



This Cabinet Report is part exempt and Appendix A is not available for public inspection as it contains exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. It is exempt because it refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## CABINET 13 March 2024

**Subject Heading:**

Application and acceptance of Veolia Environmental Trust Funding

**Cabinet Member:**

Cllr Barry Mugglestone, Lead Member for Environment

**SLT Lead:**

Neil Stubbings, Strategic Director of Place

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

*The Havering Vision*  
*Place Outcome – Havering is a Green Borough*

- *Investing in our parks*
- *Number of parks with Green Flags*

**Financial summary:**

*The Council will benefit from up to £0.900m of external funding to improve our parks and open spaces over the next 2 years. No match funding or additional budget is required to manage this.*

**Is this a Key Decision?**

Grant exceeding £500,000

**When should this matter be reviewed?**

NA

**Reviewing OSC:**

*Environment OSC*

**The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

People - Things that matter for residents

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy **X**

Resources - A well run Council that delivers for People and Place.

**SUMMARY**

From March 2024 to October 2025 the Council will be able to apply for up to £900,000 of external grant funding from Veolia Environmental Trust over various funding rounds. Given the funding criteria, this will allow priority projects to be delivered in parks and open spaces.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

For the reasons stated in this report, the Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve a series of applications, as set out in Appendix A, for up to £900,000 of grant funding from Veolia Environmental Trust (VET).
2. Authorise the Strategic Director of Place to take all steps necessary to apply for, accept and thereafter spend the grant funding (including but not limited to negotiating and signing any grant agreement issued by VET) received from VET.
3. Authorise the Strategic Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to update, amend or otherwise vary the list of projects at Appendix A, from time to time.

**REPORT DETAIL**

**STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

1. The local Havering Veolia Maintenance Trust closed in September 2023 and as they had a balance of around £900,000 unallocated grant funding, this was transferred to the national trust, Veolia Environmental Trust.
2. As the funding was originally intended to serve Havering, this has been ring-fenced for eligible projects within the borough for up to 2 years from the date of the transfer (October 2023).
3. Organisations within Havering will be able to apply for eligible projects over the various

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funding rounds until October 2025 although any grants approved in the final round will still have one to two years (depending on the project) for completion.

4. Eligible projects include improvement works to publically accessible facilities at a single site, open to everyone and anyone on a daily basis, which has community inclusion.
5. They will not consider projects that take place at, a school, medical centre, hospital, hospice, cafe, allotment, graveyard, crematoria area, road, car park, historic building, statue, monument or memorial. They will also not fund staff costs or the purchase of equipment, i.e. items of such as machinery and tools rather than as part of fixed assets or facilities.
6. Applications will have to be submitted within the standard funding rounds as per below. Further dates in 2025 are not known at this stage.

<b><u>Funding Round Opens</u></b>	<b><u>Closing Date</u></b>	<b><u>Decision Date</u></b>
29 February 2024	11 April 2024	04 June 2024
23 May 2024	20 June 2024	03 September 2024
22 August 2024	03 October 2024	03 December 2024
26 November 2024	07 January 2025	04 March 2025

7. A list of potential applications has been produced of priority projects that have been selected after reviewing; stakeholder engagement, health and safety, Green Flag improvements and those that meet the funding criteria, profiled over the above rounds (Exempt Appendix A). This may be subject to change depending on the outcome of the applications, available funding (especially in 2025) and if other priorities emerge.
8. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted per round however, trustees are less likely to approve too many at once and the Council need to be realistic about how many applications and projects the Council can manage within the timeframes.
9. The standard amount of funding that VET will agree is up to £75,000, however, during this period, trustees will consider some projects over and in excess of this. As indicated in Exempt Appendix A, the value of most of the projects the Council will be applying for are below £75,000. It is expected that only few project will have a higher value than £75,000 and in such circumstances, the value of the project is not anticipated to exceed £120,000. These are all for play and recreation area refurbishments, which have always been well supported by trustees.
10. When funding is agreed, VET will issue individual Grant Agreements for each project/site. This will include a completion date which is agreed in advance and usually one to two years from the date the agreement is signed, depending on the complexity of works. It is not expected that any projects on the list will take longer than one year to complete.
11. If any applications are submitted in the latter part of 2025 and are successful, as long as the Grant Agreement is signed before October, it is anticipated that the project would not have to be completed until 2026/27.
12. Officers will be meeting with the Executive Director of VET periodically to monitor the availability of the funding and for feedback on the Council's applications.
13. Representatives from Havering could also attend VET board meetings but would not be involved in any decision making.

## **REASONS AND OPTIONS**

### **Reasons for the decision:**

1. The funding has been ring-fenced for Havering and is a good opportunity to secure external funding to deliver priority projects
2. No match funding is required so using any grants offered will mean the Council do not have to incur any expenditure.

### **Other options considered:**

Do not apply and accept: If the grants are not applied for and accepted the projects will not progress and the Council will miss out on the available funding.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Financial implications and risks:**

The VET have made available to the Council £0.900m subject to the applications being agreed by their trustees and the various board meetings and complying with the terms and conditions of the grant agreements when issued.

Applications will in earnest be made in accordance with Exempt Appendix A, and subject to being successful and following Legal and Finance business partner review.

The grants must be used solely for the purpose set out in the grant agreements relating to the Individual Site-Specific Works.

The grant offers are the maximum amount of grant that will be paid, and this amount will not be increased as a result of any overspend or otherwise, except with VET's explicit prior written agreement to such an increase in the amount of Grant. Any incorrect amount paid to the Council as a result of administrative error or otherwise will be promptly repaid to VET.

The Council shall ensure that prior to claiming any part of the grant, the applicable works have been carried out in accordance with the grant agreement.

Budget and contract monitoring will be regularly carried out by officers throughout delivery to ensure the project is completed within the approved grant allocation.

The Council will provide VET at their request such information, explanations and documents as they may reasonably require in order to determine whether the conditions of the grants agreement have been complied with.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

The Council has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual can do, subject to any statutory constraints on the Council's powers. None of the constraints on the Council's s.1 power are engaged by this decision.

The recommendations in this report are in keeping with this power and the Council may apply for the Grant funding. In the event that the Grant application is successful, the Grant funding agreement will have to be reviewed by the Legal team.

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**Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are sufficient resources to manage the funding requirements process and oversee the projects which is already part of the Parks team's responsibilities

Works will be carried out externally and will not impact staff or existing resources.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

**Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks**

Carrying out the improvements being made possible through this funding will allow better facilities to be made available for all sections of the community in our parks and open spaces, including, play, recreation, access and outdoor classrooms.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

None

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**  
None