

Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet

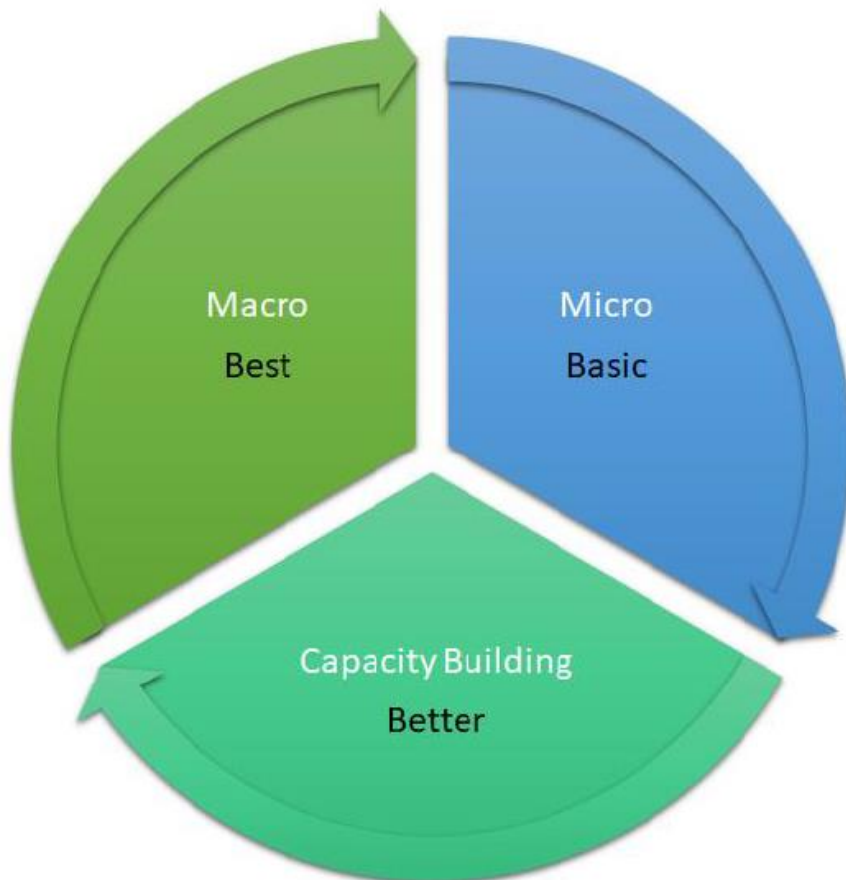
8th February 2022



APPENDIX D FINANCE & COSTINGS

1.0 New Financial Framework for Parks

- 1.1 The funding of Birmingham City of Nature is being approached through several avenues that fundamentally do not create a new revenue or capital strain on Birmingham City Council.
- 1.2 A Sustainable Finance Steering Group chaired by Councillor Chatfield as Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources has been sitting for 15 months to explore innovative funding approaches involving both potential external sources of funding and looking to build internal capacity across the service directorates of the council.
- 1.3 This Steering Group has produced a final report for the Group on December 15th, 2021.
- 1.4 The Future Parks Accelerator has developed a fresh approach to the resourcing of parks and green spaces in the city capture in the diagram below:



- 1.5 Micro funding relates to site-based funding, something that historically parks and their partners have been quite successful in. During this FPA (Future Parks Accelerator) Crowdfunding has also

been successfully tested on a pilot site; so, can be used with confidence in future. Going forward the newly formed City of Nature Alliance will assist in helping to attract further external funding to park sites; some of which the council cannot directly access themselves. Having and agreed plan will allow all parties to work strategically to target these approaches to match needs in the city.

- 1.6 Capacity building is vitally important when thinking about resources and revenue pressures. Here the FPA has developed new and important links right across the Council, forging new links that will result in new service delivery models. Service directorates will work together to deliver the outcomes need for citizens in a collaborative way; through the new governance arrangements of the new City of Nature Steering Group and City of Nature Operations Group-supported by the Alliance. In this way the revenue burden will not fall on a single service but be led by the desired outcome sought.
- 1.7 Macro funding, linked to the declared climate emergency, Our Future City Plan, and the development prospectus for a greener Birmingham. The City of Nature Board will ensure that the requirements in the City of Nature Delivery Framework are built into the city's future planning. To enable a greener Birmingham to emerge as required to meet our climate pledge. This element will also allow for the engagement with potential external green investors. This has been enabled through the work of the Sustainable Finance Steering Group; and its production of a Draft Sustainable Finance Framework better positioning the city to take advantage of emerging new markets and funding; where appropriate and to the benefit of the city and its citizens.
- 1.8 This is the over-arching approach. Below is how this will play out in our first five-year plan for the first six Red Wards as described and listed in the attached report.

2.0 First Five Year Action Plan

- 2.1 The first six red wards have been identified as described in the attached report through the environmental justice mapping approach.
- 2.2 Across the six wards are 34 parks and open spaces that have all been freshly audited through the Birmingham Fair Standard.
- 2.3 Due to the continued difficulties presented by the Covid-19 pandemic these audits have only involved parks staff. So, the results are indicative. All sites will be subject to full public engagement and consultation before progressing. This exercise has been to test the audit process and assess the affordability and deliverability of the idea. As such they do not represent firm and final plans.
- 2.4 The audits highlighted a series of common findings such as the need for additional benches or bins and the installation of community notice boards.
- 2.5 The audit also looked to identify enhancements for climate change and nature recovery and health & wellbeing.
- 2.6 The revenue implications of these plans will be met through existing re-deployed staff via the planned Streetscene re-organisation; supported by other council services via the Operations Group; and Alliance partners through additional funding or grants.
- 2.7 Additionally the maintenance contracts for each of these sites will be reviewed again in concert with Streetscene neighbourhood environmental enhancement programmes to ensure the whole service is working as effectively as it can to improve local neighbourhoods.

2.8 The costings for the site improvement programme are being built into the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy, proposals for 2022 onwards; with the full support of the Acting Director for Inclusive Growth.

2.9 Additionally the Parks Service together with Inclusive Growth are undertaking a review of current and future Section 106 Planning Gain Funding allocations for parks and green spaces across these first six red wards.

2.10 The Commonwealth Legacy Fund is also funding the establishment of the new City of Nature Community Alliance; with direct support into the first pilot ward of Bordesley & Highgate, to the tune of £150,000. The Alliance membership will then try to at least match this funding to help support the other 5 red wards in this first 5-year plan.

2.11 Nationally there are further funds being made available through the extension of the FPA programme to which Birmingham are submitting a bid. This would add to the resources available to implement this first five-year plan; be available from June 2022 circa £200,000.

2.12 The Our Future City Plan also envisions a much greener heart to central Birmingham, with greenways and additional parks and open spaces. A Review of how this will be delivered and funded commences in November 2021. This will also identify potential new funds and alignment with wider corporate agendas and programmes.

2.13 The East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Board are now also appraised of these red ward plans and are actively seeking alignment with East Birmingham programmes over the next 5 and 10 years; to ensure joined up delivery and local improvements.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 In conclusion the programme as outlined for the first five years to upgrade 34 the parks and open spaces to reach the Birmingham Fair Standard will be delivered within existing revenue resources, as outlined above.

3.2 The capital required to deliver these minor park enhancements will be covered if the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Funds are approved; together with existing Section 106 funds and the committed Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund of £150,000. ***Their estimated total over 5 years being £498,000.***

3.3 The above funding sources will be further supported if Birmingham is successful with its national FPA extension support fund of £200,000.

3.4 The entire programme above will be delivered within full recognition of council savings targets; and will be adjusted accordingly if required.