

	Cabinet 11 September 2023
	Report from the Corporate Director of Communities & Regeneration
	Lead Cabinet Member – Regeneration, Planning & Growth (Councillor Tatler)
Parks Improvements - Alperton Housing Zone	

Wards Affected:	Alperton, Wembley Central
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
No. of Appendices:	Six Appendix 1: Alperton Parks & Open Spaces Map Appendix 2: Consultation Outcome Appendix 3: One Tree Hill & Mount Pleasant existing playground Appendix 4: One Tree Hill & Mount Pleasant costs breakdown Appendix 5: Engagement Plan Appendix 6: Equality Analysis AHZ Parks Improvements
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) and the use of Public Health funding to design, plan and deliver improvements to One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant Open Spaces.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve £525,466 Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding and £100,000 Public Health funding to design, plan and deliver improvements to One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant Open Spaces.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the engagement plan for proposed improvement works.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 Alperton is the second fastest growing ward in the borough, with its population projected to rise to around 30,000 by 2041. The Council is committed to investing to enhance Alperton's parks and green spaces, to support regeneration and growth, and help meet the growing demand for outdoor recreation and exercise.
- 3.1.2 Investing in Alperton's parks aligns with key priorities in Brent's 2023-2027 Borough Plan, including increasing physical activity participation rates. Upgrading amenities and access will encourage park utilisation, boosting mental and physical wellbeing through accessible spaces for active lifestyles. As Alperton's population grows over the next two decades, thoughtfully enhancing open spaces will allow the borough to maintain an exceptional quality of life for all residents, both current and future.
- 3.1.3 Brent Youth Strategy (2021–2023) - Theme 4 “Places and facilities” highlighted the demand for more local, youth-dedicated spaces. This project would ensure Parks and open spaces are accessible to young people including the provision of SEND friendly play equipment, to enable young people to meet, be themselves, have fun and develop positive relationships.
- 3.1.4 Brent’s Climate and Ecological Strategy (2021–2030) aim is to make Brent one of the greenest boroughs in London, to be enjoyed by humans and all natural life. Parks and open spaces will help reduce carbon dioxide emissions and reduce the effect of extreme heat in the summer.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The growth in the Alperton Growth area, with 1,400 new homes delivered in the past 10 years and at least 6,500 new homes expected by 2040, is resulting in increasing demand on local parks and open spaces and the need for improvements to them. The parks and open spaces in Alperton have long been identified for investment, initially in the 2011 masterplan and again in the Local Plan. There are also proven public health benefits from improving access to parks and open green spaces.
- 3.2.2 Improvements have already been carried out to Alperton Sports Ground, and are scheduled to be delivered to Heather Park, funded by Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) and S106 funds respectively.

- 3.2.3 One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant are yet to secure funding to deliver improvements (see Appendix 3 for One Tree Hill & Mount Pleasant existing playground equipment). There has been no investment in Mount Pleasant Open Space in many years and whilst One Tree Hill received a grant from the English Cricket Board to install cricket nets in 2021, there has been very little other investment in the park, other than through community NCIL applications. The scale of the improvement required in both parks, far exceeds the Parks Service revenue budget.
- 3.2.4 The February 2021 Alperton Open Space consultation demonstrated that One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant public open space are popular and well used. Investment would make the spaces more attractive and increase their resilience to withstand the current high and future growing levels of use. Amongst the 205 responses for One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant, 38% of respondents said their park is poor or very poor. The most common reasons stated were anti-social behaviour, poor walking paths and rubbish. These views are supported by the Parks Service and their engagement with the local residents' associations and park neighbours. Alternative sources of funding such as SCIL are the only way to facilitate the improvements that are necessary in our parks.
- 3.2.5 The proposed improvements to these open spaces are important for improving physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents in the area.
- 3.2.6 A third of Brent's population are physically active for less than 30 minutes a week (Sport England Active Lives Survey). Healthy Places is one of the five priorities in Brent's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which highlights the need to increase access to green space, with improved access to parks for adults and children with disabilities. By improving walking paths in parks, the Council will also address health issues, in particular health problems associated with a lack of exercise and ensure people of all ages will be able to enjoy walking in a natural green environment and the physical and mental health benefits that brings.
- 3.2.7 The Parks Service is supportive of the project to make improvements to the parks mentioned. Having met with local residents and ward councillors the service is aware of the need to invest to improve the quality of those spaces for the benefit of all who use them. It is furthermore hoped that by investing in these parks, more local residents will choose to use them, increasing footfall, dwell time and helping to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- 3.2.8 See Appendix 4 for detail on the proposed improvements, subject to approval and subsequent consultation with local residents and stakeholders.

Objectives

- 3.2.9 The aim is to improve the play experience by creating areas where families and young people can use high quality facilities. Access improvements, new signage, seating, tree planting and public art will benefit local residents and visitors.

- Develop proposals to balance various park users' needs, encourage users to continue using and supporting the parks, and attract new visitors,
- Co-design - engage with local communities when drawing up proposals and to inform decision making.
- Provide good quality open space that contributes to the social, economic and environmental quality of regeneration and the general appeal of Alperton as a good place to live, and contributes to community cohesion in accordance with theme 4 'Nature and Green Space' of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy.
- Improve the quality of paths within parks and open spaces in accordance with theme 4 'Nature and Green Space' of the council's climate and ecological emergency strategy.
- Improve play and sport facilities in parks and open spaces in accordance with theme 4 'Nature and Green Space' of the council's climate and ecological emergency strategy.
- Install bins to reduce litter and encourage recycling.
- Install new benches to encourage visitors to dwell in the park.
- Install new welcome signage.
- Paint existing playground railings.

Options Appraisal

3.2.10 The choice facing the Council is whether to:

1. Do nothing about the poor condition of these parks highlighted by residents and ward members. By not investing in One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant open spaces, the condition of these open spaces will deteriorate amidst the growing population in the area. Parks Service view is anti-social behaviour would continue to take over both spaces.
2. Invest SCIL and public health reserve funding to improve residents' perceptions about One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant Open Spaces and increase the number of residents who actively use these open spaces, reduce anti-social behaviour and create an environment where residents feel safer.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth has been briefed on the improvements plan for One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant open spaces.
- 4.2 Meeting with Ward Members are scheduled for 12th September 2023.
- 4.3 An engagement plan with stakeholders has been attached as appendix 5. Consultation events will be held with residents and local stakeholders, including Ward Members and local schools to inform designs of the open spaces.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 The estimated cost for the improvement works in the parks and the sports ground is £625,466 and includes 10% contingency and 10% future

maintenance cost allowance. This report seeks approval for a budget allocation to this value of £625,466, with an allocation of £525,466 Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) and £100,000 from the public health reserve to fund this spend.

- 5.2 If the actual cost of delivering these works exceeds the proposed budget, then the scope of works will have to be rationalised, or such excess funded from borrowings unless additional SCIL allocation is approved to fund such excess spend.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 Section 216 of the Planning Act 2008 states “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”.
- 6.2 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. SCIL funding can therefore be used towards infrastructure that comes within these categories.
- 6.3 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.”
- 6.4 Section 3.2.1 of this report’s states that “The growth in the Alperton Growth area, with 1,400 new homes delivered in the past 10 years and at least 6,500 new homes expected by 2040, is resulting in increasing demand on local parks and open spaces and the need for improvements to them” SCIL can be applied to improving and investing in open spaces.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising their functions to have ‘due regard’ to the need:
- a. To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity; and
 - c. Foster good relations between those who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not.
- 7.2 This is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The ‘protected characteristics’ are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, 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 Equalities Analysis (Appendix 6). Officers believe that there are no identified adverse implications relating to equality issues. The parks improvements include new playground equipment, upgraded walking paths and other measures which are expected to have potential positive impacts for groups with the protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, and pregnancy and maternity, and a neutral impact on all other protected characteristics.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 Parks and open spaces play a vital role in supporting biodiversity and mitigating climate change and these proposals are aligned with the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy.

8.2 When selecting new trees and plants for these parks, Officers will prioritise trees and plants that will enhance biodiversity, withstand anticipated climate impacts, and provide food and habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

None applicable

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 See Appendix 5 for details.

Report sign off:

Zahur Khan

Corporate Director of Communities and Regeneration