



Environmental Budget & Public Realm Work 2024/2025

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 11 July 2024

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin, Director of Housing

Report Author:

Gurjit Minhas – Head of Service, Housing Division

1. Summary

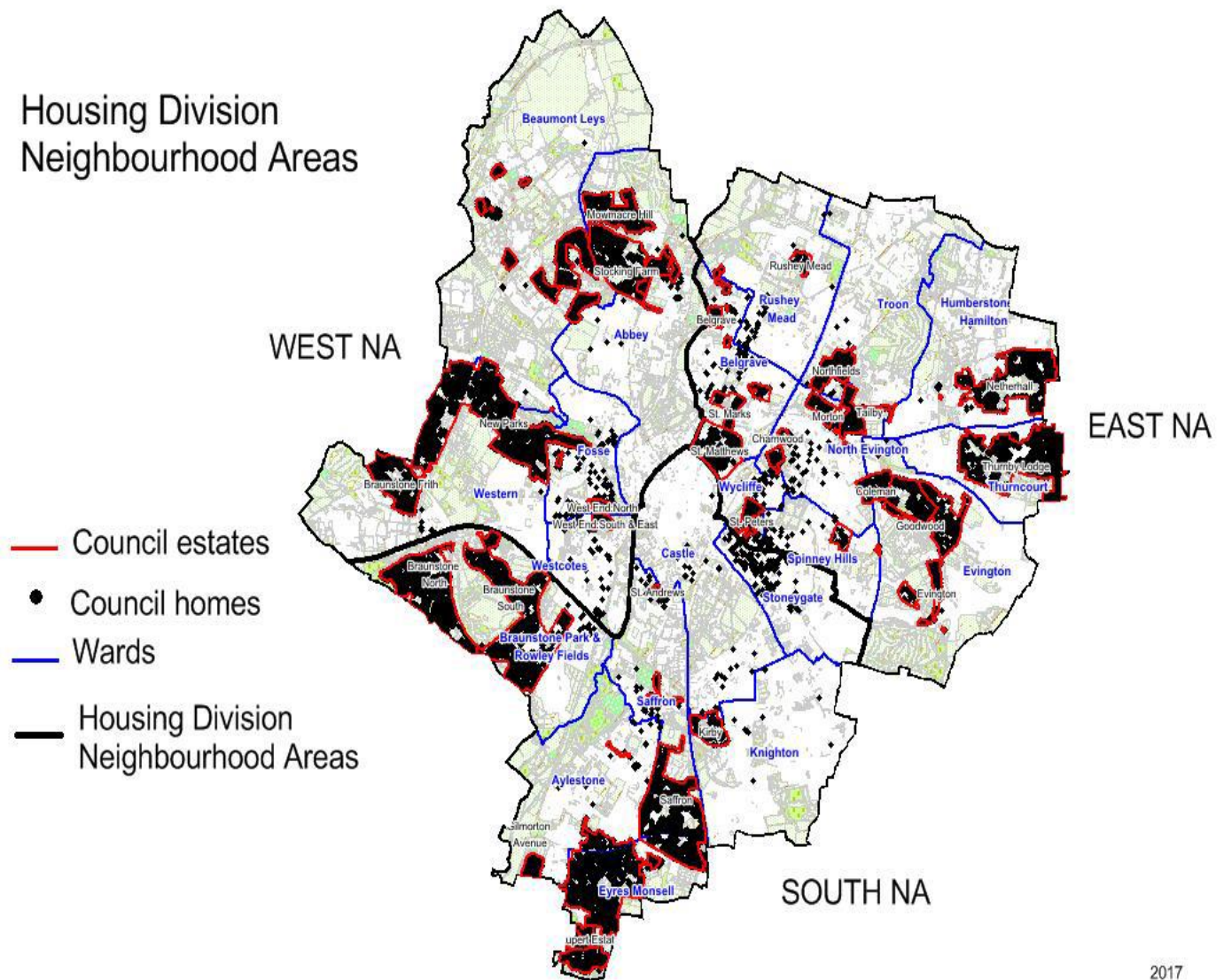
- 1.1 This report outlines how the Environmental Budget and other investment will fund improvements on estates across the city in 2024/2025. The environmental budget schemes that have been proposed for this year have been suggested by tenants and local ward Cllrs at the overall cost of £200k.
- 1.2 The annual budget for Environmental Works is usually set at £750k. However due to pressures on the HRA Budget the level of funding was set at **£200k** last year and remains at the same level for this coming year 24/25. This equates to £66k for each housing district.

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.

3. Environmental Budget Schemes:

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



3.2 What we did last year - Below some of the successful schemes completed from last year's £200k budget:

3.2.1 Flora Street we installed metal gates as suggested by local tenants and Cllr Cassidy in Fosse Ward:



3.2. 2 Additional green teamwork across the city



3.2.3 As there was some underspend due to the Green Team not being fully staffed, the budget has been reprofiled to improve the Burn's flats in New Parks, investing in the bin and recycling areas, improving bin chutes and painting inside blocks. Much of this work has been identified by local tenants and ward Cllrs, Cllr O'Neil, Cllr Dempster and Cllr Cole who are very supportive.



3.3 This year's proposals:

3.3.1 Consultation in the West

The District Manager, Mandy Smith wrote to all ward Cllrs in the West, in February 2024 asking for suggestions. At that time Cllr Waddington came forward with a couple of proposals. Due to limited feedback housing staff suggested proposals identified on estate inspections.

Mandy collated all the proposals and consulted with all the District Cllrs again in April 2024, the feedback received was from Cllr Westley, Cllr Bhatia and Cllr Orton all highlighting that Beaumont Leys ward should get an equal share of the funding. Cllrs were also invited on patch walks. The West District proposals are listed below:

- **Western Ward:**
 - **Dupont Gardens** – Continuation of security gate project, identified by Leicester Safer Partnership 4 years ago, Cllrs have previous supported - **£43,330**
 - **Liberty Road** = parking 4 spaces – identified by Tenants Association and housing staff on estate walk - **£36,000**

- **Fosse Ward**
 - **Comet Close** – install bollards to prevent ASB identified by Cllr Waddington - **£4,245**
 - **Tudor Close** – Metal mesh fencing identified by resident and Cllr Waddington - cost - **£7,307**

- **Abbey Ward**
 - **Kinley Road** – Paint all metal railings - identified by housing staff on estate inspection - **£23,668**
 - **Thurcaston Road** – knee rails identified by housing staff on estate inspection, - **£9,135**

- **Beaumont Leys Ward:**
 - **Portmore Close** - Paint all internal area, including drying rooms and ceilings, all ward Cllrs supportive - **£4,340**
 - **Gresley Close** – Bins Stores identified by housing staff on estate inspection all ward Cllrs supportive - **£20,146**
 - **Oransay Road** - – Bins Stores identified by housing staff on estate inspection all ward Cllrs supportive - **£30,176**
 - **Paterson Close** – install bike rack identified by housing staff on estate inspection all ward Cllrs supportive - **£565**
 - **Amadis Road** – remove shrubs and level identified by housing staff on estate inspection all ward Cllrs supportive - **£1,550**

- **Westcotes Ward**
 - **Andrews Close & Norfolk Walk** – Removing moss from walls identified by housing staff on estate inspection - **£4,916**

3.3.2 Consultation in the East

The District Manager, Kirsty Jacques wrote to all ward Cllrs in the East, in February 2024 advising the **£66k** could be used for weed spraying, additional cleaning and low level ground maintenance across the district. This suggestion was based on the high number of enquires raised by tenants and Cllrs about these types of issues. Kirsty also asked for Cllrs for their suggestions. Cllr Bonham, Cllr Joel (Humberstone Ward), Cllr Haq (Evington Ward), and Cllr Dave (Rushey Mead Ward) all responded to advise they were supportive of Kirsty's proposal. Patch walks with Cllrs have also taken place and no further proposals were put forward by ward Cllrs in the East.

- **All of East District**
 - Weed spraying, increased cleaning of communal areas and low level grounds maintenance - **£66,000**

3.3.3 Consultation in the South

The District Manager, Paul Lewis wrote to all ward Cllrs in the South, in March 2024, and has been on patch walks and has met with Cllr Cassidy and Cllr Cutkelvin (Saffron Ward) face to face to gather feedback on proposals. Cllr Kitterick (Castle Ward), Cllr Whittle (Knighton Ward), Cllr Halford (Braunstone and Rowley Fields ward) and Cllr Porter (Aylestone Ward) all responded with feedback. The following proposals have been put forward this year.

- **In Saffron, Braunstone and Eyres Monsell:**
 - **Saffron, Braunstone Eyres Monsell** - Bungalow external PIR lighting - **£10,000** - Supported by Cllr Clarke and Cllr Pickering
- **Saffron Ward**
 - **Meadow Gardens** - Community Growing Project - **£18,874** - this is part of a city wide initiative extension of last year's project - supported by ward Cllrs
 - **Meadow Gardens** – Communal path widening for mobility scooters and raised planters - **£19,481** – supported by ward Cllrs
- **Braunstone and Rowley Fields**
 - **Wyatt Close** - Clear path to Highway Spinney and trim trees, proposed by Cllr Halford
- **Aylestone Ward**
 - **Hopyard Close** – Additional parking for residents proposed by Cllr Porter
- **Castle Ward**
 - Lancaster Road – replacing walls in this area proposed by Cllr Kitterick, a joint programme proposal for Housing, Transport and Conservation

4. Prioritisation

As in the previous year to prioritise the proposals we have put them through the impact assessment table below and the suggestion is that we progress those with a score of 3 or higher to keep us within the £200k budget.

4.1 Prioritisation

District/ Ward	Project	Cost	Support from Ward Cllr	Need for investment	Impact on Crime & Disorder	Climate Change	Cost of living/ Housing Crisis	Staffing	Priority - Score
West									
Western	Dupont Gardens – replacing security gates	£43,330	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Low	2
Western	Liberty Road, parking 4 spaces	£36,000	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	0
Fosse Ward	Comet Close – Bollards	£4,245	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	3
Fosse Ward	Tudor Close -Metal Mesh Fence	£7,307	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	3
Abbey	Kinley Road paint rails	£23,688	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	0
Abbey	Thurcaston Road	£9,135	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	0
Beaumont Leys	Portmore Close – Paint internal areas	£4,340	High	High	Low	Low	High	Low	3
Beaumont Leys	Greasley Close - Bins Stores	£20,146	High	High	High	High	Low	Low	4
Beaumont Leys	Oronsay Close – Bin Stores	£30,176	High	High	High	High	Low	Low	4
	Paterson Close – bike rack	£565	High	Low	High	High	High	Low	4
	Armadis Road – tidy shrubs	£1,550	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	2
Westcotes Ward	Andrew Close Remove Moss	£4,916	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	1

4.1 Prioritisation

District/ Ward	Project	Cost	Support from Ward Cllr	Need for investment	Impact on Crime & Disorder	Climate Change	Cost of living/ Housing Crisis	Staffing	Priority - Score
East									
All East Wards	Weed Spraying/Low level Maintenance/ Increased cleaning	£66,000	High	High	High	Low	High	High	5
South									
Eyres Monsell/ Braunstone /Saffron	Bungalow lighting for 3 wards	£10,000	High	High	High	Low	Low	Low	3
Saffron Ward	Meadow Gardens – Food growing	£18,874	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	4
Saffron Ward	Meadow Gardens – Path widening	£19,481	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	4
Braunstone / Rowley Fields	Wyatt Close – Clear path to spinney	TBC	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	2
Aylestone Ward	Hopyard Close – Additional parking	TBC	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	1
Castle Ward	Lancaster Road – replace wall	TBC	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	1

4.2 Based on the scoring of 3 and above the following proposals are to be taken forward this year:

West District:

- **Fosse Ward**
 - **Comet Close** – install bollards to prevent ASB identified by Cllr Waddington - **£4,245**
 - **Tudor Close** – Metal mesh fencing identified by resident and Cllr Waddington - cost - **£7,307**

- **Beaumont Leys Ward**
 - **Portmore Close** - Paint all internal area, including drying rooms and ceilings, all ward Cllrs supportive - **£4,340**
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 - **Paterson Close** – install bike rack identified by housing staff on estate inspection all ward Cllrs supportive - **£565**

Total = £66,779

East District

- **All Wards in the East**
 - Weed spraying, increased cleaning of communal areas and low level grounds maintenance – Total **£66,000**

South District

- **In Saffron, Braunstone and Eyres Monsell:**
 - **Saffron, Braunstone Eyres Monsell** - Bungalow external PIR lighting - **£10,000** - Supported by Cllr Clarke and Cllr Pickering

- **Saffron Ward**
 - **Meadow Gardens** - Community Growing Project - **£18,874** - this is part of a city wide initiative extension of last year's project - supported by ward Cllrs
 - **Meadow Gardens** – Communal path widening for mobility scooters and raised planters – supported by ward Cllrs **£19,481**

Total – £48,355

4.3 This comes to a total of **£181,134**. There is an underspend of **£18,886** in the South and it has been agreed that this will be used to fund additional high priority work identified in the south district throughout the year.

5. Other Housing Estate Improvement Work

- 5.1 The Neighbourhood Improvement Team helps to bring people back into employment, by offering 6 to 12-month work placements. The housing division invests **£235k** to provide this opportunity to 10, Neighbourhood Improvement Officers. 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. At the request of housing officers, the team will clear and tidy gardens of vulnerable tenants who are unable to do it themselves.
- 5.2 The Housing Division contribute over **£1,01m** 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.
- 5.3 The Housing Division contribute **£1,16m** to the grounds maintenance service to look after housing areas across the city, this involves mowing all the grass on housing land, cutting back shrubs and maintaining greenery.
- 5.4 Cllr Cutkelvin has been involved in identifying parks on or near council housing estates in Saffron, that need improving so residents have access to good quality green space. Residents are leading these projects and are involved in planting and maintaining the park on a regular basis. A project is currently underway for Tick Tock Park which will be funded through the transfer back of ward funding which has previously been used for HRA environmental work.

6. Public Realm Works Project

6.1 The St Matthews and St Peters Public Realm Works Project was set up in 2020 following a commitment by the City Mayor to invest £5m to improve both estates. Extensive consultation with residents has been carried out throughout the life of the project. There has also been ongoing involvement of ward councillor's and tenant's associations to help shape improvements on both estates.

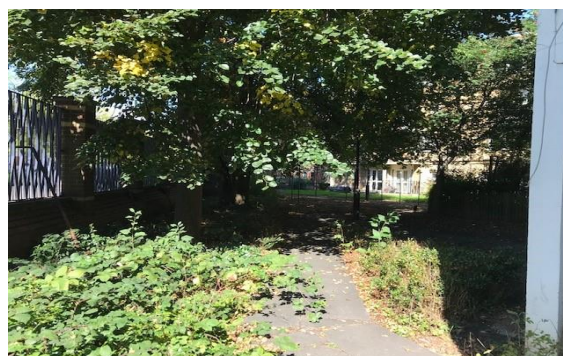
6.2 In St Matthews we have completed a **£1.2m** project to transform court yards, improve parking and create safer spaces. The scheme, focusing on Ottawa Road and the corner of Edmonton Road, involved removing old brick garages and bin stores and replacing them with new parking bays, new street lighting and railings. Landscaping in communal areas has taken place to improve the overall appearance of the area.

Before



After

Before



After



Feedback from one resident in Ottawa Road ***“Thank you for giving me a garden I can enjoy”***

6.3 We have also employed additional green and estate warden teams on both estates to maintain and keep the vegetation cut back and the estates clean and tidy. The additional resource in this area was for the life of the project, which is now coming to an end in March 2024. The work will now be picked up by the ground’s maintenance and estate warden teams that have service level agreements with Housing Service across the city. We will have spent an additional **£742k** on estate maintenance work over the 3 years. This work has been well received by residents and made a substantial difference to the appearance of the estates.

Before



After



6.4 Garage Demolition

On the St Peters estate we have introduced resident only parking and are demolishing garages on Jupiter and Pluto Close to create more parking, including more accessible parking for residents with disabilities. This work is being carried out now and will be completed June 2024 and cost **£330k**. We have also put in an additional bid for funding for **£200k** to renew the Atlas Close ball court area for improvement works.

Feedback from one resident with disabilities in St Peters “*car park space needed, it’s impossible to find parking nearby*”.

6.5 Due to the unexpected cost of the District Heating Project, **£1.4m** has been transferred to support the cost of installing meters from the Public Realm Work Budget on the St Peters and St Matthews estates.

6.6 So far out of the £5m budget we have allocated **£3.98m** and have **£1.025m** remaining which has led us to reconsider some of the remaining options. From further consultation with the ward Cllrs, Cllr Aqbany and Cllr Dawood and the Tenants and Residents Association Chairs, Jean Williams from St Matthews and Shaukat Seedat from St Peters, the following has been agreed.

- Demolition of Vostock Garages to create more residential and managed parking on St Peters estate.
- Use the remainder of the funding for the continuation of the additional Green and Estate Warden Team for St Peters and St Matthews for the next couple of years.

6.7 The above proposals are in line with the consultation feedback we have had previously from residents. St Peter’s residents have in the majority supported safer and more managed parking and we have had really positive feedback from residents on both estates about the estate warden and grounds maintenance work.

6.8 It has also been agreed with the ward Cllrs we will promote the improvement work carried out on both estates and showcase this at the office’s of the Tenant’s Association and other local community facilities.

7. Consultation next year

7.1 With the environmental budget being at a reduced level this year and last year, consultation has been led by the District Managers via e-mail or through estates visits. It is proposed for future years as funding returns to normal levels the Head of Service will lead the consultation and will facilitate meeting with ward Cllrs to gain their input.

8. Financial, legal and other implications

8.1 Financial implications

The total cost of the schemes identified within this report is £ 200k. The HRA Capital Programme for 2024/25 includes £200k for Communal and Environmental work. The schemes are not anticipated to have a significant impact on revenue costs for the Council.

8.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation)

8.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

A number of schemes identified within this report may have carbon emission-related impacts. These should be addressed to mitigate any emissions from works, including through applying the council's sustainable procurement guidance for growing media, electricals, and chemicals, as relevant to each project. This should include use of the guidance around herbicides and pesticides in the chemicals document, in relation to the proposed weed-spraying works, to avoid negative environmental impacts. The loss of trees should also be avoided in work on green spaces and, if not possible, they should be replaced in line with the council's Tree Strategy. As noted in the report, positive climate change impacts are also considered as part of the prioritisation process for projects. Several of the schemes may have a positive environmental impact, including through supporting walking & cycling, enabling local food growing and carrying out planting as part of landscaping works.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

8.4 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 2024/2025.

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 garage demolition leading to the provision of additional parking including disabled parking bays for residents, weed spraying and cleaning of communal areas and grounds maintenance and tackling anti-social behaviour.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, 454 4175