



Delegated Officer Report **(Non Key and Contracts up to a value of £100k)**

Decision Maker: Rebekah Sutcliffe, Strategic Director of Reform

Date of Decision: 15 August 2019

Subject: Northern Roots Oldham Show Garden

Report Author: Anna da Silva, Project Director

Ward (s): None

Reason for the decision: To take advantage of the offer to create a 'Northern Roots Oldham' show garden at the 2020 RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, as a means of promoting the development of the Northern Roots project and Alexandra Park ECO, while also enhancing the Growing Hub which needs to be relocated to facilitate the ECO.

Following the show, the garden will be relocated to become the heart of the new Growing Hub space at the entrance to the Northern Roots site. The creation of the new Growing Hub will mark the first tangible step in the delivery of both the ECO and Northern Roots projects.

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

The opportunity to exhibit at Hampton Court has been offered to the Council, by an experienced, prize-winning show garden delivery team. They are keen to promote the great work already happening in Oldham but will need sponsorship to bring the garden to fruition. They have a very strong track record in securing press and media attention for the projects that they champion, which will dovetail well with the emerging approach to communications promoting both

Northern Roots and ECO.

Should the Council decide not to support this initiative, the show garden will still go ahead, demonstrating growing and community activities within Oldham, however it will showcase the activities of the Social Enterprise IF Oldham, rather than the Council-led initiatives.

Option A – Approve the application for a show garden dedicated to Northern Roots, underwrite the budget for the show garden up to a value of £80,000, approve the subsequent relocation of the show garden into the new Growing Hub on the Northern Roots site, and give permission to Council Officers to pursue a range of funding sources to finance the creation and relocation of the show garden.

Option B – Refuse offer of involvement. Support relocation of the Growing Hub to the Northern Roots site and leave IF Oldham to develop a show garden to be relocated elsewhere in the borough.

Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.

None. Approval received by Cllr Abdul Jabbar

Background:

Approval was recently given to develop and support the Northern Roots project and the construction of Alexandra Park ECO. As part of the works to the Alexandra Park depot the existing Growing Hub will need to be relocated. It is suggested that to build links between the two developments the growing hub should be relocated to the council owned land, at the top of the Northern Roots site, which is outside of the green belt with good access.

Across Oldham, social enterprises, community action groups, charities and neighbourhood champions are developing innovative ways of using the spaces and places around them to help battle food poverty, improve health, combat isolation, learn new skills and find routes into employment.

Encouraged and supported by an assortment of programmes and funding opportunities from Oldham Council (*Get Oldham Growing, Get Oldham Working, Growing Oldham Feeding Ambition, Bloom & Grow, Oldham Community Power, Thriving Communities, Green Dividend*), we are battling to 'Green the Grey' and inspire residents to take action and ownership of spaces important to them. This network of sites and initiatives are growing Oldham's ambition to become a centre for horticultural excellence, working to secure access to fresh, affordable

locally produced food, with well-used public spaces to bring together residents of all ages from neighbouring communities.

The first Growing Hub at Alexandra Park has been integral to the growing movement in the town over recent years. Other Hubs have developed from this first one, creating knowledge sharing and training facilities where people come together from all walks of life to learn and grow, meet others and gain confidence.

Relocating the Alexandra Park Growing Hub to a more visible location at the gateway to the Northern Roots site will mark the first stage in the creation of Northern Roots, drawing attention to the project, and providing a focal point for pilot projects, community involvement and investment.

Social Enterprise IF Oldham were contacted by an experienced and successful group comprising garden designer (Peter Donegan), landscape contractor (Burnham Landscapes) and natural stone supplier (CED Stone), who are keen to produce a show garden at Hampton Court celebrating and showcasing many of the worthwhile community growing schemes that have established in Oldham over recent years, many of which have received funding from the council. Their proposal was then to relocate the show garden to a permanent site in Oldham. IF Oldham generously suggested that the show garden should showcase the Northern Roots project.

The publicity and kudos generated from exhibiting at Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival reaches a wide and influential audience. Not only is this a great opportunity to promote the Northern Roots and ECO centre projects, but also to celebrate the fantastic work happening all over Oldham helping to improve the wellbeing of people and their local environment through practical action.

The garden will be relocated to form the nucleus of the Growing Hub, which is to be moved as part of Oldham Council's ECO development. The timing of this can be coordinated to benefit and publicise the two significant commitments shown by the authority (N.R./ECO) with interest from environmental, planning, community & local government, horticulture and leisure sectors, among others.

Environmental Services have a strong record of using horticultural excellence and community involvement to promote the authority and help to bring investment and improvements to our spaces. In previous years, building on the success of our Bloom and Grow campaigns, we have submitted entries to the RHS Tatton Park Flower Show, giving our apprentices opportunities to gain unrivalled experience throughout the process. Pre-dating the Tatton shows were the Tulip Fun Days which saw regeneration of parks through focused activity and pooling resources to make a huge impact on a number of parks across Oldham.

Should the Hampton Court Show Garden go ahead, it would create a wide range of training and development opportunities for both Council staff, and community partners/members, including during the design, build and hosting of the show garden, and also during the design and rebuild of the garden on the Northern Roots site.

A Northern Roots Garden at the Hampton Court Show will both celebrate what we've already achieved, while showcasing the exciting developments to come. It will provide the platform to demonstrate to a wider audience Oldham's commitment to the natural environment & sustainable development, futureproofing the town to become a resilient place that can prosper and deliver on the Oldham Model. It can also serve as a useful platform for engaging potential sponsors, supporters and funders of Northern Roots.

Current Position:

The deadline for applications for the 2020 Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival is very imminent. Applications need to outline details of the garden, and the team behind it. This information has been drafted and initial enquiries have been made regarding the build, materials and fabricators. The design team need to go ahead to proceed with submitting their application in time for the deadline.

Concurrently plans for the ECO are being developed, with construction estimated to begin in 2020. Therefore the Growing Hub will need to be relocated later this year to ensure growing continues into next season and enable continuous use from the groups and individuals who regularly use the facility. Any planning application required to facilitate the relocation of the Growing Hub and the Hampton Court Garden can be included in the wider design process and planning application for the ECO centre.

Recommendation(s):

To approve Option A. This is a great opportunity to use a world renowned garden festival, and industry-leading garden designer, to help promote the exciting work already happening in Oldham, while also kick-starting the delivery of both the ECO and Northern Roots projects. It will deliver a carefully planned publicity strategy, harnessing the knowledge and expertise of a successful team of well-respected show garden participants, and our combined list of influential contacts within the sector and media organisations covering the event.

While this decision is outside of the current budget framework there will be an opportunity to draw upon a variety of funding streams over 2 financial years.

Implications:

What are the financial implications?

The £80k costs for the show garden are not currently included in the available budget for the Northern Roots project. However, an allocation from the Corporate

Priorities reserve to the Northern Roots reserve of £80k could be used to provide underwriting and/or funding for the show garden across the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years.

There are a number of potential funding streams that will be considered to minimise the council's commitment, these will be explored further once approval has been granted, to be developed in detail by officers.

Should any grant funding be received, the reserve funding can be allocated back to the Corporate Priorities reserve to fund other priority projects.

(James Postle)

*What are the **legal** implications?* The proposed options outlined in the report are lawful, the Council having the power to make such decision by virtue of the power of general competence within the Localism Act 2011. The decision maker is bound by general principles of public law including the concept of "Wednesbury reasonableness" in determining whether to approve the recommended option. (Colin Brittain)

What are the **procurement** implications? None

*What are the **Human Resources** implications?* None

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason) Not required as does not directly impact any vulnerable groups.

*What are the **property** implications* Location for new growing hub already an Environmental Services asset.

Risks: None

Co-operative agenda: None

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? N/A

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? Yes

There are no background papers for this report

Report Author Sign-off:	
	Rebekah Sutcliffe Strategic Director of Reform
Date: 22/08/2019	
	Cllr Abdul Jabbar Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
Date: 29/08/2019	

Please list and attach any appendices:-

Appendix number or letter	Description
None	n/a