

# CABINET

Tuesday, 24 May 2022

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME SCHEME APPROVAL

### Report of the Chief Financial Officer

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#### Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet

- (1) Approve expenditure of £35,000 on improvements at Hiltingbury Lakes, to be financed through New Homes Bonus
  - (2) Approve Expenditure of £75,000 on improvements at Flexford Nature Reserve, to be financed through New Homes Bonus
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#### Summary

Council approved the Capital Strategy on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022. This report seeks a revision to the Strategy to include additional expenditure at Hiltingbury Lakes and Flexford Nature Reserve.

#### Statutory Powers

Local Government Act 1972, sections 111 and 151

#### Strategic Implications

1. This report relates to the Corporate Plan through the provision of green infrastructure in the Council's open spaces, allowing increased access to Hiltingbury Lakes and Flexford Nature Reserve, whilst also enabling increased biodiversity and protection to trees and river banks.
2. This proposal contributes to meeting the Green infrastructure objectives in the Corporate Strategy 2018 (Green Borough), specifically the aim of increasing residents' and visitors' access, usage and connection with natural spaces .
3. This proposal also supports the Corporate Strategy 2018 (Health and Wellbeing) by enabling opportunities for physical activity within the Borough.

## **Hiltingbury Lakes**

2. Recent improvements have been carried out at Hiltingbury Lakes including essential maintenance works to footpaths, bridges, and waterways. Further funding is now required to allow works this summer 2022 on further drainage and surfacing works to footpaths around the lower ponds and main lake, ensuring the whole site is safe and accessible for all users.
3. These works will cost £35,000 and will be funded from New Homes Bonus.

## **Flexford Nature Reserve**

4. Works are required to reinstate and improve footpath surfaces throughout Flexford Nature reserve to ensure the area is safe and accessible for users.
5. In addition, there will be new interpretation and information panels together with improvements to signage, including information about the history of the site, as well as information regarding the plants and animals that can be found there.
6. These works will be carried out in partnership with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, with the aim to increase biodiversity of the area, and to protect trees with exposed roots, protect and improve river banks, and to lead to a more sustainable green area
7. These works will cost £75,000 and will be funded from New Homes Bonus

## **Financial Implications**

8. Financing of the Community Investment Programme Schemes is dependent on available resources arising from capital receipts, developers' contributions, external grant, reserves and borrowing. All procurements will be made in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.
9. The financing of both improvement works at Hiltingbury Lakes and Flexford Nature Reserve will be from New Homes Bonus.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

10. The Equality Act is relevant to the decision in this report as the decision relates to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations between different people in the following ways. This proposed work programme will result in an anticipated improvement for people with protected characteristic, particularly for age and disability; the proposed provision and improvement of accessible walk routes will have a positive impact on the elderly and those with reduced mobility being able to access the lakes through an improved network of footpaths. A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out, because while there are some equalities impacts, it is not proportionate to carry out a full EIA.

## **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

11. The Council is currently implementing its Climate Change and Environmental Emergency action Plan, and this proposal provides opportunities to help address some of the ecological aims within the plan.
12. The path improvements at Hiltingbury Lakes and Flexford Nature Reserve will conserve and enhance the wildlife value of both sites by reducing trampling of sensitive woodland and wetland meadow habitats where walkers try and avoid wet and muddy sections of path. Repairs to riverbanks at Flexford will also help alleviate the impact of fluvial erosion on paths and habitats at times of high river flows, helping to meet climate change adaptation strategies.
13. Improving the local environment (for example footpath improvements and signage) can also encourage journeys on foot and support modal shift to more sustainable travel.

## **Conclusion**

14. This report seeks approval for the following expenditure:
  - £35,000 for improvements at Hiltingbury Lakes.
  - £75,000 for improvements at Flexford Nature Reserve.

TOM ANDREWS  
CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

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Appendices Attached: 0

## **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.

\* List Background Papers or state None.