

# EASTLEIGH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

## FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

### Report of the Local Area Manager

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#### Recommendations

##### It is recommended that

- (1) £212,000 is allocated to the North Stoneham Park play areas from developers' contributions;
  - (2) £71,421.11 is allocated for public art at North Stoneham Park from developers' contributions;
  - (3) £10,650 is allocated for improvements to the Lakeside Country Park extension land from developers' contributions;
  - (4) £7,000 is allocated for the Avenue Park bridge repair from the Avenue Park maintenance reserve;
  - (5) £18,000 is allocated for repairs to the Freespace Skate Bowl from developers' contributions;
  - (6) £5,000 is allocated to the Litter Bin Reserve from developers' contributions;
  - (7) £1,200 is allocated for a speed limit reminder sign from developers' contributions;
  - (8) £6,000 is allocated for a town centre festive programme from the Revenue Reserve;
  - (9) £5,000 is allocated to the NEET support project from the Revenue Budget; and
  - (10) £5,000 is allocated to Eastleigh Market from the Revenue Reserve.
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#### Summary

This report contains recommendations for expenditure from the Committee's capital budget and revenue budget.

#### Statutory Powers

Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 i.e. the Local Authority's general power of competence, including power to act for the benefit of its area or persons resident or present in its area.

## **Strategic Implications**

2. The recommendations in this report support the Council's approach to localism (Local First) by allocating devolved resources to meet local needs. The recommendations align with Corporate Plan objectives of Tackling Congestion, Tackling Deprivation, Enabling Healthier Lifestyles and Wellbeing, Supporting an Excellent Environment, and Reinvigorating Town and Local Centres.

## **North Stoneham Park Play Areas**

3. Two new play areas have recently been opened in the North Stoneham Park development. The larger, natural play area was built at a cost of £172,000 and lies within the main open space near the new local centre and primary school. The smaller toddler play area was installed at a cost of £40,000 and is set within the residential area on the western side of the estate. The work commenced before the developer contributions were formally allocated. It is therefore recommended that £212,000 is allocated for these projects from DCO/15/76023, Highwood Group, Land South of Chestnut Ave/North Stoneham Park, Eastleigh.

## **North Stoneham Park Public Art**

4. The North Stoneham Park developer is also funding a substantial amount of public art within North Stoneham Park. The artwork will create local distinctiveness and add to the sense of place. A Public Art Strategy for the estate sets out the locations for the art pieces and the key themes to be reflected in the final pieces. These are now being commissioned and it is recommended that £71,421.11, which represent the most recent developer contributions received are allocated to the project from O/15/76023, Highwood Group, Land South of Chestnut Ave/North Stoneham Park, Eastleigh.

## **Lakeside Extension Land**

5. As part of the wider North Stoneham Park development a western extension to Lakeside Country Park was secured by the developer. This was transferred to the Council to meet the demand for local amenity space for the new residents. Since the transfer a cycle/footpath had been installed and number of environmental improvements been made, including the removal of derelict buildings, tree works and the removal of invasive species. Further work is needed to reinforce the boundaries and manage the open space vegetation to create a wildflower meadow with mown paths. We have received a further £10,650 payment from the developer, which now needs to be allocated to this project. It is therefore recommended that £10,650 is allocated for Lakeside improvements from DCO/15/76023, Highwood Group, Land South of Chestnut Ave/North Stoneham Park, Eastleigh Receipt Date: 26/05/2020.

## **Avenue Park Bridge Repairs**

6. The timber footbridge at the South Western corner of Avenue Park, linking to the new North Stoneham Park estate was recently found to be rotten and unsafe. All the timber work has now been replaced at a cost of £7,000. It is recommended that this sum is allocated for this work from the £113,175.21 commuted sum that makes up the Avenue Park Maintenance Reserve.

## **Freespace Skate Bowl**

7. The concrete skate bowl at Freespace is a popular feature within the wider skate park. It recently suffered criminal damage after a car was driven into it and set on fire. The repair work has been quoted at £18,000. While a larger improvement project for the whole skate park is planned to commence in April 2021 it may be a further 18 months before construction starts. A claim has been submitted to the Council's insurance Company, but it is unlikely that vandalism is covered. Councillors would like to ensure this facility is available for young people as soon as possible. It is recommended that £18,000 is allocated from developers' contributions from DCO/13/73698, First Wessex re land at Woodside Avenue, Eastleigh.

## **Litter Bin Reserve**

8. There is an ongoing need to replace broken litter bins and install new ones where required. The Committee funds this from a litter bin reserve which is regularly topped up. The current reserve has now been spent and it is therefore recommended that £5,000 is allocated for the Litter Bin Reserve from the following developer contributions: DCO/13/73698, First Wessex re land at Woodside Avenue, Eastleigh.

## **Speed Limit Reminder Sign**

9. The Local Engagement Officers deploy speed limit reminder signs in an annual programme agreed by each Local Area Committees. There are currently only sufficient signs to provide 12 two-weekly deployments within each Local Area. An investment of £1,200 will provide one sign per Local Area, allowing a continuous deployment throughout the year. The existing signs use relatively old technology, which cannot record the speeds of all passing cars - only being triggered during a speeding incident, with an upper limit being set at a level to avoid encouraging speeding.
10. The new signs will still signal to drivers in the same way, but they are now able to record all traffic movements, together with the speed of each a car. This gives a much richer picture and enables not only more complete speed data but also traffic volumes throughout the day and night. It is recommended that £1,200 is allocated for the new sign from developers' contributions from DCF/11/70108, Taylor Wimpey, Travis Perkins Site, Mill Street, Eastleigh.

## **Town Centre Festive Programme**

11. The summer cultural programme, curated by the Point over three weeks in August and September proved very popular, attracting visitors to the town and increasing dwell times, both during the performances and to see the pavement art which remains to this day.
12. The Arts and Culture Team at the Point has been asked to prepare a similar programme for the festive period, in the hope that the current lockdown will be eased in early December. The programme is still in development, but Councillors would like to allocate up to £6,000 from the revenue reserve, with the final detail being delegated to the Local Area Manager, in consultation with the Area Chair and Vice Chair.

## **Community Safety NEET Project**

13. The Eastleigh Community Safety Partnership has submitted a £33,000 bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for a service to support local young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The NEET project has been running since Spring 2020 and has been successful in turning a number of lives around of some of our more prolific young offenders. 16 young people are currently engaged with the project and 13 of these have previous convictions. The project works by giving 1-1 support to create a personal development plan for young people who go on to engage with the many education, training and skills partners involved. Seven young people have been offered college places and some are now attending. Four are working with the Enham Trust and one with Hampshire Futures.
14. The funding will enable the project to run for a further year. It will fund a part-time officer who will co-ordinate the project and start work with the next cohort of young people who are currently in year 11. It will lead to reductions in the level of crime and anti-social behaviour and the number of NEETs in the town. Matching funding is required for such a bid and £5,000 is deemed sufficient to give a reasonable chance of success. It is therefore recommended that £5,000 is allocated from the Local Area Community Safety revenue budget, previously allocated for funding Police Community Support Officers.

## **Eastleigh Market and events support**

15. Councillors have asked staff to explore options for a new Street Market for Eastleigh Town Centre. Negotiations have taken place on two fronts. The first has been with South Central Makers (SCM) the company who have recently started a weekly craft market in Hedge End. They have expressed an interest in operating a similar weekly craft market in Eastleigh. The current road closures offer an opportunity to use more of the town centre and bring additional footfall into the main retail areas, something that was impossible with the previous market, which was restricted to the Market Place and the Leigh Road Precinct.
16. SCM would like to hold markets on the three Saturdays in December before Christmas, subject to the current lockdown being lifted. If successful they

would like to restart in either January or February 2021. It is suggested that a free trial period is offered in order to test the viability of the market and best location within the town, before agreeing an on-going rent to be paid to the Council by SCM.

17. A craft market of this nature will be a valuable compliment to the short-term festive programme discussed in paragraph 11. If viable in the longer-term it will also provide an important role in supporting the town's creative industries and the wider regeneration of the town centre as a whole.
18. At the same time, we are also talking to other general market providers. A new general market demands a considerably longer lead-in time to recruit stalls. With the current lockdown it will not therefore be possible to commence a market before Christmas. Councillors support funding a six-month trial and early discussions indicate this may cost in the region of £5,000 for fully curated weekly market. This figure assumes an income derived from a £10 per stall pitch fee. This is a low introductory offer, which would be expected to increase as the market become established. It is therefore recommended that £5,000 is allocated for this project from the Revenue Reserve.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

19. An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out for this report, however separate consideration of the inclusivity and accessibility aspect of each project will be carried out as part of the project delivery.
20. New play area projects are now assessed against an inclusion checklist and a range of improvements have come about. For example, the natural play area at North Stoneham Park includes an extensive sand pit, which broadens the range of sensory experiences typically available.
21. The NEET project focuses on engaging with some of the most prolific young offenders and seeks to improve their life chances.
22. Councillors have requested that the town centre events programme fully engages young people in the design and delivery and also that it appeals to all ethnic groups. The activities will be provided free of charge, to enable those who are suffering the economic impact of Covid or on low incomes to participate.

### **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

23. The larger North Stoneham Park play area is primarily made from hardwood timber, which FSC certified from sustainable sources.
24. The countryside sites will all be managed in a way that will enhance local wildlife. And, providing litter bins is very effective in reducing pollution to the local environment and our water courses.
25. Providing high quality local facilities such as the Freespace Skate Park and a local craft market in accessible locations reduces the need to travel by car.

And the speed limit reminder increases public safety and can reduce harmful exhaust emissions.

Guy Riddoch

LOCAL AREA MANAGER

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Appendices Attached: None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D**

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

None