

Appendix B

Service Level Agreement Report 2013/14 – Groundwork South

Section A: Background and Overview

For 2013/14 Dartford Borough Council has contributed £14,000 to Groundwork South as a development/core grant to support development time and projects in Dartford during this period

Section B: Relationship to the Corporate Plan

The work of Groundwork South fits with the current objectives of the Corporate Plan:

Economic Development

- Improve access to jobs for local people through skills, training and other initiatives

Health and Well Being

- Increase the opportunities for participating in sporting, cultural and leisure activities.

Environment and Transport

- Ensure that development in Dartford is sustainable, with high standards of design, layout and energy efficiency.

Section C: Annual Review of Service Level Agreement

Listed under the review is an update from Groundwork South about recent activities and examples of projects undertaken in this financial year within Dartford Borough, under the four service headings of the SLA.

Introduction - Groundwork South Restructure

At the beginning of 2013 Groundwork Kent and Medway merged with four other Groundwork trusts to become Groundwork South. The decision to consolidate our activities into one trust was driven by the opportunity to stream line our services and increase efficiency. Following the merger GWS undertook a significant restructure instating Local Area Boards to oversee the strategic direction of the regional offices and reorganising the senior management structure. In the summer Ian Martin (Operations Manager) and Diane Snell (Employment Manager) both left the company and were replaced by Ian Long who has been with GW for over 12 years. At the beginning of 2014 Garnet Johnson joined as Development Manager.

Service Objectives and specifications

The agreed SLA for Groundwork South requires us to develop and deliver programmes in Dartford Borough. It challenges GW to create opportunities for people to take local action, create better, safer and healthier neighbourhoods and help communities, businesses and individuals to fulfil their potential in the following areas of work:

- Community
- Employment
- Landscape

- Environmental Business

Key Project Updates

Vocational training

Groundwork has continued to manage Spark IT training centre in Swanscombe and all though it has been a challenging year in terms of identifying funding GW took the decision to support the project through our own reserves. During the year our staff and volunteers worked with over 900 people providing a weekly job club, IC3 training, Computer Basics and CV writing. We are currently looking to upgrade all the computers at Spark IT to provide state of the art facilities for the residents of Swanscombe and Dartford.

For the first half of 2013 GWS ran the café at Suscon where we provided apprenticeships and training opportunities for local young people. Unfortunately due to the unforeseen financial problems faced by Northwest Kent College it became no longer viable to run the café.

We are currently in negotiations with a number of partners to run apprenticeship programmes in the Borough and late in 2013 we were informed that we had been selected as a key project partner for the South East Talent Match programme a multi-million pound project to support young people into work placements and employment. Over the next five years GWS will work with over 2,500 young people of which a percentage will be Dartford Borough Residents.

Landscaping

Throughout 2013 GWS has been a key partner in the Stone Pit development. Our Landscape team have been working with Lefarge, S Walsh, Stone PC, Kent CC, Halls AFC and Dartford Scouts to develop the concept and design for creating a new public open space at Stone Pit landfill site. The finished value of the new park will be in the region of £1million plus.

In addition to the work at Stone Pit our Landscape team has also been undertaking green infrastructure policy planning work for Dartford BC identifying green assets in the borough. We have also undertaken a number of corporate-community partnership programmes where companies have volunteered to support community projects. One example of which is DHL who alone have provided over 500 person hours volunteering on projects at Dartford marsh to improve rights of way, at Darenth Woods to widen access paths and at Beacon Woods working alongside the Friends of Group to install new footpaths and steps.

Community Development

During this period GWS has undertaken a number of community development programmes. Working in Wilmington with the Parish Council we have undertaken a detailed community consultation to identify how best to improve facilities at Oakfield Park. We consulted with local schools, residents groups, senior citizen groups and special needs organisations and developed a plan to install a woodland trim trail in the park to encourage people to get fit in a natural setting. In September we submitted an application for £50,000 to Biffa Award and expect to hear an answer in the next few months.

We have continued to undertake work at Dartford Skate Park, supporting the young skaters and improving the facilities. We were awarded some grant funding from Britvic to work with the skaters and BMXers and to undertake activities at the park. In addition late on in the year we received some more funding to improve the site with new tables, gates and bins.

Outcomes against KPI's

GKM are monitored against the following Performance Indicators for 2013/14:

GKM will deliver £10 of regeneration work in the Borough for every £1 in core funding from DBC (10:1). This equates to £140,000 by March 2014.

- Outcome - In 2013/14 the Trust delivered regeneration work to the value of £165,000 in the Borough, a gearing of 16:1.

GKM will provide 4 full time jobs in the Borough and maintain a physical presence in the Borough.

- Outcome - GWS has its regional headquarters in Swanscombe and currently employs 20 fulltime members of staff (30% of whom are Dartford Residents). These included Community Workers, Youth Workers, an ITC Trainer, two Landscape Architects, a, Team Green Operatives, Management and Support Staff.

GKM will work with at least 500 children and adults on regeneration projects in the Borough by March 2014.

- Outcome - GKM continue to run and grow the SparkIT Centre in Swanscombe with over 900 people attended the Centre during 2013/14
- GKM also ran a number of events and activities for young people including the event at Dartford Skate Park attended by over 450 young people and the school consultations for Oakfield Park.

GKM will arrange and deliver four green education events in Central Park

- Due to our environmental Ranger being on maternity for the majority of this period we haven't been able to run any environmental activities in Central Park this year. However we have run activities for the skaters and have attended and run activities at Wilmington Fair and Oakfield Park open day. We have also delivered over 500 hours of community volunteering at Beacon Wood and Dartford Marsh.

N.B Groundwork South no longer provides environmental business services.

Conclusion

GWS remains very active in Dartford Borough and we believe our programmes make a significant positive impact to the residents. Like all charities we find ourselves in challenging times however we are well placed to take advantage of opportunities as they arise and retain our above average success rate in securing funding. One recent example of this is winning the Kent Sheds lead organisation tender. Starting

early 2014 GWS will be helping community groups across Kent to develop 'Shed' projects to support the well-being and mental health of men and ex-service personnel. One of the first Sheds is about to be launched in Dartford working with Veterans.

2014 will be especially challenging for Spark IT, a new upgrade is required and funding for IT training projects is limited. However with our new Development Manager now in place we are confident that we will identify a sustainable income to continue this vital project.