



Press Release dated 26.05.2016

**Mission Possible at Uplands**

## **Allotment Project Wins Funding For Renewable Energy Survey**

Mission Possible at Uplands (MP@U), a project that is seeking to develop a low carbon, sustainable community across the Handsworth area of Birmingham, has won backing from the Urban Community Energy Fund administered by the Centre for Sustainable Energy, to undertake a feasibility and viability study for the generation of energy from solar panels. The project is centred on the Uplands Allotments, the largest allotments in the UK and the project's catalyst from which it plans to create a ripple effect throughout the adjacent community. This funding success comes only two weeks after MP@U won grant support from the Birmingham charity, LoveBrum.

Councillor Lisa Trickett, Birmingham Council Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment, said: "The generation of more sustainable forms of energy is something that organisations of all sizes should explore wherever possible.

"That is why it is great to see a grassroots organisation take a lead in one of our communities in this way. If solar power can be proven at the Uplands Allotments, it will act as a great inspiration to others in the area to look at what they can do to make their part of Birmingham cleaner and greener."

Phil Beardmore of Localise West Midlands will manage the DECC funded project. He says: "We are diversifying the uses of the allotment site to include various environmental and social enterprise facilities. We want to explore what is possible for solar energy generation at Uplands. Generated energy might simply be exported or might be used in the large community building on site, for electric vehicle charging points, for use by new micro businesses based at Uplands, and other uses. Ultimately we want a site and a project that are economically and technically resilient, and which can make a positive economic, social and environmental contribution."

Malcolm Currie of the Uplands Allotments Co-operate Association says: "Some surplus income from energy generation on site will help to support the allotment site, a vital community facility at the heart of an ethnically diverse community that is suffering from budget cuts."

David Middleton, Chairman of the voluntary group that manages MP@U says: "We see the project as a means of stimulating wider interest in and support for renewable and locally generated energy and potentially as a social investment opportunity. Our focus is on delivering real action and we are already achieving that with a variety of activity across the enormous Uplands site."

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