

## Estate Improvement Policy (Housing, Andy Vincent)

### Synopsis of report:

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service has identified £200,000 annually to invest in the improving the condition of the communal parts of its estates.

The Draft Estate Improvement Policy identifies the process for identifying and prioritising improvements.

### Recommendation:

Housing Committee approves an 8-week consultation with residents with a finalised policy to be brought back to this Committee with the results of the consultation.

## 1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 Runnymede Borough Council has made resources available to improve the communal parts of housing estates.
- 1.2 There has not previously been a specific policy relating to estate improvements; but one is required to ensure that investment is directed where it is most required.
- 1.3 This draft policy was discussed at the Housing Member Working Group on 13 December 2022 where the following suggestions were made:
  - Having a pipeline in place that was reported periodically to Committee.
  - Allow Housing Committee to decide ward member involvement.
  - Consider proportion to allow splitting the fund into categories to allow some Member led engagement.

## 2. Report

- 2.1 A draft Estate Improvement Policy is attached at Appendix A. This outlines proposed projects for expenditure (not an exhaustive list): -
  - Bike or buggy stores and racks
  - Bin shed/enclosures
  - CCTV
  - Community gardens and landscaping
  - Cycle storage
  - Installation of solar panels
  - Parking improvements
  - Pathways
  - Railings and other new security features
  - Recycling facilities
  - Tables and benches
- 2.2 The draft policy also proposes how expenditure suggestions should be prioritised: -

- Anticipated cost of the proposal
- Benefits of the proposal, including the number of residents who would benefit from it
- Feedback from tenants impacted by the proposal
- Ongoing cost of maintenance and upkeep of improved area and whether this has an impact on service charges.
- Other projects that have been undertaken or are currently in progress in the location
- Severity of issue that proposal aims to address
- The scope for the proposal to be funded from another source
- Urgency of the work

### 3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 This policy relates to Housing Revenue Account communal areas.

3.2 This policy forms part of the policy framework for Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service stock.

### 4. **Resource implications/Value for Money**

4.1 Resources have been identified to support this policy.

4.2 It is essential that any money spent through this policy is supported by the community and delivers significant value for money benefits for the Council's tenants.

### 5. **Legal implications(Have you consulted legal?)**

5.1 The management of the physical realm of the Council's Housing estates is clearly an important issue as it has a number of impacts on the use of such assets by the occupants. The range of impacts could be on their health and safety or physical or mental well being. It is prudent for the Council to have a policy in place which guides it on how to deal with such issues.

### 6. **Equality implications**

6.1 The Equalities Group has been consulted and a full impact assessment is not required as this new policy is being put in place to have a positive impact on all tenants with access to communal areas.

6.2 This policy will address largely address health and safety, community safety and use of play spaces.

6.3 There is no evidence that tenants with any of the nine protected characteristics will be negatively impacted by this policy

### 7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

7.1 This policy seeks to improve the environment for Runnymede Borough Council tenants.

7.2 Where possible we will seek to increase biodiversity when planting through this budget.

8. **Timetable for Implementation**

- 8.1 An 8-week consultation is recommended commencing on 30 January 2023 with the policy to be brought back to the June meeting of this Committee.

**(To resolve)**

**Background Papers**

None