

COMMUNITY & LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 16 MARCH 2021

RECREATIONAL MITIGATION STRATEGY PROJECTS

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on the progress of recreational mitigation projects programmed to be delivered within the financial year 2020/2021.

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An agreed approach to mitigation of recreational impacts on the New Forest and Southampton Water and Solent Coast European sites arising from new residential development was established in Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management document and its supporting Mitigation Strategy for European Sites Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2014. This approach was reflected in the Local Plan Review Part 1 2016-2036 and the draft Mitigation for Recreational Impacts Draft SPD Document 2020.
- 2.2 It was agreed that for the New Forest District (outside the National Park) there needed to be a number of components to the mitigation approach. It was recognised that ‘the New Forest’ and ‘the Coast’ are such strong draws for recreational visits, that an effective mitigation strategy needs to not only consider providing alternative recreation opportunities accessible to local residents, but to also effectively manage and minimise the potential harmful effects of the visits that cannot be deflected away from the European sites. It was therefore recognised that there is a need for both the provision of alternative recreational opportunities in a natural environment and management of access to the European sites.
- 2.3 The components of this mitigation strategy which are appropriate in the context of the New Forest European sites are identified as:
- Provision of new alternative natural recreational green spaces on site as part of new development sites of over 50 dwellings;
 - Improvement and enhancement of existing green spaces as recreational mitigation to compensate for the recreational pressure generated by developments of under 50 dwellings;
 - Enhancement of recreational walking routes;
 - Access management (including dedicated rangers delivering initiatives to encourage responsible dog walking).
 - Where new residential development is proposed within 5.6k, of the Southampton Water and Solent Coast European sites contributions are collected and spent through the Bird AWARE Project.
- 2.4 The recreational mitigation projects delivered in response to developments of under 50 units are currently funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) paid by all residential development as set out in the CIL Charging Schedule adopted in April 2014. The 2014 SPD identified a series of projects spanning to 2026, this list is not repeated in the current draft SPD though, the project list has been used to identify the current projects being delivered. It is worth noting at this stage that other community benefits maybe delivered through developments and secured through Section 106 agreements.

These will be scheme specific projects which are seen as projects necessary to ensure that the development is 'sustainable development' meeting planning objectives around climate change, supporting communities health, social and cultural well-being, improving the natural environment, air and water quality.

2.5 In accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulation 2019, any authority that receives a contribution for development through the levy or Section 106 planning obligations must prepare an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). The first IFS for New Forest District Council was published on the 31 December 2020. This Infrastructure Funding Statement includes:

- A report relating to CIL receipts for the previous financial year on the Community Infrastructure Levy
- A report relating to Section 106 planning obligation receipts for the previous financial year
- A report on the Infrastructure projects that the authority intends to fund by the levy in the next financial year (20/21) (excluding the neighbourhood proportion).

https://www.newforest.gov.uk/media/1349/Infrastructure-Funding-Statement/pdf/IFS_1920.pdf?m=637450159572670000

2.6 The Recreational Mitigation projects that are current projects are set out below:

- Sweatfords Water/Whitsbury Road. Footpath enhancement to improve biodiversity and to increase visitor numbers to the site, by creating a safe and accessible circular walking route. This project was completed in December 2020.
- Bartley Park Extension. New open space will be provided to extend the existing Bartley Park site, extending southwards from the skateboard park. This extension will provide additional natural green space for informal recreation, including dog walking and dog activity trail. The project is programmed for implementation in 2021/22.
- Ringwood Castleman Trailway. Improvements to the public rights of way network in south east of Ringwood, enhancing connections and signs to the Castleman Trail to Crow Walking route. The project is on site and nearing completion.
- Avon Valley and Blashford Lakes. Improving the walking links from Ringwood town centre to Blashford lakes and the Avon Valley through increased accessibility, clear signage and path enhancements. The project is on site and expected to be completed in April.
- Testwood Recreation Ground. Informal open space enhancements, including improved signage and walking route, linking through to adjoining public open spaces.
- Fawley former golf course. Project to create an accessible open space, suitable for off lead dog exercise, with various interesting circular walks and dog activity areas, on an underutilised area of open space within Fawley.

The Panel will be given a Powerpoint presentation to show project location and details.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The projects are funded through CIL.

5. CRIME & DISORDER, ENVIRONMENTAL, DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no crime and disorder, environmental or data protection issues arising directly from this report. Each project will be fully assessed for impact.

6. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality or diversity implications arising directly from this report.

DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

None

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel note the progress made to date on each project, further reports will come to this Panel to update on project delivery.

Further Information

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