

	Cabinet 11 March 2024
	Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources
	Lead Member – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance Resources & Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Growth & Planning (Councillor Shama Tatler)
Request for Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Allocation for three projects	
Wards Affected:	Preston, Northwick Park, Kingsbury
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. To seek Cabinet approval for use of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding towards three separate projects as detailed in the main body of this report.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves the use of £600k of SCIL for the fit out of Preston Community Library.

- 2.2 Approves the use of up to £3m of SCIL for the completion of the spine road at Northwick Park as part of the One Public Estate development.
- 2.3 Approves the use of £500k of SCIL for the nursery development project at Grove Park Pavilion.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 This report is part of the Council's ongoing commitment to create long lasting positive change to local areas for the benefit of the communities that live there. The use of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy to deliver these projects will benefit both current Brent and future residents as the borough grows and prospers.
- 3.1.2 The projects at Preston Library and Grove Park Nursery help to meet outcomes within the Borough Plan, namely Strategic Priority 3 Thriving Communities to allow the local community to be involved in and lead on activities for their communities. The projects also help to achieve objectives within the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan by providing community facilities for Brent's growing population.
- 3.1.3 The Northwick Park Spine Road project delivers infrastructure that helps to unlock the growth area to deliver further community facilities and homes.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area and helps to deliver vital infrastructure. It can be used to fund a broad range of infrastructure including transport facilities, play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, healthcare, schools, district heating schemes and other community facilities. This flexibility gives local authorities the opportunity to prioritise what vital infrastructure is needed and this is supported by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 3.2.2 This report sets out a request for SCIL investment for three projects that will aid in the delivery of infrastructure needed to support development.

Preston Community Library

- 3.2.3 The Preston Community Library redevelopment has delivered 12 affordable homes and a new community space on the ground floor. This forms part of the Council's New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) that plans to deliver over 1,000 affordable Council homes.
- 3.2.4 The current contract provided the community space as shell and core and requires SCIL investment to enable the delivery of a fully equipped space for a local community group to operate.

- 3.2.5 The Council has worked with Preston Community Library who were based at the site prior to the commencement of the development to operate the new community space provided once complete.
- 3.2.6 Preston Community Library is currently located at a nearby site (Ashley Gardens) on a temporary basis until such time that the new community space is complete. The community space will be a local hub that seeks to provide a range of services in partnership with the voluntary sector. These proposals include a new community library, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, film club, art classes, memory lounge for people suffering with dementia. There will also be opportunities for other voluntary sector organisations to use the new facility.
- 3.2.7 With the 46,000 new homes in Brent expected to be delivered in the Local Plan period of 2019 to 2041 there will be a need for new and enhanced community facilities in and around the growth areas to meet this increase in population. Although the location of the library is Carlton Avenue East / Preston Road and is not a growth area as determined in the Local Plan, it does neighbour the growth areas of Northwick Park and Wembley Park. It also is in close proximity to the Preston Road Town Centre which is a key area to develop as proscribed in the Local Plan.
- 3.2.8 The project meets Policy BS11: Social Infrastructure & Community Facilities through supporting Brent's diverse community and helping to promote social inclusion and cultural wellbeing. The facilities and subsequent activities proposed at Preston Community Library will do this as a place to meet, hire and enjoy. By supporting this project, it will allow the community to operate at its maximum potential as it will be operated by the community, for the community.
- 3.2.9 This project will also assist in meeting policy BHC3: Supporting Brent's Culture and Creative Industries as the facility will offer facilities to hire as well as a venue to showcase cultural events and activities.

Northwick Park Spine Road

- 3.2.10 In 2016 Brent in conjunction with three other major landowners; The London Northwest NHS Healthcare Trust, The University of Westminster and Sovereign Network Group, got together and made a bid for One Public Estate (OPE) funding. The OPE funding provided for master planning, infrastructure planning and development advice. This funding was integral to assist with submitting the various planning applications associated with the delivering the vision for the Northwick Park Masterplan.
- 3.2.11 The One Public Estate Initiative aims to deliver:
- Improved transport connections – construct a new spine road and associated junction improvements on Watford Road to manage the highways impact from the scheme.
 - Increased supply of affordable housing.

- New Student hub including educational buildings/accommodation/sports facilities.
- Enhanced connectivity and place making.
- Reduced running costs and cleaner/greener energy for the hospital.
- Intensification of the use of green assets (playing fields).

3.2.12 Brent received a Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Grant from the GLA for a total of £10m. The funding was awarded to help deliver the new access road and unlock Northwick Park as a strategic growth site. There have been a number of changes to the cost to deliver the project including contract price fluctuation, utility diversions and unforeseen ground conditions since contract award. The £3m SCIL request is crucial to achieving project completion of the new access road, which will be adopted by Brent as the highway authority.

3.2.13 The new Spine Road promotes active and sustainable travel through the provision of a new bus interchange, a combination of new wide footways either side of the carriageway, including a shared use pedestrian/cycle path on the north side of the new Spine Road and a new wide shared use footway on Watford Road. New signalised pedestrian and cycle crossings and zebra crossings are also provided, linking Northwick Park underground, University of Westminster, Northwick Park Hospital, and providing a new link and junction to serve the future planned housing development and development works at the University. The spine road is a Brent owned asset built under a section 278 agreement so will remain the Council's asset to maintain and manage moving forwards.

3.2.14 One of the key targets in the local plan is for Northwick Park's new designation as an intensification area to deliver a significant amount of new housing (up to 1,600 new homes), together with a significant expansion of the University of Westminster Harrow Campus (up to 50,150m² of teaching facilities, sports facilities and ancillary leisure and commercial uses, and student accommodation with up to 800 student bed spaces), small scale commercial units to serve local needs and a replacement nursery.

3.2.15 Phase 1 of the masterplan will deliver 654 homes through a joint venture agreement between Sovereign Network Group and Vistry Partnership. The full masterplan currently is awaiting outline planning permission, which is subject to a section 106 agreement and GLA consent. The Northwick Park Masterplan will contribute ~£16m in CIL payments to the Council over the course of the total project.

3.2.16 The project meets Policy BT4: Forming an access on to a road through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, helping to reduce pressure on the existing highway network. Most importantly, that the network can operate efficiently and safely for all users. This SCIL funding investment will help deliver key enabling infrastructure that will facilitate the safe provision of additional residential (BNWGA1A) for Northwick Park to be developed as a Growth Area.

Grove Park Pavilion

- 3.2.17 The Grove Park Pavilion comprises a two-storey community brick-building of approximately 400 sqm. It is located on the north side of Grove Park, which is situated in a residential area of the Kingsbury ward. The ground and part of the first floor was occupied in connection with a nursery and children's education and has been in community use for over 30 years. Since 2018/19, the premises have been occupied by Live-in Guardians to prevent squatting/anti-social behaviour and the property requires investment to bring back into use.
- 3.2.18 The project proposes to refurbish the existing property to provide a modern, refurbished nursery for local residents. It is anticipated that the refurbished premises will be marketed by the Council for an experienced nursery operator to manage on a lease basis.
- 3.2.19 The project is currently in the early stages of refurbishment plans for the reinstatement of the use as before, and an indicative cost plan has been provided to the Council by an external surveyor. It is estimated the refurbishment costs will be in the region of £500k to bring the property up to a lettable standard. The works will include new floorings, windows, enhanced life safety equipment and age appropriate toilets and welfare facilities.
- 3.2.20 In Brent, the Burnt Oak and Colindale growth area brings together sites along the western edge of the Edgware Road, the A5 corridor, in between Burnt Oak and The Hyde Town Centres. Considering the new housing schemes coming forward in Burnt Oak and Colindale, there will be a need for new community facilities in and around the growth areas to meet this increase in population. Colindale/Burnt Oak is identified in the Mayor's London Plan as an Opportunity Area with potential for 7,000 new homes and 2,000 new jobs by 2041. Since 2019, over 1,400 new homes were completed in Colindale/Burnt Oak. Since the Opportunity Area was designated in 2008, over 5,000 new homes have been completed.
- 3.2.21 The project meets Policy BS11: Social Infrastructure & Community Facilities through supporting Brent's diverse community and helping to promote social inclusion and cultural wellbeing. The facilities proposed at Grove Park will do this as a place to meet, hire and provide essential childcare and education.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 For Preston Community Library, ward members have been kept up to date with progress on the project. Further, the community library is a key stakeholder in working on designs, building layouts and proposed usage of the building. Both parties will continue to be updated should the use of SCIL be approved and the delivery of the library fit out progresses.
- 4.2 For Northwick Park Spine Road, the key stakeholders are London Northwest NHS Healthcare Trust, The University of Westminster and Sovereign Network Group. The group along with the Council meet regularly to update on this project progress.

4.3 For Grove Park Pavilion, ward members will be kept up to date as the project progresses. Also, any potential nursery provider will be a key stakeholder in working on designs, building layouts and proposed usage of the building.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The requested use of SCIL below for the three projects has been supported by Infrastructure Officer Working Group in order to fund the projects:

1. Preston Library: £600,000
2. Northwick Park Spine Road: up to £3,000,000
3. Grove Park Nursery: £500,000

5.2 At the time of drafting this report there is sufficient SCIL available to fund this project. As described above, the projects are seen as appropriate uses of SCIL to meet the requirements of the Local Plan and IDP.

5.3 For Preston Library, the anticipated cost is £867,000 and there is Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding of £267,000 to contribute to the costs of the fit out costs.

5.4 For Northwick Park Spine Road, the projected budget is £13m and there is Housing infrastructure Funding (HIF) of £10m.

5.5 For Grove Park Pavilion, there is currently no additional budget and so the SCIL request is to fund the full costs to refurbish the existing building to create the proposed nursery.

5.6 By using SCIL, there is no need for the Council to use capital borrowing to deliver these projects.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 SCIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It helps them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development. It can be used to fund a broad range of facilities including transport facilities, play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, healthcare, schools, district heating schemes and other community facilities. This flexibility gives local areas the opportunity to choose what infrastructure they need to deliver their relevant plan, supported by the IDP. Brent's IDP identifies the need for more community facilities across the borough with a range of affordable and flexible community spaces which can be hired for a range of uses.

6.2 For Preston Library, by approving the SCIL request, there are no further legal considerations as a result of this report.

6.3 For Northwick Park Spine Road, there are no further legal considerations as a result of this report.

6.4 For Grove Park Pavilion, by approving the SCIL request, the Council will be able to begin the project. This will involve procurement of very low value, low value, and medium value contracts. These will be procured in line with the Procurement Regulations and the Council's Standing Orders and financial and constitutional processes.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 The Council, as a public authority exercising public functions, is subject to a general public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 Equality Act 2010 (EqA). The PSED requires public authorities to have "due regard" to:

- The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the EqA.
- The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This involves having due regard to the need to:
 - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
 - encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and to promote understanding.

7.2 For Preston Library and Northwick Park Spine Road, officers do not consider there is any change in the equalities considerations from those previously reported to Cabinet. For Grove Park Pavilion, further equalities considerations will be put forward when obtaining approval to procure and enter into contracts with designers and contractors.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 For Preston Library and Grove Park Pavilion, the fit-out and refurbishment works will include low-carbon technologies such as air source heat pumps and enhanced building insulation to further reduce heat loss.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 For Preston Library and Grove Park Pavilion, completion of the projects will allow the Council to let these facilities to third party operators on a lease basis.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 The Council will continue to work with local stakeholders to update the local community and Ward Councillors as each project progresses.

Report sign off:

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