

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	19 January 2021
Title:	Investing in Hampshire
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services and Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to consider a £15,000 bid against the Investing in Hampshire Fund in respect of the Andover Trees United.
2. Andover Woods was purchased by Hampshire County Council in 2008 for the creation on a new public woodland to celebrate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee. The majority of the site is currently managed under license by Andover Trees United.
3. Andover Trees United (ATU) is a registered local environmental charity who aims to involve all young people in the local community in the establishment of the woodland. They welcome around 1,000 children and young people a year, together with teachers, families and friends to plant trees and wildflowers.
4. The vision that Andover Trees United has for the woodland is to improve educational facilities and create a field study base and volunteer room, that is sensitive to its surroundings and sits well in the landscape. The design of this facility would be required to be approved by Hampshire County Council as landowners.
5. A total of £37,000 has currently secured, along with in kind support, to help Andover Trees United achieve their ambition for improved educational facilities. A request has been made for £15,000 towards the cost of the project.

Recommendation

The Executive Member for Policy and Resources is recommended to :

6. Approves an award of £15,000 to Andover Trees United, towards the educational cabin at Andover Woods.

Andover Trees United

7. Andover Woods was purchased by Hampshire County Council in 2008 to celebrate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee. A new public woodland was created on the site now known as Andover Woods. With a vision in which *“The woodland is to be a legacy to all the people of Andover, Hampshire and the United Kingdom to provide habitat for scarce and declining species and an area for recreational countryside space for future generations.”* Andover Trees United (ATU) is a Registered charity and have held a licence agreement on land lying to the north east of Icknield way on 7ha within the site know as Andover Woods since November 2012.
8. The terms of the agreement included use by Andover Trees United for use as a community woodland in conjunction with local schools, community and interest groups. The agreement is currently under review and the County Council are exploring whether to grant a lease for management of the whole of the site (Including the remainder of the site currently managed by Hampshire County Council Countryside Service).
9. Andover Trees United have also been looking to secure more aesthetically pleasing facilities for their educational programme on site and have been working with Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) to explore funding opportunities for facilities that would meet HCC specifications. The charity has a programme of education and events (when COVID regulations allow) Some of their activities can be seen on their web site. (<https://www.andovertrees.org.uk>). ATU have sought a design that meets the approval of HCC Estates and avoids any additional liability to the County Council in the future.
10. In July 2020 a (remote) meeting was organised between Officers from Test Valley Borough Council, and Cllrs Kirsty North, Cllr North (Test Valley), Cllr Tasker and Cllr Nick Mathews. The discussion was based around the benefits of the Andover Trees United charity to taking a lease on the site. In principle all were in agreement that the community and engagement offering and associated volunteer groups would be desirable activities and extend the reach of the work of the County Council. Working in partnership with TVBC and the Trustees, we are currently identifying the support that Andover Trees United require so that they can successfully deliver their ambition on the site.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss 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. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. *Equalities Impact Assessment:*

The scheme does not have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics and provides opportunities that support a thriving and diverse voluntary and community sector and body of volunteers.

FUNDING CRITERIA FOR INVESTING IN HAMPSHIRE

The following criteria should be taken into account when considering a request for funding.

1. Assistance will be considered only in response to direct applications from properly constituted organisations seeking assistance for one-off funding only. The application must show that the organisation is properly and legally organised and has its own bank account. Funding would only be awarded if the proposal was to support activity within agreed County Council priorities.
2. Applications will be considered for the items listed below, where these are within agreed priorities and generally only where other substantial funding exists:
 - Specific capital projects for the improvement or maintenance of significant assets or facilities within Hampshire
 - Projects that will support economic development and business growth within Hampshire.
3. Other applications will be considered at the absolute discretion of the Leader where he considers that the award will make a contribution for the wider benefit of Hampshire and its residents.
4. The wider economic and other benefits to the residents of Hampshire should be considered together with any complementary benefits for Hampshire County Council.
5. Awards will not usually be made in respect of applications from the following:-
 - Government Institutions
 - Schools
 - Overseas and out of County organisations which have no direct Hampshire involvement
 - Bodies requesting funds for onward distribution to other charities e.g. mayoral appeals, carnivals, fetes, or for their own fundraising events.
6. Apart from exceptional circumstances, the requesting body would be expected to provide their own funding towards the project.
7. As a general rule, grants in excess of £250,000 will not be awarded unless significant benefits and funding are available. In exceptional cases, where the benefits are significant and directly relate to services and functions close to the County Council's key objectives, then an award greater than the level above would be considered.

8. Given the longer term nature of capital projects, requests can be considered well in advance, but funding will only be released once evidence of capital expenditure has been provided to the County Council or other arrangements made, consistent with the agreement of the Director of Corporate Resources.