

REPORT TITLE: ESTATE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

18 JUNE 2019

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Kelsie Learney, Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The Council's estate Improvement programme is a key priority in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and funds wide ranging schemes aimed at improving the condition and appearance of housing land throughout the district. For the current year, a total provision of £250,000 was included in the Capital Programme, funded directly from the HRA, for this work.

The Estate Improvement Programme is now in its tenth year. This report highlights what was achieved in the last financial year and the schemes that are proposed for this year.

The report also highlights the increasing cost of the works to provide the Estate Improvements and recommends that that programme be extended in future years by increasing the budget allowance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the ongoing achievements of the Estate Improvement programme be noted.
2. That the Policy Committee are asked to comment upon increasing the provision in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan to £400,000 from £250,000 for 2019/20.
3. That the Policy Committee are asked to comment upon increasing the benchmark cost per parking bay to £4,000.

4. That the Committee consider how the Programme could be amended to make a greater contribution to the Climate Emergency action plan

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

1.1 As highlighted in the body of the report.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

2.1 The Estate Improvement programme is now in its tenth year, during which time many schemes have been successfully implemented across the district.

2.2 The programme is specifically for projects which address the following community issues:

- Community safety - such as lighting, door entry systems
- Car parking - increasing parking provision or regularising parking
- Environmental - such as bin areas, fencing, landscaping

2.3 As this budget is funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) all proposals must benefit primarily Winchester City Council tenants and the improvement should, for the most part, be on Housing land.

2.4 Proposals for Estate Improvements can be made by Winchester City Council tenants and leaseholders, Councillors and Council Officers. Guidelines and forms for how to make a proposal are provided on the Winchester City Council website under 'Housing Estates and Improvements'. Requests can be submitted using the proposal form, via an on-line form or by contacting the Estate Improvements Officer.

2.5 Since its inception the provision of £250,000 has been dedicated annually within the HRA for Estate Improvement work and on occasions additional funds have been allocated to the programme to facilitate particular schemes. Due to a rise in costs primarily associated with parking schemes which remain the most commonly requested proposal, the provision of £250,000 is no longer sufficient to enable the facilitation of more than a handful of schemes per year.

2.6 We have seen a significant rise in costs recently, due to an increase in the cost of the surfacing materials, the cost of disposing of items (such as the removed hard surfaces etc.), and also supplementary items.

2.7 The existing benchmark of £3,000 per parking bay is also no longer practical due to these increased costs and therefore it is recommended that this be revised to £4,000. This figure is calculated using the costs for the last two parking schemes which were delivered at Penton Place, Highcliffe and St Peters Close, Curdridge (see table in 2.5 for further details).

2.8 The general lack of parking on our estates is an ongoing issue so we anticipate there will be a continued demand for these types of schemes for the foreseeable future.

- 2.9 Whilst parking schemes have dominated the programme in recent years, this is a programme of work that could make a positive contribution towards the “Climate Emergency” agenda, particularly in relation to environmental and landscaping improvements.
- 2.10 This report summarises the proposals dealt with during the 2018/19 financial year, providing information on those that have been completed or are currently being progressed, along with those projects that have rolled over from previous financial years.

Expenditure for 2018/19

- 2.11 Works at Drummond Close, Stanmore (parking improvements), Thurmond Crescent, Stanmore (fencing to improved parking area) and Somerville Road, Kingsworthy (communal garden improvements) began in the previous financial year, 2017/18. These schemes did not complete until 2018/19 and the full costs (£115,600) were brought forward to the 2018/19 financial year as no carry forward was in place from the 2017/18 budget.

Works	Current Expenditure	TOTAL
Works brought forward from 2017/18	Drummond Close £47,638 – Completed May 18	£115,600
	Thurmond Crescent £8,661 – Completed Mar 18	
	Somerville Road £59,301 – Completed Apr 18	
TOTAL		£115,600

- 2.12 Works at Trussell Crescent, Weeke had also started in 2017/18 but were not completed until 2018/19. This scheme has provided extensive garden landscaping and replacement fencing works to the whole of Trussell Crescent comprising of 76 units of accommodation.
- 2.13 The expenditure on this scheme far exceeded original estimates of £160,000 for the 2018/19 works. This increased expenditure was a result of the growth in popularity of the scheme with 90% of properties having garden works undertaken and 93% properties having replacement fencing, more tenants opting for the more expensive paved garden option and the rising cost of the materials over the duration of the scheme.
- 2.14 Although a costly scheme, the works have vastly improved the appearance of the street scene at Trussell Crescent and residents are now better equipped to ensure the upkeep of their outdoor areas.

Works	Current Expenditure	TOTAL
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2018/19 (works ongoing from 2017/18)	Trussell Crescent – Completed March 2019	£222,996
TOTAL		£222,996

2.15 A further three schemes were also completed at Nicholson Place, Alresford (road widening), St Peters Close, Curdridge (parking) and Penton Place, Highcliffe (parking), their costs coming from the 2018/19 budget as shown in the table below.

Works	Current Expenditure	TOTAL
2018/19	Nicholson Place £7,950 – Completed Sep 18	£7,950
	St Peters Close – Completed Apr 19	£96,788
	Penton Place – Completed Apr 19	£105,111
TOTAL		£209,849

2.16 Feasibility work and/or consultation has also taken place on nine future schemes, the costs of which are detailed in the table below.

Works	Feasibility Work	Committed Expenditure	TOTAL
Feasibility Work for future projects; Roberts Close, Moors Close, Trussell Crescent, Westwood View, Heathlands, Canford Close, Milland Road, Pound Cottages	£2,545	Nil	2,545
Feasibility Work for Chiltern Court	£1,562	£10,000	£11,562
TOTAL			£14,107

2.17 Following consultation with the residents at Roberts Close, Wickham about improvements to parking the feedback received was that there was little

interest/need for a scheme so it has been agreed that this will not be progressed but could be revisited in the future if necessary.

- 2.18 Extensive consultation has also taken place with the residents of Moors Close, Colden Common on a proposed parking scheme there which includes creating parking spaces on the Close green. A final scheme has been agreed here, the estimated cost of which is in the region of £100,000 and is currently awaiting a Planning decision before works can start.
- 2.19 The above works resulted in a significant overspend on the Estate Improvement budget for 2018/19. This was predominantly as a result of the actual cost of schemes being significantly higher than the estimated expenditure.

Future Programmes

- 2.20 The following schemes and their predicted costs are listed for progression in the 2018/19 financial year.

Works	Estimated Expenditure
Moors Close, Colden Common – parking	£107,250
Trussell Crescent, Weeke – parking	£76,200
Westwood View, Kilmeston – parking	Not being progressed
Heathlands, Shedfield – parking	Not being progressed
Canford Close, Shedfield – parking	£57,150
Milland Road, Highcliffe – pedestrian access	On hold
Pound Cottages, Meonstoke – parking	£44,450
Chiltern Court, Alresford – parking & environmental	To be confirmed (likely to be in the region of £100,000)
TOTAL	£285,750

- 2.21 Three of the schemes have already been confirmed as not being progressed at this time or are on hold. With regards to Heathlands and Westwood View, we have yet to come up with feasible schemes so these are no longer actively being pursued but can be re-visited in the future if necessary. The potential for an access route from Milland Road, Highcliffe to the new leisure centre is also on hold until the build is further ahead.

- 2.22 Chiltern Court, Alresford is currently undergoing a detailed feasibility study by an external consultant, with a view to implementing a large scale overhaul of the area to provide additional parking, soft landscaping and other environmental improvements. The costs of this scheme are expected to be in the region of £100,000 due to the sloping landscape of the immediate area and other variables.
- 2.23 The parking scheme to the rear of Trussell Crescent, Weeke has undergone further consultation with local members following previous objections to the original proposal. Consultation will be required with the Allotment Society and the local residents before this scheme can progress.
- 2.24 Consultation will also shortly begin on the schemes at Canford Close, Shedfield and Pound Cottages, Meonstoke.
- 2.25 The outcome of the consultation and more detailed assessments by the Engineering team together with a review of the budget will determine which schemes are progressed this financial year.
- 2.26 If all of these projects proceed, it is clear that the 2019/20 programme is already oversubscribed. It recognised that the costs for last years schemes have come in higher than in previous years, due to a rise in costs and other supplementary items. It is therefore suggested that should it be desirable to progress all of the above schemes in 2019/20 as planned, a further £150,000 be allocated to the Estate Improvement budget.

Conclusion

- 2.27 The Estate Improvement Programme continues to be well received both by tenants and other stakeholders, and some significant improvements have been achieved across the District.
- 2.28 The need for additional car parking continues to prove a high priority for tenants, and proposals/enquiries continue to be received on a regular basis for parking facilities to be improved across the district.
- 2.29 It has provided resources to address a number of straight forward issues, as well as some more complex schemes, that would otherwise have not been possible. These have proven to be very effective at improving problems on estates that had been frustrating residents for many years.
- 2.30 If a similar number of schemes are going to be facilitated moving forward, based on the costs of recent schemes there will need to be an increase to the Estate Improvement budget and the current financial benchmark cost per parking bay. Without these changes the Estate Improvement Programme will be restricted in what it can achieve for residents in the future.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 3.1 Options considered have included ending the programme and investing resources elsewhere. However, the programme forms one of the key priorities for the service, has always been well supported by TACT and members and therefore it is recommended that it be extended rather than reduced.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

Not applicable.

Other Background Documents:-

None.

APPENDICES:

None.