

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL LOCAL INNOVATION FUND "Doing things differently in neighbourhoods to make better places to live" WARD PROPOSAL FORM													
WARD ...Handsworth Wood	INNOVATION TITLE Uplands Allotments Open Air Learning Space (OPALS)												
<p>Innovations have to meet the LIF priorities and add value to the City wide core priorities listed below. (Tick all those that apply)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>City Core Priorities</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>LIF Priorities</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>• Children - a Great City to Grow Up In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>• Citizens' Independence & Well Being <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Jobs & Skills a great City to succeed in <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>• New approaches to investment <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Housing a great City to live in <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>• Active citizens & communities stepping up <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Health a great City to lead a healthy & active life <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>• Clean streets <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Improving local centres <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>City Core Priorities</u>	<u>LIF Priorities</u>	• Children - a Great City to Grow Up In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	• Citizens' Independence & Well Being <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	• Jobs & Skills a great City to succeed in <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	• New approaches to investment <input type="checkbox"/>	• Housing a great City to live in <input type="checkbox"/>	• Active citizens & communities stepping up <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	• Health a great City to lead a healthy & active life <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	• Clean streets <input type="checkbox"/>		Improving local centres <input type="checkbox"/>
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<p>What is your innovative idea and how does it show collaborative, partnership working and active citizenship?</p> <p>Our innovative idea is to develop an open air learning space facility on a specific part of the Uplands site to provide a stimulating open air learning environment that will be available for schools and other organisations and individuals from the city. The Open Air Learning Space (OPAL) will connect directly to City Core Priorities and LIF priorities.</p> <p>Children - A Great City to grow up in: Outdoor learning with hands-on activities engage some young people who find learning space learning lacks the stimulation they need (Knight 2011; Constable 2014¹). The outdoor learning space would be an exciting resource where all young people could engage with learning in a different, stimulating environment. The Open Air Learning Space can offer an alternative to the institutionalised settings offered by schools. This kind of space can be a trigger for engaging with young people who feel as though school isn't for them, who find the learning space offered by schools difficult to cope with.</p> <p>Jobs and Skills – a great city to succeed in: Our plan is to involve stakeholder organisations in the construction of the open air learning space. This will help engender a sense of ownership but will also initiate the intergenerational interaction that we see as being at the heart of the project. The skills needed to realise this vision are not just manual and dextrous skills connected to construction, but they are the interpersonal skills of cooperation and communication that are transferrable across different industries and contexts. In other words, the construction activities that the project demands will involve participants in the kind of teamwork that develops transferrable</p>													

skills and that employers find valuable.

Health - great city to lead a healthy and active life: As Birmingham has many densely populated areas, our open air learning space would offer an opportunity to connect with nature in a local venue to help young people to establish an ongoing active relationship with green spaces, the importance of growing healthy food and the social benefits of belonging to a community of people who share an interest in environmental issues, growing natural food and issues connected with sustainable living.

Citizens' Independence and Well-Being: The Open Air Learning Space and Learning Facility will connect directly to the LIF priority of Citizens' Independence and Well-Being. The facility will be open for all groups and individuals. Users will find out about how to grow their own food and how to look after their own health and well-being. The Open Air Learning Space will naturally lead to discussions about healthy diets and the importance of fresh air, exercise and an ongoing relationship with the natural environment. Growing our own food builds a sense of self-reliance and independence as it enables people to make informed choices about what they eat.

Active Citizens and Communities stepping up: Our bid addresses this priority as the Open Air Learning Space will be an ideal venue for promoting an active and healthy life. Uplands Allotments is a space where members of the city's many diverse communities come together. This offers the opportunity for allotmenters from these communities to "step up" and connect with those who use the facility. A majority of our ploholders are senior citizens and bring with them a rich fund of cultural knowledge which is important to the history of this city. They would interact with the visitors to the site and in so doing would assume a role as facilitator and 'expert' in growing and gardening. This aspect has strongly beneficial aspects as it will affirm the identities and knowledge of our ploholders and provide them with a platform to share their considerable knowledge and understanding. This would in turn will be beneficial for our ploholders, by enhancing their feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. Food is a deeply embedded aspect of culture – this makes the Open Air Learning Space idea an ideal opportunity for enhancing cohesion between different communities. Our ploholders would welcome the opportunity to talk to school children and others about the food they grow and their countries of origin. The Open Air Learning Space would be an integral aspect of the life of Uplands Allotments.

The Open Air Learning Space would be a venue for learning about growing and gardening. In this way it would catalyse the interest of visitors, inspiring them to take up the challenge of taking on their own allotment and thereby encouraging them to remain active and healthy citizens.

Uplands' proposal includes:

- an open-sided, timber-framed, learning deck with bench seating;
- Roofing for the above incorporating water harvesting;
- BBQ area;
- composting; seed banks; recycling facilities;
- pathway to footbridge and on to bee hives;

pathway to orchard (via abandoned plot);
 restoration and refurbishment of existing shack;
 construction of a compost toilet;
 food growing areas & raised beds.

Uplands Allotments is a well-established allotments site with established community connections in the locality. With over four hundred plots over thirty eight acres on the outskirts of Handsworth, Uplands allotmenters produce a wide variety of different produce including honey from our own hives. Uplands draws its plot holders from across a wide range of communities and ethnic groups in the city. Uplands connects with local residents, groups and organisations of **Handsworth Wood Ward**. We have ongoing relationship with schools (including Holyhead School, St John Wall School and Wattville School) and other organisations such as Birmingham City University (see below), Midland Heart Housing; we are also currently in discussions with a leading local refugee organisation. These organisations are all keen to increase their engagement and involvement with the site and this bid would facilitate this. We also have the support of Handsworth Wood Residents Association in this bid.

Uplands is overseen by a group of community-minded active volunteers. We have a core of 10-15 active volunteers. Recently, the Association established a Community Garden at the Oxhill Road entrance. This project was funded by Prologis Logistics as one of their CSR "Impact Days". Whittings Landscape – a firm which started life in Handsworth 40 years ago – undertook the groundwork and managed the 30 plus Prologis volunteers. In addition, the Allotment Association has also bid for and won money for the construction of a community pizza oven. This is to be constructed in the immediate vicinity of the clubhouse and may connect with the Open Air Learning Space we are proposing to build with money from the Local Innovation Fund. In the last year students from Birmingham City University have helped us to develop an area on the Friary Road area of the site. This involved establishing an area to be used as a community workspace and constructing a bridge for ploholders' use across the Pearl Brook that runs through the Uplands site.

Our bid is to build on this to create an open air Learning Space for use by schools in the area and from across the city: an area of decking with an open-sided, roofed frame, with benches and a series of long classroom benches.

This would be a space for participants to learn about cultivation, environmental issues, local ecologies and nature, sustainable food production and other related issues.

Participants could meet and interact with our broad range of ploholders. There is also a cross-generational aspect to this as local young people will have the opportunity to interact socially with people from the older generation, to hear their stories and to find out about different cultures through different foods. People from different parts of the world have settled in Handsworth grow, cook and eat a wide range of foods.

This could also connect to the newly built pizza oven: as a schools visit could round off with supervised young people preparing and eating food using vegetables grown on

site.

Uplands Allotments Cooperative Association is applying for money to pay for the materials and a proportion of the construction costs for the open air classroom facility. Some of the lighter construction itself will be undertaken by volunteers from the different organisations, groups and individuals who have engaged in a range of projects in the recent past.

Our proposal is not limited to use only by schools but extends to other organisations including care homes, scout and guide groups, NHS therapy organisations and others.

Time Frame – is it:-

One off event/programme

Implement and complete within 6 months (2016)

Implement and complete within 12 months (2017)

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

How will the innovation be implemented?

Uplands Allotments Cooperative Association has contacts with a range of organisations and individuals in the city and links to different community groups and organisations. Using the money provided by the Local Innovation Fund, materials can be purchased to construct a stimulating and healthy learning environment for young people and other users. Research evidence indicates that fresh air and being outdoors has strong health benefits. The learning space will need to be properly roofed and will need to have features that make it accessible to all including wheelchair users and other disabled people.

This will necessitate a design process (already begun by Birmingham City University students who have already contributed ideas and time – please see revised attached design brief) as well as a carefully managed group of volunteers to help with the layout and construction.

Some funding will be utilised for the heavier construction work. The Association already has some connections with construction firms and some work has been undertaken to improve existing facilities (namely the Clubhouse). Such local craft businesses can provide professional oversight of construction. We are also keen to involve some of our stakeholders in the construction work. We envisage our schools will be keen to take part in these activities.

While the construction is underway, we will build on existing links to generate interest and 'custom' from our neighbouring schools and other organisations in the Ward. One aspect of this will be encouraging the schools and organisations already involved at Uplands to take part in aspects of the construction. One of the Association members, Malcolm Curry has already been involved in some preliminary discussions regarding the project with Rob Tilling (a Birmingham-based champion of community gardens and greenspaces) who may help in this regard.

What outcomes will the proposal achieve? What will success look like and how will its impact be measured? How will you ensure legacy/ continuation and what learning will the project provide?

The proposal will further enhance Uplands' role as a hub for health-related educational community uses. Success will mean a fully developed open air learning environment that sits at the heart of the ward and links to different parts of the community and city.

Other outcomes include:

- enhancement to Primary School Curriculum which now includes reference to allotments;
- young people learning how to grow food and understand where it comes from!
- Inter-generational contact will add to community cohesion; provide better cross generation understanding;
- Enhanced environmental understanding in terms of relationship between land, weather, human impact and use of resources.

MEASURES of success will include:-

- feedback from schools and other organisations regarding impact on participants;
- an ongoing record of the numbers of people taking part.

LEARNING

- This is implicit in the outcomes and is a two way process, with site tenants also gaining from the experience of working with young people and other adults. Again, this is not new to the site as school groups have been well received by established plot holders.

We currently have school children and other community groups accessing the site but the educational and social potential of these visits could be greatly enhanced through this bid. This resource will provide a proper focus and a way of coordinating the educational, health and well-being benefits that the site can offer. Our proposal will also see an increased footfall on the site as more school children and others come to Uplands to learn about cultivation and to enjoy the fantastic community amenity that Uplands offers.

User increase numbers

We expect numbers to increase from between 50-100 individual X hours visits annum at present to 300-500 individual X hours visits. In other words, at the moment, we have between 50 and 100 school children and other individuals from community organisations visiting the allotments for at least an hour during the year. We think this will increase by at least tenfold. If a single 'class' was to take place over an hour and each class had 25 children, then we would need to have twenty classes across the year to achieve this figure. We currently have links with three schools. We would expect to build on this and extend uptake to between five and ten schools. We would also build up engagement with more community groups; we currently engage with one or two but intend to see this increase to four or five. Uplands Association will be able to record this increased footfall and the up-take of the amenity by different schools. By

establishing a clear record of users and recording their evaluations of the amenity we will gather evidence on numbers but also data on how to improve the facility. We believe that once the Open Air Learning Space is established, word of mouth will result in many schools and other organisations wanting to use it. Our job will be to administer bookings and to ensure the facility is maintained and kept usable.

Legacy and Sustainability for Handsworth Wood Ward: The legacy will be an ongoing environmental and educational resource for young people and others from our ward and city. Our close relationships with schools and other organisations means that we can ensure an annual timetable of calendared events that we would expect to roll on from year to year. Once schools have experienced using the facility, we will be able to establish the role of the Uplands Open Air Learning Space as a part of their curriculum offer. We would also like the facility to be used by other groups including Care Home residents and organisations that offer sheltered housing. The Learning Space could equally act as a meeting and eating area for such groups. We will draw up a list of targets groups such as Housing Associations like Spring Housing and Servol to promote the use of the Open Air Learning Space. Our strong connections as an Association with local community organisations such as Handsworth Wood Residents' Association will further strengthen the potential to build strong and lasting links with the area. We will ensure there are site bookings from one year to the next by schools and others. This will involve the development of strategic plan to grow the use of the Open Air Learning Space Facility; maintenance and repairs will be required from time to time and a small management group from the local plot holders has already been discussed with a number of long standing plot holders.

This facility will be a healthy place to learn that offers opportunities for learning not just about the health benefits of allotmenting and growing food, but also for enhancing understanding about the different communities that make up our multicultural city. In this way, our proposal will promote community cohesion and active citizenship.

Have you considered other sources of funding and whether the project can be used to leverage further funding from elsewhere (please specify funding sources)?

This mini project is part of a bigger scheme for developing the site as a place that offers recreational and educational facilities with associated health benefits and that provides a venue for activities that enhance community cohesion. We fully expect to be able to access further funding from different organisations as part of this bigger scheme. Other funding that we have accessed includes estimated in kind input from Prologis of £10k on garden; £2k from RSA for bees and honey production; £2.5k from LoveBrum for oven.

We would of course be very pleased to accept guidance about other funding sources that we could bid to.

What resources will be required?

We intend to use a contractor for heavier construction tasks and volunteer help from

our stakeholder schools and organisations for others. We would aim to rely on local companies, and to use recycled timber where possible. Our estimated costings are:

Stage 1 Design Proposal:

Basic temporary structures during construction and stakeholder meetings:

Scaffolding rig and used timber, tarpaulin rain screens - Estimated - minor costs £1000

Materials for permanent structure:

Fabricate onsite timber frame (type tbc.) Variable \pm 50% £1500

Footings Variable \pm 20% £250

Waterproofing and covering for roof (Cost varies depending on material) Variable \pm 50% £450

Fittings Budget £1000

Watlings and other on site work L&M Free Null

Associated Costs:

Toilet re-roofing Variable \pm 20% £450

Toilet conversion to reedbed (subject to feasibility study) Estimated £2000

Additional Labour (if not provided for free) Est. 30% of materials £1995

Recommended Budget level: £ 6650 + £ 1995 : £ 8645

Possible Maximum Budget level: £ 7765 + £ 1995 : £ 9760

Further choices of materials and tendering will impact this budget, and it is set out as a guide to investors. Other works such as Knotweed mitigation and removal are critical but will require separate quotation by external contractors, possibly with council input.

Labour is our largest variable - depending on how much of it we can do using allotmenters. This should include time spent operating (small) diggers which will be needed to realise the project. Below is a detailed breakdown of the works:

	£
- Capital for materials & equipment hire	£8645 / £9760
- Running costs	-The Association will undertake this.
- People power volunteers	We have 10 volunteers who each provide 10 hours of time per week over 8 weeks to realise our plan. This equates to £9 600 match funding.
Amount required from LIF £9500	
Have you got any match funding - in cash or in kind? See above	

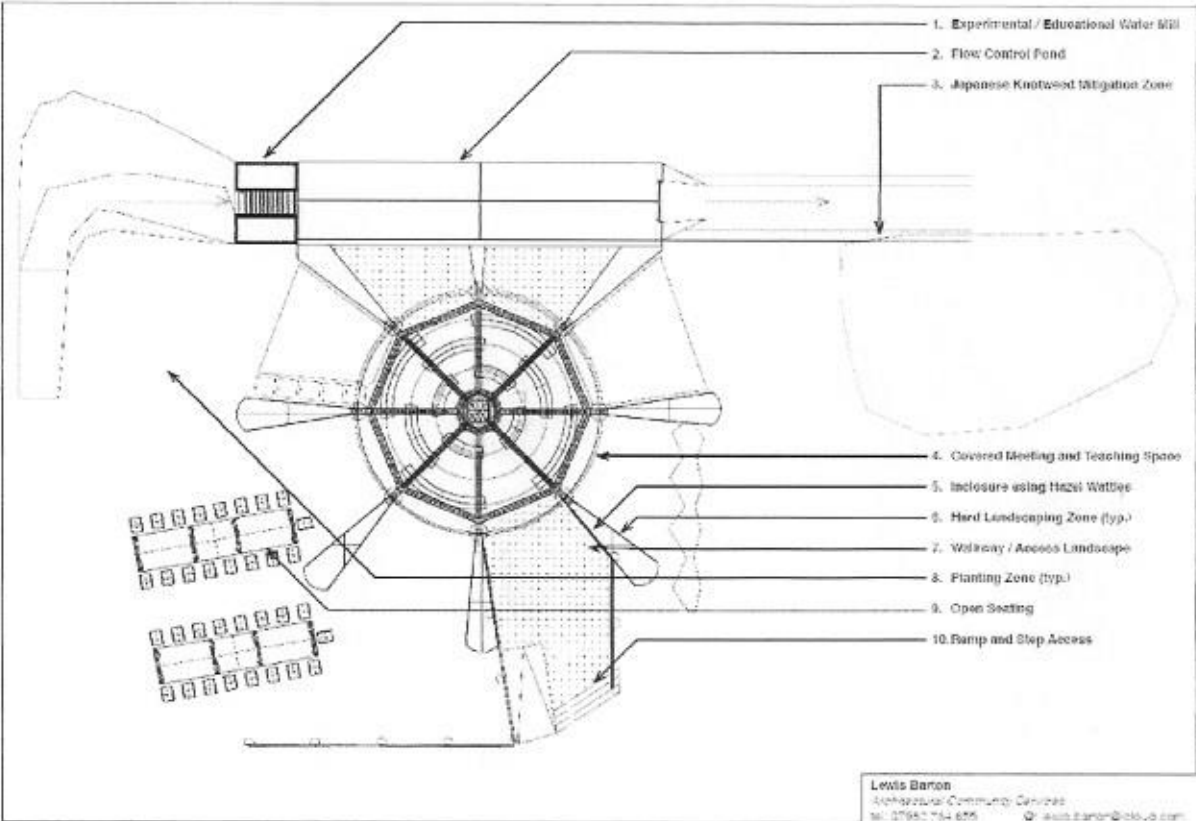
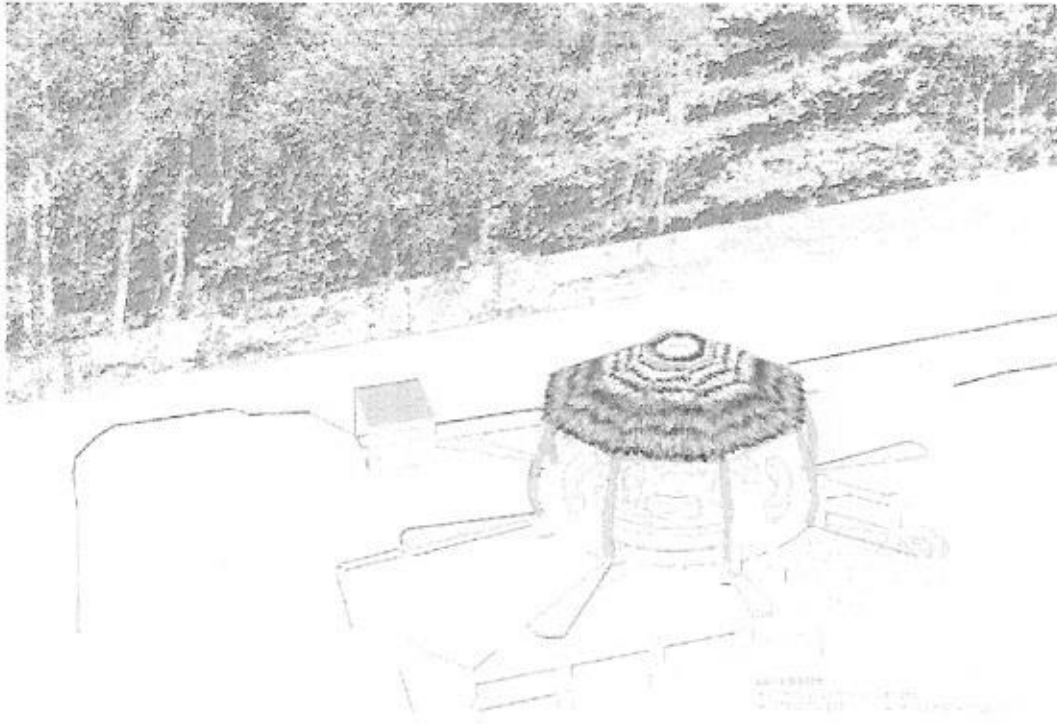
If our bid is successful, we would want the work to start at the beginning of October 2017. ** £4.9K Allocated by Ward Councillors!*

Contact person for proposal

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Lewis Baron
Architectural Community Services
Tel: 07950 714 676 www.lewisbaron.co.uk

Which residents or community groups was the proposal discussed with and when (please give details of any meetings and which councillors attended)?

The proposal has been discussed with Handsworth Wood Residents' Association. The association heard about the Local Innovation Fund quite late on. The bid was not prepared in time for the Ward meeting at which other bids were discussed.

Discussed at

Ward meeting

Date4th July 2017.....

Signatures of all 3 Ward Councillors

Name GURDIAL SINGH ATWAL Signature [Signature] Date 30/8/2017

Name NARINDER KOONER Signature [Signature] Date 30/8/2017

Name Paulette Hamilton Signature P. A. Hamilton Date 29/8/2017

Internal use only

Received: Date

Go to Cabinet Committee – Local Leadership for decision: Date

Approved

Yes	
No	

¹ Knight, S. (2011) *Forest School for All*. London: Sage.

Constable, K. (2014) *The Outdoor Classroom in Practice, Ages 3-7*. London: Routledge