

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

EXECUTIVE – 14 JUNE 2004

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

FOR ACTION

NAME OF WARD ALL

**REPORT TITLE :** Cemetery and Mortuary Service and Parks Service Capital Spend Programme 2004/ 2005

Ref: ES-03/04-207/221/173

**1.0 SUMMARY**

1.1 This report makes recommendations to Members detailing the capital spend programme for the Cemetery and Mortuary Service and the Parks Service.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 The Executive agree to utilize the capital spend as follows:

<u>Cemeteries and Mortuary</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>	<u>Amount Of Budget</u>
• Memorial Safety	25%	£34k
• H & S Works	10%	£14k
• DDA works	37%	£50k
• Mortuary Improvements	28%	<u>£36k</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£134k</b>
 <u>Parks</u>		
• Sports	32%	£200k
• Best Value Improvement Plan	41%	£253k
• Repairs and maintenance	27%	<u>£170k</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£623k</b>

2.2 John Billam Capital Receipt - to agree use of the John Billam Capital receipt as set out in paragraph 8.6.7. subject to clearance by the Executive in July 2004 following a review of the Capital Programme for 04/05.

2.3 'Stables Art Gallery' – to agree the use of capital programme funding as set out in paragraph 8.9.4.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 This report provides details of the capital spend programme for the Cemeteries and Mortuary Service and Parks Service for 2004/05. Any on-going maintenance associated with these capital works will be met from service revenue budgets. The total sum of the main programme spend set out in 2.1 and 2.3 was agreed at the Council Tax Meeting in March 2004. The John Billam receipt in para 2.2 relates to decisions in January 2001.

### **4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 introduces an explicit duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises. Regulation 4 makes it a legal requirement for duty holders to have assessed the likely presence of asbestos containing materials and to implement an asbestos management programme. This is to ensure that there is no risk to the health of the employees undertaking the maintenance work or to the occupants of the building.

4.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons in connection with employment and the provisions of goods facilities and services.

4.3 The duty to make reasonable adjustments to improve access to services is already in force and the duty to make adjustments to physical features of premises to improve access by disabled persons comes into force in October 2004.

4.4 Failure to comply with the DDA is unlawful and an aggrieved person may bring an action against the Council in the County Court. The court may order compensation against the local authority if it is satisfied that the local authority has failed to comply with the statutory duty.

### **5.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Non specific.

### **6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The majority of the proposed programme will result in direct improvements to facilities within parks and open spaces and within cemeteries which will result in a considerable enhancement of the environment.

### **7.0 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 A proportion of the spend programme within the Cemetery and Mortuary service is directly related to improving access for people with disabilities, through the installation of loop systems and improving pathways.

7.2 A significant proportion of the capital funding for the Parks Service will be spent on improving sports facilities. This includes improvements to pavilions to allow use by women and people with disabilities, both of whom are target groups within the draft Sports Strategy for Brent. This issue has also been identified as a key recommendation within the draft Brent Playing Pitch Strategy.

- 7.3 Improvements to facilities in Parks, including improvements to pathways and toilets will create better access for people with disabilities.

## **8.0 DETAIL**

- 8.1 At the Council Tax meeting in March 2004, members agreed the 2004/ 05 capital programme for the Cemeteries and Mortuary Service (134k) and the Parks Service (£655K). Subsequently, the Executive allocated £32k to Mapesbury Dell leaving a sum of £623k awaiting allocation in Parks. This report seeks scheme approval for these funds.

### **CEMETERIES AND MORTUARY SERVICE**

#### **8.2 Memorial Safety Works**

- 8.2.1 A ruling by the High Court in respect of another Council has held that local authorities are responsible for ensuring the safety and stability of memorials in the cemeteries they manage and would be liable if someone suffered an injury resulting from the collapse of a memorial. A code of practice for the installation and stabilisation of memorials has been introduced to establish compliance which would provide defence to a claim.
- 8.2.2 A three year programme of memorial safety works has been developed for the cemeteries in compliance with the code of practice, and 04/05 is year two of the programme. This involves the inspection of memorials and their subsequent repair or removal if necessary. Additional capital funding will allow this programme to progress quicker, reducing potential health and safety issues. Alperton cemetery will be completed this summer and Willesden and Wembley old burial grounds will be completed by the end of the year. Inspections at Willesden new cemetery will start in early 2005. Any under spend in any other part of the capital programme for cemeteries will be used to increase the progress of this work (£34k).

#### **8.3 Health and Safety Works**

- 8.3.1 Under investment in cemeteries infrastructure has resulted in reduced maintenance in some parts of the cemeteries, which has in turn resulted in potential health and safety issues. Such issues include poor surfacing in depot yards, need for better shoring systems and fencing that needs replacing (£14k).

#### **8.4 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Works**

- 8.4.1 Both Alperton and Paddington Chapels require improvements to improve services to disabled people. Access needs improving, seating needs to be altered so that people in wheelchairs can sit alongside the rest of the congregation and permanent hearing loop systems need to be installed (£50k).

## 8.5 **Mortuary Improvements**

8.5.1 The current air conditioning system at the mortuary is now 20 years old and is in need of refurbishment to ensure that it is able to maintain the correct level of air changes within the building. In addition, the refrigeration units are now 20 years old and a programme of replacement is needed to ensure an adequate level of refrigeration units can be supplied at all times (£36k).

The mortuary is managed on behalf of Harrow and Brent Council and officers will seek a contribution from Harrow for these capital works. Any resulting under spend of the £36k will be used to progress the memorial safety programme.

## **PARKS SERVICE**

### 8.6 **John Billam – Allocation of Capital Receipt (£500k)**

8.6.1 In January 2001 the Public Services Deciding Committee agreed to dispose of the John Billam sports pavilion to the Gujarati Arya Association (GAA) on a one hundred and twenty five year lease. Under the arrangement the Council maintained full ownership and control of the playing fields and received a capital receipt of approximately £500k. It was also agreed that the Head of Brents Parks Service and Head of Corporate Property Service be instructed to agree final terms in the best interest of the Council.

8.6.2 Since this time the GAA have completed substantial improvements to the pavilion and work is expected to be completed by July 2004. The GAA have paid a £50k deposit as a condition of the agreement to lease, and on completion of the building works and the conversion to a fully repairing lease the outstanding balance will be paid to the Council.

8.6.3 Negotiations with GAA on the terms of the final lease have taken place. This included negotiation on the use by the Council of the new changing facilities that have been built to the South of the existing pavilion. Subject to members approval it has been negotiated that the Council buy back the changing facilities at a cost of £85k. Ownership by the Council would afford total management responsibility and so link responsibility for the changing rooms with that for the pitches. This will ensure a single point of booking and information to the hirer and a single payment for use. In addition, it will allow the Council to make far greater use of the upgraded sports pitches than was previously considered in the draft lease.

8.6.4 The Public Services Deciding Committee, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2001 agreed that 'the net proceeds of sale after disposal costs should be considered for retention by the Parks Service for reinvestment in the John Billam Playing Fields (not part of the sale) and other sports grounds in the Borough which are greatly in need of replacement or improved drainage systems to make them again suitable for playing sport. In addition, consideration will be given to improving facilities at the pavilions at Northwick Park, Roe Green and North Wembley'.

8.6.5 A draft Brent Play Pitch Strategy was produced in January 2004. This strategy has highlighted a number of recommendations to improve the quality of pitch provision in the Borough. It is therefore proposed that part of the John Billam capital receipt is used to help meet the recommendations within the sports pitch strategy. The strategy highlights the need for improving pitch drainage at a number of sites including Vale Farm and King Edward VII Park.

8.6.6 Public consultation has recently been completed on the draft sports strategy for Brent and the final document is due to be considered by the Executive in June 2004. The sports strategy prioritises young people as a key target group and 'increasing sports participation amongst young people' as a key theme. The strategy highlights the need to provide a range of affordable recreation facilities in parks sites for young people. It is therefore proposed that £164k be used to provide a play area and multi-sports area as informal physical recreation facilities for young people.

8.6.7 Therefore, the proposed use of the John Billam capital receipt of £500k is as set out below:

	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
'Buy back' of changing facilities	£85k	17%
Pitch drainage and levelling – John Billam	£110k	22%
Pitch drainage – Vale Farm	£60k	12%
Pitch drainage – King Edward VII Park	£60k	12%
Multi Use Games Area – John Billam	£89k	18%
Play facilities – John Billam	£75k	15%
New paths at John Billam Playing Fields	£17k	3%
Signage at John Billam playing Fields	£4k	1%
	<b>£500k</b>	

## **8.7 Parks – Improvements to Sports Facilities (£200k)**

8.7.1 The draft Sports Playing Pitch Strategy highlights the need to improve the drainage on sports pitches and to make improvements to pavilions so that they can be used by both male and female teams and to ensure that they are DDA compliant. The section above has already outlined the proposed spend on the 'John Billam' capital receipt' to address some of the recommendations within the sports pitch strategy

8.7.2 Paragraph 8.6.6 has already outlined how young people have identified as a target group within the draft Sports Strategy for Brent and the need to provide opportunities for informal sports participation. An application has been submitted to the neighbourhood renewal fund for capital funding for a skateboard park in the New River Park and for a multi-sports area at Harlesden and Brentfield. It is proposed that capital funding be used to provide a multi-use games area (MUGA) at Roundwood Park. Space has been identified for this facility within the existing tennis courts and it is located within a priority area. The sports development team will use the multi-sports areas at both Gibbons Recreation Ground and Roundwood Park for formal sports sessions in addition to them being available for informal use.

8.7.3 DDA Audits have identified necessary improvements to bring main pavilions up to the required standards by October 2004. Asbestos audits are now a legal requirement (see paragraph 8.9.2). It will be necessary to conduct a full audit of all Brent Parks Service managed properties and any Identified work to be carried out. Other identified necessities for the continued use of pavilions ie: plumbing and boiler replacement are planned in this Capital spend.

8.7.4 The detail of how the capital will be allocated in relation to improving sports facilities is provided in Appendix 1.

## **8.8 Parks – Best Value Improvement Plan (£253k)**

8.8.1 The Parks Best Value Improvement Plan identifies key service improvements that need to be implemented in order to raise the quality of parks facilities. These are reflected within the draft Parks Strategy which grades parks into a hierarchy of district parks, local parks, small local parks, sports grounds, pocket parks and play areas, and country parks and nature reserves. Each of the Boroughs parks and open spaces are allocated to one of these categories. Under each category there are set targets for the quality of provision and what facilities should be provided in the parks. This approach ensures resources are allocated in a planned approach.

8.8.2 Due to lack of capital funding for parks in recent years, the Parks Service have only been able to progress with improvements where external funding has been secured. Therefore, it is proposed that a substantial amount of this years capital funding is used to progress the Parks Improvement Plan. Last April an interim inspection of the Sports Service also highlighted issues in relation to service quality in Parks, specifically the need to improve parks furniture and signage.

8.8.3 The draft Parks Strategy also highlights the need to ensure play units are maintained adequately to ensure that the standard and range of equipment is maintained and health and safety issues are addressed.

8.8.4 The detail of how the capital will be allocated in relation to the Best Value Improvement Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

## **8.9 Parks – Repair and Maintenance Works (£170k)**

8.9.1 The underinvestment of capital funding in parks and open spaces has resulted in a considerable amount of areas that have not received an adequate level of maintenance. Consequently, it is proposed that a proportion of the capital budget be used to address this issue, in relation to pathway and fencing repairs. Appendix 1 details the parks where it is proposed to complete these works. These areas have been prioritised in relation to DDA access issues and health and safety issues.

8.9.2 The control of asbestos at work regulations 2002 introduce new requirements from May 2004 regarding the management of Council buildings to prevent exposure to asbestos by employees, contractors and the public. The Act requires that where asbestos is found it is dealt with either by removal or containment. It is likely that some of the planned works, especially in relation to refurbishment of pavilions, may identify issues in relation to asbestos.

- 8.9.3 In March 2004 the Executive agreed to £32k of the capital funding to be used a match funding for a wider programme of improvements at Mapesbury Dell.
- 8.9.4 At the Executive Committee of 8<sup>th</sup> December 2003, it was recommended in relation to the Dollis Hill House report that £50K be allocated from the capital programme 2004/05 for the Stables Art Gallery. £30K will be used for repair and maintenance items and £20K for improved access works in line with the DDA. This work is subject to an agreement with the Brent Arts Council for a fully repairing lease.

## **9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 9.1 Details of documents:  
Public Services Deciding Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2001  
Dollis Hill House & Stables Art Gallery – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2003  
Mapesbury Dell Doorstep Green – Exec. 29<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Sue Harper, Assistant Director (Sport and Leisure), Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 6BZ,  
Telephone: 0208 937 5192

**Richard Saunders**  
**Director of Environment**

**Name : Sue Harper**  
**Title : Assistant Director (Sport and Leisure)**

**Parks Capital Spend****Sports****Sports Equipment**

Goal Posts and Nets	£10k
Tennis Posts and Nets	£5k
Multi games area – Roundwood Park	£80k
Pavilions	
N Wembley Pavilion Boiler	£50k
Northwick Park Pavilion Boiler	£40k
Northwick Park Pavilion – disabled toilet	<u>£15k</u>
<b>Sub– total</b>	<b><u>£200k</u></b>

**BV Improvement Plan**

## Parks Furniture

45 Benches; various sites	£25k
50 Bins; various sites	£20k

## Signage

Abbey Estate	£2k
Willesden Community Gardens	£2k
Mount Pleasant	£2k
Tokyngton/ St Raphael's	£2k
Maybank open space	£4k
Brentfield Park	£4k
One Tree Hill	£6k
Quainton St	£2k
Welsh Harp open space	£2k
Heather Park	£2k
Streatly Road	£2k
Chapter Road	£2k
King Edward VII Park	£4k
St Raphael's open space	£2k
Bramshill Hill	£2k
Fryent Country Park	£4k

## Play Units

Roundwood Park (relocation)	£80k
Barham Park	£27k
Tiverton Green	£9k
One Tree Hill	£9k
Franklyn Road	£10k
Streatly Road	£10k



General Improvements	
Church Lane hard standing	£4k
Brondesbury Villas	£10k
Sherrins Farm	<u>£5k</u>
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b><u>£253k</u></b>

### **R & M Works**

Footpath improvements & repairs	
Northwick Park	£10k
One Tree Hill	£20k
Church Lane	£25k
Tiverton Green	£15k
King Edward VII Park	£6k
General Small Repairs	£10k
Asbestos Removal	
New legislation requirements	£9k
DDA Requirements	
Barham Park	£10k
Roundwood Park	£35k
Fencing	
Vale Farm	£1k
Springfield Play Area	£5k
Maybank Open Space	£3.5k
Cambridge Square	£2.5k
Abbey Est.	£1.5k
Neasden Rec	£2k
Woodcock Park	£4k
Brondesbury Park	£5k
Rainbow Park	£2k
Parkside	£3.5k
<b>Sub-Total =</b>	<b><u>£170k</u></b>

**Total = £623k**