



Democratic Services

Location: Phase II
Ext: 0185
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CMD No: 765

**To: COUNCILLOR MARTIN GODDARD
CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE**

**COUNCILLOR EDDIE LAVERY
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES**

c.c. All Members of the Residents' Services Select Committee
c.c. Dragana Knezevic, Place Directorate
c.c. Perry Scott – Corporate Director of Place
c.c. Ward Councillors for Uxbridge

Date: 11 April 2023

Non-Key Decision request

Form D

CAPITAL RELEASE REPORT (April 2023)

DEPARTMENT: Place

SERVICE AREA/ PROGRAMME: Environmental & Recreational Initiatives:
Creation of Wildlife Corridor at The Grove

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 Wednesday 19 April 2023** 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.

Liz Penny
Democratic Services Officer

Title of Report: Environmental & Recreational Initiatives: Creation of Wildlife Corridor at The Grove

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 (April 2023)

DEPARTMENT: Residents' Services

SERVICE AREA / PROGRAMME: Environmental & Recreational Initiatives: Creation of Wildlife Corridor at The Grove

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Martin Goddard Councillor Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Finance Cabinet Member for Residents' Services
Officer Contact(s)	Dragana Knezevic, Place Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A with capital release requests for approval Appendix B - site plan Appendix C - aerial view
Summary	To seek release of £56k funds towards the habitat restoration in The Grove.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports our commitment to residents of: A Green and Sustainable Borough.
Financial Cost	This report seeks the release of £56k for the creation of a wildlife corridor at The Grove, inclusive of £49k grant from the GLA Rewild London Fund.
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Relevant Ward(s)	Uxbridge

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services approve the capital release request of £56k budget comprising £49k Rewild London Fund grant and £7k revenue contribution for habitat restoration at The Grove (Appendix A).

Reasons for recommendation

The Grove is off Robinwood Grove, adjacent to Royal Lane in Hillingdon. It is approximately 2 hectares in size and belongs to the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC HiBII11). Attached are a site plan and aerial view.

It is a hidden gem surrounded by roads and housing. The project aim is to enhance the existing features and to hence preserve and increase the populations of flora and fauna within the existing

habitats - in addition to further developing the reserve as a good example of urban nature conservation.

At present the existing trees around the ponds in The Grove are closed and overgrown, casting heavy shade over the ponds with no aquatic vegetation. Also, dead and/or decaying leaves increase the nutritional value of the water in the pond, triggering an abundance of duckweed. Reduction of the canopy of mature trees and removal of smaller sycamore and holly trees will allow more light to penetrate the pond and marginal vegetation to establish. Following the pond restoration, appropriate planting of wetland species (undertaken by volunteers) will provide a home for invertebrates and amphibians and improve the overall biodiversity of the site.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet Members may agree to fund the scheme and / or suggest alternative projects to which funds could be allocated within the terms of the relevant legal agreements.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This report is seeking the allocation of funding for The Grove restoration project. The table below outlines the project plan and timescales.

Project plan			
Milestone	Actions	Due Date	Comments
Selected tree works	Contracted supplier	Feb 2024	
Scrub clearance	Contractors	Oct 2023	
Pond restoration	Specialist contractor	Sep 2023	
Planting wetlands	Greenspaces team working with volunteers and social enterprise	Apr 2024	Organise volunteering days
Platform installation invasive non-native species in the pond	Contracted supplier	Sep 2023	
Planting wetland plants		Sep 2022	

The works will be undertaken by:

- Hi-Line - Council contracted supplier
- The Forward Trust - Council contracted supplier
- AGA Group- specialist supplier
- Drayton Fencing- Council contracted supplier

The table below provides a breakdown of the costs:

Table 1: Cost Plan

Description	GLA fund	LBH fund	TOTAL
Tree works	£7,000	£6,000	£13,000
Blue Sky	£1,700	£1,000	£2,700
Dipping platform	£7,500		£7,500
Pond works	£26,000		£26,000
Project management fees	£5,800		£5,800
Contingency	£500		£500
Total	£48,500	£7,000	£55,500

Financial Implications

(The Grove Habitat Restoration Budget £55.5k, Previously Released Nil, Capital Release Requested £55.5k) – Appendix A

In February 2023, Cabinet accepted £49k grant funding from the Rewild London Fund for the nature restoration project at The Grove. Match funding of £7k is required to supplement the grant funding and this is proposed to come from a revenue contribution from the Green Spaces budget.

The report seeks the release of £56k for the creation of the wildlife corridor at The Grove, to be funded from £49k Rewild London Fund grant funding and £7k revenue contribution. The release request includes some quotations from the green spaces term contractors and the remainder are based on estimates, where quotations will be sought at a later date. The cost plan also includes fees and contingency.

The project will be reported as part of the Environmental and Recreation Initiatives Programme once capital release is approved.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact on Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

The Council and its partners are committed to making the Borough a cleaner, greener and safer environment. Feel PROUD aims to make residents aware of how they can join forces with the Council and have their say on improving the area they live in and boosting their pride in being a Hillingdon resident.

Improving existing habitats in this narrow Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) section and creating a buffer zone with new habitats in the adjacent fields will increase the wildlife value of the site and benefit the whole corridor. The project will create a more varied and positive use of the land, increasing the site's overall biodiversity and ecological resilience, whilst retaining a peaceful place for people to relax and enjoy.

This project is consistent with Hillingdon's Strategic Climate Change Action Plan:

“Responding to the climate emergency is not just about reducing or removing carbon emissions. It is about recognising a much wider threat across all aspects of our environment. We are

responsible for large sections of open areas and waterways that are extremely important for wildlife and amenity for residents. We can find better ways to use green and open space to support flora and fauna, manage flooding, integrate trees and planting schemes into urban environments and re-establish wildlife corridors.”

C7 Carbon offsetting

C7.4 Understand and increase current carbon sequestration through increased planting and changes to green space management.

C7.5 Increase the number of trees, particularly in urban areas to complement objectives to improve air quality and promote urban wildlife.

C7.6 Exploit opportunities to increase carbon sequestration to maximise opportunities for biodiversity and flood risk management.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting that this project is largely funded from external grant of £48.5k that has recently been awarded from the Rewild London Fund administered by the GLA, and accepted at Cabinet in February 2023.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that the Council is responsible for carrying out its function pursuant to Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Thus, there are no legal impediments to the capital release being authorised, although any contract that is entered into must comply with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.

Infrastructure / Asset Management

There are no Infrastructure / Asset Management implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

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.

CAPITAL RELEASE APPENDIX A

Creation of Wildlife Corridor at The Grove

Location (Ward)	Project / Expenditure Title	Information	Funds Release Sought £000's	Approve	Hold	More Information Required
Uxbridge	The Grove wildlife corridor		56			
Total seeking release			56			
Previously released			0			
Budget			56			
Remaining budget			0			





The Grove Aerial Map

20 10 0 20 Meters