

WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HABITAT MITIGATION PROJECTS

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that the list of projects as shown at Appendix 1 are agreed to be progressed during the financial year 2024/25.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 New Forest District Council, through its planning powers, collects contributions (through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)) to mitigate the recreational impacts of new developments on the European nature designated conservation sites.
- 2.2 This report seeks to approve a programme of projects and expenditure for 2024/25 which have been designed to help implement the Council's adopted Local Plan policies, particularly its recreational mitigation strategy to address the impacts of new development on the New Forest European sites.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Policy ENV1 of the adopted Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management, sets out the agreed approach to mitigation of the recreational impacts arising from new residential development in the Plan Area. The four elements of the strategy can be summarised as:

- Provision of new areas of publicly accessible natural green space;
- Enhancement of existing green space and footpaths/rights of way;
- Access management – measures include the provision of additional rangers for the New Forest SPA and Solent Coastal European sites; and
- Monitoring – the gathering of further information, including about the condition of European sites' habitats and species and visitor patterns, and to gain a better understanding of the effects of visitors and other factors influencing the condition of the protected sites; and the monitoring of progress in implementing the mitigation strategy.

- 3.2 Further detail of the agreed approach to the mitigation of recreational impacts outlined in policy ENV1 is set out in the Mitigation for Recreational Impacts on New Forest European sites Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in May 2021.

4. OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS PROPOSED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2024/25

- 4.1. CIL funds are proposed to be allocated to eleven projects, across the Plan Area. The total cost of these projects is expected to be £800,000. Projects include new open spaces and pathways along with improvements to existing spaces and routes. The schemes are expected to commence during 2024/25.
- 4.2. Alongside the projects to be implemented, design work on five further projects is proposed to be undertaken during the course of the year to ascertain the suitability (or otherwise) of these projects for inclusion in a future year's programme. The cost for this design work could be up to an additional £50,000.
- 4.3. Further details are set out in Appendix 1.

5. FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF SCHEMES

- 5.1 The schemes proposed for inclusion in the 2024/25 financial year are on land either owned and/or leased by a third-party. As part of the scheme an agreement will be signed between the third party and the Council confirming that this Council will fund the works but that the future maintenance of the site (for which that party are already maintaining) will be down to that third party.
- 5.2 Should a project be included on land that is not currently maintained (or maintained to a minimum standard), a total maintenance cost will be calculated and included within the total project budget.
- 5.3 Should the third party not be willing to enter into an agreement then the project will not progress and an alternative project identified.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council are currently holding all the identified CIL funds to deliver these projects and therefore there would be no direct cost to the Council. Should the projects not be progressed then officers will need to identify alternative projects to ensure that the contributions held are delivered on suitable schemes to enable the Council to comply with the Habitat Regulations.
- 6.2 Provision has been made in costings for some inflationary pressures for the delivery of these projects. Should allocated funds be insufficient to deliver all the projects identified, additional funds from CIL receipts (in consultation with portfolio holder) or value engineering of the schemes will need to occur within budget year to deliver the projects.
- 6.3 The Council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 includes a £1M holding budget to be allocated to individual approved CIL, Open Space and Transportation projects as and when they commence into delivery. The proposed projects as included within this report will be funded through that budget, alongside some projects being brought forward from 2023/24.

7 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The proposals are intended to increase pedestrian activity in areas that are under-used or don't currently have public access. The projects will be convenient, attractive and safe to use with increasing footfall likely to provide improve safety and security.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The identified proposals bring direct environmental benefits through enhancing, improving and increasing capacity of existing open space for informal recreation, new habitat creation and enhanced management techniques.

9 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The projects identified above will improve accessibility in their respective areas with the creation of inclusive spaces.

10 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: Cllr Derek Tipp

Date: 28 March 2024

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Background Papers:

[Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy](#)

[Mitigation for Recreational Impacts on New Forest European sites Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#)

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 28 March 2024
Last date for call in – 8 April 2024

Appendix 1

Ref	Settlement	Project title	Estimated Project delivery Cost
Projects to be implemented			
As1	Ashford	West Fordingbridge - walking route improvements	£90,000
As4	Sandleheath	Old Brickyard Lane – walking route improvements – Phase 2	£15,000
Br1	Bransgore	North-west Bransgore – walking route improvements	£80,000
Ly12	Lymington	Withy Woods - Access and Open Space Enhancement - Phase 2	£50,000
Ly13	Lymington	Grove Gardens - Phase 2	£40,000
NM11	New Milton	Ballard Lake - Access and Open Space Enhancement	£100,000 *
Ri5	Ringwood	Poulner Lakes - Access and Open Space Enhancement – Phase 2	£115,000
To5	Totton	Totton Greenway - walking route signage improvements – Phase 1	£25,000
To10	Totton	Totton Greenway - walking route signage improvements – Phase 2	£25,000
To9	Totton	Testwood Recreation Ground - walking route improvements - Phase 2	£100,000
To12	Totton	Rum Walk project - Access and Open Space Enhancement	£160,000
			£800,000
Projects to be designed			
Br2	Bransgore	Recreation Ground - Access and Open Space Enhancement	n/a
Ho4	Hordle	Hordle Recreational Ground - Access and Open Space Enhancement	n/a
Ly1	Lymington	Bath Road - Access and Open Space Enhancement - Phase 1	n/a
To13	Totton	Bartley Water – Access and Open Space Enhancement	n/a
Hd5	Hythe	Beechwood Way/Roman Way footpath	n/a

* Additional monies are proposed to be added to this project through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Local Infrastructure Funds. This is subject to a different report.