

Individual Cabinet Member Report – transfer of capital scheme from provisional to approved programme

(If any background papers attached to this request are exempt please add the following paragraph here: The attached background papers are NOT FOR PUBLICATION in accordance with paragraphs.....of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972. PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE ANY EXEMPT INFORMATION ON THIS FORM).

Name of Cabinet Member	Cllr Sue Cooper – Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Nature Recovery
Name of officer requesting the decision	Kim Hall – Senior Climate Action Officer
Contact details of officer	Kimberly.Hall@southandvale.gov.uk
Details of decision required	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To change the approved Community Infrastructure Levy 2022/23 capital growth bid from 'Tiny Forests' to 'Tree Planting and Biodiversity Enhancements' to fund acceleration of tree planting and improved biodiversity of publicly accessible green spaces in South Oxfordshire. 2. To approve the transfer of £11,000 from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital budget programme for tree planting and biodiversity enhancements in South Oxfordshire.
Recommended Action	That £11,000 is transferred from the provisional CIL programme to the approved capital budget.

Reasons for recommending decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet the council's net zero carbon emission and biodiversity goals, there is an immediate requirement to identify suitable sites and undertake tree planting projects on council owned land • The project is to plant approximately 31 standard trees delivered by the council's parks team on council land in Didcot and Woodcote in winter 2022/23, with some replacement trees for trees lost due to last summer's drought. • Standard trees will in time, as they mature, provide significant improvements to the sites both visually and for biodiversity • The original proposal that was approved in the 2022/23 CIL provisional budget was to plant a Tiny Forest in partnership with Earthwatch at Cronshaw Close in Didcot at a cost of £30,000. Due to the potential presence of buried archaeological remains, the project is no longer feasible without additional investigation at a cost of upwards of £4,000. Instead, this alternative proposal has been put forward which will deliver greater biodiversity value and better value for money. • In addition, a new wildflower meadow will be created in Cronshaw Close covering approximately 800m2, four times the area of a Tiny Forest. We would look to engage with local community groups to help us monitor the results of this approach to enhance biodiversity at the site, and if the planting is a success, we could use this as an exemplar for other council estate land in future years • This proposal has been developed with the council's Parks team, who will be taking this project forward as they already manage tree planting across the council's estate using their existing skills and experience
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Financial details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tree planting and meadow creation work will be funded from an approved £25,000 Community infrastructure Levy (CIL) budget • Officers will draw £11,000 down from this CIL budget into the approved capital budget programme. The remaining £14,000 will carry forward to 2023/24 • Parks team will liaise with finance to draw down the money
Alternative options considered and rejected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing, however, for the council to achieve its own ambitious zero carbon target by 2025, we need to take action quickly. This project will be launched this planting season (Nov-Mar), also serving as an example project in other locations.
Details of background documents	NA
Declarations / conflict of interest	Declarations of any other Cabinet Members consulted by the Cabinet Member making the decision.

Consultation (officers/ward councillors)	Section	Name	Outcome	Date
<p>Legal, HR, Agenda 21 and finance should be consulted regarding the proposals. Ward Councillors, other Cabinet Members and officers should be consulted if the proposals will have an impact on their service area/ward.</p>	Legal legal@southandvale.gov.uk	Vivian Williams	No response	
	Finance Finance@southandvale.gov.uk	Nicole Tyreman	No further comments	20/02/23
	Infrastructure and Development Mark.Hewwer@southandvale.gov.uk	Mark Hewer	<p>Confirm that £25,000 has been allocated in the provisional capital programme for this benefit but that the wording of the allocation will need to be amended as set out in the decision section to use this for the project as detailed above.</p> <p>Please ensure that the infrastructure team are advised on when and where the funding is to be spent to ensure CIL spending compliance and for reporting and monitoring purposes.</p> <p>CIL spending guidance confirms the broad definition for CIL spending of 'infrastructure that is needed to support development' includes funding for (amongst other things), open spaces, parks and green spaces.</p>	11.01.2023
	Risk and insurance risk@southandvale.gov.uk	Yvonne Cutler Greaves	<p>Please confirm land ownership and maintenance to trees in future plus that they are not planted next to buildings where future subsidence may occur leading to insurance claims.</p> <p><i>Response: Council owned land as noted above and maintenance costed in appendix 2.</i></p>	26/01/23
	Communications communications@southandvale.gov.uk	Lucy Billen	This will provide positive news for the council and its residents. Please ensure the comms team is kept apprised of developments in this project.	16/01/23
SMT	TO, SM, AP, AD	Happy to support	22/03/23	
Head of Service approval	Simon Hewings by email			Date 17/03/23
Cabinet Member's approval	Cllr Sue Cooper, Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Nature Recovery, by email			Date 27/03/23

Appendix 1: Detailed capital scheme appraisal report

Ownership of report/ scheme	<p>Cllr Sue Cooper – Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Nature Recovery Email: sue.cooper@southoxon.gov.uk</p> <p>Kim Hall – Senior Climate Action Officer Email: Kimberly.Hall@southandvale.gov.uk</p>
Details of the scheme	<p>Officers have been developing plans for tree planting and meadow creation at six council owned sites in South Oxfordshire. These will deliver the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the council’s agenda to accelerate tree planting • enhance carbon sequestration • provide improved biodiversity value of green spaces to benefit local communities • provide benefits over a wider area <p>We are planning to deliver one area of wildflower meadow at Cronshaw Close in Didcot, along with the planting of approximately 31 larger standard trees at sites including Cronshaw Close, Mowbray Fields, Buckingham Close, Hamble Rd and Worcester Drive in Didcot, and Wittenham Close in Woodcote. This may also include a number of replacements in other areas to be confirmed to cover trees lost during last summer’s drought. These will be delivered by the end of March 2023.</p>
Strategic objectives	<p>Protect and Restore Our Natural World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership....to improve access to green spaces in and around our towns, reinforcing access to nature as a priority for community wellbeing • Encourage the use of natural processes to combat risks arising from climate change, such as meadows and trees to reduce flooding. <p>Action on the Climate Emergency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigate climate change through planning and land use, enhancing biodiversity on our own land and strengthening the planning system to enforce environmental standards.
Purpose of the scheme	<p>The purpose of the scheme is to plant trees on council owned land and enhance biodiversity, to be delivered in winter 2022/23.</p> <p>It will also promote the council’s tree policy and encourage further involvement in tree planting.</p>

Benefits of the Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the councils' Corporate Plan priorities and contribution towards achieving net zero on council land by 2025. • Visible demonstration of the councils' leadership on tackling the climate and ecological emergencies • A nature-rich urban green space created for the physical and mental well-being of South Oxfordshire residents of all ages • Increased public support for climate action and nature recovery • Nature recovery delivered on council land which will be monitored by interested community groups
Measuring the success of the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 large standard trees planted • One wildflower meadow created • Carbon absorbed from the local area, providing a nature-rich solution to climate change in urban areas • Roll out of similar approach at other locations in future planting seasons
Financial details	Financial details are shown in appendix 2
Hurdles to be overcome	<p>Availability of trees to be planted when ordering may mean different varieties from those requested</p> <p>Planting meadows must be done this winter</p> <p>Residents and local nature groups engaged with plans particularly regarding creation of meadow at Cronshaw Close.</p>

Appendix 2: Financial details

The capital cost of the scheme	Capital cost of the scheme is £11,000
The profile of that expenditure	<p>Approximate costs based on soft market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase, planting and one year's maintenance of 31 container grown trees = £8455 • Creation of two wildflower areas including hire of machinery, supply of seed, labour and first year's maintenance = £1,500 • Approx. 10% contingency
The revenue consequences of the scheme (expenditure and income)	<p>The capital cost of this scheme is £11,000 which will be funded for by CIL.</p> <p>Any underspend may be rolled over into the 2023/24 for more tree planting and biodiversity enhancements on public land.</p>
Details of any specific sources of external finance available for this scheme	None.
Any VAT implications of the scheme	None
Any financial risks associated with the scheme	None
Details of any financial return on the investment	None