



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

USE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CIL RECEIPTS TO FUND BIODIVERSITY AUDIT ON HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL LAND

BACKGROUND

- Haslemere Town Council is looking at its future responsibilities under the Environment Act 2021. There is a proposal to carry out a biodiversity audit of the land within the Parish that it has responsibility for¹
- This is included in the adopted Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan which provides for a biodiversity audit, and tree and hedgerow surveys which support the Council's Climate and Biodiversity motion (policy H12 & opportunities section).

The audit would include:

- carrying out an ecological survey of each site and map the habitats using the DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain habitat classification which is based on the UKHab Habitat Types;
- assessing the current management regime and provide advice on how management of the site could be improved for wildlife; and
- calculating the baseline number of DEFRA Biodiversity Units (BUs) that each site contains and make an assessment of the increase in number of BUs that could be achieved if the recommended changes to the management regime are implemented.
- The Infrastructure and CIL committee has made a recommendation to Council that funding the audit through the use of Neighbourhood CIL is appropriate because:
 - The CIL regulations Reg 59F requires that Neighbourhood CIL must be spent on
 - a) The provision, improvement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
 - b) Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that planning applications now include reports on biodiversity net gain for a development site, the preparation of a Biodiversity Audit would provide a baseline to assist the Council and WBC to mitigate the impact development has around its green spaces.
- It would also identify and inform how the Council can improve its management of the green spaces to include improvements to biodiversity, recreational and children's play spaces and facilities.

¹ Town Meadow, Lion Green, St Christopher's Green, Grovers Gardens, Woodcock Green, Pocket park at junction of Shepherd's Hill and Lower Street, Allotments at Clammer Hill, Sturt Road and Collards Lane, Clements Corner, and the grass verge on the Tilford road in Beacon Hill.

Giles Sutton	£7,465.00
Alyne Ecology	£6,095.00
Land Use Consultants	Unable to provide quote due to resource
Arun Ecology	No response
Surrey Wildlife Trust	No response

RECOMMENDATION; HTC appoints Alyne Ecology to carry out the biodiversity audit as described above and funding should be through Neighbourhood CIL receipts.

Infrastructure is dealt with explicitly in the overarching objectives in Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021: ~~“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;~~

- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with 6 accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”