

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Future Use of Waterhall Wilding Area</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director Economy, Environment &amp; Culture</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Robert Walker</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 294349</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Withdean</b>		

## **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

*Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that there was an unforeseen confirmation of the councils plans for Waterhall required by an external funder. Failure to provide this may lead to the withdrawal of the funding offer.*

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The report asks the committee to make a 20 year commitment to manage Waterhall as a 'wilding site'
- 1.2 The decision to 'wild' the site was made by TECC Committee on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2020 but the length of time the site would be wilded for was not agreed
- 1.3 An external funder now requires a 20 year minimum commitment

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 Subject to the Council receiving confirmation of an award of funding for the wilding of Waterhall from the National Heritage Lottery Fund by the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, that the committee agree to a commitment to manage Waterhall as a 'wilding site' for a period of at least 20 years commencing on the date on which the funding is confirmed.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The decision to 'wild' Waterhall was made by the TEC Committee on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2020 at this time it was also decided to move control of the site to this committee.
- 3.2 On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June ETS received an update on progress at Waterhall which included the following funding update  
*The National Heritage Lottery Fund Changing Chalk bid is progressing, and the stage 2 bid has been submitted. If successful, this will cover the cost of education*

*and outreach work. This is anticipated to be worth £0.036m per year over 4 years.*

- 3.3 The National Heritage Lottery Fund [NHLF] have agreed to award this funding subject to written confirmation that the Council will manage the Waterhall site as a 'wilding' site for at least the next 20 years. Although both officers and members involved in the Waterhall wilding project consider it to be a long-term project and are working on this premise the long-term future of the site was not specifically raised or agreed by either committee.
- 3.4 For clarity this commitment would not include the old club house and its immediate surrounds this is currently being used for food distribution and its long term future has not been decided.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Waterhall wilding project is largely dependent on external funding for delivery. Funders usually look for assurance that any funding they provide is going to be used well and for significant investments in sites it is not unusual to ask that the site continues to be used for the purpose that the investment has been made for 20 years. If we are to attract external funding a commitment will need to be made.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 A steering group of local experts chaired by a ward councillor are guiding the management of the site. This group support the aims of the NHLF bid.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Committee is recommended to agree to the 20 year commitment to satisfy the NHLF that the Council is committed to 'wilding' Waterhall
- 6.2 That this period starts when funding is confirmed subject to that decision being made within the next year.

#### **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 As set out in the report to this committee on the 24th September 2020 the rewilding at the Waterhall site would potentially be fully self-funded from external grant funding with limited cost to the council other than officer time. This grant is one of the various funds potentially identified for this project. By agreeing to the 20 year commitment to manage Waterhall as a "wilding Site", the grant value awarded from NHLF would be £0.036m per year for 4 years. This funding would cover the cost of education and outreach work. Should the 20 year commitment not be agreed then either the education and outreach work could not be carried out, or alternative funding would need to be identified.

*Finance Officer Consulted: John Lack*

*Date: 10-11-21*

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The Council will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement in order to secure the funding  
There are no other direct legal implications arising from the report

*Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Woodward*

*Date: 11/11/21*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 None identified.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The site is being managed to improve and protect and promote biodiversity and any reduction in funding will reduce the effectiveness of this.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.5 None identified.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 The site is already well used for walking and as the site is enhanced more people should be able to enjoy the site and get the health benefit both physical and mental of exploring it.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. None

