

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	25 NOVEMBER 2019	9
FYLDE SAND DUNES IMPROVEMENT SCHEME			

PUBLIC ITEM

SUMMARY

At the meeting of the Tourism and Leisure Committee held on 4 November 2019, consideration was given to the open space improvement scheme which is broken down into three elements and covers the Fylde Sand Dunes Site of Special Scientific Interest/Local Nature Reserve. The scheme includes dune re-profiling and stabilisation works; design and installation of dune signage; and the design and installation of attractive dune entrance features.

This report provides further details on the scheme. The Tourism and Leisure Committee resolved to seek the approval of the Finance and Democracy Committee for a fully-funded addition to the Capital Programme for 2019/20 in the sum of £52,000 and approval for the Council to act as the accountable body for the Fylde Sand Dunes improvement scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested:

1. To approve that the Council act as the accountable body for the Fylde Sand Dunes Improvement Scheme in the total sum of £52,000; and
2. To approve a fully-funded addition to the Capital Programme for 2019/20 in the sum of £52,000 in respect of the Fylde Sand Dunes Improvement Scheme to be met from a combination of external grants and Section 106 contributions received for this purpose as detailed within the report.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Tourism and Leisure Committee – 4 November 2019

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	✓
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	✓
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	✓
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	✓
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	✓

SCHEME DETAILS

1. Fylde Council has successfully led a partnership with Blackpool Council and Lancashire Wildlife Trust in the management of the Fylde Sand Dunes Project since 2008, ensuring the protection and improvement of the dune habitat in its role as soft sea defence and nationally significant conservation area. Environment Agency grant funding to the total value of £717,000 was secured in December 2016 by the partnership to continue the project until 2021. The funding is utilised to fund the project team as well as maintain 80 hectares of dune estate which includes a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, County Biological Heritage Sites and Local Nature Reserve.
2. The aims and objectives for the project are detailed in the Fylde Sand Dunes Management Plan 2017 – 2022 and include habitat management, improved interpretation, access management and programmes for volunteering, events and environmental education. The improvement scheme proposed within this report contributes to fulfilling the plan objectives within the agreed timeframe.
3. The first scheme element will focus on improving the interpretation and way-marking of the Fylde Sand Dunes in line with the Council's Coastal Signage Strategy. The dunes do not presently contain public signage. The Fylde Sand Dunes Project Team have developed a comprehensive signage plan including the design and location of interpretation boards and way-marking posts. The signage will serve to promote the national value of the dunes as well as guide visitors to the beach along defined trails, thus reducing trampling of sensitive dune habitat. All signage will meet visitor needs as well as the historic, aesthetic and environmental sensitivities of the site.
4. The second scheme element will focus on improving visitor access to and through the dunes. Despite its open aspect character, Fylde's dune entrances should present possibilities and opportunity for passers-by and provide a visitor with their first impression of the site. It is therefore paramount that entrances are welcoming, attractive and safe. Defined entrances guide visitors on a defined path or route, reducing uncontrolled trampling and disturbance of dune habitat and associated wildlife. The Fylde Sand Dunes Project Team have designed new dune entrance features which complement the character of the site and make use of attractive timber of rope fencing.
5. The third scheme element involves re-profiling and stabilisation works to the dunes on Clifton Drive North, opposite the Persimmon Homes development. This will reduce the volume of windblown sand lost from the dune system onto the adjacent highway and Persimmon Homes development. Operations involve lowering the roadside dunes, creating a stable and reduced height profile. The re-profiled dunes will then be stabilised utilising eco matting and Marram Grass plug plants. The design and operational delivery of project is being undertaken by staff from Fylde Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Blackpool Council.
6. The dune re-profiling and stabilisation works are subject to planning approval. A planning application has been submitted by the Fylde Sand Dunes Project Team and the allocated application number is 19/0829. It is anticipated that the application will be considered by the Planning Committee in December.
7. The overall cost breakdown for the three elements are shown in the table below:

Cost Heading	Description	Total £
New dune signage	Includes the design and installation of interpretation boards and way-marking posts.	21,561
New dune entrances	Includes the procurement and installation of new dune entrance fencing.	19,724
Dune re-profiling works	Includes the hire of machinery and the procurement of eco-matting and Marram Grass plug plants.	10,715
Total Project Costs		52,000

METHOD AND COST OF FINANCING THE SCHEME

8. Lancashire Wildlife Trust have submitted a grant application for £27,000 to the Lancashire Environment Fund to contribute to the Fylde Sand Dunes improvement scheme. The Trust will receive confirmation if the grant application has been successful in 11th December, 2019. If it is not successful then a request will be made in January 2020 for a fully funded increase of £27,000 to the capital programme from the Capital Investment Reserve to cover the shortfall which will be the subject of a subsequent report.
9. The two existing S106 contributions below have been 'ring-fenced' to the project. The total of S106 contribution is £25,000, relating to two developments in St Anne's. The developments and contributions are listed below.
10. The terms of the Planning Agreement 16/0194 for development at Rear 23 – 63 Westgate Road, St Anne's in relation to the public open space contribution states "To be used towards the coastal dunes improvement scheme".
11. The terms of the Planning Agreement 13/0231 for development at South of Bridgeside/Hornsey Avenue, St Anne's in relation to the public open space contribution states "To improve or facilitate the provision of public open space to benefit the occupiers".

Application Number	Development	106 Contribution
16/0194	Rear 23 - 63 Westgate Road, St. Annes	£10,000
13/0231	South of Bridgeside/ Hornsey Avenue, St. Annes	£15,000
Total		£25,000

12. The total budget available for the three elements of the project is summarised in the below table:

Source	Amount
Section 106 contributions	£25,000
LEF Grant	£27,000
Total	£52,000

CONCLUSION

13. It is recommended that the Finance and Democracy Committee support the recommendations of the Tourism and Leisure Committee as described in the report.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The Committee is recommend to approve a fully-funded addition to the Capital Programme for 2019/20 in the sum of £52,000 in respect of the Fylde Sand Dunes improvement scheme as detailed within the report.
Legal	The proposed dune re-profiling and stabilisation works are subject to planning approval. In addition, S106 contributions are made by developers under specific planning agreements relating to each new development. The planning agreement will specify how the monies are to be spent in terms of geographical location and scope. A developer can usually require repayment of Section 106 if they have not been spent within 10 years of the agreement.
Community Safety	Improving the quality of open spaces provides an opportunity to increase public use and reduce nuisance behaviour.
Human Rights and Equalities	No implications arising from this report.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	The dune re-profiling works require planning permission from Fylde Council as the Planning Authority. A stipulation of the planning application will involve the production of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) report for Natural England. The HRA will describe how the project will impact the dune habitat as well as mitigations to reduce disturbance to wildlife.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No implications arising from this report.

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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Attached Documents

Appendix 1 - Signage and access control design proposals.

Appendix 2 - Dune re-profiling and stabilisation works profile plans.