



Cabinet
13th September 2021

**Report from the Strategic Director
of Regeneration and Environment**

Parks Service Capital Funding for Improvement Works

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	1) Parks Improvement Project Update Briefing Note 2) Capital Investment Panel Parks Improvement Proposal Paper
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Kelly Eaton Parks, Policy and Projects Manager Tel: 020 8937 5565 kelly.eaton@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 A proposal for Capital Investment in our Parks Service of £1.43M to allow for essential improvements across a number of parks and allotment sites

2.0 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve Council borrowing of £1.43M to allow the Parks Service to carry out a number of urgent infrastructure improvements that are required in a number of locations across the borough.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Parks Service is seeking to invest in and improve various areas of aging infrastructure across the borough's parks; including pathways and playgrounds. The Parks Service would also seek to install a number of new welcome notice boards with improved maps of each location, wildflower meadow information boards and to make infrastructure improvements to our allotments with new fencing, pathways and new sustainable toilets.
- 3.2 The Parks Service revenue budget has been reduced in the last few years and much of the revenue budget is being spent on continual repairs of wearing infrastructure. Investment is sorely needed to prevent continual maintenance and to allow our parks to have pathways and playgrounds that are safe to use for all who visit.
- 3.3 The Parks service has received many requests for repair and investment from local ward councillors and residents. Those areas, which have received the most correspondence, as well as pose the highest risk to park users of injury and insurance claims are detailed in paragraph 3.4 below.
- 3.4 The investment would allow for the following improvements to be undertaken.

Project	Cost
Parks Pathways replacements (numerous locations)	£239,544
Allotments Pathways, fencing and toilets (numerous locations)	£235,700
Children's Playgrounds – resurfacing and new equipment at Roundwood and Tiverton	£511,000
Biodiversity Education and Welcome Boards across all meadow areas	£280,000
CCTV in all Parks Pavillions	£117,550
Drainage system at Eton Grove Pavillion	£45,000
TOTAL	£1,428,794

Parks Pathways.

3.4.1 There are six main pathways in different parks that are in desperate need of replacement. Some are full of potholes; some are ridged and cracked and some are overgrown and becoming trip hazards. The pathways are in the following parks:

- Leybourne Open Space access path;
- Roe Green desire line pathway from Kingsbury High Road to the walled garden;
- Gladstone Park main path from the station bridge to the centre of the park;
- Neasden Recreation Ground pathway to the reservoir;
- Longstone Avenue entrance pathway; and
- the pathway next to the school at King Edward VII Wembley.

Some of the paths will be replaced with tarmac, others with Breendon gravel, which better supports drainage of rain water and heavy downpours. The total cost of pathway replacement is £239,544.

Allotments improvement works.

3.4.2 There are six allotment sites, which require lengths of new pathways in Breendon gravel to improve accessibility for tenants. The cost of this work is £110,000. There is also boundary fencing works required at a further six sites at a total cost of £68,700.

3.4.3 Officers would also like to install three new waterless toilets in the last three of our allotment sites that have no toilet provision. The toilets are environmentally friendly and allow site users to remain on site for much longer at each visit. The cost of installation of three sites will be £30,000.

3.4.4 There is one further project required in our allotments, which is to create a car parking space within Cecil Road allotment site and improved Public Right Of Way access. Creation of this car parking area will resolve a longstanding issue of a lack of parking for tenants of this site and will cost around £27,000.

Children's Playgrounds.

3.4.5 The safety surfacing is deteriorating in a large number of children's playgrounds in our parks. Funding is sought to replace the safety surfacing rather than carry out patch repairs, which tend to cause additional issues across the surface. The total cost of resurfacing across 20 sites will be £131,000.

3.4.6 In addition, Officers would like to overhaul the play equipment in Roundwood Park, and add in one or two new pieces in Tiverton Playgrounds, something that we have had discussions with over the last year with the local residents association. The expected expenditure on this project is around £380,000.

Meadow area educational boards and new parks welcome boards.

3.4.7 The wildflower meadows have been very successful and we are now looking to install educational information boards to advise visitors of the flowers and wildlife they can expect to find at each location. We are looking to install between one and two information boards per location and further would like to design and create new welcome boards for the main parks with meadows that provide visitors with an overview map of the map detailing the available facilities. The expected cost of design, creation and installation of these boards is £280,000.

CCTV upgrade in Parks Pavilions.

3.4.8 The Council's pavilions are subject to multiple incidences of vandalism, whether it is windows being smashed, graffiti or guttering and roof tiles being damaged deliberately. The pavillions have a very antiquated CCTV system; and Officers are looking to upgrade the system at each location and link in where possible to the council's CCTV room. The cost of providing this at each location is £4,650. There are seven pavillions that Officers would seek to carry out this upgrade to; bringing the cost to £32,550.

3.4.9 In addition, because of a number of specific anti-social behaviour issues at Northwick Park and Gladstone Park; Officers would seek to install one directional post CCTV camera; directly linked to the council's control room at an estimated cost of £85,000, which will include all electrical work and connections with UKPN.

Redevelop the drainage system at Eton Grove Pavillion.

3.4.10 The Parks Service has been unable to hire out Eton Grove Pavilion for cricket bookings for the last two years because of a problem with the clean and foul water drainage systems. When the pavillion was renovated about five years ago, it was not connected to the mains water system and a cesspit was installed. However, there is an issue with the cesspit in that it is filling up with clean water from an unknown source at an excessive rate of flow, meaning that the pavillions cannot be opened or used. As well as this resulting in a loss of amenity to the community, this is creating a loss of income for the Parks Service in a lack of cricket bookings. Multiple investigations into the cause of the issue have failed to come up with a solution, other than completely remove the cess pit and seek a full mains connection for all water sources from the pavillion. The estimated costs of this project are around £60,000,

3.5 The proposed funding will also provide for increased use of the council's parks, as was demonstrated during the pandemic in 2020. Our parks had never been busier and investment is sorely needed at a level that cannot be provided through revenue and annual maintenance alone.

3.6 The service will ensure that spending does not exceed the amount committed to the capital projects in this report.

4.0 Funding Options Considered

4.1 The Parks Service has confirmed that neither strategic CIL nor s106 funding is available for the scope of these improvements. S106 funding is not available at the moment until a bidding process opens in November 2021. Strategic CIL is to be used for the creation of new infrastructure, rather than for the projects highlighted in this report.

4.2 The Parks Service has also worked with Finance to examine all existing Public Realm Capital projects to identify any possible underspends that could be utilised, however enquiries with project leads and Heads of Service clarified that full spend was expected on all projects this financial year.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There will be £1.43 million required to fund the necessary improvements in the parks service area.

5.2 Expenditure is due to start in the current financial year at a number of locations.

- 5.3 The project will be funded through prudential borrowing.
- 5.4 The funding supports the borough plan objective for a cleaner, more considerate Brent, by ensuring that our parks are in the best condition possible for visitors.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 In accordance with paragraph 31 of the Scheme of Transfers and Virements under Standing Order 20(l) of the Constitution:

Where new Capital projects, are identified during the year, the Cabinet may commit new expenditure provided that:

- (a) Spending commitments in future years are not made beyond the resources already committed to the relevant projects/programmes within the Capital Programme;
 - (b) The cost of any new borrowing is affordable and prudent;
 - (c) The new spending meets objectives set out in the Borough Plan.
- 6.2 Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendation, a range of contracts will need to be procured pursuant to delegated powers to undertake proposed works

7.0 Equality Implications

- 7.1 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- 7.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.3 The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.

7.4 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications. The improvements will benefit all visitors to parks.

8.0 Any Other Implications (HR, Property, Environmental Sustainability - where necessary)

8.1 None.

9.0 Proposed Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

9.1 None. Some ward councillors and numerous parks stakeholders have requested the improvements on numerous occasions. The works are considered to be a priority for the Parks Service.

Report sign off:

Alan Lunt

Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment