


<p>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee report</p> <p>21 April 2021</p>	
<p><b>Report of:</b> Ann Sutcliffe, Interim Corporate Director of Place</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>Formal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to Greenlight Youth Club</b></p>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Eve McQuillan</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Michael Ritchie – Place Shaping Team Leader Anna Zucchelli – Heritage at Risk Project Officer
<b>Wards affected</b>	Bow East
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	Impact on Wards
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	<b>A Great Place to Live</b>

### Executive Summary

This report relates to a formal offer of a London Borough of Tower Hamlets Historic Buildings Grant of £12,000 to Greenlight Youth Club, 223 Bow Road, Bow, E3 2SJ, towards the cost of timber repairs to the first-floor bay windows, shutters and front door. This is part of a wider works package which includes improvements to the flat roof to the rear of the building, building security and internal refurbishment works.

The building is listed grade II and is in the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. The building is monitored as “vulnerable” by Historic England’s Heritage at Risk team. Whilst the building is not currently on the Heritage at Risk register, if the condition and occupancy of the building does not improve in the near future, it may be added to the list.

### Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- Authorise the Corporate Director Place to issue a formal offer of grant to Greenlight Youth Club to a maximum of £12,000 towards the cost of timber repairs to the first-floor bay windows, shutters and front door.

- Authorise the Corporate Director Place to enter into the grant agreement and any such other agreements required to affect the grant and the use of the grant as detailed in paragraph 1.

## 1. **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 Greenlight Youth Club is an unassuming, solitary and quaint two storey building dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century with painted stucco, parapet and tiled roof. It has two bay windows to the first floor and a 19<sup>th</sup> century shopfront. It is a rare survival of this building type in what was once the rural village of Bow and could well be the oldest house in this part of the East End.



**Fig. 1: Greenlight Youth Club**

- 1.2 Greenlight Youth Club is an independently-funded community hub which offers family dispute resolution, social and leisure opportunities to support groups and individual development, arts, a Credit Union, a community café, a breakfast club, crime prevention, student placements and special events for senior citizens.

- 1.3 The Council's Historic Building Grant would contribute towards the cost of timber repairs to the first-floor bay windows, shutters and front door. This joinery is in a poor condition - remedial work now will prevent further decay to the timberwork and avoid large repair costs in the future.
- 1.4 The works will also improve the external appearance of the Grade II listed building and is an opportunity to enhance the Fairfield Road Conservation Area.
- 1.5 Two years ago, the youth club suffered from structural issues to its party wall due to development on a neighbouring site, forcing it to close and be unable to offer its services to the local community. The closure of the club has been extended further due to the impact of covid-19, which has unfortunately resulted in two break-ins and occupation by squatters.
- 1.6 The youth club proposes to improve security of the building by installing new locks and alarms. It is also preparing to open its doors to the community again once restrictions have been lifted with some internal decoration. These works, however, do not form part of the application for funds from the Council's Historic Buildings Grant scheme. If the building is occupied more frequently and in a better condition (i.e. it appears better cared for), especially on its front elevation, it will be less at risk from future break-ins.

## **2. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 2.1 The Council operates a Historic Building Grant scheme to assist owners and occupiers of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas in meeting their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the irreplaceable cultural asset which these buildings represent. The provision of this type of grant is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and section 57 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.2 Each year the Council makes £25,000 available for its Historic Buildings Grant scheme. The money is allocated from the Planning & Building Control budget. Funds are now rolled over from previous years where they have not been allocated to specific projects. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, the Historic Buildings Grant budget holds £38,000 and there are currently no funds allocated to any projects. In April 2021, a further £25,000 will be added to the budget, providing a new total of £63,000 for the financial year 2021/22. If a grant of £12,000 was awarded to Greenlight Youth Centre, it would leave £51,000 in the grant budget for 2021/22.

- 2.3 In the majority of cases, the priority for the Historic Buildings Grant is given to applications for buildings which are on the Heritage at Risk register or for buildings located within a conservation area at risk, however, there have been no applications this financial year. Greenlight Youth Club is considered a vulnerable building and if works are not carried out to the building soon, there is a chance that the condition of the building will decline and Historic England may decide to place it on the Heritage at Risk register.
- 2.4 The minimum eligible for grant funding is £1000. Where works are eligible, the grant will not exceed 60% of the total cost (including VAT). The total cost of the works is £22,900 and Greenlight are requesting £12,000 which is under 60% of the total cost.
- 2.5 Greenlight Youth Club have requested a Historic Buildings Grant from the Council for timber repairs to the first-floor bay windows, shutters and front door. This is part of further work to be carried out at the youth club including improvements to building security and internal refurbishment works.
- 2.6 These external works meet the grant criteria; however, the formal offer of grant will be conditional on the receipt of a specification/ method statement, drawings/ photographs and comparable quotes from three contractors. These documents will need to be found to be satisfactory by the Council.
- 2.7 Payment of the grant is conditional on the inspection, by the Conservation Officer or Heritage at Risk Projects Officer, of the work contained within the application to ensure it has been carried out satisfactorily to a good conservation standard. An annotated photographic report will be prepared and kept on file. The relevant budget holder will request a purchase order from the Financial Accounts Payments Section to be sent to Greenlight Youth Centre, who will then submit an invoice and the Finance Accounts Payments Section will arrange payment.
- 2.8 The grant will be conditional upon the building participating in London Open House of 5 years to ensure the best possible value for the council.

### **3. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The proposed works would contribute to the conservation and enhancement of a highly valued community asset, contributing to the setting of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area and neighbouring listed buildings, which include the grade II\* Bow Church.

- 3.2 The building currently provides a wide range of community support activities to young people, but also senior citizens and families. The work is part of a wider package to reopen the building and make it more welcoming for the community.
- 3.3 The project thus contributes to the theme 'A Great Place to Live' in the Community Plan to build One Tower Hamlets.

#### **4. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.

#### **4.2 Best Value implications**

The delivery of this project ensures the Council meets its commitment set out in the Council's Conservation Strategy. The repair works will benefit community members and is considered to offer excellent value for money. The grant will be conditional on the building participating in London Open House for five years to ensure the best possible value for the Council.

#### **4.3 Environmental**

The works will improve the lifetime of the existing windows and doors. If the condition of the windows worsens, this may result a need for larger scale repair or replacement of timbers.

#### **4.4 Risk management**

Three quotes have been received for the work. Payment of the grant cannot be made until the work is completed to the full satisfaction of the Council.

#### **4.5 Crime reduction**

Whilst the youth centre was vacant, it was broken into and occupied by squatters twice. With the appearance of the building in a better condition,

security measures and greater use of the building by the community, this should minimise the risk of further break-ins.

#### 4.6 **Safeguarding**

There are no safeguarding implications.

### 5. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 5.1 LBTH receives grant funding of £25k per annum for use on Historic Buildings. This grant is ringfenced and cannot be used for other purposes. Where the grant is not spent in full during the year, it is moved to reserves for use on future projects. The balance on the reserve as at 31 March 2021 is £38k.
- 5.2 The Council will receive a further grant of £25k in 2021/22, giving total funding of £63k for use on projects meeting the grant conditions. There are no commitments against this funding.
- 5.3 This report is seeking approval to allocate £12k of historic buildings grant funding to the Greenlight Roof Club to contribute towards the repair of the bay windows on this grade II listed property. There are sufficient funds available to meet this cost, which if approved would reduce the funding available for other schemes to £51k.

### 6. **COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 6.1 The Council has the legal power to make the grant described in this report.
- 6.2 The evaluation of the grant application was made in compliance with the Historic Building Grant scheme criteria and the Council will constantly monitor the grant to ensure that such criteria are always met, and funding distributed fairly.
- 6.3 The grant monitoring will be supported by appropriate agreement terms. The agreement will ensure that the funding is used in compliance with the purposes stated in the grant application and the conditions highlighted in this report. This will assist the Council achieving Best Value in line with the law. A condition of the grant is that the Council must review the specification/ method statement, drawings/ photographs relating to the works and comparable quotes from three contractors and must be satisfied that these are compliant with the grant criteria. This to confirm that the cost of the works represents Best Value.
- 6.4 There are no immediate legal equality issues arising from this report. However, the grant monitoring process will assess any equalities issues that may arise and ensure that these are dealt with appropriately.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- List any linked reports
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- State NONE if none.

### **Appendices**

- None

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

- List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.
- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

Or state N/A