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

Meeting and Date: Cabinet – 6 June 2022

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

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

Decision Type 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 equipment and staff contributions to maintain the additional public realm and enhanced soft landscaping requirements which are transferring to the District Council.

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

1. Approves the use of Section 106 receipts in respect of the Aylesham redevelopment for the introduction of a designated grounds maintenance service to undertake all maintenance and landscaping requirements for open spaces and play areas within the village.
2. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial) to take all necessary steps to set up and manage the service.

1. Summary

1.1 Aylesham has been subject to substantial development over the past few years as part of the ongoing Village Garden Development, creating over 1300 new homes with extensive open space, sport and play provisions. This report outlines the need to increase the Grounds Maintenance (GM) 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 A previous report was submitted in July that described this proposal as being incorporated to the current GM service, to some part this is true but at present the service visits Aylesham and has a set timeframe to deliver the service within the area. The additional works are then identified on an ad hoc basis which competes with other pressures and priorities across the GM service. It is proposed that the procurement of additional equipment using the S106 contribution will offer a more bespoke, dedicated GM service to Aylesham Village, to not only deal with the increased open spaces maintenance transferring to DDC but also enhance and prioritise the level of service overall to the village.

- 2.2 The structure of the GM service means that there is resilience built in across the service. Should equipment break down or staff be off sick, then the in-house service offers the flexibility to redirect resources to ensure service is resumed. The procurement of this additional equipment will be in its majority designated to Aylesham but on the rare occasion may be used elsewhere if there was the need to do so (a breakdown etc). The resilience is also reciprocated to Aylesham should the equipment in this area suffer a failure.
- 2.3 By enhancing the maintenance and tailoring the specifications in Aylesham, it will provide a designated service that will be supported by the wider GM Service.
- 2.4 It is intended to set up a designated GM Team in Aylesham to undertake all the existing maintenance requirements of the village as well as all the new additional areas of open space, including the provision of new play areas, Surface Drainage System SDS and high-profile landscaping.
- 2.5 The current GM resources are at capacity and there is no ability to take on the increase of service being generated by the creation of new space in this 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.
- 2.6 By 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.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 The designated 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 village and therefore can react quickly and efficiently to the requirements of the area.
- 2.9 The current value of routine works undertaken by the GM Team is just over £54k. It is intended that the dedicated Aylesham Team will pick up non routine works too, as well as the possibility of adopting the Parish Councils requirements.
- 2.10 Engagement has taken place with the Parish Council to more understand their needs and ensure the service continues develops to incorporate their requirements. This has now received their approval.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1 – To agree to set up a dedicated grounds maintenance service for Aylesham and immediate surrounding areas, including the procurement of vehicle, mowers, hand tools and additional staff resource 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 – Preferred option to deliver high quality service at an affordable cost
- 4.2 Option 2 – Not enough resources in current team to accommodate works, so similar costs as Option 1.

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 £1,057,270 in public realm management contribution.

5.2 The Capital cost to set up the service is made up of £87,000.00 for equipment. It is intended to cover the entirety of this cost from the S106 contributions. The revenue costs would be £50,460 on staff costs & £16,700 for equipment running costs, giving an overall running cost of £67,160 per annum.

5.3 The report is seeking the approval for a 10-year period from the S106 funds to embed the enhanced service.

5.4 One would assume that when all units are occupied that contributions via Council tax would sustain this from the general fund in the future.

Capital Set up Costs			10 Year Costs
Vehicle		35,000.00	
TORO ride on mower		37,000.00	
Ferris pedestrian mower		10,000.00	
Miscellaneous (lockbox, hand-tools etc)		5000.00	
		£87,000.00	On-going replacement from the Parks Equipment Replacement Programme budget
Staff (including NI and Pension)		Salary based on points one of Grades J and K for respective posts as of April 2022	Total based on a flat inflation rate of 3% pa
Skilled Operative		£26,760	
General Operative		£23,700	
General Operative	Covered in current staff structure		
		£50,460	£578,467.40
Running costs (exclusive of staff)			
Fuel & oil		4000.00	
Sundries (trimmer cord, PPE)		2000.00	
Insurance		1700.00	
Servicing & Repairs		4000.00	
Waste disposal		5000.00	
		£16,700.00	£191,446.80

6. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 This designated service 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 Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Accountancy have been consulted in the writing of this report and have no further comment to add (MR).
- 7.2 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: 'This 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>'
- 7.3 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 7.4 Other Officers (as appropriate): Amanda Martin, Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer – No further comments.

8. **Appendices**

None.

Background Papers

Contact Officer: Darran Solley – Parks & Open Spaces Manager