



AGENDA ITEM: 5(f)

CABINET: 15th September 2015

Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Patterson

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SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To obtain direction on the priority for investment of the Environmental Improvement Budget.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That in the light of the announcement on the national budget, the Environmental Improvement Budget not be allocated to a specific project until the budget has been reviewed in February 2016.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 At the Council meeting on 25th February 2015. The HRA budget was approved which included £100k for Environmental Improvements.

3.2 The detail of how this budget was to be invested was not determined by Council and therefore this report seeks guidance on where Cabinet would like to invest these resources.

4.0 OPTIONS

- 4.1 There are a range of options for investment of these resources and I have attempted to include some of these but, the list is not exhaustive and Cabinet may decide to propose a priority that is not included within this paragraph.
- 4.2 Enhancements in the vicinity of painted/rendered pilot scheme - The HRA budget included a budget of 15k to paint/render some properties in an attempt to improve the appearance of these “no fines” dwellings. One option would be to invest the environmental improvement budget in this area to provide comprehensive enhancement within one area. If this proposal was accepted, a consultation exercise would be undertaken with the local community.
- 4.3 Existing tenant led Environmental Improvement Budget – There is an existing Environmental Improvement Budget which tenants determine the priority for investment. This year’s budget of £51.6k is fully committed and the available budget of £100k could simply be added to this for tenants to determine the priority for investment.
- 4.4 Car Parking – The Service area is often contacted by individuals or groups of individuals about inadequate parking opportunities in various areas. The budget, subject to consultation, could be used to provide a remedy to this situation.
- 4.5 Shrub Beds – There are a number of shrub beds, particularly in Skelmersdale, that either require replanting or removal. The budget, subject to consultation, could be used to start addressing these matters.
- 4.6 Communal Areas – There are a number of communal areas or squares where these could be cleared / weeded where necessary and power washed together with any minor repairs to the hard landscaping.
- 4.7 Sheltered Housing – There are 10 Cat II schemes and 3 Cat I schemes where improvements would be welcomed to paved areas and gardens.
- 4.8 Communal Areas of Flats – Cabinet recognised the need to invest in communal areas of flats and the resources could be used to improve the environment in these areas.
- 4.9 All of the options outlined in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.8 are feasible and would be beneficial but as indicated above, not exhaustive. However, there will be pressure on the HRA from 2016/17 for 4 years and it would be prudent to review the implications of this before committing the budget at this stage.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 In designing any environmental improvements, a key consideration will be to ensure the works can be maintained within future budget streams.
- 5.2 Improving the Environment is in accordance with the Community Strategy.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A budget of £100k is available for the works.
- 6.2 Elsewhere on your agenda is a report which looks at the impact of the National Budget on the HRA. Members could decide to not invest this budget at this stage and use this to protect the HRA in future years.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 A formal Risk Assessment will be carried out on the proposed works once these have been worked up in accordance with any consultation exercise.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 There are a range of options outlined in paragraph 4 if Cabinet wish to invest in environmental improvements however, Members could chose to not invest the budget at this stage or decide on another priority for investment.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix A - Minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 10 September 2015 – *to follow*