

 Brent	Cabinet 28 July 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
	Lead Member - Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement (Councillor Krupa Sheth)
SCIL funding for Highways Maintenance, Parks, and CCTV Infrastructure	

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
List of Appendices:	Three Appendix 1: List of Footways / carriageways for planned maintenance Appendix 2: List of stump removal locations Appendix 3: List of street lighting columns for replacement
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Chris Whyte Director of Public Realm 020 8937 5342 Chris.Whyte@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report presents a proposal that seeks to use Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding to make investment in important public realm infrastructure to support growth and development in the Borough. This is a focus on Highways, Parks and CCTV installations and improvements to ensure that the growth of the Borough as a consequence of new developments and a growing population can be adequately supported.
- 1.2. The amount of funding being sought is broken down as follows, with further detail set out in the report.

- Highways maintenance:
- Carriageways, footways, street lighting and tree stump removal.
(up to £10,683,000)
- Parks and Playground improvements:
- Footpaths, play equipment.
(up to £730,000)
- CCTV upgrades and extensions:
- Digital expansion, replacement of dated equipment.
(up to £3,120,000)

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree to allocate up to £14,533,000 (please note: this figure has amended from original report to reflect the total amount listed within the financial considerations) of SCIL funding to support much needed infrastructure improvement in relation to highways, parks, and CCTV.

3.0 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1 The following context is relevant to this proposal

Prosperity and Stability in Brent - Critical infrastructure will benefit existing and new residents, businesses, and communities, as well as support local and wider plans to deliver regeneration and growth, for new homes, jobs, and infrastructure.

A Cleaner, Greener Future – Improving parks and the street-scene will facilitate the Borough to become more sustainable and resilient to the climate emergency. Highways and public realm improvements will encourage more walking and cycling and greater use of public transport.

Thriving Communities – The public realm matters greatly to residents and communities, and enhancing their experience out in the public realm will help. By upgrading Public Safety CCTV, this will contribute to the Thriving Communities strategic objective to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour.

A Healthier Brent – enhancing parks and open spaces will encourage people to spend more time outside, with opportunities for accessible physical activities and exercise.

- 3.2 This investment will help to implement the following relevant strategies:

- Brent Local Plan (2019-2041)
- Inclusive Growth Strategy (2019-2040)
- Climate & Ecological Emergency (2021-2030)
- Brent Air Quality Action Plan (2023-2027)
- Flood Risk Management Strategy (2025)
- Long Term Transport Strategy (2015-2035)

- Brent Air Quality Action Plan (2023-2027)
- Green Infrastructure Vision
- Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 A borough-wide and comprehensive Public Realm Improvement Programme is proposed to be funded by SCIL resources to create improvement in the condition of the public realm and the street-scene across every Connects Area within Brent.
- 4.2 This is in response to sustained pressures and demand, and a perceived degradation in its condition due to significant population growth and demographic change in recent years.
- 4.3 In addition, continued austerity has resulted in the loss of some key investment and upgrade workstreams which would have contributed towards improving the visual look and feel of our public realm and local assets.
- 4.4 The availability of SCIL funding provides an opportunity to re-invest in this priority area so a discernible improvement is effected over the medium term.
- 4.5 The proposal provides a menu for an integrated programme of activity to bring about improvements and changes that are considered to be very much needed and which must be coordinated across important Public Realm services, specifically Highways, Parks, and CCTV. The outline of the options for the programme is set out below and is listed by theme.
- 4.6 The costs are for implementation of all priority initiatives over a twelve to 18-month period from agreement of funding.
- 4.7 The Programme can be considered for approval in its entirety, or as a menu of options for agreement in part.

5.0 Rationale

- 5.1 Brent is experiencing significant growth and development. This has taken place over the past few years and is anticipated to continue in the future, as developments in the growth areas and intensification corridors come forward. This growth, along with the additional population, puts increased pressure on existing infrastructure. The purpose of the Community Infrastructure Levy is to enable local authorities to choose what infrastructure is needed to deliver their growth ambitions set out in their Local Plan.
- 5.2 Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area, and they will decide what infrastructure is needed.
- 5.3 The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure if that is necessary to support development.

- 5.4 We are proposing to invest this SCIL in infrastructure which will enhance the borough's attractiveness to investment for new development, and to improve infrastructure for existing and future residents and businesses.

6.0 Current Situation and Proposal.

- 6.1 There is an ambition to improve the public realm infrastructure across the Borough, but particularly in growth areas (or adjacent) where the majority of new development/population growth is, or will, take place. In particular, infrastructure investment in highways (roads and pavements), parks, and additional CCTV is needed to support existing and future development and growth.

Details of this proposed infrastructure investment from SCIL are as follows:

6.2 Streets

Investment to maintain highway assets for carriageways, footways, street lighting and trees.

- Planned Carriageway Maintenance:
- £4,764m (classified routes, growth areas, intensification areas and perimeters)
- Planned Footway Maintenance:
- £4,779m (growth areas, intensification areas and perimeters)
- Lamp Column Replacement:
- £420k (borough wide)

- Tree Stump Removal:
- £720k (borough wide)

Total: £10,683K

6.3 Roads and footways

The condition of our roads and footways is a regular source of complaint from the public. This is the biggest asset owned by the Council, currently valued at £4.5 billion, and includes 505 km of roads; 847 km of pavements; 20,700 road gullies and ninety bridges and structures. It requires regular and sustained investment to ensure we can improve the overall condition of our network and maintain it in a relatively safe condition. It will contribute to the attractiveness of the Borough for investors and people considering moving to or within the Borough.

If agreed, this funding will result in condition improvement to our roads, footways and street lighting columns and the various works will be programmed to commence from August 2025 and be completed within the 2025/26 budget year.

See Appendix 1 for footways and carriageways on the intended programme.

6.4 Tree Maintenance

Tree maintenance is being negatively impacted by a reduced base budget and increasing costs. Increasingly the Council is relying on more expensive reactive work rather than being able to deliver a comprehensive planned maintenance programme. Not having this can create problems in the years ahead as trees grow larger, with branches being more prone to snapping and roots growing, often protruding above the footway surface, causing safety hazards and potential structural damage. There is no dedicated budget for removing tree stumps. If a tree needs to be felled, it is cut down to a stump of approx. 1.2m and then left. We fell approximately 150-200 trees per year so over time the number of stumps builds up across the borough, reducing the ability to plant new trees and giving rise to customer complaints.

Investing in our streets by removing the tree stumps will improve the look and feel of the Borough making it more attractive to investors and existing and future residents in the Borough. Subject to funding approval, a programme to remove circa six hundred tree stumps can commence in September and be completed before the end of March 2026

See Appendix 1 for list of stumps locations.

6.5 Street Lighting

Recent structural testing of all our public highway lamp columns has identified several columns either structurally unsound or potential structural issues due to limitations in testing. We have prioritised and funded column replacement for all category red columns, as these carry the greatest risk of falling with potential for significant injury.

There are a further 264 columns categorised as “at risk” due to limitations in testing meaning we cannot confirm the full structural integrity of the column. To mitigate the potential risk, we are proposing to deliver a further programme of column replacement starting with the longest columns as these carry the greatest risk. The estimated cost of this work is £420k and we can only afford to fund it over three years through existing revenue budgets meaning we remain at risk until the programme is completed. An injection of CIL funding will enable us to complete the works within 12 months.

See Appendix 1 for location of columns to be replaced.

6.6 Parks

The condition of the pathways in many of our parks is poor as they have not received planned maintenance for many years. The asphalt surfaces are riddled with defects, such as potholes and surface cracking. This makes the surface uneven and creates trip hazards, resulting in safety concerns for pedestrians, particularly the more vulnerable pedestrians, such as the elderly,

infirm, wheelchair users, etc. We have received several claims for personal injury from the public who have tripped and fallen on our pathways.

To address the above concerns and to encourage more residents and visitors to make use of our green spaces, it is proposed to deliver a programme of planned maintenance at a cost of £300k to improve several well used pathways within a number of parks across the borough. A condition survey will determine the priorities for repair.

6.7 Playgrounds

It has been identified that the condition of playground equipment in several of our parks is not of the desired standard and does not provide a suitable environment for children to play. Feedback from local residents and parks users has been fundamental in determining the locations selected below. Upgrading the play equipment in the parks listed below will provide a better experience and encourage more residents and visitors to our parks. All new equipment will be accessible to allow for the widest use by all children, including those with SEND requirements.

Gladstone Park (£130K) Roe Green (£170K), Abbey Estate Open Space (£130k)

6.8 Public Safety CCTV

It is proposed to replace older analogue CCTV cameras and also create an increase in the overall number of CCTV cameras in the borough.

Camera replacement - 130 cameras x £8,500 each (estimated average)	£1,705,000
New cameras – 50 x £15,00 each (estimated average)	£750,000
Network expansion to support upgraded and new cameras	£540,000
Project management	£125,000
Total:	£3,120,000

Investment in Public Safety CCTV equipment by Brent Council during the 1990's resulted in the procurement of analogue systems which, while suitable at the time, have become outdated and redundant as digital technology has developed. Over time, the council has invested in a number upgrades to its CCTV network as newer digital technology has emerged however, many of the council's existing analogue cameras still remain and, when compared to the newer digital CCTV, it has become clear that the quality of the older analogue CCTV equipment is noticeably poorer.

In addition to digital cameras now being the global standard for CCTV, many organisations are also opting to purchase Ultra High Definition (UHD) digital cameras as these cameras have a much higher quality than High Definition (HD) digital cameras. UHD cameras are particularly useful for night conditions

and AI monitoring. UHD cameras use four times as much data and so currently only make up part of the council's digital system to ensure that there is enough capacity.

In 2023, the council's CCTV contractor assisted officers in the delivery of a study to establish what would be required to completely replace all remaining council analogue cameras. Given that digital cameras use more data and require greater storage capacity than analogue cameras, the study also explored what would be required in terms of CCTV network and recording / storage upgrades to support the new cameras.

The study determined that there are approximately 130 analogue cameras still in service with a average replacement cost of circa £8,500 each depending on how many cameras would need to be upgraded to ultra-high definition (UHD) digital cameras vs standard high definition (HD) digital cameras.

The quoted cost for additional network upgrades to support the higher data transmission and storage required as well as the replacement of some of the control room equipment to support UHD was between £300,000 and £540,000 with the higher costed option delivering enough capacity to future proof the system for further camera expansion.

While the study allowed for future expansion of cameras to be added to the system, it did not include any costs for additional camera sites as a survey would have been required to determine the exact number, location, and requirements for network transmission back to the Civic Centre. It is estimated, based on existing deployment, that a further fifty cameras will be required for areas in Brent where there is currently little or no coverage. This includes Queensbury, Sudbury, and Alperton as well as other areas across the borough where there is a known absence of cameras.

Based on the current Public Safety CCTV contract schedule of rates, it costs between £10,000 and £15,000 to supply and install a camera on a lamp column. It may cost up to an additional £10,000 if a standalone post is required to support the camera and around £10,000 more if additional network components are required to ensure that the CCTV signal can be transmitted back to the control room. The current preferred approach to installing new cameras is to use a lamp column where possible and so most of the new camera costs would be at the lower end of the cost range.

Assuming an average cost of £15,000 for every new camera site, 50 x additional cameras are likely to cost around £750,000 with an estimated total contract cost increase of £15,000 per annum required for maintenance.

As with any large and complex design and delivery project, a substantial amount of planning, design and delivery work will be needed to deliver the works, and so provision would also need to be made for at least one senior project officer and additional administrative support for the duration of the project period at an estimated cost of £125,000 for 12 months including salary on-costs.

If approved, the proposed upgrades will significantly improve the quality of video images being viewed and recorded - especially at night thereby significantly assisting officers and police to detect, respond to, evidence, and prevent crime.

The additional cameras in areas not currently covered will also significantly improve the safety and security of these areas by ensuring that these areas are regularly monitored and any incidents of crime are reported to the police either as they happen or passed on as evidence.

7.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 7.1 The relevant lead members, and the Leader, have been kept up to date with the proposals. Issues relating to improve the condition of the streets and our parks, and of concerns relating to public safety are frequently raised by residents.
- 7.2 The Lead Member for Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills is aware of, and has shown his support for, the requirement to upgrade and expand Public Safety CCTV

8.0 Financial Considerations

- 8.1 The total estimated costs of the separate elements of this programme are as follows

Highways	£10.683m
Parks	£0.73m
CCTV	£3.12m
Total	£14,533m

- 8.2 As at Q4 2024/25, there is approximately £66m of unallocated SCIL funding, and the programme requires a total of £14,533m. Therefore, there is sufficient funding for this programme.
- 8.3 Investing in the public realm will likely reduce operational costs over time, especially in relation to the reactive repair of our highway assets, parks infrastructure and CCTV network.

9.0 Legal Considerations

- 9.1 CIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is a valuable tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. It can be used to fund a broad range of facilities such as transport facilities, play areas, open spaces, parks, and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, healthcare facilities, academies and free schools, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities. This flexibility gives local areas

the opportunity to choose what infrastructure they need to deliver their relevant plan.

- 9.2 Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area, and they will decide what infrastructure is needed, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Brent's Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes transport facilities.
- 9.3 The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure if that is necessary to support development. It is considered that the proposed works meet the regulations for spending SCIL in accordance with Section 216(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (As amended).

10.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 10.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are - age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 10.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 10.3 The Public Safety CCTV upgrade works are unlikely to have EDI or Health related implications as they contribute to the safety and security of all residents, businesses, and visitors to Brent. A full EDI assessment will however be completed prior to seeking to award the works.

11.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 11.1 The council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and pledged to do all reasonable in the Council's gift to aim for carbon neutrality for 2030 and work with government to achieve the national 2050 target. The Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy also set out an aim for Brent to become one the greenest, most biodiverse urban boroughs by 2030 and has subsequently been supported by the Green Infrastructure Vision and Adaptation and Resilience Plan.
- 11.2 The Highways Management service has an ever-increasing role in supporting different facets of the delivery of the council's environmental sustainability aims. Particularly, in reducing carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions from

activity relating to the service, and in making Brent a greener, more diverse, and climate-resilient borough.

- 11.3 The aim of highways asset management is to have a structured approach to managing assets effectively and to minimise the whole life cost of the asset whilst delivering the required levels of service. Managing assets effectively can include using materials, tools and techniques which seek to reduce whole-life carbon emissions from the outset, through to minimising carbon emissions as part of maintenance and daily operations and finally to removal and renewal.
- 11.4 As it stands, all maintenance is likely to currently have some form of carbon footprint. For example, it is acknowledged that an expansion in CCTV cameras will have an increased energy usage. However, the Council's aim is to minimise ongoing reactive maintenance and move to a model led by planned maintenance. Planned maintenance is by its nature more cost effective and provides a degree of control to operations which persistent reactive maintenance does not provide. It is therefore possible for the council build in longer life cycle for products and seek to reduce overall maintenance activity - thereby reducing associated emissions that arise from this. When implementing these plans, it is incumbent on officers to consider, wherever possible, the most environmentally sustainability option or intervention available.
- 11.5 It is anticipated that the proposed improvements to footways and carriageways may also support an increased uptake of active travel, supporting theme 2 (Sustainable Travel) of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and the aims of the Long-Term Transport Strategy, Air Quality Action Plan and Active Travel Implementation Plan.
- 11.6 Where possible, any new parks pathways will be constructed with a permeable surface or additional drainage to ensure effective water management, particularly in times of heavy downpours to ensure continued use remains possible.
- 11.7 There are opportunities to include climate resilient planting within new playgrounds to provide an alternative opportunity for learning as well as encourage positive connections to nature.

12.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 12.1 N/A.

13.0 Communication Considerations

- 13.1 Advance notification will be sent out to ward councillors three weeks in advance of any highway works commencing. Residents and businesses on the roads where highways works will take place, will be provided with 2 weeks' advance notification.
- 13.2 Advance signing to inform of the works and any required parking suspensions will be installed prior to the works commencing.

- 13.3 Where planned CCTV works, or the placement of cameras is likely to affect or be of concern to local businesses or residents, the service will engage with this affected as standard to inform, assure and address any potential concerns. Where there are privacy concerns, automatically applied digital masking of CCTV images will be used to address these.

Report sign off:

Alice Lester

Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and
Regeneration