

**CABINET
12 SEPTEMBER 2006**

ITEM NO.

**REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDING WITH THE LAA
BLOCK 5 (3) – INCREASING COMMUNITY CAPACITY THROUGH STREET SCENE**

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Don Bristow,
Resource Management Portfolio**

Responsible Director(s) - Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Cabinet of proposals for capital spend within Block 5 (No 3) of the Local Area Agreement (LAA), Increasing Community Capacity Through Street Scene and request release of funding.

Information and Analysis

2. The Council has agreed the resources and priorities for the LAA, empowering the LAA Steering Board to firm up proposals, allocate resources and manage the programme of delivery in order to fulfil the overall LAA aims and objectives.
3. As part of the Local Area Agreement, Block 5 (No 3) Safer Stronger Communities, Increasing Community Capacity Through Street Scene, there is £1,360,000 capital grant available over two years 2006/07 and 2007/08.
4. The capital funding is to be spend within four elements:
 - (a) Pride and Street Champions
 - (b) Young Caretakers
 - (c) Parks for All
 - (d) Area Based Community Engagement
5. There is also £500,000 revenue through the Local Area Agreement to support these initiatives, which is mainly tied up in Pride and Street Champions and Young Caretakers.
6. Increasing Community Capacity Through Street Scene is clearly tied into the Council's new approach for delivering Street Scene services within these five areas.

Description of the Scheme

7. The impact of Street Scene, particularly with regard to the cleaner, safer, greener agenda cuts across a number of Council departments and partner agencies included in the public, private and voluntary sectors. The scope of the four products within the LAA are:

Pride In Your Street/Street Champions

8. The majority of this programme is revenue funded, comprising £175,000, which will be spent over the duration of the LAA. Capital grant for this project is £35,000 over two years. £5,000 in 2006/07 and £30,000 in 2007/08.
9. This will be a programme of developing pride in Darlington, working with community groups, residents associations, schools, etc in developing a programme of activities to encourage pride in Darlington. In addition this programme will also identify Street Champions, who are one of the key components of community engagement within Street Scene. Their role will be to work within their street or number of streets, identifying problems and feeding them through to the Coordinator for action. They will also assist in the delivery of messages through the Pride campaign and can be involved in other environmental promotions such as increasing recycling. Street Champions will be recruited Borough-wide.

Young Caretakers

10. The majority of this programme is revenue funded, comprising £325,000 over the duration of the LAA. Capital grant for this scheme is £125,000 over two years. £65,000 in 2006/07 and £60,000 in 2007/08.
11. This programme will work and engage young people in the delivery of environmental projects that will be identified by the young people and delivered by young people focusing on the eleven NR Wards. This may include:
 - (a) Awareness campaigns for other young people about value in their environment.
 - (b) Improving a piece of land that is under valued.
 - (c) Setting up Young Street Champions, Young Park Rangers or Cycling Rangers.
 - (d) Improving recycling rates in an area.
 - (e) Helping adults develop a better understanding of young people.
 - (f) Organising events such as litter picks to getting residents' views on the priorities for their area.
 - (g) Influencing the provision of new/improved pieces of open space to ensure they cater for young peoples' needs.
 - (h) Helping develop an environmental charter for the area.

Area Based Community Engagement

12. Capital Grant for this scheme is £600,000 over two years. £300,000 in 2006/07 and £300,000 in 2007/08.

13. This will be a capital programme for delivering physical improvements within local communities. The intention for this programme is to deliver schemes that have already been identified through the NR Strategy, emerging priorities from the Open Space Strategy and the Equipped Play Area Strategy. The Council has also identified a number of environmental improvement schemes that funding has not been available to date, to take forward. In addition, some projects will be identified through the Pride Campaign and Young Caretakers Programme. It is anticipated that up to 20 projects will be delivered across the Borough during the two years of this funding. The type of projects that will receive funding are:

(a) Eastbourne Boulder

Project developed by Groundwork to go into Eastbourne Sports Complex. Bid in for £50,000 fund from Barclays Space for Sport Programme. Planning applied for. Informal consultation carried out with residents surrounding the site who are quite happy. If funding application agreed, project to be delivered next year. £10,000 - £20,000 required from this scheme.

(b) Firthmoor MUGA

Project to have MUGA next to Maidendale House. Council funding, SRB and Football Foundation funding agreed. LAA to provide final part of funding to deliver project.

(c) Pensbury Street

Improvements to open space area between properties in Pensbury Street.

(d) Open Space – Lascelles

Improvements to this open space area, which has recently had a play area installed and due to have CCTV camera installed.

(e) Eastbourne Park

To continue to improve Eastbourne Park, working with Friends and community groups.

(f) Sugar Hill Park

To carry out improvements to this run down park.

(g) Red Hall Play/Recreation Area, Headingley Crescent

Currently two play areas for young children and juniors at this site. Need to carry out further environmental improvements.

(h) West Park

To provide funds for cycle descender track.

(i) Skerne Park Estate

To draw up environmental improvement action plan for the estate working with residents and young people. To deliver environmental improvements.

(j) New Play Area – Salters Lane

There is a gap in provision of play equipment within this area. £20,000 is available through 106 monies. This will be supplemented from the LAA to provide a new facility.

(k) Upgrade Play/Recreation Area – Fryers Crescent

This is a run down site that has had equipment removed for safety reasons in recent years. There is a gap in provision in this area for young people and the intention would be to provide a new play area/recreation facility.

(l) General Play Area Improvements

To provide funding to delivery improvements for children's play areas across the Borough in line with the Equipped Play Area Action Plan.

(m) Tennis Courts within Stanhope Park

This is a valuable facility and is in need of resurfacing work.

(n) Maidendale Fishing Ponds

To provide fishing pegs around the ponds.

(o) Countryside and Local Nature Reserve Improvements

To provide capital funds to improve where appropriate our network of countryside and local nature reserves, including fencing, signage and access.

(p) Cocker Beck – Improving Biodiversity

A scheme has been developed with the Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water, Durham Wildlife Trust and Branksome School to create a more biodiverse site along the waterway through the Denes.

Any environmental improvement will require ongoing maintenance. A number of the schemes will be to improve existing open space or replace/improve existing play equipment. In this instance existing resources would be adequate to cope with ongoing maintenance. Where new schemes are introduced which creates additional maintenance costs, these will be assessed by the Council and where possible, tied into Section 106 commitments to utilise existing funding for future maintenance. The intention through community engagement is to build capacity in the community and to involve the community in the ongoing upkeep of areas. Where opportunity exists,

additional external funding will be used to enhance any project identified.

Parks for All

14. Capital grant for this scheme is £600,000 over two years. £200,000 in 2006/07 and £400,000 in 2007/08.
15. Through the emerging Open Space Strategy, priorities for improvement have been identified. One of the headline priorities will be to develop a number of strategic sites that have appeal to residents across the Borough. South Park, which has just enjoyed a major refurbishment and West Park, the first new park in the Borough in 100 years, are two of these sites. A further two have been identified in North Park and the Denes as requiring investment. It is therefore, proposed that the funding within the Local Area Agreement will be utilised to improve these two parks. In addition to the Local Area Agreement funding, opportunities will be sought to attract additional resources from the Big Lottery and any other appropriate funding body. In consultation with Members, Friends Groups and residents/community associations, a master plan for these two sites will be developed.
16. The master plan will identify what improvements are required in both of these parks, they are likely to include such things as:
 - (a) Play provision for young people
 - (b) Improved access
 - (c) Improved fencing
 - (d) Improved biodiversity, particularly the Denes
 - (e) Creation of attractive open space for people to relax and enjoy.

Objective and Outcomes of the Scheme Including Performance Measures

17. The overall aim of Street Scene is:

'We will work with partners in the public, private and voluntary sector to keep Darlington clean, safe and green'.

18. There are also four objectives tied to the overall aim. These are:

- (a) To deliver a joined up approach to Street Scene services that reflects good practice.
- (b) Provide opportunities for the community and local Ward Members to be involved in the design and delivery of services.
- (c) Improve residents' satisfaction with the clean, safe and green agenda.
- (d) Secure efficiency gains in Street Scene services.

19. The outcomes identified in the Local Area Agreement are:

- (a) To reduce crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs, and to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

- (b) To empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision making and the delivery of services.
- (c) To have cleaner, greener and safer public places.
- (d) To improve the quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and ensure service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs and improve their delivery.
- (e) To increase numbers of children and young people who are positively engaged in their free time – achieving personal and social development.

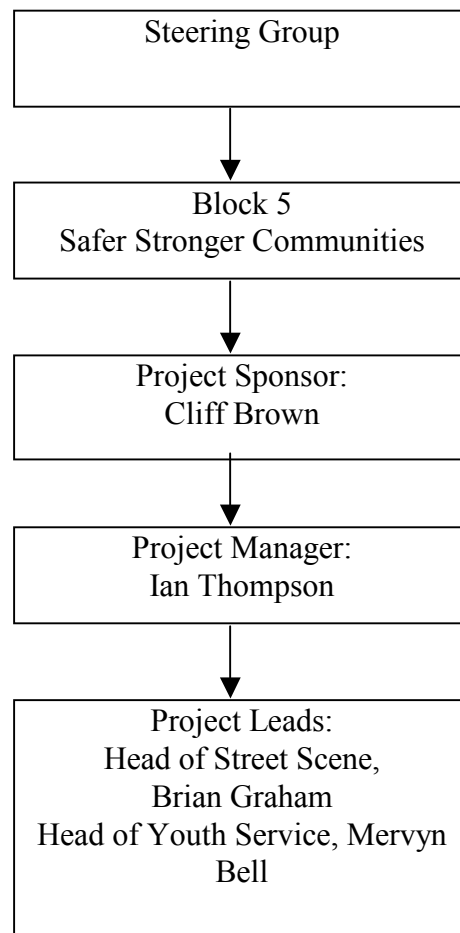
20. The performance measures within the LAA that this capital spend will assist in delivering are included in the following table:

Ref	Performance Indicators or measures	Baseline (2004/05) Unless indicated otherwise	Targets to be achieved (by 2009)
2.1.1	Percentage of people who say they feel safe walking outside in their area alone in the dark (QoL15a)	48.3%	Without Stretch: 55% With Stretch 60%
2.1.2	Percentage of people who say they feel safe walking outside in their area alone during the day (QoL15b)	93.3%	95%
2.1.3	British Crime Survey – Reductions in comparator crime between 2003/04 and 2007/08	2003/04 = 100% 6,988 Actual crimes	-----
2.1.7	Number of incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) involving young people reported to police	3,325 incidents in 2003/04	2,993 incidents, a 10% reduction
2.1.8	Number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System	311 in 2004/05	Without Stretch: 290 With Stretch: 275
2.2.1	Proportion of residents who feel able to influence decisions affecting the local area (Local PI)	33.1%	37%

2.2.2	Proportion of residents who feel that by working together people can influence decisions that affect their neighbourhood (Local PI)	54.5%	65%
2.2.3	Proportion of residents who say that people from different backgrounds get on well in their area (Local PI)	63.8%	70%
2.3.1a	Residents satisfaction with Parks and Open Spaces (BV119e)	65.9% 2003 BVPI Survey	Without Stretch: 72% With Stretch: 76%
2.3.1b	Percentage of relevant land which has significant or heavy deposits of litter or detritus (categories below B under BV199a)	19%	Without Stretch: 15% With Stretch: 10%
2.3.2	Percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards (BV89)	57.9% (2003/04)	75%
2.3.3	Percentage of household waste a) recycled; b) composted; c) used to recover heat, power and other energy resources and d) land filled (BV82)	a) 14.1% b) 3.4% c) 0.0% d) 82.5%	a) 18% b) 6% c) 0% d) 76%
2.3.4	Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head (BV84)	547.6	613
2.3.5	Area of Council owned land under management for nature conservation as well as being accessible by the public	60 hectares	75 hectares
2.3.6	Area of publicly accessible quality countryside within easy reach of people's homes	130 hectares	150 hectares
2.4.1	Proportion of residents satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	76.7%	80%
2.4.2	Proportion of residents who feel their neighbourhood has got better in the last two years	9.8%	14%
2.4.3	The percentage of residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years, community activities have got better or stayed the same. (QoL3)	85.58% (2003/04)	90%
2.5.2	Percentage of residents very or fairly satisfied with Children's play areas (CS26)	35%	53%

Delivery of the Project

21. The project will be delivered through the Local Area Agreement methodology and will be managed as follows:



22. The capital funding available has to be spent by March 2008.

23. Contracts for specific capital projects will be tendered in line with the Council's procurement procedures.

Future Revenue Costs




24. The cost for any improvement to parks and open spaces will be contained within existing MTFP and where appropriate, utilise existing and new Section 106 developer contributions for the maintenance of parks and open spaces.


Total Cost of the Scheme and How It Will Be Funded

25. Through the LAA, there is capital grant of £1,360,000 available for physical improvements to our parks and open spaces. This will be supplemented by Council capital resources where available (The Capital MTFP approved in March 2006 includes £50,000 for the refurbishment of Parks) and Section 106 monies. A report for Cabinet to release these monies will be made at a later date. In addition, there may be opportunities for additional Big Lottery and other funding bodies support to a number of the projects.




Specific Risks of This Scheme and Control Measures In Place to Reduce These Risks

26. There are a number of risks associated with this programme of capital spend and for which control measures are in place. The risks and actions with current status are shown in the following table:

Risk No.	Risk Description	Action	Status ‡
1	Shortfall in capital expenditure due to delay in commencement of work	Work to accurately profile the anticipated expenditure to commence on approval of Product Description. Options to be developed for mitigating the risk to be developed following quantification.	
2	The limited time frame for delivery (2 years) and the involvement required from the community on the design stage of the work packages may further delay the commencement of the work.	Detailed product and project plans to be developed jointly between project manager and product lead to encompass community involvement process.	
3	The sustainability of the work packages is reliant upon community engagement – without effective community engagement through the full life cycle of the work packages the sustainability of the solution being delivered may not be possible.	Involvement from the communities to be captured and detailed within the product and project plans. Consideration in the development of the work packages to consider the sustainability of the solution being delivered.	

4	Capacity to deliver could be compromised due to the recent changes following the Street Scene implementation.	Close working relationships between the product leads / project manager and street scene co-ordinator to ensure aligned delivery.	
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‡ Status:

	Risk is above risk appetite and requires management action
	Risk is being managed within risk appetite
	Risk has been successfully resolved – no longer a risk to the product

27. These risks are managed and controlled through the LAA project management methodology.

Outcome of Consultation

28. The schemes identified within the Local Area Agreement product descriptions for funding support have been identified from previous consultation as part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and Open Space Strategy.

29. For the majority of schemes within the programme, detailed consultation will take place with the local community. This will be delivered through the Pride and Street Champion project and the Young Caretakers project. For the two major park refurbishment programmes, significant consultation will take place with local Members and the local community in order to design a master plan for the Denes and North Park.

Legal Implications

30. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

31. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

32. The whole emphasis of this part of the Local Area Agreement is about providing safer, stronger communities. In particular, Increasing Community Capacity Through Street Scene is focused on engaging the community to improve their local environment, thereby significantly impacting on community safety.

Council Policy Framework

33. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

34. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Key Decisions

35. To release funding from the Local Area Agreement to utilise on improvements to parks and open spaces across the Borough.

Recommendation

36. It is recommended that £1,360,000 of capital grant funds are released from the Local Area Agreement as detailed in this report.

Reasons

37. The recommendation is supported to enable the Council to benefit from the capital resources contained in the LAA Agreement and progress the schemes within Block 5 (No 3) of the Local Area Agreement.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Ian Thompson : Extension 4446
CLD