

Climate Change, Leisure and Housing
16 October 2024

PART I
Capital Grants
(ADCCC)

1 Summary

- 1.1 In September 2018 a proposal was agreed by Policy and Resources Committee to restructure the councils external grant process. This resulted in development of service level agreements with selected local organisations using the revenue funding and small capital projects which the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee would agree to be allocated to the service area.
- 1.1.1 In October 2018 Leisure, Environment and Community Committee agreed the capital grant for 2019/20 and that future health and wellbeing projects would be detailed in the service plans of Strategy and Partnerships and Leisure. This funding has been spent on Outdoor Spaces. As five years have passed a review is required for allocation of the capital funding from 2024-2029. This report will explore the reasons and options for expenditure for the next 5 years with recommendations.

2 Details

- 2.1 Since 2019 Capital grant funding had been allocated by the Leisure and Natural Infrastructure Team to support health and wellbeing in the district, the following Outdoor Spaces projects were delivered:
- 2.1.1 2019/20: Eastbury Outdoor Gym (£8,250) and Primrose Hill Play Area (£11,750)
- 2.1.2 2020/21: The Swillett Cycle Track (£8,250) and Primrose Hill Play Area (£11,750)
- 2.1.3 2021/22: Outdoor Fitness Zone (£20,000)
- 2.1.4 2022/23: Outdoor Fitness Zone (£20,000)
- 2.1.5 2023/24: Outdoor Fitness Zone (£20,000)
- 2.2 Outdoor Fitness Zones are available for residents in the following areas, Aquadrome (Rickmansworth Town), Leavesden Country Park (Leavesden), Eastbury Recreation Ground (Moor Park & Eastbury), South Oxhey Playing Fields (South Oxhey / Oxhey Hall & Hayling), Baldwin Lane Playing Fields (Durrants / Dickinson), King George V Playing Fields (Penn & Mill End).
- 2.3 This infrastructure development has improved accessibility to health improvement equipment in several areas of the district.

3 Community Need

- 3.1 Since the initial allocation of this funding, our residents and local community infrastructure have been significantly impacted by the pandemic and now face a huge increase in the cost of living resulting in increased health inequalities.

- 3.2 The council undertook a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on Health Inequalities in 2023 to evidence and support in prioritisation of health initiatives.
- 3.3 The JSNA demonstrated that tobacco smoking (15.1%) contributed the largest proportion of attributable cancer cases, followed by being overweight/obese.
- 3.4 The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities found in 2021 that there is higher prevalence of primary aged children living in South Oxhey, who are overweight or obese (20.4%). The district average is 17.2%.
- 3.5 Community and Voluntary Group Forums established across the district bring together numerous partners from the community and voluntary sector to ensure a community-centred approach that's tailored to individual needs.
- 3.6 Some of the key issues explored through these meetings include; difficulty finding volunteers, cost of living, need for warm spaces, activities for people with learning difficulties, children's mental health, increase of mental health conditions and increase in incidents of homelessness.
- 3.7 Our Local Strategic Partnership and Corporate Framework also have strategic aims to improve health and wellbeing in Three Rivers by creating safe, sustainable communities.
- 3.8 Residents were consulted during the development of the Community Strategy Action Plan in 2023. Responses from this survey showed that "Cost of Living" was the top ranking priority, out of twelve, that residents wanted to be addressed. Second was "Promote local services to empower residents to improve their lifestyle" and third was "Adopt a place based approach to address health inequalities."
- 3.9 Income Deprivation has been identified as a significant inequality impacting on health outcomes within Three Rivers. In 2021, the difference in life expectancy at birth for those in the most deprived areas in comparison to the least deprived was 5.6 years for males and 5.3 years for females.
- 3.10 Engagement with Gate Herts and Hertfordshire Pride Society has highlighted discrepancies in demographic data provided in the Census. For example, residents from the LGBTQ+ community, and those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities are under self-reported within the census, demonstrating "hidden communities" within Three Rivers. This demonstrates greater need improve accessibility to health services for members of minority community groups.
- 3.11 The implementation of Healthy Hubs across the district provides an opportunity to work closer with a range of organisations and improve access into services to support health improvement and wellbeing. In the year 2023-24, 1,639 engagements with Three Rivers residents and the Healthy Hubs took place, this included access to various partner services present in the hubs and referrals to the Healthy Hub.
- 3.12 Some of the needs identified above are being addressed through the Health Hubs, with delivery of smoking cessation services, NHS Health Checks for residents over 40, and improving equity of access to local services, as well as through the provision of physical activities and improved outdoor spaces to encourage movement.

- 3.13 Preventative work to address the wider determinants impacting on health outcomes should be prioritised in order to prioritise the long term wellbeing of residents and reduce pressure on public services in future years.
- 3.14 Initiatives relating to addressing health inequalities and access to services should target areas of deprivation and minority community groups.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 To agree for funding to be spent between Strategy and Partnerships and Leisure and Natural Infrastructure on initiatives to promote health and wellbeing and address health inequalities.
 - 4.1.1 The Strategy and Partnerships Team currently lead on workstreams relating to public health and place based health inequalities. The funding would be utilised on projects and infrastructure to address health inequalities and the wider determinants of health inequalities impacting our residents.
 - 4.1.2 Developing a new location for the South Oxhey Food Bank and enhancing this to be a community hub would allow for additional local services to be delivered from the location to support vulnerable residents living in the area. This would also provide free accommodation for the South Oxhey Healthy Hubs which would support the demand on council resources and cost of living crisis.
 - 4.1.3 Improving access to health management services through the Healthy Hubs will directly impact on health inequalities and allow for improved service delivery to prevent poor health outcomes.
 - 4.1.4 Funding towards outdoor leisure facilities to enhance physical activity opportunities, including updating tennis courts to offer options for pickleball, other sports and line markings to support those with additional needs.
 - 4.1.5 This approach would support the priorities of the council's Corporate Framework and the Three Rivers Community Strategy.
 - 4.1.6 These projects would be agreed as part of the service planning process and in consultation with the Lead Member for Leisure and the Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships and Lead Member for Housing and Health.
- 4.2 To reallocate funds towards other capital projects across the council.
 - 4.2.1 This would support other council projects already underway and in need of resource, however, diverting resources from addressing health inequalities and improving wellbeing would increase demand on public services in later years.
- 4.3 To end the capital grants process.
 - 4.3.1 Ending the process would remove opportunities for development of community infrastructure, and flexibility to address health inequalities and promote wellbeing dependant on community need.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets. The relevant policy is entitled Corporate Framework 2023-2027 and was agreed May 2023.

Financial, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

None specific. Any requirements will be addressed on an individual project basis.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The council has a wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do including make grant funding available. It is recommended that when awarding grant funding a fair and transparent process is carried out to identify grant recipients to avoid a potential judicial review.
- 6.2 The proposed grants will be subject to the provisions of the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022 ("the Act") depending on the amounts involved, who the recipients are and whether any exemptions apply. The Act places certain duties on the council, notably (1) assessing all subsidies (which fulfil the definition of "subsidy" in the Act) against what are called the "subsidy control principles" set out in the Act, and (2) not paying any subsidy unless it is of the view that it is consistent with those principles. There is also detailed statutory guidance about applying the Subsidy Control Act 2022, to which the council is required to have regard. However, the grant programme as set out in this report will not realistically influence or distort competition or investment within the UK and so would not fall within the statutory definition of a subsidy.
- 6.3 In deciding whether to approve this grant programme Committee members should be aware of their fiduciary and best value duties in terms of the prudent and responsible stewardship of the council's assets and resources.
- 6.4 It is advisable that a written grant agreement is prepared for each proposed grant.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The proposal for the spend of the Capital Grant will help to reduce health inequalities in the district whilst supporting financially council led projects. No additional funds are required.

8 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 8.1 Impact Assessment

Projects funded through Capital Grants will undertake individual EQIAs. Projects focussing on health inequalities will improve equality of access for services and projects funded.

9 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 9.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 9.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Strategy and Partnerships service plan(s). Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
To not allocated the Capital Grants funding could risk health inequalities increasing.	Increased demand on community, voluntary and public sector in future years	Allocate funding towards capital projects supporting the reduction of health inequalities	Treat	6

9.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- ▼ Remote	Low	High	Very High	Very High
	4	8	12	16
	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	3	6	9	12
	Low	Low	Medium	High
	2	4	6	8
	Low	Low	Low	Low
	1	2	3	4
	Impact			
	Low	-----▶		Unacceptable

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote (≤5%))

9.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

10 Recommendation

10.1 That:

Committee acknowledge the report and share comments relating to the recommendations listed above.

That public access to the report be immediate

That public access to the decision be immediate

Committee Decision on Public Access:-

1. Public access to report - immediate

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Data Quality

Data sources:

Three Rivers Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Data checked by:

Freddy Chester

Data rating: Tick

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	X

Background Papers

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS