

**Democratic Services**

Location: Phase II
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To: **OUNCILLOR MARTIN GODDARD
CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE**
**OUNCILLOR EDDIE LAVERY
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES**
c.c. All Members of the Residents' Services Select Committee
c.c. Rachael Abbiss – Place Directorate
c.c. Perry Scott – Corporate Director of Place
c.c. Ward Councillors for Hillingdon West

Date: 28 November 2022

Non-Key Decision request**Form D****CAPITAL RELEASE REPORT (November 2022)****DEPARTMENT: Place****SERVICE AREA / PROGRAMME: Battle of Britain Bunker Enhancement - Faces of the Battle****RELEASE NO: 1**

Dear Cabinet Member

Attached is a report requesting that a decision be made by you as an individual Cabinet Member. Democratic Services confirm that this is not a key decision, as such, the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 notice period does not apply.

You should take a decision **on or after Tuesday 06 December 2022** in order to meet Constitutional requirements about publication of decisions that are to be made. You may wish to discuss the report with the Corporate Director before it is made. Please indicate your decision on the duplicate memo supplied, and return it to me when you have made your decision. I will then arrange for the formal notice of decision to be published.

Steve Clarke
Democratic Services Officer

Title of Report: Battle of Britain Bunker Enhancement – Faces of the Battle - Release No: 1

Decision made:

Reasons for your decision: (e.g. as stated in report)

Alternatives considered and rejected: (e.g. as stated in report)

Signed Date

Cabinet Member for Finance / Cabinet Member for Residents' Services

CAPITAL RELEASE REPORT (November 2022)

DEPARTMENT: Place

**SERVICE AREA / PROGRAMME: Battle of Britain Bunker Enhancement
- Faces of the Battle**

RELEASE NO: 1

Cabinet Members	Councillor Martin Goddard Councillor Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolios	Cabinet Member for Finance Cabinet Member for Residents' Services
Officer Contact	Dr Rachael Abbiss – Place Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A - Capital release request for approval

HEADLINES

Summary	To seek Cabinet Member approval for the release of capital funds and single tender actions.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Enjoy access to green spaces, leisure activities, culture and arts.
Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Thriving Economy.
Financial Cost	This report seeks the release of £20k from the 2022/23 Battle of Britain Bunker Enhancements budget for The Faces of the Battle (underground permanent enhancement works). The works will commence upon release of the funds and are due for completion before the end of the financial year, dependent upon supply chains and availability of materials.
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services Select Committee
Ward(s) affected	Hillingdon West

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services agree to the capital release request of £20k from the Battle of Britain Enhancement 2022/23 budget for the funding of The Faces of the Battle - underground permanent enhancement works. (Appendix A)

Reasons for recommendation

The Battle of Britain Bunker, owned and operated by the London Borough of Hillingdon, has a national profile in terms of marking important anniversary dates, including the Battle of Britain in 2020 and Operation Jubilee in 2022. As the steward of this key piece of national heritage, Hillingdon Council pursues plans to deepen and extend the interpretation at the site and, following the Covid-19 lockdown, wishes to install permanent exhibitions/visuals to refresh the visitor experience at the site.

While it was not possible to schedule the full programme of exhibitions originally planned for 2020, it is believed possible to install new displays and interactive features in the Bunker during 2022/23.

The ongoing creation of interpretation of the Borough's heritage assets is pursued through the Council's Local Plan policy HE1:

The Council will:

- 1. Conserve and enhance Hillingdon's distinct and varied environment, its settings and the wider historic landscape, which includes:*
 - Designated heritage assets such as statutorily Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and*
 - Locally recognised historic features, such as Areas of Special Local Character and Locally Listed Buildings.*
- 2. Actively encourage the regeneration of heritage assets, particularly those which have been included in English Heritage's 'Heritage at Risk' register or are currently vacant.*
- 3. Promote increased public awareness, understanding of, and access to the Borough's heritage assets and wider historic environment, through Section 106 agreements and via community engagement and outreach activities.*

The date for project delivery is expected before the end of the 2022/23 financial year, depending upon the availability of materials and supply chains, and any necessary amendments to the scope of work in-line with building conversation needs.

Alternative options considered

The alternative was not to install a permanent exhibition or to further develop the interpretation at the Battle of Britain Bunker. This was rejected because of the Council's commitment to good stewardship and ongoing interpretation of Second World War history that occurred in the Borough.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Overview

As part of the Battle of Britain Bunker enhancements project, the Faces of the Battle is an educational and interactive engagement installation aimed to refresh the public offering, increase footfall, and engage with a wide variety of visitors.

Other than the soundscape (installed in 2020), the underground Bunker has had little work done to enhance the visitor experience since 2017 in preparation for opening the Visitor Centre. The Bunker tour has been revised and improved during Covid-19, and the Faces project will further benefit public, family and school visits to the site with new interactive elements to explore.

The project consists of two components totalling £20k, including contingency:

1. Historic display refurbishment and installation

We are currently restoring the Army/Navy liaison and Observer Corps cabins, and to ensure display consistency and historical accuracy is maintained, this release will renovate and update the Intelligence, WAAF and Bomber rooms. All spaces will be restored to a 1940s aesthetic and visitors will feel as though they are stepping back into the original offices.

Cabin displays renovation and refurbishment will be completed by staff with specialist knowledge on the historic aesthetic and materials that would have been used in the Bunker during the 1940s. Age appropriate and themed furniture, equipment and items will be purchased via specialist suppliers, including auction houses and militaria experts.

2. Improvements to Bunker interpretation

The company Gpex will print and install interpretation panels, silhouette wall plates, wartime/historic maps, and artefact labels. Text and images will be aimed at adults and children, ensuring better engagement for younger audiences. Gpex is the corporate contracted print supplier for Hillingdon Council and has produced the other exhibition panels at the Bunker. The same supplier will be used to ensure consistency and continuity in design and aesthetic.

Procurement

This procurement is made on a single tender action basis, which is justified due to the need to use specialist suppliers. Our display standards must have total continuity of appearance with the previously created Visitor Centre, and this will involve the re-use of resources from the previous and current contracts with Gpex. To brief another supplier at this stage would incur additional costs that would make a comparative tender process unviable.

Costs will be controlled by officers managing budgets and altering the scope, if necessary, to control funds efficiently.

Project contingency

A small contingency budget will be required in case of problems with fitting audio, furniture, or inflation of costs for supplies, equipment and historic objects. Officers may need to hire specialist support or use different materials for the installation.

Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the costs:

Table 1: Cost Plan

Details	Amount
Bunker interpretation (design, print & fit)	2,000
Room restoration, refurbishment, and installation	15,000
Removals and disposal of existing furniture and materials	1,000
Project Contingency	2,000
Total	£20,000

Financial Implications

(Budget £100k, Previously Released £80k, Capital Release Requested £20k) – Appendix A

The revised 2022/23 Capital Programme approved by Cabinet and Council included a budget re-phased from 2021/22 to 2022/23 of £100k for the Battle of Britain Bunker & Visitor Centre Enhancement from which £80k was released for schemes completing this financial year, funded from Council resources.

The report seeks the capital release of £20k from the 2022/23 Battle of Britain Bunker & Visitor Centre Enhancement budget for the Faces of Battle works. The costs are based on quotations and includes contingency of 10% of the works. The contractor is to be appointed under single action tender to ensure consistency with previous exhibition enhancements to the visitor centre.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon residents, service users and communities

The outbreak of Covid-19 has created unprecedented circumstances, resulting in a change to the original proposal for Faces of the Battle. The Faces project (conceived in 2019) was intended as a permanent memorial sculpture installed in the Visitor Centre. Given the time that has elapsed since the Battle of Britain anniversary, the successful launch of two other large commemorative projects, and the difficult recovery period at the Bunker and across the Borough, officers recommended that the budget should be spent on a long-term educational and interactive engagement project for residents and visitors. The release of capital funds for this project, will allow the Battle of Britain Bunker to honour the Council's commitment to commemorate and educate about all the men and women that served in the Bunker during the Second World War.

This will provide residents with a new and interesting installation at the Bunker, which visitors can continue to enjoy well beyond 2022. In addition, this new element of interpretation will bring the Bunker to 'life' and help build a stronger relationship between people and place.

Consultation carried out or required

As the Bunker is a Grade I listed building, the Principal Conservation and Urban Design Officer will be kept informed of work to be carried out. The installation work will not impact on or interfere with the internal or external structure of the Bunker. The only features that will be impacted are some areas of wall space. If a problem is encountered during installation, the project team will liaise with the Principal Conservation and Urban Design Officer to seek guidance and advice.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance concurs with the financial implications above, confirming that there is a £100k capital budget for the bunker and visitor centre enhancements, financed by Council resources.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no legal impediments to agreeing the recommendation set out in this report; namely authorising the necessary capital release. The Council, as owner of the Battle of Britain Bunker, is responsible for protecting and maintaining the building in line with its Grade 1 listed status. Any contract that is entered into must comply with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.

Infrastructure / Asset Management

No implications.

Planning

The project expenditure in this report may be eligible for a contribution from planning obligations, i.e., balances received from Section 106 agreements. A contribution of £10k is held towards community facilities in the Borough (S106 reference PPR/91/331C). The allocation of eligible Section 106 monies to the project detailed in this report will be subject to formal approval by relevant Cabinet Members.

Capital Release Protocol

The release of all capital funds, and certain revenue funds, held by the Council is to be made by a formal democratic decision. No expenditure can be placed or committed by officers until this formal approval is given by Democratic Services. Release of funds must be for identified projects only and strictly not for the general release of funds for projects to be identified at a later date. No block releases of capital or funding will be allowed, except if authorised by the Leader of the Council in advance to Corporate Finance. The release of funds will only be made if previous Council, Cabinet or Cabinet Member agreement has been given to the project and only if there is an approved budget.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

APPENDIX A - CAPITAL RELEASE REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

The Battle of Britain Enhancement Budget 2022/23 – Faces of the Battle – Release No. 1

Location	Project / Expenditure Title	Information	Funds Release Sought £000's	Approve	Hold	More Information Required
The Battle of Britain Bunker	The Faces of the Battle	The Faces of the Battle is an educational and interactive engagement installation aimed to refresh the public offering, increase footfall, and engage with a wide variety of visitors.	20			
Total seeking release			20			
Previously released			80			
Budget			100			
Remaining budget			0			