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## VATTENFALL - COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING

To: **Cabinet – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Main Portfolio Area: **Operational Services**

By: **Cllr Mike Harrison, Cabinet Member for Operational Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **Cliffsend and Pegwell, Central Harbour, Eastcliff**

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**Summary:** In 2009 Vattenfall provided a grant of £100k to TDC to develop and deliver a project to benefit the local community and environment. This report describes the work to date and recommends two projects for delivery using this grant funding.

### For Decision

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#### **1.0 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 In 2009 the energy company Vattenfall started the construction phase of the Thanet Offshore Wind Farm. As part of this they confirmed their intention to support a project which benefits the local community and environment. The company provided a grant of £100k to Thanet District Council for this purpose.
- 1.2 An outline project brief was proposed for a scheme on and around the former Hoverport at Pegwell Bay. TDC formed a project group consisting of elected members, key local stakeholders and other consultees such as Natural England and the Kent Wildlife Trust. Vattenfall were also represented on the group. The project team refined the proposal for a project to promote the sustainable enjoyment of the former Pegwell Hoverport and surrounding area with improved pedestrian links to the main part of the Pegwell Bay Nature Reserve.
- 1.3 The main focus of the project was a raised walkway through the saltmarsh at the rear of the bay which was to be constructed from recycled materials. The final project scope was agreed in February 2011 and was then designed in detail. Some questions over the nearby informal car park on Sandwich Road and the overall environmental impact delayed the scheme development as an Appropriate Assessment was undertaken to assess the impact on the environmentally designated site and inform a planning application. This application was submitted in June 2012 but was withdrawn shortly afterwards following new concerns raised by members of the project group.
- 1.4 The project was put on hold at this point due to limited resources and the need to focus upon other major construction projects late in 2012. The scheme design had reached an advanced stage with contractors shortlisted for tender invitation; a full site investigation had also been completed. As a result the cost of this development work reduced the value of the remaining grant to just under £93k.
- 1.5 It is proposed that alternative projects are now progressed and delivered using the remaining funding. The issues encountered with the raised walkway project proposal cannot be easily resolved without significant compromises which would affect the desired objectives. Therefore, two new projects are being proposed which fulfil the original criteria of providing a local community and environmental benefit. These

projects are described below and recommended for approval by Cabinet to progress to detailed design and delivery as replacements for the original scheme.

## **2.0 Project Proposals Recommended for Approval by Cabinet**

### **2.1 Village Recreation Ground Play Area - Cliffsend**

2.1.1 The recreation ground has a children's play area containing a few basic pieces of play equipment. This equipment has a short residual life and would benefit significantly from being completely replaced. Some pieces of play apparatus will need to be removed soon to comply with the latest advice from RoSPA. The recreation ground at Foads Lane contains the only play facilities for the Cliffsend area, with the next nearest play area being more than 3km away on the Westcliff of Ramsgate.

2.1.2 The primary objective of this project is therefore to replace the existing play equipment with a modern high quality play area complying with current (RoSPA) guidelines. A budget of £50k would allow for the installation of a selection of comprehensive play apparatus including the required ground works, rubberised surface finishes, perimeter fencing and approaches. Upon completion of the project the play area would be maintained by the council in accordance with the established inspection and maintenance regime for play areas across the District.

2.1.3 The recreation ground is the subject of a lease agreement between the Maudsley Charity and TDC. This lease agreement is due to come to an end in September 2015 but is subject to the conditions of the Landlord and Tenant Act, therefore the council have normal security of tenure meaning that it is likely that a new lease will be agreed. The existing lease does however include a 12 month rolling break clause, which means that the landlord could choose to serve notice. No planning applications have been received by the council on the site of the recreation ground since 2005. There is also a Local Plan policy indicating a presumption to protect this area of land. However future planning policy may be subject to change and is could be affected by the proposed Cliffsend Neighbourhood Plan. There is always a risk of notice being served on the council by the landlord. However, given the circumstances and longstanding use of the land the level of risk appears to be low, and should be considered in the context of the perceived likelihood of development and the long standing lease arrangement which has been in place continuously for more than 40 years.

2.1.4 There is currently no capital funding allocated or proposed to take forward the play equipment replacement at Foads Lane. Allocation of funding to the play area from the council's wider capital programme would be dependent on the overall availability of funding within the programme moving forward and the wider priorities of the council.

### **2.2 Ramsgate Eastcliff and Westcliff Gardens**

2.2.1 This project focuses upon improvements to the Eastcliff gardens from the harbour to King George VI Park in Ramsgate. The proposed work primarily involves changes to the planting in this areas consisting of the re-siting of the current flower and shrub/rose beds to create a more uniform appearance to the upper promenade area and provide more sustainable planting. The intention is to also use this opportunity to remove older items such as the circular flowers beds, the raised bed by the Granville and rose beds opposite the Coastguard Cottages. The current flower beds are colourful but lack height and with the lack of winter planting now due to budget constraints there needs to be a change to a mixture of shrubs, herbaceous and annual planting. Similar works on the Westcliff at Ramsgate will also be considered as this project is developed.

2.2.2 In addition the work will include the final phase of planting to the Madeira Walk rockery and also the Wills Memorial. The latter site requires removal of over mature planting that

is damaging the listed structure, requiring associated repair work. This will also reinstate the intended sea views.

- 2.2.3 Although this project would be delivered in association with the local community, building on current work, it is currently unfunded. It is proposed that an allocation of £40k be made from the Vattenfall grant fund to this project.

### **3.0 Corporate Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial and VAT**

- 3.1.1 The funding was provided by Vattenfall as a grant for a project which benefits the local community and environment. The funds provided (£100k) were net of VAT. A total of just under £93k remains available for allocation to a project. It is proposed to allocate a total £90k to the two projects above with the remaining funding of just less than £3k set aside to cover project delivery including fees, staff costs and procurement.
- 3.1.2 The original scheme to deliver a Walkway at Pegwell Bay was approved as a capital project and included in the budget report to Council in 2010. If Cabinet agrees to the recommendation to take forward the above two projects instead of the Walkway project it would also be necessary to formally approve a variation to the use of these funds from that which was agreed in the 2010 budget report, including its use for the primarily revenue projects as described in section 2.
- 3.1.3 There are no known VAT issues associated with either of the recommended projects.

#### **3.2 Legal**

- 3.2.1 The expenditure of the funding provided by Vattenfall on the projects proposed above is unlikely to raise legal issues.

#### **3.3 Corporate**

- 3.3.1 The project to replace the play equipment at the Cliffsend Recreation Ground carries a project risk relating to the lease conditions. This risk is described in paragraph 2.1.3 above.
- 3.3.2 The outputs from the project options described above are aligned with Corporate Plan priorities including 3 (Community and Voluntary), 6 (Clean, Green Environment) and 11 (Preserving our Public Spaces).
- 3.3.3 Close liaison with a representative of Vattenfall on the recommended projects will be maintained as a courtesy to the funder. Permanent physical acknowledgement of Vattenfall as the funding provider will be made at both project sites.

#### **3.4 Equity and Equalities**

- 3.4.1 There are no obvious equity and equality issues associated with the options considered in this report.

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 That £50k of the Vattenfall funding is allocated to the replacement of the play area in Cliffsend as set out in section 2.1 and that £40k is allocated to the Ramsgate Eastcliff and Westcliff Gardens project as set out in section 2.2. The remaining £3k to be allocated to support the delivery of the two projects as set out in 3.1.1.
- 4.2 That Cabinet approve a variation to the use of the funds from that which was agreed in the 2010 budget report, and that the proposal for a raised walkway is not taken forward.

#### **5.0 Decision Making Process**

- 5.1 This is a non-key decision that is within the delegated authority of Cabinet.

Contact Officer:	Mike Humber – Technical Services Manager
Reporting to:	Mark Seed – Director of Operational Services

#### **Corporate Consultation Undertaken**

Finance	Matthew Sanham, Finance Manager (Service Support)
Legal	Stephen Boyle, Interim Legal Services Manager & Monitoring Officer