



Environmental Budget 2023/2024

Housing Scrutiny Commission 12 March 2024

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin, Director of Housing

2.2 The original proposals for 2023/2024 were supported by all ward Cllrs and came to £775k. The tables below indicate if there was specific Cllr involvement in identifying the schemes and which schemes were placed on hold.

2.3 In the **West District** the following 11 schemes were identified at a cost of £286,647:

Ward	Improvement	Cllr Involvement	Cost	Complete/funding source
Western				
	Burns flats improvements	Cllr O'Donnell	£55,351	On hold
	Dupont Gardens – security gates		£52,850	On hold
	Liberty Road – 4 parking spaces		£36,000	On hold
	Comet Close - bollards	Cllr Waddington	£3,615	On hold
Fosse				
	Flora Street – metal gates	Cllr Cassidy	£4,411	Completed
Westcotes				
	Wildflower planting	Cllr Russell	£2,500	Completed
Abbey				
	Thurcaston Road – knee rails		£9,135	On hold
	Mottisford Road – clear tree stumps		£4,995	Completed
B' Leys				
	Portmore Close - cladding		£104,000	On hold/Capital budget?
	Portmore Close – paint internal area		£4,340	On hold
	Portmore Close - grounds maintenance		£9,450	Completed

2.4 In the **East District**, the following 10 schemes were identified, costing: £219,250

Ward	Improvement	Cllr Involvement	Cost	Complete/funding source
Belgrave				
	Linford, Bath, Bernards and Jackson Street – deep clean internal areas		£650	Completed using the District Budget
Evington				
	Radstone Walk - clearing shrub areas		£3,000	Completed
Wycliffe Ward & Belgrave Ward				
	St Marks/ St Matthews - estate improvements to shrubbed areas and relocating recycling bins	Cllr Chamund	£15,000	On hold

	Paint bin rooms and communal areas		£20,000	On hold
	CCTV to tackle fly tipping and ASB		£25,000	On hold
	St Peters - Shopping precinct car park renovation	Cllr Aqbany/ Cllr Dawood	£20,000	Highways funding being sourced
Thurncourt Ward				
	Bowhill Grove - Painting		£6,150	On hold
	Kirmington Gardens - parking	Cllr Gee	£120,000	Not required
North Evington				
	Willowbrook Road – painting blocks		£6,150	On hold
Rushey Mead				
	Bath Street – install fencing to tackle ASB		£3,300	On hold

2.5 In the **South District** the following 8 schemes have been identified costing £269,000

Ward	Improvement	Cllr Involvement	Cost	Complete/funding source
All south				
	Estate landscape team		£135,000	Part - completed
	Meadow Gardens - Community food growing project	Cllr Dempster	£5,000	Completed
Saffron Braunstone & Eyres Monsell	Bungalow lighting	Cllr Clarke/ Cllr Pickering	£10,000	On hold
Saffron				
	Neston Gardens – Ball Court / Kingfisher Park	Cllr Cutkelvin	£45,000	On hold
Eyres Monsell				
	Featherstone Road - bins and bases	Cllr Pickering/Cllr Pantling	£34,000	On hold
	Caversham Road – verge hardening	Cllr Pantling	£15,000	On hold
Braunstone				
	Hockley Farm Road – Removing planters and replacing with bollards	Cllr Barton	£10,000	Completed
Aylestone				
	Gilmorton – Improvements to flat areas and bike stores	Cllr Clarke	£15,000	On hold

2.6 To prioritise where the £200k was spent in 2023/2024 the proposals were rated in relation to impact on the cost of living, environmental impacts and impact on crime and disorder and several other factors. Further consultation was also undertaken with ward Cllrs, including face to face meetings and as a result, it was agreed that the following proposals would be taken forward costing £175k:

District/Ward	Project	Cost
Fosse Ward	Flora Street - Install metal gates	£4,411
Westcotes Ward	Wildflower planting	£2,500
Abbey	Mottisford - clear brambles and grass	£4,995
Beaumont Leys	Portmore Close - Grounds maintenance	£9,450
East		
Evington	Radstone Walk – Clear Shrub area, planting	£3,000
South		
All Wards	Landscape Team	£135,000
All Wards	Community Food Growing Project	£5,000
Braunstone	Hockley Farm Road – Remove planters and replace.	£10,000

2.7 I am pleased to report that most of the above work has been completed, however the landscape team could not retain its staffing levels, so there has been some underspend in this area.



2.8 Above are the six new planters that have been installed on Hockley Farm Road & Wyatt Close to replace the old wooden planters that were beyond repair and were slowly disintegrating. A local community group “The Friends of Highway Spinney” will be planting new plants in the planters and maintaining them throughout the seasons. The Housing Officer has been liaising closely with the group to ensure the location of the planters were suitable.

2.9 Some of the underspend from last year was used for security measures to deal with ASB issues in the West district.

2.10 It was originally thought that the projects put on hold would be either funded through this coming year's budget or alternative funding sourced. In some areas alternative funding has been sourced for example for the St Peter's shopping precinct carpark.

2.11 As this year's budget as remained at **£200k**, not all the hold projects can be progressed, and further consultation is required to determine where the funding should be directed. Many of the on-hold projects will have to be delayed until 2025, subject to funding agreed for the Environmental Budget going forward.

3 Consultation Status 2024/2025 Funding

3.1 Currently the District Managers are just beginning consultation to see if there are new proposals or priorities.

3.2 In the East we have a high number of enquires relating to cleaning and weed spraying, so the funding could be considered to address these issues.

3.3 In the West, Cllr Dempster, Cllr O'Neill and Cllr Cole have identified improvement work for the Burns flats on Aikman Road. Other Cllrs in the district still need to be consulted about their wards.

3.4 The South has identified some initial ideas for Meadow Gardens for food growing and footpath proposals costed at £19,000 and widening paths at the back of bungalows to accommodate mobility scooters costed at £20,000.

3.5 There may also be an opportunity for a joint project with PA Housing who have stock in some of our housing areas, which could potentially be jointly funded, this is currently being explored.

3.6 The environmental budget is only one part of the investment in our estates. We have the Public Realm Work project that has invested over £2m now in St Matthews and St Peter's estates. The estate warden service is funded to keep our estates clean and tidy and remove fly tipping. A grounds maintenance service is funded by the Housing Revenue Account, so that all the green areas are maintained and cut back. This investment and resources in housing estates helps to make them safer and better places for our tenants to live in.

4. Recommendations:

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Housing Scrutiny Commission note the improvements implemented as highlighted in section 2.6. and to provide any feedback on preferred priorities for the coming year.
- 4.2 Once consultation with residents and ward Cllrs is complete, to receive a further report on the proposals to be taken forward this year and wider investment in council estates.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The HRA Capital Programme for 2023/24 includes a sum of £200k for Communal and Environmental work. The allocation of £135k for the landscape team in 2023/24 is unlikely to be spent in this financial year and if slippage is approved would release funds for new proposals.

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

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 are focused on improving council estates to make them safer and better places for people to live in. should lead to positive impacts for people from across a range of protected characteristics, such as the provision cutting back of shrubs and trees and tackling anti-social behaviour. It is important that any consultation is accessible.

Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, 454 4175