

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: Tuesday, 19 July 2022

Report author: Democratic Services Officer (IS)

Title: Neighbourhood Locality Fund Annual Report 2021/22

1.0 Summary

1.1 This document provides the annual report for the Neighbourhood Locality Funds in accordance with the fund's protocol. It includes information about the overall budget and types of projects the wards have supported during 2021/22.

2.0 Risks

2.1 There are no identified risks as a result of this report.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the Neighbourhood Locality Fund annual report be noted.

Further information:

Ian Smith

ian.smith@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Group Head of Democracy and Governance

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 The wards spent a combined total of £32,391.47, equating to 90%* of the overall budget. Wards spent within a range of 65%* to 100% of the budget available to them, an average of £2,699.29 each. This is broken down by ward as follows:

Ward	Starting budget	Number of projects	Expenditure
Callowland	£3,000.00	3	£2,401.04
Central	£3,000.00	6	£2,484.00

Holywell	£3,000.00	5	£3,000.00
Leggatts	£3,000.00	3	£2,439.00
Meriden	£3,000.00	6	£2,581.00
Nascot	£3,000.00	3	£2,857.44
Oxhey	£3,000.00	3	£1,936.99
Park	£3,000.00	2	£3,000.00
Stanborough	£3,000.00	5	£2,920.00
Tudor	£3,000.00	4	£3,000.00
Vicarage	£3,000.00	1	£3,000.00
Woodside	£3,000.00	7	£2,772.00

4.2 The full breakdown of expenditure by ward is available on the [council's website](#). The different types of expenditure have been reviewed to identify the most popular, including the amount spent and the percentage this equated to in relation to the overall budget. The breakdown of the expenditure into different categories is as follows:

- Environmental improvements (£8,187.91 equalling 25% of the budget).
- Local community groups and organisations (£7,461.99 equalling 21% of the budget).
- Community clean up and skips (£3,557.00 equalling 10% of the budget).
- Charities and charitable donations (£3,340.00 equalling 9% of the budget).
- Highways improvements (£3,214.43 equalling 9% of the budget).
- Culture and heritage (£1,525.00 equalling 4% of the budget).
- Faith groups (£1,467.14 equalling 4% of the budget).
- Sports groups (£1,000 equalling 3% of the budget).
- Schools and play groups (£935.00 equalling 3% of the budget).
- Youth groups including scouts (£930 equalling 3% of the budget).
- Residents' groups (£773.00 equalling 2% of the budget).

*All percentages quoted have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

4.3 Comparison of expenditure with 2020/21

4.3.1 Environmental improvements (primarily tree planting) made up a substantial 25% of the expenditure, thus enhancing Watford's green credentials (although this is slightly down by 3% from last year). The second largest percentage of expenditure shows the importance that members place on community, with eight of the 12 wards providing 21% of their total budget for community groups, a notable increase from 8% last year.

4.3.2 The three categories of: school and playgroups, youth groups, and sports groups, only received 3% each of the total budget. In 2020/21 this was 9% of the total spend with, sports clubs receiving no funding in 2020-21.

- 4.3.3 Community clean up and skips, saw a significant increase from last year, growing from 2% to 10% expenditure.
- 4.3.4 Charities (9%, down 1%) and residents' groups (2%, no change) remained at a broadly similar level to last year.
- 4.3.5 One ward, Oxhey sought approval from the Director of Finance to carry forward £1,063 of their previous year's budget for a specific project. Officers are in the process of confirming ward councillors' intentions with regard to this project.
- 4.3.6 In response to a recommendation by the auditor, the total number of projects completed for 2021-22 and the number of evaluation forms received back from members relating to those projects are shown below. 48 projects were completed, a decrease of 8 from last year. There were 25 evaluation forms completed by members, which is rate of 52%.

Ward	Number of projects	Evaluation forms received
Callowland	3	0
Central	6	4
Holywell	5	2
Leggatts	3	0
Meriden	6	2
Nascot	3	2
Oxhey	3	2
Park	2	2
Stanborough	5	4
Tudor	4	1
Vicarage	1	0
Woodside	7	7

4.4 **Neighbourhood Locality Fund working group**

There was a review of the Neighbourhood Locality Fund process and the working group produced a report for Cabinet on 28 February 2022. The decision of Cabinet was that a new application process should be developed whereby applications could be made by organisations wishing to benefit from funds through the council's website and this was to be introduced in 2023/24 at the earliest.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the implications of the report are within current budgets.

5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that council has agreed criteria for the spending of the Neighbourhood Locality Funds.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 There are no risks associated with equalities or human rights as a direct result of this report.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 There are no staffing implications as a direct result of this report.

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 There are no accommodation implications as a direct result of this report.

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 There are no community safety or crime and disorder implications as a direct result of this report.

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 There are no sustainability implications as a direct result of this report.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

- Applications and expenditure sheets for the individual wards and projects.
- Spreadsheet for analysis of expenditure.