



Classification	Item No.
Open	

Meeting:	CABINET
Meeting date:	16th December 2020
Title of report:	PARKS, COUNTRYSIDE AND GREENSPACES CAPITAL PROGRAMM FOR 2020/2021
Report by:	COUNCILLOR ALAN QUINN – CABINET MEMBER ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
Decision Type:	CABINET (KEY DECISION)
Ward(s) to which report relates	ALL

1.0 Executive Summary:

1.1 This Cabinet Report outlines the investment from the Corporate Capital Programme and the Manifesto Programme for 2020/2021 approved by Council in February 2020 for the associated planned works including the refurbishment of play areas, parks and other open spaces. We seek agreement that the works can progress and the funding for the 2020/2021 financial year can be released.

The Cabinet report covers the schemes of work associated with Parks, Countryside and Greenspaces Programme: The following outlines the key programmes of work:

- 1.** Investment and refurbishment to address and support Health and Safety following condition surveys of the 12 Green Flag Parks, Countryside Sites, Burrs and Phillips Park - **£800k** allocated from the 2020/2021 approved Corporate Capital Programme.
- 2.** Promoting our Physical Strategy - Improve access, infrastructure and quality of green spaces and recreational grounds - **£300k** - Manifesto Investment

- 1.2** The 2020/21 allocation of **£800k** is the first year of a 3 year strategy to refurbish all 12 green flag park as part of an ongoing programme. All of the parks have been inspected and the first phase will be to refurbish the 3 parks which are in the worst condition as well as being in an area of deprivation. Details of the proposed spend are provided in **Appendix 1** at the end of the report. Other work are included to improve play areas, the car parking at Burrs Country Park and support for a scheme led by the Friends of Nuttall Park.
- 1.3** The ability to deliver against the longer term strategy and roll out to other parks across the borough will be subject to consideration and approvals as part of the capital programme process in future years. This work also supports the wider council work and strategic review of council land to ensure safe, sustainable and well maintained open spaces are provided.
- 1.4** The key parks included for 20/21 following the condition surveys include Manchester Road Park, Hoyles Park and Openshaw Park which are all in Bury East which are within an area of deprivation however most parks will benefit from improvement plans.

Key works will include improvements to paths, structures, fencing, access, drainage, bins, play areas, ball zones, access and landscaping as detailed in Appendix 1

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That:

- 2.1 Approval is given to support the Parks, Countryside Greenspaces Corporate Capital Programme and the Manifesto Programme for 2020/2021.
- 2.2 Authority to spend the **£1.1m** included in the approved 20/21 capital programme in accordance with the detail outlined in both this report and within Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Authority is delegated to the Executive Director of Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to approve the detailed list of smaller localised schemes as part of the Manifesto funding outlined in 4.2 below.

3.0 Key considerations

3.1 Background

The Council through Parks & Countryside and Grounds Maintenance have maintained 12 green flag parks for over 10 years which remains a corporate objective. There is also 14 recreation playing fields, 60 play areas, 24 ball zones, 7 outdoor gyms and a significant infrastructure of parks, open spaces, countryside and recreation playing field areas including major country parks such as Burrs and Philips Park.

The Council's new Physical Activity Strategy Bury Moving has a vision of getting 75% of the Bury population moving by 2025. One of the strategic objectives is to Create Active Environments and maximise the potential of quality green open spaces, green networks and recreational spaces. It's important that we create equitable access to safe places for people to move more in Bury and achieve the vision.

- 3.2** Following recent condition surveys the parks, play areas, open space, countryside and recreation grounds are showing signs of rapid deterioration to the infrastructure, safe access issues and have increasing public and user group concerns.

The parks and countryside service no longer has a revenue budget for repairs or improvements to parks and open spaces. Funding does become available from S106 funding but only in localised areas where new housing is being built.

The Parks, open space and playing field strategies will look to develop a longer term programme of planned Health & Safety refurbishment for parks and all open spaces as well as a review of open spaces to identify surplus land which can potentially be sold in order to reinvest funding where approved back into parks where S106 funding is not available. This is also essential for health and safety reasons and to prevent insurance claims escalating.

These programmes also support getting people more active, exercise referral through social prescribing, supporting the Bury Moving Strategy as well as maintaining safe, accessible and well maintained parks, open spaces and play areas.

4.0 The proposal

The following proposal outlines the programmes as part of the capital programme:

4.1 £800k parks improvement 20/21 – Approved Corporate Capital Programme

Investment and improvements to address and support Health and Safety following condition surveys to the 12 Green Flag Parks, Countryside Sites, Burrs and Phillips Park. See detailed list of proposed works in Appendix 1

Subject to future capital bids, this is aimed at being a longer term 3 year programme of robust and sustainable improvements across parks and greenspace across the Borough. Aiming at a number of specific parks per year to ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and equipment are safe for members of the public accessing them, keeping the standards to the Green Flag Award ensuring that everyone doesn't have to travel too far to access these quality spaces.

Also ensuring that our local communities can continue to access these very important sites now and in the future and become more active in doing so. Including improvements to parks which will lift people's spirits and will allow,

when appropriate, socially distanced events and activities organised by various community groups and other Council sections. So improving a park with a bandstand now for when that happens is an excellent project. Borne from the Friends of Nuttall Park who already have some funding to start to make this project a reality and have plans to add to these funds as the project grows.

4.2 £300k - Manifesto Investment – One-off funding to improve access, infrastructure and quality of green spaces and recreational grounds

This programme is aimed at smaller one-off projects that will tackle health and safety issues that have been increasing over time due to the lack of budgets and disintegrating infrastructure.

The investment will also improve small pockets of green space across the borough that will improve access to local green spaces and support physical activity.

This will be aimed predominately in general (non-green flag) green spaces for issues such as quality of infrastructure, access, retaining wall repairs, fencing, security issues of motorbike access to sites and to support community led projects.

A detail list of small scale one-off schemes will be drawn together and approved separately by the Executive Director of Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment. All parts of the borough will benefit from these localised green space improvements.

4.3 Other alternative options considered

Do nothing -

Doing nothing would cause Health and Safety Concerns and potential liabilities. There is not sufficient funds available through S106 funding and this will not will not slow down the rapid decline in our parks and play areas, or increase funding for tree planting. Some wards do not do not receive S106 funding so the impact would be restricted.

5.0 Outcomes

5.1 Throughout the COVID19 pandemic parks, open spaces, Bury's countryside and our recreation grounds have been deemed extremely important by the Government in helping tackle the health and well-being of residents during these unprecedented times and they have been and continue to be very well used.

We know that every year inactivity also costs the UK around £1bn so it's essential to provide safe environments for communities to be active for physical health and promoting good mental health and support post COVID recovery for people and communities affected.

Reports state that COVID19 will be with us for a long time. Meaning that our parks and greenspaces will be even more important and more of a lifeline for the majority of our residents which can be accessed locally, making it especially important that they are made and kept safe and high quality for use during this time and well into the future.

5.2 The investment through the Capital Programme will achieve significant health, environment and climate outcomes for Bury residents. As cited in the 'Making Parks Count' report produced by the Parks Alliance, parks in England deliver over £6.6bn of Health, Climate Change and Environment benefits each year including

- An annual saving to the NHS of £2 Million.
- Carbon Sequestration by tree's in public parks in England is also estimated at £9bn per year and the
- Benefits of air pollutant removal by tree's in public parks in England is estimated at £60m per year.

5.3 The Green Spaces Strategy also support wider Council Strategies including the Bury Moving Strategy, Play Area Strategy and the emerging Bury 2030 Strategy which highlights the importance of our Green Flag Parks.

5.4 The projects contained in this report support a wider green spaces strategy to provide local access to high quality outdoor sport and recreation. Subject to available funding this includes sustainable tennis courts, sustainable 3G All Weather pitches, improved grass sports pitches, tree planting in partnership with City of Trees, improved athletics provision, play area improvement and outdoor gyms and improvement to our country parks. This also includes the development of several external funding bids.

6.0 Community impact / Contribution to the Bury 2030 Strategy

6.1 The investment will contribute towards the new Bury Moving Strategy. Creating the conditions and the safe infrastructures for more people to walk and cycle will contribute to less congestion and air pollution. Our parks, open and green spaces are quality environments which support people to lead more active lifestyles. The quality of the built and natural environment is a priority for Bury. People in more deprived areas are more likely to be exposed to poor air quality, have less access to green space so we the impact on people's health and wellness through this investment is critical.

6.2 Bury the Place will be a core theme in the emerging Bury 2030 Strategy. Bury is known for its beautiful scenery and green space and the carbon neutral commitment and GM Clean air strategy. Our green spaces strategy supports the Bury 2030 outcomes.

Equality Impact and considerations:

24. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

25. *The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.*

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
To do nothing will result in unsafe parks and greenspace making them unusable as they will put people at risk increasing claims	To invest in these programmes as proposed
Health and safety issues will continue to rise	To invest in these programmes as proposed
No or little investment into tree planting will reduce the impact of the climate change and clean air strategies	To invest in these programmes as proposed
Reduced community cohesion around community orchards	To invest in these programmes as proposed
Unsuccessful external funding bids into tree planting and other projects	To invest in these programmes as proposed

Consultation:

No Consultation Required

Legal Implications:

Completed by the Council's Monitoring Officer

The Council has the health and safety responsibilities noted in the report and in addition, there are those as land owner in terms of defective premises. The works stated are in order to meet those statutory obligations.

Financial Implications:

Completed by the Council's Section 151 Officer

The cost of the proposal can be met from monies included in the 2020/21 capital programme. The ability to deliver against the longer term strategy and roll out to other parks across the borough will be subject to consideration and approvals as part of the capital programme process in future years

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Background papers:

Capital Programme spreadsheet

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
S106	Section 106 is a planning term for funding from developers for recreation gain

Appendix 1 - Works in Green Flag Parks 2020/21 £800,000

Burrs Country Park	
Surface overflow car park to increase use of it all year	£70,000

Close Park	
Refurbish Play Area	£40,000 Parks capital added to project

Hoyles Park	£140,000
Update Hoops Signs – replacement plates	
Replace & update play area signage	
Install drains & gulleys in low flooded areas	
Improve, refurbish & removal of some sustainable shrub	
Improve access paths surrounding redundant bowling	
Improve redundant bowling green	
Improve access paths	
Tree pruning, removal and replacement programme	
Painting railings inside the park and on the boundary	
Refurbish Ball Zone including fencing	
Improve gardeners compound area	
Replace damaged/dead shrubs and fill beds	

Manchester Rd Park	£140,000 (exc play area below)
Replace all “sharps” signs on BG fencing	
Replace rotting litter & dog fouling bins	
Replace & update play area signage	
Refurbish Ball Z including fencing	
Install drains and gulleys in low flooding areas	
Remove all hedges in the park and make good the	
Create a car park for Bury EST at the side of the lodge	
Improve sustainable planting	
Improve paths/access	
Move notice board to a drier spot where it doesn’t flood	
Refurbish play area	£32,000 Parks Capital added to S106

Nuttall Park	
Bandstand project – build new canopy on top of existing	£67,000
Car park markings in relation to accident and lack of	£5,000

Openshaw Park	£140,000 (exc play area below)
Replace rotting litter & dog fouling bins x15	
Repair walls in the pit MUGA and the play area, tree roots	
Replace & update play area signage	
Repair coping stones near back gate of lodge	
Refurbish & removal of some shrub beds	
Improve access around bowling green	
Improve paths/access	
Level out tipped green waste along Renault garage	
Tree pruning, removal and replacement programme	
Install Ball zone ends into MUGA on Volleyball court to	
Raise level of path to resolve flooding/pooling of water	
Remove recycling bays and make good that area	
Review floodlighting on MUGA (Sustainable lighting if	
Change street lamp to LEDs	
Refurbish Play area	£44k Parks capital added to S106 5k
Improve sustainable landscaping	

St Marys Park	
Refurbish Play area	£45,000 Parks Capital added to phase
Install drainage rear of Phoenix Centre and raise levels to	£27,000 Complete

Whitefield Park	
Refurbish Play area	£50,000 Parks capital added to this

*all green flag park play areas listed have been inspected and assessed as a main health and safety priority due to the degradation and potential risk to users

*Nuttall park car park markings is due to an incident recently where an ambulance could not gain access into the park as someone had parked in front of the barrier due to the lack of markings. So to mark out the car park will make access safer.

* Nuttall Park bandstand is a friend's group project for which the group have researched the design history, had that design drawn up, applied for planning permission and received this permission to build and some funding to realise this project. This project will enhance the park, make it even more attractive and replaces heritage lost over the years on an existing base and will lift people's spirits when events and activities can eventually return to the parks.

* The Parks listed are in East Bury which hasn't seen much in the way of Section 106 funding and are in a high deprivation area. They have been assessed as the parks needing the most work in terms of Health & Safety and improving access.