by the LIF team to ratify the decision to discontinue parts of the programme, however there is no clear timescale of when this will take place.
- 1.4 It was agreed at the working group meeting that the Regeneration Team would ensure all risks were managed with terminating the contract with grant delivery organisation and would notify them accordingly.

2 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 The Community Gardens Programme was adopted as one of the projects approved from the 2019 LIF consultation, with a budget of £437,500 capital funding to include food growing, allotments and other forms of green community infrastructure at locations across LIF Areas 1,2, 3 and 4.
- 2.2 The project aimed to deliver a number of community gardens which people value, enjoy and feel safe and comfortable in and which promote social interaction and inclusion.
- 2.3 The Community Gardens Programme PID was approved by the LIF Working Group at the July 2021 meeting, and sets out a phased delivery plan summarised in the table below.

| Phase | 1 | 2 |
|-------|---|---|
|-------|---|---|

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Delivery Method | Direct delivery/direct award of funding | Grant funding (working with a third-party grant giving organisation,) |
| Indicative Timing | August 2021 – December 2022 | July 2022 – July 2023 |
| Beneficiaries | LIF Responders only | LIF Responders + Open Application |
| Number of Sites | 9 sites | Between 10 – 12 |
| Typical Site Cost | Between £10k - £25k | Between £10k - £25k |

2.4 Phase 1 delivery comprises of Direct delivery/ Award. An appraisal was carried out of the 2019 LIF consultation feedback which indicated 200 project suggestions for parks and green spaces of which 30 sites were specifically nominated as Community gardens, and of those 30 sites, 9 were shortlisted as being the most viable as they had an appropriate location, ownership status and an organisation with capacity and capability to take part in the programme who operate nearby.

2.5 The Phase 2 approach was to appoint a third party grant giving organisation to administer funding. A report was taken to the January 2022 Grants Determination Sub Committee to approve the delivery plan to distribute Local Infrastructure Funding via a grant to community groups and other organisations.

2.6 **Progress to Date**

Phase 1

From the nine sites identified for Phase 1 , four sites have been completed, one sites is in delivery, one site is in design and three sites will not proceed following feedback from the mayor.

Phase 2

Following approval of the delivery approach by the Committee in January 2022, a grant delivery organisation was commissioned to design and administer a grant for Phase 2 of the Community Grant Programme.

The contract was procured using the councils RFQ route in May 2022, and the development work had completed in August 2022.

Following the review of the LIF Programme in September 2023, it was recommended by the mayor not to proceed with launching this grant.

3 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Terminating the grant delivery contract may cause reputational damage with the grant delivery organisation, the council may also receive criticism for not proceeding with the launch of this grant.

4 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 Under clause 9 of the Terms and Conditions of the contract we can terminate the contract without any financial penalties, in view of this comments have not been sought from the chief financial officer.

'9. TERMINATION

9.1 The Council may terminate this Contract for whatever reason and without liability by giving not less than one month's written notice to the Contractor. In doing so, the Council shall not incur any liability and/or costs whatsoever, save in respect of any payment regarding correctly performed Services delivered at that date.'

5 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 5.1 Legal services have advised that Under D.9 of the corporate operating procedures early termination of a contract can be initiated by the Corporate Director, the person who reports to the corporate director and or one tier below that person.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- [Tower Hamlets Council - Agenda for Grants Determination \(Cabinet\) Sub-Committee on Wednesday, 12th January, 2022, 5.30 p.m.](#)

Appendices

- None

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- [Tower Hamlets Council - Agenda for Grants Determination \(Cabinet\) Sub-Committee on Wednesday, 12th January, 2022, 5.30 p.m.](#)

Officer contact details for documents:

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