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| Committee: | Cabinet | Date: | 24 May 2018 |
| Title: | S106 funding for Easy Access Path, Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve, Stansted Mountfitchet | | |
| Portfolio Holder(s): | Cllr Susan Barker, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services; Cllr Vic Ranger, Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships | | |
| Report Author: | Jeremy Pine, Planning Policy / Development Management Liaison Officer – jpine@uttlesford.gov.uk | Key decision: | No |

Summary

1. Essex Wildlife Trust wishes to provide an all year round accessible lakeside path at this Reserve, which is located north of Stansted Mountfitchet.
2. The Trust advises that increases in visitor numbers have worn the existing pathways, making them inaccessible at times and having a detrimental effect on neighbouring pond habitats. The Trust puts part of the increase in patronage down to local housing growth.
3. The Trust needs to secure £16,500 to undertake this work, which it would like to have completed by February of next year. The Trust is requesting a release of S106 funds from the remaining community facilities pot associated with Foresthall Park, which currently stands at about £41,000.

Recommendations

4. Cabinet is recommended to approve the release of £16,500 from S106 funds to secure the provision of this lakeside path.

Financial Implications

5. The funding requested will be drawn from ring fenced funds available for this purpose. There are no other financial implications arising from this report. In FY 11/12, Cabinet approved the release of £35,000 from the same community facilities pot for footpath refurbishment in Birchanger Wood.

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Letter from the Essex Wildlife Trust to UDC Planning dated 22/03/18.

Impact

7.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Communication/Consultation | N/A |
| Community Safety | N/A |
| Equalities | N/A |
| Health and Safety | N/A |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | The S106 agreement sets out the Council's obligations |
| Sustainability | An all year round accessible path would improve the Reserve's habitat, particularly for pushchair and wheelchair users |
| Ward-specific impacts | Improved nature reserve facilities in Stansted Mountfitchet |
| Workforce/Workplace | N/A |

Situation

8. The Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve was originally the pleasure park to Norman House, and is 24 acres in extent. It has 6 ponds in total, woodland and wildflower meadows. The Reserve was donated to the Essex Wildlife Trust in 1976.
9. A recent increase in visitor numbers is putting strain on the existing pathways, which are becoming extremely worn, muddy and sometimes inaccessible. In winter, visitors try to walk around the muddy areas and the increasingly exposed tree roots, exacerbating the problem.
10. This project would provide a much needed hardened surface with boardwalk in places to avoid further tree root damage. The path would be 363m in length, with sections being re-routed to take visitors and dogs away from areas at most risk from disturbance.
11. The Trust has advised officers that it would try to fund a project such as this from landfill community tax funding, but as there are no landfill sites in the vicinity there is no eligibility in this instance. The Trust has also approached four private grant-making Trusts whose charitable objectives are most relevant

to this project, but has not received positive replies.

12. The Trust's request is for the release of £16,500 of S106 funds from the remaining community facilities pot at Foresthall Park. A cost breakdown has been provided, which provides for project consultancy work, excavation and spoil levelling works and the laying of all-weather surfaces.

13. Officers consider that this is a worthy project, and it is recommended that Cabinet approves the release of £16,500 from the community facilities pot at Foresthall Park to fund the works.

Risk Analysis

14.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions |
|--|---|---|---|
| That funding for the all year round accessible path is not secured, and the existing facilities continue to deteriorate. | 2 - No other funding sources have been able to be secured by the Trust. | 2 - Reduced accessibility at the Reserve. | Approve the release of the required S106 funding. |

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.