



**Briefing Note for:  
Capital Programme Board**

**30<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

**Parks Improvement Project Update**

|                            |                                                 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b> | Kelly Eaton, Parks, Policy and Projects Manager |
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**1.0 Introduction**

In January 2021, a paper was brought to Capital Programme Board, seeking funding of just under £1.5M for a range of essential improvements required to a number of the borough's parks.

**2.0 Background**

Minutes from the meeting in January advised that whilst the funding and projects were endorsed, work would be required to seek any existing underspend within projects across the Public Realm that could contribute to the cost of the project and therefore reduce the amount borrowed. An option to investigate whether invest to save principles could also be utilised for the Eton Grove project were to be considered.

**3.0 Overview**

The 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 whilst expired projects are under legal review and are generally restricted to areas where there has been development. Strategic CIL is to be used for the creation of new infrastructure, rather than for the projects highlighted in the previous report and mentioned again in the table at the end of this section.

The service has also worked with finance to examine all existing Public Realm Capital projects to identify any possible underspends that could be utilised. Four projects were identified as requiring further investigation; Air Quality monitoring, Vale Farm Sports Centre, Gladstone Park Tennis Courts and Footways Reconstruction, however enquiries with project leads and Heads of Service clarified that full spend was expected on all projects this financial year.

The board requested that consideration be given to Invest to Save options for the £60K required for Eton Grove. No other projects proposed have any options to bring in revenue as a result of the expenditure.

Having looked at the options for income generation at Eton Grove, at present the only income is from hiring of the cricket table and pavillion during May to September. This

generates an annual estimated income of £5,385. Over a three year period this would equate to £16,155, providing a return of 26% of the value of the loan. There is potential to hire out the pavilion for separate functions; however, given the close proximity to residential properties, evening functions could not be considered as a viable option.

An alternative option would be for further investigation as to whether the pavilion could be leased as a commercial enterprise; such as a café. However, the income would be diverted to property services rather than the parks service, as they manage all commercial enterprises within Parks and the process of marketing and finding a suitable operator could take some time. Alternatively, the pavilion could be hired on a day rate for small events at a rate of £220 per day. Uptake is not high at the moment for this service, so the return to save income is not guaranteed. If there were five events a year, that would equate to £3,300 over a three year period.

For ease of reference, the projects are listed below. The last project related to Eton Grove is the only one which has the potential to facilitate an invest to save borrowing option, but figures provided above do not project a high level of income generation.

There is one further capital project with funding already allocated for Eton Grove. This currently has an underspend of £30k. Half of this amount has just been allocated to some further improvement works, leaving a potential £15K to be used towards the drainage project, potentially reducing the amount required to be borrowed.

The Parks service, therefore recommends a small reduction the amount borrowed for Eton Grove, from £60K to £45K. This would allow for an invest to save return of 35% over a three year period.

| <b>Project</b>                                         | <b>Cost</b>       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Parks Pathways replacements                            | £239,544          |
| Allotments Pathways, fencing and toilets               | £235,700          |
| Children's Playgrounds – resurfacing and new equipment | £511,000          |
| Biodiversity Education and Welcome Boards              | £280,000          |
| CCTV in Parks Pavillions                               | £117,550          |
| Drainage system at Eton Grove Pavillion                | £45,000           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                           | <b>£1,428,794</b> |

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

That the board advise whether Eton Grove drainage system works be included as part of the main borrowing option, or advise whether the reduced amount of £45K for Eton Grove be separately borrowed on an invest to save basis.

If invest to save is not an option, this report requests that the Capital Programme Board confirms that the full amount of £1.43M can be borrowed, to allow the projects detailed in the table to commence this financial year.