



Democratic Services

Location: Phase II
Ext: 0185
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CMD No: 982

**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. Jennifer Hedges – Place Directorate
c.c. Perry Scott – Corporate Director of Place
c.c. Ward Councillors for Heathrow Villages

Date: 4 December 2023

Non-Key Decision request

Form D

CAPITAL RELEASE REPORT (December 2023)

DEPARTMENT: Residents' Services

SERVICE AREA / PROGRAMME: Environmental & Recreational Initiatives:
Cranford Park Environmental Improvements Project

Dear Cabinet Members,

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 Tuesday 12 December 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: Cranford Park Environmental Improvements Project

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 (December 2023)

DEPARTMENT: Resident Services

SERVICE AREA / PROGRAMME: Environmental & Recreational Initiatives: Cranford Park Environmental Improvements Project

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Martin Goddard Councillor Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Finance Cabinet Member for Residents' Services
Officer Contact(s)	Jennifer Hedges, Place Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A – Capital release requests for approval
Summary	To seek release of £35k funds towards Cranford Park environmental improvement project
Putting our Residents First	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: <i>Live in a sustainable borough that is carbon neutral</i></p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: <i>A green and sustainable borough</i></p>
Financial Cost	This report seeks the release of £35k for Cranford Park environmental improvement project, fully funded by Smarter Water Catchment Grant.
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Relevant Ward(s)	Heathrow Villages

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services approve the project and capital release request of £35k budget fully funded by Smarter Water Catchment Grant for the Cranford Park environmental improvement project (Appendix A).

Reasons for recommendation

The 'Cranford Park environmental improvements' aim to improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of an important water network within Cranford Park, targeting ditches and the River Crane. The project contains two linked elements:

1. Tree works and scrub removal along the ditch banks

2. A feasibility study to understand the current biodiversity and nature value of the ditch in order to plan for future works to enhance the River Crane ecosystem

Selectively removing larger self-set trees and pruning others will allow natural sunlight into the river channel, boosting flora and fauna biodiversity, and allowing growth of emergent plants. In addition, it will enhance park visitors' experiences, because at present the path network adjacent to the ditch is very overgrown. Scrub removal along the banks will further utilise natural light needed for new plant growth both in and around the ditch channel.

The comprehensive feasibility study will enable experts to examine the full potential of the watercourse and the linked water networks for prospective projects. The future aim is to use the ditch and potential wetlands to filter and utilise the surface run-off from the nearby motorways and fields. This will allow a volume of high-quality water to enter the local river and water networks.

The Council plans to work in partnership with approved agricultural contractors, and Cartographer for these projects.

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.

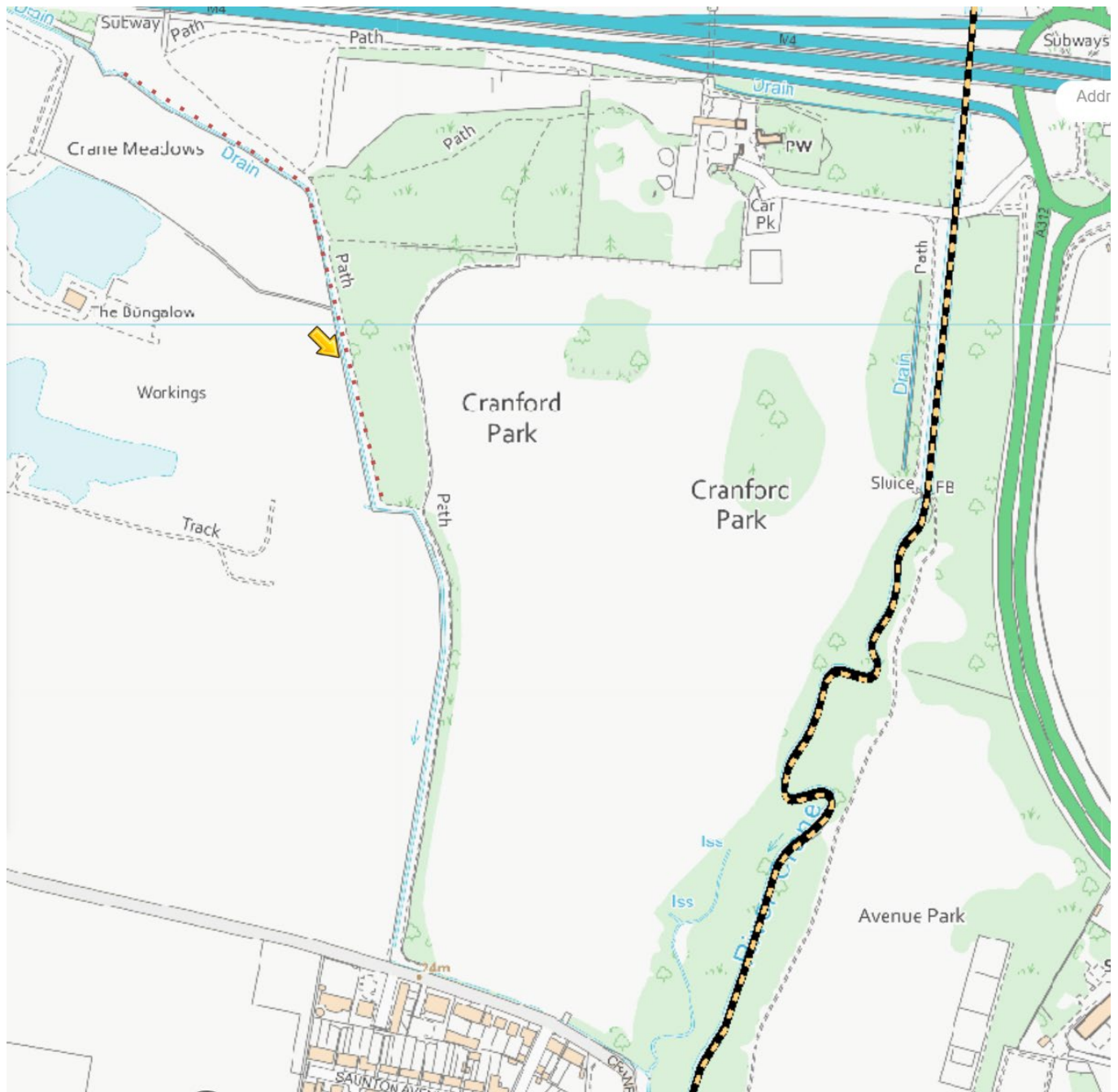
Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Cranford Park in Hayes is one of the largest green spaces in Hillingdon, covering almost 150 acres of natural habitat with ancient woodland, rivers, meadows, cattle grazing and recreational areas.

Recently, the Park has been successfully implementing a multi-million-pound Heritage Lottery Fund to regenerate and improve its facilities. This proposed project will further enhance park visitor experiences and the habitats throughout the park:



(Works will run along the western edge of the park, where it joins up with the River Crane at the south-east end of the park)

This report is seeking project approval and the allocation of funding for the Cranford Park environmental improvement project. The table below outlines the project plan and timescales:

Item	2023				2024	
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Feasibility study and reporting						
Scrub removal						
Tree management						

The works will be undertaken by:

- Tree and scrub Contractor – Council contracted supplier – John Straka Agriculture
- Cartographer – Council contracted supplier

The table below provides a breakdown of the costs:

Cost Plan		
Description	Supplier	Amount (£)
Habitat works		
Tree management	LBH contracted supplier	20,320
Scrub removal	LBH contracted supplier	1,200
Feasibility study		
Baseline feasibility study & reporting	Cartographer	10,000
Other		
Project Management Fees		3,262
Total		£34,782

Financial Implications

(Cranford Park Environmental Improvements Budget £35k, Previously Released Nil, Capital Release Requested £35k) – Appendix A

In December 2023, a recommendation is being presented to Cabinet to accept a £35k grant funding from the Groundwork London from the Crane Valley Project fund for the Cranford Park environmental improvement project. No match funding is requested.

The report seeks the release of £35k for the Cranford Park environmental improvement project, which includes habitat works and feasibility study, fully financed from grant. The release request includes quotations from the green spaces term contractors and internal project management fees.

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 upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

The Council and its partners are committed to making the Borough a cleaner, greener and safer environment. Improving existing habitats in this well-preserved Conservation Area 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 and water courses, increasing the site's overall biodiversity and ecological resilience whilst retaining a peaceful place for people to relax and enjoy.

This project is also consistent with Hillingdon's Strategic Climate Change Action Plan and Carbon offsetting:

“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 an 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 To 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 the recommendation to release £35k for the Cranford Park environmental improvement project, which will be funded from Smarter Water Catchment Grant, which is subject to Cabinet Acceptance of the grant being proposed at December Cabinet. If the grant is accepted, this release request will have no impact on Council resources.

Legal

Legal Services confirm that the Council is responsible for carrying out this function pursuant to section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875 and section 10 of the Open Spaces Act 1906. Thus, there are no legal impediments to the recommended capital release for Cranford Park environmental improvements being authorised, although any contract that is entered into must comply with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.

The Council, in managing trees, must ensure that it acts in accordance with any tree preservation orders that have been granted under sections 198 or 202 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any restrictions applicable to trees in conservation areas under section 211 of that same Act. Pursuant to regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012, any tree subject to a tree preservation order must not be cut down, topped, lopped, uprooted, or wilfully damaged or destroyed unless an exception in the Regulations applies.

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 by the Cabinet Member for Finance. 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

Cranford Park Environmental Improvements 2023/24

Location (Ward)	Project / Expenditure Title	Information	Funds Release Sought £000s	Approve	Hold	More Information Required
Heathrow Villages	Cranford Park environmental improvements	Cranford Park environmental improvements	35			
Total seeking release			35			
Previously released			0			
Budget			35			
Remaining budget			0			