



# ***Environmental Budget 2023/2024***

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**Housing Scrutiny Commission: 27 February 2023**

**Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin**

**Lead Director: Chris Burgin, Director of Housing**

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## **Report Author:**

Gurjit Minhas – Head of Service, Housing Division

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines how the Environmental Budget will fund improvements on estates across the city in 2023/2024. This majority of this year schemes have been proposed by ward Cllrs and the overall cost of the schemes proposed is £774,897.
- 11 schemes in the West area of the city, costing £286,647
  - 10 schemes in the East area of the city, costing £219,250
  - 8 schemes the South area of the city, costing, £269,000
- 1.2 The annual budget for Environmental Works is £750,000. The spend proposed exceeds this budget by £24,897 There is also a disparity in that the West and South districts have proposed a greater spend than the East, therefore it is suggested that a further consultation meeting be held with all Cllrs to decide on the final proposals for this year's budget.
- 1.3 There are currently pressures on the HRA Budget for 23/24, this may bring the level of available funding for the Environment Budget to **£200k**. If this happens it is proposed that ward Cllrs are contacted to explain the circumstances to them and to seek their input to prioritise the schemes for 23/24 and other schemes will be held for 24/25.

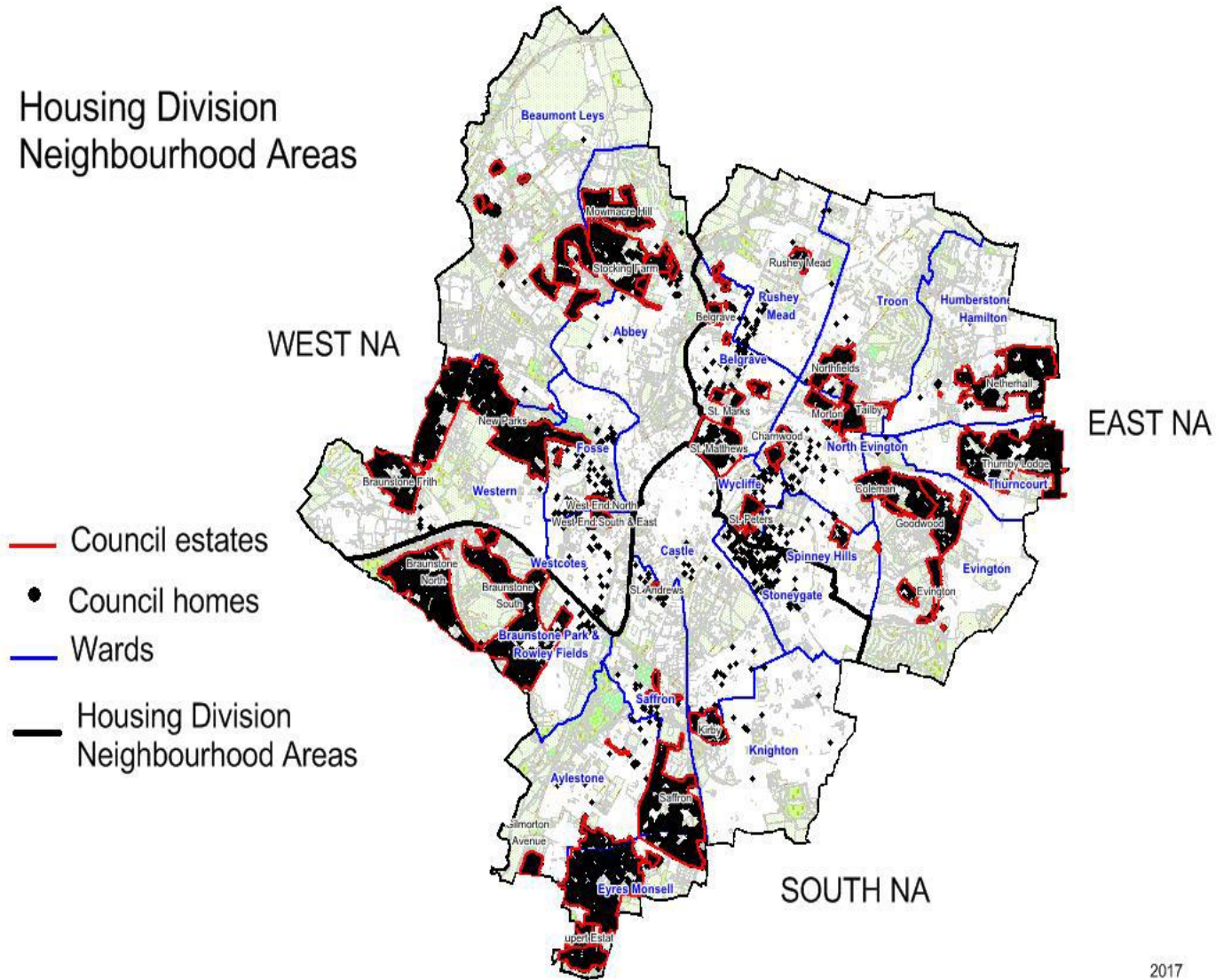
### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Over the years the Environmental Budget has been used to invest in estates, to improve parking, green areas, measures to reduce anti -social behaviour and to generally make the environment safer and improve the quality of life for residents, making them places where people want to live.
- 2.2 Housing staff have carried out local consultation and engagement exercises to identify what people like about their local area and what they would like to see improved. Housing staff are also involved in highlighting improvements based on their local knowledge of issues on estates and key priorities for the service.
- 2.3 Some of the initiatives for this coming year have been highlighted on estate walkabouts, at ward meetings or service requests from tenants. Consultation was carried out with ward Cllrs and opportunities provided to them to put forward proposals, Cllrs have also had overall sight of all the proposals for their district.
- 2.4 Housing staff including the Head of Service and ward Cllrs have been out on estates with the Police and CrASBU. In some areas we have carried out ASB surveys to engage with residents which have also been used to identify improvements on estates.
- 2.5 In line with our commitment to tackle the climate emergency we will ensure wherever we install or refurbish parking bays in 2023/2024, we will install electrical charging points, to encourage and facilitate the use of electric cars. The cost of the charging points is included in the cost of the individual proposals.

### 3. Environmental Budget Schemes:

3.1 The schemes cover the city's three district management housing areas, East, West and South:

Housing Division  
Neighbourhood Areas



**3.2 What we did last year** - See below some of the successful schemes completed from last year's budget:

3.2.1 In New Parks, tenants and Cllr O'Donnell told us they wanted fencing on Aikman Avenue to tackle Anti – Social Behaviour. Please see the photos of work in progress and completion, this scheme cost £ 15,000.



**Before**



**After**



**After**

3.2.2 Work on Donaldson Road has been carried out to prevent major flooding and as you can see it has stood up to recent downpours! This was identified by Cllrs and Highway colleagues on an estate walk and cost £90,000.



**After**

3.2.3 To encourage the use of the local play area at Neston Gardens we have installed railings and gates that can be closed to keep children safe and off the roads. We also improved lighting and have realigned the CCTV cameras to improve safety in the area. This work was identified by Cllr Cutkelvin and the Police Design Out Crime Officer and cost £26,000. These improvements and joint work with CrASBU have helped to reduce ASB in the area.



**After**

### 3.4 This year's proposals:

3.4.1 In the West area of the city the following 11 schemes have been identified at a cost of £286,647:

- **Western Ward:**
  - **Crayburn House** – Replace hoppers on bin chutes - **£55,351** – This was identified by Cllr O Donnell and housing staff on an estate walk
  - **Dupont Gardens** – Continuation of security gate project – Cllrs in support - **£52,850**
  - **Liberty Road** = parking 4 spaces – identified by Tenants Association, Cllr and housing staff on estate walk - **£36,000**
  - **Comet Close** – install bollards to prevent ASB identified by Cllr Waddington - **£3,615**
  
- **Fosse Ward**
  - **Flora Street** – Install metal gates, following tenant request and Cllr Cassidy on an Estate Walk - **£4,411**
  
- **Westcotes Ward**
  - **Westend estate locations** – Wild-flower planting to replace overgrown shrub areas identified by Cllr Russell on patch walk - **£2,500**
  
- **Abbey Ward**
  - **Thurcaston Road** – knee rails, all ward Cllrs supportive - **£9,135**
  - **Mottisford Road** – Clear area, tree stumps, brambles, slab path and grass area – Cllrs are supportive - **£4,995**
  
- **Beaumont Leys Ward:**
  - **Portmore Close** – Remove wood cladding and replace with new UPVC cladding, all ward Cllrs supportive - **£104,000**
  - **Portmore Close** - Paint all internal area, including drying rooms and ceilings, all ward Cllrs supportive - **£4,340**
  - **Portmore Close**- Grounds Maintenance, all ward Cllrs supportive - **£9,450**

3.4.2 In the East Area of the city, the following 10 schemes have been identified, costing: £219,250

- **Belgrave Ward**
  - **Linford, Bath, Bernards and Jackson Street** - Deep clean internal communal areas requested by residents **£650**
  
- **Evington Ward**
  - **Radstone Walk** courtyard development and clearing of shrubbed area identified by Cllr Hunter, Cllr Khan, Cllr Bajaj and housing staff on estate walk **£3,000**

- **Wycliffe Ward and Belgrave Ward**
  - **St Matthews/St Marks** – general estate improvements to shrubbed area, pigeon spikes, bay marking, reallocating recycling bins – identified with Cllr Chamund and housing staff on a patch walk in September 22 - **£15,000**
  - **St Matthews/St Marks** – paint bin rooms and communal areas – Identified by Cllrs following estate walk in October 22 - **£20,000**
  - **St Matthews/St Marks** – CCTV installation to tackle fly tipping and anti-social behaviour. This was identified by the tenants and residents’ association and housing staff - **£25,000**
  - **St Peter’s** - Shopping Precinct Car Park renovation, identified by Cllr Aqbany and Cllr Dawood- **£20,000**
  
- **Thurncourt Ward**
  - **Bowhill Grove** – Painting blocks - **£6,150**
  - **Kirminton Gardens** – Carparking 12 spaces charging points initially identified by Cllr Aldred and Cllr Gee, this proposal is still under discussion - **£120,000**
  
- **North Evington Ward**
  - **Willowbrook Road** – Painting blocks - **£6,150**
  
- **Rushey Mead**
  - **Bath Street** - install fencing - requested by tenants and Cllrs to address anti-social behaviour- **£3,300**

3.4.3 In the South area of the city the following 8 schemes have been identified costing £269,000

- **In all wards for the South Area:**
  - **Estate Landscape team - £135,000** - on a trees and shrubs team to carry out works to tidy the estates and cutback trees not in the current maintenance contract, including Gilmorton. This is a continuation of the project identified by District Manager Nick Griffiths. All ward Cllrs are in support of this initiative
  - **Community Food Growing Pilot - £5,000** - this is part of a city wide initiative extension of last year’s project - supported by Cllr Vi Dempster
  - **Saffron, Braunstone Eryes Monsell** - Bungalow external PIR lighting - **£10,000** - Supported by Cllr Clarke and Cllr Pickering
  
- **Saffron Ward**
  - **Neston Gardens** - ball court, upgrade shelter, pathway to Kingfisher Park – identified with Cllr Cutkelvin and Police Design out Crime Officer - **£45,000**
  
- **Eryes Monsell**
  - **Hillsborough Close, Hebden, Sonning** - Featherstone Road Bins and Bases – Supported by Cllr Pickering and Pantling - **£34,000**
  - **Caversham Road** – Verge hardening, identified by Cllr Pantling - **£15,000**
  
- **Braunstone**
  - **Hockley Farm Road** – Removing planters and replacing with bollards-supportive – identified by Cllr Barton and Friends of Highways and Spinney **£10,000**
  
- **Aylestone Ward**
  - **Gilmorton** – Improvement to flat areas and bike stores identified by, **Cllr Clarke, £15,000**

#### **4. Other Housing Estate Improvement Work**

4.1 The Neighbourhood Improvement Team helps to bring people back into employment, by offering 6 to 12-month work placements. The team works across the city carrying out work such as clearing communal garage sites, edging path and walkways, cutting back overgrown trees, hedges and bushes that can be a hazard in public areas.

4.2 At the request of housing officers, the team will clear and tidy gardens of vulnerable tenants who are unable to do it themselves.

4.3 The Housing Division also contribute over £900,000 towards the estate warden service. Teams work on housing estates across the city clearing rubbish, fly tipping and maintaining the estates to keep them tidy.

4.4 In the East of the city the City Mayor has committed to invest £5m over three years to carry out work to improve the public realm on the St Matthews and St Peters estates. We have employed a dedicated Green Team and estate wardens to maintain both estates.

4.5 We are working closely with the Wycliffe ward Cllrs and the Tenants and Residents Associations on both estates and closely involving them on all stages of the work. In St Matthews we have completed a £1.2m project to transform court yards, improve parking and created safer spaces. The scheme, focusing on Ottawa Road and the corner of Edmonton Road, involved removing old brick garages and bin stores and replacing them with new parking bays, new street lighting and railings. Landscaping in communal areas is also planned to help improve the overall appearance.



**After**



**After**

4.6 On St Peters we have commissioned final drawings that will be used to carry out costings for improvements to the central space and court yards. We have already improved access to courtyards for residents in some of the upper floor blocks. Planning permission has been submitted to demolish garages which will be replaced with improved parking facilities for residents on the estate. We are also bidding for further funding to improve the ball court so that it can be used for recreational purposes by more tenants and residents.



## **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

The total cost of the schemes identified within this report is £775k. The draft HRA Capital Programme for 2023/24, however, includes a sum of only £200k for Communal and Environmental work, therefore, a review is required to revise the list of improvements to fit within the proposed budget of £200k.

Julie Robinson -Accountant

### **5.2 Legal implications**

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation) - 371435

### **5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications**

A number of schemes identified within this report may have carbon emission-related impacts, although these are anticipated to be relatively minor. Impacts should be addressed through applying the council's sustainable procurement guidance, including for lighting, materials and paints, as appropriate and avoiding the loss of trees in work on green spaces, or ensuring they are replaced in line with the council's Trees Strategy. A number of the schemes could also have a positive impact, including through enabling local food growing and providing EV car charging points which will enable lower carbon travel.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

### **5.4 Equalities Implications**

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report outlines how the environmental budget will fund improvements on estates across the City in 2023/2024.

There are no direct equality implications arising from the report, however works that improve security for residents and visitors should lead to positive impacts for people from across a range of protected characteristics, such as the provision of additional parking including disabled parking bays, cutting back of shrubs and trees and tackling anti-social behaviour.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, 454 4175