

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 13 FEBRUARY 2017

REPORT ON: DUNDEE THERAPY GARDEN

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 20-2017

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to grant a lease to Dundee Therapy Garden and to make a financial contribution to this charitable project which will provide gardening therapy to veterans of the military and emergency services.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:-

- (i) remit the Executive Director of City Development to enter into a lease with Dundee Therapy Garden for the site of the former bowling green in Dudhope Park for a nominal sum; and
- (ii) approve a one-off grant of up to £30,000 to Dundee Therapy Garden.

Both recommendations subject to the trustees demonstrating that a viable and sustainable business plan is in place for the project.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council's proposed contribution of up to £30,000 can be met from the General Contingencies allowance included in the 2016/17 Revenue Budget.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members may recall that the City Council agreed to lease the former bowling green site in Dudhope Park to Gardening Leave, a national charity which provided horticultural therapy to military veterans. Gardening Leave invested £100,000 in converting the site for its needs but the national organisation was wound up shortly before launching the Dundee project.
- 4.2 A new local charitable trust, Dundee Therapy Garden, has now been established to run a similar project and wish to take over the lease which would have been operated by Gardening Leave. City Development had negotiated a 25 year lease for a nominal sum and it is proposed that a similar arrangement applies.
- 4.3 The aim of Dundee Therapy Garden is to provide structured horticultural therapy to veterans of the military and emergency services who suffer from mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety. The therapy is based around gardening activities, providing outdoor physical activity and social benefits, but also includes aspects of therapeutic work to improve mental health and help veterans reconnect with local communities, rebuild their self-confidence and restore relationships. The plan is to actively support 16 beneficiaries each week, using a mix of staff and volunteers.
- 4.4 The trustees have been raising funds for the project and have stated that no veterans will be recruited until the charity can demonstrate that it is on a sound financial footing with an income stream to cover the costs of the operation.

- 4.5 As well as granting a lease, Dundee City Council has been asked to make a one-off contribution of £30,000 to help get the project established. Making this contribution would be a tangible demonstration of the City Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, an updated version of which was signed by the Lord Provost in his capacity as Armed Forces Champion in June 2016.
- 4.6 It is proposed that officers work with the trustees of Dundee Therapy Garden to ensure that the full funding package and a viable and sustainable business plan for the project is in place, before a lease is granted and a start-up contribution of up to £30,000 is released.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality and Risk Management. No negative impacts have been identified, indeed approval of this report would have significant positive impacts in terms of the environment and people with disabilities.

6 CONSULTATIONS

The Executive Directors of Corporate Services, Neighbourhood Services and City Development and the Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

DAVID R MARTIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE: 20 JANUARY 2017