

Estate Improvement Grants – Criteria

There are a number of points to be considered when assessing the suitability of particular projects to go forward for estate improvement grant funding:

Primarily Benefit Tenants - all projects pursued must have clear and demonstrable benefits for tenants living in the locality. It is accepted that projects may also be to the benefit of other residents. If they **mainly** benefit non council residents they should be passed over to the Communities and Equalities Team or, funding should be sought from outside the Housing Revenue Account

Projects which benefit a mixture of council tenants and other residents should be discussed with the Housing Estate Manager / Housing Team Leader and other relevant officers for consideration and to look at the suitability of other options e.g. joint funding from HRA and other sources.

Projects which benefit only one individual should not be accepted.

ALL PROJECTS SHOULD BE EVALUATED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS TO ENSURE THAT WORK IS WITHIN THE REMIT OF THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – is the spending on housing land, property and customers? If not, it can not go ahead.

Practicality - Projects which are clearly impractical should be filtered out before proceeding to the voting stage. Council staff will be able to assist in determining the feasibility of any particular project

Targeted - all suggestions should assist the Housing Department and Council in meeting its objectives such as reducing anti social behaviour or improving the physical characteristics of the estate and should be sustainable.

No duplication - Projects should not be pursued if these are for work which should more properly be funded from other sources e.g. road signs. Similarly, estate improvement grants should not be used for work which will be covered in the ongoing housing services maintenance programme.

Maintenance - the ongoing costs associated with any suggestion need to be considered, and the RA must ensure that funding is available to

cover the required maintenance expenditure. The total cost will need to include all future costs for items such as security lights which will need light bulbs changing. A table (see below) has been established to apportion costs over the following three year period, for these additional costs, which will need to be set aside from these future budgets.

Project	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Details of Project	Full installation costs	Maintenance / Servicing costs	Maintenance / Servicing costs

Timescale - the suggested project will need to be completed within the financial year in which funds will be allocated; projects which will take more than one year can only be supported if the work is split into identified phases which can each be completed within a twelve month period. If work is not completed within the year the funding will be lost.

Cost Effectiveness / Adding to workload - Is the project the best way of achieving the identified benefit? Are there other ways of doing the work which would represent better value for money or where the benefits could be even greater? Can the local community contribute to completing the project?

Schemes which put additional pressure on services subject to budget savings / reductions should not go ahead e.g. refuse bins, dog bins

Enforceable- schemes that cannot be enforced such as no ball games signs or residents only parking signs should not be agreed. Problem parking areas on housing land can be put forward for parking enforcement where there are repeated problems and complaints over time. Residents and services should work together to find other solutions.

Examples of acceptable projects

Projects previously completed which meet the above criteria have included:

- Creation of parking bays on housing land
- Provision of local notice boards
- Financing installation of window and door locks across an estate or for vulnerable tenants
- Creation of a play area for local children on housing land
- Installation of improved security lighting
- Provision of fencing to improve tenants' sense of security
- Provision of a number of drop kerbs in a street to permit tenants to park cars off the road thereby reducing local traffic congestion
- Shrub planting on a local green space (housing land)

Examples of Projects which should not be agreed

- Traffic calming measures (Highways responsibility)
- Bus stop seating
- Street lighting in areas that provide little benefit to council tenants
- Dropped kerbs
- Benches outside Shopping Areas
- No Ball Games signs
- Improvements to areas where there are no council properties
- Improvements to Allotment Sites
- Improvement to community building that are not within the HRA
- Residents Only Parking signs
- New crockery or other equipment for a lunch club

Estate Improvement Grants – Checklist

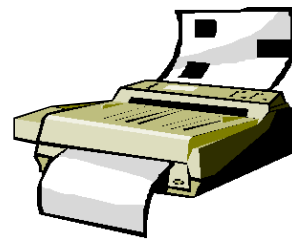
Does the project primarily benefit tenants?



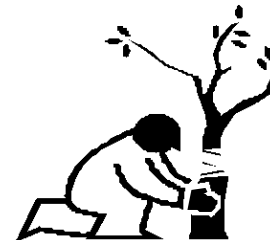
Is the project practical?



Are we sure the project doesn't duplicate something we're already doing, or is it already paid for from other budgets?



Can we afford to maintain the project?



Is the cost of the project reasonable / does it burden other services?



Can we finish the project in one year?

