

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cabinet</b> 14 November 2022</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report from Corporate Director, Resident Services</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The future of St Raphael's Estate – 2022 Update</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Stonebridge
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	Two Appendix A St Raphael's Estate Improvement spending proposal Appendix B St Raphael's Estate Graphic
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<a href="#">Cabinet Report – Future of St Raphael's Estate</a>
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## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. In June 2022, officers outlined a guideline plan and estimated costs for transforming the St Raphael's Estate through the investment of £30 million. Since then the Council has refined these proposals and the purpose of this report is to formalise how the £30 million will be spent, so that existing residents living on the estate can realise their aspiration for St Raphael's to be a place residents feel safe, a place underpinned by a strong sense of community and place they can be proud to call home.
- 1.2. It should be noted that whilst the £30 million improvement works are part of the wider plans for the estate, specifically the delivery of new council homes, this

report solely focuses on the estate improvements. A further report will be presented on the delivery of new homes.

- 1.3. This report is supported by Appendix A – St Raphael’s Estate Improvement spending proposal and Appendix B – St Raphael’s Estate Graphic.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. That Cabinet note and approve the £30m budget and spending proposal.
- 2.2. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Resident Services in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and Lead Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security, to approve any procurement of services and spend to successfully deliver all improvements outlined in Appendix A, in accordance with the budgets set out in the proposal.

## **3. Delivery to date**

- 3.1. Whilst work to finalise the plan for the £30 million has been ongoing, the Council has ensured that action on the St Raphael’s Estate has continued. The Council recognises that for residents to volunteer their time and their voices to consultation and design plans, they need to see the tangible results delivered. Residents also need to feel the increased presence from the Council on the estate.
- 3.2. The Affordable Housing and Partnerships Service has established the twice weekly drop in sessions for residents and these sessions have been running successfully since June 2022. Brent Housing Management also re-located one of its experienced Housing Officers to the estate. The purpose of this re-location was to give residents a dedicated point of contact for concerns that they can rely on. Since being in the post, this Housing Officer has worked closely to resolve complex housing management cases including longstanding anti-social behaviour on the estate.
- 3.3. A number of events took place in July which assisted in shaping the proposals for the £30 million further. This included a tour for existing St Raphael’s residents to visit examples of community centres and a follow up meeting dedicated to addressing community safety concerns. These two events are highlighted specifically, as the top two priorities for St Raphael’s residents are and have consistently been, community facilities and resident safety.
- 3.4. The estate also saw the opening of the new temporary community building. This building is designed to self-generate electricity due to the exterior being solar panelling, with wider benefits being realised by the neighbouring foodbank who utilise the excess electricity meaning bills are subsidised. This design is particularly notable given the current cost of living crisis and rising energy bills. The Council is now working with residents to ensure the building is utilised to its full potential, this includes supporting them to establish effective governance and building management processes.

- 3.5. The Council has delivered on its promise to work with residents and police to identify crime hotspot areas and have now deployed a portable camera, which links back to the control centre. Additionally, warning notices have been placed across the estate in areas identified as fly tipping hotspots and weekend clearances of rubble on the estate have been carried out by BHM's caretaking service.
- 3.6. An agreement has also been reached regarding the meadow and the area this covers which balances the biodiversity benefits but also reduced the level of concern raised by residents it was creating opportunities for criminals to conceal contraband.
- 3.7. In terms of waste management, BHM is working with waste management consultants MetroSTOR who visited the estate and are in the process of finalising their recommendations for a new waste disposal model designed to be most effective for the St Raphael's estate. The aim is to reduce overflowing and or contaminated waste, increase recycling and reduce the number and types of bins across the estate to make it easier for residents to dispose of their waste. Once the proposal is complete a consultation will be held with residents and delivery of the new bin stores can take between 10-12 weeks. The intention is to deliver the new bin stores this financial year.

#### **4. Community Priorities**

- 4.1. Consultation on how the £30 million should be spent has been extensive and the insight from both the St Raphs Voice resident group and individuals attending the various events has resulted in a clear plan, which is already underway. Appendix A sets out the full plan for the £30 million and all of the commitments listed will be delivered no later than June 2025 (36 months). As promised the Council's internal working group comprising of officers from all service areas required to deliver this plan has been established and is meeting on a three weekly basis to accelerate delivery and monitor progress.
- 4.2. The overall purpose of the £30 million investment is ultimately to address the longstanding concerns of St Raphael's residents. These include; improving guardianship and feelings of ownership of the estate and security, reducing maintenance costs of their homes, improving parking, reducing rat running, improving connectivity to and through the park and the wider area and supporting travel for pedestrians and cyclists. The plan has been categorised into four key areas, connectivity, green spaces and play, infrastructure improvements and a new community hub. Highlights under each of these themes are summarised below:

##### Connectivity-

- 4.3. The Council will invest £3.9m into connecting the estate with surrounding areas by upgrading landscaping and pedestrian routes, making crossing points safer and improving key access points to and from the estate. The intended outcome of these improvements is to tackle residents' feelings of isolation and feeling

forgotten and create a place that feels more connected to surrounding local services such as schools, shops, health facilities.

#### Green Spaces and Play-

- 4.4. The proposed spending plan commits £7m to making outdoor spaces places everyone can enjoy by installing both play and gym equipment, outdoor furniture such as picnic tables and benches and increases the soft landscaping on the estate. Particularly following periods of national lockdown, residents expressed how much they value the green space and want these areas to make them more welcoming and enjoyable to use. The Council will also review the amenity land that borders so the land can be used as an extension of the SUFRA edible garden e.g. by planting fruit trees or bushes. Details will be developed in partnership with residents.

#### Infrastructure Improvements-

- 4.5. Concerns about the estate infrastructure and residents feeling unsafe has been raised at a number of resident meetings, including the community safety meeting which was held following a fatal stabbing on the estate in June 2022.
- 4.6. Residents and Police advised that lighting in some areas across the estate is poor and needs to be improved/enhanced to create a safer environment and to discourage anti-social behaviour. Feedback from female residents and young girls in particular is that they are fearful when moving around the estate at night. The safety of women and girls in the borough is a priority and so the spending proposal includes £2 million towards improving lighting across the estate.
- 4.7. An investment of £3.5 million towards pavement and road resurfacing, plus the introduction of traffic calming measures will seek to improve safety for pedestrians. This is particularly important to residents with young children and those whose mobility is restricted who feel the uneven surfaces limit their ability to move around the estate.
- 4.8. Building on the request to make the estate greener, the plan commits £1.5 million to estate wide cycle storage, something that will benefit residents, particularly those living in blocks of flats who have limited storage for bulky items like bicycles. It is expected the cycling is likely to increase when delivered in conjunction with the traffic calming measures and road resurfacing.

#### A New Community Hub

- 4.9. St Raphael's has a strong sense of community, and high on the list of priorities is a dedicated space for the community to come together. £4.4 million has been committed to deliver a new permanent community space, including community café, affordable workspace and rooms for community usage as well as other improvements to key locations within the estate such as the shops.

### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1. Section 216 of the Planning Act 2008 provides the following: “CIL regulations must require the authority that charges CIL to apply it, or cause it to be applied, to supporting development by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure
- 5.2. Section 216 defines infrastructure as comprising (a) roads and other transport facilities; (b) flood defences; (c) schools and other educational facilities; (d) medical facilities; (e) sporting and recreational facilities, and (f) open spaces.
- 5.3. Accordingly, the application of SCIL funding should be put towards infrastructure that comes within categories listed in (a)-(f) inclusive.
- 5.4. Section 209 of the Planning Act provides that “development” means — (a) anything done by way of or for the purpose of the creation of a new building, or (b) anything done to or in respect of an existing building.”
- 5.5. Therefore, it is necessary to show clearly how the infrastructure being funded with SCIL supports development as defined by section 209.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. The range of initiatives produced to improve connectivity, green spaces and play, infrastructure improvements and the new community hub are expected to support the existing and future residents at the estate and local area. The estate improvement works are expected to cost £30m with a detailed breakdown included in Appendix 1.
- 6.2. A 10% programme contingency has been included due to the current inflationary environment. The Council will utilise SCIL and other contributions from capital receipts and capital reserves to fund the programme of works (subject to development on the estate).

## **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. The Council must, in the making of decisions in exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, pursuant to s149 (1) Equality Act 2010. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.
  - Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, 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;
- 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.

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 November 2018 Cabinet Paper on the St Raph's master planning included an Equalities Analysis (EA) which provided an assessment of the impact of the proposed masterplan on residents. This EA has been reviewed and updated (see Appendix F).

7.4. The judgement to date on the potential impact of the proposal on groups with each protected characteristic, both within and outside the red line master planning area, is based on the intention that housing, transport, environmental and community improvements, and development opportunities will on the whole have a positive impact, however until the options are developed this cannot be analysed. Equality monitoring information will be examined for those living in St Raph's Estate and the needs of groups will be considered throughout the development of the options.

7.5. Further reviews and updates will be carried out in tandem with the development of the masterplan options and the landlord offer. Detailed equality monitoring information will be collected through the Housing Needs Assessment and via equalities monitoring at all public events to which all residents will be invited.

## **8. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

8.1. Ward Members and members of St Raph's Voice (Chair and Vice Chair) have been consulted on the recommendations in this report.

**Report sign off:**

**Peter Gadsdon**  
Corporate Director, Resident Services