

**Report of :** East North East Area Leader

**Report to :** Director of Environment and Housing

**Date:** September 2014

**Subject:** SCIP Community Fund – Back Cautley Road / Copperfield Mount Environmental Improvement Scheme

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<b>Burmantofts &amp; Richmond Hill</b>	
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

### Summary of main issues

- 1 Back Cautley Road and Copperfield Mount have been in a state of disrepair for many years. As part of the initial SCIP resident consultation, the local community identified environmental improvements to this area as their top priority.
- 2 In response to this request, a scheme has been developed by Parks & Countryside, with the input of local residents, to transform the overgrown areas into useable garden plots, demolish unsafe garages and install fencing to improve community safety and reduce levels of environmental crime.
- 3 The residents have been consulted on the scheme and are in full support of the project. The investment of SCIP funding into this piece of land will significantly improve the local environment and transform a local area of concern.

### Recommendation

- 1 Director of Environment & Housing is requested to authorise **£81,536.00** from parent capital scheme number 16500/BEI/000 during 2014/15

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request £81,536.00 to be released from the Sustainable Communities Investment Fund Community Fund budget for the Back Cautley Road / Copperfield Mount environmental improvement scheme.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 As part of the Sustainable Communities Investment Programme, £150,000 capital funding was allocated to establish a Community Fund for community projects to be delivered in the Cross Green area. The Community Fund was set up to ensure that ideas and suggestions of local residents could be delivered to meet local community needs. There is a very active community group in the area and they were keen to be involved in the priority setting process for the investment of any funding into this locality.
- 2.2 The parameters of the Community Fund are that resources should:
- be used for schemes that will provide new and additional benefits to the locality, rather than investing in existing infrastructure
  - be spent by March 2016
  - address the overall aims of the programme
  - contribute to priorities outlined in the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan for Burmantofts & Richmond Hill.
- 2.3 As part of the SCIP programme consultation, local residents came up with a list of schemes which they would like the community fund to be used for:
- Clearance of plots on Back Cautley Road
  - Community food growing scheme
  - A play area for children and families
  - Improvements to the refuse system in the Copperfields
  - Installation of alley gates on Back Cautley Road
  - A number of general environmental improvements across the area
- 2.4 All the above priorities, except the Cautley Road alleygates, the need for which cannot currently be proved, are being developed into more detailed projects, primarily by Leeds City Council services, with budgets and project plans for each of the proposed schemes.

## **3 Back Cautley Road / Copperfield Mount Environmental Improvement Scheme**

- 3.1 An environmental improvement programme for Back Cautley Road and Copperfield Mount came out as the number one scheme which local people would like to see undertaken in their neighbourhood through the initial SCIP consultation event.

Residents want the area to benefit from comprehensive clearance and implementation of a scheme which will be sustained long after the SCIP programme comes to an end. Following this feedback, a scheme has been developed by Parks & Countryside in conjunction with local residents.

- 3.2 The main elements of the scheme, as illustrated by the plan attached at appendix 1 are:

1. 5 unsafe wood/asbestos panel garages to be safely demolished. These garages will not be rebuilt, as there is no waiting list or requirement for the garages to remain. The end allotment plot will be fenced appropriately in liaison with the

plot holder. The cleared land will be treated with scalpings to reduce weed growth, prevent vehicle movement creating mud and puddles, and create an area for limited expansion if the food growing group needs more space over time.

2. Clear a number of unused garden plots which are currently unusable. Once cleared, these plots will be marked out and leased to local residents to manage and maintain. Through the leases, a small income stream will be generated for Leeds City Council. Bringing the plots back into use will also reduce incidents of fly tipping which have been prevalent in the unused, overgrown areas of Back Cautley Road.
3. Fencing will be installed, along with a gate, to the entrance of the garages on Back Cautley Road which are accessed via Copperfield Mount. The fencing will create restricted access, with a one point of entry for people who have leases on the garages. This will assist with a reduction in fly tipping, as reports have been received of vehicles driving into this area dumping bulky items. It is also hoped that this would address some community safety concerns of local residents regarding attempted garage break ins.
4. Adjacent to the garages, there are two small pockets of unused land. The land is overgrown and is currently used as a dog toilet and a dumping ground. It is proposed to clear this land completely and then lay soil to allow the Cross Green Food Growing Group to expand their activities to this area. The area would also be fenced to prevent any unauthorised access.

3.3 The budget breakdown for the scheme is as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Garage Demolition, including safe asbestos removal and supply and laying of scalpings	£6,258.33
Herras Fencing	£999.68
Site Clearance – removal of dead trees, clear away all existing vegetation, debris from the rear of the properties as per the plan, and around the garages and take to an approved council tip and to level the site and provide area for new allotments, beds / and supply good quality top soil	£55,000
Fencing & Gates - supply and install 1.8,mtr high vertical rolled bar green powdered coated fence and supply and install once set maintenance gates	£14,960
Landscape design fees for the development of plans	£1,000
Contingencies @5% (this does not include the garage demolition)	£3,317.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£81,536.00</b>

3.4 The land and property described has been in disrepair for many years. As the Community Fund is currently available in the area, local residents feel that this is

the ideal opportunity to carry out the improvements which will make a real difference.

- 3.5 Leeds City Council's Parks & Countryside will be commissioned to undertake the project and manage the scheme. Parks & Countryside have already put together a detailed project plan for the improvement works and time line for the scheme to be completed. This will need to be co-ordinated with the garage demolition project at item 3.7

Subject to approval, the scheme is likely to commence in late October / early November 2014.

- 3.6 This project complements the work which has been undertaken by City Development's Property & Contracts to regulate lease arrangements for plots which are already in use by local residents. The plots which are currently in an unusable state would be cleared and brought back into use for other local people to rent from the Council. A number of local residents have already expressed an interest for taking on a plot and are in the process of being contacted to discuss the terms and conditions outlined in the lease agreements.
- 3.7 Leases for the garages which are to be demolished are in the process of being terminated. Tenants will then be given the opportunity to take on a lease in the vacant garages which are located next to the ones which are to be demolished. These garages have recently had new roofs installed, as they were previously unsafe. Work is also underway to put in place commercial leases on containers which have been located near to the garages for over 10 years.
- 3.8 Cross Green Community Group has also agreed to take on the maintenance and management of cleared land at the end of Copperfield Mount as a community garden. This will complement activity which is already underway on Fewston Avenue railway bridge, which SCIP has already provided some funding support towards.
- 3.9 Planning Services have been consulted with on the proposal and no element of the scheme is subject to planning permission.
- 3.10 Once this work is complete, there would be minimal maintenance required from the Council. The only input that could possibly be required is for repairs to locks on the new gates. It is suggested that funding generated from the lease of the plots should be set aside to cover any future maintenance, as there are no other revenue sources available.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 A household consultation exercise has been carried out regarding the proposals and every respondent was supportive of the improvement scheme. The community who responded to the survey said that it'd make a massive difference in the area at the rear of their properties that had been an eyesore for many years. The community did suggest a couple of changes to the access entrances. This has been adjusted on the plans accordingly.
- 4.1.2 A number of respondents have also indicated that they would like to take on one of the newly created garden / garage plots. The interest has been so high there is now

a waiting list. This will generate income for the Council, levels of which will be dependent on the use of the plot.

4.1.3 The proposal has been discussed with local residents at the Cross Green Community Group on a number of occasions. The community group have been very supportive of the development of the scheme and have encouraged people to reply to the household survey. The community group are also keen to take on an area of the cleared land as a community food growing space. This would complement the activity already underway on Fewston Avenue.

4.1.4 Ward Members have been consulted on the ideas generated by the community for the investment of the Community Fund and Members are fully supportive of the suggestions put forward by local residents. Members have also been consulted on the detailed proposal for Back Cautley Road and Copperfield Mount and would like to see the scheme implemented as soon as possible.

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

An equality impact assessment screening has been completed and is attached at appendix 2

## **4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 This project contributes towards achieving the City Priority Plan objective of Best City for Communities; ensuring that local neighbourhoods are clean and increasing a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities.

4.3.2 The aims and objectives of this project directly contribute towards the priorities outlined in the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (NIP). The activity undertaken as part of this scheme links to the 'Improving the Local Environment' and 'Creating Community Confidence & Cohesion' sections of the NIP.

## **4.4 Resources and Value for Money**

4.4.1 The scheme has ensured value for money by being delivered through Leeds city Council's Parks & Countryside and Asbestos Removal Teams, using existing Council resources, rather than employing an external contractor to carry out the work..

## **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

4.5.2 There is no exempt or confidential information contained in this report.

4.5.3 There are no key decisions associated with this report, so it is not subject to call in.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 Any potential risks associated with this project have been identified through the project plan for the scheme and have been mitigated as far as possible by putting in place contingency plans.

## **5. Conclusions**

5.1 It is anticipated that once this scheme is implemented there will be a reduced level of environment crime, particularly a reduction in fly tipping and dog fouling, reduced opportunity for break ins at the garages due to improved security and surveillance and a better overall local environment. The local community is very pleased that the Council is working with them to address the area's significant environmental issues.

Through the work which the Cross Green Community Group have already undertaken in the area, it has shown that there are a lot of people in the area who have a sense of pride in their neighbourhood. The work on Back Cautley Road demonstrates the Council's support for the continued invigoration of Cross Green

## **6.0 Recommendation**

6.1 Director of Environment & Housing is requested to authorise **£81,536.00** from parent capital scheme number 16500/BEI/000 during 2014/15

## **7. Background Documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.



