

**Executive Summary**  
**Applications for WAC Neighbourhood Capital Investment Programme**

**Proposals to approve Neighbourhood Capital Investment Funds**

**Application No.1**

**Washington Area Committee: Priority – Neighbourhood Management**  
**Washington Encampment Safety Measures**

**Introduction and background**

Washington Area Committee has already formally approved £62,000 (December 2020 Washington Area Committee Meeting) for barriers and groundwork at a number of sites. Following discussions with Members and site visits the original approval for 10 x lower barriers, some groundworks and the specifications have been amended to reflect changes requested by local Members.

This project aims to limit access to various sites as detailed below:

- James Steel Car Parks near Chatershaugh Bridge - Site Plans 1 to 7,
- Shepherd Way Car Park – Site Plan 8,
- Staithes Road Car Park - Site Plan 9,
- Viewpoint Car Park – Site Plan 10,
- Rickleton Park – Ground works and installation of low-level fencing. Site Plan 11.

As requested by Members the barriers copy the style of 'Barmston Pond' in design and height, (widths vary according to the size of the entrances). These are called 'higher barriers'. An additional barrier for Viewpoint car park is now included, and the intended groundworks at Bonemill Lane have been revised. In addition, a low-level fence is proposed for Rickleton Playing Field.

It has been confirmed planning permission is not required. Officers are currently drawing up tender / procurement documents with the intention to commence works as soon as funds are approved, and the procurement process completed. Plans and maps are provided for all measures including those agreed at the first funding request.

The barriers will limit access by various vehicles, to the locations specified. This includes Council vehicles. However, Building Services have designed the barriers in conjunction with Environmental Services to ensure access for their vehicles is accounted for. This will allow all necessary tasks and necessary maintenance to be completed.

<b>Objectives and goals</b>	<b>Forecast Dates</b>
Additional funding approved	01/07/2021
Tender for works	27/07/2021
Tender awarded	30/08/2021
Work commences	11/10/2021
Project complete	22/11/2021

Evaluation and signed off	29/11/2021
---------------------------	------------

The Service will monitor the level of unauthorised encampments within the Washington area (Comparative to recent years) to determine the success of the scheme.

The project will be monitored via SCC internal monitoring and performance report via Neighbourhood Capital fund processes. Update reports to be presented to the Neighbourhood and Community Board as appropriate.

Item and Description	Total Costs	Match Costs	NCIP Contribution
All barriers and associated ground works	£110,000		£58,000
Contingency (To account for the likely fluctuation in steel prices)	£10,000		
Phase 1 £ approved WAC Dec 2020		£62,000	
<b>Total</b>	£120,000	£62,000	£58,000

Following consultation with Members the following issues have been raised:

1. Issue of potential legal challenge resolved - Where do we stand legally with regards to putting up barriers to stop an ethnic group from setting up "illegal encampments"?
2. Wider resident and community consultation - Have we held any kind of consultation with residents about their thoughts on this?
3. Moving the problem to another site in Washington. This seems to me to be a huge sum of money that doesn't address the "problem" but would move it. When it moves again, are WAC going to be asked to approve funding for more barriers?
4. The Service states they will monitor the level of unauthorised encampments within the Washington area (Comparative to recent years) to determine the success of the scheme. Is there any indication already as to how successful this scheme will be?

**Recommendation:**

**Members are requested to consider the information provided and agree**

1. **To align £58,000 to deliver the Encampment Safety Measures as presented in Annex 2**
2. **All proposals will need to be in line with the Washington Area Committee Delivery Plan priorities, meet relevant Service standards and criteria, and be agreed with that Service prior to implementation**
3. **An Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken and that this would be delegated to Property Services to oversee the completion of this assessment**
4. **The Council has an Unauthorised Encampment Policy which makes provision for a period of tolerance to be applied where applicable. As part of the Record of Delegated Decision, the Council will be required to consider all relevant factors by way of mitigation (in addition to the Equality Impact Assessment) including but not limited to providing alternative sites to show compliance with the Policy. Any agreed measures (even where alternatives have been considered) could still be at risk of being judicially challenged.**
5. **Approved measures will also be subject to a process of consultation and assessment with residents.**