
Subject: RELEASE OF SECTION 106 MONIES FROM AYLESHAM VILLAGE GARDEN PUBLIC REALM CONTRIBUTIONS

Meeting and Date: Cabinet - 5 July 2021

Report of: Roger Walton, Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Oliver Richardson, Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property

Decision Type Non-Key Decision

Classification: Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To seek approval for the release of Section 106 monies obtained from the Aylesham redevelopment for the procurement of Grounds Maintenance staff and equipment to maintain the soft landscaping requirements.

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

1. Approves the use of Section 106 receipts in respect of the Aylesham redevelopment for the addition of grounds maintenance resources to undertake all maintenance and landscaping requirements for open spaces and play areas within the District.
 2. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property, to take all necessary steps to set up the service.
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1. Summary

The Council has seen a significant growth of assets since the grounds maintenance (GM) Service transferred in house. There have been several new developments including the new Leisure centre at Whitfield with an increase of high profile maintenance, the procurement of Whitfield Business Park with associated open space provisions, the George Close Development in Capel and soon the addition of Snelgrove and William Muge developments. The most significant pressure has come from the Aylesham Village Development. Aylesham has been subject to substantial development over the past few years as part of the ongoing Village Garden Development, creating over 1200 new homes with extensive open space, sport and play provisions. This report outlines the need to increase the Grounds Maintenance staff and equipment resources to accommodate the additional maintenance requirements from the increase of open space, sports and play provisions imposed on the In-House Service.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The current GM resources are at capacity and there is no ability to take on the increase of service being generated by new open space provisions including Whitfield Court, Dover Leisure Centre, George Close in Capel but predominantly the creation of new space in the Aylesham Village development. The scale of the development means this

increase is significant and will continue to increase as further phases transfer to the responsibility of the District Council.

- 2.2 The addition of the vehicle, equipment and staff resource will strengthen the GM Service and offer some resilience across the overall service.
- 2.3 Incorporating the existing maintenance requirements with the new will ensure a coherent and consistent standard of maintenance is undertaken across the entire village, supporting the integration of the new and old areas.
- 2.4 There is also the potential to incorporate the Parish Council's maintenance requirements with the support of funding from them to embody the entire service to one supplier. This will again support a consistent approach with economies of scale for an efficient service delivery. The District Council contains the necessary professionals to support all areas of service delivery from high intensity open space to specialist play area equipment.
- 2.5 The Team will integrate into the Community to offer a tailored maintenance service that meets the needs of the local community and the Parish Council. They will be based in the area and therefore can react quickly and efficiently to the requirements of the area. Currently we have multiple teams that visit Aylesham area to undertake varying tasks. By having a team focused to this area means transport movements will be reduced significantly saving fuel, wear & tear and staff downtime travelling.
- 2.6 The current value of routine works undertaken by the GM Team is just over £45k. It is intended that the dedicated Aylesham Team will pick up non routine works too, as well as the Parish Councils requirements which equates in the region of a further £20k of works. The expectation for additional open space transfer back to DDC will account for a possible further £20k. The ongoing staff and running costs equate to just over £45k therefore, demonstrating a value for money service.
- 2.7 It would cost less than the current value of works to run the service.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1 – To agree to set up a grounds maintenance service for Aylesham and procure vehicles, mowers and hand tools to undertake the maintenance requirements of Aylesham village.
- 3.2 Option 2 - Incorporate the service into the current GM service
- 3.3 Option 3 - Transfer to an external management company

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Option 1 – This option would deliver high a quality service at an affordable cost but have limitations across the overall service
- 4.2 Option 2 – Preferred option as this offers resilience across the entire GM Service. Having the team focused in the north west region of the district will afford reduced travelling times, support a more productive use of staff resource, save on fuel costs as well as wear & tear on the fleet vehicles whilst reducing our carbon emissions.
- 4.3 Option 3 – No control over service and cost likely to be more expensive.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 It is intended to resource the initial set up of this service from the Section 106 monies related to the Village Garden Development in Aylesham. At the moment the Council is currently holding £806,943 in public realm management contribution.

The Capital cost to set up the service is made up of £73,500.00 on equipment and £45,402.00 on staff costs. The staff costs can be supported by the HRA account indefinitely to manage HRA land.

- 5.2 The current value of routine works undertaken in Aylesham equates to £46k of which £41.8k is recharged to General Housing. A proportion of this HRA budget, along with annual contributions from S106, Parish Council and Kent Highways will support the ongoing revenue costs associated with this team after year 1.

Staff (including NI and Pension)		
Skilled Operative		£22,984
General Operative	Covered in current staff structure	£22,418
		£45,402
Capital Set up Costs		
Vehicle		26,000.00
TORO ride on mower		37,000.00
Ferris pedestrian mower		8,000.00
Miscellaneous (lockbox, hand-tools etc)		2,500.00
		£73,500.00
Running costs (exclusive of staff)		
Fuel & oil		3000.00
Sundries (trimmer cord, PPE)		1500.00
Insurance		1000.00
Servicing & Repairs		1000.00
Waste disposal		3000.00
		£9,500.00

- 5.3 The preferred option will be to finance the entire cost of the Capital set up, additional staff member and running costs for the first year from the S106 reserve for Aylesham Village and then to receive a contribution of £35k for the subsequent 10 years towards ongoing staff and equipment cost. One would assume all units are occupied and contributions via Council tax would sustain this from the general fund ongoing.

6. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 6.1 This asset and resource increase will reduce travelling time, expenses and emissions associated with delivery of the service. The team will be much more self-sufficient, self-monitoring and address service requests without the need for a Supervisor to travel to site.
- 6.2 The team will accommodate amendments to the grounds maintenance specification to support biodiversity and habitat improvements within the village.
- 6.3 The Team will be using Aspen fuels to operate their machinery, reducing emissions and harmful gases.

7. Corporate Implications

- 7.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: The Section 151 Officer has been consulted during the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Head of Governance has been consulted during the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: The Equalities Officer has been involved in the preparation of this report. The report does not specifically highlight any equality implications. However, in discharging their duties, Members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>.
- 7.4 Other Officers (as appropriate):
8. **Appendices**
None.
9. **Background Papers**

Contact Officer: Darran Solley – Parks & Open Spaces Manager