

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Community and Environment

**PORTFOLIO:** Environment and Urban Renewal

**SUBJECT:** Amendment to Capital Programme

**WARD(S):** Central & West Bank, Halton Castle, Mersey & Weston

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on planned landscape and public open space improvement schemes to be undertaken and to ask Members to approve a capital budget allocation and expenditure in order to complete these works.

## **2. RECOMMENDED: That:**

### **2.1 Members approve that;**

2.1.1 The sum £1,988,342.71 received from Mersey Link for the reinstatement of Mersey Gateway temporary works areas be added to the Capital Programme;

2.1.2 £1m of capital borrowing be added to the Capital Programme to be used as match funding towards the Brindley Green element of Runcorn Town Centre Investment Plan;

2.1.3 Annual revenue cost of £57k to service the £1m capital borrowing to be funded from the Contingency budget, and;

2.1.4 The Council's Environment Services Division prepare remedial works plans for the former Mersey Gateway temporary works areas and appoint any necessary consultants and contractors to carry out these works.

## **3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Several major landscape improvement schemes are planned to be delivered over the next 2-3 years. These include;**

3.1.1 Reinstatement works to land temporarily transferred to Merseylink and used during the construction of the Mersey

Gateway. Work to be carried out in both Runcorn and Widnes, and;

3.1.2 The creation of an important public open space which is part of the Runcorn Town Investment Plan improvements.

3.2 All three projects include major landscape earthworks in order to achieve a satisfactory level of finish suitable for their end use as public open space on formerly contaminated land. Further detail of each of the projects is set out below.

### 3.3 **Spike Island/Northern Open Space.**

3.3.1 The site is an area of land to the North of Spike Island between the Sankey Canal and Mersey Gateway embankment and includes the area under the Northern approach viaduct (NAV). The site is crossed by a main pedestrian route onto Spike Island and is adjacent to the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT).

3.3.2 Historically the site has a strong link with the chemical industry and requires careful design and methods of construction and material handling to achieve the required finish for public access.

3.3.3 The work on this site will include additional protection to the open section of Bowers Brook. Erosion control elements and regrading of ground levels/surfaces below the NAV, in order to improve ease of ongoing management of the area. Improved pedestrian and cycle links from Spike Island and the TPT to Croft Street and Queensway. Fencing works along the salt marsh/Spike Island boundary together with reinstatement of tree and hedgerow planting will also be included to improve habitat and amenity value.

### 3.4 **Wigg Island Community Park**

3.4.1 Following the bridge construction works the area requiring remedial works is the corridor immediately under the new bridge deck as it passes over the Park, starting from the point the bridge crosses the Manchester Ship Canal North to the start of the salt marsh. This area includes some of the most contaminated zones within the Park and some of the most intrusive works during the bridge construction.

3.4.2 The bridge works have resulted in a steep slope in this area. The proposed works include; carefully regrading slopes and providing deeper soil/root zone layers. Establishment of native species ground cover, hedgerow and woodland planting will contribute to protecting the bank and provide improved habitat value. The introduction of the Bridge over Wigg Island has altered the character of this area and as a result some rationalisation of paths and seating areas away from the main

structures is also proposed and included in this scheme, further adding to the amenity value of the park.

### 3.5 Brindley Green

3.5.1 The proposals for Brindley Green are part of the Runcorn Town Investment plan. The proposals for the outdoor Brindley Green integrate and compliment with proposals to extend the Theatre, with the addition of a library and a large café – restaurant. The Green will provide opportunities for outdoor theatre performances, as well as a café terrace and informal seating areas. The area will provide easier pedestrian connections and the proposals will better connect Crosville Car Park, canal and Brindley with the town centre.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 A settlement deed has been agreed with Merseylink which saw the Council receive £1,988,342.71 for remedial works to be carried out to Spike Island and Wigg Island. Detailed costing for each works are below;

### 5.3 Spike Island/Northern Open Space outline costs

Contract preliminaries	£88,175.90
Construction Costs	£881,759.00
Contingency	£88,175.90
Professional Fees	£96,993.00
Inflation	£99,993.49
Optimism bias	£38,797.40
<b>Total estimate Spike Island/Northern OS</b>	<b>£1,290,895.18</b>

### 5.4 Wigg Island Reinstatement outline cost

Contract preliminaries	£47,541.00
Construction Costs	£475,541.00
Contingency	£47,541.00
Professional Fees	£68,437.53
Inflation	£35,563.00
Optimism bias	£22,824.00
<b>Total estimate Wigg Island</b>	<b>£697,447.53</b>

5.5 The Brindley Green proposals are part of the Runcorn Town Investment Plan, which have attracted £23.6m of Government/Town Deal funding. In order to draw down this grant a match funding sum of £1m is required towards the development cost of the Green. Pending final Government approvals a sum of £1,497,618 is already allocated from the fund towards the works on the Green and detailed costs of the works are set out below. Match funding will only be drawn down as and when final approval for the scheme has been received.

5.6 Match funding of £1m will be funded from borrowings. The cost of servicing the borrowing will add approximately £57k to the Council's

revenue spend over each of the following 25 years. It is proposed funding for this should come from the Council's contingency budget.

#### 5.6 **Brindley Green outline cost**

Contract preliminaries	£465,000.00
Construction Costs	£1,448,910.00
Contingency	£226,214.00
Professional Fees	£226,214.00
Inflation	£75,404.00
Optimism bias	£94,258.00
<b>Total estimate Brindley Green</b>	<b>£2,536,000.00</b>

### 6. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 No direct impact.

### 6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

### 8. **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

#### 8.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

8.1.1 Wigg Island and Spike Island offer a wide range of different habitats, and recreational opportunities, which are well suited to a wide age range for young people to enjoy. As well as this they provide a significant educational resource. Proposals will further enhance access to these opportunities.

#### 8.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

8.2 No direct impact.

#### 8.3 **A Healthy Halton**

8.3.1 All three schemes offer destinations that promote walking, cycling and recreational exercise, helping to combat obesity, encourage cardio vascular and muscular activity and helping to promote mental well-being.

#### 8.4 **A Safer Halton**

8.4.1 No direct impact.

#### 8.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

8.5.1 These schemes will contribute significantly to Halton's infrastructure, and will further improve the image of the borough and help attract new businesses and visitors.

## **9.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 9.1 A key risk to not completing these works is that the opportunity to make land available for public use is missed. Further, the opportunity to draw down £1,497,618 (of £23.6m overall TC fund) would be missed.

## **10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 10.1 There are no equality and diversity issues as a result of this report.

## **11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

- 11.1 WSP Report – Spike Island –Site TUA15 (West)-External Works Reinstatement Report - August 2020
- 11.2 WSP Report – Wigg Island, Runcorn, External Works Reinstatement Report - April 2020
- 11.3 Ramboll Report – Mersey Gateway Underbridge Design Proposal October 2020