

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Business Development and Growth. (Introduced by the Executive Member for Streetscene)	Executive Member Decision	January 2017

## BIG WOOD ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To seek approval to modify the scope of the Big Wood Access Improvement Project.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To approve the request to change the location of spend on improvement works to the Big Wood Access Improvement Project and to allocate budget to statutory reservoir works.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. Between 2007 and 2009 a large regeneration project was carried out on 18 hectares of land known locally as Big Wood and Copperworks Wood within Yarrow Valley Country Park. This open space and woodland was previously derelict, underused and neglected (DUN site) and was selected for improvement and investment via REMADE and NWDA. Around £532,000 was spent on remediating contaminated land, capping 5 mineshafts, creation of a new footpath network, desilting and installation of a new spill way to the reservoir (Common Bank Lodge) and protection and enhancement of habitats.
4. The next phase of this project was to create footpath and access improvements to link through from Yarrow Valley (Big Wood) behind Lancashire College to Ackhurst Lodge in Astley Park, this is land owned by Lancashire County Council and Chorley Council.
5. This was due to be funded by £75,000 S106 from Taylor Wimpy and Redrow from the Gillibrand development and £11,520 other capital funding. The S106 has however taken until December 2016 to be invoiced and paid. In order to spend the S106 on this location Chorley Council would be required to agree a deed of variation with the developers as the S106 stipulates that it has to be spent to create a footbridge and footpath links from Gillibrands to Whitworth Road.
6. In the time that the money has taken to be received (7 years) the scope of this project has changed. It is proposed to not put in the footpath link behind Lancashire College for the following reasons:-
  - a) The Lancashire College, "Woodlands" site is being looked at with a view to disposal by LCC and development in line with the Local Plan. The woodland that the path was proposed to be installed on is owned by LCC and is within Biological Heritage Site (BHS) woodland which is currently inaccessible and undisturbed, it is a haven for wildlife.
  - b) The proposal of the new path has been included in the scoping paper for the Woodlands site so if it was viable, it could be taken forward as part of the development process.

- c) In order for the development of the "Woodlands" site to go ahead it may be suggested by ecologists that the BHS wooded valley be left undisturbed in order to protect the valuable habitat and mitigate against the development of the adjacent land.
  - d) The proposed path would also not be accessible to all needing steps, bridges and boardwalks.
  - e) The land of the BHS woodland would need to be transferred to Chorley Council and creating new paths would in turn create more assets for the Council to maintain which with dwindling budgets may be a future problem.
7. In 2008/9 footpaths were improved in Big Wood and Copperworks wood and a footbridge constructed. As 7 years has passed it is felt to be more appropriate to spend the money where the S106 intended, to carry out improvements to the existing paths, bridge, woodland management and boundaries. This meets the terms of the S106 and improves existing footpaths within Yarrow Valley for the residents of Gillibrands and Chorley alike. The opportunity to utilise the S106 also reduces the need to spend revenue or future capital budgets at this location.
8. It is proposed to allocate £5,000 of the £75,000 to be utilised in house by the Ranger Team to carry out improvements to the existing paths and bridges throughout Big Wood and Copperworks Wood. It is proposed to get competitive quotes via The Chest to carry out works to desire lines and footpaths through Yarrow Valley in the vicinity of the Gillibrand estates to formalise them into surfaced pathways using recycled aggregate material. This work will also include access improvements to fencing and gates and thinning of plantation woodland. Subject to approval it is proposed to tender out in March award via agreed evaluation criteria and get the path work completed by June 2017 and the tree work by November 2017. Any remaining funds would be retained to carry out any further remedial works in the agreed project area over the next 5 years.
9. Chorley Council are obligated to inspect and maintain Council owned reservoirs throughout the Borough as a statutory duty. The works to improve Common Bank Lodge within Big Wood were carried out in 2008/9 and are due to be inspected shortly. It is proposed to allocate the remaining capital funding (£11,520) from the original project to fund the initial inspection and subsequent remedial works that may occur within reservoirs in the Borough.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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<b>Reason</b> Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

### (If the recommendations are accepted)

10. It is recommended to spend the allocated S106 where intended on footpath and bridge improvements linking Gillibrand to Whitworth Road and improve other footpaths within the vicinity of the Gillibrand development within Yarrow Valley Country Park. This abides by the signed legal agreement and enables necessary work to be carried out to improve access for the public within Yarrow Valley Country Park.
11. It is recommended to reallocate the remaining capital from the original project to carry out and inspection and subsequent urgent works to Common Bank Lodge and other reservoirs in the Borough as necessary. This enables a statutory duty to be upheld.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12. Considered to carry on with the original project but this is deemed to be a poor use of Council resources and would also need a deed of variation to be agreed. There is a risk that the developers could ask for their money back.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

13. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	*	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	*	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	*

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

14. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

15. The £11,520 of capital funding will be reallocated to finance the improvement works of the Council's reservoirs.

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

16. No Comments.

MARK LESTER  
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Lindsey Blackstock	5218	12/01/2017	***

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraph 2 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.

Adnan Lowe

Dated

18.1.17

Councillor  
Executive Member Designation