

MONITORING OF RECREATIONAL MITIGATION PROJECTS – VISITOR/ PEOPLE COUNTERS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the purchase of additional 'visitor/people counters' to assist in the monitoring of the impact of recreational mitigation projects implemented, in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1: 2016-2036, and the Council's Mitigation Strategy for European Sites Supplementary Planning Document.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Residential development within New Forest District (and beyond) requires appropriate mitigation measures to be in place to avoid adverse impacts on the internationally important and protected sites in the New Forest. This Council's adopted approach to mitigating the recreational pressures of development in its planning area includes the provision of a suite of projects which provide alternative natural green spaces and recreational walking routes to absorb and deflect local recreational activity away from the more sensitive sites within the National Park.
- 2.2 At the Examination of the Local Plan Review Part 1, the Council was able to provide some evidence that completed projects were being successful in attracting increased recreational use. ¹ We were able to do this as we have been installing 'visitor/people counters' at project locations to measure 'before' and 'after' activity levels. The counter data showed increased visits were being made to these alternative recreational green spaces and routes following the implementation of the Council's projects.

3. EXTENSION OF MONITORING ACTIVITIES

- 3.1 An increasing number of recreational mitigation projects are in the pipeline and being implemented on the ground. It is important that the Council has capacity to continue to monitor the effectiveness of these projects. The purchase of three 'visitor/people counters' and a contract with a local supplier to service the counters was originally agreed in November 2016. (Planning & Transportation Portfolio Holder Decision: 10 November 2016: The Design and Implementation of Habitat Mitigation Projects Using Developers' Contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy Funding). Our ability to monitor projects is now constrained by only having three counters available. Further resources to undertake this monitoring are now needed. The purchase of three additional 'visitor/people counters' will ensure that we are able to continue with effective 'before' and 'after' monitoring of the impact of projects in our current programme.

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[http://forms.newforest.gov.uk/ufs/form_docs/Policy/Examination%20Documents/EXAM16%20-%20NFDC%20-%20Monitoring%20of%20Impact%20of%20Recreational%20Mitigation%20Projects%20-%20Early%20Results%20\(June%202019\).pdf?ufsReturnURL=https%3A%2F%2Fforms.newforest.gov.uk%3A443%2Fufs%2Fufsreturn%3Febz%3D2_1595929868123](http://forms.newforest.gov.uk/ufs/form_docs/Policy/Examination%20Documents/EXAM16%20-%20NFDC%20-%20Monitoring%20of%20Impact%20of%20Recreational%20Mitigation%20Projects%20-%20Early%20Results%20(June%202019).pdf?ufsReturnURL=https%3A%2F%2Fforms.newforest.gov.uk%3A443%2Fufs%2Fufsreturn%3Febz%3D2_1595929868123)

- 3.2 The existing supplier has advised the costs of the purchase of three additional counters will be in the region of £5600 (plus VAT).
- 3.3 The original contract to place and service the people counters 'expired' during the 'lockdown' period, although data and placements have continued to be provided. A new three-year contract now needs putting in place for the service of the three original counters, and subject to approval this could be extended to cover the three additional counters (6 in total). The cost estimate is £6,300.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 To enable the continued monitoring of the effective of recreational mitigation projects the number of counters should be increased to six by the purchase of three additional counters, and the contract to service the counters be revised to cover six counters and renewed for a further three year period (subject to procurement procedures).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Funding is through the collection of developers' contributions collected specifically for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of recreational mitigation projects.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No direct implications arising from the placement of monitoring equipment.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that:
- i. The three additional visitor/people counters are purchased; and
 - ii. A contract for the annual programme for the placement and collection of data from 6 visitor/people counters, funded for the next three years, be put in place.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Signed: Cllr E Heron **Date:** 17 August 2020

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Background Papers:

Published documents