

Case Officer:	Tracey Hill		
Applicant:	Barwood Development Securities Ltd		
Proposal:	WNDC Outline Planning Application - Outline application for residential development up to 82 units including public open space and associated works. All matters reserved.		
Ward:	Towcester Mill		
Councillors:	Cllr Chris Lofts & Cllr Catharine Tarburn		
Reason for Referral:	To allow Members to decide how the money is to be allocated to meet or mitigate any need or impact arising from the development		
Expiry Date:	N/A	Committee Date:	3 December 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: TO RE-ALLOCATE SOME OF THE SECURED S106 CONTRIBUTION ON ALTERNATIVE SCHEMES:

- **£29,992.00 towards continued development of the Tove Wetland Pocket Park and its surrounds.**

The matter is reported to the Planning Committee, to allow Members to reconsider the reallocation of money previously identified to meet or mitigate any need or impact arising from the development.

Proposal

At the Planning Committee meeting on 2nd July 2015, Members resolved to allocate the secured s106 contribution from the Belle Baulk development on several schemes, one of which was the installation of bus shelters on the Watling Street; Members allocated £40,000 towards this project, which also included a maintenance sum for 5 years. To date only one shelter has been installed adjacent Richmond Court sheltered accommodation however, it is not possible for any other to be installed due to the location of utilities. Members have reallocated some of the funding to alternative schemes identified by Towcester Town Council (TTC) to spend the remaining funding and so far have approved schemes that include:

- The installation of a permanent Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) sign at the top of Northampton Road.
- The installation of bollards around the Towcester Recreation Ground.

This has left an amount remaining of £29,992.00 which TTC would like to put towards expanding the successful and popular Tove Wetland Pocket Park off Belle Baulk.

Consultations

None undertaken

Conclusion

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- Alternative/re-allocation of funding scheme

Members are advised that the above is a summary of the proposals and key issues contained in the main report below which provides full details of all consultation responses, planning policies, the Officer's assessment and recommendations, and Members are advised that this summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed report.

MAIN REPORT

1. BACKGROUND AND APPRAISAL

- 1.1 Planning permission was granted on 29th March 2011 for outline planning consent for up to 82 dwellings at land off of the existing Belle Baulk estate in Towcester.
- 1.2 The application was submitted to and determined by the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and contributions were secured through S106 attached to the planning permission based on the Corporation's discounted Residential Standard Charge.
- 1.3 The discounted Residential Standard Charge equated to £18,000 per unit to be applied to a broad flexible list of infrastructure as set out within an indicative list attached to the legal agreement.
- 1.4 The indicative list of infrastructure includes items such as affordable housing, education, libraries, community centre, youth centre, open space, sports and leisure, crematoria and burial grounds, emergency and health services, waste, transport, flood defence, public realm, community cohesion and employment training.
- 1.5 The total S106 contribution based on the development of 82 dwellings was secured at **£1,476,000.00**
- 1.6 Following transfer of planning powers back to South Northants Council from WNDC, the responsibility for collecting and allocating the S106 contributions attached to planning permissions granted by the Corporation falls to the District Council as local planning authority.
- 1.7 At the Planning Committee meeting on 2nd July 2015, Members resolved to allocate the secured s106 contribution from the Belle Baulk development on several schemes, one of which was the installation of bus shelters on the Watling Street; Members allocated £40,000 towards this scheme to be paid to TTC.
- 1.8 To date only one shelter has been installed adjacent Richmond Court sheltered accommodation however, it is not possible for any other to be installed due to the location of utilities. Members have reallocated some of the funding to alternative schemes identified by Towcester Town Council (TTC) to spend the remaining funding and so far have approved schemes that include:
 - The installation of a permanent Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) sign at the top of Northampton Road. (11.04.19 Planning Committee)
 - The installation of bollards around the Towcester Recreation Ground. (06.08.20 Planning Committee)
- 1.9 This has left an amount remaining of £29,992.00 which TTC would like to put towards expanding the successful and popular Tove Wetland Pocket Park off Belle Baulk/Tove Grange development.

- 1.10 TTC is responsible for the maintenance of the open spaces at Belle Baulk (save for those arising from the Belle Baulk/Tove Grange development, which is subject to a Private Management Agreement). In the years since transfer of the open spaces completed, work has been ongoing to develop the Tove Wetland Pocket Park, with the help of a committed group of local volunteers who form the Tove Wetland Pocket Park Committee.
- 1.11 During this time, the Pocket Park has been developed, with the installation of a board walk, dipping platform and an interpretation board, additional planting and strategic mowing/maintenance. These efforts have been successful in contributing towards sustaining and improving the biodiversity of the site and increasing its value as an asset within the town for residents and visitors. In addition, pupils from both Towcester Primary School and Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School regularly visit the site to learn more about the wildlife which exists in our town.
- 1.12 To align with its recent formation of a Climate Change Working Group, TTC is seeking permission to re-allocate the final £29,992.00 remaining of the S106 funding from the Belle Baulk/Tove Grange development towards continued development of the Tove Wetland Pocket Park and its surrounds. This will extend across to Saxon Fields, the open space on the Shires Estate which connects the A5 and Northampton Road, a route which is already extremely popular with walkers.
- 1.13 Whilst a proportion of this funding would be earmarked for strategic maintenance, i.e. specialist clearance of overgrown vegetation from the balancing lake and eventual replacement of the boardwalk and dipping platform, the majority would be dedicated to further enhance the area. Working in conjunction with the Tove Wetland Pocket Park Committee, the proposals would include, but are not limited to, the creation of additional wildflower areas, additional tree planting and the installation of complementary signage and benches, the latter of which would be constructed from recycled materials.
- 1.14 TTC advise that there is growing interest from residents to increase the biodiversity of the town by introducing these types of natural habitats for wildlife. Early in 2020, the eRotary Club successfully planted a wildflower meadow on Town Council-owned land near to Hazel Crescent. The visual impact of this was spectacular and, as a result, TTC has been contacted on numerous occasions with requests for further wildflower planting. These areas can be extremely costly to develop but are highly impactful once established.
- 1.15 As the proposals are still emerging, with further ideas still coming forward, it is anticipated that the total of the remaining S106 funding, plus additional monies from TTC's own budgets, will be utilised to achieve the outcome which is hoped for.

2. CONSULTATIONS

- 2.1 None undertaken

3. REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 None received

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Whilst it was unfortunate that the installation of bus shelters was not possible, the alternative project currently identified is considered to be an acceptable alternative

and accords with the indicative infrastructure list and in due course other projects will be reported to Planning Committee to ensure that the funding is spent to meet or mitigate any need or impact arising from the development.

4. RECOMMENDATION

TO RE-ALLOCATE REMAINDER OF THE SECURED S106 CONTRIBUTION ON AN ALTERNATIVE SCHEMES TO EXPAND THE TOVE WETLAND POCKET PARK.

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